Project Information Document/ Identification/Concept Stage (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 18-Dec-2020 | Report No: PIDC208069

BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)	Environmental and Social Risk Classification	Project Name
P173017		Low	GPSA CARIBBEAN – COLLABORATIVE SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR IMPROVED GOVERNANCE IN PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS PROJECT
Region	**Country**	**Date PID Prepared**	**Estimated Date of Approval**
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	Caribbean	18-Dec-2020	
Financing Instrument	**Borrower(s)**	**Implementing Agency**	
Investment Project Financing	Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo (INTEC)	Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo (INTEC), Integrated Health Outreach (IHO)	

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	0.50
Total Financing	0.50
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	0.50
Global Partnership for Social Accountability	0.50

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

The Caribbean region has huge economic potential and growth opportunities. Many small economies, particularly the tourism-dependent economies, such as country members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)[1], have been growing fast in the last three years. In 2017, the OECS posted 3.3 percent growth from 2016. However, public debt is high across the OECS, putting a limit on state spending in other areas. OECS countries have made limited progress in reducing poverty despite their high human development indices and per-capita incomes. Unemployment, especially among women and youth, remains high, and this contributes to high emigration rates.

The Caribbean has an educated, multilingual workforce and sophisticated financial systems, and is a short hop to the United States, Mexico and other large markets. The region has potential to further develop its services, logistics, agriculture, creative and digital sectors. The Caribbean is also rich in biodiversity resources. For example, the Caribbean Islands biodiversity hotspot is one of the world's greatest centers of biodiversity and endemism (CANARI, 2019). In addition, rich ocean resources drive the "blue economy" in these markets. While the small size of these countries can prove challenging, it also means they can respond quickly to opportunities for innovation and to improve their competitiveness.

The region, however, is extremely vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, and the damages can surpass the annual gross domestic product (GDP) of some nations. Indeed, natural disasters cost the region an estimated US$8.6 billion between 1996 and 2015. Since then, major hurricanes including Irma and Maria in 2017 caused even more damages. Investing to prepare for climate change and natural disasters is critical for the region's resilience.

Caribbean civil society has played an important role in biodiversity conservation in the hotspot. Civil society organisations (CSOs) support management through direct conservation actions (some at a very large scale), and many have championed policy and legislative improvements in the hotspots and have been drivers of change. Some CSOs have partnered at the regional level to monitor country commitments; e.g., the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) serves as an umbrella fund to implement innovative solutions for conservation resource mobilization. Their Conservation Finance Program focuses on the protection and management of biodiversity and natural resources. The proceeds of this Fund are channeled through the partner national conservation trust funds (NCTFs), which lead the grant-making programs at the national level. Eight islands, including Dominican Republic, Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, and Saint Lucia are participating countries.

Moreover, conservation actions have been led by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) and the Basel Convention Regional Centre-Caribbean (BCRC) at the regional level that have encapsulated all countries included in this project. The Caribbean Biological Corridor (CBC) initiative, which began in 2007 with a political declaration from the ministers of the environment of Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, aims to make an important contribution to the long-term conservation of biodiversity based on ecosystems connectivity across countries and beyond political boundaries.

[1] Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Sectoral and Institutional Context

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B. Sector and institutional context

The Caribbean Islands biodiversity hotspot is one of the world's greatest centers of biodiversity and endemism (CANARI, 2019). The biodiversity and the natural services it provides are highly threatened (Shi et al, 2005). The Dominican Republic and Jamaica have multiple Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites, while Antigua and Barbuda has one. Thirty-nine key biodiversity areas (KBAs) have been identified in Dominican Republic, 32 in Jamaica, 6 in Antigua and Barbuda, and 7 in St Lucia (CANARI 2019). Key biodiversity areas of high priority are in Dominican Republic and Jamaica (CANARI 2019).

The loss of biodiversity has negative effects on Caribbean Islands' livelihoods, water supply, food security and resilience to extreme events. Consequences for the poor who often rely on ecosystems and the goods they produce to make a living are particularly dire (The IPCC, 2014). Thus, biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources are essential tools in the fight against poverty (Mercer, 2012).

Although the islands have protected areas systems, most are inadequately managed and important areas lack protection (6th National Report, 2019). The 2019 Clearing-House Mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CHM), which provides effective global information services to facilitate the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, noted that the risks to biodiversity in Caribbean islands had not changed much since 2001. Anthropogenic drivers range from poor management practices, low knowledge and awareness to failures in the collective and individual behaviors towards environmental protection. Principal among the pressures is the drive for the generation of economic revenue and unregulated development, often with unsustainable environmental practices.

International agreements have guided the development of national biodiversity and climate change strategies outlining specific actions and coordination mechanisms in the region. One of the important agreements is the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters (the Escazú Agreement). It is the first treaty for the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region that requires countries to ensure that the public has the right to obtain access to environmental information, participate in decisions that affect the environment and obtain justice for environmental wrongs (United Nations, 2018). The Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, and St Lucia are all signatories to this Agreement. Jamaica and Antigua and Barbuda have ratified it.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Biodiversity Strategy (CBS) is another framework for regional level assistance to Members of CARICOM in their implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020). The Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (**SPAW Protocol**) was adopted in 1990 in the Caribbean region, and entered into force in 2000. The Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, and St Lucia are all signatories. The Paris Agreement on

Climate Change (2016) is also one of the key framework agreements governing the management and conservation of biodiversity hotspots. The Dominican Republic, Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, and St. Lucia are signatories of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2016) and have ratified it. **Commitments included under the Escazú Agreement and CARICOM's Biodiversity Strategy (CBS) are also included in national sector plans and strategies and country governments have taken some steps to establish mechanisms to monitor progress against these sector plans and strategies.** For instance, the Government of the Dominican Republic has implemented The National Plan Action for Environmental Education. As a result of conservation and public awareness-raising activities, there are indications that the rare and critically endangered Hispaniolan Hawk (Buteo ridgwayi) is recovering although its status remains highly vulnerable. Special conservation programmes have also been developed for the endangered Rock Iguana (Cyclura spp.) and the Amazon Parrot (Amazona spp.), among other species.
Studies conducted by the National Museum of Natural History and the National Botanical Garden have led to the description of 11 new species for science, 24 new animal records and more than 20 new plant records. For its part, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda has ratified the Escazú Agreement. Since 2001, the Government has provided protection status to wetlands and coastal ecosystems, with 20% of watersheds and 30% of mangrove swamps and beaches currently under some level of protection. In this regard, the country is actually on target to meet the requirements of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11. There has been a 100% ban of threatened plant and animal species from commercial trade; stopping of sand mining from most beaches and the development of a sustainable island resource management and zoning plan. This zoning plan has been completed and accepted by Cabinet. [2]

The capacity and extent of national and local civil society groups' participation in the monitoring of governments' commitments on biodiversity conservation is still low and uneven within and across countries. In the Dominican Republic, civil society has important groups that have been involved in issues such as the protection of biodiversity, adaptation to climate change, the co-management of specific protected areas, good practices in sustainable agriculture, agroforestry systems, reforestation and improvements in the integral management of natural resources. In the case of monitoring, in the Jaragua Biosphere Reserve, Bahoruco, Enriquillo, CSOs are part of the Reserve Management Committee, collaborating with the incorporation of activities to monitor the conservation of biodiversity, represented in local species such as endemic iguanas, bird species and the cloud forest of the Sierra de Bahoruco, threatened by the expansion of the Agricultural Frontier. However, these activities are insufficient to ensure sustainable biodiversity and climate change conservation. Capacities for public policy advocacy and meaningful participation in policymaking and implementation are still very low or nonexistent, especially in local communities, but also in terms of coordination and collaboration across civil society groups, and between local groups and CSOs located in the capital cities.

At the national level, 30 civil society organizations, representing all sectors of the country, make up the Dominican Forum on Climate Change. The objective of the Forum is to accompany the process of formulating and complying with public policies for adaptation to climate change, one of the main drivers of the degradation of biodiversity in the Dominican Republic. The monitoring process requires more structured use of problem-driven collaborative social accountability tools in order to generate systematic and actionable feedback that

can help to inform decision-making at both central and local levels, while empowering civil society groups to improve its coordination and influence.

In Antigua and Barbuda, civil society has been a long-standing arm for the conservation and management of biodiversity. The Marine Ecosystem Protected Area (MEPA) Trust, Environmental Awareness Group (EAG), Rotary Club, National Parks Antigua (NPA), and Zero Waste Antigua and Barbuda (ZWAB) are some of the most accomplished groups in monitoring the government's commitments on biodiversity conservation. For instance, MEPA and ZWAB are implementing mercury phase out projects in partnership with the Ministries of Agriculture and Health to comply with the Minamata Convention's requirements. The Offshore Islands Conservation Project is an integral part of the EAG. They work collaboratively with various public sector institutions (PSIs) such as the Department of the Environment and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. NPA is responsible for the conservation of the park's environment and is both a statutory body and NGO.

[1] Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

[2] https://www.cbd.int/countries/profile/?country=ag#facts

Relationship to CPF

The project is aligned with the World Bank's Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for all countries covered by this project. Specifically, it is linked to the CPF for the DR FY15-FY18 *Results Area 3: Supporting the Government in building resilience to external shocks*. Likewise, the Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) for that country (June 2018) has identified in its priority area 4 "Challenges to Sustainable Development", resilience to disasters, climate-related risks, and other shocks; Environmental sustainability; and Social accountability as relevant topics. The CPF for Jamaica FY14-FY19 includes in its third main pillar for engagement Social and Climate Resilience, and specifically as Outcome 8: Improved institutional capacity to plan and respond to climate change events and natural disasters. The CPF for the OECS FY15-19 has included in its Priority Area 3: Resilience, and specifically Outcome 9: Increased capacity to manage natural hazards. The Systematic Regional Diagnostic (SRD) for the OECS countries sets out two priorities related to the project: 1) Priority 1: Build resilience to external shocks from a 360-degree perspective ; and ii) Priority 2: Embed growth in the blue economy.

The project has also been designed in close coordination with and building on lessons learned from the (pipeline) WB project that will support the second phase of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) project. The CEPF provides grants for non-governmental and other civil society organizations to conserve globally important biodiversity within the biodiversity hotspots. In the Caribbean, the objective of CEPF is to improve the capacity of civil society organizations to reduce threats to globally important biodiversity in the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot. Between 2010 and 2015, the CEPF provided $6.9 million support to 11

countries. The next phase of CEPF investment in the Caribbean Islands Hotspot (between 2020 and 2025) will cover Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The first CEPF investment phase in the Caribbean Islands (2010 to 2015) had a strong focus on site-level interventions. CEPF grantees improved management and protection of 25 KBAs covering 593,967 hectares in eight countries through the development, approval and implementation of participatory protected area management plans that engaged communities and resource users. Plans and implementation actions addressed community livelihoods, ecotourism, infrastructure and capacity building, resulting in 12 out of the 17 highest priority KBAs, covering 468,268 hectares, having strengthened protection and management as guided by sustainable management plans.

Lessons learned from the first phase (2010-2015) point to the need to improve regional links within Caribbean civil society and with the donors, public and private sectors, academia and the media around biodiversity hotspots and conservation. The CEPF-supported regional collaborative framework needs to be enhanced to transcend borders, cultures and languages. There is also the need to implement a holistic approach to capacity building. Specific actions that have a strong and sustainable impact anchored in a long-term strategy rather than a single event are needed to significantly improve capacity building for ecosystem conservation (KIUNZI, 2015). Building on the first phase results, the WB in partnership with Conservation International is preparing a new Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund – Caribbean Hotspot Project whose activities this project are aligned with.

C. Project Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The project development objective is to contribute to improving biodiversity conservation in biodiversity hotspots located in four Caribbean countries (Dominican Republic and Antigua and Barbuda with adaptive replication in Jamaica and Saint Lucia) through collaborative social accountability mechanisms between governments, citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs).

Key Results

Project-level results indicators include:

- Share of problems and issues raised by target beneficiaries at the national and sub-national levels and/or relevant spheres of action identified and followed-up through the project supported collaborative social accountability mechanisms[1].

The project will employ a threefold approach for achieving the PDO:

- First, developing, testing, adjusting and iterating sustainable collaborative social accountability mechanisms and processes for protecting biodiversity hotspots;

- Second, developing and iterating a capacity development model to increase civil society-government capacities for joint monitoring and problem-solving; and,
- Third, producing adaptive learning on the use of collaborative social accountability for biodiversity conservation.

At the local level, the project will employ inclusive participation methods focused on engaging and empowering poor and marginalized populations, especially women, youth, the disabled and ethnic minorities, that are particularly vulnerable to the deleterious impact of biodiversity degradation and climate change resilience.

D. Preliminary Description

Activities/Components

Component 1: **Capacity-building for collaborative social accountability:** This component will implement a capacity development plan aimed at equipping community-based and civil society organizations with the skills and abilities needed to use collaborative social accountability tools and mechanisms for problem-solving around biodiversity hotspots' conservation. Moreover, the component will be aligned with activity I of component 4 of the CEPF project. Given the diversity of contexts targeted by the project, it is anticipated that both CSOs based in capital cities and CBOS based in local communities will be included, based on a stakeholder mapping. The goal of the component's activities will be to have local CBOs, CSOs and citizen groups with the capacity to independently lead (and sustain over time) biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and hotspot monitoring, including by working in a collaborative manner with government representatives, and by holding them accountable for damaging environmental practices. Moreover, drawing on the GPSA's experience, government representatives will also be included in relevant capacity development activities.

Component 2: **Implementing collaborative social accountability mechanisms for improved biodiversity conservation and hotspot monitoring:** The objective of this component is to integrate biodiversity values, climate resilience and citizen feedback into national and local planning to address ecosystem challenges and to improve hotspot monitoring by creating new or strengthening existing civil society and public sector-led participatory mechanisms, with a focus on mechanisms for collaborative problem-solving that will help accelerate state responsiveness. Moreover, the component will be aligned with activity II of component 4 of the CEPF project.

Component 3: **Improving knowledge and learning on social accountability in the Caribbean biodiversity conservation sector and project management:** The objective of this component is to establish an internal adaptive knowledge and learning process to regularly adjust project implementation based on experience and contextual circumstances, and to generate knowledge and learning for targeted external dissemination

amongst key stakeholders that may take up lessons from the project to apply, sustain or scale collaborative social accountability and/or inform substantive decisions. Activities under this component will be aligned with activity iii, Component 4 of the CEPF project.

The project's components and activities will be closely coordinated with CEPF-funded components and activities as well as with other donor-funded initiatives. Specifically, this project aligns with the following components of the WBG Caribbean Hotspots CEPF project:

(Component 2): Increased Capacity of CSOs in Conservation which aims to further strengthen the capacity of local, national and regional civil society in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through targeted capacity development activities and dedicated knowledge exchanges. The GPSA project could provide support in (i) training of CEPF beneficiaries on monitoring biodiversity conservation and (ii) mentoring CEPF beneficiaries to facilitate partnerships for coordinated conservation actions through social accountability mechanisms.

(Component 4): Strengthened CSO Partnerships for Conservation, which aims to facilitate partnerships of CSOs and other stakeholders to design and implement conservation actions in and around priority KBAs. This component will pilot collaborative social accountability at priority sites and clusters of priority sites by establishing platforms for collaboration among CSOs, local and national governments, private landowners and local communities to co-create analyses of and solutions to conservation challenges through constructive engagement. The GPSA project will focus on Antigua and Barbuda, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and St Lucia. In The Bahamas, Haiti and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, this component will be led by the RIT, learning from the experience of INTEC.

Following the GPSA's adaptive management approach, some activities and their sequencing may be adjusted during the project's inception phase to better align with the workplan for the CEPF project and respond to beneficiaries' needs and other contextual factors. Moreover, adjustments to implementation and strategies are expected and will be reflected in the project's bi-annual and annual technical progress reports.

Environmental and Social Standards Relevance

E. Relevant Standards

ESS Standards		Relevance
ESS 1	Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	Relevant
ESS 10	Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure	Relevant
ESS 2	Labor and Working Conditions	Relevant
ESS 3	Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and	Not Currently Relevant

	Management	
ESS 4	Community Health and Safety	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 5	Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 6	Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 7	Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 8	Cultural Heritage	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 9	Financial Intermediaries	Not Currently Relevant

Legal Operational Policies

Safeguard Policies	Triggered	Explanation (Optional)
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No	
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No	

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The project has a fairly large scope in that it will cover multiple countries and CSOs within the Caribbean region. The social risk classification for this project is currently considered to be low. The project involves capacity building and will not include any civil works nor will it purchase any equipment or vehicles. There is also some social risk as it relates to the exclusion of certain groups/organizations in accessing the capacity building training/exercises that will be offered through the project. With respect to labor, there will be some risk with respect to the labor practices of the CSOs. These risks can be easily mitigated through capacity building by ESF training and proper implementation support and monitoring. The environmental risk is rated Low at the Concept stage, nature and scale of negative environmental risks and impacts of proposed project activities are expected to vary from moderate to even low, taken the project design is geared to improve the management, conservation and governance of the countries? biodiversity through a collaborative social accountability process. Despite environmentally positive design objectives at this concept stage, low risks include (i) an overall limited consideration and capacity for biodiversity conservation in general for planning demonstrated by the reduction of biodiversity; (ii) the need for longer-term work with conservation policies especially in relation to livelihoods, water supply, food security, and resilience to extreme events; (iii) the weakness of the countries and CSOs and CBOs to tackle challenges it faces for biodiversity conservation in general into the development plans of the countries to achieve behavioral changes; and (iv) an overall in-country low capacity.

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