

EVALUATION RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOW-UP PLAN

Evaluation Title: ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT PROJECT 1819AF Strengthening institutional frameworks in the Caribbean for an integrative approach to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS Sustainable Development Agenda

Implementing Division/Office: Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Port of Spain

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Recommendations and proposed actions	ECLAC response and anticipated actions	Responsible Entity (Division/Unit)	Estimated target date for completion
Rec. 1 Consider a country selection based on a model approach, narrowed down and adapted to available resources, as well as formal agreements with senior-level decision-makers of potential beneficiary countries from the outset.			
<p>ECLAC should consider working more closely with fewer countries and pursue an approach for possible replication and scaling up. The selection criteria could be defined on the basis of the assessments of all countries and the definition of groups of countries according to their level of progress.</p> <p>As the subregional dimension is highly relevant and generates added value, investing in subregional exchange and peer learning should be included in future projects.</p> <p>In terms of definition of intervention strategies, early commitment should be fostered at the senior/decision-making level in beneficiary countries. Communication with national counterparts should be increased during the design phase. In the initial phase of the project, formal agreements should be reached at the outset, ideally covering implementation arrangements, roles and responsibilities of all parties involved, as well as possible risk mitigation measures and planned follow-up actions.</p>	<p>The recommendation to work with fewer countries is well-received. That was the original intent of the DA11 project but due to increased and sustained demands by member States to be included as beneficiary countries of the project after it started, provision was made to accommodate additional countries.</p> <p>A subregional dimension was adequately incorporated and implemented in the DA11 project with three peer-learning subregional workshops implemented to facilitate subregional exchange and cross-fertilization of ideas between beneficiary and non-beneficiary countries. The Port of Spain office will continue to include this dimension in future projects.</p> <p>ECLAC recognizes the importance of early communication with and commitment to the project by beneficiary countries. The Office will monitor closely the engagement of beneficiary countries from the inception of the projects. Should a country's priorities change and they were no longer able to meaningfully participate, resources would be reoriented towards other countries or subregional activities.</p>	<p>ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean</p>	<p>31-Dec-23</p>
Rec. 2 Consider the use of the theory of change in projects with different levels and processes of change, and ensure monitoring and evaluation frameworks that can better capture changes and inform strategic decision-making.			
<p>To strengthen implementation strategies, it is advisable to consider using a theory of change approach, with an emphasis on better understanding the project's areas of influence, and identifying underlying assumptions, necessary conditions and associated risks.</p> <p>In light of current processes to improved stakeholder feedback mechanisms and focus on gathering learning, ECLAC should reflect on the definition of and how it is capturing enhanced capacity at different levels. Besides the focus on output reporting, it is advisable to incorporate more process and qualitative indicators, as well as monitoring tools that can capture changes at the individual/behavioural and institutional levels, for instance by using success story and outcome mapping techniques.</p>	<p>Development account projects follow a template that as of today does not include a theory of change, but rather a results framework. The type of indicators included in DA projects follow DA project guidelines. Similarly for XB projects ECLAC follows templates and requirements from the respective donors. In that context, ECLAC will explore the possibility to implement a theory of change, if and when applicable.</p>	<p>PPPEU / ECLAC substantive divisions</p>	<p>31-Dec-23</p>

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Rec. 3 Capitalize on lessons learned regarding bottlenecks linked to planning processes, including risk mitigation planning and implementation arrangements at the subregional headquarters in the Caribbean			
<p>(a) It is advisable to revise planning processes for projects in the design, negotiation and inception phase. Realistic timelines for the project set-up and kick-off should be established and integrated into the work plan. Based on the accumulated knowledge and experience of working with the Caribbean SIDS, risk mitigation planning and monitoring should be carried out from the design stage and throughout the project cycle. National counterparts, as well as implementing partners, should be involved in the analysis and definition of necessary course corrections. Monitoring tools to identify implementation challenges and delays should be strengthened to ensure timely action and implementation of mitigation measures.</p> <p>(b) The ECLAC subregional headquarters in the Caribbean should ensure that human resources are realistically allocated to respond to the needs and requirements of a project. In light of cost-sharing, sufficient support for project management, administration, monitoring and reporting should be contemplated to ensure sound and timely results-based management practices. Other necessary conditions include assessing the balance between the use of in-house expertise and external consultants, in terms of cost-benefits and realistic projection of workloads for contract management, guidance and follow-up.</p> <p>(c) ECLAC should also assess the effectiveness of internal coordination and communication structures, in terms of regular meetings/updates and inter-divisional exchange, to maximize the use of available technical resources and in-house expertise to support, for example, inputs to or revisions of technical assistance reports.</p> <p>(d) Communication and feedback mechanisms with regard to external consultants could also be strengthened; in particular, junior national consultants with medium-term commitments would benefit from performance evaluations or formal feedback at the end of assignments.</p>	<p>The proposed actions are already implemented by the office, as articulated below:</p> <p>(a) Mitigation planning and monitoring is conducted throughout the project cycle. Course corrections are agreed upon by the relevant stakeholders and reflected in the annual progress report.</p> <p>(b) Human resource allocation is addressed both within the annual programme planning for the office, as well as with extra-budgetary and DA projects. Early in each programme cycle, the office convenes a programming meeting to identify and prioritize resource needs and allocation, to ensure that each activity being undertaken during the programme cycle is adequately resourced. This includes the consideration of the use of in-house expertise vs. external consultants.</p> <p>(c) The office leverages internal coordination and inter-divisional exchanges to facilitate effective and efficient programme delivery. For example, preparation of the ten-year review of the SAMOA Pathway includes colleagues from the ECLAC headquarters Statistics Division and, more broadly, the Statistics Division in UNHQ and other UN Agencies. In-house expertise was sought from the ECLAC Statistics Division and, more broadly, from the UN-GGIM in UNHQ, to finalize research on the applications of geospatial technologies and data in disaster risk management in the Caribbean.</p> <p>(d) Communication and feedback mechanisms are built into external contractual arrangements. There is typically an initial meeting to streamline and clarify expectations, and interim evaluations and feedback during the contract period, often but not always linked to milestone deliverables. The release of the final payment of a consultant is predicated on the completion of the assignment, acceptance of the product(s)/service(s) by ECLAC, and an evaluation of the performance of the consultant.</p>	ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean	Implemented
Rec. 4 Define explicit strategies and arrangements for collaboration and cooperation to optimize comparative advantages within the United Nations system and vis-à-vis other potential partners.			
<p>(a) For the design of future projects, ECLAC, potential collaborators (including other ECLAC divisions) and partners should invest time in defining expectations, terms and implementation arrangements, including mechanisms for active and effective participation as partners. Project coordination mechanisms should contemplate as good practices regular meetings, exchanges of information within ECLAC and with its partners and collaborators, as well as knowledge management tools.</p> <p>(b) More attention should be paid to mapping potential synergies and complementarities with other initiatives during the design process and throughout the project, for example through the United Nations Resident Coordinators' Offices. Exchanges should be encouraged to draw on the use of complementary knowledge and experiences in specific countries when deciding on country selection and implementation approaches.</p>	<p>This recommendation is well received.</p> <p>(a) During the design of the DA project "2023Q Caribbean SIDS relevant climate change and disasters indicators for evidence-based policies" being implemented, ECLAC POS and its partners did in fact implement the good practices articulated in this recommendation. Further, the office is currently piloting the use of Sharepoint as a KM tool to facilitate knowledge capture and sharing, and will continue to explore other potential solutions.</p> <p>(b) We are also very active in our engagement with the UN Country Teams and the Resident Coordinators' Offices in the subregion. In this regard, we are able to leverage synergies and complementarities during the design and planning processes of projects as well as the normative areas of work, where applicable.</p>	ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean	Implemented
Rec. 5 Continue strengthening capacity development in the areas with major persisting gaps			
<p>The ECLAC subregional headquarters in the Caribbean, in coordination with the United Nations system and CARICOM partners, should explore possibilities and opportunities for further capacity development, with an emphasis on areas where the greatest gaps remain (statistical capacity, evaluation and monitoring frameworks, reporting), as well as institutional arrangements (silo approach, cross-sectoral integration, etc.) In addition, SDG-related communication and awareness raising in the subregion is an area with further need for support, and where ECLAC and partners could continue to invest, for instance, replicating the good practice of Antigua and Barbuda and paying more attention to subnational and local levels and success stories of SDG implementation.</p> <p>The two main studies delivered at the end of the project ("review of institutional arrangements" and "assessment of the statistical capacity of the NSS") provide a good basis and should be used to engage in discussions with member States and associate members, international and subregional partners on future actions and support needs.</p>	<p>ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean is building on the knowledge and experience gained in implementing the DA11 project in its joint implementation with ECLAC Statistics Division of another DA project (DA12: "Caribbean SIDS relevant climate change and disasters indicators for evidence-based policies") in close collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat and a Joint SDG Fund project on "Modernizing Trinidad and Tobago's Statistical Ecosystem through Enhanced SDG Data Development" in collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, PAHO/WHO, ILO, and UNEP. These two projects are aimed at statistical capacity development in the Caribbean as recommended. ECLAC will continue to develop additional initiatives to promote institutional coordination and SDG-related communication and awareness.</p>	ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean	31-Dec-24

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<p>Rec. 6 Invest and prioritize resources for communication, knowledge management, systematization and dissemination</p> <p>There is scope for using communication more strategically in projects, to serve different purposes. A communication strategy developed in the early stages of the project can help to raise awareness, engage stakeholders and achieve buy-in, and ultimately foster accountability.</p> <p>It is also advisable to consider the use of SharePoint or other tools to serve as a repository and resource centre for all involved parties, including national focal points, consultants and beneficiaries, during project implementation, which can help foster information exchange, more efficient use of resources and knowledge sharing and management.</p> <p>To strengthen technical assistance and remote studies, the use of communication and feedback mechanisms throughout the process is recommended, including exchange with technical working groups and a wider group of end-users, to keep national counterparts engaged and to monitor their satisfaction and commitment to the final results.</p> <p>The systematization of experiences is an interesting contribution to knowledge management, since future designs can benefit from previous experiences and beneficiaries can get a rapid overview of the whole intervention. This area can be further strengthened. Putting emphasis on the presentation of success stories, lessons learned and good practices to promote and disseminate project results can trigger multiplier effects and increase the motivation of participating stakeholders.</p>	<p>This recommendation is well received. ECLAC is currently developing a knowledge management strategy which will address these issues.</p>	<p>ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean</p>	<p>30-Jun-24</p>
<p>Rec. 7 Consider strengthening reporting linked to cross-cutting issues based on specific targets, in particular with regard to gender considerations</p> <p>In order to capture and measure ECLAC and project contributions to commitments on gender equality, human rights, "leaving no one behind" and other relevant areas within the Development Account, specific targets should be integrated into project results frameworks. Quantitative and qualitative reporting should be further improved, going beyond gender-disaggregation and mainstreaming, to make relevant contributions visible.</p>	<p>ECLAC already addresses this within its normative work and project proposals, and will continue to do so if and when applicable. For example, the 14th tranche DA project 2225P titled "Building back better in tourism-dependent Caribbean economies post-COVID-19" includes an outcome which addresses enhancing capacity of women, youth and other target groups to capitalize on entrepreneurial opportunities in sectors identified for economic transformation.</p>	<p>ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean</p>	<p>Implemented</p>