



UNITED NATIONS



FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

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ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT PROJECT 1819 AF

**Strengthening institutional frameworks in
the Caribbean for an integrative approach
to implement the 2030 Agenda and the
SIDS Sustainable Development Agenda**



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This report was prepared by Angela Naletilic, an external consultant, who led the evaluation. Ms. Naletilic worked under the overall guidance of Raúl García-Buchaca, Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and Sandra Manuelito, Chief of the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit of ECLAC; and under the direct supervision of Anne-Sophie Samjee, Programme Management Officer of the Unit, who provided strategic and technical guidance, coordination, and methodological and logistical support. Assistance was also provided by Paula Camila Muñoz, Programme Management Assistant of the Unit.

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All comments on the evaluation report by the Evaluation Reference Group and the evaluation team of the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit were considered by the evaluator and duly addressed, where appropriate, in the final text of the report. The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Organization or the countries it represents.

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ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	DEFINITION
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCI	CARICOM core set of indicators
CDCC	Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee
Data2X	Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data
EAs	Expected accomplishments
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILPES	Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning
MAPS	Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support
PARIS21	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century
RCMs	Regional Coordinating Mechanisms
SALISES	Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social & Economic Studies
SAMOA Pathway	Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UWI	University of the West Indies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. An end-of-cycle external evaluation was conducted during the period from December 2021 to March 2022 for the Project 1819AF “Strengthening institutional frameworks in the Caribbean for an integrative approach to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS Sustainable Development Agenda”. This project was funded under the 11th tranche of the United Nations Development Account and implemented by the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean from January 2018 to December 2021 in selected Caribbean member States and associate members. It built on ECLAC technical support and capacity development for Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS) in the area of sustainable development, and aimed to enhance institutional and technical capacities to design and apply evidence-based development planning and to effectively implement and monitor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and specific development objectives of SIDS.
2. The assessment, managed by the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit of ECLAC and conducted by an external consultant, reviewed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and cross-cutting issues (evaluation criteria) of project implementation and, specifically, documents its outcomes in relation to its objectives and expected results. In addition, good practices and lessons learned from the implementation of the project were identified, which can be used when designing similar interventions in the future.
3. A mixed and integrated methodology was employed for this gender-responsive assessment that ensured inclusiveness and participation, covered the entire scope of the project and comprised the following tools: (a) an extensive desk study, (b) a stakeholder analysis, (c) semi-structured interviews with relevant internal and external stakeholders, and (d) a self-administered online survey of participants and beneficiaries.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

4. The main findings and conclusions presented in this report are divided into sections related to the evaluation criteria and key questions.

Relevance

5. In general terms, the project was, and remained, highly relevant to the target countries’ needs throughout its implementation. Its alignment with the ECLAC mandate and programmes of work was high, as well as with objectives set by the United Nations system and other subregional partners with regard to the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway. Despite the appropriateness of the design, the intervention strategy’s underlying assumptions did not unfold as anticipated, but the project was flexible enough to adapt and respond to emerging issues. In light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the need to invest in sustainable development and resilience for the recovery, the relevance of the project was ultimately reaffirmed.

Effectiveness

6. The project succeeded in contributing to expected results. Despite major adjustments to the implementation plan, the project was effective in the delivery of the main activities and outputs, while services were extended to more beneficiary countries and a wider audience. Important contributions were made, especially at the individual and organizational level, in terms of evidence-based development planning capacity, policy coherence and SDG integration, as well as multi-stakeholder engagements. Among the factors influencing achievement of results, the tailored approach to country-level interests and opportunities, as well as SDG champions with decision-making power, have been key to move the agenda forward in the respective countries. However, context challenges and structural capacity constraints hindered the achievement of more results.

Efficiency

7. Project implementation suffered delays due to different internal and external factors, which affected the technical and financial execution. However, resources were used in an efficient and reliable manner, with the delivery of services and activities being guided by optimization, ECLAC know-how and high standards of quality. Human resources, including for administration and monitoring, were limited, while consultancies required close oversight and high time investment, which prevented more agile project management. In addition, collaborations with United Nations system partners and academia generated efficiency gains, which could potentially have resulted in more synergies if based on a coherent partnership strategy.

Sustainability

8. The sustainability of the benefits and results of the project is not generally guaranteed, as the problems and challenges that gave rise to the project are still present, particularly technical and human resources capacity constraints, as well as dedicated budget for the SDG/SAMOA Pathway implementation. Some preconditions have been supported with potential to sustain results, such as increased technical capacity, relevant outputs including long-term national development plans, engagement of SDG allies and stakeholders from different sectors, and follow-up actions, for instance a communications strategy in Antigua and Barbuda and mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support (MAPS) missions and voluntary national review processes in Dominica and Grenada.

Cross-cutting issues

9. The project succeeded in promoting and contributing to the 'leaving no one behind' principle, and addressed gender considerations through a mainstreaming approach. The project contributed broadly to the positioning and promotion of the 2030 Agenda in the subregion. Other cross-cutting issues relevant to the Development Account were not prominently addressed by the project, and, there was scope for further efforts.

BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

10. The assessment identified *best practices* that are linked to the adaptive and demand-driven approach taken by the project, the good use of the flexibility provided by a Development Account project, and the ability of ECLAC to seize opportunities and its added value. This also entails such aspects as identifying strong entry points, the ability to leverage momentum and existing spaces and resources within and outside the project and through collaboration between United Nations system partners.

11. The assessment also revealed some *lessons learned* that could be useful for the following purposes: (a) to improve the process of early engagement and buy-in, as well as country selection in the design and inception phases; (b) to improve the definition of implementation plans based on results-oriented and agile project management practices; (c) better and more strategic allocation of resources and in-house expertise; and (d) to improve aspects related to coordination, communication and knowledge management and partnership approaches.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. There are seven recommendations arising from this evaluation that respond to the main findings, conclusions and lessons learned, which are organized by evaluation criteria and with the level of priority assigned to them. These recommendations relate to: (1) assessing the approach and scope applied for country selection, as well as the definition of agreements for engagement and implementation with potential beneficiary countries; (2) improving monitoring and evaluation frameworks to better capture changes and to inform strategic decision-making; (3) strengthening planning processes, including risk mitigation planning, as well as improving implementation arrangements linked to human resource allocation at the subregional headquarters in the Caribbean; (4) defining explicit strategies and arrangements for collaboration and cooperation to optimize comparative advantages within the United Nations system and vis-à-vis other potential partners; (5) continuing support for capacity development of Caribbean SIDS; (6) investing in and prioritizing resources for communication, knowledge management, systematization and dissemination; and (7) strengthening reporting linked to cross-cutting issues.

1. INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents an end-of-cycle assessment of the 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” (hereinafter referred to as “the project”). The project was funded under the 11th tranche of the United Nations Development Account and was implemented by the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean from January 2018 to December 2021.
2. The assessment was conducted by Angela Naletilic, an external consultant, between December 2021 and March 2022, commissioned by the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The objectives were to review the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the project implemented and, in particular, to document its results in relation to its objectives and expected accomplishments as defined in the project document. Emphasis has been placed on assessing the project’s capacity to adapt and respond to emerging issues, particularly the COVID-19 context, and on identifying good practices and lessons learned from implementing the project, their sustainability and potential replication in other countries and future Development Account projects. The results of this assessment are aimed at contributing to ECLAC accountability, its institutional learning, and decision-making to improve the quality of future interventions and investments.
3. The evaluation process was carried out remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and comprised a global analysis involving a desk review, project stakeholder interviews, and a survey directed to participants and beneficiaries of project activities. It was conducted in line with the norms, standards and ethical principles of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), guiding principles of evaluation at ECLAC¹ and United Nations Development Account Project Evaluation Guidelines.

¹ See ECLAC, “Preparing and Conducting Evaluations: ECLAC guidelines”, Santiago [online] <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/1570>; ECLAC, *Evaluation Policy and Strategy* (LC/L.3724/REV.2), Santiago, 2017; and (UNEG), *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*, New York, 2016.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

4. Making the 2030 Agenda operational, which implies, among other issues, localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure policy coherence with national development priorities and goals, to accelerate their synergetic implementation, and to monitor progress effectively, remains a challenge for the Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS). The pace of implementation of the SDGs in the Caribbean has been relatively slow compared to other regions. This applies also to the SIDS-specific development agenda² and other frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
5. The challenges and constraints are several and shared by all Caribbean countries; the most significant being the limited capacity to develop integrated, evidence-based development plans that mainstream the SDGs, the SAMOA Pathway and other relevant international frameworks, as well as to monitor and evaluate progress in achieving these commitments, and targets and indicators specific to the Caribbean context. The absence of an autonomous national planning agency for drafting and implementing a long-term development strategy, limited technical capacity to ensure policy coherence across sustainable development agendas and sectoral plans and significant statistical capacity gaps to produce data on the SDG indicators are the common features across the SIDS. Moreover, the member States targeted by the project face structural gaps, among those socioeconomic and gender inequalities, financial and fiscal sustainability, and vulnerabilities to natural hazards and climate change.
6. It is within this context that ECLAC, in collaboration with the United Nations system and other subregional partners, has been providing assistance and technical support to Caribbean countries in building capacities in evidence-based policy planning, statistics and SDG mainstreaming. The project under assessment builds on the earlier project “Planning for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean”, funded by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).³ It expands its scope and support services to the SIDS to respond to jointly-identified needs and specific country-driven requests for stronger policy coherence and to accelerate the implementation of the SDG and SIDS agenda.

² This agenda includes the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (BPoA), the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the BPoA (MSI), and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

³ The project implemented from 2016-2018 provided technical assistance to Aruba, the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Sint Maarten for the establishment of an institutional framework for SDG implementation and the integration of the SDGs in their national development planning processes.

2.2 PROJECT PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

7. The project was implemented between January 2018 and December 2021, with total funding of US\$ 640,000⁴ under the 11th Tranche (2018–2021) of the Development Account. Its overarching objective was to strengthen the institutional capacities of selected Caribbean States for national development planning, which integrates the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SIDS agenda in the subregion. In pursuit of this objective, the expected accomplishments (EAs) were:
 - EA1 Improved capacity of selected Caribbean SIDS to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals and the SIDS agenda into coherent national development plans.
 - EA2 Improved capacity of selected Caribbean SIDS to review and follow up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS agenda.
8. A set of five activities per EA was planned under the project that intended to target, as per the project document, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and one other country. Following requirements for national ownership and country-driven project implementation, the project did not move forward with Barbados. As part of the COVID-19-related adjustments to the project and in light of specific requests, several additional ECLAC member States and associate members were integrated during the implementation, namely: The British Virgin Islands, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat and Trinidad and Tobago.

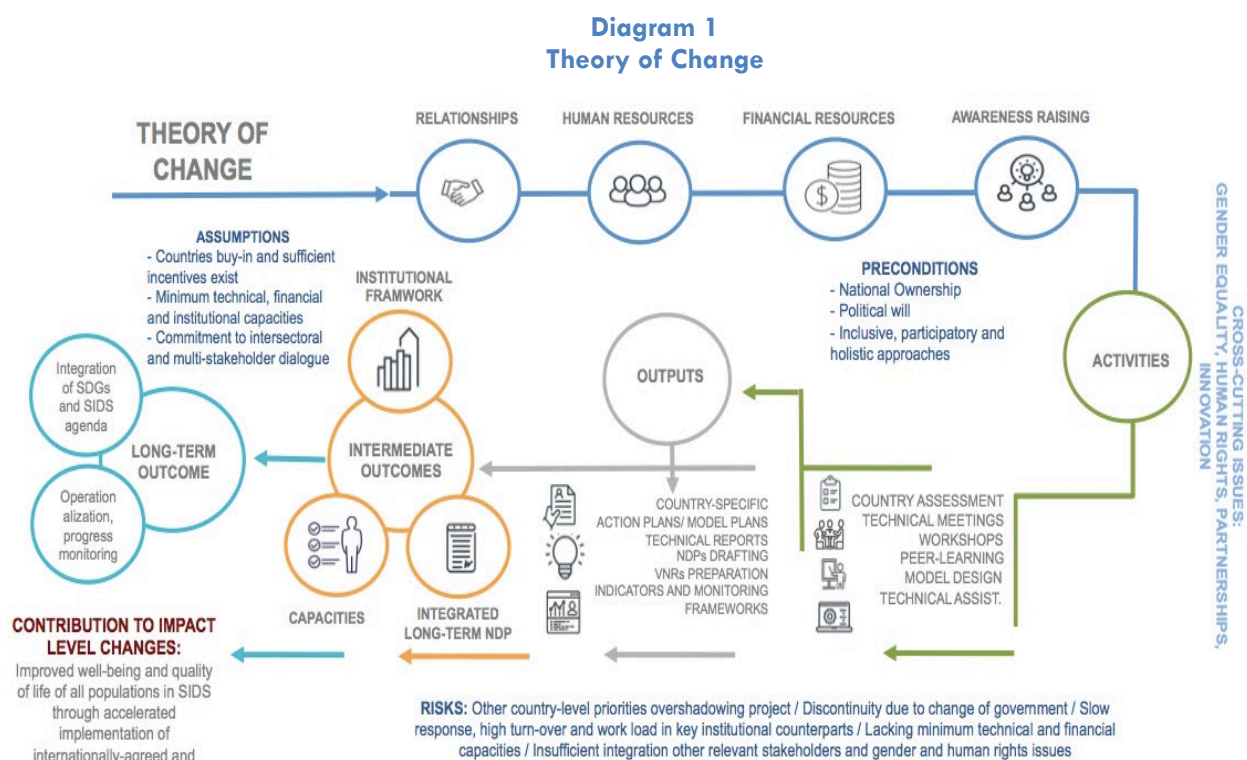
2.3 PROJECT STRATEGY

9. The intervention logic of the project was built around the objective of contributing to the operationalization and implementation of the SDGs and SIDS-specific development agenda, addressing relevant gaps of institutional frameworks and capacities in the subregion. The strategy focused on promoting stronger policy coherence, multi-sector/stakeholder collaboration, and inclusive and holistic approaches. Both expected accomplishments (EAs) emphasize capacity development, specifically with regard to: (i) the existence of long-term integrated national development plans, (ii) the adoption of changes in institutional frameworks and/or new coordination arrangements, and (iii) monitoring and follow-up frameworks built on evidence-based planning, as well as agreed indicators and targets. In the logic of intervention, these are the intermediate outcomes necessary to accelerate and progress in the effective implementation of the sustainable development agendas (long-term outcome).
10. As per the project document, the key precondition underlying the implementation strategy is national ownership, which implies a country-driven process. The project targets stakeholders at different levels and with different capacity or power to influence, including policymakers (both government and opposition), relevant public sector institutions (ministries; planning divisions/offices; national statistical offices), and stakeholders from the private sector, civil society

⁴ The original budget, according to the Project Document, amounted to US\$ 650,000. The budget ceiling was reduced in light of savings related to the COVID-19 restrictions and by mutual agreement between DESA, Development Coordination Office and ECLAC to return savings for the funding of COVID-19 response actions.

and academia. While the demand or expressed interest for ECLAC technical support and assistance appears to be an assumption for country buy-in and sufficient incentives for commitment and active participation, the project strategy foresaw scoping missions, awareness-raising actions, and initial country-level assessments. With this in mind, different potential risks unfolded, among those, other country-level priorities, insufficient capacity to respond, implement and follow up on project activities, as well as constraints on engaging effectively at the multi-sector/stakeholder level, and on investing necessary resources.

11. The planned activities (country assessments, technical meetings, national and regional workshops, modelling/template development and technical assistance) represent the core of ECLAC support and technical assistance services. The approach of tailoring those services according to country inputs, perspective and needs should incentivize those countries' participation and engagement. Moreover, the relevance of ECLAC support in terms of established relations, credibility and expertise (inputs) is another aspect that underpins the assumptions and preconditions.
12. Overall, the initially planned activities and associated outputs are logically linked and sequenced to achieve each of the expected outcomes, while both outcomes are also adequately interlinked. However, the implementation suffered from delays and emerging issues (in particular the COVID-19 context) that led to adjustments affecting the causal relations and underpinning processes linked to the various activities of the projects leading to changes at the outcome level. This will be further detailed in the findings chapter of this report.
13. The following (diagram 1) summarizes graphically the project's theory of change.



Source: Prepared by the evaluator.

2.4 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

14. The management and executing entity of the Development Account project was the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, more specifically the Statistics and Social Development Unit. The Programme Planning and Operations division of ECLAC provided contract management, accountability and reporting support. Also involved in its implementation were:

- Cooperating entities within the United Nations system: the ECLAC Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES); United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Sustainable Development Goals, more specifically the SIDS Unit and the Programme Management and Capacity Development Unit; United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
- International consultants
- National consultants
- National partner institutions
- Other international cooperation agencies and subregional entities.

15. The primary beneficiaries of the project were SIDS government officials from different relevant Ministries involved in national development planning and implementation of international agendas (Prime Ministers' offices, ministries of finance, foreign affairs, economic affairs, environment, education, planning and economic development), as well as officials of national statistical offices and stakeholders involved in SDG committees and inter-agency coordination structures. A detailed stakeholder map is included in annex 4.

3. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE ASSESSMENT

3.1 ASSESSMENT PURPOSE AND APPROACH

16. The purpose of this assessment was to provide an independent review that follows a participatory and inclusive approach and responds to the accountability and learning-oriented evaluation function within ECLAC. This evaluation is summative in nature and focuses on the measurement and analysis of the project's contributions to the results achieved in the supported ECLAC member States and associate members in the Caribbean.
17. The specific purposes of the assessment, according to the terms of reference⁵ were to: (1) assess the project implementation, and more particularly, its results attained in relation to the overall objective and expected accomplishments; and (2) provide lessons learned and successful practices, along with recommendations for the future planning and implementation of Development Account projects.
18. The assessment adopted the Development Account evaluation framework with the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, applied to the three levels of analysis, namely design, implementation and outcomes. Relevant cross-cutting issues⁶ were analyzed using both a mainstreaming approach and stand-alone evaluation criterion.⁷

3.2 METHODOLOGY

19. To ensure a comprehensive and rigorous approach for the assessment that is oriented towards accountability and learning, the methodological design considered: (i) the kind of questions and assessment variables requested, (ii) the nature of the subject of the assessment in the given context (including changes during the project cycle), and (iii) the balance between evaluability, evaluation resources and modality (remote evaluation). The methodology therefore aimed to ensure depth and coverage of the analysis, using evaluation approaches that are theory-based, utilization-focused, and responsive to human rights and gender equality considerations.
20. The evaluation questions outlined in the terms of reference (TOR) were revised, reorganized and grouped under ten key evaluation questions and associated subquestions. Relevant issues and areas of interest for more in-depth analysis, as expressed in initial consultations with the Evaluation Task Manager and the project management, fed into the final design and methods described in the evaluation matrix.

⁵ See the terms of reference in annex 1.

⁶ The main cross-cutting issues are human rights and gender equality, along with Sustainable Development Goals, partnerships and innovation. In addition, the assessment was carried out against other relevant Development Account criteria, namely the development of national capacities, use of ICT, and the use of the existing knowledge/skills/capacity within the United Nations Secretariat. See United Nations, *UN Development Account Project Evaluation Guidelines*, October, 2019 [online] [https://www.un.org/development/desa/da/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/da-project-management-documents/2253_1571321382_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Guidelines%20\(Final\).pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/da/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/da-project-management-documents/2253_1571321382_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Guidelines%20(Final).pdf). 10–11.

⁷ See the Evaluation Matrix in annex 2.

21. A mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods was used to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the project's accomplishments and the lessons learned. The following research tools were applied:
- A desk review of a large corpus of project documents, reports and products was carried out, together with additional relevant documentation collected during the remote field phase. The document review also served to select four countries for an in-depth analysis during the remote field phase. Additional relevant ECLAC resources and knowledge products and third-party reports and resources were also reviewed.⁸
 - A comprehensive stakeholder map was drawn up to identify and classify the project's stakeholders (participants, beneficiaries and collaborators), as well as ECLAC staff members involved in implementing the project. The mapping served the purpose of providing a snapshot of the range of stakeholders and institutions involved, and of selecting respondents for interviews and the survey.⁹
 - 18 semi-structured individual and group interviews were conducted remotely with key project stakeholders, comprising seven internal stakeholders, six collaborators (including international consultants), and seven direct beneficiaries (government counterparts, public institutions and involved technical staff) from the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Two additional stakeholders shared information via email that was also taken into consideration. The gender ratio among the key informants was 70% female and 30% male.¹⁰
 - A self-administered survey covered participants of the remaining member States and associate members targeted by the project, as well as non-beneficiary countries and other collaborating entities. With support from the ECLAC Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit the survey was distributed to a total of 52 individuals who participated in at least one project activity (e.g. training, event or seminar). The response rate was 23%, with a gender ratio of 77% female and 23% male participants.¹¹
22. Following a gender-responsive approach, the information was assessed against specific evaluation questions, existing indicators and disaggregated data, and an inclusive, participatory and respectful process with all stakeholders was ensured. Women's participation and voices were prevalent throughout the assessment.
23. The quantitative and qualitative data collected were compiled, analyzed and triangulated at different stages of the assessment process, using the evaluation matrix as the overarching guide to validate findings and formulate conclusions and recommendations.

⁸ See list of documents and bibliographical references in annex 3.

⁹ See stakeholder map in annex 4.

¹⁰ See list of persons interviewed in annex 5 and interview guidelines in annex 6.

¹¹ See survey in annex 7.

3.3 LIMITATIONS

24. A number of potential limitations and constraints were identified during the inception stage, which included access to stakeholders, turnover in public institutions, as well as response rates to interview and survey requests. The fact that activities were still ongoing when the assessment started and the final project report was not yet finalized and shared with the evaluator was an additional challenge. In most cases, these were addressed or mitigated with the support of the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit of ECLAC and the project management team in Port of Spain.
25. However, being a remote assignment, this assessment lacked focus group discussions with a larger number of stakeholders and participants. Interviews at the country level were conducted with the main counterparts, in particular one to two focal points per country, as per the list of contacts provided by ELCAC. Several interview requests, particularly those sent to national focal points and collaborating entities, remained unanswered. This can be explained in some cases by staff turnover, but also by the timing of the assessment, the continuing burden of the COVID-19 pandemic and the workload on senior staff and representatives of the institutions involved.
26. To mitigate these limitations, the duration of the remote field phase was extended to accommodate stakeholder availability, and some potential key informants were invited to respond to the survey as an alternative. Ideally, the data collection through the survey would have complemented the interviews, including responses from direct beneficiaries from other involved member States and associate members, but the number and percentage of responses attained was too limited.
27. Despite the above limitations, the data collection instruments used allowed for sufficient evidence to be collected and triangulated to ensure that the findings, lessons learned and recommendations are evidence-based and reliable.

4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 RELEVANCE

Key Finding 1: The Development Account project proved to be highly relevant and coherent in terms of the implementing countries' development needs and priorities. However, early buy-in and engagement was a challenge for the project's intervention strategy and roll-out.

28. Stakeholder interviews unanimously confirmed that the project, in terms of objectives, issues addressed and design, was highly relevant and pertinent. Both national and international stakeholders acknowledged that addressing the challenges and key gaps in relation to sustainable development planning, as well as advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SIDS agenda, represented a need for the Member States involved and the subregion as a whole. Therefore, technical assistance, guidance and support on this matter from international partners, such as ECLAC, the United Nations system or other subregional partners, is welcomed. Several interviewees confirmed that their institutions have specifically requested support and technical assistance from ECLAC, which underlines the relevance of the project's objective and its enabler function.
29. The survey results demonstrated the alignment of the project and EA objectives with the needs and priorities of their respective countries and the subregion: 50% responded "very well aligned" and 50% responded "well aligned".¹² Regarding capacity development, which represents the core of the project, respondents highlighted its relevance in light of existing capacity and human resource constraints. Addressing these gaps is perceived as "important", and given the limited opportunities, the project has been relevant in providing access to "very useful" skills, and knowledge "adapted to the country context". The survey responses mirror the perception of the relevance of the project in this regard.
30. While acknowledging the particularities of each country context, the evaluation confirmed common challenges across all SIDS with regard to integrated sustainable development planning, implementation and follow-up. In this sense, the intervention logic and the initial selection of target countries seem to be sufficiently well justified. This is evidenced, on the one hand, by the expertise and knowledge accumulated by ECLAC, the gap and needs assessments carried out which fed into the design of the project, and, on the other hand, the formal and informal requests for support from several member States.
31. The selection of countries with similar weaknesses in long-term national development planning, institutional frameworks and statistical capacities followed the premise of fostering partnerships and shared learning. Driven by an interest in addressing these gaps, scaling up and advancing the implementation of the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway in the subregion, a demanding project intervention strategy was prioritized. According to interviewees, tailoring technical assistance and support services through national implementation plans was both a commitment and a condition for participatory and country-driven processes, but carried risks in terms of buy-in and engagement.

¹² See details on Survey Results in annex 8. Question 7.

32. In practice, the ambitious design and scope with the six envisaged target countries and the subregional dimension unfolded a number of challenges with regard to early engagement. The evaluation revealed that national ownership, including the interests expressed in the design phase, is a valid and necessary precondition, but not a sufficient guarantee for early acceptance and responsiveness of national counterparts in terms of commitments and fulfilment of responsibilities.
33. However, the stakeholders interviewed agreed that the difficulties in engaging, committing and responding to implementation requirements are not related to the relevance and appropriateness of the project design. The associated factors, together with issues related to the operational dimension of the implementation strategy, will be assessed in more detail in the effectiveness and efficiency sections.

Key Finding 2: The alignment of the project with the ECLAC mandate and subprogrammes of work, as well as objectives and priorities set out by the Development Account, and the regional and international frameworks in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda and SIDS Sustainable Development Agenda, proved to be high.

34. In line with its mandate and tradition, the project responded to the ECLAC commitment to “assist and support countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the process of implementation and follow-up to the Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, placing its analytical, technical and human capacities at their disposal”.¹³ Based on its integrated approach to development and its multidisciplinary work and structure, different subprogrammes of work framed the project. It is specifically aligned with the objectives and expected accomplishments of the subprogrammes 7 (Sustainable development and human settlements) and 12 (Subregional activities in the Caribbean) for the period 2018-2019:¹⁴
- Increased capacity of Latin American and Caribbean countries to integrate sustainability criteria into development policies and measures, particularly in relation to sustainable development, climate change and human settlements (Subprogramme 7);
 - Improved institutional capacity in countries of the subregion to achieve the targets of the major subregional, regional and/or international agreements in the economic, social and environmental fields, including the Sustainable Development Goals (Subprogramme 12).
35. The project underlined the Commission’s SDG-specific strategies, plans and areas of work, while it also supported the implementation of the overall programme of work and other global commitments. In this regard, the project’s relevance to the work of ECLAC remained constant in light of renewed commitments, such as: (i) the decennial Strategic Plan of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and commitments to strengthen countries’ analytical and statistical capacity for more effective evidence-based policymaking and monitoring within the 2030 Agenda;¹⁵ (ii) the Montevideo Consensus on Population and

¹³ United Nations, *The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals: An opportunity for Latin America and the Caribbean* (LC/G.2681-P/Rev.3), Santiago, 2018, p. 8.

¹⁴ Additional subprogrammes aligned with the DA project are the subprogramme 9 – Planning of Public Administration and Subprogramme 10 – Statistics. For more details see [online] https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/pages/files/en_marco_estrategico_para_los_periodos_2018-2019_0.pdf.

¹⁵ Tenth meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, Santiago, November 2019 [online]: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/2020-20-ECLAC-EE.pdf>.

Development to advance the 2030 Agenda;¹⁶ and (iii) the resolution of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) and the Regional Coordinating Mechanisms (RCMs) to build stronger synergies between the SIDS agendas and SDG implementation.¹⁷

36. Furthermore, as affirmed by interviewees, the project underscored ECLAC support for the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (SDG 17) and the localization of the 2030 Agenda, drawing specific attention to those SDGs and indicators of particular relevance to the Caribbean SIDS.
37. In relation to partnerships and enhancing the capacity of Caribbean governments to advance the 2030 Agenda in synergy with the SIDS agenda, the project was closely linked to the objectives and priorities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Development Account, as well as those of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat. In this regard, it is evident that the project had strong linkages to the technical assistance, advisory and support functions of both the SIDS Unit of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and CARICOM; for example, linked to monitoring and reporting on progress towards the achievement of the SDGs and SIDS-specific development goals.

Key Finding 3: In light of the negative impact of emerging issues, and particularly the global COVID-19 pandemic, the project's responsiveness allowed it to seize some opportunities and ultimately reaffirm its relevance.

38. The project faced different external factors and emerging challenges, with the global COVID-19 pandemic being the most impactful. Among the external factors, vulnerability to natural hazards as a common feature and key challenge in the subregion manifested itself early on. The aftermath of the 2017 hurricane season and the focus of governments on recovery efforts affected the initial roll-out of the project, and later in 2021, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines faced the volcanic eruption of La Soufrière. Changes of government in Antigua and Barbuda in 2018, Dominica in 2019, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in 2020 affected project implementation to a lesser extent.
39. The specific challenges faced by SIDS in advancing national development goals, along with the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway, were magnified by the impacts of the pandemic and reversed the gains made thus far in all sectors. Stakeholders interviewed unanimously agreed that the unique challenges presented by COVID-19 significantly shifted priorities and required considerable effort of adaptation.
40. In light of the exacerbated structural gaps and inequalities, national actors interviewed acknowledged that the pandemic reinforced the understanding of the need for urgent action with regard to resilience and sustainable development in Caribbean SIDS. In this sense, although governments' attention was focused on response and recovery actions in the aftermath of COVID-19, ECLAC succeeded in reinforcing the overall narrative around sustainable development and recovery in the aftermath of COVID, and thus in advancing assistance to SIDS as part of its Caribbean First strategy.¹⁸

¹⁶ Fourth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, Santiago, October 2019 [online]: https://repository.eclac.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45227/S2000141_en.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

¹⁷ Resolution 100(XXVII), "Ensuring synergy in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action in the Caribbean subregion" [online] https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/lcar2018_02.pdf.

¹⁸ See for more details, 7th Council of Ministers on Environmental Sustainability of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), June 2020 [online] <https://www.cepal.org/en/news/eclac-reaffirms-its-commitment-supporting-caribbean-countries-their-path-towards-sustainable>.

41. Regarding adaptability, the evaluation confirmed that the project was sufficiently flexible and responsive to country-specific requests and new opportunities. Both internal and external interviewees highlighted the ability to adjust to country-specific constraints and needs, while taking advantage of emerging opportunities to expand the scope of the project, with the integration of the British Virgin Islands, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat and Trinidad and Tobago as beneficiaries. In contrast, in Barbados, which was initially selected at their request, project activities were eventually not launched, according to interviewees, due to lack of acceptance and demand for support.
42. The demand-driven approach, the focus on adaptation to country processes and capacities, together with the flexibility of the project, all reinforced by the COVID-19 context, have ultimately contributed to reaffirming its relevance.

4.2 EFFECTIVENESS

Key Finding 4: As a result of the adjustments in the implementation plan, the project met and even exceeded some of its output and outcome targets, while others were not fully achieved.

43. The performance of the project in terms of the level of implementation of the planned activities and outputs was overall satisfactory. Although not all activities were implemented as expected, others were adjusted and increased in scope and the type of service delivery. In this respect, the initial work plan and the underlying implementation strategy were largely modified. This implied, in particular, a different pace and performance with regard to the achievement of expected results, as well as a greater emphasis on technical assistance based on the interests and requests expressed by Member States.
44. In terms of targets and scope, at the output level the results can be summarized as follows:

EA1: Improved capacity of selected Caribbean SIDS to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals and the SIDS agenda into coherent national development plans

Activities ^a	# project outputs and countries involved
A1.1 Scoping/SDG sensitization missions	Five missions [Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines]
A1.2 National workshops [topics: evidence-based policy planning, SDGs/SAMOA Pathway mainstreaming, etc.]	Dominica, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
A1.3 Design of a model plan of implementation for national plans of action	No specific output/conversations held with countries on implementations for their respective long-term national development strategies and action plans
A1.4 Technical assistance in integrating the SDGs and SIDS agenda into national development plans	5 TA [British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada (2), Montserrat]
A1.5 Regional end of project workshop [peer exchange and learning]	Four subregional events (3 co-organized and not initially planned), with coverage of beneficiary and non-beneficiary countries

EA 1: Improved capacity of selected Caribbean SIDS to review and follow-up on the implementation of 2030 Agenda and SIDS agenda

A2.1 Assessment of the capacity of the national statistical systems	Two reports on data and statistics for SDG implementation and monitoring [Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines]; one subregional study [covering eight countries]
A2.2 Technical meetings focused on data requirements for SDG reporting	Initial exchange during scoping missions (A1.1), no specific output, mainly covered through A2.5
A2.3 Template design for a monitoring framework	Not implemented as planned; two monitoring frameworks reviewed [Dominica, Grenada]
A2.4 National training to implement the monitoring framework	Not implemented as planned
A2.5 Technical assistance for the preparation of voluntary national reviews	Four voluntary national reviews supported [Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda]

^a Activity descriptions are adjusted from the original for the purpose of simplification.

45. Other activities and services carried out that were not initially planned include, among others, technical assistance provided to Jamaica in modelling COVID-19 transmission and infection control, hospitalization and death, based on country-specific data and aimed at informed decision-making on response and recovery actions, and a comprehensive review of the status of institutional mechanisms for sustainable development planning in the Caribbean, which covered the eight member States and associate members involved in the project.

46. Based on the progress reporting conducted for the project, indicators and monitoring tools are focused on final outputs (integrated national development plans; presentation of voluntary national reviews), rather than processes and changes triggered as a result of the delivery of activities and services. In terms of capacity enhancement, the immediate perception of event participants is measured through an evaluation survey, but not the retention and use of knowledge and knowledge products over a longer period of time. Qualitative data is rarely used in reporting, nor are process indicators that describe processes that contribute to the achievement of outcomes (i.e. changes at the policy level) or trigger changes of behaviour, attitude, skills and performance of stakeholders and supported institutions. These are some of the limitations of the project monitoring and reporting identified.

47. In terms of EA 1 performance indicators, the project aimed to support three of the six beneficiary countries in the elaboration of long-term, integrated national development strategies, while establishing appropriate coordination and implementation mechanisms. The level of achievement can be summarized as follows:

Indicators planned	Level of achievement
IA 1.1 Three out of six beneficiary countries prepare inclusive and participatory national development plans that integrate the agreed set of SDG targets and indicators and the SIDS agenda.	Achieved: Support provided to Grenada and the British Virgin Islands in the drafting of their long-term national development strategies, and the review and alignment of Dominica's National Resilience Development Strategy 2030 and sector plans with the SDG and SIDS agendas.

Indicators planned	Level of achievement
IA 1.2 Three out of six beneficiary countries establish or designate a mechanism or institution to lead and coordinate the implementation of their integrated national development plans.	Achieved: In the case of the three beneficiary countries of IA1.1, Grenada received technical assistance for the development of the design and implementation plan for a planning and coordination institute (Sustainable Development Institute of Grenada); Dominica has designated the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development for the implementation of the integrated NRDS, and the British Virgin Islands is planning to create a Sustainable Development Planning Unit within the Office of the Prime Minister. It should be noted that other Member States and Associated Members have, albeit with weaknesses, SDG technical committees or designated units of ministries of economy/finance/foreign affairs or Prime Minister's offices as SDG coordination mechanisms. ¹⁹

48. With respect to EA 2, the project exceeded the quantitative target set for measuring the achievement of this expected outcome by supporting four countries in the preparation and presentation of their Voluntary National Review, and achieved the remaining targets as planned. The results are the following:

Indicators planned	Level of achievement
IA 1.1 At least three beneficiary countries have agreed on/adopted a set of Caribbean-specific targets and indicators for review and follow-up of the progress in the implementation of the SDGs and the SIDS agenda in the Caribbean.	Achieved: Grenada and Dominica have adopted the CARICOM core set of indicators (CCI); Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago have adopted a subset of the global SDG indicators as the minimum to review and follow up the progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
IA 2.2 At least two beneficiary countries with integrated national development plans create a monitoring framework to follow up on the implementation progress.	Exceeded: Dominica has a Results Monitoring Matrix for the National Resilience Development Strategy 2030; Grenada has a Results Monitoring Framework for its National Sustainable Development Plan 2030-2035; and The British Virgin Islands has a Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the NSDP (Vision 2036).
IA 2.3 At least two beneficiary countries prepare Voluntary National Reviews and present at the High-Level Political Forum.	Exceeded: Saint Lucia (2019), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (2020), Trinidad and Tobago (2020) and Antigua and Barbuda (2021) presented Voluntary National Reviews at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

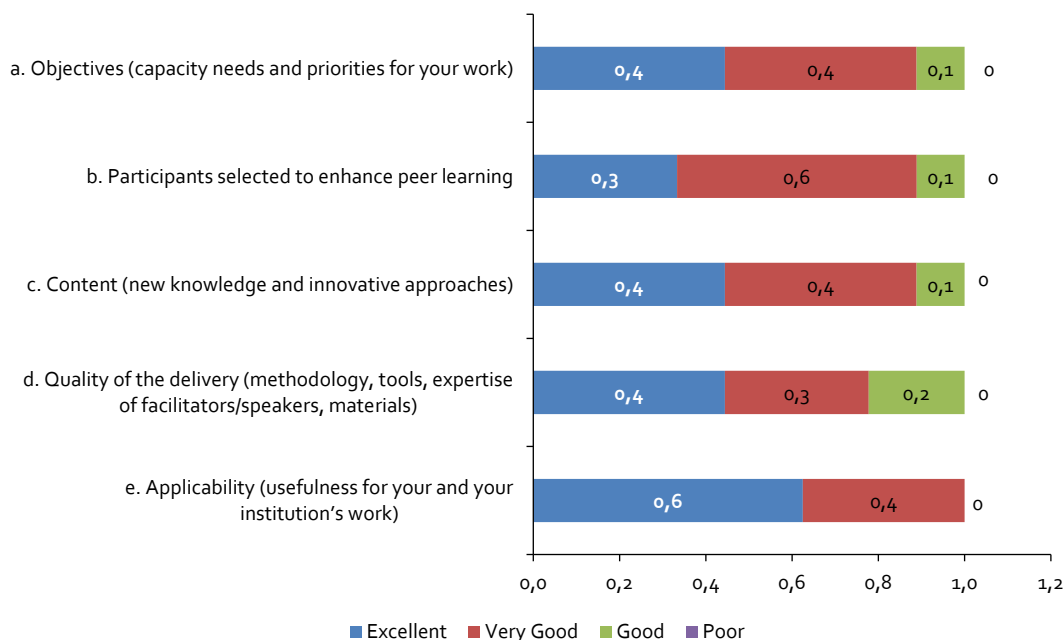
49. Based on the document review and interviews held, the evaluation confirmed that the activities and outputs delivered served their immediate purposes. Interviewees acknowledged that the modalities of intervention²⁰ have been appropriate and effective in this regard. Although several interviewees pointed out that capacity building and training delivered through one- or two-day sessions, and discontinuity in terms of follow-up, might be less effective, these activities were still highly

¹⁹ For more details see C. Camarinhas and I. Trumbic, "A review of the status of institutional mechanisms for sustainable development planning in the Caribbean", *Studies and Perspectives series-ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean*, No. 107 (LC/TS.2022/16-LC/CAR/TS.2022/1), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2022.

²⁰ Defined as the set of activities and services including country assessments, technical meetings, national and regional workshops, model and template design, technical assistance.

appreciated. External interviewees considered capacity-building activities to be useful for improving technical knowledge and skills at the individual level, as well as applicable for improving performance at the institutional level. Similarly, survey respondents assessed both the objectives and usefulness of capacity building activities as predominantly "excellent" and "very good", as shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 1
Q10: Respondents' perceptions of workshops/seminars/capacity building courses
(Percentages)



Source: Prepared by the evaluator.

50. Moreover, interviewees unanimously acknowledged the effectiveness of the technical assistance approach followed and implemented by ECLAC. In addition to the tailored and demand-driven approach, stakeholders highlighted as key features the aspects of knowledge and skills transfer through the technical assistance provided, as well as the very practical guidance received. Likewise, interviewees referred positively to the usefulness of knowledge sharing and peer learning fostered through seminars and conferences at the subregional level. These perceptions coincide with the results of the survey, as well as of the surveys conducted by ECLAC for the workshops and training activities.

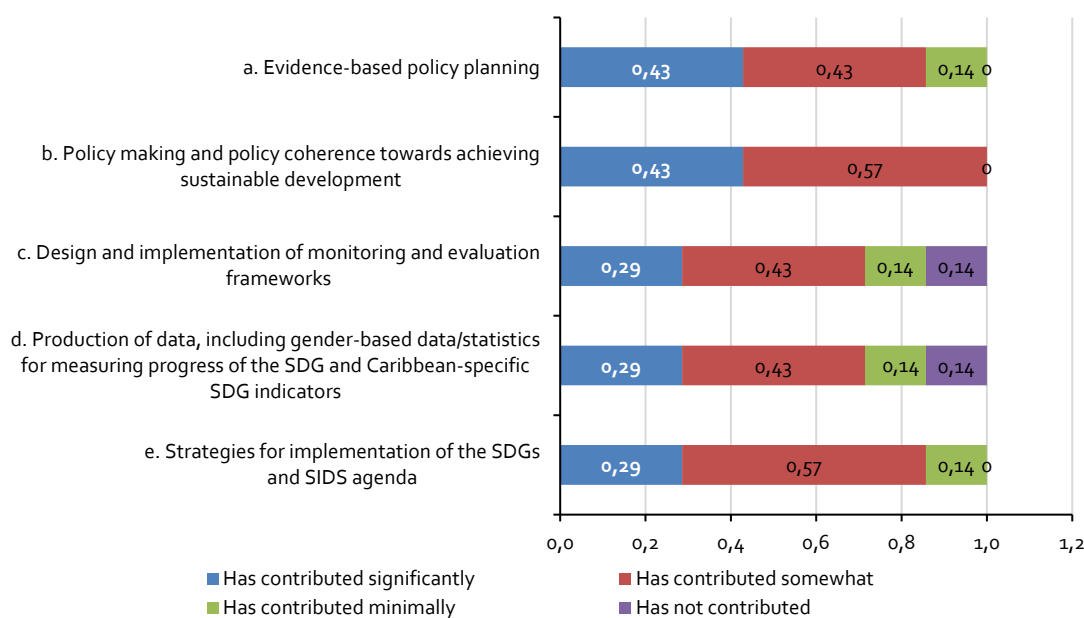
Key Finding 5: The project contributed, albeit with implementation difficulties, to significant results and changes at both the substantive and technical levels, and to its overall objective.

51. When measuring the project's contributions against its objective and EAs, the complexity of the envisioned change needs to be taken into consideration, both at the level of improved capacities and institutional arrangements of the selected Caribbean SIDS. This is relevant for determining the realistic level of contribution possible, given the following: (a) the project was small in size

(i.e. resources) in light of the complexity of the problems and gaps identified, (b) the coverage with six target countries and desired results per country were ambitious, and (c) the required level of investment of effort and resources was similar across countries.

52. In this regard, some flaws in the project intervention logic must be considered, in particular the underlying assumptions alongside limits to the project's influence (e.g. behavioural changes, policy influencing, resource allocation, etc.). Although project activities and services were linked in a coherent way, with clear interactions to serve as inputs and stepping-stones towards the intended changes, weak country response and technical capacity constraints undermined the implementation strategy, alongside the above-mentioned external factors. The theory of change was overall correct and appropriate but it lacked considerations of potential barriers or contextual elements, and explicit ways to mitigate them.
53. In practice, the effectiveness of the implementation strategy vis-à-vis its processes and expected accomplishments was significantly affected in that it could not be developed to its fullest. As a consequence, and as part of the corrective measures taken, the provision of on-demand services and products was prioritized over the medium- and long-term perspective of the technical cooperation process originally envisaged.
54. In addition, implementation cycles in the different countries varied in length and depth, while the activities and outputs delivered became an end in themselves rather than tools to achieve sustainable results. Hence, as some services and outputs were delivered through the end of 2021, they had less time to be consolidated and effectively used to influence processes and results, for instance studies of the statistical capacity for SDG monitoring and reporting, and the review of institutional arrangements.
55. Despite these limitations, the evidence gathered in the evaluation confirms that the project has made tangible contributions to its objective and to the EAs. These contributions are strongest at the individual and organizational level, but can also be found at the enabling environment level for long-term national development planning and advancing the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS Sustainable Development Agenda.
56. **At the individual level, the project contributed to strengthening technical capacity of its main stakeholders, namely policy makers, development planners and statisticians.**
57. Figure 2 below presents the results of the survey on participants' perception of the degree to which the project contributed to strengthening knowledge and technical capacity in accordance with the EAs, namely EA 1 being linked to the capacities (a) and (b), and EA2 to the capacities (c) and (d). The capacity linked to area entitled "Strategies for the implementation of the SDGs and SIDS agenda" is understood as the outcome of effective evidence-based planning and decision-making, which refers to the project's overall objective.

Figure 2
Q15: Participants' assessment of the project's contribution to EAs (individual level)
 (Percentages)



Source: Prepared by the evaluator.

58. According to these results, and confirmed by the interviews, the area where the project contributed most was in strengthening knowledge on policy coherence and evidence-based policy planning. Given the need to reinforce concepts around effective planning processes, evidence-based policy making and integrated approaches to sustainable development, but also to raise awareness and understanding of the SDGs and subregional SIDS Agenda, the national and regional workshops on these topics were highly effective.

59. With regard to the **most significant change at individual level**, one national interviewee highlighted that the knowledge and skills she gained through the workshops and seminars were crucial to better fulfil her role as the designated focal point for SDG coordination and implementation. She recognized that the project helped to increase her knowledge and understanding of the 2030 Agenda, leading to her more strongly committing to her role. Similarly, among the survey responses about the most significant change, the following can be highlighted: (i) greater knowledge of the SDGs and lessons for implementation, (ii) practical experiences from other countries, transferable to one's own work, (iii) capacity building, and (iv) knowledge of critical data with regard to policy formulation and decision-making.

60. On the other hand, given that the workshops foreseen in EA 2 related to SDG monitoring and statistical capacity were not fully conducted, the mixed results of the survey with respect to capacity (c) and (d) can be explained. This reflects the results of the interviews and document review that explicitly emphasize the continuing need to strengthen national statistical systems and monitoring and evaluation frameworks for national sustainable development. In this regard, although target countries have adopted the CARICOM core set of indicators (CCI) or the SDG global set of indicators for review and follow-up of the progress in the implementation of the

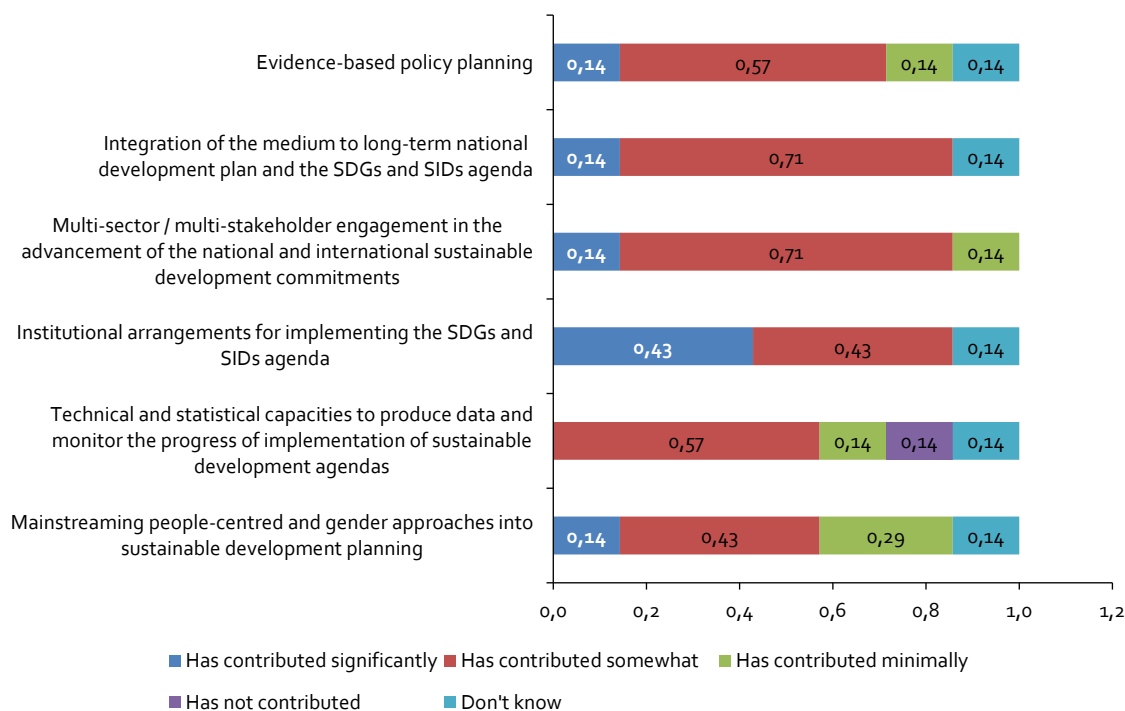
SDGs and the SIDS agenda in the Caribbean, the capacity to produce data for these indicators remains below the average in the subregion. According to the assessment conducted through the project, in the eight beneficiary countries, only 48% of the 155 CCI and 37% of the 249 global indicators have been produced.²¹

61. In terms of implementation strategies, this area has also received less attention in the capacity development activities offered by the project. However, interviewees have recognized that spaces and opportunities to learn from other countries' experiences and best practices are useful inputs for reflecting on strategies and solutions to overcome existing constraints, including how to overcome the silo approach and improve inter-institutional coordination.
62. **At the institutional level, the project provided crucial support to lead institutions to enable them to better fulfil their role in long-term sustainable development planning and implementation.**
63. By comparing the project's baseline country analysis with the progress achieved in the beneficiary countries, the project made relevant contributions to strengthen the lead institutions to better perform their role in sustainable development planning and implementation. The perceptions of interviewed stakeholders from different member States fully concur on the crucial support their respective institutions have received through this project to advance the integration of the 2030 Agenda and SIDS into their national development planning, as well as to improve inter-agency and multi-sectoral coordination and engagement for effective implementation, follow-up and reporting. Among the most **significant changes** the following can be highlighted:
- **Antigua and Barbuda**, supported in the preparation of the first voluntary national review, and subsequently in the development of a communication strategy on the SDGs for continuing engagement and accountability, revealed that the country was far behind in the SDG process. ECLAC technical assistance and accompaniment helped to overcome barriers not only at the institutional level, but also with regard to engaging other relevant stakeholders to move the 2030 Agenda forward, for instance civil society and the private sector. Identifying initiatives from different stakeholders and sectors, and making contributions to, as well as benefits from, the SDGs visible, forged buy-in and engagement, according to the interview conducted.
 - **Dominica**, supported in the review of its National Resilient Development Strategy 2018–2030 and Sectoral Strategic Plans for better integration and alignment with the SDG and SIDS agendas, as well as a series of workshops, acknowledged the effort to bring together all Government Ministries to reflect on challenges and bottlenecks such as planning overload, the silo approach and limited knowledge on SDGs, and to address the poor alignment between sector plans and monitoring frameworks. According to the key informant, these exchanges helped to identify gaps and areas for action necessary to advance in effective implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS Agenda.

²¹ For more details see ECLAC, "NSS capacity assessment Caribbean subregion report. Production of data for development planning and the SDGs", Port of Spain, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, December 2021.

- **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**, the only one among the selected Member States with a long-term development strategy that predated the 2030 Agenda, capitalized significantly on the support for its first voluntary national review, as well as the national and regional training opportunities, according to the interviewees. Not only did it help to take steps to address gaps in the alignment of its strategy with the SDGs, based on the analysis previously supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as SDG reporting, but it was seen as instrumental in strengthening the Planning Division of the Ministry of Finance and the Statistical Office in terms of coordination capacity, data collection and more effective monitoring and reporting. As a major success the increased awareness of the National Development Strategy as the overall guiding framework, as well as progress in localizing the 2030 Agenda, were highlighted.
64. **At the enabling environment level, some countries took relevant steps to improve legal and institutional frameworks, while, in general, awareness and commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS Sustainable Development Agenda increased in the subregion in different sectors.**
65. With regard to the project's contribution to strengthening the enabling environment, the experience of **Grenada** stands out. The country started drafting its long-term development strategy in 2016 and, as highlighted by the key informant, the Technical Working Group faced difficulties in coordinating the process and finalizing the strategy. Besides the support for its finalization, the project helped in taking further steps towards effective implementation. To move forward with a more cohesive and integrated vision of development planning and implementation, Grenada's effort to strengthen the legal and institutional framework was supported with the draft sustainable development bill and the plan for an SDG planning and coordination institute, similar to the one in Jamaica. Interviewees underlined, the crucial support and guidance that has enabled the country to assume a pioneering role among the smaller islands, despite the challenges in implementing the plans.
66. In addition, among the findings of the survey, the experience of the **British Virgin Islands** is worth highlighting with regard to the support and guidance received for the development of its first long-term development strategy in midst of the pandemic: "Vision 2036: Building a Sustainable Virgin Islands". The plan entailed a large stakeholder engagement and public consultation process. Further steps taken and supported through the project were the integration of the SDGs into the budget process and the mapping of the SDGs into the institutional structure of government, as relevant actions to ensure implementation.
67. Figure 3 below presents the results of the survey on participants' perception of the project's contribution to strengthening relevant areas for countries to advance the implementation of the SDGs and SIDS agendas.

Figure 3
Q18: Participants' assessment of the project's contribution to EAs (country- level)



Source: Prepared by the evaluator.

68. Although the results are mixed in the different areas, they coincide to some extent with perceptions of the development of individual technical capacity (see figure 2). Contributions and progress are most strongly felt with regard to actions under EA 1, as well as multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement in advancing national and international sustainable development commitments, which is also linked to voluntary national review support provided. In light of the project's overall objective, the strengthening of institutional arrangements for implementing the SDGs and SIDS agenda is perceived as high, with 42.9% responding "has contributed significantly" and 42.9% responding "has contributed somewhat". These results fully reflect the findings of the interviews.

69. All in all, interviewees highlighted the project's contribution to raising awareness and positioning the SDGs in their respective countries. Starting from an abstract concept and an agenda promoted by the United Nations system, progress has gradually been made in national ownership and localization. The voluntary national review presentations have, according to interviews, contributed greatly. As an opportunity to take stock of progress and gaps, interviewees highlighted the contributions in terms of accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and participation in reporting on the SDGs, which triggered in some Member States positive effects of follow-up actions. Despite the above challenges and those posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, countries, with the support of the project, were able to maintain their commitment and effort in monitoring the SDGs. It should be noted that four other Member States will submit their first voluntary national reviews in 2022, including Dominica and Grenada, and Jamaica is preparing its second.

70. Ultimately, in response to the survey question on whether the project helped to advance efforts to achieve the SDGs in their countries, 57.1% of project participants indicated that the project helped somewhat, with 28.6% indicating that it “helped a lot” and 14.3% indicating “don’t know”.²²

Key Finding 6: The achievement of results was influenced by factors such as the buy-in of policy- and decision-makers at the senior level, and the existence of SDG Champions in a position to influence decision-making.

71. The document review and interviews evidenced that the governments’ priority setting, timing, and the involvement of relevant stakeholders with decision-making power were relevant factors that influenced the early or delayed engagements of the selected countries in the project. In addition, the lead institutions’ human resource capacity was a critical factor for effective participation and fulfilment of their role and responsibilities in the management, coordination and implementation of activities at the country level.
72. The interviews brought to the fore that the established and close relations of ECLAC with relevant stakeholders in lead institutions were another relevant factor that facilitated at the outset engagements and the definition of the work plan at the country level. These stakeholders have been key allies and facilitators as champions of the SDGs, capable and with decision-making power to push the agenda forward in their respective institutions and countries. This has clearly been the case in Grenada, while in other Member States, such as in Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica, the designated focal points faced serious human resource constraints to follow up and respond to the implementation needs of the project.
73. All stakeholder interviews coincide in the analysis of technical and human resource constraints as the major hindering factor, additionally exacerbated by the challenges that the management of the COVID-19 pandemic demanded. Among the weaknesses, stakeholders interviewed highlighted high workloads and large portfolios, as well as inter- and intra-institutional coordination challenges. Others acknowledged that the focus on immediate and emerging issues or priorities is a central factor hindering the planning and implementation of work plans. The lack of timeliness in the countries’ response to requests for information and the capacity to organize, implement and follow up on activities within the planned timeframe were the main obstacles identified by ECLAC and the international consultants hired that hindered the achievement of more results.

4.3 EFFICIENCY

Key Finding 7: Despite the existence of weaknesses in project planning and implementation at the national level, these did not compromise the effectiveness and high satisfaction with the delivery of activities and services in relation to the needs and expectations of stakeholders.

74. As noted in the progress reports and stakeholder interviews, the project faced challenges that led to delays and impacts on planning and implementation. With slow progress and a low rate of financial implementation already existing before the pandemic, challenges continued to increase

²² See details on Survey Results in annex 8. Question 19.

and the implementation extended until December 2021. Consultations with governments and scoping missions were seen as the entry point for engagement and definition of national implementation plans. However, the time and effort investment required was not realistically foreseen in the design and planning. Thus, assessment, consultation and coordination activities at country level were delayed considerably, in most cases until the second half of 2019, and even longer in the case of Antigua and Barbuda.

75. The pandemic added to the implementation challenges, leading to further modifications to the initial planning and leaving 55% of the budget to be implemented during 2021. Resources were reallocated as a response to the COVID-19 travel restrictions, resulting in an increase of the consultancy and other staff costs budget line. The project reached a total execution of 90% of its budget at closure. As noted in internal stakeholder interviews, the continuing challenges related to national engagement and response capacity, as well as the shortened timeframe to implement the remaining activities and budget, added significant pressure on the ECLAC project team and consultants involved.
76. On the other hand, the evaluation confirmed that process shortcomings and delivery delays did not ultimately compromise the overall effectiveness and high assessment of the provision of services and support by ECLAC throughout the project. According to external interviewees, and confirmed by the survey results, the activities, services and products delivered were of a high level of quality and reliability, a characteristic they consider representative of the work of ECLAC. The national focal points interviewed unanimously confirmed that the technical assistance provided by ECLAC staff and consultants met and even exceeded their expectations.

Key Finding 8: ECLAC leveraged its strengths and expertise to address operational bottlenecks and ensure value for money of the project. Results-based management practices were followed but not exploited fully, especially in terms of more agile and timely implementation of corrective actions.

77. The vast majority of interviewees confirmed their satisfaction with the project management and implementation arrangements. Most internal stakeholders pointed to high commitment and dedication as well as good internal coordination as strengths, although they acknowledged that human resource constraints were a challenge for implementation. For a project of this scope, resources for project management, administration and monitoring appeared insufficient, with the research assistant being the only full-time staff employed for one and a half years. The management and administrative burden was found to be high, which added to the workload of the Coordinator of the Statistics and Social Development Unit as Project Manager, as well as the support staff involved.
78. On another note, the resources and support provided by ECLAC in relation to the development of the tasks and activities of national and international consultants were confirmed as sufficient and adequate. However, several consultants pointed out problems of information exchange and communication with both ECLAC and national counterparts in the development of their tasks. Weaknesses were highlighted in terms of timeliness of responses and access to information, but also in terms of feedback from ECLAC during and specifically after the delivery of the final products. Two consultants underlined the fact that they did not have direct communication with national counterparts, but through ECLAC, as a limiting factor for a more fluid and timely development of their assignments.

79. On the other hand, external stakeholders acknowledged quality control and assurance by ECLAC in selecting and mobilizing consultants to support the delivery of technical assistance. Strong expertise, knowledge of the context and practical approaches were identified as positive features of the collaborations with both consultants and ECLAC staff. In this regard, the evaluation confirmed that ECLAC oversight, guidance and ownership of all processes involving national and international consultants were crucial to the good performance and high quality of services and products delivered.
80. Ensuring value for money and the "seal of quality" in processes and products relying on external consultants has to some extent added to the complexity of implementation and to the workload of ECLAC staff. As noted by staff interviewed, in some cases international consultants performed below expectations, while junior national consultants required more supervision and guidance, but proved to be a good asset in supporting implementation at the country level. In addition, some interviewees suggested that working with national and junior consultants in support of international consultants or national counterparts allows for a more cost-effective use of resources.
81. While the project faced time efficiency issues, the evaluation confirmed that resources were generally implemented efficiently and to the extent possible with optimization in mind. Bottlenecks and associated adjustments, for example recruitment of junior consultants to support country-level implementation and budget reallocations due to COVID-19 and new requests, were adequately addressed, but not necessarily in the most timely and agile manner. According to the analysis conducted as part of the evaluation, this is related to the lack of adequate planning and risk assessment processes, and subsequent follow-up and contingency measures, which relates to staffing constraints and effective results-based management practices.
82. Similarly, monitoring and evaluation tasks seemed to serve more for reporting purposes than for feedback, learning and informed course corrections. During interviews, ECLAC staff acknowledged that the project could have benefited from more spaces for exchange, including regular coordination meetings, to monitor progress and take advantage of opportunities for inter-divisional work and knowledge management. It is worth noting that the Programme Support Unit in the Port of Spain office is making efforts regarding the development of a formal feedback management tool to better capture satisfaction, recommendations and success stories from project participants and beneficiaries, but this is still work in progress and has not yet been implemented.

Key Finding 9: Coordination, complementarity and synergies with other initiatives, the United Nations system and subregional partners were pursued, but mainly on an ad hoc basis and without a clear and articulated collaboration and coordination strategy.

83. The project's ability to develop complementarities and areas of synergy was largely based on past and ongoing work in this area at regional and subregional levels, established relationships, as well as emerging opportunities throughout implementation.
84. The interviews conducted unanimously confirmed that ECLAC is a highly valued, recognized and preferred partner for member States in the subregion. Its solid reputation in terms of technical expertise, its in-depth knowledge of the context, its proximity and responsiveness, determine the added value of the relationships and collaborations established. The subregional and regional perspective provided by ECLAC, reinforced through the subregional headquarters in the Caribbean and leveraged through different spaces and forums, was highlighted by interviewees as a strong comparative advantage, along with the capacity to convene a wide range of actors.

85. The project document pre-identified two main partnerships for project implementation, namely with ILPES and the SIDS Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. As noted in the progress reports, and as confirmed by the interviews, the cooperation arrangements materialized mainly through collaborations in a small number of subregional capacity development events. Initial exchanges and joint planning exercises at the beginning of the project suggested a more strategic approach to collaboration, although this was not pursued as the project progressed, according to interviewees. In light of the absence of regular coordination meetings and updates, in particular with the SIDS Unit, some opportunities for further synergies were potentially missed.
86. This also applies to collaborations with other United Nations agencies and subregional partners, such as CARICOM. In this case, exchanges take place mainly in the framework of organized events. For a more systematic and strategic coordination, according to two interviewees, the project could have benefited from regular meetings to exchange information on ongoing initiatives in support of SIDS, and to define possible complementarities and coordination efforts to avoid duplication. It is important to note, however, that the vast majority of interviewees and respondents did not perceive duplication in the services and support provided by the project.
87. Furthermore, the fact that coordinated and complementary actions require aligned planning processes, which nevertheless respond to different requirements and funding timeframes, as noted by ECLAC staff, is seen as one of the main constraints. Among the weaknesses identified through the evaluation was the absence of a clear and articulated collaboration and coordination strategy. The project lacked a systematic institutional approach to implementation, including inter-divisional collaboration, and did not take full advantage of strategic partnerships and the comparative advantages of the United Nations system. A more comprehensive mapping of available initiatives and support services for SIDS in the relevant areas addressed by the project, as well as better use of existing mechanisms for broader United Nations collaboration, including through the United Nations Resident Coordinators' offices, could have supported the effort to foster synergies and complementarities.
88. However, good examples of collaboration with UNDP were identified in the framework of Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) missions, for example in Saint Lucia, or the voluntary national review support and process in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, efficiency gains were achieved through the joint organization of seminars and conferences, such as the collaboration for capacity building events with UNITAR and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as well as the collaboration with the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) and the University of the West Indies. These collaborations allowed for areas of synergies and cost-sharing arrangements that benefited the target countries and others, as outreach and audiences were expanded to more countries in the subregion and other stakeholders.

4.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Key Finding 10: The project fostered, as far as possible, preconditions for sustainability of the different processes and results. The problems and challenges that gave rise to the project are still present, but there is potential for country-driven follow-up, and support remains crucial in most cases.

89. Sustainability is understood to be intrinsically embedded in the project in light of its overall objective of improving long-term national development planning, as well as the specific outputs that constitute milestones to this end. The project played a facilitating role in supporting and triggering short-term

actions for long-term processes. In this context, the vast majority of interviewees agreed that the project supported and fostered relevant conditions for sustainability with a particular focus on national ownership and inclusive stakeholder engagement processes. However, persistent and structural constraints highlighted in interviews are similar to those described in the project document, and continue to jeopardize the acceleration of progress.

90. These constraints relate also to the continuing need to strengthen and retain technical skills development. In terms of sustainability of capacity building provided, external interviewees confirmed that the knowledge, skills and tools continue to be useful and applicable to their work in the future. This is consistent with the survey results, with 42.9% of respondents indicating “yes” and 57.1% “to a certain extent”, when asked about the continued use of skills acquired. Similarly, when asked specifically whether the support provided was sufficient to equip governments and relevant institutions with the knowledge and skills needed to make further progress in implementing the SDGs, 28.7% responded “yes” and 71.4% responded “to a certain extent”.²³ This finding was echoed in the interviews, with most stakeholders acknowledging strengthened capacities for integrated, evidence-based planning processes and inter-agency coordination, but also highlighting persistent gaps in these areas.
91. Political will and commitment seem overall to be positive in the target countries, but capacities in terms of financial, technical and institutional arrangements remain, according to most interviewees, the main constraint. For example, in the case of Grenada, the plan for the creation of the Sustainable Development Institute supported through the project remains on hold for the moment, as the Sustainable Development Bill approval is behind schedule and funding is not secured. However, as the national focal point interviewed pointed out, despite the delays, implementation is likely to move forward in the next five years thanks to strong advocates and regardless of the change of government.
92. Similarly, the voluntary national review processes supported in different Member States have been a driver of engagement and participation. However, as several interviewees acknowledged, the momentum of awareness and enthusiasm risks being easily lost once the process is over, when monitoring and follow-up mechanisms are not robust and fully functioning, or SDG-related activities are not budgeted for. In this regard, a good example of building on the momentum is the case of Antigua and Barbuda. According to interviewees, the development of an SDG communication strategy and interactive website with support of the project facilitates continued engagement in promoting and advancing SDG implementation in the country. In addition, as public awareness increases and stakeholders from civil society and the private sector take ownership of the 2030 Agenda, there is greater momentum and demand for accountability; public communication also serves this purpose.
93. Beyond the processes of awareness raising and stakeholder engagement in the voluntary national reviews, SDG champions are crucial to continue to advocate for and keep the SDGs on the national agenda. As noted by some of the national focal points during the interviews, although civil society is an important advocate and the private sector is gradually coming on board, there is still a good portion of the public sector that has not yet taken ownership of the SDGs. The development of long-term national sustainable development plans supported by the project is a relevant step for

²³ See details on Survey Results in annex 8. Question 22 and question 23.

continuity and sustainability. At the same time, ensuring adequate financing for these plans and SDG implementation, in addition to SDG integration and alignment of sector plans, is difficult, according to interviewees, as governments are facing post-COVID-19 recovery, along with fiscal and debt challenges.

94. Ultimately, while outputs and results achieved within the project feed into broader processes for implementing the SDGs and SIDS agendas, the conditions for sustained progress vary among the target countries. During interviews, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago were recognized as model countries in terms of institutional arrangements, integrated plans and strategies and coordination mechanisms, but their overall conditions and resources differ significantly from those of the remaining SIDS. The availability of quality data and statistical capacity, however, remain a challenge in SDG implementation and reporting in all Member States, as noted in the project's assessment of national statistics systems.²⁴ In this regard, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' effort to strengthen the collection and production of data for decision-making and reporting through new initiatives, in collaboration with the World Bank and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), is a good example of building on results and recommendations of the DA project.
95. Overwhelmingly, all national stakeholders interviewed highlighted interest in continued support from ECLAC. One of the most common comments during interviews was the need for continuity and support, particularly with regard to vertical decentralization and horizontal integration to overcome the persistent silo approach and strengthen cross-cutting monitoring, accountability and external communication for national development goals and SDGs. It should be noted that these aspects coincide with and echo the conclusions and recommendations of the review of institutional mechanisms for sustainable development in the Caribbean prepared by the project.²⁵

Key Finding 11: The project seized some opportunities to share lessons learned and successful practices implemented in the subregion, but dissemination could have been widened through an explicit knowledge management strategy to support scaling up and replication.

96. Knowledge production and dissemination, together with peer learning, represent a central aspect of ECLAC value added, according to many interviewees. According to the project document, a subregional knowledge sharing activity was foreseen at the end of the project to exchange lessons learned and successful strategies being implemented in the subregion. In addition, some events and learning conferences provided opportunities for target countries to share experiences and lessons learned from the implementation of the project with beneficiary and non-beneficiary countries. For example, the SALISES 22nd Annual Conference "Re-imagining Development for Small Island States (SIDS)" Post-Pandemic Transformation" included presentations from ECLAC, Grenada, Dominica and the British Virgin Islands.

²⁴ For more details see ECLAC, "NSS capacity assessment Caribbean subregion report. Production of data for development planning and the SDGs", Port of Spain, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, December 2021.

²⁵ For more details see C. Camarinhas and I. Trumbic, "A review of the status of institutional mechanisms for sustainable development planning in the Caribbean", *Studies and Perspectives series-ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean*, No. 107 (LC/TS.2022/16-LC/CAR/TS.2022/1), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2022.

97. During the interviews, external stakeholders recognized the importance of these opportunities and spaces that not only enhance understanding of shared constraints, learning and avoidance of mistakes, but also serve for motivation and recognition of successful experiences. In this context, various interviewees highlighted the ECLAC “Community of Practice”, which was established external to the project, but revealed high relevance for target countries in terms of sharing valuable good practices and lessons learned regarding voluntary national review processes and stakeholder engagements.²⁶ The interest in continuing the Community of Practice as a peer-to-peer learning platform on issues related to the 2030 Agenda implementation and national sustainable development planning was underlined by multiple interviewees.
98. Moreover, ECLAC drew on the experience gained and lessons learned throughout these processes from one target country to another, which also allowed for fine-tuning and adapting the approach and methodology of support, according to interviewees. As confirmed by the interviews, different formal and informal spaces of exchange and some knowledge products²⁷ were used to draw attention to the experience and successful practices of the project, which eventually also led to multiple effects in terms of new requests for support and the extension of the support services.
99. However, the project did not define an explicit knowledge management strategy to address learning and knowledge generation and dissemination more systematically and strategically throughout implementation. This means that there were no guidelines, protocols and practices to ensure that good practices and lessons learned were systematically captured and incorporated into working practices, which applies to both internal and external mechanisms and tools. For example, given the necessary adaptation and learning that the COVID-19 context entailed for project implementation, such practices could have been further exploited at regional level or across Development Account projects to support more agile project management. In addition, the use of an internal share point or resource hub for information, documents and knowledge products related to the project and its activities, with access for internal and external stakeholders, could have improved knowledge sharing and dissemination, as pointed out by several internal stakeholders.
100. Moreover, interviews with external stakeholders revealed that their knowledge of the project as a whole was more limited, including information on other activities and support services provided by the project, or on which Member States were involved. A large part of the knowledge was gained through direct exchanges with the Project Manager and individual initiative rather than broader channels of exchange, communication and dissemination of information. This highlights gaps in communication, as well as in knowledge management and dissemination for scaling up and replication. This finding was echoed in interviews with national and international consultants. A lack of project knowledge beyond the specific assignment and some missed opportunities to capitalize more effectively on different processes, experience and lessons learned, for instance, solutions to overcome stakeholder engagement challenges and timeliness of stakeholder response, were confirmed.

²⁶ Between December 2019 and early 2021, some 40 virtual meetings of the Community of Practice were held to support the region’s countries in the process of preparing the voluntary national reviews and monitoring implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For more details see: “ECLAC Community of Practice on the Voluntary National Reviews” [online] <https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/2030-agenda-sustainable-development/eclac-community-practice-voluntary-national-reviews>.

²⁷ For example: ECLAC, *A decade of action for a change of era* (LC/FDS.5/3), Santiago, 2022.

4.5 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Key Finding 12: The project was successful in promoting the integration of gender and human rights and contributing to the commitment to "leave no one behind". However, there was scope for further efforts to address gender data considerations.

101. The review of project documents and interviews confirmed that the project followed an implicit gender mainstreaming approach in the design and implementation. In this regard, the project did not have an explicit strategy or specific objective, but overall attention was paid to gender parity in activities, sex-disaggregated data and streamlining of gender considerations in all activities and outputs.
102. Stakeholder interviews and survey results acknowledged the project's alignment with international commitments to human rights and gender equality.²⁸ The project fully adhered to the principle of "leaving no one behind", and promoted people-centred, gender-sensitive and integrated policy approaches for sustainable development that ensures wellbeing of all people in SIDS. According to the interviews conducted, the project generated an enabling environment and discussions on concepts and approaches, with a particular focus on the concept of 'leaving no one behind' in the project activities. Several national interviewees acknowledged that the project not only helped to understand what the concept of leaving no one behind really entailed and to take ownership of it, but also to set concrete actions in motion.
103. In practice, the principle of leaving no one behind was largely reflected in the inclusive and participatory approach followed in consultations, voluntary national review and stakeholder engagement processes supported. These processes brought together multiple stakeholders from the private sector, academia, civil society and vulnerable groups such as youth, persons with disabilities, women, children and the elderly, who were engaged through different channels and means. The project's contribution with regard to representing all voices, emphasizing the localization of the 2030 Agenda and also recognizing initiatives led by civil society or the private sector that contribute to the different SDGs, has been highlighted by several interviewees.
104. In the evaluation survey, in response to the question whether the project has contributed to the integration of people-centred and gender approaches in sustainable development planning, the results are mixed, as shown in figure 2.
105. This finding is consistent with perceptions shared by several external interviewees that more attention needs to be paid to the particularities of Caribbean SIDS in terms of gender data and evidence-based policy making that addresses disparities between population groups, thus giving visibility to the challenges they face. For example, in light of the specific vulnerability of boys, adolescents and older men in Caribbean SIDS, two interviewees noted that while international partners push for gender mainstreaming and gender-disaggregated data in SDG reporting, national and subregional perspectives on gender data and disaggregation need to be shaped.

²⁸ See for more detail annex 8 - Survey results Question 7.

106. Data availability and gaps remain an important challenge for the weak statistical capacity in the subregion, and strengthening gender data in statistics and national development planning requires specific attention. In this regard, while the assessment of statistical capacity conducted by the project took gender-based statistics into consideration, it mainly referred to sex disaggregation. The project could have explored possible collaborations with other initiatives and partnerships, such as UN Women, PARIS21 and Data2X, to leverage resources invested in research and assessments that can contribute to actions for the use of gender data.

Key Finding 13: Although the project did not have an innovative or pioneering approach, it made good use of the demand-driven approach and responsiveness to opportunities as key strengths, but less so in harnessing ICTs and networking of expertise and resources.

107. The project built on the experience, best practices and lessons learned from previous initiatives, in particular the project mentioned above funded by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)/Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany, but also other associated actions focusing on strengthening the institutional, technical and statistical capacities of Caribbean SIDS. Furthermore, the design emphasized the application of existing and validated methodologies and approaches such as the country vulnerability-resilience profile approach and the voluntary national review methodology, as well as the use of technical, human and other resources available in the target countries. In this respect, the project refrained from adopting an innovative or pioneering approach, but focused on tailoring technical assistance and training to the maximum extent to the country-specific capacities, structures and resources.

108. The vast majority of stakeholders interviewed acknowledged ECLAC efforts to establish close liaison and consultation processes in order to better understand and respond to country-specific contexts and demands. Activities at the national level were largely driven by the main counterparts and focal points of the designated lead institutions, which, despite the challenges and human resource constraints, was considered a strength. In this context, interviewees positively highlighted the recruitment of senior consultants from the subregions or junior national consultants, although the evaluation found less evidence on effective cross-fertilization of different assignments.

109. The adaptation of the project to the COVID-19 context, in terms of remote implementation and virtual activities, was generally perceived as well-executed and effective, and even provided some positive externalities in terms of outreach and participation. Interviewees noted among the benefits that participation increased in virtual activities, national counterparts were able to involve more staff and, in general, the audience broadened in subregional activities, with engagement of non-beneficiary countries. However, the vast majority of interviewees agreed that networking, peer learning and relationship building, so important for the subregion, still rely heavily on personal contacts and on-site events. In addition, several consultants highlighted a number of challenges in relation to the remote implementation, such as low response rates to online surveys and questionnaires and bilateral communication through a national focal point, rather than broader engagements with technical working groups.

110. Ultimately, the evaluation found that the use of ICTs was well applied especially in the context of COVID-19, but not as much for wider networking and knowledge sharing, which relates to aspects explained earlier in this report. Moreover, there was scope for improving communication and dissemination of existing knowledge and information resources, both produced by ECLAC and within the United Nations system. This refers for instance to the dissemination of the Commission's new Regional Knowledge Management Platform²⁹ aimed at enhancing access to data on SDG indicators, the Regional Observatory on Planning for Development³⁰ as an information and knowledge hub on integrated national development planning, as well as other platforms with resources and toolboxes, such as the UNDP SDG Acceleration Toolkit,³¹ Local2030 partners³² or UNITAR online SDGs Learning, Training & Practice.³³ External stakeholder interviews revealed a strong interest and need for further support for training and skills development, including to a wider audience of public sector officials, although there was limited awareness of existing resources. Thus, the targeted Member States and stakeholders would have benefited from more tailored and strategic approach to communication and dissemination in this respect.

²⁹ For more details see [online] <https://agenda2030lac.org/en>.

³⁰ For more details see [online] <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/en>.

³¹ For more details see [online] <https://sdgintegration.undp.org/>.

³² For more details see [online] <https://www.local2030.org/>.

³³ For more details see [online]: <https://unitar.org/sustainable-development-goals/accelerating-sdg-implementation/our-portfolio/2030-agenda-training-tools>.

5. BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

5.1 BEST PRACTICES

5.1.1 Flexibility and capacity to respond to emerging opportunities

111. Beyond the premise of country ownership and country-driven processes, a common observation in several interviews was the project's need to rethink the top-down approach and its implementation strategy. The flexible approach adopted by the project to changing contexts and requests from member States and associate members was widely identified as a determining factor in keeping the project on track. It is key to seize emerging opportunities quickly and efficiently, given the flexibility offered by the Development Account as a funding instrument and the responsiveness of ECLAC.

5.1.2 Use of a strong entry point for buy-in and building on the momentum

112. In light of governments' priority setting alongside limited institutional capacities, the identification of solid incentives is crucial. The voluntary national review process proved to be a strong entry point for buy-in, and a good tool to foster multi-stakeholder engagement and localization of the 2030 Agenda. Both countries that were more advanced and those thus far less active in the implementation of the SDGs benefitted largely from the voluntary national review support. Harnessing the momentum as well as commitment of SDG champions to agree on and undertake concrete follow-up actions proved to be a very successful strategy. In addition, investment in communication appears to generate multiplier effects and can help sustain stakeholder engagement over the long term.

5.1.3 Strong oversight by ECLAC and effective use of consultants

113. The ability of ECLAC to capitalize on its added value and its close relations with member States and associate members in the subregion has been a key factor in the achievement of project results. This includes the understanding of country dynamics and the ways of working specific to each country and the subregion as a whole. Therefore, the use of in-house expertise and ECLAC staff in the delivery of activities and services remains key for quality, client satisfaction and reputation. Maintaining oversight and guidance by ECLAC, using both national consultants and consultants from other countries in the subregion unfolded some advantages in terms of cost-benefit for ECLAC, as well as knowledge sharing and networking of regional expertise. In particular, the local recruitment of junior consultants to support lead institutions on site proved to be an effective mitigation measure to address limited capacity of national counterparts.

5.1.4 Value added subregional events and spaces and importance of communication

114. While not being contemplated initially, workshops, seminars and conferences co-organized at the subregional level, as well as the ECLAC Community of Practice, were quite valuable in promoting the project, strengthening exchange of experience and learning, and even in generating multiplier effects. These spaces provided opportunities for showcasing and sharing information with a broader audience, with potential to create incentives for other Member States and Associated Members to

take actions “following the example of others”. In the light of cross fertilization, numerous interviews recognized the importance of investment in communication to foster incentives for both beneficiary and non-beneficiary countries.

5.1.5 Synergies with other development initiatives and partnerships

115. Effective coordination of international cooperation, including the United Nations system's "Delivering as One" premise, remains a challenge at the country level, and even more so at the regional and global levels. The coordination effort made by the project through the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as UNDP, UNITAR and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, contributed to the effective use of existing resources and expertise, and to strengthening cooperation mechanisms at the country level. They are also highly valued by Member States, as the interviews demonstrated, and should receive sufficient attention through explicit partnership and stakeholder engagement strategies.

5.2 LESSONS LEARNED

5.2.1 Early involvement and buy-in from senior-level decision-/policy makers

116. Despite specific country requests or expressions of interest in participating, the engagement of high-level decision-makers in the potential beneficiary countries is crucial at the outset of the project to ensure buy-in and to establish implementation and operational arrangements, including the appointment of focal points and definition of work plans. To avoid delays and wasted effort, a realistic timetable should be established in the inception phase to reconfirm Member States' commitment to the project and to establish work plans. It is found to be crucial to focus on Member States that are enthusiastic about the policy and technical assistance support, and have clarity about needs and expectations, as well as commitments to follow-up.

5.2.2 Strategic investment of limited resources when selecting countries and coverage

117. In light of the urgent need to step up the implementation of the SDGs in the subregion and the existing constraints, the project has opted to support more Member States and Associated Members by expanding scarce resources. The investment of time and effort to engage and work with each Member State, together with the administrative and management burden, took resources away from the more strategic and in-depth work that could be achieved by working with fewer countries. The approach to country selection and prioritization requires in-depth assessment of opportunities and alternatives, including the mapping of potential collaborations and synergies, for the strategic investment of resources.

5.2.3 Thorough risk mitigation planning as part of national implementation plans

118. In addition to external factors, limited responsiveness of human and technical resources and timeliness of response negatively affected the timely and efficient implementation of the project. These risks can be anticipated and should be analyzed thoroughly as part of a risk mitigation planning. The assessment of existing national capacities (technical, human and other resources available), along with other country-specific constraints such as government cycles should guide the definition of country-level implementation plans that contemplate feasible objectives and outcomes.

5.2.4 Optimal utilization of limited human resources

119. Future Development Account projects managed and implemented by ECLAC subregional headquarters need to take account of the management and administrative implications and the human resource constraints in the design and contract negotiation. Without staff dedicated to administrative and project management, the optimal utilization of senior-level technical staff for a project of subregional scope and which also includes external consultancies (e.g. high demand of management of contracts and oversight), is not guaranteed.

5.2.5 Adapting work to virtual modalities and missed opportunities

120. Although the adaptation to a remote implementation modality due to COVID-19 provided some benefits in terms of cost savings, increased number of participants in virtual activities and the rethinking of certain implementation approaches, it was widely recognized that face-to-face engagement remains crucial to the ways of working and dynamics in the subregion. The closer interaction and externalities of on-site events and engagements, such as networking and peer learning, cannot be achieved in the same way in remote settings. With the cancellation of some scoping missions, the project has lost an important tool for raising awareness and influencing policy. Similarly, remote technical assistance carries the risk of limited country commitment and ownership, with possible consequences in terms of meeting expectations and needs.

5.2.6 Maximising partnerships requires defined areas of collaboration and implementation arrangements

121. The difficulty of maintaining smooth and effective coordination and communication throughout the project between ECLAC and the main partners/collaborators suggests the need for an explicit strategy according to pre-identified areas of collaboration, and defined implementation arrangements. The latter should entail operational aspects with regard to regular meetings, exchange of information and reporting.

6. CONCLUSIONS

RELEVANCE: To what extent were the objectives and EAs of the project consistent with the priorities and needs set out by the targeted countries, and priorities of ECLAC?

122. The project came at the right time and with relevant objectives for Caribbean SIDS in view of the challenges and capacity gaps in addressing long-term national development planning, and meeting commitments to the specific development agenda of SIDS and the 2030 Agenda. The data collected confirmed that the project objective and EAs were and remain highly relevant to the target countries throughout its implementation. The appropriateness of the activities and services provided by the project to the needs and priorities of stakeholders and participants was assessed as high.
123. The project's alignment and relevance are anchored in mandates and missions of ECLAC, the United Nations system and other subregional partners to assist Caribbean SIDS in the process of implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway. Strategic objectives and priorities of ECLAC programmes of work are pursued through the project, focusing on improving evidence-based development planning capacity, statistics and the achievement of the targets of major subregional, regional and international agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals.
124. Despite the appropriateness of the design, the underlying assumptions of the intervention strategy did not develop as envisaged at the outset of the project, especially with regard to the early acceptance and responsiveness of national counterparts. While both internal and external factors posed challenges that affected the original intervention logic, the evaluation confirmed that the project was flexible enough to adapt, as well as to respond to specific country requests and new opportunities. As governments' attention and priorities shifted to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, ECLAC and the project were able to strengthen the narrative around sustainable development and resilient recovery and adapt to country processes and capacities, which ultimately reaffirmed the relevance of the project.

EFFECTIVENESS: To what extent did the project achieve the objectives and EAs outlined in the project document?

125. The project's performance in terms of activities, services and outputs delivered has been strong overall, by ensuring technical quality, usefulness, and applicability. Despite adjustments to the original implementation plan, the project was successful in meeting most of the targets of its two EAs, expanding services and activities to more beneficiary countries and broader audiences.
126. The tailored approach to country-level interests and opportunities has significantly fostered the effectiveness of the outputs and services delivered. Nevertheless, the slow pace in the implementation and the required shift in the stakeholder engagement strategy by focusing on technical assistance on demand undermined the implementation strategy vis-à-vis its medium to long-term processes of change and expected accomplishments. The implementation cycles in the different countries varied in length and depth, while the activities and outputs delivered became an end in themselves rather than tools to achieve sustained change.

127. Evidence gathered, however, shows that the project was effective in advancing its objective and EAs, with EA 1 —related to enhanced capacity to integrate the SDGs and SIDS agenda into coherent national development plans— being where most contributions and results were achieved. Document review, interviews and survey results confirm that the project made strong and tangible contributions at the individual and organizational level, but these can also be found at the enabling environment level for long-term national development planning and advancing the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS Sustainable Development Agenda.
128. The technical and institutional capacity of selected stakeholders and key institutions has improved in the area of evidence-based development planning, policy coherence, SDG integration and multi-stakeholder engagement. The fact that, with the support of the project, two Member States/Associate Members have developed long-term, integrated sustainable development strategies, and two others have critically assessed and revised their existing strategies, including sectoral plans, for better integration with the SDG and SIDS agendas, is a significant achievement. As for EA 2, the most notable contribution, widely acknowledged in the interviews, was the project's support for four voluntary national review presentations and driving two more to be submitted in 2022. These processes have significantly boosted awareness and commitments to the SDGs, mobilized a wide range of stakeholders and sectors and, in some cases, led to concrete follow-up actions. Overall, it is possible to say that the project contributed to advancing the 2030 Agenda, and some steps are being taken in Grenada and the British Virgin Islands in terms of legal and institutional frameworks, as well as SDG budgeting.
129. Critical to the project's success have been committed and strong SDG champions with decision-making power to move the agenda forward in their respective countries. The strong relationships with these national focal points, ECLAC responsiveness and the harnessing of its added value, together with the flexibility of the project, were crucial facilitating factors. On the other hand, the limited technical capacity, human resource constraints, and the dynamics of the subregion in terms of priority setting and response to the immediate needs, hindered the achievement of more results.

EFFICIENCY: To what extent were services and support provided in a timely and reliable manner, according to the priorities established by the project documents?

130. Project implementation suffered serious delays, caused by slow engagement and weak institutional and human resource capacity of the national counterparts. These translated into challenges in terms of planning, management and financial execution, and more importantly, revealed some weaknesses with regard to agile project management to address mitigation measures in a timely manner.
131. In terms of efficient and reliable use of resources, the project activities and outputs achieved very high ratings for overall satisfaction with the modality of implementation and fulfilment of their purposes. Data collected confirmed that technical assistance services and products delivered were of a high level of quality and reliability, a characteristic they consider representative of the work of ECLAC.
132. For a project of this scope and high demand for management, human resources, including for administration and monitoring, were limited and overburdened the ECLAC staff involved. The shift to technical assistance and the mitigation measures taken to respond to capacity gaps of national counterparts implied an increase in consultancies that required high time investment and close follow-up by the ECLAC team to ensure adequate oversight, quality control and assurance.

133. Despite time efficiency issues, the evaluation confirmed that, overall, resources were executed in an efficient and, to the extent possible, cost-effective manner. Some efficiency gains were achieved through collaboration with United Nations system partners and other subregional partners from academia. However, the collaboration between ECLAC and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as well as with other agencies of the United Nations system, would have likely yielded more outcomes with an explicit collaboration and coordination strategy, and more regular exchange to seize opportunities for complementarities and synergies.

SUSTAINABILITY: To what extent can the benefits of the project be deemed lasting at the level of the beneficiaries?

134. The sustainability of the benefits and results of the project are not generally guaranteed, but some preconditions have been supported by the project with potential to sustain them. The problems and challenges that gave rise to the project are still present, in particular technical and human resources capacity constraints, as well as financial allocations to respond effectively to the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs and SIDS agenda.

135. The data collected through the interviews and the survey confirm that the knowledge and skills acquired through the project are likely to be used and remain applicable to the work of the stakeholders addressed. To maintain and further enhance capacity in evidence-based policy- and decision-making, the national development strategies and plans supported are crucial frameworks with a long-term perspective. However, the progress in implementation, including advancement of the SDGs, remains subject to substantive actions within the existing or foreseen institutional mechanisms, including dedicated funding, horizontal and vertical coordination, monitoring and statistical capacity, etc.

136. The momentum created by the voluntary national review processes has been capitalized on by a number of the involved Member States, such as Antigua and Barbuda with the communication strategy and actions supported by the project, as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, mobilizing additional support and funding to address statistical capacity constraints and improve SDG monitoring. Other Member States are planning MAPS missions, as well as initiating review processes and drafting new long-term development strategies - all positive signs for continuity.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES: To what extent did the project activities and outputs incorporate gender and human rights approaches and other cross-cutting issues?

137. The project fully adhered to and strongly promoted the principle of “leaving no one behind”. Awareness and understanding of the concept were raised, and activities and outputs emphasized the importance of people-centred, gender-sensitive and integrated policy approaches for sustainable development that ensures wellbeing of all people in the SIDS. In practice, it was largely reflected in the inclusive and participatory approach followed in consultations, voluntary national review and stakeholder engagement processes supported through the project.

138. However, there was scope to address gender data considerations and gaps more comprehensively, taking into account the particularities of the subregion, specific needs and interests, as well as possible synergies and collaborations with other international partners.

139. With regard to other specific Development Account criteria, the project was not innovative in nature, but followed broadly the premise to adapt and tailor approaches and methodologies to specific country contexts and existing capacities at the national level. The involvement of consultants from the subregion or junior national consultants can also be highlighted as a positive contribution to capacity gains and networking of expertise in the subregion. However, the use of ICTs to improve communication, knowledge sharing and dissemination of project results, as well as the promotion of existing tools, platforms and resource centres within the United Nations system to facilitate the continuation and scaling up of capacity building processes could be enhanced.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

140. The following recommendations arise from findings and conclusions of the evaluation and take into consideration feedback and the consensus they generated among stakeholders consulted. They are listed according to the evaluation criteria, and indicate the level of priority assigned to them.

RELEVANCE

Recommendation 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.

Linked to findings: 1 and 7. Priority for future actions: high

141. In light of limited resources, ECLAC should consider working more closely with fewer countries and pursue an approach that generates opportunities to optimize resources and added value for possible replication and scaling up. Policy and capacity development support for the Caribbean SIDS remains highly relevant and necessary, but a more focused approach to support Member States and Associated Members in greater depth is recommended.

142. 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. In a project such as DA 1819AF, it seems reasonable to focus on three beneficiary countries, selecting one country per level of progress that could serve as a model for implementation. As the subregional dimension is highly relevant and generates added value, investing in subregional exchange and peer learning should be included in future projects.

143. In terms of definition of intervention strategies, early commitment should be fostered at the senior/decision-making level in beneficiary countries and interested and potential counterparts. Communication with national counterparts should therefore be increased during the design phase to manage expectations, define specific needs and interests and clarify commitments. 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.

EFFECTIVENESS

Recommendation 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.

Linked to findings: 5 and 6. Priority for future actions: medium-high

144. 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.

145. A flexible approach is recommended to respond to emerging opportunities and context-specific conditions, while emphasizing articulation and steering towards the project's overall objectives and expected outcomes. In this regard, it remains critical to prioritize strategic investments and processes with relevant stakeholders (decision-makers and policy makers) best aligned with the achievement of sustainable outcomes.
146. 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.

EFFICIENCY

Recommendation 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

Linked to finding: 8. Priority for future actions: medium-high

147. 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.
148. 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. This includes assessing the feasibility of projects being supervised and managed by coordinators of units with multiple and demanding responsibilities. 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.
149. 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.
150. 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.

Recommendation 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.

Linked to finding: 9. Priority for future actions: medium-high; Directed to: ECLAC and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

151. 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.
152. 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.

SUSTAINABILITY

Recommendation 5: Continue strengthening capacity development in the areas with major persisting gaps

Linked to finding: 10. Priority for future actions: high

153. 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.). Other international agencies working with member States and associate members, including the World Bank and the PARIS21 initiative, should be considered to ensure complementarities and effective coordination. 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.
154. 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.

Recommendation 6: Invest and prioritize resources for communication, knowledge management, systematization and dissemination

Linked to finding: 11. Priority for future actions: medium

155. 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.
156. 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.

157. 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.
158. 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.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Recommendation 7: Consider strengthening reporting linked to cross-cutting issues based on specific targets, in particular with regard to gender considerations

Linked to finding: 12. Priority for future Actions: medium

159. 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.

8. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1	TERMS OF REFERENCE
ANNEX 2	EVALUATION MATRIX
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ANNEX 4	STAKEHOLDER MAP
ANNEX 5	LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED
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ANNEX 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Assessment of the 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

I. Introduction

1. This assessment is being conducted in accordance with the General Assembly resolutions 54/236 of December 1999, 54/474 of April 2000 and 70/8 of December 2015, which endorsed the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (PPBME) and its subsequent revisions. In this context, the General Assembly requested that programmes be evaluated on a regular, periodic basis, covering all areas of work under their purview. As part of the general strengthening of the evaluation function to support and inform the decision-making cycle in the UN Secretariat in general and ECLAC in particular and within the normative recommendations made by different oversight bodies endorsed by the General Assembly, ECLAC's Executive Secretary is implementing an evaluation strategy that includes periodic evaluations of different areas of ECLAC's work. This is therefore a discretionary internal evaluation managed by the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit (PPEU) of ECLAC's Programme Planning and Operations division (PPOD).

II. Assessment Topic

2. This assessment is an end-of-cycle review of a project aimed at strengthening institutional capacities of selected Caribbean States for national development planning which integrates the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SIDS agenda in the subregion.

III. Objective of the Assessment

3. The objective of this assessment is to review the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of the project implementation and more particularly document the results the project attained in relation to its overall objectives and expected results as defined in the project document.

4. The assessment will place an important emphasis in identifying lessons learned and good practices that derive from the implementation of the project, its sustainability and the potential of replicating them in other countries.

5. The lessons learned and good practices in actual project implementation will in turn be used as tools for the future planning and implementation of projects.

IV. Background

The Development Account

6. The Development Account (DA) was established by the General Assembly in 1997, as a mechanism to fund capacity development projects of the economic and social entities of the United Nations (UN). By building capacity on three levels, namely: (i) the individual; (ii) the organizational; and (iii) the enabling environment, the DA becomes a supportive vehicle for advancing the implementation of internationally

agreed development goals (IADGs) and the outcomes of the UN conferences and summits. The DA adopts a medium to long-term approach in helping countries to better integrate social, economic and environmental policies and strategies in order to achieve inclusive and sustained economic growth, poverty eradication, and sustainable development.

7. Projects financed from the DA aim at achieving development impact through building the socio-economic capacity of developing countries through collaboration at the national, sub- regional, regional and inter-regional levels. The DA provides a mechanism for promoting the exchange and transfer of skills, knowledge and good practices among target countries within and between different geographic regions, and through the cooperation with a wide range of partners in the broader development assistance community. It provides a bridge between in-country capacity development actors, on the one hand, and UN Secretariat entities, on the other. The latter offer distinctive skills and competencies in a broad range of economic and social issues that are often only marginally dealt with by other development partners at country level. For target countries, the DA provides a vehicle to tap into the normative and analytical expertise of the UN Secretariat and receive on-going policy support in the economic and social area, particularly in areas where such expertise does not reside in the capacities of the UN country teams.

8. The DA's operational profile is further reinforced by the adoption of pilot approaches that test new ideas and eventually scale them up through supplementary funding, with an emphasis on integration of national expertise in the projects to ensure national ownership and sustainability of project outcomes.

9. DA projects are programmed in tranches, which represent the Account's programming cycle. The DA is funded from the Secretariat's regular budget and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is one of its 10 implementing entities. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) provides overall management of the DA portfolio.

10. ECLAC undertakes internal assessments of each of its DA projects in accordance with DA requirements. Assessments are defined by ECLAC as brief end-of-project evaluation exercises aimed at assessing the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of project activities. They are undertaken as desk studies and consist of a document review, stakeholder survey, and a limited number of telephone-based interviews.

The project

11. The project under evaluation is part of the projects approved under this account for the 11th Tranche (2018-2021). It was implemented by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean.

12. The duration of this project was of approximately three and half years, having started activities on January 2018, and with an estimated date of closure of July 2021.

13. The overall logic of the project against which results and impact will be assessed contains an overall objective and a set of expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement that will be used as signposts to assess its effectiveness and relevance.

14. The project's objective as stated above is "to strengthen institutional capacities of selected Caribbean States for national development planning which integrates the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SIDS agenda in the subregion." The project was envisaged to focus on Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and one other country.

15. The expected accomplishments were defined as follows:

- EA1 Improved capacity of selected Caribbean SIDS to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals and the SIDS agenda into coherent national development plans.

- EA2 Improved capacity of selected Caribbean SIDS to review and follow-up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS agenda.

16. To achieve the expected accomplishments above, the following activities were originally planned:

A1.1 Conduct a national assessment in each beneficiary country to determine the status of national development plans and their implementation;

A1.2 Conduct a national workshop in each beneficiary country for country representatives and all relevant stakeholders involved in the process of development planning and integration of the 2030 Agenda to develop a plan of action to integrate the SDGs and the SIDS agenda into the national development plans;

A1.3 Design a model plan of implementation in collaboration with the designated lead institution in each country, drawing from best practice identified in the national plans of action;

A1.4 Provide technical assistance to beneficiary countries in integrating the SDGs and the SIDS agenda into long-term national development plans based on the model plan of implementation;

A1.5 Organize a regional workshop to afford countries the opportunity to exchange perspectives and approaches to development planning and implementation, to promote knowledge sharing on successful strategies being implemented in the subregion;

A2.1 Conduct a national assessment of each beneficiary country, using the Vulnerability and Country Resilience Profile (VRCP) approach, to determine the capacity of the national statistical systems to produce the necessary data - including gender-based statistics - for measuring progress in the implementation of the SDGs and the SIDS agenda;

A2.2 Organize a technical meeting in each beneficiary country to address the data requirements for monitoring the progress in implementation of the integrated national development plans, and to consider the feasibility of setting a schedule for periodic reporting to facilitate subregional reviews of progress achieved;

A2.3 Design the template for a monitoring framework to be considered for adoption by beneficiary countries, using existing tools;

A2.4 Conduct a national workshop in each beneficiary country for government officials with reporting responsibility in designated lead institutions and statisticians in each beneficiary country in implementing the monitoring framework to measure and report on the implementation progress of the integrated national development plans;

A2.5 Provide technical assistance to select beneficiary countries in the preparation of their VNRs for presentation to the HLPF.

17. The budget for the project totalled US\$650,000. Progress reports were prepared on a yearly basis.

Stakeholder Analysis

18. As stated in the project document, the main project stakeholders were Policymakers (both government and opposition), Planning Divisions or Offices, National Statistical Offices (NSOs), Private Sector, Civil Society and Academia.

V. Guiding Principles

19. The evaluation will seek to be independent, credible and useful and adhere to the highest possible professional standards. It will be consultative and engage the participation of a broad range of stakeholders. The unit of analysis is the project itself, including its design, implementation and effects. The assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the provisions contained in the Project Document. The evaluation will be conducted in line with the norms, standards and ethical principles of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).

20. It is expected that ECLAC's guiding principles to the evaluation process are applied². In particular, special consideration will be taken to assess the extent to which ECLAC's activities and outputs respected and promoted human rights³. This includes a consideration of whether ECLAC interventions treated beneficiaries as equals, safeguarded and promoted the rights of minorities, and helped to empower civil society.

21. The evaluation will also examine the extent to which gender concerns were incorporated into the project—whether project design and implementation incorporated the needs and priorities of women, whether women were treated as equal players, and whether it served to promote women's empowerment.

22. Moreover, the evaluation process itself, including the design, data collection, and dissemination of the assessment report, will be carried out in alignment with these principles.

23. The evaluation will also include an assessment of the project's contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Evaluators are also expected to respect UNEG's ethical principles as per its "Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation":

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Respect
- Beneficence

VI. Scope of the assessment

25. In line with the assessment objective, the scope of the assessment will more specifically cover all the activities implemented by the project. The assessment will review the benefits accrued by the various stakeholders in the region, as well as the sustainability of the project interventions. The assessment will also review the interaction and coordination modalities used in its implementation within ECLAC, and between/among other co-operating agencies participating in the implementation of the project.

26. In summary, the elements to be covered in the assessment include:

- Actual progress made towards project objectives.
- The extent to which the project has contributed to outcomes in the identified countries whether intended or unintended.
- The efficiency with which outputs were delivered.
- The strengths and weaknesses of project implementation on the basis of the available elements of the logical framework (objectives, results, etc) contained in the project document.
- The validity of the strategy and partnership arrangements. Coordination within ECLAC, and with other co-operating agencies.
- The extent to which the project was designed and implemented to facilitate the attainment of the goals.
- Relevance of the project's activities and outputs towards the needs of Member States, the needs of the region and the mandates and programme of works of ECLAC.

27. It will also assess various aspects related to the way the project met the following Development Account criteria:

- Result in durable, self-sustaining initiatives to develop national capacities, with measurable impact at field level, ideally having multiplier effects;
- Be innovative and take advantage of information and communication technology, knowledge management and networking of expertise at the sub regional, regional and global levels;

- Utilize the technical, human and other resources available in developing countries and effectively draw on the existing knowledge/skills/capacity within the UN Secretariat;
- Create synergies with other development interventions and benefit from partnerships with non-UN stakeholders.

VII. Methodology

28. The assessment will use the following data collection methods to assess the impact of the work of the project:

(a) Desk review and secondary data collection analysis: of the programme of work of ECLAC, DA project criteria, the project document, annual reports of advance, workshops and meetings reports and evaluation surveys, other project documentation such as project methodology, country reports, consolidated report, webpage, etc.

(b) Self-administered surveys: Surveys to beneficiaries in the different participating countries covered by the project should be considered as part of the methodology. Surveys to co-operating agencies and stakeholders within the United Nations and the countries participating in the project should be considered if applicable and relevant. PPEU can provide support to manage the online surveys through SurveyMonkey. In the case, this procedure is agreed upon with the evaluator, PPEU will distribute the surveys among project beneficiaries to the revised lists facilitated by the consultant. PPEU will finally provide the evaluator with the consolidated responses.

(c) Semi-structured interviews and focus groups to validate and triangulate information and findings from the surveys and the document reviews, a limited number of interviews (structured, semi-structured, in-depth, key informant, focus group, etc.) may be carried out via tele- or video- conference with project partners to capture the perspectives of managers, beneficiaries, participating ministries, departments and agencies, etc. PPEU will provide assistance to coordinate the interviews, including initial contact with beneficiaries to present the assessment and the evaluator. Following this presentation, the evaluator will directly arrange the interviews with available beneficiaries, project managers and co-operating agencies.

29. Methodological triangulation is an underlying principle of the approach chosen. Suitable frameworks for analysis and evaluation are to be elaborated —based on the questions to be answered. The experts will identify and set out the methods and frameworks as part of the *inception report*.

VIII. Evaluation Issues/Questions

30. This assessment encompasses the different stages of the given project, including its design, process, results, and impact, and is structured around four main criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. Within each of these criteria, a set of evaluation questions will be applied to guide the analysis⁶. The responses to these questions are intended to explain “the extent to which,” “why,” and “how” specific outcomes were attained.

31. The questions included hereafter are intended to serve as a basis for the final set of evaluation questions, to be adapted by the evaluator and presented in the inception report.

Relevance

- How in line were the activities and outputs delivered with the priorities of the targeted countries?
- How aligned was the proposed project with the activities and programmes of work of ECLAC, specifically those of the subprogramme in charge of the implementation of the project?
- Were there any complementarities and synergies with other work being developed by ECLAC or by beneficiary countries?

Efficiency

- (a) Provision of services and support in a timely and reliable manner, according to the priorities established by the project document;
- (b) Flexibility and responsiveness of ECLAC to meet the requirements of the project and the needs of the countries involved, reducing or minimizing the negative effects of externalities (for example, those derived from important changes in the management of UN administrative processes).
- (c) How did the project utilize the technical, human and other resources available in participating countries?
- (d) To what extent has partnering with other organizations enabled or enhanced reaching of results?

Effectiveness

- (a) How satisfied are the project's main beneficiaries with the services they received?
- (b) How much more knowledgeable are the participants in workshops and seminars?
- (c) What are the results identified by the beneficiaries?
- (d) Has the project made any difference in the behavior/attitude/skills/performance of the clients?
- (e) Are there any tangible policies that have considered the contributions provided by ECLAC in relation to the project under evaluation?

Sustainability

With beneficiaries:

- (a) How have the programme's main results and recommendations been used or incorporated in the work and practices of beneficiary institutions after completion of the project's activities? What were the multiplier effects generated by the programme?
- (b) What mechanisms were set up to ensure the follow-up of networks created under the project?

Within ECLAC:

- (a) How has the project contributed to shaping / enhancing ECLAC's programme of work / priorities and activities? The work modalities and the type of activities carried out? How has ECLAC built on the findings of the project?

Cross-cutting issues

- (a) Have the project managers effectively taken into consideration human rights and gender issues in the design and implementation of the project and its activities?
- (b) Has and how has the project contributed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
- (c) What innovative aspects of the project (addressing new topics or using new means of delivery or a combination thereof) proved successful?
- (d) What adjustments, if any, were made to the project activities and modality, as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 situation or in response to the new priorities of Member States?

IX. Deliverables

32. The assessment will include the following outputs:

- (a) **Work Plan and Inception Report.** No later than 4 weeks after the signature of the contract, the consultant should deliver the inception report, which should include the background of the project, an analysis of the Project profile and implementation and a full review of all related documentation as well as project implementation reports. It should provide a detailed Work Plan of all the activities to be carried out related to the assessment of project 1819AF. Additionally, the inception report should include a detailed evaluation methodology including the description of the types of data

collection instruments that will be used and a full analysis of the stakeholders and partners that will be contacted to obtain the evaluation information. First drafts of the instruments to be used for the survey, focus groups and interviews should also be included in this first report.

- (b) **Draft final evaluation Report.** No later than 12 weeks after the signature of the contract, the consultant should deliver the preliminary report for revision and comments by the Programme Planning and Operations Division (PPOD) of ECLAC and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), which includes representatives of the implementing substantive Division/Office. The draft final evaluation report should include the main draft results and findings, conclusions of the evaluation, lessons learned and recommendations derived from it, including its sustainability, and potential improvements in project management and coordination of similar DA projects.
- (c) **Final Evaluation Report.** No later than 16 weeks after the signature of the contract, the consultant should deliver the final evaluation report which should include the revised version of the preliminary version after making sure all the comments and observations from PPOD and the ERG have been included. Before submitting the final report, the consultant must have received the clearance on this final version from PPOD, assuring the satisfaction of ECLAC with the final evaluation report.
- (d) **Presentation of the results of the evaluation.** A final presentation of the main results of the evaluation to ECLAC staff involved in the project will be delivered at the same time of the delivery of the final evaluation report.

X. Payment schedule and conditions

33. The duration of the consultancy will be initially for 16 weeks during the months of October 2021 - January 2022 (TBC). The consultant will be reporting to and be managed by the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit (PPEU) of the Programme Planning and Operations Division (PPOD) of ECLAC. Support to the evaluation activities will be provided by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean (Port of Spain).

34. The contract will include the payment for the services of the consultant as well as all the related expenses of the evaluation. Payments will be done according to the following schedule and conditions:

- (a) 30% of the total value of the contract will be paid against the satisfactory delivery of the inception report which should be delivered as per the above deadlines.
- (b) 30% of the total value of the contract will be paid against the satisfactory delivery of the draft final evaluation report which should be delivered as per the above deadlines.
- (c) 40% of the total value of the contract will be paid against the satisfactory delivery and presentation of the final evaluation report which should be delivered as per the above deadlines.

35. All payments will be done only after the approval of each progress report and the final report from the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit (PPEU) of the Programme Planning and Operations Division (PPOD) of ECLAC.

XI. Profile of the Evaluator

36. The evaluator will have the following characteristics:

Education

- Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) political science, public policy, development studies, economics, business administration, or a related social or economic science.

Experience

- At least seven years of progressively responsible relevant experience in programme/project evaluation are required.
- At least two years of experience in areas related to public policies for sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda, small island developing States and/or related areas is highly desirable.
- Experience in at least three evaluations with international (development) organizations is required. Experience in Regional Commissions and United Nations projects, especially Development Account projects is highly desirable.
- Proven competency in quantitative and qualitative research methods, particularly self-administered surveys, document analysis, and informal and semi-structured interviews are required.
- Working experience in the Caribbean is desirable.

Language Requirements

- Proficiency in English is required.

XII. Roles and responsibilities in the evaluation process37. Commissioner of the evaluation

(ECLAC Executive Secretary and PPOD Director)

- Mandates the evaluation
- Provides the funds to undertake the evaluation
- Safeguards the independence of the evaluation process

38. Task manager

(PPEU Evaluation Team)

- Drafts evaluation TORs
- Recruits the evaluator/evaluation team
- Shares relevant information and documentation and provides strategic guidance to the evaluator/evaluation team
- Provides overall management of the evaluation and its budget, including administrative and logistical support in the methodological process and organization of evaluation missions
- Coordinates communication between the evaluator/evaluation team, implementing partners and the ERG, and convenes meetings
- Supports the evaluator/evaluation team in the data collection process
- Reviews key evaluation deliverables for quality and robustness and facilitates the overall quality assurance process for the evaluation
- Manages the editing, dissemination and communication of the evaluation report
- Implements the evaluation follow-up process

39. Evaluator/Evaluation team

(External consultant)

- Undertakes the desk review, designs the evaluation methodology and prepares the inception report
- Conducts the data collection process, including the design of the electronic survey and semi-structured interviews
- Carries out the data analysis
- Drafts the evaluation report and undertakes revisions

40. Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)

(Composed of representatives of each of the implementing partners)

- Provides feedback to the evaluator/evaluation team on preliminary evaluation findings and final conclusions and recommendations
- Reviews draft evaluation report for robustness of evidence and factual accuracy

XIII. Other Issues

41. Intellectual property rights. The consultant is obliged to cede to ECLAC all authors rights, patents and any other intellectual property rights for all the work, reports, final products and materials resulting from the design and implementation of this consultancy, in the cases where these rights are applicable. The consultant will not be allowed to use, nor provide or disseminate part of these products and reports or its total to third parties without previously obtaining a written permission from ECLAC.

42. Coordination arrangements. The team in charge of the evaluation comprised of the staff of the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit of ECLAC and the consultant will confer and coordinate activities on an on-going basis, ensuring at least a monthly coordination meeting/teleconference to ensure the project is on track and that immediate urgencies and problems are dealt with in a timely manner. If any difficulty or problem develops in the interim the evaluation team member will raise it immediately with the rest of the team so that immediate solutions can be explored and decisions taken.

XIV. Assessment use and dissemination

43. This assessment seeks to identify best practices and lessons learned in the implementation of development account projects and specifically the capacities of the beneficiary countries to promote digital economy policies. The evaluation findings will be presented to and discussed with ECLAC. An Action Plan will be developed to implement recommendations when appropriate in future development account projects. The evaluation report will also be circulated through ECLAC's internet and intranet webpages (and other knowledge management tools), including circulating a final copy to DESA, as the programme manager for the Development Account, so as to constitute a learning tool in the organization.

ANNEX 2

EVALUATION MATRIX

Questions & Sub-Questions	Indicators	Data Collection Method	Information Source
RELEVANCE: Considers the extent to which the objectives and design of the intervention are consistent with the objectives, priorities, and needs of relevant and affected stakeholders.			
(1) To what extent were the objectives and EAs of the project consistent with the priorities and needs set out by the targeted countries, and priorities of ECLAC?	Alignment of project's objectives and EA with the targeted countries' development and institutional strengthening objectives, priorities and needs; Degree of the relevance of services, activities and outputs provided by the project to respond to stakeholders' different needs and priorities (incl. participation and feedback of project stakeholders to define interests);	Desk Review Key Informant Interviews Survey of national stakeholders	Project documents and outputs ECLAC strategic documents and work programmes ECLAC internal stakeholders Consultants Counterparts and benefiting national stakeholders
(a) How well-tailored and aligned were the services, activities and outputs delivered with different needs and priorities of the targeted countries? (b) How well aligned was the project with: a) the objectives of the Development Account, b) activities and programmes of work of ECLAC, specifically those of the sub-programme in charge of the implementation, and c) international commitments on sustainable development	Evidence of consistency between project's objectives and services with: (a) the DA's objectives, (b) mandates of ECLAC and the sub-programme in the Caribbean, and (c) the SDGs, SIDS agendas and other relevant international commitments		
(2) To what extent did the objectives and EAs of the project remain appropriate given any changed circumstances? (a) Which context issues have affected the project implementation positively or negatively? (b) What adjustments, if any, were made to the project activities and modality, as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 situation or in response to the new priorities of Member States?	Degree of the relevance of the project objectives and EAs throughout implementation; Evidence of externalities affecting the implementation; Evidence of an approach and strategies to adapt and respond to emerging issues and interests;	Desk Review Key Informant Interviews Survey of national stakeholders	Project documents and outputs ECLAC internal stakeholders Consultants Counterparts and benefiting national stakeholders

Questions & Sub-Questions	Indicators	Data Collection Method	Information Source
EFFECTIVENESS: Considers the extent to which the intervention's objectives and expected results were achieved.			
(3) To what extent did the project achieve the objectives and EAs outlined in the project document?	Levels of achievement of planned targets (outputs and outcomes); Evidence and perception of stakeholders that the project had results in terms of: (a) <i>Improved capacity to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals and the SIDS agenda into coherent national development plans in the targeted countries;</i> (b) <i>Improved capacity to review and follow-up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS agenda;</i>	Desk Review Key Informant Interviews Survey of national stakeholders	Project documents and outputs ECLAC internal stakeholders Consultants Counterparts and benefitting national stakeholders Collaborators/other cooperation agencies
(a) What are the main results (<i>most significant change</i>) identified by stakeholders in the targeted countries?			
(b) Have there been unintended results of the implementation of the project at the country or sub-regional level?			
(c) What were the key factors that determined success or failure in achieving the project's objectives and EAs?	Level of interest and commitment of project stakeholders/beneficiaries; Number and type of unplanned results from project activities and outputs;		
(4) To what extent did the project achieve outcomes at the level of capacities of individuals participating in the project activities?	Perception of stakeholders and project participants on improvements in their behaviour, attitude, skills, performance; and knowledge;	Desk Review Key Informant Interviews Survey of national stakeholders	Project documents and outputs ECLAC internal stakeholders Consultants Counterparts and benefitting national stakeholders Collaborators/other cooperation agencies
(a) Has the project made any difference in the behaviour, attitude, skills and performance of the beneficiaries?	Evidence of enhanced planning, review and monitoring processes, and implementation of mechanisms and tools attributable to the project's capacity building, training and technical assistance activities;		
(b) How much more knowledgeable are the participants in workshops and seminars?			
(c) How satisfied are the project's main beneficiaries with the services received?	Level of satisfaction of project's stakeholders with the activities undertaken and services received as contributors to outcomes;		
(5) To what extent did the project influence or contribute to changes at the policy level (in the targeted countries or at subregional level)?	Evidence of actions taken by targeted countries (or non-beneficiary countries) attributable to the support provided by the project;	Desk Review Key Informant Interviews Survey of national stakeholders	Project documents and outputs ECLAC internal stakeholders Consultants Counterparts and benefitting national stakeholders
(a) To what extent did the project promote and contribute to the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda?	Existence of tangible policies/norms/regulations that have considered the contributions provided by ECLAC through the DA project; Evidence of promotion and contribution to SDGs;		

Questions & Sub-Questions	Indicators	Data Collection Method	Information Source
EFFICIENCY: Considers the extent to which the project's outputs were achieved, and how well resources were used to achieve those outputs. It further considers the quality, design, and management of the implementation of and support provided through the intervention.			
(6) Were services and support provided in a timely and reliable manner, according to the priorities established by the project documents?	Degree of alignment between planned and actual project expenditures and schedules; Degree of alignment between the actual financial, human and material allocations made and the documented needs;	Desk Review Key Informant Interviews Survey of national stakeholders	Project documents and outputs ECLAC internal stakeholders Consultants
(a) Was the project implemented using sound management practices?	Existence of appropriate management, coordination and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning mechanisms to respond to emerging opportunities, constraints, and to mitigate risks;		Counterparts and benefiting national stakeholders Collaborators/other cooperation agencies
(b) How well and cost-efficient did the project utilise the technical, human and other resources available in participating countries?	Stakeholders' perception of the value of results achieved in line with investments made and management processes in place; Level of satisfaction of project stakeholders with the management and implementation, and the quality of services and support delivered;		
(c) How flexible and responsive was ECLAC in meeting the requirements of the project and the needs of the countries involved, while reducing or minimising the negative effects of externalities?			
(7) To what extent were efforts made to optimise complementarities and synergies with other work being developed by ECLAC, targeted countries or other development partners?	Evidence of efforts to optimise synergies and avoid duplications with other activities and initiatives implemented by: targeted countries, ECLAC or other development partners;	Desk Review Key Informant Interviews Survey of national stakeholders	Project documents and outputs ECLAC internal stakeholders Consultants
(a) To what extent has partnering with other organisations enabled or enhanced the reaching of results?	Stakeholders' perception of the suitability of coordination mechanisms, and the level of complementarities and synergies achieved and/or missed; Existence of established agreements of collaboration resulting from the project implementation;		Counterparts and benefiting national stakeholders Collaborators/other cooperation agencies

Questions & Sub-Questions	Indicators	Data Collection Method	Information Source
SUSTAINABILITY: Considers whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn			
(8) To what extent can the benefits of the project be deemed lasting at the level of the beneficiaries?	Evidence of stakeholders who report using the knowledge and tools acquired through the project;	Desk Review Key Informant Interviews	Project documents and outputs ECLAC internal stakeholders
(a) How have the project's main results and recommendations been used or incorporated in the work and practices of beneficiary institutions after completion of the project's activities?	Existence of commitments/initiatives/funds to continue activities aligned to the project objectives after the project ends; Perception of stakeholders of existence and value commitments/initiatives;	Survey of national stakeholders	Consultants Counterparts and benefitting national stakeholders
(b) What mechanisms were set up to ensure the follow-up and sustainability of outputs and results generated by the project?	Existence and quality of follow-up support activities;		Collaborators/other cooperation agencies
(9) To what extent can the benefits of the project be deemed lasting at the level of the ECLAC?	Evidence of changes in ECLAC's programme of work, delivery modalities or activities attributable to the project;	Desk Review Key Informant Interviews	Project documents and outputs ECLAC internal stakeholders
(a) How has the project contributed to shaping/enhancing ECLAC's programme of work/priorities and activities, and modalities of work in the sub-region?	Existence of a strategy or mechanisms to build on findings/lessons learned/best practices for replications/ expansion of the project to other institutions or locations;		Consultants Counterparts and benefitting national stakeholders
(b) Are there any multiplier effects or potential for replication and scale-up of successful practices generated by the project?	Evidence beneficiaries are seeking further support and/or existence of similar needs in other countries;		
Questions & Sub-Questions	Indicators	Data Collection Method	Information Source
CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES: Considers the extent to which the project integrated and contributed to priorities linked to the promotion of the SDGs, partnerships, human rights, gender equality, and innovation.			
(10) To what extent did the design, implementation and monitoring of the project and its activities and outputs incorporate gender and human rights approaches?	Evidence of mainstreaming of gender and people-centred approaches (in activities, outputs and documents); Perception of stakeholders on gender consideration and impacts of the project;	Desk Review Key Informant Interviews Survey of national stakeholders	Project documents and outputs ECLAC internal stakeholders Consultants Counterparts and benefitting national stakeholders
(a) Were there specific results towards positively impacting gender equality, human rights and inclusiveness?	Perception of stakeholders on human rights consideration and impacts of the project;		Collaborators / other cooperation agencies

ANNEX 3

List of documents and resources consulted

	Title	Type of document
1	Project Document	Design
2	ECLAC Strategic Framework for the period 2018-2019 https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/pages/files/en_marco_estrategico_para_los_periodos_2018-2019_0.pdf	Programming
3	Annual Progress Reports 2018, 2019, 2020	Contractual/ Reporting
4	Report of ECLAC SDG mission to Dominica	Implementation/ Reporting
5	Report of ECLAC SDG mission to SVG	Implementation/ Reporting
6	Report of ECLAC SDG mission to Antigua and Barbuda	Implementation/ Reporting
7	Report of the expert group meeting on monitoring frameworks for Sustainable Development Goals reporting in the Caribbean (2018)	Implementation
8	Report of the Learning Conference on implementing the Sustainable Development Agenda in the Caribbean Region (2019)	Implementation
9	Evaluation report of the Training in Evidence-based Policy Planning for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean (2019)	Implementation
10	Grenada National Sustainable Development Plan 2020 -2035	Project output
11	British Virgin Island "Vision 2036: Building a Sustainable Virgin Islands"	Project output
12	Antigua and Barbuda Medium-Term Development Strategy 2016-2020	National Development Plan
13	Dominica 2030 National Resilience Development Strategy	National Development Plan
14	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013-2025	National Development Plan
15	Saint Lucia Medium-Term Development Strategy 2020-2023	National Development Plan
16	Saint Lucia Voluntary National Review Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2019)	Project output
17	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Voluntary National Review Report – Accelerated action and transformative pathway: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development (2020)	Project output
18	Trinidad and Tobago Voluntary National Review Report – Connecting the Data to the SDGs (2020)	Project output
19	ECLAC, <i>NSS Capacity Assessment Caribbean Subregion Report. Production of Data for Development Planning and the SDGs</i> . ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Port of Spain, December 2021.	Project output
20	C. Camarinhas and I. Trumbic, <i>A review of the status of national institutional mechanisms for sustainable development planning in the Caribbean: Towards integrated approaches for resilience building</i> , <i>Studies and Perspectives series</i> . ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Santiago, 2022.	Project output

	Title	Type of document
21	Consultancy Reports and Outputs “Antigua and Barbuda VNR support”	Project output
22	Reports – Technical Assistance to British Virgin Islands “Mission Report”; “Methodological Framework”; “Stakeholder Consultation Plan and NSPD Communication Strategy”	Project output
23	Consultancy Reports and Outputs “Report on the Review of Three Revised Sector Plans of the Government of Dominica”; “Dominica’s National Resilience Development Strategy (NRDS) and the Sector Plans: Assessing the Alignment”; “Alignment of Sector Strategic Plans to the NRDS”	Project output
24	Consultancy Reports and Outputs “Establishment of the Sustainable Development Institute of Grenada”	Project output
25	Consultancy Report and Outputs “Modelling of the COVID-19 outbreak in Jamaica”	Project output
26	Saint Lucia Technical Assistance “Pre-MAPS Report”; “Report on Data and Statistics for SDG implementation and monitoring	Project output
27	Trinidad and Tobago Technical Assistance VNR support “Stakeholder consultation report”; “Stakeholder engagement report”	Project output
28	Montserrat Technical Assistance reports “Visioning for the New Montserrat Sustainable Development Plan”; “Situational Analysis”	Project output
29	Other materials and presentations used for national workshops, stakeholder engagements/ consultations, etc.	Implementation
30	United Nations, The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals: An opportunity for Latin America and the Caribbean. (LC/G.2681-P/Rev.3), Santiago de Chile, 2018 https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/40156/S1801140_en.pdf	Knowledge product
31	Quadrennial report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/FDS.3/3/Rev.1), Santiago, 2019 https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/44552/S1900432_en.pdf?sequence=7&isAllowed=y	Knowledge product
32	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), A decade of action for a change of era (LC/FDS.5/3), Santiago, 2022. https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/47746/1/S2100984_en.pdf	Knowledge product
33	Tenth Meeting of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, Santiago de Chile, November 2019 https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/2020-20-ECLAC-EE.pdf	Official document
34	Fourth Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, Santiago de Chile, October 2019 https://repository.eclac.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45227/S2000141_en.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y	Official document
35	Resolution 100(XXVII), “Ensuring synergy in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action in the Caribbean subregion https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/lcar2018_02.pdf	Official document
36	7th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), June 2020 https://www.cepal.org/en/news/eclac-reaffirms-its-commitment-supporting-caribbean-countries-their-path-towards-sustainable	Official document
37	CARICOM Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) 2019 – 2030, CARICOM, April 2018 https://caricom.org/documents/16306-rsds2018.pdf	Knowledge product

	Title	Type of document
38	CARICOM Core Indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Assessment of Data Availability in Member States and Associated Members, CARICOM, September 2018	Strategy document
39	Guide Small Island Developing States National Focal Points Network, UN-OHRLS, 2019 https://www.un.org/ohrls/news/guide-small-island-developing-states-national-focal-points	Knowledge product
40	ECLAC Caribbean- The Hummingbird (April 2019, June 2020)	Communication
41	ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean – FOCUS “A Caribbean that counts”, Issue 2, April- June 2018	Communication
42	ECLAC Community of Practice on the Voluntary National Reviews [online] https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/2030-agenda-sustainable-development/eclac-community-practice-voluntary-national-reviews	Online resources
43	2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean - Regional Knowledge Management Platform https://agenda2030lac.org/en	Online resources
44	ECLAC- ILPES Regional Observatory on Planning for Development https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/en	Online resources
45	UNDP’s SDG Acceleration Toolkit https://sdgintegration.undp.org/	Online resources
46	Local2030 partners https://www.local2030.org/	Online resources
47	UNITAR online SDGs Learning, Training & Practice https://unitar.org/sustainable-development-goals/accelerating-sdg-implementation/our-portfolio/2030-agenda-training-tools	Online resources
48	CARICOM Sustainable Development Goals https://caricom.org/tag/sustainable-development-goals/	Online resources
49	UN DESA Sustainable Development https://sdgs.un.org/	Online resources
50	Sustainable Development Goals Partnership Platform https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/partners/?id=925	Online resources

ANNEX 4

STAKEHOLDER MAP

The **executing entity** of this project has been the Statistics and Social Development Unit at the ECLAC Sub-regional Headquarters for the Caribbean. Its implementation has also involved:

(a) Cooperating entities within the UN System

- ECLAC's Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES, for its acronym in Spanish);
- UN DESA's Division for Sustainable Development Goals; SIDS Unit and Programme Management and Capacity Development Unit (PMCDU);
- United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR);
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

(b) International consultants: in charge of the provision of assessment studies, technical assistance and support services to targeted countries;

(c) National consultants: in charge of the provision of short-term technical support to national counterparts (relevant Ministries of Planning and Statistical Offices) in the implementation and follow-up of project activities;

(d) National counterparts/partner institutions: in charge of provision and management of data, including National Statistical Institutes and Offices, and Statistics Divisions of relevant Ministries;

The **primary beneficiaries** of the project were the following:

- SIDS government officials from different relevant Ministries involved in national development planning and implementation of international agendas (Prime Minister's Offices, Ministries of Finance, Foreign Affairs, Ministries of Economic Affairs, Environment, Education, of Planning and Economic Development);
- Officials of National Statistical Offices;
- SDG Committees and inter-agency coordination structures;

The **secondary beneficiaries** who were engaged and participated in different activities carried out by the project included the following:

- Private sector representatives;
- Civil society representatives, including NGOs, women's and youth organisations;
- Academic sector representatives, including universities and research centres;

Finally, a number of **other cooperating entities and collaborators** (international partners) were also engaged within different national and sub-regional events, seminars and workshops, such as:

- Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM);
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA);
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF);
- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO);
- Inter-American Development Bank (IADB);
- Association of Caribbean States (ACS);
- Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD);
- University of the West Indies (UWI) and Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES)

ANNEX 5

LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Institution	Name	Surname	Position
ECLAC Subregional HQs for the Caribbean	Abdullahi	Dr. Abdulkadri	Coordinator, Statistics and Social Development Unit/DA Programme Manager
ECLAC Subregional HQs for the Caribbean	Johann	Brathwaite	Coordinator, Strategic Planning and Outreach Unit/Programme Officer
ECLAC Subregional HQs for the Caribbean	Gina	Marajh	Research Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit
ECLAC Subregional HQs for the Caribbean	Colleen	Skeete	Programme Management Assistant, Statistics and Social Development Unit
ECLAC Subregional HQs for the Caribbean	Catarina	Camarinhas	Social Affairs Officer, Statistics and Social Development Unit
National Consultant	Shirelle	Floyd	Junior Consultant
National Consultant	Shari	Johnson	Junior Consultant
International Consultant	Wesley	Hughes	“Establishment of the Sustainable Development Institute of Grenada”
Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, University of the West Indies	Michael	Witter	“Alignment of Dominica NRDS and Sector Plans”
International Consultant	Dave	Clement	Assessment of the capacity of the National Statistical Systems of the Caribbean Subregion to produce data for national development and the implementation of the SDGs
International Consultant	Ivica	Trumbic	“A Review of the status of institutional mechanisms for sustainable development planning in the Caribbean”
International Consultant	Elizabeth	Emanuel	VNR support for Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
UN DESA	Anya	Thomas	SIDS Unit, Division for Sustainable Development
CARICOM	Amrikha	Singh	Programme Manager, Sustainable Development
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Antigua and Barbuda	Joy-Marie	King	Director of International Trade
Ministry of Planning, Economic Development, Climate Resilience, Sustainable Development and Renewable Energy, Dominica	Amonia	Paul-Rolle	Social Development Planner
Ministry of Finance, Grenada	Kari	Grenade	Chairwoman, Technical Working Group of the National Sustainable Development Plan 2035, Macroeconomist
Cabinet Office, Grenada	Lorraine	St. Louis-Nedd	Senior Administrative Officer
Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Giselle	Myers	Senior Economist

Institution	Name	Surname	Position
Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Janelle	Hannaway-Horne	Planning Division
Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	DeAnna	Ralph	Planning Division

ANNEX 6

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT – INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

1- Interview Protocol for ECLAC (Project Coordination Unit and involved staff)

Name of the Interviewee: _____

Office/Duty station: _____

Position: _____

Date and Time of the Interview: Date _____ Time _____

GENERAL DATA

- (1) What was your role within the project?
- (2) Do you have any information on how the project was originated and on the design process? Have you been involved directly?

RELEVANCE

- (3) What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the project' logic of intervention to appropriately respond to different priorities, needs and interests of the targeted countries?
- (4) How did the project fit into and contributed to the mandate of ECLAC, the programme of work for the sub-region, and the advancement of international commitments/cross-cutting issues?
- (5) Which context issues have affected the project implementation positively or negatively? How has the project adapted, in particular to the COVID-19 context and requests from targeted countries)?

EFFICIENCY

- (6) To what extent did the project's management and coordination structure proven fit for purpose to ensure a coherent and effective implementation of its operations? How useful were monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for learning and knowledge management purposes and the identification of necessary adjustments?
- (7) What were the main internal difficulties faced by the project, and how have these difficulties been managed?
- (8) In retrospective, is there anything that could have been done differently to improve the efficiency, performance or quality of the service delivery (e.g. resource allocation, timelines)?
- (9) How successfully has the project coordinated and enhanced opportunities for synergies and complementarities with other activities/initiatives developed by ECLAC, targeted countries or other development partners? Are there any missed opportunities?

EFFECTIVENESS

- (10) How successful was the project in addressing needs and closing gaps of the SDGs and SIDS agenda implementation, follow-up and monitoring? In which area or countries have you identified the most significant change(s) and contributions of the project and ECLAC's work, including influencing of concrete policies or progress of the SDG implementation? Which factors contributed to the success?
- (11) What success story, good practice or particularly interesting process would you highlight?
- (12) Were the overall performance and the achievements in line with all stakeholders' expectations?
- (13) To what extent have activities, advice and technical assistance been visibly picked up and used by the project's target audiences? Was the effectiveness of activities/outputs reduced due to changes resulting from the COVID-19 context? Which activities proved major impact?
- (14) Did the project have any unforeseen positive or negative externalities?

SUSTAINABILITY

- (15) Are the project results expected to have a lasting impact on beneficiaries' access to knowledge and technical capacity in the medium to long term?
- (16) Have national counterparts demonstrated the political will and commitment, and does financial, technical and institutional capacities exist to carry the project's results forward? Where do you see major constraints for sustainability?
- (17) Does the project demonstrate the potential for replicating and scaling-up successful practices? To what extent did lessons learned and successful practices feed into ECLAC's programming for the sub-region?

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

- (18) What are the major contributions the project made in terms of promoting and advancing in cross-cutting issues?
- (19) What good practices can you highlight considering innovation fostered by the project and that are worth replication and scaling up?
- (20) Do you have any key lessons learned or recommendations for future DA projects?

2- Interview Protocol for national and international consultants

Name of the Interviewee: _____

Office/Duty station: _____

Position: _____

Date and Time of the Interview: Date _____ Time _____

GENERAL DATA

- (1) What was your role within the project and for how long have you been involved?

RELEVANCE

- (2) How responsive have the project participants been to the objectives, activities and expected accomplishments of the work you supported? What importance do you think the project has had for them and their daily work?

EFFICIENCY

- (3) What were the main internal and external difficulties that suffered the development of your assignment? How were these managed and mitigated? What are the key aspects that contributed to a successful implementation?
- (4) From your perspective, were the management, support and follow-up of ECLAC appropriate, sufficient and timely?
- (5) How satisfied are you with how the activities you were in charge of/supported were carried out and with the final products/accomplishments? Were the resources and timelines appropriate and realistic? Were accomplishments in line with all stakeholders' expectations and capacities of the targeted audiences?
- (6) In retrospective, are there any aspects of the implementation that could have been carried out more efficiently?

EFFECTIVENESS

- (7) From the knowledge you have, which are the most interesting processes (activities and approaches) promoted by the project and why?
- (8) Considering the EAs, are there clear examples where you can perceive that the project has strengthened national technical capacities in the target areas/topics?
- (9) What are the most significant change(s) or contributions you were able to observe in the targeted audience/country? Any success story or good practice or would you highlight?

- (10) Was the effectiveness of activities/outputs reduced due to changes resulting from the COVID-19 context? Is there anything that could have been done differently to ensure better results?

SUSTAINABILITY

- (11) To what extent do you consider the benefits and results that the project produced will be sustained in the long term? The support provided was sufficient to equip participants with the knowledge and skills they need to follow-up and carry on activities in the future? Where do you see major constraints for sustainability?

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

- (12) How and to what extent did you integrate/mainstream a gender and human rights approach into the activities or outputs you developed? Did you identify any positive impacts on gender and human rights considerations in the targeted audience/country?
- (13) What good practices can you highlight considering innovation fostered by the project and that are worth replication and scaling up?
- (14) Do you have any key lessons learned or recommendations for future DA projects?

3- Interview Protocol for collaborators / other development organisations

Name of the Interviewee: _____

Office/Duty station: _____

Position: _____

Date and Time of the Interview: Date _____ Time _____

GENERAL DATA

- (1) How were you and your organisation involved in this project? What kind of collaboration do you generally maintain with ECLAC?

RELEVANCE

- (2) From your perspective, to what extent was the project relevant considering gaps and needs in the sub-region in the implementation/monitoring of the SDGs and SIDS agenda, and in terms of priorities of the targeted countries? Do you consider that the project remained relevant during its implementation, considering context issues and COVID-19 pandemic?

EFFICIENCY

- (3) Based on your participation in activities and interaction with the project, how do you assess the quality of the activities (efficient delivery, quality of methodology and approaches)? Could anything be improved?
- (4) What kind of collaboration/synergies were established between your organisation and ECLAC for the development of activities and services? What were the main benefits and value add of this collaboration?
- (5) Where do you see ECLAC's major contributions and added value in terms of quality of activities, products and services provided to targeted countries and stakeholders in the sub-region?

EFFECTIVENESS

- (6) From the knowledge you have, which are the most interesting processes (activities and approaches) promoted by the project and why?

- (7) Considering the EAs, are there clear examples where you can perceive that the project has strengthened national technical capacities in the target areas/topics?
- (8) Do you think this project helped advance efforts to achieve the SDGs and SIDS agenda in the sub-region/specific target country?

SUSTAINABILITY

- (9) To what extent do you consider the benefits and results that the project produced will be sustained in the long term? Where do you see major constraints for sustainability?

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

- (10) From your knowledge, to what extent did the project/activities integrate and promote gender and human rights approaches?
- (11) Are there any innovative elements this project fostered and that are worth replication and scaling up?
- (12) Do you have any recommendations for future DA projects?

4- Interview Protocol for Government / public sector representatives

Name of the Interviewee: _____

Institution/Country: _____

Position: _____

Date and Time of the Interview: Date _____ Time _____

GENERAL DATA

- (1) How were you involved in this project? What kind of collaboration do you generally maintain with ECLAC?
- (2) Have you been involved in any kind of consultation process for the design of the project and/or the specific requests for support and technical assistance?

RELEVANCE

- (3) How and to what extent was the project relevant for your country and in light of specific gaps, needs and priorities identified regarding the SDGs and SIDS agenda implementation and monitoring?
- (4) Did the project respond adequately to the requested support, as well as expectations you had regarding the services and activities?
- (5) Do you consider that the project remained relevant during its implementation, considering context issues, COVID-19 pandemic and specific requests your country might have had?

EFFICIENCY

- (6) Based on your participation in activities and interaction with the project, to what extent were activities and services delivered in an appropriate and timely manner, and with high standards of quality? Could anything be improved?
- (7) Were there any complementarities and synergies with other initiatives being developed by the Government, national stakeholders or other development organisations?
- (8) Where do you see ECLAC's major contributions and added value in terms of quality of activities, products and services provided to your country and national/sub-regional stakeholders?

EFFECTIVENESS

- (9) From the knowledge you have, which are the most interesting processes (activities and approaches) promoted by the project and why?
- (10) Considering the EAs, are there clear examples where you can perceive that the project has strengthened national technical capacities in the target areas/topics? How and to what extent have advice and technical assistance been picked up and used by you and your institution?
- (11) What are the most significant change(s)? Did ECLAC's contributions promote or influence concrete results in specific policies/norms/regulations?
- (12) Do you think this project helped advance efforts to achieve the SDGs and SIDS agenda in your country?

SUSTAINABILITY

- (13) To what extent do you consider the benefits and results that the project produced will be sustained in the long term? Does financial, technical and institutional capacities exist to carry the project's results forward? Where do you see major constraints for sustainability?

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

- (14) Did the project promote and influence considerations for gender and human rights mainstreaming in your institution? Did you consider that capacities were enhanced to produce gender data?
- (15) Are there any innovative elements this project fostered and that are worth replication and scaling up?
- (16) Do you have any recommendations for future DA projects?

5- Interview Protocol for beneficiaries / participants of workshops / capacity building

Name of the Interviewee: _____

Institution/Country: _____

Position: _____

Date and Time of the Interview: Date _____ Time _____

GENERAL DATA

- (1) How were you involved in this project? In what kind of activities did you participate?

RELEVANCE

- (2) How relevant were the activities in which you participated (seminars/workshops/training) and the contents/topics addressed to the SDGs/SIDS agenda priorities of your country?
- (3) How relevant were the contents of activities in which you participated to the technical capacity needs for development planning/policy coherence/statistics and monitoring of the SDGs and SIDS agenda implementation?
- (4) Do you consider that the project and its activities remained relevant during its implementation, considering context issues, COVID-19 pandemic, etc.?

EFFICIENCY

- (5) Based on your participation in activities, to what extent were activities and services delivered in an appropriate and timely manner, and involving the right institutions and participants? How satisfied were you with the quality and usefulness of the methodology used in the activities you participated, and the knowledge, tools, inputs and materials received? Could anything be improved?
- (6) Where do you see ECLAC's major contributions and added value in terms of quality of activities, products and services provided?

EFFECTIVENESS

- (7) Which were the most interesting approaches, aspects or contributions you appreciated most from your participation the project activities?
- (8) Do you consider that the knowledge/advice/inputs received have a direct practical application in your work? To what extent were you able to use it in your daily work? Can you give examples?
- (9) What are the key benefits and most significant change(s) you can highlight?
- (10) Are you able to perceive concrete results at institutional level or specific policies/norms/regulations that have benefited from the outcomes of the activities in which you participated? Have institutional and technical capacities overall been enhanced?
- (11) Do you think this project helped advance efforts to achieve the SDGs and SIDS agenda in your country?

SUSTAINABILITY

- (12) Do you consider that the support has been sufficient to equip your country with the necessary knowledge and skills to continue advancing in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs and SIDS agenda?
- (13) How do you assess the political and institutional commitment of your country, as well as the financial, technical and institutional capacities to follow-up on the results of the project?

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

- (14) Did the activities in which you participated promoted gender and human rights mainstreaming? Have you increased your knowledge in integrating gender/human rights approaches (e.g. capacities to produce gender data)?
- (15) Are there any innovative elements this project fostered and that are worth replication and scaling up?
- (16) Do you have any recommendations for future DA projects?

ANNEX 7

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT – ONLINE SURVEY

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Programme Planning and Operations Division (PPOD) is carrying out an end-of-project review of the project “Strengthening institutional frameworks in the Caribbean for an integrative approach to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS Sustainable Development Agenda.”, funded by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. This project has been implemented by the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago from January 2018 to December 2021.

Participants of the project activities in all countries are invited to respond to this survey. It will take 15 minutes to complete. Your perspectives, experiences and suggestions will make an important contribution to the evaluation exercise. It will help ECLAC and its partners to strengthen their efforts in the area of capacity building and support services for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The survey is part of the lines of evidence included in the evaluation being carried out by an independent external consultant, supported by the Evaluation Unit of ECLAC. Your answers will be handled strictly anonymous and will be presented in an aggregated form.

If you have any questions about this survey, please send your comments and suggestions to the following email: evaluacion@cepal.org.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1) For what type of institution were you working during the period you participated in the activities organised by ECLAC?
Selection option: a. Government body or public institution; b. Sector specific national agency; c. Sector specific regional agency; d. Bilateral or multilateral agency; e. Private sector company; f. Civil society; g. Academic or research institute; h. Other (please specify)
- 2) What was your position at the time of participation in the ECLAC project activities?
Selection option: a. Director or Head of Department/Unit; b. Senior Management; c. Middle Management; d. Technical/Professional Staff; e. Consultant; f. Administrative Staff; g. Other (please specify)
- 3) At the time of your participation in project activities, were you in a position to influence national development planning or public policy making in your country?
Selection option: Yes, significantly | Yes, fairly | Maybe indirectly | d. Not at all
- 4) Where were you working at the time of participation in the ECLAC project activities?
Selection option: a. Antigua and Barbuda; b. Barbados; c. British Virgin Island; d. Dominica; e. Grenada; f. Jamaica; g. Montserrat; h. Saint Lucia; i. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; j. Trinidad and Tobago; k. Other (please specify)
- 5) Please indicate your gender:
Selection option: a. Female; b. Male; c. Non-binary; d. Rather not say

SECTION 2: RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

- 6) The project’s objective was to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of the Caribbean countries a) to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals and the SIDS agenda in national development planning and b) to review, monitor and follow-up on the implementation of these agendas.

In your opinion, how relevant is this project objective for you and your daily work?

Selection option: Very relevant | Relevant | Not very relevant | Not relevant at all | Don't know

Please provide details and/or explanations related to your response: *(optional)*

7) To what extent do you consider that the project objective is aligned with:

(a) Needs and priorities of your country

(b) Needs and priorities of the subregion?

(c) International commitments on sustainable development, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

(d) International commitments on human rights and gender equality, and particularly the closing of gender gaps

Selection option: Very well aligned | Well aligned | Partially aligned | Not at all aligned | Don't Know

Please provide details and/or explanations related to your response: *(optional)*

SECTION 3: ABOUT THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

8) In which activities did you participate or engage with the project? (Select all that apply)

Selection option: a. Country-level assessments and studies; b. Workshops, seminars/webinars, dialogues, events, peer learning at country level; c. Workshops, seminars/webinars, dialogues, peer learning at subregional level; d. Technical training courses and capacity building at country level; e. Technical training courses and capacity building at subregional level; f. Technical assistance provided at request of the country; g. Other (please specify)

9) Approximately in how many project activities did you participate?

Selection option: 1 to 2 | 3 to 5 | More than 5

10) Regarding the workshop/seminar/capacity building course in which you participated, how would you evaluate the following aspects:

(a) The objective in terms of your capacity needs and priorities for your work

(b) The participants selected to enhance peer learning

(c) The content in terms of new knowledge and innovative approaches

(d) The quality of the delivery in terms of methodology, tools, expertise of facilitators/speakers, and materials provided

(e) The applicability (usefulness for your and your institution's work)

Selection option: Excellent | Very Good | Good | Poor

Please provide details and/or explanations related to your response: *(optional)*

11) Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of services and support provided by ECLAC through this project?

Selection option: Very satisfied | Somewhat satisfied | Somewhat dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied

Please provide details and/or explanations related to your response: *(optional)*

12) Do you know of other national or regional initiatives currently being developed or implemented with objectives, activities and support services similar to those of this project?

Selection option: Yes | No | Don't know

13) If yes, do you think this project avoided duplication of efforts with these other initiatives?

Selection option: Yes | No | Don't know

Please provide details and/or explanations related to your response: *(optional)*

14) From your perspective and experience, what would you highlight as the main added value of ECLAC and its provision of services and activities? *(optional)*

(open answer)

SECTION 4: ABOUT THE BENEFITS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

15) At a personal level, to what extent do you consider that the project has contributed to strengthen your knowledge and technical capacity in the following areas:

- (a) Evidence-based policy planning
- (b) Design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- (c) Production of data, including gender-based data/statistics for measuring progress of the SDG and Caribbean-specific SDG indicators
- (d) Policy making and policy coherence towards achieving sustainable development
- (e) Strategies for implementation of the SDGs and SIDS agenda

Selection option: Has contributed significantly | Has contributed somewhat | Has contributed minimally | Has not contributed | Don't know

Please provide details and/or explanations related to your response: *(optional)*

16) What is the most significant change or contribution that your participation in the project activities has brought you at individual level?

(open answer)

17) What is the most significant change you are able to observe in your institution as a result of the engagement in the project?

(open answer)

18) At country level, to what extent do you consider that the project has contributed to strengthen the following areas:

- (a) Institutional arrangements for implementing the SDGs and SIDS agenda
- (b) Integration of the medium to long-term national development plan and the SDGs and SIDS agenda
- (c) Evidence-based policy planning
- (d) Multi-sector / multi-stakeholder engagement in the advancement of the national and international sustainable development commitments
- (e) Technical and statistical capacities to produce data and monitor the progress of implementation of sustainable development agendas
- (f) Mainstreaming people-centred and gender approaches into sustainable development planning

Selection option: Has contributed significantly | Has contributed somewhat | Has contributed minimally | Has not contributed | Don't know

Please provide details and/or explanations related to your response: *(optional)*

19) To what extent do you consider that this project helped advance efforts to achieve the SDGs in your country?

Selection option: Helped a lot | Helped somewhat | Did not help | Don't know

Please provide details and/or explanations related to your response: *(optional)*

20) Can you provide an example where recommendations, advice and input provided by ECLAC has been used to influence any policy, policy-making process or any kind of change at institutional level in your country? *(optional)*

21) Can you provide an example of a significant contribution that the project made to the promotion and advancing of gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights commitments in your country? *(optional)*

SECTION 4: ABOUT THE SUSTAINABILITY AND CONTINUITY

22) Will you continue using the knowledge, skills and tools provided by the project in the future in your daily work?

Selection option: Yes | To certain extent | No | Don't know

Please provide details and/or explanations related to your response: *(optional)*

23) Do you consider that the support provided through the project was sufficient to equip governments and relevant institutions with the knowledge and skills needed to continue advancing in the implementation of the national and international sustainable development agendas and monitor the progress?

Selection option: Yes | To certain extent | No | Don't know

Please provide details and/or explanations related to your response: *(optional)*

24) In your opinion, does sufficient political and institutional commitment and capacities (financial, technical and institutional) exist in your country to significantly accelerate the implementation of the national development plan, along with the SDGs and SIDS agenda in the upcoming years?

Selection option: Yes | To certain extent | No | Don't know

Please provide details and/or explanations related to your response: *(optional)*

25) Do you have any recommendation that you would like to share to strengthen ECLAC's work or future initiative in this area?

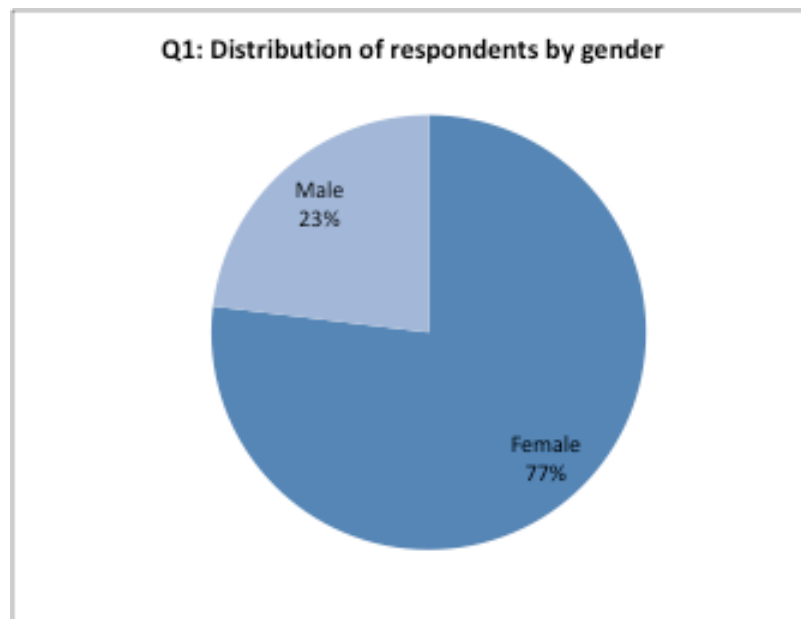
(open answer)

Thank you very much for your valuable time and feedback!

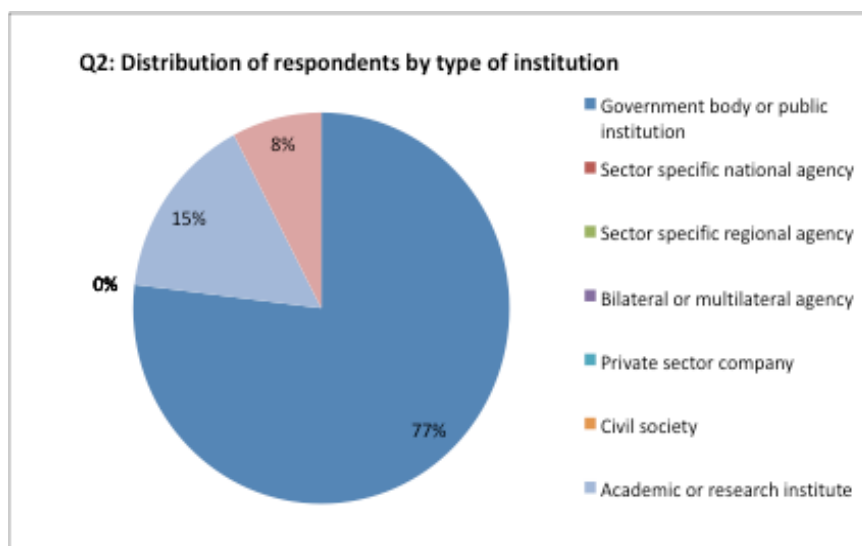
ANNEX 8

SURVEY RESULTS

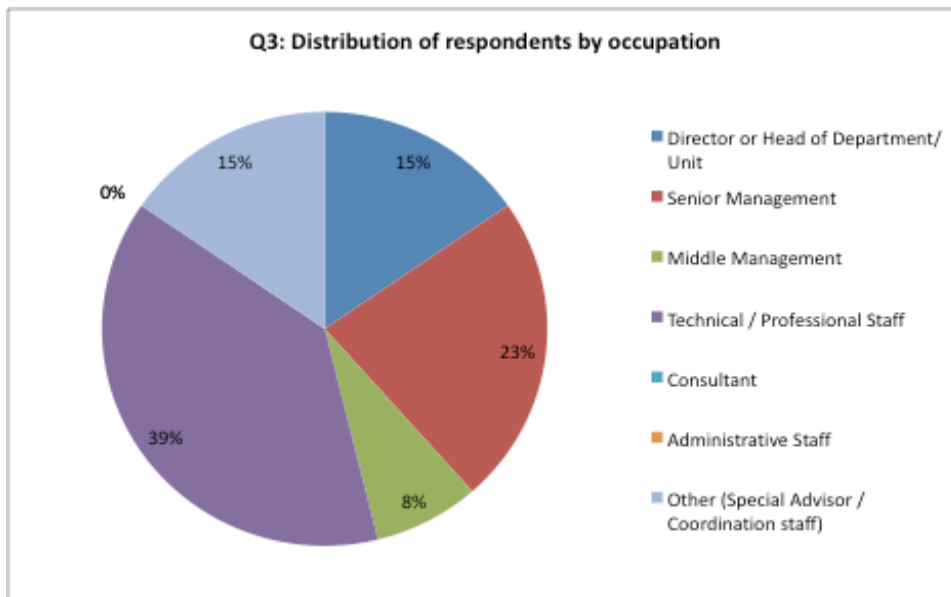
Question 1: Please, indicate your gender.



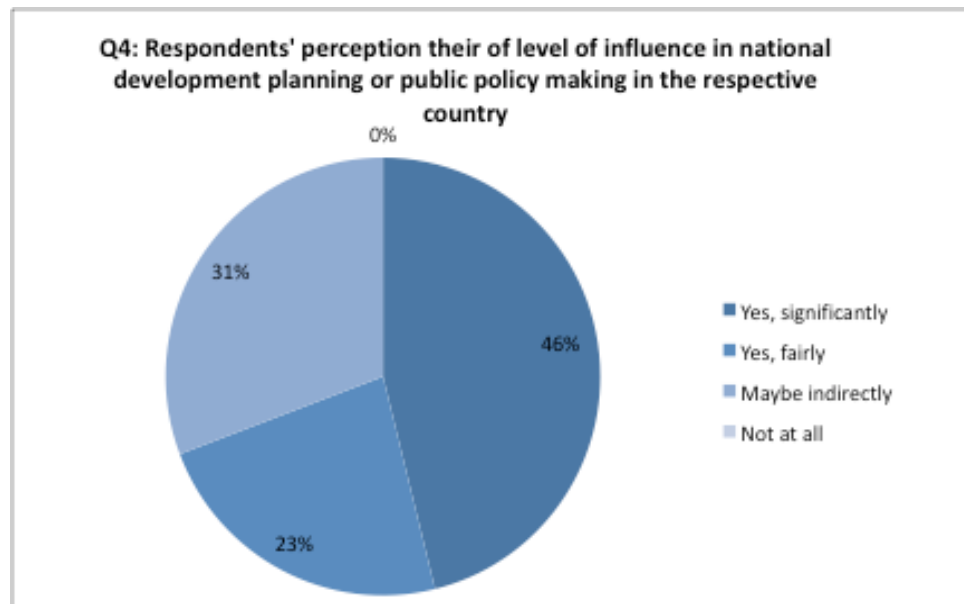
Question 2: For what type of institution were you working during the period you participated in the activities organised by ECLAC?



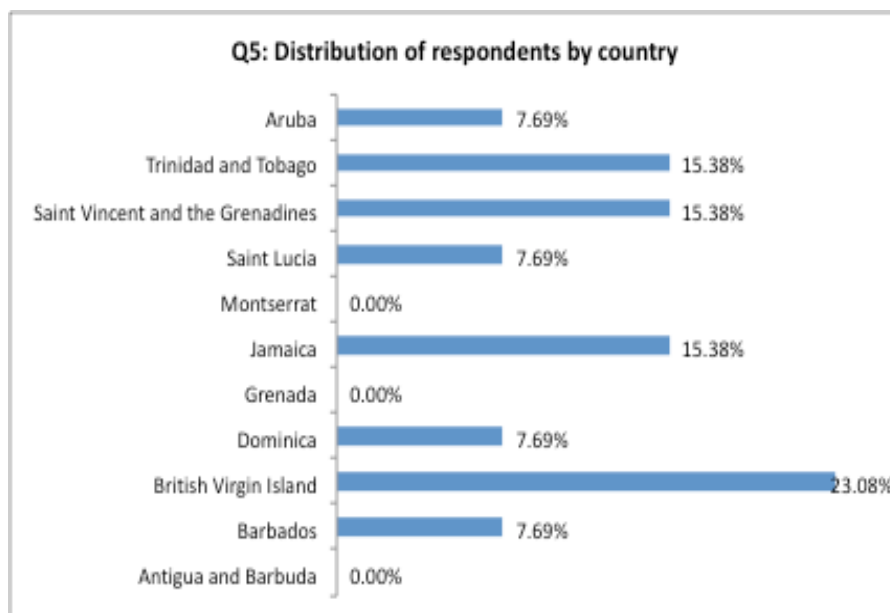
Question 3: What was your position at the time of participation in the ECLAC project activities?



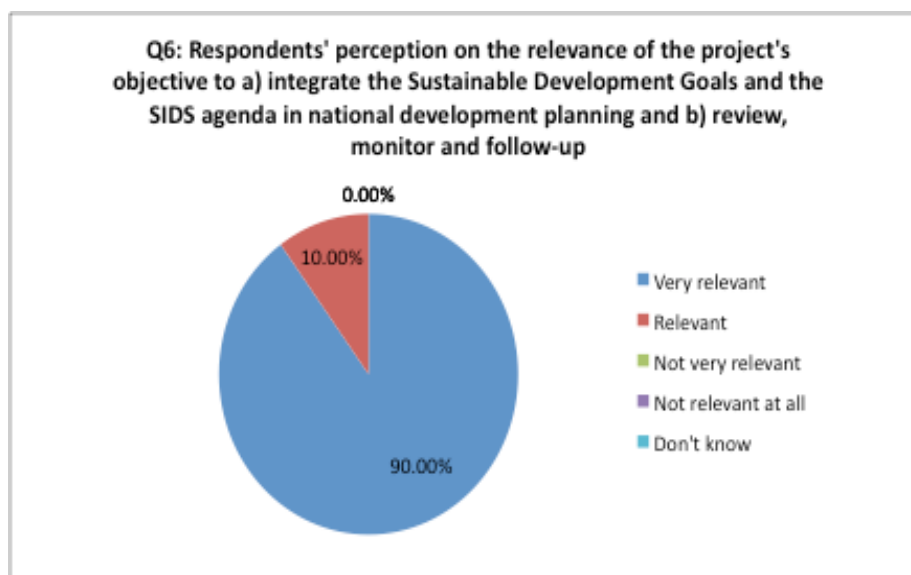
Question 4: At the time of your participation in project activities, were you in a position to influence national development planning or public policy making in your country?



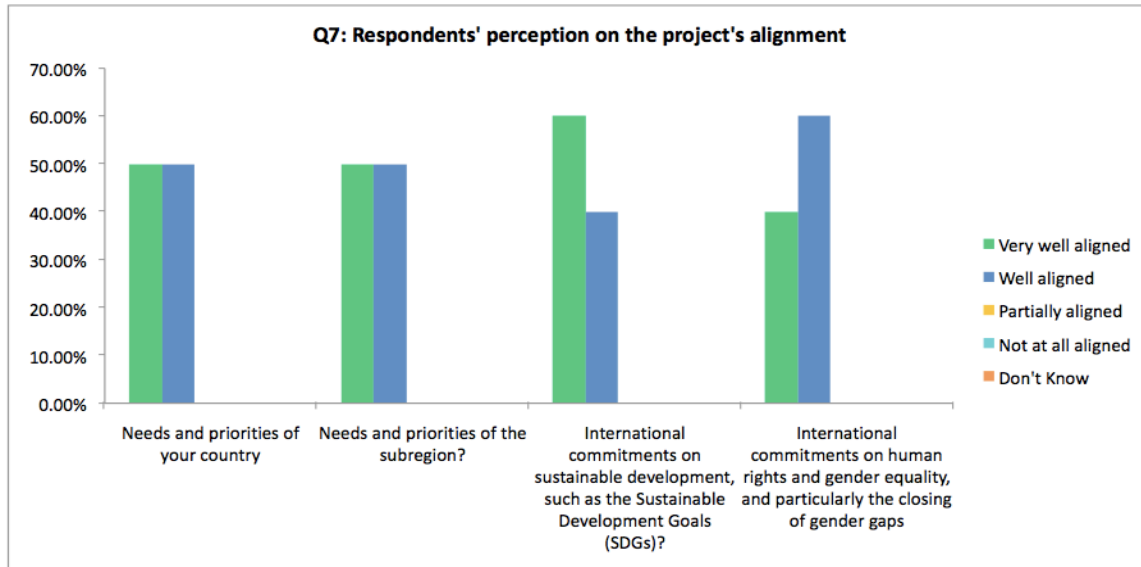
Question 5: Where were you working at the time of participation in the ECLAC project activities?



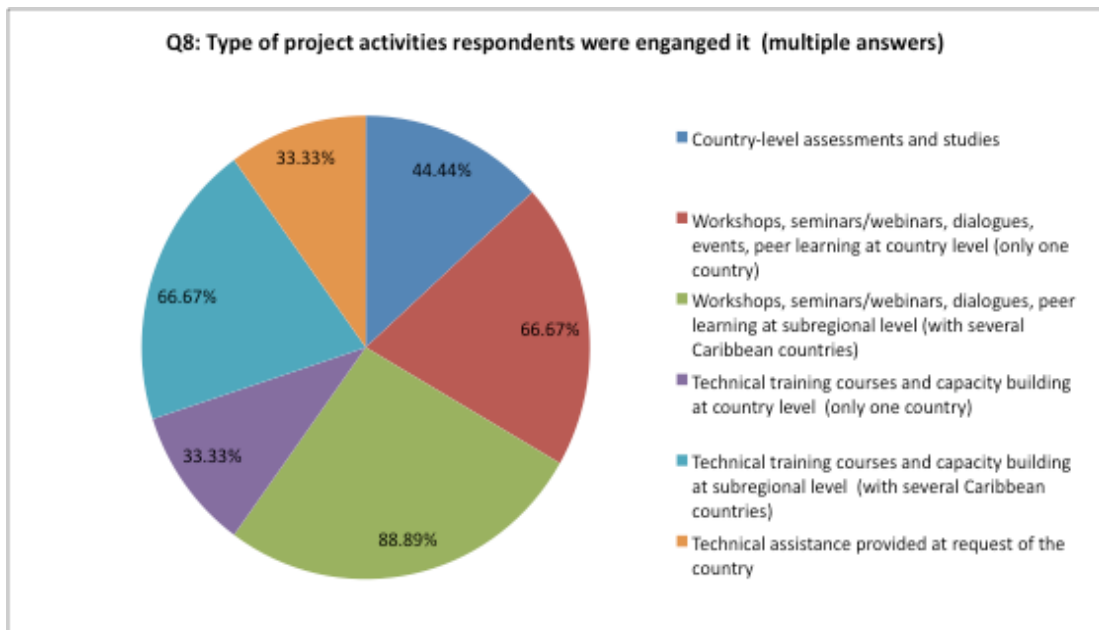
Question 6: The project's objective was to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of the Caribbean countries a) to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals and the SIDS agenda in national development planning and b) to review, monitor and follow-up on the implementation of these agendas. In your opinion, how relevant is this project objective for you and your daily work?



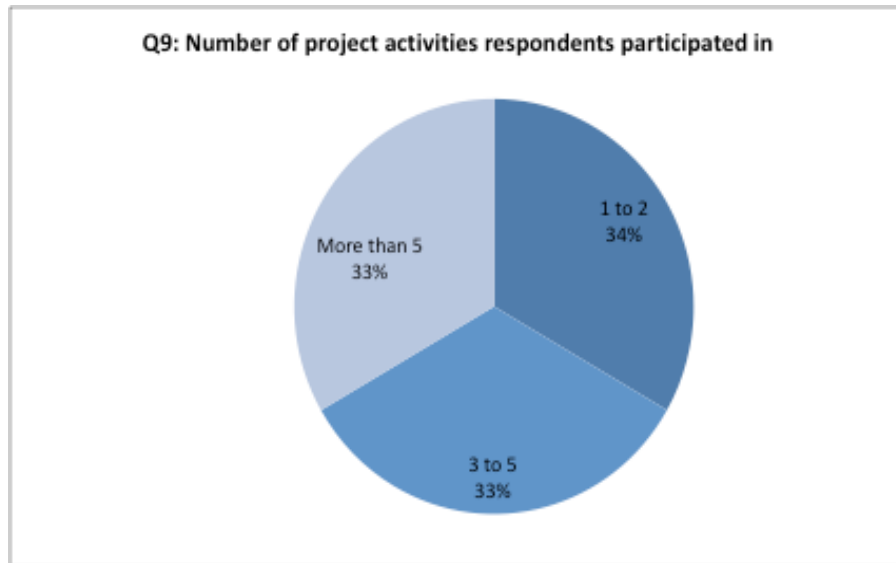
Question 7: To what extent do you consider that the project objective is aligned with the following?



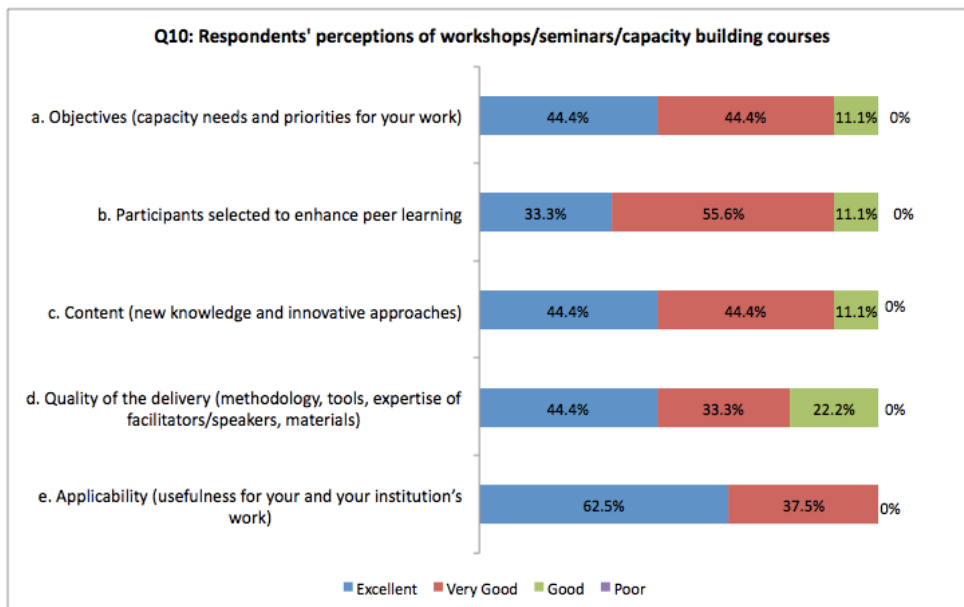
Question 8: In which activities did you participate or engage with the project? (Select all that apply)



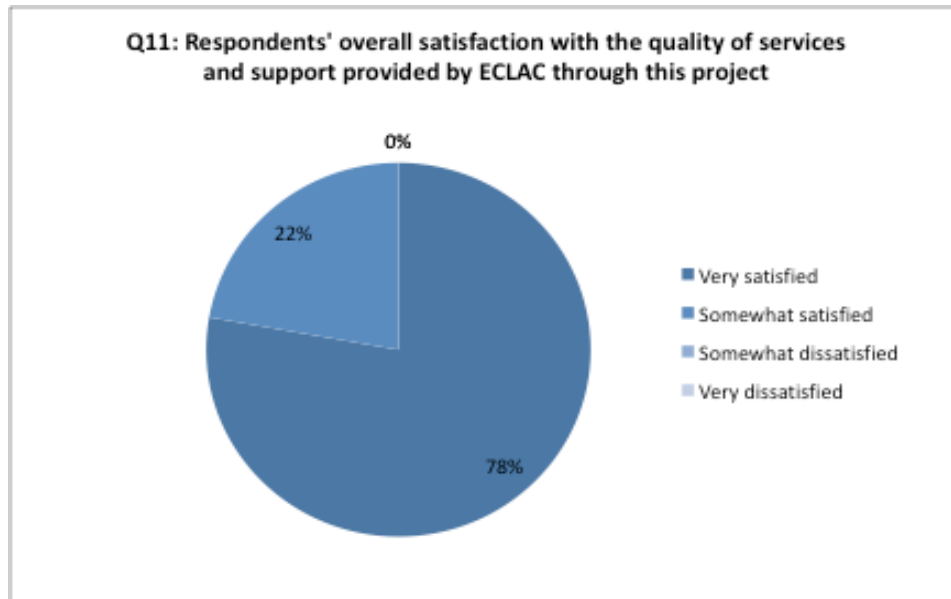
Question 9: Approximately in how many project activities did you participate?



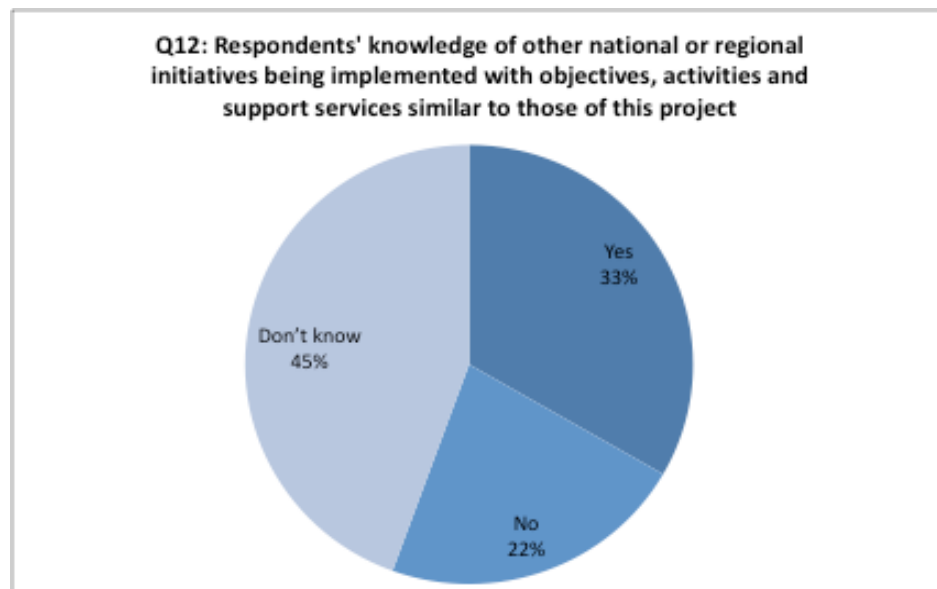
Question 10: Regarding the workshop/seminar/capacity building course in which you participated, how would you evaluate the following aspects?



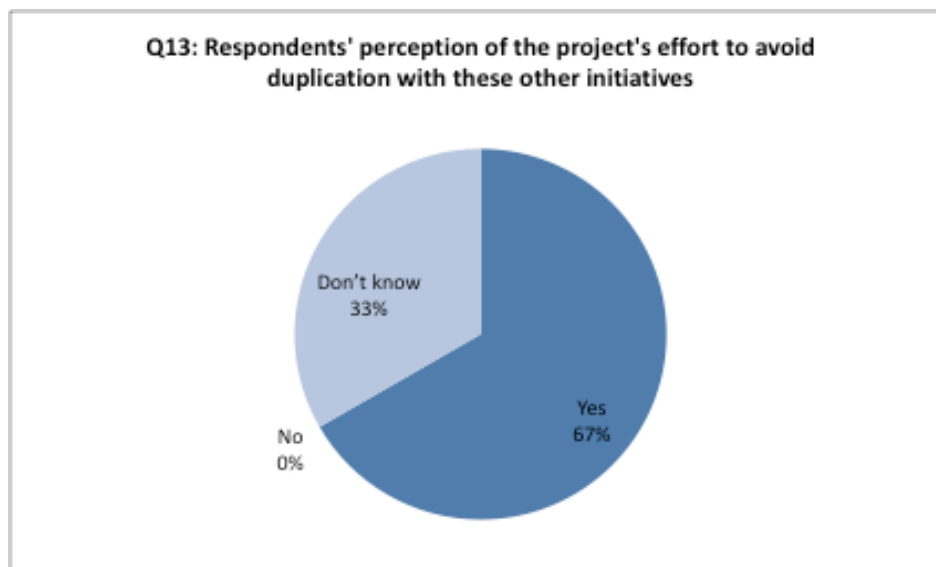
Question 11: Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of services and support provided by ECLAC through this project?



Question 12: Do you know of other national or regional initiatives currently being developed or implemented with objectives, activities and support services similar to those of this project?



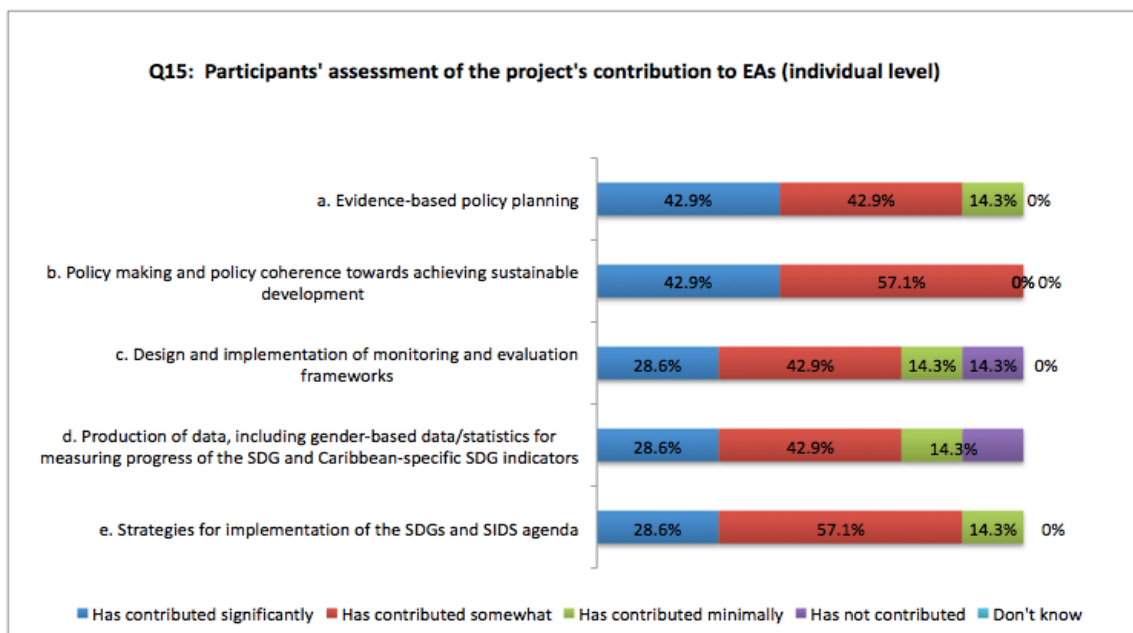
Question 13: If yes, do you think this project avoided duplication of efforts with these other initiatives?



Question 14: From your perspective and experience, what would you highlight as the main added value of ECLAC and its provision of services and activities?

<i>R1: Providing an excellent consultant</i>
<i>R2: Technical and research</i>
<i>R3: The ability to deliver from a regional perspective by leveraging the strong relationships it has built within the region</i>
<i>R4: I think that continuing to produce excellent research and training on that basis is useful</i>
<i>R5: Our country has benefitted significantly from ECLAC with our VNR preparation with lots of hands on training and knowledge sharing from other countries who already went through the process.</i>
<i>R6: Consistent communication and conversation on the subject matter with a view to achieving a successful outcome based on development priorities.</i>
<i>R7: Providing an excellent consultant</i>
<i>R8: Global perspective.</i>

Question 15: At an individual level, to what extent do you consider that the project has contributed to strengthen your knowledge and technical capacity in the following areas:



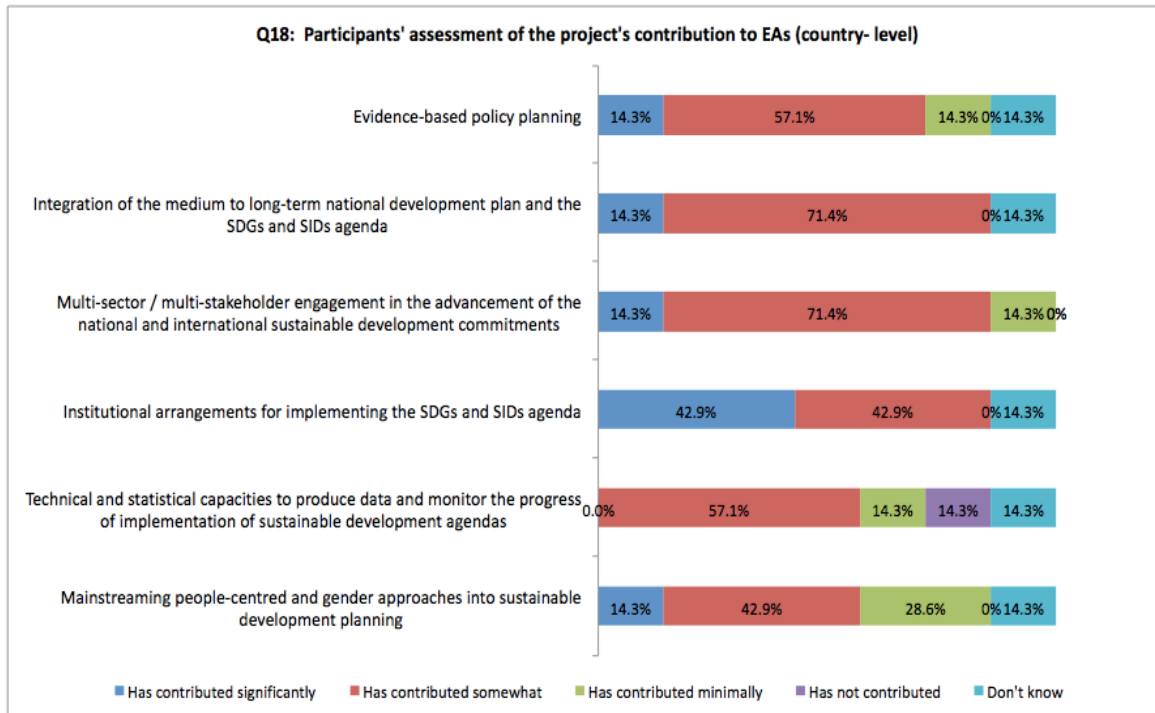
Question 16: What is the most significant change or contribution that your participation in the project activities has brought you at individual level?

<i>R1: Greater knowledge of SDGs and lessons for implementation</i>
<i>R2: Provided me with practical experiences from other countries which I will utilize</i>
<i>R3: Capacity building</i>
<i>R4: Knowledge of critical data with regards to policy formulation and decision-making.</i>

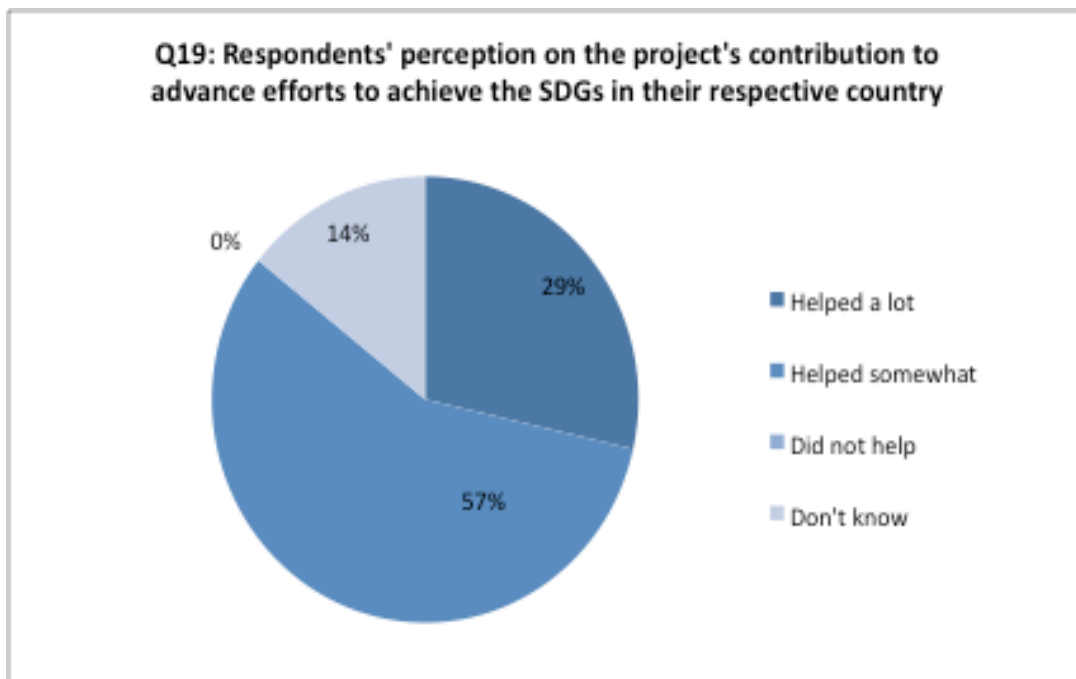
Question 17: What is the most significant change you are able to observe in your institution as a result of the engagement in the project?

<i>R1: Development of the BVI National Sustainable Development Plan and strategies for implementation</i>
<i>R2: Enhancement of the process to deliver Jamaica's second VNR</i>
<i>R3: Greater recognition</i>
<i>R4: Communicaton sharing</i>

Question 18: At country level, to what extent do you consider that the project has contributed to strengthen the following areas:



Question 19: To what extent do you consider that this project helped advance efforts to achieve the SDGs in your country?



Question 20: Can you provide an example where recommendations, advice and input provided by ECLAC has been used to influence any policy, policy-making process or any kind of change at institutional level in your country?

R1: The plan is to be passed at Cabinet [NDP of BVI]

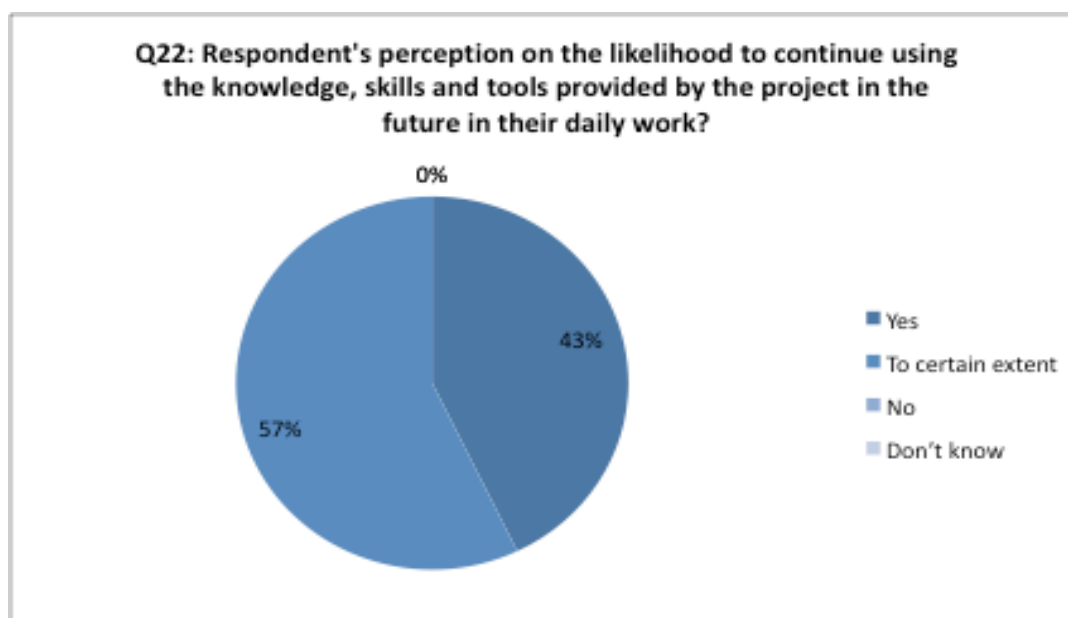
R2: The level of institutional reform that is taking place through out the economy in both the public and the private sectors.

Question 21: Can you provide an example of a significant contribution that the project made to the promotion and advancing of gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights commitments in your country?

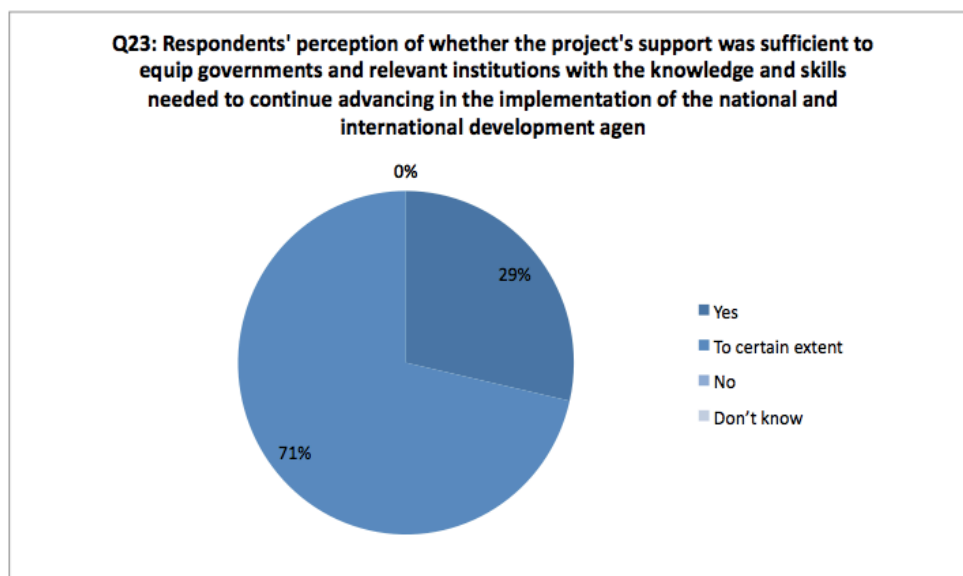
R1: There are plans for gender equality, participation and monitoring [BVI]

R2: There are more women in strategic leadership positions across the country than there were before

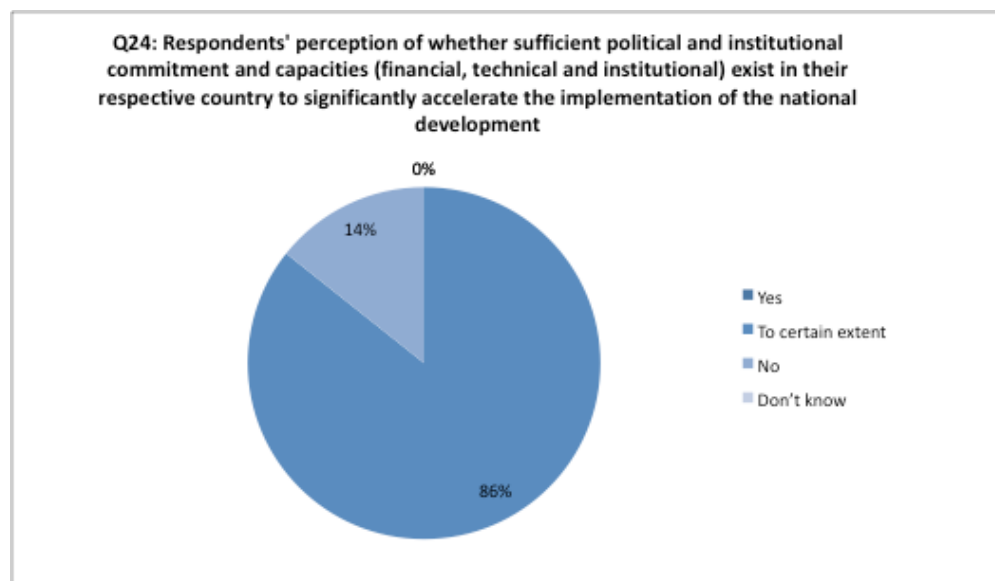
Question 22: Will you continue using the knowledge, skills and tools provided by the project in the future in your daily work?



Question 23: Do you consider that the support provided through the project was sufficient to equip governments and relevant institutions with the knowledge and skills needed to continue advancing in the implementation of the national and international sustainable development agendas and monitor the progress?



Question 24: In your opinion, does sufficient political and institutional commitment and capacities (financial, technical and institutional) exist in your country to significantly accelerate the implementation of the national development plan, along with the SDGs and SIDS agenda in the upcoming years?



Question 25: Do you have any recommendation that you would like to share to strengthen ECLAC's work or future initiative in this area?

R1: Strategies to support communication and education on SDGs to the public. Limited Government resource may not have the capacity to take on added work from developing initiatives.

R2: Not at the moment



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