



Synthesis of Country Strategy and Programme Evaluations

Barbados, Belize, Jamaica,
Suriname, The Bahamas

Office of
Independent Evaluation

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This Synthesis Report marks the beginning of a new series of evaluation reports conducted by the Office of Independent Evaluation (OIE) of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). The report consolidates and reflects on the evidence collected over the evaluation period, spanning from 2019 to 2024, across five distinct CSPEs. This body of evidence represents a crucial source of knowledge and insights, which is capitalized through this synthesis to inform future strategies and interventions.

I would also like to acknowledge the support and cooperation of the Government officials, project implementing agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners in each of the evaluated countries. Their engagement and collaboration have been essential in ensuring the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the evaluations.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BERT	Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation	GOCJ	Government of the Commonwealth of Jamaica
BMC	Borrowing Member Countries	IFI	International Financial Institutions
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy	IMF	International Monetary Fund
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank	RCI	Regional Cooperation and Integration
CES	Country Engagement Strategy	RMF	Results Monitoring Framework
CSP	Country Strategy Paper	SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound
CGA	Country Gender Assessments	SSD	Social Sector Division
CSPE	Country Strategy Programme Evaluation	TA	Technical Assistance
CVA	Climate Vulnerability Assessment	UN	United Nations
ESU	Environmental Sustainability Unit		
GOCB	Government of the Commonwealth of Bahamas		
GOBZ	Government of Belize		

Executive Summary

This synthesis of Country Strategy and Programme Evaluations (CSPEs) covers evaluations for Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Suriname, and the Bahamas, conducted between 2019 and 2024 by the Office of Independent Evaluation (OIE) with the support of the consultancy firm, IOD PARC.

The evaluations assessed the Caribbean Development Bank's (CDB) support to these Borrowing Member Countries (BMCs), focusing on strategy, policy dialogue, completed and ongoing projects, and technical assistance. The period covered spans from 2010 to 2023.

The synthesis study aims to:

1. **Synthesize** findings and lessons from the five CSPEs.
2. **Assess** the effectiveness of CDB's strategies and programmes in reducing poverty and achieving development objectives.
3. **Identify** commonalities, strengths, and weaknesses in CDB's operations.
4. **Evaluate** enabling factors and barriers affecting CDB's initiatives.
5. **Provide** recommendations for enhancing CDB's future strategies and programmes in the Caribbean region.

Key Findings

CDB's strategies and programs were initially relevant, aligning with country needs and contexts.

They anticipated risks and emerging needs and demonstrated adaptability to challenges such as economic crises, the COVID-19 pandemic, and natural disasters. Policy Based Loans (PBLs) in Barbados, Belize, and the Bahamas were critical in mitigating these impacts. However, their relevance declined over time in some countries due to delays in implementation, rendering some projects less pertinent by the time of delivery.

While the country strategies had a high degree of relevance and strategic thinking, delivery was hampered by public sector capacity constraints and a lack of executing agency capacity. For example, in Suriname, institutional capacity issues and political economy problems exacerbated these challenges. Jamaica faced project management limitations despite strong technical capacity. Belize encountered procurement challenges and capacity issues in the energy sector.

Efficiency was a significant challenge, with slow implementation and disbursement across all countries. Factors included in-country capacity challenges and CDB-related issues, such as political economy and fiscal challenges in Suriname and limited strategic engagement in Jamaica and the Bahamas.

Earlier country strategies were broad and ambitious, often not aligned with the actual capacity and economic constraints of the BMCs. A more realistic approach, focusing on achievable areas within shorter timeframes, was needed, as started by CDB's new Country Engagement Strategy in Saint Lucia.

There was no systematic approach to follow-through on country strategies. Results Management Frameworks (RMFs) were poorly designed and not actively used, leading to unrealistic targets and lack of adaptive management.

**Key Findings across Barbados, Belize, Jamaica,
Suriname, and the Bahamas**

Belize

Policy-Based Loans (PBLs) were critical in mitigating economic crises, COVID-19, and natural disasters.

Faced procurement challenges and capacity issues in the energy sector.

Regional cooperation and integration were not effectively leveraged into CSPs.

Slow implementation and disbursement challenges, therefore relevance tended to decline over time.

Jamaica

Strong technical capacity, but project management limitations hindered implementation.

Limited strategic engagement from CDB affected program management.

Regional cooperation and integration were not effectively leveraged.

Slow implementation and disbursement challenges, therefore relevance tended to decline over time.

Suriname

Institutional capacity and political economy challenges severely impacted implementation.

Limited strategic engagement from CDB affected program management.

Regional cooperation and integration were not effectively leveraged into CSPs.

Slow implementation and disbursement challenges.

The Bahamas

Policy-Based Loans (PBLs) were critical in mitigating economic crises, COVID-19, and natural disasters.

Mitigation measures for climate events and hurricanes were inadequate.

Limited strategic engagement from CDB affected program management, overall CSP traction, uptake of Technical Assistance (TA) and gender mainstreaming.

Regional cooperation and integration were not effectively leveraged into CSPs.

Limited GOCB capacity and local capacity of consultants hindered implementation.

Slow implementation and disbursement challenges led to reduced relevance.

Limited buy-in for TA related to gender, which had implications for the sustainability of projects.

GOCB prioritisation of more tangible infrastructure projects vs TA (where benefits are longer-term and less tangible) was a key reason for lack of traction.

The RMF and results measurement more broadly were not well considered.

GOCB priorities shifted considerably over the 2018-22 CSP period due to COVID-19, two changes of administration and Hurricane Dorian.

Barbados

Policy-Based Loans (PBLs) were critical in mitigating economic crises, COVID-19, and natural disasters.

Slow implementation and disbursement challenges.

While risks were well-identified in CSPs, mitigation measures were often overly optimistic. The approach to climate events and hurricanes was inadequate, as seen in the Bahamas, where explicit mitigation measures were lacking.

COVID-19 severely impacted strategy and project implementation, causing delays, increased costs, and limited CDB's ability to conduct physical supervision. However, it also pushed CDB towards accepting electronic reporting and approval processes, which supported overall implementation.

CDB's comparative advantage lies in its regional knowledge and long-standing relationships. However, limited visibility and engagement in countries like Suriname, Jamaica, and the Bahamas hindered programme management and performance.

While CDB understands gender and social protection needs well, follow-through on gender priorities during implementation was limited. Lack of BMC government awareness and sensitivity around gender issues constrained integration efforts.

CDB's potential for leveraging regional cooperation and integration was not consistently realized. Despite being a key area of comparative advantage, it was not consistently integrated into CSPs in Jamaica, the Bahamas, Belize, and Suriname.



Recommendations

- 1. Stronger Engagement:**
Arrange more regular country missions and explore employing Resident Implementation Officers in countries without an office to enhance engagement and understanding of processes.
- 2. Realism and Prioritization:**
Employ greater realism at the appraisal and design stage, focusing on achievable goals and narrowing the scope of country strategies to improve implementation.
- 3. Strengthen RMFs:** Develop utility-focused RMFs that support progress monitoring, adaptive management, and improved CSP performance. Integrate project-level monitoring within a live M&E dashboard.
- 4. Improve Coherence via Partnerships:** Align work on cross-cutting CDB priorities with other international development partners to develop synergies and improve results.
- 5. Improve Gender Integration:**
Develop a range of responses to gender and social issues, leveraging specialist technical assistance provided by CDB.
- 6. Increase Risk Planning:**
Ensure sufficient risk mitigation measures are in place at the CSP design stage and consider climate/risk hurricanes as standard across all activities.

Introduction

Background

This Synthesis of Country Strategy and Programme Evaluations covers the CSPEs for Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Suriname and the Bahamas, all of which took place between 2019 and 2024. All CSPEs were undertaken by IOD PARC and aimed to assess the Caribbean Development Bank’s (CDB) overall support to the Borrowing Member Countries (BMC), assessing the Bank’s strategy, policy dialogue, completed and ongoing projects, and technical assistance (TA). As shown in Figure 1, the period covered by the CSPEs analysed for this synthesis stretches from 2010 to 2023.

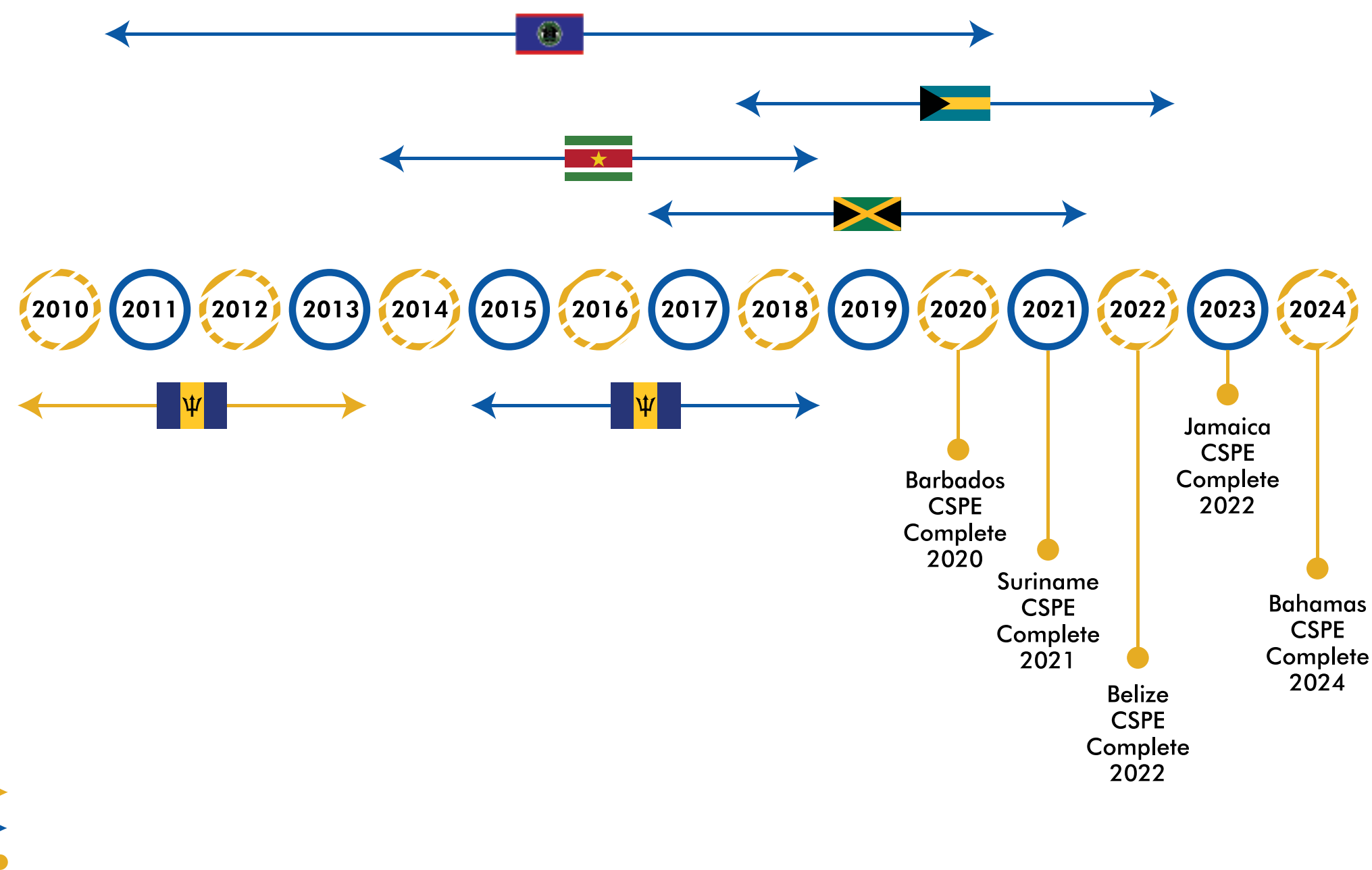


Figure 1: Timeline of CSPE Coverage

Objective

This study will focus on common findings and lessons learned from the five above-mentioned CSPEs. This study aims to inform CDB’s Board of Directors, Senior Management and CDB staff regarding the performance of Bank interventions in the examined countries, and to draw lessons that will inform preparation of the Bank’s new Country Engagement Strategies and Operations.

The study aimed to:

- 1. To synthesize the findings and lessons learned from the five CSPEs conducted in the specified countries.
- 2. To explore the effectiveness of CDB’s strategies and programmes in reducing poverty and achieving development objectives in the aforementioned countries.

- 3. To identify commonalities, strengths, and weaknesses in the approaches and outcomes of CDB’s operations in these countries.
- 4. To assess the enabling factors and barriers affecting the success of CDB’s initiatives in the examined countries.
- 5. To provide recommendations for enhancing CDB’s future strategies and programmes in the Caribbean region based on the comparative analysis of CSPEs.

The following sections outline some of the key findings, lessons and themes from the previous five CSPEs. While this report will explore them in more detail in further sections, an overview of some of the more common themes is presented below in Figure 2. The report will then move on to a series of recommendations which aim to provide learning for CDB and strengthen future CSP.

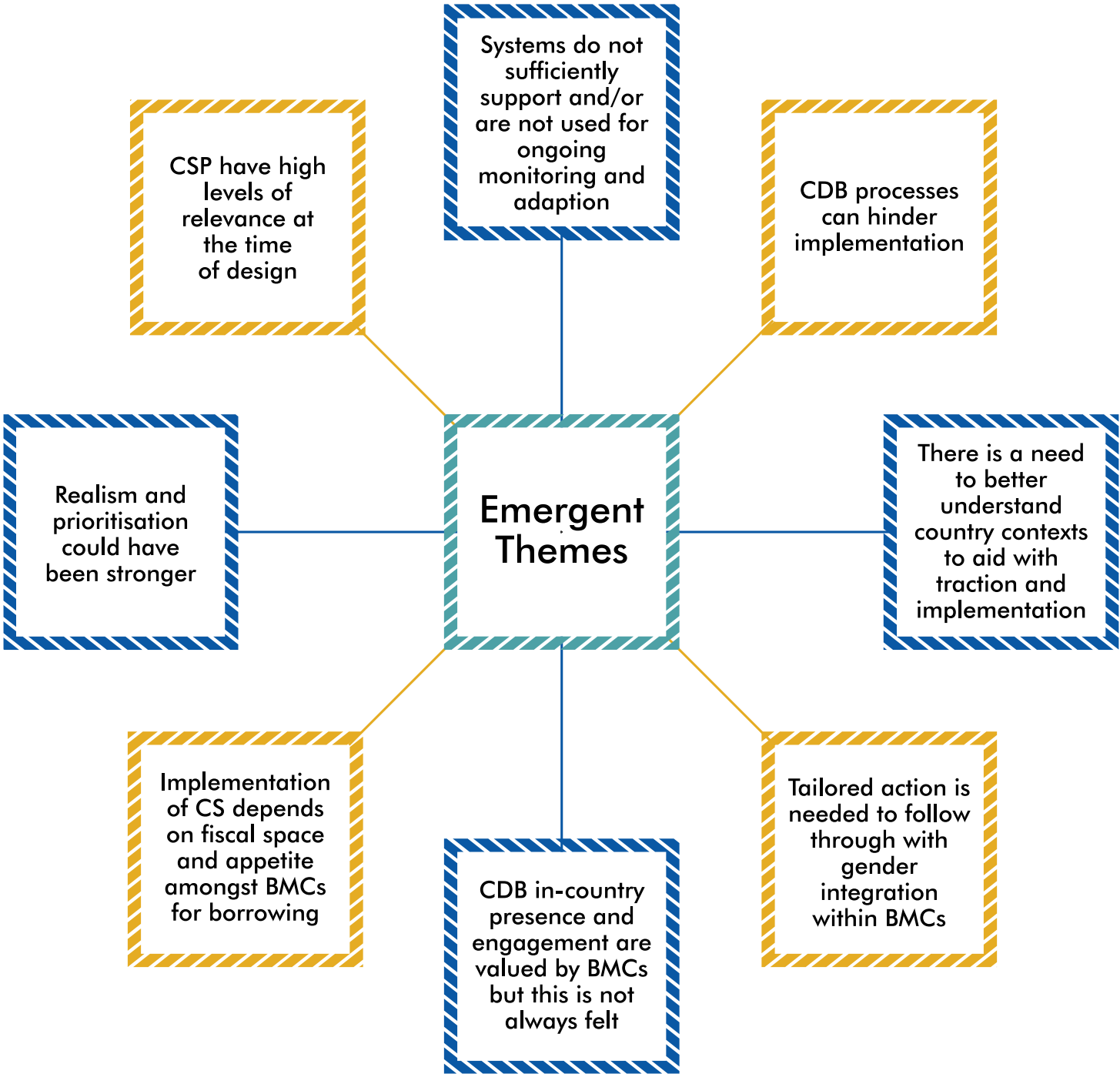


Figure 2: Common Themes

Relevance of Country Strategies and Programmes

Within all CSPE countries, evidence indicated that the strategies and programs were relevant and aligned with the initial country needs and context.

The CSPs also anticipated risks, key trends and future areas of needs that emerged. Furthermore, during the strategy periods, CDB demonstrated swift and adaptable responses to unforeseen challenges or changes in the environment, such as economic crises, the impact of COVID-19 and natural disasters. For example, the rapid provision of Policy Based Loans (PBL) in Barbados was welcomed and was further supplemented via other IFIs. Similarly, timely PBLs in Belize and the Bahamas contributed to increased liquidity which facilitated social protection support, lessening the negative impacts of the pandemic, droughts (in the former) and hurricanes (in the latter), allowing for more resilience to be built.

The flexibility of the PBLs also enabled BMCs to pivot when necessary. For example, despite the Belize CSP not directly supporting the health sector, funds were reprogrammed from

the education sector to support the COVID-19 emergency response. Youth transformation projects were also adjusted and processes for approval were accelerated. Similarly in the Bahamas, a COVID-19 supplement was added as part of the Fiscal Stability and Resilience PBL.

The flexibility in approach is partly derived from CDB not having to go through a formal revision of the CSP itself, but instead adapting and reprogramming according to new priority areas as required. This was typically informed by high-level dialogue with the governments, including senior managers from CDB visiting the country to engage with Ministers/Permanent Secretaries.

Despite the high degree of relevance initially, in the cases of Bahamas, Jamaica and Belize, the relevance tended to decline over time. This was mainly due to long delays in implementation. By the time many projects were delivered, they were of less relevance to current needs having been planned many years previously.

Implementation Gap in CSP Execution

In-country capacity

As already noted, there was a high degree of relevance, good quality context analysis and strategic thinking in the preparation of the CSPs. However, delivery of the strategy and planned priorities was constrained in all countries by lack of capacity in the public sector, and implementation gap. This was exacerbated by insufficient capacity of executing agencies to deliver projects. Specifically, there were BMC skill/capacity deficits in areas such as project management, finance, and monitoring and evaluation.

In Barbados and Belize, CDB had a strong understanding of how to engage with the government and how to support implementation. However, in Suriname the lack of institutional capacity and political economy issues coupled with the absence of Bank presence on the ground left CDB exposed to both operational and implementation risks. Government felt that other development partners had more understanding of how to build relationships and capacity.

In Jamaica, BMC technical capacity was considered strong, but project management was seen as a key capacity limitation within executing agencies. CDB attempted to address this limitation via creation of project execution units, utilizing short- medium-term contract staff, but this was seen to be somewhat at odds with the desire to strengthen national systems, i.e. build longer-term institutional capacity within government.

In Belize, there were challenges related to the BMC's experience with and awareness of procurement procedures as well as with their capacity to negotiate, especially in the energy sector. The operational risks associated with not being able to procure in accordance with the usual regulations were not sufficiently considered. Sub-optimal cooperation with other stakeholders and changes in government also negatively impacted capacity. In Suriname, progress in the education and energy sectors was also slow due to limited government capacity.

In the Bahamas, specific plans for strengthening implementation capacity were developed through provision of public policy analysis and management, and project cycle management training as well as support for improved public procurement. However, while these initiatives did go ahead, along with other institutional strengthening support to the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit, limited Government capacity still constrained implementation. Multiple informants referred to the limited

local capacity in the Bahamas which makes it difficult to find and retain contractors/staff. In key cross-cutting government agencies like the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, there was limited capacity, and they were thus unable to implement multiple projects simultaneously. This was reportedly a particular challenge, as they are responsible for environmental impact assessments of all international development partner infrastructure projects.

Efficiency issues

The CSPEs in all countries found significant challenges around efficiency, particularly slow implementation and disbursement. Most projects had not fully delivered the intended results by the end of the strategy period, and several were cancelled¹, which limited the overall relevance and effectiveness of CDB's work. Various factors contributed to slow implementation and disbursement, some related to BMCs, including but not limited to the above mentioned in-country capacity challenges, and others related to CDB. For example, in Suriname, the political economy of the public sector and fiscal

challenges contributed to delays and modifications in scheduled payments to contractors. In Jamaica and The Bahamas, other key factors affecting efficiency included limited engagement by CDB at a strategic, cross-cutting level (see later BMC Engagement and Visibility section for further discussion). The Bahamas also suffered from limited BMC buy-in for technical assistance, particularly related to gender, which had implications for the sustainability of projects. COVID-19 also had a major impact on disbursement and implementation, as discussed later.

¹ Including, for example, significant planned interventions in citizen security interventions (\$23.5m) and an inclusive growth and competitiveness PBL (\$30m) in Jamaica; in macroeconomic development (\$50m) and governance (\$25m) PBLs in Belize; and in education projects (\$15m) in The Bahamas. In all these cases, the majority of funds initially planned to support these areas/interventions were not approved and/or disbursed at the time of evaluation.



Realism, selectivity and prioritisation within CSPs

Taken together, the implementation gap, public sector capacity constraints, BMC fiscal positions and appetite for new lending meant that it was important for CDB and BMCs to adopt a realistic approach to prioritization.

Earlier Country Strategies tended to be broad in scope and to programme a high number of projects compared with what could be delivered. In any case the CSPs once approved tended to 'sit on a shelf' and were not actively used for decision making during the strategy period.

Within a Barbados context, while elements of programmes were prioritised effectively (e.g. the Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation programme) overall, there was a need for greater realism at the appraisal and design stage. CDB staff noted that it would have been useful to plan more realistic timescales and designs which take account of the various processes involved e.g. issues related to land acquisition or other politically sensitive legal issues or internal government processes such as approvals and union consultations. This did take place later in the strategy period, where there was evidence of a more deliberate effort to hold back on seeking approval until more of these elements were in place.

In Belize, there was again a significant gap in what was planned and what could be delivered within a specific timescale. The overall scope of the strategy was, in hindsight, too broad and did not take account of the BMC's capacity and economic constraints sufficiently, for example fiscal space/debt and capacity to implement multiple large infrastructure projects concurrently. In Jamaica and Suriname while stakeholders found the programmes to be relevant, some did not proceed as a result of them being too broad and ambitious.

Similarly in the Bahamas, it was important to recognise the role that countries can play in prioritisation. Both in-country and CDB stakeholders felt that the key reason for lack of traction in TA was the government's prioritisation of more tangible infrastructure projects as compared with TA, where benefits are longer-term and less tangible.

Recognizing the need for selectivity, the CDB has ensured that the new Country Engagement Strategy in Saint Lucia concentrates on fewer, more achievable areas within a shorter timeframe, while maintaining continuous collaboration with the government. Future evaluations should explore the benefits of this approach to delivery and prioritization, as well as the advantages of having these strategies driven by the government and aligned with national political cycles to enhance outcomes.

Follow through in tracking CSP implementation and measuring results

In all five countries, there was not a systematic, structured approach to ensuring follow through on the country strategy.

The lack of a clear country focal point with overall responsibility for CSP/in-country engagement, implementation and monitoring was a key reason. Additionally, in all cases the results management frameworks (RMF) were not sufficiently developed nor actively used during the strategy period. For example, indicators and targets in the CSP RMFs were often poorly designed and/or the targets were found to be unrealistic. Despite this the RMFs had not been updated to better reflect implementation.

Within Barbados for example there was no monitoring of CSP results and the document was rarely referred to, nor was it visible to or used by the incoming government in 2018. RMFs were included in the design of the two CSPs for Jamaica, which allowed for the measuring of development results using Key Performance Indicators (KPI). However, indicators and targets within the framework of the Jamaica CSPs were generally not designed according to the specific,

measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) approach, and there was limited evidence that data generated by specific interventions was used for measuring progress. Moreover, adaptive management was not facilitated by the RMFs or M&E system more broadly; CSP level monitoring was not conducted on an ongoing/regular basis and necessary changes were thus not detected. It should also be noted that the sector outcomes and related KPIs were not appropriate to monitor the progress of specific interventions.

Similarly in Belize and The Bahamas, the RMF and results measurement were not well considered, either in documenting interim progress or in being used for course correction and adaptation. Similarly, there was little evidence of performance monitoring of the overall programme in Suriname, although projects were monitored individually. However, across the majority of countries at the level of individual projects and sectors e.g. infrastructure, education, agriculture, there was greater evidence of follow-through and adaptation.

Identification and management of risk

CDB's approach to addressing emerging risks is well-structured, and the risk factors identified in the CSPs were considered highly relevant. For example, the risks to the economy were flagged well in advance in countries which eventually had to resort to debt restructuring, saw their credit ratings downgraded, and where reforms supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other IFIs were eventually required.

However, the mitigation measures to address risks were less successful in practice, and were based on an overly optimistic view of what was required. For example, in Belize the planned use of a PBL was the only stated mitigation measure for economic risks across both CSP periods. Even though the PBL failed to proceed over the 2011-15 CSP period, it was again listed as the only mitigation measure against macroeconomic shocks in the 2016-20 CSP.

At the same time, CDB was facing a need to manage its own risks given that many BMCs were seeing downgrades in their credit rating. This constrained the ability to

support countries such as Belize and Suriname through their economic crises, not least because the fiscal position tightened and the willingness of BMC governments to take on additional loans was severely limited.

In Barbados there was a much more positive experience, with CDB able to support the government through the economic reform process, working with other IFIs. This predated the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the region.

While it may be the case that CDB considers climate-events/ hurricanes as a standard risk across all activities in the region, the lack of explicit mitigation of the especially high risk of hurricanes in the Bahamas was a major gap. It was also noted that several of CDB's Climate Vulnerability Assessments (CVAs) were delayed despite the high risk of climate events in The Bahamas. The slow turnaround times for CDB risk assessments were mainly put down to limited staffing. The Environmental Sustainability Unit (ESU) did signal that they can carry out more independent risk monitoring which is a positive step forward given some of the delays experienced.

Impact of COVID-19 on strategy and project implementation

The impact of COVID-19 was severe and cross-cutting, contributing to delays and difficulties in supervising projects by CDB experts. The

pandemic affected the Government of Belize (GOBZ), the Government of the Commonwealth of Jamaica (GOCJ), and the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas (GOCB)'s overall financial situation and resulted in knock-on social impacts, such as increased unemployment.

In Belize, constraints to implementation were found to relate to limited in-country capacity, procurement-related challenges, sub-optimal cooperation with other stakeholders and changes in government. These constraints were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, CDB's implementation experience in Jamaica was relatively poor and worsened from the 2014-16 to 2017-21 CSP periods. Approvals for loans and grants were 41%, or United States dollars (USD) 15.7 million, greater than the USD 38.5 million projected in the 2014-2016 CSP. However, under the 2017-2021 CSP, only USD 145 million, or 75% of the USD 193.7 million envisaged in the 2017-2021 CSP, was approved. Performance in terms of duration between key

project milestones was also poor and worsened during the 2017-21 CSP due in part to COVID-19 related disruptions, which also negatively impacted disbursement levels. COVID-19 affected implementation in various ways, including supply chain delays and increased costs, movement restrictions affecting community engagement activities, and the inability of CDB officers to conduct physical supervision visits for an extended period.

In The Bahamas, GOCB priorities shifted considerably over the 2018-22 CSP period due to COVID-19, two changes of administration and Hurricane Dorian. The impact from COVID-19 ultimately led to several programmes not starting due to changes in government objectives. This was most evident within the CSP education pillar. It should be noted however that CDB did successfully disburse and implement two linked PBLs to alleviate the impact of COVID-19.

For all countries, COVID-19 did lead to one unexpected positive outcome which supported overall implementation, as it pushed CDB towards accepting electronic reporting and approval processes.

BMC Engagement and Visibility

CDB Comparative Advantage

The CDB has a strong comparative advantage in the region due to its knowledge and expertise and it is well positioned through long-standing relationships in several countries. The notion that CDB

understands the Caribbean context to a greater extent than other development banks was echoed by stakeholders, especially in The Bahamas, Barbados and Belize, where CDB's understanding of the context is valued by governments and partners.

Challenges

In three countries (Suriname, Jamaica and The Bahamas) the evaluations highlight a perception that CDB has not been sufficiently visible and engaged. As a result, it has not capitalized on its regional position i.e. as the MDB bank for the Caribbean, with local expertise and experience. The solution to this problem likely requires investment in developing relationships/presence and ongoing development and support of CDB in-country activity across each BMC.

In Jamaica, the Bank is perceived as a valued player as it often understands the context better than other IFIs, but one which has not fully leveraged its position as the region's own development bank. CDB's limited visibility and engagement impacted overall programme management and performance, with reduced uptake of interventions and insufficient consideration of executing agency capacity. Similarly in The Bahamas, limited engagement affected

overall CSP traction, particularly uptake of TA and in key cross-cutting areas such as gender.

The Bank has no permanent presence in four out of five of the countries reviewed, and most in-country stakeholders in The Bahamas, Jamaica, and Suriname saw this as having severely limited CDB's ability to effectively engage at both a strategic and operational level. Several stakeholders directly compared the lack of CDB presence with other IFIs, such as the World Bank and IDB, who did have a physical presence in-country and were seen as being proactive in engaging with country governments and other in-country stakeholders. Feedback from internal and external stakeholders suggests that project officers are not always visible to government counterparts, and based on internal feedback, the primary reason for this is most likely workload or at least the wide range of projects which officers are covering.

Approach to Partnership

In several countries (e.g. Barbados, Suriname, The Bahamas) CDB's approach to consultation with stakeholders outside government was relatively narrow, missing opportunities for identifying implementation challenges early in the design process. In Barbados, a tripartite structure for engagement with the private sector and civil society had been adopted by the government. However, a notable gap had been the approach to wider engagement with civil society, for example with the trade unions, which could have helped the Bank to understand the implementation issues that would arise.

The majority of the country evaluations recommend that the CDB could also leverage other routes through more effective partnering with UN agencies, IFIs and local partners, to establish its presence, effectiveness, and influence in-country. This approach would be particularly applicable in new BMCs such as Suriname where the lack of visible presence on the ground means that leveraging partnerships could be a means to help mitigate risk.



Gender and Social Protection

Gender and social protection are strategically important issues both for CDB and the majority of its BMCs, with typically major challenges and high levels of need for support. CDB clearly understands the needs and has conducted thorough analyses of social and gender issues, as shown for example in Barbados and Belize. There were examples of high-quality Country Gender Assessments (CGAs) and detailed thinking on social aspects feeding into CSP and project documentation.

The expertise of social sector and gender specialists within CDB has been important in this process, and the mainstreaming of gender has raised understanding among project and technical leads. However, the extent of

follow-through during implementation on the gender priorities set out in the CSPs or the CGAs was much more limited. This was partly due to turnover of key CDB staff. Furthermore, across CSPs, in some instances intervention level RMF indicators depended on collection of gender-disaggregated data that in practice was not collected during the strategy period.

Lack of BMC government awareness on the importance of gender was also a constraining factor in some countries. Within the Bahamas especially, gender as a cross-cutting priority has struggled to be operationalised due to limited in-country buy-in, in large part due to sensitivities around the concept of gender and lack of awareness of CDB's gender priorities.



Conclusions and Recommendations

The CDB country strategies and programmes considered in these 5 evaluations demonstrate a high degree of alignment in support of BMCs’ objectives and CDB’s overarching goals and objectives. Overall, CSPs were relevant and responded to key needs in the countries. CDB was also able to meet many of the intended CSP objectives, although effectiveness was constrained by factors such as: limited government capacity, limited traction with BMCs, external shocks including natural disasters and weak design and monitoring of RMFs. The impact from COVID-19 was felt throughout the region, negatively impacting countries both economically and socially. While CDB was able to adapt some of its operations to COVID-19 (e.g.

electronic reports and processes), the pandemic hindered the traction of projects and exacerbated issues of CDB’s limited in country visibility. Despite concerns from BMCs around CDB engagement and visibility, CDB is viewed as a valued partner with a strong understanding of the Caribbean context. However, CDB can do more to leverage this trust by firming relationships with other stakeholders (IFIs, civil society and multiple governmental departments) when designing and engaging future CSPs. Such partnerships also offer the opportunity to mainstream gender into strategy in a way that is well received by BMCs and more likely to be integrated

With these points in mind, this report makes the following recommendations for future country engagement strategies:

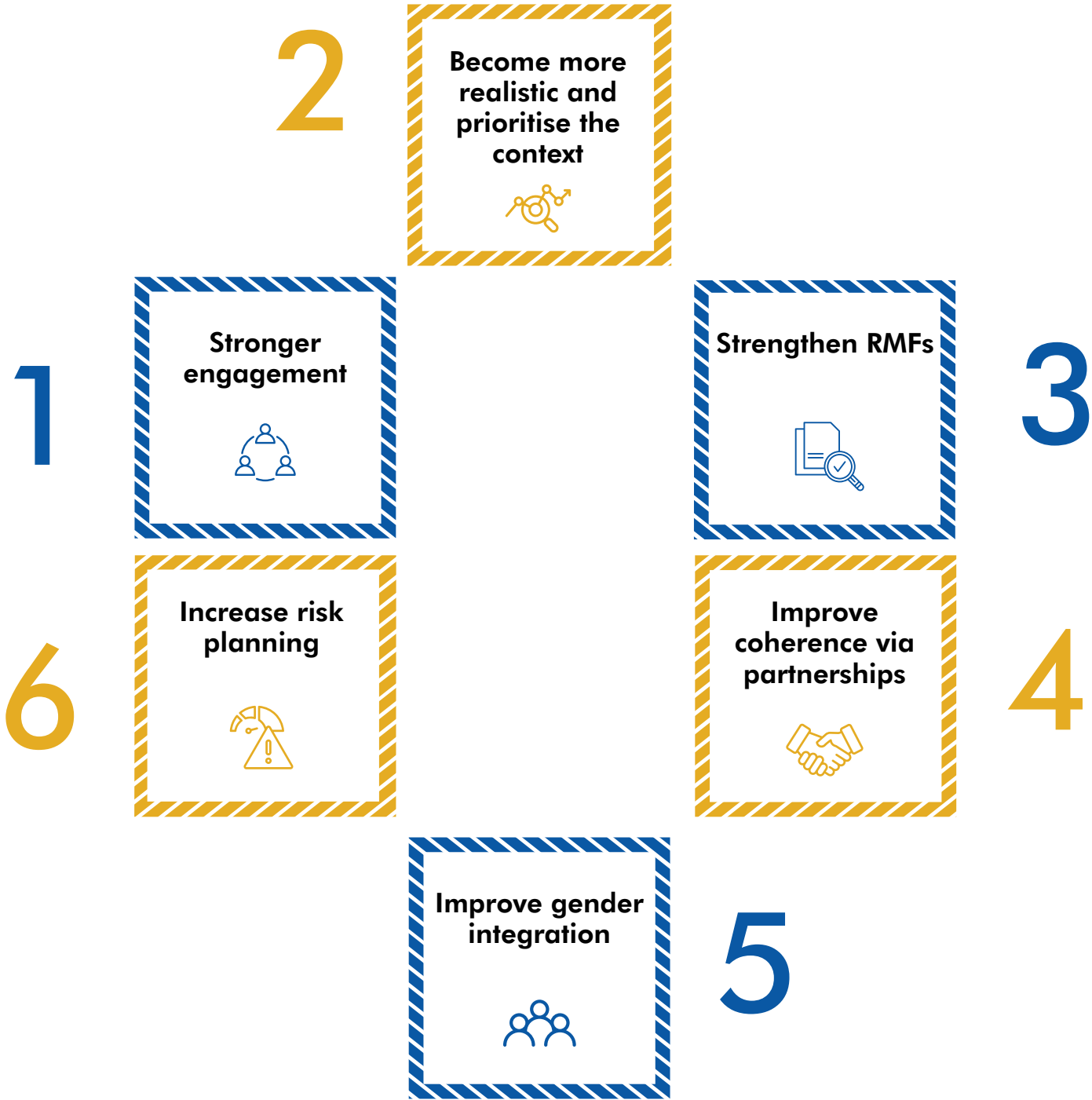


Figure 3: Overview of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Stronger engagement



To deal with BMC perceptions of a lack of CDB engagement and visibility, CDB should arrange (more regular) CES missions at specific, strategic intervals, e.g. after changes in government, key ministry leadership positions or other shifts. In countries where does not have an office, it could be worth exploring the value of employing a compulsory Resident Implementation Officer. By increasing engagement with in-country stakeholders, CDB could also ensure that their processes are better understood, especially in relation to procurement, project statuses and overall decision making.

Recommendation 2: Become more realistic and prioritise to the context



Future Country Strategies should employ greater levels of realism at appraisal and design stage. This would include more realistic timescales and designs which take account of the realities of the processes involved. Moreover, by narrowing the scope of country strategies, CDB should see implementation levels improve, and improved focus on and eventual uptake of CDB priorities.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen RMFs



Results Monitoring Frameworks should become more utility-focused and accessible so that they can better support monitoring of progress, adaptive management and ultimately improved CSP performance. Furthermore, it's important to ensure that project level RMFs explicitly feed into these RMF outcome indicators. This could be aided by integrating CSP and project level monitoring within a live M&E dashboard, which helps to visualize the links between specific CSP interventions and the overall CSP outcomes and reduce the ongoing reporting burden.

Recommendation 4: Improve coherence via partnerships



There were missed opportunities to potentially improve CDB's results with more intentional alignment and coherence with the work being done by other IDPs. This includes working to align work on cross-cutting CDB priorities e.g. gender and environment, with other IDPs. CDB should look to map out existing efforts prior to implementation in order to develop synergies with other stakeholders.

Recommendation 5:
Improve gender
integration



There is a need to develop a more convincing range of responses to the gender and social issues that are emerging across countries. The specialist technical assistance provided by CDB as part of the recently approved PBLs offers a key entry point and vehicle to deliver this, as a way of supporting gender responsive planning, programming and budgeting; and helping to support evidence-based social protection systems reform in the context of economic reforms.

Recommendation 6:
Increase risk planning



More attention at the CSP design and planning stage is needed to ensure projects have sufficient risk mitigation measures in place. Ongoing monitoring of the RMFs could provide an opportunity to update risk mitigation measures throughout the CSP period. In addition, CDB should consider climate/ risk hurricanes as standard across all activities to a greater extent.



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