

Inception Workshops Report

“Multi-sectoral Adaptation Measures to Climate Change in the South Oropouche River Basin (SORB) for Flood Relief

Trinidad and Tobago

11th October 2023

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2. Abbreviations

AF	Adaptation Fund
AFB	Adaptation Fund Board
AFBSEC	Adaptation Fund Board secretariat
CAF	Development bank of Latin America and the Caribbean
CC	Climate Change
CESAS	Coordination of Environmental and Social Assessment and Monitoring
EE	Executing Entity
EI	Engineering Institute
EMA	Environmental Management Authority
IMA	Institute of Marine Affairs
MALF	Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries
MNS	Ministry of National Security
MOPD	Ministry of Planning and Development
MOWT	Ministry of Works and Transport
MPU	Ministry of Public Utilities
MRDLG	Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government
NDA	National Designated Authority - AF Focal Point
ODPM	Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management
OP	Operational Plan
PMU	Project Management Unit
PP	Procurement Plan
RIE	Regional Implementing Entity
SORB	South Oropouche River Basin
STACIE	St. Augustine Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship
UWI	The University of the West Indies
WASA	Water and Sewerage Authority

3. Executive Summary

The "Trinidad and Tobago: Multi-sectoral Adaptation Measures to Climate Change in the South Oropouche River Basin for Flood Relief" project is a critical initiative funded by the AF and implemented by the CAF. The MOPD plays a dual role as the government entity promoting the project and the project's beneficiary, acting as the NDA designated by the AF.

The South Oropouche River Basin faces escalating flood risks due to climate change, leading to significant property losses. This region already grapples with diverse economic activities and urban expansion. Prioritizing this area is crucial due to chronic flooding and climate projections. The project aims to benefit 197,540 individuals, enhance resilience, and protect ecosystems.

The executing entity for this project is as follows:

1. **The UWI:** UWI, specifically the Engineering Institute, is responsible for the technical implementation, project management, and reporting aspects and the St. Augustine Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (StACIE) oversees project administration, high-level project management, and contract management.

This four-year project was approved on July 29, 2022.

The agreements for the execution of the Project were signed on:

CAF-AF	August 22, 2022
CAF-UWI	November 15, 2022

On September 12, 2023, the Joint Steering and Technical Committee convened its inaugural meeting during which led to the official approval of the Operational Plan (OP) and the Procurement Plan (PP) for Year 1.

See attachment 1: Minutes of Meeting – Joint Steering & Technical Committee

See attachment 2: Minutes of Meeting –Steering Committee

Moving forward, there will be a distinct Steering Committee meeting and two Technical Committee meetings:

- Advising and reporting on planning, green and grey infrastructure interventions
- Sector development interventions related to the agriculture, farming, and fishing sectors

On September 13, 2023 the Inception Workshop was held at the Debe Secondary School, Debe.

4. Objective of the Inception Workshop

The objective of the inception workshop is to facilitate the effective operationalization of the project by addressing key components, highlighting the importance of:

1. **Communication:** Develop a comprehensive communication strategy that outlines channels, stakeholders, and messaging to ensure transparent and efficient project communication.
2. **Contacts:** Establish and organize essential project contacts, both internal and external, to foster collaboration, streamline information flow, and facilitate timely decision-making.
3. **Annual Plan/KPIs (Key Performance Indicators):** Define a detailed annual plan with clear milestones and KPIs that will guide project implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, ensuring alignment with project objectives.
4. **Procurement:** Develop a robust procurement plan and framework that adheres to best practices, promotes transparency, and expedites the acquisition of necessary resources and services.

Through this inception workshop, we aim to lay the groundwork for a well-coordinated and effective project operation, setting the stage for successful project execution and achievement of our goals.

5. Project Overview

Background: The SORB has traditionally experienced frequent flooding due to high-intensity, short-duration storms, occurring approximately ten times annually. However, the last five years have seen a concerning trend of basin-wide floods with prolonged durations, resulting in significant disruption to both the productive sector and populated areas. These events lead to substantial personal property losses, estimated between USD 19-36 million per year, depending on climate scenarios. Climate change models indicate an anticipated increase in flood frequency and intensity, coupled with sea level rise and extended dry periods. Climate-induced changes also threaten livelihoods, particularly small-scale fisheries.

Challenges and Vulnerabilities: Climate change exacerbates existing challenges in the basin, including the coexistence of various economic activities (agriculture, fishing, commercial, and oil/gas production), inadequate drainage systems, and rapid urban expansion. The riverine system, vital to the region's livelihoods, is highly susceptible to climate change, including saline intrusion, which affects both flora and fauna, with tangible economic repercussions on people's lives.

Geographical Context: The South Oropouche River flows through a diverse landscape, transitioning from flat, arable lands in Barrackpore to the Godineau Swamp, an estuarine wetland, before reaching the Gulf of Paria. Covering 3,171 hectares, the swamp acts as a natural buffer against flooding and sea-level effects. However, it faces pressure from human activities and environmental changes induced by climate change, necessitating reinforcement and protection to safeguard the basin's population.

Prioritization and Vulnerability: The SORB has been identified as a priority region due to chronic flooding issues, high population density, agricultural and commercial activity, evident sea water intrusion, and projections indicating that climate change will exacerbate the situation without adaptation measures.

Projected Impact and Beneficiaries: The project is expected to benefit a total of 197,540 individuals. Direct interventions will reach 9,758 community members, with a focus on gender balance, and prevent income reduction for 679 individuals through diversified livelihood options. Additionally, 175

hectares of key coastal and wetland ecosystems in the Godineau Swamp will be rehabilitated, and sustainable production practices will improve an additional 17.5 hectares.

This project aims to address the pressing climate challenges faced by the SORB, fostering resilience, safeguarding livelihoods, and protecting vital ecosystems. Its implementation will require coordinated efforts and active engagement from various stakeholders to ensure the sustainable development of this vulnerable region.

5.1. Objective of the project

The primary objective of this project is to address the challenges posed by climate change in the SORB, with a primary focus on mitigating the impacts of flooding. The project aims to enhance resilience in the region's population and ecosystems through multi-sectoral adaptation measures.

5.2. Project Description

In line with the proposal approved by the AF, the Project has five components:

1. Territorial Planning and Risk Management:

- Objective: Strengthen the region's capacity for climate risk management and territorial planning to proactively address climate-related challenges.
- Activities:
 - Develop comprehensive climate risk assessment and vulnerability mapping.
 - Formulate adaptive land-use plans and zoning regulations.
 - Establish early warning systems and flood risk communication strategies.
 - Train local officials and stakeholders in risk assessment and management.

2. Infrastructure Enhancement:

- Objective: Implement improvements in both green and grey infrastructure to enhance resilience against floods and other climate-related events.
- Activities:
 - Upgrade and expand flood protection infrastructure.
 - Invest in natural infrastructure, such as wetlands and mangroves, for flood mitigation.
 - Retrofit critical infrastructure to withstand climate impacts.
 - Promote sustainable drainage systems and flood-resilient building standards.

3. Ecosystem Preservation:

- Objective: Enhance the resilience of vulnerable coastal and wetland ecosystems within the SORB.
- Activities:
 - Restore and rehabilitate degraded coastal and wetland areas.
 - Implement ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) measures.
 - Conduct biodiversity assessments and habitat protection.
 - Promote sustainable land and water resource management practices.

4. Community Adaptation:

- Objective: Build the capacity of vulnerable fishers and farmers to address climate change and variability, ensuring the sustainability of their livelihoods.
- Activities:
 - Provide training and technical support for climate-resilient agricultural practices.
 - Support diversification of livelihoods and income sources.
 - Strengthen community-based disaster risk reduction initiatives.
 - Facilitate access to climate-smart technologies and practices.

5. Stakeholder Engagement:

- Objective: Promote climate risk awareness and build capacities among stakeholders within the SORB.
- Activities:
 - Conduct climate change awareness campaigns and educational programs.
 - Facilitate stakeholder dialogues and participatory decision-making processes.
 - Foster partnerships between government agencies, local communities, and civil society organizations.
 - Establish a knowledge-sharing platform for climate adaptation best practices.

5.3. Implementation

CAF bears the responsibility for the implementation and funding of activities financed by the AF. This responsibility entails ensuring that all activities are conducted in strict compliance with the policies, criteria, and procedures established by both CAF and the AF. Furthermore, CAF is also accountable to the AFB for the proper execution of these activities.

5.3.1 Steering Committee

On September 12, 2023, the Steering Committee convened its inaugural meeting during which the Operational Plan (OP) and the Procurement Plan (PP) for Year 1 were presented. The Steering Committee, as outlined in the Project Document, serves as the primary coordinating and decision-making body responsible for strategically overseeing project activities to ensure they align with the envisioned outcomes detailed in the Project Document. The committee comprises senior representatives from both CAF and the Beneficiary, with provisions for observer representatives from various governmental institutions crucial to managing climate-related matters in the SORB.

The Steering Committee approved the Operational Plan (OP) and the Procurement Plan (PP) for Year 1 on September 12, 2023.

The Steering Committee members present on September 12, 2023 were:

Institution	Name	Phone	Email
CAF	Stephanie Ledesma	1-868-222-1540/41	sledesma@caf.com
IMA	Rahanna Juman	1-868-722-3777	rajuman@ima.gov.tt
MALF	Michelle Shah	1-868-683-5587	mshah@gov.tt
MOPD	Kishan Kumarsingh	1-868-760-0885	kishan.kumarsingh@planning.gov.tt
MOWT	Maritsa Harry	1-868-625-1225	mharry@mowt.gov.tt
MPU	Micah Connor	1-868-309-1996	mconnor@gov.tt

Institution	Name	Phone	Email
MRDLG	Renee Ramroop	1-868-620-2592	renee.ramroop@gov.tt
ODPM	Rodney Smart	1-868-782-4943	rsmart@mns.gov.tt
UWI	Graham King	1-868-740-9157	graham.king@sta.uwi.edu
UWI	Vincent Cooper	1-868-352-0780	vincent.cooper@sta.uwi.edu
UWI	Navneet Boodhai	1-868-774-2534	Navneet.Boodhai@sta.uwi.edu
WASA	Marissa Mc Millan	1-868-495-6978	marissa.mcmillan@wasa.gov.tt

The invited attendees to the Steering Committee meeting on September 12, 2023 were:

Institution	Name	Phone	Email
MOPD	Danielle Sookram	1-868-612-3000	Danielle.Sookram@planning.gov.tt
MOPD	Aditi Bisram Singh	1-868-612-3000	Aditi.BisramSingh@planning.gov.tt
PMU	Julie Kublalsingh	1-868-662-6267	STA-AccountingOfficer.ENGINST@sta.uwi.edu
PMU	Bernard de Freitas	1-868-736-5037	Bernard.DeFreitas@sta.uwi.edu
PMU	Anuradha Maharaj-Jagdip	1-868-722-7269	Anuradha.Maharaj-Jagdip@sta.uwi.edu

See annex 1 – Agenda of the Steering Committee and Joint Steering & Technical Committee Meetings.

5.3.2 Technical Committees

The Technical Committee convened its inaugural meeting on September 12, 2023. Moving forward two Technical Committees will play a crucial role in advising on technical matters and providing progress updates to the Steering Committee. These committees are designed to offer specialized guidance in different project areas. The first Technical Committee will focus on advising and reporting on planning, green and grey infrastructure interventions, while the second Technical Committee will concentrate on sector development interventions related to the agriculture, farming, and fishing sectors.

The Joint Steering and Technical Committee members present on September 12, 2023 were:

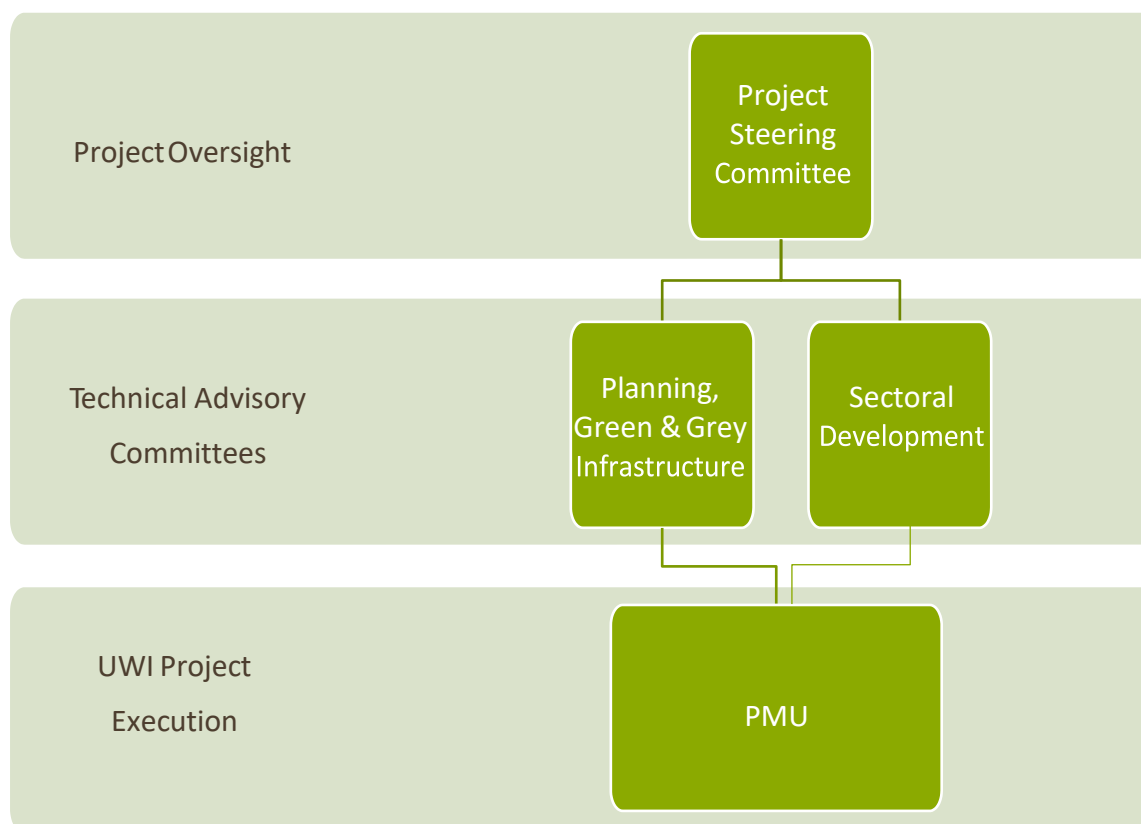
Institution	Name
CAF	Carolina Cortes
CAF	Stephanie Ledesma
EMA	Travis Sooknanan
IMA	Rahanna Juman
IMA	Christopher Alexis
IMA	Hamish Asmath
MALF	Renold Ramdial
MALF	Hansley Durbal
MALF	Michelle Shah
MOPD	Kishan Kumarsingh
MOPD	Danielle Sookram
MOPD	Aditi Bisram Singh
MOWT	Maritsa Harry
MPU	Micah Connor

Institution	Name
MRDLG	Renee Ramroop
ODPM	Curmira Gulston
ODPM	Rodney Smart
PMU	Julie Kublalsingh
PMU	Bernard de Freitas
PMU	Anuradha Maharaj-Jagdip
UWI	Cheryle Tewarie
UWI	Graham King
UWI	Vincent Cooper
UWI	Navneet Boodhai
WASA	Marissa Mc Millan
WASA	Anthony Chadee

See detailed Workshop Attendees Listing, Annex 2.

5.3.3 Operational Structure

PROJECT GOVERNANCE:



The PMU serves as the technical team responsible for achieving the project's specified results and deliverables. This dedicated unit maintains a close working relationship with focal points designated

by CAF, the Beneficiary, and other local institutions to facilitate and support activities. The PMU also plays a pivotal role in shaping technical definitions and securing approvals for terms of reference and project outputs.

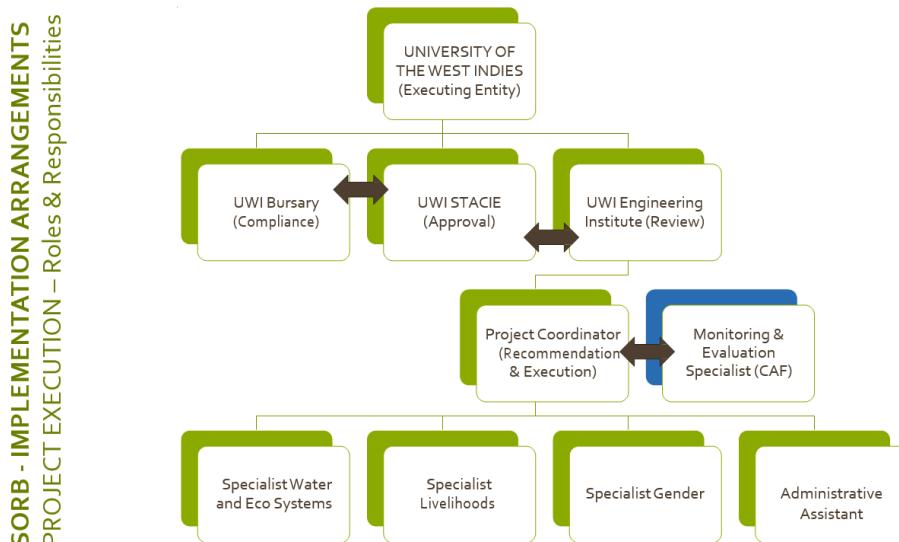
The PMU is composed of the following key roles:

Project Coordinator: The Project Coordinator assumes overall responsibility for project implementation, ensuring that activities align with project objectives and adhere to established timelines. This role serves as the central point of contact for all project-related matters.

Water Sector and Ecosystem-based Adaptation Specialist (EbA): This specialist focuses on water-related activities and the implementation of ecosystem-based adaptation measures. Their expertise contributes to effective water resource management and ecosystem resilience enhancement.

Livelihoods Specialist (Agriculture, Farming, and Fishing): The Livelihoods Specialist concentrates on the agriculture, farming, and fishing sectors. Their role involves capacity building within vulnerable communities and diversifying income sources to enhance resilience to climate change impacts.

Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialist: The Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialist assumes responsibility for overseeing the execution of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and the Gender Action Plan. This role involves close collaboration with the PMU and administrative units within CAF to ensure compliance with environmental and social safeguards.



5.4. Compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and the Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund

During regular project progress monitoring meetings, the Environmental and Social Safeguards Specialist will provide updates on any potential environmental, social, and gender-related risks that may have emerged but were not previously identified. Their role encompasses the responsibility of

revising the Environmental and Social Management Plan and the Gender Action Plan whenever unanticipated impacts or risks become apparent. This specialist will collaborate closely with the PMU to guarantee full compliance with all stipulated conditions.

General Operating Principles:

Both the Executing Entity and the Implementing Entity are committed to upholding the Adaptation Fund's Gender Policy, ensuring that gender considerations are integrated into all project activities and decisions. This commitment aligns with our dedication to promoting gender equality and addressing gender-related concerns throughout the project's implementation.

6. Inception workshop

The Inception Workshop, attended by 108 participants, took place on September 13, 2023 at the Debe Secondary School, Debe. It was an opportunity to introduce the CAF, NDA, PMU and UWI to the main stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Project.

The target audience were the representatives and local partners involved in the project, beneficiary groups and the general public. A wide dissemination of the event was carried out through the Ministries and UWI via emails, calls and social media and a registration form link was sent to all potential attendees. The event was video recorded and will appear on the Project's website and YouTube channel.

The workshop was presided over by Mr. Kishan Kumarsingh, who serves as the Head of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit within the MOPD. Notable addresses were presented during the event, with remarks offered by Mr. Bernardo Requena, the Country Representative from the Latin American Development Bank-CAF. The keynote address was delivered by The Honourable Penelope Beckles, the Minister of Planning & Development.

Following the presentations, the workshop provided an opportunity for an open floor session dedicated to questions and answers.

The panel comprised of:

The Honourable Penelope Beckles	Minister of Planning & Development, Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Mr. Bernardo Requena	Country Representative, Latin American Development Bank - CAF
Mr. Kishan Kumarsingh	Head of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit, MOPD
Ms. Carolina Cortés	Principal Executive Directorate of Technical Advice on Biodiversity and Climate, CAF
Professor Bheshem Ramlal	Dean, Faculty of Engineering, UWI
Mr. Navneet Boodhai	Manager, Engineering Institute, UWI

Thirty-six Q cards were completed, 14 of the 36 indicated that their households were “highly impacted by flooding” and 17 of the 36 indicated that their households were “highly impacted by water shortages”.

6.1.1. Presentations of focal areas

- **Carolina Cortés**, Principal Executive Directorate of Technical Advice on Biodiversity and Climate, CAF, Presentation of the Scheme of the SORB project ([Annex 3](#)).
- **Navneet Boodhai**, Manager of the UWI Engineering Institute, Presentation of the Annual Operating Plan of the SORB Project ([Annex 4](#)).

6.1.2. Comments during the meeting

Several individuals conveyed their gratitude to both CAF and AF for their contributions. Additionally, questions were raised during the Q&A segment, reflecting a range of concerns related to the project. These questions predominantly revolved around specific project aspects, including the development of the Godineau and South Oropouche Rivers for Ecotourism, the potential consequences of flooding and saltwater intrusion in the SORB, immediate relief measures for communities affected by flooding and water shortages, and the long-term maintenance of equipment or systems provided by the Project once its implementation is concluded.

The questions posed by attendees were addressed by members of the Panel. It was underscored by the Panel members that while this project serves as a crucial initiative, it may not comprehensively address every challenge presented by climate change within the SORB. Instead, the project's focus remains on key priority areas, which were identified by stakeholders during community engagement meetings. This approach ensures that the project's efforts are directed toward the most pressing concerns voiced by the local communities.

7. Technical meetings

7.1. Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Steering and Technical Committees

See annex 5.

7.2. Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee

See annex 6.

8. Conclusions

The UWI Project Execution Unit will seek to implement the One Year Plan, in line with the Annual Operation Plan and the Procurement Plan. It will seek guidance from the Ministry of Planning, working directly with CAF giving monthly updates, and develop relationships with key stakeholders to ensure the benefit to the SORB Communities is realized, with specific focus on the areas being impacted.

9. Recommendations

The UWI, as a resource for technical insights and studies, is expected to use such resources, build capacity and enhance the sustainability measures derived from the project as a longer term goal i.e. post-project completion.

10. Annexes

- 10.1. Annex1: Agendas of the Inception Workshop, Steering Committee and Joint Steering & Technical Committee Meetings
- 10.2. Annex 2: Steering Committee and Joint Steering & Technical Committees Participants List
- 10.3. Annex 3: CAF Presentation – Inception Workshop
- 10.4. Annex 4: UWI PMU Presentation – Inception Workshop
- 10.5. Annex 5: Minutes of the of the Joint Steering & Technical Committee Meeting
- 10.6. Annex 6: Minutes of the of the Steering Committee Meeting
- 10.7. Annex 7: Annual Operational Plan Year 1
- 10.8. Annex 8: Annual Procurement Plan Year 1
- 10.9. Annex 9: Inception Workshop