

**OAK**
FOUNDATION
BELIZE

Global Environmental Facility
Secretariat
Washington, D.C

26th March, 2010

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Re: Counterpart Funding for Project PIMS 4207, "Strengthening National Capacities for the Operationalization, Consolidation, and Sustainability of Belize's Protected Areas System"

We write in regards to the above captioned initiative being proposed by United Nations Development Programme on behalf of the Government of Belize.

In our view the proposed initiative is a very important one for Belize as it will enable protected area managers and co-managers to gain the necessary capacities, supported by key planning tools and frameworks, to address the issue of sustainability from a systems and financial standpoint. Our understanding is that the project is also expected to create a centralized, network and will seek to consolidate protected areas units to allow for greater effectiveness in their management as well as a more coherent approach for expansion of the country's protected areas system at the landscape level. Perhaps most importantly it will create the necessary legal and institutional environments for the development and sustainability of a more robust national protected areas system.

As you may know, the OAK Foundation has supported issues of global social and environmental concern, particularly those that have a major impact on the lives of the disadvantaged. Over the past decade, OAK Belize Foundation has been supporting a wide range of initiatives associated with the establishment of a sustainable Marine Protected Areas Network in Belize and throughout Mesoamerica. In years 2008/ 2009, the Foundation invested some 6.5 million USD supporting issues of governance, research, financial sustainability and capacity development, amongst other things, within Belize's Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Network.

We remain committed to supporting the protection and sustainable use of marine ecosystems in Belize and providing direct support for the effective management of marine reserves in Belize. In this regard we have for approximately two years now supported the work of the National Protected Areas Commission through the National Protected Areas Conservation Trust, and have invited a grant request of USD200,000 over two years to support the legislative and institutional reform for Belize's National Protected Areas System. This work is very important in our view and will be of high impact for the network of protected areas.

We are certain that any support provided to this endeavor would be greatly appreciated and impactful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Imani', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Imani Fairweather Morrison
Programme Officer

cc. Kristine Blokhuis, Assistant Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme, Belmopan City, Belize.

Diane Wade-Moore, Environmental Programme Analyst, UNDP Belize