

**Project Evaluation Series
08/2020**

**Terminal evaluation of
the project
“Improving forest and
protected area management in
Trinidad and Tobago”**

**Project code: GCP /TRI/003/GFF
GEF ID: 4750**

Management response

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 2020**

Management response to the terminal evaluation of the project "Improving forest and protected area management in Trinidad and Tobago." Project code: GCP/TRI/003/GFF GEF ID: 4750					Date 6 August, 2020
Evaluation recommendation (a)	Management response (b) Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection (c)	Responsible unit (d)	Timeframe (e)	Further funding required (Y or N) (f)
<p>Recommendation 1 Develop a sustainability strategy before formal project closure. 141.</p> <p>The evaluation team rated the project's sustainability Moderately Likely. There is a relatively good social basis but uncertain political/institutional context and insufficient public funding for sustaining project results and ensuring transition to long-term impact.</p> <p>This sustainability can be increased by developing a plan with targets, tasks and responsibilities for the different project stakeholders. The plan should be presented to the Project Steering Committee to seek endorsement from the different agencies.</p>	Partially Accepted	<p>A virtual meeting of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) was scheduled for Wednesday, 22 July 2020 to which all members of the PSC and their alternates were invited.</p> <p>Ten (10) persons attended the meeting in addition to the FAO Representation (FAOR), Lead Technical Officer (LTO) and Project Coordination Unit (PCU).</p> <p>On the basis of this recommendation, ten "Steps for Sustainability" were outlined, inclusive of proposed lead agencies*. The recommendations were endorsed by those present.</p> <p>Additionally areas for immediate follow-up by Government were recommended** which were also endorsed by the meeting.</p>	FAO Trinidad and Tobago (FAOTT)	1-31 July 2020	N

<p>Recommendation 2 Adjust the process of formal project closure to the measures for COVID-19 crisis.</p> <p>Considering the measures put in place because of the ongoing COVID-19 situation, the project closure process has practically been put on hold. Given the uncertainty of the future application of the measures put in place by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the project should develop a realistic project plan, including financial closure, a last Project Steering Committee meeting and formal handover of products, equipment, etc. to the Government. This should of course follow COVID-19 risk measures and include alternative activities such as internet-based meetings.</p>	Accepted	Adopting adaptive management strategies, project closure has been ongoing adhering to COVID-19 restrictions. For example, handover meetings have been conducted with limited numbers and remotely, accounting for assets is being verified and transfers to the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) have been initiated, as well as reconciliation of the accounts.	FAOTT	August-December 2020	N
<p>Recommendation 3 In coordination with FAO Trinidad and Tobago, continue to explore options to strengthen the institutional and financial basis for the national protected area system. 143.</p> <p>During the project implementation period, the institutional arrangement for protected areas management in Trinidad and Tobago did not fundamentally change. While some institutional aspects improved (legislation, definition and xix adoption of responsibilities of the different agencies), the evaluation showed that the lack of a single agency, as was committed by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago during project design, continues to be an</p>	Accepted	In line with SO3, the Representation's work plan 2019-2020 and the current CPF for Trinidad and Tobago, the FAOR and his team will pursue initiatives to support the institutional and financial basis for the national protected area system. These include the implementation of the unilateral trust fund (UTF) with the GORTT which supports effective land use planning and the design, approval and implementation of a submission to GEF for biodiversity conservation and land restoration.	FAOTT	August 2020-July 2022	Y

<p>important barrier to consolidation of a national protected area system. In spite of the changed policy orientation, it is recommended to re-engage in an institutional strengthening process for such system. Also, the government agencies should establish a plan to ensure enough public funding for protected area management. Therefore, the financing study carried out by the project should form the basis, in line with the to-be-developed sustainability plan, to determine clear targets and responsibilities, particularly for the Green Fund. Based on the experience and insights obtained during IFPAM, FAO Trinidad and Tobago should provide follow-up to these processes.</p>					
<p>Recommendation 4 Following GEF and FAO standards, ensure that GEF funds are fully dedicated to the project activities, despite overlapping Country Office needs. 144.</p> <p>This evaluation found some divergence regarding the use of GEF funds by FAO Trinidad and Tobago. Among the major ones are the lack of annual planning and reporting, and the relatively high expenditures on project management costs. Also, some GEF funds were used for non-project related issues. For the final financial report, it is recommended that all expenses be brought in line with FAO and GEF guidelines, with qualitative oversight from the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit. Finally, FAO Trinidad and Tobago should</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>This issue was fully ventilated and discussed during the audit. There is need to reiterate here that the circumstances under which project staff conducted non-project related work occurred at a time when staffing at the Representation was considerably reduced. It was also noted that subsequent to this occurrence, Representation staff performed technical duties which basically compensated for the cost. Finally, given the experience, closer attention will be paid to the segregation of task between project and Representation staff in the future.</p>	<p>FAOTT</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>N</p>

strengthen financial controls on the use of GEF funds. The Representation could reach out to FAO's Finance Division and/or the Office of Internal Oversight for guidance and/or support on this matter.					
<p>Recommendation 5 Ensure that important social and institutional aspects are mainstreamed in project design, including the results framework, monitoring, risk management. 145.</p> <p>The project had several social and institutional aspects that were critical for the achievement of the objectives. The evaluation found that this was sub-optimally achieved, largely because the contribution to improved livelihoods and gender equality were not fully mainstreamed. Also, crucial institutional and financial risks were not appropriately included in the risk management strategy. Therefore, in future project developments, it should be ensured that these aspects are not only mentioned at the level of a development objective or through a separate strategy, but they should be reflected in the results framework (mentioned in outcomes, outputs and activities), monitoring framework (clear indicators, separated for outcome and outputs, fairly reported) and risk management (monitored continuously through indicators and contingency plans at hand; include safeguard monitoring in risk management).</p>	Partially Accepted	Projects of this magnitude and complexity could have paid greater attention to gender equity and livelihoods in more detail. Projects in the future will do this. Given that projects are impacted by macroeconomic externalities, for which Project Managers have no control, it is not feasible to solely attribute/allocate project results to changes in social and institutional aspects. In this experience, critical financing promised by GORTT was not realized due to a global crisis in the oil and gas sector which also impacted the approach of the Government to institutional reform. Hence, the financial risk although apparent now was not included in design. Although, the advice is theoretically rational, hindsight suggest it may not be easily implementable.	FAOTT	N/A	N

***Steps for Sustainability**

No.	Item	Lead/s	Update to 01/08/2020
1	Establish monitoring points and implement site monitoring schedule	FD / IMA / DNRF Assisted by NGOs, EPPD	Monitoring to be initiated by FD and EPPD at Matura National Park, August 2020.
2	Enact workplans for each protected area (PA) management plan	FD / EMA / DNRF	Workplans adopted by FD/EMA and DNRF.
3	Manage TTGIS data: verification, upload, security, reporting	All trained agencies	Trained personnel have updated data collection sheets to facilitate capture in the field.
4	Periodic refresher training (trail design, communication, GIS/GPS etc)	All trained agencies	-
5	Ongoing communication and surveys of public awareness and attitudes	All trained agencies	-
6	Outreach activities aligned to management plans (including schools)	All trained agencies	FD, IMA, EMA, EPPD, DNRF, DMRF and NGOs have been given public education resources for use in outreach activities.
7	Network management (e.g. enforcement, research, website)	All agencies	Forestry Division has accepted responsibility for management of National Website for Forest and protected Areas and two officers were trained in website update on 24 July 2020.
8	Explore PA management funding options	FD/MALF; other agencies	-
9	Undertake livelihood activity development that supports PA management	FD	-
10	Finalize Trinity Hills Management Plan	FD	-

DMRF – Department of Marine Resources and Fisheries, DNRF – Department of Natural Resources and Forestry; EMA – Environmental Management Authority; EPPD – Environmental Policy and Planning Division; FD- Forestry Division; IMA – Institute of Marine Affairs

****Government follow-up**

- Institutional and legislative reform for forest and protected area management including addressing the issue of sustainable financing
- High level inter-ministerial committee to implement System Plan; Formal Adoption of management plans, with co-management arrangements developed
- Green Fund activity
- Co-management approach to be used/piloted (e.g. Private sector/Tour operators at Caroni Swamp; CBOs at Nariva Swamp for fire management, tours, monitoring)