

TERMINAL EVALUATION OF PROJECT:
“Strengthening Institutional Capacities for Coordinating Multi-Sectoral Environmental Policies and Programmes”

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GEFSEC Project ID: PIMS 3708

Agency’s Project ID: 00062533

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Country: Belize

Focal Area: Multiple Focal Area/ Others

GEF Operational Program: Capacity Building

Strategic Objectives: CB-2 (Cross Cutting Capacity Building)

Executing Agency: Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment

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Note that all Annexes are contained in a separate Microsoft Word file.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|---|
| AOP | Annual Operational Plan |
| APAMO | Association of Protected Area Management Organizations |
| APR | Annual Progress Report |
| CBO | Community Based Organization |
| CARICOM | Caribbean Community |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| CITES | Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora |
| CO | Country Office |
| COP | Conference of the Parties |
| DOE | Department of Environment |
| EA | Executing Agency |
| FCD | Friends of Conservation and Development |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GoB | Government of Belize |
| HOD | Head of Department |
| IA | Implementing Agency |
| Logframe | Logical Framework |
| MAFC | Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Cooperatives |
| MEA | Multilateral Environmental Agreement |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| MNDIC | Ministry of National Development, Investment and Culture |
| MNRA | Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture |
| MNRE | Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment |
| MSP | Medium-Sized Project |
| NCSA | National Capacity Self-Assessment |
| NEMO | National Emergency Management Organization of Belize |
| NEX | National Execution |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NHDAC | National Human Development Advisory Committee |
| OLADE | Latin American Energy Organization |
| PCPU | Policy Coordination and Planning Unit |
| PD | Project Director |
| PDF-A | Project Development Facility-A |
| PEG | Project Executing Group |
| PIR | Project Implementation Report |
| PMU | Project Management Unit |
| PSC | Project Steering Committee |

| | |
|--------|---|
| RAMSAR | Ramsar Convention on Wetlands |
| SICCM | Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Coordinating Multi-Sectoral Environmental Policies and Programmes |
| SLM | Sustainable Land Management |
| TE | Terminal Evaluation |
| TORs | Terms of Reference |
| TPR | Tripartite Review |
| UNCBD | United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| UNCCD | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |

1 Executive Summary

Project Summary:

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Project Title: | Strengthening Institutional Capacities for Coordinating Multi-sectoral Environmental Policies and Programmes | | | |
| GEF Project ID: | 3708 | | <i>At endorsement (Million US\$)</i> | <i>At completion (Million US \$)</i> |
| UNDP Project ID: | 00062533 | GEF financing: | \$ 472,500 | \$ 472,500 |
| Country: | Belize | IA/EA own: | | \$ 12,865 |
| Region: | LAC | Government: | \$ 152,400 | \$ 152,400 |
| Focal Area: | | Other: | | |
| FA Objectives, (OP/SP): | | Total co-financing: | \$ 152,400 | 165,265 |
| Executing Agency: | Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment | Total Project Cost: | \$ 624,900 | \$ 637,765 |
| Other Partners Involved: | | ProDoc Signature (date project began) | | 29th June 2008 |
| | | (Operational) Closing Date: | Proposed: 31/12/2011 | Actual: 31/12/2011 |

Project Description:

Belize has made numerous commitments to environmentally sound and sustainable development, and has signed on to over 25 multilateral environmental agreements. However, the inadequacy of Belize's institutional framework limits the ability to meet these obligations (MEAs). This stems in large part from the many pieces of legislative instruments that directly and indirectly affect the management of natural resources and the environment and a lack of coordination in the application of these tools. The project proposal identifies a number of specific barriers that limit the country's ability to fulfil global environmental commitments, such as the independent operation of the Focal Point departments for the conventions, with collaboration mainly based on informal relationships between ministries, departments, central and local government structures and among GoB and NGOs and CBOs.

The project established the following immediate and development objectives for the project to address the identified barriers:

Long-term goal: To improve management and protection of Belize's natural resources and environment, resulting in improvements to meet national commitments to multilateral environment agreements.

Project objective: To coordinate Belize's natural resource and environmental policies in such a way that creates synergies for the national implementation of the CBD, CCD and FCCC.

The following three project outcomes were articulated in response to the overall project objective:

- i) Strengthened policy coordination and planning mechanisms within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE);
- ii) Increased capacities for integrating natural resource and environmental management issues into national development framework;
- iii) Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptive Collaborative Management.

This Terminal Evaluation was conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF. The methodology included preparation for the evaluation, a 5-day evaluation mission, and development of the draft and final reports. The findings are based on an extensive review of the existing documentation and interviews with a total of 26 individuals involved in different capacities in the project.

Main Findings and Conclusions

Project Design

In general, the project logic was clear and included a suitable project objective and outcomes to address the threats and barriers identified at the design stage. Most of the indicators selected were appropriate and consistent with the objective and outcomes, although there was one indicator that was outside the scope of the project, and a few indicators and targets that were not appropriately framed as detailed in the report. Project assumptions and risks were clearly formulated but there were a few risks identified that were not in fact external to the project's sphere of influence in that they represented what the project hoped to achieve.

Lessons learned from other projects and the findings of the Belize National Capacity Self-Assessment-1 were taken into consideration in the design of the project, as were linkages between the project and other interventions within the sector. The planned stakeholder participation as outlined in the project proposal is considered highly inclusive and representative, and included a Steering Committee and the two consultative committees to be established through the project. Moreover, the management arrangements and the choice of Executing Agency and Implementing Agency were appropriate. The UNDP had a clear comparative advantage as IA given its physical office in Belize, extensive network of contacts, and previous experience implementing UNDP/GEF environmental and natural resource management projects. The project proposal outlined an ambitious replication approach that would ensure widespread dissemination of the lessons learned from the project.

Project Implementation

The Policy and Coordination and Planning Unit located within the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MRNE) took on the dual roles of project management and policy coordination. While this may have contributed to increased government ownership and sustainability, this relatively unusual executing modality proved to be difficult and led to some slippage in terms of project management functions. This was compounded by the fact that as the project progressed more and more demands were placed on the PCPU and its role expanded beyond pure policy coordination. Project narrative and financial reporting was considered adequate for the first half of the project but became more challenging over time, which led to the decision to begin reporting on a semester basis and to have UNDP take on some of the reporting functions. UNDP also took over procurement in the later stages of the project due to some issues related to the way this function was being handled. In general, the project would have benefitted from additional time dedicated to project management and to documentation of project results.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan was comprehensive and well budgeted. The logframe was used to track progress against project objectives, but there were some studies specified in the logframe that were not carried out, suggesting that the team did not always ensure adherence to these targets. The two PIRs produced for this project highlighted a few problematic issues, notably, the infrequency of PEG meetings, and the impact of the expanding role of the PCPU. Attempts were made to address these issues, though they remained a challenge throughout project implementation. The PEG ended up being a tripartite body consisting of UNDP, the GEF Operational Focal Point, and the CEO of MNRE. Due to the unavailability of the PEG minutes it is difficult to comment on its effectiveness in guiding the project, however, several examples were provided by interviewees on adaptive management as a result of decisions taken by the PEG. In general, both the UNDP and the EA successfully employed adaptive management on a number of occasions in response to changing external conditions and to the desire to find the most effective approach to achieve project goals. A wide array of partnerships was established with regional and international organizations, as well as with state and non-state actors through the consultative bodies that formed a core component of the project. The project fell somewhat short in establishing partnerships with regional entities to disseminate lessons learned.

Project Results

Objective:

This project established the highly relevant NREPS structure, which allowed for broad consultation on natural resource and environmental policies with state and non-state stakeholders. This consultative approach, which was relatively novel for Belize, was utilized on a number of occasions during the project's lifespan; senior government functionaries and other stakeholders provided input that was taken into consideration on various nationally significant policies, such as the Energy Policy and the Land Use Policy. These policies were subsequently approved by Cabinet, filling important policy gaps. However, the project's impact on the level of policy duplication was not measured.

The degree of institutionalization of NREPS remains somewhat unclear as there have been no meetings of the TC and the OSC since October 2011 and March 2011 respectively. While this can be attributed in part to delays caused by the recent government elections, there is scope for the convening of more meetings to enable stakeholders to engage more frequently and continue to perceive the utility of this mechanism.

The Public Sector and Civil Society Liaison Officers of the PCPU now have government contracts, while the PCPU Director has chosen to continue to receive funding from different projects. The administrative costs associated with the PCPU have also been assumed by government. As such, the sustainability of the PCPU appears promising, though its mandate has been modified since recent government elections, with the focal points of the Rio Conventions having been transferred to another Ministry.

Outcome 1:

After a number of sensitization workshops, the NREPS- Technical Committee (TC) was established, comprised of senior representatives of most of the key government departments and ministries, and chaired by the CEO of MNRE. The TC had four meetings during the project's lifespan with high attendance rates. It provided recommendations on several nationally relevant policies, which were subsequently approved by Cabinet. Interviewees felt that the TC played a positive role in facilitating intra-ministerial coordination but that more could still be done to promote greater inter-ministerial coordination. It was also advised that meetings be held more frequently to maximize engagement with its members.

The PCPU also facilitated the established of the “Other Stakeholders Committee”, which had strong representation from NGOs, quasi-governmental organizations, and the private sector. The establishment of this committee was welcomed as it provided a much sought after opportunity for non-state actors to provide input into government policy. Interviewees indicated, however, that the group should have met more frequently and that more outreach from the PCPU to other stakeholders between meetings would have been beneficial. In addition, they commented that the feedback loop between the OSC and the TC was not sufficiently clear and well-established to ensure that feedback from the OSC was effectively conveyed to the TC and vice versa. It should also be noted that for both the TC and the OSC, comprehensive minutes were not consistently produced or disseminated by the PCPU. This represents a lost opportunity to share the results of discussions and recommendations with a larger audience.

Outcome 2:

The PCPU implemented its role of servicing the NREPS committees and worked to improve the level of policy coordination and to facilitate broader inputs into national policies. Training workshops in various relevant themes were held to build capacity both within the PCPU itself and within government departments of the MNRE, and equipment was purchased to help departments within MNRE carry out their functions more effectively and efficiently. To facilitate information sharing, the PCPU established a shared server, housing information on natural resource and environmental policies, multilateral environmental agreements and project documents, among others. It is difficult to objectively measure the impact of the PCPU’s work on policy coordination effectiveness and reduction of policy overlap as the planned studies to measure this were not carried out. Interviewees generally felt that a positive step in this direction was made but that more remains to be done.

The PCPU contributed substantially to Belize’s increased visibility on the international stage through its coordination of delegations and active participation in the events. In addition, it should be noted that the PCPU mobilized substantial funding for the MRNE.

Outcome 3:

Lessons learned were identified in the Final Project Review report, and the project team indicated that lessons informed the development of the entire NREPS process. However, the planned production of various reports on lessons learned and their widespread dissemination did not occur and this insufficient documentation of lessons learned represents a lost opportunity.

UNDP and the PCPU demonstrated adaptive management on various occasions throughout project implementation, which positively contributed to the achievement of project objectives.

Sustainability

Changes in the government structure after the recent election since project closure pose some institutional and socio-political risks to project achievements. The focal units for the Rio Conventions are now housed within the newly created Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development, while the PCPU remains in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture. As a result, it will be important to determine how best to move forward with NREPS, by looking at the most appropriate positioning of the PCPU (or the possibility of creating an additional PCPU), and who will take the lead in servicing the NREPS committees. These institutional barriers need to be addressed and the political will demonstrated to ensure that the NREPS consultative bodies continue to be regularly employed to promote broad stakeholder consultation and that the capacity built up in the PCPU continues to be used to facilitate intersectoral policy coordination.

Evaluation Rating Table:

| Evaluation Ratings: | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|---|--------|
| 1. Monitoring and Evaluation | Rating | 2. IA& EA Execution | rating |
| M&E design at entry | S | Quality of UNDP Implementation | S |
| M&E plan implementation | MS | Quality of Execution - Executing Agency | MS |
| Overall quality of M&E | MS | Overall quality of Implementation / Execution | MS |
| 3. Assessment of Outcomes | Rating | 4. Sustainability | rating |
| Relevance | R | Financial resources: | L |
| Effectiveness | MS | Socio-political: | ML |
| Efficiency | MS | Institutional framework and governance: | ML |
| Overall Project Outcome Rating | MS | Environmental: | L |
| | | Overall likelihood of sustainability: | ML |

The PCPU employed several best practices that are worth emulating by other projects in the future, as highlighted below.

Best practices**Ø PCPU provided customized capacity building**

The PCPU provided training and equipment to departments based on the needs they identified, rather than coming in with a preset idea of capacity building requirements that might not have necessarily matched with government priorities.

Ø PCPU expanded the parameters of capacity building to include purchase of equipment and tools

While the purchase of equipment was not in the original project design, it was considered critical to help departments fulfill their mandate in terms of natural resource management and environment and to increase their efficiency.

Ø PCPU carried out substantial follow to ensure high attendance at meetings

The PCPU effectively identified the main important players to participate in the NREPS- Technical Committee and Other Stakeholders Committee and followed up to ensure high meeting attendance rates.

Ø Extensive sensitization of stakeholders of NREPS to obtain input and buy-in

The project carried out numerous sensitization workshops/ working group meetings with a wide array of government departments and with other stakeholders (NGOs, private sector, quasi-governmental organizations) to determine the most appropriate composition and working structure of the committees and to maximize ownership of the system.

Ø The PCPU effectively coordinated participation in international meetings.

Interviewees commented that the PCPU worked well to organize the logistics of participation in international meetings, and was also able to leverage additional funds for increased participation at such events.

Lessons Learned/ Recommendations

There were a number of lessons learned from this project, which was the first cross-cutting capacity building project executed in the region. The following is the list of the main recommendations that emerged from this Terminal Evaluation.

Recommendations related to Project Design

Ø Ensure all indicators measure factors that are within the project scope

In the case of this project, one of the indicators was an increase in the number of NGOs registered under the NGO Act, which was outside of the scope of what the project was meant to achieve. The identification of appropriate indicators at the project design stage will ensure that all are realistically achievable.

Ø Ensure logframe includes all necessary indicators to monitor achievement of the project objective

There were no specific indicators included in the project design to measure the level of creation of synergies in the implementation of the three Rio Conventions, which makes it difficult to measure project impact at the objective level.

Ø Plan for establishment of PMU dedicated exclusively to project management

This project implemented a novel executing modality in that the Policy Coordination and Planning Unit also took on project management functions. Given the difficulties experienced by the team in fulfilling these dual responsibilities, it is recommended that a PMU dedicated solely or primarily to project management be established for future projects.

Recommendations related to Project Execution/ Implementation

Ø Dedicate more effort to monitoring and measuring project impact

It is critical to carry out objective studies to measure project impact to determine whether project actions are actually leading to the intended results. In this case, the baseline and follow-up studies of policy coordination effectiveness were not carried out.

Ø Ensure regular documentation of project results to facilitate sharing of lessons learned

Regular and sufficiently detailed narrative reports are a necessary component of project monitoring and evaluation, help monitor progress toward project goals, and facilitate the sharing of lessons learned.

Ø Obtain high-level assistance in scheduling meetings to maximize attendance at committee meetings

It is beneficial to follow protocol and go through CEOs when scheduling meetings as this higher level endorsement can serve to increase participation levels.

Ø Ensure sufficient lag and slippage time to accommodate challenges in implementing training workshops with government

Given that it is difficult to maintain the participation of government functionaries in training sessions due to their large number of other commitments, projects should build in sufficient slippage time and develop realistic timelines so that capacity-building objectives can be achieved.

Ø Promote self-sufficiency within government departments to meet their capacity building needs

In order to address the risk of overdependence on projects, it is important to manage expectations and ensure that stakeholders continue to raise funds for their capacity building needs so that they are able to meet these when project funding ends.

Ø Provide staff training when necessary to reduce learning curve

Training should be provided to staff members as early as possible in project implementation if there are any capacity issues or knowledge gaps, to minimize the initial learning curve. As examples from this project, training for the PCPU in the specific functioning of the different Departments within the MNRE might have been useful as well as training in UNDP/GEF procurement procedures for the administrative assistant.

Ø Obtain commitment for long-term sustainability from the outset

The absorption of PCPU staff into the government budget was delayed, which resulted in a situation of uncertainty in the interim. Projects need to work to obtain government commitment for staffing post-project from the early stages of the project to enable long-term planning to occur.

Recommendations to Enhance Project Results and Promote Sustainability of Project Impact

Ø Clarify mandate, roles and responsibilities of PCPU

Given the tensions experienced between the PCPU's work of facilitating policy coordination as per the project's goals versus carrying out other MNRE priorities, any future similar project should ensure that the scope of work

of a policy and planning unit is clarified from the outset and specific deliverables consistent with project objectives are established.

Ø Re-consider appropriate positioning of PCPU to facilitate inter-ministerial coordination

While the PCPU's location within the then MNRE made sense given that it housed the focal points for the three Rio Conventions, it was perhaps less appropriate for ensuring that coordination across ministries occurred than a higher-level positioning might have been. The issue of the positioning of the PCPU also needs to be reconsidered given the recent changes in government structure.

Ø Promote support and integration of the technical level in the PCPU

In this project, it could be argued that the PCPU structure was not sufficiently socialized and integrated at the level of the Heads of Department. This is important to maximize support and ensure that it is used to the fullest extent possible.

Ø Convene more frequent and shorter meetings to enhance information sharing within the NREPS Technical Committee

More frequent, shorter meetings are felt to be easier to schedule and may also permit increased dialogue and information sharing compared to sporadic meetings separated by a substantial amount of time.

Ø Ensure all NREPS-TC representatives are adequately debriefed to be able to inform on all relevant ongoing activities

In order to maximize the dissemination of information on project, department and ministerial activities, TC representatives should be fully debriefed on relevant ongoing activities within their agency or department.

Ø Identify mechanisms to promote socialization of meeting discussions and recommendations downwards within departments and Ministries

The TC was comprised of many high-level representatives including CEOs. In order to ensure that feedback from the meetings flows downward to all relevant functionaries within government departments and ministries, appropriate mechanisms to do so need to be identified and implemented.

Ø Increase level of communication with 'other' stakeholders to promote ownership

Interviewees commented that increased outreach from the PCPU to the OSC would have been beneficial, which could be achieved by:

- Increasing the frequency of meetings;
- Increasing the level of communication between meetings;
- Promoting the inclusion of agenda items brought forth by other stakeholders;
- Establishing a clear feedback loop between the OSC and the TC. The representatives of the OSC on the TC need to be replaced if they leave their positions. In addition, minutes of OSC meetings should be shared with the TC and feedback should be provided to other stakeholders as to how their input and recommendations were taken into consideration.

Ø Ensure that reservoir of natural resource and environmental information housed in the PCPU continues to be populated and utilized

The PCPU accumulated a substantial number of documents relating to natural resource management and the environment on a shared server, which should continue to be updated and shared widely.

Ø Consider legislating NREPS mechanism to enhance sustainability

While there is an approved Cabinet paper establishing NREPS, it might be useful to develop a legal instrument to formalize NREPS. This would help enhance the sustainability of this system to facilitate coordination on environment and natural resource issues.

Ø Decide on how to move NREPS forward with new government structure

In order to build on project achievements, NREPS needs to be re-evaluated in terms of the positioning of the PCPU and how NREPS will be facilitated to maximize inter-sectoral cooperation. If the new Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development decides to establish its own PCPU structure, it is important that the lessons learned by the PCPU staff members be shared.

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

1. The Terminal Evaluation (TE) is a requirement of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) and was initiated by UNDP Belize Country Office. It was conducted according to the guidance, rules, and procedures for such evaluations established by UNDP and GEF.
2. The overall objective of the TE is to analyze the implementation of the project and review the achievements made by the project to deliver the specified objective and outcomes. It establishes the relevance, performance and impact of the project, including the sustainability of results. The evaluation also brings together and analyzes best practices, specific lessons and recommendations pertaining to the strategies employed and implementation arrangements, which may be of relevance to other projects in the country and elsewhere in the world.
3. The TE provides a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of a completed project by assessing its project design, process of implementation and results vis-à-vis the project objective and outcomes. TEs have three complementary purposes:
 - To promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose levels of project accomplishments;
 - To synthesize lessons that may help improve the selection, design and implementation of future UNDP-GEF activities;
 - To provide feedback on issues that are recurrent across the portfolio and need attention, and on improvements regarding previously identified issues.

2.2 Key Issues Addressed

4. This evaluation will analyze the following five criteria at a minimum:
 - **Relevance.** The extent to which the activities are suited to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time.
 - **Effectiveness.** The extent to which the results have been achieved or how likely they are to be achieved.
 - **Efficiency.** The extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible; also called cost-effectiveness or efficacy.
 - **Impact.** This includes an analysis of whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.
 - **Sustainability.** The likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially and socially sustainable.
5. The evaluation will provide general information about the evaluation; outline the project description and development context; analyze the project design and project implementation (including the M&E system), assess the level of achievement of project results and; comment on the sustainability of project outcomes. As

specified in the TORs, certain elements will be rated using a scale from Highly Unsatisfactory to Highly Satisfactory and the risks to sustainability will be rated on a scale from Highly Likely to Highly Unlikely.

2.3 Methodology of the Evaluation

6. The methodology for this Terminal Evaluation included the following components:

A) Evaluation Preparation:

- The consultant carried out an extensive review of documentation, including the Project Document, project proposal, project reports, and all other relevant information. The list of documents reviewed is provided in Annex 2;
- The overall development situation of the country (based on the UNDP Common Country Assessment and other available reports) was reviewed.
- An Inception Report was prepared with a detailed mission programme, including the evaluation methodology to be followed.

B) Evaluation Mission:

- Debriefing session was held with UNDP/Belize, the Project Manager and Project Public Sector Liaison Officer.
- Interviews were carried out with 26 individuals involved in different capacities in the project (see Annex 4).
- Additional material received during the mission was reviewed with a focused attention to project outcomes and outputs.
- A presentation of the initial findings was prepared but could not be carried out on the last day of the mission due to the fact that the UNDP Environmental Programme Analyst was on sick leave. The presentation was distributed via e-mail instead.

C) Report preparation:

- This involved a detailed analysis of data, follow-up phone calls and e-mails to address information gaps, and consolidation of the information. The draft report was prepared in accordance with guidelines and Terms of Reference for this Terminal Evaluation (see Annex 1). Upon receipt of reviewer comments, a final evaluation report will be prepared.

2.4 Structure of the Evaluation

7. The structure of this evaluation follows the Terms of Reference provided by UNDP Belize and approved by the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit (see Annex 1). UNDP Guidelines for Evaluators as well as GEF evaluation policies were followed as well as the specific expectations of the Implementing Agency (IA) and Executing Agency (EA).

3 Project Description and Development Context

3.1 Project Start and Duration

8. The project was approved by GEF on March 20, 2008 and the Project Document (ProDoc) was signed on June 30, 2008. By December 2, 2008, the first disbursement was made and in January 2009, the Project Manager was hired. The project launch was carried out in April 2009. The project operational closure was on December 31, 2011 and the financial closure is planned for December 31, 2012.
9. GEF provided funding in the amount of \$472,500, and \$152,400 was promised as government co-financing.

3.2 Problems that the Project Seeks to Address

10. Belize is committed to environmentally sound and sustainable development, and has signed on to over 25 multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). However, the inadequacy of Belize's institutional framework limits the ability to meet these obligations. This stems in large part from the many pieces of legislative instruments that directly and indirectly affect the management of natural resources and the environment and a lack of coordination in the application of these tools.
11. The project proposal identifies a number of specific barriers that limit the country's ability to fulfil global environmental commitments. These include:
 - Ø Independent operation of the Focal Point departments for the conventions, with collaboration mainly related to informal relationships between ministries, departments, central and local government structures and among GoB and NGOs and CBOs;
 - Ø Relatively rigidity of the ToRs of the Convention focal points, which limits flexibility in terms of shifting responsibilities and targets when necessary, and the marginalization of Focal Point responsibilities compared to the more immediate priorities governed by national legislation and regulation;
 - Ø Importance of Convention implementation is not reflected in broader socio-economic policy deliberations, such as in meetings of the National Human Development Advisory Council (NHDAC);
 - Ø Failure to adopt many policies; overlapping nature of some legislation and duplication in terms of coverage, authority, institutional responsibilities and operation; and deficiencies in some legislation;
 - Ø Under-resourcing of many departments that are key to implementing Convention requirements, insufficient training in policy analysis of MEAs, and difficulty of policy analysts to fully conceptualize policy interventions for the national implementation of the Rio Conventions within the framework of national environmental policies and plans;
 - Ø Inadequate accessibility to natural resource and environmental data and information, and limited data sharing, leading to the same data being collected by different departments, at times using different methodologies;
 - Ø Lack of implementation of fiscal policies and economic instruments that could promote environmental stewardship. Instead legislation focuses on fines and imprisonments for violations;
 - Ø Insufficient involvement of local communities in monitoring and enforcement of environmental legislation.

12. This project sets out to minimize the overlapping and conflicting natural resource and environmental policies relevant to the goals and principles of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as to fill identified policy gaps. The multitude of legislation and associated responsible departments will be rationalized in terms of cost-effectiveness and attainment of immediate objectives, such as through the development and implementation of co-managed projects among multiple departments that produce synergies. Both government and non-state stakeholders will be better enabled to undertake activities that are mutually supportive of each other, including co-managed projects (such as integrated resource management projects).

3.3 Immediate and Development Objectives of the Project

13. **Long-term goal:** To improve management and protection of Belize's natural resources and environment, resulting in improvements to meet national commitments to multilateral environment agreements.
14. **Project objective:** To coordinate Belize's natural resource and environmental policies in such a way that creates synergies for the national implementation of the CBD, CCD and FCCC.
15. The following three project outcomes were articulated in response to the overall project objective:
- i) Strengthened policy coordination and planning mechanisms within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE);
 - ii) Increased capacities for integrating natural resource and environmental management issues into national development framework;
 - iii) Monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive collaborative management.

3.4 Main Stakeholders

16. The following are the main stakeholders of relevance to this project:
- Ø The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) as a whole was a critical stakeholder in this project because at the time of project implementation it housed the focal points of the three Rio Conventions.
 - Ø The Department of Environment (MNRE) coordinated the Belize National Capacity Self Assessment- 1 project (NCSA-1) (2005-2006), which identified the thematic and cross-cutting capacity constraints affecting implementation of the Rio Conventions, and identified opportunities for addressing these constraints. The NCSA-1 project highlighted the need to improve policy coordination, which ultimately resulted in this follow-up project. DOE also developed the PDF-A concept for this project.

- Ø Ministry of National Development, Investment and Culture (MNDIC), which oversaw and supported the National Human Development Advisory Committee (NHDAC) at the time of project design (it is now MED that coordinates NHDAC) and housed the GEF Operational Focal Point at that time (during project implementation, the GEF Operational Focal Point was housed within the Department of the Environment, MNRE). MNDIC played an active role in the design of this project.
- Ø Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Cooperatives, which also made contributions to the design of the project. As a result of their role in managing natural resources and influencing land use, the Ministry was considered an important stakeholder in this project.
- Ø Ministry of Finance, whose involvement was identified as important to the financial sustainability of the project strategy through the submission of proposals and budget requests to Cabinet.
- Ø Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which houses the GEF Political Focal Point and has a mandate to ensure that all internationally funded projects are designed and implemented in a manner that allows for synergies.
- Ø Other non-state stakeholders, which were consulted during the design of the project, such as at a national level: the Association of National Development Agencies, Belize Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, Belize Electric Company Limited, and at a regional level: the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC).

3.5 Expected Results

17. The Logical Framework presented in Annex 6 identifies the Long-term Goal, Project Objective and three Project Outcomes, as well as associated indicators, baselines, targets, sources of verification, risks and assumptions.

4 Findings

4.1 Project Design/ Formulation

- **Analysis of LFA (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)**

18. In general, the project logic is clear and the project identified an appropriate project objective and outcomes to address the threats and barriers that were identified at the project design stage. In addition, the indicators selected are logical and consistent with the identified Objectives and Outcomes. One exception is the indicator under Output 1.2 of an “increased number of non-state stakeholders registered under the NGO Act”. The project is focused on strengthening NGOs’ capacity through increased collaboration and increased participation in the development of relevant policies, and as such was not designed to have an impact on the number of registered NGOs, which is outside of the scope of activities of MNRE and of the project.
19. More specific indicator(s) should perhaps have been included to measure the level of achievement of the project objective (creation of synergies in the implementation of the three Rio Conventions). In addition, in a number of instances the targets included in the logframe do not fully correspond with the indicators, some indicators are framed as targets (e.g., “NREPS meets every 6 months with a minimum of 70% quorum at the senior director level”) or the targets included are actually sources of verification (e.g., “large sample size surveys”). In other cases, the targets are not appropriate. For example, under Output 1.1, one of the targets specifies that “all NHDAC members have attended at least one sensitization workshop” and similarly under Output 1.2, one of the targets is that “by the end of the project, at least 50 non-state stakeholders attended

sensitization workshops”. Sensitization workshops refer to the workshops undertaken to enable stakeholders to understand and feed into the proposed NREPS structure and process- they are an activity to be carried out to achieve an output, rather than being an appropriate project target.

Finally, there are a few instances in the logframe in which the timelines associated with targets may have been overly ambitious (at least this is the perception in hindsight). For example, under Output 2.1, one of the targets established is that large sample size surveys would be undertaken at the end of years 1, 2 and 3. It could be argued that after the first year baseline survey, the next survey should have been at the end of project to allow time for the project to achieve the intended results.

- **Assumptions and Risks**

20. In general, project assumptions were clearly formulated in the original logical framework. However, it should be noted that some of the risks identified were not external to the project’s sphere of influence in that they represent what the project hoped to achieve. Specifically, in some cases the assumptions are the same or similar to the project targets. As such, based on conventional logframe design guidelines, they should not have been included. For example, one of the project targets is that the PCPU staff and administration would be financed through government appropriations and the corresponding assumption is that the long-term sustainability of project benefits is assured by GoB budgetary appropriations and not by extra-budgetary resources. Similarly, one of the project assumptions at the Project Objective level is that the “project will be executed in a holistic, adaptive, collaborative, integrative and iterative manner”, which is what the project is effectively meant to work toward.

- **Lessons from Other Relevant Projects (e.g., same focal area) Incorporated into Project Design**

21. The project built specifically on the findings of the Belize National Capacity Self-Assessment-1, which identified the need for increased cross-sectoral coordination across government ministries to strengthen Belize’s ability to fulfill its obligations to the Rio Conventions. The Department of Environment initiated the NCSA-1 project and was instrumental in the development of this project.
22. This project was a pioneering one in that it was the first GEF capacity development project in the region and as such contributed to the overall capacity development portfolio. It was therefore not in the position to take advantage of lessons from other cross-cutting capacity building projects.
23. Nevertheless, lessons from the implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects in Belize were taken into consideration, in particular, the positive impact of having civil servants take on project management functions in order to enhance national ownership.

- **Planned Stakeholder Participation**

24. The planned stakeholder participation as outlined in the project proposal is considered highly inclusive and comprehensive. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) is to be established by reconstituting the NCSA Steering Committee, which consisted of the main relevant stakeholders, including senior directors of MNRE, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Cooperatives (MAFC), Ministry of National Development, Investment and Culture (MNDIC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), a representative of UNDP and a non-state stakeholder as observer (to be chosen through consultations with the non-state stakeholder community). The proposal also specifies that the governmental representation is to include the heads of the Department of Environment, Forest Department, Coastal Zone Management Authority, Lands and Survey Department, and the Protected Areas Management Programme. In addition to the PSC, the project design envisioned the

implementation of Tripartite Reviews for the purpose of project monitoring, including MNRE, the GEF Operational Focal Point and UNDP.

25. In addition, the main elements of the project were designed so as to ensure the participation of both state and non-state stakeholders in the coordination of environmental and natural resource management policies. Specifically, Output 1.1 of the project stipulates the establishment of a Natural Resource and Environmental Policy Sub-Committee composed of senior directors of key governmental departments and agencies, in particular MNRE, MAFC and Finance. This Committee is also to include the Focal Points of all the main multilateral environmental agreements (e.g., UNCBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC, CITES, RAMSAR), as well as non-state stakeholder representation. Output 1.2 involves the establishment of the Non-State Stakeholders Committee, comprising “the full range of non-state stakeholders”, including NGOs, private sector, CBOs and civil society.
26. In terms of the level of stakeholder participation in project design, there was a wide array of state and non-state stakeholders consulted, including through individual consultations with representatives from various government agencies, private sector associations and non-governmental organizations, as well as through a large stakeholder workshop (as described in detail in the project proposal.) In total, 44 individuals were consulted.

- **Replication Approach**

27. The project proposal indicates that UNDP and GEF will play a key role in facilitating the dissemination of lessons learned from this project with a view to encouraging replication. Lessons learned are to be shared through regional organizations to which Belize belongs, such as CARICOM and the Central American Commission on Environment and Development. The project proposal also commits the project to the production of technical reports and/or publications on lessons learned to be “widely” disseminated by the project, with funds allocated to this component. The electronic versions of said documents are to be shared on UNDP’s web site, Belize’s Clearing House Mechanism, and other websites to be negotiated during the project. In addition, the project is to participate in UNDP-GEF sponsored networks related to projects with shared characteristics, and in scientific, policy-based and any other networks as relevant and appropriate.

- **UNDP Comparative Advantage**

28. UNDP-Belize had a strong comparative advantage as the Implementing Agency (IA) for this project. UNDP is the only GEF IA with a physical office in Belize, and has an extensive network of contacts in the country to draw upon, knowledge of partner dynamics and direct linkages to these contacts. As such, UNDP’s Country Office and Environmental Programme Analyst are able to provide the Executing Agency with a substantial level of support and technical backstopping.
29. UNDP has played an important role in supporting natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable use initiatives in Belize. UNDP was the IA of the National Capacity Self Assessment-1 (NCSA-1) project, which identified the need for the present project. UNDP also previously implemented a number of other GEF projects, such as the “Mainstreaming and Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management in Belize” Medium Sized Project (MSP), “Golden Stream Watershed Project” (MSP), “Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Belize Barrier Reef” Full-Sized Project, and two Full-Sized

regional programmes that included Belize, namely, the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor and the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System. As a result, UNDP has valuable experience and lessons learned to draw upon.

- **Linkages between Project and Other Interventions Within the Sector**

30. The project proposal indicates that the project's implementation will be coordinated with all other GEF funded projects in Belize to prevent duplication of effort, including the UNDP-GEF Sustainable Land Management Project and other enabling activity projects that lead to the production of national reports and national communications. Further details are not provided, neither in the project proposal nor in the ProDoc.

- **Management Arrangements**

31. The management arrangements established in the project design are generally considered well thought-out. The selected project Executing Agency (EA) was the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment. Given that the Ministry at the time of project implementation housed the focal points for the three Rio Conventions (UNCCD, UNCBD and UNCCC), this choice was felt to be appropriate. However, in hindsight, some of those interviewed commented that the positioning was not necessarily ideal to address cross-cutting and cross-sectoral issues and that perhaps the PCPU should have been placed at a higher level of government.
32. The project was to be managed using the standard UNDP NEX modality (National Execution). A Project Director would be assigned from within the Policy Coordinating and Planning Unit to provide project oversight (this position would not be paid by the project as it constitutes government co-financing).
33. The proposal specifies that the existing Policy and Planning Coordination Unit (PCPU) of MNRE serves as the Executing Agency for projects that are under the Ministry itself, including those funded by international partners. The proposal also indicates that a Project Management Unit (PMU) would be established within the EA. A Project Manager and an NGO/Civil Society Liaison would be hired as part of this PMU, in addition to various consultants for specific shorter-term consultancies.
34. The proposal indicates that the NCSA-1 steering committee would be reconstituted as the Project Steering Committee (PSC) for this project (for composition, see Planned Stakeholder Participation section). The PSC would meet every six months to examine project performance and to provide guidance for project implementation.
35. UNDP was identified as the Implementing Agency for the project, responsible for disbursing funds and for management oversight, and has the final responsibility for timely reporting, monitoring and evaluation and submission of audits to UNDP Headquarters. The UNDP Regional Coordination Office in Panama would provide technical backstopping, UNDP GEF policy advice, trouble shooting and advisory services if necessary.

4.2 Project Implementation

- **UNDP and Executing Agency Execution (*), Coordination, and Operational Issues**
(Overall Quality: Moderately Satisfactory)

36. The modality for the implementation of this project was UNDP NEX, that is, national execution, with the UNDP disbursing funds and providing management oversight.

Executing Agency (Implementing Partner) Execution (*Moderately Satisfactory*)

37. The Policy Coordination and Policy Unit, which was located within the then Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, took on the dual roles of policy coordination and project management. This arrangement was established in the project design to retain the capacity that would be built by the project within the MNRE and to promote sustainability of project impact. Furthermore, the decision to have the project managed by civil servants was designed to allow for greater national ownership. Beside the PCPU staff, an administrative assistant was hired to manage project administrative/ financial matters. During project implementation, the assumption of these dual responsibilities by the PCPU staff was found to be problematic and it was difficult to take on both successfully. To a certain extent, the project management functions were undermined by the heavy demands on PCPU staff members' time.
38. Over the course of project implementation, the PCPU began to take on additional tasks and expand its mandate beyond policy coordination. The Project Manager/PCPU Director took on the role of providing policy advice to the CEO and the PCPU as a whole began to be involved more in the actual issues (such as energy), in mobilizing project funds, in providing oversight to approved projects, and in attending different regional and international events, among others. Thus the focus on the project's specific intended results was not fully maintained and a number of the stakeholders interviewed felt that this undermined the level of natural resource management and environmental policy coordination and broad stakeholder consultation that the project was able to achieve. Others viewed this more positively in that the PCPU "moved the ball" on various issues such as energy and climate change. It should be noted that there was significant high-level support for the PCPU and government ownership of the project.
39. This expansion in the scope of the PCPU also affected the level of project reporting and timeliness. Project reporting was considered adequate for the first half of the project but it diminished over time. Later on during project implementation, the project did not submit all reports in a timely manner and as a result, the UNDP took on some functions that are normally carried out by projects, such as preparation of AWP, PIRs and QORs (though there were no QORs for 2011). In addition, UNDP took over procurement in early 2011 due to problems in the way this function was being handled by the EA (see Project Finance section for more details). Stage plans and reports began to be produced on a semester basis in the second half of 2010 and there are no stage plans or reports or QORs for 2011, only the final project review report. A risk log was not maintained during project implementation to support risk management though issues of concern that could have jeopardized achievement of project goals were identified in PIRs and in PEG meetings. Minutes were not consistently produced for NREPS meetings and lessons learned were not sufficiently documented or disseminated. Thus, there was insufficient adherence to standard management functions by the EA. As a result of the factors outlined, the Executing Agency execution of the project is rated as *Marginally Satisfactory*.

Implementing Agency Execution (*) (*Satisfactory*)

40. The UNDP execution of this project is rated as *Satisfactory*. Interviewees agreed that UNDP provided regular and strong support to the PMU as well as substantial training to the PMU in project management functions. The UNDP's approach was considered very flexible, with the maintenance of a good balance between ensuring compliance with fiscal guidelines and promoting achievement of the project objectives. Throughout, the UNDP maintained a focus on project results and reminded the PCPU regularly to employ the logframe to monitor progress against project objectives and to maintain its focus on policy coordination. UNDP also

regularly stressed to the PMU the importance of obtaining government commitment for the appropriation of PCPU staff in its budget, as this was one of the key targets included in the logframe at the objective level.

41. The UNDP was responsive to implementation issues that arose during the project and identified risks that could jeopardize achievement of the project objectives. For example, as mentioned in the Adaptive Management section, the UNDP identified the need to strengthen the capacity of the PCPU at project outset by pushing for the hiring of a PCPU Director/ Project Manager. UNDP also supported the process of hiring an additional staff person, who had not been included in the original project design, to manage the large amount of documentation being gathered by the PCPU. While UNDP did follow up regularly with the PMU to encourage submission of the necessary project reports and documents, it might have been beneficial if the UNDP had required greater levels of project documentation as a precondition to issuing payments.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation (*Overall quality: Moderately Satisfactory*)**

- Monitoring and Evaluation design at project entry (*Satisfactory*)**

42. The Monitoring and Evaluation design at project entry is rated as *Satisfactory*. The logframe was generally logical, with appropriate indicators, baselines values and targets, though there were a few deficiencies related to the indicators and targets as highlighted in section 4.1 (Project Design/Formulation, Analysis of LFA). For example, one of the indicators relating to the increase in the number of registered NGOs was not ‘SMART’ (specifically, it was not achievable as it was outside of the scope of the project.)
43. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan presented in the Project Document was appropriate and included all the main necessary M&E activities, including an inception workshop, preparation of an inception report, quarterly progress reports, PEG meetings, annual Tripartite Reviews and associated reports, annual performance audits (reviews of policy coordination), Mid-Term and Terminal External Evaluations, financial audit, terminal report, visits to field sites and gathering of lessons learned. The roles, responsibilities and methodology for M&E were clearly articulated in the Project Document. The budget for Monitoring and Evaluation provided in the Project Document was \$70,000.00, which is considered sufficient.

- Monitoring and Evaluation Implementation (*Moderately Satisfactory*)**

44. Monitoring and Evaluation Implementation is rated as *Moderately Satisfactory*. Due to the relative inexperience of the PMU in managing UNDP/GEF projects, UNDP provided training in monitoring and evaluation procedures. Annual PIRs reported against the logical framework and according to interviewees, the logframe was used effectively as a tool to monitor project progress. However, there were some targets that were not achieved; for example, the policy coordination effectiveness baseline and follow-up studies were not carried out nor was a programming document prepared outlining strategic implementation of policy interventions. This suggests that the team did not always ensure adherence to the targets established in the logframe.
45. The minutes of the PEG meetings were not available for the evaluator to review. PEG meetings were held relatively infrequently, with the evaluator able to view evidence (in the form of agendas or Powerpoint presentations) of two PEG meetings in 2009, one in 2010 and one in 2011. The goal of having PEG meetings every 6 months as indicated in the project proposal was not met. Examples of issues discussed were stage reports, stage plans, the budget and project milestones. The evaluator is of the opinion that the PEG should have been benefitted from being a larger body with greater cross-sectoral representation and that meetings should have been more frequent in order to effectively oversee project progress and ensure the project was staying on track.

46. The PIRs that were developed in 2010 and 2011 underscored a few problematic issues, such as the fact that the expansion of the role of the PCPU was undermining the focus on project results, as well as the insufficient guidance provided by the PEG due to the difficulty convening meetings. While the PEG membership was changed to facilitate obtaining quorum, infrequent PEG meetings remained a problem for the duration of the project. Similarly, the issue of the PCPU taking on additional responsibilities and losing its focus on project monitoring, management and results remained unresolved despite the discussions that were held to highlight this issue. The project team has not been able to locate the minutes of the PEG meetings so it is difficult to comment on the extent to which PEG meetings led to follow-up actions, though the section entitled ‘Feedback from M&E activities Used for Adaptive Management’ provides some examples.
47. The narrative and financial reporting of the project was adequate though over time there was some slippage with reports not being produced in a timely manner. As mentioned previously, this led to the UNDP taking on some of these reporting functions.
48. Funds for Monitoring and Evaluation were spent primarily on the project launch, the financial audit and the Terminal Evaluation. Annual performance audits to review project impact on policy coordination were not undertaken, nor was an MTE undertaken. Both project staff and the UNDP indicated that this was a decision made by consensus due to the late start of the project and limited deliverables by the time of the planned MTE. Instead, a PEG meeting was undertaken to take stock of progress so far.
49. It is not possible to comment on the consistency of the APR self-ratings and the Mid-Term Evaluation since an MTE was not undertaken for this project. The following table compares the ratings included in this Terminal Evaluation with those in the PIR for 2011. Possible reasons for the slight discrepancies in these ratings include the fact that the PIR 2011 was carried out in 2011 while the TE was carried out in 2012, and the fact that the TE ratings reflect the opinions of a broader range of stakeholders than the PIR (ratings were based on interviews with 26 individuals and extensive review of documentation).

PIR 2011 Ratings

| | <i>Rating of Progress toward Meeting Development Objective</i> | <i>Rating of Implementation Progress</i> |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| National Project Manager | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |
| GEF Operational Focal Point | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |
| Project Implementing Partner | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |
| UNDP Country Office | Satisfactory | Moderately Satisfactory |
| UNDP Regional Technical Adviser | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |

TE Ratings:

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>Overall quality of M&E</i> | MS |
| <i>Overall quality of Implementation/Execution</i> | MS |
| <i>Overall Project Outcome Rating</i> | MS |

50. Based on the combined analysis of Monitoring and Evaluation planning and implementation, the overall rating for Monitoring and Evaluation is *Moderately Satisfactory*.

- **Feedback from M&E Activities Used for Adaptive Management**

51. The evaluator was not able to view the PEG minutes themselves as these could not be located. However, according to interviewees, PEG meetings and discussions had a significant impact on adaptive management. For example, at one of the PEG meetings, the decision was made to begin semester-based project reporting instead of quarterly reporting as a result of the many other obligations of the PCPU. At another PEG meeting, the decision was made to pool the various fuel allocation budget lines from the project and use this money to purchase a vehicle for the project/PCPU as the lack of a vehicle was undermining project effectiveness (the government in turn agreed to take on fuel and other transportation related costs).

As noted previously, the decision was made by UNDP and the government not to carry out a MTE (this is not mandatory for MSPs), as a result of time constraints and the impact of earlier delays on the level of progress by the time of the planned MTE. As such, there was no MTE to provide recommendations on project management. There was, however, a PEG meeting that was carried out around the time of the planned MTE according to interviewees.

52. As will be expanded upon in the next section, there were numerous other examples of adaptive management by the project team, which were informed by ongoing monitoring of how best to achieve project objectives.

- **Adaptive Management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation)**

53. The main environmental and development objectives of the project did not change during project implementation. There were, however, a few instances during project implementation that required changes to the project approach or to the implementation systems.
54. The change in government, which coincided with project onset, led to changes to the staffing of the Policy and Planning Unit, with the former senior members of the Unit being replaced by a younger group with less experience. As a result of this change in the exogenous conditions, the UNDP took the decision to bolster the capacity of the new PCPU by hiring a Project Manager with project funds (the position was officially called Strategic Planning and Policy Adviser). The person hired had a strong academic background in systems thinking and strategic planning. In another example of UNDP's adaptive management of the project, UNDP took on some of the PMU's reporting functions due to the latter's increasing difficulties in carrying out the dual roles of policy coordination and project management and the resulting slippage in project monitoring and reporting.
55. The project staff also demonstrated adaptive management on various occasions. Most notably, the decision was made that the NREPS-Technical Committee would be a separate committee reporting to a CEO Caucus, rather than a sub-committee of NHDAC as originally envisioned in the project design. This change was due to a change in the exogenous conditions since the NHDAC was a somewhat weaker entity than it had been during project design and had insufficient focus on natural resource management issues. This decision was a positive one as it enabled the project to have more direct access to the higher decision-making level (Cabinet) through the CEO Caucus.
56. Another decision made by the project that reflected adaptive management was to allocate some funds to the purchase of equipment because it was recognized that training alone would not be sufficient to strengthen the capacity and increase the efficiency of the different departments involved in natural resource management and environmental issues. This change was therefore made to enhance achievement of the project goal of capacity building within the MNRE. As a result, equipment such as laptops for Heads of Departments, a printer/fax copier for the Planning Department, GPS equipment for the Department of Geology and Petroleum, capacity

building equipment for forest rangers, and software for the IT Department of MNRE to remotely access the computers in the regional divisions, was purchased.

57. Given the large amount of information the PCPU was dealing with and the expanding scope of the PCPU's activities, the project identified the need for a Document and Information Management Officer. While this was not part of the original project design, it was deemed necessary to facilitate achievement of the goals of increased cooperation and information sharing as it relates to natural resource management and the environment. As a result, the PCPU and UNDP cooperated to make this happen and the individual hired began work in early 2009.

- **Partnership Arrangements/ Stakeholder Interaction (with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region)**

58. In essence the core of the project was the establishment of partnerships through cooperation with a variety of state, non-state and quasi governmental organizations via-a-vis the establishment of the two consultative bodies, the NREPS- Technical Committee and the NREPS- Other Stakeholders Committee. These comprised the main relevant stakeholders involved in natural resource management and environmental issues, or representatives thereof (for example APAMO represents many of Belize's Protected Areas Management Organizations). A more detailed description on the effectiveness of these two committees can be found in the Results section.
59. The project design detailed the composition of the PEG which would essentially be a reconstitution of the NCSA steering committee (see Planned Stakeholder Participation, Project Design section for details). The actual composition of the PEG did not reflect this plan as it ended up being a tripartite body consisting of the GEF Operational Focal Point, UNDP and the CEO of the MNRE. At project outset, the PEG had also included the Ministry of Economic Development, but the decision was made to reduce the size of the PEG due to the difficulty of obtaining quorum.
60. The project established partnerships with a number of regional and international actors, a task which was facilitated by the PCPU's participation in a variety of international and national events. For example, the project established a partnership with CARICOM, which allowed Belize to benefit from a template for the development of its national energy policy. In addition, the PCPU established a partnership with OLADE (Latin American Energy Organization) together with the MNRE, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Public Service, which resulted in the government agreeing to pay the annual OLADE membership fee, thus enabling Belize to access training offered by this organization, as well as their database. This partnership led to Belize's inclusion in the Central American energy statistics for the first time. Partnerships were established for the delivery of various training workshops, such as with the Venezuelan Embassy for the Spanish training, and with the firm, "Get Real Training", for the public relations workshop.
61. In terms of information dissemination, the project proposal outlined a number of different ways that project lessons learned would be disseminated to stakeholders, such as through CARICOM and the Central American Commission on Environment and Development, but in the end, lessons learned were only formally shared with PEG members through the distribution of the Final Project Review Report (and perhaps more informally through the TC and OSC meetings though this cannot be verified as detailed minutes are not available for these meetings).

- **Project Finance**

62. Financial reporting was considered adequate for the first half of the project but in the later stages of project implementation, there was slippage, with the UNDP having to prepare some financial information, such as the

Annual Operational Plans, for the project to sign off on as a result of the project failing to carry out this function adequately and in a timely manner.

63. In the latter half of project implementation, UNDP learned that the project had outstanding financial commitments of which UNDP had been unaware, resulting in less funds being available than anticipated for 2011. Moreover, some expenditures for which the project was submitting Payment Requests were found to be outside of the scope of the project and as such UNDP denied certain requests. There was also insufficient documentation to support expenditures at times. As a result, the UNDP took the decision in early 2011 to manage procurement.
64. The project was audited for the year ending December 31, 2009 with a report produced in April 2010. The financial audit found that the financial statements presented the project's financial position fairly. The audit noted, however, that the statement of assets and equipment did not include the value of the assets. This has since been provided to the final evaluator with the total value of project assets and equipment at project end totaling USD 27,260 (mainly computers, equipment for Forestry Department and Geology and Petroleum Department and DVD writers).
65. The delivery rate by project operational closure as indicated in the Final Project Review Report was 100%. The UNDP agreed to take on the full cost of the Terminal Evaluation as co-financing due to the lack of project funds remaining for this purpose.
66. Annual expenditures by Outcome are provided in Annex 7. As can be seen, there were some variances between the planned and actual expenditures per Outcome. Spending on Outcome 1 was less than planned (delivery rate of 32%), while expenses for Outcome 2 were somewhat more than planned (133% delivery rate). This is because once the PCPU was established, it internalized many of the tasks that were to be covered under Outcome 1. As a result, more funds were available for the remaining Outcomes. The decision was made to combine Outcomes 3 and 4 to conform to UNDP Belize's practice of managing monitoring and evaluation and project management funds together. The total combined expenditures on these two Outcomes exceeded planned expenditures (delivery rate of 130%).
67. The total co-financing reported in the Final Project Review was \$165,265, which exceeds the amount committed in the Project Document of \$152,400. An additional \$12,865.00 was leveraged from the UNDP during the course of project implementation, which was used for the realization of the TE. According to project interviews, there was also some additional co-financing provided by the government for the renovated space to which the PCPU was relocated and for equipment and furniture, however, this amount was not quantified by the project team and the evaluator was not able to obtain this information.

Table 3: Summary of Co-Financing

| Co-financing (type/source) | UNDP own financing (US\$) | | Government (US\$) | | Partner agency (US\$) | | Total (US\$) | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|------------|--------------------------|--------|--------------|------------|
| | Planned | Actual | Planned | Actual | Planned | Actual | Planned | Actual |
| Grants | 0 | 12,865.00 | | | | | 0 | 12,865.00 |
| Loans/Concessions | | | | | | | | |
| In-kind support | | | 152,400.00 | 152,400.00 | | | 152,400.00 | 152,400.00 |
| Other | | | | | | | | |
| Totals | 0 | 12,865.00 | 152,400.00 | 152,400.00 | | | 152,400.00 | 165,265.00 |

4.3 Project Results

- Relevance (*) (*Relevant- R*)

68. Project outcomes are rated *relevant*. All interviewees stressed the critical importance of the project's goal of increasing the level of coordination among departments, ministries and other stakeholders for the development and review of natural resource and environmental policies. The project outcomes were therefore highly relevant in the national context. The NREPS consultative bodies and PCPU were considered to be appropriate mechanisms to achieve these aims, though some areas of further strengthening remain.
69. The project was fully consistent with GEF's strategic approach to capacity building by supporting the building of capacities to implement international environmental conventions. One of the main objectives identified in the Capacity Development Results Framework associated with the GEF-5 programming document is to "enhance [the] capacities of stakeholders for engagement through consultative process[es]", which was a central theme in this project. Thus, the project was relevant in terms of GEF's strategic objectives.

- Efficiency (*) (*Moderately Satisfactory*)

70. The efficiency or cost-effectiveness of achievement of project results is rated as *Moderately Satisfactory*. The project was able to achieve the majority of the deliverables without exceeding the original budget. However, as was noted in the section on Finances, UNDP found that some expenditures were not fully consistent with project objectives and were therefore denied. There were also some outstanding expenditures that UNDP learned of after the fact that reduced the amount available for achieving project results. As a result, UNDP needed to step in at one point and take over procurement functions to track procurement more directly and keep expenditures on track. UNDP ended up increasing its co-financing amount to cover the full cost of the final FTE).

- Overall results (attainment of objectives) (*) (*Moderately Satisfactory*)

The attainment of project objectives is rated as *Moderately Satisfactory*. Further details to substantiate this rating are provided in the following section.

- Effectiveness (*) (*Moderately Satisfactory*)

71. The effectiveness of achievement of project results is rated as *Moderately Satisfactory*. Significant progress was made in establishing a consultative structure for policy coordination, the PCPU's capacity was strengthened and policy reform based on a coordinated approach was achieved. However, there were some limitations, for example, in the project's ability to achieve inter-ministerial coordination and to create synergies in the implementation of the Rio Conventions. More details on the achievements at the project objective and outcome levels and on limitations are provided below.

Project objective: To coordinate Belize's natural resource and environmental policies in such a way that creates synergies for the national implementation of the CBD, CCD and FCCC.

72. The consultative approach made up of the NREPS Technical Committee and Other Stakeholder Committee was established and tested through the project. Several natural resource and environmental policies were reviewed through the NREPS structure by senior government functionaries and other stakeholders, who made recommendations, and these policies were approved by Cabinet during the project's lifespan. The coordinated

review of policies was therefore improved through the project, though the expected studies to measure the impact of the project on policy coordination effectiveness were not carried out as expected. The project played an important role in filling policy gaps but was less involved in carrying out an analysis of the level of overlap between existing policies and in addressing these. Thus while progress was made, the problems of insufficient inter-ministerial coordination and insufficient cross-referencing of policies persist.

73. Overall, the project made some headway in establishing a coordinated approach to implementing the three Rio Conventions, facilitating Belize's engagements in international meetings and helping to coordinate input into the national communications. However, there was room for more actions to monitor the impact of existing programs and projects on Belize's fulfilment of obligations related to MEAs and to identify cross-cutting issues and common themes across the three Conventions, for example, in terms of research, technology transfer and public education. One interviewee commented that the fact that the representatives on the Technical Committee were high-level functionaries limited the level of technical input they could provide to benefit the implementation of the Rio Conventions (for example by providing input into the national communications).
74. In terms of the sustainability of the NREPS system, the costs of the staffing and administration of the PCPU have now been partially assumed by government, with the Public Sector Liaison Officer and the Civil Society Liaison Officer positions now holding government contracts, while the PCPU Director has chosen to continue to receive funding from projects.

Outcome 1: Strengthened policy coordination and planning mechanisms within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE);

75. A Natural Resource and Environmental Policy System (NREPS) was established through this project, and included three different layers of stakeholder involvement: the Technical Committee (TC), the Other Stakeholders Committee (OSC) and the CEO Caucus. After substantial consultation, a Charter for the NREPS system was developed, which outlined the principles, organs, and duties of the NREPS structures, including the PCPU as the NREPS Secretariat, the TC, OSC, CEO Caucus, and the Advisory Council.
76. The NREPS Technical Committee was comprised of 15 members of different government departments and ministries, including the focal points of the Rio Conventions. The Committee also had one representative of the Other Stakeholders Committee, though this position has not been filled since the existing representative left country. In order to facilitate the flow of information between the PCPU and the NHDAC, MED (which coordinates NHDAC) had a seat on the NREPS-TC and the Project Manager/ PCPU Director had a seat on NHDAC.
77. The NREPS- TC was chaired by the MNRE CEO and met four times during the project's lifespan, with quorum obtained each time. NREPS-TC government stakeholders provided input on issues such as the Land Use Policy, the Energy Policy and the Integrated Water Resource Management Strategy. Several of the policies discussed were later approved by Cabinet. The structure also enabled participants to learn about various ongoing projects within government of which they might not otherwise have been aware through presentations that were made, which also provided TC members with the opportunity to make comments on

said projects (for example, the UNDP/GEF Sustainable Land Management Project made a presentation to the TC and solicited input).

78. While some interviewees indicated that Ministries were more up to date on various initiatives as a result of the TC, a number of interviewees indicated that while the project had a positive impact on the level of cooperation between the different departments of the then MNRE, there was less impact in terms of collaboration across ministries. For example, it was commented that there was insufficient cross-sectoral involvement and participation of agencies such as the Department of Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and of the Ministry of Tourism. This may have been in part because of insufficient cross-sectoral/ inter-ministerial networking and a substantial focus on the priorities of the particular ministry in which the project was housed (MNRE). In part it may also have been a factor of the tendency of government ministries to work in isolation and “protect their own turf”, which is a phenomenon that takes time to change. Some interviewees also commented that the number of meetings held was too little to have a meaningful impact on levels of inter-ministerial cooperation.
79. It should be noted that the PCPU’s work led to the development of a number of co-managed projects. For example, the PCPU mobilized funds for the “Land Management-3 Program” between the Lands and Surveys Department and the PCPU. The PCPU also partnered with the Geology and Petroleum Department, Central Statistics Department, Forest Department, Lands and Surveys Department, the Protected Areas Unit and APAMO to develop a GIS-based matrix that would support government decision-making on areas for oil drilling (the PCPU coordinated development of this tool).
80. To complement the NREPS Technical Committee, a second stakeholder committee which was named “Other Stakeholders Committee” (OSC) was established with approximately 14 organizational members comprising NGOs, the private sector (including major utilities), and academia. The launch occurred approximately 15 months after project start-up, which was later than scheduled in the logframe. Project staff indicating that this was due to the extensive consultation undertaken to obtain input and buy-in for the process. This included sensitization workshops, which were held both with groups of stakeholders and with individual stakeholder organizations. According to project estimates, at least 50 non-state stakeholders attended these sensitization workshops.
81. Elections to establish the Executive Committee, including the Chair and Co-Chair of the OSC, were held during the first meeting of the OSC. The decision was made against having a rotating chair as this would mean that the representative of the OSC on the TC would be changing regularly, undermining continuity.
82. According to the original Charter, one OSC member was to represent the OSC on the TC. In this case, the OSC Chair, Mr. Robert Tillett from the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), took on this role. However, this was not clear to many of those interviewed by the evaluator; interviewees either could not recall who the representative was or provided the names of other individuals who were not in fact the OSC representatives on the TC. Based on the interviews, there was insufficient clarity among OSC members as to how feedback from the OSC would be carried to the TC (and back) and by whom. The evaluator was not able to speak to Mr. Tillett to obtain more insight into how effectively this mechanism connecting the OSC and the TC worked, as he has moved out of country and no contact details were available.

83. Based on a recommendation from the OSC, it was later decided to have two members representing OSC on the TC (the Chair and Co-Chair of the OSC) as it was felt that one member would not necessarily be able to represent the diversity of opinions and interests on the OSC. However, the Chair and Co-Chair left their positions and were not replaced as by-elections were not included in the agenda of the OSC meetings that took place. The critical link between the two committees should they begin to meet again needs to be clarified.
84. In addition to the role of the OSC representative on the TC in conveying information, the PCPU indicated that the consultants who presented to both the OSC and to the TC on different policies took the feedback and input provided by the OSC up to the level of the TC. While this may have been the case in practice, the NREPS structure should have a working built-in mechanism to link the OSC and the TC that is not dependent on external consultants, with active OSC members on the TC and a feedback loop that is clearly communicated to all participants (to enable OSC members to find out how their feedback is taken into consideration). Moreover, minutes of each OSC meeting should be produced detailing the main discussions and recommendations made, and these should be shared with the TC. This was not the case in this project, as minutes were not consistently produced for all OSC meetings, those that were produced did not include details on the main discussions held and points of view of different stakeholders, and the minutes were not shared with the TC. It should also be noted that while OSC meetings were to have taken place shortly before TC meetings to enable feedback from the OSC to be shared with the TC, the OSC meeting in March 2011 was not immediately followed by a TC meeting (the next TC meeting did not take place until October 2011).
85. In total, the OSC met three times during the project (in 2010 and 2011), beginning with its launch in April 2010. The meetings were well attended with many high-level members participating. Membership was based on organizations rather than individuals. Interviewees felt that the OSC was broadly representative and involved all the main players, including the major utilities, the Association of Protected Area Management Organizations (APAMO), Chamber of Commerce, a Community-Based Organization (CBO) representative and academia. Indigenous groups were represented by the CBO member. The evaluator is of the opinion that it might have been useful to have a separate member representing indigenous groups as had been highlighted in the original project proposal. The meetings were considered to have been well organized with the PCPU having been persistent in terms of follow-up to maximize attendance. The committee working structure was also viewed as having been well thought-out.
86. Based on interviews, all ‘other’ stakeholders were receptive to the concept of the OSC. They appreciated the mechanism as the first attempt to bridge the gap between state and non-state actors, to begin to address the tensions that existed between the two sets of stakeholders, and to increase their level of communication. They also felt that it was very important for them to be apprised of policy developments and to be able to provide input into said developments. As commented by one interviewee, this was a “long awaited avenue to get access to the government”.
87. However, there were differing opinions among interviewees as to the actual impact of the OSC on the level of policy coordination and information sharing. As highlighted above, some felt that OSC played an important pioneering role in addressing the previous limited input of NGOs in policies and in ameliorating the strained relationship with government. Allowing space for non-state actors to raise issues and to be involved in policy development represented a “paradigm shift” in government operations and as such was viewed as significant.

This was also seen as a move to increase transparency around policy development. In practice, the OSC did provide input and recommendations on a number of nationally relevant policies such as the National Energy Policy and the Land Use Policy (although the process of development of these particular policies involved independent consultation with non-state stakeholders in any case). The OSC meetings also enabled members to make presentations about what their sector was involved in, which helped to keep members up to date. A few interviewees commented that the frequency of meetings was appropriate given the high level representatives that were being convened. Some interviewees went so far as to say that the OSC had a significant positive impact on the relationship between the government and NGOs and contributed to the situation at present, in which the Minister of the newly created Ministry of Fisheries, Forestry and Sustainable Development is the former director of an environmental NGO.

88. Other stakeholders interviewed were concerned about the limited number of OSC meetings, which was deemed insufficient to keep committee members engaged. In addition, several interviewees commented that there was insufficient communication, outreach and information sharing between meetings. The PCPU would circulate the meeting agenda and OSC participants were able to present on additional topics at any of the meetings. However, some of the interviewees did not appreciate the fact that the agenda was initially drafted by MNRE. The criticism was also made that there was insufficient follow-up and feedback to OSC members as to how their recommendations were taken into consideration with the feedback loop being perceived as weak. Moreover, some interviewees saw NREPs as carrying out the Ministry's mandate (which of course it had to do to a certain extent as the PCPU is part of government), rather than objectively trying to bring state and other stakeholders together. This led to what was described as a lack of confidence in the process, reduced credibility of the OSC, and limited ownership of it by at least some of the non-state stakeholders involved. Some expressed disappointment that the structure "did not live up to the hope of bridging the gap between state and non-state stakeholders". As such, some stakeholders felt that the OSC was not as effective as it could have been to achieve the desired objectives.
89. To conclude, the OSC concept, composition and working structure were appreciated by all involved and the OSC meetings had a positive impact by enabling other stakeholders to provide input into nationally relevant policies. The mechanism can be further strengthened through more regular meetings, increased communication between meetings, and a clearer feedback loop, to achieve greater coordination with non-state stakeholders and maximize the impact of the committee.
90. For both the TC and the OSC, comprehensive minutes were not consistently produced or disseminated by the PCPU. This represents a lost opportunity to share the results of discussions and recommendations with a larger audience.
91. Besides the TC and the OSC, the project team established a CEO Caucus comprised of those CEOs with responsibility for natural resource and environmental issues. This committee was set up so that recommendations from NREPS-OSC and TC could be brought to a higher level, the level of CEOs, who would then be able to provide feedback to NREPS for improvements to policy recommendations, before taking the policies up to the level of Cabinet. This group met once during the project with an initial retreat that had high levels of attendance of the relevant CEOs. While the CEO Caucus established by the project was viewed positively and with substantial excitement, there were difficulties in convening this CEO Caucus and those who could not attend still had to be resensitized. The project therefore decided after the first meeting to

take advantage of the existing larger CEO Caucus meetings (all CEOs within the government) to enable a link between NREPS and Cabinet. The PCPU or the NREPS-TC did not actually present directly at the existing CEO Caucus meetings, but rather facilitated the logistics for the consultants presenting particular policies at CEO Caucus meetings. The consultants thus were able to obtain feedback, and make the necessary changes before the policies went up to Cabinet. The project therefore contributed to a strengthened platform for the existing CEO Caucus meetings by increasing the level of attention given to natural resource management issues. While there was significant initial excitement among CEOs at the project outset about being involved in NREPS, the project could have done even more to continue to engage CEOs, either by keeping up the meetings of the CEO Caucus established by the project, or by presenting regularly to the existing larger CEO Caucus meetings. More generally, several interviewees commented that the NREPS system needs to be pushed more to increase its visibility and maintain its relevance in the eyes of stakeholders.

92. The NREPS Charter also envisioned the establishment of an Advisory Council, composed of the heads of each of the NREPS committee as well as the Director of the PCPU. The PCPU indicated that this body did not need to be convened during the project as there were no controversial issues on the agenda upon which agreement could not be reached.
93. A Cabinet Paper establishing the NREPS system, including the TC and OSC, was approved, though no actual legal instrument to formally institutionalize the system was developed. While the project initiated a process to develop an MOU onto which all CEOs would sign to commit to NREPS, it was later decided not to proceed with this upon the advice of the Solicitor General.

Outcome 2: Increased capacities for integrating natural resource and environmental management issues into national development framework

94. The Policy Coordination and Policy Unit within the MNRE was significantly strengthened through this project and through the training workshops provided to PCPU staff, which were considered relevant to the project objectives by enhancing MRNE's coordination ability and readiness to make representations at MEA conferences and other meetings. Training workshops covered the fields of systems thinking, Spanish, customer service, minute taking and metadata management. The workshops were also delivered to other departments and were well received. In addition to the provision of training, the PCPU provided equipment and tools to departments in support of project objectives.
95. A SWOT analysis was carried out by the PCPU Director and presented in January 2012 to examine the Unit's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. In addition, the final project review report and final survey reflected in general terms on the PCPU. Interviewees agreed that several of the PCPU staff members gained significant capacity through this project.
96. As the NREPS Secretariat, a key responsibility of the PCPU was to service the NREPS system. As such, the PCPU set up the NREPS Technical Committee and Other Stakeholders Committee after a broad consultation process to determine the most appropriate composition and working structure for them. Both bodies were considered to have broad representation and a well-thought out working mechanism. Interviewees indicated that the PCPU organized the meeting logistics effectively and carried out substantial follow-up to maximize attendance levels. However, as mentioned under Outcome 1, several interviewees would have liked the PCPU

to have convened a greater number of meetings and provided more communication to committee members between meetings.

97. Inputs from the OSC were channelled to government agencies through the OSC representative who sat on the Technical Committee as well as through the consultants who presented draft policies to both committees. Some interviewees commented that there should have been more meetings to solicit the input of non-state actors and more communication between the PCPU and the other stakeholders during the life of the project. Nevertheless, the project did lead to the increased presentation of program and project information from other stakeholders to the PCPU and a greater level of awareness among other stakeholders of proposed government policies.
98. Through the CEO Caucus, policy recommendations were channelled up to the level of Cabinet. The evaluator was able to view numerous examples of policy papers prepared or reviewed by the PCPU which went to Cabinet, such as the Cabinet Memorandum on the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing and a Cabinet Confidential Memorandum for the approval of an energy policy team, with the PCPU Director being named as the coordinating body for this team.
99. The logframe indicates that by project mid-point the PCPU was to have prepared a programming document outlining the strategic implementation of policy interventions. The project prepared a presentation that included a schematic of the main existing policies and policy gaps, with a colour-coded system identifying those policies for which the least progress has been made, which ended up being areas of focus for the PCPU (e.g., energy policy). However, no formal baseline analysis of the policy interventions across the three Rio Conventions and their level of overlap was carried out, nor was an overarching strategy document prepared on required actions. The final project survey assessed the general level of understanding and buy-in of the NREPS structure but did not specifically draw conclusions on the effectiveness of the policy interventions (and furthermore had a very low response rate despite follow-up from the PCPU). The project did not carry out a baseline study of policy coordination effectiveness or formal studies in years 2 and 3 to measure changes in policy coordination effectiveness over time. It is therefore difficult to comment on project impact in this respect.
100. However, as part of this Terminal Evaluation, interviewees were asked to comment on their perception of the project's impact on the level of policy coordination. Various interviewees indicated that they felt that the level of policy coordination within the MNRE has increased. This was achieved through various means. For example, the PCPU instigated the process of preparation of regular reports from Heads of Departments to provide updates on their activities and convened HOD meetings (these occurred frequently in 2010, but less regularly for 2011 due to other obligations). However, one interviewee cautioned that the PCPU's involvement in providing policy advice at the CEO level rather than just coordinating policy created some tensions among Heads of Department, which may have undermined intra-ministerial coordination. In general, the majority of interviewees felt that the project had less of an impact on the level of coordination between agencies/ Ministries than on intra-ministerial coordination. This was considered to be a more difficult issue to address with multiple CEOs to work with, ministries that want to protect their turf, and insufficient engagement of the TC to have a tangible impact on these trends.

101. The PCPU spearheaded the development of a number of nationally relevant policies. The PCPU took the initiative to move forward the energy issue at the time when an Energy Office or Ministry had not yet been established. It was instrumental in supporting the drafting and socialization of the Energy Policy, obtaining funds, and coordinating stakeholder input into the Energy Policy. With the increased profile of the energy issue, a Ministry dedicated to energy was created in March of 2012.
102. In terms of climate change, the PCPU participated in the body that was set up to reactivate the national climate change committee and helped to set up the climate change desk (which later became the Secretariat for Climate Change Office). PCPU supported the development of the Forest Fire Policy and the National Integrated Water Resource Management Strategy. The Unit also set up and chaired the National Protected Areas Commission tasked with reviving the National Protected Areas Secretariat, which would be responsible for the implementation of the Protected Areas Strategy and Action Plan.
103. Besides its involvement in the coordination of policy development and review, the PCPU also played a role in the coordination of regional and international meetings related to Belize's commitments to MEAs, including the Rio Conventions. As such, the PCPU coordinated the delegations to these meetings and ensured that delegates had the necessary information and logistics arranged. Interviewees commented that the PCPU lobbied for funding to increase the size of the Belize delegations to such events. For one of the COP meetings, as a result of the PCPU's efforts, focal points for other conventions were able to attend as a way to encourage the creation of synergies.
104. The PCPU also participated in many of these meetings, such as Conferences of the Parties (COPs) of UNCCC and UNCBD, as well as other regional and international events. Some interviewees commented that the PCPU "represented Belize well", that its participation was based on a solid understanding of the policy framework, and that the engagements were of a high quality. In terms of the Rio+20 meetings, the PCPU played an important role in the stock-taking exercise for the Rio+20 report, however, since the government restructuring, the Unit was not involved in the stakeholder consultations carried out to validate the report.
105. Interviewees commented that as a result of this project, the country was able to participate in regional and international discussions to a much greater extent than beforehand. This led to Belize's increased visibility internationally, and to the realization within government of the importance of active participation in such events and of the need to prioritize funding for delegates. There were some interviewees, however, who commented that the role of the PCPU was not to represent Belize on the substantive issues related to natural resource management and environment (policy advice) but rather one of coordination and facilitation, and that it overstepped its role at times.
106. The PCPU mobilized agencies to come forward with their funding needs and was able to identify appropriate donors. As a result of this as well as the networking carried out at different events, the PCPU was instrumental in raising significant funds for projects, such as for the GCCA Climate Change Project and the Land Management Program-3.
107. One of the barriers identified in the project document was limited information sharing, which undermined the government's ability to coordinate policy development and implementation. In this respect, the project set up a shared server which served as repository of natural resource management and environmental documents,

including relevant project information, policies, information about MEAs to which Belize has subscribed, and research papers.

108. This consolidation of documents that were once disperse in one section of government was seen as one of the project's successes and enabled the PCPU to serve as a point of contact for individuals to obtain information about natural resource and environmental policies and projects. For example, the Ministry of Economic Development, which monitors public sector investment projects, was able to turn to the PCPU when it needed information on specific projects. Other stakeholders could also request information from the PCPU on natural resource and environmental policies, although it is difficult to comment on the extent to which they did so.
109. While the PCPU sent out information upon request, the shared server did not become part of a national Clearing House Mechanism (as this initiative did not have sustainable funding), and as such, other stakeholders (outside of the PCPU) could not access the information housed in the shared server directly. Furthermore, it is unclear what will happen to the information contained in this shared server with the new government structure in which the focal points of the Rio Convention are now in a different Ministry.
110. Besides the establishment of the shared server, the project was involved in two data sharing initiatives, the information sharing protocol (developed through the UNDP/GEF Sustainable Land Management project) and the National Spatial Data infrastructure (NSDI). While the information sharing protocol was not fully operationalized, at a larger scale, ongoing work is being undertaken to establish the NSDI (funding has been committed and TORs are being developed for consultants to begin this initiative, which has a broader scope than the CHM would have had). The project itself did not lead to the conclusion of formal agreements among departments, agencies and non-state stakeholders for the sharing of information (which was one of the log frame's targets).
111. It should be noted that beyond its involvement in capacity building, policy coordination and the promotion of information sharing, the PCPU took on additional roles such as the provision of policy advice at the CEO level and the management/ oversight of projects. Thus, the mandate of the PCPU shifted significantly from the original one to include additional priorities of the Ministry in which it is housed. As such, one of the assumptions in the logframe did not hold true, which was that "the PCPU does not take up additional functions that go beyond the scope of policy coordination". Various interviewees commented that the PCPU lost its focus on policy coordination to a certain extent and may have had a "distorted vision of the objective of the unit", "skewed mandate" into looking at Ministry policy (i.e., the policy of the then MNRE) rather than national government policy. This became particularly problematic when the PCPU Director took on the additional role of adviser to the CEO of MNRE. It could be postulated that this expansion in scope of the PCPU may be one of the reasons for which the required assessments of policy coordination effectiveness were not undertaken as the logframe had stipulated. As the PCPU began to actually implement instead of just coordinating among the Heads of Department, there was some resentment within the latter that their technical experts were not being sufficiently consulted.
112. The PCPU continues to operate after project operational closure. Revised Terms of Reference for the Unit were prepared upon the UNDP's request to clarify the Unit's role post-project and to take the Unit "out of the project and into the Ministry context", as commented by one interviewee, and ensure its long-term relevance.

Both the Public Sector Liaison Officer and the Civil Society Liaison Officer now have Government of Belize contracts (as of spring 2012) and are expected to become public civil servants by the end of the fiscal year. The delays were attributed to recent changes in Cabinet, but some interviewees also pointed to insufficient attention given by the project earlier on to ensuring the sustainability of staffing for the PCPU. The logframe also indicates that the PCPU is “to continue the same level of policy coordination” post project. This remains unclear with the new government restructuring. For the moment, the PCPU is focused on policy coordination on those issues within the mandate of the MNRA, which does not include policy coordination as it relates to the issues of climate change, biodiversity or land degradation (the Rio Conventions).

Outcome 3: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptive Collaborative Management.

113. Based on the agenda and TC and OSC minutes that the evaluator was able to review, a lessons learned agenda item was not included in relation to policy coordination (as per the logframe). It should be noted, though, that not all meetings had minutes produced and the minutes that were developed were lacking in detail. Moreover, lessons learned were not disseminated via regional organizations to which Belize belongs, such as CARICOM and the Central American Commission on Environment and Development or through appropriate networks, as had been committed in the original project proposal.
114. The Final Project Review Report did include a section detailing lessons learned. This report was disseminated to the project PEG (GEF Operational Focal Point, CEO of MNRE and UNDP). The report also indicates that lessons learned informed the development of the NREPS process as all stakeholders contributed to the shaping of the process. However, apart from this Final Project Review Report, there were no technical reports and/or publications on lessons learned that were produced or disseminated by the project as had been promised in the project proposal. All interviewees agreed that there was insufficient documentation of project activities, results and lessons learned throughout this project and lost opportunities to share this information widely.
115. While there was a staff person dedicated to documenting and disseminating information, which was considered to an important undertaking, the maintenance of project records and the naming of project files was not sufficiently methodical or consistent (as evidenced by the difficulty of the evaluator in obtaining all relevant documents needed for this evaluation). Interviewees also commented that the dissemination of information to stakeholders could have been part of a more strategic exercise.
116. Adaptive collaborative management was carried out throughout project implementation with modifications made to the project approach based on changing circumstances. A Terminal Evaluation is being undertaken, though there was a delay in initiating this evaluation due to pending tasks that the project team wanted to complete beforehand.
117. Table 2 provides a summary of the progress made in achieving the project objective and outcomes based on the indicators and targets included in the original logframe.

Table 2: Level of Achievement of Project Objective and Outcomes based on Project Indicators

| Project Strategy | Objectively verifiable indicators | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| | Indicator | Target value and date | Level of achievement by end of project |
| <p>Project objective:</p> <p>To coordinate Belize's natural resource and environmental policies in such a way that creates synergies for the national implementation of the CBD, CCD and FCCC.</p> | <p>Outcome indicators:</p> <p>§ Non-state stakeholders and senior government technocrats systematically review natural resource and environmental policies in a holistic manner.</p> <p>§ Policy recommendations to modify policy interventions are reviewed and acted upon in a timely manner by Cabinet.</p> <p>§ Fewer incidences of policy overlap, duplication and conflict. Policy gaps identified and filled.</p> | <p>§ By the end of the project, a consultative approach made up of the NSSC and NREPS is established, tested and institutionalized to systematically assess the implications of policies and their interventions.</p> <p>§ By the end of the project, the staffing and administration of the Policy Coordination and Planning Unit to service the NSSC and NREPS is financed through government appropriations</p> | <p>The achievement of the project objective is considered <i>Moderately Satisfactory</i>.</p> <p>The consultative approach made up of the NREPS- Technical Committee and Other Stakeholder Committee was established and tested through the project. Different natural resource and environmental policies were reviewed by senior government functionaries and other stakeholders and input was provided. Policy recommendations were made and a number of policies upon which NREPS provided input were approved by Cabinet during the project's lifespan. For example, the National Energy Policy, National Water Policy and the National Land Use Policy and Planning Framework were taken through NREPS, to Cabinet and were endorsed.</p> <p>The level of institutionalization of NREPS-TC and OSC remains somewhat unclear as neither body has met since 2011 and it is unclear whether these consultative mechanisms will survive the revised government structure.</p> <p>The Public Sector Liaison Officer and the Civil Society Liaison Officer positions have been assumed by the government (financed through government appropriations, with a formal written commitment to be incorporated into the public service), while the PCPU Director is funded by different projects.</p> <p>The project made a significant contribution to filling important policy gaps, such as through its support of the process to develop the country's first Energy Policy. It is difficult to conclude on the project's impact on the level of policy duplication as no baseline or follow-up studies were undertaken to measure this. Interviewees suggested that while the project may have had some impact, the problem of policy overlap persists.</p> <p>In theory, the inclusion of the focal points of UNCCD, UNCBD and UNCCC on the NREPS-Technical Committee would allow for the identification of synergies in actions to be taken under these Conventions. However, interviewees commented that more needs to be done to promote and implement synergistic actions in this respect.</p> |
| Project Strategy | Objectively verifiable indicators | | |

| | Indicator | Target value and date | Level of achievement by end of project |
|--|---|---|--|
| Output 1.1 Establishment of the Natural Resource and Environmental Policy Sub-committee (NREPS) | <p>§ NREPS is chaired by the MNRE CEO</p> <p>§ The NREPS is comprised of senior directors of key governmental departments and agencies, in particular MNRE, MAFC and Finance.</p> <p>§ The NREPS meets every six months, with a minimum of 70% quorum at the senior director level</p> <p>§ NREPS recommendations are deemed technically and politically feasible, and under implementation within one year of being made.</p> <p>§ Policy and programme reforms underway on the basis of Cabinet directives initiated under the NREPS.</p> | <p>§ Within six months of project implementation, the NREPS has been constituted.</p> <p>§ By the mid-point of the project, the NREPS has met at least twice.</p> <p>§ By the mid-point of the project, the NHDAC has effectively incorporated policy recommendations from the NREPS and reported these to Cabinet.</p> <p>§ At the project mid-point and end, Cabinet has issued policy reform directives in response to policy recommendations initiated under the NREPS.</p> <p>§ At the end of year 3, the independent evaluation has confirmed the best modality for the institutional sustainability of the NREPS as a consultative mechanism proposed by the PSC.</p> <p>§ By the end of the project, all NHDAC members have attended at least one sensitization workshop.</p> | <p>§ The level of achievement of Outcome 1 is rated <i>Moderately Satisfactory</i>.</p> <p>§ After sensitization workshops were held, the NREPS –Technical Committee was constituted within the first half year of project start-up and had met two times by a few months after the project mid-point. The committee met once in 2009 (July 2009), two times in 2010 (June 2010 and November 2010) and once in 2011 (October 2011), so did not fully comply with the indicator of meeting every 6 months. The project indicated that this was due to the difficulty in convening the participants of these meetings. The MNRE CEO chaired the NREPS-TC. Participation rates were high (e.g., 95% attendance at first meeting and 92% at second meeting) with quorum obtained each time.</p> <p>§ The Committee was comprised of senior representatives of most of the key government departments and ministries (with a few exceptions such as the Department of Agriculture, which did not participate actively on the committee.)</p> <p>§ Recommendations of the Technical Committee were considered technically and politically feasible and were carried up to the CEO Caucus level. Several policies for which the TC provided input and advice were approved by Cabinet during the time period of project implementation.</p> <p>§ While NREPS became a separate committee reporting to the CEO Caucus as opposed to a sub-committee of NHDAC, cross-sensitization was carried out with members of the Ministry of Economic Development, which coordinates NHDAC (MED had a seat on the TC and the Project Manager/PCPU Director had a seat on NHDAC to enable a two-way flow of information.) Through the PCPU's active work to sensitize these stakeholders, the decision was made at the Cabinet level to add climate change and natural resource management as national priorities that need to be funded by the MED.</p> |

| Project Strategy | Objectively verifiable indicators | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| | Indicator | Target value and date | Level of achievement by end of project |
| Output 1.2: The Non-State Stakeholder | § The NSSC is composed of the full range of non-state stakeholders. | § Within six months of project implementation, the NSSC has been constituted. | § Sensitization workshops were carried out with a wide range of stakeholders both in large group meetings and in smaller meetings in order to determine the appropriate composition and process to follow to operationalize the OSC. At |

| Project Strategy | Objectively verifiable indicators | | |
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| | Indicator | Target value and date | Level of achievement by end of project |
| (NSSC) established | <p>§ The NSSC meets every six months and prior to the meetings of the NREPS.</p> <p>§ NSSC is chaired on a rotating basis.</p> <p>§ Increased number of non-state stakeholders are registered under the NGO Act</p> <p>§ NGO capacity is strengthened to galvanize the impact of their efforts by improved cooperation, collaboration and partnership, as well as their increased role in informing policy and programme reforms.</p> | <p>§ At the mid-point of the project, the NSSC has met at least twice.</p> <p>§ At the project mid-point and end, the NREPS has effectively incorporated policy recommendations from the NSSC.</p> <p>§ At the end of years 1, 2 & 3 non-state stakeholders deem the NSSC as a legitimate organizational mechanism.</p> <p>§ At the end of year 3, the independent evaluation has confirmed the best modality for the institutional sustainability of the NSSC as a consultative mechanism proposed by the PSC.</p> <p>§ By the end of the project, a doubling of NGOs registered under the NGO Act (from 51 to at least 100).</p> <p>§ By the end of the project, at least 50 non-state stakeholders attended sensitization workshops</p> | <p>least 50 non-state stakeholders were consulted.</p> <p>§ The NSSC was renamed the Other Stakeholders Committee as not all of the stakeholders to be included were non-state actors (some were quasi-governmental organizations). The first meeting of the OSC was on April 23, 2010, 15 months after project start-up (instead of the 6 months target established in the logframe), which corresponds to the project mid-point. This delay was attributed in part to the time it took to carry out the sensitization workshops/ working group meetings with other stakeholders so that they would have ownership over the process.</p> <p>§ The OSC met a total of three times during the project (it started meeting late, but once it started meeting, the meetings were approximately every 6 months).</p> <p>§ The decision was made against having a rotating chair as this would lead to inconsistent representation of the OSC on the TC.</p> <p>§ Non-state actors made recommendations on relevant policies, such as the National Energy Policy and the National Land Use Policy, and as such there was increased collaboration with government on natural resource management and environmental issues. Interviewees did not feel that the project led to a significant increase in NGO capacity. The only survey carried out with other stakeholders was at the end of the project with only three other stakeholders who provided limited feedback.</p> <p>§ Based on the interviews carried out during the Terminal Evaluation, there were mixed opinions about the legitimacy of the OSC. All felt that the establishment of such a committee was a very important initiative and valued the opportunity to provide input into policy. Some of those interviewed indicated that the group would ideally have met more frequently in order for it to be viewed as a more useful mechanism, and that there could have been more outreach from the PCPU between meetings. Furthermore, the extent to which other stakeholder comments were taken into consideration was not sufficiently clear to participants.</p> <p>§ Within the MNRA, for those issues still under the MRNA mandate, the PCPU could still make use of the OSC structure for consultations with other stakeholders, however, it has not done so since March of 2011. Moving forward, the facilitation of consultation with other stakeholders on issues related to UNCCD, UNCCCC and UNBD will depend in part on political and institutional decisions taken within the new Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development as to whether to use this committee. A firm commitment has not yet been given to assure the institutional sustainability of the OSC.</p> |

| Project Strategy | Objectively verifiable indicators | | |
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| | Indicator | Target value and date | Level of achievement by end of project |
| | | | § Note that the indicator related to the number of NGOs registered under the NGO Act was found to be inappropriate as the project was focused on NGO capacity building and input into policy rather than increasing the number of registered NGOs. |

| Project Strategy | Objectively verifiable indicators | | |
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| | Indicator | Target value and date | Level of achievement by end of project |
| Output 2.1: Policy Coordination and Planning Unit, MNRE, restructured to more effectively review and integrate national development policies, programmes, and plans | <p>§ PCPU is effectively servicing the NREPS and channeling inputs from the NSSC to government agencies and NREPS.</p> <p>§ Policy interventions of individual government agencies are more streamlined.</p> <p>§ Increased inter-agency collaboration and cooperation in policy and programme formulation, implementation, M&E</p> <p>§ Non-state stakeholders increase submissions to PCPU on their programmes and activities, and are better informed of natural resource and environmental policy interventions.</p> <p>§ Web portals within an existing CHM serve to receive on-line inputs</p> | <p>§ By project's end, the PCPU operations to continue the same level of policy coordination are fully financed through government budgetary appropriations, not extra-budgetary resources.</p> <p>§ By project mid-point, agreements among departments, agencies, and non-state stakeholders concluded for the systematic sharing of data and information.</p> <p>§ By project mid-point, programming document prepared outlining strategic implementation of policy interventions.</p> <p>§ By project mid-point, training provided to PCPU staff.</p> <p>§ At the end of years 2 & 3, assessment of policy coordination effectiveness compared against baseline study undertaken at project onset.</p> | <p>§ The level of achievement of Outcome 2 can be considered <i>Moderately Satisfactory</i>.</p> <p>§ The PCPU prepared a presentation which highlighted policy gaps and those policies for which the least progress has been made, which were identified as possible strategic areas of intervention for the project. However, as had been envisioned in the project proposal, there was no baseline analysis of the specific overlapping and undermining character of policy interventions across the three Rio Conventions and other MEAs (baseline policy coordination effectiveness study). In addition, the consultancy identified in the project proposal to prepare an overarching strategy document that reconciles existing natural resource and environmental legislation and regulation was not carried out.</p> <p>§ At the end of the project a survey was sent out to stakeholders (OSC and TC members) to obtain feedback on the project in general, the PCPU and NREPS, however, this did not focus specifically on the project's impact on policy coordination. This survey was conducted by the PCPU, rather than independently as per the indicator. It is therefore difficult to comment objectively on the extent to which policy interventions of government agencies were more streamlined by project end.</p> <p>§ The PCPU received increased information from other stakeholders on their programs and activities through updates provided at OSC meetings. The role of the OSC representative on the TC was to channel inputs from the OSC to government agencies. It was later decided to have two OSC representatives on the TC to strengthen this process. It should be noted that the two representatives of the OSC on the TC were not replaced through by-elections when they left their positions as Chair and Vice-Chair of the OSC. The CHM of the government of Belize did not materialize and as a result, on-line inputs from non-state stakeholders could not be received in this manner nor could</p> |

| Project Strategy | Objectively verifiable indicators | | |
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| | from non-state stakeholders and to provide updates on policy coordination. | § At the end of years 1, 2 & 3, large sample size surveys undertaken. | <p>updates on policy coordination be provided through this mechanism. Nevertheless, the PCPU made itself available throughout the project to receiving information from non-state stakeholders.</p> <p>§ The PCPU participated in the development of the data sharing protocol, as well as the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) , which is currently in the process of being developed. In addition, the PCPU set up a shared server, which housed relevant project information as well as policies related to natural resource management and environmental issues, and which was considered very useful. There remains further work to be done to facilitate the sharing of data and information among all relevant stakeholders to contribute to the development of national communications, for example.</p> <p>§ Training was provided to PCPU staff on topics such as systems thinking, meta data management, Spanish language skills, minute taking skills and public relations. As a result of this training and the process of project implementation, the PCPU capacity was felt to have increased significantly.</p> <p>§ Since project operational closure, the PCPU has continued to carry out policy coordination, however, with the change in government structure, the level of policy coordination has been restricted to those issues under the mandate of the new Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture, which no longer houses the focal points of UNCCD, UNCCC and UNCBD. This is a result of a political decision for government restructuring that was out of the control of the project. The funding for the Public Sector Liaison Officer and the Civil Society Liaison Officer has been incorporated into the government budget.</p> |

| Project Strategy | Objectively verifiable indicators | | |
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| | Indicator | Target value and date | Level of achievement by end of project |
| Output 3.1: Lessons Learned | § NSSC and NREPS meetings include an agenda item “Lessons Learned”, focusing on opportunities, successes and failures to improve policy coordination | <p>§ NREPS and NSSC meeting minutes include a summary of the lessons learned discussion.</p> <p>§ At the end of years 1, 2 & 3, lessons learned prepared and widely disseminated.</p> | <p>The level of achievement of this outcome is rated <i>Moderately Satisfactory</i>.</p> <p>Minutes were not produced for all NREPS-TC and NREPS-OSC. Those that were produced and therefore reviewed by the evaluator did not have a lessons learned section. The project team has indicated, however, that lessons learned informed the process of development and implementation of the NREPS throughout the project.</p> <p>The final project survey sent out to OSC and TC members included a question on recommendations for NREPS and the PCPU. The survey response rate was</p> |

| Project Strategy | Objectively verifiable indicators | | |
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| | Indicator | Target value and date | Level of achievement by end of project |
| | | | <p>very low despite follow-up from the PCPU and the survey therefore provided little information in terms of lessons learned.</p> <p>Lessons learned were formally documented in the Final Project Review Report, which was prepared by the Project Manager/PCPU Director and was disseminated to the PEG. It is evident that opportunities to reflect on and disseminate lessons learned more widely were not sufficiently taken advantage of in this project, reflecting the general lack of sufficient documentation of project processes and results.</p> |
| Output 3.2: Evaluations | § Independent Final Evaluation | § Within 3 months of project closure, an independent final evaluation of the project is undertaken | An independent final evaluation is currently being carried out (though later than the target of 3 months after project closure, with approximately 11 months elapsed since project closure.) This delay is attributed to the desire on the part of the project team and UNDP to ensure all deliverables were completed, including the appropriation of project staff within the government budget. |

- **Country Ownership**

118. In general, there was significant government support and ownership for this project. During project design, state and non-state stakeholders were widely consulted and supportive of the initiative. All interviewees agreed on the importance of the project and the critical need for increased cooperation between departments and ministries and increased collaboration with non-state stakeholders for the purpose of natural resource and environmental policy development and reform.
119. Government participation in the project was high. Both the Technical Committee and Other Stakeholder Committee meetings had high attendance rates; the launch of the TC had a 95% attendance rate, for example. The level of representation was also high with CEOs, Heads of Departments and senior staff of non-state stakeholder organizations in attendance. This high-level representation suggests that there was significant national interest in the project.
120. The fact that the Project Management Unit was comprised of civil servants served to enhance country ownership. Since project closure (in the spring of 2012), the government has agreed to take on the Public Sector Liaison Officer and the Civil Society Liaison Officer as permanent civil servants, which also attests to government commitment to ensuring that the PCPU continues operating.
121. While the PCPU has continued to be active since project closure, its role and mandate under the new government structure since the last election remain unclear. At the moment it is focusing on areas that are under the purview of the newly structured Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture, including land management and integrated water management. There is still uncertainty as to whether this Unit will be empowered to take on the coordination of issues that are within the mandate of the newly created Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development, which now houses the focal points of the UNCCD, UNCCC and UNCBD.
122. In terms of the NREPS structure created through the project, there have not been any meetings of the Technical Committee or the Other Stakeholder Committee since October 2011 and March 2011 respectively. While it could be argued that the time before and after elections is always associated with a slowing down of regular government operations (the elections were held in March 2012), some interviewees commented that the committees were not regularly meeting even before the call to elections. Most recently, opportunities to use the NREPS structure to facilitate cross-sectoral coordination and stakeholder consultations were not exploited, for example, for the preparation of the Rio+20 report for Belize. With regard to this specific example, some felt that the fact that NREPS and the PCPU were not involved in the latest stakeholder consultations on the Rio+20 report calls into question the sustainability of NREPS, while others felt that it was simply a matter of time constraints.
123. The political will now needs to be demonstrated with the new government structure in place to continue to support the PCPU and NREPS committees as they can play an important role in facilitating inter-agency and cross-sectoral cooperation and a synergistic approach to the implementation of Belize's MEAs.

- **Mainstreaming**

124. The project mainstreamed a number of UNDP priorities, including improved governance and gender equity. In essence, one of the project's main intended results was to contribute to improved governance through increased collaboration within government and between government and other stakeholders. The process of keeping non-state actors apprised of government policy initiatives and of soliciting their input through the OSC in and of itself is a positive step in that direction. There remains further work to be done to increase the impact of the OSC by convening more frequent meetings, putting in place a clear feedback loop to carry information up to the TC and to bring feedback back to the OSC, and by promoting its sustainability.
125. The project was cognizant of the gender issue and maintained a gender balance in terms of the composition of the OSC, the consultations, and the capacity building initiatives that were undertaken. It should also be noted that the UNDP Environmental Programme Analyst, Public Sector Liaison Officer and Administrative Assistant were all female.
126. In terms of disaster preparedness, the NREPS Technical Committee included a representative of NEMO (the National Emergency Management Organization), which would have permitted it to be updated on policies under development of relevance to the organization and to provide input into such policies. With regard to livelihoods and poverty reduction, the Project Manager/ PCPU Director held a seat on the National Human Development Advisory Committee (NHDAC) to permit cross-sensitization of the linkages between sustainable natural resource and environmental management and poverty reduction and increased prioritization of these issues on the national development agenda.
127. The project was directly consistent with Outcome 3 of UNDAF, namely: "By 2011, national frameworks and capacities are in place enhancing the ability to adequately address adaptation to and mitigation of the impact of disasters as well as the comprehensive, equitable, sustainable and effective management of the nation's natural resources." This project built capacities within the PCPU and other government departments and established consultative structures (NREPS-TC and NREPS-OSC) for the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment.

- **Sustainability (*) (Overall Likelihood of Sustainability: *Moderately Likely*)**

Institutional Framework and Governance Risks (Moderately Likely)

128. The institutional framework with the new government structure in place since the last elections in March 2012 represents the most significant risk to the sustainability of project outcomes.
129. As mentioned earlier in this report, while the party in power did not change, there was significant restructuring of government departments, Ministries and Convention focal points. Thus the former Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, which housed the focal points for UNCBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC was modified, and a Ministry of Fisheries, Forestry and Sustainable Development and Ministry of Energy were created. The Policy and Planning Unit remains within the

now Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture, but the focal points for UNCCC, UNCBD and UNCCD were moved to the Ministry of Fisheries, Forestry and Sustainable Development. This new Ministry has not yet made a formal commitment to adopt the NREPS structure.

130. In theory, these changes should not mean that the Policy and Planning Unit set up to facilitate inter-agency cooperation cannot continue to perform this role. However, in reality the PCPU is currently working under the mandate of the MNRA and the two Ministries (MNRA and MSD) have not yet solidified a working relationship. As a result it is not yet clear whether or not the PCPU will be able to continue to facilitate inter-agency cooperation with a view to improving Belize's fulfillment of MEA commitments when it does not house the relevant focal points to these Conventions. This institutional barrier poses a substantial risk to the continuity of the PCPU's work and to the capacity built up through this project.
131. Nevertheless, the PCPU's existence was established in an approved Cabinet paper and two of its staff members are now being funded by the government. The PCPU continues to coordinate on issues related to the MNRA's new modified mandate, including cross-sectoral ones. For example, the PCPU is responsible for the socialization of the Integrated Water Resource Management Act, which cuts across several ministries and will therefore necessitate inter-ministerial coordination. The PCPU was also recently involved in organizing a workshop on the National Spatial Data Infrastructure and in coordinating stakeholder input for a national agriculture show. Thus far, it has not been involved in coordination of issues related to the Rio Conventions since the change in government structure. Most recently, the PCPU was not involved in facilitating the consultations for a stakeholder workshop to validate the Rio+20 report. This was carried out by the new Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development without using the NREPS structure.
132. The NREPS- Technical Committee and Other Stakeholder Committee have not met since October 2011 and March 2011 respectively. According to the PCPU, the inactivity of NREPS is related to the impact of election preparation, actual elections and since then, the time required for things to settle down. Other interviewees felt that the NREPS committees were not sufficiently active or visible even before the elections, perhaps because the PCPU's expanded scope to take on other Ministerial priorities meant less of a focus on convening NREPS meetings and utilizing the structure to its fullest extent.
133. The rating given for this risk is Moderately Likely. There is substantial institutional buy-in into the NREPS process and widespread recognition of the need for greater policy coordination. However, there are some risks that the mechanisms will not survive in their current form with the new government structure. If the PCPU established through this project no longer services NREPS or coordinates implementation of the Rio Conventions, it is possible that an equivalent policy coordination unit will be established within the Ministry now housing the Rio Convention focal points. If this occurs, information sharing and dissemination of lessons learned through this project will be crucial.

Sociopolitical Risks (Moderately Likely)

134. With the restructuring of government and the appointment of some new Ministers, there is still uncertainty as to the level of political will to continue to support the original mandate of the PCPU as well as the NREPS structure. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the newly established Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development, will want or even be able to employ a structure created and housed within another Ministry (the MNRA) to facilitate coordination of the Rio Conventions.

135. In addition, while the project worked to change this mindset, the tendency of some government Ministries to “protect their turf” still exists and there remains some reluctance to coordinating efforts and increasing collaboration, including around the development of policy.
136. Nevertheless, all those interviewed indicated that they felt that policy coordination and broad-based consultation are key issues for Belize and there is therefore significant ownership of the objectives of the project and of NREPS. For this reason, the sustainability rating for this factor is Moderately Likely.

Financial Risks (Likely)

137. The financial risks to the sustainability of project impact are not considered to be substantial. As highlighted previously, the sustainability of the NREPS, including the Technical Committee and the Other Stakeholder Committee, depends primarily on institutional and political issues, rather than financial issues. Two of the PCPU staff members, the Public Sector Liaison Officer and the Civil Society Liaison Officer have GOB contracts and are expected to become civil servants by the end of 2012. The Document and Information Officer has not been moved to a different function but remains within government. The PCPU Director has secured substantial funding to continue on contract; the decision not to become a civil servant is a personal one owing to the differences in remuneration between project and government pay scales.
138. Furthermore, besides the government financial commitment to the PCPU staffing, there is also at least one new project coming on board that contributes to the furtherance of some of the objectives of this project. A new GEF-funded project has been approved with the new Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development, which involves capacity building of departments and forwarding the Rio agenda.
139. The one element that will likely to be most affected by financial factors post project is the funding available for capacity building of the PCPU and other stakeholders, for equipment purchases, and for participation in international and regional meetings, including those related to MEA negotiations. However, according to interviewees, the project has led to an increased recognition of the importance of allocating funds for such participation.
140. The sustainability rating given for financial risks is “Likely”, meaning that there are no significant risks to sustainability related to this factor.

Environmental risks (~~Highly~~ Likely)

141. There are no ongoing environmental activities or threats that are believed to pose a significant risk to the sustainability of project outcomes.

• **Impact**

142. The long-term goal of the project is to improve the management and protection of Belize’s natural resources and environment, resulting in improvements to meet national commitments to multilateral environment agreements. The specific project objective was to coordinate Belize’s

natural resource and environmental policies in such a way that creates synergies for the national implementation of the CBD, CCD and FCCC.

143. The project activities were focused on setting up new consultative structures and on capacity building. It is still considered somewhat premature to measure the project's impact on the effectiveness of management and level of protection of Belize's environment, or to measure impact on ecological status or reductions in stress to ecological systems. However, one way to begin to look at progress towards impact achievements would be through an analysis of the data contained in Belize's national communications to the main three Rio Conventions. However, this is not feasible given that the time period of reporting through the national communications does not correspond fully to the project implementation phase. Furthermore, it would be difficult if not impossible to separate out the impacts of the project from those of other initiatives that were carried out simultaneously.
144. This evaluator therefore can only base her comments on impact on the results of the end of project survey that was undertaken, on the documentation reviewed, and on the interviews that were carried out as part of the Terminal Evaluation. The PCPU helped build capacity within MNRE to meet its obligations with respect to natural resource management and the environment. Furthermore, the TC and OSC provided meaningful input into several policies that once implemented could have a substantial impact on the management and protection of Belize's natural resources and environment, such as the Energy Policy and Land Use Policy. These policy developments can also help Belize meet its international commitments to Rio Conventions. The PCPU also strengthened Belize's position in international meetings related to MEAs. Interviewees commented, however, that more could have been done to identify cross-cutting actions and synergies in the implementation of the Rio Conventions.

5 Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons

5.1 Conclusions

145. This project was highly relevant for Belize and the structures established remain highly relevant, given the substantial level of policy duplication and overlap in the field of natural resource management and environment. All stakeholders interviewed agreed on the importance of a project such as this one to promote greater coordination and cooperation among state and non-state actors. Increased policy coordination between departments and between ministries and the inclusion of input from non-state stakeholders represented a paradigm shift since government departments and ministries were seen to have operated largely in silos in the past. In addition, non-state stakeholders have complained of their lack of awareness of government policy developments and lack of opportunities to feed into the process. A number of interviewees therefore welcomed the establishment of the National Resource and Environmental Policy system (NREPS), with its associated Technical Committee, composed of government stakeholders, as well as "Other Stakeholder Committee", composed of NGOs, quasi-government organizations and representatives of the private sector. The structure of NREPS was well-consulted through the project and a Charter was developed to outline the roles and responsibilities of the different bodies and to clarify the decision-making processes. Several meetings of each committee took place with high levels of attendance, and stakeholders were able to discuss and provide input into important national policies, such as the Land Use Policy and the Energy Policy.

146. The project enabled agencies to appreciate the value of a policy and planning unit. Besides servicing the NREPS structure, the PCPU coordinated capacity building of departments within the MNRE, by organizing workshops on topics such as system thinking, public relations, Spanish and minute taking, and by providing equipment and tools to facilitate the ability of departments to fulfill their mandates. The PCPU also played a useful role in terms of sharing and disseminating natural resource and environmental documents, including policies and project documents, and in coordinating national delegations to international conventions related to MEAs. It should also be noted that the PCPU spearheaded some nationally significant initiatives such as the development of the Energy Policy and establishment of the energy desk (which has since developed into a new Ministry of Energy).
147. While there were many successes achieved by the project, the broadly participatory approach was not always easy to achieve. There was general agreement that the project was able to achieve greater coordination between the different departments within the then Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, but interviewees felt that the project had more difficulty in promoting inter-ministerial coordination. Apart from the institutional barriers the project faced in promoting a new modus operandum, some also commented that the PCPU could have done more to facilitate inter-ministerial cooperation. To a certain extent, the project was felt by many to have its lost focus on policy coordination as its role expanded and it took on more and more activities, some of which were beyond the scope of the project, such as providing policy advice and overseeing the execution of projects. Beyond affecting the level of policy coordination that the project was able to achieve, this also undermined project management functions. Project narrative and financial reporting was not always consistent and there was insufficient documentation of project impact and of lessons learned. Furthermore, procurement was not always in line with project goals, resulting in the assumption of procurement functions by the UNDP.
148. The level of sustainability of the NREPS structure is still in question until such time as the system is re-evaluated within the context of the new government structure in place and the two main large ministries with responsibility for natural resource management and the environment consolidate a working relationship.

5.2 Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project and proposals for future directions

149. Interviewees agreed on the importance of continuing to promote the NREPS mechanism and maintaining the momentum achieved through the project. A much needed and highly relevant mechanism was established but it needs to continue to be utilized, consolidated and strengthened. The main priority to build on the project's accomplishments is therefore for stakeholders to come together and come to an agreement as to the way forward with the NREPS system within the new government structure. Given that the PCPU was established in large part to coordinate Belize's fulfillment of the three Rio Conventions and that the focal points for these conventions have now moved to another Ministry, a decision must be made as to whether the PCPU will continue to coordinate the Rio Conventions, whether the PCPU will move to the new Ministry, or whether the new Ministry will establish a similar structure/ mechanism to take on this coordination function, adopting the lessons learned from this project. In addition, stakeholders will need to determine whether the CEO of MNRA will continue to Chair NREPS, whether it will be led by the new Ministry or whether a co-CEO structure will be put in place. What is clear is that an inter-ministerial relationship between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture and the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development needs to be established. This is important to ensure that effective and cross-sectoral policy coordination on matters related to natural resource management and the environment occurs.

150. Once the new working mechanism is agreed upon, NREPS needs to be championed to a greater extent and the PCPU needs to push for more regular meetings of the TC and the OSC. To the extent that it is used more, its value will be more fully appreciated and its impact increased. This is critical to achieve the “transition from project to fully fledged functioning mechanism”, as commented by one interviewee.
151. In the longer term once the sustainability of the NREPS system is assured and the role of the PCPU is clarified, it might be worthwhile to consider whether the NREPS system could serve as a model or best practice to implement across government, beyond the field of natural resource management and the environment. This recommendation came from a number of interviewees who recognized that insufficient policy coordination and policy overlap are problems throughout government and that the NREPS structure could be used on a broader scale to benefit the entire public sector as well as quasi-governmental organizations. To facilitate this task, the structure of NREPS and the lessons learned from this project should be documented in greater detail and shared with relevant stakeholders so that they can appreciate the value of this approach.
152. The natural resource and environmental information accumulated in the PCPU shared server needs to continue to be populated and shared as widely as possible, including with the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development. Access to the information contained therein could also be broadened beyond the PCPU. Building on this reservoir of information, one interviewee suggested that it would be extremely useful to build a database of all government policies so that these could be reviewed for possible overlap and subsequent reform.
153. With the end of project support, new ways to finance the capacity building needs of departments and ministries involved in natural resource management and environment and to strengthen Belize’s voice in international negotiations will need to be found. The PCPU took on the mobilization of funds as one of its tasks and did so successfully, and such fundraising needs to remain a priority.

5.3 Best Practices

The PCPU/PMU implemented a number of best practices that could be emulated by other projects in the future, as described below.

Ø PCPU provided customized capacity building

The PCPU asked the different departments about their training and equipment needs and sought to full these needs within the budget available. This ensured that the capacity building would achieve the most impact. This contrasts with some projects in which there is a preset list of training and equipment that is provided that does not necessarily match with government priorities.

Ø PCPU expanded the parameters of capacity building to include purchase of equipment and tools as these were limiting departments’ ability to fulfill their mandates

The PCPU expanded the scope of capacity building to include the purchase of the equipment necessary to help departments fulfill their mandate in terms of natural resource management and environment and to increase their efficiency. Examples include safety and outdoor gear for the Forestry Department, GPS equipment for the Department of Geology and Petroleum and a copier for the Planning Department. While this was not in the original project design, it was critical to achieve the project objective under Outcome 2.

Ø PCPU carried out substantial follow to ensure high attendance at meetings

According to interviewees, the PCPU did a good job in identifying the important players to participate in the NREPS- Technical Committee and Other Stakeholders Committee. In addition, the PCPU planned the TC and OSC meetings well, carefully selecting appropriate dates for meetings, identifying attractive venues, and following up repeatedly with invitees to maximize participation. As a result, the meetings had high attendance rates.

Ø **Extensive sensitization of stakeholders of NREPS to obtain input and buy-in**

The project carried out numerous sensitization workshops/ working group meetings with a wide array of government departments and with other stakeholders (NGOs, private sector, quasi-governmental organizations) to determine the most appropriate composition and working structure of the committees. Based on this preliminary work, a Charter was developed outlining the roles and responsibilities of the different organs of NREPS.

Ø **The PCPU effectively coordinated participation in international meetings.**

Interviewees commented that the PCPU worked well to organize the logistics of participation in international meetings related to natural resource management and the environment and manage the schedule of national delegations. This coordination helped ensure that the delegation would speak in one voice. In addition, the PCPU was able to leverage funds for increased participation at such events.

5.4 Recommendations Based on Lessons Learned

The following section will describe the main lessons learned and recommendations emerging from this cross-cutting capacity building project. These are divided into recommendations related to project design, project execution/implementation, and those related to sustaining project results.

Recommendations Related to Project Design

Ø **Ensure all indicators measure factors that are within the project scope**

In the case of this project, one of the indicators was an increase in the number of NGOs registered under the NGO Act, which was outside of the scope of the project's activities. As a result, the target for this indicator was not reached. The identification of appropriate indicators at the project design stage will ensure that all are achievable.

Ø **Ensure logframe includes all necessary indicators to monitor achievement of the project objective**

In the case of this project, there were no specific and concrete indicators to measure the level of creation of synergies in the implementation of the three Rio Conventions. This makes it difficult to objectively measure project impact.

Ø **Plan for establishment of PMU dedicated to project management**

This project implemented a novel executing modality in that the Policy Coordination and Planning Unit took on the functions of project management at the same time. Given the difficulties experienced by the team in fulfilling these dual responsibilities (particularly vis-a-vis project management), the approach is not recommended for future projects. Rather, the PMU should be dedicated solely or primarily to project management.

Recommendations Related to Project Execution/ Implementation

Ø Dedicate more effort to monitoring and measuring project impact

The project did not realize sufficient project monitoring nor carry out specific studies to measure the impact of the PCPU, NREPS-TC and NREPS-OSC on policy coordination effectiveness. This is important to verify that the broad-based stakeholder consultation and the work of the PCPU is leading to tangible results.

Ø Ensure regular documentation of project results to facilitate sharing of lessons learned

The level of documentation of achievements for this project was low and as a result, it is now more difficult to judge the full extent of project achievements and to share lessons learned. Regular and detailed narrative reports are a necessary component of project monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, it is useful to have a paper trail to showcase all project achievements. Finally, regular documentation is critical to prevent loss of institutional memory if the individuals involved in the project move on to other positions.

Ø Obtain high-level assistance in scheduling meetings to maximize attendance

As previous projects have also shown, it is beneficial to follow protocol and go through CEOs when scheduling meetings because this higher-level endorsement serves to increase participation levels. In the case of this project, the TC and OSC meetings were convened by the PCPU.

Ø Build in sufficient lag and slippage time to accommodate challenges in implementing training workshops with government

Previous experience has repeatedly shown that it is challenging to maintain the participation of government functionaries in training sessions due to the large number of other commitments they have. In recognition of this reality, projects should identify a realistic number of training workshops to offer, build in sufficient slippage time and develop appropriate timelines. This will help reduce pressure on project staff and ensure that capacity building objectives are achieved.

Ø Promote self-sufficiency within government departments to meet their capacity building needs

In order to address the risk of overdependence on projects, it is important to manage expectations and ensure that stakeholders continue to raise funds for their capacity building needs so as to still be able to meet these when project funding inevitably ends. This refers to both training and equipment.

Ø Provide staff training when necessary to reduce learning curve

At project outset, the PCPU indicated that it did not have a detailed understanding of the full functioning of the different departments within the then MNRE or of the other Ministries that impact natural resource and environmental management issues. In addition, there may have also been some knowledge gaps within the PCPU in terms of natural resource management and sustainable development policies, as well as in UNDP/GEF procurement and other administrative procedures. It is therefore recommended that training be offered as early as possible in project implementation to reduce the learning curve and maximize the effectiveness of such Units.

Ø Obtain commitment for long-term sustainability from the outset

The absorption of PCPU staff into the government budget was delayed and only achieved late in the project, which resulted in a situation of uncertainty and tension in the interim. Projects need to work to obtain government commitment for staffing post-project from the early stages of the project. This will enable long-term planning to occur. The issue of the difference in pay scales between project versus government funding should also be discussed with relevant staff early on to determine how this will be addressed post project.

Ø Do not differentiate civil servants if possible to avoid creating resentment

According to some interviewees, the PCPU received some additional privileges as a result of this project, such as the use of uniforms and specialized positioning within the Ministry. If possible, it is recommended that such distinctions be avoided to reduce the possibility of resentment within other government departments. This can also make it more difficult to fully integrate staff once projects close.

Recommendations to Enhance Project Results and Promote Sustainability of Project Impact

Ø Clarify mandate, roles and responsibilities of PCPU

Given the tensions experienced between the PCPU's work of facilitating policy coordination as per the project's goals versus its assumption of other MNRE priorities, any future similar project should ensure that the scope of work of a policy and planning unit is clarified from the outset. Specifically, the PCPU's role in coordinating policies rather than executing projects or acting as a focal point for Conventions needs to be clear. While Terms of Reference were established for the PCPU, some interviewees commented that more detail might have been useful to identify PCPU deliverables that are consistent with the objectives for which it was created. This is critical to ensure that policy and planning units do not begin to take on project or program implementation functions that are the responsibility of individual government departments.

Ø Re-consider appropriate positioning of PCPU to facilitate inter-ministerial coordination

While the decision made at the project design stage to locate the PCPU within the MNRE made sense given that it housed the focal points for the three Rio Conventions, it may not have been ideal for ensuring that coordination across ministries occurred. It might be worthwhile to consider whether a higher-level positioning for such a unit would be more appropriate and would remove the possible issue of the PCPU being driven by Ministerial priorities. It could also give the Unit more clout. Furthermore this executing modality of having the PCPU work directly under the MNRE resulted in loss in support at the technical level as some considered it a 'superstructure' that led at times to a situation where the role of HODs in providing policy and technical advice was by-passed. The issue of the positioning of the PCPU also needs to be reconsidered given the recent changes in government structure.

Ø Promote support and integration of the technical level in the PCPU

In this project, it could be argued that the PCPU structure was not sufficiently socialized and integrated across "the base", i.e., at the level of the Heads of Department. It would have been important to identify what support this mechanism could have provided to these functionaries and have it integrated into their workplans so that HODs would have reached up to use the system more fully, rather than the more top-down approach that was adopted, with the PCPU coordinating the levels below it to a certain extent.

Ø **Convene more frequent and shorter meetings to enhance information sharing within the NREPS Technical Committee**

Given the large number of different activities going on at any period of time within different departments and ministries, interviewees recommended that more frequent, shorter meetings would help ensure that members are kept up to date more effectively. More frequent meetings were also felt to be important to consolidate the mechanism and to fully get people to dialogue and appreciate the value of the committee. Finally, it was felt to be easier to schedule shorter meetings than long all-day sessions.

Ø **Ensure all NREPS-TC representatives are adequately debriefed to be able to inform on all relevant ongoing activities**

In order to maintain a workable size, it is evident that not all individual departments will be able to have a representative on the NREPS Technical Committee nor that all projects within departments would be represented. In order to maximize the sharing of information on project, departmental and ministerial activities, it is therefore important that the representatives that are selected to be on the TC are fully debriefed on relevant ongoing activities within their agency or department.

Ø **Identify mechanisms to promote socialization of meeting results within departments and Ministries**

The TC was comprised of many high-level representatives including CEOs. In order to ensure that feedback from the meetings flows downward to all relevant functionaries within government departments and ministries, a mechanism to do so needs to be identified. For those ministries with their own policy and coordination unit, that structure could be utilized for this purpose. However, for others, alternative mechanisms would need to be discussed, agreed upon and implemented.

Ø **Increase level of communication with non-state stakeholders to promote ownership**

A number of interviewees who were members of the Other Stakeholders Committee commented that increased outreach from the PCPU to the OSC would have been beneficial and would have served to enhance the utility of this structure. This could be achieved by:

- Increasing the frequency of meetings;
- Increasing the level of communication between meetings;
- Promoting the inclusion of agenda items brought forth by other stakeholders;
- Establishing a clear feedback loop between the OSC and the TC. The NREPS system was designed so that feedback from the OSC would be conveyed to the TC through the 1 (and later 2) representatives of the OSC on the TC (Chair and Co-Chair of OSC). However, when these individuals changed positions or moved during project implementation, by-elections were not held to replace these representatives. This undermines the transmission of information from the OSC to the TC. This system needs to be clear to all participants and there needs to be a representative of the OSC on the TC at all times. Furthermore, all OSC meetings should have minutes produced that are circulated to OSC members as well as to TC members. When feasible, feedback should be provided to other stakeholders as to how their input and recommendations were taken into consideration. This feedback loop is important so that non-state stakeholders feel that the OSC is not a mere formality and that their input is making difference.

Ø Strive for consistent representation at international meetings to build capacity

The comment was made by some interviewees that the delegates sent to international meetings related to MEAs were not always the same individuals, perhaps as a result of the desire to ‘let different people have a turn’. However, consistent representation is important to build strong capacity and strong negotiating positions.

Ø Ensure that reservoir of natural resource and environmental information housed in the PCPU continues to be populated and utilized

The PCPU accumulated a substantial number of documents relating to natural resource management and the environment, in the form of policies and project documents, among others. This reservoir of information needs to continue to be updated. Furthermore a mechanism to share the information on the server beyond those in the PCPU should be identified to increase its utility. Given that the focal points of the Rio Conventions are now housed within a new Ministry, it is important to share this information with that Ministry or transfer it over.

Ø Consider legislating NREPS mechanism to enhance sustainability

While there is an approved Cabinet paper establishing NREPS, it might be useful to develop a legal instrument to formalize NREPS. This would help give the system “teeth” and enhance the sustainability of a system to facilitate coordination across government on environment and natural resource issues.

Ø Decide on how to move NREPS forward with new government structure

In order to build on project achievements, NREPS needs to be re-evaluated in terms of the positioning of the PCPU and how NREPS will be facilitated to maximize inter-sectoral cooperation and increased synergies in implementing the Rio Conventions (e.g., who will be Chair, Co-Chair, etc.). If the new Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development decides to establish its own PCPU structure, it is vital that the lessons learned by the PCPU staff members be shared.