

Management Response to the Terminal Evaluation of the Capacity Development for Improved Management of Multilateral Environmental Agreements for Global Environmental Benefits Project

Project Title: Capacity Development for Improved Management of Multilateral Environmental Agreements for Global Environmental Benefits

Project PIMS #: 5372

GEF Project ID (PMIS) #: 5847

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Context, background and findings

1. This document is the response to recommended actions in the independent evaluation of the CCCD project. The objective of the terminal evaluation is to provide an external assessment of the project. It further provides decision makers with information to assess the performance of the projects financed by GEF.

2. The main findings of the TE Report are:

“The CCCD Project was designed to address those capacity barriers identified in Trinidad and Tobago, which hinder the proper implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). Its primary objective was to implement capacity development activities in Trinidad and Tobago to improve the synergistic implementation of MEAs and contribute to increased national and global environmental benefits. In keeping with this, the goal of the Project was to build in-country capacities to better manage global environmental concerns and issues based on Trinidad and Tobago’s particular priorities and needs through MEAs and their implementation tools.”

“While the Project has had many delays during its implementation, several products have been achieved, with some results already evident. The remaining operational period of the Project should be utilized to not only implement these products/activities but to also generate sustainability by dissemination of the information the Project has generated. It would also be important to establish mechanisms to ensure the continuity of not only the capacity building activities, but additionally, the strengthening of consultative and management structures and mechanisms, integration of MEAs’ provisions within national policy, legislative, and regulatory frameworks, and the identification of financial tools for convention implementation, over the long term in Trinidad and Tobago.”

2. Issues raised in the evaluation have been noted by the project implementing agency (UNDP) and implementing partner (MPD). In the table that follows, detailed responses to each of the recommendations and proposed follow-up actions are suggested where necessary.

Recommendations and Management Response

<p>Terminal Evaluation Recommendation 1.</p> <p>A champion organization is required to ensure sustainability and find solutions to existing problems, particularly those relating to information collection. The lead agency would be charged with the responsibility of coordinating dialogues among various stakeholders and compiling recommendations to take forward for action. This would also include key decision-makers whose “buy in” is critical to sustainability and a longer-term impact of the Project. Steps must be taken to continue to foster the collaborative linkages fostered under the Project, and that CSOs in particular are provided with the necessary support to develop meaningful projects that could lead to both national and global environmental benefits. The champion organization needs to carry on the Project’s work to generate sustainability by dissemination of the information and by identifying mechanisms that would allow capacity activities to remain applicable and current over the long term in Trinidad and Tobago.</p>				
<p>Management response: The organization described in this recommendation exists in the form of the MEA Unit (MEAU) at the MPD. Efforts with respect to this recommendation are inherent in the mandate of and work conducted by the MEAU and will continue through the products of this project. These products include the MEAs TT website (meastt.gov.tt), as well as knowledge products, technical reports and audio-visual material, which have been disseminated via print and electronic means, such as Facebook, Environmental Policy and Planning Division (EPPD) Blog and local media. Brochures and booklets will also be placed in the offices and on the websites of relevant government agencies.</p> <p>Sustainability will also be ensured through the online MEA course, which has been developed and the continued collaboration with the MEA Focal Point Network (FPN) that includes Project Steering Committee members and other project stakeholders and has seen renewed commitment during this project. The MEAs TT website has a dedicated members’ forum for the FPN, which will facilitate virtual networking that will be combined with in-person initiatives by the MEAU when the national health regulations allow public gatherings.</p> <p>The OFP will also recommend the creation of a Cabinet appointed Committee for MEAs consisting of all Ministries and Agencies involved in MEAs. This will allow for better coordination and implementation of MEAs including provision of data. This committee should be chaired by Permanent Secretary MPD or Foreign Affairs.</p>				
Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Continue interaction with stakeholders and the FPN after conclusion of the project	NA	MPD, UNDP		

<p>Terminal Evaluation Recommendation 2.</p> <p>Find resources to continue building the technical and organizational capacity of CSOs so that they can take a more significant role vis à vis environmental management and MEAs implementation in Trinidad and Tobago. Notwithstanding the importance of the information and data collection process, the organizations undertaking this effort have been operating with limited funding, making them unable to engage in a sustained manner with other more established institutions and organizations. This requires follow-up in the post-project period to ensure that CSOs can effectively take on their “new” implied roles.</p>				
<p>Management response: A key outcome of this project is the increase in capacity of CSOs to apply to the Green Fund of Trinidad and Tobago to implement projects related to MEAs. One of the project’s initiatives included a training and mentorship programme for increasing organizational and project management capacity of CSOs. This programme has engaged 18 participant organizations and will also be continued after the project has been completed through partnership with the CSOs. Further collaboration with GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) and their associated training programme(s) will be recommended for future projects to build the capacity of CSOs.</p>				
Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Continue collaboration with CSOs on issues related to MEAs and facilitate future delivery of the training programme	NA	MPD		

<p>Terminal Evaluation Recommendation 3.</p> <p>To further enhance the collaborative processes between the various stakeholders, strengthen communication and information sharing using the champion agency. Enhancement of the MEAFN is one mechanism that could facilitate this process with discussions between governmental and non-governmental organizations, and also between governmental organizations on how to sustain this communication and information sharing.</p>				
<p>Management response: The FPN has been reaffirmed during the project by a comprehensive update exercise, through which existing members were confirmed and new members were able to register for the FPN. The MEAU will continue to register new members, create and maintain linkages among existing members, including communication and information sharing, through virtual means using the FPN membership forum on the MEAs TT website and, when circumstances allow, through in-person networking sessions.</p>				
<p>The OFP will also recommend the creation of a Cabinet appointed Committee for MEAs consisting of all Ministries and Agencies involved in MEAs. This will allow for better coordination and implementation of MEAs including provision of data. This committee should be chaired by Permanent Secretary MPD or Foreign Affairs.</p>				

Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
3.1 Continue to collaborate with stakeholders especially through the MEA FPN	NA	MPD		

<p>Terminal Evaluation Recommendation 4.</p> <p>Follow-up with the continuation of the work started in the areas of training, education and outreach on MEAs obligations beyond the Project. Resources will be required to fund the academic institutions that have expressed an interest in mainstreaming MEAs implementation into their programmes, something that could contribute to sustainability. While the Project has developed a number of materials to support the knowledge transfer for part of the process, there is an issue of what happens in the absence of funding. It has been suggested that training, education and outreach activities would only continue if funding were available.</p>				
<p>Management response: The MEA training course will continue as an online course that was developed during this project and will be hosted by UWI Open Campus, an accredited academic institution, that will be available at no cost to stakeholders for a minimum of three (3) years. The CSO capacity building programme developed for this project will also be available online through a comprehensive CSO knowledge portal that is hosted by a national CSO, the Cropper Foundation. This will also be available at no cost to local CSOs. The training of trainers exercise conducted by this project has produced a cohort of 29 stakeholders who are equipped to guide their colleagues and other stakeholders on MEA obligations. These measures will ensure that training continues even in the absence of funding. Further collaboration with GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) and their associated training programme(s) will be recommended for future projects to build the capacity of CSOs.</p>				
Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
4.1 Continue training and outreach after the project	NA	MPD, Academic institutions, CSOs		

<p>Terminal Evaluation Recommendation 5.</p> <p>Generate synergies between current projects that deal either with MEAs and MEA-related environmental policy and processes at the technical as well as at the decision-making processes levels. Projects should summon lead ministries as well as other agencies that are involved in MEAs to acknowledge the cross-cutting nature of multilateral environmental agreements and MEA-related environmental policy.</p>				
<p>Management response: This recommendation is noted and these criteria have been incorporated into national projects. Current projects such as the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) are implemented using this synergistic and cross-cutting approach. The OFP will also recommend the creation of a Cabinet appointed Committee for MEAs consisting of all Ministries and Agencies involved in MEAs. This will allow for better coordination and implementation of MEAs including provision of data. This committee should be chaired by Permanent Secretary MPD or Foreign Affairs.</p>				

Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
5.1 Continue to build synergies between projects that are related to MEA implementation	NA	MPD, UNDP, Government agencies		

<p>Terminal Evaluation Recommendation 6.</p> <p>GEF should consider the inclusion of a <i>force majeure</i> clause for projects and provide some leeway in the granting of extensions under conditions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic resulted in many disruptions to the Project.</p> <p>Management response: This recommendation is noted. For future projects, GEF Agencies will also examine the challenges experienced and lessons learned during the pandemic and include mitigation measures to avert or decrease the impact of such a risk.</p>				
Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
6.1 Include a clause to cater for extraordinary or unforeseen delays and project extensions, e.g., COVID-19 pandemic	For future projects – during preparatory stage	GEF, UNDP		

<p>Terminal Evaluation Recommendation 7.</p> <p>The budget of a project should reflect the resources required at design including sufficient resources to manage a project and to draw the capacities needed for consultancies. This should include a realistic financial plan with adequate costing of management personnel and technical inputs that includes technical staff and consultancies, training programs and awareness raising material.</p> <p>Management response: This recommendation is noted and will be taken into consideration for future projects.</p>				
Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
6.1 Prepare future project budgets to include sufficient resources for project implementation	For future projects – during preparatory stage	GEF, UNDP, Implementing partners		

<p>Terminal Evaluation Recommendation 8.</p> <p>A capacity building project should have a result-based design with indicators that reflect the desired impacts of the project. The type of end-of-project indicators for a capacity building project should measure actual uptake of capacity building activities at the individual and institutional levels, and that results indicators should reflect effects attributable to the project.</p> <p>Management response: This recommendation is noted and will be taken into consideration for future projects.</p>				
Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
6.1 Design indicators for future capacity development projects to reflect desired impacts attributable to the project	For future projects – during preparatory stage	GEF, UNDP, Implementing partners		

<p>Terminal Evaluation Recommendation 9.</p> <p>Timing of a project needs to be in accordance with what a project is trying to achieve. For instance, a capacity building project should unfold within an adequate time period to see results and effects.</p> <p>Management response: This recommendation is noted and will be taken into consideration for future projects.</p>				
Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
6.1 Ensure that capacity building projects are given sufficient time to be able to measure its effects	For future projects – during preparatory stage	GEF, UNDP, Implementing partners		

<p>Terminal Evaluation Recommendation 10.</p> <p>Attempt to link similar in future CCCD projects which are being implemented with GEF support in several nations, in particular in countries in the same region and sub-region, in order for them to learn from each other.</p> <p>Management response: This recommendation is noted and will be taken into consideration for future projects.</p>				
Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status

6.1 Link capacity building projects that are being implemented in the same region	For future projects – during preparatory stage	GEF, UNDP, Implementing partners		
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<p>Terminal Evaluation Recommendation 11.</p> <p>For projects to promote a gender equality approach, a gender action plan should be set that fully addresses the different needs of men or women from design and from implementation onset. Related to this, design should include sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits, so that development benefits in general and gender aspects of a project can be monitored effectively throughout the full implementing process.</p> <p>Management response: Subsequent to the development of this project, GEF-funded projects are now required to prepare a Gender Analysis and Action Plan during the project preparation phase. The issues raised in this recommendation are included in this plan.</p>				
Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
6.1 Design future projects to include indicators that capture gender aspects and benefits of the project	For future projects – during preparatory stage	GEF, UNDP, Implementing partners		