

Caribbean Regional Unit for Technical Assistance (CARUTA)

FINAL EVALUATION

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. Project Background

This project is a coordinated response to deliver institutional capacity building technical assistance in agriculture and integrated sustainable rural development to selected CARICOM/OECS Member States (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago).

This rural development project specifically seeks to address development issues such as poverty alleviation, gender equality and equity, sustainable livelihoods and sustainable environment and natural resources management.

The overall goal of the project is to contribute to the achievement of an efficient and effective sustainable regional agricultural sector which contributes to the reduction of rural poverty. The objective of the project is to strengthen national and sub-regional capacity to alleviate current levels of rural poverty, in the context of a regional level strategic framework to enhance food security and the competitiveness of the region's agricultural sector.

The activities are divided into four components:

- 1) **Governance and Institutional Framework:** assisting the CARICOM and OECS Secretariats and national Governments in the definition and/or updating of strategies for the development of the rural sector (e.g. establishing knowledge and communication networks, publishing knowledge products including project studies and reports);
- 2) **Policy support:** implementation of study recommendations (e.g. youth and agriculture, renewable energy options for the small farmer, etc.);
- 3) **Capacity Development:** training workshops and expert support (e.g. renewable energy options for small-scale farming, agro-processing, etc.);
- 4) **Project Coordination:** general project oversight, monitoring, evaluation and direct technical assistance provided by the project coordinator

The project shall deliver the following results (by category):

- 1) A **Governance** mechanism for rural development is set up at CARICOM level;
- 2) **Advocacy** for coordinated approaches for Governments and other stakeholders' interventions in agriculture reinforced by technical output through studies;

- 3) An effective strategy for **capacity development** for rural development defined. Organisational and networking capacity of selected Rural Producers Organisations (RPOs) strengthened;
- 4) Efficient and effective **project implementation**, monitoring and evaluation achieved.

The concept of this type of intervention has been promoted by IFAD since 2001 when this institution initiated a dialogue with UNDP and the OECS Secretariat. Subsequently, UNDP launched an initiative for technical assistance (Technical Assistance to Promote Agriculture and Rural Development, TAPARD) which was instrumental in the proper definition and establishment of CARUTA as a full-fledged project. In October 2007, IFAD signed a Grant Agreement with the UNDP which led to the preparation of the project. IFAD transferred the first installment in October 2008 while UNDP recruited a consultant to draft a project document. The process for the selection and recruitment of the Project Coordinator was completed in November 2008.

During the TAPARD period, several initiatives were implemented. Of note are the study and publication: *“Towards a Strategy for Agriculture and Poverty Alleviation in the OECS”* which identified the important role of agriculture and support to rural livelihoods in reducing poverty; studies on fruit processing conducted by CIRAD; study and capacity development workshop for Rural Producers Organisation (RPOs) in Grenada; video production training of women from The Uprising Women’s Cooperative Society Ltd of St. Kitts, and completion of a participatory video entitled Uprising Women: Life after Sugar¹; and the 2008 agreement to form a Consortium for cooperation in agriculture. This agreement was signed by eleven parties including sub-regional and French research institutions, Universities, the OECS Secretariat, IICA and UNPD. TAPARD has provided a significant number of lessons, and the platform on which CARUTA was built.

With the appointment of the Coordinator on 1st January 2009, the implementation of CARUTA operations commenced. In the start-up phase, the project document was revised and subsequently approved and signed. Final endorsements required from a number of the participating countries were received on 27th April 2009. Formal agreements and contracts for implementing activities defined during the first months were finalized in May 2009 and a series of activities were implemented from June 2009.

| | Summary of delivery |
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| GI | Collaboration with CIRAD and IICA in the preparation of workshop for Agricultural and Territorial Observatory (OECS Consortium) |
| GI | Following CARUTA participation at the CARICOM agribusiness public-private sector consultation and follow up with the implementation of consultancy, established a portal for agricultural initiatives data sharing |
| GI | Established a CARUTA website |
| PS/ | Finalized the study on Best Practices for Youth in Agriculture in Barbados, |

¹ <http://vimeo.com/6812707>;

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| CD | Grenada and St. Lucia. Collaboration with CAFAN in the implementation of a Youth and Agriculture workshop |
| PS | Undertook a study on forestry resources and climate change (contracted to CANARI) intended to sensitise key stakeholders to issues related to climate risk management in the context of conservation and sustainable use of forestry resources |
| CD | 30 farmers from seven participating countries trained in organic farming, climate risk management and ICT for women farmers in two successive workshops (Jamaica and Dominica) |
| CD | Sponsored two participants from rural areas of Antigua, who trained in recycling.) |
| CD | Participation at the WINFA Regional Food Security Workshop at their Biennial General Assembly in 2009 and 2011. Field visits to assess their agro-processing project also funded by IFAD |
| PS | Support to the hosting of the Annual Meeting and Scientific Conference of the Caribbean Food Crops Society (CFCS) from July 3 – 9, 2011 facilitating the implementation of an INRA Symposium on Agro-ecology |
| G | Established a CARICOM portal for agri-business initiatives and agriculture related data |
| G | Coordination of a study tour for regional and national institutions to the Regional Unit of Technical Assistance RUTA project in Central America. |
| CD/PS | Undertook a study on renewable energies in agriculture focusing on utilisation of solar driers |
| CD | Established a contest for rural innovative projects and award for five projects |
| PC | Various: Participation at IFAD/CDB GREP closure event and follow up discussions with IFAD. Preparation of high level event on climate change (CC) and Agriculture. Participated in the LAC IFAD general meeting in Ecuador. Participated at the IFAD first supervision mission for the MAREP project in Grenada |

GI = Governance and Institutional framework, PS = Policy support, CD = Capacity Development; PC = Project Coordination

The outputs and outcomes of the above tables are described in the CARUTA last implementation progress report which will be made available to the evaluator.

The project was affected by a late start and a considerable reduction of activities in the first semester of 2010 due to a delay in the release of funds and the need to carry out a revision of the programme approach and strategy.

Three Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings took place (7th July 2009, 31st May 2010 and 15 March 2011). The Project Document indicates that PSC meetings were supposed to take place every six months therefore less number of meetings than planned were held.

II Evaluation Objectives

2.1 Purpose

The overall aim of the evaluation is to assess the performance and achievements of the CARUTA three years of implementation with a view to defining, if relevant, future strategic intervention of UNDP and IFAD.

2.2 Objectives

In order to achieve the main objective, the evaluation will pursue the following specific objectives:

- (i) Assess the appropriateness of the design to achieve the stated objectives;
- (ii) Assess the effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the project and the results achieved;
- (iii) Assess the adequacy of CARUTA institutional arrangements;
- (iv) Formulate concrete recommendations for the sustainability of achievements and provide guidance for future UNDP/IFAD interventions within the framework of the new United Nation Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), IFAD and regional institution strategies and policies.

III. Evaluation Approach

The evaluation will initially include desk reviews, qualitative and quantitative empirical data gathering related to project activities and results (outputs and outcomes), as well as with the rural sector environment (policies, strategies, institutions, needs, challenges, etc) in which the project is operating. This will be followed by individual interviews with the main project stakeholders. To conclude, the evaluator(s) will hold a one day project evaluation workshop after which the drafting of the final draft report will commence.

IV Scope of Work

In order to achieve the objectives, the evaluation team is expected to:

1. Identify and analyze the sector environment at the time of project design (PRODOC) and the current one (strengths, weaknesses and challenges) to assess its relevance in each moment;
2. Identify and analyze the key principles for promoting inclusive and sustainable development of the Caribbean rural sector as defined by the regional institutions (Treaties, Policies and Initiatives) to assess the project alignment with those principles,

3. Assess the adequacy and relevance of institutional framework in which CARUTA operated/integrated, including its organization, functioning and resources;
4. Assess the adequacy of resources (human, financial and material) allocated to the project for the achievement of the established objectives;
5. Analyze the objectives, results, indicators, targets and intervention instruments of CARUTA and assess their relevance within the prevailing sector environment;
6. Identify the lessons learned from the project implementation;
7. Analyze the qualitative and quantitative data on the results achieved presented in the CARUTA end of implementation report and assess their contribution to build an inclusive rural sector in selected CARICOM countries, taking into account the defined project M & E framework;
8. Provide recommendations for leveraging the project impact in an eventual second project phase.

V. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation methodology will be the following:

1. Review and analysis of key documents related with the project and the sector, including:
 - a. The Project Documents (IFAD\UNDP Grant Agreement, PRODOC, AWP, Minutes of CARUTA Steering Committee Meetings, CARUTA website);
 - b. The project implementation progress reports;
 - c. The Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, The Jagdeo Initiative, The CARICOM Food and Nutrition Security Policy and draft Action Plan;
 - d. Agricultural Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for the OECS, Resolutions of the Meetings of OECS Ministers of Agriculture 2001 - 2011, Towards a Strategy for Agriculture and Poverty Alleviation in the OECS ;
 - e. The UNDAF 2012 – 2016 for Barbados and the OECS; and
 - f. The end of project implementation report.
2. Meetings with representatives of partner agencies, (IFAD and UNDP), key stakeholders (CARICOM and OECS Secretariats);
3. Meetings and consultations with the CARUTA Coordinator;
4. Facilitation of one day project evaluation workshop to present major findings of the evaluation and to summarize discussion and feedback of participants

VI. Evaluation team composition, organization and duration

6.1 Composition and Profile of the Evaluator

The evaluation will be conducted by one international consultant.

The international consultant is a senior expert in the field of project/program evaluation and has a good knowledge of the agricultural and rural sector, especially in the Caribbean and of United Nations funded projects/programs. He/she will be responsible for the evaluation process implementation and the deliverables.

Profile of the International Consultant

- At least a Master's Degree in Economics, Agriculture and Rural Development, Business Administration or related fields;
- At least 10 years of experience out of which at least 5 in the area of rural development;
- Substantial experience with participatory monitoring and evaluation of rural development projects/program or sector;
- Proven experience in project formulation and evaluation;
- Familiarity with the functioning of the government and regional institutions in the Caribbean;
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills;
- Good understanding of mainstreaming of cross cutting issues (gender, youth development; social protection and climate change)
- Full proficiency in English;
- Excellent writing skills and proven ability to produce quality documents at speed;
- Proven team leading experience;
- Knowledge of the process of national regional strategies is an advantage.

6.2 Evaluation process organization

Upon the initial briefing with UNDP and documents collection, the Evaluator will refine the methodology and plan the evaluation process in an inception report. Before the validation workshop the Evaluator will submit a progress report that will include the preliminary main findings and recommendations to be presented at the above mentioned workshop.

Throughout the duration of the mission, the consultants will receive logistical support from UNDP and will work closely with CARUTA Coordinator. The Evaluator will be free to discuss with the competent authorities and partners and potentials partner of all matters relating to the conduct of the evaluation but will not be empowered to make commitments on behalf of UNDP and/or CARUTA project.

Any amendments to these terms of reference will not be accepted without the prior express consent written of the UNDP.

6.3 Duration of the Assignment

The assessment mission will last 25 working days (including travel days) as follows:

- Inception (initial briefing, documents gathering, preparation, organization and inception report): 3 days;

- Desk review and meetings with CARUTA coordinator: 2 days
- Meetings and teleconference with CARUTA key stakeholders: 2 days
- Preliminary report writing: 7 days;
- Report presentation and working session with UNDP/IFAD: 1 day;
- Report revision: 1 day
- Preparation of validation workshop: 1 day
- Report presentation and project evaluation workshop (Project Steering Committee and other key stakeholders); 1 day
- Completion of report: 5 days.

The evaluation is scheduled to start on 4 January, 2012 and must be completed (final report submitted and approved) by end February, 2012.

The applicants will submit a technical and financial proposal by 14 December, 2011 to: the CARUTA coordinator at mario.porchetta@undp.org.

The maximum budget for the evaluation is USD 25,000 which includes fees, travel and printing of reports, facilitation and workshop material. The UNDP will provide the venue and technical equipment for the workshop.

VII. Deliverables

The Evaluation team will provide the following deliverables:

1. Inception Report

The Inception Report will be due immediately after the briefing with UNDP, and this report will provide the refined methodological approach to the assignment, the Work Plan and any issues related to the ToRs that may require discussions and adjustments.

The inception report should not exceed 5 pages.

2. Preliminary Report

The Progress report will be due after the desk review and consultations and is expected to provide the indication of compliance with the evaluation Work Plan as well as the progress against the main tasks and achievement of defined objectives. The preliminary report must be finalized in 15 working days from start of evaluation and will be commented by UNDP/IFAD on the day of report presentation.

The report shall not to exceed 20 pages.

3. Final Report

Evaluation report outline

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">I. Executive summary (maximum 4 pages)II. Introduction and background (project description)III. Evaluation purpose and objectiveIV. Evaluation MethodologyV. Major findingsVI. Lessons learntVII. Summary of constraining factors that impacted project deliveryVIII. Conclusions and recommendations for the establishment of the project second phaseIX. Annexes (if applicable) |
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The final evaluation report will be finalized within ten working days after the submission of the preliminary report and should include the following aspects:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (maximum 5 pages)

The executive summary evaluation will be an integral part of the evaluation report. It should briefly describe the project, the evaluation objectives and methodology, main findings, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations.

MAIN REPORT (maximum 25 pages)

- **Project Overview**

Brief overview of the region and the rural sector. Factual presentation of the CARUTA project as originally conceived and any changes made in progress: development objectives, immediate objectives, expected outcomes, activities, implementation arrangements, budget and finance, monitoring, evaluation, work plans, the risks identified in the program design, etc..

- **Assessment of project design**

This section of the report must address issues related with the relevance and clarity of the objectives, outputs, indicators, targets and inputs as stipulated in the project document. It should also assess the relevance of changes made during the execution and their justification.

The section should analyze the adequacy of the objectives and deliverables of the project to the needs of direct beneficiaries and final beneficiaries (the rural poor and poor entrepreneurs, especially women), analyze the critical conditions and assumptions defined during the design phase as well as the relevance of project design in relation to the overall goals of Regional Institutions, IFAD and UNDP to fight against rural poverty.

- **Project oversight and management performance**

This section will discuss the suitability of the management structure and system in place (distribution of roles and responsibilities, decision-making powers, steering committee, relations between UNDP and IFAD, and CARUTA and the Regional Institutions).

It will discuss the strategy, technical capability and performance of the CARUTA team, UNDP and IFAD in achieving project objectives and expected accomplishments of the project, and the use of financial resources allocated to the project and the procedures for monitoring.

- **Project Achievements**

In this section, the report should present and discuss the project achievements vis-a-vis the anticipated objectives, qualitative and quantitative results and targets, as well as the impact. The discussion will include the consistency of the achieved results with the needs of direct and indirect beneficiaries and project expectations.

The section will also address the issue of sustainability of the achieved results and impact by analyzing and presenting the mechanisms in place to ensure effectiveness of the technical assistance provided by CARUTA.

- **Strategy to strengthen the sector capacity**

Based on the assessment of the sector, this section will discuss the synergy, and adequacy, strengths and weaknesses of existing policies and strategies to promote a sustainable rural development, youth employment promotion, promotion of micro and small enterprises, and poverty reduction in general.

The section will also discuss the capacity constraints and needs of the sector, especially in terms of institutional arrangements, capable human resources and financial resources.

In addition, it will analyze the progress, strengths and weaknesses and actions needed to leverage interventions for rural development, particularly in agriculture to better serve population segments such as rural women, youth and rural areas in general.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (maximum 10 pages)

In this section the report will summarize the main findings of the evaluation, considering both the successes and failures of the program.

Finally, the section will present concrete recommendations in a form of action plan with responsibilities and assigned indicators for the establishment of an eventual second phase of CARUTA.