

Acronyms continued

NPAS	National Protected Area System
NR	Natural Resources
NCSUBAP	National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity and Action Plan
NTDP	National Tourism Development Plan
PA	Protected Area
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PIR	Project Implementation Reviews (Annual)
PMAA	Management and Environmental Adaptation Plans
PNT	National Plan of Tourism
POTT	Tourism Land Use Plans
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PRONATURA	Pro Nature Fund
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
RD-CAFTA	The US-Central American Free Trade Agreement
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEPA	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
SICA	System for Integration in Centroamerica
SOECI	Cibao Ecologic Society
SPAW	Special Protocol Concerning Protected Areas and Wildlife
TA	Technical Assistance
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UGAM	Municipal Environmental Management Units
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VMC&MR	Vice Ministry of Coastal & Marine Resources. M.Environment
VM	Vice Ministry
VMPA	Vice Ministry of Protected Areas. M.Environment
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Table 1 – Project information table.

Project title: Conserving Biodiversity in Coastal Areas Threatened by Rapid Tourism and Physical Infrastructure Development			
UNDP project number (PIMS #)	4955	PIF approval date	12/04/2013
GEF Project number	5088	GEF endorsement date	11/03/2015
# Project (ATLAS) # Award (ATLAS)	00083903	Project Document (PRODOC) signature (Project start)	02/07/2015
Country	Dominican Republic	Date of project coordinator contract	01/12/2015
Region	LAC	Date of inception workshop	03/02/2016
		End date of Mid-Term Review	Julyo/2019
Focal area	Biodiversity	End date of Terminal Evaluation	28/02/2021
GEF 5 Focal Area Strategic Objective	Obj. 2: Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in terrestrial and marine productive sectors	Original end date for project	31/07/2020
Fiduciary fund (GEF, LDCF, SCCF, NIPF)	GEF	Date proposed for project extension	31/12/ 2020
Executing agency / Implementing agency	M.Environment / PNUD	Actual end date of the project	31/03/2021
Location of project sites	Two pilot sites: Montecristi and Samaná, Dominican Republic		
Partner institutions	Ministry of Tourism		
Project financing	At time of approval (USD) 2,838,792	At the time of FE (USD)* 2,764,050.89	
Implementing agency (IA) Executing agency (EA)	UNDP (USD) 350,000 M.Environment 6,134,799	PNUD (USD) 249,000 M.Environment (USD) 5,140,625	
Other agencies:	MITUR (USD) 9,550,000	MITUR (USD) 12,862,500	
		MARENA Fund (USD) 200,000 GIZ (USD) 1,200,000 JICA (USD) 846,423.04 TNC (USD) 1,500,000 Agora Mall (USD) 21,000	
Total co-financing and total expenses of the project	USD 18,873,591	USD 22,019,548.04	

1.2 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The Dominican Republic (DR), located in the Caribbean, covers two-thirds of the eastern part of the island of Hispaniola, with the western side occupied by Haiti. The country has a unique biodiversity of global importance, reason why it has been identified as a "Caribbean Hotspot". The coastal-marine areas include a variety of marine environments such as very deep trenches, coral reefs, barrier islands, deep and shallow estuaries and a wide variety of cays and mangroves.

Dominican marine environments comprise part of the Central Caribbean ecoregion that has received the highest biological values from both Conservation International and WWF, which have listed the area as one of the top five priority eco-regions for conservation in the world.

Several key species that inhabit the coastal areas and are of global importance are critically endangered, including species of commercial interest that consequently face increased pressure.

Currently, ecosystems and species in the Dominican Republic are subject to various forms of pressure and degradation, both within protected areas and in the surrounding landscapes. Tourism, both directly through infrastructure development and indirectly through the expansion of urban areas and increasing pressure from coastal populations, has led to degradation of coastal areas affecting the functionality of each of the coastal marine ecosystems: dunes, mangroves, seagrasses, wetlands, and coral reefs.

The long-term solution proposed by the project is to effectively incorporate biodiversity conservation into the Dominican Republic's tourism sector and to strengthen the institutional, legal, and policy framework as well as management capacities needed to address the various threats.

The Government of the Dominican Republic requested assistance from the GEF and UNDP to remove barriers to ensuring the long-term conservation of the country's biodiversity through a collaborative agreement under the National Implementation Modality (NIM). The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources is the implementing partner and is, together with the Ministry of Tourism, the responsible party for the project. Thus, on July 2, 2015, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Tourism and UNDP signed the Project Document (PRODOC), which sets the guidelines, goals and indicators and establishes the basis for the implementation; it will be completed on March 31, 2021. This project has been executed in accordance with the cooperation standards and regulations of UNDP in the Dominican Republic.

1.3 –TERMINAL EVALUATION RATINGS TABLE

Table 2 – Terminal Evaluation Ratings

Criteria	Comments	Rating
Monitoring and Evaluation: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately satisfactory (MS), Moderately unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly unsatisfactory (HU), not possible to evaluate (NE)		
M&E design at project start	Structurally and operationally, the M&E plan was well conceived, practical, and sufficiently articulated to be able to monitor project progress: it included various types of technical monitoring and financial reports, as well as two independent evaluations, the monitoring of indicators and means of verification, an analysis of major risks, as well as those related to the issue of UNDP safeguards and the management effectiveness monitoring tool. However, some shortcomings existed with regard the actual risk assessment, some of the targets were not feasible, and although the main partners were evaluated, it would have been desirable to incorporate some other partners who could have had a strong influence on the project. Some indicators were not appropriate, making them difficult to assess or monitor. The project did not have a Theory of Change developed at the beginning of the project, because it was not a mandatory requirement at the time the project was designed.	MS
Implementation of M&E plan	Although financial and progress reporting requirements were met, including their quality and timeliness, the information provided in some reports was not used to improve and adapt project performance. Recommendations made by the RTA in the PIRs to improve project performance were not always addressed. Several recommendations made in the MTR were also not addressed and/or properly followed up. The Steering Committee Meetings did not have the desired impact, and very few meetings were held, among other difficulties. Together this led to a very pronounced delay in the implementation of the project. During the last year and a half, the implementation of the M&E plan was improved, including risk management, gender issues were also included in the context of the project, and the reorientation of the project was paramount to its progress.	MU
General quality of M&E	In general, "structurally", (it means, in accordance with established UNDP/GEF procedures by the project team and the UNDP Country Office) the development and budget of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan was appropriate and executed. The weaknesses and strengths found at both the design and execution levels (which were improved in the last year and a half of the project), merit the rating of Moderately Satisfactory. In the end, the monitoring and evaluation systems did not fully guarantee effective project management, which was highlighted by a questionable execution by one of the partners.	MS
Execution by Implementing Agency and Executing Agencies: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately satisfactory (MS), Moderately unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly unsatisfactory (HU), not possible to evaluate (NE)		
Execution by Implementing Agency UNDP	It is widely recognized, that particularly in the last year and a half of the project, during the incorporation of the private sector, UNDP has been the decisive force to work with the government and its strategic vision favored the fulfillment of the objectives. Furthermore, its performance at the closing of the project by facilitating and putting the key elements and topics on the agenda of the new administration, taking advantage of the windows of opportunities due to the change of government and the willingness throughout the value chain of the tourism sector has been indeed remarkable. However, the first years of the project were characterized by continuous delays, poor dialogue between partners and project progress where UNDP DR was initially unable to influence conflict resolution. Some deficiencies were observed, related to the facilitation and convening power required to open the pathways and channels of communication required with partners at the highest level to achieve the goals. Also, during the execution of the project, some delays were observed in the follow-up of various administrative processes that could be improved.	MS
Execution by Executing Agency M. Environment	Since the start, the project encountered a series of obstacles during its implementation. The involvement of M.Environment developed gradually, and with differences in understanding the objectives and goals, and how to address them especially at the beginning. However, in general, it performed well. The VMC&MR was the focal point for the project and its involvement is considered outstanding. It ensured proper follow-up of the project, facilitated action to achieve the results and supported the opening of communication channels with its counterpart. There was also greater participation in terms of the number of areas involved, although, the degree of involvement and commitment varied. Overall, at the technical level, participation and support were high, leaving the project with good lessons learned and experiences. The performance of the provinces varied, although the involvement of the provincial directorate of Montecristi is noteworthy. As for the provincial directorate of Samaná, although it was not very	MS

Criteria	Comments	Rating
	proactive, it always supported and backed the actions. Many activities and proposals were well received, yet there were problems during the implementation.	
Execution by Responsible Partner MITUR	Although the DPP (focal point for this project) is recognized for its high-level performance in other projects and its standing at the Ministerial level, this project showed otherwise, as the required role was not met during this administration. The partner was lacking openness and barriers to higher levels of decision making were not overcome; this would have allowed to implement important outputs being considered core commitment of the project. At the technical level, openness and willingness to cooperate prevailed, thus relevant achievements were made. Support was provided at the provincial and district levels; however, it was weaker and the inputs were more tangible on less relevant issues. Nevertheless, MITUR fulfilled its co-financing commitments. Likewise, the vision of the new administration (2020-2024), is in line with the project's goals, showing interest and willingness to adopt the project's achievements and results of the project.	MU
General quality of Project implementation and execution	The beginning of the project and the following three years of implementation represented a period of many obstacles, important delays, postponement of activities, little synergy and participation as a result of institutional structural weaknesses and the missing leadership of one of the main partners in particular. However, UNDP and PCU demonstrated strong strategic capacity by rescuing the project through the support of newly gained stakeholders which improved the prospect of sustainability. Several results were achieved, some beyond what was originally planned, and others remained stagnant. Collaborative alliances improved in the last year and a half of the project. At the end of the project, the openness and willingness of the implementing partners (MITUR y M.Environment) and UNDP is quite favorable.	MS
Outcomes: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately satisfactory (MS), Moderately unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly unsatisfactory (HU), not possible to evaluate (NE)		
Relevance	The Project is highly relevant in the national context, its design was coherent with the national objectives and priorities and the international commitments of the Dominican government. It is the first project with GEF funds that exclusively addresses the needs of consolidation and development of national policies that allow for a transition towards a sustainable tourism that seeks to integrate coastal-marine natural capital and tourism. Despite its relevance, the degree of stakeholder participation, particularly from MITUR, fell short of expectations; in turn, the involvement of other institutions and partners would have been necessary and allowed for broader scope. The long-term solution envisioned for this project, although congruent with national and global priorities and with UNDP and GEF strategic priorities, the level of compliance is still too limited to meet user needs and achieve global environmental benefits. Nevertheless, progress has been made at the baseline level, and the quantity and quality of inputs generated by BC&T can be translated into public policies to achieve the project's objective.	MS
Effectiveness	The slow performance of the project in general, derived from the insufficient participation of one of the partners, the limited coordination between the two responsible ministries, the inability of the PCU to influence the decision-making at the highest level regarding the formulation of policies and the non-feasibility of some activities, caused severe delays in the achievement of the expected objectives of the project. Regarding the results, the implementation of Outcome 2 activities was more effective than Outcome 1, which involved changes mainly at the national level. It is noteworthy, however, that there was a significant improvement in the effectiveness of the operational staff of both partner institutions, partly thanks to the equipment, capacity building and use of technologies, especially at the pilot sites. The inclusion of the private sector and the civil society was strategic and very well addressed; both welcomed the project, which has enabled the building of partnerships and better behaviors as well as good practices. Opportunities for women were created to participate in various activities as a consequence of the gender policy of inclusion promoted by UNDP during the implementation of the project.	MS
Efficiency	A large part of the resources was used for the implementation of the project, while the administration costs (PCU) were minimal (4.76%). The execution of resources was slow during the first three years of the project although the project accelerated the pace of implementation later on. Still, to date the project has not been able to reach its global objectives regarding the conservation of BD and sustainable tourism development, however, achievements at the local level stand out. Resources were well managed in terms of processes and documentation, with no findings from financial audits. MITUR's co-financing values were exceeded and M.Environment complied with 84%; in addition, there was a contribution of more than USD \$3.5 million from other entities, especially from international cooperation agencies.	MS

Criteria	Comments	Rating
General rating of Project outcomes	The project had to deal with problems regarding its performance and had to cross many obstacles during the first three years, which were overcome by refocusing the project after the MTR. Thus, some results were exceeded and the changes made at the local level are evident and very positive, especially for Montecristi that contributed to the development of a new sustainable tourism model. At the national level, particularly regarding Outcome 1, the main goals established were not achieved due to several factors including design problems, feasibility, difficulties with one of the partners and the Covid-19 pandemic.	MS
Sustainability: Likely (L), Moderately likely (ML), Moderately unlikely (MU), Unlikely (U), not possible to evaluate (NE)		
Financial	The results of the project at the local level favor financial sustainability by having a more diversified tourism, with better infrastructure and viable options of co-management with the municipal governments. At the national level, and which will evidently impact the entire value chain, the tourism sector is one of the current priorities, since due to Covid-19, the priority is its reactivation to once again drive socio-economic development. The government has earmarked considerable expenditure for both partner ministries, and during interviews it has expressed its willingness to internalize the project's results and inputs by considering them already in its 2021 AOPs. In addition, a new project between the new MITUR government and UNDP is underway, aimed at the recovery of "destination tourism", considering the lessons learned, products, and opportunities created by this GEF project. Another opportunity arises from the involvement of the private sector in this project in terms of a capital injection strategy; in this regard, important alliances have been established, favoring the prospects of sustainability.	L
Socioeconomic	Various achievements of the project add to socio-economic sustainability including actions of sustainable community projects; progress made with regard to regularization of businesses contribute to operationalize the achievements of the project, seeking to support the social and business fabric to have an economic growth with sustainability criteria and local empowerment, among other initiatives. However, among the factors that put socio-economic sustainability at risk are i) achieving an increase in the participation of other government agencies, ii) the stability of the incoming government has not yet been consolidated, iii) the need to ensure economic resources to reinforce the achievements in progress and reached, and iv) the Covid-19. The latter, is considered to still have negative impacts for the sector by 2021 consisting in a continued loss of jobs, among other effects. Thus, the recovery will be only gradual, imposing great challenges that will not be solved in the short term.	ML
Institutional framework and governance	The project was designed to achieve good governance through legal frameworks, policies, as well as structures and processes that would ensure its continuity; however, up to this TE this has not happened. Nevertheless, for the new MITUR administration, the elaboration of the PNT including BD conservation criteria and the elaboration of the POTTs is of high priority, designed to increase and improve the dialogue and participation with DGODT, M.Environment and the support of FEDOMU. The latter is in charge of the municipal development plans. On the other hand, after the change of administration in August 2020, the political dialogue has been established mainly at the sectoral level with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. During the evaluation it became obvious that a great willingness exists in both ministries to continue with the foundations laid by BC&T. Thus, it is likely that many of the activities will continue, especially those that have been integrated into institutional processes. It is desirable to improve the relationship between the government, civil society and economic activities in the sector, which is widely contemplated in the project that is about to begin between MITUR and UNDP.	ML
Environmental	Considering the advantages and disadvantages mentioned in the previous sections, environmental sustainability is moderately likely. However, it is not yet possible to speak of environmental sustainability in a broader sense or at the scale of global environmental benefits. At the local level, good initiatives to favor conservation of ecosystems and species plus ecosystem restoration actions have been applied, but they are still very focused small-scale actions. Likewise, other activities at the local level such as the strengthening of capacities for biological monitoring, the increase in the adoption of good practices by tourism service providers and the application of those practices in their daily workflows, the establishment of diverse voluntary agreements, the change in the perception regarding the use and management of resources and their conservation, among other specific actions at the pilot sites, will surely create direct benefits and impacts at the local, regional, national and global scale in the medium and long term.	ML
General likelihood of sustainability		ML

1.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In general, the project delivers its objective **at the baseline level**, with regard to "ensuring the conservation of BD in ecologically important coastal areas threatened by the burgeoning tourism industry and associated physical development". A great diversity of baseline inputs has been produced that contribute to the project's goal, although the delay observed in its implementation does not yet allow for evidence of recovery or non-loss in coastal-marine ecosystem coverage, especially as a result of tourism activities.

The Project constitutes a reference for the entire region. It exclusively addresses the need of consolidation and development of national policies that allow for a transition towards a socially responsible tourism in accordance with the sustainable use of natural resources. Furthermore, the integration of coastal-marine natural capital and the tourism sector (along the entire value chain) presents an opportunity for innovation in GEF portfolio priorities.

The Project was embedded and designed in a different national and global political context than the current one. At that time, first steps were being taken to adopt the 2030 agenda targeting the 17 SDG, thus, a corresponding culture to assimilate the concept of sustainable tourism in development policies at the national level did not exist. Consequently, the project is considered a key piece within the sustainable development topic, as it tries to create a socio-economic-environmental development model, which seeks a highly strategic vision on valuing natural capital and including the direct users of the same, adopting a new diversified and conscious vision for development.

The project design process was adequately assisted in terms of standard procedures, and the participation of national specialists and institutions; however, it presented important deficiencies related, among other points, to the setting of clear and viable objectives and components within the project's timeframe, the maturity and vision of the partners for its implementation, and the availability of information to better guide the planning of activities. Likewise, the failure to apply adaptive management actions at the structure level to adjust the MRE to the real country situation and institutional context, caused important deficiencies in the project at its closing. As a result, most of the key systemic activities achieved a very limited level of progress, cascading into other activities.

This is related to the indicators established in the MRE, which did not fully comply with the SMART criteria, making the goals unfeasible to achieve or without providing information to measure the achievement of the objectives. Verifying these criteria when developing the MRE indicators is fundamental for the proper implementation of the project, the achievement of the targets and the overall objective of the project.

The project encountered significant difficulties from the outset and suffered severe delays during its implementation in order to accomplish the planned activities. Although initial conditions promised a successful execution, during the project's development, disadvantages arose mainly due to the low political priority given to the project by MITUR and the limited understanding among partners at the highest levels of decision making, a very slow action by UNDP and PCU to solve problems, little communication between sectoral and local government of both ministries to efficiently coordinate work, unfeasible goals, adverse climate situations and the arrival of Covid-19.

At the technical level, openness and willingness to collaborate on part of MITUR prevailed, therefore achievements were made on this level. At the provincial and district levels, support was also provided, however, it was weaker and the contributions tended to be on less relevant topics, for example, training, dissemination and technical support. The M.Environment performed better during the project, had a better understanding and demonstrated more ownership of the project, although this was gradual.

The inclusion of other areas (directorates) within each ministry, and mainly their linkage and coordinated participation, as well as the participation from different levels (technical, middle and top management) could have improved the project's performance, opened doors, enabled a better involvement and institutional ownership of the project as well as a greater scope of results and achievement of goals, particularly at MITUR. Although the project management arrangements included the establishment of a Technical Oversight Committee, which was planned to include different areas of each Ministry for participation and coordination, it did not have the desired impact during project implementation.

The adaptive management of the project resulting from the difficulties faced, was focused on two aspects: 1) to generate the inputs that would constitute the background for the modification of the legal framework and the elaboration of public policies necessary for the transition towards sustainable tourism; and 2) to realign the efforts by including the private sector, NGOs, international cooperation agencies and residents in the activities to achieve the project's goals, which was a great success. This new dynamic, together with the guidance and support of UNDP, made it possible to overcome some of these difficulties.

In addition, the project had the great opportunity to join independent initiatives that various institutions were implementing. This maximized the results, allowed for a broader scope and avoided duplicating efforts, making the project more efficient. This also led to strategic alliances that contribute to the sustainability of the activities carried out and other related activities. As examples serve: The Certification of the Sustainable Tourism Destination of "Las Galeras" in Samaná, the continuation of a coral nursery and the Community Tourism project in coordination with JICA.

However, at the time of this evaluation, the project still presents a clear risk of failing to meet its main objective "to ensure the conservation of biodiversity in ecologically important coastal areas threatened by the burgeoning tourism industry and physical development" by failing to meet the main goals of strengthening the institutional, legal, and policy framework related to address direct threats from traditional tourism development as well as activities and consequently to improve the operational framework.

Strictly speaking, several targets were not achieved, approximately 37% of the targets for Outcome1 and 65% for Outcome 2 (and approximately 10% for both outcomes have intermediate progress). However, there is a considerable number of additional results and unplanned inputs, resulting from adaptive management, which serve as baseline inputs for the incoming government, and which contributed significantly to the project. Thus, the results achieved are key elements that can and should be maximized and replicated in the medium and long term, as they are still limited in scale. It is of utmost urgency that the exit strategy resumes those activities that still need to be fulfilled in order to move towards the long-term solution and goal sought by the project.

The execution of the resources, presented important differences between the years of implementation. Only 36% of the budget had been executed between 2015 and the first quarter of 2018. During the remaining time of 2018 there was an upturn in which another 60% (96% total) of the available funds had been executed up to December 2020. The execution of the remaining 4% will be reached until the end of the project in March 2021. The improvement regarding the implementation rate is connected to the realignment of the project, where the private sector was more proactively involved. No findings resulted from internal controls and audits.

The planned co-financing from the two main partners was not only fulfilled but exceeded by MITUR and almost fulfilled by the M.Environment and UNDP. Significant contributions from other national and international bodies were received, allowing for a co-financing of 137% compared to the original planned.

With regard to the additionality of GEF resources, it is not yet possible to perceive the expected change for the greater benefit of the DR's vulnerable and strategic ecosystems or the impact is still very limited at the local level. It is impossible to show impacts, considering that most of the achievements are largely recent and therefore it is difficult to verify the additionality of GEF funds, as their most important function is often their longer-term impact.

However, the additionality is in part, reflected in the innovation of the project proposal; bringing together two ministries with almost opposite visions to achieve a transition to a productive activity that acknowledges the value of BD, is certainly unprecedented, and would not have been possible without the implementation of this project supported with GEF resources. This is being achieved almost at the projects closing, and thanks to all the work accomplished by the project, the expected global environmental benefits may be observed in the medium and long term. The projects accomplishment will help to ensure economic and institutional framework and governance sustainability mainly in the short and medium term.

To date, the contribution of the project's achievements has not had a catalytic effect leading to wider adoption of the successful interventions, seeking wider acceptance and behavior change, locally, regionally and nationally; the catalytic effect is still at the *Demonstration* level. However, several activities being completed mostly at pilot sites and mainly in Montecristi, have a high probability of being *replicated*, and the inputs generated could achieve the *Scale-up effect* if they can be translated into public policy documents.

It is important to remember that projects can be more successful and sustainable if the needs of the communities, as well as their involvement in decision making and execution of tasks are considered from the beginning; this conveys a sense of belonging and appreciation, they feel listened to, they perceive that their opinion matters and thus they are more willing to participate and commit. Approaching communities with projects that do not fully address the essential needs of the community (in line with natural resources conservation) and sometimes with external consultants unaware of their dynamics, leads to missing ownerships and puts the sustainability of their action at risk. Although it should be acknowledged that sometimes necessary capacities are not available at these sites, therefore the goal should be building *in situ* capacities whenever possible.

In terms of impact, the project has reduced environmental stress on a very small scale through interventions carried out to restore coastal-marine ecosystems, although baseline studies have

been developed to know the loss/gain of coverage of these ecosystems during the project's execution period, and it is possible to continue carrying out restoration actions. Likewise, a "slight" change for the better can be perceived (focused) in the environmental status of critical ecosystems, in the restored coastal-marine areas, and in fishing refuge areas of several species, mainly the parrot fish, which is a threatened species.

However, progress towards environmental stress reduction and environmental status change is possible: as two regulations are already in place (for turtles and whales) that will favor the conservation of these species in the medium and long term (if applied correctly); as significant contributions have been made to local communities which are willing to adopt BD-compatible livelihoods and good practices that help to protect globally threatened coastal-marine species; through improving the effectiveness of PA management and tourism activities; and the potential of adjusting the regulatory framework and development of other necessary public policy instruments (PNT and POTTs, among others).

It should be acknowledged that the situation of the project is still fragile, derived from a) the change of government, b) the non-fulfillment of diverse activities, c) the scale at which the main achievements are found and d) how complicated the socio-economic recovery of the country will be due to the effect of Covid-19. Full commitment and political support at the highest level is required at this crucial moment of project closure, where UNDP plays a key role in guiding the Exit Strategy so that the project is able to move forward with a logic of results and incremental cost.

Despite the short time since the new administration took office, there is a great receptiveness of the current Ministers of Tourism and of Environment as well as in several areas of the institutions to promote dialogue, establish coordination and collaboration alliances among them and with other relevant partners from further government agencies and at various levels, the private sector, civil society, among others. Likewise, there is a very clear stance regarding the needs that must be addressed in the future and that the project represents the background and the base line at the national level to consolidate the transition towards sustainable tourism.

Understanding the added value or incremental cost of GEF contributions from the outset could have made the project more efficient in achieving its targets, even though this analysis was included in the PRODOC. Not losing sight of the global benefits and how to reach them could have modified the pace of project implementation and the activities executed, which is related to the MRE, its indicators and targets that could have been modified during the MTR. Although it is worth noting that there were particular actions where this vision was present, they were not implemented on time or at an early stage. As a result, it is not yet possible to perceive the expected changes for the greatest benefit of the DR's vulnerable and strategic ecosystems or the impact is still very limited at the local level. This indicates that this process of analysis should be ongoing from the initial stages of project implementation and throughout the entire management of the project.

1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY TABLE

Table 3 – Summary of Terminal Evaluation Recommendations.

Rec #	Terminal Evaluation Recommendation	Responsible Entity	Deadline
The focal points of the partner institutions (DPP and VMRC&M) are suggested as the responsible entity; however, these two areas could in turn involve other directorates according to their attributions and their capacity to support compliance with the recommendation.			
A	Category 1: Closing the project		
A.1	Hold a meeting/workshop with UNDP and partner Ministries to discuss priorities, opportunities, responsibilities, synergies to enhance project results, identify institutional areas to generate coordination to contribute to project objectives.	Lead UNDP, VMC&MR (M.Environment) and DPP (MITUR)	March 2021
A.2	Based on the aforementioned, consolidate the project's exit strategy that includes: (i) a prioritization of pending project activities and the selection of inputs generated for their transformation into public policies; (ii) identification of partners at government level (sectoral, regional, provincial and local), business sector, NGOs and international cooperation agencies, among others, and their potential responsibilities and/or participation and/or relevant activities to direct the project towards the achievement of its objective; (iii) a strengthened and expanded financial strategy; (iv) systematization of the lessons learned from the project; (v) recommendations for the M.Environment and MITUR for the consolidation and enhancement of the results, (vi) description of the mechanisms by which the information generated by the project will be available and (vii) issues of gender equity and women's empowerment in a broad sense.	Lead UNDP, VMC&MR (M.Environment) and DPP (MITUR)	March and April 2021
A.3	Improve and ensure the promotion of the project's achievements, its implementation and continuity through the following activities: a) Explore the feasibility of a Sustainable Tourism Forum focused on SDG 14, 15 and 8 for project closure, to position the topic of sustainable tourism, share examples of good practices and lessons learned and generate new windows of opportunity. b) Disseminate the project among the provincial and municipal Directorates of new entry (urgent) as in some cases they still do not have clarity or knowledge of it, which is fundamental for the sustainability of the results.	Lead a) UNDP DPP (MITUR), VMC&MR M.Environment, b) VMC&MR M.Environment and DPP (MITUR), UNDP	a) April 2021 b) March 2021
B	Category 2: Follow-up activities and for project sustainability		
B.1	Use the inputs generated to prioritize the elaboration and implementation of the PNT and apply the Dominican System of Sustainable Tourism Indicators (SIDTUR), to promote the achievement of the SDG and Agenda 2030, in accordance with the National Development Strategy 2030.	Lead DPP (MITUR)	January 2022
B.2	Consolidate and follow up on the main agreements generated by the project: a) an alliance with the MICM to incorporate the BD and other sustainability criteria in the tourism business; b) follow up on the signing of the voluntary agreement with more than 70 companies in the provinces of Samaná and Montecristi, to apply better environmental practices; c) the formation of the inter-institutional consultative group between both ministries (target of Outcome 1) in which the inclusion and participation of the private sector and the MICM would be very appropriate; and d) consolidate and apply the financial mechanism developed and still to be supported by MITUR.	a)Lead UNDP MICM, b)M.Environment sectoral and provincial and MITUR sectoral and provincial	August 2021 and permanent follow-up

Rec #	Terminal Evaluation Recommendation	Responsible Entity	Deadline
		c) DPP (MITUR), and VMC&MR (M. Environment) d) Lead MITUR (DPP, regional and provincial) Samana Tourism Cluster and the hotel association	
B.3	Outcome1. Promote certification for sustainable tourism destinations by using the lessons learned, experiences and inputs generated by the project as a mechanism to attract foreign investment, seeking the support of international cooperation for replication at other sites. This will be done through an initial diagnosis of potential sites.	Lead: MITUR (DPP, V. Technical) VMC&MR (M.Environment)	Diagnostic June 2021. Promotion of certification, permanent
B.4	Outcome2. Ensure continuity to the monitoring and maintenance actions of the coral nurseries and restored coastal areas through the establishment of a permanent program with trained personnel from the Ministry of the Environment and/or through agreements with NGOs that can carry out this program and/or with the same communities that were previously trained; it is crucial to continue with the monitoring in order to keep feeding the information system for decision making. Continue feeding and strengthening the National System of Environmental Management.	VMC&MR M.Environment sectoral, provincial and local.	Monitoring Activities, Permanent
B.5	a) During the following months formalize the mechanisms for co-management of the Provincial Directorates of M.Environment with local people, NGOs and associations, creating committees for the management of resources in which all parties involved are represented. b) Establish PA fee collection to raise more funds.	Lead: a) M.Environment, provincial and local of Samaná and Montecristi (S&M) NGO, groups of residents and associations that may be considered relevant Lead b) VM of Protected Areas (PA) and BD; and Directorate of PA. / M. Environment, provincial and local of S&M	May 2021
B.6	Elaborate the two POTTs foreseen in the project considering the "Environmental Management Guide in Tourist Zones to be applied in the Territorial Tourist Management Plans (POTTs)". This should be done through dialogue, collaboration and integration of the parties: MITUR,	Lead: DPP (MITUR), DGODT	Sept. 2021

Rec #	Terminal Evaluation Recommendation	Responsible Entity	Deadline
	the DGODT, which depends on the MEPyD, and FEDOMU, so coherence and consistency in these public policy instruments is ensured. These instruments will serve as a basis for the development of new POTTs in other provinces.	(MEP&D) and FEDOMU	
C	Category 3: Sustainability and replication of project actions		
C.1	Assess the potential for generating incentives to support small and medium-sized businesses with sustainable practices (e.g., tax works (temporary tax exception), carbon credits, fines for environmental compensation and/or environmental crimes, including construction of infrastructure without compliance with environmental regulations, production and discharge of polluting waste into the sea, etc.)	Lead: VMC&MR DPP (MITUR), MICM, Ministry of Finance	Permanent
C.2	Prioritize the particular successful activities of the project and seek to initiate their replication. Expand both its content and scope e.g. the campaign "Better without Calimete" was received very positively regarding the reduction and elimination of single-use plastic, this should be expanded, incorporating other products and scaling it to various levels.	Lead: VMC&MR (M.Environment) and DPP (MITUR), M.Environment and MITUR provincial and local of Samaná and Montecristi	Permanent
C.3	Continue to strengthen public-private partnerships through meetings and forums ensuring broad participation and dialogue to formalize agreements. This was an important achievement of the project that should be maintained, above all because of its relevance within the tourism sector, since it can generate broad and diverse windows of opportunity.	Lead: UNDP, MITUR, MICM	Permanent
D	Category 4: For future projects		
D.1	Make progress in the diversification of the tourism sector, with UNDP support to promote, motivate and incorporate the inputs, instruments and results generated by BC&T to move in this direction; both through the strategy of working with the private sector to promote sustainable tourism as an integral, sustainable and resilient recovery strategy for COVID, as well as in the promotion of the Sustainable Production and Consumption Roadmap. Establish actions and strategies with the corresponding governments (see recommendation A1). The above through agreements, programs and/or projects that allow for creating new links and commitment with the heads of the institutions with responsibilities in this area and who have recently assumed their positions, as well as to consolidate the issue in the work routines. Incorporate the recommendations developed in the context of BC&T for gender equity and other relevant topics.	Lead: UNDP, MITUR, M.Environment	From March 2021 on
D.2	During the development of the Logical Framework for each project, verify that each Indicator meets the SMART criteria as far as possible in order to facilitate the project management process and its execution, to be certain of its viability over the life time of the project and to be able to objectively measure the achievement of the objectives.	UNDP	Permanent
D.3	Include a financial advisor as part of the project team in the design of future projects, or use cross-sectoral initiatives such as BIOFIN to advise the project from the outset, addressing the principle that external resources are not a substitute for domestic resources, including as a requirement, a solid understanding of the level and type of expenditures	UNDP country and regional	Permanent

Rec #	Terminal Evaluation Recommendation	Responsible Entity	Deadline
	prior to funding and assumptions about the potential evolution of domestic resources and about the expected benefits of the project to determine the incremental benefit.		
D.4	Linked to the above, although UNDP followed the norms and procedures regarding the organization for the design of the project, it is expected that the following projects will strengthen the monitoring mechanisms for direct environmental results associating these and sustainability with the expectations of the assumptions, as well as the articulation points identifying the pathways that lead to long-term impact in a more rigorous manner. This should be done through planning a logical framework that is as specific as possible and includes quantitative environmental indicators, which will help facilitate recognition of the evidence of additionality envisaged by the GEF.	UNDP country and regional	Permanent
D.5	It is recommended that more diversified profiles be included in the PCU to build a multidisciplinary team that can cover all components and aspects of the project. Although a coordinator and/or other professionals with proven experience in the core subjects of the project are involved, the team should include professionals with political and communication experience and skills to facilitate negotiation with high institutional levels and to influence changes or development of new public policies and with sufficient technical capacity.	Lead: UNDP M.Environment, MITUR and entities associated with each project	Permanent
D.6	Regarding the consultancies and services, align the design and its products with reality, which causes an impact and serves for the decision making. Ensure once (the) product(s) is (are) completed (especially if these are documents) its/their adoption, application and use, and analyze how the resources can be optimized in order to avoid repetition with other inputs or generated products. The above with the guidance of UNDP for feasibility.	Lead: M.Environment and MITUR, (institutions/implementation partners) UNDP	Permanent
D.7	Conduct an analysis of the ToR preparation processes, the delivery of reports on contracted products and other processes that generate delays. Seek means to improve the initial quality of the ToR and reports, by sharing the structure and the minimum content and format for approval of the reports with the PCU and the consultants, in order to optimize review and payments timelines so as to avoid delays, especially in field activities. Assign review tasks to a couple of people per institution, including UNDP (from the institutions that should review and/or comment on the products to avoid unnecessary delays). Establish and meet deadlines for delivery of ToR and products by those involved.	UNDP	Permanent
D.8	As part of projects incorporating BC&T scopes, as well as for other projects, conduct at the outset a socio-economic analysis of the pilot sites selected to implement actions. This helps to demonstrate at the end of the project how the processes worked to capture broader development effects, including income generation, improved governance, employment opportunities, and gender equity and livelihood benefits.	UNDP	Permanent