**Minutes of the Virtual Project Appraisal Committee approval for Award 50457 “Strategic Ecosystems and Biodiversity protected through the implementation of economic valuation methodologies, payment of environmental services and adoption of new technologies”**

## Background:

In the course of this project, the regional Environment and Energy Practice team will focus on assisting countries of the LAC region to build their capacities to understand and value the nature and linkages between ecosystem services and livelihoods, including biodiversity, on which much of their economic welfare depends.  This project has already supported 18 countries of the region to analyze and plan for the financial sustainability of their protected area systems as key components of natural capital essential to climate change adaptation and mitigation. It has also produced major reports for input to regional and national policy processes aimed at ensuring long term production of ecosystem goods and services for benefits at national, regional and global levels. It served to mobilize more than usd10M from UN-REDD and FCPF funds to support REDD readiness activities in the region, and contributed to facilitate regional dialogue on sensitive issues, related to REDD+ readiness topics.

The Regional Programme of Latin America & the Caribbean (RPLAC) for 2008-2013 covers work on an ongoing set of projects funded by Spanish Funds, UNDP TRAC funds, Multi-donor Trust Fund and other funds. During 2014, RBLAC will continue its ongoing work to complete key deliverables from the outgoing RP LAC region and initiate activities for the new Regional Programme actions. To this end substantive revision is proposed to adjust the original project documents so that UNDP can take full advantage of potential synergies and use of funds to respond better to emerging country office challenges in MICs, upper-MICS and SIDS, while also focusing on fewer and more strategic interventions reflecting new global UNDP priorities. This revision will result in the use of the remaining funds to deliver more impact and greater efficiency and optimize the contribution towards the new priorities outlined in UNDP 2014-2017 Strategic Plan and the concomitant RBLAC 20014-2017 Regional Programme.

**Description of the process:**

On The 29 of November 2013, the Director of the Regional Service Center for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr. Freddy Justiniano, invited the PAC members to forward their comments regarding the extension of award 50457 for the years 2014. The substantive revision documentation included the following projects:

Award 50457 “Strategic Ecosystems and Biodiversity protected through the implementation of economic valuation methodologies, payment of environmental services and adoption of new technologies””

* Output 1.1 00062371- Regional Report on the Economic Value of Biodiversity Assets in the Region and the Potential Impact of Biodiversity Loss and Ecosystems Degradation on Development
* Output 1.2 00062372- Financing Strategies for National Systems of Protected Areas in key LAC countries
* Output 1.3 00062375 – Access to REDD and other new, emerging funding mechanisms to finance climate change mitigation, especially related to forest conservation.

The following country offices’ (CO) and staff members were invited to participate in the virtual PAC:

Costa Rica CO: Yoriko Yasukawa, Resident Representative; Kifah Sasa, Environmental Focal Point

Peru CO: Rebeca Arias, Resident Representative; James Leslie, Technical Advisor.

Colombia CO: Fabrizio Hochschild, Resident Representative; Silvia Rucks, Country Director; Jimena Puyana, Environmental Focal Point.

Mexico CO: Marcia De Castro, Resident Representative; Verania Chao, Environmental Focal Point.

Paraguay CO: Cecilia Ugaz, Resident Representative; Veronique Gerard, Environmental Focal Point.

Argentina CO: Martin Santiago, Resident Representative; Daniel Tomasini, Environmental Focal Point.

BDP: Yamil Bonduki, LECB Programme Manager; Matilde Mordt, Practice Manager; Adriana Dinu, GEF Deputy Executive Coordinator

RBLAC: Alfredo Gonzalez, Programme Specialist

Bhanu Shrestha, ICT Analyst

Carlos Benitez, Programme Specialist

Consuelo VIDAL-BRUCE, Chief Strategic Monitoring

Crispin Gregoire, Chief Monitoring Caribbean

Emma Torres, Senior Advisor

Fernando Hiraldo, Programme Advisor

George Ronald Gray , Chief Economist

Gerardo Noto, Programme Specialist

Igor Garafulic, Senior Policy Advisor

Javier Sagredo, Advisor

Karina Servellon, Chief Finance

Kenroy Roach, Programme Manager Caribbean

Lorena Acevedo Narea, Special Assistant to Regional Director

Pablo Gago, Policy Specialist

Paloma Morazo Perez, Management Specialist

Soledad Bauza, Programme Specialist

Sonia Ortiz Arcos, Programme Specialist

Ugo Blanco, Special Assistant Deputy Director

RSC LAC: Ines Brill, Team Leader

Pablo Ruiz Hiebra, Team Leader

Gonzalo Pizarro, Team Leader

Carmen De La Cruz, Team Leader

Gerardo Berthin, Policy Advisor

Maria Tallarico, Team Leader

UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre:

Martin Krause, Regional Practice Leader for Environment, Climate & Energy

UNEP: Jason Spensley, Programme Officer Climate Change Adaptation; Gabriel Labbate, REDD and PEI Regional Coordinator

UN-REDD Secretariat: Mirey Atallah, Senior Officer

The period allowed for comments was from November 29 to December 4th, 2013. During that period, no objections were received against the documentation presented. Below are the main comments received:

1. *The Project must ensure that knowledge products that are generated are widely distributed and disseminated, in particular through virtual means. Support from the Knowledge, Innovation and Capacity can be provided in case the Project requires support for dissemination methodology.*
2. *The Project should consider providing technical inputs for the preparation of the CARICOM Climate Change Strategy.*
3. *The Project should continue promoting south-south cooperation as a way to strengthen collaboration across countries within the region.*
4. *The Risk Analysis should be revised and updated.*
5. *The Country office of Argentina has submitted (by Daniel Tomasini) the following specific comments:*
   1. *Output 1.1 00062371: We would like to consult if this revision includes a round of presentation in LAC countries as it has been done for the BD Superpower publication. This initiative represents an excellent opportunities for local and regional benefit and to share experience in the areas of economic valuation of ecosystem services and payment schemes through the implementation of forest protection law. Argentina CO request to be incorporated into this activity. (Response: The RP will liaise with the CO on the dissemination of the guidebook).*
   2. *Output 1.2 00062372: Argentina was one of the pilot cases, but there were no continuity of this activity. It is not clear how to proceed. (Response: The follow up phase was funded by Moore Foundation, but Argentina was not a priority country for the donor so we were not able to include Argentina as part of the second phase of the project).*
   3. *Output 1.3 00062375: Argentina is initiating the agreement to start its UN-REDD programme, thus the support and the participation in the activities of capacity development and South-South cooperation with more advance countries would be welcome by the government. (Response: Various activities of knowledge sharing and south-south cooperation are planned to be realized in 2014. Argentina could be invited to participate in these activities to be exposed to the experience of countries in the region that have learned from the 3 year process in which they have been involved.).*

The above comments were duly included in the final substantive revision document, and responses were provided for the specific questions.

December 17th, 2013