

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy	Midterm Evaluation (MTE) of the Caribbean Organizations for a Resilient Environment (CORE) Project
Location	Flexible within the Caribbean
Eligible to:	Consultancy firms, consortiums, groups of individual experts

1. INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) is inviting qualified firms or consortiums to submit their technical and financial proposals for the “*Mid-term Evaluation of the Caribbean Organizations for a Resilient Environment (CORE) Project*,” consultancy bidding process. The objective of the mid-term evaluation is to assess whether activities are being implemented as intended and if they have delivered the expected products/outputs on time. This will also serve as a milestone to determine if immediate remedial actions are necessary.

2. BACKGROUND

The CBF is a regional Environmental Fund whose mission is “to ensure continuous funding for conservation and sustainable development in the Caribbean.” Established in 2012, and with a flexible structure, the CBF is designed to accommodate the receipt, investment, distribution and monitoring of conservation funding throughout the region. Currently, the CBF has three programs: (i) a Conservation Finance Program, anchored by a US \$100 million endowment fund, (ii) a Climate Change Program, focused on Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA), with a US \$60 million sinking fund and (iii) a Nature Based Economies Program focused on Advancing Circular Economy (ACE) with a US \$25 million sinking fund.

Under the Conservation Finance Program, and through its Endowment, the CBF provides financial resources through eligible National Conservation Trust Funds (NCTFs) that have signed Partnership Agreements with the CBF, forming the CBF Caribbean Sustainable Finance Architecture (CSFA). The Partner NCTFs then lead the grant-making at the national level with resources from the CBF and other donors.

More information about the CBF can be found at <http://www.caribbeanbiodiversityfund.org>

Caribbean Organizations for a Resilient Environment (CORE) Project:

In April 2023, the CBF signed an Agreement with Global Affairs Canada (GAC) for a project entitled “Caribbean Organizations for a Resilient Environment”. The Caribbean Organizations for a Resilient Environment (CORE) project is designed to be a game changer in both ensuring on-the-ground activities to ensure positive impacts in tackling biodiversity loss and climate change effects while mainstreaming inclusive gender responsive (IGR) approaches in the Caribbean. During its 4-year implementation (April 2023-March 2028), and based on the partnership between the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) and Cuso International, CORE will create new opportunities. It will reform the CSFA to strengthen their institutional policies and grant making procedures, and that they fully incorporate an inclusive and gender responsive approach.

Under the Conservation Finance Program, the CORE Project aims to increase resilience to climate change of vulnerable groups in 8 beneficiary countries across the Caribbean: Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname.

CORE is designed for both on-the-ground activities to ensure positive impacts in tackling biodiversity loss and climate change effects and mainstreaming inclusive gender responsive (IGR) approaches in the Caribbean. The CORE project is being implemented by the CBF and is financed by the Global Affairs Canada (GAC), with co-financing from the CBF.

The final beneficiaries of the CORE project are 8 National Conservation Trust Funds in the CORE target countries and will involve the participation of Environmental and Women's Organisations working in gender mainstreaming, Communities, and other actors in the region working in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem-based adaptation.

The CORE Project consists of the following key outcomes:

1. **Intermediate outcome 1:** Improved performance of National Conservation Trust Funds (NCTFs) and environmental and women's organizations to protect biodiversity and promote climate change resilience for vulnerable and marginalized local communities, particularly for women.

Immediate outcomes:

- a. Increased capacity of NCTFs to implement inclusive and gender-responsive (IGR) nature-based climate solutions (NbCs) to protect biodiversity conservation and promote climate change resilience programming in the Caribbean, particularly for women.
- b. Increased knowledge and skills of environmental and women's organizations receiving NCTFs funding to design and implement IGR NbCS initiatives to protect biodiversity conservation and climate change resilience

2. **Intermediate outcome 2:** Enhanced viability of regional environmental and women's organizations and conservation trust funds to expand the CSFA in support of inclusive and gender-responsive climate resilience in communities and conservation areas.

Immediate outcome:

- a. Improved knowledge and skills of CBF, NCTFs and regional environmental and women's organizations to design sustainable, IGR financial mechanisms (FMs) that increase access of women to biodiversity and climate funds.

3. **Intermediate outcome 3:** Increased effectiveness of NCTFs and target Caribbean countries to advance agendas for the sustainable, inclusive, and equitable protection and gender responsive management of biodiversity conservation and climate resilience across the Caribbean.

Immediate outcome:

- a. Enhanced capacity of CTFs to coordinate agendas across the Caribbean for the sustainable, inclusive, and equitable protection and gender responsive management of biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.

As at March 2026, the CORE Project is at the end of its operational Year 3, and a mid-term evaluation (MTE) is necessitated to:

1. Ascertain how the project is performing vis-à-vis the project's Theory of Change (ToC) and Performance Measurement Framework towards the mainstreaming of inclusive and

gender responsive approaches throughout the Caribbean Sustainable Finance Architecture so that climate and biodiversity solutions reach local communities in practical and lasting ways.

2. Identify corrective measures and/or changes to the intended work plan of the project, focusing on the level of progress in attaining the project objectives stated in the Logical Model Framework.
3. Assess the degree of effectiveness of the internal monitoring and supervision system of the CBF CORE Project Management Unit (PMU).

More information about the CORE Project can be found at
<https://caribbeanbiodiversityfund.org/project/cbf-core-project/>

3. PURPOSE

At mid-point, a mid-term process-output evaluation will be undertaken to assess whether activities are being implemented as intended and if they have delivered the expected products on time. The MTE will also review the project's strategy, its risks to sustainability. The MTE findings will serve to inform and adjust the project's direction as needed for the remaining implementation period.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTANCY

1. Assess the relevance of the project design and implementation and monitoring using discussion tools and field visits with key staff and stakeholders from CBF Conservation Finance Program, CORE PMU, Cuso International, NCTFs, other partners, and beneficiaries in the 8 CORE countries.
1. Assess the CORE's project performance at midpoint towards planned outputs and outcomes organized under the The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC)¹'s criteria and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)'s Gender Guidelines across the ***below-listed key evaluation questions in Table 1.***
2. Assess the sustainability and inclusivity of the CORE project's cooperative knowledge sharing spaces - did the knowledge, experiences, and practices shared through these spaces lead to any concrete changes in partner organizations.
3. Evaluate the efficiency of the CORE project implementation, including outputs delivered and outcomes achieved under each of the three components as at mid-point.
4. Analyze the efficiency of financial and operational management, including the performance of the CORE PMU, Cuso International and the NCTFs as co-executing partners.
5. Identify challenges and lessons learned of the NCTFs and sub-grantees in the operationalization of the Gender Smart Facility Operations Manual, Gender Strategy and other key guiding policies and documents.
6. Provide actionable recommendations to improve performance, align with strategic opportunities, and enhance long-term sustainability and impact.

¹ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has established common definitions for six evaluation criteria – relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability – to support consistent, high-quality evaluation. These criteria provide a normative framework used to determine the merit or worth of an intervention (policy, strategy, programme, project or activity). They serve as the basis upon which evaluative judgements are made. Source: OECD (2021), Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/543e84ed-en>.

Table 1: Key Evaluation Questions to be answered by the MTE

Evaluation criteria	Questions
Relevance² (It is to assess the consistency of the objectives of an intervention with the organization's goals and comparative advantages, the client country's development strategy or policy priorities, and the needs of beneficiaries).	Does the CORE Project Implementation Plan (PIP) clearly and specifically identify the problem to be addressed?
	To what extent is the project responding to the national and sub-national environmental needs and priorities?
	How well has the project design and objectives responded to the targeted needs and priorities identified in the context of the project and changes in the operational context and/or circumstances?
	How has the project met the expectations of participants and target beneficiaries?
Effectiveness³ (It is to assess to what extent the intervention's objectives have been achieved or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance).	Is the project successfully delivering its outputs and achieving targets as per the Projects Performance Measurement Framework?
	How much progress has been made and are the outputs contributing to the achievement of the project's immediate outcomes?
	How well has the project achieved planned results (outputs and immediate outcomes) and its objective?
Efficiency⁴ (It is to assess to what extent the intervention has converted its resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) economically into results (i.e., the results chain, ToC and intervention strategy).	Do the actual or anticipated results – including outputs and immediate outcomes– provide sufficient justification for the costs incurred?
	Does the project intervention model offer the most efficient way to address gender mainstreaming across NCTFs, communities, and other actors in the region working in biodiversity conservation and ecosystem-based adaptation?
	Is the rate of disbursement consistent with the work plan, the length of implementation to date and the outputs delivered?
	Does the project comply with financial reporting and/or auditing requirements/ schedule, including quality and timeliness of reports?
Potential for Impact⁵ (It is to measure changes that have occurred or are expected to occur for the partners and beneficiaries, and to indicate the positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended, medium- to long-term results caused by the interventions. The impact domains aligned to the UN 2030 SDGs are considered in assessing impact).	Were there any significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, impacts on project beneficiaries and/or ecological sites?
	How has the project generated, or is expected to generate, significant and potentially transformative longer-term social, economic or environmental effects within the 8 NCTFs?
	Is the project likely to generate adverse environmental, social and economic effects?
Potential for Sustainability⁶ (It is to assess the likelihood of continued long-term benefits of the interventions and the resilience to risk of net benefit flows over time).	How likely is it that the changes caused by this project will continue beyond the life of the project?
	Has the project planned adequately for sustainability? What measures have been put in place to guarantee the sustainability of the project?
	What are the risks facing sustainability of project outputs and outcomes?

² International Trade Centre. 2018. ITC Evaluation Guidelines.

³ International Trade Centre. 2018. ITC Evaluation Guidelines.

⁴ International Trade Centre. 2018. ITC Evaluation Guidelines.

⁵ International Trade Centre. 2018. ITC Evaluation Guidelines.

⁶ International Trade Centre. 2018. ITC Evaluation Guidelines.

Evaluation criteria	Questions
Crosscutting	
Mainstreaming Gender and Human Rights	Is there evidence that gender mainstreaming was integrated across NCTFs, environmental and women's organizations to strengthen understanding of gender equality, social inclusion and human rights?
	Examine if progress so far has led to or could in the future catalyse CORE gender responsive outcomes (i.e. increased knowledge, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance, increased leadership etc...)
	To what extent has the CORE project addressed structural barriers to mainstreaming of inclusive and gender responsive approaches so that climate and biodiversity solutions reach local communities in practical and lasting ways?
Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning	Is the Project Theory of Change and intervention logic appropriate, coherent, and realistic to achieve project results?
	Are the project's outcomes clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
	Is the monitoring Framework and processes well-conceived, and sufficient to monitor results and track progress toward achieving project outputs and immediate outcomes?
Communication and Reporting	Are there key stakeholders included in communication of progress? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received?
	Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
Lessons Learned	What is working or not working for the project? What can be done differently in relation to ensuring women and other vulnerable groups accessing biodiversity and climate finance at both community and national levels?
	To what extent has adaptive management been integrated in project implementation and monitoring?
	Did participation in the CORE Project's cooperative knowledge-sharing spaces lead to concrete changes in partners' practices, systems, or decision-making within their organizations?

5. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation will adhere to the standards of the **UNEG** and will follow the criteria set by the **OECD-DAC**, namely: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, potential for impact and sustainability along with other cross-cutting themes outlined in **Table 1**. The evaluation will adopt a **mixed methods approach** to ensure a comprehensive and balanced assessment of the project's progress, relevance, and outcomes. The following methods are proposed:

1. **Desk Review:** A comprehensive desk review- of reports (narrative and financial), audit reports, review of key project documents including monitoring and evaluation frameworks. A desk review of all relevant documentation, including (but not limited to): The project implementation plan (PIP), other documents, contracts and related agreements/Work-plans and budgets/ NCTFs Progress Technical and Financial Reports.
2. **Key informant interviews** and group discussions conducted with key stakeholders involved in the CORE project to ensure that the review is carried out in a participatory manner. A list of key partners and stakeholders would be identified at an early stage and a consultation process developed. All stakeholders consulted should be able to present their views in confidence to the evaluation team and to identify issues, opportunities,

constraints and options towards project endline. These will be done mostly virtually or in-person during the specific site visits.

3. **Focus group discussions** with all key stakeholders involved in the implementation of GSF projects at country levels.
4. **Field Visit(s)** conducted based on agreed selection criteria to selected GSF Implementation sites during Inception phase.

The PMU will review the planned methodologies proposed by the consultancy firm and provide feedback before the review process begins.

6. SCOPE OF WORK

In close consultation with the PMU, the Lead Evaluation Consultant will be responsible for the overall management of the MTE and timely provision of its outputs, data collection and analysis and report-writing. More specifically:

1. **Inception phase** of the MTE. The Team completes the following tasks, including:
 - a) Attend an inception meeting and agree on core deliverables and methodologies.
 - b) Complete preliminary desk review and conduct introductory interviews with project staff.
 - a. Review PMF and Theory of Change of the project and suggest revisions
 - b. Prepare the evaluation matrix and data collection tools.
 - c. Conduct desk review and draft stakeholder lists
 - d. Draft Methodology and Work Plan and develop instruments including interview protocols, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guides, survey instruments (if relevant);
 - e. Develop and present criteria for country and/or site selection for the evaluation mission.
 - f. Plan the evaluation schedule.
 - g. Prepare the Inception Report with methodology and work plan, incorporating comments until approved.
2. **Data collection and analysis phase** of the MTE, including:
 - a. conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners, and project stakeholders across NCTFs and sub-grantees, beneficiaries
 - b. (where appropriate and agreed) conduct field mission(s) to selected countries, visit the GSF project locations, interview project partners and stakeholders, including a good representation of local indigenous communities (if possible). Ensure the independence of the Evaluation and the confidentiality of evaluation interviews.
 - c. Periodic reporting back to the PMU on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and.
 - Bi-weekly check-ins with the PMU informed of the evaluation progress.
 - d. Convene a validation workshop (virtual) to share preliminary findings with the PMU further to data collection and analysis completion
3. **Draft Report Phase** of the Evaluation will include:
 - a. Draft the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that the report is coherent and consistent with the Evaluation Manager guidelines both in substance and style.
 - b. Liaise with the PMU on comments received and finalize the Main Evaluation

Report, ensuring that comments are taken into account until approved by the PMU.

- c. Prepare an Audit Response Trail with Comments as an annex for the main report, listing those accepted and /not accepted by the Evaluation Consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection; and,
4. **Final Report Phase** of the Evaluation will include:
 - a. Prepare and present the final evaluation report incorporating the feedback received.
 - b. Prepare and present Audit Trail (tracked changed version and cleaned version with feedback and comments addressed).
 - c. Prepare an Evaluation Brief (2-3 page summary of the MTE and the key evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons).

7. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- The Lead Consultant will be required to present preliminary findings for discussion at a virtual validation workshop with the CORE PMU and other project implementing partners.
- The evaluation report should not exceed 40 pages, excluding Annexes, and should include an Executive Summary with key findings and lessons learned. Annexes should include technical data, registers, data tools and protocols, evaluation matrix, PMF updates, maps, photographs, etc. The Evaluation Brief is a stand-a-lone document.
- All reports are to be submitted electronically in MS Word and in English and presented in the format approved by the PMU.
- The Final report should be delivered electronically in both Word and PDF format. Annexes should be submitted in WORD format.
- The Evaluation report is the property of the CBF and Global Affairs Canada (GAC). The Consultant is restricted from publishing the Evaluation Report in whole or in part unless permission is granted by the CBF and GAC.

8. DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables are to be submitted in English:

1. **Inception Report (D1)** with Methodology and Work Plan
2. **a) Draft Mid-term Evaluation Report (D2a)** will be produced upon completion of the desk review and after the conduct of interviews and stakeholder consultations with the CORE project stakeholders and informal feedback meetings with stakeholders. The draft report will be validated through a Validation Workshop session held virtually.

b) Validation Workshop Presentation (D2b): Virtual and/or in-person sessions with the CBF CORE PMU, GAC representatives, and other key stakeholders to present the Report, validate findings, and discuss recommendations and main lessons.
3. **Final Midterm Evaluation Report and a stand-alone Evaluation Brief (D3):** Incorporating feedback, submitted to the CORE PMU, no later than 4 weeks after validation. The final MTE report should describe the full MTE approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges,

strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the evaluation. Recommendations should be put in the report's executive summary.

9. ETHICS AND VALUES

The MTE will be conducted in accordance with the relevant GAC and CBF policies. The evaluation must be conducted in a participatory, collaborative and respectful manner that ensures close engagement with key participants including the CBF, GAC, representatives and NCTF's heads, and other key Environmental and Women's Organizations participating in the project. The consulting firm's approach is to be honest, fair and unbiased - any expected and/or arising biases must be communicated to the CBF's CORE PMU with mitigation measures. The consulting firm is required to sign a UNEG Code of Conduct form.

10. SCHEDULE AND DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT

Timeframe, Budget and Terms of Payment

Duration: 01 April 2026 – 28 to August 2026.

Total budget: The total budget for this consultancy shall not exceed **USD 50,000**, including all travel and incidental costs. Payments will be disbursed as follows:

Terms of Payment:

- ✓ **First payment** – 30% upon approval of Deliverable 1- approved Inception Report within a month of contract signing.
- ✓ **Second payment** – 40% upon submission and approval of Deliverable 2a & 2b - Draft MTE Report and Presentation to PMU and other stakeholders within 3 months of contract signing.
- ✓ **Third payment** – 30% upon final approval of Deliverable 3- approved Final MTE Report and 2-3 pages Evaluation Brief within 5 months of contract signing.

11. REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

The MTE will be commissioned by the CBF. The Lead Evaluator will report directly to the CORE Project Lead and any other relevant CORE personnel. Support will be provided by the CBF Project Management Unit, including access to documentation and stakeholder contacts across CBF and external.

12. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERTISE FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

Team Leader:

- Advanced degree in environmental management, environmental economics, finance, public policy, marine conservation, sustainable development, evaluation or related field.

- At least 10 years of experience in project evaluation or midterm/final reviews.
- In-depth knowledge of climate change and conservation finance frameworks.
- Experience working with regional Caribbean organizations and small island developing states (SIDS).
- Excellent writing and facilitation skills in English; working knowledge of Spanish, Creole or French is an asset.
- Ability/experience to facilitate consultation workshops.
- Knowledge in gender and vulnerability issues is also preferable.
- Consultant Firm possesses at least 5 years' experience leading donor evaluations (Evidence of at least 3 midterm/outcome evaluations/reviews/ completed in the last 3 years) is desirable.

Evaluation Team Members (as applicable):

- Subject-matter expertise in environmental management, sustainable finance (climate change, environmental management, gender and development studies, sociology, economics or related development studies).
- At least 5 years of experience in project evaluation or midterm/final reviews.
- Experience monitoring and evaluating initiatives, policies, projects and/or programs, or applied research background.
- Experience mainstreaming Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) considerations in evaluation planning to implementation and reporting.
- Evidence of quantitative and qualitative mixed methods research (3 applied research/evaluation studies in past 5 years)
- Credentialed Evaluator (CE) designations are an asset.
- Ability to write concisely in English; proficiency in French and/or Spanish is an asset.

13. HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this consultancy, please submit the documents listed below to procurement@caribbeanbiodiversityfund.org

All applications must be received by **6 March, 2026 at 11:59pm AST**, with the Subject line: **“Proposal – CORE Project Mid-term Evaluation”**. Late submissions will not be considered.

Any questions must be submitted via email to procurement@caribbeanbiodiversityfund.org with the subject line: “Questions: CORE Mid-term Evaluation” by **20 February 2026**. The CBF will provide responses to all inquiries no later than **27 February 2026**.

14. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

A. Application documents:

All applicants must submit a:

- Technical Proposal with detailed methodology and workplan for the deliverables with a maximum of 15 pages excluding appendices. The Technical Proposal appendices should also include:
 - Cover letter that specifically references strengths in the areas noted
 - Full CVs or resumes of individual or individuals involved in consultancy
 - Contact information for three references
- Financial Proposal
 - Costs in USD currency.

B. Selection Process:

1. All compliant packages will be reviewed by a selection committee against the assessment matrix found below.
2. Only the successful candidate will be contacted.

15. SELECTION CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT MATRIX

1. Assessment and Selection Criteria

Proposals submitted for this consultancy will be assessed using a weighted scoring system based on the technical and financial competencies required for the **“Proposal – CORE Project Mid-term Evaluation”**.

The evaluation will be conducted by a selection panel composed of representatives from the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF), and other project stakeholders as appropriate. The total maximum score is 100 points, with technical criteria accounting for 80 points and the financial proposal accounting for **20 points**.

A. Technical Assessment Criteria (80 points total)

No.	Evaluation Criteria	Description	Maximum Points
1	Understanding of the Assignment and Methodological Approach	Understanding of CORE objectives, Theory of Change, PMF, gender-responsive focus, and OECD-DAC / UNEG standards. Clear mixed-methods methodology aligned with TOR.	15
2	Evaluation Experience – Team Leader	Minimum 10 years of experience conducting donor-funded regional or multi-country evaluations applying OECD-DAC and UNEG standards.	12
3	Technical Expertise in Conservation, Climate Resilience and Sustainable Finance	Expertise in biodiversity conservation, EbA, climate resilience, conservation finance, or nature-based solutions.	10
4	Gender, Inclusion and Human Rights Expertise	Experience integrating gender equality, social inclusion, and human rights in evaluation design, implementation, and reporting.	10

5	Caribbean and SIDS Contextual Experience	Experience working in the Caribbean and/or Small Island Developing States with regional institutions and NCTFs.	8
6	Evaluation Team Composition and Complementarity	Balanced team with appropriate evaluation, thematic, gender, and regional expertise.	8
7	Stakeholder Engagement and Facilitation Capacity	Ability to conduct participatory evaluations and facilitate validation workshops with diverse stakeholders.	4
8	Work Plan, Deliverables and Timeline	Clear and realistic work plan aligned with TOR deliverables and timeline.	6
9	Report Writing and Communication Skills	Ability to produce high-quality evaluation reports and briefs in clear English (Evidence of at least 3 midterm/terminal/outcome evaluations/reviews/ completed in the last 3 years) is desirable.	7

Subtotal – Technical Score = 80 marks.

B. Financial Assessment Criteria (20 points total)

The financial score will be calculated based on the best value for money principle. The lowest-priced proposal will receive the full 20 points. Other proposals will receive points in proportion to the lowest bid using the formula:

$$\text{Financial Score} = (\text{Lowest Price} / \text{Proposed Price}) \times 20$$

Assessment Component	Maximum Points
Technical Proposal	80
Financial Proposal	20
Total	100

2. Final Scoring and Selection

The contract will be awarded to the consultant or firm that achieves the highest combined technical and financial score and is deemed most responsive to the Terms of Reference.