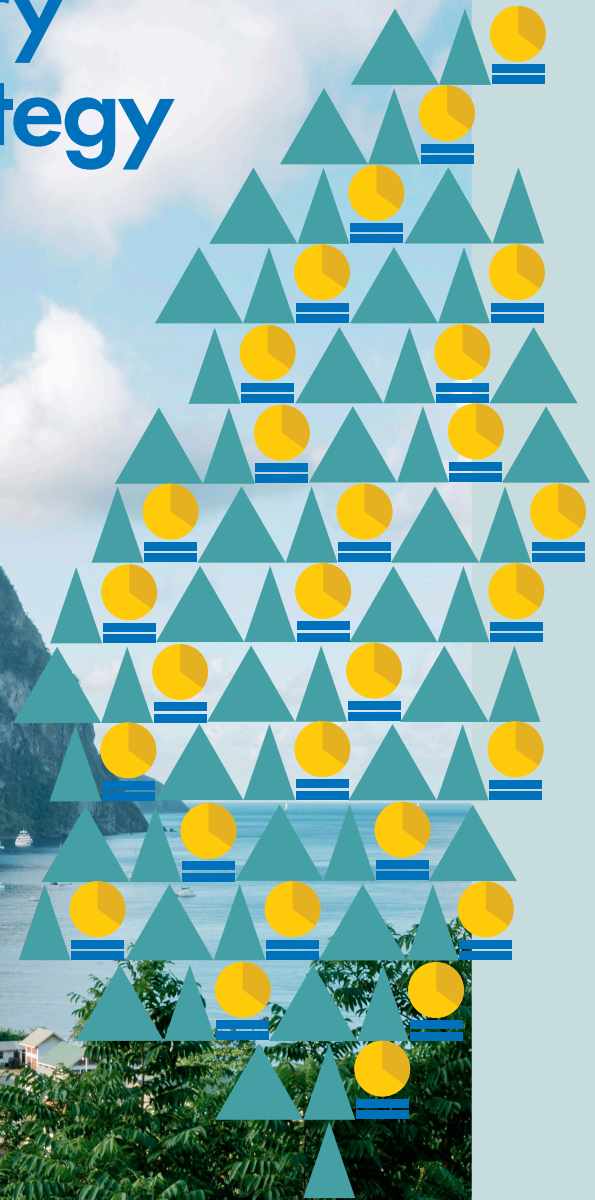


Evaluation of the Caribbean Development Bank Saint Lucia Country Engagement Strategy 2020-23

Volume 1: Main Report



Office of
Independent Evaluation



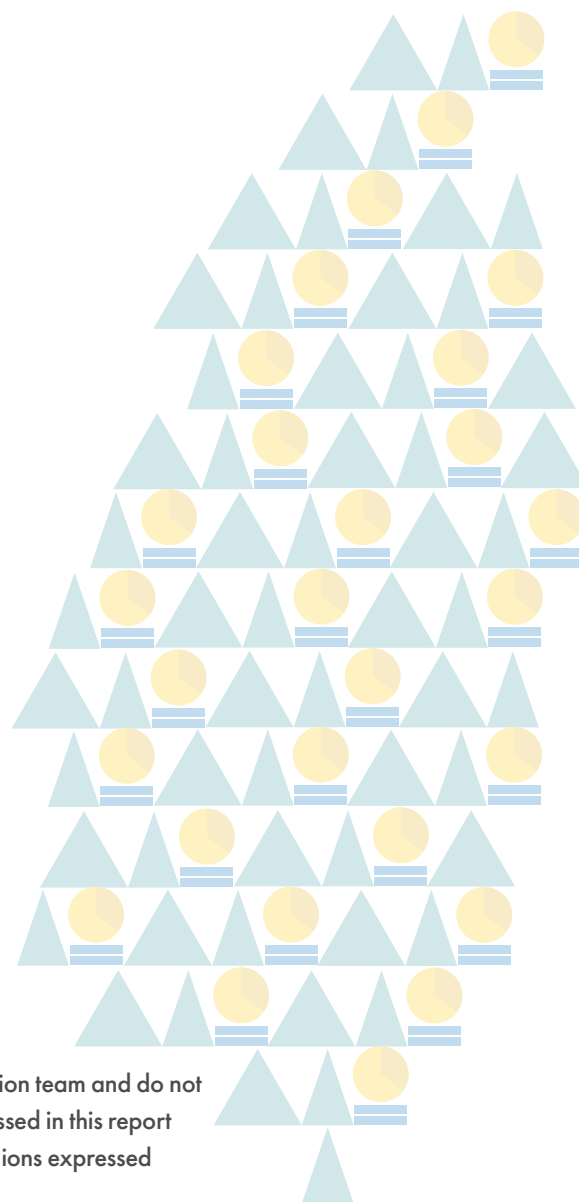
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Office of Independent Evaluation (OIE) thanks the Government of Saint Lucia, its focal point team within the Department of Economic Development, Charlin Louisy Regis, and the strategy implementing agencies for readily agreeing to engage with the evaluation team. Staff from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) Operations Divisions also responded readily to the numerous queries of the evaluation team, including participating in a Theory of Change validation workshop, a Preliminary Findings Validation workshop and a co-creation workshop to develop recommendations, and reviewing and commenting on the draft final report. Special thanks to Justin Carter, country economist CDB, who acted as focal point for consultations and provided support throughout the process; to Katherine Liakos, who was the OIE manager for the evaluation and liaised with the IOD PARC evaluation team; and Denise Padmore who supported the process of gathering the necessary documents from CDB. I acknowledge the IOD PARC team for conducting this evaluation: Ruth Sherratt as evaluation Team Leader, and Jan Voordouw, Ima Bishop, Jordan Williams, and Quality Assurance by Matthew Crump.

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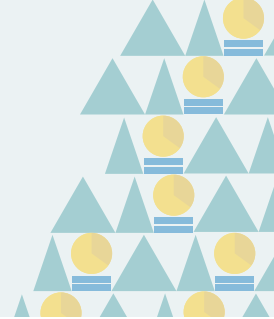
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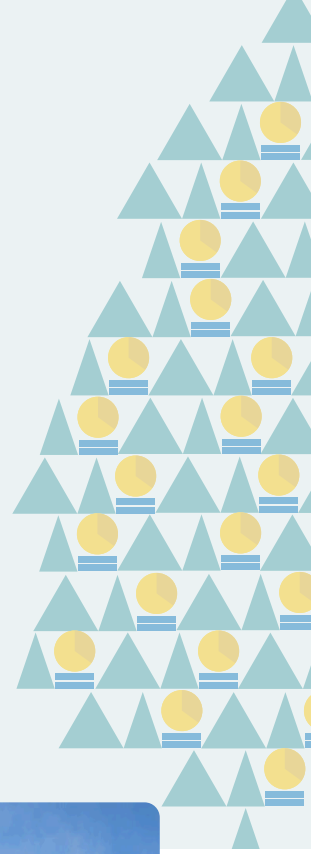


ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BNTF	Basic Needs Trust Fund	FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
BRACCCVAS	Building Resilience for Adaptation to Climate Change and Climate Variability in Agriculture	GBV	Gender Based Violence
CARICOM	The Caribbean Community and Common Market	GCCA+	Global Climate Change Alliance Plus Initiative
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank	GCF	Green Climate Fund
CES	Country Engagement Strategy	GDI	Gender Development Index
CESE	Country Engagement Strategy Evaluation	GDP	Gross Domestic Product
UK CIF	United Kingdom Caribbean Infrastructure Fund	GEF	The Global Environment Facility
COVID	Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2.	GIS	Geographic Information System
CPA	Country Poverty Assessment	GOSL	Government of Saint Lucia
CSP	Country Strategy Programme	GPS	Global Positioning System
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	HCSL	Health and Citizen Security Levy
DRVP	Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project	ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ECE	Early Childhood Education	IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ECG	Evaluation Cooperation Group	IDP	International Donor Partner
EIB	European Investment Bank	IICA	The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
EQIP	Education Quality Improvement Project	IMF	International Monetary Fund
ERG	Evaluation Review Group	ITC	International Trade Centre
ESR	Exogenous Shock Response	KII	Key Informant Interview
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations	LOC	Line of Credit
		MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
		MSME	Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

MTDS	Medium Term Development Strategy	SEN	Special Educational Needs
MTR	Mid Term Review	SFR	Special Funds Resources
NCPU	National Competitiveness and Productivity Unit	SIDS	Small Island Developing States
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation	SIMP	Security Interests in Movable Property Act
NIC	National Insurance Corporation	SLDB	Saint Lucia Development Bank
NURC	National Utilities Regulatory Commission	SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound
OCR	Ordinary Capital Resources	SPS	Social Protection System
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	TDD	Terminal dates of disbursements
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States	TVET	The Technical Vocational Education & Training Unit
OIE	Office of Independent Evaluation	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
PBL	Policy Based Loan	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
PDMU	Prime Minister's Delivery Unit	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
PFM	Public Financial Management	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
PIU	Project Implementation Unit	UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
PMDU	The Performance Management and Delivery Unit	WASCO	The Water and Sewerage Company Inc.
PSIP	Public Sector Investment Programme		
PWD	Persons with disabilities		
RBM	Results-Based Management		
RIO	Resident Implementation Officer		
RMF	Results Monitoring Framework		
SAO	Strategy and Accountability Office		
SBDC	Small Business Development Centre		
SDF	Special Development Fund		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This evaluation examines the Caribbean Development Bank's (CDB) Country Engagement Strategy (CES) for Saint Lucia for the period 2020–23, including activities designed and implemented until December 2024.

The evaluation uses a **mixed-methods approach**, combining document reviews, portfolio analysis, and stakeholder interviews, to inform the next CES. The evaluation process supported **participation, reflection, and co-creation**. During the inception phase, feedback was collected from CDB staff and Government of Saint Lucia (GOSL) counterparts to refine the focus and ensure evaluation questions would generate insights aligned with both CDB's strategic needs and GOSL priorities. A **Theory of Change workshop** was conducted with CDB and GOSL stakeholders to reconstruct the underlying logic of the CES and identify key assumptions and change pathways. This collaboration provided a shared foundation for assessing progress and strategic alignment. **Validation of emerging findings** was carried out via an online workshop. A **hybrid co-creation workshop** was held with Saint Lucia-based stakeholders and CDB staff to collaboratively develop recommendations and ensure proposed actions are useful, specific, and actionable, with the aim of increasing the success of the next CES.



High-Level Findings

Did the CES achieve the intended results?

Progress against GOSL development outcomes was moderate, and CDB’s contribution to this progress was moderate to strong, with strongest results in climate resilient infrastructure and MSME viability and strongest CDB contribution in crisis response and good governance.¹ CDB catalysed positive long-term policy shifts in social protection, though other negative unintended outcomes, including perceived inequities and added fiscal/capacity pressures for GOSL, were identified. CDB engagement supported GOSL/

CES outcomes, but its full potential was not realised: constraints with CDB staff bandwidth/time meant engagement was intermittent and guidance was not always timely or clear, leading to some uncertainty and delays around CDB processes. The likelihood of sustainability is moderate but fragile: stronger where institutional capacity was built but weaker where there is reliance on ongoing budget and technical support.

Table 1. Intended Results (GOSL development/CES pillar outcomes) and CDB contribution to these

Intended Results	Achievement	CDB Contribution
CES Pillar 1: Enhancing Economic Outcomes Through Infrastructure and Private Sector Development		
Outcome 1: Improved quality climate resistant infrastructure, services	Moderate-Strong	Moderate-Strong
Outcome 2: Enhanced viability of MSME	Moderate-Strong	Moderate-Strong
CES Pillar 2: Enhancing Inclusive Social Development and Protection		
Outcome 3: Improved quality, equity, efficiency, effectiveness of education	Moderate	Moderate-Strong
Outcome 4: Improved Youth Outcomes	Moderate	Moderate-Strong
Outcome 5: Strengthened Social Protection System	Moderate	Moderate
Outcome 6: Improved access to quality health care	Moderate	Moderate
CES Pillar 3: Enhancing Disaster Risk Management and Disaster Risk Reduction Systems		
Outcome 7: Improved resilience to disaster and climate change	Moderate	Moderate
CES Pillar 4: Effective Crisis Response and Good Governance		
Outcome 8: Improved crisis response systems, institutions, governance	Moderate	Strong

1 Ratings reflect achievement of GOSL/CES outcomes and CDB contribution to those outcomes as follows:

- Limited** – small or early progress/influence;
- Some** – uneven but emerging progress/influence;
- Moderate** – clear measurable progress with partial gaps;
- Moderate-Strong** – strong progress/influence across most areas with some remaining gaps;
- Strong** – substantial and system-wide progress or influence

Was the design of the CES appropriate?

The CES was highly relevant and broadly coherent, reflecting strong early alignment with Saint Lucia's development strategies and close engagement with GOSL during design. High-level alignment with GOSL priorities remained relevant by adapting to changes in priorities stemming from the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the change of administration. However, the CES overestimated national implementation capacity (encompassing technical capacity, human resources, and staff time) and only partially integrated CDB cross-cutting priorities such as digitalisation and governance. While coordination with other development partners occurred in specific cases, overall coherence depended largely on GOSL, with CDB's role in donor coordination remaining limited. Weak results monitoring and limited use of the Country Engagement Strategy Results Monitoring Framework (CES RMF) further constrained strategic learning and adaptation, with weak data availability, limited use of disaggregated data, and insufficient adaptive monitoring and risk management processes.

Was CES implementation efficient?

CDB's engagement supported implementation, particularly where strong Project Implementation Unit (PIUs) or Resident Implementation Officer (RIO) support existed but was inconsistent across sectors and at community-level. Implementation faced widespread delays driven by procurement, CDB and GOSL capacity (primarily bandwidth) and coordination challenges, meaning overall efficiency varied across the portfolio and was constrained overall.

High-Level Conclusions

CONCLUSION 1

Relevance

Strategic relevance remained high, but portfolio realism was low. The CES stayed strongly aligned with Saint Lucia's development objectives and evolving priorities. Adaptation during COVID-19 demonstrated responsiveness, however CES design over-estimated GOSL implementation capacity, which must be better assessed in the future.

CONCLUSION 2

Coherence

Engagement by CDB was uneven due to variable staff availability. The 2020–23 CES piloted a new engagement approach, which received positive initial feedback. But limited CDB bandwidth especially during COVID-19 and staff transitions meant opportunities to sustain engagement during implementation were sometimes missed.

CONCLUSION 3

Efficiency and Effectiveness

Efficiency and effectiveness were constrained by systemic bottlenecks and external shocks. Projects with strong PIUs and RIO support and where CDB demonstrated flexibility were implemented more smoothly.

CONCLUSION 4

Results Monitoring

CES and project level results monitoring frameworks existed but were under-utilised, were overly focussed on intervention/output level, and data to monitor progress was often unavailable, which meant CDB's contribution to Saint Lucia's strategic development objectives could not easily be tracked.

CONCLUSION 5

Sustainability

Sustainability prospects are strengthened by CDB's long-term relationships and flexibility but threatened by limited GOSL capacity and bandwidth.

Recommendations

Six recommendations were developed in collaboration with CDB and GOSL:

RECOMMENDATION 1

Align the development of the new CES based on realistic national capacity, CDB value-add, and the new Medium Term Development Strategy (MTDS) development timeline (beginning 2026).

Focus the next CES on a small number of priority themes where implementation capacity is strongest and CDB has clear comparative advantage. Adjust the CES development timeline so that it aligns with GOSL's MTDS development process scheduled to begin in 2026. Ensure that the CES portfolio is designed to be realistic by ensuring appropriate sequencing of interventions to avoid overloading ministries, systematically checking if agencies have the staff, time, and technical capacity to design and implement the proposed projects.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Strengthen systemic GOSL implementation capacity through workforce planning, institutionalised Results Based Management (RBM), and targeted skills development.

Improve staff availability and technical capacity planning at project design (bandwidth assessments, surge-support rosters, consultant pools). CDB to support GOSL with RBM, procurement, and project-cycle training through the Public Service Training Division to build institutional capacity beyond project-specific roles. Develop sectoral skills pipelines aligned to anticipated project demand to reduce implementation bottlenecks.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Strengthen CES results monitoring through MTDS alignment, a shared data repository and joint performance reviews (including other donors as appropriate).

Co-design a simplified CES results framework aligned to MTDS indicators to reduce parallel reporting. Develop a shared digital repository for CES-related results and data. Conduct semi-annual joint CES

performance reviews to assess progress, identify bottlenecks, and promote adaptive management. Where possible, (continue to) integrate these with other donor review processes.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Strengthen coordination by leveraging the existing Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PMDU) and creating a unified donor/project matrix.

Leverage and strengthen Saint Lucia's existing PMDU by reviewing its mandate in relation to CDB and other donor-funded projects. Enhance its resourcing and technical capacity (e.g., monitoring, coordination, escalation pathways) so it can serve as the central node for cross-government delivery monitoring. In parallel, develop and maintain a centralised donor/project matrix to ensure all partners are visible, aligned, and engaged throughout conceptualisation, design, and implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Introduce adaptive portfolio and strategy management to increase responsiveness and efficiency.

Institutionalise a mid-cycle CES review to recalibrate the project pipeline, risks and sequencing. Enable adaptive adjustments to the CES results framework when context shifts. Review RIO scope/terms of reference beyond the current infrastructure focus and increase their involvement in portfolio-wide monitoring including risk analysis and cross-portfolio problem-solving.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Strengthen engagement, visibility, and communication to sustain ownership and momentum of the Country Engagement Strategy.

Develop and implement a Country Engagement Strategy communication and engagement plan to position it as a nationally owned tool. Hold annual briefings for Cabinet, permanent secretaries, and implementing agencies. Provide onboarding for new government officials and project managers, including orientation on CDB processes and the role of the RIO.



1. INTRODUCTION

This Country Engagement Strategy Evaluation (CESE) is primarily intended to support learning and decision-making within CDB.

It provides a structured assessment of whether the design of the Country Engagement Strategy (CES) 2020-2023 was appropriate (examining relevance and coherence), the efficiency of implementation, and whether the expected results of the CES were achieved (examining effectiveness and sustainability). Through this assessment, the CESE provides a status report on the performance of Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) programming in Saint Lucia, also feeding into the process to develop a new CES. The evaluation is learning, accountability and utility focused. It includes useful, specific and actionable recommendations, focussed on the Saint Lucia context, but which may also be transferable to CDB's broader programming and operations.

The primary users of the evaluation are:

- CDB's Senior Management and CDB staff involved in the developing the new CES
- CDB's Board of Directors, providing oversight and strategic guidance
- Project teams involved in ongoing and future CES implementation who can draw on insights to improve design, delivery and results of CES interventions
- GOSL, who are CDB's main partner in CES design and implementation, who co-developed the recommendations, some of which are targeted at GOSL and will support improved design, delivery and results of the current and future CES

2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation is utilisation-focused, based on Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) Good Practice Standards for Country Evaluations.

A mixed-methods approach was used combining qualitative analysis from document review and key informant interviews (KII) and quantitative analysis of administrative/financial data. Findings are based on triangulated data from primary and secondary sources, and based on analysis against the following evaluation questions (EQs):

- **Did the CES achieve the intended results?** (*Effectiveness and Sustainability*)
 - EQ1: To what extent did CDB's interventions make progress towards the outputs, outcomes and strategic objectives set out in the CES/interventions?
 - EQ2: What is the likelihood that results will be sustained?
- **Was the CES design appropriate?** (*Relevance, Coherence and Results Monitoring*)
 - EQ3: To what extent did the CES/CDB's support from 2020-24 align with Saint Lucia's development needs?
 - EQ4: To what extent were planned and actual CES interventions aligned with CDB's corporate priorities?
 - EQ5: Were the CES and interventions designed in a manner consistent with GOSL and other agencies' implementation capacity?
 - EQ6: How and to what extent did CES design and implementation of interventions

complement (rather than duplicate) other actors' interventions?

- EQ7: To what extent was an appropriate M&E strategy and system included in the design of the CES and actively used for performance management?

- **Was CES implementation efficient?** (*Efficiency*)

- EQ8: Was there sufficient and effective initial and ongoing engagement with GOSL, IDPs and other Saint Lucia stakeholders and governance mechanisms to support design and implementation?
- EQ9: Did CES interventions proceed in a timely and efficient manner?
- EQ10: What other key factors enabled/constrained CES management and implementation?

Brief high-level case studies on CES Engagement and CES Results Monitoring were included and integrated into the EQs, which used primarily qualitative evidence from KIIs and background documents and brought evidence against several EQs under one case study.

The evaluation matrix (see Annex A) was structured around the EQs and developed during the inception phase, a reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) (see Annex H), and five OECD DAC evaluation criteria:

relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.

The evaluation used the ToC as a core tool to guide EQ formulation and help assess plausible achievement of and CDB contribution to results. Through review of evidence against key assumptions underpinning each causal link in the ToC, the evaluation was able to examine “what happened” and “why or why not.” Annexes for the report are presented in a separate volume.

2.1 Evaluation Scope

The evaluation was designed to serve both accountability and learning purposes in determining how CDB interventions performed and the lessons that can be drawn to inform Bank operations in the future. The evaluation focuses on CDB’s implementation of the CES 2020-23, but includes ongoing implementation of activities in 2024. It sampled a selection of interventions², some of which were initiated under the previous strategic period but which were still being implemented during the CES 2020-23 timeframe (see Table 2).

2.2 Evaluation Process

The evaluation was initiated in July 2025 with a four-week inception phase to finalise the design, data sources, main areas of focus and proposed workplan. All data collection was conducted remotely from August to November 2025. Preliminary findings were validated with the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) plus additional CDB staff in late October 2025, and a co-creation of recommendation workshop held in Saint Lucia with CDB, GOSL and other implementing agency stakeholders on 11 November 2025. These participatory processes helped to improve buy-in for evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations and supported development of specific, owned, realistic and timebound recommendations.

2.3 Evaluation Process

The evidence for the evaluation consists of a range of qualitative and quantitative sources:

- Secondary documents:
 - 132 CDB documents (strategy and project level)
- Primary data collection:
 - 12 inception phase scoping KIIs (with 9 CDB and 3 GOSL staff)
 - 45 main phase KIIs with 68 stakeholders (through a combination of individual and group KIIs)
 - » 21 CDB staff
 - » 9 International Donor Partner (IDP) representatives
 - » 22 GOSL staff
 - » 15 Statutory Body staff
 - » 1 NGO representative

KIIs followed a semi-structured format and were tailored to each key informant (KI) in line with the KI’s position, and to fill gaps in the evaluation’s evidence base.

2.4 Data Analysis

The basis for planning data collection and analysis was the evaluation matrix (see Annex A). The analysis began during the inception phase with a high-level review of strategy and project level documentation. Based on this, a ToC of the CES was reconstructed to serve as a data collection and analysis tool and to enable the evaluation team to visualise the causal links from output to outcome and thus build a picture of the CES portfolio. The reconstructed ToC was validated with the ERG and wider CDB staff during the inception phase. In-depth analysis was then conducted following completion of data collection, including structured thematic qualitative analysis of KII notes and secondary documents against the EQs and ToC.

² To ensure coverage of all CDB sectors, loan and grants, and capital, TA and financing instrument coverage

Table 2. Projects included in the in-depth review the evaluation³

CDB Sector	Project Name
Economic Cooperation	Coronavirus 2019 Emergency Response Support Loan
	Recovery and Resilience Building Policy-Based Loan (PBL)
Economic Infrastructure	Millennium Highway/West Coast Road Reconstruction Project
	Ninth water (John Compton Dam Water Pipeline Replacement) ⁴
	Sixth Water (Vieux Fort Water Supply Redevelopment) Project ⁵
	Institutional Capacity Building Within the National Utilities Regulatory Commission
Environmental Sustainability	Building Resilience for Adaptation to Climate Change and Climate Variability in Agriculture
	Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Water Sector Planning, Development, Operations
	Capacity Development for WASCO for Integrating Climate Resilience into Policies, Planning & Development of Investment
Private Sector Development	Ninth Line of Credit (LOC) – Saint Lucia Development Bank (SLDB) student loans ⁶
	Support to MSMEs Post Covid
	Enhancing the Capacity of Stakeholders in the Agriculture Sector to Supply Quality Products in New Markets
Social Sector	Education Quality Improvement Project (EQuIP)*
	Building Public Health System Resilience - Coronavirus Disease 2019 Response
	Youth Economy Project
	Safety Nets for Vulnerable Populations Affected by Coronavirus
	Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) 9 & 10

³ CDB (2023), Project disbursement details table

⁴ The 9th Water Project builds on the previous 7th Water project (John Compton Dam Rehabilitation Project) with an approved envelope of \$10.1m in the 2013-16 CES, with \$3.3m disbursed as of Dec 2020

⁵ 6h Water Project details here are for an additional loan, which builds on original 6th Water Project loan approved 2014

⁶ In the original CES, the LOC was for MSMEs, but was re-targeted to students based on change in GOSL priorities



2.5 Stakeholder Engagement

To improve the utility of the evaluation, various efforts were made to interact with key stakeholders at different stages of the evaluation process, as follows:

- Early and ongoing engagement with the focal points from the Economics Department at CDB and GOSL's Department of Economic Development to ensure that the approach and planned outputs of the evaluation met intended objectives. This engagement included meetings, review and feedback on the project sample, ad-hoc conversations for clarifications, and participation in all workshops.
- Engagement of the former and current CDB country economists and other staff that had been involved in the Country Engagement Strategy (CES), through early scoping interviews, data collection, participation in workshops, and reviewing the draft and final reports.
- A workshop to validate and discuss the reconstructed theory of change for the 2020-2023 CES, with key CDB staff and ERG representatives. This workshop used an online interactive whiteboard (via Miro) and included a group discussion on the project portfolio and alignment with CES pillars, and the links between outputs to outcomes, achievement of outcomes, and the identification of risks and assumptions. Participation was good and the information supported the data analysis process.
- A Preliminary Findings Validation Workshop with CDB and ERG members to test and validate emerging findings.
- A Co-Creation of Recommendations Workshop held on 11 November 2025, with key CDB staff and key stakeholders from GOSL and other executing agencies. The workshop served to present the findings and to pose strategic questions to help identify evidence-based recommendations that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timebound (SMART), as well as coherent and user-owned. (See Annex F)
- The draft Evaluation Report was shared initially by the OIE and then the ERG to elicit and address

feedback, consider possible omissions, different interpretations and political and other sensitivities, before submission of the final report.

2.6 Limitations

Several limitations were experienced during the evaluation process:

- **Incomplete Monitoring and Financial Data:** There were significant gaps in results and financial reporting. Supervision reports, project completion reports, timeline and full disbursement data were either unavailable or inconsistently documented. This limited the ability to systematically assess performance against targets, financial efficiency, and delivery bottlenecks. Weak integration between CDB and national monitoring systems further constrained performance analysis.
- **Loss of Institutional Memory:** There was high turnover of staff both within CDB and among key national partners. Many individuals involved in the design or early implementation of the CES were no longer available to provide context or validation of key decisions. This weakened institutional memory was partially mitigated through document review and stakeholder triangulation, but it nonetheless impacted the depth of historical memory insights - particularly regarding early design assumptions and project sequencing, and on the CES engagement case study.

Despite these challenges, we consider the overall strength of evidence for the findings presented to be strong in most cases (based on multiple pieces of evidence from a variety of sources /stakeholders), and at least moderate in all cases (based on multiple pieces of evidence but from a narrower range of sources/ stakeholders). We have noted within the report where it was not possible to present specific analysis or findings due to some of the challenges mentioned above.

3. COUNTRY CONTEXT

At the commencement of the CES in 2020, the population of Saint Lucia was just under 182,000 with population growth of 0.7%.

Due to COVID-19, the GDP per capita saw a 24% sharp contraction from 2019-20 to an estimated USD 8,367. From 2019-20 the unemployment rate trended upwards; according to the 2021 Labour Force Survey, the overall unemployment rate increased to a high of 22% due to COVID-19. Young people face the highest levels of unemployment, spiking to 37% in 2021.

From 2010-19, prior to the CES, Saint Lucia made notable socio-economic progress, but the country continued to grapple with volatile economic conditions, persistently high-level poverty, and high vulnerability to natural hazard events and exogenous shocks. At the outset of the CES, Saint Lucia showed mixed social indicators and the Enhanced Country Poverty Assessment (CPA:2016), revealed a level of poverty of 25%, down from 29% in 2006. CDB ranks Saint Lucia as the second most vulnerable State amongst its Borrowing Member Countries (BMCs). This vulnerability is highest amongst low-income households, elderly, and youth. COVID-19 exacerbated the inherent vulnerability of Saint Lucia to external shocks, severely impacting tourism, the main economic activity, and compromising economic growth. In 2020, public debt stood at USD 3.77 billion (92% of GDP), of which USD 1.95 billion (52% of total debt) was external, equivalent to 48% of GDP.

Caribbean Development Bank in Saint Lucia: The Saint Lucia portfolio is CDB's fourth largest, with loan and grant approvals over the period 1970 (year of establishment of the Bank) to August 2020 (prior to

the start of the CES 2020-23) totalling USD 524m, of which USD 265.4m (50.6%) had been disbursed. Over this period, CDB has provided funding for a range of projects and programmes, mainly in the areas of infrastructure development and education.

3.1 Development Context Infrastructure

GOSL has identified the development of new, climate-appropriate infrastructure and the upgrading of the aging stock as medium-term priorities. The contribution of construction to Real GDP was approximately 4.1% in 2020. That year, some private sector projects were put on hold as investors revisited project plans amidst high levels of uncertainty about the depth and duration of the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. That decline was mitigated by increased public sector activity, including road works and the reconstruction of the St. Jude Hospital. Public sector spending on construction rose by 37.4% to USD 207.4 million.

Private Sector Development

More than 70% of private companies in Saint Lucia are Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), and these contribute significantly to GDP and employment. MSMEs play a particularly vital role in Saint Lucian society, as they employ a large share of the most vulnerable segments of the workforce, namely less experienced and less-educated workers from poorer households, as well as women and youths. But MSME development is

hindered by challenges such as limited access to skills, knowledge, and finance.

Education

The GOSL indicated that to improve educational outcomes, in particular teacher effectiveness and access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) need to be improved. Also, students at the secondary and postsecondary levels currently have limited opportunities to pursue Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes at higher levels. The COVID-19 pandemic forced new measures relating to transportation, school feeding, sanitisation, water storage, etc. Operations were permanently changed with access to electronic devices and internet, use of technology, the introduction of E-Books and ICT in Education for both teachers and students. The government outlays on education, inclusive of capital and operational expenditure increased by 7% to USD 224.6 million in 2020-21. Increased outlays were reported in 54% of the educational programmes, with secondary schools recording the highest increase of 18%.

Tourism

COVID-19 highlighted many risks to the tourism sector. Real GDP growth in tourism, proxied by accommodation and food services, declined by 67% in 2020. Consequently, the sector's contribution to overall GDP fell from 21% in 2019 to 10%. The first two months of 2020 experienced growth compared to 2019, with particularly strong growth in cruise arrivals. Pandemic containment measures by governments all over the world commenced in March 2020, which included cessation of travel, lockdowns and closures of ports of entry.

Agriculture

The agriculture, forestry and livestock sector had declined an annual average of 2.1% over the period 2010-19, attributed to high incidence of pests and diseases, vulnerability to weather-related hazards, and limited investment in agricultural/rural infrastructure, in particular farm/rural roads and technology. Production levels diminished in all

sub-sectors (livestock, fisheries, bananas, non-banana crops). Sustaining and improving the performance of the sector will require significant public and private investment in climate resilient production, market access infrastructure and systems – feeder roads, drainage, water/irrigation systems, farm buildings and facilities - and making the sector more attractive to young farmers.

Citizen Security and Social Protection

The pandemic overwhelmed the Social Protection System (SPS) which was not designed to be adaptive and scaled-up in times of crisis.

GOSL aimed to strengthen the resilience of the SPS by increasing its adaptive shock responsiveness, build capacity in key agencies for SPS, and improve the efficiency of social programmes by rationalising those offered across the various agencies. GOSL is also tackling issues of crime, violence, and antisocial behaviour through restorative justice and crime prevention strategies.

Gender Equality

Saint Lucia demonstrates a strong performance in gender equality, particularly in the areas of education and labour force participation. But it also faces challenges in areas like adolescent fertility rates and gender-based violence. The country's Gender Development Index (GDI) of 0.975 (2018) reflects a relatively high level of gender equality, though specific areas need attention. To address some of the challenges, in 2019 GOSL launched a gender mainstreaming project. A gender scorecard was developed, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in various gender-related indicators.

Environmental Sustainability, Climate Resilience, Disaster Risk

Saint Lucia is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate-related hydrological and geophysical hazards because of its geographical location and size. The Global Climate Risk Index 2018 placed Saint Lucia in the top 10% of countries for losses due to climate-related natural

disasters during 1997-2016, and in the top 15% for climate-related disaster fatalities. Climate change is a cross-cutting concern for all sectors, projected to deliver worsening weather-related destruction, deterioration and shocks. These include the influence of heat on health and agriculture, increase of sea levels affecting the coastal zones, the occurrence of more extreme storms, flooding, landslides, as well as droughts.

Health

Prior to 2020, Saint Lucia's health system achieved relatively good population health outcomes but faced growing structural pressures.

A rising burden of non-communicable diseases, constrained public health financing, aging infrastructure, and shortages of specialised personnel placed

increasing strain on service delivery. While access to basic services was generally high, reliance on out-of-pocket spending and limited emphasis on primary and preventive care reduced system resilience, leaving the health sector poorly positioned to absorb large-scale shocks such as COVID-19.

Good Governance and Crisis Response

Governance in Saint Lucia, as assessed by the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators, shows a mixed performance.

Over the period 2013 – 2023, a decrease was noted in performance of the criteria "Voice and Accountability," "Government Effectiveness," "Rule of Law" and "Control of Corruption." The criteria for "Political Stability, Absence of Violence/Terrorism" and "Regulatory Quality" have improved.



4. PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Table 3. Portfolio overview

Portfolio Element	Status (2020-24)
Total Approved (USD)	245.23m
Investment Lending (USD)	245.23m
Technical Assistance (TA) grants (USD)	5.20m
TA/Investment Ratio	2.1%
Largest Sector (USD)	Economic Infrastructure (88.4m; 48%)

An indicative resource envelope of USD 148.9 million was estimated to support the Government of Saint Lucia’s (GOSL) development priorities over the 2020–2023 Country Engagement Strategy (CES) period. The scale and pacing of resource use were expected to align with the evolution of public finances and the extent to which technical and institutional capacities across key ministries could support timely project preparation and execution.

During the first half of the CES period, progress was uneven, primarily due to the socioeconomic disruption brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and, subsequently, the change in administration in 2021. Nonetheless, CDB approved a mix of investments, policy-based operations, and technical assistance across the CES pillars, including support for crisis response, education sector transformation, social protection strengthening, MSME recovery, and infrastructure resilience.

By mid-term, approved and ongoing interventions included an Exogenous Shock Response (ESR)

COVID-19 Policy-Based Loan (PBL) in 2020 supporting crisis response and public financial management reform; ongoing implementation of the Education Quality Improvement Project (EQIP); appraisal and early-stage preparation of new investments in education, health, MSME support, and feeder roads; technical assistance supporting capacity development in priority sectors, including disaster risk management and youth development.

By mid-term, total approved resources represented only a modest share of the indicative envelope, reflecting delays linked to the pandemic, the need to realign investment priorities under the new GOSL Medium Term Development Strategy (MTDS) 2021–2026, and capacity constraints that slowed project cycle progression. In several areas, particularly climate resilience and citizen security, the use of TA as a strategic instrument remained limited relative to investment needs, underscoring opportunities for more deliberate deployment of TA to strengthen readiness, de-risk projects, and improve implementation performance.

Portfolio approval dates could not be confirmed for all projects, but approvals were uneven across the CES period, with over half of investment projects approved over 2023-2024 (see Figure 1). The approvals pattern reflects a common trend seen across other Country Strategy and Programme Evaluations (CSPEs), where initial years are typically marked by slower approvals and disbursements, followed by a surge in the latter stages of the strategy cycle. The 2023 peak coincided with subsidence of the COVID-19 crisis, prompting a rapid increase in approvals including that of the Recovery and Resilience PBL.

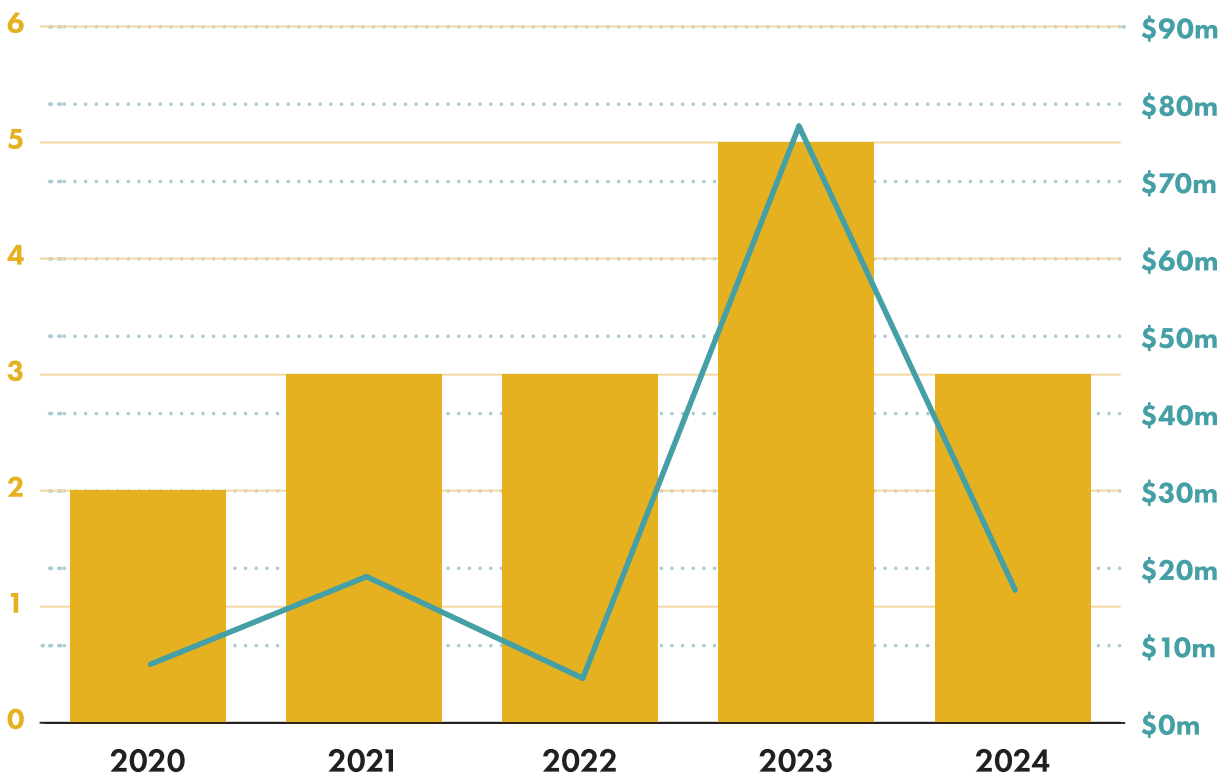
The disbursement rate for investment projects approved over the strategy period averaged 58%.⁷ Disbursement was skewed downwards by late approval and thus disbursement of large projects such as the 9th Water Project (USD 15.69m, 0% disbursement) and delayed start/implementation of the 8th Water Project (USD 11.23m, 16% disbursement). As

explored in more detail in the findings, implementation progress varied. Economics focused interventions, namely the PBLs, were fully disbursed and implemented, whereas infrastructure projects had the lowest disbursement and experienced multiple delays.

The approved portfolio reflected the CES pillars, with a concentration in climate resilience infrastructure (USD 88.4m), but also reflecting adaptation, via the two PBLs approved in response to COVID-19 and related fiscal pressures (USD 72.7m).

CDB’s Saint Lucia portfolio was delivered through a combination of Ordinary Capital Resources (OCR), special development funds (SDF), Special Funds Resources (SFR) and co-financing from development partners such as the European Investment Bank, Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund. Some projects had multiple funding sources, such as the COVID-19 Exogenous Shock Response (ESR) Policy Based Loan (PBL).

Figure 1. Investment approvals (number and amount) over 2020-24



7 Disbursement of standalone TA investments was not known at the time of assessment, but even if 100%, this would only increase overall portfolio disbursement to 59%. This differs from disbursement included under Efficiency, which includes additional projects included in the evaluation sample, approved prior to the CES period, namely EQuIP and BNTF 9



5. FINDINGS

This section of the report examines the performance of CDB’s activities in Saint Lucia 2020-24 under three high-level questions and against the following evaluation criteria:

High-Level Question	Evaluation Criteria
Did the CES achieve the intended results?	Effectiveness, Sustainability
Was the CES design appropriate?	Relevance, Coherence, Results Monitoring
Was CES implementation efficient?	Efficiency

Achievement against results and CDB’s contribution to that achievement have been rated as follows:

- Limited**
small or early progress/CDB contribution
- Some**
uneven but emerging progress/contribution
- Moderate**
clear measurable progress/contribution with partial gaps;
- Moderate-Strong**
strong progress/influence across most areas; some remaining gaps;
- Strong**
substantial and system-wide progress or influence

5.1. Achievement of results

HIGH LEVEL FINDING

Progress against GOSL development outcomes was moderate, and CDB’s contribution to this progress was moderate to strong, with strongest progress and contribution in climate resilient infrastructure and MSME viability, and strongest CDB contribution in crisis response and good governance. Some unintended results emerged: CDB support helped catalyse positive long-term policy shifts in social protection but also contributed inadvertently to perceived inequities and added fiscal/capacity pressures for GOSL. CDB engagement supported GOSL/CES outcomes, but its full potential was not realised: constraints with CDB staff bandwidth/time meant engagement was intermittent and guidance was not always timely or clear, leading to some uncertainty and delays around CDB processes. The likelihood of sustainability is moderate but fragile: stronger where institutional capacity, ownership, and coordination were built but weaker where there is heavy reliance on ongoing budget and technical support.

5.1.1 Effectiveness

Progress towards GOSL and CES Outcomes

Finding 1: Slower than planned implementation affected progress towards GOSL development and CES sector outcomes, but overall progress is moderate, which is commendable considering the impact of COVID-19. CDB's contribution to this progress was mostly moderate to strong. Most progress was made against the "Improved quality climate resistant infrastructure and services" GOSL outcome, with CDB's contribution here through the BRACCCVAS project seen as especially valuable.

The 2020-23 CES was originally framed against four pillars and seven GOSL development outcomes.⁸ During the CES period, in response to COVID-19, additional GOSL development outcomes became relevant ("Improved access to quality health care") and is thus included in Table 4. Several CES sector level outcomes were nested under each GOSL development/CES pillar outcome (see ToC, Annex H) and all CES interventions were designed to contribute to these (see Relevance/Section 5.2.1 for details).

Progress against GOSL's desired development outcomes from 2020 to 2024 is moderate to strong, with strongest progress against Outcome 1 - Improved quality climate resistant infrastructure and services (see Table 4). Achievement against all other outcomes is moderate. This progress is commendable given the impact of COVID-19 during the period being considered. The progress made is a result of contributions from multiple actors, with GOSL itself often making strong contributions to the progress made (see Annex G for details).^{9,10}

CDB provided a moderate to strong contribution to all GOSL outcomes. A summary narrative to justify the rating provided is provided in Annex G. GOSL development outcomes and CES outcomes with strongest achievement and CDB contribution are:

GOSL Outcome 1: Improved quality climate resistant infrastructure and services

CES SECTOR OUTCOME III

Strengthened infrastructure capacity towards mitigation, preparedness, management and coordinated response to natural hazards, climate change and climate variability

Progress: **Strong** CDB Contribution: **Strong**

- Millenium Highway project's climate-vulnerability-driven designs, including major upgrades to slopes, drainage systems, and bridges to withstand extreme weather, though delayed, now nearing completion. Project TA strengthened national capacity for climate-resilient road design and planning.
- BNTF community-level drainage and access works reduced localised flooding.
- Water sector contributions including:
 - 6th Water (Vieux Fort System): Project construction and commissioning of the Grace and Beausejour Water Treatment Plants, installation of upgraded transmission mains storage reservoirs and deployment of hydrometric monitoring equipment to improve hazard forecasting; watershed rehabilitation to stabilise slopes and improve water quality.

8 CDB (2019), Saint Lucia Country Engagement Strategy 2020-23

9 The CES Results Monitoring Framework (RMF) was not updated despite major changes to CES interventions, thus RMF indicators included in the original CES have largely not been utilised to make the above assessments due to a lack of data. The evaluation has made a qualitative assessment of progress and CDB contribution based on qualitative data from CDB reports and public documentation.

10 Outcome results are not 100% attributable to CDB, as other donors and GOSL also provide significant inputs. In line with this, we have provided a qualitative assessment of CDB's contribution to outcomes, based on a combination of the number and size of projects, their implementation, and known implementation progress. Strong contribution indicates that without CDB's support, this outcome would likely not have been achieved. Moderate contribution indicates that CDB's support was valuable, but the outcome may still have been achieved without CDB support. Some contribution and limited contribution indicate progressively less significant CDB contribution compared to other actors.

Table 4. High-level Summary of Results Against GOSL Development Outcomes/CES Pillar Outcomes

Intended Results	Achievement	CDB Contribution
CES Pillar 1: Enhancing Economic Outcomes Through Infrastructure and Private Sector Development		
Outcome 1: Improved quality climate resistant infrastructure, services	Moderate-Strong	Moderate-Strong
Outcome 2: Enhanced viability of MSME	Moderate-Strong	Moderate-Strong
CES Pillar 2: Enhancing Inclusive Social Development and Protection		
Outcome 3: Improved quality, equity, efficiency, effectiveness of education	Moderate	Moderate-Strong
Outcome 4: Improved Youth Outcomes	Moderate	Moderate-Strong
Outcome 5: Strengthened Social Protection System	Moderate	Moderate
Outcome 6: Improved access to quality health care	Moderate	Moderate
CES Pillar 3: Enhancing Disaster Risk Management and Disaster Risk Reduction Systems		
Outcome 7: Improved resilience to disaster and climate change	Moderate	Moderate
CES Pillar 4: Effective Crisis Response and Good Governance		
Outcome 8: Improved crisis response systems, institutions, governance	Moderate	Strong

- 7th Water (John Compton Dam): Spillway and drainage rehabilitation completed to strengthen the dam’s flood-handling capacity and safety improvements to reduce vulnerability to extreme rainfall.
- 8th Water Project: New Dennerly Water Treatment Plant commissioned; installation of resilient transmission pipelines; construction of a sludge management facility to improve environmental performance. Turbidity improving, enhancing water quality and reliability.
- Mainstreaming Climate Resilience project - 20 WASCO staff trained in climate-change impacts and adaptation measures. Development of resilience mainstreaming tools and plans for the water sector.

CES SECTOR OUTCOME VI

Enhanced farm resilience, productivity and competitiveness

Progress: **Strong** CDB Contribution: **Strong**

The Building Resilience for Adaptation to Climate Change and Climate Variability in Agriculture in Saint Lucia (BRACCCVAS) Agriculture Project is the largest agricultural resilience investment in Saint Lucia. It supports thousands of farmers through improved irrigation, soil conservation, climate-resilient production systems, renewable energy for agriculture, and stronger community-based climate adaptation. Expected to have supported ~12,000 people by project end with water security, irrigation schemes, soil conservation, protected agriculture, agro-parks, climate services. To date, agricultural personnel have been trained in GPS and GIS technologies, improving the precision of vulnerability mapping and disaster-impact assessments; a forest nursery has produced over 10,000 plants for land restoration and youth partnerships have been formed.

GOSL Outcome 2: Enhanced viability of MSME

CES SECTOR OUTCOME VII

Strengthened infrastructure capacity towards mitigation, preparedness, management and coordinated response to natural hazards, climate change and climate variability

Progress: **Strong** CDB Contribution: **Strong**

The Packaging and Labelling project successfully delivered significant regulatory compliance gains for MSMEs; direct, measurable improvements in labels, standards, and export readiness.

GOSL Outcome 6: Improved access to quality health care

CES SECTOR OUTCOME XVII

Basic needs supported for communities most affected by COVID-19

Progress: **Moderate** CDB Contribution: **Strong**

- The Safety Nets for Vulnerable Populations Affected by Coronavirus Project (USD 5.2m) was one of the largest COVID-specific social protection investments, directly aimed at basic needs and social resilience of hardest-hit households.
- Through the 2020 ESR Policy-Based Loan, CDB also provided large-scale budget support that created the fiscal breathing room the government needed to maintain social spending during the crisis, helping ensure social programmes and emergency cash responses could continue even as revenues collapsed.
- National Insurance Corporation (NIC), supported by the ESR PBL, supported the government's crisis-response package. NIC implemented the two largest and most impactful emergency income-

support programmes during COVID-19: The Economic Relief Programme and Income Support Programme. Together these provided USD 54.3 million in direct assistance to over 45,000 people.

GOSL Outcome 8: Improved crisis response systems and institutions and governance

Progress: **Moderate** CDB Contribution: **Strong**

CDB was the central financier and policy driver. The ESR PBL covered COVID response, social protection expansion, emergency coordination, and fiscal rules. The R&R PBL deepened structural reforms in PFM, debt management (PDM Act), MTDS publication, and electronic government procurement expansion. CDB also funded NURC institutional strengthening, in support of the regulatory part of Outcome 8.

CES SECTOR OUTCOME XXII

Improved crisis response capacity, systems and institutions

Progress: **Moderate-Strong** CDB Contribution: **Strong**

The ESR PBL provided the funding and policy framework that guided the country's health measures, social-assistance programmes, and the creation of more coordinated systems for managing the national emergency. The Recovery and Resilience PBL, built on this foundation by supporting long-term improvements such as stronger public-finance management, more modern procurement systems, clearer debt-management rules, and reforms in the energy and business environment. Through these PBLs, the Bank also supported the Government in putting in place business-continuity procedures, enabling remote work in public services, and improving the way vulnerable households are identified and assisted during crises.

Unintended Results of CES Interventions

Finding 2: A key positive unintended outcome CDB’s support was its contribution to key long-term GOSL policy shifts especially in social protection, for example around unemployment insurance and minimum wage legislation. Perceptions of several negative unintended outcomes were cited, including inadvertently reinforcing social inequities and increasing GOSL fiscal/capacity pressures. CDB’s work also served to highlight deeper structural challenges.^{11, 12}

Multiple examples of unintended results were cited, with the following key examples:

- **Crisis-response measures contributed to positive long-term policy shifts beyond project intent:** While these GOSL policy shifts cannot be attributed to CDB alone, the COVID-19 and Recovery and Resilience PBLs improved fiscal space and helped to focus policy dialogue and momentum in key longer-term reforms in labour markets, fiscal governance, social protection and climate/energy policy.
 - COVID-19 PBL discussions supported a GOSL push for unemployment insurance and the recent upward revision of minimum wage legislation.
 - COVID and Recovery & Resilience PBLs supported enactment of the Public Debt Management Act, annual publication of Medium-Term Debt Strategies and new requirements to table financial policy statements as part of the budget process – all now embedded in routine practice.
 - E-procurement, insolvency, MSME and climate legislation policy operations helped advance extension of the e-Government
- **Stakeholders perceived that social inclusion efforts were sometimes reinforced by exclusion, rather than resolving it:** Some interventions designed to integrate/address inclusion and equity were perceived as either delaying or diluting more meaningful inclusion. For example:
 - SEN-focused education interventions experienced long delays and design issues resulting in ongoing “inadequate provision” for learners with SEN despite EQUiP.
 - Key vulnerable groups (e.g. persons with disabilities) were perceived as consulted too late in infrastructure design of major projects, once designs and/or implementation was final/almost complete.
 - Gender mainstreaming with a strong focus on women’s empowerment and limited emphasis on male perpetrators and at-risk young men was perceived by some as potentially displacing the need for work with young men, who are most involved in and affected by

Procurement system to most high-value contracts; a Bankruptcy and Insolvency Bill; the SIMP Act for secured transactions; Climate Change Bill; and updated National Energy Plan.

- Health and Citizen Security Levy (HCSL) was introduced to enhance tax revenue under the Recovery and Resilience PBL and is now included in budget projections for the next two financial years. KIIs noted that GOSL plans to re-allocate HCSL revenues to sustain and expand Universal Health Care and to support a shift toward performance-based primary healthcare.

11 The selected examples represent those with at least moderate triangulation across KIIs and documents

12 CDB (n.d.), Project PSR - Saint Lucia - SLDB Student Loan LOC.docx; CDB (n.d.), CES MID-TERM REVIEW_St_Lucia.docx; CDB (2024), 2024 Project PSR - Sixth Water (Vieux Fort Water Supply Redevelopment) Project.pdf; CDB (2022), Project 3813 PSR 2022 - Sixth Water (Vieux Fort Water Supply Redevelopment) Project.docx; CDB (2023), 2023 Project PSR - Eighth Water (Dennerly North Water Supply Redevelopment Project).pdf; CDB (2024), MISSION BRIEF - SLU MHWCRPP Supervision 2024-10.docx; CDB (2024), Appendix 1 - Key Findings Action Items - MHWCRPP - October 2024.docx; CDB (2024), Ltr-MOF - Post MHWCRPP Mission October 2024.docx; CDB (n.d.), Safety Nets.pdf; CDB (n.d.), Project PSR - Saint Lucia - SLDB Student Loan LOC.docx; CDB (n.d.), Project PSR - Saint Lucia MSME Loan-Grant Facility.docx

crime. Stakeholders called for more tailored support for young men.

- The design of student loans targeted disadvantaged students, but only one approval for this sub-group by end-2024, as the loan collateral requirements and high study costs blocked access for poorer students.
- **While PBLs reduced fiscal pressure, other CDB interventions inadvertently generated fiscal pressure and long-term cost burdens:** While CDB financing alleviated short-term constraints, several interventions created or exposed ongoing GOSL fiscal and capacity burdens, including counterpart funding requirements, land acquisition and/or resettlement costs/delays and backstopping of loss-making institutions.
 - Infrastructure project counterpart funding requirements and overruns increased fiscal pressure. For example, the Sixth Water noted that while much of its counterpart was “in-kind,” GOSL was still required to commit scarce resources. Long delays in water project land acquisition and approvals raised implementation costs. Delays in relocation of persons affected by the Millennium Highway/West Coast Road project were also cited as increasing effective costs/pressures for GOSL.
 - COVID-19 support interventions expanded the number of persons on the poverty list. While necessary, some perceived these measures as having increased expectations in the longer term and baseline caseloads which must now be financed from domestic revenues (including levies like HCSL).
 - There is a need for ongoing GOSL fiscal backstopping to SLDB’s student loan portfolio. SLDB has recorded recurrent losses in recent years, reflecting a combination of high operating and funding costs, constrained access to long-term concessional finance, and portfolio credit risks, including in education lending. While GOSL has periodically recapitalised SLDB, the student loan portfolio within a financially-constrained development creates an implicit and recurring contingent liability for the Government.¹³
- High levels of citizen and MSME demand revealed deeper structural weaknesses: Where projects were highly attractive, the surge in demand exposed underlying structural gaps in youth labour markets, MSME readiness and social protection
 - High demand for Youth Economy services indicates a structurally under-served youth segment in the financial system and labour market.
 - Heavy oversubscription for the MSME Loan-Grant Facility but low quality of applications indicates structural weaknesses in MSME management and financial literacy, business formalisation. Challenges experienced by GOSL in managing the high level of applications received highlights limited GOSL bandwidth to process and support MSMEs at scale.
 - High need versus constrained access to student loans as many prospective students lack acceptable security. Indicates deeper structural issues in how education investments are financed, particularly for poorer households.
 - COVID-19 support lessons indicated that the high demand for emergency transfers reflects structural labour-market fragility and limited household resilience, not just short-term pandemic shocks.

13 SLDB (2024), SAINT LUCIA DEVELOPMENT BANK, Separate Financial Statements For the Year Ended March 31, 2024; SLDB (2021), Saint Lucia Development Bank Annual Report 2020, CDB (2013), “Private Sector Assessment of Saint Lucia”, accessed 18 Nov 2025 from <https://www.ceintelligence.com/files/documents/2014-St.-Lucia-PSAR.pdf>;

How CDB Engagement Supported Achievement of CES results

Finding 3: CDB’s engagement, especially through the re-designed CES process and the recruitment of a Resident Implementation Officer (RIO), played a meaningful but not fully leveraged role in CDB’s contribution to GOSL and CES outcomes. Engagement clearly improved alignment, dialogue, and on-the-ground support, but systemic constraints, internal CDB bandwidth and thus communication gaps and weak follow-through limited how far that engagement could contribute to CES outcomes.¹⁴

The 2020-23 CES development process used a more intentional and structured engagement model from the outset, focused on “investment-ready” operations; strengthened management and operational planning; rebuilding of trust and closer alignment with GOSL priorities. This included a rigorous political and technical dialogue over 2018-19, where the new engagement model was clarified and early agreement on focal areas such as citizen security, education, and infrastructure was made. Mission planning involved diverse actors beyond economic ministries, supporting wider ownership, including representatives from the opposition political party at the time. This process had a clear influence on CES content, with past lessons on weak implementation informing a CES focused on infrastructure, social sectors, resilience, and PFM, all areas aligned with GOSL needs and politically feasible. In principle, this led to CES that was more realistic, politically aware, and aligned with government priorities compared with earlier cycles. These efforts strengthened ownership, but the resulting change in government and impact of COVID-19 on GOSL priorities plus uneven CDB follow-through moderated how this translated into CDB’s contribution to results (see Relevance, Section 5.2.1, and Efficiency, Section 5.3.1 for more discussion).

The engagement of a RIO helped to highlight and unblock cross-cutting constraints/bottlenecks. But the limited official scope of the RIO’s work (to big ticket infrastructure projects) and slow feedback from key CDB divisions/units led to missed opportunities or delays in addressing some challenges and thus performance against results. Coordination and engagement with/across GOSL, implementing agencies and donors (see Coherence, Section 5.2.2 for more discussion) was also not leveraged as much as it could have been in support of results. Inter-agency coordination challenges, siloed ministry structures, and difficulties in aligning project planning with implementation processes continued to slow implementation and, in turn, constrained CDB’s contribution to results (see Efficiency, Section 5.3.1) for more details on implementation delays.

5.1.2 Sustainability

Likelihood of CES results being sustained

Finding 4: The likelihood of sustaining the results achieved by CDB interventions to date is moderate but fragile. The main risks to sustainability stem from changing political priorities and fiscal limitations or pressures.

The level of sustainability of the project results achieved often benefits from their relevance to national development and overall engagement of a variety of local stakeholders. Respondents confirmed repeatedly that CES puts critical activities in practice that are beneficial to the country. Through the projects the preliminary studies done with depth, the increasing use of local consultants, the social safeguards considered, the processes established for updating data, and promoting sustainability, all contribute to long-term impact. It was noted that CES promoted studies and created knowledge which allowed for adapting within a changing context and consequently promoting the sustainability of results.

¹⁴ CDB (2019), CDB Country Strategy Framework Paper (CSFP) and Department Review Notes (2018–2019); CDB (2019), Saint Lucia Pre-CSP Mission Notes and March 2019 Aide Memoire; CDB (2019), CDB Internal CSP Framework Documents and CSP Team Meeting Notes; CDB (2019), Social Sector Division Mission Planning Note (Saint Lucia); CDB (2023–25), RIO Monthly Reports (2023–2025); GOSL (2019), Prime Minister’s Budget Speeches and GOSL Medium-Term Development Plan.

An example is the research on establishing agro-parks, a new approach for the Eastern Caribbean.

However, the GOSL implements a great number of externally financed projects. Respondents noted that whether these projects were managed by a government entity or dedicated project management units, there is always additional workload being generated for government staff above their usual duties. Sustaining the results of a project suffers when there is no additional staff allocated to the unit responsible. For instance, the “Support to MSMEs post-COVID-19” project caused significant resource constraints at the Small Business Development Centre (SBDC): a busy unit that already had responsibility for the MSME sector, had to refocus its normal operations after additional tasks were placed on it. This sentiment was communicated for several projects. A positive note was that CDB usually organises training activities to apprise project officers of CDB processes, including procurement and operations management.

It was recognised that there could have been wider dialogue with the opposition party during the design process of this CES, which would have been part of the open dialogue approach, and there were important changes in the strategy after a change in administration. Several projects reported changes in priorities.

It is important to note that not all projects sought sustainability. COVID-19 emergency projects were meant to provide stop-gap support so that government action would be sustained during the crisis, and that it would be ensured that no-one would be left behind. However, it was brought forward that the Lines of Credit established for student loans and MSMEs, established as part of the emergency support, should be continued, taking learning during the pandemic into account.

Finding 5: Sustainability prospects are stronger where projects have successfully built institutional capacity, ownership, and coordination systems, but weaker where outcomes are dependent on continuous budget allocation and technical maintenance.

The CES included several actions that supported the strengthening of national systems. Examples include initiatives in agriculture (strengthening of value chains and agro-food systems, including the establishment of agro-parks), major infrastructure development (water supply, highways), education (school infrastructure and teacher capacity building) as well as the institutional development of several bodies, in particular the Water and Sewerage Company Inc. (WASCO)¹⁵ and the National Utilities Regulatory Commission (NURC). Stakeholders confirmed the success of these efforts, which are expected to contribute to sustainability of results.

The impact of the PMDU on sustainability was mixed. Created in 2019, it supported the implementation of projects. Although the PMDU increased political ownership of CES, not all ministries were fully involved. Stakeholders further mentioned that there was limited interaction between the PMDU and the CDB RIO.

Some respondents proposed maximising the use of technical agencies over individual consultants to provide technical assistance. Their institutional expertise may improve coordination and higher chances for continued engagement, even when challenges arise.

Sustainability in building gender equality was promoted through the development of relevant policies and the review of legislation and systematically engaging the Division of Gender Affairs. Related to the educational sector, the EQUiP project has built institutional mechanisms, e.g. parent teacher community

15 Regarding WASCO, under the “Mainstreaming climate resilience into water sector planning, development and operations” institutional capacity building including training on soft skills related to customer services was done. Under the “Capacity development for WASCO for integrating climate resilience into policies, planning and development of investment”, the focus was climate resilience.

associations, which are broader than standard PTAs and will enhance sustainability of project results. With UNFPA, CDB carried out a course to address Gender-based Violence (GBV) in emergency settings, which offers opportunities for follow-up and consolidation¹⁶ and strengthening agency coordination, as well as implementing wider dissemination of materials across various sectors.

Finding 6: CDB has made efforts to bolster likely sustainability of infrastructure projects through ensuring works are designed to be long-lasting and providing training on maintenance, but project delays and other challenges constrain some of these efforts. Climate risk vulnerability assessments, which support sustainable project design, are sometimes outdated by the time projects begin, since more data have been produced, affecting drainage and other requirements.

It is assumed that GOSL ensures maintenance of items which were funded through interventions. While minor maintenance falls under the various agencies, the rest is the responsibility of the Ministry of Infrastructure. A respondent confirmed that for instance, when schools are built, a maintenance plan is developed which also covers training for school personnel and community networks. However, pertinent project documents drawn up with CDB are lacking maintenance plans to guide GOSL entities. A major issue, particularly considering large infrastructure projects, is that external financing tends to be needed for overall maintenance. This is the case with the Millennium Highway and other highways. For most roads, after a decade or so, slight deterioration – small cracks – may appear which can attract water intrusion and quickly cause further deterioration. Some respondents state that because of climate change, standards need to be reconsidered; climate resilience

still is dealt with through a reactive rather than a proactive approach. For instance, retaining walls are constructed where landslides happened before, rather than at identified future areas of vulnerability.

CDB provided successful training in road asset maintenance, through the UK CIF financing, but not as part of the project.¹⁷ The project also produced a road policy framework and roadmap, which may provide some sustainability of the benefits of this project.

5.2 CES Design

HIGH LEVEL FINDING

The CES was highly relevant and broadly coherent, reflecting strong early alignment with Saint Lucia's development strategies and close engagement with government during design. High-level alignment with GOSL priorities remained relevant by adapting to changes in priorities as a result of extreme socioeconomic and macroeconomic volatility stemming from the COVID-19, and the change of administration. However, the CES overestimated national implementation capacity and only partially integrated cross-cutting priorities such as digitalisation and governance. While coordination with other partners occurred in specific cases, overall coherence depended largely on GOSL systems, with CDB's role in donor coordination remaining limited. Weak results monitoring and limited use of the CES RMF further constrained strategic learning and adaptation, with weak data availability, limited use of disaggregated data, and insufficiently adaptive monitoring and risk management processes.

16 e.g. Train-the-Trainer activities, Essential Services Communities of Practice, One-Stop Centre

17 KII: "The CDB training course on road maintenance was well executed. It included what signs to look out for on highways, whether to build, maintain, relocate, and look at climate change hazards..."

5.2.1 Relevance

CES Alignment with Saint Lucia's development needs

Finding 7: The CES remains highly relevant due to strong alignment with both the original 2020-23 and revised 2021-26 Medium Term Development Strategies, supported by broad strategic pillars and largely consistent government priorities. This relevance was further reinforced by GOSL's active involvement in the CES design and the continued applicability of its focus areas despite challenges like volatility stemming from the COVID-19 and change in administration.

The CES was highly relevant to Saint Lucia's development needs and remained so throughout the strategic period, showing adequate adaptation, in response to changing contextual requirements. The CES was designed with close alignment to Saint Lucia's 2020-23 Medium Term Development Strategy which included six key results areas: agriculture, tourism, infrastructure, health, education and citizen security.¹⁸ In turn, the CES rests on four strategic pillars and seven targeted outcomes¹⁹ (see Figure 2) deliberately aligned with the MTDS results areas. Relevance and strategic alignment was supported by the GOSL's active involvement in the CES design process including participation of a wide range of government and implementing agencies in the Strategy Mission, which ran in parallel to GOSL own MTDS development.²⁰ This helped CDB to identify key priorities with GOSL where CDB could usefully provide support.

The CES was implemented during a period of notable macroeconomic and socioeconomic instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other major changes in context included the change in government administration in 2021. Nonetheless, the CES retained

relevance despite these significant changes, which significantly affected Saint Lucia's socioeconomic context and resulted in an adjustment to government priorities. A new MTDS was developed by GOSL for the 2021-period, with a more specific focus on three development themes, social and human capital resilience, economic resilience and environment resilience and an overall goal of enhancing GOSL's capacity to manage shocks and social risks, improving trade productivity and competitiveness, and integrated adaptation and mitigation measures for socio-economic and environmental protection.²¹ However, as the new MTDS pillars are largely similar to that of the 2020-2023 MTDS and as the CES is based on broad pillars directly linked to the original MTDS, relevance remained consistent throughout the strategic period.

The CES's original assumptions regarding growth and fiscal space were also undermined by macroeconomic volatility driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. CDB and GOSL responded well to this through adaptations to the CES throughout the strategic period to ensure ongoing alignment to the updated MTDS and new administration's priorities, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact. Adaptations included introducing interventions to strengthen the resilience of Saint Lucia's health system and an increased focus on social protection for vulnerable populations through 'Building Public Health System Resilience – Coronavirus 19 Disease Response'²² and under Pillar 2, increasing the focus on strengthening social protection systems through 'Safety Nets for Vulnerable Populations Affected by Coronavirus'²³ while reducing the resources dedicated to citizen security dimensions of youth-focused interventions.²⁴ Policy-based loans were introduced to directly strengthen economic recovery from COVID-19,

18 Government of Saint Lucia (2019) Medium Term Development Strategy 2020-2023

19 CDB (2020) Country Engagement Strategy (2020-2023) for Saint Lucia

20 CDB (2019) Country Engagement Strategy Saint Lucia Mission Planning – Social Sector Division; Caribbean Development (2019) Aide Memoire Saint Lucia Country Engagement Strategy Mission March 2019

21 CDB CES Saint Lucia Midterm Review

22 CDB (2023) Building Public Health System Resilience – Notification of Approval by the Board of Directors

23 CDB (2022) Notification for Approval of a Loan Safety Nets for Vulnerable Populations Affected by Coronavirus

24 CDB (2023), CES Saint Lucia Midterm Review

recognising GOSL’s limited fiscal space to respond to the pandemic’s effects. Additionally, the introduction of ‘Support to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Post Coronavirus Disease’²⁵ aimed to support MSME owners adversely affected by the pandemic’s effects and bolster private sector resilience. Overall, key informants reported positive ongoing communication between GOSL and CDB on the need for adaptation throughout the period, whilst continuing to support similar development needs, exacerbated by the pandemic.

Most CES projects were well targeted to address specific development needs (see Figure 2, such as youth unemployment and infrastructure gaps. However, some relevance-related challenges emerged due to issues in project scoping, with knock-on effects to Efficiency and Effectiveness. For example, the BRACCCVAS projects faced delays as a result of the need to change the proposed location of agro-parks. Meanwhile, the Line of Credit for Student Loans intervention faced delays due to the Saint Lucia Development Bank’s nationally mandated restrictions on securities required to access credit, delaying the

rates of disbursement and number of eligible students. GOSL stakeholders reported that more in depth tailoring to local realities and regulations on these projects could have mitigated implementation delays.

CES Alignment with CDB’s corporate priorities

Finding 8: There was strong alignment with CDB corporate priorities of gender and climate resilience with a lesser focus on digitalisation, good governance and regional cooperation. Stakeholders highlighted the need for further mainstreaming and tailoring to context.

All interventions incorporated in the CES reflect strong read across with CDB’s Strategic Objectives 2020-24. Regarding CDB’s cross-cutting priorities, there is clear evidence that gender and climate resilience are mainstreamed across most interventions. However, there is weaker evidence of the inclusion of other cross-cutting priorities such as digital transformation, regional cooperation and integration, and governance.

Figure 2. GOSL MTDS and CES comparison²⁶

MTDS 2020-23		CDB CES 2020-2023		New MTDS
Pillar	Key results area	Pillar	Sector Outcomes	2021-2026 Pillar
Economic priorities	Tourism Agriculture Infrastructure	Enhancing economic outcomes through resilient infrastructure and private sector development	Improved quality climate resilient transport infrastructure and services Enhanced viability of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises	Economic resilience Environmental resilience
		Environmental sustainability, climate change and disaster risk reduction	Improved crisis response systems and institutions, and governance structures	
Social priorities	Health Education Citizen security	Enhancing inclusive social development and protection Effective crisis response and good governance	Strengthened social protection systems Improved quality, equity, efficiency and effectiveness of the education system Improved youth outcomes Improved resilience to disaster and climate change risks	Social and human capital resilience

25 CDB (2022) Appraisal Report on Support to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Post Coronavirus Disease’

26 Government of Saint Lucia (2019) Medium Term Development Strategy 2020-2023; CDB (2020) Country Engagement Strategy (2020-2023) for Saint Lucia; CDB (2023), CES Saint Lucia Midterm Review (Note: the revised MTDS is not publicly available so data is drawn from the CDB MTR)

Figure 3. Cross-cutting priority integration in sampled projects

Project	Gender equality	Climate	RCI	Good governance	Digital transformation	Innovation	Disaggregated indicators
Social Sector							
Youth Economy	3.5 (GM)	Integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	Yes
Safety Nets for Vulnerable Populations Affected by Coronavirus	3 (GM)	Not integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	Integrated	Not integrated	Yes
Education Quality Improvement Project	3 (GM)	Integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Yes
Building Public Health System Resilience – COVID- 19 Response	3 (GM)	Not integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	Integrated	Not integrated	Yes
BNTF 9 and 10		Integrated	No data	No data	No data	No data	No
Private sector							
Post-Covid Support to MSMEs	3 (GM)	Not integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	Yes
Student Loan Line of Credit	3 (GM)	Not integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Yes
Enhancing the Capacity of Stakeholders in the Agriculture Sector	2 (MM)	Not integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	No
Economics Department							
Recovery and Resilience PBL	3 (GM)	Integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	No
Covid-19 Response PBL	1.5 (MM)	Not integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	Integrated	Integrated	No
Economic Infrastructure							
9th Water	MM	Integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	No data
6th Water	3 (GM)	Integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Yes
Institutional Capacity Building Within the NURC	3 (GM)	Not integrated	Partially integrated	Integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Yes
Millennium Highway and West Coast Road Reconstruction Project	3 (GM)	Integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Yes
Environmental Sustainability							
Capacity Development for WASCO for Integrating Climate Resilience	3 (GM)	Integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Yes
Building Resilience for Adaptation to Climate Change and Climate Variability in Agriculture	3 (GM)	Integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Not integrated	Integrated	Yes
Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Water Sector Planning, Development and Operations		Integrated	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data

Key Integrated Partially integrated Not integrated No data

GM = Gender mainstreamed; MM = Marginally mainstreamed

Gender: Gender is integrated across the CES interventions, stemming from the CES scoping mission where CDB staff were encouraged to specifically discuss the integration of gender intervention design.²⁷ The majority of projects achieved a gender marker score of 3 or above and were considered ‘gender mainstreamed’. However, key informants suggested that while gender is included in project designs, gender responsive implementation is more limited. The EQUiP project is an exception and GOSL stakeholders reported the project helped to shift the needle on how gender is understood within government. Some GOSL

stakeholders reported that gender could be further tailored to context specific challenges. For example, while gender heavily focused on women and girls, challenges relating to young male unemployment and crime rates could have been better addressed within intervention design.

Environmental sustainability and climate change: Environmental sustainability and climate change are well integrated into many interventions, particularly in water management, agriculture, infrastructure, and school rehabilitation under EQUiP

and BNTF, which emphasise climate-smart design. This aligns with CDB priorities and is appropriate for Saint Lucia’s vulnerability to climate impacts. However, integration could be stronger in some areas. For example, the Millennium Highway project, commissioned before CDB’s greening focus, was seen as a missed opportunity. GOSL stakeholders noted that while dedicated climate resilience projects were useful, mainstreaming resilience more strongly across the entire portfolio would have added value.

Other priority areas; The evaluation found limited evidence of systematic integration of other priority areas. Almost half of the sampled projects included a focus on organisational governance and institutional strengthening where this was noted as a capacity gap for GOSL and implementing agencies. There was more limited focus on digital transformation within the interventions although post-COVID-19 support did include a focus on access to digital learning for marginalised groups. GOSL stakeholders indicated that a stocktake on digital transformation undertaken during the strategic period would be necessary to understand how far it was implemented, its benefits, and what remains to be addressed in the next strategic period, suggesting that its integration and effects were limited. Three projects focused on building private sector resilience had a specific focus on innovation at the individual level.

Consideration of Saint Lucia’s implementation capacity

Finding 9: Overall, the CES overestimated the GOSL capacity to implement so many projects at once, especially multiple big ticket infrastructure projects. Although project appraisals do build in technical assistance (TA) to support delivery and strengthen implementation capacity, this did not anticipate challenges in procuring TA consultants.

The CES encompassed numerous projects, with additional ones added in response to COVID-19, which overestimated GOSL’s capacity to manage

so many simultaneously. While the CES was co-designed and aligned with GOSL priorities, some key informants reported it became a wish list. GOSL stakeholders cited limited bandwidth to oversee CES projects alongside other donor-funded interventions as a major challenge. Many noted they work across multiple CDB-funded projects, often involving the same personnel, due to siloed project design lacking holistic consideration of management capacity. Managing large infrastructure projects was further constrained by a small pool of qualified contractors in Saint Lucia. Although CDB aimed to fund only “shovel-ready” projects, contractor availability and GOSL’s supervisory capacity were overestimated, resulting in delays (see Efficiency). Bandwidth to implement did vary across implementing agencies with those with existing dedicated project management units faring better. Stakeholders suggested that the CES would have benefitted from a more focused analysis of each implementing agency’s capacity alongside consideration of how the central PMDU could provide further support.

Project appraisal documents do consider where implementing agencies lack capacity (e.g. procurement expertise, environmental and gender expertise, required systems strengthening) and did include Technical Assistance consultancies designed to provide support. However, this did not account for lack of procurement capacity in many implementing partners and long CDB procurement processes, which led to significant delays in appointing necessary consultants to support delivery (see Efficiency).

5.2.2 Coherence CES Complementarity with other Development Partners

Finding 10: Rather than CDB, the GOSL was the main body bringing coherence with other actors to CES, since it negotiated development support from various donors and ensured that interventions would complement each other. CDB and IDP’s awareness of each other’s interventions was ad hoc and inconsistent.

It was reported that CDB did not participate in some key donor mechanisms. The UN for instance has a coordination mechanism, with a country coordinating officer, informed about the efforts of the various agencies in Saint Lucia. The mechanism includes various Caribbean development partner thematic groupings. However, there was some level of project coordination between the World Bank and CDB. In early 2025, a joint portfolio review mission to Saint Lucia was successfully conducted and synergies were built. UK FCDO participated in all safeguards and project update meetings related to the Millennium Highway. They also participated in supervision visits. Additionally, CDB coordinates initiatives informally with other development banks.

GOSL generally negotiates projects directly with the IDPs. For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture works with IICA, FAO, the FAO Investment Centre, International Trade Centre (ITC), as well as CARICOM and CDB. GOSL also coordinates with OECS, which has many similar projects across member states. Further, it contacts UNDP, which provides small grants for many projects. The water sector works with donors such as GEF, EU-GCCA, WB (DRVP), GCF (a national water project has been submitted), UNESCO/AF (regarding a regional project), and UNFCCC. These donors do not seem to align their support for Saint Lucia directly between each other but negotiate their interventions individually with the government.

The PDMU successfully assisted in keeping an overview of the various projects funded under the MTDS. It also helped several projects move forward, brought together the stakeholders, and organised meetings to discuss key result areas and develop KPIs.

It was mentioned that project teams external to the ministries can lack awareness of other projects being implemented in their sector. For example, the

BRACCCVAS²⁸ team had no knowledge of the value chain stakeholder project²⁹ with Export Saint Lucia, while it supported Export Saint Lucia in general, missing out on potential synergies.

Finding 11: There were some important positive examples of CDB successfully leveraging different IDPs' financial and technical resources towards improved development results.

CDB is perceived as a strategic partner for other development banks and IDPs. Its scope is limited to Caribbean countries, which it knows very well; CDB also has good relationships with the pertinent Governments. For the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which has no reach to the Eastern Caribbean, collaboration with CDB adds value; it is one of the few development partners in the region that comes with its own financial resources. It also has significant experience with projects of various types and has a wealth of expertise across sectors and thematic areas. IDB leveraged loans to two COVID-19 crisis management projects, Building Public Health System Resilience of Coronavirus 2019 Response, and Safety Nets for Vulnerable Populations Affected by Coronavirus. Similarly, the European Investment Bank (EIB) also provided a loan to the first mentioned project.

CDB facilitated a readiness grant from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) through UNOPS, for GOSL to develop a large project in the water sector, Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Water Sector Planning, Development and Operations. Similarly, CDB received a grant from the Adaptation Fund (AF) for onward transmission to the GOSL to implement the BRACCCVAS project. CDB also supports this project with a dedicated project coordinator based at its Headquarters.

28 CDB (n.d.), Building Resilience for Adaptation to Climate Change and Climate Variability in Agriculture in Saint Lucia (BRACCCVAS).

29 CDB (n.d.), Enhancing the Capacity of Stakeholders in the Agriculture Sector to Supply Quality Products in New Markets



Leveraging external funding can also assist CDB in its quest to promote full inclusion of marginalised groups, e.g. People with Disabilities (PWD) in planning meetings regarding standards for accessible infrastructure, for instance the West Coast Road. UK CIF and CDB also have a mandate to ensure that PWD are compensated for their time and have means to get to workshops or engage in remote dialogue.

5.2.3 CES Results Monitoring Overall Appropriateness of CES Results Monitoring

Finding 12: While the CES included a Results Monitoring Framework (RMF), there is limited evidence that it was used by either CDB or GOSL at the strategic level, resulting in limited understanding of the extent to which CES interventions had contributed to CES and GOSL development outcomes. While there is evidence of project-level adaptations, there is little evidence that this adaptation stems from use of either CES- or project-level RMFs.

Overall, CES monitoring at outcome level was not effective. The CES included an RMF with measurable indicators but there is limited evidence of its use at strategic and portfolio levels. Monitoring was largely project focused and neither CDB nor GOSL played an active role in aggregating project-level monitoring to produce an understanding of interventions' contribution to the CES's outcomes and Saint Lucia's development priorities. This is a key gap in ongoing assessment of performance. Neither CDB nor GOSL took ownership for ongoing systematic monitoring and reporting against outcome level indicators to inform an overall picture of the CES's performance. While CDB conducted a Mid-Term Review of the strategy, implementation of recommendations was limited.

The CES RMF was not updated to include projects introduced after its original design. This means that new projects, such as the COVID-19 response projects, health-related interventions and the fire bridge project within the Citizen Security pillar were not integrated into the CES RMF. While these interventions were monitored at a project-level, the CES RMF was out of

date for a portion of the strategic implementation period, limiting its utility in providing an overall perspective of performance of CDB-funded projects in Saint Lucia.

The reliance on project-level monitoring was a weakness as the quality of reporting was not consistent across the portfolio. Data from key informant interviews shows that monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) capabilities varied significantly between implementing agencies, and this impacted the ease with which project teams were able to conduct monitoring and reporting. Stakeholders with dedicated M&E professionals or with access to PIU support showed a stronger awareness and compliance for reporting. Stakeholders who lacked dedicated resources found that the reporting requirements burdensome and were not familiar with the indicators in their project RMF. Consequently, this weakened the quality and consistency of monitoring across the portfolio adding an additional challenge to the fact that data was not systematically aggregated to assess overall performance.

Appropriateness of monitoring indicators and availability of data

Finding 13: Limited adaptation and weak data availability reduced the usefulness of the CES results framework.

CES and intervention RMF indicators and targets were appropriate at the point of their design. However, the evaluation found no evidence that indicators and targets were updated in response to changes in context or implementation delays. As the evaluation received limited monitoring reports, it is challenging to assess the extent to which data was available for measurement and evidence is largely anecdotal. Key informants within Saint Lucia also had very limited perspectives on the extent to which data was available, although they did confirm that quarterly or annual reporting, as required by project agreements, was completed. One CDB stakeholder indicated that data collection and statistics for Saint Lucia could be improved and there is a data availability gap for primary data.

Gender and other key data disaggregation

Finding 14: Gender and other key disaggregated data were included in project frameworks but not systematically used.

The integration of gender and other key disaggregated data is adequate in most project RMFs excluding PBLs. This was validated by CDB staff, who verified that for large-scale infrastructure projects, the expected indicators and safeguards were included. Across social sector projects, there is particularly clear and consistent integration of gender disaggregated indicators. However, there is limited evidence on the extent to which this data was captured, used in assessing

performance, or to support adaptation. Both CDB and GOSL/implementing agencies stakeholders show limited awareness of these indicators within their project RMFs or how they were tracked.

CDB and GOSL stakeholders reported that they regularly engage in project management meetings, but these were more focused on day-to-day implementation rather than performance against RMFs. There is limited evidence that RMF indicators were reviewed in these meetings. While meetings supported adaptations, broader challenges such as delayed approval processes and procurement bottlenecks hindered timely adjustments (see Efficiency).

Box 1. Results monitoring case study: Innovative approaches for monitoring, learning and adaptation

The CES M&E strategy and system included several innovative mechanisms intended to support ongoing monitoring, to identify lessons learned and to support adaptation with varying degrees of success.

The Implementation Monitoring Framework (IMF) – The IMF, based on the CES RMF, was intended to instil regular stock-takes between CDB and GOSL to monitor across the portfolio, address bottlenecks and illustrate contribution to outcomes. The IMF, would have been a highly useful tool and mitigated against the lack of portfolio-level performance tracking against outcomes, as outlined above, had it been used. Although CDB stakeholders reported that the IMF had been used before the change in administration, GOSL stakeholders reported that the IMF had lost momentum following COVID-19 when the GOSL's priorities shifted to pandemic response and resilience building. As such, the IMF did not function well in practice as the change in government and context meant that the tool was not officially adopted by GOSL.

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) – The MTR was conducted by CDB and provided an overview of the change in Saint Lucia's context following COVID-19 and the administration change and its impact on the portfolio. While this was useful in producing learnings, central recommendations such as formally extending the CES timeframe were not taken forward.

Regional Implementation Officer reports – Finally, the RIO provided regular progress reports on CDB-funded infrastructure projects. The RIO reports were useful in identifying bottlenecks and helped stakeholders to find mitigations. Accompanied by the physical and continuous presence of the RIO in Saint Lucia, this tool was useful in supporting learning and adaptation.

The CES RMF did largely identify the key risks with appropriate mitigations. However, there were some key gaps, which substantially impacted performance. Procurement challenges were consistently experienced across the interventions. However, a lack of procurement capacity on the part of Saint Lucia and challenges with CDB's own processes (see Efficiency and Effectiveness) were not identified and included in the CES meaning mitigations were not provided upfront. The RMF risks also underestimate the lack of GOSL and implementing agencies' bandwidth and capacity to absorb multiple large-scale infrastructure projects simultaneously. In particular, the RMF takes a one-size-fits-all approach to the government capacity risk, whereas capacity varied greatly across implementing partners, affecting the extent to which the risk materialised. The CES RMF was insufficiently updated to include emerging risks, particularly the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and effects of the change in administration, despite these factors being explored in detail in the MTR.

5.3 CES Implementation

HIGH LEVEL FINDING

CDB's engagement supported implementation, particularly where strong PIUs or RIO support existed, but was inconsistent across sectors and less consistent at community-level. CES implementation faced widespread delays driven by procurement, CDB and GOSL capacity (primarily bandwidth) and coordination challenges, meaning overall efficiency varied significantly across the portfolio and was constrained overall.

5.3.1 Efficiency Sufficiency of CDB engagement during design and implementation³⁰

Finding 16: CDB engagement was uneven in depth and consistency. Design-stage consultations were a visible feature of CES and intervention design, but engagement during implementation varied across projects. Engagement tended to be strongest at the central government level, with room for improvement at community level. The RIO played an important but constrained role in day-to-day coordination.

As already outlined under Effectiveness (Section 5.1.1), GOSL engagement during CES design ensured it was embedded in national priorities at the time, but COVID-19 followed by a change of government required substantial changes/re-engagement once implementation began.³¹ At project level, some stakeholders described design consultations as narrow, time-limited, or insufficiently participatory, particularly at the community levels, with some stakeholders referencing other donors such as IDB being better at community level engagement.³²

During implementation, where CDB had long-standing relationships or dedicated Project Implementation Unit (PIU) support, engagement produced traction. Elsewhere consultations were perceived as more superficial and follow-up slow. Civil society and private sector participation in early phases was perceived as uneven: stronger in projects linked to MSME or social protection support, but more limited in infrastructure-heavy interventions. For example, social protection projects such as the Safety Nets intervention were noted as involving cross-sectoral consultations across education, health, social development and gender, whereas in big infrastructure projects such as the Millennium Highway project, engagement tended to be

³⁰ Engagement is cross-cutting and contributes to all evaluation criteria, but it has been placed under the "Efficiency" section for streamlining purposes.

³¹ CDB (2019), SSD Mission Planning – Saint Lucia CSP (002).docx; CDB (2019, Aide Memoire_STL_2019_SMG.docx; CDB (2019), Signed Aide Memoire 2019.pdf; CDB (2019), SLU CSP Framework Paper Presentation_Final;

³² CDB (2022-25), RIO monthly reports; CDB (2024), Mission Brief – MHWCRP Oct 2024; CDB (n.d.), Safety Nets.pdf; CDB (various), EIB Health Projects PSRs; CDB (various) Sixth and Eighth Water PSRs

more focussed on landowners than for disadvantaged groups such as those with disabilities.³³

Timeliness and efficiency of CES implementation

Finding 17: CES implementation was widely affected by delays and slower-than-planned disbursement. Structural bottlenecks including procurement challenges, contractor performance issues, land acquisition delays, delays in satisfying required preconditions, understaffed PIUs, and weak inter-agency coordination were all repeatedly identified as cross-portfolio constraints.

Overall disbursement in investment projects across those approved under the CES and the additional projects included in our sample (EQuIP and BNTF9) was 61%. Disbursement was highest in Economics interventions, namely the PBLs (100% of \$72.7m), and lowest against infrastructure projects (24% of USD 88.4m) although this was skewed by the late approval of the 9th Water project (USD 15.7m). Disbursements in social sector projects were relatively high (72% of USD 63.5m) (see Table 3 for full details). Disbursement figures reflected delayed approvals, start dates and implementation.

Box 2. CES Engagement Case Study: How CDB engagement supported CES design, implementation and results³⁴

CDB's engagement with Saint Lucia was constructive and often valuable but variable. It was strongest at the initial CES design stage, but strained during implementation due to contextual factors such as COVID-19 which placed additional strain on limited CDB bandwidth. This ultimately reduced CDB's overall contribution to CES results, as limited engagement contributed to delays in implementation of CES and GOSL outcomes.

Design (Relevance & Coherence):

CDB undertook broad design-stage consultations with central ministries, agencies, civil society and key partners, helping anchor the CES in national priorities, but contextual changes highlighted a need for strong ongoing engagement: The 2019 CES missions produced a clear, co-owned country strategy. However, COVID-19 and a political transition required substantial redesign and re-engagement, indicating the need for more iterative design processes and strong ongoing engagement.

Implementation (Efficiency):

Engagement was strongest with central ministries and where well-established PIUs and RIO support were in place, enabling smoother problem-solving and timely adaptation. Uneven availability of CDB staff, especially amid competing priorities during COVID-19 peak and organisational transitions, slowed follow-up or feedback cycles, contributing to delays in engagement and thus implementation.

Results (Effectiveness & Sustainability):

In sectors such as social protection, MSME support and fiscal governance, CDB's technical dialogue and adaptive engagement supported progress toward CES and GOSL outcomes.

Sustainability was strengthened where CDB had long-standing relationships and strong PIUs (thus making engagement efforts smoother and more effective), but more limited cross-government, community level and donor engagement reduced likely sustainability.

33 CDB (2022-25), RIO monthly reports; CDB (2024), Mission Brief – MHWCRPP Oct 2024; CDB (n.d.), Safety Nets.pdf; CDB (2023-25), EIB Health Projects PSRs; CDB (2023-25), Sixth and Eighth Water PSRs

34 CDB (2019), SLU CSP Framework Paper Presentation; CDB (2019), CDB (2019), SLU CSFP Department Review; CDB (2019), CDB (2019), Aide Memoire_STL_2019_SMG; CDB (2019), Pre-Mission Meeting Notes (2018–2019); CDB (2023-25), RIO Monthly Reports (2023–2025); CDB (2024), Mission Brief – MHWCRPP (2024); CDB (2023-25) PSRs for Health Resilience, MSME Facility, Sixth & Eighth Water; CDB (20223), CES Mid-Term Review

Approval, start and disbursement dates could not be confirmed for all projects, but available data indicates substantial delays, as does available qualitative information. For example, the IDB LOC Building Capacity and Resilience in the Health Sector to Respond to the Coronavirus-2019 Project was approved in September 2021, but did not start until March 2023, by which time substantial rescoping was necessary to ensure continued relevance of the interventions included. Terminal dates of disbursements (TDD) had to be extended for many projects, with for example the TDD for the Saint Lucia - Ninth LOC - SLDB student Loans project shifted by almost five years, from early 2021 to early 2026.

The Millennium Highway project was among the most significantly delayed, with repeated slippages linked to vendor relocation, GOSL development authority approvals, design modifications, and contractor mobilisation and implementation limitations. Several other interventions including BRACCCVAS, the EIB Health System Resilience project, and components of the Sixth and Eighth Water Projects, experienced prolonged start-up delays, often due to failed or lengthy procurement rounds, unmet conditions precedent, shortages of technical staff or the need for rescoping. Some, such as BRACCCVAS, eventually accelerated once implementation arrangements were adapted. A minority of interventions, particularly those with experienced and well-staffed PIUs or simpler procurement requirements, progressed closer to plan. Examples include the MSME Loan-Grant Facility, the Youth Economy Project, and certain water project components. These tended to benefit from more streamlined scopes, strong PIU engagement, or flexible implementation support from CDB.³⁵

Key factors enabling and constraining factors in CES implementation

Finding 17: Key constraining factors in CES implementation were COVID-19, political turnover, fiscal pressures, agency capacity (primarily bandwidth)

gaps, and procurement challenges, which collectively caused widespread delays. Enablers to progress included experienced PIUs, strong CDB/GOSL relationships, adaptive support from CDB, and consistent engagement from the RIO.

Contextual shocks (political cycles, funding constraints, emergencies) had material impacts on timelines and priorities. COVID-19 disrupted work planning and supply chains; political and administrative turnover disrupted continuity and decision-making; GOSL funding constraints limited counterpart contributions and operational focus, reducing its ability to provide timely counterpart funding, staffing, or logistical support.

Capacity (primarily bandwidth) constraints within executing agencies were a key constraint. Across several projects/sectors, executing agencies lacked sufficient bandwidth to implement effectively. Most stakeholders stated capacity constraints were primarily due to limited number/availability of staff (rather than individual technical expertise/experience). Where GOSL staff were assigned to roles, they often struggled to manage their substantive work alongside their CDB project responsibilities. Where projects were designed to include dedicated full-time staff, recruitment delays and staff turnover affected implementation.

Limited awareness and thus application of CDB institutional procedures, particularly around procurement were cited as a major source of delays, with multiple examples of procurement delays and “back-and-to” between implementing agencies and CDB cited, causing frustration on all sides. One specific example referenced by several stakeholders was the MSME loan project, where procurement was started following GOSL procedures, and it was not until several months later that the implementing agency were informed that CDB procedures had to be followed, resulting in a need to restart the process. This was despite CDB’s ongoing efforts to strengthen awareness and understanding of its procurement processes.

35 CDB (2022-25), RIO Monthly Reports; CDB (2022-23), PSRs for Health Resilience and Water Projects; CDB (2024), Mission Brief – MHWCRP Oct 2024; CDB (2024), Health Resilience PSR; CDB (2022-25, Water Project PSRs (Sixth, Eighth)

Several positive enabling factors also emerged: Long-standing institutional relationships between CDB and GOSL; instances of adaptive flexibility by CDB; the presence of some well-staffed and experienced Project Implementation Units (PIUs) which helped

sustain delivery momentum and mitigate implementation risks in some projects. The RIO was also seen as key to helping identify and mitigate/navigate implementation challenges in the projects included within the RIO's scope.³⁶



36 CDB (2023), CES MID-TERM REVIEW_St_Lucia.docx; CDB (2024), CDB (2022-25), RIO monthly reports;; CDB (2024), 2024 Project PSR - Sixth Water (Vieux Fort Water Supply Redevelopment) Project.pdf; CDB (2022), Project 3813 PSR 2022 - Sixth Water (Vieux Fort Water Supply Redevelopment) Project (2).docx; CDB (2023), 2023 Project PSR - Eighth Water (Dennery North Water Supply Redevelopment Project).pdf; CDB (2024), 2024 Project PSR - Eighth Water (Dennery North Water Supply Redevelopment Project).pdf; CDB (2023), Project PSR - Saint Lucia MSME Loan-Grant Facility (1).docx; CDB (2023), Project PSR - Building Public Health System Resilience - Coronavirus Disease 2019 Response - Saint Lucia.docx; CDB (2024), Mission Brief - SLU MHWCRPP Supervision 2024-10.docx; CDB (2024), Appendix 1 - Key Findings Action Items - MHWCRPP - October 2024.docx; CDB (2024), Ltr-MOF - Post MHWCRPP Mission October 2024.docx; CDB (2024), Safety Nets Status Reports (Jan–March 2024; Apr–June 2024)

Table 5. Known disbursement levels of main CES interventions under implementation 2020-24³⁷

	Title	Total Approved	Disbursed	Disbursement %	
Social Sector Division	Building Public Health System Resilience - Corona Virus Disease 2019 Response	\$11.74m	\$10.70m	91%	72%
	IDB LOC Building Capacity and Resilience in the Health Sector to Respond to	\$5.49m	\$4.30m	78%	
	Safety Nets for Vulnerable Populations Affected by Coronavirus-Saint Lucia Project	\$5.41m	\$5.01m	93%	
	Enhancing the Resilience of the Saint Lucia Fire Service Project	\$11.03m	\$2.31m	21%	
	Youth Economy Project	\$7.68m	\$2.25m	29%	
	Youth Empowerment Project	\$0.24m	\$0.24m	102.27%	
	BNTF 9	\$3.15m	\$2.99m	95%	
	BNTF 10	\$2.59m	\$2.95m	114%	
	St. Lucia Education Quality Improvement Project (EQuIP)	\$16.19m	\$15.06m	93%	
Private Sector Division	Saint Lucia - Ninth LOC - SLDB student Loans	\$4.01m	\$1.11m	28%	62%
	Support to MSMEs Post Covid	\$3.70m	\$3.67m	99%	
	Technical Assistance in Packaging and Labelling to MSME in St. Lucia	\$0.10m	\$0.10m	100%	
	Increasing employent opportunities for Vulnerable young males in Agri-	\$0.07m	\$0.07m	90%	
	Enhancing Capacity of Stakeholders in Agriculture to Supply Quality Products in	\$0.28m	\$0.13m	48%	
Environmental Sustainability Division	Building Resilience for Adaptation to Climate Change and Climate Variability in	\$10.83m	\$4.05m	37%	38%
	Capacity Development for the Water and Sewerage Co for Integrating Climate	\$0.75m	\$0.32m	43%	
	Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Water Sector Planning, Development and	\$0.85m	\$0.37m	44%	
Economic Infrastructure Division	Millennium Highway and West Coast Road Reconstruction Project	\$52.41m	\$10.86m	34%	24%
	Sixth Water (Vieux Fort Water Supply Redevelopment) Project	\$7.38m	\$6.73m	91%	
	Eighth Water(Dennerly North Water Supply Redevelopment Project	\$11.23m	\$1.80m	16%	
	Institutional Capacity Building Within the National Utilities Regulatory	\$0.21m	\$0.21m	99%	
	Ninth water (John Compton Dam Water Pipeline Replacement)	\$15.69m	\$0.00m	0%	
	NDM - IRL - Saint Lucia November 2022 Trough Event	\$1.50m	\$1.41m	94%	
Economics Department	Coronavirus Disease 2019 Emergency Response Support Loan	\$30.00m	\$30.00m	100%	100%
	Recovery and Resilience Building Policy-Based Loan (PBL)	\$42.70m	\$42.70m	100%	
Total		\$245.23m	\$149.35m	61%	61%

37 Figures are those shared by OIE up to end Dec 2024. Disbursement for the following TA was not available: Canada - CARICOM Climate Adaptation Fund Saint Lucia; Capacity Development for the Water and Sewerage Company Inc. for Integrating Climate Resilience into Policies, Planning and Development of Investment Programme - Saint Lucia; Enhancing the capacity of stakeholders in the agricultural sector to supply quality products in new markets; Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Water Sector Planning, Development and Operations; Mushroom Production; NURC Capacity Building; Packaging and Labelling; Revision of Livestock Sub-Sector Policy and Strategy and Development of a Masterplan

6. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions below pull out the main overarching strengths and weaknesses that have emerged from the findings and are mapped against the evaluation criteria.

1. Relevance

Strategic relevance remained high, but portfolio realism was low. The CES stayed strongly aligned with Saint Lucia's Medium-Term Development Strategies, and evolving national priorities (resilience, social protection, health). Rapid adaptation during COVID-19 demonstrated responsiveness. However, CES design over-estimated national implementation capacity, which needs to be better assessed and accounted for in future CES cycles.

2. Coherence

Engagement by CDB was uneven due to variable staff availability. The 2020–23 CES piloted a new engagement approach, which received positive initial feedback. But limited CDB bandwidth for example due to COVID-19 and staff transition meant opportunities to sustain engagement during implementation were sometimes missed. The advent of COVID-19 strained CDB's ability to maintain increased levels of engagement with GOSL and others, and engagement thus dropped off during CES implementation. The introduction of a Regional Implementation Officer (RIO) partly mitigated this drop-off, but focusing of RIO resources on big-ticket infrastructure projects limited opportunities to identify and address cross-cutting bottlenecks and coordinate engagement across the CES portfolio.

3. Efficiency and Effectiveness

Efficiency and effectiveness were constrained by systemic bottlenecks and external shocks. Projects with strong PIUs and RIO support operated

more smoothly, and where CDB was able to demonstrate flexibility, implementation was more efficient. Persistent procurement and approval bottlenecks, limited use of the RIO, and contextual shocks (elections, fiscal stress, COVID-19) disrupted delivery and weakened the link from outputs to outcomes.

4. Results Monitoring

Results monitoring frameworks existed but were under-utilised and were overly focused on intervention/output level. Limited use/updating of the CES RMF meant that indicators were often no longer relevant and/or there was limited data to track progress against the RMF. As a result, CDB's contribution to Saint Lucia's strategic development objectives could not be easily tracked. A focus on performance tracking at project level means that there is no clear ongoing understanding of the link to Saint Lucia's longer-term development needs.

5. Sustainability

Sustainability prospects are strengthened by CDB's long-term relationships and flexibility but threatened by limited GOSL capacity (financial and technical). Institutional and policy reforms initiatives integrated into CDB interventions (such as integration of climate resilience into agriculture and water policies and frameworks and Special Educational Needs into Ministry of Education policies) are more likely to endure due to alignment with government priorities. Sustainability of infrastructure projects is more fragile, constrained by limited GOSL human capacity and fiscal pressures. CDB's long-standing relationship with Saint Lucia and successful examples of adaptation and flexibility are positive for sustainability prospects, but these enablers are not yet systematised and depend heavily on individual relationships.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Six priority recommendations are derived from the analysis of the evidence, findings and conclusions of the evaluation.

The recommendations were co-created with the CDB staff, GOSL and other relevant Saint Lucia-based stakeholders responsible for implementing the CES, and for designing the next CES. These recommendations were identified as the priority areas that would help to overcome the challenges experienced under the CES 2020-23, and designed to be useful, specific and actionable to support the process of developing the new CES. Details of the background and evidence supporting each recommendation are included in Annex J.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Align the development of the new CES based on realistic national capacity, CDB value-add, and the new Medium Term Development Strategy (MTDS) development timeline (beginning 2026)

Action: Focus the next CES on a small number (1–3) of priority themes where implementation capacity is strongest and CDB has clear comparative advantage. Adjust the CES development timeline so that it aligns with the Government of Saint Lucia’s MTDS development process scheduled to begin in 2026. Ensure that the CES portfolio is designed to be realistic by ensuring appropriate sequencing of interventions to avoid overloading ministries, systematically checking if agencies have the staff, time, and technical capacity to design and implement the proposed projects, taking into consideration existing CDB and other donor projects still under implementation.

Responsible Unit

CDB: Economics Department; Office of Strategy and Accountability (SAO)

GOSL: Led by Department of Economic Development

Timeline

Begin Q1 2026, aligned with MTDS process in 2026

RECOMMENDATION 2

Strengthen systemic GOSL implementation capacity through workforce planning, institutionalised Results Based Management (RBM), and targeted skills development

Action: Improve staff availability and technical capacity planning at project design (bandwidth assessments, surge-support rosters, consultant pools). CDB to support GOSL with RBM, procurement, and project-cycle training through the Public Service Training Division to build institutional capacity beyond project-specific roles. Develop sectoral skills pipelines aligned to anticipated project demand to reduce implementation bottlenecks.

Responsible Unit

CDB: Projects Department, Procurement Division, relevant Sector divisions

GOSL: Public Service Training Division and Department of Economic Development;

Timeline

Begin before next CES; continue throughout strategic period

RECOMMENDATION 3

Strengthen CES results monitoring through MTDS alignment, a shared data repository, and joint performance reviews (including with other donors as appropriate)

Action: Co-design a simplified CES results framework aligned to MTDS indicators to reduce parallel reporting. Develop a shared digital repository for CES-related results and data. Conduct semi-annual joint CES performance reviews to assess progress, identify bottlenecks, and promote adaptive management. Where possible, (continue to) integrate these with other donor review processes.

Responsible Unit

CDB: Country Economist/Economics Division, SAO
GOSL: Department of Economic Development and PMDU

Timeline

Repository and RMF alignment within 12 months; bi-annual CES reviews throughout next strategy period

RECOMMENDATION 4

Strengthen coordination by leveraging the existing PMDU and creating a unified donor/project matrix

Action: Leverage and strengthen Saint Lucia's existing PMDU by reviewing its mandate in relation to CDB and other donor-funded projects. Enhance its resourcing and technical capacity (e.g., monitoring, coordination, escalation pathways) so it can serve as the central node for cross-government delivery monitoring. In parallel, develop and maintain a centralised donor/project matrix to ensure all partners are visible, aligned, and engaged throughout conceptualisation, design, and implementation. This matrix should be housed within the Department of Economic Development and integrated into PMDU monitoring processes.

Responsible Unit

GOSL – PMDU and Department of Economic Development

CDB: Country Economist/Economics Department and RIO

Timeline

Strengthening PMDU mandate – within next CES cycle; Donor/project matrix – quarterly/bi-annual updates

RECOMMENDATION 5

Introduce adaptive portfolio and strategy management to increase responsiveness and efficiency

Action: Institutionalise a mid-cycle CES review to recalibrate the project pipeline, risks, and sequencing. Enable adaptive adjustments to the CES results framework when context shifts. Review RIO scope/terms of reference beyond the current infrastructure focus and increase their involvement in portfolio-wide monitoring including risk analysis and cross-portfolio problem-solving.

Responsible Unit

CDB: Country Economist with support from Projects Department, SAO; RIO

Timeline

Q1 2026 for review of RIO scope/terms of reference; Mid-point of CES for major review; annual adaptive reviews

RECOMMENDATION 6

Strengthen engagement, visibility, and communication to sustain ownership and momentum of the Country Engagement Strategy

Action: Develop and implement a Country Engagement Strategy communication and engagement plan to position it as a nationally owned tool. Hold annual briefings for Cabinet, permanent secretaries, and implementing agencies. Provide onboarding for new government officials and project managers, including orientation on CDB processes and the role of the RIO.

Responsible Unit

CDB: Country Economist with support from Projects Department, SAO; RIO

GOSL: Department of Economic Development

Timeline

Begin in the second quarter of 2026/during new CES development; update annually

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

High-Level Question

Evaluation Criteria

Due date of Management Response

March 6, 2026

Coordinator of Management Response

Justin Carter/Ronald James

Submission for management Response

General comments on the evaluation (if any)

Management welcomes the Office of Independent Evaluation's (OIE) captioned evaluation (CESE/the Evaluation) of the Caribbean Development Bank's (CDB/ the Bank) Country Engagement Strategy 2020-2023 (CES/the Strategy) for Saint Lucia. In general, we find that the Evaluation provides a balanced assessment of the Strategy, and we concur with the evaluation finding of "moderate to strong" progress made toward achieving the CES' intended results and contribution to the Government of Saint Lucia's (GOSL) development outcomes, with the strongest progress and contribution made in improving quality climate-resilient infrastructure – an area where the Bank has a strong track record of delivery. The Evaluation deemed this performance commendable considering the impact of COVID-19, even as the Strategy's full potential is not yet fully realised.

The Evaluation assesses the CES as highly relevant and broadly coherent, while efficiency and implementation realism were constrained by systemic bottlenecks and external shocks. Sustainability prospects were assessed as moderate but fragile, reflecting institutional capacity gains in some areas, alongside fiscal constraints, reduced staffing levels, and increased workloads, particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Management notes the need for better qualified statements and evidence to rigorously support the findings in a few sections. Below are illustrative of the concern:

- (a) The unclear reference to 'inadequate provision' of special education needs (SEN)-focused education, without explaining type and scope. This relates to the finding that the Bank's **"social inclusion efforts were sometimes reinforced by exclusion, rather than resolving it"**. Firstly, the explanation given that **"SEN focused education interventions experiences long delays and design issues resulting in ongoing "inadequate provision"** for learners with SEN despite EQUIP, is not validated. It is not clear which other SEN-focused interventions are referred and, furthermore, the delays in the SEN activities implemented cannot be given as an example of the Bank 'reinforcing exclusion'. Secondly, the more specific point for which the Youth Economy Agency reference was given as evidence remains in the document. Including **"limited emphasis on male perpetrators and at-risk young men was perceived by some as potentially displacing the need for work with young men"**. In general, the evaluation must provide substantive examples to show that the perceptions are valid.
- (b) There is also the finding that there was **"limited staff availability (particularly in the midst of competing priorities during COVID-19) which ultimately reduced CDB's overall contribution to CES results"**. In response to Management's feedback that the reference to limited staff availability was unsubstantiated and subsequent agreement with OIE that it should be removed, the final Evaluation Report substitutes the term **'particularly'** with, 'for example' and maintains the unsubstantiated finding regarding 'limited availability of (CDB) staff/limited bandwidth during COVID 19. The examples subsequently provided by the Evaluation team speaks to *'changes in the timing of various planned activities'; 'many sub-projects (not disclosed) were not ready on time'; the pivot to include a new health project...placed additional pressure on CDB'; 'due to COVID, many projects had to be re-costed...which required additional work'*. None of these are evidence of **'limited availability of CDB staff'** but rather speaks to staff being engaged to advance the adjusted CES programme, adapted to include the COVID 19 interventions requested by GOSL which were approved by the Bank and implemented.
- (c) **"Generally, it (CDB) also does not participate in thematic meetings with other donors."** Evidence was shared with OIE showing that CDB staff participated/participates in ongoing donor coordination

meetings (including co-chairing). The finding was nuanced by the Evaluation team to **“It was reported that CDB did not participate in some key donor mechanisms. The UN for instance...”**.

Management deems that not to be a satisfactory response and suggests that the Evaluation team/OIE should advise which key donor mechanisms Bank staff were invited to and failed to participate.

(d) The Evaluation report notes that **“the design process of this CES did not benefit from a bi-partisan approach and there were important changes in the strategy after a change in administration.”**

Management restates the fact that CES design benefited from in-country stakeholder engagement that included consultation with the leader of the Opposition Party. Country priorities shifted, nonetheless, with the change in administration.

Management acknowledges the conclusion that the CES “overestimated national implementation capacity.” We recognise the importance of implementation realism in small island developing states, where institutional bandwidth, fiscal volatility, and exposure to exogenous shocks materially affect the delivery timelines. CES implementation coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, a change in administration, and a period of significant macroeconomic disruption. These factors altered fiscal trajectories, national priorities, and constrained administrative capacity, thereby affecting sequencing and pace of execution. We note the mixed finding on Bank-supported initiatives, the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit (PMDU), a technical assistance (TA)-funded initiative assessed to have helped strengthen ownership, and the CDB Regional Implementation Officer (RIO) assessed as useful in supporting learning and adaption, but which were not fully leveraged.

Management views the recommendations, for the most part, as constructive and mostly aligned with ongoing institutional efforts to strengthen strategic selectivity, deepen partner coordination, improve pipeline and contact management, enhance implementation capacity, improve monitoring and adaptive management, and to reinforce structured portfolio engagement throughout the next cycle. In most of these areas, the Bank has already begun making changes and we expect reform will gain momentum informed by the findings and recommendations of several significant initiatives ongoing, including a study of implementation conditions in the Region and Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network, that will all aim to increase the Bank’s effectiveness in the longer term.

Management’s responses below outline areas of agreement, contextual clarification, and forward-looking actions that will inform preparation of the next CES.



Evaluation recommendation #1 ('the what')

Align the development of the new CES based on realistic national capacity, CDB value-add, and the new MTDS development timeline (beginning 2026)

Lead entity ('who' is responsible)	Participating partners ('who else is responsible')
Economics Department	Projects Department; Office of Strategy; Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Youth Economy (Saint Lucia)

Overall management response

or ('if' – accepted, partially accepted, rejected)	('how' - in 250 words or less to explain the management response)
Accepted Partially Accepted Rejected	<p>Management partially accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>CDB addresses country implementation constraints through targeted support mechanisms. Support is provided to enhance and address capacity gaps through TA (both grant and loan). Project cycle management (PCM) training has been provided in the past and additional PCM training is programmed to build capacity. Notwithstanding, portfolio ambition for the now expired three-year CES exceeded implementation bandwidth in certain areas, particularly given the number of concurrent reforms and projects under execution. Furthermore, the contextual shocks—including COVID-19 in 2020 and a change in government administration in 2021—compounded underlying capacity constraints and contributed to sequencing pressures across ministries.</p> <p>The forthcoming CES, with a longer period of four to five years, will aim to support realistic programming, while focusing on the priority sectors requiring CDB's support. CES will always align with national strategic priorities to ensure harmonisation between national development frameworks and with CDB's Strategic Plan (2026-2035). The CES sets out jointly agreed objectives and priority areas for Bank intervention, informed by extensive collaboration with Government and external partners for alignment, relevance and coherence, and guided by the Bank's strategic priorities and thematic areas.</p> <p>As such, the preparation of the Saint Lucia CES will be linked to MTDS preparation and GOSL's readiness to engage with CDB on national strategic priorities and the opportunities for CDB support.</p>

Suggested lines of action

Lines of action	Suggested Actions to be Implemented (to articulate how to implement the recommendations)	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
Adjust CES development timelines to MTDS development process.	CES development timeline will align with GOSL's MTDS development process scheduled to begin in 2026.	Q3 – 2026	2026 (Board approval)

Evaluation recommendation #2 ('the what')

Strengthen systemic GOSL implementation capacity through workforce planning, institutionalised Results Based Management (RBM), and targeted skills development

Lead entity ('who' is responsible)

Economics Department

Participating partners ('who else is responsible')

Projects Department; Office of Strategy; Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Youth Economy (Saint Lucia)

Overall management response

or ('if' – accepted, partially accepted, rejected)

('how' - in 250 words or less to explain the management response)

Accepted

Partially Accepted

Rejected

Management partially accepts this recommendation.

Strengthening systemic implementation capability and institutional depth are fundamental to improving delivery outcomes and reducing project bottlenecks, a constraint CDB recognised during CES design and addressed proactively through targeted interventions. The CES incorporated two institutional innovations: (a) TA provided through dedicated consultancies to support implementation capacity through the PMDU; and (b) deployment of a RIO to help alleviate immediate bandwidth constraints and assist outcome delivery. Additionally, throughout the CES period, the Bank provided support in procurement, project management, and results monitoring through project-level TA and policy dialogue. While these measures helped to mitigate capacity constraints, Management acknowledges that systemic capacity limitations require longer-term institutional strengthening beyond the CES timeframe. Workforce planning and public sector staffing decisions remain primarily within the purview of the Government; however, the Bank can play a catalytic role by supporting capacity planning discussions during project design and ensuring that implementation demands are calibrated to institutional realities.

The Bank will continue to support institutionalisation of RBM and strengthened procurement systems through collaboration with the Public Service Training Division and relevant sector agencies. These institutional strengthening efforts will be aligned with anticipated sectoral project demand to help develop sustainable skills pipelines and reduce recurrent implementation bottlenecks, ensuring that improvements extend beyond individual projects and contribute to durable public sector capacity.

Suggested lines of action

Lines of action	Suggested Actions to be Implemented (to articulate how to implement the recommendations)	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
CDB to support GOSL with RBM, procurement, and project-cycle training.	CDB will continue to support GOSL with RBM, procurement, and project-cycle training. There are active plans to strengthen the knowledge function within the organisational structure that include establishing CDBA for capacity development, policy dialogue, research, and knowledge sharing.	Q2 – 2027	Continuous

Evaluation recommendation #3 ('the what')

Strengthen CES results monitoring through MTDS alignment, a shared data repository, and joint performance reviews (including with other donors as appropriate)

Lead entity ('who' is responsible)	Participating partners ('who else is responsible')
Economics Department	Projects Department; Office of Strategy; Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Youth Economy (Saint Lucia)

Overall management response

or ('if' – accepted, partially accepted, rejected)	('how' - in 250 words or less to explain the management response)
<p>Accepted</p> <p>Partially Accepted</p> <p>Rejected</p>	<p>Management partially accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>The Bank has corporate systems to monitor project and country portfolio performance but did not use these tools consistently during the 2020-2023 CES period to track implementation progress.</p> <p>Management agrees with the need to reduce reporting burdens and strengthen coherence between CDB programming and MTDS. For the next CES, we will co-design a CES results framework that aligns, where feasible, with the Government's MTDS indicators, targets and national data systems. This will reduce parallel reporting, improve clarity, and support country-level aggregation of outcomes without weakening measurement quality.</p> <p>Management recognises the value of joint country portfolio reviews (CPRs). CDB partnered with the World Bank to conduct joint in-country review in February 2025, with a follow-up review mission scheduled for May 2026. We will improve structured CES-level performance reviews. Where partner programming overlaps with CDB's portfolio, we will continue to align these reviews with existing Government and donor coordination processes and, where practical, conduct joint reviews with other development partners. We support stronger information sharing and results aggregation. However, a shared digital data repository requires Government agreement on design, hosting, governance, and resourcing, and must align with existing national platforms. We will therefore assess options with Government and agree a proportionate approach within available resources.</p>

Suggested lines of action

Lines of action	Suggested Actions to be Implemented (to articulate how to implement the recommendations)	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
Align CES results monitoring with national systems and introduce structured joint review mechanisms.	<p>Co-design a simplified CES results framework aligned to MTDS indicators to reduce parallel reporting.</p> <p>Assess options for a shared CES results/data repository with Government and agree an approach aligned to national systems.</p>	Q3 – 2026	Continuous

Evaluation recommendation #4 ('the what')

Strengthen coordination by leveraging the existing PMDU and creating a unified donor/project matrix

Lead entity ('who' is responsible)	Participating partners ('who else is responsible')
Economics Department	Projects Department; Office of Strategy; Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Youth Economy (Saint Lucia)

Overall management response

or ('if' – accepted, partially accepted, rejected)	('how' - in 250 words or less to explain the management response)
<p>Accepted</p> <p>Partially Accepted</p> <p>Rejected</p>	<p>Management partially accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>PMDU was first established in 2019 with CDB's TA support. Management acknowledges that strengthening delivery coordination arrangements within Government, including the effective utilisation of the PMDU, is essential to improving cross-ministerial delivery and reducing implementation bottlenecks. CDB engages regularly with the PMDU, the Department of Economic Development, and relevant implementing agencies to support coordination of CDB-financed operations.</p> <p>We recognise the potential value of further clarifying the PMDU's mandate and enhancing its monitoring and coordination role in relation to donor-supported projects. While institutional mandate reviews and resourcing decisions are led by Government, the Bank will continue to support structured dialogue aimed at strengthening PMDU's coordination, monitoring, and escalation functions. The Bank can play a supportive role through structured dialogue and harmonisation of reporting practices, including integration of CDB portfolio monitoring with broader cross-government coordination mechanisms.</p> <p>With respect to the development of a unified donor/project matrix, Management supports improved visibility of donor-supported operations to enhance sequencing, reduce duplication, and strengthen adaptive management. Any such matrix should be embedded within Government systems and aligned with existing project implementation and coordination processes to avoid parallel structures. CDB will collaborate with the Department of Economic Development and the PMDU to support practical mechanisms that enhance transparency and cross-donor alignment, including integration of the matrix into PMDU monitoring processes and periodic updates to ensure that donor programming remains visible and coordinated throughout the CES cycle.</p>

Suggested lines of action

Lines of action	Suggested Actions to be Implemented (to articulate how to implement the recommendations)	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
Enhance coordination with PDMU.	To enhance coordination with PDMU, the Bank will support the development and maintenance of a centralised donor/project matrix to ensure all partners are visible, aligned, and engaged throughout conceptualisation, design, and implementation. This matrix will be housed within the Department of Economic Development and integrated into PMDU monitoring processes.	Q1 – 2026	Continuous

Evaluation recommendation #5 ('the what')

Introduce adaptive portfolio and strategy management to increase responsiveness and efficiency

Lead entity ('who' is responsible)	Participating partners ('who else is responsible')
Economics Department	Projects Department; Office of Strategy; Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Youth Economy (Saint Lucia)

Overall management response

or ('if' – accepted, partially accepted, rejected)	('how' - in 250 words or less to explain the management response)
<p>Accepted</p> <p>Partially Accepted</p> <p>Rejected</p>	<p>Management partially accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>Embedding “adaptive windows” into portfolio and strategy management is done in various ways. The CES implementation process involves frequent country interactions during project appraisal and supervision that are typically documented and shared via aide-memoire or memoranda. Annual project supervision reviews allow for reflection and progress tracking.</p> <p>As previously noted, the Bank has recently enhanced its use of CPRs, that were underutilised as instruments for adaptive management. CPRs involve CDB teams, project implementation teams and representatives from Government; and facilitate crucial exchanges and updates to projects to identify and address bottlenecks, and collaboration on agreed plans of action. CES implementation is also monitored through CPRs that allow for highlighting of strategic issues and shifts in strategic priorities.</p> <p>On the PMDU, Management will work with GOSL to strengthen its role in portfolio-wide coordination, monitoring, and cross-project alignment, including improving visibility and tracking of donor-funded operations across the portfolio.</p>

Suggested lines of action

Lines of action	Suggested Actions to be Implemented (to articulate how to implement the recommendations)	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
Institutionalise adaptive review mechanisms within the CES cycle and clarify RIO's portfolio-wide monitoring role.	<p>Adaptive review mechanisms exist across the CES cycle.</p> <p>The CES RMF will be kept under constant review and tracking by the CES coordinator. A formal CES review is programmed for mid-cycle, with additional reviews coupled with CPRs conducted to facilitate and embed adaptive management and ensure the Bank remains responsive to shifts in country context, changing priorities and needs, operational challenges, and external shocks, while continuing to align with national development priorities and institutional objectives.</p> <p>Training facilitated by the Strategy and Development Effectiveness Department is planned for 2026 to ensure report (mid-term reviews) quality and accuracy.</p> <p>The optimal approaches to country level presence and engagement will be informed in Q3-4, 2026, by the ongoing investigation of implementation conditions at country level. The review of the RIO model is part of this exercise.</p>		Continuous throughout the next CES cycle

Evaluation recommendation #5 ('the what')

Strengthen engagement, visibility, and communication to sustain ownership and momentum of the Country Engagement Strategy

Lead entity ('who' is responsible)

Department of Communication and Corporate Affairs/
Operations units

Participating partners ('who else is responsible')

Projects Department; Economics Department; Office of Strategy; Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Youth Economy (Saint Lucia)

Overall management response

or ('if' – accepted, partially accepted, rejected)

('how' - in 250 words or less to explain the management response)

Accepted

Partially Accepted

Rejected

Management accepts this recommendation.

Strategic country engagement is a key requirement for maintaining relevance, visibility, and uptake throughout the CES cycle, and for positioning the Bank's work to be relevant and accepted as nationally and politically resonant tools that support national development agendas. A CES on its own, however, will not necessarily deliver greatest visibility and development impact without effective means to advance pipeline implementation through robust, structured and timely pipeline engagement, management and project implementation. The Bank maintained active dialogue with senior officials, implemented project launches, and undertook a high-level CPR in 2025.

We recognise that structured and visible communication would strengthen continuity, particularly during administrative transitions. Management underscores the importance of a tailored, context-specific approach to communication. Engagement around the CES must be pragmatic and aligned with the CES's purpose, role, and primary audience. As a strategic and operational framework, the CES is intended to guide the Bank's collaboration with the Government and key implementation partners. Accordingly, the Bank should prioritise keeping these stakeholders, particularly line ministries and implementing agencies, well informed and engaged throughout the strategy cycle. In keeping with this, we note that in-country stakeholder engagement and consultation was actively pursued.

A targeted stakeholder communications approach incorporates direct and fit-for-purpose engagements such as quarterly and annual virtual briefings or updates. Combined with timely press releases and social media promotion, this approach will be more effective than broad-scale public campaigns. This should be embedded in the CES's implementation schedule to provide continuous communication while supporting alignment and mutual accountability for results.

For broader national visibility, the Bank currently publicises CESs across traditional and social media upon Board approval. In some instances, where appropriate and feasible, the Bank has undertaken structured in-country launches to which local media partitioners are invited. More importantly, however, the Bank sees significant opportunity for strategic communication

centred on the tangible results of its investments in Saint Lucia. Highlighting how these initiatives are grounded in the CES will reinforce the Strategy's relevance and demonstrate the Bank's ongoing contribution to the country's development priorities.

Suggested lines of action

Lines of action	Suggested Actions to be Implemented (to articulate how to implement the recommendations)	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
Include structured engagement and communication mechanisms within the next CES cycle.	<p>CPRs, CES mid-term reviews and supervision missions are existing structured mechanisms for stakeholder engagement through the CES cycle that ensures direct and targeted communication with government ministries and implementing agencies.</p> <p>The Bank will complement stakeholder engagement with timely press releases and social media promotion upon key CES/ project milestones, including Board approval, and conduct structured in-country launches with local media participation, where appropriate and feasible.</p> <p>The Bank will also continue to leverage the CES investment results as a strategic communication opportunity to reinforce the Strategy's relevance and demonstrate the Bank's ongoing contribution to national development goals.</p>	Ongoing	Continuous



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