**CRMI Evaluation Report – Phase II**

## Final Evaluation Report

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Table of Contents

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS 2

CHAPTER 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 4

CHAPTER 2. INTRODUCTION 9

CHAPTER 3. INTERVENTION DESCRIPTION 11

CHAPTER 4. EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES 18

CHAPTER 5. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS 20

CHAPTER 6. FINDINGS 25

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS 41

CHAPTER 8. LESSONS LEARNED 48

CHAPTER 9. RECOMMENDATIONS 49

LIST OF ANNEXES 54

# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AMA - Cuban Environmental Agency

BCPR - Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery

BVI - British Virgin Islands

CARICOM - Caribbean Community

CARIWA - Caribbean Women’s Association

CCA - Climate Change Adaptation

CCAD - Central American Commission for Environment and Development

CCCCC - Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre

CD - Country Director

CDC - Civil Defense Commission

CDEMA - Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency

CDERA - Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency

CDM - Comprehensive Disaster Management

CEPREDENAC - Central American Disaster Prevention Coordination Centre

CO - Country Office

COA - Chart of Accounts

CPD - Country Programme Document

CPR - Crisis Prevention and Recovery

CRMI - Caribbean Risk Management Initiative

CUJAE - Polytechnic University Jose Antonio Echeverria

DAC - Development Assistance Committee

DDM - Department of Disaster Management

DIPECHO - Disaster Preparedness Programme of ECHO

DRIP - Disaster Risk Information Platform

DRM - Disaster Risk Management

DRR - Disaster Risk Reduction

DRR/M - Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

ECHO - EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department

EMNDC - Joint Staff of Cuban National Civil Defense

EW - Early Warning

GIS - Geographic Information System

GREDES - Group for the Study of Disasters of the Polytechnic Institute Jose Antonio Echeverria

GWG - Gender Working Group

IFRC - International Federation of Red Cross

KICG - Knowledge, Innovation and Capacity Group

NCC - Net Contributing Country

ODPEM - Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management

ODPM - Office of Disaster Preparedness Management

OECD - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OECS - Organization of Eastern Caribbean Countries

PDNA - Post Disaster Needs Assessment

PIOJ - Planning Institute of Jamaica

RBLAC - Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

RC - Resident Coordinator

ROAR - Results Oriented Annual Report

RPD - Regional Programme Document

RRF - Results and Resources Framework

RRMC - Risk Reduction Management Center

RHLAC - Regional Hub for Latin America and the Caribbean

SICA - Central American Integration System

SIDS - Small Island Developing States

SMART - Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound

SSC - South-South Cooperation

UNDAF - United Nations Development Assistance Framework

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

UNEG - United Nations Evaluation Group

UWI - University of West Indies

# CHAPTER 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Evaluation of the Project **“Caribbean Risk Management Initiative – Phase II”** was commissioned by the UNDP Regional Hub for Latin America and the Caribbean (RHLAC)[[1]](#footnote-1)and carried out from February - April 2015 by an independent consultant Nana Gibradze. The *purpose* of the evaluation is to provide the RHLAC, UNDP Country Offices and stakeholders in Cuba, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobagowith findings and recommendations for improving management and accountability,and to inform development programming and strategy for future actions in disaster risk management and climate change adaptation (DRM/CCA) in the Caribbean. The *general objective* of the evaluation is to identify the outputs produced by the Project, its contributions to outcome level results, positive and/or negative changes produced, including possible unplanned results, key lessons learned, limitations and strengths. The *specific* objectives of the evaluation are to assess: the *relevance* of the Project, and in particular, its regional and South-South Cooperation (SSC) dimensions; the *effectiveness and efficiency* with which the BCPR and RBLAC resources have been used; the *usefulness and sustainability* of the results/project targets for the beneficiaries; UNDP and other implementing partners’ *performance* as development partners; UNDP and other implementing partners’ *added value* to the expected results; *gaps and needs* in the region in DRR/CCA that could be addressed by future regional-level projects. The evaluation covered all aspects of the Project included in the period from 1 April 2011 – 31 December 2014 focusing on *project outputs and activities as described in the substantive revision of 2014.*

The *non-experimental summative output (process) evaluation* was predominantly qualitative and was implemented with a purposive sample, consisting of 3 categories: Headquarters/Project Management, Country Stakeholders and Regional Partners. The proportion of quantitative data in the final analysis is approximately 15%. The evaluation reviewed more than 150 documents and reference materials and conducted field visits to 3 three Project sites (Cuba, Jamaica and Barbados). The evaluation encountered *methodological* challenges,such as the *quality ofcomparable primary data* and *difference in the size of the categories within the sample*. *Non-methodological* challenges were related to the *limited availability/non-responsiveness of some respondents* and *the lack of awareness about the Project* among senior managers in some UNDP Country Offices.

The Project was implemented in seven Caribbean countries: Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago and benefitted local governments, vulnerable communities, national governmental and scientific/educational institutions and regional bodies. The Project had three *output-level expected results*: 1. Capacity for disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change developed within the Caribbean region is strengthened; 2. Management of knowledge on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction is improved; and, 3. Partnerships and resource mobilization are enhanced.

The Project implementation started on 15 March 2011 with the initial duration of 21 months and is due to finish at the end of June 2015 after two substantive revisions and extensions. The Project was executed by the RHLAC and implemented by UNDP Country Offices in cooperation with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management agency (CDEMA). The Project was managed by a Regional Project Coordinator stationed in the RHLAC, with the support of three project interns, a full-time national project coordinator in UNDP Cuba and DRR focal points or other designated persons in Country Offices. Coordinators located in national disaster management organizations in beneficiary countries handled national pilot activities.

The Project was aligned with the UNDP’s Strategic Plan (2014-2017) and UNDP Regional Programme Document for Latin America and the Caribbean (2014-2018). The three outputs of the Project are linked with and contribute to the Outcome 4 of the Regional Programme Document (RPD) for Latin American and the Caribbean: *“Countries are able to reduce the likelihood of conflict and lower the risk of natural disasters, including from climate change”;* and Output 4.3. *“Effective institutional, legislative and policy frameworks in place to enhance the implementation of disaster and climate risk management measures at national and sub-national levels”.*

Total amount of resources managed by the Project from 2011-2015 was US$ 1,095,979.58 (42% of the requested amount), of which US$ 1,046,369.93 (95%) was allocated by BCPR(800,000 USD from the CPR Thematic Trust and 247,000 USD from TRAC 3), and US$ 49,609.65 (5%) by RBLACTRAC resources. Additionally, the Project stakeholders benefitted from US$ 8,000 mobilized with the CRMI support through the RHLAC *Sharing Knowledge for Development Regional Call* (managed by Knowledge, Innovation and Capacity Group of the RHLAC) and US$ 35,000 from Perez Guerrero Fund (managed by UNDP Cuba).

The overall rating of the Project by the stakeholders was 4.3 on the scale of 1-5. The highest ratings were received for *relevance* (4.9 out of 5), especially the adequacy and importance of the local, national and regional level interventions, alignment with the national, regional and corporate priorities and appropriateness of its interventions. *Effectiveness*was rated 4.3,despite the *endogenous* (administrative/operational and methodological/conceptual) and *exogenous* (political and institutional context and capacities) challenges that affected the implementation. Despite these challenges, the Project has achieved 90% of the planned output results, has contributed to outcome-level changes, has forged successful partnerships and has obtained positive unplanned results. The Project can be considered *innovative* and catalytic through successful piloting of the Cuban RRMC model in five countries and generating wealth of knowledge and experience for sharing.

Despite the insufficiency of financial and human resources and time limitations due to the late start, the Project was rated 4.1 for *efficiency*, given the achieved results and the potential impact it helped generate. The Project received lowest rating (3.7) for *sustainability,* mainly due to the lack of funding and weak institutional frameworks. Overall, UNDP respondents rated the Project sustainability lower than national and regional counterparts. *South-South Cooperation* was rated 4.4.

Overall, in view of the Project’s pilot nature and short timeframe, the objectives of the Project were rather *ambitious* and were *further compounded* by the late start and resource limitations. However, the Project demonstrated *utmost effectiveness and efficiency of implementation* and achieved *significant success,* manifested primarily in the *legacy it created, the importance of the processes and products it helped launch, knowledge it generated and shared and potential impact it can produce.*

The Project has been highly successful in introducing *effective and innovative* processes, methods and know-how for *reducing local level disaster vulnerability* through piloting a comprehensive local level risk management model adaptable to different hazard profiles, socio-political, economic and governance contexts; contributed to collecting baseline data for the *establishment RRMCs*;strengthened local and national Early Warning and GIS capacities for disaster risk management in select communities; helped open doors for *closer regional cooperation among the English and Spanish-speaking Caribbean states*; identified niches where UNDP has comparative advantages to provide expertise and coordination; and, allowed consolidating the *regional dimension* of UNDP work demonstrating the advantages of the regional approach to national and local challenges.

The evaluation considers that despite a series of political, administrative and operational limitations, the Project has been largely *relevant and effective.* The Project’s relevance, effectiveness and potential impact has been due to its *regional* character; *management arrangements* that allowed the leadership and coordination of the RHLAC; the *key role of UNDP Cuba* in systematization and transfer of the experience; *commitment of national stakeholders* to adapting the RRMC model to their national contexts; and, *active role of UNDP Country Offices* in promoting and facilitating the experience in close coordination with the RHLAC and UNDP Cuba.

The Project has demonstrated the *importance of the regional approach to multi-country cross-disciplinary interventions* of the CRMI kind and confirmed the *comparative advantage* of RHLAC management in close collaboration with the Country Offices. It was due to its *regional character* that the Project succeeded in achieving effective *synergies*between the regional and national levels and engaging diverse national stakeholders; producing tangible products, *which can effectively be converted into public goods* with adequate support and follow-up; and, implementing the innovative *South-South Cooperation mechanism*, which supported the transformation of the Cuban experience into an exportable SSC model and facilitated the entire transfer process.

The Project has demonstrated adequate and highly *efficient* use of limited financial and human resources, converting them into results and leveraging support and commitment of national counterparts and UNDP Country Offices. The Project has correctly chosen to *concentrate on a few strategic interventions* with most likely national and regional impact, thus maximizing the benefits of limited resources.

The *sustainability* concept of the Project has not been properly thought through at the inception, partly due to the shortage of time and the pilot nature of the Project. However, with a proper follow-up and support, the Project results have *high prospects of sustainability*and a*significant potential for long-term impact* provided there is further consolidation and institutionalization of the processes and products, continuous ex-post monitoring of the results and further systematization and dissemination of the knowledge.

The key to CRMI sustainability lies in the *South-South Cooperation* mechanism piloted by the Project through adapting the highly successful Cuban RRMC model in beneficiary countries and operationalizing SSC in the region. As a direct result of the Project, UNDP has at its disposal a *toolkit* that can be further refined and promoted as a flagship UNDP product for Latin America and the Caribbean and other regions. Another key to sustainability is the wealth of *knowledge in the area of disaster risk management* generated and processed by the Project.

The evaluation considers that the Project would have benefitted from an *initial assessment of the capacities* of the recipient institutions, for better matching of transferred experience with the host country; *initial costing* of RRMC establishment for increased efficiency; and, an *initial preparatory period* of 1-3 months for putting together Project infrastructure, recruitment and procurement.

The *climate change adaptation* component was largely missing from the RRMC transfer process due to the absence of strong association between disaster management and climate change adaptation in the recipient countries, as opposed to Cuba where the *links between climate change and disaster risks* are integrated at the policy level and incorporated through vulnerability studies and scenario modeling. More comprehensive and in-depth interventions were required to increase the awareness about and strengthen institutional frameworks for *mainstreaming gender and DRR.* The relatively limited scale of *PDNA-related* activities of the Project and time/resource limitations did not permit properly capture the advantages of the PDNA methodology and align them with the current priorities in post disaster assessments.There is a need for a more *comprehensive approach* to post disaster assessments and recovery, through strengthening capacities for data collection and analysis, consolidation of different types of assessment methodologies and harmonization of disaster management policies currently carried out by CDEMA.

The evaluation identified a series of *lessons learned* related to: a) the need to make a distinction between the *Disaster Management and Disaster Risk Management* entities when designing future interventions with the disaster risk focus; b) *absence or weakness of the preventive/risk reduction focus* in the beneficiary countries; c) importance of *selecting communities* with stronger technical capacities and governance structures, more streamlined processes and enabling legal frameworks, higher prospects of integrating the RRMCs with local planning and development structures and adequate location; and, d) importance of achieving *buy-in* at the key decision-making level and *institutionalization of results*.

The evaluation has formulated a series of *recommendations* regarding the potential niches of UNDP involvement and for improving design, implementation and sustainability of future interventions:

a. In view of the ongoing corporate processes and the advances made by the CRMI II, the *main axis of future UNDP work in the Caribbean should be South-South Cooperation with* the following *three areas for future work* in the Caribbean: 1. Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in development planning; 2. Mainstreaming gender in disaster risk management, at local, national and regional levels; and 3. Strengthening CDEMA capacities for the implementation of its Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy.

b. In order to *capitalize on the advances* made in the area of South-South Cooperation and *increase the relevance* of future interventions, the evaluation recommendsexploring the possibilities for*expanding the experience* to other countries/regions and focusing on risk and vulnerability studies, especially climate change related data collection and modeling; data management platforms; preparedness plans, guidelines and standard operating procedures; promoting the*integrated approach* to disaster risk reduction*,* climate change, local governance and decentralization, poverty and vulnerability and gender; supporting the development of *gender sensitive* disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation legislations and institutional capacities and strengthening civil society involvement; and, strengthening the *linkages between the global corporate processes*, such as the PDNA roll-out, with regional and national priorities.

For increased *effectiveness and efficiency* of future interventions and taking into account the comparative advantages of RHLAC management, the evaluation recommends *applying the regional implementation modality for projects of this nature,* which deal with the regional structures and thematic issues of regional importance, with the overall leadership, management and coordination by the RHLAC and strong engagement of Country Offices in the implementation and decision-making.For better outreach and coordination, the evaluation considers it reasonable to delegate implementation to *sub-regional units in specific Country Offices*, based on the capacity of each given office and the scope of the intervention.

Depending on the implementation modality (regional vs. multi-country) and source of funding (TTF vs. TRAC), the evaluation recommends *delegating financial management to Country Offices*, to reduce the transaction costs, increase the Country Office engagement and commitment and speed up the administrative processes. In circumstances, where such delegation is not feasible, the evaluation recommends reducing the transaction costs by applying the *procurement rules pertinent to each Country Office and* exploring different *cost-recovery* options for Country Offices.

The evaluation strongly recommends strengthening the *resource mobilization efforts* through closer engagement of potential donors and *scaling up of awareness-raising activities aimed* at the decision-makers in beneficiary institutions. The evaluation recommends planning for cost-recovery and budgeting the positions of *full-time disaster/climate change coordinator* for the Caribbean, *regional financial/administrative assistant and project personnel* in beneficiary countries.

For the *effectiveness* of future interventions the evaluation recommends *engaging the national and corporate stakeholders* in the articulation and design at the onset of the project; *strengthening coordination and communication* by means of *annual meetings* of the Project Board and establishment of a *project technical committee* with the participation of CO technical/operational staff and national stakeholders. The evaluation recommends *strengthening horizontal cooperation*through technical committee meetings, project events and interactive virtual space for communication and exchange and suggests including the related costs in the budget.

The evaluation recommends *increasing the involvement of RHLAC thematic teams* in the design, implementation and monitoring of future interventions, as well as in the systematization of knowledge; *engaging UN agencies* through UNCT system and/or UNDG LAC team; and pursuing *partnerships with different regional organizations* in the Caribbean,and possibly, Central America

The evaluation highly recommends conducting *capacity assessments of the beneficiary institutions prior* to planning the activities, conducting an *inventory and costing of existing tangible and intangible assets and needs* to determine the real costs of SSC transfer and *providing basic introduction to and guidelines on UNDP administrative procedures* to relevant stakeholders. The evaluation recommends starting to plan the *sustainability* of the intervention at the design stage and ensuring proper and continuous *monitoring* of the project to identify and address possible sustainability challenges early on.To ensure the *sustainability* of the Project results, the evaluation recommends sustaining, improving and expanding the pilot RRMC model to other locations in the Caribbean and potentially in Central and Southern America; completing all components of the Cuban RRMC model, most importantly the Risk and Vulnerability Studies; and,institutionalizing the RRMCs in local governance structures. The evaluation recommends at least biannual *monitoring of the RRMCs* in the five beneficiary countries in the course of the following 2-3 years and further systematization of the monitoring results.

# CHAPTER 2. INTRODUCTION

*Purpose and Timing of the Evaluation*

Evaluation of the Project **“Caribbean Risk Management Initiative – Phase II”** (hereinafter referred to interchangeably as the “Project” and “CRMI”) was carried out from February-April 2015 by an independent consultant Nana Gibradze. It was commissioned by the UNDP Regional Hub for Latin America and the Caribbean (RHLAC).

The *timing* of the evaluation is due to the anticipated completion of the Project in June 2015. The *general objective* of the evaluation is to identify the outputs produced by the Project, its contributions to outcome level results, positive and/or negative changes produced, including possible unplanned results, key lessons learned, limitations and strengths. The *purpose* of the evaluation is to provide UNDP with findings and recommendations for improving project management and accountability and to inform development programming and strategy for future actions in disaster risk management and climate change adaptation (DRM/CCA) in the Caribbean region.

*Primary Audience of Evaluation*

The primary users of the evaluation results are UNDP Regional Hub for Latin America and the Caribbean (RHLAC) and the participating UNDP Country Offices. The evaluation results and lessons learned will be shared, as necessary, with the key Project stakeholders, which include:

* Cuba: Cuban Environmental Agency (AMA), Cuban Civil Defense (EMNDC) Group for the Study of Disasters of the Polytechnic Institute Jose Antonio Echeverria (GREDES);
* British Virgin Islands: BVI Department of Disaster Management (DDM);
* Dominican Republic: Civil Defense, La Victoria Municipality;
* Guyana: Civil Defense Commission (CDC), Jamaica: Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM), St. Catherine’s Parish;
* Trinidad & Tobago: Office of Disaster Preparedness Management (ODPM), Mayaro Rio Claro Regional Corporation, Disaster Management Units;
* Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA);
* Caribbean Women’s Association (CARIWA).

In line with the UNEG Norms for Evaluation in the UN System, the present evaluation will contribute to general accountability, knowledge building and organizational improvement by sharing the findings and lessons learned with all concerned stakeholders.

The final report of the evaluation will serve as a learning document, which will help focus UNDP’s work in the Caribbean and will foster UNDP’s South-South Cooperation mechanisms and policies to support sustainable development. Key conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned of the evaluation will be used by the main parties to assess their approaches to development assistance at local, national and regional levels and to design future interventions in the area of disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, gender mainstreaming and south-south cooperation.

*Structure and Contents of the Report*

The report largely follows the recommendations of the evaluation report template of the *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results*, with some modifications made to the structure to better reflect the logic of the analysis. The report contains nine chapters and eight annexes.

Chapter 1 offers the readers a 6-page executive summary of the evaluation with the key findings, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2 introduces the objective, the purpose and the timing of the Evaluation, describes its primary audience and outlines the structure and contents of the report.

Chapter 3 presents the basic background information about the Project, explains key Project objectives and expected results as stipulated in the Results and Resources Framework (RRF), links them with corporate priorities and strategic plans and outlines the Project strategy. It also identifies the beneficiaries and strategic partners, describes the implementation arrangements and funding situation.

Chapter 4 explains what the evaluation intends to achieve and how, pointing to the issues not covered by the evaluation, defines its scope, objectives, criteria and type of generated information.

Chapter 5 describes selected methods of analysis and rationale for their selection, defines data sources, data collection procedures and methods, describes the sampling methods applied and identifies limitations of the selected methodology. The chapter also describes what type of data was collected, how this data was processed and identifies challenges of data analysis.

Chapter 6 offers the findings of the evaluation based on the revision of the primary and secondary data. The chapter describes the achievement of the Project outputs in accordance with the RRF, Project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, south-south cooperation mechanisms and gender mainstreaming. It also describes the strengths and limitations of the Project, which have influenced the achievement of the outputs.

Chapter 7 consolidates the evaluation conclusions drawn as a result of the analysis and triangulation of the findings, following the guiding questions of the evaluation Terms of Reference.

Chapter 8 offers a brief list of lessons learned during the evaluation.

Chapter 9 offers a list of recommendations for UNDP and for key project stakeholders.

# CHAPTER 3. INTERVENTION DESCRIPTION

*Subject of Evaluation*

The subject of the evaluation is the UNDP Project **“Caribbean Risk Management Initiative – Phase II”,** which is currently in the last stage of implementation. The Project is the second phase of the UNDP Caribbean Risk Management Initiative; the first phase was carried out from 2004-2010.

The overall objective of the Project is to strengthen local, national and regional capacities for disaster risk management and reduction and climate change adaptation. This was to be achieved through the establishment of disaster risk management centers in target communities for mapping vulnerability and risks associated with climate change and geological hazards and strengthening of national and local early warning systems (EWS); support to collection and generation of data on climate; development of accurate climate change scenarios for effective climate change adaptation policies for Small Island Developing States (SIDS); establishment and strengthening of the Community of Practice; development of education courses, increasing the awareness of stakeholders and beneficiaries, including the governments, technical agencies and media; development of financial mechanisms; dissemination of guidelines for reducing risk and integrating climate change adaptation into livelihoods, policy and practice.

Within these objectives the expected output-level results of the Project are:

1. Capacity for disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change developed within the Caribbean region is strengthened;
2. Management of knowledge on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction is improved;
3. Partnerships and resource mobilization are enhanced.

*Geographic Scope and Beneficiaries*

The Project interventions were carried out in seven Caribbean countries: Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

The immediate direct beneficiaries of the Project include local governments and vulnerable communities in five countries that implemented RRMCs (British Virgin Islands, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago), national governmental and scientific/educational institutions and regional bodies[[2]](#footnote-2). The indirect beneficiaries comprise the representatives of countries and organizations, which participated in the Project training events and their populations/constituencies, who would benefit from the improved capacities and processes.

*Implementation Phases, Strategic Lines and Programmatic Linkages*

The CRMI II is the second phase of a UNDP-led initiative aimed at strengthening the national capacities for reducing disaster risks in the Caribbean countries. The CRMI II was developed upon the recommendations of the evaluation of the CRMI Phase I, which analyzed its accomplishments and shortcomings and recommended to promote the integration of climate change and disaster risk reduction capacity and concepts into broader development planning. The evaluation also recommended establishing mechanisms for greater autonomy of stakeholders for initiating and fostering South-South Cooperation partnerships between the Caribbean countries and strengthening national and regional disaster risk reduction capacities.

The Project implementation started on 15 March 2011 and had the initial duration of 21 months. The Project was largely inactive during the first two years of implementationdue to the corporate restructuring, departure of the sub-regional Disaster Risk Adviser, challenges in coordination between the Country Offices and closure of theUNDP sub-regional center for the Caribbean in Trinidad and Tobago. As a result, the Project underwent two substantive revisions and extensions and is due to finish at the end of June 2015.

The initial Project objectives and outputs were framed by the UNDP’s Strategic Plan (2008-2011, extended to 2013) and the UNDP Regional Programme Document for Latin America and the Caribbean (2008-2011, extended to 2013). The Project was later aligned with the UNDP’s new Strategic Plan (2014-2017) and UNDP Regional Programme Document for Latin America and the Caribbean (2014-2018). The three outputs of the Project are linked with and contribute to the Outcome 4 of the Regional Programme Document (RPD) for Latin American and the Caribbean: *“Countries are able to reduce the likelihood of conflict and lower the risk of natural disasters, including from climate change”;* and Output 4.3. *“Effective institutional, legislative and policy frameworks in place to enhance the implementation of disaster and climate risk management measures at national and sub-national levels”[[3]](#footnote-3).*

*Project Resources*

The Project was financed by the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) and the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC). The amount of resources requested at the inception of the Project was US$ 2,618,500. Total amount of resources managed by the Project from 2011-2015 was US$ 1,095,979.58 (42% of the requested amount), of which US$ 1,046,369.93 (95%) was allocated by BCPR(800,000 USD from the CPR Thematic Trust Fund and 250,000 USD from TRAC 3), and US$ 49,609.65 (5%) by RBLAC TRAC resources.

Additionally, the Project stakeholders benefitted from the US$ 8,000 obtained with the CRMI support through the RHLAC *Sharing Knowledge for Development Regional Call.* These funds were awarded to the joint Cuba-Jamaica proposal *“Methodology for Determining Disaster Risk at the Local Level”.* The Project also supported mobilization of US$ 35,000 from Perez Guerrero Fund to further develop RRMC capacities in the Caribbean. These two funds were not managed by the Project nor were not recorded in ATLAS under the Project ID and thus not included in the project budget total; *Sharing Knowledge* was managed by the Knowledge, Innovation and Capacity Group (KICG) in RHLAC and *Perez Guerrero* by UNDP Cuba.

In addition to the allocated resources, the Project received in-kind and financial contributions from beneficiary countries and institutions and UNDP Country Offices. The in-kind contributions included office space and premises for RRMCs, staff time, renovation costs, transportation, complementary funding for trainings and workshops and the like. Total value of contributions was US$ 209,006.

*Political and Institutional Context*

The increasing impact of global climate change and risk posed by a range of natural, environmental and technological hazards are some of the most critical development problems of the Caribbean region, which is highly prone to natural hazards such as tropical cyclones, floods, volcanic and seismic activities, droughts and forest fires.

UNDP has been implementing its Crisis Prevention and Recovery (CPR) strategy, carrying out interventions in areas where natural disasters and violent conflicts negatively affect sustainable development. UNDP efforts have been geared towards sustainably reducing disaster risks and encouraging post-disaster recovery in the countries where it operates, strengthening national and regional capacities in alliance with national, regional and international stakeholders and allowing past experiences to be incorporated into present and future proposals. Institutionally, UNDP has been working to advance an integrated disaster and climate risk management approach (CRM), as well. To address climate-induced hydro-meteorological disasters and impacts on key socio-economic development sectors and community livelihoods, UNDP’s integrated CRM approach seeks to strengthen the risk management practice by harmonizing risk reduction and adaptation to effect a holistic, positive impact on development.

The Caribbean Risk Management Initiative takes its roots in the *Havana Risk* initiative, launched in 2001 by UNDP Cuba, to provide a platform for coordinating and sharing knowledge and experiences on risk management throughout the Caribbean, across language groups and cultures of the Caribbean. The *Caribbean Risk Management Network*, established within the framework of Havana Risk aimed at strengthening national capacities for incorporating risk management into regional development strategies and programmes of the Caribbean insular region, Belize, Guyana and Suriname.

The first phase of the CRMI, launched in 2004 as an umbrella programme, was designed to build capacity for the management of climate-related risk and improvement of regional collaboration between the different linguistic and cultural communities of the Caribbean. The project focused on South-South Cooperation, identification and exchange of existing technical capacities and documentation, dissemination of best practices related to disaster risk management, adaptation to climate change and early recovery in the SIDS. The CRMI I was co-managed by the UNDP Country Offices in Cuba and Barbados/Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)[[4]](#footnote-4) with intermittent support from other partners and UNDP Country Offices in the Caribbean.

Despite the gains made by the CRMI Phase I and other initiatives undertaken by regional governments, the United Nations, and other development partners, capacity in the Caribbean for managing climate-induced disaster risk continued to be low. Building on the logic and the achievements of the first phase, UNDP launched the second phase of the CRMI project, to strengthen the institutional capacities for integrating a risk perspective in disaster programming and planning. The CRMI II focused on strengthening national and regional climate-change adaptation (CCA) and coordination mechanisms of the Caribbean countries; improving national disaster mitigation, preparedness and early-warning capacities; increasing public awareness about disaster risk reduction and management (DRR/M); stimulating interdisciplinary and inter-sectorial partnerships; and mainstreaming risk management in national and local development policies.

In order to strengthen *national disaster risk management capacities* in the Caribbean, UNDP focused on building local level institutional capacities through South-South Cooperation (SSC) mechanisms, transferring Cuban expertise and approach to five Caribbean countries (British Virgin Islands, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago). The Cuban model, known as the *Risk Reduction Management Centers (RRMCs)*, was established by the Joint Staff of National Civil Defense (EMNDC) in 2005, in the aftermath of the Hurricanes Charley and Ivan, which caused significant damage in 2004. With the support and funding from UNDP and other UN agencies, the RRMC model has been transformed into a tool to increase local level capacities for disaster risk preparedness, planning and decision-making. The model was implemented by the Cuban Civil Defense System under the provisions of the Directive #1, which mandated how to plan, organize and prepare for disaster risks in the country and established the process and development of disaster risk assessments and studies as a requirement for elaborating disaster reduction plans for regions and economic sectors.

The Cuban Civil Defense system covers the entire territory of the country and is comprised of state organizations and bodies, as well as social and popular organizations. According to the State Decree-Law #170 of May 1997, the Cuban Civil Defense comprises a *group of activities for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery aimed at protecting the population, the economy and the environment from the destructive consequences of natural or other types of disasters or catastrophes*. Through the direction of the head of the Joint Staff of National Civil Defense, the RRMCs are directly subordinated to the presidents of the local Municipal Assemblies, in their capacity as territorial heads of Civil Defense. Currently, 92 RRMCs are operating on the territory of Cuba, of which 63 have been directly supported by UNDP.

At the *regional* level the Project worked with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) towards improving regional institutional capacities for mainstreaming gender in disaster management policies and programmes and preparation for disaster recovery through Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) training. CDEMA, formerly known as CDERA[[5]](#footnote-5), is the regional disaster management body, which acts as a facilitator, driver, coordinator and motivating force for the promotion and engineering of Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) in all participating states[[6]](#footnote-6). CDEMA’s functions include: (a) mobilizing and coordinating disaster relief; (b) mitigating or eliminating, as far as practicable, the immediate consequences of disasters in Participating States; (c) providing immediate and coordinated response by means of emergency disaster relief to any affected Participating State; (d) securing, coordinating and providing to interested inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations reliable and comprehensive information on disasters affecting any Participating State; (e) encouraging (i) the adoption of disaster loss reduction and mitigation policies and practices at the national and regional level, and; (ii) cooperative arrangements and mechanisms to facilitate the development of a culture of disaster loss reduction; and (f) coordinating the establishment, enhancement and maintenance of adequate emergency disaster response capabilities among the Participating States.

*Project Design*

The Project Document is well developed, contains most essential components required by UNDP and provides adequate background information and contents. The Project does not have the Theory of Change[[7]](#footnote-7), however, the Results and Resources Framework is well formulated and has clearly established baselines and measurable and attainable targets. The RRF has been amended two times following the substantive Project revisions. Output indicators correspond to SMART criteria and are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound.

The original Project rationale and objectives were aligned with the Outputs of the Regional Programme Document (RPD) for Latin America and the Caribbean for 2008-2001 (extended to 2013). The Project was aligned with the Regional Programme Document for 2014-2017 through a substantive revision in 2014.

The Management Arrangements are relatively well defined. The project document provides the general description of the structure and the functions of the *Regional Program Thematic Advisory Panel (Group)* for CRMI II, however, it does not specify the participating countries. The roles of Project Assurance and Project Manager are well defined and clear. The project document also clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of participating UNDP Country Offices, administrative and coordination mechanisms as well as financial management arrangements.

The signed project document contains a monitoring and evaluation framework, a detailed component ¨*Quality Management for Project Activity Results*¨ and an offline risk log, which are well developed and detailed. The project document contains comprehensive situation analysis, which provides full context of the intervention. The budget and the workplan provide detailed breakdown of activities/costs per donor/implementing agency.

The Legal Framework component of the project document makes reference to Standard Basic Assistance Agreements (SBAA) signed between UNDP and Barbados, Guyana and Jamaica. The project document does not list agreements with Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago and Dominican Republic.

The UNDP Country Office in Barbados was instrumental in obtaining letters of endorsement from three governments in the region - Government of British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and St. Vincent and Grenadines - expressing the acceptance and endorsement of the regional project CRMI – Phase II.

For the purposes of the Project, the RHLAC has signed a Letter of Agreement with CDEMA on the implementation of CRMI II. Agreements on Technical Assistance for the Implementation of the Risk Reduction Management Centre South-South Initiative have been signed with UNDP Country Offices of Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago; RHLAC has signed a letter of approval of the RRMC implementation plan in British Virgin Islands with the support of UNDP Barbados. Additionally, Country Offices of Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic, Guyana and Jamaica obtained letters of agreement with national counterpart institutions as part of the criteria participate in the RRMC pilot in their respective countries.

*Execution and Implementation Modalities*

The Project was executed by the UNDP Regional Hub in Panama and implemented by UNDP Country Offices in cooperation with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management agency (CDEMA).

After a series of staff changes, which included the closure of UNDP Sub-Regional Centre in Trinidad and Tobago and the departure of the sub-regional Disaster Risk Adviser, the Project has been managed by the Project Coordinator based in RHLAC in Panama. The Project Coordinator was responsible for the achievement of outputs and day-to-day management of the Project, coordination with stakeholders and corporate partners, and project monitoring.

With the exception of Cuba, the Project did not have designated National Project Coordinators in the beneficiary countries. In every participating Country Office, the DRR focal points or other designated persons provided support for activity planning, implementation, monitoring and follow-up, participated in meetings and other coordination and decision-making activities. The UNDP Country Offices also provided operational support for pilot activities, which included explaining UNDP processes, processing and obtaining documentation, submission of requisitions and purchase orders for pilot implementation. All requests were reviewed and approved by the RHLAC. National pilot activities were handled by coordinators located in national organizations such as OPDEM in Jamaica, DDM in British Virgin Islands, CDC in Guyana, ODPM in Trinidad and Tobago and Civil Defense in the Dominican Republic.

In Cuba, in addition to the DRR focal point, the Project maintained a national project coordinator, whose costs were shared by the Project and UNDP Cuba. This position was required given the key role of UNDP Cuba in designing and transferring the RRMC model. This implied production of knowledge materials, systematization of knowledge, design and implementation of workshops and trainings, methodological support and monitoring.

Additionally, the Project financed a portion of the DRR focal point position in UNDP Barbados to provide continuity from Phase I, assist with the implementation of the RRMC model in British Virgin Islands and ensure coordinated implementation of the Output 2 with partners such as CDEMA.

Funds received from BCPR and RBLAC were managed from the RHLAC, with the UNDP Country Offices receiving Chart of Accounts (COA) to charge country-specific activities. Once the Project was re-activated, the possibility of delegating financial management responsibility to the participating UNDP Country Offices was contemplated and respective consultations undertaken. However, the Project was approved for RHLAC implementation from BCPR Thematic Trust funds[[8]](#footnote-8) and according to the finance and audit departments, consulted by the Project, it was not possible to delegate financial management to the Country Offices, since it implied changing the Project modality from the regional to multi-country and contradicted the intervention logic and objectives. Therefore, following the consultation with the RHLAC audit department, financial management of the Project was maintained at the regional level with the administrative and financial support from the RHLAC Operations Unit. The RHLAC Regional Programme Officer provided Project Assurance functions.

The Thematic Advisory Panel met once at the beginning of the Project. Subsequent meetings of the Panel were conducted in the framework of various RC/RR meetings organized by RHLAC and/or RBLAC, during which the RC/RRs discussed project implementation, challenges and progress and made decisions about Project priorities and adjustments[[9]](#footnote-9). Participation of UN Resident Representatives in these meetings has been varied.

*Strategic Partnerships*

The Project has established successful partnership arrangements at national and regional levels. Apart from the national disaster management authorities in the beneficiary countries, the Project has strengthened its collaboration with the regional organizations such as CDEMA; academia, through the University of West Indies (UWI) in Jamaica and Polytechnic University José Antonio Echeverria (CUJAE) in Cuba; Governments, through the national disaster management authorities in the beneficiary countries (DDM, Dominican Civil Defense, CDC, ODPEM, and ODPM), as well as the Cuban Environmental Agency (AMA) and civil society – through the Caribbean Women’s Association (CARIWA). The Project also advanced in fostering partnerships at the local level, through grassroots organizations in the RRMC recipient communities.

*Implementation Constraints*

The most significant implementation challenge has been the limited time and funding available to the Project. Due to corporate reorganization, lack of engagement of key national and corporate counterparts and staff turnover, the Project start was delayed by almost two years affecting the implementation of the initially planned activities and resulting in two revisions of the Project.

The Project funds were also limited. As noted above, the Project received 42% of the planned resources, which were not sufficient for the achievement of the planned results, despite the noted efficiency in the use of available resources. See Chapter 6. Findings for a more detailed description of challenges and limitations.

# CHAPTER 4. EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

*Evaluation Objectives*

In line with the evaluation Terms of Reference, the specific objectives of the evaluation are to assess:

* The relevance of the Project, and, in particular, its regional and south-south cooperation (SSC) dimensions;
* The effectiveness and efficiency with which the BCPR and RBLAC resources have been used;
* The usefulness and sustainability of the results/project targets for the beneficiaries;
* UNDP and other implementing partners’ performance as development partners;
* UNDP and other implementing partners’ added value to the expected results;
* Gaps and needs in the region in DRR/CCA that could be addressed by future regional-level projects.

*Evaluation Scope*

The unit of analysis was the CRMI II Project in its entirety. The evaluation covered all aspects of the Project included in the period from 1 April 2011 – 31 December 2014 focusing on *project outputs and activities as described in the substantive revision of 2014*:

1. Capacity for disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change developed within the Caribbean region is strengthened;
2. Management of knowledge on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction is improved;
3. Partnerships and resource mobilization are enhanced.

The evaluation assessed the contributions of the Project to the Regional Programme Document (RPD) for Latin America and the Caribbean, namely to the Regional Programme Outcome 4. *“Countries are able to reduce the likelihood of conflict and lower the risk of natural disasters, including from climate change”;* and Output 4.3. *“Effective institutional, legislative and policy frameworks in place to enhance the implementation of disaster and climate risk management measures at national and sub-national levels.”[[10]](#footnote-10)*

The evaluation did not assess the impact of the project on the achievement of the Regional Programme outcomes or of broader development goals given the relatively short lifespan of the Project. However, the evaluation verified to what extent the processes, mechanisms and tools introduced by the Project contributed to the achievement of the outcome, helped bring about changes in human development conditions, including in the behavior of people and/or institutions targeted through UNDP initiatives” (UNDP) and have triggered political incidence leading to potential long-term impact.

The evaluation assessed the relevance and adequacy of the baselines, indicators and targets using the SMART criteria; effectiveness of the Project interventions and efficiency in the use of financial and human resources.

The evaluation assessed the sustainability of the Project results and activities, including the implementation and coordination arrangements. The evaluation put specific emphasis on assessing the effectiveness and sustainability of the South-South Cooperation mechanisms fostered by the Project as well as in the existence of political will in the beneficiary countries and level of ownership of the Project results.

The evaluation reviewed strategic partnerships and inter-institutional coordination, as well as the gains made for the strategic positioning of UNDP in the Caribbean vis-à-vis the regional and national stakeholders in the emerging thematic areas such as climate risk management, SIDS, gender mainstreaming, urban risk/resilience and recovery. The evaluation also assessed the support provided by UNDP regional and Country Offices and the role and value added of UNDP coordination and implementation.

The evaluation assessed the knowledge management mechanisms and products, their relevance, applicability and replicability, their contribution to the achievement of the outcomes as well as their contribution to the advancement of the disaster risk reduction and climate change agenda in the region.

The evaluation reviewed the lessons learned in the course of the Project implementation, including those learned by the participating agencies (UNDP COs, CDEMA, AMA, EMNDC, GREDES, DDM, Dominican Civil Defense, CDC, ODPEM, and ODPM, among others), which assisted with the implementation of particular activities of the Project.

The evaluation did not make an in-depth assessment of the financial management and efficiency of the Project. However, general conclusions were made on the overall financial performance and the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of management and implementation modalities, financial and administrative arrangements and financial and human resource capacities on the basis of reports reviewed during the evaluation.

The evaluation did notassess the technical quality of the knowledge products, methodological guidelines and tools. These were evaluated in terms of their utility and relevance for the achievement of the objectives of the Project.

The cost of the evaluation is US$ 16,345, which represents less than 2% of the total Project cost.

*Evaluation Criteria and Questions*

The evaluation criteria followed the requirements of the *UNDPHandbook for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of Development Results*, the *Guide for Outcome Level Evaluation*, the *United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and OECD/DAC Evaluation Norms* and contained all obligatory elements spelled out therein. These criteria include:

* Relevance – to which extent the evaluated development initiative and its outputs and expected outcomes respond to national and local priorities and policies, the beneficiary needs and human development goals.
* Effectiveness – to what extent the initiative has obtained the expected results (outputs and outcomes) and the extent of progress towards their achievement.
* Efficiency – whether project resources (human and/or financial, time, experience) have been converted into the results in the most economic way.
* Sustainability – to what extent the obtained results continue to have benefits after the project has ceased its activities.

Additionally, the evaluation assessed the quality and results of South-South Cooperation mechanisms and gender mainstreaming activities carried out by the Project.

Interview and focus group questions were constructed on the basis of the evaluation criteria mentioned above as well as on the respondents’ particular role and involvement in the Project. The questions comprised overall relevance of the Project activities in the regional, national and local context, relevance and sustainability of implementation mechanisms and tools, quality of learning and capacity building activities and materials, quality of services provided by the Project, major achievements and problems, lessons learned and replicability of results, agency-specific contributions, institutional coordination, etc.

Specific questions related to the Project design, the relevance of outputs, activity indicators, baseline data and targets, administrative and financial management arrangements and the like were directed to the respondents directly involved in the Project implementation.

The evaluation tried to minimize the response bias by wording the questions without suggesting the leading opinion.

A consolidated list of indicative questions is given in Annex 2. Evaluation Matrix.

# CHAPTER 5. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

*Data sources*

The Evaluation used the following data sources: UNDP strategic and programmatic frameworks; methodological guides and manuals; national and regional strategic documents and conceptual frameworks; project documents, revisions, plans and budgets; project reports; stakeholder information; knowledge products produced by the Project and stakeholders; and financial information.

The full list of the data sources is given in Annex 4: Data Sources and Bibliography.

*Sample and Sampling Frame*

The type and methodology of the evaluation were determined by various factors: nature of the project; scope of the evaluation; and quality of the available data and sampling method.

The current evaluation is a *non-experimental summative output (process) evaluation*. The purposive sample was constructed from the respondents intentionally selected by the Regional Project Coordinator from the population of Project stakeholders and direct beneficiaries, with the suggestion that Country Office DRR Focal Points and national counterparts be able to suggest additional respondents, unknown to the Regional Project Coordinator. The sample consisted of 3 categories: Headquarters/Project Management, Country Stakeholders (including national disaster management institutions, provincial and district authorities, civil society and community groups, UNDP Country Offices in the beneficiary countries) and Regional Partners.

The size and the structure of the sample were directly related to the specific task at hand: to test the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Project results to and identify gaps for future regional interventions.

*Basic Statistics*

The evaluation reviewed more than 150 documents and reference materials, including audio-visual and multimedia products and conducted field visits to 3 three Project sites (Cuba, Jamaica and Barbados). These countries were selected based on the following considerations:

As the creator of the RRMC model, Cuba is the provider of the South-South Cooperation to the participating countries, therefore a visit to Cuba was considered essential for the evaluation of the achievement of Output 1 of the Project. Jamaica had successfully adapted the Cuban RRMC model and had extended South-South Cooperation to include two distinct, but complementary initiatives focusing on Risk and Vulnerability Studies. As for the Barbados, it was selected due to the role the UNDP Country Office played in supporting the implementation of the Output 2 (Gender and PDNA) and the adaptation of the RRMC model in the British Virgin Islands. UNDP Barbados had also participated in the CRMI I and was expected to contribute important insights about the continuity of the project and future opportunities and actions. Finally, given that the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), identified as a strategic partner, is located in Barbados, a mission to Barbados offered the opportunity to discuss their involvement with CRMI II Project through the PDNA and gender components.

The evaluation interviewed 94 respondents, of whom 50 respondents were women, and 44 were men. The evaluation carried out individual and group (1-3 persons) interviews and four focus groups in person and by telephone/Skype. One respondent provided inputs in writing. See Annex 3. List of Evaluation Respondents - for more details about the respondents.

*Data Collection Procedures and Instruments*

Given thecharacteristics of the sample, the evaluation applied predominantly *qualitative* data collection methodology.

The selection of a qualitative analysis method was determined by the *type* of the Evaluation, that is, ex-post non-experimental process evaluation. In those cases when the sample is not randomly selected, but pre-determined (purposive), quantitative methods are difficult to apply. Furthermore, quantitative methods are best suited to measuring levels and changes in impacts and to drawing inferences from observed statistical relations between those impacts and other covariates. They are less effective, however, in understanding *process*—that is, the mechanisms by which a particular intervention instigates a series of events that ultimately result in the observed impact[[11]](#footnote-11). The current evaluation was a process (output) evaluation as it evaluated the delivery of results, effectiveness, efficiency, etc. rather than an outcome or impact.

The *primary qualitative* data was comprised of the knowledge, opinions and commentary of the stakeholders and beneficiaries. This information was gathered through a combination of the evaluator’s observations and inputs received from the semi-structured interviews and focus groups conducted during the country visits and by Skype/telephone calls. For more information about the mode of interviews/focus groups, please refer to Annex 3. List of Evaluation Respondents.

The *secondary qualitative* data was comprised of the information generated by the Project, UNDP Country Offices and national/regional stakeholders and included methodological instruments, plans, manuals, reports, and audio-visual materials, policy documents and the like.

The proportion of the weight of the primary and secondary qualitative data in the final analysis is approximately 60:40.

In addition to the qualitative data, the evaluation also applied quantitative methods by rating the four basic evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability) as well as an additional criterion of South-South Cooperation. The rating was applied during the interviews and focus groups. The respondents were requested to rate the above five criteria on a scale from 1 to 5, the latter being the highest. Given the varied understanding of the above criteria by the respondents, the evaluation provided the definitions to facilitate the rating and ensure relative homogeneity and comparability of the responses. The evaluation obtained additional quantitative data from the quantitative indicators of the project outputs as presented in the annual workplans. The share of quantitative data in the final analysis is approximately 15 %.

In order to increase the credibility of data and its internal and external validity, the evaluation applied the methods of methodological and data triangulation, cross-analyzing qualitative and quantitative information obtained from different data sources. The evaluation first cross-examined the data from the largest category: country level stakeholders, comparing the data among different countries. The evaluation then compared the findings with the data obtained from the Categories Regional Partners and Headquarters/Project Management and referenced the findings with the secondary data sources. Finally, the evaluation triangulated the findings with the quantitative ratings described above.

*Methodological Limitations and Challenges*

Qualitative analysis centers on the understanding and observation without control and is considered subjective and descriptive. Despite the UNDP focus on the results, the qualitative analysis focuses mainly on the processes, is not generalizable and presents internal and external validity challenges.

However, qualitative analysis, albeit non-generalizable, allows for better understanding the mechanisms through which the program helps beneficiaries[[12]](#footnote-12)and permits to work with issues related to “soft” and intangible products associated with processes, as well as perceptions related to knowledge and capacities. It allows evaluating potential impacts, generating critical information for the understanding of the problem and construction of the intervention, providing in depth analysis of complex cases, which are difficult to evaluate quantitatively.

Given the qualitative nature of the analysis, one of the main methodological challenges encountered by the evaluation was obtaining *comparable primary data* to analyze the Project according to the evaluation criteria. On the one hand the challenge was due to the *varied level of engagement* of stakeholders in different outputs and stages of the Project, which is composed of independent “thematic blocks” (South-South Cooperation for Disaster Risk Reduction, Gender, PDNA) and has varied levels of entry (national, local and regional). This characteristic feature of the Project only permitted assessing the *individual perceptions* of respondents engaged in *specific components* of the intervention.

On the other hand, this methodological challenge was related to a *varied understanding* of the concepts of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. While the evaluation explained the criteria to respondents before each interview, the challenge remained as many respondents continued to struggle with the definitions. On a number of occasions, the respondents confused the object of the evaluation[[13]](#footnote-13). Some respondents were not comfortable rating 1 or more of the five proposed criteria due to their limited knowledge of interventions. In those cases where the understanding of the criteria was erroneous, or the respondents could not rate all five criteria, the evaluation chose not to apply the quantitative rating in order to avoid bias and skewed results. Focus groups provided 1 rating per group.

Another methodological challenge was the *difference in the size* of the categories within the sample. The category of Regional Partners contained five persons, of whom only one person felt qualified to rate all components, which significantly reduces the validity of this rating. Likewise, of the eleven persons comprising the category Headquarters/Project Management, only three could rate all project components.

In order to address the methodological challenges, the evaluation provided explanations when necessary and applied the methods of methodological and data triangulation explained on p. 23.

*Other Evaluation Challenges*

The evaluation did not experience major challenges related to the lack of data and/or financial resources, which were readily available for proper planning and carrying out the Evaluation.

The evaluation encountered a minor challenge due to the limited availability/non-responsiveness of some respondents, which caused the extension of the evaluation timeframe to accommodate the most important interviews. Four of the initially planned interviews could not be carried out given the absence of a response from the respondents. One interview was not conducted given the poor communication with the respondent and inability to connect.

The most significant evaluation challenge has been the lack of awareness about the Project among some corporate respondents. Due to the departure of senior management (Resident Coordinators and Deputy Resident Representatives) involved at the earlier stages of CRMI II and arrival of new programme staff to participating Country Offices, institutional memory about the different stages of the Project was sporadic. Some of the current UNDP staff were less familiar with the Project objectives and outcomes and were unable to provide valid inputs.

*Stakeholder Participation*

The evaluation was guided by the fundamental premise of transparency and consultation with the major stakeholders, which are essential features in all stages of the evaluation process. As defined by the UNEG, consultation during the evaluation process ¨improves the credibility and quality of the evaluation, [it] can facilitate consensus building and ownership of the findings, conclusions and recommendations”[[14]](#footnote-14). *UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results* states, that “… key partners and stakeholders must play an integral part in the evaluation from the outset to ensure national ownership of the results.”

In line with these provisions, the Project management and stakeholders were engaged directly in the evaluation. An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) was formed to support the evaluation process with the participation of UNDP RHLAC and Country Offices, as well as national and regional stakeholders. The ERG reviewed the evaluation Terms of Reference and provided comments to the evaluation inception report and the final draft.

*Ethical Considerations*

In line with the *UNDP Evaluation Policy* and the *UNEG Norms for Evaluation in the UN System*, the evaluation was based on the principles of independence, intentionality, transparency and ethical integrity. The DRR focal points in UNDP Country Offices and key stakeholders in counterpart national institutions were informed of the evaluation objectives, scope and criteria beforehand by the Project Coordinator. National counterparts in turn informed the beneficiaries in local institutions and communities. Additionally, the evaluator briefed the respondents about the evaluation scope and objectives before each interview. On those occasions when the interviews were recorded, the responses were requested the permission to record.

The evaluator has signed the Code of Ethical Conduct. (Please see Annex 8)

*Background Information*

The Evaluation was conducted by an independent consultant Nana Gibradze selected from a pool of candidates on the basis of the Terms of Reference elaborated by the Project in consultation with the *Democratic Governance, Conflict Prevention and HIV* and *Sustainable Development and Resilience* Practice Areas and the *Monitoring and Evaluation Team*. The potential candidates were identified from the RHLAC *Associate Experts Network for Evaluation* and the BCPR *ExpRes Roster*. The final selection was done on the basis of the proposals submitted by the candidates. Please refer to Annex 7 for the brief biography of the evaluator.

# CHAPTER 6. FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings based on the *evidence* obtained from the respondents during the interviews and through the revision of the Project-related documentation. The findings are structured along the evaluation criteria and include the factors that affected the achievement of outputs.

*Relevance*

Analysis of the primary and secondary data points that the *intervention logic* has been considered relevant as it opened different entry points for intervention and allowed addressing priorities and needs at local, national and regional levels. The overwhelming majority of the respondents considers that the Project continues to be relevant and should be continued.

The Project has been considered relevant *at national and local levels* for strengthening local and national capacities for disaster management and risk reduction through the establishment of risk reduction management centers in five beneficiary countries and fostering decentralized decision-making for comprehensive disaster risk management.

At the *regional* level the Project has been considered relevant for addressing the need for regional knowledge sharing and integration through South-South and triangular cooperation between Cuba and five beneficiary countries in the Caribbean. The Project has been considered particularly relevant and timely in terms of its focus on strengthening regional coordination mechanisms, identifying common regional priorities and fostering linkages between the different linguistic and cultural communities of the Caribbean. Analysis of Project documents and interviews conducted with CDEMA, national disaster management institutions and beneficiary communities, points that the Project has been relevant in responding to the existing gaps related to the lack of awareness and institutional mechanisms for mainstreaming gender into disaster risk reduction policies.

Opinions were split about the relevance of the *Post Disaster Needs Assessment* (PDNA) *component* of the Project. While the PDNA, in general, has been considered an important instrument for the recovery efforts in the Caribbean, *regional* respondents perceived the PDNA-related activities of the Project as less relevant for their immediate priorities. However, the respondents valued positively the quality and the contents of the offered trainings and highlighted their general informative value.

Meanwhile, the *corporate* respondents from the headquarters and UNDP Barbados highlighted the relevance of the PDNA component, which is linked with the PDNA roll-out at global, regional and national levels. The CRMI has been part of this process offering a regional perspective to the PDNA process, supporting two regional Caribbean trainings and providing linkages with the global and national levels. In this context, corporate respondents considered the Project PDNA component as relevant and directly responding to the current UNDP mandate for recovery.

From the *corporate* perspective, the Project has been considered relevant for a number of reasons. It has been valued by the respondents as one of the few comprehensive interventions of UNDP in the Caribbean, which had allowed exploring regional coordination and knowledge-sharing mechanisms between the regional and national stakeholders and whose benefits have the potential of replication and long-term impact. The Project has been considered particularly relevant for strengthening UNDP’s role and positioning in the region, fostering partnerships with CDEMA and identifying areas for potential joint work.

The Project interventions were considered relevant for contributing to the RPD outcome in that they contributed to lowering the risks of natural disasters in the beneficiary communities and countries. At the same time, the Project has been perceived as relevant for contributing to the achievement of the RPD Output, by fostering institutional mechanisms for enhanced implementation of disaster and climate risk management measures at national and subnational levels.

While the overall relevance of the Project has not been disputed, some Country Offices considered the Project has been *less* relevant for their work in the beneficiary countries. According to some CO respondents, while the Project objectives, in general, responded to their respective UNDAFs and/or Country Programme Documents, they were not reflected in the CO planning and reporting frameworks (e.g. ROAR) and the Country Offices could not take credit for the results achieved with their support. Additionally, some Country Offices considered that funds received for backstopping the Project did not justify the efforts, time and human resources provided by their teams. (See *endogenous limitations and challenges* on p. 39).

Regarding the ROARs, the evaluation has encountered evidence to the contrary: according to the information obtained from UNDP Intranet, *all* participating Country Offices have reported on CRMI II-related activities in their respective ROARs: In 2013, the following countries reported on RRMC Results: Barbados (Outcome 13); Guyana (Outcome 18); Jamaica (Outcome 42); Dominican Republic (Outcome 47); and Cuba (Outcome 18). In 2014, the following countries reported on South-South Cooperation under the category B1: Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

The evaluation did not find evidence supporting the statement of some Country Offices that funds received from the Project were insufficient to justify the workload associated with CRMI II backstopping. Agreements on Technical Assistance signed by the RHLAC with 4 Country Offices involved in the piloting the RRMC model (Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago) stipulated that the Country Offices could recuperate up to US$ 1,000 of administrative costs. To the best of evaluator’s knowledge, the only country that recovered a small amount of administrative costs was the Dominican Republic.

The average rating of Project relevance is 4.9 with the predominant rating being 5 and the lowest rating - 3.5.

*Effectiveness*

Based on the analysis of targets and indicators contained in the substantial revision of 2014, by the time of the evaluation, 90% of the Project activities have been implemented and Project products produced. The change in the output has been positive and measurable albeit challenging, given that the Project was largely inactive during the first two years since its inception and had to undergo two substantive revisions and extensions. During these revisions, the expected results were adjusted to the existing implementation challenges. Likewise, initial targets and indicators have been amended, reflecting more realistic estimates of the expected results. The achievement of the output has not been steady due to the limitations and challenges described on pp. 37-39.

*Output 1: Capacity for Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation to Climate Change Developed within the Caribbean Region is Strengthened.*

Based on the only indicator for the output, the Project has *mostly* achieved the results by increasing local institutional capacities to manage and reduce local risk through South-South Cooperation. The Project has successfully established RRMC in local communities in five beneficiary countries, identifying specific areas for technical assistance in each pilot; developed guidelines for RRMC implementation; contributed to collecting baseline data for the establishment of 5 pilot RRMCs and has provided training and EW and GIS tools for strengthening of local and national capacities for disaster risk management in select communities; developed training materials for RRMC transfer; built awareness on local level risk disaster reduction among participating national and local authorities; andtrained RRMC staff in 5 beneficiary countries. The Project has collected and GIS mapped data for local DRR databases; reviewed and improved national databases in beneficiary communities based on information collected by the RRMCs; and compiled documentation on best practices and lessons learned during the piloting of RRMCs.

With the exception of Jamaica, where the Project carried out hazard and asset mapping and storm surge modeling, and the British Virgin Islands, where a Vulnerability and Disaster Risk Profile was produced, the Project was not able to conduct vulnerability and seismic risk studies. The Project had planned to conduct a baseline study on urban resilience in the Caribbean in consultation with the UNISDR. However, given the high costs of the study (approximately US$ 80,000 per city) it was not deemed feasible to conduct a comprehensive urban resilience study across the region. In its stead, the Project supported the development of the *Urban Resilience Concept Note* for future resource mobilization.

*Output 2: Improved Management of Knowledge on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction.*

Based on the four output indicators provided in the RRF, the Project has *partially* achieved the output. The Project has improved awareness and knowledge-sharing on emergent themes, such as disaster risk reduction and gender mainstreaming and post-disaster needs assessments. The Project has enhanced the CRMI web-portal in three languages, created a document library with a DRR/CCA Caribbean focus and complemented this web presence with a project space on the UNDP Teamworks knowledge platform; contributed to increased understanding of intersection of gender, DRR and public policy among Caribbean women organizations; improved awareness on PDNA in fourteen Caribbean countries; convened and supported the work of the Gender Working Group in collaboration with CDEMA and supported the development and implementation of the GWG plan of action; supported the development of a Gender Checklist; carried out trainings on mainstreaming gender in DRR for CDEMA partners; and supported the adaptation of a virtual gender course for the Caribbean. The Project supported a seismic risk forum and study in Jamaica and fostered experience and knowledge sharing in the Caribbean through working meetings, platforms and document exchange.

The Project was less successful in improving the integration of and knowledge sharing on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in the Caribbean. The climate change adaptation component of the RRMC model was not included in the RRMC transfer due mainly to the time constraints associated with the late start of the Project as well as the institutional deficiencies described on p. 49. It was due to theseinstitutional and deficiencies, that the beneficiaries did not prioritize the CCA/DRR integration component of the Cuban model when adapting the RRMC model to their respective countries. Other activities not implemented as planned include the roll-out of a distance learning programme with a Caribbean university and the development of national recovery plans in 2 Caribbean countries.

*Output 3. Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Enhanced*

The Project has partially achieved the Output 3, as measured by resource mobilization, partnership and sustainability indicators spelled out in the RRF. The Project has successfully fostered partnerships between the Pacific and Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS); strengthened liaisons with national governments and institutions in beneficiary countries; and furthered successful partnership with CDEMA. The Project has been partially successful with resource mobilization: in addition to US$ 43,000 received from the Sharing Knowledge for Development Regional Call and Perez Guerrero Foundation, the Project received US$ 209,006 in the form of in-kind and financial contributions from the five beneficiary countries to complement funds allocated for the RRMC pilot.

The Project results are expected to contribute to the *outcome-level change.* Community capacities for disaster preparedness, response and risk management strengthened through the transfer of RRMCs in five pilot countries are expected to contribute to building resilience to disasters and climate change. Awareness about linkages between gender and disasters, increased through workshops and trainings and promoted through gender-sensitive risk and vulnerability studies, is expected to contribute to addressing gender-based vulnerabilities to disasters in disaster-prone communities. Early warning response capacities linked with disaster, and climate risk vulnerability mapping mechanisms installed in RRMCs will help protect livelihoods and reduce local level environmental risks for poor and excluded populations. Lessons learned from piloting local-level risk management and decision-making mechanisms and structures in five beneficiary countries will contribute to fostering proactive policies and mechanisms for disaster risk management and strengthen local governance and decentralization for development results.

Respondents from Country Offices considered the *management arrangementsas fruitful but not optimal* given the limited human resource capacity of the Project and heavy workload it generated for DRR Focal points. Some CO respondents also expressed their concern about the distance between the RHLAC and the beneficiary countries.

Despite the above concerns, the majority of CO respondents considered *coordination between the RHLAC and UNDP Country Offices* as satisfactory and fruitful. Coordination has been considered particularly successful by DRR Focal Points in charge of backstopping and providing technical support, implementation and coordination, whose technical capacities for managing local-level disaster risk interventions have been strengthened by the Project. As for the senior management, the Evaluation has observed varied engagement and coordination throughout the years. While more sustained and regular engagement of Resident Coordinators has been reported by stakeholders at the earlier stage (October 2012-March 2014), by the time of the Evaluation the engagement and awareness of the current senior management has been, on average, low. This can be partly explained by the fact that, with the exception of Jamaica, the RRMC pilot activities in countries wrapped up in March 2014. Subsequent project activities, conducted from March 2014 – March 2015 involved UNDP Jamaica, which was completing the RRMC activities; UNDP Cuba, which supported a national RRMC lesson learnedworkshop; and, UNDP Barbados, which supported the PDNA-related activities in July 2014. Another reason for limited involvement of senior management, identified through interviews, has been the staff turnover and the arrival of new senior management in the latter stages of the project.

Stakeholder interviews and Project documentation indicate that the Project has established successful partnerships with disaster risk management institutions in Cuba and in five RRMC pilot countries and has made important advances for regional level strategic partnership with CDEMA in the area of gender and post disaster recovery. The Project has also established successful collaboration with national academia, as demonstrated by the successful engagement of the UWI and CUJAE in the Project.

The Project has been successful in fostering partnerships beyond the Caribbean, supporting South-South Cooperation activities and generating interest on the successful Caribbean experiences and mechanisms in the in the Pacific region. Early on the Project supported the Project on *South-South Cooperation Between Pacific and Caribbean SIDS on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management,* coordinated by the UNDP Pacific Centre, with extensive participation of CDEMA, CARICOM Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and the University of the West Indies (UWI). The Pacific SSC Project aimed at strengthening safety and resilience of Pacific and Caribbean SIDS communities to a range of natural hazards. This was to be achieved by facilitating and supporting a south-south cooperation program targeted at strengthening climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction capacity in SIDS, using “southern” expertise and methodologies, including the CRMI.

The CRMI supported the preparation of a background paper and organization of the Side Event on*“Building Climate Resilience and Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction Knowledge Management”* in Barbados in 2013, and provided substantial support in the organization of the side event *“Sharing What Works: Transforming Disaster Risk Management in the Caribbean”*in the framework of the Third International Conference on SIDS in Samoa in 2014. The side event provided an overview of disaster risk management in the Caribbean, based on the best practices and lessons learned such as Comprehensive Integrated Disaster Management 2014-2014 Strategy, planning for recovery and integrated disaster risk management at a local level through RRMCs.

The Project has been considered as *innovative* due to piloting a comprehensive local level risk management model from Cuba in five beneficiary countries. The RRMC model, adaptable to different hazard profiles, socio-political, economic and governance contexts has been considered as *catalytic* in that it introduced effective and tested processes, methods and tools for reducing local level vulnerability to disasters and providing the know-how for adjusting these processes and tools to specific country characteristics. It also spurred financial and in-kind contributions to RRMCs from local stakeholders.

The Project has had a number of *positive unplanned* results. The successful adaptation of the Cuban RRMC model in Jamaica was identified as a winning experience at *Sharing Knowledge for Development Regional Call* in 2013 and was awarded US$ 8,000. The funds were utilized to fund Knowledge Sharing workshops with participation of Jamaican and Cuban disaster management specialists; translation of the Cuban risk assessment methodology, adapted to Jamaican context; training workshop on methodologies for local level risk assessment studies; and revision of the social and environmental components for their adaptation to Jamaican context. Also a result of the Project, the Perez Guerrero Foundation allocated US$ 35,000 to finance the further development of RRMC capacities in the Caribbean. These funds cover exchange of experiences on RVS methodologies in Cuba and Jamaica with the Dominican Republic; development of socioeconomic vulnerability assessment capacities; training on data collection; lessons learned workshop; and administrative costs. The Project has had a certain degree of incidence, generating interest from other countries (E.g. Aruba, Colombia, Russia) to replicate the experience and adapt the Cuban RRMC model to local contexts.

While not directly attributable to the Project, the success of the Cuban RRMC model has triggered the interest of Talcahuano municipality in Chile, affected by the earthquake. The municipality delegated a representative to participate in the experience transfer workshops and trainings organized by the Project in Cuba and has committed to adapting the RRMC model in the local community.

While the Project did not have a specific Human Rights component, the issue was addressed implicitly in Output 1 through activities aimed at reducing vulnerabilities to disaster risks, affecting different types of vulnerable populations, such as women, children, female-headed households, disabled and elderly, etc. Rights or women and vulnerable populations have been implicit in the PDNA component of the Output 2, which addresses vulnerable segments of population in recovery processes by analyzing their post-disaster needs and necessities. The CRMI has also been supporting the inclusion of gender mainstreaming in the post disaster assessment processes, currently led by CDEMA.

Analysis of gender mainstreaming activities is presented separately on pp. 35-37.

The average rating of Project effectiveness is 4.3. The lowest rating obtained in this category is 2.5. The most frequent rating – 4.

*Efficiency*

Analysis of the primary and secondary data indicates that the Project financial, human and time resources *have not been sufficient*. As mentioned earlier, from 2011-2015 the Project received US$ 1,095,979.58 or 42% of the initially budgeted US$ 2,618,500, which affected the course of implementation. While additional funds were received from Perez Guerrero Foundation and Regional and Sharing Knowledge for Development Regional Call, these were allocated for specific knowledge and experience exchange activities between Cuba, Jamaica and Dominican Republic and did not influence the financial situation.

According to the national stakeholders, funds allocated for RRMC establishment have not been always sufficient. Based on the RRMC Implementation Plans of the beneficiary countries, each received an equal amount of funds without previously conducting initial costing. The flat-rate allocation of US$ 25,000 was done based on the approximate cost of a similar center in Cuba, and did not take into account differences between the cost of services and goods in a market system as opposed to the central planning system, where goods and services[[15]](#footnote-15) are often facilitated by the government without cost. This lack of funding and of initial costing required budget adjustments and contributions from beneficiary countries. While the contributions from beneficiaries were not requested nor obligatory, these became needed to complete the activities planned for the establishment of RRMCs.

The financial limitations have not permitted the Project to hire support personnel in beneficiary countries, which in some cases resulted in the implementation delays and increased workload for DRR Focal Points, as reported by the Country Offices. The Project has also been implemented under serious time constraints. Due to a two-year delay caused by institutional and administrative challenges, described in *Strengths and Limitations*, some activities were rolled out late and were implemented within relatively short timeframes.

Evidence obtained primarily through the analysis of project documentation and some interviews indicates that the Project had *adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms* in place. The Project has carried out regular monitoring of Project activities and has produced regular and detailed quarterly and annual progress reports. RRMC implementation was monitored by means of a detailed Monitoring Chart, which recorded overall progress by outputs and activities and provided observations. The Project has produced detailed reports on all major events carried out in the course of implementation, including workshops, trainings and important meetings.

The Project Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms have allowed for adequate corrective measures in the course of Project implementation. As a result of continuous monitoring, the Project has been able to identify the time and resources challenges and carried out two substantial revisions to prioritize planned results and adjust the objectives and activities to make more efficient use of available resources. One example of such adjustment is the RRMC in Luperon, Dominican Republic, which could not be established due to weak institutional settings and insufficient engagement of local authorities. As a result of timely monitoring, challenges were identified early on and resources allocated for RRMC Luperon were assigned to RRMC in La Victoria, Dominican Republic, which had demonstrated stronger institutional frameworks and political buy-in.

To counter the human resource limitations, the Project engaged three interns specifically requested to support Project management and coordination at the regional level. National stakeholders and Country Offices provided in-kind support to enable the establishment and operations of the RRMCs in beneficiary countries. UNDP Cuba contributed to greater financial efficiency by producing a large number of Project materials instead of outsourcing, allowing for major savings in production costs.

By the time of the evaluation, the budget delivery was 90%, and the Project was on track to achieve 100% execution by the end of June.

The average rating of the efficiency of the Project is 4.1 with 4 being the most frequent rating and 1 being the lowest.

*Sustainability*

Opinions about the degree of Project sustainability varied based on the type of intervention and the respondent group. On average, respondents linked with the RRMCs and beneficiary communities ranked the sustainability higher than the representatives of UNDP and national institutions, which expressed more doubts about the long-term sustainability of the results.

* The majority of national stakeholders considered the RRMCs relatively sustainable and expressed their commitment to sustaining the results and providing adequate support to the centers.However, the respondents identified *lack of funding and institutional frameworks* as key obstacles to the long-term sustainability of the RRMCs.
* The majority of the respondents believe that the lack of available financing is the key challenge to the sustainability of the results and continuous operation of the RRMCs in the long run. For example,in Saint Catherine Parish in Jamaica, there is sufficient infrastructure and technical capacity in place; however, it is not clear whether the Parish Council will be able to finance the salaries of personnel and data collection costs and manage the Disaster Reduction Information Platform (DRIP), which is currently in its alpha testing stage and which will require funds for beta testing and implementation. Other RRMCs also face financial challenges to managing the RRMC, collect and input data and operate information platforms. In Trinidad and Tobago sustainability and potential replication of the RRMC model depend on the availability of national funding. Given that Trinidad and Tobago is a net contributing country (NCC), the UNDP country office has limited core funds to support the RRMC replication, which implies shifting the responsibility for funding to national and local governments.

In response to fund limitations, countries have been pursuing external funding opportunities. In Jamaica, a proposal had been elaborated for DIPECHO funding but has not been approved by ECHO. In Trinidad and Tobago, a two-million dollar proposal to replicate RRMCs in other 13 regional districts has been formulated with the RHLAC support. The proposal has received preliminary funding commitments from national ministries but has not yet been approved, in view of the forthcoming elections.

In terms of institutional sustainability, the evaluation received mixed results. The evaluation encountered evidence of adequate support and engagement of *local and national disaster management* organizations throughout the Project duration. However, national stakeholders in some countries (e.g. Jamaica, Guyana) pointed to insufficient political will and commitment at the higher political level (ministries, secretariats) and institutional inefficiencies (different institutions involved in disaster risk reduction, as potential challenges for long-term sustainability of the RRMCs. Countries with stronger local level institutional structures and more pronounced institutional commitment (e.g. St. Catherine’s Parish in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic) have demonstrated stronger ownership and higher sustainability prospects for RRMCs.

Sustainability of *regional* level interventions was rated satisfactory, particularly in the area of gender mainstreaming and fostering regional cooperation. The respondents considered that despite a relatively limited scale of regional interventions and their focused, narrow character, the potential impact can be significant and with a proper follow-up and support, can be sustainable in the long run. This is mainly due to the alignment of the Project’s regional interventions with the regional priorities and CDEMA’s strategies, as well as the political will and commitment of CDEMA’s management to the issues of gender and disaster risk reduction. Interventions related to PDNA were considered by the respondents as relatively less sustainable, given their limited scale and duration.

* The average rating of Project sustainability is 3.7. Predominant ratings varied between 3 and 4, with six respondents providing lowest rating of 2.

*South-South Cooperation*

The Project has received a positive rating for its South-South Cooperation mechanism, which allowed transferring a successful Cuban RRMC experience to five pilot countries and fostering SSC between different regions.

The respondents valued highly the comprehensive nature of the applied SSC modality, which did not focus only on the sharing of experience, but offered a full package of services, including conceptual frameworks, processes and checklists, training materials and workshops, field visits and technical support. The SSC model allowed installing the know-how in RRMCs for its future application in other parts of the beneficiary countries and permitted engaging stakeholders at different levels of the governance structures. The SSC also permitted systematizing and generalizing the knowledge and experience and its transformation into a template for future replication and/or adaptation.

The respondents praised the conceptual design of the SSC model, engagement of both technical and decision-making levels from the beneficiary countries, quality of tools and materials and technical assistance provided by the Cuban experts. The stakeholders particularly valued the field visits to Cuban RRMCs, which allowed contextualizing the Cuban experience in its original settings and draw parallels with their own country environments. The SSC experience has also allowed learning about other countries from the region, and analyzing the similarities and differences between the English and Spanish speaking Caribbean as pertaining to disaster risk management, local governance and decentralization and climate change adaptation. An important element of the experience was the fact that while facilitated by UNDP, it was *driven by the countries* and reflected their specific needs and priorities.

The respondents highlighted the time limitation as a key obstacle for more in-depth understanding and application of the model. It was due to time limitations, as well as limited resources, that many of the elements of the Cuban model were not transferred and the countries had to prioritize the components to be implemented within the RRMC model. Thus, most of the countries focused on early warning system and GIS tools and with the exception of Jamaica and the British Virgin Islands, did not carry out the vulnerability studies, which are an essential component of the Cuban model and ensure the linkages between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Even in Jamaica, the vulnerability assessment was not conducted in its entirety but limited to hazard mapping (Old Harbor Bay and Linstead), storm surge modeling (Old Harbor Bay) and asset mapping (Old Harbor Bay).

Perhaps the most important weakness of the applied South-South Cooperation model was its *bilateral* nature, as evidenced in project reports and stakeholder interviews. There has not been sufficient horizontal interaction between the six participating countries; rather, the cooperation was carried out bilaterally between Cuba and the recipients of the experience, who were not well aware of similar experiences implemented in other countries. The respondents noted that stronger multilateral engagement would have strengthened the regional aspect of the experience and would have contributed to fostering regional knowledge transfer.

The selection of the RRMCs was done on the basis of self-assessment following a checklist with minimum requirements provided by the CRMI. The checklist criteria were developed on the basis of the Cuban experience, which has a strong focus on risk prevention and comprehensive management of national disaster policies and structures. The Project did not carry out costing of establishing the RRMC in the beneficiary countries and provided a flat-rate allocation of US$ 25,000 to beneficiaries as evidenced from the Project documentation and interviews. The allocation did not reflect the actual cost of the RRMCs and resulted in unexpected outlays for some recipient communities. While the benefits of the RRMCs have convinced the stakeholders to allocate own resources and thus confirm their commitment to the Project, the majority considered the transaction costs of insufficient planning as high.

While the Project document has a sustainability section, analysis of primary and secondary data suggests that it lacked precision in terms of actions and did not offer exit strategies after the achievement of results. In the case of the RRMCs, the Project provided a sustainability checklist to all RRMC as part of the RRMC model transfer. The checklists have been shared with the DRR Focal Points in Country Offices, which, in turn forwarded them to national counterparts in beneficiary institutions for local-level follow-up and implementation. However, due to the lack of planning, time and follow up these checklists were not taken proper advantage of for articulating RRMC sustainability measures. At least one RRMC was not aware of their existence, due probably to a possible lack of coordination and communication at the local level.

The respondents often mentioned the “academic” and non-interactive character of the trainings provided by the Cuban authorities, especially at the initial stage of the Project. The trainings were considered rather general, lacking the hands-on aspect and clear examples, which would have helped better understand the essence of the RRMC and better prepare for the transfer. Some national counterparts also pointed at the difficulty of obtaining from Cuba of specific data, operational manuals and standardized guidelines for each component of the RRMC transfer. According to the respondents, these guidelines and manuals would have been particularly helpful at the beginning for a proper planning and implementation of RRMCs and are essential for further replication of the model in other communities.

Language barrier has been considered a challenge, in that a lot of information and time was lost in translation (both simultaneous interpretation and document translation, although the former has been considered by respondents as more frustrating). Some national respondents regretted insufficient monitoring and follow-up of the RRMC implementation from the Cuban experts and UNDP.

The average rating of the SSC component was 4.4, with the majority of respondents giving the rating of 4 and 5. The SSC component received a rating of 1 from the stakeholders of one of the beneficiary countries.

*Gender Mainstreaming*

Gender mainstreaming has been present in the Project both implicitly and explicitly through activities implemented at national and regional levels.

As part of the larger regional initiative in Latin American and the Caribbean, CRMI contributed to the strengthening of linkages between gender, DRR and public policy through a pilot course on gender-sensitive disaster management, developed and adapted to the Caribbean context by the UNDP Virtual School. The CRMI support included the translation of Spanish materials to English, the design of an English-language learning space and an instructor. The course was piloted in both Spanish and English to seventeen persons from the UN system, of which, 71% were UNDP staff from the Caribbean. Of the seventeen persons who initiated the course, only three passed it, six participants failed, four withdrew and four were inactive since the beginning of the course. As noted by the Project management, low completion rate can be primarily attributed to two reasons: timing limitations - the course had to be completed prior to end of fiscal year which is the busiest time of the year for UNDP staff; and challenges related to the conceptual design, contents and methodological support.

The Project addressed the issue of mainstreaming gender into DRR at the national level through trainings aimed at the national disaster management entities.At the local level, gender mainstreaming was implicit at all stages of the RRMC transfer, given that the Cuban model considers gender as an importantdimension of reducing risk andvulnerability and incorporates it as one of the variables in risk and vulnerability assessments. Thus, gender disaggregated data is collected and inputted into different risk scenarios and is used for planning purposes. The RRMC model offered for transfer to the five beneficiary countries contained the component of risk and vulnerability studies and implied gender-focused data collection and disaggregation. However, due to time limitations, vulnerability studies have not been conducted in the beneficiary countries. None of the studies carried out in Jamaica or BVI contained gender parameters.

Apart from the implicit presence of gender in the RRMC model, the Project had a series of gender mainstreaming activities incorporated in the Results and Resources Framework. Gender training was included in the training modules developed in Cuba for RRMC transfer and was offered to all beneficiaries who attended the RRMC workshops and trainings. UNDP Cuba also carried out a Workshop on Gender and Disasters in December 2013 to national level participants involved in disaster management.

The Project was more successful at the regional level where it implemented a series of activities in collaboration with CDEMA. Given its critical role in managing risk and resilience, gender mainstreaming is one of the key crosscutting priorities of CDEMA’s strategy for 2014-2024, which is part of CDEMA’s regional disaster management policy. In collaboration with the CDEMA Gender Coordination Unit, the CRMI supported a series of activities to foster gender mainstreaming at the regional level. The CRMI-supported Gender Working Group (GWG) engaged representatives of national gender bureaus, UNDP, UNWOMEN, IFRC in joint work towards strengthening of national gender mainstreaming capacities and raising awareness on gender and DRR linkages among national gender and women bureaus. With the CRMI support, the GWG provided training for National Disaster Coordinators in 18 CDEMA member countries, which included practical exercises for on the use of gender disaggregated data for post-impact scenarios. The GWG prepared the training manual, carried out a session on gender in the framework of Comprehensive Disaster Management Conference and commissioned a Concept note on mainstreaming gender and DRR, which was discussed by the Gender Working Group (GWG) and presented at a think-tank meeting on gender, vulnerable groups and DRR in the Caribbean with representatives of 10 regional agencies, convened by CDEMA in 2014.

* Through collaboration with the Caribbean Women’s Association (CARIWA), the Project contributed to raising awareness on mainstreaming gender in Disaster Management among the CARIWA members, who participated in the CRMI-supported workshop on Women in Disasters. According to the CARIWA representative, the workshop helped identify the existing gaps in the awareness about gender roles in disasters and capacity needs, in particular in the area of gender data collection, analysis and advocacy.

Despite these achievements, the evaluation found a major *gap in the awareness about the linkages between gender and disaster risk* in all participating countries at all levels of engagement. The majority of respondents from Categories 1 and 2(country – both national and local - and regional stakeholders) do not consider gender an issue, citing as an example a relatively strong representation of women in local and national governance structures[[16]](#footnote-16). There is an *overwhelming perception* that “disasters do not differentiate between men and women” and gender mainstreaming is not relevant for disaster management. Even in Cuba, where the risk and vulnerability studies disaggregate data by gender for proper risk modeling and risk management, the master’s degree course in disaster management, offered by GREDES does not have a module or a component that would link gender with disasters, nor is there an understanding of how differently disasters affect different genders.

The evaluation found evidence of *stronger emphasis on linkages* between gender and disasters in CDEMA, especially on how gender disaggregated information can shape the recovery process and the overall need to strengthen the Gender and DRR interface in the region. However, CDEMA does not have legal mechanisms to enforce gender-related standards and processes in the countries and is limited to the advisory, coordination and facilitating role.

*Strengths and Limitations*

The evaluation has identified several contributing factors, both positive and negative, which influenced the achievement of the Project results and may have an impact on the long-term sustainability of the Project results.

According to the primary and secondary data the Project has demonstrated significant strengths and assets, which have helped overcome financial, human resource and time constraints and not only facilitated the implementation, but also laid basis for future development interventions in the region.

The regional nature of the Project and its management from the RHLAC have been considered as one of the decisive factors for engaging different political actors at national and regional levels. UNDP’s convening power, quality and availability of technical expertise and administrative support, its presence in the beneficiary countries and its regional capacity and outreach have been considered instrumental for CRMI success. The regional nature of the Project enabled UNDP to identify strategic entry points for regional activities in the area of disaster risk management and lay grounds for expanded cooperation with the Caribbean through enhanced collaboration with CDEMA. At the country level, UNDP’s role has been crucial for getting stakeholders on board through its direct engagement with central governmental institutions.

The *role of RHLAC* has been considered by the respondents as essential for promoting a comprehensive approach to disaster management and linking gender, governance and climate change to sustainable development. The RHLAC has been particularly valuable in leveraging networks and opening communication channels, seeding and scaling up pilot initiatives, identifying lessons, best practices and providing oversight and technical expertise.

The analysis of the mandate, structure and operations of the RHLAC and its role in the Project suggests that the RHLAC has a number of *comparative advantages for leading multi-sector multi-national initiatives* in the region. As the home of the Regional Programme Document for Latin America and the Caribbean, the RHLAC has a comprehensive knowledge of national and regional development trends, capacities and settings, which help identify priorities to focus regional interventions; the RHLAC is best positioned to pilot innovative projects in different countries, collect and analyze the lessons, systematize them into knowledge products and facilitate knowledge sharing through available knowledge-sharing platforms, Communities of Practice and other networks; through its thematic clusters, communities of practice, associate expert rosters as well as interagency networks, the RHLAC has readily available high quality in-house expertise in the area of DRM, climate change, gender, local government and decentralization, knowledge management, south-south cooperation, which allows for a significant reduction in the financial and transaction costs associated with identifying and dispatching suitable professional expertise.

The overwhelming majority of the respondents from all categories consider that one of the most important strengths of the Project has been the *capacity of UNDP Cuba* to organize, systematize and share the knowledge and spearhead the entire South-South Cooperation process. As the owner of the experience, UNDP Cuba has been instrumental in developing the methodologies, training programmes and materials, organizing technical assistance and guidance and leveraging high-level political support of national institutions that were actively involved in the entire transfer process. The presence of a dedicated national coordinator/team has enabled UNDP Cuba to consolidate and systematize an immense volume of knowledge for transfer (See Annex 6. CRMI II Knowledge Products) and to mobilize resources for further political incidence and capacity development (Sharing Knowledge for Development Regional Call, Perez Guerrero Fund).

An important contributing factor to the successful transfer of the RRMC model was the *synergy* between the RHLAC Project Coordinator, UNDP Cuba, DRR Project focal points in UNDP Country Offices and counterparts in national disaster management institutions. According to the respondents, constant communication and coordination between the Regional Hub and the Country Office staff permitted overcoming obstacles and completing implementation in significantly reduced timeframe. A crucial asset of the Project has been the Regional Project Coordinator, whose management and coordination capacity and the ability to engage key actors has been considered indispensable by the overwhelming majority of Project stakeholders for the revival and successful completion of the Project. The dedication and commitment of the counterparts in UNDP Offices and national disaster management institutions have also been highly valued and considered as one of the most important success factors.

Likewise, strong involvement of the local governments and communities served as an important element of the success of the RRMC model and provided a certain degree of assurance regarding the sustainability of the RRMC. As demonstrated by the example of the Dominican Republic, of two similar interventions, the community with strong support from the local authorities and stronger institutional capacities (La Victoria) has perfectly adapted the RRMC and demonstrated high degree of potential sustainability. Whereas, the RRMC could not be established in Luperon, due to the absence of a strong focal point, limited interest of the local authorities, insufficient capacities and funding.

The existence of institutional frameworks for RRMC institutionalization in some beneficiary communities has been viewed as an asset. The presence of stronger institutional structures and relatively advanced organization of beneficiary communities in Saint Catherine’s Parish in Jamaica has permitted the successful adaptation of the RRMC model in two communities. In Trinidad and Tobago, the RRMC was aligned with the existing disaster management unit and was easily embedded. Likewise, in the Dominican Republic the RRMC in La Victoria was adapted to the existing disaster committee structure.

The regional CRMI platform has been considered a strong instrument for continuous involvement with the countries in the region, identification of additional needs and priorities and joint development of future programming.

* Despite the overall positive appraisal of the Project, the evaluation has encountered a number of endogenous and exogenous challenges that affected the Project at different stages of its implementation. The *exogenous* factors (political and institutional context of the countries, its political and administrative system and institutional/resource capacities of stakeholders) mostly posed challenges to the sustainability of the Project, whereas the *endogenous* challenges (corporate administrative and operational processes and norms, project design, resources) have been mostly present during the Project implementation and affected the achievement of the results.

The *endogenous* limitations of the Project were of two types: *administrative/operational* and *methodological/conceptual. Methodological/Conceptual* limitations were primarily related to the design and transfer of the RRMC model and have been covered in sub-chapter South-South Cooperation on pp. 33-35.

Analysis of primary and secondary information indicates that time and resource constraints have been the most important *administrative/operational* limitations of the Project. The Project has been largely inactive during the first two years since its inception and had to undergo two substantive revisions and extensions, adjusting expected results, targets and indicators to the existing resources.

As a result of the late start, the Project was forced to curtail some activities and speed up the implementation. Some activities spelled out in the RRF could not be implemented or had limited scope due also to fund limitations. As mentioned earlier, the Project could not hire national Project coordinators, which would have greatly increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the Project. Instead, the Project relied heavily on the Regional Project Coordinator in Panama, DRR focal points in UNDP Offices and national counterparts in beneficiary countries. These time and human resource limitations affected the resource mobilization efforts as well. The Project lacked human and financial resources for adequate resource mobilization activities, which imply high cost. The limited human resource capacity of the Project was channeled towards the implementation and achievement of the results.

The respondents noted the highly bureaucratic nature of UNDP administrative procedures, especially those related to procurement, which were considered a hurdle. Some national respondents, who were not aware of UNDP procurement rule, attributed the delays in approval to the RHLAC given the requirement to present three quotations for procurement above US$ 2,500. In some countries, obtaining the required number of quotations has been considered difficult given the absence of adequate suppliers in Project locations.

In general, national stakeholders were not familiar with the UNDP organizational structure, operational modalities and administrative procedures, and it took them time and effort to get acquainted with and grasp the nuances of UNDP project implementation processes. Many national stakeholders did not properly understand the differences between the RHLAC and UNDP Country Offices; many were not aware of the nature and purpose of the RHLAC, its functions, services and scope of work and considered that a Caribbean project should not have been managed from Central America. The latter perception points to a mistaken understanding of the nature of the Regional Hub, whereby the RHLAC geographical location is not related to and does not influence the geographical scope of its activities.

After a long hiatus between the two phases of the CRMI, engaging the Country Offices was a challenge and required lengthy and complicated discussions to define priority directions of the Project and agree on management arrangements. Unlike the CRMI I, which held Project Board meetings annually, the CRMI II Advisory Panel did not have annual meetings with all members present at all times. Primary and secondary data indicate that the Resident Coordinators from participating countries did not meet regularly, which affected the Project visibility with the senior management, especially after the departure of the Resident Coordinators who were involved at the early stages of the Project.

Respondents in some Country Offices considered that the RHLAC was engaged bilaterally with the beneficiary institutions, which, in their opinion sidelined the Country Offices and excluded them from the decision-making. The evaluation did not find the evidence of bilateral engagement between the RHLAC and national stakeholders, with the exception of CDEMA. UNDP Country Offices featured in all emails, invitations and meeting notes and have, in fact, served as the key agents of Project implementation in beneficiary countries. In the case of CDEMA, the bilateral engagement was due to its regional character and its position as an expected homolog for RHLAC.

According to Country Office respondents, there was not sufficient interaction *between* the Country Offices. The respondents (mostly senior management) demonstrated limited to no knowledge of the activities in *other* countries and reported limited involvement in horizontal exchanges and discussions on Project issues with their peers from other countries. In case of senior management, this lack of awareness can be partially explained by their relatively recent arrival to beneficiary countries and irregularity of the Thematic Advisory Panel meetings. In case of the DRR focal points, the insufficient horizontal interaction between Country Offices has been attributed mostly to the lack of an interactive exchange mechanism/platform. The *exogenous* limitations and challenges of the Project were mainly related to the institutional differences and weaknesses of the recipient countries.

According to the national stakeholders, cultural, linguistic and governance differences in the recipient countries caused initial delays in the adaptation of the RRMC model. Often the delays were related to insufficient institutional capacities, differences in the legal framework, political structure and governance culture between Cuba and the recipient countries.

One of the key challenges has been the buy-in and commitment at the highest political levels. While the Project has provided trainings to both the decision-makers and technical staff, engagement of high-level political figures and managers at ministerial levels has not been easy and may eventually affect the long-term sustainability of the RRMCs. In Cuba, disaster management is the responsibility of Civil Defense under the command of the country president and by law, all institutions that integrate it are obliged to comply, providing tangible and intangible resources. This is not true in the CRMI beneficiary countries, where responsibility for disaster management is often split between the ministries and departments, complicating the decision-making and coordination and limiting the ownership of the results

At the technical level, the main challenges were related to the limited access to trained human resources and quality data. As reported by some respondents, data access is costly as it is not readily available in many countries, and there are no legal frameworks that would facilitate free data sharing. In some communities, local technical capacities are very basic and finding adequate candidates for technical positions can be a challenge. Trained staff are difficult to retain due to high demand. Also, unlike the Cuban model, which engages community volunteers for Early Warning Points, volunteers are not easily found in some beneficiary countries.

Technical capacity has been a challenge at the regional level as well. According to the respondents from CDEMA, the CDEMA Coordinating Unit to Advance Gender does not have a gender specialist on board to support the implementation of the gender component of the CDM strategy. There is a need to strengthen the awareness and capacities of national gender organizations and NGOs for mainstreaming gender in disaster risk management, as demonstrated by the CARIWA Women and Disaster Preparedness Workshop organized in 2014.

# CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are based on the analysis and triangulation of the evaluation findings. The conclusions are organized according to the evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, South-South Cooperation and Gender Mainstreaming). The chapter also presents additional conclusions, which encompass wider aspects of CRMI and cannot be limited to one single criterion.

The evaluation concludes that, in view of the Project’s pilot nature and short timeframe, the objectives of the Project were rather *ambitious* and were *further compounded* by the late start and resource limitations. The evaluation considers that it was unrealistic to expect *significant changes in output* given the limited scope of the regional interventions related to emerging themes (climate change, gender and disaster risk reduction, PDNA) and significant time constraints. The evaluation also considers that it was rather unrealistic to expect the establishment of *fully operational* RRMCs in the beneficiary countries given the shortage of time and funds. It took Cuba years and outstanding commitment of the government and the society to develop the RRMCs into local level hubs for comprehensive disaster risk and analysis and planning. The Cuban model has been based on a rigorous scientific research, which underpins decision-making, planning, governance and monitoring of disaster risk management at both local and central levels. It implies the existence of strong centralized integrated governance system with a certain degree of decentralization at the local level, which is characteristic of Cuba and cannot be found elsewhere. Likewise, it implies a strong multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral approach, which ensures more systemic approach to disaster risk management. It also implies strong monitoring mechanisms and regular update of data and processes, which is challenging in the settings with limited data availability and technical capacities.

However, the evaluation considers that despite a certain degree of “CRMI fatigue” and the initial resistance from some Country Offices, caused by the hiatus between the two phases and effective start of the Project, significant time constraints, financial and human resource limitations, geographical scope and different linguistic and cultural settings, the Project has achieved *significant success* and has demonstrated *utmost efficiency of implementation*.

The evaluation believes that the success of the Project is primarily in the *legacy it created, the importance of the processes and products it helped launch, the knowledge it generated and shared and the potential impact it can produce.* This success is confirmed by the overwhelmingly positive appraisal of the Project, which received the average rating of 4.3 on the scale of 1-5.

The Project has been highly successful in introducing effective and innovative processes, methods and tools for reducing local level vulnerability to disasters and providing the know-how for adjusting these processes and tools to specific country characteristics. The Project has piloted a comprehensive local level risk management model adaptable to different hazard profiles, socio-political, economic and governance contexts. The Project has contributed to collecting baseline data for the establishment RRMCs and has provided training and Early Warning and GIS for strengthening of local and national capacities for disaster risk management in select communities.

The evaluation concludes that the Project has been highly *relevant* at the moment of its inception as it addressed important national and local development priorities and needs in countries and communities with different disaster vulnerability profiles and political, economic and governance contexts. It has underlined the importance of local and national institutional linkages while highlighting the effectiveness of decentralized decision-making, planning and implementation of disaster management policies and processes. The ongoing relevance of the Project has been confirmed by the commitment of national stakeholders and beneficiaries to the sustainability of Project results and the existing interest to continue the CRMI. Project design, activities and interventions have generated the results, which respond to the needs of beneficiaries and address national and corporate priorities.

The evaluation considers that, in light of political, administrative and operational limitations described in Chapter 6, the Project has been largely *effective.* The evaluation concludes that the relevance, effectiveness and potential impact of the Project have been due to the *regional* character of the Project; *management arrangements* that allowed the leadership and coordination of the RHLAC; the *key role of UNDP Cuba* in systematization of the experience, organization of the transfer process and overall methodological and technical support; strong interest and *commitment of national stakeholders* to adapting the RRMC model to their national contexts; and, *active role of UNDP Country Offices* in promoting and facilitating the experience in close coordination with the RHLAC and UNDP Cuba.

The evaluation considers that the Project has demonstrated the *importance of the regional approach to multi-country cross-disciplinary interventions* of the CRMI kind and confirmed the *comparative advantage* of RHLAC management in close collaboration with the Country Offices. The evaluation considers that based on the experience of CRMI I, managed from Country Offices, and of the early stages of CRMI II, managed from the sub-regional center in Trinidad and Tobago, the decision to manage the Project from RHLAC was the most adequate. Moreover, the evaluation considers, that placing the Project headquarters outside the RHLAC would have impeded the implementation and may have significantly altered the Project results and benefits.

The Project has been able to demonstrate the *effectiveness* of the synergies between the regional and national levels, which enabled the achievement of most results even in the conditions of time and resource limitations. While the CRMI I, which has been managed from the Country Offices succeeded in laying strong foundations for regional knowledge sharing, the regionally-managed CRMI II has advanced further and produced tangible products, *which can effectively be converted into public goods* with adequate support and follow-up. Moreover, the evaluation considers that launching the CRMI II after an almost two-year hiatus has been partly due to rigorous consultations and coordination with the Country Offices carried out from the RHLAC. The evaluation does not find it viable to have achieved a similar level of coordination from any single Country Office in the Caribbean.

The evaluation considers that it was due to its *regional character* that the Project succeeded in engaging diverse national stakeholders in the beneficiary countries – the evaluation considers it highly unlikely for any single Country Office to achieve similar level of engagement of national stakeholders across the countries with linguistic barriers and distinct social and political settings; moreover, the evaluation considers that RHLAC has been best positioned to ensure impartiality and neutrality in implementation.

The evaluation considers that the success of the *South-South Cooperation mechanism* implemented by the Project was largely attributable to the regional nature of the CRMI, which supported the transformation of the Cuban experience into an exportable SSC model and facilitated the entire transfer process; the RHLAC has a particular advantage and positioning for strengthening partnership with CDEMA and leveraging CRMI mechanism to draw CDEMA closer to other geographic jurisdictions of the Caribbean, especially Cuba.

The evaluation concludes that the Project has been *effective* in fostering collaboration with national stakeholders, establishing partnerships with national and regional disaster management authorities in the Caribbean and working in close coordination with the UNDP COs and counterparts to ensure political engagement and buy-in. The Project has contributed to strengthening linkages between local and national authorities in select countries and has identified the importance of decentralized decision-making and planning of disaster risk reduction interventions. The Project has been instrumental in fomenting partnership with CDEMA management and has identified gender mainstreaming and post-disaster recovery capacities as entry points for further collaboration and partnership.

Building on the foundations laid by the CRMI I, the Project has introduced an*innovative modality* of experience transfer through South-South Cooperation and has fostered generation and sharing of knowledge and skills among the beneficiary countries. Successful methodologies and practices generated by the Project and successfully implemented and systematized in Cuba are expected to serve for further replication and improving capacities for comprehensive disaster risk management in the Caribbean and beyond. The SSC mechanisms used to promote the Caribbean experience in the Pacific region have set the foundations for inter-regional cooperation and partnerships, resulting in a new South-South Cooperation Pacific-Caribbean Phase II Project.

The Project has been instrumental in articulating and facilitating the South-South Cooperation process among different linguistic groups of the Caribbean and in bringing the Cuban experience to other countries in the region, most importantly to the English-speaking Caribbean. UNDP has been considered an important vehicle for transferring knowledge and know-how and building bridges between countries with different cultural and ethno-linguistic settings. The Project has been also able to balance the academic and practical aspects of the Cuban model and link the technical experts with decision-makers, engaging them in collaboration for better understanding and implementation of the experience. A particularly valued strength of the Project was its consultative and participatory nature, which allowed the countries articulate their demand and be the drivers of the experience transfer process.

The evaluation considers that institutional arrangements and *coordination with the national authorities* have been largely adequate and successful. By working with the decision-makers and engaging them in the training sessions and visits, the Project has helped anchor local level interventions with policy work carried out by the national governmental institutions and explored potential niches for future interventions. The commitment of local and national authorities and communities has been seen as instrumental for strengthening the links with the national disaster management institutions and has contributed to the buy-in among the government officials.

Despite the identified lack of engagement of senior managers in some Country Offices, the evaluation considers the *collaboration and coordination with the COs* have been highly successful and productive. The evaluation considers that the DRR Focal Points in UNDP Country Offices have been instrumental for national-level implementation, engagement of key national and local stakeholders, ensuring the buy-in and ownership of national entities and laying basis for long-term sustainability.

The Project has helped open doors for *closer regional cooperation among the English and Spanish-speaking Caribbean States* and has identified niches where UNDP has comparative advantages to provide expertise and coordination (See Chapter 9. Recommendations). While UNDP presence and positioning in the participating countries has always been quite strong, the Project has allowed consolidating the *regional dimension* of UNDP work and demonstrated the advantages of the regional approach to national and local challenges.

The evaluation concludes that in the conditions of significant funding and time constraints, the Project has demonstrated adequate and highly *efficient* use of limited financial and human resources, converting the available resources into results. The Project has succeeded in achieving the majority of planned results by adjusting the objectives and activities to the existing resources and amending the initial targets and indicators to more realistic estimates of the expected results. The Project has successfully leveraged support and commitment of national counterparts and UNDP Country Offices, which provided necessary backstopping and coordination of Project activities in beneficiary countries and contributed own resources as a demonstration of ownership and commitment. Absence of financial and human resources in the field has been compensated by the dedication, enthusiasm and hard work of the Project coordinator, national stakeholders, DRR focal points in Country Offices and in particular in UNDP Cuba, which had contributed significantly to Project efficiency by absorbing a large share of systematization costs.

The evaluation considers that the Project has correctly chosen to *concentrate on a few strategic interventions* that are most likely to have an impact at national and regional levels, thus maximizing the benefits of limited resources. In those cases where the Project has not been able to make significant advancements (climate change adaptation, risk and vulnerability studies) or has had limited scope (PDNA), it has managed to identify lessons and potential points of entry for future interventions (see Chapter 9. Recommendations). The Project has helped stakeholders learn important lessons and has contributed to putting on the national and local agenda of a series of institutional challenges and priorities, such as data collection and sharing, decentralization of decision-making, linkages with vulnerability and risk, focus on comprehensive risk management, mainstreaming gender and disaster risks, among others.

The evaluation considers that the *sustainability* concept of the Project was not properly thought through at the inception, partly due to the shortage of time and the pilot nature of the Project. However, the evaluation concludes, that with a proper follow-up and support the Project results have high prospects of sustainability. Seeds planted by the Project have a *significant potential for long-term impact* provided there is a further consolidation and institutionalization of the processes and products, continuous ex-post monitoring of the results and further systematization and dissemination of the knowledge. The commitment of local authorities and communities has been instrumental for strengthening the links with the national disaster management institutions and has contributed to the buy-in among the government officials.

The key to CRMI sustainability lies in the *South-South Cooperation* mechanism successfully piloted by the Project. The evaluation considers that through the CRMI, UNDP has encountered a very tangible way of operationalizing SSC in the region and has succeeded in constructing an entire SSC process with all essential components - starting from the identification of an experience for transfer, development of a conceptual framework, construction of methodology, identification and engagement of stakeholders, development of knowledge products, installation of capacities and infrastructure, development of operating procedures and sustainability guidelines. Pending the approval of a corporate strategy on South-South Cooperation, the Project has helped to embody what SSC really means – influencing decision-makers through knowledge exchange between communities and governments, taking advantage of similarities and differences and learning from each-others’ lessons. The Project has avoided the trap of becoming a programmatic framework for a series of expensive “study tours” and trainings and has created a successful precedent of a largely complete transfer of experience. The Project has succeeded in articulating different elements of the experience transfer process in a coherent, comprehensive package that can serve as a blueprint for other South-South Cooperation endeavors in disaster risk reduction and in other thematic areas. The evaluation believes, that as a direct result of the Project, UNDP now counts with a *toolkit* that can be further refined and promoted as a flagship UNDP product for Latin America and the Caribbean and other regions.

An essential component of the SSC mechanism is *the RRMC model*, which, to the best of the evaluator’s knowledge, is first of its kind in the western hemisphere. While the RRMC’s were created and implemented solely by the Cuban Government and people, UNDP support was crucial for transforming the experience into a model, development of conceptual and methodological framework and structure, systematizing the processes and tools and making it transferable. With the UNDP support the model has been transferred to five countries, has generated interest in at least three more countries and has a potential to be adapted and replicated in countries and communities with different socio-economic situations, political settings and disaster risk profiles. The strength of the model is in its multidisciplinary, multi-sectoral and evidence-based nature, solid scientific base for policy-making, territorial approach and decentralized decision making, continuous monitoring and modernization, strong preventive focus, strong linkages with sustainable development and overall comprehensive approach to disaster risk management, which aims at reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience. While the model owes its success in Cuba to specific political and governance context and strong support from the Government and society, it is flexible enough to be adapted to varied settings in the Caribbean and beyond and can be transferred as a package or by components.

Another key to CRMI sustainability is the wealth of *knowledge in the area of disaster risk management* generated and processed by the Project. Systematized case studies, methodologies and tools will be at the disposal of UNDP and its stakeholders in the region and can be exported beyond the Caribbean. Apart from establishing and strengthening capacities in local and national institutions and communities, these products can help identify capacity and knowledge gaps and institutional deficiencies as well as assets to build on and to replicate. The Project has generated valuable lessons that should serve both national/local and corporate stakeholders in articulating and honing future interventions in the area of Disaster Risk Management.

The evaluation considers that despite the overall success of the RRMC transfer a number of actions during the planning and implementation could have improved the effectiveness of the intervention and increased the probability of its sustainability. Thus, the Project would have benefited from an *initial assessment of the capacities* of the recipient institutions, which would have allowed better matching of the transferred experience with the recipient context. While the self-assessment approach is valuable for stimulating self-analysis and commitment of the beneficiaries, it may have missed important criteria of selection, related to the capacity of the local communities, availability of resources and existence of an enabling environment in the form of legislation, institutional structures and political will, distance of the community and availability of regular and low-cost transportation, etc.

Likewise, the Project would have benefitted from the *initial costing* of RRMC establishment, based on the actual needs and costs. The Project would also have benefitted from an *initial preparatory period* of 1-3 months for putting together Project infrastructure, recruitment and procurement. This preparatory period would have ideally included a brief introduction of personnel and counterparts to UNDP’s administrative and operational procedures and would have permitted more efficient use of time and resources.

The evaluation considers that the *gender mainstreaming* component was less successful given its limited scope, general time constraints and awareness gaps identified in Chapter 6. The evaluation considers that despite the quality of the contents, basic gender training modules included in the RRMC model and gender workshops were not sufficient for addressing important gender awareness gaps. The evaluation believes that a more comprehensive and in-depth interventions were required to increase the awareness about and strengthen institutional frameworks for *mainstreaming gender and DRR.* However,despite the relatively limited success of the gender component described in Chapter 6, it has helped identify awareness and capacity gaps and has laid the basis for potential interventions aimed at national and regional levels.

The evaluation considers that the PDNA roll-out has not been properly communicated at the regional level resulting in a relatively low perception of its relevance by the regional stakeholders. The relatively limited scale of PDNA-related activities of the Project and time/resource limitations did not permit proper capturing of the advantages of the PDNA methodology and align them with the current priorities in post-disaster assessments. While the *PDNA component* of the Project represents an important part of the corporate mandate and is currently being rolled out in some countries in the region[[17]](#footnote-17), the process has not yet been established as a priority on the regional agenda. In the region with limited human resource capacities, the principal concern for CDEMA is to efficiently consolidate and rationalize the different types of methodologies and tools and to find ways of streamlining different types of post-disaster assessment process, including the PDNA. In this context, the PDNA workshops contributed to better understanding of the linkages between PDNA and other assessments, but they fell short of positioning the PDNA as the key element for strengthening recovery capacities in the region. The evaluation considers that there is a need for a more comprehensive approach to post-disaster assessments and recovery, through strengthening capacities for data collection and analysis, consolidation of different types of assessment methodologies and harmonization of disaster management policies currently carried out by CDEMA.

# CHAPTER 8. LESSONS LEARNED

The evaluation identified a series of lessons learned in the process of Project implementation. Some of these lessons coincide with those identified through Project monitoring; others have been identified by the evaluation through the analysis of the secondary data and interviews with the respondents.

An important *distinction* must be made between the *Disaster Management and Disaster Risk Management* entities when designing future interventions with the disaster risk focus. While disaster management is the responsibility of single agencies and is often limited to preparedness and response (reactive action), Disaster Risk Management implies a more comprehensive approach, involving a set of responsibilities covering planning, mitigation, recovery (proactive action), which may be shared between different national institutions. The majority of the Caribbean disaster management entities may formally presume wider mandates, however, the capacities and functions may be limited to preparedness and response. This may require more strategic programming of interventions to foster the shift from the traditional preparedness and response towards a more comprehensive risk management mandate.

Linked with the previous lesson is the reason the risk and vulnerability studies have not been implemented in the majority of the pilot countries. *Risk and vulnerability studies are the pillars of the RRMC* model and imply the presence of the preventive focus in the national disaster management policies and frameworks and existence of respective capacities in national counterparts. Meanwhile, in many beneficiary countries the preventive focus is missing or weak, which explains the tendency to select early warning and GIS mapping components as priority activities when pressed with time and funds constraints.

Unlike Cuba, where the *links between climate change and disaster risks* are integrated at the policy level and incorporated through vulnerability studies and scenario modeling, there is no strong association between disaster management and climate change adaptation *at the policy and institutional level* in the recipient countries. The Cuban environmental agency is a member of the multidisciplinary group for assessing the disaster risks and vulnerability, which conducts regular assessments of climate change induced risks to incorporate in the disaster management and climate change adaptation scenarios. The same level of integration is missing in the CRMI beneficiary countries, which partly explains why climate change adaptation component was largely missing from the RRMC transfer process. With the beneficiary countries primarily focusing on disaster preparedness and response, interventions aimed at exploring linkages between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptations have not been considered a priority at the local level.

Being *most vulnerable should not be the decisive factor* for the selection of target communities. In order to successfully pilot the RRMC model, it is important to select communities with stronger technical capacities and governance structures, more streamlined processes and enabling legal frameworks. It is important to look for communities where RRMC tools and mechanisms can be potentially *integrated with local planning and development structures*, which can benefit from data and tools generated by the centers. This will increase the chances of success, reduce the transaction costs and allow for better adaptation and sustainability of the RRMCs. *Location* of the pilot community is also important. Piloting the RRMCs in remote communities with poor access and limited technical resources may reduce the effectiveness of the pilot intervention, affect the sustainability prospects, distort the end results and result in false negative.

It is easier to *engage local governments and disaster management entities* after ensuring the buy-in at the central level. Achieving understanding and commitment at the key decision-making level can help getting more stakeholders on board and provide guarantees for more sustainability and replication. *Institutionalization of results* is another important factor of sustainability. Formal acknowledgment of the commitment by local and national authorities increases the odds of sustaining the benefits of the intervention in the long term.

# CHAPTER 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation has formulated a series of recommendations regarding the potential niches of UNDP involvement and a number of practical tips for improving the design, implementation and sustainability of future interventions. The recommendations were based on the findings of the evaluation and referenced with the activities articulated under the Outcome 4 of the Regional Programme Document for LAC, namely: *formulate and implement policies that effectively mainstream disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based adaptation, particularly in the Caribbean, develop strategies to integrate gender analysis into risk management and into adaptation strategies and tools, with particular emphasis in the Caribbean, strategies to foster pre-disaster recovery planning, including data collection, institutional, legislative and financial mechanisms, and strategies to improve capacities and coordination across sectors and within levels of government to adopt integral and effective approaches in risk reduction and early recovery.*

The evaluation considers that in view of the ongoing corporate processes and the advances made by the CRMI II, the *main axis of future UNDP work in the Caribbean should be South-South Cooperation.* UNDP is currently in the process of institutionalizing South-South Cooperation as its corporate priority and is developing Global South-South Cooperation Strategy and a subsequent action plan. This process presents an opportunity to further explore the potential of the CRMI SSC mechanism, continue monitoring of the achieved results and consolidate its lessons and products into a methodological and conceptual toolkit, which can be applied in different thematic areas. UNDP has a unique advantage of having at its disposal a fully operational pilot, which can serve as a baseline for further exploration and improvement. UNDP also counts with a solid CRMI platform, which has to be further strengthened for knowledge exchange and coordination.

With South-South Cooperation being its primary operational modality, the evaluation recommends the following *three areas for future work* in the Caribbean:

*Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in Development Planning –* in many countries of the Caribbeaninterfaces between the disaster risk and climate change are rather weak. As part of its mandate and due to its national and regional presence, UNDP has a comparative advantage to bring technical expertise and mobilize partnerships for strengthening national and regional institutional capacities for disaster risk management and climate change adaptation. The Cuban RRMC model provides applicable mechanisms for linking climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and mainstreaming them in local level development planning. By completing the transfer of the missing components of the RRMC experience to the beneficiary countries, UNDP can contribute to creating capacities and structures for effective DRR and CCA mainstreaming. In cooperation with CDEMA, UNDP is well positioned to support mainstreaming climate risk management across sectors, support streamlining of national and regional DRR and CCA structures and frameworks and foster climate scenarios and climate risk management, such as measuring the impact of sea-level rise, addressing the slow onset of disasters and supporting policies to integrate DRR and CCA.

*Mainstreaming gender in disaster risk management, at local, national and regional levels -* CDEMA’s Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy for the Caribbean provides a solid framework for UNDP support. Potential areas of assistance may include articulating gender-sensitive disaster management policies and programmes in the Caribbean; improving advocacy on gender-sensitive disaster risks and development of advocacy capacities for mainstreaming gender in disaster management; strengthening of institutional capacities at local, national and regional levels; comprehensive mapping of national and regional entities working in the area of women’s rights and gender equality, including the civil society organizations. Utilizing partnerships and experience of working with the academia (GREDES, UWI, UNDP Virtual School), UNDP can effectively support the inclusion of gender component in disaster and climate-related degree programmes and executive diploma/certificate courses and offer them to institutions involved in national disaster management systems. Building on the initial engagement with the CARIWA, UNDP can support identification, mapping and strengthening of women’s organizations operating in the region to promote gender and disaster awareness in the civil society.

*Strengthening CDEMA capacities for the implementation of its Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy –* the Project has succeeded in improving collaboration with CDEMA and has identified a number of areas of cooperation, which can be further explored and expanded. The evaluation recommends to structure its cooperation with CDEMA on the basis of CDEMA’s *Comprehensive Disaster Strategy for the Caribbean* and to provide technical support for its implementation. This support can include, but not be limited to assessing CDEMA’s institutional capacities for the implementation of the CDM Strategy; designing strategies and action plans for capacity strengthening and advocacy; supporting the assessment of national disaster risk management legislations to identify weaknesses and gaps; improving data collection and analysis instruments and processes; facilitating consultations on post-disaster assessment, early recovery and risk investment; streamlining different disaster assessment tools and mechanisms, including the PDNA; mobilizing interagency support to CDEMA; and facilitating SSC partnerships with non-CDEMA countries in the Caribbean and outside the region (e.g. South America, Central America, Asia and Pacific).

In order to *capitalize on the advances* made in the area of South-South Cooperation and *increase the relevance* of future interventions, the evaluation recommends exploring the possibilities of *expanding the experience* to other countries/regions and including other themes: risk and vulnerability studies, especially climate change related data collection and modeling; data management platforms, such as DRIP; preparedness plans, guidelines and standard operating procedures (e.g. tsunami preparedness plan for Jamaica). Knowledge and best practices generated by the Project have to be incorporated into the regional and national programmaticwork to promote *integrated approach* to disaster risk reduction*,* climate change, local governance and decentralization, poverty and vulnerability and gender; to support the development of gender-sensitive disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation legislations and institutional capacities and to strengthen civil society involvement. The evaluation recommends strengthening the *linkages between the global corporate processes*, such as the PDNA roll-out, with regional and national priorities, for increased relevance and effectiveness of future interventions.

For increased *effectiveness and efficiency* of future interventions, the evaluation takes into account the comparative advantages of RHLAC management, described in Chapter 7 and recommends *maintaining the regional implementation modality*. This implies the overall leadership, management and coordination by the RHLAC with strong engagement of Country Offices in the implementation and decision-making. While the regional implementation modality may imply higher transaction costs, as opposed to the multi-country project format, the regional project format provides stronger guarantees for the achievement of the results, execution of project funds, coherence of interventions and as a result, wider potential impact of South-South Cooperation interventions, as evidenced by the success of the CRMI Phase II.

For better outreach and coordination, the evaluation considers it reasonable to delegate implementation to *sub-regional units in specific Country Offices*, based on the capacity of each given office and the scope of the intervention. The possible sub-regional units may include, but not be limited to UNDP Cuba, as the provider of the experience; UNDP Barbados, given its proximity to and mandate with Eastern Caribbean countries and location of CDEMA; and/or Jamaica, which serves Bahamas, Bermuda, Turks & Caicos Islands and Cayman Islands.

Depending on the implementation modality (regional vs. multi-country) and source of funding (TTF vs. TRAC), the evaluation recommends *delegating financial management to Country Offices*, to reduce the transaction costs, increase the Country Office engagement and commitment and speed up the administrative processes. In those circumstances, where such delegation is not feasible, the evaluation recommends reducing the transaction costs by allowing certain *flexibility in the application* of the procurement rules spelled out in the POPP at the discretion of the Country Offices. Likewise, the evaluation recommends exploring different *cost-recovery* options for Country Offices, including but not limited to Universal Price List (UPL) and Direct Project Costs.

The evaluation strongly recommends strengthening the *resource mobilization efforts* through a closer engagement of potential donors, such as EU, World Bank, Caribbean Development Bank, in project-related events, communication and awareness efforts. The Evaluation particularly recommends *scaling up of awareness-raising activities aimed* at the decision-makers in beneficiary institutions (RRMCs, national DM/DRM institutions, CDEMA, civil society organizations) to improve their awareness and buy-in and stimulate financial contributions to the project. Provisions for cost-recovery should be made in the budget during the initial planning.

The evaluations considers it of utmost importance that the RHLAC count with the services of a *full-time disaster/climate change coordinator* for the Caribbean who would be in charge of identifying, designing and implementing regional interventions in disaster risk management and climate change adaptation. Depending on the scope of the future project and financial allocation, the evaluation recommends budgeting a position of a *full-time regional financial/administrative assistant*. The evaluation also recommends making provisions for *full-time project coordinators* and support personnel in the beneficiary countries based on the scope of future interventions and the projected workload.

The evaluation considers it crucial for the *effectiveness* of future interventions to *engage the national and corporate stakeholders* in the articulation and design at the onset of the project. The evaluation recommends *strengthening coordination and communication* by improving information sharing, monitoring and feedback between all levels of project management. For this purpose, the evaluation considers it of utmost importance to conduct *annual meetings* of the Project Board with the participation of RC/RRs and senior level representatives of beneficiary governments. At the same time, the evaluation recommends establishing a *project technical committee* with the participation of technical/operational staff of participating UNDP Offices and national stakeholders. These two levels of consultation would contribute to stronger engagement, awareness and ownership of the stakeholders and will improve the decision-making process.

The evaluation highly recommends *strengthening horizontal cooperation* between the Country Offices on the one hand and between the national stakeholders on the other, by facilitating information exchanges and coordination between the participating project teams and supervising staff. Project technical committee can be one such vehicle for improved horizontal cooperation, through regular[[18]](#footnote-18) meetings of corporate and national stakeholders. The evaluation also recommends using Project events for organizing stakeholder encounters organizing side events during workshops and conferences. Another effective instrument for horizontal cooperation can be an *interactive virtual space* for communication and exchange. This space (moderated or not) can be offered as a separate platform or opened in the framework of the CRMI platform operated by the Project and will imply hosting and maintenance costs. The evaluation highly recommends costing and including the horizontal cooperation activities in the budget.

The evaluation recommends *increasing the involvement of RHLAC thematic teams* in the design, implementation and monitoring of future interventions, as well as the systematization of knowledge. Likewise, the evaluation recommends strengthening coordination with and engagement of *UN agencies* through UNCT system and/or UNDG LAC team in Panama. The inclusion of a relevant UN Agency and/or thematic team in a project board is recommended for better synergies and increased efficiency. The evaluation also recommends further pursuing *partnerships with different regional organizations* in the Caribbean (CARICOM through CDEMA and CCCCCas well as CIMH) and possibly, Central America (SICA through CEPREDENACand CCAD).

The evaluation highly recommends conducting *capacity assessments of the beneficiary institutions prior* to planning the activities. In the case of RRMC, the assessment should not replace the self-evaluation by the beneficiary institutions but complement it, to allow better adjustment of the RRMC model to specific circumstances. Combined with the hazard profile of the recipient country, the capacity assessment results would help better target the intervention and adapt the model to the characteristics of the recipient country. The *capacity assessments* should include, among others, the assessment of the legal and political environment, the existence of adequate technical and functional capacities, processes, infrastructure, governance structures, knowledge, awareness, etc. The assessment should target different levels of the beneficiary institution, both decision-makers, and technical staff. The evaluation also recommends conducting an *inventory and costing of existing tangible and intangible assets and needs* to determine the real costs of the RRMC transfer. The inventory can be carried out simultaneously with the capacity assessment or as part of it.

The evaluation highly recommends *providing a basic introduction to and guidelines on UNDP administrative procedures* to all stakeholders involved in the implementation or affected by the procurement rules. The evaluation also recommends factoring the initial delays associated with the start-up activities (contracting, procurement, etc.) in the workplans and budgets.

The evaluation considers it of utmost importance to start planning the *sustainability* of the intervention at the design stage, in consultation with all involved parties. Capacity assessments of beneficiaries and preliminary costing of the intervention should provide sufficient information about the potential sustainability challenges, such as the availability of adequate legal and institutional frameworks, existence of relevant technical and functional capacities, mechanisms and tools, guidelines, protocols, financial resources etc. Proper and continuous *monitoring* of the project will ensure that the sustainability challenges are identified and addressed early on.

To ensure the *sustainability* of the Project results, the pilot RRMC model needs to be sustained, improved and expanded to other locations in the Caribbean and potentially in Central and Southern America. In order to achieve full adaptation of the RRMC model, all its components need to be completed, most importantly the Risk and Vulnerability Studies and the RRMCs institutionalized in local governance structures.

The evaluation recommends at least biannual *monitoring of the RRMCs* in the five beneficiary countries in the course of the following 2-3 years. The monitoring should be done on the basis of a standardized monitoring checklist to be developed for each RRMC. This will allow collecting and comparing lessons on the adaptation and sustainability of the RRMCs in different contexts and improving the RRMC model, thus completing the full cycle of the RRMC transfer and adaptation. Without such ex-post monitoring and analysis, the information about the experience will not be complete and will lack important knowledge about different factors that affect sustainability and effectiveness of the model and the South-South Cooperation mechanism employed. The systematized RRMC experience should be duly updated with the ex-post monitoring results to offer the lessons learned and appropriate corrective actions for the RRMC transfer.

In order to improve the quality and impact of the transferred knowledge, the evaluation recommends strengthening the *knowledge systematization and training capacities* of UNDP Cuba and Cuban stakeholders as the providers of the experience. In particular, the evaluation recommends *training the potential trainers* to improve the pedagogical skills and knowledge delivery methods. The evaluation strongly recommends elaborating a complete package of RRMC guidelines and operational manuals for beneficiary communities based on the systematized knowledge and lessons learned. These guidelines and manuals will help ensure better planning of future activities and resources and will contribute to the increased efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of results.

The evaluation also recommends exploring different ways of *institutionalizing the results*. As mentioned earlier, communities with stronger governance structures and commitment have a higher probability of success and sustainability of RRMCs. A Letter of Agreement signed at the early stages of the Project, which commits the recipient community to the Project, can be one of the requisites of eligibility for funding. Another possible, albeit difficult way of institutionalizing the results can be a legal act, executive order or other normative action issued upon completion of the intervention, prior to the transfer of the goods and assets to the beneficiary.

# LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1. Evaluation Terms of Reference

Annex 2. Evaluation Matrix

Annex 3. List of Evaluation Respondents

Annex 4. Data Sources and Bibliography

Annex 5. Results and Resources Framework of the Project

Annex 6. CRMI II Knowledge Products

Annex 7. Brief Biography of the Evaluator

Annex 8. Code of Ethical Conduct

1. The name *UNDP Regional Service Centre for LAC (RSC LAC)* was replaced by the *UNDP Regional Hub for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDP RHLAC)* in the fall 2014 to reflect the corporate restructuring process. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. While the Project was implemented in 7 countries, only five (British Virgin Islands, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago) benefitted from direct project interventions through RRMCs. Cuba was involved as the creator of the RRMC model and overall provider of experience and knowhow on RRMC implementation.As for the Barbados, it was involved through the support provided by the UNDP Country Office for the implementation of the Output 2 (Gender and PDNA); support provided to the British Virgin Islands in the adaptation of the RRMC model; and, cooperation with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), located in Barbados. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Regional Programme Outcome 4 and Output 4.3 are aligned with the Strategic Plan Outcome 5 and Output 5.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands are associate members of the OECS. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The evaluation could not reconstruct the Project’s Theory of Change given the lack of institutional memory due to the departure of Project managers and UNDP staff, involved in the design of the CRMI II. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The BCPR Thematic Trust Funds are designated by the donors to BCPR, which, in turn designated them to the RHLAC for the Project. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. One such meeting was held in the framework of the RR/RC Cluster meeting in Guyana on 1 October 2012 and included the CRMI countries as well as other Caribbean and Central American countries (Belize, Haiti and Suriname). Consultations resulting in the subsequent Project revision took place during the meeting. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Regional Programme Outcome 4 and Output 4.3 are aligned to Strategic Plan Outcome 5 and Output 5.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches in Program Evaluation, (with Michael Woolcock), in Francois Bourgingnon and Luiz Pereira Da Silva (edited) *Tool Kit for Evaluating the Poverty and Distributional Impact of Economic Policies*, World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2003 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. World Bank Handbook on Impact Evaluation, Quantitative Methods and Practices, Khandker, Shahidur, Koolwal, Gayatri, Samad, Hussain, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. E.g. In Cuba some respondents considered that the object of evaluation were the RRMCs in Cuba, rather than the RRMC model transferred through South-South Cooperation. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, UNEG [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. These services include cost of premises, equipment, data, personnel and the like. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. While the evaluation acknowledges that power relations between genders in the Caribbean may be different from other regions, gender-based inequality and vulnerability is a major issue in both the Spanish and English speaking Caribbean, according to the *Inter-Agency Group on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment for Latin America and the Caribbean* (<http://americalatinagenera.org/es/documentos/post2015_fichas/Inequality.pdf>) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. UNDP Barbados is currently implementing two projects with a PDNA component: the Eastern Caribbean Recovery project which was established to facilitate the recovery process in Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and led to the development of the PDNA in these countries.  Separate from this is the WB GFDRR funded Project - Strengthening capacity in PDNA in the region, which aims at building awareness and advocacy on PDNA and its elements for relevant ministries. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Quarterly or biannual, depending on the availability of funds. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)