

Final Evaluation of UNDP/GEF project:

Re-engineering the National Protected Area System in Order to Achieve Financial Sustainability

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Executing Agency: Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales

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1 Acronyms and Abbreviations

AOP	Annual Operational Plan
CAD	Consorcio Ambiental Dominicano
CBF	Caribbean Biodiversity Fund
EA	Executing Agency
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GoDR	Government of Dominican Republic
IA	Implementing Agency
KfW	German Development Bank
Ministry of Environment	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NPAS	National Protected Area System
NPATF	National Protected Areas Trust Fund
PA	Protected Area
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RSC	Regional Service Centre
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
SEMARENA	Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

UNDP CO

United Nations Development Program Country Office

USAID

United States Agency for International Development

2 Executive Summary

Table 1: Project Summary

Project Title:	Re-engineering the National Protected Area System in Order to Achieve Financial Sustainability			
GEF Project ID:	3424		<i>At endorsement (Million US\$)</i>	<i>At completion* (Million US \$)</i>
UNDP Project ID:	71567	GEF financing:	3,200,000	3,031,950.67
Country:	Dominican Republic	IA/EA own:	45,000	32,500
Region:	LAC	Government:	594,000	1,769,945
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Other:	5,000,000	11,897,087
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	GEF 4; SO1 – SP1	Total co-financing:	8,839,000.00	13,699,532
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	Total Project Cost:	11,822,000.00	N/A
Other Partners Involved:		ProDoc Signature (date project began):		15/5/2010
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 14/05/2014	Actual: 14/05/2015

This project was designed to address the main financial and operational barriers threatening the management effectiveness of the National Protected Areas System (NPAS) of the Dominican Republic. The three proposed Outcomes were to increase and diversify protected area (PA) financing, improve PA management effectiveness and efficiency in the 18 priority PAs with the highest revenue generation potential, and promote co-management arrangement to underwrite PA costs.

This Final Evaluation was carried out from September to October 2015 and adhered fully to the UNDP/GEF guidelines and Terms of Reference provided. The evaluation methodology was based on a thorough review of all relevant project documentation; interviews with a total of 27 stakeholders; a presentation of the initial evaluation findings during the mission; follow-up interviews, correspondence and review of documentation; a detailed analysis of the findings; and the drafting of the final evaluation report.

Project Execution

The Project Management Unit (PMU) structure, which was modified in 2012, consisted of an overall project coordinator, two technical specialists and a monitoring and evaluation specialist. The PMU carried out Monitoring and Evaluation activities in a satisfactory manner, including activities such as the inception workshop, the Mid-Term Review (MTR), field visits, and periodic reporting. Reports were completed in a timely manner, and were of good quality, with improvements over time. Project planning was participatory and involved annual workshops among stakeholders to review draft Annual Operational Plans. The extent and timeliness of responses to the feedback received from M&E activities varied. For example, many of the recommendations made in the MTR were implemented, however, others were not achieved, such as a high-level advocacy campaign to disseminate the results of the economic valuation study. The Strategic Results Framework was found to be very ambitious with its focus on a large number of quantitative targets for various indicators. Its utility as a management tool increased once modified targets were approved after the Mid-Term Review. A tripartite Project Steering Committee composed of the Ministry of Environment, the GEF Focal Point, and UNDP CO provided guidance but unfortunately did not start meeting until the third year of the project.

The PMU worked closely with technical staff and managers of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, although the technical groups envisioned in the project design did not formally materialize.

The integration of the project within the institutional structure in which it was housed increased over time and supported government ownership over the project's deliverables, though in some cases further institutionalization of project products could have been undertaken. The PMU communicated well with the UNDP Country Office and with the NGOs involved in the pilot project work.

Adaptive management was frequently employed by the Executing Agency to strive to achieve project deliverables. However, significant delays were experienced, particularly during the first two to three years of the project, owing primarily to insufficient high-level support for contracting consultants. Procurement issues also caused delays due to difficulties finding the required expertise and the onerous administrative requirements associated with both UNDP and government procedures. As a result, the project needed to be extended by one year to ensure that the main deliverables would be achieved.

The project was generally cost-effective and financial management was adequate, with no major findings noted in the financial audits. This was a National Implementation Modality project with UNDP issuing direct payments to all providers. Budgetary execution was relatively low in some years but increased significantly over time such that 95% of the total GEF funds were spent by project closure. Co-financing significantly exceeded expectations with a total amount of USD 13,484,532 secured, primarily from government, KfW, and TNC.

The UNDP Dominican Republic Country Office (CO) dedicated substantial time to providing technical and financial oversight to the project to ensure achievement of project goals. Support was provided in procurement, including revision of a large number of ToRs, publishing consultancies, and participating in selection panels; Monitoring and Evaluation activities, including revision of PIRs and periodic field visits, among others; facilitating coordination with other projects through regular meetings of UNDP/GEF projects; fostering high-level discussions and advocacy; and promoting project results and visibility. To address the delays associated with limited national capacity, UNDP strived to speed things up, such as by convening applicants before bid deadlines to clarify outstanding issues. While the UNDP CO was generally responsive to the needs of the Executing Agency, there were some delays for a four-month period when the CO was going through internal audit procedures. In addition, in a few instances, the CO could have convened high-level meetings sooner to address project bottlenecks and increase the impact of the project's strategic deliverables.

Project Results

The project played an important role in increasing and diversifying PA financing. A National Fund for Environment and Natural Resources (Fondo Marena) was operationalized, and a National Protected Areas Trust Fund was established within its structure. The latter has a significant capital endowment and is starting to generate interest to be invested in the NPAS. The remaining committed capital will be secured once a 'vertical agreement' is signed between Fondo Marena and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, which will increase the potential interest earnings as long as the government provides the required matching funds. The project goal of increasing the revenues generated by the NPAS was surpassed with a 75% increase in the funds collected between 2010 and 2014. The project can be commended for the role it played in this achievement, primarily through promoting improved controls on visitors, a review of ecotourism concession fees and increased tariffs in 14 protected areas. However, not all the revenues generated have been reinvested in the system because the government has put in place a new system whereby all state revenue first enters a national account before being redistributed to different Ministries. The project has worked to strengthen budgetary planning and execution within the Vice Ministry to maximize the amount of resources coming back to the NPAS, but the goal of increased budgetary allocation to NPAS compared to baseline amounts was not achieved. Several strategic documents were produced, including the country's first economic valuation of the ecosystem services provided by the protected areas system. If disseminated

in a high-level advocacy campaign, the results of this study could be used to lobby for increased budgetary allocations. A National Strategy for Payments for Environmental Services (PES) was also developed, which has not yet been implemented, as well as a manual to organize the system of allocating ecotourism concessions. This manual is already guiding operational procedures and leading to increased revenue for government and reduced environmental impact.

In order to improve PA management effectiveness, 18 five-year management plans for protected areas were developed in a participatory fashion. These were generally considered to be comprehensive but the majority still require final technical validation to pave the way for their formal approval. In addition, for the first time, protected area business plans were developed to increase benefits for local communities and reduce the pressures on PAs. These seven plans were developed late in the project and have not yet been implemented. To complement these planning instruments, key infrastructure investments were made and improved signage was installed in prioritized protected areas to strengthen control and surveillance and to promote increased visitation. Capacity building was also carried out to enhance PA management effectiveness on a variety of topics such as PA management, species and ecosystem monitoring, financial management, and application of the existing legal framework. A proposal was developed to support the restructuring of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity in order to improve the quality and efficiency of its technical and administrative work. This institutional strengthening still requires substantial follow-up to improve the procedures and structures in place. Other deliverables to mention include the revision of Sectorial Law 64-00 on protected areas and the development of a Species and Ecosystem Monitoring Strategy and biodiversity database.

The project made important strides in promoting alternative PA management models. A Regulation on the Co-Management of Protected Areas was developed through the project and has been formally approved, and during the time period of the project, 16 co-management agreements were developed or updated. The Co-Management Board which had been inactive was revitalized with an inaugural meeting held in 2013. In addition, a regulation on the declaration of private protected areas was developed and has been approved. Progress was also made in clarifying legal land ownership status in different protected areas and defining the boundaries of the PAs, but the boundaries could not be registered in the National Catastral Survey Registry because state compensation to individuals with rights to the land is outstanding. Several innovative financing mechanisms were tested through the project. In the protected areas Loma Quita Espuela/ Loma Guaconejo/ El Zorzal private reserve, a carbon offset program was successfully established, with agricultural producers receiving a premium for planting native trees in buffer zones. In Francisco Camaaño de Deno protected area (Los Quemados), different possible financial mechanisms were identified to compensate landowners for the declaration of this protected area, although none have been implemented yet. In the Saltos de Damajagua pilot project, the project supported the renewal of the co-management agreement with a focus on the sustainability of activities in the area, as well as infrastructure investments and improved signage.

It is difficult to gauge the project's final direct impact on environmental status improvement and stress reduction. Only data from 2012 are available at this point, which point to positive benefits in that there was no loss of wet and moist broad-leaf forested ecosystems. Data on species in PAs is only now being entered into a database so project impact cannot be discerned. The pilot projects had positive local-level impacts through the creation of a private reserve linking two existing scientific reserves and thus enhancing biological connectivity. In the buffer zones of this reserve and two neighbouring protected areas, native tree planting is being promoted through a carbon offset program. The results of the application of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) for the 19 priority PAs show a small increase in management effectiveness in these areas, which is an indication of improvements in the capacity to deal with stresses on ecological systems. It is also important to mention that the project has made important advances to set in motion processes to ensure positive ecological impact through actions

such as institutional capacity building, increasing the resources available for the NPAS, strengthening the governance framework and piloting innovative financial mechanisms.

Sustainability

The project has worked hard to put in place elements to ensure the sustainability of impacts. The governance framework has been significantly strengthened through the approval of regulations on co-management and establishment of private reserves to institutional capacity. In terms of financial sustainability, a National Protected Areas Trust Fund was created which is already generating funds to be reinvested in the system and the funds generated by the NPAS have increased substantially. Institutional capacity building at the central level and at the level of individual protected areas has taken place and an institutional restructuring process is underway. Furthermore, several structures set up with the project have now been incorporated by the Ministry of Environment, such as a Property Jurisdiction Office, and a PA maintenance unit. However, there are still some issues that need to be dealt with to ensure full sustainability of project results. Increased revenue generation from the NPAS has not yet translated into greater budgetary allocations. Adequate budgets for the NPAS are critical to increase the management effectiveness of PAs and will depend in part on convincing key institutions and decision-makers on the vital contribution of the NPAS to the country's economy and to the well-being of its inhabitants and generating the necessary political will. The remaining committed capital from KfW and TNC for the National Protected Areas Trust Fund will depend on signature of the vertical agreement between Fondo Marena and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, and the release of the interest earnings from the National Protected Areas Trust Fund will require government matching funds. Some key project deliverables were developed late in the project and will require time to be institutionalized and implemented (such as the PA business plans and the institutional restructuring). Finally, some strategic outputs still require formal approval, such as many of the PA management plans. The level of social support to maintain project results over time will depend on the benefits received by communities from co-management arrangements, private reserves and innovative financial mechanisms and the extent to which government addresses difficult issues such as compensation. Overall, project sustainability is considered moderately likely.

Best Practices

- *Designation of a member of the Project Management Unit to take responsibility for each Project Outcome*
- *Development of protected areas management plans in a participatory fashion*
- *Integration of externally financed project into the work of the government Executing Agency*
- *Establishment of technical committee for the implementation of pilot project in El Zorzal private reserve*
- *Production of a detailed final project report to summarize achievements, impacts and lessons learned.*

Lessons Learned

- *Project design needs to be realistic in terms of target METT scores*

- *A guideline on the scoring of PAs using the METT tool can help ensure consistency in its application*
- *Sufficient time and resources should be set aside during project execution to pilot implementation of PA business plans*

Recommendations related to project design

- *Establish realistic targets regarding project impact on PA management effectiveness*
Since changing PA management effectiveness scores takes time and resources, biodiversity projects focused on protected areas should develop realistic targets in terms of METT scores.

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 rather than part-way through the project are recommended to enable more strategic guidance to be provided and to address bottlenecks in a timely fashion. In addition broader membership including key institutions such as the Ministry of Economy, Development and Planning could help to increase the impact of strategic deliverables
- *Strengthen knowledge management and internal communication plan*
Intrainstitutional communication and knowledge management with all relevant directorates and departments of the executing agency 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.
- *Dedicate more time to disseminating project outputs*
It is important to ensure that key project outputs are disseminated during the time period of the project to maximize their utility.

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*
Once the vertical agreement is secured, the remaining funds from TNC and KfW can be transferred to the Dominican Republic and interest earnings from the National Protected Areas Trust Fund can be maximized.
- *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 for government to make the necessary contributions to Fondo Marena (and thus to the National Protected Areas Trust Fund).
- *Strengthen the functioning of the Fondo Marena Board of Directors so that it can effectively carry out its duties*

Weaknesses in terms of the current functioning of the Board of Fondo Marena should be addressed to ensure that this governance structure is working effectively to support the resolution of any issues that may arise with regard to the National Protected Areas Trust Fund.

➤ *Widely disseminate the protected areas business plans*

The seven protected area business plans that were developed in 2014 and 2015 should be disseminated to all relevant stakeholders, such as the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, provincial directorates of the Ministry of Environment, local level groups and organizations, and to the Co-Management Board.

➤ *Promote partnerships for the implementation of business plans and increase promotion of the ecotourism potential of the National Protected Areas System*

Strategic partnerships should be explored with local associations, boards of concession owners, and external donors, among others, in order to secure funds for the initial investments required to kick-start implementation of the PA business plans. In addition, the logos developed for four of the business plans should be utilized in marketing the respective protected areas.

➤ *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*

To increase the impact of the study, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources should carry out a high-level advocacy campaign with key institutions such as Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development and the Ministry of Finance to promote increased budget allocations.

➤ *Ministry of Environment to carry out restructuring process to maximize effectiveness, building on steps taken during the project*

The Directorate of Planning is advised to go forward as planned with the development of a procedures manual and an improvement plan to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity and of the Ministry as a whole.

➤ *Ministry of Environment to legally approve all PA management plans*

It is recommended that the technical revisions for 14 of the 18 PA management plans be finalized and that they be formally approved so that they can serve as an up-to-date management guide for PA administrators.

➤ *Promote establishment of the Management Plan Monitoring Committees proposed in the PA management plans*

Such intersectoral local-level Committees could provide support to Protected Areas administrations in monitoring the implementation of the actions proposed in the management plans.

➤ *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*

In order to ensure that the participatory interdisciplinary methodology used during the project continues to be adopted, it would be useful to update the Vice Ministry's formal written guide in this respect.

➤ *Continue to promote protected areas co-management*

The co-management Unit within the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity is advised to continue to work with interested organizations to forge partnerships for the promotion of additional co-

management arrangements as they represent an important mechanism to support the effective management of PAs.

➤ *Ensure continuity in meetings of the Co-Management Board*

To promote continued exchange of information, experiences and learning among the country's co-managing organizations, it is recommended that Ministry of Environment budget for and organize regular meetings of the Co-Management Board now that the project has concluded.

➤ *Define possible financial incentives for the establishment of private reserves in greater detail*

The newly approved regulation for the establishment of private reserves makes mention of the provision of economic incentives to land owners, however, tangible financial benefits will need to be identified to motivate landowners to take the step of declaring private reserves.

➤ *Share the pilot project experiences and lessons learned on innovative financial mechanisms to promote further replication*

In order to promote learning and replication, widespread dissemination of these experiences should be carried out, including through the preparation of succinct written material that can be shared throughout the NPAS.

➤ *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*

Given that the lack of compensation for local inhabitants affected by PA designation contributes to conflict within communities and reduces support for conservation, feasible compensation mechanisms such as the ones identified for Los Quemados should be implemented.

Table 2: Ratings of Project Performance

Criteria:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	Rating	2. IA& EA Execution	Rating
M&E Design at Entry	Satisfactory	Quality of UNDP Implementation	Satisfactory
M&E Plan Implementation	Satisfactory	Quality of Execution- Executing Agency	Satisfactory
Overall quality of M&E	Satisfactory	Overall quality of Implementation/ Execution	Satisfactory
3. Assessment of Outcomes	Rating	4. Sustainability	Rating
Relevance	Relevant	Financial resources:	Moderately Likely
Effectiveness	Satisfactory	Socio-political:	Moderately Likely
Efficiency	Satisfactory	Institutional framework and governance:	Likely
Overall Project Outcome/Results rating	Satisfactory	Environmental:	Likely
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	Moderately Likely
Impact	Rating	* End-of-project data from 2014 or 2015 were not available for the ecosystem-level indicators, which is one of the reasons why a rating of significant could not be given (only data from 2012 were available).	
Environmental Status Improvement	Minimal*		
Environmental Stress Reduction	Minimal*		
Progress toward stress/ status change	Significant		

Ratings for Effectiveness, Outcomes, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution are on a *six-point scale of Highly Unsatisfactory to Highly Satisfactory*. Ratings of sustainability are on a four-point scale from Highly Unlikely to Likely. Ratings of relevance are on a two-point scale (Relevant or Not relevant). Ratings of impact are on a three-point scale (Negligible, Minimal and Significant).

3 Introduction

3.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

1. This Final Evaluation (FE) is a compulsory requirement of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and was instigated by the UNDP Dominican Republic Country Office in its role as Implementing Agency (IA) for this project. The evaluation adheres to the guidance, rules and procedures for such evaluations as defined by UNDP and GEF.

2. UNDP GEF-funded project evaluations have the following objectives (UNDP 2012):

- To promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose the extent of project accomplishments;
- To synthesize lessons that can help to improve the selection, design and implementation of future GEF financed UNDP activities;
- To provide feedback on issues that are recurrent across the UNDP portfolio and need attention, and on improvements regarding previously identified issues;
- To contribute to the overall assessment of results in achieving GEF strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefits;
- To gauge the extent of project convergence with other UN and UNDP priorities, including harmonization with other UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) outcomes and outputs.

3.2 Key Issues Addressed

3. As per UNDP/GEF guidelines, this Final Evaluation assessed the following five criteria:

- Relevance, defined as the extent to which the activities are suited to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, taking into consideration changes over time.
- Effectiveness, that is, the extent to which the results have been achieved or the likelihood of their achievement.
- Efficiency: the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible, also called cost-effectiveness or efficacy.
- Sustainability: the likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. Projects need to be financially, socially and environmentally sustainable.
- Impact: verifiable improvements in ecological status, verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, or indications that progress is being made towards achievement of stress reduction and/or ecological improvement (through process indicators).

4. The report covers the following main aspects: introduction to the evaluation and methodology; project description; analysis of project design, monitoring and evaluation, execution and implementation; level of achievement of project results; likely sustainability of project outcomes; conclusions, best practices, lessons learned, and recommendations to guide future projects. As per the Terms of Reference (TORs), various elements were rated on a scale that ranges from Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory.

3.3 Methodology of the Evaluation

5. The Final Evaluation involved preparatory work, a seven day in-country mission, and drafting of the evaluation report. Details are provided in the following paragraphs:

A) Evaluation Preparation:

6. The preparatory phase included a review of all relevant project documentation, such as the Project Document, annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), Annual Operational Plans (AOPs), Combined Delivery Reports (CDRs), Quarterly Operational Reports (QORs), the inception report, Mid-term Review report, final project report, and a wide variety of project products, such as PA management plans and business plans, the PES Strategy and the economic valuation study, as well as relevant regulations. The documents reviewed are listed in Annex 3.

7. The Project Evaluator participated in a teleconference with the project's Regional Technical Adviser (Lyes Ferroukhi) from the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean (RSC LAC) to review expectations for the evaluation and issues to assess in detail. In addition, the evaluator held a teleconference with the Environment and Energy Program Official of the UNDP Dominican Republic Country Office as she could not be present during the evaluation mission.

8. An Inception Report was prepared with a mission programme and further details of the methodology for the evaluation.

B) Evaluation Mission:

9. The evaluator met with the Environment and Energy Unit of UNDP Dominican Republic to discuss UNDP's perceptions of the project's achievements, constraints and lessons learned and to review the mission programme. Additional meetings took place in Santo Domingo with the Project Management Unit, managers of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, the Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry, Directorate of Planning, Ecotourism Department, project consultants, and the staff member in charge of PES.

10. In addition to the meetings in Santo Domingo, field visits were carried out to Reserva El Zorzal, as well as to Cabo Samana with administrators of two PAs in each of the two sites. On the last day of the mission, the Project Evaluator gave a presentation of the initial findings to the UNDP CO and to personnel of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, including the Deputy Minister, Director of Biodiversity and the staff member responsible for the management of protected areas.

11. The mission itinerary is detailed in Annex 4.

C) Report preparation:

12. Additional interviews that could not be scheduled during the mission were held with the CEO of the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund and with the Director of Planning, Cooperation and Development of Fondo Marena. In the process of preparing the final report, further information was requested of the Project Management Unit (PMU) to obtain additional documents and to seek clarification on different issues and phone calls were held with the project coordinator. The project material was reviewed with a

focused attention on project outcomes and outputs as well as sustainability. A detailed analysis of the findings of the mission and of the project information was undertaken and a draft report prepared in English, as per the guidelines and Terms of Reference (please see Annex 5 of this report). The report was subsequently translated into Spanish. The report was then reviewed by the Executing Agency (EA) and the Implementing Agency (IA) and a final report was prepared incorporating the feedback.

3.4 Structure of the Evaluation

13. The structure of the Final Evaluation adhered to the Terms of Reference prepared by UNDP Dominican Republic and approved by the UNDP-GEF Regional Service Centre (RSC) (please see Annex 5). UNDP Guidelines for Evaluators as well as GEF evaluation policies were followed, as well as the specific expectations of the Implementing Agency (IA), Executing Agency (EA), and UNDP RSC.

4 Project Description and Development Context

4.1 Project Start, Expected Duration and Funding

14. The Project Document was signed in May 2010. The national coordinator was hired in October 2010, the first disbursement was made shortly thereafter in November 2010, and the inception workshop took place from Nov.29 -1 December, 2010. Due to delays in project implementation, the Mid-Term Review (MTR) was carried out in 2013 rather than the planned date in 2012. Among other issues, the MTR recommended an extension of the planned closure date from May 2014 to May 2015, which was approved. The total resources committed by GEF for this project were USD 3,200,000 and the total expected co-financing amount was USD 8,839,000.

4.2 Problems that the Project Seeks to Address

15. As described in the ProDoc, the following direct and indirect threats could impact the long-term viability of the National Protected Areas System (NPAS):

- *Conversion and/or destruction of habitats for biodiversity* due to: (i) the growing incursion of agriculture and livestock grazing into PAs, (ii) the expansion of tourism in and around PAs; and (iii) mining.
- *Degradation of habitats and ecosystem functions* due to: (i) forest fires; and (ii) terrestrial and aquatic pollution.
- *Overexploitation of native flora and fauna* due to: (i) overfishing and illegal hunting; and (ii) illegal collection of flora and fauna.
- *Introduction of alien/invasive species*, such as the presence of feral animals (dogs, cats, pigs, goats, *Herpestes aeropuntatus*).
- *Climate instability*: Climate change and climatic variability is placing increasing pressure on the resiliency and sustainability of the Dominican Republic's biodiversity and the overall balance of its ecosystems.

16. These threats can be attributed to several direct causes, such as the important role of natural resource exploitation in the country's economy and unclear land tenure arrangements. Macro-economic underlying issues include population growth, rural poverty, land appreciation, strong economic returns for productive activities, such as livestock rearing, and national policies that promote tourism and mining. Three main financial and operational barriers are negatively affecting the management effectiveness of PAs as described in the ProDoc:

- i. The inability of the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARENA) (now the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources) to generate and channel adequate financial flows in support of PA management;
- ii. PA managers do not use the budget available to them in a cost-effective manner;
- iii. The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and other agencies within the NPAS fail to take advantage of the opportunities that exist for local communities and the private sector to participate in the management of the NPAS and its constituent PAs.

4.3 Immediate and Development Objectives of the Project

17. The project goal is to safeguard the globally significant biodiversity of the Dominican Republic. The project objective is to consolidate the financial sustainability of the National Protected Areas System (NPAS). The three main project Outcomes are:

- (i) PA financing increased and diversified;
- (ii) Improved PA management effectiveness and efficiency in 18 priority PAs with highest revenue generation potential; and
- (iii) Co-management arrangement to underwrite PA costs.

4.4 Expected Results

18. The project Objective and three Outcomes are presented in the Strategic Results Framework, together with indicators, baselines and targets (see Annex 1). The project aims to strengthen the financial and operational management of the NPAS and thereby protected globally significant biodiversity, including endemic species and globally important migratory species, among others. One of the project targets is no net loss of terrestrial cover in ecosystems in the project area, particularly in the grasslands and broadleaf forest (cloud, lower montane, and upper montane) in the 18 PAs that were identified as priorities for the project.

4.5 Main Stakeholders

19. The following Table list the key stakeholders involved in this project:

Table 3: Main Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Description
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (Ministry of Environment) (formerly SEMARENA)	By legal mandate (Law 64-00), this institution is responsible for safeguarding the environment and natural resources at the national level.
Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development	Entity responsible for economic planning and follow up, authorized budgetary appropriation authority vis a vis the Central Government.
The Nature Conservancy	International NGO with an office in the Dominican Republic that has supported conservation efforts in close collaboration with Ministry of Environment and other national entities.
UNDP Dominican Republic	United Nations agency that, among other things, acts as the GEF Implementing Agency.
PSA Office, Ministry of Environment	Ministry of Environment office charged with promoting, developing and regulating Payment for Environmental Services in the DR.
Fondo MARENA	National fund established by Law 64-00 to provide financial support for environmental conservation.
Protected Areas Fund	Special Ministry of Environment fund created through Decree 222-06 to provide financial support for the country's PAs.
National Congress	Double body of representatives charged with reading, reviewing, adjusting and enacting national laws.
Central, Provincial and Local PA staff	All technical, administrative and operative Ministry of Environment staff whose duties are directly related to PAs.
Civil Society Organizations (NGOs)	Legally recognized non-governmental entities carrying out activities related to the conservation of the environment and natural resources, such as the Grupo Jaragua.
Community Organizations	Different social and community development entities interested in the advantages and/or disadvantages of establishing and managing PAs.
Communities and Local Producers.	Local communities and agricultural and livestock producers that are affected positively or negatively by the establishment and management of PAs.
Co-managers of PAs	Individual organizations that have entered into or will enter into formal PA co-management agreements, such as Sociedad para el Desarrollo Integral del Nordeste (SODIN) and Fundación Loma Quita Espuela (FLQE).
Stakeholders involved in the pilot demonstration projects	For Pilot Demonstration - Loma Guaconejo – Loma Quita Espuela Scientific Reserves:, these include, for example, SODIN, FLQE, the Provincial Office of the Environment and Natural Resources for Nagua and San Francisco de Macorís, local governments, land owners, Office for Environmental Service Payments, Ministry of Environment, the National Potable Water Institute (INAPA), the business sector and local irrigation associations. Stakeholders involved in the Pilot Demonstration – Salto de Damajagua Natural Monument: Ministry of Environment, PA Administrator, Association of Ecotourism Guides of Río Damajagua, Ministry of Tourism, local government, and landowners. For the Pilot Demonstration – Los Quemados Wildlife Refuge: In addition to ASOCLEM other actors to be involved include five communities: Las Charcas, Cañada Cimarrona, La China, Arroyo Colorado and el Memiso.
Shared PA Management Unit	Unit within Ministry of Environment directly responsible for the promotion, establishment, follow up and evaluation of PA Co-management Agreements.

Shared PA Management Board	Cooperation mechanism between Ministry of Environment and other entities that includes all organizations with formal PA co-management functions.
Parties interested in PA co-management and concessions	Organizations and micro enterprises interested in entering into shared management agreements and/or in implementing activities through already established PA concessions.
Landowners and others with land usage rights within PA boundaries.	Large number of individuals with land titles or land usage rights that are affected by the establishment and management of PAs.
Business sector	Companies or individuals interested in different forms of investment to promote conservation of natural resources and BD, especially within or in proximity to PAs.

Information taken from Project Document.

5 Findings

5.1 Project Design/ Formulation

(Satisfactory)

20. The project objectives and outcomes were clearly explained in the ProDoc and comprehensively addressed the main barriers to financial sustainability. Key elements to increase the financial sustainability of the NPAS were included in the project strategy, such as the establishment of a National Protected Areas Trust Fund, increased earnings and reinvestment in the system, and the development of new and innovative financial mechanisms, to name a few. These elements were identified during the project preparatory phase and described in detail in the Financial Sustainability Plan for the National Protected Areas System, which was developed with funding from TNC and USAID. The ProDoc benefitted from extensive baseline data and information. Furthermore, the indicators selected for inclusion in the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) were generally 'SMART'¹. However, based on an analysis by the evaluator and interviews with stakeholders, the design was considered overambitious, with a large number of quantitative indicators related to METT scores and to the financial sustainability scorecard. For example, at the Objective level, the SRF included a target of increased management effectiveness in all protected areas (PAs) with on-site staff (34 at the time) and other targets were included for 18 prioritized areas. It would have been preferable to aim to influence a more manageable number of protected areas. In general, the targets were considered to be difficult to achieve in the planned project implementation period of four years, especially given capacity and budget limitations within the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.

21. The ProDoc included relevant risks, such as the possible failure of decision-makers to reflect the contribution of PAs to national development in budget allocations; limited interest of the private sector in investing in protected areas; changes in political administration and the potential risk of inflation; sudden changes in institutional structures and responsibilities for PAs (such as GoDR change or staff changes) hampering the project's ability to achieve improved conservation management; reductions in interest rates; and finally climate change undermining the conservation of biodiversity within the Dominican Republic's PAs. Risk mitigation measures were identified for all identified risks but were overly reliant on the establishment and full functioning of the National Protected Areas Trust Fund. At the same time, the risk that this fund would not become fully operational during the project was not mentioned. Nor were the risks of delays due to lengthy procurement procedures or limited national capacity highlighted.

¹ Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bond.

22. Project management arrangements, roles and responsibilities and partnership arrangements were clearly defined in the ProDoc. The Project Management Unit was to include a Project Coordinator, Project Administrator, Administrative Assistant and part-time Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. The ProDoc also indicated that a Project Steering Committee and Technical Supervision Committee would be established to support project execution as well as inter- and intrainstitutional coordination. Lessons learned from other projects were taken into consideration. For example the modality of UNDP making direct payments was chosen based on issues that arose in a previous project that involved cash transfers to government.

5.2 Project Implementation- Monitoring and Evaluation (Design at entry and Implementation)

Satisfactory

- **Monitoring and Evaluation Design at entry**

Satisfactory

23. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan proposed in the ProDoc included all key M&E activities, such as preparation of an inception report, project implementation reviews (PIRs), quarterly operational reports, a mid-term review and final evaluation, project terminal report, annual financial audits, steering committee meetings, visits to field sites, possible technical reports and project publications, and a lessons learned final project event. The M&E Plan cites the METT and the Biodiversity Tracking Tool as instruments to monitor project impact on PA management effectiveness and on biodiversity, while the Financial Sustainability scorecard was not mentioned (although the SRF itself did indicate that it was to be applied). A specific budget to implement the Plan was included in the amount of US\$ 191,400, which is considered sufficient to cover the activities outlined. Please see the Project Design section for more details on the Strategic Results Framework.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation Implementation**

Satisfactory

24. Monitoring and Evaluation activities were carried out in a satisfactory manner, particularly since the restructuring of the Project Management Unit in 2012, which led to the designation of a full-time Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist specifically charged with M&E activities and reporting. Interviewees indicated that sufficient funding was allocated to M&E. An inception workshop was carried out Nov.29 -1 December, 2010 with the participation of key stakeholders, such as various directorates of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, PA administrators, UNDP CO, and NGOs. During this workshop, working groups were formed for each project Outcome and the 2011 POA was defined in greater detail. The Mid-Term review was realized in April- May 2013 and led to specific recommendations to modify some of the project indicators to make them more realistic, to maximize project delivery during the time remaining, and to extend the project by one year to ensure completion of key deliverables. The Final Evaluation was carried out from September to October 2015, which is within the expected time frame. There was close supervision of the work being carried out in the field, including for the three pilot projects under Outcome 3, with regular field visits to verify achievements. In addition, the project coordinator guiding Outcome 1 and technical specialist responsible for Outcome 2 monitored field level activities and procurement related to their respective Outcomes.

25. Reports, including quarterly progress reports, Annual Project Reports and PIRs were considered to have been completed and handed in on time, and were of good quality. Improvements were noted over time as the PMU became more accustomed to the formats in use. In addition to these standard reports, the management effectiveness tracking tool (METT) was completed in 2009, 2012 and 2015 and the

Financial Sustainability Scorecard was completed in 2010, 2012 and 2014. The draft Annual Operational Plans (AOPs) were reviewed in a participatory manner each year through workshops held in November with all key stakeholders to review progress and define specific activities and budget figures in greater detail; the AOPs were then approved at the level of the Vice Ministry (note that it was not the Project Steering Committee that approved them). In terms of self-reporting on the project, as shown in the table at the end of this section, the ratings provided by the National Project Coordinator tended to be higher than those of the UNDP CO and UNDP Regional Service Centre. Nevertheless, relevant project challenges were highlighted by the coordinator.

26. The extent and timeliness of follow-up actions to the feedback received varied somewhat. For example, in terms of the annual PIRs, action was taken based on the strong recommendation in the 2012 PIR to establish a Project Steering Committee and to prioritize the development of business plans. On the other hand, the recommendation from the Regional Technical Advisor to strengthen partnerships with key actors such as the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development and to increase understanding of the role of the NPAS in reducing the country's vulnerability to climate change would have benefited from greater prioritization.

27. Many of the recommendations made in the Mid-Term Review were implemented in the last 2.5 years of the project. However, some were not, such as a high-level advocacy campaign to disseminate the results of the economic valuation study, workshops to speed up institutional validation of products (such as management plans), trimestral meetings of the PSC (annual meetings were held instead) and tracking of participation in capacity building workshops by gender.

28. The Strategic Results Framework included a large number of quantitative targets for various indicators and in hindsight was considered very ambitious. Given this reality as well as changes to the national context, modified targets were proposed for various indicators at the time of the Mid-Term Review and were approved.

29. Unfortunately a Project Steering Committee (PSC) did not meet until partway into the third year of project execution in April 2013, due to insufficient political support in the first years of the project for such a figure. A PSC could have been instrumental in helping to address bottlenecks at the beginning of the project. The PSC was a tripartite body consisting of the Ministry of Environment, the GEF Focal Point, and UNDP CO and has met annually since 2013. In 2013 and 2015, the meetings included high-level representation from the Minister of Environment and Resident Representative of UNDP CO, while the 2014 meeting included representatives at the level of the Vice Minister and Deputy Resident Representative. In addition to representatives of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, the Directorate of Planning was also a member of the PSC. The ProDoc proposed one additional member of the PSC, namely Coastal and Marine Resources, which did not end up participating on the PSC. The 2015 PSC meeting actually tackled a number of different projects and issues. It would have been useful to have dedicated more time to discussing the project in more detail.

30. The technical groups envisioned in the project design did not formally materialize. While intrainstitutional technical cooperation still occurred informally, such technical groups might have provided a useful forum for more detailed and regular discussions than what could be hoped for in the context of steering committee meetings. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the project coordinator participated in weekly managerial meetings of the Vice Ministry.

31. The following table provides a comparison of the ratings included in the latest 2015 PIR and those of the Final Evaluation.

2015 PIR:

	<i>Rating of Progress toward meeting development objective</i>	<i>Rating of implementation progress</i>
National Project Manager	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory
UNDP Country Office	Moderately Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory
UNDP Regional Technical Adviser	Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory

Final Evaluation Ratings:

Overall quality of Monitoring and Evaluation	Satisfactory
Overall quality of project Implementation/ Execution	Satisfactory
Overall quality of project outcomes	Satisfactory

5.3 Implementing and Executing Agency –Implementation, execution, coordination and operational issues

(Satisfactory)

Executing Agency

(Satisfactory)

32. The Project Management Unit (PMU) carried out its functions diligently and effectively. The structure that was modified in 2012 included an overall project coordinator who was also specifically in charge of Outcome 1, technical specialists responsible for Outcomes 2 and 3, and a monitoring and evaluation specialist whose role was cross-cutting. As such, the respective responsibilities were clearly differentiated and the PMU structure was found to work well, with motivated personnel who gained substantial experience through the project. Interviewees indicated that the PMU consistently maintained a focus on the expected results of the project.

33. The PMU maintained regular communication and worked closely with technical staff and with the managerial level of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity. According to interviews, the project was considered to be an integral part of the work of the Vice Ministry. This level of integration increased over time and helped to increase government ownership over the project's deliverables (*see country ownership section for more details*). Nevertheless in some cases, further institutionalization of project products could have been undertaken to ensure that the necessary actions to build on strategic documents were taken. Examples include the economic valuation of ecosystem services produced by the NPAS, and the Payment for Environmental Services strategy, whose strategic value are undeniable. It should also be noted that there was some turnover in staff and lack of continuity within the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, including three different Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and Protected Areas Directors, respectively, during the project implementation period. This inevitably affected the pace of progress toward project deliverables.

34. In terms of the timeliness of project actions, the PMU strived to ensure that annual deliverables were achieved. However, significant delays were experienced, particularly during the first two to three years of the project owing primarily to insufficient high-level support for contracting consultants, carrying out studies and formulating policy. This issue, combined with difficulties throughout the project in

finding the required expertise to carry out some of the consultancies and long procurement processes, led to delays in project execution and to the need to extend the project by one year to complete outstanding activities. It also meant that many deliverables needed to be achieved in a shorter period of time than what was originally envisioned.

35. Procurement processes were handled both by the UNDP Country Office and by the government, depending on the particular service or good that was needed. With both modalities, attempts were made to make procurement as efficient as possible, but delays were frequent due to the bureaucratic requirements involved and due to limited national capacity for many of the consultancies, resulting in the need to republish tenders. That being said, the processes were considered to have become more quick over time and the consultants hired produced high-quality products.

36. As mentioned in the M&E section, progress reports and PIRs are considered to have been submitted in a timely manner and adhered to content requirements. Planning was carried out appropriately using a participatory approach and adaptive management was frequently employed (*see corresponding section of report for more details*).

37. Intra-institutional coordination within the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources was carried out to help meet the project objectives, as the PMU worked with the Legal Directorate, the Ecotourism Department and the staff member in charge of the Payment for Environmental Services Program, to name a few. The project coordinator participated in weekly meetings with the Director of Biodiversity, Director of Protected Areas and Deputy Minister of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, as well as weekly meetings with the Director of Protected Areas and staff members involved in ecotourism and protected areas management. This enabled the project to be inserted into the Vice Ministry's agenda and support to be provided for the planning of project activities. Intrainstitutional coordination and dissemination of project outputs could have been even greater with technical staff of different departments within the Ministry and with staff members involved in planning at the Ministerial level.

38. The Project Management Unit maintained regular communication with the UNDP Country Office. Communication with NGOs was also considered to have been fluid, such as with the organizations that managed the pilot projects (such as the Asociación Clemente Melo and the Consorcio Ambiental Dominicano). Reports were submitted by these organizations to the PMU on pilot project progress, observations made where applicable, and a two-way dialogue was maintained. The project facilitated greater communication and responsiveness to the needs of particular protected areas, such as Loma Quita Espuela Scientific Reserve and the Estero Hondo Marine Mammal Sanctuary. This was substantiated by the interviews carried out during the Final Evaluation. Interviewees also indicated that communication with other key stakeholders such as with the managers of the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund and the Fondo Marena was regular and transparent.

39. The one-year project extension was extremely useful in providing the PMU with the time to complete several outstanding deliverables, such as some of the PA management and business plans, and to advance negotiations related to the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. In addition, it enabled the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources to institutionalize some structures that had been introduced by the project, such as a Property Jurisdiction Office, as well as a PA Maintenance/Signage Unit. Furthermore, according to the stakeholders interviewed, certain tasks that were carried out through the project have now been accepted as standard institutional practice, such as the completion of the METT tool every two years.

- **Finance**

40. All payments were made directly by the UNDP Country Office, regardless of whether the procurement processes were managed by UNDP or by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. Delivery rates varied with lows of 57-58% for two of the years of the project and highs of 75% in 2015, but by the final project evaluation 95% of total project funds were spent (please see Table 4). The most significant issue affecting delivery was the difficulty procuring services for the different consultancies due to insufficient national capacity. This led to substantial delays in carrying out various activities. It also meant that the PMU had to find different ways to publish tenders and creative approaches to securing needed services. One example is the difficulty experienced in finding consultants to develop the protected areas business plans, which led to the need to publish this tender several times. In the end, the decision was made to implement a course on the development of business plans during which time three plans were developed.

41. Financial audits of the project were carried out in 2012, 2013 and 2014 (when budgetary execution exceeded USD 300,000), with no significant findings identified. The Combined Delivery Reports (CDRs) were considered to reflect the expenses incurred accurately and the internal control systems were found to be adequate. In addition, the statement of supplies and equipment accurately represented the inventory balance. There was a small error in the information presented by the auditors in both 2013 and 2014 in terms of the total funding provided by GEF.

- **Co-financing**

42. The original amount of co-financing committed in the CEO Endorsement was USD 8,622,000. By the time of the project evaluation, the total co-financing secured was USD 13,699,532, with the vast majority of this co-financing coming from the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and from the capital contributions of TNC and KfW to the National Protected Areas Trust Fund (in the amount of USD 6,662,177). Please see Table 5 for a breakdown of total project co-financing.

Table 4: Summary of Expenditures by Outcome and Year

Outcome									Total Budget
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015			
Outcome 1:									
Budget in Prodoc	427,800.00	355,320.00	169,000.00	86,200.00	0.00	0.00			1,038,320.00
Amount in AWP	50,000.00	254,200.00	221,900.00	271,900.00	379,558.00	138,010.00			1,315,568.00
Amount disbursed	28,911.77	228,249.75	147,960.20	172,451.52	273,642.66	131,017.57			982,233.47
Delivery Rate	58%	90%	67%	63%	72%	95%			95%
Outcome 2:									
Budget in Prodoc	172,200.00	360,900.00	450,088.00	154,192.00	0.00	0.00			1,137,380.00
Amount in AWP		33,850.00	118,745.00	432,300.00	859,924.00	242,270.00			1,687,089.00
Amount disbursed		31,839.92	113,539.87	189,532.33	568,556.16	170,988.91			1,074,457.19
Delivery Rate	0%	94%	96%	44%	66%	71%			94%
Outcome 3:									
Budget in Prodoc	304,400.00	304,500.00	72,400.00	23,000.00	0.00	0.00			704,300.00
Amount in AWP		67,000.00	288,803.00	416,800.00	122,555.00	42,775.00			937,933.00
Amount disbursed		49,544.80	191,573.78	253,251.32	169,955.50	15,883.79			680,209.19
Delivery Rate	0%	74%	66%	61%	139%	37%			97%
Outcome 4:									
Budget in Prodoc	85,200.00	78,500.00	111,200.00	45,100.00	0.00	0.00			320,000.00
Amount in AWP	0.00	70,000.00	50,350.00	81,800.00	122,300.00	89,298.00			413,748.00
Amount disbursed	0.00	71,441.27	48,644.77	73,666.74	35,083.35	66,214.69			295,050.82
Delivery Rate	0%	102%	97%	90%	29%	74%			92%
Gran Total									
Total Budget in ProDoc	989,600.00	1,099,220.00	802,688.00	308,492.00	0.00	0.00			3,200,000.00
Amount in AWP	50,000.00	425,050.00	679,798.00	1,202,800.00	1,484,337.00	512,353.00			4,354,338.00
Total amount disbursed	28,911.77	381,075.74	501,718.62	688,901.91	1,047,237.67	384,104.96			3,031,950.67
Delivery Rate	57.8%	89.7%	73.8%	57.3%	70.6%	75.0%			95%

Table 5: Summary of Co-Financing

Co-financing (type and source)	UNDP (mill. USD)			Government (mill. USD)			Otras fuentes (mill. USD)			Total (mill. US\$)		
	Amount in ProDoc	Amount committed after ProDOc approval	Funds Spent	Amount in ProDoc	Amount committed after ProDOc approval	Funds Spent	Amount in ProDoc	Amount committed after ProDOc approval	Funds Spent	Amount in ProDoc	Amount committed after ProDOc approval	Funds Spent
Grants	45,000		32,500	300,000	1,187,695	1,503,839	500,000	4,734,910	5,234,910	845,000	5,922,605	6,771,249
Credit												
Equity												
In-kind				483,000		66,106	2,500,000		0	2,983,000		66,106
Non-grant instruments				294,000		200,000	4,500,000	2,162,177	6,662,177	4,794,000		6,862,177
Other types												
Total	45,000		32,500	1,077,000	1,187,695	1,769,945	7,500,000	6,897,087	11,897,087	8,622,000	5,922,605	13,699,532

UNDP Implementation

Satisfactory

43. The UNDP Dominican Republic Country Office (CO) and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources have cooperated together on a number of previous projects. According to interviews carried out during the evaluation, this has translated into a mutual understanding between the two institutions. UNDP took on the role of Implementing Agency (IA) in a committed fashion, dedicating substantial time to providing technical and financial oversight and support to the Executing Agency to ensure achievement of the project goals. The support UNDP provided included:

- Procurement functions, including review of a large number of terms of reference for different consultancies, advertising of tenders, support in selection processes, and direct payments to providers;
- Monitoring and evaluation activities, including review of quarterly progress reports, POAs, PIRs, and some field visits at key moments. In terms of the CO's review and contribution to annual PIRs, their reporting is considered to have been candid and realistic. The UNDP ratings and justification thereof were clear and well explained and shortcomings were mentioned when applicable.
- Coordination with other projects. UNDP organized joint meetings every three months of all UNDP/GEF projects, which sometimes helped coordinators learn from each other's experiences related to procedural issues. Given the diverse nature of the projects, there was less building of synergies on thematic issues.
- High-level discussions and advocacy. This included high-level UNDP involvement on the issue of discussions related to the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. Since the 2013 Mid-Term Review, UNDP has also participated in annual meetings of the tripartite Project Steering Committee that was finally established. In 2014, the UNDP Country Office held monthly meetings with the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas to carry out follow-up. The UNDP Country Office could have further strengthened its role in terms of facilitating and participating in high-level meetings to increase project impact. For example, with regard to the economic valuation study of the NPAS, it might have been beneficial for UNDP to try to organize some high-level meetings with the specific purpose of discussing the results and implications of this study both within the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and with other key institutions, such as the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development.
- Promotion of project results. UNDP made efforts to promote the project's deliverables through actions to increase visibility. For example, the idea of producing a graphic short summary (*infografía*) of the results of the economic valuation study originated from the UNDP CO. UNDP also reviewed project products such as the videos made on the pilot projects.

44. This was a NIM project (National Implementation Modality) with UNDP issuing direct payments to providers. The procurement services were handled either by the UNDP CO Procurement and Service Center or in some cases directly by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. More complex, larger contracts and all consultancies were procured through the UNDP system. Draft Terms of Reference were sometimes prepared by the UNDP CO, which had the benefit of speeding things up, but creates the challenge of needing to ensure that government still feels sufficient ownership. In terms of the application process for consultancies, limited national capacity and the substantial administrative requirements for individuals interested in applying for consultancies led to difficulties in finding suitable experts. To address these issues, UNDP began to convene applicants before the application deadlines to clarify any outstanding issues in an effort to increase the number of proposals from which to select. Some delays in procurement were experienced at times due to limited staffing within the UNDP CO Procurement and Service Centre and the many administrative requirements.

45. While the UNDP CO was generally responsive to the needs of the Executing Agency, there were some delays for a period of approximately four months when the CO was going through two internal audit procedures. This delayed follow-up on project issues, such as the purchase of the radio communication system for the NPAS.

- **Adaptive Management**

46. The Project Management Unit demonstrated adaptive management on various occasions to address bottlenecks and changes in the external context. Examples include the need to explain the project and garner the support of the different Ministers that held office during the project implementation period, and the restructuring of the PMU to speed up project delivery.

47. One of the pilot projects under Outcome 3 which was designed to look at the process of setting up a private reserve needed to be changed because this area was incorporated into the national protected areas system. The Los Quemados pilot project was thus reoriented to identify feasible mechanisms to compensate landowners affected by the declaration of protected areas. In another pilot project, the lack of land title of individual producers was a potential barrier for pursuing the initiative of setting up a system of carbon payments. The solution that was found was to use an existing government program entitled Quisqueya Verde which provides producers with seedlings for reforestation and gives them the rights over the trees planted.

48. Different types of adaptive management measures were employed to deal with issues related to procurement. As previously highlighted, procurement was handled either by the Ministry of Environment or by UNDP depending on issues such as the type of service, the amount of funds involved, and the potential providers. The adoption of this flexible approach proved helpful in expediting procurement. As highlighted in the UNDP implementation section, in order to increase the likelihood of finding appropriate consultants to carry out key consultancies, UNDP began the practice of convening candidates before the application deadlines in order to clarify outstanding issues. Difficulties in procuring the necessary expertise to develop PA business plans (and the desire to save time) led to the decision to implement a training course in which participants were divided into three groups in order to develop business plans during the actual course.

49. Another issue that arose that significantly impacted the project was the change in the national financial system to one in which all revenue goes into a central account and is then redistributed. The project had to work hard to understand the implications of the new system, and identify ways to help the Vice Ministry strengthen its planning and budgetary execution so as to access more funds from this central pot of money.

50. With regard to certain issues, adaptive management measures could have been implemented sooner, for example, in terms of the development of PA business plans. This would have allowed more time for the use of these outputs and for their institutionalization. Had a Project Steering Committee been in place from the outset of the project, this body could have helped guide action.

- **Stakeholders/ Partnership Arrangements**

51. Various fruitful partnerships were developed to support achievement of the project's objectives. Some examples include partnerships with:

- TNC, which supported key consultancies during the PPG stage, such as the Master Plan for the NPAS, the Capacity Strengthening Plan and the valuation of four protected areas. TNC also provided equipment and vehicles;
- Consorcio Ambiental Dominicano, an umbrella association of environmental NGOs, which supported the process of establishing the country's first private reserve called El Zorzal and supervised the pilot project being carried out by Fundación Loma Quita Espuela to put in place a system of carbon payments to producers planting trees;
- Spanish cooperation agency, which funded public use infrastructure investments in Lago Enriquillo National Park;
- A University entitled Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, which entered into a collaboration agreement with the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity to promote tourism in a protected area.

5.4 Project Results/ Effectiveness

Satisfactory

52. The following paragraphs will analyze the main project achievements under the three Outcomes. For a specific description of the extent to which each target from the Strategic Results Framework was reached, please see Table 5.

Outcome 1: PA financing increased and diversified;

53. One of the key elements that was identified to increase the financial sustainability of the protected areas system was the establishment of a National Protected Areas Trust Fund (NPATF) in order to provide a sustainable source of funds. The NPATF for the Dominican Republic was established as an account within the country's National Fund for the Environment and Natural Resources (Fondo MARENA), which was set up through the project and became operational in 2010. A manual of operations was developed for the NPATF to outline procedural issues. An initial capital contribution from KfW and TNC (combined value of USD 6,662,177), GEF funds (250,000) and government funding (200,000) was put into the NPATF. The Dominican Republic is the only one of the eight countries participating in the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) initiative whose Trust Fund is already operational and generating interest earnings. In 2015, the first disbursement from this fund was made to purchase a radio communication system for the NPAS (this expenditure was co-funded by this GEF project).

54. The NPATF has not yet been fully capitalized as additional capital is still expected from KfW and TNC once the vertical agreement between Fondo Marena and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund is signed. The full capitalization of this fund and generation of funding to match the CBF interest earnings are vital elements of financial sustainability. There have been significant delays over the past few years in moving this forward, due to issues that needed to be resolved related to the eligibility of the Fondo Marena to receive funding from the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, particularly in terms of the composition of its Board of Directors and its level of independence of government. This situation arose despite the fact that the financial mechanism had been developed with the input and approval of TNC during the preparatory phase. A consultancy was carried out to analyze key points in terms of the alignment of Fondo Marena with the eligibility requirements of the CBF. CBF has carried out a preliminary review of the results of the consultancy. Fondo Marena has now submitted its official CBF eligibility request in order to receive the funds designated for the country (Dominican Republic is the first country to do so).

55. A meeting was recently held between Fondo Marena, the Board of Directors of CBF and the government to clarify outstanding issues, which paved the way for the negotiations to begin to draft the specific articles of the vertical agreement. Stakeholders have indicated their desire to conclude this

process by the end of 2015, at which point the full funding from CBF could then be provided as an endowment to the fund. Among other topics of discussion, the ongoing negotiations should clarify the role of the Board of Directors of the Fondo Marena in the administration of the NPATF and how the functioning of this Board may be strengthened. It should be noted that over the past two years, the Fondo Marena Board has not been meeting with the periodicity required by law (two times a year) and information exchange with board members has been weak.

56. The total expected endowment is 9,530,579 USD from KfW and TNC, which could generate approximately 450,000 in annual interest earnings (depending on interest rates) to be invested fully in conservation actions. Two years after the signature of the vertical agreement, the government will need to begin matching the interest earned on the CBF portion of the endowment in order to access the interest earnings. The government has signaled its interest in doing so and some mechanisms have been established for this purpose, but it will nevertheless be a challenge, especially considering current low interest rates and the currency exchange rate between US dollars and Dominican Pesos.

57. A strategy for the capitalization and investment of the National Protected Area Trust Fund was developed early on in the project. However, due to changes to the country's accounting system, meaning that all revenue is now channeled through a central fund or account, the mechanisms identified through the consultancy such as investments in the stock market are no longer considered relevant and the government prefers to proceed with less risky investments.

58. The goal of increasing revenues from the NPAS by project end was surpassed with a 75% increase in the funds collected between 2010 and 2014. The earnings for 2015 to the month of July alone are equivalent to what had been projected for the year. The project can be commended for the role it played in this achievement, primarily through promoting improved controls on visitors entering protected areas, through the work to revisit concession fees in protected areas, and through increased tariffs in 14 protected areas. In Parque Nacional del Este, the protected area that receives the largest numbers of tourists, a system of wrist bands was instigated to improve visitor fee collection. There is tremendous potential to generate even more funds from the NPAS as many PAs with substantial ecotourism potential do not yet charge any entrance fees (such as the Cabo Samana). The project funded the development of a proposal of revised entrance fees for the 12 protected areas with the greatest potential for revenue generation. Not all of the proposed fee hikes have been implemented yet due to the need for investments in infrastructure for public use to be able to justify some of the increases.

59. The impact of the increased generation of revenues on the NPAS budget was somewhat undermined by the fact that the government adopted a new system in 2012/2013 whereby all revenue enters a central account and is then redistributed to different Ministries. As a result, not all the revenues are reinvested in the national protected areas system. The project has worked to strengthen budgetary planning and execution within the Vice Ministry to maximize the amount of resources coming back to the NPAS, and has facilitated training in this respect. However, the final decisions on budgetary allocation are beyond the control of the project and even of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity. By the end of the project, there had not been an increase in the budget compared to the baseline, despite the significant increase in revenues generated.

60. Several key studies were carried out under this Outcome, including the country's first economic valuation of the ecosystem services provided by the protected areas system. Through the use of a contingent preferences methodology, the estimated value of these services was USD 2.68 billion, or 4.2% of the GDP in 2012 (according to the intermediate value scenario). Given the initial delays in implementation during the first few years of the project, this consultancy started late and was only concluded in 2014. The results are strategically important in demonstrating the significant impact of protected areas on the country's GDP but require a greater level of dissemination for them to translate into

policy changes or into greater budgetary allocations for the NPAS. A dissemination/ advocacy campaign was not carried out with high-level staff during project implementation as had been recommended in PIRs and in the Mid-Term Review. In part, this may have been due to internal disagreement within the Ministry on the utility of the results of the study, as some staff members felt that the estimated value of NPAS was an underestimate and there was some concern that putting a figure on this could threaten the system if higher economic values are attributed to other uses. Based on the interviews carried out, it appears that there is now greater openness and interest in further disseminating the results of the study to the Economic Cabinet of government and to the Ministry of Finance, for example. A graphic information sheet summarizing the results of the study has been developed and the idea is to print copies and disseminate them at a fair on ecosystem services. High-level engagement will be important to maximize the utility of the research so it does not end up as another study on the shelf but helps convince decision-makers of the value of increasing the NPAS budget.

61. A National Strategy for Payments for Environmental Services (PES) was developed in 2014, another first for the country. This is considered a useful tool to guide the Ministry in the implementation of PES within and outside of PAs. The Strategy still needs to be integrated in the Ministry's planning in terms of its AOPs and budget. In addition, external funding sources could be identified to implement key actions in the Strategy. At the moment, the country has a draft PES law that has been under review for the past 2.5 years. This draft law is currently before the Senate; once approved it would provide further impetus to the expansion of PES as a tool to strengthen the financial sustainability of the NPAS. Further work to raise the awareness of the potential of PES and to operationalize a working system are needed. It should be noted, however, that the Dominican Republic already has some practical experience in implementing PES for the provision of water in upper watersheds, that it is involved in REDD+ readiness activities in terms of carbon payments, and that under Outcome 3, the project supported the establishment of a carbon offset model in the buffer zone of the Loma Quita Espuela protected area.

62. A manual to organize the system of allocating ecotourism concessions was produced to clarify the rules and to reduce the environmental impact of concessions within protected areas. This manual specifies the requirements of concession holders with regard to issues such as the definition of the physical limits of each concession, and the management of waste, water and energy. This activity was accompanied by the provision of training for concession holders, particularly in Sanoa Island where the majority of concession holders are found. In Parque Nacional del Este, the concessions were organized in accordance with the requirements of the manual and there have been positive economic impacts for government. A regulation on concessions was drafted but was not formally approved. Nevertheless, according to interviewees, the manual on concessions is guiding practice. Guidelines for the development of PA business plans were also developed to promote consistency.

Outcome 2: Improved PA management effectiveness and efficiency in 18 priority PAs with highest revenue generation potential

63. A total of 18 five-year management plans for protected areas were developed for the 2014-2019 and 2015-2020 periods. This is a sizeable number of protected areas that now have this key management instrument available. To get a sense of the relevance of the project's contribution, only 31 of the 126 protected areas in the NPAS have management plans. The format and content of the management plans were generally consistent with the Methodological Guidelines for the Development and Updating of Protected Areas Management Plans in the Dominican Republic in place before the project, but the process of developing the plans was more participatory and multidisciplinary than had been the case beforehand, which was an important contribution in and of itself. A review of the management plans and feedback from interviewees found them to be comprehensive on the whole. One exception is the Cabo Samana management plan, which does not include the required budget or timeline.

64. Only four of these management plans have been formally approved by Resolution, as they are awaiting the conclusion of technical reviews within the Vice Ministry. This is an issue that needs to be addressed to promote their implementation, in addition to continued efforts to increase the amount of resources available for PAs to apply the management plans. Currently the implementation of management plans in the country is limited to ad hoc actions, because there is insufficient funding available to do so in a comprehensive manner. It should also be noted that the project funded the preparation of a report for the periodic revision of the Jaragua-Bahoruco Biosphere Reserve, which comprises three protected areas involved in the project. The report gathered useful baseline information for the preparation of management plans.

65. In addition to the PA management plans, seven business plans were developed for protected areas in order to increase benefits to local communities and reduce conflicts, while also reducing pressures on the PAs. The PAs were selected based on their visitation potentials, level of capacity of administrators, and existence of management plans. The PA business plans included a description of each area and its attractions, baseline information on threats to the area and current management scenarios; a market analysis; a marketing strategy; administrative requirements and costs to implement the plan; risks; and recommendations.

66. The idea of PA business plans is a new concept for Dominican Republic and there is a lack of experience in preparing them. The project encountered substantial delays in procuring consultants for this task and they were only finally prepared in 2014 and 2015, three as part of a practical course on business plans provided in 2014 to protected areas administrators, NGOs and independent consultants, and four through a consultant. The plans developed by the consultant involved workshops with key stakeholders at the community level, a complete visit to the protected areas to view the attractions, as well as the development of attractive logos that could be used in promotional material such as brochures, mugs and T-shirts. In order to ensure that the business plans are developed in a consistent manner, a guide was developed under Outcome 1.

67. The stakeholders interviewed during the final evaluation indicated that there was interest at the level of individual protected areas and among co-managing institutions to move forward with these plans. However, none have begun to be implemented and positive financial benefits for local level stakeholders have not yet been reaped. It is difficult to comment on the extent to which the plans will be used at this point. However, it is clear that the next step is to produce and disseminate copies of the completed business plans to stakeholders in each protected area.

68. One of the priorities of the Vice Ministry was to designate some project funds for key infrastructure investments to strengthen control and surveillance and to promote increased visitation. As such, investments were made in 10 protected areas at a cost of approximately USD 500,000, on items such as solar energy systems for PA protection and surveillance centres and visitor centres; infrastructure for visitors; signage for 12 PAs; computers; equipment for PA staff; office and audiovisual equipment for the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity and other units within the Ministry (such as for the staff member working on PES); as well as boats, marine motors and motorcycles. In addition, a radio communication system was established and digital radios purchased for the NPAS. This has already facilitated a faster response time to forest fires that are detected. Some audiovisual material was also printed on various PAs to assist in marketing. A facility was outfitted with the tools needed to be able to carry out repairs required by PAs, as well as to enable further PA signs to be constructed. An additional activity that was carried out that had not been planned was to better organize the whale watching activity carried out at one of the protected areas (Estero Hondo Marine Mammal Sanctuary).

69. Another important activity carried out to enhance PA management effectiveness was capacity

building. Training was provided to staff members and other stakeholders on issues such as PA management, species and ecosystem monitoring, and financial management in particular, including innovative new mechanisms with which personnel has relatively little prior experience. Other topics included PA signage, nature interpretation, public use of PAs, ecotourism, carrying capacity, and business plans. Two PA administrators benefitted from a course on natural resource management in Mexico. It should also be noted that administrators were trained on the appropriate procedures to follow to apply the law when there are transgressions, since errors were found to undermine the ability to impose sanctions. This training was well received, as was the training imparted to judges to increase their understanding of environmental law, which has led to more favourable sentences being handed down in terms of the environment. In total, since 2012, 512 individuals participated in various capacity building workshops (note that this number includes double entries as the same individuals may have participated in various workshops).

70. A proposal was developed to support the restructuring of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity in order to improve the quality and efficiency of its technical and administrative work. The scope of the consultancy ended up extending to the entire Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, so that the linkages among processes could be fully analyzed and improved upon. The required institutional skills and abilities for NPAS to function effectively were determined through a consultancy and follow-up work that assessed existing technical and administrative functions and roles as well as gaps in terms of the procedures that should be carried out to adhere to regulatory requirements. Examples of gaps that are not consistently or adequately being addressed include cadastre establishment in protected areas, biophysical inventories of PAs, and adequate monitoring, control and surveillance of PAs. This institutional strengthening work is being led by the Directorate of Planning of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and has not concluded yet. Additional information collection took place in three provinces to add to the data that had been collected on the central level. Institutional restructuring has not yet occurred as had been envisioned in the ProDoc. The next steps are to develop a manual on the procedures that need to be adopted by personnel based on regulatory requirements, and to develop an improvement plan for the restructuring of the Ministry. According to interviews, the Capacity Building Plan for the NPAS that was prepared will not be implemented until the Ministerial restructuring is completed. It will need to be formally approved by the Ministry of Environment through a Resolution and approved by the Ministry of Public Administration, which has been accompanying the process.

71. Other deliverables to mention under this Outcome include the revision of Sectorial Law 64-00 on protected areas. Various issues were clarified as part of this exercise (such as PA management categories, co-management, private reserves and concessions) and some new issues were introduced, such as climate change. The proposed modifications have not yet been presented to Congress. The project also funded the development of a Species and Ecosystem Monitoring Strategy, including relevant indicators and general methodologies for their measurement, and training was provided. According to interviews, some species are currently being monitored. In addition, a database was set up and is currently being populated with data on the biodiversity of each protected area, which is being gathered by park rangers and uploaded by technicians from the Ministry of Environment. Thus far three protected areas (of the 126 in the system) have all their biodiversity information entered. The objective is to enable this data to be used to inform PA management decisions.

72. The management effectiveness tracking tool (METT) was applied in 2009, 2012 and in 2015. PA administrators have thus gained valuable experience in its application and recognize the value of regular measurements of management effectiveness in order to identify actions that need to be taken.

Outcome 3: Co-management arrangement to underwrite PA costs.

73. A key project achievement to support co-management was the development of the Regulation on

the Co-Management of Protected Areas. The project worked for several years to advocate for its formal approval, which was finally achieved by Resolution in 2015. During the time period of the project, five new co-management agreements were developed and approved, which all adhere to the newly approved regulation, and eleven agreements were updated. As such, the project contributed to an expansion of co-management. As a type of public-private partnership, co-management has the potential to continue to expand. If properly managed, it can represent a win-win situation by reducing the economic pressures on the Ministry of Environment to manage the large national protected areas system, and by providing greater benefits for local communities and organizations.

74. The Co-Management Board which had been inactive before the project was revitalized. An inaugural meeting was held with co-managing organizations, protected area administrators, and park rangers in 2013. This was considered a useful forum for information exchange and exchange of experiences among different protected areas. No meetings have been held since then, though another meeting is planned for 2015.

75. Outcome 3 aimed to make progress on the issue of land ownership within PAs and PA limits. Through the project, the legal land ownership status was clarified for nine protected areas. In addition, the boundaries of eight protected areas were defined, verified in the field and physically delineated. However, these could not be registered in the National Catastral Survey Registry as had been planned. This is because the state has not yet paid landowners compensation for the declaration of these PAs. This is an outstanding issue that merits increased attention in the future.

76. Several innovative financing mechanisms were tested. Three pilot projects were carried out that involve five protected areas. The first involved the protected areas Loma Quita Espuela, Loma Guaconejo and the newly established El Zorzal private reserve. The latter represents a milestone in that it is the first private protected reserve in the Dominican Republic. Funds to purchase the land were provided by private investors. This Reserve includes a large area set-aside for conservation (as this is the key wintering area for Bricknell's thrush or *Catharus bicknelli*) as well as another area for sustainable agricultural production, especially of cacao and macadamia nuts. The sustainable agricultural activities provide funds for the maintenance of the reserve and provide employment to locals.

77. A carbon offset program was successfully established, with agricultural producers receiving a bonus for planting trees in the buffer zone of the nearby Loma Quita Espuela protected area, thus providing incentives for a shift away from slash and burn agriculture. A total of eight producers are currently participating in the program and have signed 10-year agreements with a program called Plan Vivo. The use of native species is an added value compared to the existing government promotion of tree planting using exotic, fast growing species. The NGO that managed this pilot project (Consortio Ambiental Dominicano or CAD) plans to disseminate the project experience through various means, such as distribution of the video and uploading of information on the CAD and UNDP websites. In addition to this initiative related to PES for carbon sequestration, a study was carried out to explore the potential of PES for water provision. This has not progressed further as several issues still need to be worked out in terms of the payments.

78. A regulation for the declaration of private protected areas or voluntary conservation was developed with project funds and was approved. This regulation establishes the policy framework for further areas to be declared throughout the country and is another important project impact. Such reserves have the potential to play an important role in increasing biological connectivity. Interviewees indicated that there is significant interest among some private landowners to declare private reserves so the potential for replication exists.

79. The second pilot project involved Francisco Camaaño de Deno protected area (Los Quemados),

which is an area with high biodiversity value that has been managed by an NGO called Asociación Clemente Melo. The project supported renovations to the Visitor Centre with the goal of increasing visitation, including the purchase of solar panels, and supported training and monitoring of the threatened bird species *Coccyzus rufifigularis* (locally known as la cúa). In addition, a census of protected area users was carried out and training provided on permitted activities. The key element of the pilot project was the identification of different possible financial mechanisms to compensate landowners for the declaration of this protected area, such as protein banks in the buffer zones, rainwater capture and ecotourism. The rationale is that this could reduce the pressure on the natural resources of the protected area and could increase the standard of living of nearby communities. Due to budgetary and time constraints, none of these mechanisms were actually implemented during the time period of the project (although some follow-up is expected through a project with FAO).

80. In the Saltos de Damajagua pilot project, the project contributed in various ways to this protected area, which showcases effective co-management and substantial benefits to neighbouring communities. The project supported the construction of a Visitor Centre and improved signage to improve the visitor experience. In addition, the co-management agreement was renewed with an increased focus on the sustainability of activities in the area. The experience in Saltos de Damajagua has also been documented in a recently produced video.

Table 6: Level of Achievement of Project Objective and Outcomes based on Project Indicators

*** Please note that this Table includes revised baseline values, which were recalculated due to errors found and to ensure consistent application of the METT and financial sustainability scorecard, as well as targets that were revised at the project mid-term mark.*

Project Objective: consolidating the financial sustainability of the National Protected Areas System (NPAS).																											
Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline	Target	Comments																								
<p>1. Increase in financial capacity of National Protected Areas’ System (NPAS) in Dominican Republic as measured through improvement in the Total Average Score for all PA sub-systems in the UNDP Financial Scorecard (SECTION IV: Annex 2) that includes 3 components as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governance frameworks that enable sustainable PA financing;• Business planning and other tools for cost-effective management;• Tools and systems for revenue generation and mobilization.	<p>Original Target: Total score 67 (or 34% of the maximum possible score)</p> <p>RECALCULATED BASELINE:</p> <p>Total score 72 (or 32% of maximum possible score)</p> <table><tr><th>Scorecard</th><th>Baseline</th></tr><tr><td>Component 1</td><td>29 (31%)</td></tr><tr><td>Component 2</td><td>14 (23%)</td></tr><tr><td>Component 3</td><td>29 (41%)</td></tr></table>	Scorecard	Baseline	Component 1	29 (31%)	Component 2	14 (23%)	Component 3	29 (41%)	<p>Original Target: Total score 125 (or 63% of the maximum possible score) by end of project</p> <p>REVISED TARGETS:</p> <p>Total score of 128 (or 56% of maximum possible score)</p> <table><tr><th>Scorecard</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Component 1</td><td>57 (60%)</td></tr><tr><td>Component 2</td><td>31 (51%)</td></tr><tr><td>Component 3</td><td>40 (56%)</td></tr></table>	Scorecard	Target	Component 1	57 (60%)	Component 2	31 (51%)	Component 3	40 (56%)	<p>The total score as calculated in 2015 (using 2014 data) was 121 (or 54% of the maximum possible score of 225). Scores for each component were as following:</p> <table><tr><th>Scorecard</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Component 1</td><td>60 (64%)</td></tr><tr><td>Component 2</td><td>21 (36%)</td></tr><tr><td>Component 3</td><td>40 (56%)</td></tr></table> <p>This represents a significant improvement over the baseline score of 72, despite the fact that the target of 128 was not quite met. In particular, it was Component 2 related to business planning and other tools for cost-effective management which affected the overall score.</p>	Scorecard	Target	Component 1	60 (64%)	Component 2	21 (36%)	Component 3	40 (56%)
Scorecard	Baseline																										
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Component 2	21 (36%)																										
Component 3	40 (56%)																										
<p>2. Reduction in gap between available funding and levels needed for management to meet established basic standards for NPAS and its PAs</p>	<p>The funding gap is almost US\$15.7 million – or 69% - per year (basic operating scenario). (To be reconfirmed and adjusted by year 2).</p>	<p>Funding gap is reduced to 53% by end of project.</p>	<p>The funding gap by 2014 was found to be 50% in a basic operating scenario, meaning that the target was surpassed. This was calculated as follows: the financial needs for the expanded NPAS were determined to be USD 19,685,786, while total income was USD 9,874,473 (including the government allocation of USD 5,737,898, funds generated by the system in the</p>																								

			amount of USD 3,021,996 and funds channeled through third parties for USD 1,114,579). However, it should be noted that not all the funds generated by the system were reinvested in protected areas so the funding gap may actually be somewhat higher.
<p>3. Increase in PA management effectiveness as measured by METT scores for all PAs with on-site staff (34 PAs units): 5 Strict Natural Reserves, 15 National Parks, 9 Natural Monuments and 5 Wildlife Refuges) (SECTION IV: Annex 1), based on the following definitions: High (75-100), Medium (55-74), Low (<55).</p> <p>Proposed revised indicator: Increase in PA management effectiveness as measured by METT scores for priority PAs (19 PAs): 3 Strict Natural Reserves, 8 National Parks, 5 Natural Monuments and 3 Wildlife Refuges (<i>using the same definitions as above</i>).</p>	<p>By project start:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High 4 PA - Medium 25 PA - Low 5 PA <p>REVISED BASELINE for 19 priority PAs:</p> <p>High- 2 PA</p> <p>Medium- 14 PA</p> <p>Low- 3 PA</p>	<p>By end of project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High 10 PA - Medium 24 PA - Low 0 PA <p>REVISED TARGETS FOR 19 PAs:</p> <p>High- 4 PAs</p> <p>Medium- 12 PAs</p> <p>Low- 3 PAs</p>	<p>The results calculated using the METT tool in 2015 for the 19 priority PAs were as follows:</p> <p>High- 1 PA</p> <p>Medium- 15 PAs</p> <p>Low- 4 PAs</p> <p>Compared to the revised baseline, the number of protected areas in the three management effectiveness categories (high, medium and low) has not improved. Despite progress on issues such as management and business plans, the delimitation of PA boundaries, infrastructure improvements in some areas, this has not yet translated into improved scores. This may be due to several external factors outside of the immediate control of the project such as the substantial expansion of the NPAS since the project was designed (from 34 to 123 protected areas) without a concomitant increase in budget, budget cuts from 2011-2013, and the new government system involving a single account into which all revenues flow, which has meant that not all generated funds are reinvested in the National Protected Areas System. It should also be mentioned that there has not been much time to implement the management plans developed through the project, so it is possible that these scores will increase in the future.</p>
<p>4. Ecosystem-level indicator: The amount of area with conflicting land cover change in critical terrestrial ecosystems (711,489 ha) in 18 PAs reduced and no additional land-use</p>	<p>Within the 18 priority PAs, the PPG-prepared land cover analysis demonstrates the following: (i) a loss of wet and moist broad-leaf forests; (ii) a</p>	<p>No net negative change in cover in terrestrial ecosystems in 18 PAs registered by end of project. Change in baseline cover in key</p>	<p>Satellite data from 2012 (analyzed in 2013) from the Environmental Information Directorate on the 18 priority PAs indicated the following: (i) No loss of wet and moist broad-leaf forests; (ii) data on grasslands for DR was not evaluated; (iii) a decrease in total land use</p>

anomalies during the life of the project due to enhanced PA management	<p>loss of grasslands; (iii) an increase in coffee/cacao and sugar cane production; (iv) a shift from short cycle agriculture to grazing; (v) and an increase in population or human settlement within PAs.</p> <p>The baseline information comparing 1996 to 2003 needs to be revised to revisit the trends and validate the targets during the inception phase.</p>	<p>terrestrial ecosystems re-evaluated by the end of project.</p> <p>1. No broadleaf forest loss from baseline. 2. No additional loss of grasslands. 3. No additions of subsistence agriculture. 4. Increases in permanent cover in in-holdings or maintenance of permanent pasture may be desirable</p> <p><i>PMU proposes a new target of no net change in 10 priority PAs.</i></p>	<p>agriculture (including production of coffee/cacao, sugar cane, traditional agriculture, pasture land, uncovered land, other crops; (iv) some data to suggest that there is more grazing compared to short cycle agriculture; (v) Number of individuals living within PAs has decreased. The data that exist suggest that the targets were met . More up to date data will only be available by end of 2015 based on 2014 data so that the final end-of-project impact cannot be assessed.</p> <p>Note that the PMU reported on all 18 PAs rather than only the 10 priority PAs proposed in the revised target.</p>
5. Specific ecosystem and species-level indicators for long-term biological monitoring are selected	<p>Agreement on biological indicators or M&E system design that identifies and validates biological indicators for long-term monitoring does not exist in the Dominican Republic</p>	<p>Biological indicators of representative species/ecosystems will be selected during Year 1.</p> <p>An agreed upon Biological Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with officially endorsed ecosystem and species-level indicators for long-term monitoring</p>	<p>This target was achieved. A Species and Ecosystem Monitoring and Evaluation Plan was developed, coupled with an Implementation Plan for Phase 1 for 2012-2016. There is no specific budget set aside to implement this Plan, but some funds are included in the budget for the Vice Ministry and there are activities being carried out by NGOs. Specific indicators for representative species and ecosystems were identified and general monitoring protocols agreed upon. Some workshops were provided on how to fill out monitoring forms and baseline data is beginning to be gathered by park rangers. A database to house this data has been established and is beginning to be populated by staff at the central level. By the Final Evaluation, this database included the data for three PAs and the staff member who was working on this during the project has been taken on by the Ministry to continue with this work. It will be important to follow up on this to ensure that comprehensive data on all key species and ecosystems in the protected areas are gathered as there remain a large number of PAs without full information in the</p>

			database. The goal will be to use this information in PA management.
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Outcome 1: PA financing increased and diversified					
Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline		Target		Comments
1. Strengthened Governance frameworks for sustainable PA financing, measured as increased scores in the following elements of Component 1 of UNDP Financial scorecard : • Legal, policy and regulatory support for revenue generation by PAs (Element 1) • Legal, policy and regulatory support for revenue sharing within the PA system (Element 2) • Legal and regulatory conditions for establishing endowment or trust funds (Element 3) • National PA financing strategies (Element 5) • Economic valuation of PA systems (Element 6) • Improved government budgeting for PA systems (Element 7)	By project start:		By end of project:		Element 1- Legal, policy and regulatory support for revenue generation by PAs: 3 (50%) The target for this element was not achieved. A Strategy for PES was developed but the draft PES Law has not yet been approved by the Senate. Furthermore, with the single account system, not all funds generated by PAs are reinvested in the system. Element 2- Legal, policy and regulatory support for revenue sharing within the PA system: 8 (89%) This target was achieved. There is an administrative resolution indicating that revenues should be reinvested in the NPAS (though not fully applied). Furthermore, the approved co-management regulation allows communities to obtain revenues from PAs. Element 3: Legal and regulatory conditions for establishing endowment or trust funds- 4 (44%) This target was achieved as the Fondo Marena, which had been established by law, was legally constituted and made operational with the project. The National Protected Areas Trust Fund has been established under Fondo Marena. A total of USD 6,707,177 has already been deposited in the fund and the first disbursement from interest earning was made in 2015. Negotiations are ongoing with the CBF to sign the vertical
	Element	Baseline	Element	Target	
	Element 1	5 (83%)	Element 1	5 (83%)	
	Element 2	4 (44%)	Element 2	6 (67%)	
	Element 3	0 (0%)	Element 3	4 (44%)	
	Element 5	5 (38%)	Element 5	12 (92%)	
	Element 6	2 (33%)	Element 6	4 (67%)	
	Element 7	2 (33%)	Element 7	4 (67%)	
	REVISED BASELINE:		REVISED TARGETS:		
	Element	Baseline	Element	Target	
	Element 1	5 (83%)	Element 1	5 (83%)	
	Element 2	4 (44%)	Element 2	8 (89%)	
	Element 3	0 (0%)	Element 3	4 (44%)	
	Element 5	5 (25%)	Element 5	10 (50%)	
	Element 6	2 (33%)	Element 6	4 (67%)	
Element 7	2 (33%)				

		<table><tr><td>Element 7</td><td>6 (50%)</td></tr></table>	Element 7	6 (50%)	<p>agreement, which will allow the remaining committed capital endowment from KfW and TNC to be deposited in the NPATF.</p> <p>Element 5- National PA financing strategies 12 (66%)</p> <p>The target was achieved as the Plan for Financial Sustainability of the NPAS is being implemented, with the development of business plans, the operationalization of the National Protected Areas Trust Fund, increased controls on visitor fees in PAs and the development of AOPs, among other elements.</p> <p>Element 6- Economic valuation of PA systems 4 (67%)</p> <p>The target was achieved as the project supported the development of the country's first economic valuation study, which was shared within the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. Further high-level dissemination of this study is essential to increase its impact on budgetary allocations and policy.</p> <p>Element 7- Improved government budgeting for PA systems. 5 (62%)</p> <p>While the target had been achieved in 2013, the score went down since then, as the government put in place a new system whereby all state revenues are placed in one general account and then distributed to different Ministries, which led to a substantial reduction in funding, particularly when the change was first put into place. Since then, the budget assigned to the NPAS has stabilized to near baseline amounts. To facilitate the transition to this new system, the project provided training to strengthen budgetary planning and increase budgetary execution.</p>
Element 7	6 (50%)				

<div>2. Strengthened business planning and other tools for cost-effective management as measured by an increased score in the following element of Component 2 of UNDP Financial scorecard:</div> <div><div><div>• Operational, transparent and useful accounting and auditing systems (Element 2)</div><div>• Systems for monitoring and reporting on financial management performance (Element 3)</div><div>• Methods for allocating funds across individual PA sites (Element 4)</div></div></div>	<div>By project start:</div> <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Baseline</th></tr><tr><td>Element 2</td><td>8 (67%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 3</td><td>3 (25%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 4</td><td>0 (0%)</td></tr></table> <div>REVISED BASELINE:</div> <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Baseline</th></tr><tr><td>Element 2</td><td>6 (67%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 3</td><td>3 (25%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 4</td><td>2 (50%)</td></tr></table>	Element	Baseline	Element 2	8 (67%)	Element 3	3 (25%)	Element 4	0 (0%)	Element	Baseline	Element 2	6 (67%)	Element 3	3 (25%)	Element 4	2 (50%)	<div>By end of project:</div> <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Element 2</td><td>9 (75%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 3</td><td>6 (50%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 4</td><td>2 (50%)</td></tr></table> <div>REVISED TARGETS:</div> <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Element 2</td><td>7 (78%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 3</td><td>5 (42%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 4</td><td>2 (50%)</td></tr></table>	Element	Target	Element 2	9 (75%)	Element 3	6 (50%)	Element 4	2 (50%)	Element	Target	Element 2	7 (78%)	Element 3	5 (42%)	Element 4	2 (50%)	<div>Scores in 2015:</div> <div>Element 2- Operational, transparent and useful accounting and auditing systems. 2 (55%). The target was not achieved. Costs incurred at the individual PA level are not tracked and there is no system in place so that accounting data can contribute to PA budgeting.</div> <div>Element 3: Systems for monitoring and reporting on financial management performance- 5 (42%).</div> <div>The target was achieved. The Ministry has improved the reporting of income generated by the PAs and increased the transparency in this regard. In addition, some PAs received electricity through the project so they are now able to send in information on revenues.</div> <div>Element 4- Methods for allocating funds across individual PA sites - 2 (50%)</div> <div>The revised target, which is equivalent to the baseline, was achieved. The system does not yet take into account expenses at the level of different PAs and funds are not distributed across individual PA sites based on individual budgets.</div>
Element	Baseline																																		
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<div>3. Strengthened tools and systems for revenue generation and mobilization measured as an increased score in the following elements of Component 3 of UNDP Financial Sustainability Scorecard Rating:</div> <div><div><div>• Increase in number and variety of revenue sources used across the PA system (Element 1)</div><div>• Setting and establishment of user fees across the PA system (Element 2)</div></div></div>	<div>By project start:</div> <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Baseline</th></tr><tr><td>Element 1</td><td>4 (44%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 2</td><td>7 (47%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 3</td><td>1 (33%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 4</td><td>1 (33%)</td></tr></table>	Element	Baseline	Element 1	4 (44%)	Element 2	7 (47%)	Element 3	1 (33%)	Element 4	1 (33%)	<div>By end of project:</div> <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Element 1</td><td>6 (67%) (percentage was wrong and should have been 50%)</td></tr></table>	Element	Target	Element 1	6 (67%) (percentage was wrong and should have been 50%)	<div>Results in 2014:</div> <div>Element 1: Increase in number and variety of revenue sources used across the PA system - 7 (58%)</div> <div>The target was surpassed . Revenue options have been explored, revenue from concessions, and entrance fees have increased ,and local communities are benefitting more near some protected areas.</div> <div>Element 2: Setting and establishment of user fees across the PA system 6 (40%).</div>																		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective fee collection systems (Element 3)• Marketing and communication strategies for revenue generation mechanisms (Element 4)• Operational PES schemes for PAs (Element 5)• Operational concessions within PAs (Element 6)	Element 5	4 (33%)	Element 2	11 (73%)	<p>The revised target was not reached. The project supported the development of a proposal to update user fees for PAs (Establishment of Access and User Fees), which is being put in place in some PAs, where visitor fees have increased. In other areas, there is a need for infrastructure investments before the proposed visitor fees can be put in place. Tourism-related infrastructure is not put in place based on an analysis of revenue potential and return on investment. Furthermore, non tourism user fees are not currently being applied.</p> <p>Element 3: Effective fee collection systems 8 (72%) The revised target was surpassed. Through a system of wrist bands in various PAs and increased signage, fee collection systems have greatly improved.</p> <p>Element 4: Marketing and communication strategies for revenue generation mechanisms 2 (33%) - The revised target was reached but there is still a need for more work to communicate with the public about tourism fees at the national and individual PA level.</p> <p>Element 5: Operational PES schemes for PAs 6 (50%) The revised target was reached. A PES Strategy was developed through the project. In one of the pilot projects, a PES system was put in place with producers who planted trees and are now receiving payments for carbon offsetting through a program called Plan Vivo.</p> <p>Element 6: Operational concessions within PAs 9 (75%) The revised target was reached with significant progress achieved. The project supported the development of a Manual for the Establishment and Monitoring of Concessions in the NPAS. The concessions in two PAs, Parque Nacional del Este and Monumento Natural Isla Catalina were reviewed, revised fees charged and measures put in place to reduce environmental impact.</p>
	Element 6	6 (50%)	Element 3	2 (67%)	
	REVISED BASELINE:		Element 4	2 (67%)	
	Element	Baseline	Element 5	6 (50%)	
	Element 1	5 (42%)	Element 6	9 (75%)	
	Element 2	7 (47%)	REVISED TARGETS:		
	Element 3	3 (27%)	Element	Target	
	Element 4	1 (17%)	Element 1	6 (50%)	
	Element 5	6 (50%)	Element 2	9 (60%)	
	Element 6	6 (50%)	Element 3	6 (55%)	
			Element 4	2 (33%)	
			Element 5	6 (50%)	
			Element 6	9 (75%)	

4. Increase in Government funds annually expended in NPAS	\$4.6 m expended in NPAS in 2007	US\$7.1 m/year by end of project (based on approved 2007 government budget for NPAS). <i>PMU plans to develop a revised target for this indicator.</i>	The target did not end up being revised. The original target was not at all achieved, unfortunately, as a result of reduced budgetary allocations in NPAS. In 2014, the amount expended in NPAS was US\$4,065,605.56 (with 88% budgetary execution), which is actually less than the 2007 baseline. While the project supported strengthened budgetary execution, the single national account system that was put in place has had a significant impact on this issue (compared to the system in place before where the revenues could be spent within NPAS without going through a national account first). It will be vital for the Ministry to continue to lobby for increased budgetary allocation, including by disseminating the results of the economic valuation study, and to continue to strengthen budgetary execution.
5. Annual funds received by NPAS from innovative financing mechanisms (local fund, carbon, PES, increased fees etc.)	\$0	US\$ 100,000 by end of project	The target was exceeded. In 2014 U.S.\$ 573,245 were generated in the NPAS from fines, penalties, licenses, permits, concessions and other sources. The interest earnings from the NPATF was not included in this total nor were the payments received by produced for carbon offsets in one of the pilot projects. However, it should be noted that these revenues went into the one government account and not all were reinvested in the NPAS.
6. Increase in annual NPAS revenues from visitor fees.	US\$1.61 m in 2008	At least US\$2.3 m/year by end of project (resulting from increased income generation on 18 priority PAs) <i>New target: US \$2.6 million/year</i>	The original target for this indicator was met with 2.45 million in revenues from visitor fees (while the revised more ambitious target was not quite achieved). The increase in revenues can be attributed primarily to an improved fee collection system using wrist bands at 12 PAs as well as to adjusted visitor fees in selected PAs. The revenues were gathered in 17 PAs, 12 of which were included in the project priority PAs. It should be noted that the revenues went into the government's

			single account and not all the revenues were reinvested in NPAS.
7. Increase in resources generated by the PA Patrimonial Fund available for investment in PA management above the level of capitalization	\$ 0	At least US\$1.16 million by end of project (US\$ 290,000 per year)	The target was not achieved. Funds from KfW, TNC, GEF and the government were deposited as capital into the NPATF. As a result, the National PA Trust Fund has started generating interest revenue and 2015 marks the first year that a disbursement was made, with the funds being used to strengthen the NPAS (through the purchase of a radio communication system). By April 2015, the fund had generated a cumulative amount of USD 76,791, of which USD 49,479 were used for a radio communication system. Because of delays in capitalizing the fund and the fact that the full capital has not yet been secured (pending the signing of the vertical agreement), with USD 2,868,402 still outstanding, the total interest earnings were lower than expected by project end (the target had been US 1.16 million). Expected annual earnings once all capital is secured is approximately US 450,000.
8. Increase in PA Patrimonial Fund equity over the inflation rate	\$ 0	At least 3% over the inflation rate by end of project	Since the first disbursement in 2011, the fund has earned about US\$ 76,791, which represents 17% of capitalization. Equity has remained above the average inflation rate.

Outcome 2: Improved PA management effectiveness and efficiency in 18 priority PAs with highest revenue generation potential					
Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline		Target		Comments
1. Strengthened Governance frameworks for sustainable PA financing, measured as increased scores in the following elements	By project start:		By end of project:		The scores as calculated applying the financial scorecard in 2014 were as follows:
	Element	Baseline	Element	Target	

of Component 1 of UNDP Financial scorecard : • Legal, policy and regulatory support for alternative institutional arrangements for PA management (Element 4) • Clearly defined institutional responsibilities for PA management and financing (Element 8) • Well-defined staffing requirements, profiles and incentives at site and system level (Element 9)	<table><tr><td>Element 4</td><td>8 (67%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 8</td><td>2 (67%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 9</td><td>1 (7%)</td></tr></table> REVISED BASELINE: <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Baseline</th></tr><tr><td>Element 4</td><td>8 (67%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 8</td><td>2 (67%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 9</td><td>1 (6%)</td></tr></table>	Element 4	8 (67%)	Element 8	2 (67%)	Element 9	1 (7%)	Element	Baseline	Element 4	8 (67%)	Element 8	2 (67%)	Element 9	1 (6%)	<table><tr><td>Element 4</td><td>10 (83%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 8</td><td>2 (67%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 9</td><td>4 (27%)</td></tr></table> REVISED TARGETS: <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Element 4</td><td>11 (92%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 8</td><td>3 (100%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 9</td><td>6 (33%)</td></tr></table>	Element 4	10 (83%)	Element 8	2 (67%)	Element 9	4 (27%)	Element	Target	Element 4	11 (92%)	Element 8	3 (100%)	Element 9	6 (33%)	<table><tr><td>Element 4</td><td>11 (92%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 8</td><td>3 (100%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 9</td><td>11 (46%)</td></tr></table> All revised targets were met or exceeded. This is due to the formal approval of the regulation on private reserves, as well as the approval of the co-management regulations and procedures. Since the MTR, progress was made on element 9 as a result of the consultancy to define the staffing requirements and profiles of personnel at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. This proposed restructuring still requires follow-up through the development of a manual on procedures and the implementation of an improvement plan. Implementation of these pending steps will enable the Ministry as a whole to increase efficiency and ensure that all required tasks and procedures are being carried out.	Element 4	11 (92%)	Element 8	3 (100%)	Element 9	11 (46%)
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2. Strengthened business planning and other tools for cost-effective management as measured by an increased score in the following element of Component 2 of UNDP Financial scorecard: • PA Site-level business planning (Element 1) • Training and support networks to enable park managers to operate more cost-effectively (Element 5)	By project start: <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Baseline</th></tr><tr><td>Element 1</td><td>1 (6%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 5</td><td>2 (13%)</td></tr></table> REVISED BASELINE: <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Baseline</th></tr><tr><td>Element 1</td><td>1 (6%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 5</td><td>2 (11%)</td></tr></table>	Element	Baseline	Element 1	1 (6%)	Element 5	2 (13%)	Element	Baseline	Element 1	1 (6%)	Element 5	2 (11%)	By end of project: <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Element 1</td><td>8 (44%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 5</td><td>9 (60%)</td></tr></table> REVISED TARGETS: <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Element 1</td><td>8 (44%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 5</td><td>9 (50%)</td></tr></table>	Element	Target	Element 1	8 (44%)	Element 5	9 (60%)	Element	Target	Element 1	8 (44%)	Element 5	9 (50%)	Results in 2014: <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Element 1</td><td>6 (33%)</td></tr><tr><td>Element 5</td><td>4 (22%)</td></tr></table> Although the revised targets were not achieved, significant progress was made on these elements since the Mid-Term Review in 2013. Since that point, seven PA business plans were developed for the following protected areas: Cuevas de Borbon o Pomier, Parque Nacional Los Haitises, Parque Nacional Lago Enriquillo, Monumento Natural Cabo Samaná, Monumento Natural Lagunas Cabarete y Goleta,	Element	Target	Element 1	6 (33%)	Element 5	4 (22%)				
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			Santuario de Mamíferos Marinos Estero Hondo and Parque Nacional Armando Bermúdez. Training was provided to stakeholders on the development of business plans and more generally on the financial sustainability of protected areas. Due to significant delays in procuring the services for the development of the business plans, they were only completed in 2014 and 2015 and they have not yet begun to be implemented.																								
3. Strengthened tools and systems for revenue generation and mobilization measured as an increased score in the following elements of Component 3 of UNDP Financial Sustainability Scorecard Rating: • PA training programmes on revenue generation mechanisms (Element 7)	By project start: <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Baseline</th></tr><tr><td>Element 7</td><td>1 (33%)</td></tr></table>	Element	Baseline	Element 7	1 (33%)	By end of project: <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Element 7</td><td>2 (67%)</td></tr></table>	Element	Target	Element 7	2 (67%)	Results 2014: <table><tr><th>Element</th><th>Target</th></tr><tr><td>Element 7</td><td>2 (67%)</td></tr></table> The target was achieved. Training was carried out on revenue generation mechanisms and on PA financial management. It will be important for the Ministry to continue to carry out training as personnel may change.	Element	Target	Element 7	2 (67%)												
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4. Increase in PA management effectiveness in 19 Priority PAs as measured by an increase in the METT scores	Baseline METT scores: 64.05% (18 AP) Revised average baseline score for 19 PAs: 62.88% <table><tr><th>Capacity level</th><th>Baseline (Average %)/ REVISED BASELINE</th></tr><tr><td>Management Plans</td><td>42.66/45.61</td></tr><tr><td>Research</td><td>40.66/54.39</td></tr><tr><td>Quantity of staff</td><td>64.66/52.63</td></tr></table>	Capacity level	Baseline (Average %)/ REVISED BASELINE	Management Plans	42.66/45.61	Research	40.66/54.39	Quantity of staff	64.66/52.63	Target METT scores: 85.00% (18AP) by project end Revised target METT score for 19 PAs: 66% <table><tr><th>Capacity level</th><th>Target (Average %)/ REVISED TARGETS</th></tr><tr><td>Management Plans</td><td>85/56</td></tr></table>	Capacity level	Target (Average %)/ REVISED TARGETS	Management Plans	85/56	Results 2015 for 19 priority PAs: Average METT score: 68%. The revised target was met. This score reflects a small increase in management effectiveness compared to the baseline. Scores for the sub-components can be found below: <table><tr><td>Management plans</td><td>61.4%</td></tr><tr><td>Research</td><td>77.2%</td></tr><tr><td>Quantity of staff</td><td>71.95%</td></tr><tr><td>Capacity of staff</td><td>61.4%</td></tr><tr><td>Budget</td><td>57.9%</td></tr><tr><td>Maintenance of equipment & infrastructure</td><td>61.4%</td></tr></table>	Management plans	61.4%	Research	77.2%	Quantity of staff	71.95%	Capacity of staff	61.4%	Budget	57.9%	Maintenance of equipment & infrastructure	61.4%
Capacity level	Baseline (Average %)/ REVISED BASELINE																										
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	Capacity of staff	54.66/57.89		Research	70/56		Education & awareness raising	43.9%	<p>Various external factors affected management effectiveness such the decentralization of some PA management functions that took place for a few years of the project without sufficient capacity in place, as well as significant reductions in the budget for NPAS, particularly from 2011-2013. Despite this situation, the revised overall target was met.</p> <p>The targets were surpassed for the following elements: Management Plans, Research, Quantity of staff and Monitoring & Evaluation. The targets for capacity of staff, maintenance of equipment and infrastructure, and facilities for visitors were reached.</p> <p>For the following elements, the targets were not achieved: budget, land use planning, education and awareness raising, and linkages with local communities. This was in part due to the need for government to address these issues more (e.g., budget and land use planning) and in part because these elements were not the focus of the project intervention (e.g., education and awareness raising). Particular attention should be paid to these elements in the future.</p>
	Budget	62.04/61.40		Quantity of staff	95/60		Land use planning	52.6%	
	Maintenance of equipment and infrastructure	40.74/56.14		Capacity of staff	90/70		Linkages with local communities	49%	
	Education & awareness raising	41.67/45.61		Budget	95/62		Monitoring and evaluation	54.4%	
	Land use planning	48.15/56.14		Maintenance of equipment and infrastructure	85/60		Facilities for visitors	64.9%	
	Linkages with local communities	54.0/57.89		Education and awareness raising	85/46				
	Monitoring & Evaluation	29.67/38.6		Land use planning	65/64				
	Facilities for visitors	54.70/56.14		Linkages with local communities	85/62				
				Monitoring & Evaluation	70/45				
				Facilities for visitors	85/62				

5. Increase in number of PAs with the necessary conditions for boosting revenue from visits and other services	0 PA	18 PA by end of project	A total of 18 protected areas benefited to a greater or lesser extent from improved conditions for boosting revenues from visits and other services. Through the project, road signs and internal PA signs were purchased and erected in 12 protected areas. Infrastructure investments were made in various protected areas in terms of office equipment such as GPSs, public use infrastructure (including at Visitor Centres), renovation or construction of control and surveillance centres, vehicles (including boats and motorcycles), and a radio communication system that will strengthen communication country wide, among others.
6. 18 prioritized PAs with Management Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 Prioritized PAs have outdated and incomplete management plans per official guidelines • One PA has a completed Management plan 	<p>By end of project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 updated management plans • 9 management plans 	Despite the earlier delays in procuring consultants to develop management plans, in a little over two years since the Mid-Term Review, the number of prioritized PAs with management plans increased from 4 to 18, with many completed in 2014 and early 2015. Four have been officially approved via Resolution, meaning that 14 are still in the process of validation from the technical staff of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity and still require official endorsement. It should be noted that the project-supported management plans were developed in a participatory fashion that differed from the methodology employed beforehand. It is recommended that the guidelines for preparing management plans therefore be updated.
7. % staffing of technical-administrative NPAS staff (system-wide and PA site level) with sufficient competence and skills required for their role in the PA System	<p>TBD by Year 1 of project.</p> <p>NOTE – Based on ongoing Ministry of Environment-TNC collaboration, the project will define the standards and required competencies and skills needed</p>	<p>By end of project;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% (133) park rangers, • 100% (35) administrators and • 100% (32) provincial directors and at the municipal level 	The PMU estimates that 100% of the administrators achieved the target in terms of competence based on training provided through the project. The actual number of administrators increased to 70 (compared to the 32 mentioned in the target). An estimated 50% of park rangers, provincial directors and municipal level staff have the required competences and skills. For the

	for key roles/positions within NPAS.	Revised target: 100% of the park rangers, administrators and corresponding provincial directors in the 10 prioritized PAs.	<p>latter, the original targets were not reached because of substantial personnel changes.</p> <p>A consultancy to define the competencies and skills needed for key positions was carried out at the level of the entire Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. Follow-up work is planned to look at procedural gaps and to develop an improvement plan.</p> <p>Given that this work is ongoing and that the restructuring is expected to be completed within a year, the baseline for this indicator was not calculated.</p> <p>The Ministry is keeping a record of staff members who have received training at the level of protected areas but not at the central level. These data have not been incorporated in an Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation system.</p>
8. A Monitoring and Evaluation System with integrated financial, operational and ecological data	<p>There is no integrated NPAS Monitoring and Evaluation System.</p> <p>Yet, some disparate components for a future system are in place. The status is as follows:</p> <p><u>Financial:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No financial baseline • No financial M&E • Preliminary Financial Score Card <p><u>Operational:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary METT scores <p><u>Ecological:</u></p>	<p>By end of project, all M&E components are established and the following will be operational:</p> <p><u>Financial:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial baseline established (TNC study finalized); • Basic financial M&E operational based on AOPs, budget formulation and management • Financial Score Card systematized and institutionalized from being measured 3 times during project implementation (start, mid and end) <p><u>Operational:</u></p>	<p>In terms of <u>financial</u> information, the financial scorecard was applied three times: in 2010, 2012 and 2014. The project supported the development of 72 AOPs (for all the protected areas with personnel). These AOPs do not include individual budgets. Decisions on allocating the limited budget among PAs is based on prioritization decisions made at the central level.</p> <p>In terms of <u>operational</u> information, METT scores were determined in 2009, 2012 as well as in 2014.</p> <p>Based on the interviews carried out during the final evaluation, the application of this instrument has now become institutionalized and is carried out every two years at the level of each protected area with an administrator. In terms of <u>ecological</u> data, the species and ecosystem indicators were selected, basic M&E is being carried out and the data are being gradually fed into the newly established database in order to</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No consolidated biological M&E Established GIS system that is capable of measuring land use cover change (LUCC). <p><u>Overall:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no institutional interpretation of data to support decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> METT scores systematized and institutionalized through two measurements during project duration (mid and end) <p><u>Ecological:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biological indicators of representative species/ecosystems selected during Year 1 Incipient biological M&E initiated Institutionalized regular measurement of land use cover change (LUCC) through GIS Unit. <p><u>Overall:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integral system and institutional capacity that allows for interpretation of data to support decision making 	<p>influence decision making (for example, if significant threats to species and/or ecosystems are identified). Land use cover change is measured via satellite images every 2 years.</p> <p>The operational, financial, and ecological data have not been integrated into one M&E system, as this was not deemed feasible at this point.</p>
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Outcome 3: Co-management arrangement to underwrite PA costs			
Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline	Target	Comments
1. Regulatory framework provisions on PA Co-management	Draft <i>Regulations and Procedures for Shared Management of Protected Areas</i> pending official approval.	By Year 1, approved Rules and Procedures.	Target reached. After different stages of review of the draft regulations and procedures, the Protected Areas Co-Management Regulation was finally approved by the Ministry in 2014. As such, the regulatory framework for co-management is in place.

2. Effective institutional coordination entities between Ministry of Environment and local stakeholders (communities and private sector) to foster cooperation and resolve conflicts with regard to co-management arrangement	<p>Proposal for Shared Management Unit within Ministry of Environment pending approval</p> <p>Proposal for Shared PA Management Board pending approval</p>	<p>By Year 1, Shared Management Unit within Ministry of Environment established and operational</p> <p>By Year 1, Shared PA Management Board established and operational</p>	<p>Target reached. A Co-Management Unit has been established within the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources with one staff member. The staff member participated in all the workshops related to the development of the Co-Management Regulation and received training on issues such as the updating of co-management agreements. In addition, the project supported the strengthening of this Unit through the purchase of equipment.</p> <p>The Co-Management Board has been established consisting of representatives of all the co-managing organizations in the country (approximately 30). The Board had its first meeting in October 2013 with 60 individuals participating representing 26 organizations . No subsequent meetings have been held since then. It is a useful space for the sharing of experiences among co-managing entities, and it will be important for the government to continue to fund meetings after the project.</p>
3. No. of PAs with Co-management Agreement in line with the new regulatory framework provisions on co-management	0 Co-management Agreements	<p>At least 18 co-management agreements by the end of project</p> <p>Revised target: 3 new and 10 renewed co-management agreements (as not all the PAs prioritized with this project lend themselves to co-management).</p>	The revised target for this indicator was reached. By June 2015, there were a total of 16 Co-Management agreements in the country (5 new and 11 updated). Three additional agreements are expected by the end of the year 2015.
4. No. of PAs with legal land ownership status defined	0 PAs	9 PAs by the end of project	The target was reached with 9 PAs with their legal land ownership defined in the following areas: MN Saltos de la Damajagua, 2-MN Cabo Samaná, 3-PN Cabo Cabron, 4-RC Loma Quita Espuela, 5-RC Guaconejo, 6-MN Lagunas Cabarete y Goleta, 7- PN Francisco Alberto Caamaño Deño, 8 PN Jaraguas, 9- one zone of Parque Nacional del Este.

5. No. of PAs with clarified boundaries registered in the National Cadastral Survey Registry	0 PAs	3 pilots PAs (Loma Quita Espuela/Loma Guaconejo, Saltos de la Damajagua and Los Quemados) will be officially registered with clarified boundaries in the National Cadastral Survey Registry by project end	The project supported the definition and verification of the boundaries of eight protected areas in the field. However, these could not be registered in the National Cadastral Survey Register because the state has not compensated the legal land owners after designating the PAs. This is an unresolved problem that the government has not yet addressed, perhaps due in part to the significant amount of funding required to do so.
6. No. of conservation easements established	0 PAs	<p>3 easements negotiated by the end of project</p> <p><i>Proposed revised target:</i> <i>Three pilot projects demonstrate social participation mechanisms and at least 1 private protected area declared by the Ministry is managed in accordance with the regulations and serves as a model for the implementation of private reserves.</i></p>	<p>The target was revised in 2012 because it was determined that conservation easements were outside of the scope of the project because they are legal agreements between two private parties. The revised target was reached.</p> <p>The country's first private reserve was declared (the Reserva el Zorzal) and a regulation for the declaration of private reserves was approved. A management plan was developed for the Reserve and species monitoring is being carried out.</p> <p>Three pilots projects were put in place to demonstrate social participation mechanisms and innovative funding mechanisms:</p> <p>1) Loma Quita Espuela/ Loma Guaconejo Scientific Reserves: carbon offset payments are being made to community members who are planting trees with the program Plan Vivo. A study was also carried out on PES for water provision and community members received training on this issue.</p> <p>2) Saltos de Damajagua Natural Monument: infrastructure investments to the Visitor Centre have facilitated increased revenues, with concomitant benefits to the Association of Guides and nearby communities in terms of revenue, physical infrastructure and employment.</p> <p>3) Francisco Alberto Caamaño Deño National Park: The project funded a census of users and the identification of possible mechanisms for compensation of individuals affected by the</p>

			<p>designation of the PA (though none of these have been implemented yet). The project also provided support for critical species monitoring and infrastructure improvements to the Visitor Centre and to the Protection and Monitoring Centre.</p>
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5.5 Efficiency

Satisfactory

81. Efficiency refers to the degree to which expected results were achieved using the least costly resources possible. The level of efficiency in this project is satisfactory. As described in more detail in the Project Results section, planned activities were carried out, and the majority of expected outputs were delivered with the budget available. GEF funded the incremental aspects that would not likely have received funding from the government, such as strategic planning documents, which, if fully implemented will have an important impact on the financial sustainability of the NPAS and therefore on the globally important biodiversity housed therein.

82. There are many examples of the PMU adopting a cost-efficient approach to minimize use of funds. For example, some of the workshops were held in existing installations of the Ministry of Environment's national environment school to save on accommodation costs. During the training course on the development of PA business plans, four plans were actually produced. For construction works, the material costs were often separated from labour costs during procurement to keep costs down. Interviewees at the pilot project level indicated that few resources translated into big impacts. For the Los Quemados pilot project managed by the Asociación Clemente Melo, the NGO relies exclusively on volunteer work by the family involved.

83. Substantial co-financing was secured in the amount of USD 13,699,532, supporting the achievement of project results and greatly exceeding the target included in the ProDoc of USD 8,622,000. It must be mentioned that the project did not finish on schedule requiring a one-year extension to complete all key deliverables. This was largely outside of the direct control of the Project Management Unit as there were delays experienced during the first years of the project related to insufficient high-level support for hiring consultants and delays throughout the project in finding the required expertise, which led to lost time and in the latter case, the need to republish some public bids several times. The one-year extension reduces cost efficiency for the UNDP (both at the country and regional level) as such extensions imply additional efforts.

5.6 Country Ownership and Relevance

Relevant

84. The project adhered to the objectives included in various national development and sectoral plans and strategies. For example, the Master Plan for the NPAS 2010-2030 is consistent with the National Development Strategy as well as with the Constitution, which was recently modified in 2010. The project is also fully in line with the country's National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity. In particular, national target 11 is highly relevant to this project as it is focused on strengthening the NPAS by 2016 through the implementation of NPAS's Master Plan and includes milestones such as having a regulation on private reserves, a regulation on co-management, and a functioning Protected Areas Endowment Fund. Related indicators include 18 priority protected areas with effective management, among others. It should also be noted that this National Strategy includes a target related to local participation and one of the indicators is the trends in PA co-management programs with direct benefits to local community groups.

85. Project design was carried out in a participatory manner with relevant government institutions. There was an indication from some of the Final Evaluation interviewees that some government proponents would have appreciated a greater focus on infrastructure investments as well as on practical actions to protect biodiversity directly. Others agreed with the strategic focus on putting in place mechanisms for long-term financial sustainability.

86. Country ownership of the project increased over the time period of project implementation and was satisfactory by the end of the project. For the first few years, there was insufficient high-level support for the project (as it was designed) within the Ministry, which led to delays in implementation of activities, particularly those that required the hiring of consultants. However, with time, ownership increased substantially. Two new key regulations developed with project support received formal approval, namely, the regulations on co-management and on the establishment of private reserves. Other strategic outputs still require official approval, such as the Capacity Strengthening Plan. As another sign of its commitment, the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity now has a Co-Management Unit in place, a Property Jurisdiction Office, and a PA Maintenance and Signage unit as part of its institutional structure. In terms of financial commitment to the project, the government provided USD 1,769,945 in co-financing compared to the amount indicated in the CEO Endorsement of 1,077,000. This includes the USD 200,000 contributed by the government to the National Protected Areas Trust Fund. There were some delays in providing this funding and there have not been further contributions since 2012. It should also be noted that the budget assigned to the Ministry of Environment declined significantly in 2011-2013 but has since recovered to approach baseline levels; this may have been in part due to the financial challenges facing the country and partly because environmental issues were not sufficiently prioritized.

87. Project implementation has involved the active involvement of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity in activities such as the technical revision of draft PA management plans, negotiations related to the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, and provision of data for studies such as the economic valuation study. Interviews with personnel of the Vice Ministry indicated that they perceived the project to be their project as opposed to an external activity separate from their work. This was not necessarily the case at the outset of the project but was achieved over time. This integration of the project within the Vice Ministry is due to the fact that the project responded to institutional needs both at the central level and at the level of individual protected areas, as well as due to the regular communication and collaboration that the PMU maintained with staff. It should be noted that there were some internal discussions as to the utility of the results of the economic valuation study and insufficient support to carry out an associated advocacy campaign during the time period of the project.

88. The management level of the Vice Ministry, the International Cooperation Directorate and the Planning Directorate were members of the Project Steering Committee, which met since 2013. It would have been useful to have had a Steering Committee in place from the outset of the project and to have had meetings at least twice a year. Particularly in the context of personnel changes (including at the level of Ministers and Directors), regular Steering Committee meetings could have helped stakeholders better understand and provide strategic guidance and support to the project. In addition, an expanded Steering Committee including institutions outside of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and/or an inter-governmental technical committee would have further supported institutionalization of project outputs. Members of civil society were involved in project activities such as the pilot projects in Saltos de Damajagua, El Zorzal Private Reserve and the Francisco Alberto Caamaño Deño National Park.

89. In order to maximize the sustainability of project impact, continued government commitment and political will are essential, in particular to approve and act on key strategic outputs, such as the economic valuation study, to continue to inject funds into the National Protected Areas Trust Fund, and to carry out institutional restructuring to increase efficiency.

5.7 Mainstreaming UNDP Priorities

Poverty reduction

90. The project led to tangible benefits in terms of poverty reduction in two of the pilot projects, Saltos de Damajagua and Loma Quita Espuela/ Loma Guaconejo. In Saltos de Damajagua, the project supported infrastructure improvements, including to the kitchen, which provides employment to women from nearby communities. In addition, as the infrastructure and visitor numbers increased, so too did earnings. A percentage of the earnings of the Association of Guides of Saltas de Damajagua goes toward community projects, such as installation of aqueducts, thus supporting poverty reduction and improved standards of living in the nearby communities. Interviewees indicated that there has been a significant change in the economic situation of the area.

91. Through the Loma Quita Espuela/ Loma Guaconejo pilot project, eight agricultural producers in the buffer zone of the protected areas are participating in a carbon offset scheme, whereby they are engaged in sustainable agricultural production and obtain a premium to plant native trees at the same time. They received their first payments at the end of 2014 through this innovative financial mechanism. This provides producers with the capacity and with incentives to engage in sustainable production as an alternative to slash-and-burn agriculture. The Foundation that co-manages the Loma Quita Espuela Scientific Reserve is interested in involving additional producers and expanding the scheme. In addition to this initiative, there is some small-scale production of cocoa within the El Zorzal Private reserve in order to provide income for its upkeep, which is providing community employment for planting and maintenance activities.

92. Project support for a co-management regulation and for the renewal/ establishment of new co-management agreements could also benefit poverty reduction through the increased involvement of nearby communities in protected areas management and through an equitable distribution of benefits (as has been modeled in Saltos de Damajagua).

93. It would be remiss not to mention the impact that the protected area business plans developed late in the project could have on poverty reduction if implemented. This is the first time that such plans have been developed for protected areas in the Dominican Republic and they identify viable ecotourism products in each area. This could provide a way for local stakeholders, associations, and interested parties to become involved in marketing sustainable tourism products.

Gender

94. The project did not adopt a specific or strategic approach to gender. Many of the more macro project deliverables did not necessarily lend themselves to any kind of differentiation based on gender. At the pilot project level, the project did lead to some benefits for women. For example, in Saltos de Damajagua, the project supported the refurbishment of the visitor facilities including the kitchen, which provides employment to women in the neighbouring communities. Generally, project training events included female participation. According to interviews, the proportion of women to men was approximately four women for every 10 men, reflecting the fact that there are more men working in protected areas; however the specific number of female versus male participants was not tracked. In terms of the composition of the Project Management Unit itself, two of the four members were women and several of the consultancies were carried out by women, such as the development of four business plans and of the manual on ecotourism concessions.

Vulnerability and risk reduction

95. One of the key project contributions to reducing vulnerability was the support provided for the development of the regulation on the establishment of private reserves, which puts in place the necessary regulatory framework. In addition, through project support and co-financing, the first private reserve in the country was established (El Zorzal Reserve), which increases connectivity between two existing protected areas (the Loma Quita Espuela and Guaconejo Scientific Reserves), and thus enhances the resilience of the species and ecosystems present in the region.

96. The economic valuation of the ecosystem services provided by protected areas took into consideration the value of the carbon capture and climatic regulation functions performed by the NPAS. It is recommended that greater efforts be undertaken post project to ensure that stakeholders of key institutions understand the vital role that the protected areas system plays in mitigation, adaptation and reducing vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events. This message could be included in the advocacy campaign that should be carried out to disseminate the results of the economic valuation exercise with high-level decision makers with the view to increasing budgetary allocation to the NPAS.

South-South cooperation

97. There were several instances of joint training and information sharing among countries of the region, with the strongest two-way South-South cooperation taking place with Cuba. These include:

- Workshop to exchange experiences with a Cuban project, entitled "Application of a regional approach to the management of marine and coastal protected areas in Cuba's Southern Archipelagos";
- Participation of two PA administrators in the Programa Reserva, which is a training course on natural resources management in Mexico in 2013, 2014 and 2015;
- Participation of a PA technical staff member in a course on protected areas management at the University of Colorado, U.S.;
- Participation of two administrators in a course for park rangers in Argentina in 2013.

98. With regard to Cuba, there has been joint cooperation and information exchange on issues such as harmonization of species and ecosystem monitoring protocols, co-management, public use and signage of PAs.

5.8 Sustainability

Moderately Likely

99. The project has worked hard to put in place elements to ensure the sustainability of impacts, from strengthening the governance framework and institutional capacity to establishing a National Protected Areas Trust Fund that is already generating funds to be reinvested in the system. The next paragraphs describe these achievements in more detail. Despite progress, full sustainability, including financial sustainability, is not a done deal yet. The Trust Fund has not been fully capitalized so the interest earnings are not what they could be. Some key project deliverables were developed late in the project and will require time to be institutionalized and implemented (such as the PA business plans) and others require more high-level dissemination to increase their impact (such as the economic valuation study). Had there been more time to carry this out, the sustainability ratings would have been even higher. Ongoing government commitment to move forward to make full use of project outputs will be critical.

Financial (Moderately Likely)

100. The project made a vital contribution to the sustainability of the NPAS by supporting the establishment of the Fondo Marena and within its structure, the National Protected Areas Trust Fund. As mentioned under Outcome 1, this Fund is already operating, generating interest and as of 2015, beginning to make disbursements. The full amount of capital committed through the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund from KfW and TNC is pending the signature of the vertical agreement between the Fondo Marena and CBF. Based on the interviews undertaken, it appears that there is commitment on both sides to see these negotiations through to a successful conclusion by the end of 2015 with signature of the agreement. This Fund is a vital element, indeed a bastion, of NPAS financial sustainability as all the interest earnings are specifically earmarked for investment in PAs, based on the Ministry of Environment's Annual Operational Plan in which priorities for investment are defined. Since the total capital investment is expected to be over 9.5 million USD, the interest earnings per year could be substantial (estimated at USD 450,000 annually depending on the interest rate).

101. The disbursement of interest earnings from the CBF capital will depend on government matching funds beginning two years after the signing of the vertical agreement. The financial mechanism established by Dominican law is that the Ministry of Environment should transfer 33% of its internal funds to the Fondo Marena, and in turn a percentage of Fondo Marena's funds should be allocated to the National Protected Areas Trust Fund. It should be noted that the government is not yet meeting the financial targets established by the law in terms of contributions to the Fondo Marena, having not made any contributions since 2012. Some interviewees indicated that it will be challenging for the government to provide all of the co-matching funds for the NPATF, especially considering the exchange rate between USD and pesos.

102. As described under Outcome 1, the level of revenue generation from the NPAS has nearly doubled during the lifetime of the project as a result of increased controls on tourist access to PAs, increased

visitation levels and visitor fee increases, however this has not yet translated into increased budgetary allocation for the NPAS. In fact there was a considerable reduction in the budget of the Vice Ministry compared to the project outset in 2011, 2012, and 2013 although by 2015, the budgetary allocation had recovered substantially, due in part to project support for improved budget planning. In order to reduce the financial risks associated with the national accounting system, it will be vital for the Vice Ministry to continue to carry out careful planning and increase budgetary execution and continue to make the case for increased reinvestments of the rising revenues being generated by the NPAS. As highlighted in the Recommendations section, an advocacy campaign also needs to be carried out to disseminate the results of the economic valuation study to high-level decision makers to make the case for increased budgetary allocation.

103. The full capitalization of the National Protected Areas Trust Fund and adequate budgetary allocations will be necessary to increase the management effectiveness of PAs in the system and to ensure continued capacity building. At the moment, funds are still limited (particularly in the context of a system that has 123 PAs), leading to a situation where PA management plans are not being implemented in a rigorous fashion. While the project supported the development of Annual Operational Plans for some protected areas, these are developed without a budget as the amount to be received depends on availability rather than the specific financial needs identified.

104. The potential impact of the protected areas business plans in increasing revenues at the community level (and therefore local financial sustainability) has not yet been realized as the plans were only developed close to the conclusion of the project and have not yet been adequately disseminated nor have they been implemented. For some areas with business plans, such as for the Estero Hondo Marine Mammal Sanctuary, possible external funds have been identified to make initial investments, but this is not yet the case for all of the PAs. However, in all PAs for which business plans were developed associations or entrepreneurs exist who could take the initiative/ demonstrate leadership in beginning their implementation. In terms of the further establishment of private reserves, this will depend in part on whether specific economic incentives can be identified for landowners to set aside part of their land for conservation purposes. Moreover, implementation of actions to further develop the concept of PES in the country will require dedicated resources.

105. In light of the situation described above, particularly in terms of the pending signature of the vertical agreement between Fondo Marena and CBF, a certain level of uncertainty as to whether the government will match interest earnings of the NPATF fully, and the budgetary constraints the government is working under in part due to macroeconomic factors, the rating for financial sustainability is Moderately Likely, meaning there are moderate risks to this element of sustainability but it is expected that many of the outcomes will be sustained.

Institutional and governance framework (Likely)

106. The governance framework to ensure the sustainability of project results has strengthened considerably over the last few years of the project with the formal approval of both the co-management regulation in 2015 and the regulation for the declaration of private protected areas or voluntary conservation in 2013. The approval of the Law on Payment for Environmental Services is still pending

approval by the country's Senate; if approved, it would provide the regulatory underpinning for the National Strategy for Payment for Environmental Services that was developed in 2014.

107. The PA management plans developed with project funding and support are key tools to guide management at the level of individual protected areas. To serve as effective instruments to guide management, these should be formally approved by Resolution and sufficient funding for their implementation along with appropriate staffing need to be secured. At this point, only four of the 18 management plans developed through the project have received such approval.

108. Institutional capacity in terms of technical know-how to sustain project impacts has increased over time, as the project supported capacity building both at the central level and at the level of individual protected areas, on topics such as effective PA management, ecotourism, measuring management effectiveness, and financial sustainability of NPAS, among others. Interviewees during the final evaluation perceived this training as very important to them. However, the number of staff members to promote management effectiveness and financial sustainability remains limited, particularly at the level of individual protected areas. In order to address institutional weaknesses, the project supported a revision of the institutional structure of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources in terms of the roles and functions of personnel. It will be critical for the Directorate of Planning to move forward as planned with the next steps in institutional strengthening, which include the development of a manual on procedures and an improvement plan.

109. It should be mentioned that the government has assumed some new structures and staff positions that were initiated through the project, which signals a commitment to ensuring the sustainability of project results. In particular, the Co-Management Unit, Property Jurisdiction Office and PA Maintenance/ Signage unit were all established during the project and are now being funded by the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity. In addition, the individual who was involved in creating the database on species and ecosystems as part of Outcome 2 of the project is now a staff member of the Ministry. Moreover, according to interviews, some project activities have now been institutionalized within the Vice Ministry, such as the regular measurement of PA management effectiveness using the METT tool.

Socio-political (Moderately likely)

110. Institutional stakeholders at the management level who were interviewed expressed their commitment to continuing to build on project achievements. Nevertheless, there is always a risk that the level of support given to protected areas through budgetary allocations will differ with changes to the political authorities. This remains the case with the single account system in place now whereby all government funds are put into one account and then redistributed based primarily on government prioritization, budgetary planning, and execution capacity. The Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity has been increasing its budgetary execution and planning in order to try to maximize the budget assigned to it. The project supported this exercise through capacity building. It will be important to secure high-level political commitment in the years to come to fully take advantage of the strategic outputs developed by the project, such as the National Protected Areas Trust Fund, the economic valuation study, and the PA management plans, to name a few.

111. The level of social support for effective PA management and biodiversity conservation from nearby communities and the society at large will depend on the effectiveness with which business plans can be implemented as well the benefits that communities accrue from co-management and from the establishment of private reserves. The pending issue of compensation of community members for the declaration of PAs and restrictions on their activities will need further attention from government to minimize conflicts. With one of the communities involved in the project, whose members never received compensation, a few of the PA signs erected with the project were actually removed, which underscores the need to work on this issue.

Environmental (Likely)

112. No significant environment-related risks were identified that could undermine the sustainability of project results. Project support for strengthening the financial sustainability of the NPAS and thereby increasing the management effectiveness of the PAs will strengthen the role they play in reducing the country's vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events. In addition, the promotion of private reserves and co-management can also increase management effectiveness and thereby enhance environmental sustainability. With respect to private reserves, these can enhance connectivity between protected areas included in the NPAS and thus enhance resilience. This is the case with the El Zorzal private reserve that was established with project support, which links two Scientific Reserves (IUCN Category 1), namely, Loma Quita Espuela and Loma El Guaconejo.

5.9 Impact

113. An assessment of impact needs to analyze both direct evidence of environmental improvements and the extent to which mechanisms were put in place to contribute to environmental benefits in the future. In terms of direct impact, satellite image data from 2012 indicate that there was no loss of wet and moist broad-leaf forested ecosystems compared to the project start in 18 priority PAs, which is a positive sign that threats to PAs had not exacerbated by that point. In addition, the area dedicated to short-cycle agriculture was found to have decreased by 2012. Unfortunately, the final project impact on these elements cannot be determined as of yet as the 2014 data will only be processed by the end of 2015. There are no data on the project's impacts on specific species; in fact a database on the biodiversity of protected areas is only now being populated as a result of the establishment of a Species and Ecosystem Monitoring and Evaluation System through the project.

114. The creation of a private reserve contributed to increased biological connectivity as the El Zorzal Reserve links two existing scientific reserves with IUCN Category 1 of protection. The pilot project in the Loma Quita Espuela and Loma Guaconejo Scientific Reserves which promoted native tree planting by agricultural producers will likely have a small positive impact on carbon capture, biodiversity and reduced soil erosion but the seedlings are still too small to perceive significant benefits at this point. The ultimate impact in terms of carbon capture will depend on whether the producers decide to continue to renew the agreements and refrain from cutting the trees once they are mature.

115. The results of the application of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) for the priority 19 priority PAs represents an indirect measure to gauge whether management capacity to deal with stresses on ecological systems has changed over the time period of the project. The data gathered in 2014 suggested a small increase in management effectiveness in the prioritized protected areas compared to project outset. It is important to keep in mind that there were very significant external factors outside of the control of the project that undermined management effectiveness whose impact might have led to further declines in management effectiveness without the project. Stresses on ecological systems may also have gone down due to the fact that the population within protected areas was found to have decreased in 2012 compared to project outset.

116. The project has made important advances to set in motion processes to ensure positive ecological impact, through the many actions described in detail in the Results section. Examples include capacity building and ongoing work to strengthen the Ministry of Environment, various actions to increase the resources available for the management of the NPAS including through the establishment of a National Protected Areas Trust Fund (NPATF) and increased revenue generation from the system, the development of new PA management models (e.g., strengthening co-management and developing a regulation for the creation of private reserves) and innovative mechanisms for generating financial resources (e.g., through PES payments for carbon capture). The scale at which these processes are being put in place is appropriate to achieve impact in the NPAS as many of the deliverables have national application, such as the NPATF, new management models, and a strengthened Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. The likely permanence or sustainability of these processes is described in detail in the Sustainability section and will depend in large part on political will and continued follow-up to fully implement the strategic outputs developed through the project.

5.10 Conclusions

117. The project benefited from an effective Project Management Unit that worked hard to achieve expected project results within the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, as well as the support of the UNDP Country Office in technical and financial oversight. Despite significant delays in the first few years of the project and important changes to the external context, the Executing Agency was able to employ adaptive management and achieve the majority of project deliverables. More time to disseminate and fully institutionalize the results would, however, have been useful.

118. The project has made important inroads in the implementation of the Plan for the Financial Sustainability of the National Protected Areas System, which was developed during the project preparatory phase. This project enabled the country to have a series of "firsts", which represent a significant advance compared to the baseline at the outset of the project. For example, for the first time, the country has a National Protected Areas Trust Fund, which is operational and generating interest earnings. Dominican Republic is in fact the first of the eight countries participating in the Caribbean Challenge Initiative to have set this up. This is considered a key element of the financial architecture for sustainability. Business plans for protected areas were developed for the first time for seven prioritized areas and a Species and Ecosystem Monitoring System was designed. Furthermore, the first private reserve in the Dominican Republic was established through the project, which increases biological connectivity between two existing

scientific reserves. In order to heighten the level of understanding of the important contribution of the National Protected Areas System to the economy, the first economic valuation was carried out.

119. Through project support, the regulatory framework for different PA management models was substantially strengthened as the co-management regulation was formally approved as was the regulation on the establishment of private reserves. Institutional capacity was increased through capacity building at the central level and the level of individual protected areas on issues such as financial sustainability in general, preparation of Annual Operational Plans, and business planning, among others. The project funded a consultancy to support institutional restructuring to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, which has not yet been fully implemented. The project also funded key infrastructure investments in prioritized PAs and the development of PA management plans for 18 protected areas. Three pilot projects were carried out to put in place innovative funding mechanisms. Perhaps the most groundbreaking of these for the Dominican Republic was the implementation of a carbon offset program for producers engaging in native tree planting.

120. Various strategic documents were developed to guide PA management, such as the manual on the establishment of ecotourism concessions, a strategy for Payments for Environmental Services, guidelines for the development of business plans, and a system for user fees in PAs. The increase in visitor fees in some PAs, coupled with increased controls on visitors entering PAs, have led to an almost doubling of the revenue generated from protected areas in the country.

121. The project has therefore put in place a number of key elements that could ensure the financial sustainability of the National Protected Areas System, but the end goal has not yet been fully reached, which means that follow-up actions after the project will be absolutely vital. Despite substantial increases to the revenues generated in the NPAS, this has not yet translated into increased budget allocation. In fact, the budget allocation is slightly lower than the baseline amount.

122. There is a tremendous potential to increase the funding available for investment in NPAS, but full financial sustainability will depend on the conclusion of the negotiations and signing of the vertical agreement with the Caribbean Biodiversity to secure the remaining promised capital as well as contributions from the government to match interest earnings to be able to access it. Continued work to strengthen budgetary planning and execution will be vital to maximize reinvestment in the NPAS. A high-level advocacy campaign to disseminate the results of the economic valuation study was not carried out through the project but is imperative to lobby for increased budgetary allocations. In addition, the innovative mechanisms explored through the pilot projects need to be further implemented and promoted for replication, such as payments for environmental services, compensation for landowners affected by PA designation and co-management arrangements involving the equitable distribution of benefits. The Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity will need to take a proactive role in building on the important foundation laid by the project so that the NPAS has the funds available for effective management and biodiversity conservation.

123. The following paragraphs will outline best practices employed, lessons learned as well as recommendations in order to maximize project impact.

5.11 Best Practices

- *Designation of a member of the Project Management Unit to take responsibility for each Project Outcome*

Once the structure of the PMU was revised in 2012, there was a designated person to take charge of each project Outcome, which supported achievement of project objectives and goals and helped increase budgetary execution substantially.

- *Development of protected areas management plans in a participatory fashion*

The project helped to shape a new methodology for the development of PA management plans, which was highly participatory in contrast to how such plans had been developed in the country prior to the project. Not only did this process involve workshops to gather information from local stakeholders but the management plans themselves recommend the formation of Monitoring Committees comprising all key stakeholders to support their implementation.

- *Integration of externally financed project into the work of the government Executing Agency*

Rather than functioning as a stand-alone project with an isolated PMU, as is sometimes the case in projects, different stakeholders interviewed stressed that the PMU effectively worked within the institution that housed it (i.e., the Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity). This integration strengthened significantly over time. This was achieved through regular communication and the involvement of Ministry staff from the outset of each initiative. In addition, the project coordinator ensured that all project outputs were validated by the Ministry. As a result of this, the Ministry has demonstrated a commitment to following up on project outputs, as exemplified, for example, by its decision to set up a Co-Management Unit, a Property Jurisdiction Office and a PA Maintenance/Signage unit to continue to work on these issues.

- *Establishment of technical committee for the implementation of pilot project in El Zorzal private reserve*

This technical team included representatives from government, the umbrella NGO Consorcio Ambiental Dominicano, Foundation Loma Quita Espuela (which was directly implementing the Plan Vivo component), and the project. This team work facilitated the achievement of the results.

- *Production of a detailed final project report to summarize achievements, impacts and lessons learned.*

While most Project Documents indicate that this will be done, it is often not the case in practice. Here a consultant was hired to objectively report on the project's deliverables.

5.12 Lessons Learned

- *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.

5.13 Recommendations

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 intrainstitutional 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 29 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 kickstart 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 intersectoral 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 example 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.

Annex 1: List of Stakeholders Interviewed and/or Present in Final Evaluation Meetings

Name of Stakeholder	Position
Alcala, Alejandro	Administrator, Cabo de Samaná Natural Monument
Alcántara , Juan	Directorate of Planning, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
Baez, Jose Enrique	Director of Protected Areas, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
Batista, Yabanez	CEO, Caribbean Biodiversity Fund
Beras, Ana Carolina	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNDP Dominican Republic
Bonnelly, Isabel	Ecotourism Department, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
Camilo, Maria Altagracia	Executive Director, Fundación Loma Quita Espuela
Carib, Emmanuel	Fundación Loma Quita Espuela
Delance, Jonathan	Project Coordinator
Fabián, Enrique	Administrator of Loma Quita Espuela
Fabreta Veera, Roselio	Farmer involved in Reserva El Zorzal Pilot project
Fernández, Clara	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Project Management Unit
Ferroukhi, Lyes	Regional Technical Advisor, UNDP Regional Service Centre
García, Carlos	Director of Planning, Cooperation and Development, Fondo Marena
García, Nicolas	Directorate of Planning, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
González, Manuel	Species and Ecosystem Database, Directorate of Biodiversity, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
Mateo Félix, José Manuel	Director of Biodiversity
Mejia, Kathia	Fundación Sur Futuro, member of Fondo Marena Board of Directors
Melo, Hector	Asociación Clemente Melo, Los Quemados Pilot Project
Morales, Maria Eugenia	Environment and Energy Official, UNDP Dominican Republic
Nuñez, Jimmy	Administrator for Marine Mammal Sanctuary Banco de la Plata y de la Navidad and former administrator of Cabo Samaná Natural Monument

Paredes, Sol Teresa	Responsible for Payment for Environmental Services in Ministry of Environment and counterpart for carbon offset pilot project work.
Raposo, Ekers	Responsible for management of protected areas, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
Rodriguez, Sesar	Executive Director, Consorcio Ambiental Dominicano
Russa, Lourdes	Consultant responsible for developing various Business Plans and for manual on concessions
Sanchez, Nestor	Consultant in charge of systematization of project experiences
Santana, Daneris	Deputy Minister of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
Vázquez, Rafael	Producer

Annex 2: Itinerary

Final Evaluation Mission- September 7-11, 2015

Date	Time	Stakeholder
Monday Sept. 7	9:00 – 11:00 am	Meeting-UNDP Country Office Ana Carolina Beras and Jacqueline Sanchez
	11:00 am - 11:45 pm	Briefing- UNDP Country Office Luciana Mermet and Ana Carolina Beras
	12:00 – 12:45 pm	Meeting with Patricia Abreu, GEF Focal Point
	12:45pm – 1:45 pm	Lunch
	2:00pm – 4:15 pm	Meeting with Project Management Unit members Jonathan Delance and Clara Fernández
Tues. Sept. 8	9:00 – 10:30 am	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Meeting with Deputy Minister, Director of Protected Areas, and Director of Biodiversity
	10:45 – 11:30 am	Directorate of Planning, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Juan Alcántara and Nicolas García
	11:45 – 12:30 pm	Meeting with Héctor Melo Piloto Los Quemados
	12:30 -1:00	Ecotourism Department, Ministry of Environment Isabel Bonnelly
	1:00 pm – 02:00pm	Lunch
	2:00pm – 2:45 pm	Meeting with Consultant, Néstor Sanchez, in charge of systematization of project experiences
	4:00 – 4:45	Fundación Sur Futuro, Member of the Fondo Mareña Board Kathia Mejia, Executive Director
Wednesday Sept. 9	All day	Field visit and interviews at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • El Zorzal Private Reserve • Sesar Rodriguez, CAD

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundación Loma Quita Espuela (Representative of Co-Management Board)
Thursday Sept. 10	All day	Visit to Protected Areas in Samaná: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabo Samaná Natural Monument, interviews with former and current administrator Interview with Lourdes Russa, consultant responsible for developing various Business Plans and for manual on concessions
Friday, Sept. 11		
	8:30-10:00	Preparation for presentation
	10:15-11:00	Interview with Project Coordinator Jonathan Delance
	11:00 -12:00 pm	Debriefing of preliminary evaluation results to Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and UNDP CO Deputy Minister of Protected Areas and Biodiversity; Director of Biodiversity; Staff member from Protected Areas Directorate; UNDP Country Office
	12:00-12:30	Meeting with staff member charged with setting up species and ecosystem database
	12:30-1:15	Meeting with Sol Teresa Paredes, Responsible for Payment for Environmental Services in Ministry of Environment and counterpart for carbon offset pilot project

Additional Interviews Outside of the Evaluation Mission:

September 4	Teleconference with Maria Eugenia Morales, Environment and Energy Program Officer
September 4	Teleconference with Lyes Ferroukhi, Regional Technical Advisor, UNDP
September 14	Teleconference with Yabanez Batista, CEO of Caribbean Biodiversity Fund
September 15	Teleconference with Carlos Garcia, Director of Planning, Cooperation and Development, Fondo Marena

Annex 3: Interview Questions

(note that specific questions were tailored to each individual interviewee)

Evaluative Criteria	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Questions			
Overall project assessment, lessons learned and recommendations			
What do you perceive as the project's most significant achievements thus far?	Project achievements	Interviews Project documentation	Interviews Review of project documentation
Please comment on any lessons learned thus far through this project	Lessons learned	Project reports Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews
What issues, if any, are impeding project progress and how might these be addressed?	Obstacles to progress	Interviews Project reports	Interviews Review of project documentation
Do you have any recommendations to strengthen project execution and delivery?	Recommendations	Interviews Project documentation	Interviews Review of project documentation
Do you have any recommendations to maximize project impact and sustainability?	Recommendations	Interviews Project documentation	Interviews Project documentation
Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?			
To what extent does the project correspond to local and national development priorities and organizational policies?	Level of consistency between project objectives and achievements and national priorities	ProDoc Evaluation mission interviews	Review of documentation Interviews
To what extent is the project in line with GEF Operational Programs or the strategic priorities under which the project was funded?	Level of consistency between project objectives and achievements and the strategic priorities and programs of GEF	ProDoc GEF strategy documents	Review of project and GEF documentation
Are the objectives of the project still appropriate given the changed circumstances since the project was designed?	Level of fit between project objectives and socio-economic/environmental and political context.	Interviews Project reports	Interviews Review of project documentation
What is the level of country ownership of the project?	Level of country ownership	Interviews Project reports	Interviews Review of project documentation

Have the relevant representatives from government and civil society been involved in project implementation, including as part of the project steering committee?	Level of participation of key stakeholders in project implementation	Project documentation (e.g. PIRs, list of steering committee members, attendance sheets for steering committee meetings)	Review of project documentation
Has the government enacted legislation and/or developed policies and regulations in line with the project's objectives?	Draft or enacted legislation, policies or regulations that are consistent with project.	Project documentation (PIRs and progress reports) Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews
Effectiveness: to what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
To what extent were each of the project outcomes and project objective achieved thus far?	Logframe indicators at the objective and outcome levels	PIRs, progress reports, consultancy reports Interviews	Review of documentation Interviews Field visits
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in line with international and national norms and standards?			
To what extent have the results been delivered with the least costly resources possible?	Total amount spent compared to budget Amount spent per output and outcome compared to budget Total amount of co-financing secured	PIRs (particularly summaries of project expenses) Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews
Sustainability			
Are there financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outcomes?	Amount of funding available after project termination to support project objectives	Interviews	Interviews
Has a mechanism been installed to ensure financial and economic sustainability once GEF assistance ends?	Financial commitments or arrangements established to secure resources for post-project activities that are consistent with project objectives	Project reports Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews
Is there sufficient stakeholder (including government and public) awareness and ownership of the project's long-term objectives?	Level of stakeholder support for project objectives	Project reports including surveys Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews
Do the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?	Existence of legal and policy frameworks and governance structures to enable sustainability of project benefits	Project reports Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews

Are required systems for accountability and transparency, and required technical know-how, in place?	Level of capacity, accountability and transparency to facilitate sustainability of project achievements	Project reports Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews
Are there ongoing activities that may pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outcomes?	Presence of environmental threats to project sustainability	Project reports Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews
Project Design			
Were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its time frame?	Content of logframe	Logframe Interviews	Review of logframe Interviews
Were the main project assumptions and risks identified?	Project assumptions and risks	Logframe Interviews	Review of logframe Interviews
Were the capacities and resources of the executing institution and counterparts properly considered when the project was designed?	Capacity and resources of EA and counterparts at project entry	Interviews ProDoc	Interviews Review of ProDoc
Were the management arrangements and roles and responsibilities properly identified prior to project approval?	Detail and clarity of management arrangements	ProDoc	Review of ProDoc
Were partnership arrangements negotiated prior to project approval?	Agreements with partners on project implementation at project entry	ProDoc Interviews	Review of ProDoc Interviews
To what extent did stakeholders participate in the project formulation process?	Level of stakeholder participation in project design	ProDoc Interviews	Review of ProDoc Interviews
Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design?	Project design reflecting previous lessons learned	Interviews	Interviews
Impact			
What are the main positive and negative impacts of the project thus far?	Project impacts (e.g. re. capacity, enabling framework, etc.)	Project reports Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews Field visits
Has the project led to global environmental benefits or reductions in stress to ecological systems, or is there evidence that the project	Levels of land degradation Systems, structures and capacity expected to lead to changes in levels of land degradation	Project reports Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews

has put in place processes that will lead to such impact?			
Project Implementation			
Has Implementing Agency & Executing Agency supervision and support been adequate so far?	EA and IA level of supervision and support	Interviews Project reports (PIRs, progress reports)	Interviews Review of project documentation
Has there been an appropriate focus on results by the IA and EA?	EA and IA monitoring of results	Interviews Project reports (PIRs, progress reports)	Interviews Review of project documentation
Are managing parties responsive to significant implementation problems (if any) and project risks?	Response to implementation problems and risks	Project reports Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews
Does the M&E plan include all necessary elements to permit the monitoring of results and clearly identify M&E roles and responsibilities?	M&E Plan	ProDoc	Review of ProDoc
Was the M&E Plan sufficiently budgeted and funded during project preparation and implementation?	Amount of funding designated and actually utilized for M&E	ProDoc Interviews Project reports detailing expenses	Review of ProDoc Interviews Review of project expenses
Is the project logframe effectively being used as a management tool to measure progress and performance?	Use of logframe	Project reports including PIRs Interviews	Review of project reports Interviews
Are progress and financial reporting requirements/ schedules complied with, including the timely delivery of well-developed monitoring reports (PIRs)?	Content and submission dates of project reports	Interviews Project reports	Interviews Review of project documentation
Are follow-up actions, and/or adaptive management, taken in response to M&E activities (e.g., in response to PIRs, MTE if applicable and steering committee meetings)?	Responses to M&E activities	Project reports Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews
If changes in planned project outputs, activities or implementation methodology were made, were these adequately justified and approved by	Explanations provided for changes during project implementation	Steering committee minutes Project reports	Review of steering committee minutes and project documentation

the project steering committee?			
Stakeholders			
Is the project involving the relevant stakeholders through information sharing and consultation and by seeking their active participation in project implementation, and M&E?	Level of participation of stakeholders in project implementation	Project reports Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews Field visits
Project Finance			
Is there sufficient clarity in the reported co-financing and leveraged resources to substantiate in-kind and cash co-financing from all listed sources?	Table specifying co-financing and leveraged resources secured and sources thereof	Project reports Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews
Have the reasons for differences in the level of expected and actual co-financing been made clear and are the reasons compelling?	Explanation of difference between expected and actual co-financing	Project reports and final co-financing figures Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews
Are externally funded project components well integrated into the GEF supported components?	Components funded by co-financing	Project reports Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews
Is the extent of materialization of co-financing having an effect on project outcomes and/or sustainability?	Total co-financing secured Level of achievement of project outcomes Perceived project sustainability	Project reports Interviews	Review of project documentation Interviews
Mainstreaming			
Is it possible to identify and define positive or negative effects of the project on local populations?	Employment generated as result of project Impact of project on income levels, food security, etc.	PIRs Interviews	Review of PIRs Interviews Field visits
Do the project objectives conform to agreed priorities in the UNDP country programme document (CPD) country programme action plan (CPAP), and UN Development Assistance framework (UNDAF)?	Consistency of project with CPD, CPAP and UNDAF	ProDoc CPD CPAP UNDAF	Review of ProDoc, CPD, CPAP and UNDAF
Is there evidence that the project outcomes have contributed to better	Project contribution to disaster preparedness	Interviews PIRs	Interviews Review of PIRs

preparations to cope with natural disasters?			
Have gender issues been taken into account in project implementation? If so, how and to what extent?	Level and nature of participation of women in project implementation	PIRs, interviews	Review of PIRs, interviews

Annex 4: Summary of Field Visits

The evaluator participated in two days of field trips: one to the pilot project in El Zorzal Private Reserve/ Loma Quita Espuela Scientific Reserve/ Loma Guaconejo Scientific Reserve, and the other to Cabo Samaná Natural Monument. The choice of destinations for the field visits was based on the desire for the evaluator to see innovative project impacts (including new financial mechanisms at work such as carbon offsets, the country's first private reserve and an area for which a business plan was developed) and to visit areas that were not already visited during the Mid-Term Review. During the MTR, the evaluator visited the Parque Nacional del Este, where substantial work on controlling tourist access and strengthening the management of concessions was carried out with the project, as well as Saltos de la Damajagua Natural Moment, where the project further strengthened the co-management arrangement and supported infrastructure investments, among other elements.

The evaluator interviewed the Executive Director of Consorcio Ambiental Dominicano, which was the NGO that managed the pilot project in El Zorzal/ Loma Quita Espuela/ Loma Guaconejo to find out more about the carbon offset program in which eight agricultural producers are participating as well as about the creation of the country's first private reserve. At the administrative office in the El Zorzal Reserve, the evaluator interviewed several of the farmers participating in the Plan Vivo carbon offset program who were pleased with the added value of the trees planted and the annual premiums that they have started to receive. In addition, the evaluator had a chance to interview the Executive Director of the Loma Quita Espuela Foundation which directly managed the carbon offset project as well as one of the administrators of the protected area. The advantages of the program were highlighted. The evaluator asked the administrator about Loma Quita Espuela Foundation's experience on the Co-Managing Board that was reinvigorated with the project. Finally, the evaluator was given a tour of a part of the El Zorzal Reserve in which sustainable cacao and macadamia production is taking place. Different varieties of cacao were being planted to preserve genetic diversity and offer differentiated products.

The second field trip took place to Cabo Samaná Natural Monument, for which a protected areas business plan was developed. The evaluator interviewed the current administrator of the protected area, as well as the former administrator, who is currently managing the Estero Hondo Marine Mammal Sanctuary. The administrators were able to provide the evaluator with more detail on the training received through the project, the infrastructure funded by the project, as well as the process of developing a PA business plan. The evaluator was then given a boat tour of part of the protected area to witness first-hand the tremendous ecotourism potential that is still largely unexploited (at the moment, relatively few visitors visit the area and there are no entrance fees being charged to visitors). Finally, the evaluator met with the consultant who was in charge of developing four of the seven PA business plans produced through the project, and who also developed the manual on the establishment and monitoring of ecotourism concessions. The consultant

provided more details on the participatory process employed to develop the business plans, the follow-up needed to ensure that they are implemented, and the work carried out to standardize the provision and operation of ecotourism concessions to minimize environmental impact.

Annex 5: Terms of Reference

Project No. 00071567 "Reengineering of National System of Protected Areas of the Dominican Republic to achieve Financial Sustainability"

Supervisor: Environment Official, UNDP

1. Description of Project

1.1 The United Nations Development Program supports the strengthening of the national capacities in the Dominican Republic and promotes the achieves of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), human rights and gender equity, through technical assistance in order to achieve sustainable human development. Though the Environment and Renewable Energy Unit, UNDP seeks to promote environmental sustainability as a basis on which to construct strategies to fight against poverty, to reduce the population's vulnerability and the implementation of activities to drive the national economy.

1.2 The Government of the Dominican Republic, through the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (Ministry of Environment) is executing the project "Reengineering of National System of Protected Areas of the Dominican Republic to achieve Financial Sustainability". This project was formulated and is being implemented through an agreement with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

1.3 The project goal is to safeguard the globally significant biodiversity of the Dominican Republic.. The three main planned project Outcomes are: (i) PA financing increased and diversified; (ii) Improved PA management effectiveness and efficiency in 18 priority PAs with highest revenue generation potential; and (iii) Co-management arrangement to underwrite PA costs.

1.4 In accordance with the policies and procedures for Monitoring and Evaluation of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), all *full size* projects supported by UNDP and funded by GEF should undergo a Final Evaluation (FE) once the project has concluded. These terms of reference (TOR) establish expectations of the FE of the Project, Reengineering of the National Protected Areas System in order to achieve its Financial Sustainability (PIMS No. 3424).

The following table presents some essential information on the project:

PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

Project Title:	Re-engineering the National Protected Area System in Order to Achieve Financial Sustainability			
GEF Project ID:	3424		<i>At endorsement (Million US\$)</i>	<i>At completion* (Million US \$)</i>
UNDP Project ID:	71567	GEF financing:	3,200,000	
Country:	Dominican Republic	IA/EA own:	45,000	N/A
Region:	LAC	Government:	594,000	N/A
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Other:	5,000,000	N/A
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	GEF 4; SO1 – SP1	Total co-financing:	8,839,000.00	N/A
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	Total Project Cost:	11,822,000.00	N/A
Other Partners Involved:		ProDoc Signature (date project began):		15/5/2010
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 14/05/2014	Actual: 14/05/2015

II.- Scope of the work:

II-1 The FE will be performed according to the guidelines, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF, as set out in the UNDP Evaluation Guide for Projects Financed by GEF.

II-2 The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

II-2 It is expected that the consultant carry out the following functions:

- It is expected that the evaluator frame the assessment work using the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, as defined and explained in the Guide for final evaluations of projects supported by UNDP and funded by GEF. A series of questions is provided in these TORs covering each of these criteria (see **Annex C**). It is expected that the evaluator modifies, completes and submits this matrix as part of the evaluation's initial report, and includes it as an annex in the final report.
- The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. It is expected that the evaluator follows a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close involvement with government officials, including the GEF operational focal point, the UNDP Country Office, the project team, the GEF Regional Technical Advisor of UNDP/GEF and key stakeholders. It is expected that the evaluator carries out a mission in the Dominican Republic, including to the project office and other key stakeholders in Santo Domingo, as well as other areas of impact of the project in the countryside, to be agreed upon at the start of evaluation. Interviews will be conducted with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum:

- Project team
 - United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
 - Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
 - Planning Directorate of Ministry of Environmental and Natural Resources
 - GEF Operational Focal Point
 - MARENA Fund
 - Staff at the protected areas to be visited
 - Consorcio Ambiental Dominicano (CAD)
 - The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
 - Asociación de Guías del Monumento Natural Saltos de la Damajagua
 - Asociación Clemente Melo
 - Team of the Caribbean Biological Corridor project
 - Project consultants
- The evaluator will review all relevant information sources, such as the project document, annual progress reports (PIRs) and other reports, Mid-Term Review report, project budget reviews, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, project files, project products, national strategic and legal documents, and any other material that the evaluator deems useful for this empirically-based evaluation. **Annex B** of these Terms of Reference includes a list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review.
 - An evaluation of the performance of the project will be carried out, in comparison with the expectations set out in the project logical framework and results framework (see **Annex A**), which provides performance and impact indicators for project execution, along with the corresponding means of verification. At a minimum, the evaluation will cover the following criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. The ratings must be provided according to the performance criteria included in the following table. The full table should be included in the Executive Summary of the evaluation. Mandatory rating scales are included in **Appendix D** of the ToR.

Evaluation of project performance			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	<i>rating</i>	2. Execution of IA and EA:	<i>rating</i>
M&E design at entry		Quality of UNDP implementation	
Execution of M&E plan		Quality of execution: executing agency	
Overall quality of M&E		Overall quality of implementation and execution	
3. Assessment of outcomes	<i>rating</i>	4. Sustainability	<i>rating</i>
Relevance		Financial resources:	
Effectiveness		Socio-political:	
Efficiency		Institutional and governance framework:	
Overall rating for project outcomes		Environmental:	
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	

- The evaluation will assess key financial aspects of the project, including the scope of planned and actual co-financing. Data on project costs and financing will be required, including annual expenses. The differences between planned and actual costs should be evaluated and explained. The results of recent financial audits should be considered, if available. Evaluators will receive assistance from the UNDP Country Office (OP) and Project Team to obtain financial data to complete the following co-financing table, which will be included in the final evaluation report.

Co-funding (type/ source)	UNDP funding (millions of USD)		Government (millions of USD)		Other organizations (millions of USD)		Total (millions of USD)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Grants								
Loans								
• In-kind								
• Other								
Totals								

- Projects supported by UNDP and GEF funded are key components of the UNDP country programming, as well as of regional and global programs. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project is integrated with other UNDP priorities, including poverty reduction, improved governance, prevention and recovery from natural disasters and gender.
- The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or is progressing towards achieving impacts. The key results which the evaluation should assess include whether the project demonstrated: a) measurable improvements in ecological state, b) verifiable stress reductions in ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress toward achieving these impacts.
- The evaluation report should include a chapter that provides a set of conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned.

It is expected that the evaluator achieve the following:

Products	Contenido	Período	Responsabilidades
Initial report	The evaluator provides clarifications on the time periods and methodology	At least one week before the evaluation mission	The evaluator presents it the UNDP CO
Presentation	Initial results	End of evaluation mission	To the project team and the UNDP CO
Draft of final report	Complete report with annexes	Within three weeks of the evaluation mission	Sent to the CO, reviewed by the Regional Technical Advisor, the Project Management Unit and the GEF Operational Focal Point

Final report*	Revised report	Within 1 week of receiving comments from UNDP on the draft	Sent to the CO to upload it to the UNDP ERC
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*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator should provide an "audit itinerary", which details how the comments received have (or have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

III. Evaluation Deliverables

The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following:

III-1 Consultancy deliverables:

Product 1: An initial report that clarifies time periods and work methodology, including an agreed upon timeline and preliminary interview tools.

Product 2: A draft of the Final Evaluation Report.

Product 3: Final Evaluation Report.

III- 2 All products developed as activities of this consultancy will be submitted in electronic form. The reports should include the documents produced during the consultancy and will be submitted by the agreed upon dates.

III-3 The final document will be presented in English and Spanish. The preliminary versions will be circulated in Spanish.

III-4

Products	Estimated duration to complete product	Submission date	Revision and approval
Product 1	Three (3) calendar days	Seven (7) days after signature of the Contract	UNDP CO
Product 2	Eleven (11) calendar days	Forty-five (45) days after signature of Contract	UNDP CO/ Regional Technical Advisor (RTA)
Product 3	Three (3) calendar days	Sixty (60) days after signature of Contract	UNDP CO/ RTA

IV. Institutional Agreements

IV.1 The primary responsibility for managing this evaluation lies with the UNDP Country Office (CO) in the Dominican Republic. The CO will contract the evaluator and ensure that the travel arrangements within the country are arranged. The Project Team will be responsible for keeping in touch with the evaluating team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with government, etc.

V. Duration of Evaluation

The total duration of the evaluation shall be 25 days within a period of two months, according to the following plan:

Activity	Period	Fecha de finalización
Preparation	3 days	The activity finalization dates will depend on the date of signature of the contract of the evaluator. Nevertheless, the evaluation is planned to begin in August 2015, such that a final document would be available by September 2015.
Evaluation mission	8 days	
Draft of evaluation report	11 days	
Final report	3 days	

V.2 The services hired through this consultancy will initiate upon signature of the contract and will conclude upon final approval of the final product.

VI. Place of delivery of services

V1.1- The consultancy does NOT need to be carried out in person. However, the evaluator should carry out one field visit to the Dominican Republic, in which he or she visits the project office and key stakeholders in Santo Domingo, as well as other project intervention sites in the countryside, to be agreed upon at the start of the evaluation.

VII. Required qualifications

The evaluator should have previous experience in evaluating similar projects. It is an advantage to have experience with projects funded by GEF. The selected evaluator should not have participated in the preparation or execution of the project and should have no conflict of interest with project-related activities.

Required profile:

- Academic degree in natural resource management, environmental management, environmental science or related subject.
- Relevant professional experience of 10 years at a minimum.
- At least 5 years experience in the monitoring and/or evaluation of projects. Special emphasis will be placed on project evaluation experience.
- Experience with biodiversity projects related to management or sustainability of protected areas.
- Preference will be given to consultants with knowledge of monitoring and evaluation of projects funded by GEF.
- Experience working with international cooperation agencies, preferably agencies of the United Nations System
- Mastery of the logical framework methodology.
- Work experience with different sectors related to the environment and conservation of natural resources (government, private and nongovernmental organizations).
- Communication skills.

- Ability to coordinate, lead and manage groups.
- Knowledge of the environmental, economic and political reality of the region.
- Fluency in Spanish and English
- Ensure the independence of the evaluation. The consultant hired must be free of potential conflicts of interest with the executing and co-executing institutions of the project.
- Ability to work under pressure and meet tight deadlines

Fees and Payment of Consultancy

The total to be paid and the form of payment will be described in the service contract that will be prepared and signed upon mutual agreement, based on the following criteria:

- First Payment: Payment of **plane ticket** up to 20% of the total bid amount after presentation of the plane ticket payment.
- Second Payment- **15%** of fees and per diems after submission and approval of **Product 1**.
- Third Payment- **35%** after submission and approval of **Product 2**.
- Fourth Payment- **50%** after submission and approval of **Product 3**.

VIII Criteria to Evaluate Proposals

The evaluation of proposals will involve a process consisting of two stages, in which the technical evaluation will be carried out prior to the review of the financial proposal. Economic proposals will only be considered for proponents who exceed the minimum score of 70% of the total score of 70 points in the technical evaluation (which takes into consideration both the professional profile and experience of the proponent as well as his or her technical proposal).

The financial proposal will have a weighting of 30 points, with the highest score being awarded to the lowest proposals and others given score based on the following formula: (lowest bid / offer to be evaluated) x 30.

It is recommended that the contract be awarded to the proposal with the highest combined score of Technical Quality (70) + Financial Proposal (30).

XI Application Process

The proposal of each interested person should contain the following:

- i. Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability using the model provided by UNDP (format attached)
- ii. Personal CV and P11 form (format attached), indicating past experience in similar projects, as well as contact details of the candidate (e-mail and telephone number) and at least three (3) professional references.
- iii. Brief description of why the individual considers him or herself to be the most appropriate candidate for the work.
- iv. Technical proposal with tentative workplan and methodology. The person should show samples of similar products carried out with similar contracts.

v. Financial proposal that indicates the total all-inclusive value of the contract, justified by a breakdown of the costs, based on the format provided. If the proponent is an employee of an organization/ company/ institution, and he or she wishes the employer to cover an administration cost in the process of liberating him or her to UNDP under a Reimbursable Loan Agreement, the proponent should indicate this here and ensure that all the costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal presented to UNDP.

vi. Copy of identity document.

These documents will be an integral part of the proposal. The proponents should send the required documentation to demonstrate fulfillment of the selection criteria PREFERABLY by e-mail to the e-mail of the Acquisitions Unit adquisiciones.do@undp.org or this could be deposited in a closed envelope, identifying the project involved in the consultancy in any of the following addresses:

Hard copy: **United Nations House, Anacaona Avenue # 9, Mirador Sur, Santo Domingo, RD**
Fax number: **809-531-4882.**

Note:

- This tender process is aimed at professionals, who will provide their services on an individual basis.
- Under the Individual Contract modality of UNDP, government employees cannot be hired unless they fulfill the following conditions before being proposed: (i): a no-objection letter has been received from the government in relation to the individual; and (ii) the government in question has certified in writing that the employee is on leave without salary during the time period of the Individual Contract.
- The procurement sector of UNDP reserves the right to accept or reject any Proposal and to annual the bidding process or to reject all Proposals at any moment before the emission of the contract without incurring any responsibility to the proponent who may have been affected and without the obligation of informing the affected proponent or proponent(s) of the reasons for making this decision.

Because the UNDP promotes the protection of the environment, we would appreciate receiving your proposal in electronic format.

ToRs presented by:

Signature: _____

Name/ Designation: _____

Date of signature: _____

ToRs revised by: _____

OM

ToRs approved by _____

DRR

Annex 6: Documents consulted during evaluation

Arias Rodríguez, David E. 2012. Plan de Sostenibilidad Financiera del Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas. Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, The Nature Conservancy.

Barrantes Moreno, Gerardo, Solhanlle Bonilla Duarte. 2014. Elaboración de una Estrategia de Pago y/o Compensación por Servicios Ambientales en República Dominicana, incluyendo el Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas, Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, Santo Domingo, República Dominicana.

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Echeverría, Jaime, Ana Báez, Stanley Arguedas, Marlig Pérez. 2014. Lineamientos técnicos para el desarrollo de planes de negocio en áreas protegidas. Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales. Santo Domingo, República Dominicana.

García Cartagena, Carlos M. 2012. Manual operativo del Fondo Patrimonial de Áreas Protegidas. Fondo Marena.

Gómez-Valenzuela, Víctor, Francisco Alpízar and Solhanlle Bonilla. 2015. ¿Cuál es el valor de los ecosistemas protegidos de la República Dominicana? Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, Santo Domingo, República Dominicana.

Government of Dominican Republic. Reglamento para el co-manejo de áreas protegidas en la República Dominicana

Government of Dominican Republic. Resolución 012-2011 que promulga el reglamento para la declaración de áreas protegidas privadas o conservación voluntario de la República Dominicana.

Government of Dominican Republic. Resoluciones 19-2013, 20-2013, 24-2013, 25-2013 que aprueba y autoriza la ejecución del plan de manejo del Parque Nacional Los Haitises, Parque Nacional del Este, Reserva Científica Loma Guaconejo and Reserva Científica Loma Quita Espuela, respectively.

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. 2011. Sistema de monitoreo de especies y ecosistemas. Parte 1: Objetivos e Indicadores.

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. 2011. Sistema de monitoreo de especies y ecosistemas. Parte II: Plan de Implementación. Prepared by Ramón Ovidio Sánchez Peña and Bernal Herrera-F.

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Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. 2015. Acta Reunión Comité Directivo Nacional: 19 de Febrero del 2015.

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Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. 2011. Estrategia Nacional de Conservación y Uso Sostenible de la Biodiversidad y Plan de Acción 2011-2020 (ENBPA)

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Directorate of Protected Areas. 2014. Management Plan for Parque Nacional El Morro.

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Directorate of Protected Areas. 2014. Management Plan for Parque Nacional Submarino Montecristi.

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Directorate of Protected Areas. 2014. Management Plan for Refugio de Vida Silvestre Cayo Siete Hermanos.

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Directorate of Protected Areas. 2014. Management Plan for Parque Nacional Francisco Alberto Caamaño.

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Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Directorate of Protected Areas. 2015. Management Plan for Monumento Natural Antropológica Cuevas de Borbon o Pomier.

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Directorate of Protected Areas. 2014. Management Plan for Monumento Natural Isla Catalina.

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Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Directorate of Protected Areas. 2012. Management Plan for Parque Nacional Los Haitises.

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Directorate of Protected Areas. 2014. Management Plan for Parque Nacional Manglares Estero Balsa.

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Directorate of Protected Areas. 2012. Management Plan for Reserva Científica Loma Guaconejo.

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Vice Ministry of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, Directorate of Protected Areas. 2012. Management Plan for Reserva Científica Loma Quita Espuela.

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Project Management Unit and UNDP. PIR 2015 (Draft)

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Annex 6: Signed Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement Form

see separate file