FINAL AND INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

PAYMENT FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES (PES) FOR THE PROTECTION & RESTORATION OF THE BONDEAU, PESTEL AND CORAIL MANGROVE ECOSYSTEM IN HAITI

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CORE
Community Organized Relief Effort

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Mission Statement

CORE's (Community Organized Relief Effort) mission is to empower communities in and beyond crisis. CORE envisions a more equitable world in which underserved communities are prepared and can respond effectively to crises from within. To learn more visit www.coreresponse.org and contact Matt Knight, Haiti Country Director, (matt.knight@coreresponse.org).

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About this document: *This is a condensed version of the evaluation report from May 2026, prepared for external dissemination. It presents the executive summary, introduction, methodology, findings, conclusions and recommendations in summarized form, closely following the original evaluator's language. The complete report is available from CORE upon request.*

1. Executive Summary

This final and independent evaluation covers the project "*Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) for the Protection and Restoration of the Bondeau, Pestel, and Corail Mangroves*," implemented by CORE (Community Organized Relief Effort) between January 2023 and April 2026, with financial support from Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF), for a budget of USD 2 million. Implemented in the Nippes and Grand'Anse departments in Haiti, the project operated in an environment characterized by significant socio-environmental vulnerability, pressure on mangroves and watersheds, fragile livelihoods, and persistent institutional, climatic, and security constraints. Structured around three complementary pillars: 1) ecological restoration; 2) environmental governance; and 3) livelihoods, the project aimed to strengthen community resilience and ecosystem integrity through "*Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)*" and a "*Ridge to Reef (R2R)*" approach. The evaluation assessed the project's overall performance, including: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. It was based on a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys (200 households), 12 focus groups with 145 participants, and 30 interviews with institutional and community stakeholders. Stratified sampling covered all intervention areas.

Key achievements by pillar: *1) Ecological Restoration*. The project brought more than 19,000 hectares (46,950 acres) of ecosystems — mangroves, watersheds, agroforestry systems — under protection, restoration or sustainable management actions. The program also treated degraded slopes through water and soil conservation structures, and introduced and diversified plant species, including forest, fruit, fodder, with plantations generally in good condition and natural regeneration dynamics observed. Thus, the intervention areas have experienced progressive improvements in vegetation cover, land stability, and ecological function. *2) Environmental governance*. It built the capacity of local authorities and established natural resource management committees, created environmental clubs in schools, and energized local consultation spaces. *3) Livelihoods*. The project reached 1,046 participants with a focus on women. It strengthened cooperatives and community organizations and established local economic dialogue spaces. In addition, the project contributed to the progressive diversification of livelihoods of cocoa, coffee, and beekeeping.

Main constraints: Climatic hazards and input-quality limitations affected seedling survival and agricultural performance. Deteriorating roads and security-related disruptions to supply chains also delayed implementation and raised costs. In addition, inflation and household vulnerability limited participants' ability to invest in new practices; and uneven capacity and engagement among local authorities and public institutions sometimes hindered coordination. Despite this complex environment, the project demonstrated adaptive capacity to achieve the planned targets.

As shown in **Table 1,** overall, the evaluation team rated half of the evaluation criterion as "*satisfactory*" to "*very satisfactory*", with "*moderately satisfactory*" ratings for efficiency, sustainability as well as gender and inclusion, and the PES mechanism itself, each still consolidating:

Table 1. Final Score in the Evaluation Criterion

Evaluation criterion	Score out of 5
Relevance	4 – 4.5 (very satisfactory)
Coherence	3.5 – 4 (satisfactory)
Effectiveness	3 – 4 (satisfactory)
Impacts	3.5 – 4 (satisfactory)
Efficiency	3 – 3.5 (moderately satisfactory)
Sustainability	3 – 3.5 (moderately satisfactory)
Gender & Inclusion	3 – 3.5 (moderately satisfactory)
PES Mechanism	3 – 3.5 (moderately satisfactory)

Source: Authors' own assessment and scoring (1-5 scale, with 5 being the highest score), based on triangulated evaluation data.

2. Introduction, Operational Context and Project Overview

2.1 Introduction and Operational Context

Haiti's 1,770 km (1,100 miles) of coastal areas are a strategic space for the country's development, but also highly susceptible to environmental and climatic risks. They host essential ecosystems such as mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass beds that protect against erosion, sustain biodiversity, and support local economies. However, these ecosystems are degrading rapidly. Forest cover is estimated at less than 10% of the territory, and coastal erosion, watershed degradation, and climate change are compounding the loss of natural resources.

In the project's intervention areas, communities depend on fishing, agriculture, and logging — activities that also drive ecosystem degradation depending on the methods applied. Approximately 66% of the population has limited knowledge of climate change and sustainable resource management, constraining the adoption of alternative practices and feeding a cycle in which economic insecurity increases pressure on natural resources and reduces communities' adaptive capacity. The project was implemented in a national context characterized by significant structural constraints in security, field access, and institutional capacity, which influenced both project implementation and results.

To respond to these challenges, the project adopted socio-ecological resilience as its guiding principle, aiming to strengthen both ecosystems' capacity to regenerate and communities' capacity to adapt. This aligned with Haiti's commitments under the three Rio Conventions, the Ramsar Convention and Aichi Targets, as well as the national environmental strategy "*Haiti Biodiversity 2030*", though persistent gaps in monitoring, institutional coordination, and operational capacity continue to limit the effectiveness of interventions nationally. Integrated approaches such as EbA and PES attempt to bridge environmental conservation and livelihoods, and the project under evaluation follows this logic.

To measure the impact of the project, CORE and CBF commissioned a final and independent evaluation. The evaluation was structured around a central question: to what extent, how, and under what conditions did the project produce lasting ecological, socioeconomic, and institutional change, and what lessons can be drawn for the future? Five complementary areas of analysis were used: relevance and fairness; consistency with existing policies; effectiveness and efficiency; observed effects and impacts; and sustainability and scale-up potential. Risks and sensitivity factors related to the intervention context such as security, data limitations, and complex socio-ecological dynamics were identified during scoping and integrated throughout the evaluation process.

The evaluation was intended to support decision-making for several audiences, including CORE and CBF (strategic direction and scale-up), institutional partners (alignment with public policy), local actors (improved practices and ownership), donors and technical partners (guidance for future interventions), and the academic community (sectoral knowledge).

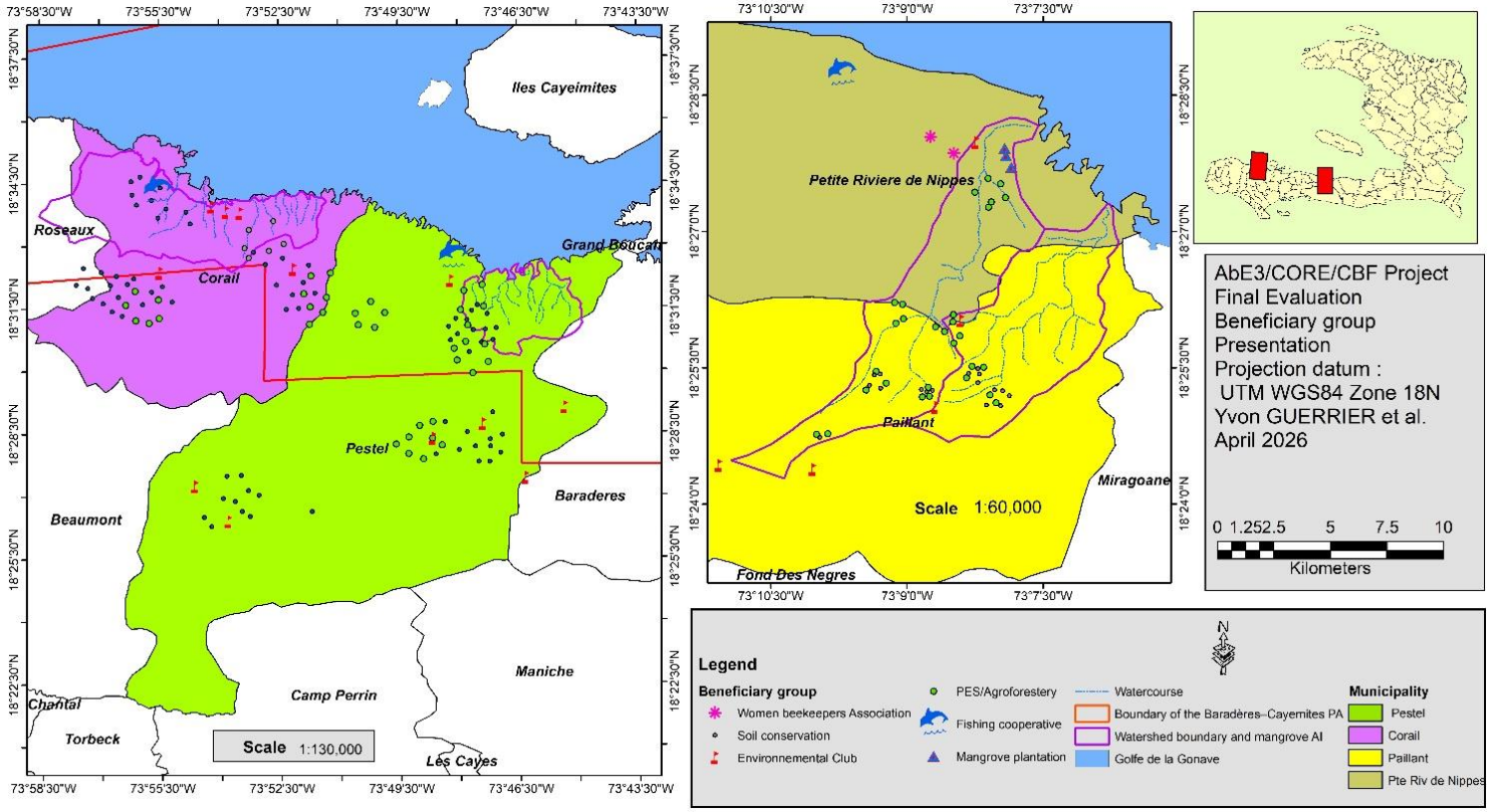
2.2 Project Overview

Implemented by CORE from January 2023 to April 2026, the three-year project aimed to preserve the biodiversity of marine and coastal ecosystems and strengthen community resilience to climate shocks, through a PES mechanism. Its intervention logic rests on restoring ecosystems and at the same time developing viable economic alternatives to sustainably reduce pressure on natural resources — structured around three complementary components: sustainable livelihoods (agroforestry, fishing, beekeeping),

environmental governance (stakeholder capacity and consultation mechanisms), and ecological restoration (protection and rehabilitation of mangroves and watersheds).

The project's guiding principles include an integrated territorial R2R [1] approach, strong community involvement, an incentive mechanism based on the PES, an emphasis on behavior change, and a link between ecological and economic resilience. Geographically, the project operated in Haiti's southwest (See **Figure 1**), across Nippes (Paillant, Petite-Rivière de Nippes) and Grand'Anse (Pestel, Corail) regions, with intervention in Grand'Anse concentrated in the southwestern part of the Baradères-Cayémites Protected Area, an area of high ecological and strategic value. This arrangement required coordination among institutional, community, and technical actors at multiple levels, structured through a matrix of roles and responsibilities clarifying relationships between CORE, CBF, sectoral ministries, local authorities, community organizations, cooperatives, participants, and partner non-government organizations.

Figure 1. Territorial Distribution of the Project Activities by Municipality and Component



Source: Authors' Elaboration.

[1] The Ridge to Reef (R2R) approach treats land and water management as a single connected system; thus linking inland activities, like forest protection and sustainable farming, to their downstream effects on rivers, coastlines, and coral reefs. Restoring mangroves and wetlands alongside these practices helps reduce erosion, flooding, and pollution, while protecting water quality and marine life.

3. Methodology and Limitations

3.1 Methodology

The evaluation was conducted following a result-based framework, based on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee's (OECD-DAC) six evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts, and sustainability. The analysis focused on three principles: 1) a pragmatic reading of performance considering actual conditions of intervention; 2) attention to resilience dynamics at community, ecosystem, and governance levels; and 3) a critical, triangulated analysis of data.

The evaluation combined qualitative methods, including review of secondary and project data, key informant interviews, focus groups, and field observation methods with quantitative methods (household surveys and geo-referenced mapping). The consultant team examined evaluation questions across four dimensions: observed results and discrepancies; mechanisms mobilized; perceptions and levels of ownership; and medium-term effects on resilience and sustainability. A five-point rating scale (ranging from 1 = very poor to 5 = complete achievement) was applied to each criterion to support accessible, rigorous, and context-appropriate interpretation.

Stakeholders were structured across four levels: 1) institutional (sectoral ministries, local authorities, technical structures); 2) operational (implementation partners); 3) community (local organizations, management committees), and 4) participants (households, women's groups, fishers, farmers), which allowed a holistic reading linking governance, local practices, and livelihood conditions. The sampling strategy was stratified along territorial, socioeconomic, and institutional lines. A team of 16 investigators, recruited for quality and diversity of profile, was deployed across the project's three main intervention areas in Bondeau, Pestel and Corail, and were organized in pairs or trios and supervised by three field sub-coordinators along with the lead evaluator, who provided overall methodological supervision and daily quality assurance. Data collection ran from April 3 to 16, 2026, monitored in real time through KoboToolbox, and was completed without major incident despite access constraints.

Data collection achieved approximately 87.5% of the initially planned sample: 30 institutional interviews (target: between 25–35), 12 focus groups with 145 participants (target: 165), and 200 household surveys (target: between 180–220) — a level of coverage supporting robust representativeness across gender, socioeconomic status, and geography. Participants ranged in age from 8 to over 80; children and adolescents in school-club focus groups were accompanied by parents or guardians to ensure child assent and privacy protection. Particular attention was paid to strengthening the participation of women and adolescent girls and ensuring intergenerational balance. Women represented between 55% and 95% of focus group participants by intervention area, and between 58% and 83% of respondents in the perception survey. Regarding the institutional and socio-organizational interviews, women accounting for 45% of all respondents.

Beyond household and stakeholder surveys, the evaluation triangulated field observations, geo-referenced mapping, and a before-during-after photographic method to document ecological change on selected sites. It also drew on the project's 2023 baseline and mid-term evaluation to track trajectories over time. Data processing combined thematic qualitative analysis (supported by NVivo) with descriptive and comparative quantitative analysis, and a contribution-based inference approach linking activities, assumptions, and results to observed changes, cross-referenced against normative frameworks and public policy commitments.

3.2 Limitations

Potential biases were identified and directly managed. Institutional turnover and unavailability were addressed through stakeholder diversification; the potential influence of community leaders was mitigated

by convening separate focus groups for community leaders and for community members, and by facilitating men's and women's groups separately; social-desirability bias among participants was managed through anonymity and group separation; and security constraints in the field were addressed through flexible planning.

The evaluation's principal limitations stem from the constrained operating context itself: security conditions and limited field access; heterogeneous or incomplete data, particularly on costs and budgetary trade-offs, which limits a fully consolidated cost-benefit analysis; social biases inherent to self-reported perception data; the complexity of attributing socio-ecological change to a single intervention; and a project timeline still too short to observe the full consolidation of durability effects. These constraints were mitigated through source triangulation, differentiated and gender-sensitive facilitation, adaptive scheduling, and a data-saturation approach used to confirm when qualitative findings had stabilized. However, they should be borne in mind when interpreting the findings that follow.

4. Findings

4.1 Relevance

Relevance assessed the coherence between the territory's challenges, stakeholders' needs, and the project's response. The project's relevance was rated as "*high*" with a score of 4–4.5 out of 5. The project activities were aligned with priority needs identified at baseline, both ecologically such as mangrove restoration, improved vegetation cover, reduced pressures as well as socioeconomically, specifically livelihood diversification and strengthened local capacities. In addition, the project was relevant due to the fact that climate resilience and PES remained largely under-resourced in Haiti's public budgets and dependent on external financing (often exceeding 80%). Limitations observed, particularly around perceived equity and consolidation of achievements, stem largely from external structural constraints such as socio-economic pressure, household vulnerability, and weak institutional capacity rather than from the project's design.

On ecological functions, field observations pointed to a positive shift: restored mangroves are visible and generally in good condition, though subject to residual pressure, and agroforestry practices in upstream areas indirectly reduce pressure on coastal ecosystems. Mangrove ecosystems covering approximately 35.2 hectares (86.98 acres) in Pestel, 442 hectares (1,092.21 acres) in Corail, and 248.13 hectares (613.14 acres) in Bondeau remained under high anthropogenic and environmental pressure (e.g. sedimentation, hurricanes, drought, and logging linked to economic vulnerability). The project's planting of 24.6 hectares (60.78 acres) of degraded mangrove land in Bondeau was a concrete step, but sustainability still depends on continued local ownership.

On the relevance of participant targeting, it was rated as "*high*" with a score of 4 out of 5. The project had a genuine diversity among participants, including farmers, fisherfolk, market women ("*madan sara*"), women and youth, as well as participatory selection mechanisms. Despite these achievements, perceptions of unfairness in some areas stemmed less from flaws in the targeting mechanism, and more from a structural gap between the scale of local needs — intensified by food insecurity and displacement — and the project's limited resources. Satisfaction surveys showed approximately 74% of respondents consider the project fully meets their needs (76% of men versus 73% of women), with satisfaction highest in Pestel (79%) and Corail (73%) and relatively lower in Paillant/Bondeau (71%). The differences were linked to payment delays and perceived targeting fairness rather than to the project's underlying rationale.

4.2 Coherence

Coherence assessed the project's integration within its institutional environment and its contribution to environmental governance capacity. The project's overall coherence and governance were rated "*very satisfactory*" with a score of 4 out of 5. The project had a good integration with local stakeholders, functional operational coordination, and notable adaptability to contextual constraints, with limitations in institutionalization and long-term sustainability stemming mainly from external structural constraints, such as weak public capacity, financial dependence, absence of consolidated national mechanisms, rather than from project design.

On alignment with normative frameworks, the project was rated "*very satisfactory*" with a score of 4–4.5 out of 5, demonstrating strong, multidimensional alignment with Haiti's Strategic Development Plan, and the National Action Plan for Adaptation. It also contributed to international frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 13, 14 and 15 through mangrove restoration, watershed management, and soil and water conservation; SDGs 1, 5 and 8 through livelihood diversification and women's and youth involvement; and SDGs 16 and 17 through community organizations and territorial consultation mechanisms, consistent with Haiti's disaster-risk and decentralization frameworks. Moreover, it aligned with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement, the Ramsar Convention, and the Aichi Targets. This alignment remained, however, more operational than structural as PES and related mechanisms were not yet stabilized within sustainable national regulatory and budgetary frameworks.

Regarding strengthening local environmental governance, the performance was rated "*satisfactory*" with a score of 3.5–4 out of 5. The findings showed strong community-level ownership. After the project community members participated actively in planning workshops, local committees, and consultation forums such as the sectoral environmental table in Nippes. Moreover, many participants reported improved environmental practices. Some examples include reduced logging, improved waste management, and soil conservation. Environmental clubs in schools were seen by communities as a promising, if still under-resourced, lever for intergenerational transformation. Satisfaction levels regarding the environmental governance varied by actor type: community organizations and youth reported high satisfaction with governance. However, local authorities and public institutions reported more moderate satisfaction. The reason was not related to commitment, but because limited staff, funding, and logistical capacity constrain how consistently they can engage in different territories.

On institutionalization, the degree to which mechanisms (PES, community-based organizations, management committees, cooperatives) achieved sustainable local ownership was rated "*moderate to satisfactory*" with a score of 3–3.5 out of 5. These mechanisms were functional, relevant, and widely adopted at community level, but remain only partially institutionalized and still heavily reliant on project momentum rather than formal frameworks. Sustainability will depend on formalizing normative frameworks (for instance, by formally linking community management committees to local government structures and anchoring the PES mechanism in policy instruments), building public-institution capacity, and establishing relay and monitoring mechanisms.

4.3 Effectiveness

Effectiveness assessed the extent to which the project produced concrete, measurable results relative to their objectives. On ecological change, effectiveness was rated as "*satisfactory to relatively high*" with a score of 3–4 out of 5. Field observations, geo-referenced data, and community feedback confirmed gradual improvement in vegetation quality and diversity, effective mangrove restoration with signs of natural regeneration, water and soil conservation structures reducing erosion, more diversified and resilient

agroecological systems, and an increasing eco-community dynamic through school environmental clubs. These changes are observed in the following comparative photographic series of sites undergoing restoration (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 2. Comparative photographic series of sites undergoing restoration



A. Cattle on a bare slope, illustrating forage insecurity (before the project)



B. Landscape in transition: strengthening of the agroforestry hedgerow network and progressive





C. Planted contour lines (grasses and sugarcane): erosion reduction and co -benefits for employment, livestock, food and ecosystems

Source: CORE Project Archives, 2023-2026.

However, these gains were neither uniform nor stable: some areas showed more consolidated trajectories supported by stronger community organization, while others remained exposed to logging, economic constraints, and resource saturation. Thus, the findings must be interpreted considering two structuring realities: the ecological time, particularly for plantations, which have not yet reached their biological maturity; and the tension between conservation objectives and households' immediate needs.

Participant satisfaction with effectiveness was high across genders and municipalities (86% to 90% reported to be satisfied or very satisfied), though tempered by recurring concerns: some delays in worker

payments (identified as a critical issue given household economic vulnerability), variable quality or suitability of inputs, and, in some cases, perceived lack of clarity in the targeting process.

On the role of participation, effectiveness was rated 4 out of 5. Participation was a key driver of ownership and sustainability, reflected in direct community involvement in restoration activities, local governance mechanisms, and training. However, an "effectiveness funnel", built from satisfaction survey data and triangulated with focus group and interviews, revealed a structural gap. About 80% of targeted participants took part in project activities, and almost 70% reported that they were satisfied. However, only an estimated 50% achieved results considered sustainable. Participants, in focus groups and interviews, attributed this difference to difficulties accessing inputs, delays caused by the local context, financial pressures on households, and a lack of support after the project's direct involvement ended. Local authorities, in particular, took part less consistently than communities did, which at times weakened continuity of local decision-making.

4.4 Impact

Impact assessed the transformative effects generated by the project. The performance was rated 3.5–4 out of 5. Income-generating activities (IGAs) contributed, overall satisfactorily, to improved incomes and a partial reduction in pressure on natural resources, particularly through beekeeping, small-scale trade, artisanal processing, and select agroecological initiatives. Participants reported diversified income sources and, in several cases, reduced reliance on logging and other extractive practices. Despite the progress, these gains remained unevenly consolidated. Income generated is often modest and irregular, limiting its capacity to durably replace extractive livelihoods. In addition, payment delays, input-access difficulties, and limited technical support constrained performance in places. Approximately 70% of participants reported satisfaction with IGAs (72% of men versus 68% of women), with higher satisfaction (72% t0 75%) in municipalities where input access and technical monitoring were better structured.

A key component of IGA was the participation of women. The performance was rated 3–3.5 out of 5. Gender constraints influenced access to project benefits. Women were integrated into IGAs and associations, and their engagement grew over the life of the project, but their ability to fully benefit remains shaped by the burden of domestic work, limited access to productive resources, and constrained decision-making power within households and organizations. Activities compatible with women's existing responsibilities tended to see stronger participation, but the economic benefits generated were often modest and could be redistributed at household level, limiting individual empowerment — a reminder that high participation does not automatically translate into greater control over resources or decisions, and that more differentiated, gender-sensitive approaches were still needed.

4.5 Efficiency

Efficiency assessed whether mobilized resources were used appropriately given the operational context. The performance was rated 3.5 out of 5. Resource use was rated appropriate to the context, with significant adaptive capacity. The project directed resources toward ecological restoration, livelihoods, and community mobilization despite significant logistical, climatic, security, and institutional constraints, and its R2R approach created synergies across components. Facing limited accessibility, supply-chain disruptions, transport delays, market volatility, and security constraints, the project prioritized essential activities, used alternative suppliers, rescheduled deliveries, and increasingly relied on local service providers — measures that limited disruption while maintaining acceptable performance and donor compliance.

This assessment must be qualified: activity delays, constrained access to inputs and equipment, additional procurement-related delays, rising logistics costs, and an unstable operating context all affected overall efficiency, requiring constant trade-offs between speed, procedural compliance, and adaptability. The

evaluation also noted a need to strengthen the consolidation, traceability, and archiving of financial and management data, which currently limits a fully consolidated cost-benefit assessment. With a budget of approximately USD 2 million, the project pursued an ambitious scope — multiple thematic components across dispersed, access-constrained territories — which may have limited the depth of interventions in some areas. A more targeted, progressive, and territorially focused approach, concentrated on a smaller number of strategic priorities, would likely maximize the prospects for consolidation and lasting impact.

4.6 Sustainability

Sustainability assessed whether achievements can be maintained beyond direct project support. The performance was rated 3–3.5 out of 5. Achievements were real and largely owned locally, but institutionalization and long-term viability remained to be consolidated. Ecological restoration, livelihood diversification, and local governance dynamics were well integrated by communities, some of which were already sustaining these dynamics independently. This ownership was a key sustainability driver in a context of limited formal institutional capacity, but it still depended heavily on project support: institutional integration remains partial, given weak or absent formal frameworks, limited public resources, and constrained institutional capacity for continuity.

Sustainability was unevenly consolidated across territories and social groups — areas with stronger community structures or more sustained support showed more stable gains, while women, despite strong involvement, saw their benefits still limited by structural constraints. The central paradox: the project has created and anchored solid local dynamics, but these remain fragile without further institutional and economic support. Sustainability will depend on strengthening support mechanisms, securing participants' economic conditions, and deepening institutional frameworks.

4.7 PES Mechanism

The PES mechanism was a structuring innovation, generally well perceived and accepted, though still in a phase of ownership and consolidation. The performance was rated 3–3.5 out of 5. Its principle — recognizing and compensating environmentally friendly practices — was broadly understood and valued, though comprehension of eligibility criteria, payment methods, and commitments remained uneven across stakeholder groups; acceptability was high but sensitive to perceived targeting or insufficient payment relative to effort expended. Functionally, the mechanism was operational at an early stage but remained largely dependent on project support, with challenges around payment regularity, procedural clarity, and local capacity to manage and monitor the system independently.

Weighing driving factors against structural constraints, the same 3–3.5/5 rating applies to its sustainability outlook. Favorable factors include genuine community support, the mechanism's relevance given strong ecosystem dependence, and project-provided technical and financial backing. These were counterbalanced by partial understanding, dependence on external funding, uncertain payment regularity, limited institutional capacity for autonomous management, and high socio-economic pressure on households that could undercut sustained commitment when incentives were insufficient. The PES mechanism therefore represented a promising but still fragile lever for transformation: its future depends on moving from a project-supported scheme to an autonomous, institutionalized, and economically viable system.

4.8 Security

As a cross-cutting factor, the security and institutional context significantly shapes the pace, continuity, and quality of implementation. While the Great South intervention areas were relatively less exposed than other regions of Haiti, they nevertheless experienced meaningful indirect effects: poor road infrastructure and insecurity on routes connecting intervention areas to supply centers (often centralized in Port-au-Prince)

have disrupted transport of inputs, equipment, and personnel, causing delays, higher costs, and unpredictability. Decision-making authority concentrated at the national level, combined with varying levels of engagement from local authorities, created gaps between planning and implementation. Precarious living conditions and mobility constraints affect participant availability to participate. These challenges were compounded by recurring climatic hazards (e.g., drought, floods, cyclone periods).

In response, the project deployed pragmatic, adaptive mitigation strategies — adjusted schedules, flexible planning, mobilization of local contacts and networks, reduced travel, and adapted intervention methods — that preserved business continuity and community engagement, though persistent delays, higher costs, and dependence on access conditions remained. This resilience was adaptive and situational rather than the product of formalized, anticipatory risk-management systems. The central challenge going forward is to transform this demonstrated adaptive capacity into a structured, institutionalized, and scalable approach to risk management, capable of sustaining consolidation over the medium and long term.

5. Conclusion

The project demonstrated an overall "*Satisfactory*" to "*Good performance*," with tangible relevant results across the evaluation criteria:

- **Relevance** (Very Satisfactory, 4–4.5 out of 5): A clear, contextualized response to priority environmental and livelihood needs. It stood out for its ability to translate strategic orientations into concrete actions.
- **Coherence** (Satisfactory, 3.5–4 out of 5): Broadly consistent with national and international frameworks and territorial dynamics through the integrated "*mountain-to-sea*" approach, though institutional anchoring remains partial.
- **Effectiveness** (Satisfactory, 3–4 out of 5): Ecological and socio-economic changes were observable. In addition, strong participation (~80%) and satisfaction (~70%) were noted, but transformation into sustainable results remained partial.
- **Impacts** (Satisfactory, 3.5–4 out of 5): IGA contributed to diversify livelihoods and partially reduced resource pressure, though effects remain fragile given modest, irregular incomes.
- **Efficiency** (Moderately Satisfactory, 3.5 out of 5): Resources were mobilized appropriately within a constrained environment, though incomplete internal cost data limits full cost-benefit analysis, and the project's ambitious scope contributed to some dispersion of effort.
- **Sustainability** (Moderately Satisfactory, 3–3.5 out of 5): Local initiatives were real and promising but remain fragile pending stronger institutional anchoring and financing.
- **PES Mechanism** (Moderately Satisfactory, 3–3.5 out of 5): Relevant and generally accepted, but still dependent on external support and partial understanding.
- **Gender and Inclusion** (Moderately Satisfactory, 3–3.5 out of 5): Women's participation was high, but benefits remained unevenly distributed and structural constraints limited empowerment.
- **Security and institutional context**: A major structuring constraint on the pace, quality and continuity of implementation, managed adaptively rather than through formalized risk systems.

Considering all the criteria, the project can be rated as Satisfactory, with Very Satisfactory dimensions, particularly in terms of relevance and strategic coherence. The project succeeded in triggering credible, relevant, and socially embedded transformation dynamics. Their consolidation will depend on the ability to strengthen institutional anchoring, consolidate the economic viability of activities, focus efforts on fewer, higher-priority areas rather than spreading resources thin, and address the structural conditions of the operating context.

6. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

6.1 Lessons Learned

- **Gradual and context-dependent changes**: The findings confirmed that the project acted as a lever for gradual transformation. Their consolidation will depend on economic, institutional, and environmental conditions.
- **Strong local ownership, but still uneven institutional anchoring**: Community mobilization was a major achievement. However, the formalization and integration of these mechanisms into institutional frameworks remain inconsistent.
- **The central role of household economic constraints**: The proposed economic alternatives helped to reduce pressure on resources, but their impact remained limited when the IGAs were irregular.
- **Strong but insufficient participation to impact sustainability**: The commitment of stakeholders was real but required long-term support to translate into sustainable results.
- **An ambitious scope of intervention limits the consolidation of impacts**: The dispersion of efforts, in a constrained context, reduced the depth of interventions and the consolidation of gains.

6.2 Recommendations

- **Consolidate institutional anchoring and local relay mechanisms**: Formalize roles and responsibilities among local authorities, decentralized services, and community-based organizations; strengthen monitoring, regulation, and maintenance capacities; and support formal recognition of consultation frameworks.
- **Strengthen the economic viability of income-generating activities**: Structure value chains (e.g., cocoa, coffee, beekeeping, processing), improve market access, and strengthen technical, entrepreneurial, and input support, including through microfinance.
- **Consolidate and institutionalize the PES mechanism**: Clarify criteria, and payment mechanisms; strengthen stakeholder understanding; secure medium-term financing; explore integration into public policy.
- **Deepen gender sensitive and inclusion approaches**: Adapt activities to women's specific constraints, strengthen access to resources and decision-making spaces, and integrate empowerment indicators.
- **Improve operational management and accountability**: Improve planning and communication, reduce payment delays, secure financial circuits, and strengthen community feedback mechanisms.
- **Fully integrate contextual constraints into strategic planning**: Build in contingency scenarios for security, logistics, and climate; strengthen local relays to reduce dependence on centralized supply chains; adapt schedules to territorial realities.
- **Strengthen learning and strategic management systems**: Institutionalize adaptive learning cycles, strengthen feedback loops with communities, and use data more systematically to guide decisions.

  Objective: monitoring and evaluation as a lever for continuous improvement.
- **Consolidate and expand ecological clubs as a lever for transformation**: Mobilize dedicated resources and a structured pedagogical framework, coordinate with relevant ministries (education, environment), and involve young people and cultural actors in dissemination.
- **Better calibrate the scope of interventions to available resources**: Prioritize a smaller number of high-leverage areas and themes, favor a progressive, territorially grounded approach that consolidates before expanding, and strengthen coordination with other projects to avoid overlap.