

**CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND AWARENESS BUILDING
THROUGH DONOR INTERVENTION**

**A Rapid Appraisal of Selected Projects
Under the GEF/Small Grants Programme in the Eastern Caribbean.**

14th February 1998

Floyd Homer

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Context of this evaluation and limitations of the study.

The Global Environmental Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF/SGP) was launched in 1992 by UNDP. The GEF/SGP provides grants of up to US\$50,000 and other support to community-based groups and non-governmental organisations for activities that address local problems related to the GEF areas of concern. The purpose of this evaluation is to review the performance of the programme especially during the period 1995-1997. In this report, attention has been given to selected projects in the Eastern Caribbean that are under the jurisdiction of the GEF/SGP Coordinator based at UNDP Barbados.

There are 13 ongoing projects in the Eastern Caribbean distributed among eight islands (Appendix 1). Projects in five islands apart from Barbados, were selected for site visits based on the degree of completion, geographic and local socio-cultural differences, representation of GEF focal areas, and logistical feasibility. During January 1998 projects in Grenada, St Kitts, Antigua, and Barbados were appraised by this author through field visits, discussion with some NGO and CBO members, staff at UNDP, members of the Project Selection Committee, and through review of in-house project files and GEF/SGP documentation.

Due to the timing and short visits imposed for field work as well as logistical arrangements, several key persons in some of the islands were not available and therefore a broad range of stakeholders could not be interviewed. The time spent in the field was inadequate in several cases, additionally due to constraints of inter-island travel.

Overview of the region.

There are 10 island states and territories in the Eastern Caribbean served by the GEF/SGP office in Barbados. This chain of islands are located between 11° and 19° North Latitude and between 59° and 65° West Longitude. The distance between the two outermost islands is approximately 1000 kilometres. These islands range in size from 91 km² to 750 km², with varied topography, geology, flora and fauna, and relatively high coastal population densities. Table 1 provides a summary of selected statistics for these islands. Governance in these States is through Parliamentary democracy, essentially based on the British Westminster system. NGOs and CBOs are encouraged as partners in the development process, though with varying degrees of success, especially since community participation in decision making at the local level is generally still in its infancy in the Caribbean.

Inter-island transportation and telecommunication are good and often reliable, however, they are relatively expensive in the Caribbean context and effective consultations are limited by budgetary restrictions.

Although all of these islands share a common history of European colonisation, slavery, and plantation economies, there are many socio-cultural and political differences which have evolved over time to impact on the utilisation and rate of degradation of each State's natural resources. Currently, the economy of some of these islands is heavily dependent on tourism, while others are more dependent on banana or sugar exports, with increasing reliance on tourism.

TABLE 1. STATISTICS ON SELECTED CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

COUNTRIES	POPULATION 1994	LAND AREA km ²	POPULATION DENSITY per km ²	PER CAPITA GDP US\$ 1994	GDP GROWTH (%) 1994
ANGUILLA	9,900	91	109	6,153	7
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	64,200	440	146	7,702	5.3
BARBADOS	264,300	432	612	6,578	4
BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS	17,800	150	119	15,579	3.5
DOMINICA	73,500	750	98	2,825	1.8
GRENADA	97,000	345	281	2,810	2
MONTSERRAT	10,400	102	102	5,846	0.8
ST KITTS AND NEVIS	42,800	269	159	4,889	3
ST LUCIA	142,700	616	232	3,596	2.2
ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	107,400	388	277	2,390	2

Source: Caribbean Development Bank Annual Report 1995

Recovery in the agricultural sector from hurricane damage to some countries export crops, particularly banana, has been slow and compounded by low productivity in some food crops due to infestations of the pink mealy bug. Additionally, Caribbean bananas producers are likely to lose their preferential access to the European Union (EU) market before 2002. This situation is expected to bring increased hardship to many communities whose livelihood depend on the export of bananas. The predicted loss of preferential treatment was brought about by the USA and Latin American banana producing countries successfully getting the World Trade Organisation to rule on the validity of the existing arrangement between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

Eastern Caribbean institutions are also trying to cope with the impact of significant reductions in international development assistance to the sub-region which began about three years ago. For example, the United States Agency for International Development and the Canadian International Development Agency no longer fund many activities in the sub-region. The UNDP-Barbados Office which services the Eastern Caribbean, now has a budgetary allocation for 1996-2001 of about 11% of that for the previous five-year period.

Local NGO/CBO capabilities vary among the islands, especially in terms of their approach to participatory planning and management of projects. NGOs/CBOs in Dominica, Grenada, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and St Lucia have considerably more experience and success in actively involving communities in various aspects of their projects, in comparison to the NGOs in Anguilla, Montserrat, the British Virgin Islands, St Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, and Barbados. This difference could in part be attributed to socio-cultural and political factors, for example, in St Vincent, rural communities through self-help, often plan, manage and supply free labour for small scale infrastructural projects in their area, using materials provided by the Government.

Regional NGOs in particular, are not as active as they were five years ago because reduced donor funding has led to a cut back in staffing and project activities. NGOs/CBOs with more experience, more full time staff, better skill at sourcing resources, and more broadbased support are more effective at utilising GEF funding (or any other funds), and in managing their projects. Less capable NGOs/CBOs are given the opportunity through SGP projects to increase their capacity to manage and to address some local needs.

Commitment to environmental protection.

The countries of the Eastern Caribbean have all signed or ratified several international agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Climate Change Convention, the Cartagena Convention (Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region) and the SPAW protocol (Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife). Government agencies are engaged in activities or in preparation for activities, in fulfillment of their obligations under these international agreements.

Since 1994, National Environmental Action Plans were prepared for most of these countries and all member States had endorsed a commitment to a Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States. This programme was developed as a consequence of the United Nations First Global Conference for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which was held in Barbados in 1994.

Other small grants programmes of relevance.

There are a few small grants programmes for natural resources management, which are administered from within the Caribbean and can be accessed by NGOs and CBOs. These are identified below.

The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives administered by the Development Section, Canadian High Appraisal of Eastern Caribbean GEF/SGP Projects

Commission in Barbados : The aim of this grant is to provide funding for NGOs and community groups to undertake sustainable development and income generating projects under 34 different themes (including the environment, human resource development, education and training, and science and technology). The maximum grant size is CAD\$50,000.

The Small Projects Facility administered by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States/ Natural Resources Management Unit (OECS/NRMU), located in St Lucia : The aim is to assist NGOs and CBOs in the OECS to initiate projects which address local coastal resource use issues and which will strengthen the local management and technical capabilities of these organisations. The maximum grant size is US\$10,000.

The Micro-Project Scheme administered by the Federal Republic of Germany through the German Embassy located in Trinidad and Tobago : This grant funding is for NGOs, community groups, and Government departments to purchase expendable and non-expendable equipment for self-help projects, mainly in the area of poverty eradication. The maximum grant size is US\$10,000.

The Small Grant Fund administered by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) located in St Lucia : The aim is to support NGO, CBO and Government projects that increase community participation in natural resource management. The maximum grant size is US\$2,500.

These grant sources do not compete with the GEF/SGP for projects; they supplement the large demand by Caribbean NGOs and CBOs for grant funding. For example, the National Coordinator received 43 proposals for funding in 1997, of which only seven were approved. Appendix 1 identifies the projects funded since 1994, the year in which the Eastern Caribbean SGP began. The extent to which the other sources of grants are known to, and utilised by NGOs and CBOs is unknown, however, preliminary enquiries indicated that some groups were unaware of these sources.

Country programme strategy.

The GEF/SGP in the Eastern Caribbean has a vision of empowering target communities to a level where they are capable of sustaining their livelihoods and can manage their affairs via a dynamic process that improves the quality of their lives. In the short term, empowerment will be developed through activities that increase: 1) community awareness and interest in undertaking projects within the GEF focal areas; 2) NGO/CBO capacity to manage projects in the GEF focal areas; and 3) political will and national support for community level management of community affairs within the GEF focal areas.

Large environmental and development projects in the region such as the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change (World Bank/OAS/UWI), Caribbean Environmental Programme (UNEP), Caribbean Multi-Island Programme (UNDP), and the OECS Solid Waste Management Project (World Bank/OECS) are largely executed through government agencies with little or no substantial input from CBOs and local NGOs in the planning and implementation. However, the GEF/SGP can play a significant role in preparing Caribbean communities for a more active role in the management of natural resources on which their

livelihoods depend. Currently, there are no National Environmental Funds available in the Eastern Caribbean. Funding for local environmental projects are usually donor agency to government arrangements that exclude NGOs and CBOs.

Programme implementation.

Review of proposals

Proposals submitted by NGOs and CBOs to the National Coordinator (NC) for funding under the GEF/SGP are first screened by the NC before they are passed on the Project Selection Committee (PSC) for assessment, shortlisting and approval. The PSC is based in Barbados and is comprised of representatives from a regional inter-governmental agency (Caribbean Centre for Development and Administration, CARICAD), a regional environmental NGO (Caribbean Conservation Association, CCA), a development unit from the regional university system (Women and Development Unit of the University of the West Indies, WAND-UWI), a government agency (Environment Unit, Government of Barbados) and the United Nations System (UNDP). The PSC also provides overall policy and programme guidance.

The setting up of a Project Advisory Committee in Grenada, and St Vincent and the Grenadines, together with the cooperation of the Sustainable Development Council in Dominica, has facilitated the screening of local project proposals before they are submitted to the National Coordinator. In Anguilla and Montserrat, proposals are prepared in consultation with the appropriate government departments before being sent to the National Coordinator; a mechanism which was developed long before the SGP and used for all types of projects. The voluntary nature of all these committees however, limit their involvement in working with the relevant communities to develop better proposals.

The evaluation of proposals by the PSC was facilitated through the use of a checklist of selection criteria based on GEF requirements (Appendix 2), as a means to speed up the process and improve transparency in decision-making. The extent to which PSC members are familiar with local conditions and the capability of NGOs/CBOs in the 10 islands that submit the proposals, have varying degrees of influence in the final selection. Requests for further information on a proposal are usually made as a consequence of poor proposal preparation and limited knowledge of the local situation. This then leads to further delays in the project submission/approval process. Additionally, the busy schedule and external travel commitments of the PSC members also present some challenges in setting mutually convenient times for review meetings (usually once per quarter), and timely response on the proposals. The minimum and maximum time taken from proposal submission to grant approval has been seven months and eleven months respectively.

GEF focal areas

Generally, Caribbean communities do not have a clear understanding of the terms biological diversity, climate change and international waters. These communities are insufficiently aware of the impact of their activities on the conservation of biological diversity, contribution to the likelihood of adverse climate change and the protection of international waters. Indeed, the activities of some of these communities may have little

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or no significant impact on these focal areas. There are also few livelihood options available to local communities for the conservation of endemic species and the use of renewable energy technologies because of a lack of baseline and feasibility studies which could support bankable, income generating projects in these sectors. These communities generally do not have the technical expertise to conduct the required studies and even if such studies were undertaken by outside parties, the community often has difficulty in assuming ownership for the process or recommendations produced.

If the capacity of selected households and communities are to be enhanced to improve their livelihood and security, through activities in the GEF focal areas (a GEF/SGP objective of the Operational Phase), the basic needs of these households and communities have to be met first. Community consultations in St Lucia, Grenada and St Vincent and the Grenadines have identified some basic needs and priorities which do not fall into the GEF focal areas, for example, insect vector control, historical and cultural traditions, technical staff, equipment, access to credit and employment.

Linking environmental resource management issues with community development is desirable and compatible, however the process of community development does not seem to be adequately reflected in GEF/SGP documentation, with respect to the nature of activities that could be funded, the type of results, and the time in which these results were expected. Members of the Project Selection Committee expressed the view that the parameters for development through the GEF/SGP were set outside of the Caribbean and did not necessarily reflect the reality in this region, so that boundaries were imposed on the target communities which restricted success of the SGP intervention. NGOs and CBOs were therefore required to adapt a project idea critical to their development, within the GEF/SGP criteria that minimised the sustainability of the project activities.

Work-plan

Members of the PSC and senior representatives at two Barbadian agencies expressed some concern on the heavy administrative load of the National Coordinator due to the large number of proposals generated from the 10 islands in the Eastern Caribbean and the number of reporting and follow-up requirements for the programme. Additionally, the National Coordinator is the large and medium-sized GEF focal point, the environmental focal point and the NGO/CBO focal point for the UNDP-Barbados, and she also participates in other UNDP planning and technical activities. It is not unusual for the National Coordinator to spend 12-15 hours per day, several times per week in trying to ensure the timely delivery of outputs. Other than a few complaints on what is considered by some NGOs/CBOs to be excessive delays in the approval of proposals and disbursement of grants, no dissatisfaction with the quality of service by the National Coordinator was expressed among the persons interviewed.

Physical monitoring is generally difficult due to the large number of projects, the geographical location of the islands in which these projects are located, the cost of inter-island travel, and the administrative work load of the National Coordinator, consequently self-monitoring by the NGOs/CBOs were being developed.

Coordination

There are several opportunities for coordination of efforts particularly within the UNDP. Senior UNDP-Barbados officials indicated that the GEF/SGP is seen as the mechanism through which UNDP has interaction with Caribbean communities and through which environmental concerns can be addressed. Linkages with UNDP's activities in Social Development, Poverty Eradication, Sustainable Livelihoods and Advocacy are currently being explored.

Collaboration has been initiated with the Export Council for Renewable Energy-Caribbean Branch for technical advice to, and sourcing of equipment for some community groups, the Florida International Volunteer Corps for exchange of information and training opportunities for CBOs and NGOs, and several local government departments for technical advice.

Brief description of projects reviewed.

Barbados

Planning Grant for the Preparation of a Business Plan for the Scotland District Renewable Energy and Environmental Park: Initially, a proposal for a renewable energy theme park was submitted by the Barbados Association for Renewable Energy Science and Technology (BAREST). Subsequent review by the NC and the PSC, and discussions with BAREST led to the active involvement of a rural community and a redesign of the proposed project. Since their involvement, the St Simons Walkers and Bawden community group of 60 persons including farmers, women and youth, has organised themselves to form a registered Cooperative. They subsequently were able to successfully lobby and secure a grant of US\$25,000 from the government for the lease of about 1200 acres of under utilised agricultural plantations, a part of which is earmarked for the Renewable Energy and Environmental Park. The proposed site also has ponds for recreational fishing, and hills and woodlands for scenic tours. The redesign of the project proposal and the commitment of the community led to the award of the GEF/SGP grant of US\$1000 for the preparation of a business and management plan to mobilise the necessary funding for a sustainable project with good income generating potential at the community level. Linkages between the community, the University of the West Indies, schools, hotels and tour operators were developed through the promotion of the project idea and presentations on the use of alternative energy technology. The University went further to donate equipment to the community group for display at the proposed site of the Park. The exhibits donated include solar dryers, a solar water still, a solar water heater, and a parabolic collector for a solar oven. When the Park becomes fully operational, it will promote the adoption of renewable energy and energy conservation. It will be the first of its kind in the insular Caribbean that will demonstrate the range and benefits of renewable energy devices which can be used in homes or in businesses, as well as information on how these devices could be built or purchased. The site will also provide for ongoing related educational activities, and recreational tours on the natural environment.

The developmental phase of the proposal and the preparation of the business plan have taught the group much about participatory planning, community cohesion and partnership with an academic institution. The group has also gained a lot of exposure to the hotel and tour operators which improved their confidence in dealing with each other, and hence securing a large potential market for visitors to the Park.

Future Centre Trust Support to the Dominica Conservation Association: The Future Centre Trust (FCT) is a Barbadian NGO which evolved from the efforts of individuals who produced the sustainable development exhibition called the Village of Hope at the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island States which was held in Barbados in 1994. The FCT was asked by the Dominica Conservation Association (DCA) to jointly put up exhibits at the Caribbean Tourism Organisation's conference on Eco-tourism which was being held in the island of Dominica in 1997. The GEF/SGP provided US\$6,175 for the FCT's preparation and shipping of the exhibits to Dominica which was intended to mobilise interest in sustainable development and the GEF focal areas, as well as to increase the capability of the DCA to undertake similar exhibitions. Exhibits included posters, interactive displays, models, presentations, and working models of selected equipment, covering the following themes: biodiversity, oceans and coasts, and renewable energy devices.

From media reports and recorded interviews and comments, the exhibition had a large and positive impact on the people of Dominica. The NGOs and communities in Dominica became further sensitised to activities that could be undertaken in pursuit of sustainable development which could fit within the objectives of GEF and of the availability of funding through the SGP. The success of the exhibition helped to heal the rift between the DCA and the government which had developed over the recent passing of the Mining Act. It also led to the DCA preparing plans for the setting up of a Future Centre Trust.

GEF/SGP funding to the FCT therefore provided for the promotion of conservation of biodiversity, energy conservation and adoption of renewable energy, and the reduction of threats to international waters through the medium of a national exhibition.

The Cornerstone Project: The Theocratic Government of His Majesty Haile Selassie I Churchical Order of the Nyahbinghi is a rastafarian group that has been given an SGP grant of US\$39,452 for the promotion of organic farming methods through a demonstration project with community participation for sustainable livelihood. The group now has one member working full time on the project with the active involvement of 5 to 8 persons and several more depending on the activities to be undertaken. The major activities have been the utilisation of water from a nearby watercourse for irrigation by gravity, installation of water storage tanks, equipment and materials store room, cultivation of an assortment of fruits and vegetables, refinement of organic farming practices and experimentation with non-chemical methods of pest control. Pest control and marketing of produce are currently the major challenges which confront the group. The group has also been able to access free professional advice from an Agricultural Specialist, an irrigation company and the US Export Council for Renewable Energy. Planning and implementation of the project have increased the administrative capability of the group and helped to raise the group's profile through meetings with government Senators, senior officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the University of the West Indies, a local bank, and the public. The public has also become aware that local organically grown produce can be obtained in Barbados and one of the large super markets is now promoting and selling organically grown vegetables purchased from the Cornerstone Project. More farmers, particular those adjacent to the project have become interested in learning more about the methods used by the group.

In 1995 farmers in Barbados imported 8,827,938 kg of fertilizers and 565,168 kg of pesticides, herbicides and plant growth regulators that were applied to about 21,560 ha of agricultural holdings across the island.

The impact of agrochemical discharge into the local marine environment is not well documented, but it is generally accepted to be negative. The Cornerstone Project through its organic farming techniques, promises to be an important demonstration of how reduction of agrochemical use can minimise land-based threats to international waters.

Grenada

Community Consultations and Case Studies on Coastal Management: The Grenada Community Development Agency (GRENCODA) is a rural development organisation which focuses on assisting people's initiatives for holistic, environmentally friendly development, self reliance and community building. GRENCODA received an SGP grant of US\$16,308 for conducting a series of consultations along the west coast of Grenada to identify community needs and mobilise communities to accept responsibility for the management of coastal resources. Consultations were held in 13 communities and GRENCODA succeeded in compiling an inventory of the resources in these communities, mobilising communities to identify the main environmental issues, improving environmental practices (garbage disposal in the coastal environment and beach sand mining) through public education, and initiating research into alternative and sustainable use of the local coastal resources. The high level of involvement of the local communities and government agencies increased the commitment to finding workable solutions to local environmental problems. This process has contributed locally to the promotion of the conservation and sustainable use of coastal biodiversity (ecosystems) and the reduction of land-based threats to international waters.

St. Kitts and Nevis

Protecting the Biodiversity of St Kitts and Nevis: The Nevis Historical and Conservation Association has recently initiated a project for biodiversity protection via research, documentation and dissemination of information, training and public outreach; institutional capacity building and human resource development to monitor biodiversity; preparation of a national species list; medicinal plant displays and herbarium development; preparation of ecosystem classification map; raising of public awareness on biodiversity issues; documentation of oral history relating to biodiversity use on the islands. The human resources for this project are largely voluntary from the members of the NGO and from members of the St Christopher Heritage Society, school children and visiting experts. Expertise from the Island Resources Foundation has been contracted to assist in species identification and ecosystem classification. So far, existing published information on the biodiversity of St Kitts and Nevis is being gathered. A panel discussion on 'Promoting our Biodiversity', a school quiz for 13- 15 year old students, and posters were proposed as the major outreach activities.

There were no indications of community consultations or direct collaboration with the government's Environment Division on the soon to be implemented project on the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for St Kitts and Nevis.

Antigua and Barbuda

Information Gathering for Wetlands Conservation: The Environmental Awareness Group (EAG) has recently initiated a GEF/SGP funded project which will develop a national inventory and overview of the country's wetlands; determine key conservation sites; conduct a detailed survey and monitoring of priority sites; develop wetland restoration and conservation plans; and undertake a stakeholder analysis and information dissemination to communities and the public. The human resources for this project will comprise mainly voluntary members of the EAG and paid technical input from the Island Resources Foundation. Published information on wetlands in Antigua and Barbuda are being compiled and field work at selected sites have begun. Good working relationships with the Fisheries Division and other government agencies have been cultivated in the past and are likely to continue for this project. Community consultations are planned and will build on the group's experience of public outreach acquired under the project Effects of Climate Change and Adaptations Assessment: Case Study of Antigua and Barbuda executed by the Ministry of Planning and funded by GEF/UNEP.

Project impact.

The institutional capacity of the NGOs and CBOs which submitted proposals is generally weak and therefore affects their ability to access funding, prepare effective project proposals, implement and manage projects, and to report, monitor and evaluate projects to the standards required by the funding or executing agencies. The projects funded through the GEF/SGP provided opportunities for selected Caribbean communities to initiate or build on the participatory process in community development, and contributed to institutional strengthening of the implementing NGOs.

Capacity development

The projects under review that were completed or had completed more than 50% of the proposed activities provided useful exposure to members of these NGOs/CBOs in the preparation of project proposals and progress reports. Several of these NGOs/CBOs had never before prepared proposals for funding or had no interactions with donor agencies. However, the quality of reports from many groups lacked sufficient detail and clarity in several key areas, for example, lessons learnt and project impacts, despite the availability of reporting guidelines.

Community consultations were found to be a very useful mechanism by all groups, which led to increased consciousness on the linkages between their activities and environmental degradation, definition of needs and problems, possible solutions, potential sources of support, as well as partnership arrangements between the community and the NGO/CBO, and between the grant recipient and the government or private sector. In Grenada for example, the Fisheries Division indicated that these consultations improved the Division's ability to better plan its activities in the coastal zone. GRENCODA, the CBO which executed the consultation project, also claimed that it was able to redefine its programming to better address the needs identified in eight communities through the consultation process. GRENCODA additionally acquired some experience in coastal zone management during the process. Communities additionally gained increased confidence in their ability to work with government and non-governmental agencies to promote local action.

In St Vincent and the Grenadines, after workshop sessions on the GEF thematic areas, 25 community

leaders were given introductory training in project proposal writing, project implementation and evaluation. The process of awareness on the GEF/SGP and the training on project skills were documented using print and electronic media. A video report on the consultation in St Vincent was subsequently made available to NGOs/CBOs by JEMS, the agency that coordinated the consultation.

St Vincent and the Grenadines has submitted the most successful proposals so far, in comparison to the other countries in the Eastern Caribbean. Both Barbados and St Vincent have the most projects funded through the SGP (five each).

Sustainability

It is still too early to determine the sustainability of results beyond the period of GEF/SGP financing. However, motivation for sustainability of action by the community was regarded by one CBO (GRENCODA) as requiring regular consultations and follow-up. Further, it was important to be seen to be responding to the concerns identified through community consultations and to keep their expectations realistic.

Leverage

These projects have not yet influenced larger projects and broader policies, but there is potential to market the community approach to planning and implementation of larger national projects, particularly where successes are documented. For example, it is too early to try to replicate the Cornerstone Project elsewhere in the Caribbean, unless the group can overcome the pest problem through organic methods, inconsistent labour inputs, and a determination of whether or not the venture is really making a profit. These factors will help define the success of this project. If organic farming methods within the context of local constraints can be shown to be profitable, then there will be a real chance of reduction in agrochemical use by small farmers, and hence, the reduction in the pollution threat to international waters.

The GEF Medium-sized Project Facility is not well known in the region. There was a workshop in Barbados from 23-24 July, 1997 hosted by UNEP and the Caribbean Conservation Association, which introduced the GEF Medium-sized Project Facility to 26 NGO participants (from 11 Caribbean countries including the French and Spanish speaking islands), 9 inter-governmental representatives and 7 governmental agencies (five of which were Barbadian). Subsequent to this workshop, the only known proposals submitted from the Eastern Caribbean to the World Bank/GEF/LAC group for Medium-Sized Project funding was: Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change (St Vincent and the Grenadines), Sustainable Management for the Praslin Protected Landscape and the Effective Management of the Pointe Sable National Park (St Lucia). These proposals were prepared not as a result of prior SGP interventions, but because a new funding opportunity had become available.

The St Simons Walkers and Bawden community group in Barbados, with the assistance of William Hinds of the University of the West Indies Renewable Energy Group, have developed a draft proposal for the GEF Medium-sized grant, which is expected to build on efforts for their SGP Renewable Energy and Environmental Park. This proposal was in preparation even before the commissioning of the current business

plan funded under the SGP.

Awareness raising

All of these projects have a significant awareness component which had varying degrees of success. In Grenada, which had a history of community consultation and participation in projects, awareness raising at the local level was more successful than in the other countries under review. The awareness activities led to the stopping of beach sand mining and with the help of other agencies, encouraged the government to enforce a ban on beach sand mining. There was also a reduction of littering and improved garbage disposal in the target communities, and an improved attitude towards public facilities (no reported incidence of vandalism).

The profile of the Cornerstone Project has been increased by virtue of several local media events, so more people became aware of their activities in organic farming and the environmental and health benefits attributed to this agricultural practice. This also reduced or eliminated the negative attitude that some sectors of the society have towards members of the Rastafarian community. Additionally, farmers in other areas have been influenced by the work of this group to initiate some aspects of sustainable agriculture.

National consultation on the GEF/SGP took place in Grenada, and St Vincent and the Grenadines, with a workshop in proposal preparation taking place only in St Vincent. The national consultation had presentations by local technical persons on environmental issues at the parish, community and national levels, before explanations of the GEF/SGP were delivered. Based on the number and type of questions that were raised by participants and answered by the resource persons present, a clearer understanding of the objectives and operation of the GEF/SGP was developed. Discussions at these sessions on the appropriate selection process and mechanism for the operation of the SGP, also led to the setting up of a Project Appraisal Committee in both countries. The members of the PAC were selected from among NGOs, CBOs, the government and the private sector.

These sessions also helped all participants (NGO, CBO, government departments and the private sector) to become sensitised to the needs of each other and to better appreciate the links between their activities and environmental degradation. Additionally, potential solutions to problems facing some of these communities and related project ideas were identified, which further initiated a sense of ownership and commitment to action at the local level among the participants.

The community consultations also contributed to an awareness of the broader issues of environmental management and the linkages between local action and the GEF focal areas. However, the effectiveness of the awareness activities in most target communities is not known. The availability of human and financial resources is often the limiting factors in determining the effectiveness of any awareness programme in the region.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation capabilities of NGOs/CBOs are generally weak; this situation is common throughout the region. However, in Grenada, for example, representatives of the Beausejour community

monitor the progress of specific project activities and meet with the CBO (GRENCODA) at least every three months for review and advice.

Lessons learned.

Generally, community groups and NGOs are aware of how their actions have been modified to achieve a desired impact, but they have not articulated the range of lessons learned or the lessons that could be learnt as a result of the SGP project intervention. The following lessons were detected during interviews:

- C Participatory consultations at the community level can influence attitude modification for reduced natural resource degradation.
- C Participatory consultations provide a good opportunity for more precisely defining local needs, priorities and possible solutions to environment and developmental problems.
- C Participatory consultation facilitated community cohesion, a sense that *‘we are each our brother’s keeper’* and effectiveness of local action.
- C When CBOs target the political directorate during their consultations they get government’s support and dispel government’s apparent indifference to their needs.
- C People are less inclined to volunteer their services for community action in areas where unemployment is high, because they expect to be paid for their efforts.
- C Communities are more interested in income generating opportunities and meeting other basic needs rather than in environmental protection, unless viable livelihood options can be developed through environmental protection. *{Hence, the GEF must be flexible enough to address community needs if projects and ultimately the programme, are to be sustainable}*
- C The success of awareness activities depends on the manner and complexity in which the information is packaged and presented, the nature of the audience targeted, and the timing and frequency of promoting the message.
- C Posters and fliers for awareness were of limited use for sustaining a message; billboards could be used instead.
- C The voluntary nature of many NGOs and the limited part-time contribution of its resource persons affect the timely delivery of project outputs.
- C Personal conflicts and protection of *‘territory’* between some NGOs and some governmental agencies foster duplication of efforts.
- C The effectiveness of project activities executed by NGOs and CBOs is dependent on outside technical and financial assistance.
- C The strength of a project depends on the strength of the NGO which is executing the project, therefore strengthening of the NGO is critical.
- C Any project that raises the consciousness of people and then involves these people, contributes to sustainability.

Best practices.

A best practice can be defined as an action which has resulted in a tangible impact on improving living or

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working conditions of people, involving partnerships between two or more key actors and which demonstrates sustainability, that is, changes to policies, decision making and management systems which ensure the durability of the impact. Using this criteria, none of the GEF/SGP projects under review could be considered as a best practice. However, a few projects do have some potential for evolving into best practice examples over the next 3-5 years, for example, the Praslin/Mamiku community project in St Lucia and the Cornerstone Project in Barbados.

Recommendations.

The following recommendations to improve the impact of the GEF/SGP in the Caribbean are suggested:

- C Assistance should be provided to NGOs/CBOs to improve their ability to analyse project activities and to write effective project reports. Strengthening NGOs/CBOs to prepare good project proposals is also desirable. This could be done through a separate project analysis and project writing skills training programme. The SGP should be prepared to provide more funding for this activity as a separate budget line item.
- C A monitoring programme should be developed for each project, and should include what factors need to be monitored, and how and when these factors should be monitored. Due consideration of local resources and constraints must guide the design of this programme. This monitoring programme may best be executed as a separate component contracted out to an NGO or a suitably experienced individual. The SGP should be prepared to provide more funding for this activity as a separate budget line item.
- C The focus of sustainability should be based more on the social parameters of community development rather than on the availability of financing. A study on the components of sustainability within the Caribbean context should be undertaken for GEF projects in the region.
- C The criteria for selection of projects for funding under GEF/SGP should be modified to reflect the reality of community development needs and processes in the Eastern Caribbean.
- C Functional linkages with larger environment/development projects in the region should be given some priority, and made accessible to local groups working on the same issue or in the same area.
- C Greater effort is required at translating and disseminating the GEF focal areas into information that is easily understood by Caribbean communities. Simplified audio-visuals on the GEF focal areas could be produced by the GEF/SGP Coordination Unit, one set of materials with special emphasis on small island states and another set for mainland countries.
- C A mechanism needs to be developed to rationalise the administrative load of the National Coordinator that is generated by the programme, and by current and potential projects from the 10 islands in the Eastern Caribbean.
- C Since the Operational Phase of the GEF/SGP recommends participatory evaluation of projects, future evaluations should be arranged at the convenience of the target agencies and communities, within an appropriate time frame and with sufficient notification, so as to ensure the inputs of key stakeholders and improve the precision of the results.
- C The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) approach should be extended to other islands in favour of such a mechanism. Specific terms of reference need to be drafted for the operation of these PACs and a budgetary allocation will be needed to cover the local administrative and project review costs.

- C The budget for these PACs should be included as a separate line item in the replenishment of funds.
- C The SGP should be flexible enough to deal with the evolving needs of the community as the project moves towards sustainability; some of these needs maybe outside of GEF focal areas, but should be funded if sustainability is expected.
- C A study should be conducted to determine the impact of awareness activities for selected projects in the Eastern Caribbean. Subsequently, appropriate guidelines should be prepared to help maximise benefits form awareness building activities.
- C Project Selection Committee members should be chosen based on their knowledge and experience in the GEF focal areas and in community development in the Caribbean, so as to ensure optimum and timely inputs. Membership should be open to suitable individuals or appropriate institutions, at the discretion of the National Coordinator.

List of key documents consulted.

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St Hill, C. 1997. GEF/SGP End of year programme report for the Eastern Caribbean. UNDP, Barbados.

St Hill, C. and Blackman, C. 1997. GEF/SGP Country Programme Strategy for the Eastern Caribbean. UNDP, Barbados.

UNDP. 1997. GEF/SGP Programme Impact Guidelines. UNDP, New York.

UNDP. 1996. UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme - Project document. UNDP, New York.

UNDP files and progress reports on selected GEF/SGP projects in the Eastern Caribbean.

List of persons consulted.

UNDP: Marjorie Thorpe, Fadzai Gwaradzimba, Paula Mohamed, Doreen Boyd, Norma Springer, Anthony Cave.

Project Selection Committee: Celeste St Hill, Glenda Medina, Ricky Marshall, Kim Downes, Patrick Gomes, Judith Soares.

Cornerstone Project: Ras Iral, Ras Mike, Ras Iron, Bongolai, Mark Doctoroff (Technical Advisor), Rodney Reader (ARC Irrigation), John and Patricia Thompson (Neighbours and Teachers at Codrington College).

Future Centre Trust: Colin Hudson.

Renewable Energy and Environmental Park: John Hunt, William Hinds.

Community Consultations/Coastal Management-Grenada: Selby DaBreo, Crofton Isaacs, Benny Languine, Cecil McQueen, Willan Dewsbury, Augustine Charles, Anthony Ambrose.

Protecting Biodiversity in St Kitts/Nevis: Randy Walters, David Robinson, Kate Orchard, Jacqueline Armony.

Wetlands Conservation- Antigua/Barbuda: Gillian Cooper.

Appendix 1

Number and status of GEF/SGP Projects in the Eastern Caribbean up to December 1997.

Country and Project	GEF Focal Area	Number of Projects started in Pilot Phase (1994-June 1996)	Number of Projects started in Operational Phase (July 1996-1997)	Status as at December 1997	Total Amount of Grant in US\$	Total Number of Projects
Antigua and Barbuda <i>Information gathering for wetlands conservation</i>	Biodiversity	-	1	Ongoing	37,137 (12,379 disbursed in July 1997)	1
Anguilla <i>Turtle conservation project</i>	Biodiversity	-	1	Ongoing	15,500 (10,000 disbursed in Sept. 1997)	1
Barbados 1. <i>Development of a natural history specimen collection</i> 2. <i>Permanent Mooring Buoys</i> 3. <i>Future Centre Trust support to the Dominica Conservation Association</i> 4. <i>Planning grant for the preparation of a business plan for the Scotland District Renewable Energy and Environmental Park</i> 5. <i>The Cornerstone - organic farming</i>	Biodiversity	1	-	Completed	15,000	5
	Biodiversity	1	-	Completed	10,000	
	Multifocal	-	1	Completed	6,175	
	Climate Change	-	1	Ongoing	1,000	
	Biodiversity, International Waters	1	-	Ongoing	39,452	
British Virgin Islands <i>Reforestation programme and supporting education</i>	Biodiversity, Climate	1	-	Ongoing	9,750	1

	Change					
Dominica 1. <i>Planning grant for the Roseau Botanical Gardens and the peripheral link project</i> 2. <i>Ecological agricultural methods in weed and pest control on small farms</i> 2. <i>Roseau Botanical Gardens and the peripheral link project</i>	Biodiversity		1	Completed	630	3
	Biodiversity, International Waters	1		Ongoing	25,000	
	Biodiversity	-	1	Ongoing	45,000 (4,500 disbursed in Aug.-97)	
Grenada 1. <i>National consultation on GEF/SGP</i> 2. <i>Community consultations and case studies on coastal management</i>	Multi-focal	1	-	Completed	4,308	2
	Biodiversity, International Waters	1	-	Completed	16,308	
Montserrat	-	-	-	-	-	-
St Kitts and Nevis <i>Protecting the Biodiversity of St Kitts and Nevis</i>	Biodiversity		1	Ongoing	34,656 (17,325 disbursed in Jul.-97)	1
St Lucia 1. Popular education for community based coastal and marine management 2. Building capacity for sustainable action in the communities of Praslin and Mamiku 3. Collaborative planning for the establishment of the Praslin Protected Landscape.	Biodiversity, International Waters	1	-	Completed	9,900	3
	Biodiversity, International Waters	1	-	Completed	11,148	
	Biodiversity, International Waters	1	-	Ongoing	20,600	
St Vincent and the Grenadines 1. National consultation on, and evaluation of GEF/SGP 2. District and national consultations on GEF 3. Community management of natural resources in the Southern grenadines 4. North windward integrated community land and river management project 5. Anse Cayenne River	Multifocal	-	1	Completed	2,000	5
	Multifocal	1	-	Completed	21,970	
	International Waters	1	-	Ongoing	27,445	
	Biodiversity, International	1	-	Ongoing	34,100	

project- Clare Valley	Waters Biodiversity, International Waters	1	-	Ongoing	12,500	
TOTAL		14	8	US\$399,584		22

Appendix 2

Checklist of GEF/SGP Selection Criteria

Project Proposal Checklist	Project Name	Project Name	Project Name
1. Does the proposing organisation meet the basic eligibility requirements for GEF/SGP support?			
2. Does the proposing organisation have the demonstrated capacity and experience to successfully implement the project?			
3. Does the proposed project meet the basic eligibility criteria as set forth in the GEF/SGP Country Programme Strategy? (Demonstration, Capacity Building, Monitoring Applied Research or Policy Analysis, and Information Dissemination, Networking and Policy Dialogue)			
4. Does the proposed project address one of the priority concerns identified in either the GEF/SGP Global Strategy or the Country Programme Strategy? (Biodiversity, Global Warming, International Waters and Land Degradation)			
5. Does the proposed project have a particular focus on the empowerment of women or indigenous peoples?			
6. Are the objectives of the project clear and compelling? Do they represent a well conceived integration of GEF-related environmental protection and sustainable livelihood development?			
7. Are the project's intended results appropriate and relevant to the stated objectives? If accomplished, do they represent a substantial beneficial impact in addressing environmental and sustainable livelihood challenges? Are they sufficiently ambitious? Are they unrealistically ambitious?			
8. Does the proposal present a sound strategy or approach to achieving the stated objectives and intended results? Are the proposed activities properly sequenced? If fully implemented, will the activities result in accomplishment of the intended results?			
9. Does the project plan incorporate realistic approaches and activities which will ensure the sustainability of the			

project's impacts, activities, or both?			
10. Are the time estimates for project implementation sound and realistic?			
11. Are the assumptions underlying the project's design accurate and complete? Have all substantial risk factors based on internal and external conditions been taken into account?			
12. Has the proposer involved and consulted all appropriate stakeholders, including in particular, members of affected communities, in the design and development of the project to date?			
13. Have representative groupings in stakeholder communities endorsed or expressed support for the project?			
14. Does the project design incorporate effective and appropriate means of assuring the participation and support of community members and other stakeholders throughout the period of the project implementation?			
15. Has the proposer made appropriate plans to include affected communities in the monitoring, assessment, and evaluation of the project, both during and after implementation?			
16. Would the proposed project complement, reinforce, or balance other projects in the GEF/SGP portfolio?			
17. Is the geographic location of the proposed strategy supportive of the overall GEF/SGP country strategy, either by concentrating inputs for maximum impact and synergy, or by providing GEF/SGP outreach to new or under-represented areas?			
18. Would the proposed project generate constructive linkages with larger GEF projects in the country or region?			
19. Would the proposed project generate new and innovative models which could be replicated locally, nationally or internationally?			
20. Would the proposed project help to build the capacity of communities and organisations (including the proposer), to address environmental and sustainable livelihood concerns in an effective and integrated manner?			
21. Are there exceptional circumstances which would make it important to fund (or not fund) this project in spite of other countervailing reasons?			
Other observations:			
Recommendation:			

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