

Executive Summary

Introduction

Grenada's Capacity Building & Mainstreaming of Sustainable Land Management Project (SLM) officially began on May 4, 2009. The mission to Grenada to carry out the 'on-the-ground' review of the project took place from Monday 29th November to Wednesday 1st December, 2010. This evaluation comes at the one and a half year mark of the planned two and a half year span of the project. This review of the project sought evidence that from May 4, 2009 to November 29, 2010 the project actions have been directly focused on contributing to the specific project outcomes.

Scope of the Review

The mid-term evaluation in Grenada consisted essentially of site visits, review of the project documents such as the ProDoc, annual work plans, two APR/ PIR reports, five QORs and interviews with several stakeholders. Data was collected electronically in verbal and pictorial format. Details of the interviews, response to questions, and information gathered from the literature review and observation forms the substance of this report. The report is designed to cover the relevance of the project, quality of project design, efficiency of implementation, effectiveness to date, partners' perception of change and potential sustainability. It assesses the achievements of the project with respect to the relevance of its objectives and the attainability of its outcomes. It also assesses the project design including the extent to which the assumptions/risks outlined in the logical framework are valid and identifies external factors beyond the control of the project that affected it negatively or positively. Special emphasis is placed on the degree to which the project has succeeded in carrying out the activities outlined in the logical framework.

Long Term SLM Goal

The stated long term goal of the Sustainable Land Management Project at the country level 'is to ensure that the agricultural, forest and other terrestrial land uses of Grenada promote sustainable systems that maintain ecosystem productivity and ecological functions while contributing to environmental, economic and social well-being' of the nation.

Specific Project Outcomes

This project intervention was designed to "strengthen capacities for SLM within appropriate government, private sector and civil society institutions/user groups, and mainstream SLM principles and practices into long term development planning." It was expected that capacities for SLM would be strengthened through 5 major outcomes. These are

1. Mainstreaming sustainable land management into national development policies, plans and regulatory frameworks
2. Developing individual and institutional capacities for SLM

3. Developing capacities for knowledge management in support of SLM
4. Elaboration of investment planning and resource mobilization of SLM interventions and
5. Elaboration of adaptive management and learning inclusive of monitoring and evaluation.

Grenada faces severe land degradation challenges. Following Hurricane Ivan in 2004, > 75% of forest cover was destroyed. This included approximately 90% of the nutmeg production system, the island premier crop, the entire banana production system and the plethora of tree crop and native forest cover. The result was that the island lay almost naked when hurricane Emily struck less than one year later. As a consequence, there was wide spread land slippage, flooding and coastal erosion. The rebuilding process did little to help as heavy equipment push top soil and silt deposit away to allow for housing construction with limited appropriate land management practices.

Against this backdrop, the SLM project funded by the GEF, executed by the Ministry of Agriculture of Grenada and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is attempting to address these challenges while remaining true to the original project mandate.

Despite the foregoing challenges, the project design is still valid and with creative management and added financial support, the objectives can be fully achieved.

Progress towards Results

There is clear evidence to indicate that the Project Coordinator is keenly aware of the fact that the Project Managing Unit (PMU) is temporary but that the project outputs have long term benefits. Bearing this in mind the project team is consciously focused on the tasks while trying to ensure that existing mechanisms are strengthened or that needed structures are established to foster sustainability of the project gains. Several Ministries of Government and private sector agencies are involved in the project and are benefiting significantly from the Capacity building components of the project.

A good example of this is seen in the contribution towards capacities building for knowledge management in support of SLM. Under this activity, twenty-seven (27) technical officers from various Government Ministries and Departments, and one NGO were trained to use GIS, GPS and IT in monitoring land degradation. This project's target of fifteen (15) persons was exceeded. The first protocol for land degradation management in Grenada was developed. Another example is that ninety-nine (99) persons from among Grenada's leading contracting firms and individuals were trained in 'best land use practices.' This training served the dual purpose of responding to the realities on the ground regarding land degradation associated with construction while addressing the project outcome aimed at 'developing individual and institutional capacities for SLM.' It is expected that these contractors will modify their approach to land use for building purposes. The success of this initiative vis-à-vis the contractors' modification of their construction practices to incorporate principles of SLM will be assessed through a survey slated to take place in the year 2011.

The NGO community is also involved in the SLM implementation both as implementing partners for various activities and as recipients of capacity development that is already impacting livelihood.

Each activity of the project has been assessed to determine to what extent the work has progressed towards the related outcome(s), objectives and goal. Of particular focus during the evaluation was the extent to which the project has succeeded or failed to implement planned activities using the available resources? To date, all Outcomes have been addressed to some degree with Outcomes one, two, three and five being the most advanced. In general, activities that have started are being carried out according to plan and results have been documented. It is noted that the purely technical aspects of the project, such as the identification and application of best practices and training, are progressing at a much faster pace compared to the work related to socio-economics, gender, and policy formulation. The project document did not speak to socio-economies or gender.

Project Management and Monitoring

The implementation of the project has been reviewed with respect to project management, the delivery of inputs, assumptions made, and status of achievement of activities, project timing, budget and expenditures. Project implementation has been in concurrence with project design and management arrangements. Activities have been carried out professionally and at a much faster pace than expected. This is in an effort to make up for lost time due to the late start of the project (approximately two years). *It is clear, however, that this expedited implementation is not being substituted for quality of delivery.*

The PMU consists of two women who have an effective division of labour between them. One person, the project manager, is responsible for all technical aspects of the project and the general oversight of the project while the other person handles the administrative issues.

There is a functioning project steering committee (PSC) that has met five times so far. The minutes for four (4) of these meetings were reviewed. Other project reports examined included the project Inception Report, five Quarterly Reports, eighteen Monthly Reports and reports of training activities and subprojects.

In addition to the work of the PSC, other informal monitoring activities are carried out by the Head of the Land Use Department and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture. Although UNDP is listed on the PSC it participated in only one of the committee's meetings. UNDP's other monitoring activities include participation in the inception workshop, one annual review and two announced visits to the project office. UNDP maintains its financial vigilance through the quarterly financial reports, review of TORs and direct payment to all consultants and service providers.

Budget Management

Based on discussions with both the PMU and UNDP, and examination of the Combined Delivery Report (CDR), the project expenditure is within the allocated budget. Funds appear to be spent judiciously. There is constant dialogue between the PMU and UNDP's Programme and Finance Departments to verify contract sums, permitted activities and ensure general budget agreements.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From inception, this project was given high recognition by the Government of Grenada as seen by the fact that two Ministers of Government and three Permanent Secretaries were present at the inception workshop. Interest in and expectation from the project remains high, strong partnerships are being developed with farmers, contractors, the relevant Government Ministries and Departments, NGOs and other non-traditional stakeholders which can assure the effectiveness and the sustainability of this project intervention.

At the level of the national country wide long term goal there is a potential risk from the issue of public understanding and application of sustainable land management practices.

In general the very strong collaborative relationship between the project team and the UNDP team has avoided potential challenges, mitigate risks and ensure smooth implementation. If this relationship is maintained, the project effectiveness and impacts seem certain. However, it is the view of the PMU that efforts need to be made to ensure more timely approval and payment of contractors and service providers.

There is need for some up-scaling of the project and an exit strategy to ensure that the gains made in this project are not lost when the project ends.

In an effort to compensate for the time lost at the front end, the project is moving rather quickly. This limits the absorptive time given to NGOs and civil society learning from the project. Some mechanism needs to be put in place to ensure the public education programme continues at least for six months after the proposed closing date for the project.

This evaluation rate project formulation as Satisfactory (S); project implementation including monitoring and evaluation as Highly Satisfactory (HS); the results to date as (HS) ; and sustainable as Satisfactory(S).