Terminal Evaluation Report

Government of Mauritius

United Nations Development Program

PIMS 3092: Capacity Building and Knowledge Management for Sustainable Land Management in Mauritius Including Rodrigues

**International TE Evaluator**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Project Description*

This medium-sized UNDP/GEF project officially commenced in September 2006 and was scheduled to conclude in October 2009. The project is funded under GEF’s OP 15 and clearly follows this OP’s guidance, particularly Strategic Priority One,”targeted capacity building for sustainable land management.” This project is part of the UNDP/GEF LDC and SIDS Targeted Portfolio Approach for Capacity Development and Mainstreaming of Sustainable Land Management. The Project is executed nationally. The executing agency is the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security (MoAF). The PMU is situated within the MoAF.

GEF’s investment is approximately US $570,000. Other significant co-funders include UNDP, FAO ($164,000-committed at design) and the Government of Mauritius ($600,000 committed at design).

The project’s immediate objective is “capacities for sustainable land management are built in appropriate government and civil society institutions/user groups in Mauritius and Rodrigues and mainstreamed into government planning and strategy development.”

The capacity building project focuses upon four Outcomes:

Outcome 1: SLM is mainstreamed into national policies, plans and legislation

Outcome 2: Human resource capacities needed for SLM are developed

Outcome 3: Capacities for knowledge management for SLM are developed

Outcome 4: The National Action Program for the UNCCD is completed.

*Evaluation Ratings 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 | S | Quality of Execution**–**Executing Agency | S |
| Overall quality of M&E | S | Overall quality of Implementation/Execution | S |
| 3. Assessment of Outcomes | rating | 4. Sustainability | Rating |
| Relevance | R | Financial resources: | L |
| Effectiveness | R | Socio-political: | L |
| Efficiency | R | Institutional framework and governance: | L |
| Overall Project Outcome Rating | S | Environmental: | L |
|  |  | Overall likelihood of sustainability: | ML[[1]](#endnote-1) |

*Summary of the Conclusions*

Land Degradation in Mauritius has been caused by three main factors: deforestation, unsustainable agriculture and recurring wildfires on grass-covered mountain slopes, as well as paucity of monitoring and enforcement issues in the normal evolution process, including urbanization. In Rodrigues, this is caused primarily by overgrazing and unsustainable agriculture, overgrazing being in greatest evidence at the end of the dry season in December (ProDoc 2006, Mid-term 2008 and IFS 2011).

The project was designed to strengthen capacity and impact on the national enabling environment supported by necessary human resource capacities to facilitate long-term investments in the promotion of sustainable land management. This was to be built upon a series of training programs, the development of extension materials, the provision of information management technical equipment and expertise for informed decision-making and the deliberation of at least three broad policy instruments: NAP, SLM Policy and SLM investment plan. Capacities were also expected to be developed through the generation of baseline land degradation assessments and associated monitoring activity.

Based on the project experience, the evaluator found it could have been designed to deal directly with the root causes and to impart capacity to changing destructive practices as well as empower end users (through multi-stakeholder and participatory approaches and principles). Such a restriction in the original project design was identified during the mid-term evaluation, but by then it was too late, and there were no resources to allow undertaking a major shift to demonstration and downstream work directly empowering resource users (with support and capacity strengthening) on the actual root causes/problems.

The project is a relatively small investment in Mauritius and Rodrigues–US $570,000. As such, it has had remarkable success and has accomplished important aspects of SLM mainstreaming, including influencing the broader enabling environment towards a longer-term SLM perspective.

The following results have been accomplished: research and capacities strengthened on environmental impact and policy landscape; broad sensitization of government and private sector; training of NGOs on SLM concepts; the development of important tools, including the introduction of a forestry information management system compatible with the broader LAVIMS at MOHL and the development of the investment financing programme for SLM, linked to NAP policy and implementation.

Through the project, the Forestry Service demonstrated the ability to convene collaborative cross-sector engagement on environmental protection and sustainable development through which stakeholders have learned about important concepts and tools for SLM. These include valuation techniques (results discussed during the SLM TE workshop). The project also demonstrated an innovative and effective inter-sectoral platform for multi-stakeholder involvement in SLM, including Government, Non-Government Agencies, Private Sector and Civil Society.

Although the project was successful in delivering process- related results (project status review in annex), the impact on environmental outcomes and sustainability is at risk. Towards the overall programme outcome, it was important that the project contribute to and institute an SLM mentality within all government sectors, programmes and services and promote effective facilitation of knowledge and learning. Regular coordination of knowledge and learning facilitates integrated service and technical cooperation across Ministries. Key elements include establishing a working mechanism for cross-sector collaboration and monitoring of SLM more demonstration and capacities strengthening work with resource users, initiating a multi-use information management system for SLM, (building upon existing LAVIMS) and instituting cost benefits analysis as a methodology for all NRM issues across sectors..

For sustainable land management (SLM) to be sufficiently mainstreamed into policies, regulations, strategies, plans and educational systems, a general recognition on the part of politicians and decision makers is required. This is still a barrier. Environment/natural resource economics is a tool for land use planning and policy development, including requisite cost/benefit analyses of present land use systems (the cost of doing nothing) in comparison with similar analyses of SLM options.

The Project Management Unit was strategically based at the Forestry Service (FS) within the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security. The FS is the suitable institutional arrangement as it has been grappling historically with the SLM barriers in relation to the policy, institutional and legal frameworks posed by a cross-cutting services agenda on SLM.

The UNDP environment programme team supports SLM as an overarching programme with the potential to bring many of the existing environment programmes, including the PAN, AAP and MID fund (also see linkages section below), together under one inter-sectoral planning committee for coherence and impact.

The financial utilization of the project at this stage with stands at 100%.

*Recommendations*

Formulation, strategy and design

* UNDP, MOE and MOAF: Reinforce SLM project strategy and results to date through advocating the institutional arrangement for a knowledge management approach across sector within the context of the NAP-IFS programme implementation framework. Essential next steps include instituting a multi-stakeholder monitoring and evaluation committee.
* UNDP, MOAF: Learning from the project suggests that project-related activities in Rodrigues can be reinforced and scaled up. More regional planning work for SLM planning and capacity strengthening and synergies with work on national protected areas, demonstration of alternative livelihoods, i.e. eco-villages and specific work on overgrazing and invasive species control should be explored.
* MOAF, MOU, NGOs and private sector actors: The activities that touched on direct farmer, forest or fisher field schools through trainings were successful, especially in Rodrigues. The recommendation is to augment alternative SLM livelihood activities for resource users in the environmentally sensitive and highly vulnerable areas and find ways to expand the development of incentive schemes for deer ranchers and national and regional planning, including SLM.
* UNDP MOAF MOE MOT MOHL MOLG, Water Utilities: Undertake SLM 2 project conceptualization work on SLM linked to planning. This needs immediate follow-up to deal with the institutional gaps exposed during project implementation. In consideration of the institutional arrangements demonstrated by the project and in relation to the key stakeholders and partners identified along the Ministerial lines and in the public domain within the private sector and NGO, all parties must continue to mobilize the SLM network around the MID action planning process.

Immediate actions for sustainability

* MOAF, MOE: Finalize the NAP and endorse IFS as an NAP action plan. Update IFS as two years have passed.
* UNDP, MOE, MOHL and MOAF: Follow up project work on SLM planning regarding institutional development. Develop KM and focus on formalizing institutional monitoring mechanism piloted under the project as a multi-sectoral and stakeholder platform. Involve private sector and NGOs.
* UNDP-MOAF: UNDP should share terminal evaluation with government officials in appropriate forums to advocate for continuing the SLM project, taking into consideration the learning based on SLM project.
* UNDP, MOE, MOHL and MOAF: Undertake project concept design activity for GEF 5 or GEF 6.
* UNDP, MOE, MOHL and MOAF: Develop a strategy to continue the project activity and its focus on a multi-stakeholder institutional mechanism piloted under the project as a planning platform.
* UNDP, MOE, MOHL MOAF: Develop a short policy advocacy paper outlining the interlinkages and the role an SLM committee can have for creating synergy and supporting monitoring activities outlined in section 3.2. Distribute this paper through appropriate policy forums and to the public if appropriate.
* UNDP-MOAF: Follow up the GM, IOC and GOM partnership for regional cooperation, possibly linked to a new project conceptualization process. Follow-up is needed ASAP.
* MOAF, MOE and MOU: Hold a dialogue about integrating the training courses as a package for national and regional consumption. They might be integrated into the University of Mauritius formal programmes. The training work will need to be followed up and activities reinforced for integration into national learning programmes.
* MOAF, MOE and MOHL: Develop an SLM webpage and knowledge portal. All of these materials need an institutional home base and knowledge management strategy.
* MOAF, MOHL: Continue to develop protocol for harmonizing the data sharing and the work on synergies with National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) for implementation of data sharing, standards and a user groups protocol to minimize duplication. This is an important next step.

*Lessons Learned*

The primary lessons learned from this project are the importance of the following:

* SLM is achieving multi-stakeholder collaboration in planning and implementation of services that traditionally came only from government, community or private sector. The broad platform for engagement of many stakeholders is what is unique and making a difference. The adoption of the action plan by government as a cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder initiative and action planning is central to future success.
* Project activities, particularly those to be financed by more than one source, should benefit from strategic implementation approaches to make certain each is aligned to avoid conflict, increase efficiency and enhance synergy.
* The success of many SLM projects globally is the capacity to catalyze inter-institutional coordination based upon a shared interest in project implementation. Projects should recognize this success and capitalize upon it by making plans to assist Steering Committees and Technical Advisory Committees to evolve into SLM support units.
* Capacity building projects, particularly those based primarily upon training, should be designed to make certain that tangible products are developed that may be used by practitioners as reference materials and are built upon as replication and upscaling tools.
* Predicating project success upon the timely adoption of laws and policies is inherently risky. Contingency plans should be in place to deal with likely delays.
* PIR formats should be strengthened. PIRs should provide great information regarding the quality and impact of project activities. Project reporting should address not only achievement of outputs but, more importantly, achievement of objectives. Presuming that achieving originally conceived outputs will lead to achieving SLM objectives is not always an accurate method to monitor project results.

1. A summary of the ratings is presented in Table 1 below

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   | --- | --- | --- |
   | Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution | Sustainability ratings: | Relevance ratings |
   | Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings  Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings  Moderately Satisfactory (MS)  Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings  Unsatisfactory (U): major problems  Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems | Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability | Relevant (R) |
   | Moderately Likely (ML):moderate risks | Not relevant (NR) |
   | Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks  Unlikely (U): severe risks | Impact Ratings:  Significant (S)  Minimal (M)  Negligible (N) |
   | Additional ratings where relevant:  Not Applicable (N/A)  Unable to Assess (U/A | | |

   [↑](#endnote-ref-1)