



FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

July 2018

ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT PROJECT 14/15 AG

**Strengthening the technical capacity of public finance managers
in select Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
to manage their public finances**



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This report was prepared by Oscar Huertas, an external consultant, who led the evaluation. Mr. Huertas worked under the overall guidance of Raul García-Buchaca, Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Sandra Manuelito, Chief of the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit, and under the direct supervision of Irene Barquero, Programme Management Officer of the same unit, who provided strategic and technical guidance, coordination, and methodological and logistical support.

The evaluation team is grateful for the support provided by its project partners at ECLAC, all of whom were represented in the Evaluation Reference Group. Warm thanks go to the programme managers and technical advisors of ECLAC for their cooperation throughout the evaluation process and their assistance in the review of the report.

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 Commission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACRONYMS	iv
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	v
1. INTRODUCTION	9
1.1 OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION	9
2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION	10
2.1 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY.....	12
3. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS	17
3.1 RELEVANCE	17
3.2 EFFICIENCY	20
3.3 EFFECTIVENESS	22
3.4 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES.....	29
3.5 SUSTAINABILITY	31
4. LESSONS LEARNED	32
5. CONCLUSIONS	33
5.1 RELEVANCE.....	33
5.2 EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS	33
5.3 SUSTAINABILITY	34
6. RECOMMENDATIONS	34
ANNEXES	37
ANNEX 1 TERMS OF REFERENCE.....	32
ANNEX 2 LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	49
ANNEX 3 SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES	50
ANNEX 4 INTERVIEW GUIDELINES	54
ANNEX 5 TIMELINE.....	56
ANNEX 6 EVALUATION MATRIX.....	57
ANNEX 7 RISK, LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATIONS STRATEGIES.....	61
ANNEX 8 EVALUATOR'S REVISION MATRIX	62

ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	DEFINITION
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
DA	Development Account
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean
ILPES	Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PPEU	Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit
PPOD	Programme Planning and Operations Division of ECLAC
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UWI	University of the West Indies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION

1. The main objective of the evaluation is to review the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of the project implementation and to document the results of the project in relation to its overall objectives and expected outcomes as defined in the project document.

II. KEY FINDINGS

2. Overall, the evaluator found that the project objective was highly relevant to the needs and contexts of the target countries. Moreover, this is a pioneering project as it is the first initiative in the region aimed at capacity-building in fiscal management skills. Its aim of improving coordination across government departments and ministries, is seen as an appropriate approach inasmuch as improving expenditure reviews entails the joint efforts of all State actors.
3. The main hypotheses that underpinned the project at the formulation stage remain valid, but the initial approach and strategy were inadequate for attaining the project objectives. The approach was unclear, as the project lacked a clear theory of change, with specific links between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes.
4. The project was efficient in covering different activities in a number of countries, with limited budget and staff. During the implementation, the project delivered most of its planned activities. In terms of synergies, the project was unable to significantly develop partnerships, and its coordination mechanisms were limited to the joint work with ILPES, as at the time of implementation there were no comparable initiatives.
5. The evaluator found that ECLAC had to a certain extent implemented a results management process, with basic information on the project's achievements in the countries, but that the monitoring and evaluation process was inadequate to measure progress towards results. One of the difficulties in assessing accomplishments was the lack of a project baseline.
6. In terms of achievements and results, during the field phase, respondents showed mixed levels of satisfaction. The main outcome of the project was an increased awareness of expenditure review, efficiency and fiscal management. However, this did not lead to institutional results or changes. In general, respondents felt that the project had created better conditions for expenditure reviews at the technical level. The project made a difference in the attitude towards and the awareness of the concepts of efficiency and budgeting.
7. Regarding the effectiveness of the project's capacity-building activities and influence on policymaking, the evaluation could not find substantial evidence on policymaking changes. Project beneficiaries attended training sessions, and acquired skills in some cases, but this did not lead to institutional changes in budgeting or fiscal management. At the institutional level, the implementation of the project allowed the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain to strengthen its relationship with the region's countries.
8. An analysis of knowledge management strategies and sharing of best practices to maximize results showed that there were no major developments in this regard; other than the regional workshop, countries were not part of a systematic learning process, or knowledge management strategy.
9. Although there were no specific or clear gender mainstreaming strategies, women and men were included in the different project activities and gender-disaggregated data were generated.

III. LESSONS LEARNED

10. Buy-in of the project at the highest level was mixed. Thus, it will be very important for future interventions to receive feedback from the targeted countries to identify needs. All projects should aim to respond to a need expressed by the countries as well as match the programme of work and priorities of ECLAC.
11. The holding of awareness-raising workshops was successful as it made it possible to present the project, its scope and expectations to the beneficiary countries and key stakeholders. Future projects can benefit from an awareness-raising process, which increases their impact by framing the expectations of beneficiaries, as well as defining the scope, roadmap and commitment of all parties regarding the resources required (human, financial, time, among others).
12. In some cases, high-level authorities did not attend project activities because of their tight agendas. To gain greater buy-in from high-level decision makers, future projects must take advantage of existing regional events, such as the meetings of OECS and CARICOM ministers, where these types of initiatives could be included, thus obviating separate events. Likewise, initial diagnoses in the countries sought solutions tailored to their needs, national priorities and contexts.
13. Development interventions in the Caribbean face many challenges, including the lack of capacity in some countries. In a region made up of SIDS, the possibility of executing resources and implementing activities efficiently is likely to be constrained by the limited capacities of the countries themselves. Thus, all future interventions need to meet this challenge and establish risk mitigation strategies.
14. In some cases, the commitment demanded by the project was not achieved due to lack of staff, and in some cases lack of will. Thus, it is essential to secure commitment from the beginning of the project to avoid implementation and sustainability difficulties.
15. The designation of national focal points was considered a good practice of the project as it enabled progress with logistics issues, empowerment, coordination and improved communication with the target countries.
16. The project had limited resources and aimed to cover different countries with mixed results. Future projects with limited resources should prioritize depth rather than breadth. It is more critical to achieve impact in a few countries than to aim for broader coverage.
17. A lesson learned from the implementation of the project was that participants' profiles need to be more specific and based on the project's requirements. In some cases, the profiles or roles of participants meant they were unable to take advantage of the knowledge acquired during the workshops, and so the expected capacity-building has not materialized. It is imperative to apply specific criteria for selecting participants in project activities. Furthermore, ECLAC must insist that only participants meeting the required profile criteria can take part in the workshops.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

18. Project objectives and expected achievements are relevant to, and well aligned with, the development priorities and needs of the subregion's countries. These priorities have not changed significantly since the beginning of the initiative and continue to be centred on improving economic health in targeted countries.

19. The project design was ambitious as it aimed for long-term impact in multiple countries, despite its limited resources. This approach, aiming for breadth rather than depth, may have led to scattered activities. Future interventions should aim for initiatives that have greater impact in fewer countries, with the option of scaling up.
20. The approach was unclear, as the project lacked a clear theory of change with specific links between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes.
21. The project's delivery rate was poor; efficiency in implementation and delivery was affected by the number of target countries, slow responses from some country partners, understaffed government offices, turnover rates, elections and natural disasters.
22. The project's internal monitoring system was inadequate and appeared to focus mainly on activities and expenditure levels. Progress tracking based on delivery levels (i.e., rates of expenditure) is somewhat misleading, although a common practice by many donors, including ECLAC. Effectiveness was affected by shortcomings in recording results and data management.
23. The project's main outcome was a greater awareness on expenditure review, efficiency and fiscal management, although this did not translate into institutional results or changes. The project made a difference in the awareness of and attitude towards the concepts of efficiency and budgeting. Nevertheless, regarding the effectiveness of the project activities in building capacities and influencing policymaking, the evaluation could not find substantial evidence on policymaking changes.
24. The lack of a knowledge-management strategy for identifying and sharing best practices and lessons learned was a missed opportunity considering that the project was implemented in different countries.
25. As the primary project beneficiaries were institutions, it was difficult for the project design to include human rights and gender strategies. Nevertheless, during implementation, efforts were made to include both men and women in all project activities.
26. Factors hindering effectiveness, such as government response, also threaten the project's sustainability as the evaluation could not find any evidence of activities that were sustained over time.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on conclusions 2, 3 and 9

27. For ECLAC: For future projects, special care should be taken during the design phase with respect to relevance, the rationale for intervention and achieving the desired impact. Projects must have a theory of change from the outset, identifying the chain of specific results, roles and responsibilities.
 - Future interventions need to identify the expected outputs and outcomes and to develop a theory of change describing the path from inputs to results (outputs and outcomes). The theory of change should include assumptions and be linked to a risk log.

Based on conclusions 2 and 4

29. For ECLAC: Future projects will require a risk log listing the potential risks and clear mitigation strategies. It is critical to ensure that beneficiary countries have the available resources (dedicated staff) from the outset to implement project activities. Countries with appropriate legal frameworks are more likely to succeed.
 - All projects must include a risk assessment with specific mitigation measures

- Every project of regional or subregional scope should include selection criteria to prioritize the countries targeted for intervention. Availability of resources and political will (commitments, agreements, MoUs, letters of intent, among other things) should be prioritized.
- It would be desirable to validate these theories of change and risk logs with target groups and countries.

Based on conclusions 3, 4 and 5

30. For ECLAC: Monitoring and evaluation, based on specific and verifiable results indicators—which allow for greater control over processes and results—are essential to the success of projects.
- All projects should go beyond the results framework and develop a monitoring and evaluation system, with clearly defined progress and results indicators, sources of information and verification, roles and responsibilities (data upload and analysis), reporting procedures, among other things.
 - All indicators need a baseline to analyse evolution and change.

Based on conclusions 6 and 9

31. For ECLAC: Project design for capacity-building must be meticulous and take into account participants' profiles, topics to be covered, methodologies, study loads, time frame for achieving the desired results and evaluation. Future interventions need to take into account the fact that capacity-building requires a sustained effort over time, as well as a rigorous follow-up process.
- In capacity-building projects, detailed profiles of those participating in training must be provided and institutions should clarify the time available for training and the job stability of participants, as well as existing channels for sharing workshop knowledge with other colleagues, among other things.

Based on conclusion 7

32. For ECLAC: Pilot projects require a knowledge management strategy to identify and share lessons learned and best practices among key stakeholders at the national and regional level.
- All projects must include a knowledge management strategy from the outset, to clearly define how the best practices will be identified, recorded and shared.
 - This knowledge management strategy should include templates for case studies, best practices, stories from the field (texts or audios from key stakeholders), testimonials, among other things.

1. INTRODUCTION

1. This evaluation is an end-of-cycle review of a subregional project aimed at strengthening the capacity of Caribbean small island developing States to effectively manage their public expenditure, revenue and debt.
2. The evaluation was commissioned by ECLAC and conducted by the external consultant Oscar Huertas. The evaluation design process started in February 2018, field visits were conducted in Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Kitts and Nevis from 5 to 10 April, followed by the analysis and reporting phase which took place from April to July 2018.
3. This final evaluation report is the third deliverable of the project “Strengthening the technical capacity of public finance managers in select Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS) to manage their public finances”, implemented by ECLAC.

1.1 OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION

4. The main objective of the evaluation is to review the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of the project implementation and to document the results of the project in relation to its overall objectives and expected outcomes as defined in the project document.
5. The evaluation places a significant emphasis on identifying lessons learned and good practices that derive from the project’s implementation and sustainability, and the potential to replicate them in other countries. Lessons learned and good practices in the current project implementation will, in turn, be used as tools for future planning and implementation of projects.

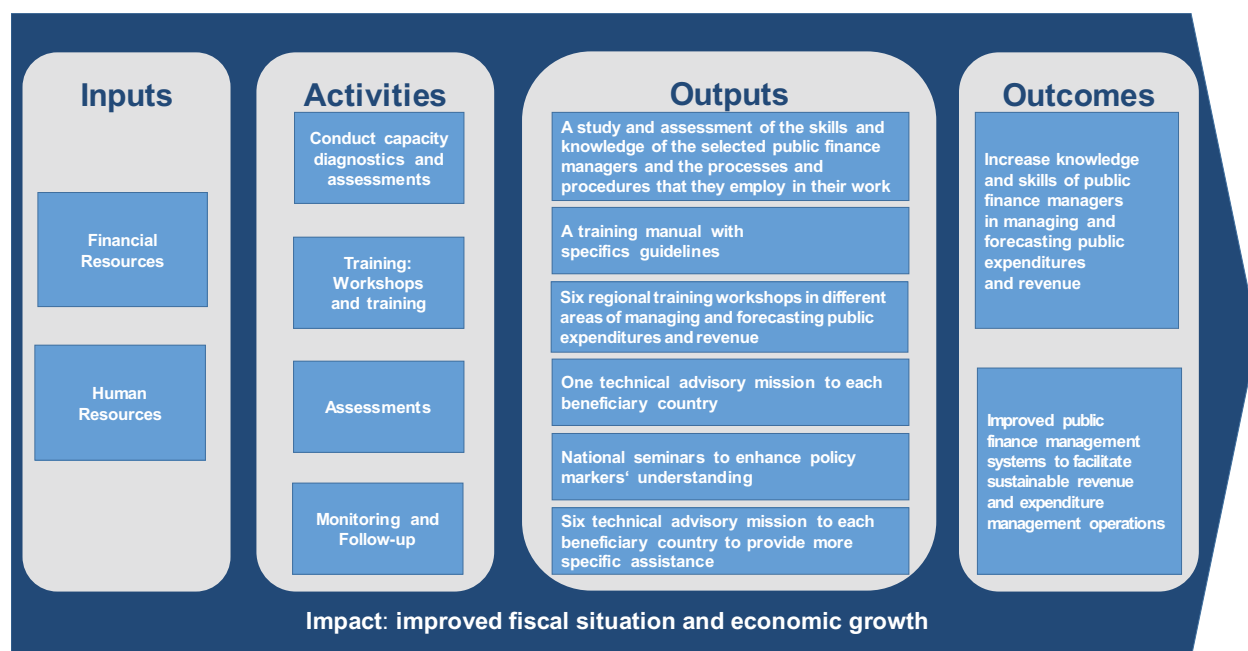
2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

6. The economic crisis has been particularly severe on the economies of the Caribbean, especially those that depend heavily on services for their economic growth. It has exacerbated already high levels of debt for several countries of this region. Reduced fiscal space has been a long-standing problem, and chronic fiscal deficits leading to high public debt is one of the most critical development challenges facing Caribbean SIDS. For instance, the average fiscal deficit and public debt levels were 3.4% and 84.4% of GDP, respectively, from 2000 to 2007. Moreover, four countries had debt levels over 100% of GDP.¹
7. The project, entitled "Strengthening the technical capacity of public finance managers in select Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS) to manage their public finances," is aligned with the strategic framework of ECLAC for 2014–2015. The objective of Subprogramme 13: Subregional activities in the Caribbean, is "to strengthen the development process in the economic, social and environmental fields in the Caribbean and enhance its cooperation with Latin America." The project aims to contribute to fulfilling this objective by helping to foster a more efficient management of public finances in the Caribbean, which will lead to improved economic growth and sustained financing for social protection programmes.
8. The project start date was 1 August 2014 and the expected end date was 31 December 2017. The budget allocated totalled US\$ 492,000, and the beneficiary were Caribbean countries, with a focus on Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica and Saint Kitts and Nevis.
9. As stated above, the problem the project sought to address was the high level of debt in Caribbean countries and ultimately its impact on economic growth.
10. Given the number of countries and the extent of the problems, the project design aimed to build capacities to strengthen public finance management and to control fiscal deficits. The project sought to improve countries' ability to effectively manage their public expenditure, revenue and debt, and to design more efficient public management systems. As a result, positive outcomes were expected in terms of the efficiency of public finance management in those countries, ultimately helping them to improve their debt ratio and providing a more stable environment for economic and social development.
11. The primary inputs of the project were financial and human resources: staff from ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain, experts from the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and UWI Consulting, and independent consultants.
12. The activities were:
 - Conducting capacity diagnostics and assessments
 - Technical assistance
 - Training (workshops, seminars)
 - Follow-up of progress and results

¹ See project summary at <http://www.un.org/esa/devaccount/projects/2014/1415AG.html>.

13. The expected outputs of the activities were:
- A study and assessment of the skills and knowledge of the selected public finance managers and the processes and procedures that they use in their work
 - A training manual (informed by the findings of the assessment) containing specific guidelines on budgeting and other fiscal management approaches
 - Six regional training workshops in different areas of managing and forecasting public expenditure and revenue
 - One technical advisory mission to each beneficiary country, to provide more targeted assistance and capacity-building to foster sustainability
 - National seminars to enhance policymakers' understanding of the need to commit financial and technical resources to strengthen their public financial management systems
 - Six technical advisory missions to each beneficiary country to provide specific assistance
14. The expected outcomes were:
- Increased knowledge and improved skills of public finance managers in managing and forecasting public expenditure and revenue
 - Improved public finance management systems to facilitate sustainable revenue and expenditure management operations
15. The expected impact was an improved fiscal situation and economic growth.

Diagram 1
Project theory of change



Source: Evaluation process

16. As stated in the ToR, the unit of analysis of this evaluation is the project itself, including its design, implementation and effects. The scope of the evaluation covers all the activities implemented by the project. The assessment reviews the benefits gained by the various stakeholders in the region, as well as the sustainability of project interventions. The assessment also reviews the interaction and coordination modalities used within ECLAC to implement the project, and in other cooperating agencies participating in the implementation of the project.
17. The evaluation will look for and collect gender-disaggregated data when these are available, to be able to analyse results for men and women. The evaluation will examine results as they relate to gender mainstreaming, awareness and mechanisms for empowering women: (a) in the context of the project and its activities; and (b) as regards service orientation, staff issues and policies of the implementing partners.
18. The findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned documented in this evaluation report can be used as tools by ECLAC staff in charge of the design and implementation of multi-country or regional interventions, and by government authorities and other key decision-makers for future planning and implementation of projects.

2.1 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

19. The evaluation is structured around four evaluation criteria from UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.
20. **Relevance:** The extent to which the project and its activities were suited to the priorities and policies of the region and countries at the time of formulation and to what extent they were linked or related to the mandate and programme of work of ECLAC.
21. **Efficiency:** Measurement of the outputs (qualitative and quantitative) in relation to the inputs, including complementarity (the extent to which the activities and the outcomes of the project have been able to establish and/or exploit synergies with other actions implemented by ECLAC, other United Nations bodies or local organizations) and value added (the extent to which the project's activities and outcomes have confirmed the advantages of ECLAC involvement, primarily by promoting human rights and gender equality).
22. **Effectiveness:** The extent to which the activities attained their goals and expected accomplishments.
23. **Sustainability:** The extent to which the benefits of the project are likely to continue after funding has been withdrawn, including long-term impact, dissemination and replication.
24. **Cross-cutting issues:** Although not an evaluation criterion, it measures how and to what extent human rights, gender issues and other overarching strategies, including the achievement of the SDGs, were considered in the project and its activities.
25. The methodology adopted for this evaluation was designed to meet the requirements and expectations established in the ToR. It allowed for the identification of the results attributable to the project considering the range of information and time available. The evaluation used UNEG Guidance Documents and involved mostly qualitative and a few quantitative methods to measure the project's progress and contribution to outcomes. The evaluation also used subjective non-statistical analysis, based on both qualitative and quantitative information, as well as informed judgment and expert opinions.
26. A variety of data collection methods were used, involving the following:

27. **Desk review:** The evaluator relied on already existing documentation, including the project document, annual progress reports, workshop and meeting reports, and project materials such as manuals, assessments, project methodologies, country reports, consolidated reports, among others (see annex 2).
28. **Field visits:** Selected field visits to countries were undertaken to validate findings and to observe progress and achievements first-hand, and to collect best practices/lessons learned, where available.
29. **Stakeholder interviews:** Key informant interviews and consultations were a vital source of information. They complemented and validated the information gathered through the desk review and survey. In the course of the evaluation, telephone/Skype interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders and clients including: (i) staff from ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean (managers and programme/project officers); (ii) ILPES staff; (iii) policymakers, beneficiaries, civil society organizations and other key stakeholders; and (iv) consultants/experts. Efforts were made to ensure that a range of voices were represented, covering the entire stakeholder map (see annex 4).
30. **Surveys:** The evaluation included two surveys to collect feedback from project focal points and workshop participants from the beneficiary countries. The survey for focal points collected feedback on the project as a whole, while the survey for workshop participants collected data on the perception of project events. PPEU provided support in managing the surveys conducted online through SurveyMonkey and provided the evaluator with the consolidated responses (see annex 3).
31. Evaluation phases.²

2.1.2 PREPARATORY/INCEPTION PHASE

32. Consultations with PPEU: The evaluator held a preparatory call with PPEU to ensure understanding of the process and methodology, obtain perspectives on critical issues and questions and discuss the scope of the evaluation and its overall timeframe.
33. The evaluator reviewed numerous programme documents and reference materials and worked on the evaluation plan, inception report and evaluation instruments, such as the evaluation matrix and the online survey.

2.1.3 MAIN EVALUATION PHASE

34. Field visits were conducted in Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Kitts and Nevis from 5 to 10 April, to validate findings and to observe progress and achievements first-hand and to collect information on best practices/lessons learned.
35. Key informant interviews and consultations were vital sources of information. The evaluator conducted on-site interviews, as well as telephone/Skype interviews with relevant stakeholders including the staff at ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, and focal points from Belize and Jamaica. Efforts were made to ensure a range of voices were represented, covering the entire stakeholder map.
36. A mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches was used to analyse data and assess the status of the results. The variety of data collected will enable triangulation and provide a strong base to put forward findings, recommendations and conclusions based on substantial evidence. This triangulation is based on the verification of at least three sources of information: perception, validation and documentation. The methods described above will be used to validate the information and to respond to the evaluation questions through the cross-referencing of data sources.

² See annex 5, "Timeline".

37. Out of the six target countries, two countries were used as a sample for field visits and in-depth consultation: Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Antigua and Barbuda.

Antigua and Barbuda interviewees

- Whitfield Harris – Financial Secretary
- Carolyn Tonge – Budget Director
- Beverly Airall – Assistant Financial Secretary
- Cordella Weston – Senior Budget Analyst (project focal point)

Saint Kitts and Nevis interviewees

- Calvin Edwards – Ministry of Finance (project focal point)
- Quinton Morton – Ministry of Education
- Christopher Herbert - Ministry of Education
- Natasha Daniel – Ministry of Agriculture
- Alister Edwards – Ministry of Agriculture
- Marita Francis – Ministry of Agriculture
- Gene Knight – Ministry of Agriculture
- Eulynis Brown – Ministry of Health
- Janelle Lewis – Social Development
- Jenna Evelyn – Ministry of Finance
- Auren Manners – Sustainable Development
- Glen Amory – Sustainable Development

Skype interviewees

- Darlene Morrisson – Project focal point in Jamaica
- Zita Magana-Perez – Project focal point in Belize
- Lindy-Ann Edwards – ECLAC regional headquarters for the Caribbean, Port of Spain
- Johann Brathwaite – ECLAC regional headquarters for the Caribbean, Port of Spain

2.1.4 REPORT PREPARATION PHASE

38. On conclusion of the field visits, the evaluator prepared a report with the preliminary findings of the field phase, and a draft report based on the analysis conducted and the feedback received. Subsequently, the consultant prepared the draft report that was reviewed by the PPEU and the Reference Group and which became the final report once all required adjustments were made.

2.1.5 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

39. The evaluation analyses the progress made by the subregional project towards achieving expected results by providing answers to the following questions:

Relevance:

- (a) To what extent were the activities and delivered outputs aligned with the priorities and needs of the targeted countries?
- (b) To what extent was the proposed project in line with the activities and programme of work of ECLAC, specifically those of the subprogramme in charge of project implementation?

Efficiency:

- (c) What collaboration and coordination mechanisms are there within ECLAC and with other cooperating agencies to ensure efficiencies and coherent responses?
- (d) Are services and support provided in a timely and reliable manner, according to the priorities established in the project document?
- (e) Were any complementarities and synergies with other work developed by ECLAC identified?

Effectiveness:

- (f) To what extent were the project's primary beneficiaries satisfied with the services they received?
- (g) To what extent have workshop and seminar participants improved their knowledge?
- (h) What were the outcomes identified by the participants?
- (i) Has the project made any difference in the behaviour/attitudes/skills/performance of beneficiaries?
- (j) To what extent were project activities effective in building capacities and influencing policymaking?
- (k) Are there any tangible policies stemming from project contributions?

Sustainability:

With beneficiaries:

- (l) How did the project use the technical, human and other resources available in participating countries?
- (m) How have the programme's main results and recommendations been used or incorporated in the work and practices of beneficiary institutions after completion of project activities?
- (n) What were the multiplier effects generated by the programme?
- (o) What mechanisms were set up to ensure the follow-up of project activities and results?

Within ECLAC:

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

Cross-cutting issues

- (q) Have the project managers effectively taken into consideration human rights and gender issues in the design and implementation of the project and its activities?
- (r) How has the project contributed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

2.1.6 STAKEHOLDERS ANALYSIS

40. The project implementation was guided and supervised by the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean; the implementing partners were the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and UWI Consulting (now LUMIN Consulting). The primary beneficiaries were policymakers and public finance officers.
41. Policymakers in the ministries of Finance and Planning have a mandate to implement policies and can play a role in ensuring mainstreaming of the project in the relevant institutions. The desired result was that participants would gain greater knowledge and awareness of the programmes and techniques for improving public finance and debt management, which could increase their commitment to implementing and sustaining reform measures stemming from the project.

42. Public finance officers in the ministries of Finance and Planning are responsible for forecasting budget revenues and matching them with expenditures, and for designing management systems. The expectation was that they would improve their capacity to forecast government revenues accurately and establish more efficient management systems, leading to better control of public debt.

2.1.7 EVALUATION LIMITATIONS

43. There were no major limitations for the evaluation process. The evaluator received the support of the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit of ECLAC and the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean to arrange the field visits and Skype interviews and to manage the online survey. Guidance and constant communication were also key aides during the process. Although the evaluator had access to all the project documents as stated in annex 2, the main information gap was the lack of a project baseline and a rigorous monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, which limited the evaluator's ability to assess results.

3. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

3.1 RELEVANCE

FINDING 1: The extent to which the project and its activities were suited to the priorities and policies of the region and countries at the time of formulation, and to which they were linked or related to the mandate and programme of work of ECLAC.

(a) To what extent were the activities and delivered outputs aligned with the priorities and needs of the targeted countries?

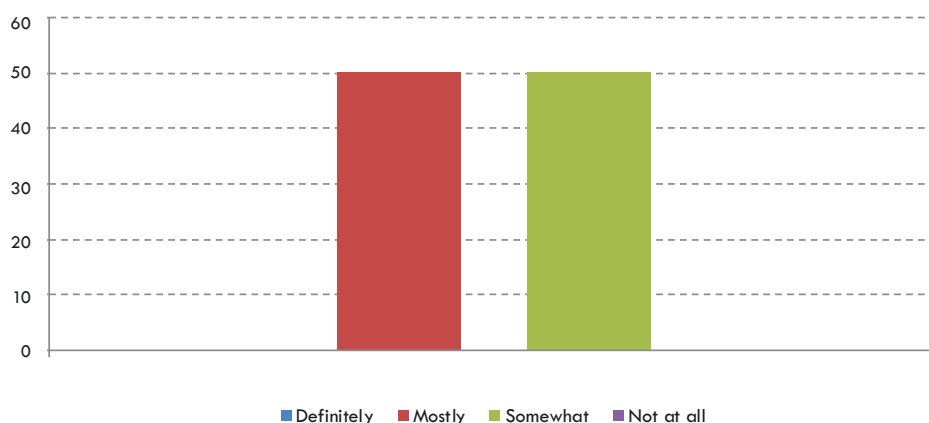
44. **The evaluation found that the objective of the project was highly relevant** to the needs and contexts of the targeted countries. During the field visit, all the interviewees stated that reducing the fiscal gap was not only essential but also a major priority for their countries. The objective of the project was to increase the capacity of policymakers and public finance managers of selected Caribbean SIDS to apply methods and procedures to improve their management and forecasting of public expenditure and revenue.
45. High-level authorities in Antigua and Barbuda mentioned that the public expenditure programme was fundamental, and that it needed to be mainstreamed into people's work plans. Daily tasks should include public expenditure activities, assessment looked at public expenditure execution, efficiency in execution, outcomes from inputs.

“The project was a United Nations ECLAC initiative, and we saw the value in the proposal as being a pilot country” – high-ranking official in the Ministry of Finance of Antigua and Barbuda

46. The results of the field visit are in line with the project documentation and the survey results, indicating that the project's aims were relevant to the countries. All respondents expressed the opinion that the project activities were mostly or somewhat aligned with their country's priorities. No one expressed total disagreement in terms of alignment, thus confirming the relevance of the project's expected outcomes (see figure 1).

Figure 1
Survey question 1
(Percentage of responses)

To what extent do you think the project objective and activities were aligned with your country's national policies, priorities and/or development objectives?

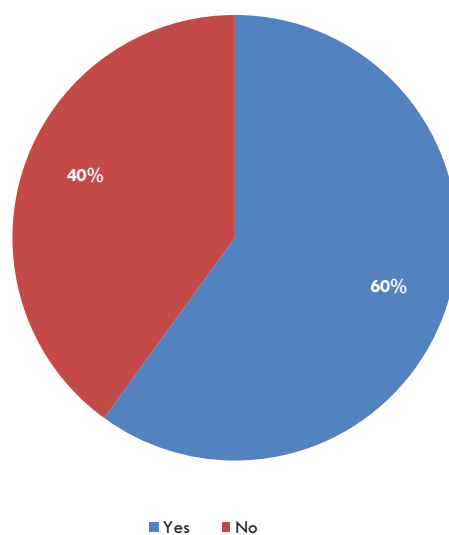


Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of the focal points' survey.

47. Small economies that depend on external factors are vulnerable and can suffer from devaluation, inflation, reduced public expenditure and impact on social investments, among other consequences. In this sense, the project contributes to national and regional strategies in the Caribbean.
48. **The project involved various government departments and ministries, which is appropriate inasmuch as expenditure review should be the joint responsibility of all State actors.** Caribbean countries benefit from holistic interventions targeting all key stakeholders. For example, in Antigua and Barbuda, the project provided training to 30 people from 7 ministries on expenditure review and methods for data collection, which was useful as there was a multisector approach with different ministries.
49. **The project undertook implementation measures at the operational level that were relevant to the scope of project implementation.** The designation of national focal points was considered a good practice as it allowed progress on logistics issues, empowerment, coordination and better communication with each of the target countries. Another good practice to foster relevance was that country interventions were guided by the available analysis and tailored assessments, and thus able to respond accordingly to the context and country needs.
50. **This is a pioneering project as it is the first initiative in the region aimed at capacity-building in fiscal management skills, and project implementation showed flexibility during execution.** Several respondents referred to the project as a pilot intervention, which entailed a process of learning by doing. It was a process of discovery and evolution, in which countries saw capacity not just as a technical matter, but also an organizational one (restructuring, number of people needed, among other things). As the project evolved, the project team in Port of Spain was receptive to the countries' needs, accepted feedback and discussed next steps.
51. Sixty percent of survey respondents considered that the project had conducted a consultation process in their countries, while the remaining 40% thought the opposite (see figure 2). The ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean presented the project in Saint Kitts and Nevis as an initiative for the economic planning and fiscal budget areas. It was seen as a top-down initiative, and a consultant from Barbados was sent to explore priority areas, identifying expenditure review as a critical topic for the country.

Figure 2
Survey question 2

Within the framework of the project, was a consultation process conducted with your country to identify and design project activities?



Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of the focal points' survey

52. **The main hypotheses that underpinned the project at the formulation stage remain valid and relevant; however, the initial approach and strategy were not fully adequate for attaining the objectives of the project.** Despite the relevance of the overall aim, the evaluation found that the project’s theory of change—which should describe how each input and activity contributes to the end goal—had some gaps and did not offer an adequate basis for measuring results. The main reservation on the relevance of the project is the absence of a clear rationale for how it contributes to the desired outcome of building capacities and reducing fiscal deficits.
53. The ultimate aim of the project—reducing the fiscal deficit and improving fiscal management skills—is highly relevant to the countries. Nevertheless, the project lacks a clear design to explain how national and regional workshops could improve national capacities, secure political will and overcome economic structural barriers to achieve good fiscal performance. Capacity-building processes take time and call for close follow-up of students. One workshop is not enough.
54. The evaluation identified an over-reliance on training, which contradicts available evidence on successful strategies in this area. Training improves the work of government agencies only if skills gaps are the primary constraint on their performance, rather than political barriers or understaffed units. Some of the training was of uncertain relevance to the target countries: for example, emphasis was placed on learning how to use the STATA software, which is one among many tools to perform statistical analysis. While six STATA software licenses were made available to each Ministry of Finance in the beneficiary countries, respondents that had taken part in STATA training stated that they did not have access to the software.
55. In Saint Kitts and Nevis, for example, the national workshop for technical staff from the ministries focused on expenditure review activities, which participants found worthwhile. However, it was felt that training on STATA software was too complicated and more relevant for people with a statistics background. Also, one week was considered insufficient to cover all topics, and people felt they were more familiar with other tools, such as Excel and other Microsoft products. Respondents mentioned that they did not have STATA licenses at their offices and, therefore, were unable to put their newly acquired knowledge to work. Eighty percent of survey respondents said that the project’s added value was of a medium level, while 20% said that the value added was high.
56. Face-to-face training lasted one week, which is not enough to cover all the critical topics such as regression modelling, estimation, data management, multilevel/mixed methods, panel-data analysis, among others. Online courses were provided, but participant workloads caused many to drop out, while others asked for time extensions. The impact of training was assessed with midpoint and post-training satisfaction surveys, with the aim of measuring usefulness of knowledge gained and the tools and methodologies used and identifying obstacles. These instruments are somewhat useful to assess participants’ results, but do not measure changes in institutional performance.
57. Reducing fiscal deficits requires capacity-building, but there are also other factors. In many cases, Caribbean countries lack fiscal management procedures for political reasons. In Saint Kitts and Nevis, respondents pointed out that political decisions were prioritized over technical ones. For example, an agreement was reached to assign US\$ 5 million to a fisheries project, but in the end only US\$ 500,000 were allocated because the government needed to split the budget among other ministries to avoid internal disputes. This shows how despite having technical skills in fiscal management, poor decisions can be made solely for political reasons.
- (b) To what extent was the proposed project in line with the activities and programme of work of ECLAC, specifically those of the subprogramme in charge of project implementation?
58. **The project is aligned with ECLAC work.** The project entitled “Strengthening the technical capacity of public finance managers in select Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS) to manage their public finances” is aligned with the strategic framework of ECLAC for 2014–2015. The

objective of Subprogramme 13: Subregional activities in the Caribbean, is “to strengthen the development process in the economic, social and environmental fields in the Caribbean and enhance its cooperation with Latin America.” The project aims to contribute to fulfilling this objective by helping to foster a more efficient management of public finances in the Caribbean, which will lead to improved economic growth and sustained financing for social protection programmes.

59. The project is aligned with the high-level objectives and policy choices of ECLAC, inasmuch as the Commission promotes economic and social development through regional and subregional cooperation and integration; gathers, organizes, interprets and disseminates information and data relating to the economic and social development of the region; provides advisory services to Governments at their request and plans, organizes and executes programmes of technical cooperation.³
60. Also, the project lays an essential foundation for the ECLAC proposal on debt for climate adaptation swaps by supporting the efforts of member States to improve their fiscal management capacities. Strengthening this capacity signals to creditors, international financial institutions and development partners that member States are committed to practicing prudent fiscal management, engaging in fiscal consolidation, improving the budgetary process through, among other things, forecasting revenue and expenditure, and achieving and maintaining a sustainable debt profile.

3.2 EFFICIENCY

FINDING 2: Measurement of the outputs (qualitative and quantitative) in relation to the inputs, including complementarity (the extent to which the activities and the outcomes of the project have been able to establish and/or exploit synergies with other actions implemented by ECLAC, other United Nations bodies or local organizations) and value added (the extent to which the project's activities and outcomes have confirmed the advantages of ECLAC involvement, primarily by promoting human rights and gender equality).

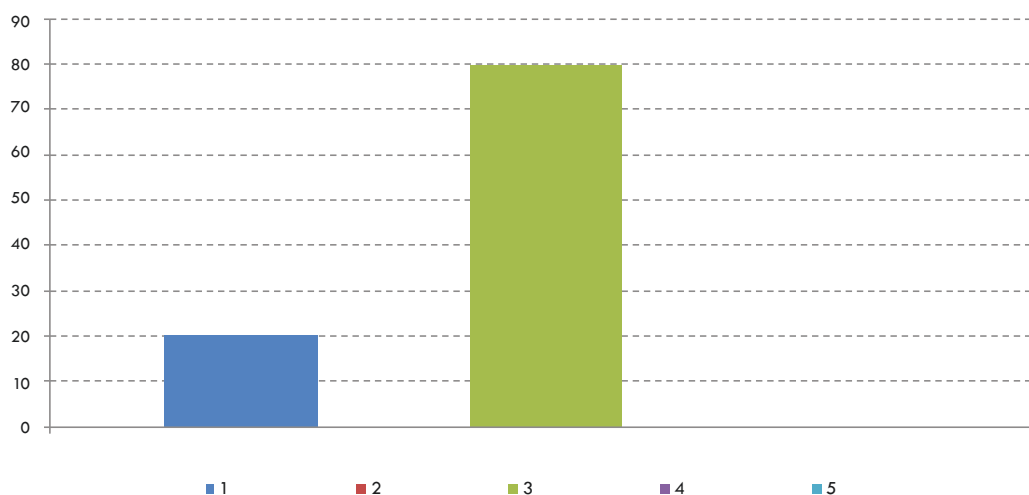
- (a) Are services and support provided in a timely and reliable manner, according to the priorities established by the project document?
61. **The evaluation found that the project goals were ambitious** as the intention was to contribute to improving fiscal management skills and reducing the deficit in various countries with a limited budget. The project's total budget of US\$ 492,000 to cover six countries over a three-year period is a limited amount of money to develop activities in different countries and achieve the expected results. This was felt by most respondents in the field.
62. **Despite external factors affecting implementation, the project delivered most of its planned activities.** The project delivered all country assessments and national and regional workshops, but did not deliver the country pilot programmes to develop institutional business plans, and in some cases the expected technical assistance visits were not conducted. According to financial reports, the project executed US\$ 313,941 out of the US\$ 492,000 initially budgeted. This delivery rate of 63% is somewhat low regarding implementation. Additionally, there were obstacles and issues related to governments' capacities, such as understaffed offices, turnover rates, high workloads and lack of resources in general. This meant that focal points and participants were too busy with many responsibilities, leaving little to no time for project activities. Data collection was also an issue, particularly because of the quality of existing data and the fact that, in some cases, officials did not share data and in many cases, there was an absence of consolidated or centralized databases. Respondents expressed their satisfaction with timeliness from ECLAC and mentioned that delays were due to internal matters such as lack of resources or staff.

³ ECLAC mandate and mission. "Organization of the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean," Secretary-General's bulletin, 7 February 2000, ST/SGB/2000/5.

63. Some countries were holding elections during the project implementation period, which led to a shift in focus at times, but also to delays on account of staff turnover. When governments changed, the project had to restart from the beginning raising awareness and training staff.
64. There were also significant gaps between project milestones; for example, in Antigua and Barbuda, the country review was conducted in 2014, the national workshop a year later in 2015, the regional workshop in 2016 and data collection began in 2017. This year-long gap between activities affected continuity and efficiency as learning and awareness rates drop.
65. Other factors affecting efficiency were beyond the project's control, such as adverse weather conditions and disasters. The hurricane that affected some countries led to unexpected delays as their focus changed; for example, in Saint Kitts and Nevis the pilot business plans with Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Education never materialized because of timing issues and the hurricane.
66. Procurement and administrative procedures also affected efficiency at times. For example, in Belize, the vendors chosen by the focal point for venue and catering services were required to register as business partners in the ECLAC system to receive payment. This proved to be a longer-than-expected process. To facilitate hiring of the chosen vendor and the timely delivery of the workshop, the Ministry of Finance kindly agreed to provide advance payment, since ECLAC was unable to do this. ECLAC subsequently reimbursed the Ministry of Finance for the unforeseen expenditure relating to the final payment to the caterer. Some focal points brought attention to the delays in payment reported by some vendors for services delivered during the national training workshops, once again due to ECLAC administrative procedures and issues finalizing procurement processes.
67. Overall, opinions collected in the survey reflect that 1 out of 5 respondents thought the project was inefficient for different reasons, while 4 out of 5 respondents thought the project was somewhat efficient. None stated it was efficient or highly efficient (see figure 3).

Figure 3
Survey question 3
 (Percentage of responses)

In your opinion, how efficient and timely was the project's implementation?
 (from 1 = Inefficient to 5 = Highly Efficient)



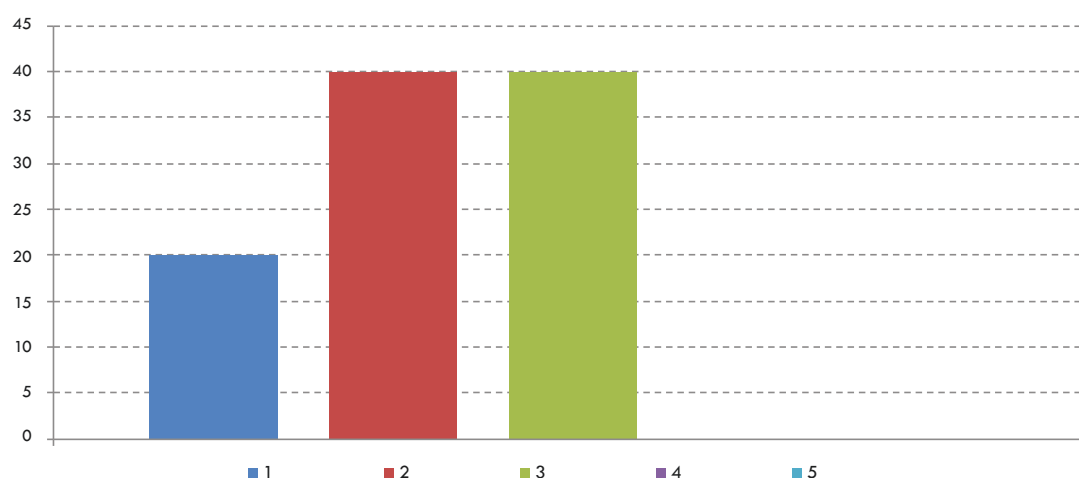
Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of the focal points' survey

- (b) What collaboration and coordination mechanisms are there within ECLAC and with other cooperating agencies to ensure efficiencies and coherent responses? Were any complementarities and synergies with other work developed by ECLAC identified?
68. **Collaboration and coordination mechanisms within ECLAC and with other cooperating agencies were limited to the joint work with ILPES, as at the time of implementation there were no comparable initiatives.** ILPES was a strategic partner at the outset of project implementation in the areas of country assessments and training programme design.
69. During field visits, when asked about coordination of the project with similar initiatives, most respondents stated that there were no similar projects at that time. During the implementation period, international cooperation and development partners did not conduct interventions to reduce the fiscal deficit through capacity-building in the Caribbean. Eighty percent of survey respondents graded coordination efforts between 2 and 3 on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being “insufficient” and 5 “excellent” (see figure 4).

Figure 4
Survey question 4

(Percentage of responses)

What was the level of coordination with similar interventions in your country?
(from 1 = Insufficient to 5 = Excellent)



Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of the focal points' survey

3.3 EFFECTIVENESS

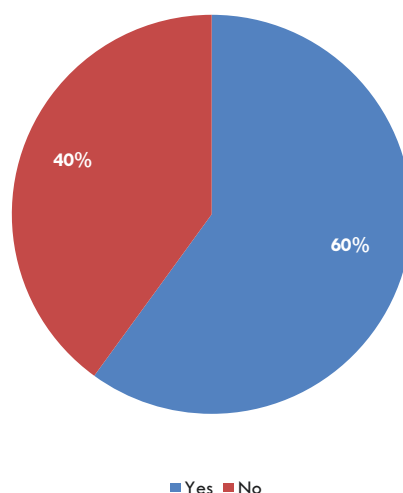
FINDING 3: The extent to which the activities attained their goals and expected accomplishments

- (a) To what extent were the project's primary beneficiaries satisfied with the services they received?
- (b) What were the outcomes identified by the beneficiaries?
- (c) To what extent have workshop and seminar participants improved their knowledge?

70. It is difficult to measure the results of programmes aimed at capacity- building. Progress tends to be slow and uneven, attribution of results is problematic and potential context volatility makes it difficult to sustain activities long enough to assess results. In recognizing this, the evaluation examined whether ECLAC had adopted a results-based approach to designing, implementing and monitoring its programmes, based on general good programming principles and on the available evidence on what does and does not work in capacity-building aid programming.
71. **The evaluator found that ECLAC had, to a certain extent, implemented a results management process, recording basic information on the project's achievements in the countries, but that the monitoring and evaluation process was inadequate to measure progress towards results and to provide feedback to strategic decision-making processes.** The project document included a results framework, monitoring indicators, problem and solution trees and annual reports. However, it lacked plausible indicators, baselines, verification sources, targets or milestones, and therefore had no way of assessing whether or not the project was achieving its intended results. This relates to the lack of a detailed theory of change to describe how results will be achieved through inputs, activities and outputs.
72. **During the field phase, respondents showed mixed levels of satisfaction.** Interviewees stated that they appreciated the knowledge gained but regretted the lack of opportunities for putting it into practice. Also, 60% of survey respondents considered that project outputs were satisfactory, while 40% considered they were not (see figure 5).

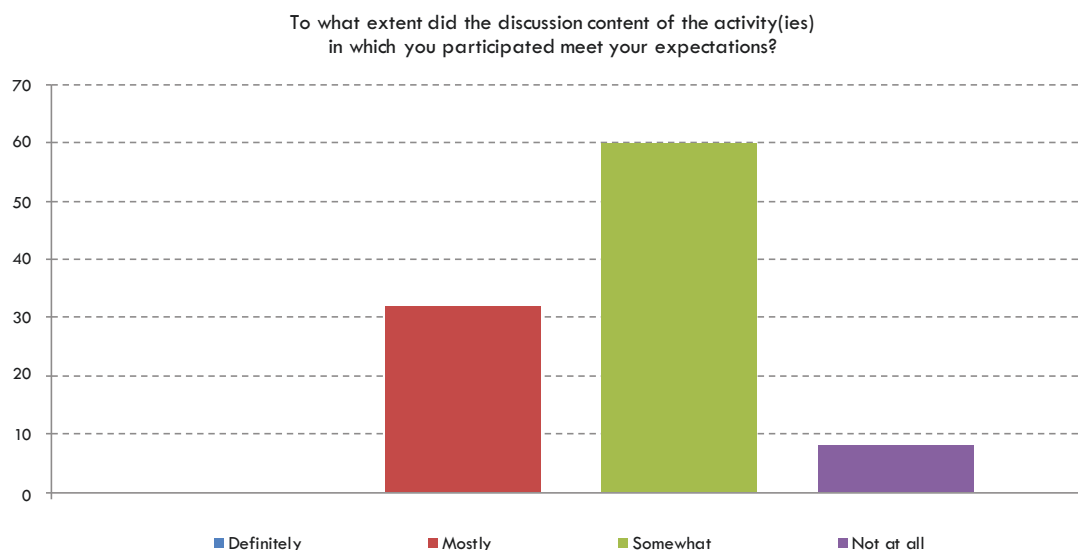
Figure 5
Survey question 5

Were the outputs of the project satisfactory?



Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of the focal points' survey

Figure 6
Survey question 6
 (Percentage of responses)

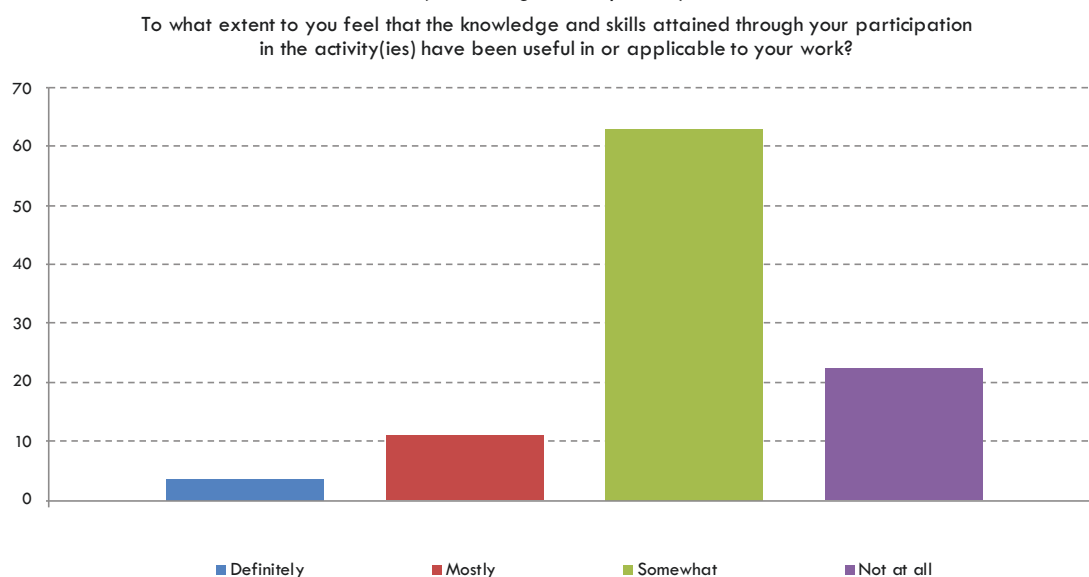


Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of the participants' survey

73. **The main outcome of the project was increased awareness of expenditure review, efficiency and fiscal management concepts, but this did not lead to results or changes at the institutional level.** Interviewees who participated in workshops and seminars felt they had gained significant knowledge on budget efficiency, expenditure review and forecasting, with the majority stating it was the first time they had learned about these topics.
74. One of the critical results highlighted by respondents during the field phase was their increased awareness about the need for appropriate data for policy formulation and efficient project execution and design. It is vital that Caribbean countries report and integrate financial figures into the operational narratives of each ministry. For example, in countries like Antigua and Barbuda, respondents said that the project raised awareness on vital budgeting topics like analysing spending versus results.
75. Participants identified specific weaknesses in data collection, communication between institutions and strategic evidence-based decision-making. Respondents in Antigua and Barbuda were of the view that the project increased people's awareness of budgeting processes and the need for long-term budgeting rather than one-year efforts.
76. As a result of awareness-raising workshops and training, people from different institutions realized they had been planning in silos, without communicating with other sectors and institutions, and recognized the implicit inefficiency in the use of resources and the potential duplication of efforts. For example, in Antigua and Barbuda, respondents stated that the project had "opened the eyes of senior managers to the need for keeping quality data and sharing data across ministries to shape policy formulation." In Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Ministry of Health launched a tool to track expenditure and results, and the Ministry of Education initiated discussions about specific data to create an in-house database, but the hurricane derailed the initial momentum. Despite these examples, the evaluation could not find evidence of budgeting decisions that had been based on the training provided by the project.
77. After the country assessments and the national and regional workshops, 2017 had been earmarked as the year for business plan changes, after considering the expenditure reviews. Unfortunately, it was not possible to include the business plan component and no data was collected. In the end, the project prioritized integrity of data, centralization of databases and information management. At the regional level, the project fostered exchanges between staff members of different countries, which proved useful for the exchange of ideas and best practices in fiscal management.

78. **The implementation of the project allowed the Economic Development unit of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean to strengthen its relationship with the region's countries.** The project has paved the way for relationship-building with various governments, as is the case with the Government of Belize, with which meetings continue to be held with a view to expanding activities and initiatives in 2018. These developments were confirmed by respondents in Belize and by the project's team.
79. Respondents considered that intermittent training through workshops —without follow-up from the project— and the focus on specific tools like STATA was not necessarily conducive to implementing knowledge and improving skills in fiscal management. The time spent on STATA was considered not particularly useful, given participant background, complexity of the tool and the fact that not all participants had access to the software as the project had only purchased six software licenses. Survey results point to a negative perception about skills attainment: 90% of respondents considered that the project was somewhat useful or not at all useful for improving skills and knowledge, only 10% said it was mostly useful, while no one stated that it was definitely useful (see figure 7).

Figure 7
Survey question 7
 (Percentage of responses)



Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of the participants' survey.

- (d) Has the project made any difference in the behaviours/attitudes/skills/performance of beneficiaries?
- (e) To what extent were project activities effective in building capacities and influencing policymaking?
- (f) Are there any tangible policies stemming from project contributions?
80. **In general, respondents felt that the project had fostered better conditions for expenditure review at the technical level;** staff at institutions were more interested in results, expenditure alignment and forecasting. There was also greater awareness about potential cross-ministerial work and standardization. For example, in Saint Kitts and Nevis, respondents mentioned that budgeting was too simplistic; simply following fundamental trends, trying to satisfy all stakeholders, responding to contingencies, among other things. Different sectors worked in silos, but now beneficiaries are aware of the need for long-term planning and achieving unified goals, with resources from different sectors, and avoiding duplication. This could be achieved by analysing the number workers per product/activity, calculating productivity and reallocating resources.

81. **The project made a difference in the awareness and attitude towards the concepts of efficiency and budgeting.** The project was successful in raising awareness about fiscal management and expenditure review, but there is no evidence of the knowledge and skills attained through the workshops and technical assistance visits. The project did not evaluate students and not all the participants completed all training courses; exit surveys were conducted after each workshop and there was a mid-term review survey, but no knowledge testing was done. Respondents expressed the opinion that the lack of continuity affected capacity-building as training requires sustained interventions and follow-up over time. Also, understaffed offices and high workloads affect training effectiveness.
82. **Regarding the effectiveness of project activities in building capacities and influencing policymaking, the evaluation could not find substantial evidence of policymaking changes.** Influencing government agendas and approaches to fiscal management is an important part of the work of ECLAC. This is only possible in very few cases as budgeting is a highly political process. In Antigua and Barbuda, it was clear that the Finance Secretary (who serves as deputy to the Minister of Finance) was aware of the need for better expenditure reviews and budgeting processes, but no formal decisions were made regarding budgeting and policymaking based on project inputs. Elsewhere, the evaluation observed influencing efforts that seemed to have limited prospects of success.
83. To reduce the risk of failure, the project should have had explicit policy influence goals and strategies, a clear rationale for the level of investment and at least some mechanisms for measuring outcomes. The evaluation found that ECLAC did not clearly coordinate its influence goals with other project activities and did not report on these types of outcomes. ECLAC influencing efforts would benefit from more consistently clear goals and strategies, and from progress monitoring. Very few respondents said that project activities had contributed to the ultimate aim of reducing the fiscal deficit (see figures 8 and 9).

Figure 8
Survey question 8
(Percentage of responses)

To what extent do you think the application of the knowledge/processes/techniques acquired by participating in this project have contributed/can contribute in the future to reducing your country's fiscal deficit?

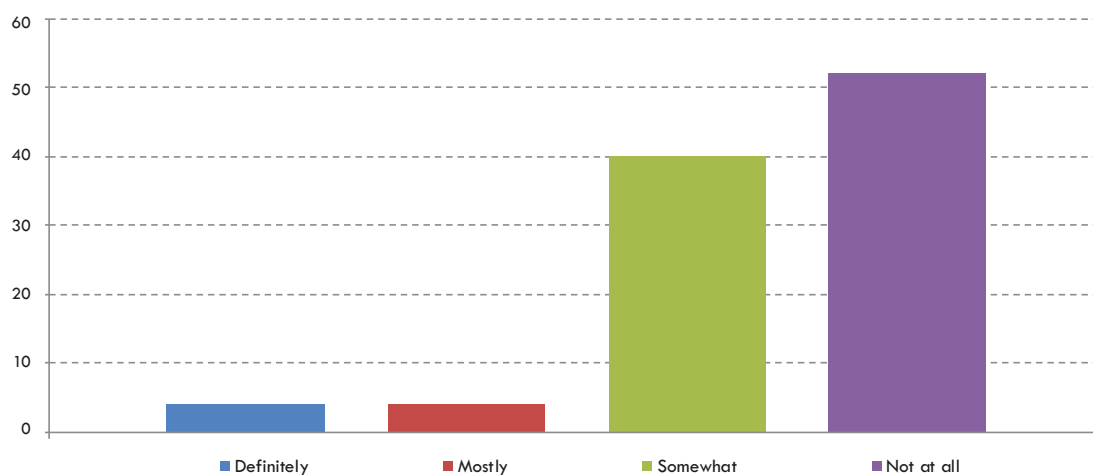


Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of the focal points' survey

Figure 9
Survey question 9

(Percentage of responses)

To what extent do you think that this project has contributed to reducing your country's fiscal deficit?



Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of the participants' survey

84. **Regarding knowledge management and sharing of best practices to maximize results, other than the regional workshop, countries were not part of a systematic learning process, or knowledge management strategy.** Annual reviews were not always shared with countries, there was no practice of identifying and sharing best practices, and ECLAC did not generally share knowledge with external partners. While confidentiality may preclude the sharing of some information, respondents considered that this inhibited learning. As a key stakeholder in the region, ECLAC could make a much more significant contribution to regional knowledge on effective capacity-building and fiscal management.
85. Respondents identified best practices such as: (i) the provision of manuals for expenditure review, (ii) training based on real information and using examples from participant ministries (with real data), (iii) knowledgeable facilitators, and (iv) the project's theoretical and pragmatic approach.

3.3.1 ANALYSIS OF EXPECTED RESULTS VERSUS PROGRESS:

86. **One of the difficulties in assessing accomplishments was the lack of a project baseline.** The lack of a snapshot of the existing situation makes it hard to measure changes and assess the level of impact. The evaluation identified a lack of project metrics and indicators to measure results at the outcome level. Notwithstanding that including an indicator at the macroeconomic level would be too ambitious—inasmuch as changing the fiscal deficit in different countries would be too difficult—the project could have measured outcome level indicators to monitor progress towards results; for example, the number of pilot programmes implemented, number of adopted policies, number of budgets adjusted, among others.
87. The following is an overall assessment of the log frame indicators and results:

Expected Accomplishment	Indicator of achievement (T0)	Means of verification	Indicator of achievement (T1)	Comments on indicators	Comments on progress towards results
EA1	Increased knowledge and skills of public finance managers in managing and forecasting public expenditure and revenue				
EA1 (IA.1)	Increased number of public finance practitioners applying skills and techniques acquired from workshops in day-to-day fiscal management, including the use of the reference guide (0)	Work assignment charts from the ministries of finance and planning detailing the number of persons who are using the skills and techniques learned at training in their daily work	Nineteen practitioners agreed or strongly agreed that they had increased their application of skills and techniques acquired at the workshops	The indicator could be improved as the use of acquired concepts is subjective and does not measure the impact on capacity-building. If participants do not have the intended role and profile, their opinion is not useful for assessing institutional changes. The means of verification changed from the assignment charts to the survey, but surveys are useful to capture perception and satisfaction, not to verify the application of skills and knowledge because of potential biases as respondents may not wish to commit to a negative answer.	Results from field interviews, documents and surveys indicate that the participants were somewhat satisfied with the training provided. They appreciated learning about public expenditure and revenue concepts but did not find STATA software training useful, as it took up a substantial amount of time. Additionally, high staff turnover in institutions affected training sustainability.
EA1 (IA.2)	At least 75% of workshop participants acknowledging their capacity to manage and forecast government expenditure and revenue has increased (0)	Surveys to be conducted after the workshops	63.1% of workshop participants surveyed. Of the 65 participants who responded to a survey on this indicator, 41 (63.1%) acknowledged that their capacity to manage and forecast government expenditure and revenue had increased.	This is a good indicator to assess satisfaction but not capacity-building (e.g. learning how to use STATA without the license to use the software). It would have been interesting to learn about dropout rates, or changes in the grades of participants from different areas (with baseline and endline scores)	

EA2	Improved public finance management systems to facilitate sustainable revenue and expenditure management operations				
EA2 (IA.1)	All beneficiary countries have integrated or are in the process of integrating the training programmes and techniques into their public financial management systems	Follow-up checks to find out the extent to which countries have implemented the framework for mainstreaming training in their public finance management systems	Three countries: Barbados (Finance) Belize (Education) and Saint Kitts and Nevis (Health)	The indicator should only measure the number of countries that have incorporated the techniques, as it is difficult to objectively measure the number of countries that are in the process of doing so. The means of verification should be strong evidence from official documents, budgets, plans and reports.	No evidence was found of the application of public expenditure and revenue concepts in public finance management systems in Saint Kitts and Nevis or Barbados

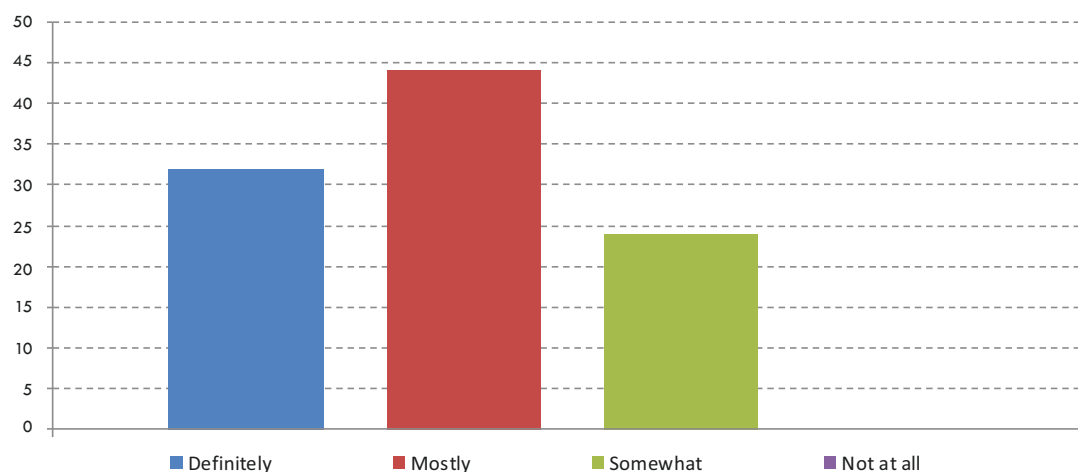
3.4 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

FINDING 4: How and to what extent human rights, gender issues and other overarching strategies, including the achievement of the SDGs, were considered in the project and its activities.

- 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?
88. As required by United Nations and ECLAC guidelines, gender mainstreaming and furthering the role of women in capacity-building are a central requirement of the ECLAC agenda. The rationale is that programmes based on a gender-sensitive analysis are more likely to be effective in addressing the specific needs, capabilities and experiences of the whole society in question, including women, men, boys, girls and gender minorities.
89. **The central commitment to gender sensitivity and to furthering the role of women in national development is not yet consistently mirrored at the project level.** The evaluation found that project documents did not include a dedicated gender mainstreaming strategy, probably owing to the project's institutional focus. From interviews, it was understood that achieving gender equality also meant, for example, ensuring that women were included among workshop participants. Survey results also indicate that most respondents thought that women's participation in the project was satisfactory (see figure 10).

Figure 10
Survey question 10
 (Percentage of responses)

To what extent do you think that the participation of women was satisfactory in the activity(ies) in which you participated within the framework of the project?



Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of the participants' survey

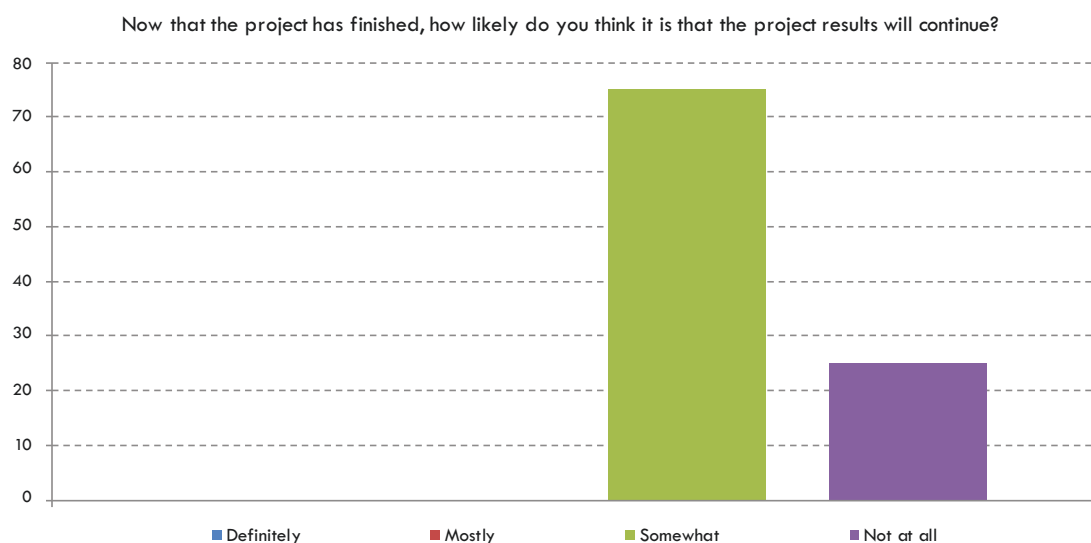
90. **Although there were no specific or clear gender mainstreaming strategies, women and men were included in the different project activities and gender-disaggregated data were generated.** However, it is challenging for a project aimed at strengthening institutional capacities to be gender-sensitive.
91. The project is designed to benefit government capacities to address fiscal deficits, which, in turn, should contribute to reducing poverty rates, increasing resources available for social investment and, in the longer term, reaching the most marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- (c) How has the project contributed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
92. **The project aims to provide an enabling economic environment to achieve the SDGs.** The project's objective was to increase the capacity of policymakers and public finance managers of selected Caribbean SIDS to apply methods and procedures for better management and forecasting of public expenditure and revenue. Reducing the fiscal gap is a major priority for Caribbean countries to progress towards achieving the SDGs. Social investment in small economies is vulnerable to external factors such as devaluation, inflation and reduced public expenditure among others.
93. Its aim of improving coordination across government departments and ministries is appropriate inasmuch as improving expenditure reviews entails the joint efforts of all State actors. Caribbean countries benefit from holistic interventions targeting all key stakeholders and achieving the SDGs demands joint efforts and multi-disciplinary approaches.
94. Despite project alignment with the SDGs, it is difficult to say that it actually contributed to their achievement; the lack of a baseline and of a clear theory of change linking inputs with results make it difficult to assess the project's contribution.

3.5 SUSTAINABILITY

FINDING 5: The extent to which the benefits of the project are likely to continue after funding has been withdrawn, including long-term impact, dissemination and replication.

95. **Efforts were made to ensure that the project would be sustainable, but the lack of measurable results will limit the chances that benefits will be sustained after it comes to an end.** The desired outcome was to improve fiscal management in the target countries by building the capacities of key staff members. However, implementation continuity was affected by internal and external factors, and effectiveness was hindered by staff turnover, large workloads and understaffed offices. In countries like Saint Kitts and Nevis, consultants were brought from Barbados. Respondents believed that project sustainability would suffer for these reasons, and survey results showed that no one considered that the project “definitely” or “mostly” sustainable, with most respondents answering “somewhat” and a few “not at all” (see figure 11).

Figure 11
Survey question 11
 (Percentage of responses)



Source: Prepared by the author, on the basis of the focal points' survey

96. Furthermore, no evidence of policy influence was found. No formal commitments were signed with governments and no official policies were formulated to apply the concepts related to fiscal management, expenditure review and deficit reduction. It is unlikely that specific training on the use of statistical analysis tools like the Stata software will be sustainable because only six licenses were purchased under the project.
97. The evaluator acknowledged efforts to make the project sustainable, such as written manuals, the online Moodle training platform for self-paced training, the technical assistance provided by the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean and other training materials

4. LESSONS LEARNED

98. Buy-in of the project at the highest level was mixed. Thus, it will be very important for future interventions to receive feedback from the target countries to identify needs. All projects should aim to respond to a need expressed by the countries as well as match the programme of work and priorities of ECLAC.
99. The holding of awareness-raising workshops was successful as it made it possible to present the project, its scope and expectations to the beneficiary countries and key stakeholders. Future projects can benefit from an awareness-raising process, which increases their impact by framing the expectations of beneficiaries, as well as defining the scope, roadmap and commitment of all parties regarding the resources required (human, financial, time, among others).
100. In some cases, high-level authorities did not attend project activities because of their tight agendas. To gain greater buy-in from high-level decision makers, future projects must take advantage of existing regional events, such as meetings of OECS and CARICOM ministers, where these types of initiatives could be included, thus obviating separate events. Likewise, initial diagnoses in the countries sought solutions tailored to their needs, national priorities, and contexts.
101. Development interventions in the Caribbean face many challenges, including the lack of capacity in some countries. In a region made up of SIDS, the possibility of executing resources and implementing activities efficiently is likely to be constrained by the limited capacities of the countries themselves. Thus, all future interventions need to meet this challenge and establish risk mitigation strategies.
102. In some cases, the commitment demanded by the project was not achieved due to lack of staff, and in some cases lack of will. Thus, it is essential to secure commitment from the beginning of the project to avoid implementation and sustainability difficulties.
103. The designation of national focal points was considered a good practice of the project as it enabled progress on logistics issues, empowerment, coordination and improved communication with the targeted countries.
104. The project had limited resources and aimed to cover different countries with mixed results. Future projects with limited resources should prioritize depth rather than breadth. It is more critical to achieve impact in a few countries than to aim for broader coverage.
105. A lesson learned from the implementation of the project was that participants' profiles need to be more specific and based on the project's requirements. In some cases, the profiles or roles of participants meant they were unable to take advantage of the knowledge acquired during the workshops, and so the expected capacity-building did not materialize. It is imperative to apply specific criteria for selecting participants in project activities. Furthermore, ECLAC must insist that only participants meeting the required profile criteria can take part in the workshops.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 RELEVANCE

106. Project objectives and expected achievements are relevant to, and well aligned with, the development priorities and needs of the subregion's countries. These priorities have not changed significantly since the beginning of the initiative and continue to be centred on improving economic health in targeted countries.
107. The project design was ambitious as it aimed for long-term impact in multiple countries, despite its limited resources. This approach, aiming for breadth rather than depth, may have led to scattered activities. Future action should aim for initiatives that have greater impact in fewer countries, with the option of scaling up.
108. The approach was unclear, as the project lacked a clear theory of change, with specific links between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes.

5.2 EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

109. The project's delivery rate was poor; efficiency in implementation and delivery was affected by the number of target countries, slow responses from some country partners, understaffed government offices, turnover rates, elections and natural disasters.
110. The project's internal monitoring system was inadequate and appeared to focus mainly on activities and expenditure levels. Progress tracking based on delivery levels (i.e. rates of expenditure) is somewhat misleading, although a common practice of many donors, including ECLAC. Effectiveness was affected by shortcomings in recording results and data management.
111. The project's main outcome was greater awareness on expenditure review, efficiency and fiscal management, although this did not translate into institutional results or changes. The project made a difference in the awareness of and attitude towards the concepts of efficiency and budgeting. Nevertheless, regarding the effectiveness of the project activities in building capacities and influencing policymaking, the evaluation could not find substantial evidence on policymaking changes.
112. The lack of a knowledge-management strategy for identifying and sharing best practices and lessons learned was a missed opportunity considering that the project was implemented in different countries.
113. As the main project beneficiaries were institutions, it was difficult for the project design to include human rights and gender strategies. Nevertheless, during implementation, efforts were made to include both men and women in all project activities.

5.3 SUSTAINABILITY

114. Factors hindering effectiveness, such as government response, also threaten the project's sustainability as the evaluation could not find any evidence of activities that were sustained over time.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on conclusions 2, 3 and 9

For ECLAC: For future projects, special care should be taken during the design phase with respect to relevance, the rationale for intervention and achieving the desired impact. Projects must have a theory of change from the outset, identifying the chain of specific results, roles, and responsibilities.

- Future interventions need to identify the expected outputs and outcomes and to develop a theory of change describing the path from inputs to results (outputs and outcomes). The theory of change should include assumptions and be linked to a risk log.

Based on conclusions 2 and 4

For ECLAC: Future projects will require a risk log listing the potential risks and clear mitigation strategies. It is critical to ensure that beneficiary countries have the available resources (dedicated staff) from the outset to implement project activities. Countries with appropriate legal frameworks are more likely to succeed.

- All projects must include a risk assessment with specific mitigation measures.
- Every project of regional or subregional scope should include selection criteria to prioritize the countries targeted for intervention. Availability of resources and political will (commitments, agreements, MoUs, letters of intent, among other things) should be prioritized.
- It would be desirable to validate these theories of change and risk logs with target groups and countries.

Based on conclusions 3, 4 and 5

For ECLAC: Monitoring and evaluation, based on specific and verifiable results indicators—which allow for greater control over processes and results—are essential to the success of projects.

- All projects should go beyond the results framework and develop a monitoring and evaluation system, with clearly defined progress and results indicators, sources of information and verification, roles and responsibilities (data upload and analysis), reporting procedures, among other things.
- All indicators need a baseline to analyse evolution and change.

Based on conclusions 6 and 9

For ECLAC: project design for capacity-building must be meticulous and take into account participants' profiles, topics to be covered, methodologies, study loads, time frame for achieving the desired results and evaluation. Future interventions need to take into account the fact that capacity-building requires a sustained effort over time, as well as a rigorous follow-up process.

- In capacity-building projects, detailed profiles of those participating in training must be provided, and institutions should clarify the time available for training and the job stability of participants, as well as existing channels for sharing workshop knowledge with other colleagues, among other things.

Based on conclusion 7

For ECLAC: Pilot projects must have a knowledge management strategy to identify and share lessons learned and best practices among key stakeholders at the national and regional level.

- All projects must include a knowledge management strategy from the outset, to clearly define how the best practices will be identified, recorded and shared.
- This knowledge management strategy should include templates for case studies, best practices, stories from the field (texts or audios from key stakeholders), testimonials, among other things.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1	TERMS OF REFERENCE
ANNEX 2	LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED
ANNEX 3	SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES
ANNEX 4	INTERVIEW GUIDELINES
ANNEX 5	TIMELINE
ANNEX 6	EVALUATION MATRIX
ANNEX 7	RISK, LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATIONS STRATEGIES
ANNEX 8	EVALUATOR'S REVISION MATRIX

ANNEX 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation of the Development Account Project ROA 289-9

Strengthening the technical capacity of public finance managers in select Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to manage their public finances

I. Introduction

1. This assessment is in accordance with 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 programmes to 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. Evaluation Topic

2. This evaluation is an end-of-cycle review of a subregional project aimed at strengthening the capacity of the small island developing States of the Caribbean to effectively manage their public expenditure, revenue and debt. This would be achieved through a series of integrated activities aimed at increasing the capacity and skills and upgrading public finance management systems to ensure the achievement of the objective. To this end, the activities conducted under the project will serve to: increase the knowledge and skills of the public finance managers; support member States in the application of improved public finance practices; and improve public finance management systems.

III. Objective of the Evaluation

3. The objective of this evaluation 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 project objective was to increase the capacity of policy-makers and public finance managers of selected Caribbean SIDS to apply methods and procedures for better management and forecasting of public expenditure and revenue.
5. The evaluation will place an important emphasis on identifying lessons learned and good practices that derive from the project's implementation, sustainability and the potential of replicating them in other countries.
6. The lessons learned and good practices in the actual project implementation will in turn be used as tools for the future planning and implementation of projects.

IV. Background

The Development Account

7. 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.
8. 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 development issues that are often only marginally dealt with by other development partners at the 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 arena, particularly in areas where such expertise does not reside in the capacities of the UN country teams.
9. 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, and the emphasis on integration of national expertise in the projects to ensure national ownership and sustainability of project outcomes.
10. DA projects are being implemented by global and regional entities, cover all regions of the globe and focus on five thematic clusters.¹ 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.
11. ECLAC undertakes internal evaluations of each of its DA projects in accordance with DA requirements.

The project

12. The project under evaluation is part of the projects approved under this account for the 9th Tranche (2014-2017). It was implemented by the Economic Commission for Latin America and The Caribbean (ECLAC), specifically its Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, with substantive and technical support from Instituto Latinoamericano y del Caribe de Planificación Económica y Social (ILPES).
13. The original duration of this project was approximately three and half years (2014 –2017), with activities having started in August 2014.

¹ Development Account projects are implemented in the following thematic clusters: Governance and institution building; social development; statistics; sustainable development, environment and natural resources; and trade, economics and finance. See also UN Development Account website: <http://www.un.org/esa/devaccount/projects/active/theme.html>.

14. The 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.
15. The project's objective as stated above is "to increase the capacity of policy-makers and public finance managers of selected Caribbean SIDS to apply methods and procedures for better management and forecasting of public expenditure and revenue."² The project focused on six small island developing States in the Caribbean.
16. The expected accomplishments were defined as follows:
 - EA1: Increased knowledge and skills of public finance managers in managing and forecasting public expenditure and revenue.
 - EA2: Improved public finance management systems to facilitate sustainable revenue and expenditure management operations.
17. To achieve the expected accomplishments above, the following activities were originally planned:
 - (A1.1) Undertake a study and assessment of the skills and knowledge of the selected public finance managers and the processes and procedures that they employ in their work.
 - (A1.2) Develop a training manual (informed by the findings of the assessment) that contains specific guidelines on budgeting and other fiscal management approaches, including techniques on cash management, expenditure control, revenue and expenditure forecasting for use during the workshop.
 - (A1.3) Conduct six regional training workshops in different areas of managing and forecasting public expenditure and revenue, such as budget execution and procurement, tax and revenue administration, financial programming and forecasting and expenditure control and cash management.
 - (A1.4) Undertake one technical advisory mission to each beneficiary country, to provide more targeted assistance and capacity development to foster sustainability.
 - (A2.1) Conduct national seminars to enhance policy makers' understanding of the need to commit financial and technical resources to strengthen their public finance management systems, and to provide guidelines for public finance policy makers on how to incorporate methods and techniques of training into their public finance management systems.
 - (A2.2) Undertake one technical advisory mission to each beneficiary country to provide more specific assistance on strengthening their public finance management systems.
18. The budget for the project totalled US\$ 492,000. Progress reports were prepared on a yearly basis and a final report should be prepared at the end of the project.

Stakeholder Analysis

19. Project beneficiaries included policy makers in the ministries of Finance and Planning, public finance officers in the ministries of Finance and Planning and officers in other line ministries who are responsible for forecasting budget revenues, matching them with expenditures, and designing management systems.

² See Annex 1: Project Document.

V. Guiding Principles

20. 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).³
21. It is expected that ECLAC's guiding principles to the evaluation process will be applied⁴ throughout the evaluation process. In particular, special consideration should be taken to assess the extent to which ECLAC's activities and outputs respected and promoted human rights.⁵ 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.
22. 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.
23. 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.⁶
24. The evaluation will also include an assessment of the project's contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
25. Evaluators are also expected to respect UNEG's ethical principles as per its "Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation":⁷
 - Independence: Evaluators shall ensure that independence of judgment is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
 - Impartiality: Evaluators shall operate in an impartial and unbiased manner and give a balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the policy, programme, project or organizational unit being evaluated.
 - Conflict of Interest: Evaluators are required to disclose in writing any past experience, which may give rise to a potential conflict of interest, and to deal honestly in resolving any conflict of interest which may arise.
 - Honesty and Integrity: Evaluators shall show honesty and integrity in their own behaviour, negotiating honestly the evaluation costs, tasks, limitations, scope of results likely to be obtained, while accurately presenting their procedures, data and findings and highlighting any limitations or uncertainties of interpretation within the evaluation.

³ Norms and Standards for Evaluation, UNEG, June 2016. <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>. UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, UNEG, March 2008. <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>.

⁴ See ECLAC, "Preparing and Conducting Evaluations: ECLAC Guidelines" (2009) and ECLAC, "Evaluation Policy and Strategy" (2014) for a full description of its guiding principles.

⁵ For further reference see UNEG "Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations" (2014), <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>.

⁶ *Human rights and gender perspective*.

⁷ UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, UNEG, March 2008 (<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>).

- **Competence:** Evaluators shall accurately represent their level of skills and knowledge and work only within the limits of their professional training and abilities in evaluation, declining assignments for which they do not have the skills and experience to complete successfully.
- **Accountability:** Evaluators are accountable for the completion of the agreed evaluation deliverables within the timeframe and budget agreed, while operating in a cost effective manner.
- **Obligations to Participants:** Evaluators shall respect and protect the rights and welfare of human subjects and communities, in accordance with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights conventions. Evaluators shall respect differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity, while using evaluation instruments appropriate to the cultural setting. Evaluators shall ensure prospective participants are treated as autonomous agents, free to choose whether to participate in the evaluation, while ensuring that the relatively powerless are represented.
- **Confidentiality:** Evaluators shall respect people's right to provide information in confidence and make participants aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality, while ensuring that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source.
- **Avoidance of Harm:** Evaluators shall act to minimize risks and harms to, and burdens on, those participating in the evaluation, without compromising the integrity of the evaluation findings.
- **Accuracy, Completeness and Reliability:** Evaluators have an obligation to ensure that evaluation reports and presentations are accurate, complete and reliable. Evaluators shall explicitly justify judgments, findings and conclusions and show their underlying rationale, so that stakeholders are in a position to assess them.
- **Transparency:** Evaluators shall clearly communicate to stakeholders the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria applied and the intended use of findings. Evaluators shall ensure that stakeholders have a say in shaping the evaluation and shall ensure that all documentation is readily available to and understood by stakeholders.
- **Omissions and wrongdoing:** Where evaluators find evidence of wrong-doing or unethical conduct, they are obliged to report it to the proper oversight authority.

VI. Scope of the evaluation

26. In line with the evaluation objective, the scope of the evaluation will cover all the activities implemented by the project. The assessment will review the benefits gained 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.
27. 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 and priorities of Member States, the needs and priorities of the region and the mandates and programme of work of ECLAC.
28. It will also assess various aspects related to the way in which 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 subregional, 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

29. The evaluation 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, workshop and meeting 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. If 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.
 - (d) **Field visits:** The consultant in charge of the evaluation will visit 1-2 beneficiary countries in the region with a view to gauge the opinion of High level officials and authorities with regards to the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the interventions of the project.
30. 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

31. This evaluation encompasses the different stages of the given project, including its design, process and results, 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 analysis.⁸ The responses to these questions are intended to explain “the extent to which,” “why,” and “how” specific outcomes were attained.
32. 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.

Efficiency

- (a) Collaboration and coordination mechanisms within ECLAC and with other cooperating agencies that ensure efficiencies and coherence of response;
- (b) Provision of services and support in a timely and reliable manner, according to the priorities established by the project document;
- (c) Were there any complementarities and synergies with the other work being developed by ECLAC?

Effectiveness

- (a) How satisfied are the project’s main beneficiaries with the services they received?
- (b) How much more knowledgeable are the beneficiaries who participated in workshops and seminars?
- (c) What are the results identified by the beneficiaries?
- (d) Has the project made any difference in the behaviour/attitude/skills/performance of the clients?
- (e) How effective were the project activities in enabling capacities and influencing policy making?
- (f) Are there any tangible policies that have considered the contributions provided by the ECLAC in relation to the project under evaluation?

Relevance:

- (a) How in line were the activities and outputs delivered with the priorities and needs of the targeted countries?
- (b) How aligned was the proposed project with the activities and programme of work of ECLAC, specifically those of the subprogramme in charge of the implementation of the project?

Sustainability

With beneficiaries:

- (a) How did the project utilize the technical, human and other resources available in participating countries?
- (b) 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?
- (c) What were the multiplier effects generated by the programme?
- (d) What mechanisms were set up to ensure the follow-up of the project’s activities and results?

⁸ The questions included here will serve as a basis for the final set of evaluation questions, to be adapted by the evaluator and presented in the inception report.

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) How has the project contributed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

IX. Deliverables

33. The evaluation will include the following outputs:

- (a) **Work Plan.** No later than five days after the signature of the contract, the consultant must deliver to PPOD a detailed Work Plan of all the activities to be carried out as part of the evaluation, schedule of activities and outputs detailing the methodology to be used, etc.
- (b) **Inception Report.** No later than four 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. Additionally, the inception report should include a detailed evaluation methodology including the description of the evaluation matrix, 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.
- (c) **Field Visit and preliminary findings Report.** No later than eight weeks after the signature of the contract, the consultants should deliver the field visit and preliminary findings report which should include the main results of the field visits and the preliminary findings based on data analysis of surveys, interviews and focus groups.
- (d) **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 PPOD and the ERG which should include the main draft results and findings backed –up by factual evidence, 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.
- (e) **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, which includes representatives of the implementing substantive Divisions. Before submitting the final report, the consultant must have received the clearance on this final version from PPOD, ensuring the satisfaction of ECLAC with the final evaluation report.
- (f) **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

34. The duration of the consultancy will be of 16 weeks. It will take place between January-April 2018. 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 ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean.
35. 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) 20 per cent 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) 20 per cent of the total value of the contract will be paid against the satisfactory delivery of the field visit and preliminary findings report which should be delivered as per the above deadlines.
 - (c) 30 per cent 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.
 - (d) 30 per cent 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.
36. 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

37. The evaluator will have the following characteristics:

Education

- MA in economics, public policy, development studies, business administration, evaluation, or a related 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 economic and public finance management 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.
- Proven competency in integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation is highly desirable.
- Working experience in the Caribbean is desirable.

Language Requirements

- Proficiency in English is required.

XII. Roles and responsibilities in the evaluation process

38. 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
39. 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
40. 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
41. 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

42. 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 written permission from ECLAC.

43. 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

44. This assessment seeks to identify best practices and lessons learned in the implementation of development account projects as well as in the implementation of activities in the subject area of the project. The evaluation findings will be presented and discussed to 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

LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- Terms of Reference
- DA 1415AG ROA2899 Project Document
- 2014 Progress Report
- 2015 Progress Report
- 2016 Progress Report
- 2017 Final Report
- Trade Logistic and Regional Integration in Latin America & the Caribbean, IADB, December 2009
- Scoping study for Antigua & Barbuda
- Scoping study for Barbados
- Scoping study for Belize
- Scoping study for Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Scoping study for Guyana
- Guide for National consultants
- Training manual
- Technical advisory mission to Belize report
- Training sessions feedback for Belize, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua & Barbuda
- ECLAC programme of work 2014-2015
- ECLAC programme of work 2015-2016
- ECLAC programme of work 2016-2017
- Evaluation Guidelines ECLAC 2017
- Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, UNEG, April 2005
- Norms for Evaluation in the UN System, UNEG, April 2005
- UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, UNEG, March 2008

ANNEX 3

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

Survey to assess project focal points perception on the project as a whole

The ECLAC wishes to invite you to participate in the survey for the Evaluation of the sub-regional project: **“Strengthening the technical capacity of public finance managers in select Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to manage their public finances.”**

The information received through this survey will be treated confidentially with no reference to the names of the respondents or their home country.

Completing the survey will only take 10 minutes of your time. This survey will be available from XXXX until XXXX, 2018.

- (a) Gender
- (b) Country
- (c) Organization
- (d) Position

- (1) The project objective (Build capacity to strengthen public finance management and to control fiscal deficits) were aligned with national policies, priorities, and/or development objectives?

Definitely Mostly Somewhat Not at all

- 1.1. **The project activities (Conduct capacity diagnostics and assessments, Technical assistance, Training (workshop, seminars), Progress and results follow-up) were aligned with national policies, priorities, and/or development objectives?**

Definitely Mostly Somewhat Not at all

- (2) Fiscal deficit has many causes in the countries. Please rate the prominence of each deficit factor in your country:

- High levels of tax avoidance and tax evasion
(Definitely Mostly Somewhat Not at all)
- Demographic pressures (for example an ageing population will cause an increase in government spending on the state pension)
(Definitely Mostly Somewhat Not at all)
- Government size (if the state sector is relatively big, then more spending is needed to cover people needs)
(Definitely Mostly Somewhat Not at all)
- High levels of government subsidy / financial support
(Definitely Mostly Somewhat Not at all)
- Corruption
(Definitely Mostly Somewhat Not at all)
- Lack of technical capacities for fiscal management
(Definitely Mostly Somewhat Not at all)
- Other causes: _____

(3) What was the project's added value for your country? (1 = low- 5 = high)

1 2 3 4 5

(4) Did the project include a consultation process with your country to identify and design the project activities? (Yes, No)

How was it?

(5) What is the level of coordination with similar interventions in the country? Synergies with similar projects (from 1 = insufficient to 5= excellent)

1 2 3 4 5

(6) In your opinion, how efficient and timely was the project's implementation? (from 1 = Inefficient to 5= highly efficient)

1 2 3 4 5

(7) In your opinion, what are the results achieved by the project?

•

•

•

•

(8) Were the output(s) produced by the project satisfactory?

Yes

No

If yes, how? If no, why not?

(9) Do you think the application of the knowledge/processes/techniques gained from this project can contribute/has contributed to reducing your country's fiscal deficit?

Definitely

Mostly

Somewhat

Not at all

(10) Now that the project is finished, how likely do you think it is that the project results will continue?

Definitely

Mostly

Somewhat

Not at all

(11) Do you think this project was gender sensitive?

Definitely

Mostly

Somewhat

Not at all

Survey to assess workshop participants perception

The ECLAC wishes to invite you to participate in the survey for the Evaluation of the sub-regional project: **“Strengthening the technical capacity of public finance managers in select Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to manage their public finances.”**

The information received through this survey will be treated confidentially with no reference to the names of the respondents or their home country.

Completing the survey will only take 10 minutes of your time. This survey will be available from XXXX until XXXX, 2018.

(1) Please identify in which of the following workshops organized within the framework of this project you have participated. Please check all of the options that apply.

(2) What is your overall assessment of the workshop? (1 = insufficient - 5 = excellent)

1 2 3 4 5

(3) The knowledge and skills attained through my participation in the workshop (or event) have been useful/applicable in my work

Definitely Mostly Somewhat Not at all

(4) Which topics or aspects of the workshop did you find most interesting or useful?

(5) Did the workshop achieve its objective(s)?

Yes No

If yes, how? If no, why not?

(6) Please comment on the organization of the workshop (from 1 = insufficient to 5= excellent)

1 2 3 4 5

(7) Did the content of the workshop discussions meet your expectations?

Definitely Mostly Somewhat Not at all

(8) Please briefly share examples or evidence on how this workshop has strengthened your skills/knowledge

(9) Please briefly share examples or evidence on how you have applied the skills/knowledge acquired in your work?

(10) Do you think this project has contributed to reducing your countries fiscal deficit?

Definitely Mostly Somewhat Not at all

(11) Do you think womens' participation was satisfactory in the workshop?

Definitely Mostly Somewhat Not at all

ANNEX 4

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

INTERVIEW TEMPLATE FOR ECLAC	
Interviewer	
Name:	Date and time:
Interviewee Profile	
Name:	
Position:	
Contact information (phone, email):	
Country:	
Interviewer	
Name:	Date and Time:
Interviewee profile	
Name:	
Position:	
Contact information (phone, email):	
Country:	
Relevance	Questions/Answers
	Tell us about your experience with the project? How did you get involved?
	In your opinion, Did the project have a consultation process with your country? How was it?
	What are the main causes of public debt in your country?
	What is the project added value for the country?
Efficiency	Were the activities and products delivered on time? The project met the deadlines?
	What is the level of coordination with similar interventions in the country?
Effectiveness	In your opinion, what are the most salient results achieved by the project? Benefits? Changes?
	What wouldn't have happened if the project never existed?
	Are you satisfied with the products and results? Did it met your expectations?
	What issues did the project have?
	What were the Best practices?
	Was monitoring information adequately shared with you/your institution?

Relevance	Questions/Answers
	<p>What distinguishes ECLAC's expertise, role and contribution to Country X from the other agencies engaged in similar or related areas?</p>
Sustainability	<p>Are the results achieved well known and "owned" regionally and nationally?</p>
	<p>Are lessons learned disseminated? And how?</p>
	<p>What risks may reduce or strengthen sustainability (e.g., world financial crisis, middle-income status, etc.)?</p>
	<p>Were appropriate exit strategies included in memorandums of understanding, the design and implemented, if appropriate?</p>
	<p>What are the lessons learned from this project? If the project started all over again, what would you do differently? Recommendations?</p> <p>Any other comment/suggestion?</p>

ANNEX 6

EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Data Sources	Data collection and analysis methods
Relevance			
a) How in line were the activities and outputs delivered with the priorities and needs of the targeted countries?	Did the project have a consultation process with countries? How was it?	Key stakeholders (ILPES, UWI) Consultants Project focal points, policy makers	Content analysis In-depth interviews Focus group discussions Online survey
	The activities were aligned with national policies, priorities, development objectives? Is it addressing pressing development challenges in the countries?	Project documents (reports) Project focal points and policy makers	Content analysis In-depth interviews
	How are national stakeholders' needs identified? What was the criteria for selection of countries and beneficiaries?	Online survey Project document Key stakeholders (ILPES, UWI) Consultants Project focal points	Content analysis In-depth interviews Focus group discussions
	Assess extent to which interventions address problems (set out in the TOC): Was the risk assessment adequate and comprehensive, mitigation actions were relevant? What are other causes for public debt in those countries?	Online survey Project document Key stakeholders (ILPES, UWI) Consultants Project focal points	Content analysis In-depth interviews Focus group discussions
b) How aligned was the proposed project with the activities and programme of work of ECLAC, specifically those of the subprogramme in charge of the implementation of the project?	Are country interventions clearly within ECLAC's mandate and congruent with its Strategic Planning?	Project documents (reports)	Content analysis
	What is the project added value for the countries?	Online survey Project document Beneficiaries Consultants Project focal points	Content analysis In-depth interviews Focus group discussions
	Is the strategy aligned with ECLAC's strengths?	Project documents (reports) Project focal points and policy makers	Content analysis In-depth interviews

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Data Sources	Data collection and analysis methods
Efficiency			
a) Collaboration and coordination mechanisms within ECLAC and with other cooperating agencies that ensure efficiencies and coherence of response;	What is the level of coordination with similar interventions in the country/region (from regional institutions, governments)	Project documents (reports) Project focal points and policy makers	Content analysis In-depth interviews
b) Provision of services and support in a timely and reliable manner, according to the priorities established by the project document;	Was the implementation timely? What were the Delivery rates?	Online survey Project document Consultants Project focal points	Content analysis In-depth interviews Focus group discussions
	How was the mixture of inputs (human resources, budget and time) managed to produce the outputs and reach the outcomes? To what extent did these decisions contributed to efficiency?	Project documents (reports) Project focal points and policy makers	Content analysis In-depth interviews
c) Were there any complementarities and synergies with the other work being developed by ECLAC?	What is the level of coordination with similar interventions in the the country/region (from ECLAC)	Project documents (reports) Project focal points and policy makers	Content analysis In-depth interviews
Effectiveness			
a) How satisfied are the project's main beneficiaries with the services they received?	Were the outputs produced by the project well received by stake holders? (satisfactory)	Online survey Project document Beneficiaries Consultants Project focal points	Content analysis In-depth interviews Focus group discussions
c) What are the results identified by the beneficiaries?	What are the most salient results achieved by the project ? What are the main examples of results achieved at the national level? What are the obstacles, risks or constraints the project faced? And how are they mitigating these constraints?	Online survey Project document Beneficiaries Consultants Project focal points	Content analysis In-depth interviews Focus group discussions
b) How much more knowledgeable are the beneficiaries who participated in workshops and seminars?	How do these achieved results compare with planned results? Expected and non-expected results? Tangible and intangible results? What were the Best practices?	Online survey Beneficiaries Key stakeholders (ILPES, UWI) Consultants ECLAC staff	In-depth interviews Focus group discussions Feedback sessions Content analysis

Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Data Sources	Data collection and analysis methods
d) Has the project made any difference in the behavior/attitude/skills/performance of the clients?			
e) How effective were the project activities in enabling capacities and influencing policymaking?			
f) Are there any tangible policies that have considered the contributions provided by the ECLAC in relation to the project under evaluation?			
Sustainability			
With beneficiaries:			
a) How did the project utilize the technical, human and other resources available in participating countries?	Are the capacities generated by the project enough to sustain the results achieved after the closure of the project?	Official documents, government guidelines, regulations Policy makers/decision makers	Content analysis In-depth interviews Focus group discussions
b) How has 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?			
c) What were the multiplier effects generated by the programme?	Are lessons learned disseminated? And how?	Project focal points, consultants	In-depth interviews Focus group discussions
d) What mechanisms were set up to ensure the follow-up of the project's activities and results?	Does the project have an exit strategy?, Are there any follow-up activities or projects already planned or under implementation?	Online survey, Official documents, government guidelines, regulations Policy makers/decision makers	Content analysis In-depth interviews Focus group discussions

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?	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?	Project focal points, consultants ECLAC staff	In-depth interviews Focus group discussions
Cross-cutting issues			
b) Have the project managers effectively taken into consideration human rights and gender issues in the design and implementation of the project and its activities?	How could the project and the national counterparts address gender issues? Were they taken into consideration during the project design and implementation? How?	Key documents Substantive reports	Content analysis
c) How has the project contributed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?	How has the project contributed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?		

ANNEX 7

RISK, LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATIONS STRATEGIES

The evaluation complexity is derived from different elements that the methodology will address:

- The 'products' and effects generated sometimes lack a monetary or quantitative basis of assessment, and therefore are often difficult to express quantifiably (e.g., building capacity, *strengthening fiscal systems, raising awareness of the policymakers, mobilizing authorities, etc.*)
- External factors affecting the management and outcomes (e.g., political will, capacity of the partners at the national level, economic aspects, culture, education, natural disasters, etc.)
- Implementation of the programme with a range of different countries

The methodology is designed with the aforementioned complexities in mind. The basic purpose of the methodology is to establish a method that will allow the evaluation to answer the questions stated in the ToR and come to overall assessment. The risks will be addressed by the appropriate mitigation measures:

Risk	Mitigation Measures
1. Availability of focal points, identified interviewees to meet during the allocated period.	Extended notice will be provided to identify interviewees, and if face to face appointments cannot be kept, these will be rescheduled and carried out by phone or Skype as necessary.
2. Difficulties in accessing necessary data and/or delays in receiving necessary information from identified informants.	The ECLAC PPEU and ERG will be solicited to use their influence to leverage the full support and participation of stakeholders in all aspects of the evaluation.
3. Inadequacies in the baselines developed at programme outset.	Data from pre-project situational reports and anecdotal information will be solicited from key informants and used to construct a proxy baseline condition as can be reasonably expected existed before the intervention start.
4. Absence of sufficiently rigorous monitoring protocols and systematic reporting on the respective interventions.	Where there are information gaps, there will be greater emphasis on the information derived from key informants, and the information will be validated by triangulation to the extent possible.
5. Reticence on the part of informants regarding their perceived true status of the intervention outcomes due to fears of adverse repercussions/bias.	Participants in the evaluation will be briefed on the purpose of the exercise, and be assured that the evaluation is not a personal performance assessment. Information gathered from informants will be kept confidential if necessary, and permission sought to cite evidence from data gathered from such informants. Good practice evaluation ethics will be followed, including the standards established by the UNEG and ECLAC.
6. Size of the sample for in-depth consultations in the field. Given time and resources restraints, the evaluation can only visit one or two countries for in-depth observation.	The triangulation process involving other consultations tools and covering all countries will guarantee a rigorous evaluation process, based on evidence.

ANNEX 8

EVALUATOR'S REVISION MATRIX

Evaluation of the Development Account Project: 14/15AG “Strengthening the technical capacity of public finance managers in select Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to manage their public finances” (ROA/289-9)

Evaluation Report Feedback Form: Evaluation Reference Group

GENERAL COMMENTS		
REPORT SECTION (if applicable)	COMMENT	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	A number of grammatical errors which, when fixed, will improve the readability of the report.	All grammar was reviewed, adjusted a couple of typos
SPECIFIC COMMENTS		
PARAGRAPH NUMBER	COMMENT	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
4	Delete this paragraph, since it is replicated in paragraph 5.	Deleted
9	Could read: The objective of subprogramme 13, Subregional activities in the Caribbean, is “...”.	Right, adjusted
19-20	Switch paragraphs 19 and 20 to group the UNEG evaluation criteria together.	True, done
26	Should read: The evaluation launched two surveys to collect feedback from project focal points and workshop participants from the beneficiary countries.	Done
26	Reads PPEU will do several things...did they not?	Right, adjusted to the past sense
27 and 32	These paragraphs are identical.	Right
63	Six licenses of the STATA software was made available to the Ministry of Finance in each country. The sentence could therefore read: “While six licenses of the STATA software was made available to each beneficiary country’s Ministry of Finance, all interviewees that participated in the STATA training stated that they did not have access to the software.	Adjusted as suggested.

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	COMMENT	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
78	<p>It must be made clear that at no point did the project “use government’s money to pay for” a venue, caterers etc. during the implementation of the project’s activities. The choice of vendors was the responsibility of the focal points, and the project team deferred to their knowledge in this regard. Moreover, in all communication with vendors, the project team was careful to outline the administrative process and timelines involved. A period of initiation was required to get both focal points and vendors familiar with the documentation and processes required for the procurement process. ECLAC’s internal administrative procedures were, in some instances, also not as timely as hoped, which resulted in delays in processing and eventual payments. It is suggested therefore that this paragraph be reformulated as follows:</p> <p><i>Procurement and administrative procedures also affected efficiency sometimes. For example, in Belize, the vendors chosen by the focal point for venue and catering were required to register as Business Partners in ECLAC’s system to facilitate their payment. This proved to be a longer than expected process. To facilitate the use of the chosen vendor and timely delivery of the workshop, the Ministry of Finance kindly agreed to provide advance payment to the vendor, since ECLAC was unable to do this in time. The final payment to the caterer, transferred by ECLAC, was subsequently reimbursed to the Ministry for its unforeseen expenditure.</i></p> <p><i>Some Project focal points did highlight that a few vendors reported that they experienced delays in receiving payments for services delivered during the National Training Workshops, once again due to ECLAC’s administrative procedures and issues with closing the procurement process.</i></p>	Agreed, adjusted as ERG suggests
82	This paragraph is not clear. If there were no similar interventions, there is zero coordination. No coordination does not imply that ECLAC failed to coordinate with similar interventions in the various countries, but that there were no similar activities around which to coordinate. This is what the paragraph should reflect, rather than signalling that ECLAC’s coordination efforts were less than stellar.	Reworded as follows: During the field visits, when asked about the coordination of the project with similar initiatives, most of the respondents stated that there were no similar projects at that time. During the implementation period, international cooperation and development partners did not conducted interventions to reduce the fiscal deficit through capacity building in the Caribbean.
112	See comment on paragraph 63.	Adjusted
116	Is this paragraph linked to paragraph 115?	Reworded and merged

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	COMMENT	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
117	The implications of this paragraph are not very clear within the lessons learned context.	Reworded as: In a region which is comprised of SIDs, the possibility to spend at a rapid rate is likely to be constrained by the limited capacities of the countries, all future interventions need to take this issue as a challenge and establish a risk mitigation strategy.
121	I think this lesson was already learned and applied in this project, since ECLAC did articulate and request of the countries participants with a suitable profile to engage in capacity-building activities. I would suggest the need for improvement lay in ECLAC's reluctance to insist on participants with the requested profile engaging in the workshops.	Yes, and it should serve for future interventions as well
Recommendation 2	"Projects also need to have flexibility to reallocate resources from one country to another if needed". I am not sure how applicable this part of the recommendation is to the way in which project budgets are planned and expended (by activity/output, not by country).	If there is an activity on Training for example, and it is supposed to cover 6 countries, if there is an indication of potential issues with a given country, then the project should be able to reallocate funding.

**Evaluation of the Development Account Project:
ROA 289-9 “Strengthening the technical capacity of public finance managers in select Caribbean
Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to manage their public finances” 1415AG**

Evaluation Report Feedback Form: PPOD/ECLAC

GENERAL COMMENTS		
REPORT SECTION (if applicable)	ECLAC PPOD COMMENTS	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	<p>i) Please review and edit the whole report as it contains various grammar mistakes and typos. The report would benefit from a re-ordering of the information presented, clearer links between paragraphs and sections and better narratives.</p> <p>ii) The report still needs editing.</p>	<p>i) Agreed, Done ii) Did further editing</p>
Executive Summary	Please make sure to include an executive summary in the final version of the report. The executive summary must be able to function as a stand-alone document summarizing all the main sections of the evaluation report, with emphasis in the findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.	<p>i) Will do for the final version ii) Submitted the exec. summary</p>
Background Paragraphs 6-10	Please join this section with the one on intervention logic under sub-section called Evaluation Scope”, right after Evaluation objective. We would again recommend shortening this section.	Merged and shortened
Evaluation scope	Please rename this section as Evaluation purpose and Scope and include one-to- two paragraphs on the future use and users of the evaluation.	Done
Introduction	<p>i) Please re-order the introduction, as this is the introduction to the evaluation and not the project, by first introducing the evaluation, its objectives and scope, and then going into the background of the project, and finally presenting the evaluation methodology. We also suggest reducing the section on the background of the project and include information on the activities actually carried out and outputs and outcomes produced and/or achieved. When presenting the evaluation, please state the period of time in which it was conducted and by whom. Please correct all section related to the introduction to the evaluation, its scope, and methodology and use past tense, as the evaluation has already occurred. As this information has been literally copied from the TORs and subsequent inception report, it is still presented as a proposition.</p> <p>ii) All highlighted comments have not been incorporated or responded to properly. Please address them.</p>	i) ok
Evaluation methodology	Please include a section (one-two paragraphs) on the limitations to the evaluation.	Done

REPORT SECTION (if applicable)	ECLAC PPOD COMMENTS	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
Graphs and tables	i) Include an explanatory title for each graph and table, and specify the source at the bottom of the graph or table. ii) Figures have no titles still	i) Done ii) I don't understand this comment, what figures do not have titles? Most figures are describing the survey results, so the title says that with the specific survey question within each graph. I don't understand what is missing.
Findings	i) Please re-structure this section by: highlighting each specific finding, under each evaluation criteria and/or evaluation question, as a sub-title and by numbering them. Immediately after, include the explanation and supporting evidence related to each finding. ii) Highlighted part has not been done yet. Please make sure to incorporate it in the final draft report. The structure should be the following: FINDING 1. The evaluation found that the project objective is highly relevant in face of the countries' context and needs. Explanatory text and supporting evidence.	i) Done ii) The findings are bolded, and provided backup information
Lessons Learned	i) Please elaborate more on each lesson learned, and also make sure that what is being presented as lesson learned has already been mentioned somewhere throughout the body of the report. The reviser from PPOD does not recall having read related information on lesson learned one and partially lesson learned 2. We recommend using the following structure: Lesson Learned 1. Text of the lesson learned as a subtitle One-maximum two paragraphs explaining the lesson learned, where it derives from, and how it can serve for future projects or interventions. Lesson Learned 2. Text of the lesson learned as a subtitle i) Comment not fully addressed. The lessons learned section still needs to be strengthened and more clearly linked to identified best practices and lessons learnt of this project. Many of them are too generic and not providing clear details or explanations on why they constitute lessons learned and/or how they can be more widely applied to the work of ECLAC. Please revise this section according to respond to the comments above and those included in the previous comments (I). Please see example below: Lesson learned 1. Different stakeholders tend to apply the inclusive social protection approach once they have learned about it and when the opportunity arises. In that connection and in order to incorporate the human rights approach into social protection policies, resources and efforts should be devoted to promoting a better understanding of the inclusive social protection approach among policymakers and officials with responsibilities in the field of social policies.	i) There is a specific text on lesson learned 1 that says: "The designation of national focal points was considered as a good practice of the project since it allowed to move forward positively on logistics issues, empowerment, coordination and better communication with each of the targeted countries. Another good practice to foster relevance was that the country interventions were guided by the available analysis and tailored-to-the-needs assessments, and able to respond accordingly to the context and country needs." Page 21. ii) I reworded the lessons learned section, separating the lesson learned from the project implementation, from the use it can have in future interventions.

REPORT SECTION (if applicable)	ECLAC PPOD COMMENTS	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	<p>In addition to being a conceptual framework, the project has shown how the inclusive social protection approach is a highly useful tool for translating the legal standards of economic, social and cultural rights into a matrix that can be used to formulate public policies and plan diverse actions in the areas of influence of different social actors (academia, social organizations). Therefore, promoting a better understanding among decision-makers of the inclusive social protection approach, sharing regional and interregional good practices, and promoting the relevance of the institutional dimension^a needed to implement this approach, would be a strategic investment that allows the rights-based approach to be mainstreamed into the processes to reform national social protection systems, processes in which numerous member States of the regional commissions are currently engaged.</p>	
Conclusions	We recommend structuring the conclusions based on each evaluation criteria to facilitate its understanding.	Done
Recommendations	<p>i) In the recommendations section, after the main text of each recommendation reference should be made to the specific findings and/or conclusions from where the said recommendation derives from. Each recommendation should also be numbered and should include a title, summarizing the recommendation, information on the findings and conclusions that support it and to whom is the recommendation addressed, providing some clear examples on how the recommendation could be implemented (more specific actions). This section would also benefit from more in-depth analysis and strengthening of the recommendations. Recommendations need to be clearly linked to the findings and conclusions of the evaluation, and should preferably, not only be linked to the management of the project but should also cover at least partially the substantive issues under the project's purview.</p> <p>ii) Partially addressed. Please see a proposed structure below:</p>	<p>I have seen other reports in the PPEU website but could not find any with recommendations including “reference should be made to the specific findings and/or conclusions from where the said”. What I can do is link each recommendation with specific conclusions.</p> <p>iii) Adjusted, but just to clarify that UNEG norms and standards state that “Recommendations should not be overly prescriptive.”</p> <p>The Recommendations should come from conclusions and be realistic, useful for improvement, they can be addressed to specific groups of stakeholders, etc. But linking recommendations to findings is quite rare as there are many findings.</p> <p>I did submit a matrix with findings, conclusions and recommendations before.</p>

^aThe institutional dimension of the inclusive social protection approach includes, among other things: (i) a legal framework that recognizes the right to social protection and public policies guaranteeing that protection; (ii) institutional reform to coordinate cross-sectoral social protection policies; (iii) a strategic plan for social and economic inclusion to implement the inclusive and rights-based approach, adapted to national realities and needs; (iv) a life cycle perspective as the basis for reorganizing social protection instruments and facilitating a comprehensive and inclusive vision of governments' public actions; (v) activities to develop or consolidate technical and operational management tools, including monitoring and evaluation systems.

REPORT SECTION (if applicable)	ECLAC PPOD COMMENTS	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
	<p><i>Recommendation 4 (based on C11)</i></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p><u>To ECLAC divisions:</u> Implement a sustainability plan (exit strategy) outlining how the project intends to withdraw its resources while ensuring that progress towards the goals continues. The strategy should include targeted activities to link the Development Account project's activities with the regular work of ECLAC and partners' future undertakings. This should be reflected in the final report by including indications on how to further sustain the project's results.</p> </div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="344 545 1331 691">1. It is crucial to ensure a lasting impact of the results and achievements of this type of project in the form of sustained access to knowledge and enhanced technical capacity of beneficiaries. It is well known that funding cycles rarely align with needs, imposing artificial timelines on programme phase-out. This could be minimized by implementing a sustainability plan outlining how the project intends to withdraw its resources while ensuring that the achievement of the goals is not jeopardized and that progress towards these goals will continue. <li data-bbox="344 724 1331 943">2. For future projects, it would be advisable to outline an explicit 'exit strategy' at project outset and further develop it during the implementation. The strategy should include specific actions to promote ownership; (disseminate outputs and results; and ensure that the individual capacities are further translated into institutional capacities. In addition, the exit strategy should define the transition from one type of assistance (e.g. Development Account project) to another (e.g. regular work of ECLAC). Therefore, it is necessary to include targeted activities linking the project's results and the dissemination activities implemented with the future undertakings of ECLAC and its partners. At the very least, the final reports should include (reasoned) indications on how the projects results are to be sustained. 	
SPECIFIC COMMENTS		
REPORT SECTION (if applicable)	ECLAC PPOD COMMENTS	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
Paragraph 1	Please include the timeframe in which the evaluation was carried out and by whom, as well as the fact that the evaluation was commissioned by ECLAC.	Ok
Paragraph 19.	Please place cross-cutting issues after paragraph 19. And provide an explanation that this is not an evaluation criterion per se, but other factors considered during the evaluation and which are of a cross-cutting nature for the whole evaluation process.	Done
Paragraphs 55-57	<p>Paragraph 55, line 2. Please revise wording as the text cannot be understood clearly.</p> <p>Please revise the order of paragraphs 56 and 57, as they seem to be more related to the finding in paragraph 53 than to that presented in paragraph 55.</p> <p>Furthermore, clearer explanations and more documentary evidence to support the finding in paragraph 55 is needed.</p>	Reworded

REPORT SECTION (if applicable)	ECLAC PPOD COMMENTS	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
Paragraph 58.	Please make the text of the finding itself more self-explanatory. By the way it has been written right now, the finding in itself cannot be understood unless you read the explanatory text.	Adjusted
Paragraph 59.	Please separate as there are two findings in one, the one on the flexibility of the project management during implementation and the one on the pioneering nature of the project. Also, please properly link paragraph 60 with the related finding.	I don't think is useful to separate as the flexibility was a consequence of the innovative nature of the project, therefore, I reworded to make it one finding.
Paragraph 65.	Line 3 states that: "the impact of trainings was limited to post-training satisfaction surveys.....". Please correct. A midpoint survey was also implemented with the purpose of not only measuring satisfaction with the trainings but actual use of the knowledge, tools and methodologies attained through the trainings, and identifying obstacles for their actual use to guide the implementation of the rest of the project.	Adjusted. The in-person training lasted one week, which is not enough to cover all the critical topics like regression modeling, estimation, data management, multilevel/mixed methods, panel-data analysis, etc. There were online courses in an online platform, but given the workloads from participants many dropped out, and others asked for time extensions. The impact of the training was assessed with a midpoint survey, and to post-training surveys to measure satisfaction, the perceived use of the knowledge, tools and methodologies attained through the trainings, and identifying obstacles, which is somewhat useful to assess results with the participants but do not measure changes in institutional performance.
Paragraph 72.	Please provide a more detailed explanation and supporting evidence for the finding included in this paragraph.	Done
Paragraph 73.	Please revise and edit the text of the findings, as it cannot be understood. Furthermore, we would recommend merging the finding in paragraph 73 with that in paragraph 74.	Merged and reworded both paragraphs
Paragraph 85.	Please revise and edit the text of the findings, and make it more self-explanatory. By the way it has been written right now, the finding in itself cannot be understood unless you read the explanatory text. If possible, please extend the explanation of the finding, as for now there is no mention to the "results management processes" that ECLAC did implement during the project. Also, please specify that the evaluation finding is circumscribed to the project under evaluation, and separate between those issues that pertain to ECLAC management team and those that are somehow related to the standardized formats for project documents used in the Development Account.	Adjusted. The evaluator found that the ECLAC had some results management processes, recording basic information on what the project had achieved in the countries, but the process of monitoring and evaluation was not proper to measure progress towards results, and to provide feedback to strategic decision-making processes. The project did develop a project document with a results framework, monitoring indicators, problem and solution trees, and annual reports. The project document lacked plausible indicators, baselines, verification sources, targets or milestones, and therefore had no way of assessing whether they were achieving their intended results. This is related to the lack of a detailed Theory of Change to describe how results will be achieved through inputs, activities, and outputs.

REPORT SECTION (if applicable)	ECLAC PPOD COMMENTS	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
Paragraph 86.	Is the text in line 3 of this paragraph making reference to figure 7? If so, please revise the figures as they do not coincide with the information in the graph. If not, please insert the correct graph and refer in the text to figure 7 as well.	Adjusted
Page 30. Paragraph 2. (previous version) Paragraphs 87-90 (new version)	<p>i) The following paragraph is a clear example of what has been stated in comment of the General Comments section, regarding the need to improve the narrative of the report and increase the coherence of the texts.</p> <p>ii) Comment not completely addressed. Text still needs to be revised to ensure clarity and coherence.</p>	<p>i) Adjusted</p> <p>ii) You need to be more specific on what is not clear or coherent.</p>
Paragraph 92.	Please provide more details on the findings and supporting evidence.	Adjusted
Paragraph 93.	Please revise, the text included in paragraph 93 seems to be out of context as it has no relation with the finding or text preceding it.	<p>On the other hand, according to interviewees, intermittent training in workshops with no follow up from the project and focusing on specific tools like stata do not necessarily conduce to apply knowledge and improved skills on fiscal management. The time spent on stata was seen as not so useful, given the background of the participants, the complexity of the tool and the fact that not all participants have access to the software given that the project only purchased 6 software licenses. From the evaluation survey results, it can be concluded that there are negative feelings about the fulfillment of the project regarding skills attainment: 90% of respondents consider the project was somewhat and not at all useful to improve skills and knowledge, while only 10 responded mostly and no one said it was definitely useful.</p>
Figure 8	The graph has been inserted in this page without any link or reference in the antecedent or preceding text. Please make sure to reference the results of the question in the text.	
Paragraph 96.	Please revise, as there is no link between what has been highlighted as the finding and the text that precedes it. Actually, they seem contradictory to a certain extent.	<p>Revised and adjusted:</p> <p>96. The project made a difference regarding behavior and awareness towards these concepts of efficiency and budgeting. As said before, the project was successful in raising awareness towards fiscal management and expenditure review, but there is no evidence of the knowledge and skills gained because of the workshops and technical assistance. The project did not evaluate students and not all the participants completed all training courses.; the project implemented exit surveys after each workshop and there was a mid-term review survey, but no knowledge testing was done. As said before, evaluation interviewees expressed that the lack of continuity affected the capacity building as training is a process that requires a sustained-in-time intervention, and follow up. Also, understaffing and high workloads affect the effectiveness of training initiatives.</p>

REPORT SECTION (if applicable)	ECLAC PPOD COMMENTS	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
Page 34. Paragraph 1.	<p>i) As it was explained before; including indicator at the macroeconomic level would be too ambitious as changing the fiscal deficit in different countries is too complex. Nevertheless, the project could have measured outcome level indicators to monitor progress towards results; for example, number of pilots implemented, number of policies approved, budgets adjusted, etc.</p> <p>The evaluator mentions in the paragraph copied above, that the project managers had established an indicator at the macroeconomic level: "reducing fiscal deficit". However, when you review the logical framework of the project, there is no indicator of achievement at such level. Not even the objective is set at such level, which is set at the level of increased capacity to apply methods and procedures for better management and forecasting of public expenditure and revenue. Important to highlight, is the fact that in the UN secretariat as established by the PPBME, objectives, which are the higher levels of contribution measured for any intervention are not measured by any indicator, as this are established as aspirational ends to which the project or programme wishes to contribute, but which will not be achievable by the project/programme in itself.</p> <p>Furthermore, the evaluator mentions that the project should measure outcome level indicators, which is exactly what the project intended to do, within the deficiencies it might have, when they established EAS oriented to measure capacity- building (IOA1.2), actual application of acquired knowledge and techniques (IOA1.1) the integration of programmes and techniques into public management systems by countries themselves (IOA2.1).</p> <p>i) Same comment applies to the revised text.</p>	i) The text was reworded
<p>Page 34. Table on the overall assessment of the log frame indicators and results. EA1. (IA.21), column "comments to indicators"</p> <p>New version: Pages 37-38</p>	<p>i) The evaluator states the following: the indicator is a bit vague as the use of acquired concepts is subjective and does not measure the end result. However, this indicator of achievement is not directed towards measuring an end-result as for example, IA2.2 is somehow doing. The IOAS as established in the EA to which it relates, is oriented to measure increased knowledge and skills, by going one step forward of IA1.2, which measures the self-defined increased knowledge as expressed by participants to trying to measure the actual implementation of the knowledge and skills in their day-to-day work. Furthermore, the statement contradicts, what was expressed by the evaluator in paragraph 1 of the same page where he states that: "the project could have measured outcome level indicators to monitor progress towards results".</p> <p>ii) ECLAC still disagrees with the explanation and the text included in the report. Even with the deficiencies the indicator might have it is still a valid indicator. In any development intervention, the project, first intends to make changes in individual capacities (knowledge, skills, provision of methodologies, etc.), then promotes the actual use of these capacities (which this indicator intends to measure, even if it is self-evaluated by participants themselves), and then lead to the institutionalization of such results, which is what indicator 2.1 intends to measure.</p>	<p>I disagree, the indicator is still vague as you can't objectively prove that a practitioner is in fact applying skills and techniques in the fiscal management. The indicator verification source was changed. As stated in the evaluation report, there were participants with non-optimal profiles and backgrounds whose opinion is flawed, there are high turnover rates, high workloads, etc. Ultimately, the indicator aims at measuring changes at the individual level, not institutional, so you may end up with well-trained staff members that cannot apply the learnings.</p> <p>i) Well the text can be nuanced, but I have to insist that the quality of this indicator is poor. There is no baseline to assess evolution or change, the information and verification sources changed from a work chart to a survey, but more importantly, the indicator is a subjective assessment, highly biased as workshop participants wouldn't accept they are not applying new techniques (as their bosses could react negatively), the survey is launched by the project (potential conflict of interest), they might not be invited to future workshops, and many reasons more.</p>

REPORT SECTION (if applicable)	ECLAC PPOD COMMENTS	EVALUATOR'S RESPONSE
		It would be much better to assess the quality and usefulness of the workshop with other type of indicators. Maybe a qualitative one where the participants cite concrete examples how they have used the skills gained in the trainings, set performance ranges/parameter (if XX low, medium, high performance, etc.) asking Most Significant Change type questions might yield results. Quantitatively, the project could have used proxy indicators to usefulness, like drop out rates, completion rates, baseline scores and endline scores, using pre and post self-assessment tools.
Figure 13.	The graph has been inserted in this page without any link or reference in the antecedent or preceding text. Please make sure to reference the results of the question in the text.	Adjusted: From interviews, it was understood that achieving gender equality meant, for example, ensuring that women are included among workshop trainees, also, from the survey results it can be concluded that most of surveyees think that the women participation in the project was satisfactory:
Paragraph 109.	Please revise, the text included in paragraph 109 seems to be out of context as it has no relation with the finding or text preceding it.	Adjusted: 109. The ECLAC project aimed at improving the coordination across government departments and Ministries, which is seen as an appropriate approach since better expenditure review falls under the responsibility of all State actors. Caribbean countries do benefit from holistic interventions that target all key stakeholders, and SDGs achievement demands joint efforts and multi-disciplinary approaches.
Paragraph 111.	Please revise, the text included in paragraph 111 and 112 seems to be out of context as it has no relation with the finding or text preceding it. To balance the finding, some mention to the information presented in paragraph 113 should be included in the text of the finding.	Adjusted: The project made efforts for a sustainable intervention but the lack of precise results and outcome achievement affects the possibility of a sustained in time benefit after the project end. The end result was to improve fiscal management in the targeted countries by building capacity in key personnel. Nevertheless, the implementation lacked continuity for internal and external factors; the effectiveness was affected for different reasons such as the institution's staff turnover, high workloads and understaffing. In countries like St. Kitts the consultants were brought from Barbados. Interviewees opinions are that the project is not likely to be sustainable for these reasons, and survey results show that no one considers the project to be definitely or most likely to be sustainable, most respondents answered "somewhat" and a few "not at all.



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