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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project has made significant progress towards the effective conservation of coastal biodiversity in the Dominican Republic by promoting activities that address needs for both conservation and environmentally friendly development at four demonstration sites. The project has been implemented during a period of change within the national institutional framework and shifts in governmental policies affecting many aspects of natural resource management. While governmental agencies were not included as project implementers, the manner in which the project has been administered has promoted governmental agency participation. It has built a strong consensus on the major issues and what to do about them within the non-governmental organization (NGO) community and the responsible governmental agencies.

The project has been administered with unusual skill and efficiency. It has successfully adapted to a rapidly changing institutional landscape and has made major contributions to creating a positive context for a period of policy reform that is likely to produce major improvements in the prospects for a sustained advance towards the goals of effective coastal ecosystem management. Specifically:

- Existing information on the condition of coastal ecosystems and biodiversity, supplemented by new surveys and species inventories at the pilot sites, has been compiled and made available to a diverse community of potential users that includes government agencies, NGOs, universities and the private sector. The heart of this information system is a Geographic Information System (GIS) housed in a national university.
- The project has pioneered an inclusive and participatory process that included the liberal distribution of the project's many technical reports, and wide participation

in its workshops and short courses that drew together stakeholders at the community level and national institutions based in the capital city.

- Activities at four pilot sites have demonstrated the power and many benefits of community-level participation in both research and all aspects of the governance process.
- A large number of short courses and internships have increased the technical capabilities of staff within NGOs, government agencies and community-level organizations. This, combined with vigorous field activities at the four sites, appears to have considerably strengthened these institutions, and has also fostered greater collaboration and the sense of a common agenda.

The project was designed to be implemented over a three-year period. However, the difficulties posed by an overly complex and ambitious design consumed an entire year during which the details of individual subcontracts and significant adjustments to the project design were negotiated. This compressed project implementation at the four sites into a two-year period. During this two-year period, project activities have been devoted to Steps 1 and 2 of the management process—i.e., issue analysis, the documentation of baseline conditions, selected research activities and planning. The project design called for a national coastal management policy and “putting in place” management plans for the demonstration sites. These Step 3 objectives were unrealistic and have not been achieved.

A major feature of this final external evaluation was a capacity assessment that applied the recently produced *A Manual for Assessing Progress in Coastal Management* (Olsen et al., 1999) produced through a multi-donor initiative supported by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This capacity assessment has identified a number of “instrumental adjustments” that the evaluators believe would increase the effectiveness and efficiency of ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation efforts.

The following recommendations should guide the next phase of this initiative:

- The project should adopt an explicit conceptual framework and apply it to all four pilot sites
- Comparable techniques for documenting baseline conditions for environmental, social and institutional variables should be applied across the four sites
- An overt issue-driven approach to the management process should be adopted
- Future iterations of management plans should include an analysis of institutional issues, and begin the process of designing the institutional frameworks and decisionmaking processes by which the desired changes in human behavior and anthropogenic change can be implemented
- Future training activities should feature techniques of strategic planning and options for the design of resource management plans
- Research activities should be arrayed around the questions upon which they will presumably shed light

We conclude that this has been a successful project that has made a timely and strategic Global Environment Facility (GEF) investment in the Dominican Republic. We strongly recommend that this effort be continued through a Phase 2 GEF project constructed upon the foundations set by Phase 1. It is essential that a Phase 2 project be directed at moving through Step 3 and into Step 4 of the coastal management cycle. This requires developing institutional structures by which management policies and practices can be implemented at the pilot sites. The greatest risk is to continue in the mode of data gathering, research and planning rather than securing commitments to specific courses of action and their

implementation. Once institutional frameworks and a decisionmaking process are in place, the four sites can realize their potential of serving as models for effective participatory management that can inspire effective action in both the Dominican Republic and in the region.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Features of the Project Design

Country:	Dominican Republic
Project Number and Title:	DOM/92/G31
Duration:	3 years
Executing Agency:	CEBSE, Group Jaragua and other NGOs
Implementing Agency:	National Office of Planning (ONAPLAN)
UNDP Contribution:	US\$ 3,000,000

Beginning in 1992, several Dominican institutions prepared submissions to the GEF. Two project proposals were formally submitted but both were rejected. In 1994, the GEF retained a consultant to work with the interested parties and prepare a single project proposal that drew together many of the features of the previous proposals. This third submission was formally approved on February 5, 1994.

The Project Document calls for a three-year effort funded at \$2.9 million. The Project Document has the following major features:

- An analysis of the pressures that threaten biodiversity and the condition of ecosystems
- A description of the Integrated Conservation and Development Model (ICDM) that have been adopted by the Government of the Dominican Republic (GDR) as its version of an approach to management that integrates needs for both conservation and development
- Descriptions of three distinct but not wholly consistent structures that detail what the project will attempt to accomplish and how the various activities will be organized.

The inconsistencies in the three approaches to project design that are set forth in the Project Document were the source of considerable confusion and anxiety when the project got underway in early 1995 with the hiring of Dr. Jose Ottenwalder as the national project coordinator. The three approaches to the project's design are as follows:

- (1) *Three phases of project evolution.* This perspective is incorporated in the Project Document as an element of the project strategy (Section 4). Here the project's activities and objectives are organized in a sequence of three distinct phases that parallel the first three steps of the coastal management process as outlined by the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) (1996). The first phase, entitled "Strategic Planning," emphasizes data gathering and analysis combined with consultation with stakeholders at the local level. The second phase, termed "Adaptive Management Planning and Development," features the preparation of draft management plans for two demonstration sites. The third phase, "Sustainable Development," calls for the institutionalization of the management plans and a community-based governance process. The Project Document envisioned that each of these phases would require one year to complete. The major feature of the culmination of such participatory research and planning are: (a) financial permanence; (b) formal and informal institutionalization of the governance process; (c) sustained community participation; and (d) arrangements for sustained policy dialogue through interagency agreements and various coordinating mechanisms that will draw together the Dominican Republic NGOs and universities.

- (2) *Immediate objectives, outputs and activities.* These are detailed as Section D of the English version of the Project Document. The organization and content of this section is similar to those contained in GEF Project Documents for Patagonia, Cuba and Belize. There are five Immediate Objectives and a total of 12 Outputs and 49 Individual Activities. There is, however, no obvious connection between the

objectives and activities contained in this section and the sequence of phases described above. As with other GEF initiatives in the region, the project monitoring and evaluation process carried out through Tripartite Reviews has been organized around this second perspective on the project's objectives and activities.

- (3) *Draft Terms of Reference for subcontractors.* The signed version of the Project Document, which is in Spanish, contains a series of appendices that include an initial timeline, budget and Terms of Reference that outline the activities to be undertaken by a number of subcontractors. These subcontracts are organized both by activity type (e.g., training and the administration of small grants) and by geographic area (pilot activities at three sites). Here again, the content of the Terms of Reference do not line up readily with either the three phases of the project or all the activities outlined in the second perspective on the project. The budget provides for some but not all of the specified activities, and the timeline only vaguely follows the three-phase process.

Once the project coordinator had been retained, an international solicitation process had to be initiated according to UNOPS procedures for all subcontracts that exceed a value of \$50,000. The Terms of Reference annexed to the Project Document were all above this threshold. It was, however, clearly the intent of those who had prepared the Project Document and the government implementing agency—the National Office of Planning (ONAPLAN)—that the subcontracts would be executed by known Dominican NGOs. An international solicitation process could therefore have defeated the primary objective of the project, which is to strengthen the Dominican NGOs most directly involved with the management of the selected pilot sites. The solution suggested by the project director, and ultimately accepted, was to make ONAPLAN the executing agency and to adopt a “short list” solicitation process modeled on the one used by the World Bank. This led to a protracted series of negotiations over detailed work plans for each subcontractor. These set forth the activities that would be undertaken and the outputs that would be produced in considerably greater detail than the Terms of Reference contained in the Appendix to the Project Document. This process also led to modifications to the project including the addition of a fourth pilot area—the

Montecristi site—and subcontracts that brought other institutions into the project, including Cornell University.

Working out these subcontracting arrangements consumed the better part of a year and implementation of the project's activities therefore got underway at the four sites at the beginning of 1996. This left only two years to complete an agenda that would have been ambitious for a three-year period. Indeed, the project has achieved most of the benchmarks outlined for Phases 1 and 2, but has only begun to tackle the "institutionalization" process called for by Phase 3 as described in Section 4 of the Project Document. This places the Dominican Republic GEF initiative at approximately the same degree of maturity as the other three GEF initiatives in the region.

During the period that detailed work plans were being negotiated, the national project coordinator operated out of an office in ONAPLAN. In late 1995, a project coordination office was set up in a rented house in Santo Domingo. This operates with a small staff and it is likely that it will assume responsibility for further projects related to ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation for which ONAPLAN is the lead governmental agency.

The expenditures of the project, as calculated by the Coordination Office, are presented in Appendix E.

1.2 Evaluation Methodology

The final evaluation was conducted by Stephen Olsen, director of the University of Rhode Island's Coastal Resources Center (CRC); Emilio Ochoa, CRC associate and professor at Ecuador's Polytechnic University of the Coast (ESPOL); and Pedro Alcolado, professor of the Institute of Oceanology at the University of Havana, Cuba, and senior scientist for the GEF project in that country. The team reviewed a large number of documents provided by the national project coordinator by e-mail before the team arrived in the Dominican Republic. Emilio Ochoa and Pedro Alcolado visited two of the demonstration sites before Stephen Olsen joined the team in country. They together subsequently visited the Samana site and conducted a number of interviews in the capital city.

This final evaluation combines performance evaluation (Section 2 and Appendix F) and a governance capacity assessment (Section 3) that applies the *Manual for Assessing Progress in Coastal Management*, recently completed through a multi-donor initiative supported by UNDP. The purpose of a *performance* evaluation is to evaluate (1) the degree to which the project's objectives have been achieved; and (2) the quality of project implementation. The purpose of a *governance capacity* assessment is to determine the adequacy of management structures and the governance process as these relate to explicit standards based on international experience. Governance capacity assessments are conducted in order to identify how to improve program design and implementation and make adjustments to the internal workings of a project or program and to the resource management strategies and practices that the project or program is promoting. The application of both forms of evaluation provides a basis for both assessing the accomplishments of this project and charting a course for the next stage of work. The Terms of Reference for this final evaluation are provided in Appendix A.

1.3 The Project Strategy for Promoting Biodiversity Protection in the Coastal Zone of the Dominican Republic

The long-term goal of this project phrased as the Development Objective is:

To preserve Dominican coastal diversity and functioning ecosystems by facilitating their nondestructive economic uses...

The brief description of the project contained in the Project Document calls for advancing an approach to coastal management with the same features of stakeholder participation and sectoral integration as called for by GESAMP and numerous other international institutions. The strategy of this project has been to concentrate efforts on strengthening those NGOs and community-level organizations at the four pilot sites. It is notable that the Project Strategy did not call for the participation of the governmental institutions that are ultimately responsible for how the protected areas selected as the four pilot sites will be managed and developed. Yet one of the most successful features of the manner in which the project has been administered is that such institutions have been involved in the project's activities and have benefited significantly from it. The project design rests upon five assumptions:

- Effective and sustainable progress towards the goal of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem health will not be achieved by eliminating human activities but rather by promoting appropriate forms and intensities of use
- At a time when governmental institutions with responsibilities for conservation and environmentally sound development are weak or do not yet exist, the primary short-term objective will be the institutional strengthening of NGOs and community-level organizations dedicated to people-oriented conservation
- Institutional strengthening and the promotion of participation in the management process will be most effective when focused upon demonstration sites already designated as national priorities for conservation

- Major investments will be made in the compilation of scientific information that documents and analyzes the condition of natural systems and the impacts of selected human activities at four pilot sites
- Stakeholder involvement at the community level in all phases of information gathering and the governance process is essential to a successful and sustainable management process

These assumptions have proved to be sound and to have made major contributions to putting in place the fundamental preconditions for effective management of coastal ecosystems and biodiversity conservation.

The Project Document implies that at the beginning of the project a dominant hypothesis was that effective resource management is science driven. Much attention is given to research activities that would presumably produce new products and new markets that would provide a viable alternative for the destructive forms of resource use that predominate in and around areas of high biodiversity and critical importance to the future condition of coastal ecosystems. According to Sixto Incháustegui, who has been involved in the project since its inception, the initial concept was that a project designed to conserve biodiversity had to invest in systematics and reference collections. This in turn, led to an emphasis on capacity building among Dominican institutions involved in such research. It would appear that the experience of implementing the project has reaffirmed that the governance process itself is both the major problem and the major opportunity, and that the “science-driven management” hypothesis has been revised.

A consequence of designing a project that does not provide for the active participation of governmental institutions is that expectations must be modest for an institutionalization process of the kind envisioned for Phase 3. Nonetheless, the Project Document calls for “model management plans” that can be applied to other areas of the island.

2. OVERVIEW OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE

2.1 Introduction

The Project Document, in section H, describes an evaluation process that features annual Tripartite Reviews, each of which will be based on a Project Performance Evaluative Report. A project terminal report is called for that would be prepared four months before the final Tripartite Review. However, in contrast to the final evaluations conducted in Patagonia, Cuba and Belize, the evaluation team could not base its assessment of project performance on previously completed evaluations. Only the report on the Tripartite Review conducted in 1996 was available and it provided few insights on the accomplishments of the project. More recent reviews were not available to us. We understand that the report of the final Tripartite Review is still in preparation. Immediately before and during the evaluation the national project coordinator provided the evaluation team with drafts of a Terminal Report. This will be a voluminous and very detailed document that pulls together the conclusions and recommendations from the final reports of each of the subcontractors and combines it with new text. Appendix F of this final evaluation is an attempt to summarize the major accomplishments of the project as these relate to the Outputs and Activities listed under the five Immediate Objectives as these are detailed in the Project Document. This section is limited to observations on the five Intermediate Objectives and their related outputs.

This project has generated more documents than any of the other four GEF-sponsored coastal management projects in the region. The time available for this final evaluation allowed only a selective review of this very large—and well-organized—collection.

2.2 Immediate Objective 1

To strengthen the capacity of governmental, nongovernmental, university and private sector actors to improve management of the biodiversity of the coastal zone institutions with needed organization, structure, and human and technical capabilities for regional coastal zone

management with economic development components; and to improve procedures for coordinating environmental and developmental programs.

Outputs

- 1.1 Improved operating procedures in environmental organizations with strategic plans in operation.
- 1.2 Enhanced technical capacity of participating institutions.
- 1.3 Increased expertise of specialists in participating institutions and increased numbers of environmentally trained personnel.
- 1.4 Establishment of permanent bases of operation in the coastal zone for appropriate institutions.
- 1.5 Creation of private sector partnership to promote independent financing of training, public education, and environmentally sensitive economic ventures.

This objective covers two distinct types of activities. The first calls for the strengthening of the institutions most directly involved in the administration of the demonstration sites and biodiversity conservation. The second calls for improved coordination between environmental and development programs. Both objectives are stated in very general terms and in the absence of any baselines, measurable accomplishments attributed to this GEF project are difficult to verify. The 13 Individual Activities listed under this objective almost all relate to institutional strengthening and do not provide specifics on the purpose or forms of institutional coordination that are desired.

According to the Final Project Report, all the participating institutions in this GEF project have been strengthened in the manner suggested by Outputs 1 through 3. According to the draft Terminal Report, the principal means by which these improvements have been achieved are: (1) the large number of workshops and seminars on a wide variety of topics; (2) promoting inter-institutional interaction through a wide variety of joint planning and research activities; and (3) the small-scale grants program. Five projects were carried out that were designed to promote sustainable forms of resource use, build the capacity of community-level organizations and promote awareness of conservation issues. Construction of community

centers at each of the pilot sites is nearing completion, and they are indeed providing a focal point for local activities of many types.

The promotion of “green investments” and related activities called for by Output 5 have not advanced significantly. It may, however, be possible to consider the promotion of *yautia* in Los Haitises as an example of the kind of practice contemplated under this output.

2.3 Immediate Objective 2

To establish a research program in country to support coastal zone management, sustainable resource development, biodiversity conservation, and continuous long-term environmental monitoring.

Outputs

- 2.1 Recovery of existing information on biodiversity and ecosystems in the Dominican coastal zone.
- 2.2 Databases on distribution systematics and the conservation status of plant and animal species in the coastal zone.
- 2.3 A comprehensive classification of the Dominican coastal species and natural areas.
- 2.4 A comprehensive information base for the support of sustainable development in the coastal zone.

A major program of interdisciplinary research has been carried out in all the pilot areas. These surveys have generated databases on flora and fauna biotypes and landscapes. Work on the potential use of local species for agriculture has been most active in Los Haitises, where maps of land use and human population density were also developed. Surveys of fisheries landings were carried out in the three major pilot sites. A database has been developed that lists species of possible interest for biochemical and pharmacological use.

The purpose of this objective has been to compile existing information on Dominican biodiversity in ecosystems into a series of computerized databases, and to sort this

information into various categories of conservation interest. This activity also called for primary research on biodiversity, as well as socioeconomic and demographic baselines and the analysis of local community attitudes towards conservation.

Progress on these tasks, as outlined in Appendix F, can be considered one of the major accomplishments of the project. Considerable information has been collected and organized into readily accessible information management systems. This has included cross-referencing in some collections housed in overseas institutions. The major expression of these information collections is a GIS housed in the national university, Pedro Henriquez Ureña.

These many activities and accomplishments, however, cannot be considered to have achieved the major target of this objective—i.e., “to establish a research program in-country to support coastal zone management.” Since as of yet, there is no coastal management program, the design of research programs must await the specification of the objectives and the specific issues that a research program can address. Progress on a classification system and database in support of sustainable development outlined under Outputs 2.3 and 2.4 has been made but must be considered a work in progress.

2.4 Immediate Objective 3

To establish a coastal zone management policy for the Dominican Republic, initially establishing regional management plans in selected areas as model projects for extension of regional planning to the remainder of the coastal zone.

Outputs

- 3.1 Establishment of regional management plans with significant community input.
- 3.2 Establishment of a coastal zone management policy.

As discussed in greater detail in Section 3.3 of this document, the instability and rapid change in the institutional framework for management and policy reform at the national level could have made the preparation and formal adoption of management plans a potentially

counterproductive, exercise during the three years of the project. Given this context, only sets of recommendations on a diversity of topics have been put forward for each of the four demonstration sites. With the exception of Los Haitises, these tend to be lists of problems and proposed actions that lack strategic focus. These limitations are discussed in Section 3 of this report. There has as yet been no attempt to articulate a national coastal management policy.

2.5 Immediate Objective 4

In collaboration with community organizations, establish appropriate mechanisms of improving local appreciation of biodiversity, its relationship to human welfare, and its significance as a basis for sustained economic activity.

Outputs

- 4.1 Encourage community involvement, responsibility and control through public education programs.

In contrast to the preceding three objectives, the activities listed here are well within the mandates and capacities of the NGOs involved. According to the draft Terminal Project Report the major outputs include:

- More than 50 workshops and courses given
- Eight scholarships created
- Twelve media outreach programs created that have included 15 radio programs
- Distribution of 20 scientific documents
- Training for 320 school teachers on coastal marine ecosystems
- School educational modules that have been brought to 45 schools and been seen by approximately 800 school children
- Production of pamphlets on Dominican flora and fauna

2.6 *Immediate Objective 5*

Because authentic community participation in all facets of this GEF project is of overriding importance, develop and implement effective mechanisms for the participation of local communities in conservation, planning and action.

Outputs

- 5.1 Elevate community participation, to a pre-eminent place; ensure that local communities are empowered in the execution of each appropriate activity.
- 5.2 Undertake activities intended to guarantee the beneficial place of local community groups in resource management planning.

Output 5.1 implies putting in place permanent governance structures that the NGOs involved in this project are not in a position to deliver. The activities listed under Output 5.2, however, are appropriate and have been carried out with great success and have succeeded in building capacity and confidence among several user groups in each of the project sites. Several of the small projects undertaken have, however, required more time and resources than were originally foreseen—for example, the production of sweets in Los Haitises and fish scale artisanal products in Samana.

This activity reiterates many of the training and public education activities undertaken through Objectives 1 and 4. Activities ascribed to this objective have featured training workshops for tourism guides and for farmers and the distribution of information generated by the project in community centers. For example, listed under this objective are additional practical exercises such as a beach clean-up event in Samana that involved nearly 2,500 people, and workshops and demonstration projects on improved agricultural techniques conducted in the vicinity of Los Haitises Park. The active involvement of communities in the analysis of management issues and the preparation of management strategies has included large numbers of workshops and training courses, and local involvement in surveys.

2.7 *The Anticipated End-of-Project Situation*

The End of Project Situation as described in the Project Document contains a number of targets and outcomes that are not mentioned in any of the three perspectives outlined in Section 1.2 of this report. If extraneous items are ignored, the End of Project Situation calls for advances on the following fronts:

- (1) A biodiversity information system will have been developed that allows for the rapid assessment of priority areas for protection. The system will feature a computerized database network and will enhance biodiversity protection by:
 - Facilitating rapid responses to environmental emergencies
 - Reducing the need for extended predevelopment impact studies
 - Guiding commercial and development decisions
 - Repatriation of data on Dominican ecosystems and biodiversity
- (2) Assessments of ecologically sensitive areas in the Dominican coastal zone will have been completed.
- (3) Management plans will have been in place for existing coastal protected areas.
- (4) Biodiversity friendly activities and products, and markets for them will have been identified.
- (5) NGOs will have increased their capacity in management, operations and fund-raising.
- (6) A sustained program of community education will be in place.
- (7) Public participation in all phases of coastal management will have been institutionalized—e.g., through the establishment of community committees.

Many of these outcomes have been achieved and these accomplishments have contributed significantly to establishing the preconditions for effective management at the four pilot sites. As noted elsewhere in this report, #3 is not in the power of NGOs to deliver and cannot be achieved in the absence of a stable institutional framework and supportive governmental policies. This outcome has therefore not been achieved. Modest progress has been made on #4.

3. A CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

As set forth in Section 1.1 of this report, one of the principal purposes of a capacity assessment is to identify the “instrumental adjustments” to the design and execution of a project that are likely to contribute to its eventual success. Management capacity assessment addresses the adequacy of management structures and the governance process as these relate to explicit standards that are emerging from international experience. In this final evaluation, questions for each step in the process by which management projects and programs evolve were selected from the document, *A Manual for Assessing Progress in Coastal Management*. The manual poses questions that are organized by the steps and essential actions that are widely accepted as constituting good practice in integrated coastal management. It is important to recognize that such a capacity assessment applies a set of standards to this GEF project that are somewhat different from those embedded in the Project Design. These differences, however, are relatively minor since the goal of the management process, as defined by the project’s Development Objective and the phases by which this GEF project was designed to evolve (see Section 1.1), are parallel to those set forth by the self-assessment manual.

In this section, we list those questions from the manual considered to be most relevant to a capacity assessment of this project. The selection of questions was influenced by both the scope and complexity of this project, and the need to avoid repeating elements of the analysis covered in Sections 1 and 2 of this report.

One of the major features of the four pilot sites selected as the focus for this project is that they represent a broad range of situations and different degrees of institutional maturity. If it is accepted that the ecosystem management process evolves through a sequence of cycles each of which should comprise all five steps in the management process, one can conclude that three sites—Montecristi, Jaragua and Samana are all in Stage 2 (preparation of management policies and plans for a first generation effort). Montecristi has all the attributes of a young initiative that is working to apply contemporary ecosystem management

methodologies. Jaragua and Samana, on the other hand, have both been the subject of site-specific NGOs—Grupo Jaragua and The Center for Conservation and Eco-development of Samana Bay and Its Environments, Inc. (CEBSE)—that have sponsored a long sequence of research and management activities extending back almost a decade. These three sites contrast with Los Haitises that was designated as a national park in 1968 and has a well-documented and tumultuous history. This history will be analyzed in a forthcoming book published by Island Press entitled, *Managing A Park: Restoration or Requiem*. Los Haitises can be considered to be at Step 2 of a second-generation effort. This, however, is an oversimplification since the seven modifications to the Park’s boundaries and the many shifts in governance policies and institutional frameworks, illustrate the machinations of a painful attempt to protect an important and vulnerable ecosystem.

3.1 Step 1: Issue Identification and Assessment

3.1.1. Identification and Analysis of Management Issues

Questions Addressed

- A1. *What are the management issues in the coastal area that are the subject of this project or program?*
- A3. *Has an issue assessment been prepared? Who prepared the assessment and who funded the effort?*
- A6. *Was an analysis made of current relationships between agencies of government and other institutions and the priority coastal management issues? What did this analysis reveal about the adequacy of existing management?*

Pressures on Biodiversity and the Condition of Ecosystems. The Project Document identifies four intensifying pressures on the rich biodiversity and endemism of Dominican coastal ecosystems.

- (1) Changing rural land use that is leading to ecosystem homogenization.

- (2) Demographic pressures brought by a growing population, expanding urbanization and a proliferation of activities that threaten biodiversity and ecosystem qualities.
- (3) Underplanned tourist development that often conflicts with the existing livelihoods of rural communities and accelerates the destruction of natural assets and amenities upon which the sector ultimately depends.
- (4) Disjunctures between science and management.

These pressures are all reflected in varying degrees at the four pilot sites. There has been no subsequent attempt to analyze how such pressures are affecting the processes of social and ecosystem change across the four sites or to examine the expression of site-specific management issues to these larger forces.

Issue-driven Analysis. The major weakness of the approach adopted by the project's partners at Montecristi, Jaragua and Samana is that the research and planning process is not explicitly issue driven. For example, management issues are embedded in the text of the management plans prepared for Montecristi and Jaragua. In both cases, the reader must search out the issues in a descriptive text that tends to be organized according to ecosystem type or research feature rather than by issues. In some cases, issues that were noted as priorities at these sites during this evaluation are not mentioned at all in these documents. The absence of an issue-driven analysis is particularly notable in the document entitled, *A Plan for the Management and Conservation of Biodiversity in the Samana Region*. At this site, the biggest tourist attraction is whale watching, and this has produced a number of problems and opportunities that have been a major focus of CEBSE activities. According to interviews, a more recent problem is the sudden increase in trawling which is having major impacts on the marine biota of the bay and on fisheries as a major source of livelihoods. Yet whales are not mentioned in the Final Document for this site, and the expansion of trawling is buried in the lists of problems and actions in the chapter on fisheries.

The absence of an issue-driven analysis at these three sites produces a number of consequences that threaten the ultimate effectiveness and efficiency of resource management efforts. In Samana, for example, an attempt was made to present the results of surveys and research on a number of topics at a series of public workshops. However, since this information was not organized to shed light on specific management issues, there was little interest in such information and these presentations were discontinued.

In contrast to the other sites, the organization of surveys, research, planning and public involvement at Los Haitises has been organized around selected resource management issues. This has had a major beneficial impact on the progress made at this site. The result is that the management challenges and the priority needs in terms of both information and management actions are much clearer for Los Haitises than at the other project sites.

The techniques used for issue identification and assessment have been similar at the Montecristi and Jaragua sites, where a modified version of the rapid rural assessment techniques recommended by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) have been applied. These are described in more detail in Section 3.2.1. At the Samana site, considerable information on some topics had been gathered before this GEF project. It nonetheless would be useful to apply some of the survey techniques used in Montecristi to provide a coherent characterization of management issues that could subsequently be used as a basis for comparing among the process of societal and ecosystem change across the three coastal sites.

Institutional Analysis. A major gap in the issue assessment process as it is reflected in the final documents for Montecristi, Jaragua and Samana is the absence of any institutional analysis of the kind called for by Question A6. This is an important omission, since discussions at these three sites makes it obvious that institutional problems are the most important impediment to forward progress toward effective resource management and biodiversity conservation. It is clear that those involved at these sites, including community-level stakeholders, NGOs and government officials, are keenly aware of these issues and willing to discuss them in great detail. The evaluation team believes that it would be fully

within the traditions of transparency practiced by this project to explicitly address these issues in their management documents, and to link the technical, social and institutional dimensions of both the management problems and opportunities that exist at the sites.

3.1.2 Involvement of Stakeholders in the Management Process

Questions Addressed

- B2. Were the views of unorganized interests and the perceptions of the general public solicited during the issue assessment process? How did this occur, and what was learned?*
- B3. What governmental agencies and other formally constituted institutions—such as universities, user groups and religious organizations—have an interest in the condition and use of the coastal ecosystems being considered? How were their interests analyzed?*
- B4. How well did the assessment bring together disparate or conflicting interests? Were stakeholders and opinion leaders involved at the local level as well as within central government? How did this occur?*

The involvement of stakeholders at both the local level at the four pilot sites and with national-level governmental, educational and private sector interests has been a major feature and success of the project.

At the local level, the lead NGO at each site has been successful in identifying and bringing together community-level stakeholders and working to involve them in all phases of the management process. In Los Haitises, Samana and Jaragua, this process was eased by the many years of effort that preceded this GEF project by the lead NGOs—and in the case of Los Haitises, Cornell University—in working with local stakeholders and conducting research on local issues. As highlighted in Section 3.1.1, the absence of an explicit issue-driven approach in all sites except Los Haitises has raised some problems in integrating some forms of research into the dialogue with local stakeholders. In all cases, however, local stakeholders have participated in the research activities even when they do not fully understand what role the information generated may play in addressing problems and

opportunities. The absence of an issue-driven approach probably contributed to instances where the link between the small grants projects undertaken at a given management site and an emerging management strategy were weak. The activities that were funded by the small grants program, however, were all identified by local stakeholders and this did much to build confidence and interest in the project's activities.

At the national level, the project did an outstanding job at integrating the most relevant governmental agencies into the project, even though their participation was not featured in the Project Design. This is understandable given the condition of these management institutions at the time. The project has been highly successful in promoting a reputation for transparent and inclusive behavior. This has been expressed by: (1) featuring important officials at opening and closing ceremonies of project-sponsored events; (2) including a wide diversity of governmental and nongovernmental participants in workshops and courses; and (3) widely distributing the many documents produced by the project. The GIS system, that is a major result of the investment, surveys and research, is accessible to all interested parties.

The project has also succeeded in promoting vertical integration particularly between local-level stakeholders and governmental officials in Santo Domingo. Some workshops, for example, have featured community leaders. More importantly, the officials we interviewed in the capital all spoke positively of the importance of local level involvement in the research and management process.

There have been a number of instances when a diversity of opinions have been voiced at project events. It is notable that the officials representing many national level institutions all were well-informed about the project and felt that its success in bringing together a diversity of players at both the local and national level was one of—or in several interviewees' opinion—the most important achievement of the project. As noted above, institutional conflicts and the different interests of various groups have been widely and openly discussed but so far are not the subject of an explicit analysis. Here again, the exception is at the Los Haitises site where such institutional issues and the public policy problems they produce have been documented and analyzed in detail.

The evaluation team is not aware of opportunities for the general public to engage in the issues raised by the project. There has, however, been a considerable public outreach effort, but the impression is that it focused on informing the public rather than soliciting their views.

3.1.3 Issue Selection

Questions Addressed

- CI. What coastal issues has the project selected as the focus for its efforts? How were these issues chosen? By whom?*

Issue selection is the most critical outcome of Step 1. It requires “scoping down” from the large number of problems and opportunities that have been identified to a limited agenda that is within the capacity and the resources of the institutions involved to implement. The issue selection process should provide Step 2—the crafting of management policy and plans—with a clear strategic focus.

The evaluation team could not discern an overt scoping down process at Montecristi, Jaragua or Samana. This was particularly troubling at Samana, where CEBSE has been actively engaged in a wide diversity of activities for almost a decade. Much of the problem can probably be attributed to a largely donor-driven agenda. At this site, a large number of donors including the Center for Marine Conservation, the U.S. Agency for International Development, The Ford Foundation, The Tinker Foundation, Helvetas and The Moriah Fund have supported CEBSE activities. The team could not identify a clearly articulated “CEBSE agenda,” but rather had the impression that activities were tailored to meet the interests of the different donors. This contributes to the impression that activities at this site consist of many iterations of Steps 1 and 2, rather than a purposeful advance through Steps 3, 4 and 5 and thus the completion of coherent cycles of management and learning. This is not to say that there are no examples of implementation. These are expressed, however, as the implementation of discrete activities in the mode of pilot scale demonstrations—such as the whale watching

program and garbage collection initiatives—rather than the articulation and implementation of an overarching management strategy. These impressions of stand-alone projects rather than an overt, locally owned and explicit agenda were reinforced by the fact that the Final Document produced for the GEF project by CEBSE makes no mention of the 1996 *Integrated Management Plan for the Samana Region* or the *Proposal for a Biosphere Reserve* that preceded it in 1990. Yet it is apparent that many of the problems, policies and actions listed in the GEF document are a revision of the lists presented in the 1996 Plan.

3.1.4 Consensus on the Goals of the Project

Questions Addressed

- E1. To what extent does the proposed project or program goals reflect the issues that have been identified?*
- E2. Is the purpose of this coastal management initiative understood by those who are likely to be affected by it?*

The objectives of the project and the strategies adopted to attain them appear to be well understood by all those interviewed at Track 1 (the national level). Given that the ultimate goals of effective ecosystem management and biodiversity protection lie in the future, there is a strong consensus among all those interviewed for this evaluation that the best strategy is to focus on the project's three priorities of institutional strengthening, stakeholder involvement and investing in assembling the information base that should eventually inform management decisions.

3.2 *Step 2: Preparation of Management Plans*

3.2.1 Documentation of Baseline Conditions, Monitoring Change

Questions Addressed

- A2. *Did the public and/or specific stakeholder groups participate in documenting baseline conditions?*
- A3. *Are the baselines considered to be adequate to serve as the basis for analyzing future change? What are the prospects for ascribing future impacts to the efforts of the coastal management project? Have control sites been considered or planned as the basis of a future analysis of project impacts?*

The Project Document in Section H raises high expectations for the impacts of the information systems to be generated by this GEF project. These are that the knowledge generated will:

- Assist in rapid responses to emergencies
- Reduce the needs for information gathering for Environmental Impact Assessments
- Guide commercial decisionmaking

Such benefits may indeed eventually occur but they appear to lie sometime in the future.

As noted in Section 3.1.1, similar techniques are being followed in Montecristi and Jaragua to characterize current conditions and document selected baseline conditions. At these two sites a modified version of TNC methodologies for rapid assessment are being followed. At the Samana site, information collection has been undertaken through this GEF project to fill in some of the gaps from previous surveys and studies sponsored by other donors. For example, a shoreline survey has been made of the west (?) coast of Samana Bay to complement an earlier survey of the east (?) coast. Data on the size and species composition of fisheries landings have been completed that add another level of detail to earlier surveys funded by The Ford Foundation. At all four pilot sites community groups have participated in documenting baseline conditions.

It does not appear that the coastal and marine baselines at these three sites will readily provide a basis for a comparative analysis of ecosystem change but the brief time available for this evaluation did not allow for an in-depth review. The baselines at these three sites are in the form of initial surveys that provide a good “snapshot” of the distribution and condition of selected features of marine and coastal ecosystems. Surveys of social variables were included but are less detailed. At these sites, controls or monitoring protocols that could document the changes that might in the future be attributed to management actions or specific societal behaviors are not currently being considered. Jaragua and Montecristi baseline surveys have addressed such topics as:

- Fisheries landings
- Characterization of marine habitats out to the 50-meter contour
- Descriptions of the condition of mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass beds
- Maps of fishing grounds
- Surveys of the distribution and livelihoods of the resident human population

Baseline documentation and the analysis of change is more advanced and much more sophisticated at the Los Haitises site, thanks largely to the many Masters and Ph.D. theses completed over the years by Cornell University students.

The project has made a major investment in a GIS system that has organized and made more accessible already existing information on the four sites, and incorporates the data produced through this GEF project. Here again, the advanced state of research on Los Haitises provides for approximately 50 overlays of information for that site, compared to 10 or less overlays for the other three sites. These information sources are considered to be adequate as a basis for making a preliminary characterization of ecosystem condition and current human activities. They can provide an initial reference point for assessing future change. The project has worked to have the Dominican Republic identified as a regional server for the Caribbean Environmental Network. There has also been discussion of a national

clearinghouse that could draw together information on environmental and biodiversity variables collected by some 60 governmental and private institutions.

3.2.2 Research in Support of Biodiversity, Conservation and Management

Questions Addressed

- B1. What studies have been conducted? What questions does the research seek to answer? How have coastal management issues shaped the research agenda? Is the scale of research appropriate to the issues identified and to program needs?*
- B2. Is the project process benefiting from research that has been designed to fill important gaps in the analysis of the selected management issues?*

The many documents generated by the project unfortunately do not specify the management questions that the research sponsored by the project is designed to answer. It would appear, however, that the research undertaken could be applied to such questions as the following:

- What is the distribution and current condition of major habitat types?
- What problems and opportunities are posed by current and future uses of those habitats?
- What is the current condition of fisheries resources?
- What is the composition and distribution of biodiversity?
- What geographic areas require protection and/or restoration initiatives?
- What is the current socioeconomic condition of local level user groups?

The absence of a rigorous, issue-driven approach to research and planning noted in Section 3.1.1 has major repercussions on the targeting of research and monitoring. It was therefore not possible to discern whether the research that had been undertaken was indeed filling the gaps that are most important to an integrated resource management initiative. In Samana, for example, one of the research priorities has been to document the condition and distribution of vines (*bejuocos*). This is apparently based on the assumption that basket weaving will become more important in the future in part as a means of replacing the current high use of

nonbiodegradable plastic bags. This and other research activities in fisheries and coastal morphology are difficult to evaluate in the absence of an explicit “scoping down” process or any clear sense of the major features of a future integrated management strategy for the region.

The Project Document suggests a sophisticated research agenda that would produce new products and markets, and test livelihood activities that could replace the losses caused by conservation. Such research has been conducted in Los Haitises and is persuading some communities to adopt new forms of agriculture and give up destructive practices. At the other sites, the small grants program has experimented with alternative livelihoods, but these are not based on research or developing “new” products and markets.

3.2.3 Planning and Policy Formulation in the Demonstration Sites

Questions Addressed

- C1. What is the “logic” or “theory” that underlies the design of the major management initiatives in the management plan? How valid is the logic or theory?*
- C3. What changes in target group behavior are sought in the management strategy? How significant are those changes?*

The Logic or Theory Underlying Management Initiatives. The major project hypotheses that are reflected in the activities of each site and at the national level are the following:

- Effective and sustainable progress towards the goals of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem health will be achieved not by eliminating human activities but rather by promoting appropriate forms of use. This is described in the project paper as The Integrated Conservation and Development Model. As described in the reports of the Cornell team (Geisler et al.), this model is a major departure from the initial

conservationist strategy adopted in Latin America in the 1970s that called for establishing parks and preserves to be sustained in their natural and undisturbed state.

- At a time when governmental institutions with the responsibilities for conservation and environmentally sound development were weak or in disarray, the project's primary objective should be the institutional strengthening of NGOs and community-level organizations dedicated to people-oriented conservation.
- Major investments should be made in the compilation of scientific information that documents and analyzes the condition of natural systems at the pilot sites and the impacts of selected human activities. An important feature of such science for management is the identification of new eco-friendly products and markets designed to meet the livelihood needs of those adversely affected by restrictions on destructive practices.
- Public involvement in all phases of information gathering and management at the community level is essential to a successful and sustainable governance process.

Both international experience and the experience of those interviewed by the evaluation team suggests that these assumptions are sound. As mentioned elsewhere in this document, the assumption that would benefit from a more careful analysis is the one concerning science for management. It is the belief of this evaluation team that the project would benefit by linking priorities for information compilation and research more closely with priority management issues, and to pose the specific questions that would inform the formulation of management strategies.

Changes in Target Group Behavior. Identifying the specific changes in behavior that are deemed to be both necessary and feasible in order to advance towards the fundamental goals of the project lies at the very heart of any management strategy. Such specifics are fairly clear for Los Haitises but are vague at the other three sites. In Los Haitises, the core of the

management strategy is to promote environmentally appropriate economic activity in the proposed zone of cooperation. A number of specific activities are being proposed and tested that include a variety of practices in agroforestry and environmentally conscious agriculture. Cornell recommends that a management strategy for the zone of cooperation should accommodate controlled timber extraction and the cultivation of *yautia*, a lucrative root crop with a dependable market demand. Other recommendations promote intensive chemical-free agriculture and possibly industrial-scale water bottling schemes designed to exploit the abundant water resources of the national park. Since increases in the resident population of the park will threaten the long-term viability of any management strategy, the Cornell team recommends a procedure for issuing identity cards to current residents in specific zones. This form of registration could be the basis for regulating immigration and thereby stabilizing the size of the resident population.

At the other sites, the process of specifying needed behavioral changes is still at an early stage. In Samana, CEBSE has led a very successful campaign that has resulted in a code of conduct for those who take tourists whale watching. This has apparently significantly reduced disturbance to the whales. This activity, however, was not sponsored by, or directly related to, this GEF project and no mention of it is made in the *Plan for the Conservation of Biodiversity in the Samana Region*. This document in its list of recommended actions includes needed behavioral changes but only in very general terms. The small grants program has addressed some forms of behavioral change but it is not at all clear how these initiatives could be translated into strategies that would produce change at a significant scale. For example, one small grants project provided a bakery that had used mangrove wood to fuel its oven with a gas-fired oven. This has presumably had some impact on the demand for mangrove fuel wood but we are unaware of any attempt to apply this experience to a coherent mangrove management strategy.

3.2.4 Design of Institutional Structures and a Decisionmaking Process

Questions Addressed

D1. Has an institutional framework been designed for implementation of the plan?

None of the plans or proposed elements of plans that we reviewed included an institutional framework. We regard this as a major and unnecessary gap in the research and planning process.

3.2.5 Early Implementation Actions

Questions Addressed

G2. To what extent is the experience gained transferable to other issues or sites?

G3. Has the experience gained been incorporated into policy formulation?

G4. Do early implementation actions produce tangible improvements for stakeholders in the place where they are applied?

During Step 2, when the emphasis should be upon the analysis of selected management issues and the formulation of approaches to their resolution, it is vitally important to discover the feasibility of the management techniques and strategies that are being contemplated. Pilot-scale actions can bring attention and credibility to a management initiative when they demonstrate that meaningful action is indeed possible. In this GEF project, such pilot-scale activities became a feature of the design in 1995 and were undertaken as “small grants projects” in each of the four sites. All of these projects were selected from ideas generated at community-level workshops. They therefore responded to local perceptions of needs and have done much to build confidence and experience among community groups. They have also created considerable good will. It is apparent, however, that for most of these small projects community participation is an end in itself. Thus, the strategy implied by questions G2 and G3 were not incorporated into this element of the project.

3.3 *Step 3: Formal Adoption and Sustained Funding*

Formal Adoption of Policies and Plans. In the Project Document, this phase in the evolution of management programs is termed “sustainable development.” According to the Project Document:

The adaptive management plans built on strategic planning must establish a sustainable base in terms of i) financial permanence, ii) programmatic acceptability, iii) community participation, and iv) policy dialogue and reform. These elements form the core agenda of Phase III.

According to the Project Document, this final phase of the GEF project would have occurred in the third year. A persuasive argument can be made that the compression of project implementation into a two-year period has eliminated any reasonable possibility to make progress on this phase. The project has, however, played a significant role in creating the preconditions to a potentially significant restructuring of the national institutional framework for ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation. In this section, we briefly sketch out the major features of this complex and rapidly changing landscape.

Unfortunately the evaluation team was unable to meet with the director of the Park Service who was unavailable due to sickness in his family. We gathered from our other conversations that the Park Service is severely overtaxed and is not in a position to either formulate or implement management plans of the detail and complexity that would be required at the pilot sites. The Park Service is charged with the administration of 70 parks and preserves. These are governed by an outdated law that provides for only two categories of protection, both of which eliminate or severely reduce the kinds of human activities that prevail in much of the area included within Los Haitises. We gather that the inclusive and participatory approach promoted by this GEF project is still in conflict with the older and largely discredited concept of parks and reserves as areas where most human activities must be eliminated. Los Haitises serves as a regional example of the struggle to define a viable approach to the conservation of natural areas. Seven changes have been made to the boundaries of this park, each of which has been accompanied by major revisions to policies

and use zones. Large numbers of people have been forcefully evicted or resettled and according to the Director of the Forestry Service, the current subsidies provided by the government to the people affected by these actions is currently running at 4.2 million pesos per month (\$280,000 per month) which is apparently considerably more than the entire monthly budget of the Park Service.

The problems of the Park Service, however, are the reflection of a much larger set of complex and long-standing problems in the policies and institutional framework for environmental issues in the Dominican Republic. This GEF project has taken place at a time of major institutional change. In 1995, the year that the implementation of activities at the pilot sites got underway, an Executive Decree created three commissions charged with revising policy and coordinating the actions of governmental institutions on a full range of environmental topics. One of these was the Comision Tecnico Adminiestrativo Marino Costero. This commission was chaired by the current director of the Forest Service, Captain Lora. The Coastal Commission worked to coordinate among approximately 10 separate governmental institutions involved in such matters as the ratification of international conventions, planning for a regional hub port, and the review of the many laws and decrees affecting the development and management of coastal marine areas. Many of these matters are of direct relevance to the management of the GEF pilot sites. According to Captain Lora, considerable progress was made. However, in May of this year, by another Executive Decree, the Coastal Commission and its two sister commissions were replaced with a new environmental institute (IMPRA) which has the potential to become an agency like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, with broad powers. Reform at this scale, however, requires a new legislative mandate. Such legislation was being debated in the Congress at the time of this evaluation.

A symptom of the instability of governmental institutions has been the rapid turnover of staff. Each time the leadership of an institution changes, there can be a wholesale turnover in the staffing of an institution. In the Park Service, for example, this turnover can extend as far down as to the appointment of park rangers. According to Dr. Ottenwalder, the national project coordinator, in the three years since he was appointed in early 1995, there have been

four directors of ONAPLAN, six directors of the Park Service, and five subsecretaries of the environment in the Ministry of Agriculture.

This GEF project has done much to foster a useful and positive policy dialogue at the Track 1 level through its many workshops and short courses. This has involved a broad cross-section of officials from various governmental institutions. The project's national coordinator has played a pivotal role in the negotiation of \$3 million project to be funded by the World Bank, the objective of which is to prepare a National and Environmental Management Program through a learning and participatory process. This project will be administered by the ONAPLAN coordinating office that was created to service this GEF project and has the potential to advance the activities foreseen for Phase 3.

At the provincial level, a potentially very significant development this year is the creation of Consejos Provinciales that are chaired by the governor of each province and draw together governmental and nongovernmental bodies to discuss and act upon issues of local interest. The lead NGOs at each of the pilot sites are participating in this process and are optimistic that this can produce a degree of coordination that has been impossible in the past and has the potential for providing an important forum for the resolution of conflicts and the framing of local policy.

These recent developments at both the national and provincial level may over the next few years produce an institutional context within which the formulation, adoption and initial implementation of coherent management strategies may become a feasible option. If this occurs, the investments made by this GEF project will prove to have been timely and to have significantly contributed to the creation of a positive context for forward progress into Steps 3 and 4.

The Formulation of Management Plans. Management plans explicitly designed for formal approval and funding (Step 3) and their subsequent full-scale implementation (Step 4) were not an objective of this GEF project. This makes the Dominican Republic GEF project different from companion projects in Patagonia, Cuba and Belize. Since this GEF project

was designed to be implemented by selected NGOs and did not call for the participation of the governmental institutions charged with the management and the development of the pilot areas, Intermediate Objective No. 3 is cautious in specifying what advances in terms of site-specific management plans could be expected from this initiative. These limitations to the project are discussed in Section 2.4. Recognizing this reality, the final reports for the four project sites therefore present lists of proposed recommendations for future management plans, or even more indirectly, offer ideas and concepts that should be considered at some later date. Here again for Montecristi, Jaragua and Samana, the absence of an issue-driven analysis or an explicit scoping down process results in long lists of problems and potential actions that lack a strategic focus. The situation is different in Los Haitises, where the clear priority is to settle the boundaries of the Park and to clearly define what activities are to be permitted in each of the zones. Without unequivocal clarification on these fundamental issues the effectiveness of all other policies and actions will be in jeopardy. The enunciation of similarly clear priorities for the other three sites would be the essential first step in framing a strategic and practical course of action that could carry efforts through Steps 3 and 4.

Sustained Funding. Current governmental funding for parks, reserves and important natural resources is wholly inadequate. It is also clear that an insignificant portion of the revenues generated by the tourist activities, which already dominate the economy in the Samana region, flow to the resident population. Yet the potential appears to be great for defraying a significant portion of the costs of effective resource management and biodiversity conservation with tourism revenues. At present there are no user fees at parks. The revenues generated by the \$20 levied on each tourist as an entry and exit tax and hotel taxes flow to the General Treasury. It may be possible to earmark a portion of such funds for conservation purposes. It may also be possible to solicit voluntary contributions for these purposes. These possibilities are another aspect of the policy reforms that will hopefully emerge over the next several years.

3.4 Program Attributes

3.4.1 National Ownership of the Program

One of the most striking features of this project is the sense of pride and commitment that it has engendered in a wide cross-section of institutions spanning both the NGO community, government agencies and community-level groups. This is a major accomplishment. We attribute this success in part to the fact that the project has been executed by a Dominican agency—ONAPLAN—and has been administered by a very capable Dominican national who has a long-term commitment to advancing effective ecosystem management in the republic. Although the project has benefited from many foreign specialists, the character and ownership of the project is clearly Dominican. The participation of Cornell University in the project has added an international perspective. We were impressed by Cornell's long-term commitment to the Los Haitises Park and to its role as a source of Dominican experience in the training of Dominican professionals. Several of the high level professionals interviewed during this evaluation have received advanced degrees from Cornell, including Captain Lora, the director of the Forestry Service, who earned his Ph.D. at Cornell and whose dissertation was based on his research on Los Haitises.

3.4.2 Evidence of Adaptive Management

As mentioned in Section 3.1.1, the lead NGOs for Jaragua and Samana have almost a decade of experience working to promote biodiversity conservation and effective management at those two sites. The Los Haitises Park was created in 1968, and has a long and rich history, much of it of failure. This rich body of experience has been the source of considerable learning but it is only at the Los Haitises site that the process of adaptive management has been carefully examined and acted upon.

The project itself contains many excellent examples of adaptive management. The complex process of negotiating an administrative framework for the project, as outlined in Section 1.1, is an example of strategic analysis and adaptation. The project has developed a tradition of self-examination in sharing experience across the four project sites. The evaluation team feels that a more explicit learning-based approach to resource management and conservation based on using such frameworks as the one contained in the self-assessment manual could be readily applied to the ongoing administration of activities both at the demonstration sites and in Santo Domingo.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A PHASE 2 GEF PROJECT

The evaluation team strongly recommends a Phase 2 GEF project that builds upon the accomplishments of Phase 1. It is essential that the fundamental strategy of promoting biodiversity conservation through the formulation and implementation of integrated coastal management policies and plans is sustained in a Phase 2 project. As in Phase 1, the principal focus of a Phase 2 effort should be the four pilot sites where the priority should be to produce living models of successful participatory management in a diversity of settings. This will require sustaining the practices that were successful in Phase 1 that promote capacity building, trust and the consensus building on a common agenda for action at both the individual pilot sites and at the national level.

During a Phase 2 GEF project, it will be essential to design institutional frameworks for management at the four sites and at the national level. While the lead NGOs and their partners at the community level are already in a position to make significant forward progress—perhaps with the support of the emerging Consejos Provinciales—the continuing policy dialogue and restructuring of governmental institutions with an environmental agenda at the national level will require close coordination with a forthcoming World Bank project and the emerging IMPRA. We believe, however, that substantial progress at the provincial level can be made at a time when the national policy is less than clear.

The application of the self-assessment manual gives rise to a number of recommended “instrumental adjustments” that we believe would together considerably increase the effectiveness and the efficiency of resource management at the pilot sites. As noted in Section 3, these recommendations apply most directly to Montecristi, Jaragua and Samana:

- (1) The project should adopt an explicit conceptual framework and apply it to all four pilot sites. We recommend assigning project activities to the different steps in the policy process and experiment with ways of charting progress to reinforce the idea

that progress is made through a sequence of cycles of learning, each of which contains periods of action, reflection and lesson drawing.

- (2) We recommend that techniques for documenting baseline conditions for environmental, social and institutional variables should be applied, wherever possible, across the four sites. This will facilitate the analysis of ecosystem and social change and the transfer of learning from one site to another.
- (3) We recommend that an overt issue-driven approach to the management process be adopted. This is a fundamental prerequisite of strategic planning and management and can greatly ease the process of integrating research, planning, public education and stakeholder involvement in the management process.
- (4) We recommend that all future iterations of management plans include an analysis of institutional issues and begin the process of suggesting the institutional frameworks and decisionmaking processes by which the desired changes in human behavior and anthropogenic change can be implemented.
- (5) The absence of issue-driven management process has made the process by which year-to-year action priorities are selected appear ad hoc and without a clear strategic purpose. The long lists of recommended actions that follow each “problem” in the recommended area plans for Montecristi, Jaragua and Samana would greatly benefit from a scoping down process that identifies immediate priorities and begins to organize actions into a logical sequence.
- (6) We recommend that future training activities feature techniques of strategic planning and options for the design of management plans that will be effective as the basis for a future management process. We recommend that in the future small-scale projects be undertaken that test the feasibility of ideas for new management practices and decisionmaking procedures. Some of the small grants projects carried out during

Phase 1 are providing this function but the strategy of testing ideas for improved management at a pilot scale should be more explicit.

- (7) We recommend that baselines and monitoring schemes should be adjusted so that the short-term impacts of selected human activities can be evaluated. For example, in the Samana region, it would be very useful to document the impacts of the rapid increase in trawling on both bottom communities and fisheries landings.
- (8) Finally, we recommend that research activities be arrayed around the questions upon which they will presumably shed light. This will help strengthen the link between science and management that was recognized as one of the fundamental problems that this GEF project was designed to address.

The evaluation team believes that it was a sound decision to structure the Phase 1 project so that it would be implemented by a selected number of NGOs and universities. However, the developments of the last two years, in our judgment, require including selected governmental institutions as full partners in a Phase 2 effort.

5. SOME LESSONS LEARNED

This was the first occasion when the *Manual for Assessing Progress in Coastal Management* was used as the basis for a capacity assessment. It became apparent that it was only feasible to select which questions listed under each step of the policy process were applicable to this project after the team had become familiar with the project and the unique features of the Dominican Republic as the setting for a GEF initiative. We also realized that it would be useful to organize the questions under each topic into a hierarchy designed to distinguish between different levels of analysis. Once the sophistication and detail of the analysis had been established, we found that answering the selected questions gave the analysis a rigor that is rarely achieved in a performance evaluation. Furthermore, the analysis as framed by the Manual led logically to ideas for instrumental adjustments and a conceptual framework for analyzing both the project's design and its accomplishments.

The evaluation team recognizes that the five-step "road map," as described by GESAMP, is a heuristic that oversimplifies the complex situations in which individual projects must play out. For example, it is important to recognize that in some cases the formal approval and funding of an integrated management plan, as called for by Step 3, may be neither feasible nor desirable. In the Dominican Republic, for example, the disarray of government institutions at the national level with responsibilities for resource management would, during the life of this GEF project, have made such formalities difficult to achieve and potentially meaningless. We nonetheless find that it is very useful to encourage those working to promote effective resource management and biodiversity conservation in specific geographic areas to recognize that the articulation of a strategic and well-balanced agenda is very important. Far too many resource management initiatives fail to progress into a period of effective implementation at significant scales. They tend to become caught up in repeated cycles of data gathering, analysis and planning that contribute little to forward progress. This leads to frustration and disillusionment among those involved.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

Final Evaluation of the GEF Project Conservation and Management of Biodiversity in the Coastal Zone of the Dominican Republic

Mr. Olsen, Mr. Ochoa and Dr. Alcolado will assist the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean in providing an in-depth evaluation of the GEF Project “Conservation and Management of Biodiversity in the Coastal Zone of the Dominican Republic.”

They will work closely with staff from the UNDP Country Office and the project team, as required, to assess (1) the project’s potential for advancing the conservation and sustainable use of coastal biodiversity in the Dominican Republic, and (2) the sustainability of those impacts over the medium to long term. Based on these assessments, they will also recommend strategies and actions for a second phase of GEF support to this initiative.

Mr. Olsen, Mr. Ochoa and Dr. Alcolado’s activities will include the following:

- A. Review of material related to the project including the GEF Project Document, previous project evaluations and other reports and assessments that may be provided during the mission.
- B. Interviews, consultations and meetings with project staff, government agencies, NGOs, local communities, civil society organizations, and the UNDP Country Office as arranged by project staff in the Dominican Republic.
- C. The evaluation shall be structured as follows:
 - (1) A Performance Assessment. This will update and comment upon the most recent tripartite review and will be organized to address (a) the project’s Interim Objectives with reference to the lists of specific outputs and activities as detailed in the Project Document and (b) the End of Project Situation as described in the Project Document.
 - (2) A Capacity Assessment. This will address the questions listed in the *Manual for Self-Assessment* (Olsen, et al. 1999) that has resulted from a multi-donor initiative supported by the UNDP. These questions are organized according to the steps in the coastal management process as defined by GESAMP (1996)

and reflect the attributes of coastal management described in the Project Document. Specifically:

- Identification, Analysis and Selection of Management Issues
- Involvement of Stakeholders in the Management Process
- Consensus on the Goals of the Project
- Planning and Policy Formulation in the Demonstration Sites
- Documentation of baseline conditions, monitoring change
- Research in Support of Biodiversity, Conservation and Management
- Strengthening Management Institutions
- Early Implementation Actions
- Public Education
- Sustained Funding
- National Ownership of the Program
- Evidence of Adaptive Management
- Progress in Mitigating the Impacts of Development on Ecosystem Quality and Biodiversity

(3) Lessons learned on the project's design and strategy as these relate to progress towards the objectives reviewed in Item #(1).

(4) Recommendations for future activities in support of biodiversity conservation through integrated coastal development and management.

D. A draft report on the above topics shall be delivered to UNDP/NYC and UNDP/Dominican Republic no later than 14 days after the end of the field visit on diskette and by e-mail in WP5.1 or MS Word.

Mr. Olsen has agreed to a constancy of 15 working days to consist of 5 days in the project site and 10 days in office.

Mr. Ochoa and Dr. Alcolado have agreed to a constancy of 10 working days at the project site.

Appendix B: Evaluation Schedule

Appendix C: Persons Interviewed (Partial Listing)

Venecia Alvarez	Centro de Investigaciones de Biología Marina (CIBIMA/UASD)
Yvonne Arias	Grupo Jaragua, Inc.
Lourdes Brache	Universidad de Cornell
Ricardo Colom	Director Depto. De Recursos Pesqueros/SURENA
Ricardo García	Jardin Botanico Nacional
Zoila González	Oficina Nacional de Planificación (ONAPLAN)
José Martínez Guridy	Sub-Secretario de Estado de Recursos Naturales/SURENA
Marina Hernández	Oficina Nacional de Planificación (ONAPLAN)
Sixto Incháustegui	Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD/RD)
Patricia Lamelas	Centro para la Conservación y Ecodesarrollo de la Bahía de Samaná y su Entorno, Inc. (CEBSE)
Eugenio Marcano	Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña (UNPHU)
Milcíades Mejía	Director Jardin Botanico Nacional
Raúl Méndez C.	Director Depto. Inventario de Recursos Naturales/SURENA
Paolo Oberti	Residente Coordinador
Enrique E. Pugibet	Acuario Nacional
Omar Ramírez	Director Dirección Nacional de Parques
Carlos Rodríguez	Director Museo Nacional de Historia
Radhamés Lora Salcedo	Presidencia de la Republica Dominicana DIRECCION GENERAL DE FORESTA
Alberto Sánchez	Programa de Pequeños Subsidios a ONG's/PRONATURA
Ramón Ovidio Sánchez	Director Depto. De Vida Silvestre/SURENA
Bolívar Troncoso	Depto. De medio Ambiente, Secretaria de Estado de Turismo

Appendix D: Principal Documents Reviewed (Partial Listing)

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC EVALUATION

Project Documents

Project Document
Subcontratos
Anexo 2: Documentos
Anexo 3: Talleres, Cursos y Seminarios
Síntesis de Resultados del Subcontrato Biología Marina – CIBIMA
Perfil de Proyecto – Subcontrato Asistencia Técnica y Sistemas de Información y Evaluación de la Biodiversidad
Borrador del Informe Final 1996 Report on the Tripartite Review
World Bank Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Learning and Innovation Loan

Samaná

Samaná Workplan
Perfil de Proyecto
Síntesis de Resultados
Propuesta de Plan Para La Conservación de La Biodiversidad
Plan de Manejo Integrado para la región de Samaná

Montecristi

Plan de Trabajo Workplan – Grupo Jaragua, Inc.
Plan de Trabajo Workplan – Centro de Investigaciones de Biología, Marina (CIBIMA) de la Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (UASD)
Perfil de Proyecto
Síntesis de Resultados
Propuesta de Plan

Jaragua

Perfil de Proyecto
Síntesis de Resultados
Propuesta de Plan

Los Haitises

Workplan – Cornell
Resumen Ejecutivo – Cornell
Informe Final – Universidad de Cornell
Research Implications for Management Planning in the Los Haitises National Park
Workplan – Agricultura Sostenible – Los Haitises – Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez – Ureña (UNPHU)
Perfil de Proyecto – Proyecto Agricultura Sostenible – Los Haitises
Síntesis de Resultados del Subcontrato Agricultura
Perfil de Proyecto – Subcontrato Agricultura Ecológica – Los Haitises
Perfil de Proyecto – Proyecto Parque Nacional Los Haitises
Sugerencias del Subcontrato Agricultura Ecológica
Managing a Park: Restoration or Requiem? (book prospectus)
Cornell University Subcontract Final Report

Appendix E: Summary of Budget Expenditures