

Access to Information Request from Jamaica Accountability Meter Portal

Background:

The 2022/23 Auditor General's Report (subsection 3.2.56) found that the Integrated Water Land, and Ecosystems Project, funded by the US\$3.1 million grant of the United Nations Environment Programme, co-financed to US\$10.3 million by several agencies and co-funded to US\$43.8 million by the Government of Jamaica, had its completion date extended to September 30, 2024. The objective of the project is to promote conservation of wetland diversity. The audit disclosed the Project's accounts were properly maintained, expenditure supported by adequate documentation and accorded with objectives and GOJ guidelines. Notwithstanding, NEPA has been encouraged to address inadequacies in the management of logical access controls, which NEPA has since begun to do. At December 31, 2022, NEPA completed 16 of 45 project activities, while 15 were discontinued and the balance had not been started or were in progress. Slow implementation was attributed to post-filing delays, COVID 19, and a peer review.

It was recommended that NEPA review the Project monitoring and evaluation system to ensure completion within the stipulated timeframe and mitigate risk of losing grant funding. Subsequent to the audit, the Project completed four of the six re-scoped.

The Jamaica Accountability Meter Portal is therefore requesting documentation to:

- Substantiate the status of the project activities and the steps taken to strengthen the project monitoring and implementation systems.
- If the accounts were not submitted, can the Department share the projected date for each submission?

Response

Point 1:

In 2023, the decision was taken to re-scope the project to prioritise activities that will result in on-the-ground implementation and high impact visibility within the Negril Environmental Protection Area while meeting the original project objective, targets and outputs. The change in scope was facilitated through amendments to the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the final amended PCA being signed on 28 June 2024. Project closure was still scheduled for 30 September 2024. Additionally, the committed grant funding to support the execution of the re-scoped project was reduced to US\$352,000. The re-scoped project focused on the following main activities:

- **Activity 1:** Apply hydrologic solutions to control water level and movement geared towards hydrological improvement of zonal waters [hydrological restoration of targeted areas within the Negril Great Morass (10% of the NGM)]
- **Activity 2:** Establish an interactive, interpretive research and knowledge sharing centre within the Negril Royal Palm Reserve [development of a conceptual design and associated costing for the interpretive centre at the Negril Royal Palm Reserve]
- **Activity 3:** Improve inter-agency and stakeholder engagement and communication to support National sub-Project objectives.
- **Activity 4:** Activities to ensure sustainability of measures to conserve internationally significant wetland biodiversity in the Negril Environmental Protected Area (EPA)

- **Activity 5:** Strengthening of policies and legal and institutional frameworks and capacity building for sustainable land management, integrated management of water resources and the management of ecosystem services, taking into account climate change.

The sixth and final area was Project Management, which addressed project administration.

The performance in respect of the activities is as follows:

Update on the Delivery of the Rescoped Project		
Phase 1 - Activities/Outputs (as listed in the project document)	Status (complete/ongoing)	Results/Outcomes (measured against the performance indicators stated in the project document)
Activity 1 - Apply hydrological solutions to control water level and movement geared towards hydrological improvement of zonal waters	10% - activity discontinued due to time constraints – it would have been impossible to complete the consultancy within the deadline stipulated for the re-scoped project	A consultant was engaged through direct contracting as the terms of reference was completed, and the procurement process commenced. The consultant also submitted a pricing proposal and schedule for the consultancy. However the duration of the consultancy would exceed the deadline for project closure and thus could not be pursued.
Activity 2 - Establish an interactive interpretive research and knowledge sharing center within the Negril Royal Palm Reserve	Completed	Establish an interactive interpretive research and knowledge sharing center within the Negril Royal Palm Reserve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity sub-contracted to the Urban Development Corporation. The deliverables are the schematic design concept proposal, order of cost estimate and strategic brief outline. All deliverables were completed and submitted by the UDC.
Activity 3 - Improve inter-agency and stakeholder engagement and communication to support National sub-Project objectives	Completed	Develop and implement a public awareness programme on the conservation of wetlands and biodiversity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project Steering Committee Meeting was convened virtually on 18 September 2024. • Wrap-Up Session which was held on 26 September 2024 at which key stakeholders to the IWEco Project were recognized and gifted.

<p>Activity 4 - Activities to ensure sustainability of measures to conserve internationally significant wetland biodiversity in the Negril</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>i. Establish a monitoring network for measuring hydrological fluctuations for surface water flows, as well as maintain measuring device and provide quality data and information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-yr MOU signed with Water Resources Authority (WRA) which entails the WRA supervising the installation of the hydromet stations, maintaining the instruments and collecting data from the hydromet stations which will be shared with NEPA over the period of the 2 years. • 4 hydromet stations installed within the project site in Logwood and March Town, Westmoreland. This includes 2 rain gauges at the NWC Treatment Plant in Logwood and at the Medical Center in Cave Valley, March Town, as well as 2 stream flow gauges at Fish River and Orange River in Logwood. The WRA supervised the installation and approved the completed works. <p>ii. Develop a long-term monitoring plan for the Negril Environmental Protection Area with an appropriate monitoring regime for enhancing air quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM2.5 air quality monitoring instrument procured. Agreement also established with the Negril and Green Island Area Local Planning Authority (NGIALPA) to allow for the mounting of the air quality instrument on their building in Negril. The data will be collected by NEPA's Air Quality Management Branch and will contribute to the gathering of important information to allow for assessments, analyses and evidence-based decision-making.
<p>Activity 5 - Development of capacity of local community groups to implement long-term biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management inclusive of Citizen Science approach within the Negril EPA and taking into consideration gender dynamics. (water quality, biomonitoring, designation of wardens)</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Develop local capacity to implement long-term biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of 17 community (9 males and 8 females) through the Citizen Science Training programme was completed in August 2024. Training was specifically in the use of biomonitoring techniques to monitor the water quality of the river in Silver Spring. • Biomonitoring instruments inclusive of a microscope, biological sorting trays, dissecting kits, kick net, waders, forceps, magnifying glass and vials/bottles were also procured to assist with data collection and analysis.

Activity 6– Project Management	Completed	Project Final Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final audit conducted by Auditor General Department. At the time of project closure this would have been in progress. The process is now complete.
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Strengthening of the project monitoring and implementation systems:

In a bid to strengthen project monitoring and implementation systems, the Agency has commenced the analysis of project processes, specifically those associated with unachieved or partially achieved project activities and also general areas of weakness. This undertaking is deemed important as it has the potential to assist in strengthening future project planning, refine implementation strategies, and proactively address recurring challenges.

Point 2:

Accounts would have been submitted in satisfaction of the audit.

ACCESS GRANTED