Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Project Steering Committee

Public Workers Union Building, Tanteen, St. George

July 13, 2010

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This report summarizes the minutes of the 4th meeting of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) held on July 13, 2010 at the Public Workers Union Building, Tanteen, St. George. Present at the meeting were:

* Raymond Baptiste, Chairman
* Augustus Thomas
* Aden Forteau
* Paul Phillip
* Fabian Purcell
* Rickie Morain
* Benson Patrice
* Naiesha John
* Judy Williams
* Dianne Roberts, Project Manager

Absent was Tiffany Noel due to unforeseen circumstances. Aden Forteau opened the meeting with prayer. The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda. A report on the UNCCD’s 4th report preparation held from July 5-9, 2010 in St. Lucia was included under any other business. Mr. Forteau moved the notion to adopt the agenda (Refer to **Appendix 1** for agenda).

1. **REVIEW & ADOPTATION OF MINUTES**

No amendments were made to the minutes of the 3rd meeting due to insufficient hard copies available to all members. The Chairman noted that he reviewed the minutes, and it was acceptable. He informed members that they should submit any clarifications and/or corrections to the Project Management Unit if deemed necessary.

1. **PRESENTATION OF PROGRESS REPORT**

The Project Manager (PM) presented a progress report on the status of implementation for the period May 2009 – June 30, 2010. **Appendix 2** summarizes the highlights of the presentation.

Matters arising from Presentation of Progress Report

1. Congratulations were extended by Paul Phillip on a well done presentation and the extent of accomplishments attained by the Project Management Unit in Year One. Mr. Phillip highlighted specifically the Environmental Economics training conducted in June 2010, and rated it as an excellent initiative. He noted that this is an emerging area of study that is promoted internationally. He reported that he attended a workshop recently organized by fill in… which looked at different ways of conducting cost-benefit analysis (CBA) relative to adaptation to climate change. Information emanating from that workshop revealed that donors are now recommending that CBA be conducted at different levels to assess the effectiveness of financial investments in development projects. According to Mr. Phillip, the Environmental Economics workshop organized by the SLM project was therefore timely. He further recommended that similar capacity building initiatives should be undertaken by the SLM Project.
2. Ms. Judy Williams also shared Mr. Phillip’s sentiment regarding the comprehensiveness of the Project Manager’s (PM’s) report, and the excellent trainings sessions facilitated by the project. She added that it is critical that the project commence its public awareness and education programme to build greater consciousness on land degradation issues, and the work that the SLM project is doing. Ms. Williams reiterated that the impacts of the recent dry season can be attributed to among other things, lack of public knowledge of SLM and poor land use practices. The PSC member noted that she is very pleased with the work done by the SLM project in engaging building contractors. She questioned however the mechanisms that the project will employ to monitor impact on behavior changes - (how do we ensure that the seeds we are planting will blossom)?
3. Regarding challenges experienced by the SLM project re UNDP late approval of funds and delay in payment of service providers, Ms. Williams indicated that she was not satisfied with the donor’s performance. In fact, she noted that this problem is also experienced at her organization (GRENCODA)[[1]](#footnote-1). She recommended that the Ministry of Finance needs to make a strong case to UNDP’s highest echelon regarding these issues since the above issue is not just affecting the SLM project.
4. Mr. Augustus Thomas also joined the other members and congratulated the PMU and all stakeholders for a job well done. He stated that Grenada has made tremendous progress in implementing the project. In fact, Grenada seems to be way ahead of other regional SLM projects. Re UNDP, he stated that this problem cannot be solved just at the national level since other islands are suffering with the same problem. He therefore recommended that the issue be tabled at the upcoming UNCCD’s Regional Meeting of Latin America and the Caribbean Countries since UNDP financial management is severely affecting implementation of the Convention.
5. Ms. Judy Williams indicated that although she agreed with Mr. Thomas, she believed that the issue should be taken directly to UNDP as a matter of protocol.
6. Mr. Forteau also expressed his congratulations to the PM and entire PMU.
7. Mr. Paul Phillip noted that monitoring project impact is a major challenge in Grenada not just with the SLM project but in other areas. For instance, Grenada Solid Waste Management Authority has been educating people for years on best solid waste management practices; yet many nationals continue to adopt inadequate practices.
8. With respect to monitoring best land management practices, Mr. Phillip proposed that the Physical Development Authority (PDA) establish a team not just to evaluate EIAs for development proposals, but that team should be engaged to monitor implementation of the development projects. He stated that a recommendation for this was already made to Cabinet previously but was not approved since it was proposed that members be given a stipend.
9. Chairman, Mr. Raymond Baptiste reminded members of the land degradation monitoring initiative (aided by GPS cameras) that the project will put in place shortly. The protocol, according to Baptiste will be finalized on implementation of the LADA project.
10. Mrs. Williams noted that the project needs to implement the demo site, and promote land use best practices through its public relations initiatives. Engagement of resource users particularly contractors in getting the SLM message out was also recommended.
11. Mr. Benson Patrice ruled that SLM is not just up to contractors but the land owners have a critical role to play.
12. Mr. Thomas reminded members that although the ideas recommended are important we need to look at the big picture. Under the UNCCD Convention, Grenada is expected to have a National Action Plan (NAP) to address all land degradation issues. Countries are now asked to realign the NAP to the 10-year strategic plan, while also mobilize financial resources for its implementation.
13. He noted that Government has not been doing much in supporting SLM and land degradation. For instance, the Forestry Department did not receive financial resources for these areas in the 2010 budget. He also expressed that the National Coordinating Body is low key and not functioning effectively. He proposed that the SLM PSC can be used as a mechanism to propel the UNCCD process.
14. Land Use Policy – Mr. Patrice noted that Carriacou’s Land Settlement Board is starting to discuss using Carriacou as a pilot to develop a Land Use Policy. This was highly supported by all members.
15. **OUTCOME 4: DEVELOPMENT OF INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

It was recommended that the NAP be realigned to the 10-Year strategic plan prior to the development of an investment plan to address land degradation issues.

 The following decisions were therefore taken to fast track the above realignment:

1. Mr. Thomas and Mr. Baptiste will meet with Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture on Friday July 16th, to discuss among other things funding for the realignment process.
2. Mr. Thomas will circulate the NAP to all members.
3. Mr. Thomas will determine the budget for realignment and seek funding from the Secretariat through the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture to support urgent realignment. Mr. Thomas will take lead. This process must be done immediately.

Re the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) activity, it was advised that the Project Manager speak to the Ministry of Tourism, the Willie Redhead Foundation and other relevant entities to determine if any PES studies have been done to avoid duplication.

1. **OTHER BUSINESS**
* A report on the UNCCD meeting in St. Lucia was provided by Mr. Baptiste and Mr. Thomas.
* Mr. Purcell updated members on the status of the review of the Physical Planning and Development Act. He noted that he is trying to arrange a meeting with the Attorney general (to include the SLM Project PM) to discuss co-funding opportunities. He complemented the recently held Environmental Economics Training, and stated that he is reviewing options to integrate some of the principles of the course in strengthening the TOR for the conduct of EIAs.

Mr. Thomas moved the notion to end the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Rickie Morain.

**APPENDIX 1**

**Agenda of the 4th Meeting of the PSC**

1. Opening/Welcome
2. Review and Adoption of Minutes of 3rd PSC meeting held on November 11th 2009
3. Presentation of project progress report (1st year in review)
4. Outcome 4: Development of investment strategy (way forward)
5. Any other business
* UNCCD Workshop in St. Lucia – Preparation of 4th country report
1. Adjournment

**APPENDIX 2**

**Summary of Presentation – SLM Project: 1st Year in Review**

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| **Outcome 1: SLM mainstreamed into national development policies, plans and regulatory frameworks** |
| **Planned Outputs** | **Specific Achievements** | **Comments** |
| * 1. Rapid assessment of the policy, legislative and institutional capacity for SLM within relevant public sector agencies completed
 | * Rapid assessment completed
* Dissemination workshop held on Feb. 18th, 2010 highlighting the preliminary findings of the review
 | * Emanating from the rapid assessment, the SLM project is embarking on the following initiatives:
1. Mainstream land degradation (LD) and SLM in the Grenada Poverty Reduction Strategy for 2010. **Status** – integrated SLM issues in the TOR for development of the GPRS
2. Review of the Physical Planning and Development Control Act of 2002 to address its structural and substantive deficiencies. **Status** – awaiting counterpart funding.
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| **Outcome 2: Institutional and individual capacities for SLM developed** |
| **2.1. Technical staff from MOA and other key public sector agencies and NGOs trained and actively engaged in providing technical support and policy guidance on SLM to stakeholders.**  | * Writers workshop held to develop resource guide on LD targeting economic sectors (Jan 28 – 29, 2010)
* Training course held in Applied Environmental Economics: Implications for LD and SLM (July 14-18, 2010)
 | * Compilation of the resource guide is a work in progress
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| **2.2. Farmers and other resource users within the agricultural, construction, commercial and tourism sectors trained and practicing SLM** | * Conducted island-wide training on LD and SLM in the construction Sector
	+ Hosted 3 training sessions in St. Andrew (June 24); St. George (July 9); & Carriacou (July 15).
	+ A total of … leading contractors reached with key messages
 | * Ground breaking work by the Ministry of Agriculture
* Initiative implemented in collaboration with the Physical Planning Unit
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| **Planned Outputs** | **Specific Achievements** | **Comments** |
| 2.3. Education and awareness strategy and support material on land degradation and SLM developed | * Interviewed 3 potential candidates to develop and implement the public education campaign on LD awareness and SLM
 | * Selection of successful candidate to be completed by July 22, 2010
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| **Outcome 3: Capacities for knowledge management in support of SLM developed** |
| 3.1 Information database on land use, land tenure, land degradation and land zoning for Grenada within the GLIS set up | * Developed and published metadata for all land related data in Grenada (Nov. 2009)
* National Land Use map developed and updated by the Land Use Division, Ministry of Agriculture
 |  |
| 3.2 Pilot National Grid established in the South Western Grenada Peninsula | * Working in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing, Lands & Community Development, preliminary plans have commenced
 | * In the process of selecting field workers and a surveyor to execute the necessary field work.
* In the process of developing a public awareness strategy to sensitize the public of the pilot grid project.
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| 3.3. Participatory monitoring and evaluation system for state of the environment assessment established. | * Pursued the development capacity for monitoring LD.
* Organized a 1-day seminar to develop a protocol for monitoring LD in agriculture, forests and coastal ecosystems (Dec. 11, 2010)
* Secured 7 GPS enabled cameras
 | * Draft protocol is completed – will be finalized on implementation of the LADA (Land Degradation Assessment for Drylands)
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| 3.4 Technical staff trained in analytic applications for decision making to support SLM planning | * Completed training to integrate GIS, GPS and IT in SLM (Nov. 2009)
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| 3.5 SLM website developed | * Partnering with the IT Department, Prime Minister’s Ministry to develop website
 | * Domain name procured
* Website mock-up developed
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| **Outcome 4:** **Investment planning and resource mobilization for implementation of SLM interventions elaborated** |
| 4.1 Investment plans in key economic sectors incorporate priority actions for SLM as defined in the NAP | * 4-member national team participated in workshop to Integrate Financing Strategies training in St. Lucia (Nov 16-20, 2009)
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| **Outcome 5: Adaptive Management** |
| 5.2 Monitoring and evaluation plan provides inputs for robust adaptive management | * Complete implementation of the baseline survey to assess the public’s awareness of LD and SLM.
 | All reports to UNDP has been timely submitted (APR/PIR, Inception and quarterly reports) |
| **Planned Outputs** | **Specific Achievements** | **Comments** |
| **Leverage activities** |
| * Forged a partnership with St. George’s University (SGU) to integrate LD in its GEPSGP Nutmeg Reforestation Project; SGU and Ministry of Finance providing technical support for conduct of baseline survey.
* In the process of securing leverage funds from FAO to implement a LADA project in Grenada. Organized a seminar, facilitated by FAO to develop the TCP (Technical Cooperation Programme) for the LADA
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| **Challenges** |
| * Slow rate at which UNDP CO issues payment to invoices submitted for services and/or goods provided. This threatens the integrity of the local Project Management Unit (PMU), project implementation rate, and future relationship with service providers.
* Very late approval of the 2010 budget; almost 2 quarters behind schedule.
* This has significantly delayed implementation and could possibly negatively impact weather sensitive outputs (e.g. the National Pilot Grid Project).
* Moreover, this situation places increased strain on the human resource capacity of the PMU to deliver planned outputs in a shorter timeframe.
* Delay in development of the Resource Guide on Land Degradation and SLM due to unforeseen family crisis experienced by the Consultant
* Lack of clarity regarding the process to implement specific aspects of Outcome 4
* Concern about our ability to guarantee completion of the following by end of year:
	+ Output 1.3 due to challenges encountered by the Ministry of Works and Physical Development in securing additional funds to implement these activities;
	+ Activity 2.1.5, due to challenges faced by the official in negotiating required course work from the University within a specified time period.
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1. Grenada Community Development Organization. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)