

Terminal Evaluation Report

2015 March

Version: final

Strengthening National Capacities for the Consolidation, Operationalization and Sustainability of Belize's Protected Areas System

GEF Project ID: 3861

UNDP PIMS ID: 4207

Country:	Belize
Region:	Latin America and Caribbean
Focal Area:	Biodiversity
Implementing Agency:	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Belize
Implementing Partner:	Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development
Other Responsible Parties:	Forest Department Fisheries Department

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IC No. OPS15/002 (UNDP Belize)

Terminal Evaluation Opening Page:

Project Name: Strengthening National Capacities for the Consolidation, Operationalization and Sustainability of Belize's Protected Areas System

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Region: Latin America and Caribbean

Country: Belize

Focal Area: Biodiversity

GEF-4 Strategic Program: BD-1

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Project Start Date: 30 September 2010 (1 November 2010 inception)

Project Closing Date: Original: 31 December 2013 Actual: 31 October 2014

Implementing Agency: UNDP Belize

Implementation Modality: National Implementation

Implementing Partner: Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development

Other Responsible Parties: Forest Department
Fisheries Department

Project Cost: USD 2,054,971

GEF Project Grant: USD 975,000 (excluding the USD 25,000 PPG Grant)

Co-Financing, Committed: USD 1,079,971

Forestry Department	Cash	USD 25,000
PACT	Cash	USD 585,000
Oak Foundation	Cash	USD 200,000
APAMO	Cash	USD 112,471
UNDP Belize	Cash	USD 50,000
Forestry Department	In-kind	USD 31,000
Department of Fisheries	In-kind	USD 76,500

TE Timeframe: March 2015

Evaluator: James Lenoci

TE Reporting Language: English

The evaluator would like acknowledge the information and feedback provided by interviewed project stakeholders, including the Minister of MFFSD, the CEO of MFFSD, the fisheries administrator, the chief forest officer, the director of NPAS, the former project manager. Special thanks are also extended to the UNDP Country Office Staff, and the GEF Regional Technical Advisor, representatives from involved NGO's and CBO's, and local and international consultants.

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Executive Summary

Exhibit 1: Project Summary Table

Exhibit 1: Project Summary Table				
Project Title:	Strengthening National Capacities for the Operationalization, Consolidation, and Sustainability of Belize's Protected Areas System		at endorsement (USD million)	at completion (USD million)
GEF Project ID:	3861	GEF financing:	0.975	0.952
UNDP Project ID:	4207	IA own:	0.050	0.041
Country:	Belize	Government:	0.718	0.755
Region:	Latin America and the Caribbean	Other:	0.312	0.660
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Total co-financing:	1.080	1.456
Operational Programme:	SP-1	Total Project Cost:	2.055	2.408
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Forestry Fisheries and Sustainable Development	Prodoc Signature (date project began):		30 Sep 2010
Other Partners Involved:	Forest Department Fisheries Department	(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 31 Oct 2013	Actual: 31 Oct 2014

Note: Total expenditures based upon figures through the end of 2014

Project Description

The project was designed to safeguard globally significant terrestrial, coastal, and marine biodiversity of Belize. The objective was that by project closure, Belize would have effectively developed legal, financial, and institutional capacities to ensure sustainability of the existing national protected areas system. This objective was addressed through three interrelated outcomes that were intended to generate the flow of global, national, and local-level benefits for:

- i. Enhanced protection of over 1.22 million ha of terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems, including 546,904 ha of lowland broadleaf forests, 195,844 ha of sub-mountain broadleaf forests, and 17,075 ha of mangroves;
- ii. Improved management effectiveness for 28 PAs (3 Forest Reserves, 7 Marine Reserves, 4 National Monuments, 5 National Parks, 2 Natural Reserves, 4 Private Protected Areas, and 3 Sanctuaries);
- iii. An increase in the financial capacity of Belize's NPAS by 30%, which is currently at 26.4% as measured through the total average score for all PAs in the UNDP Financial Scorecard, including an increase of annual government budgeting for PA's from USD 2.3 million to USD 2.9 million per year and doubling the income generated by non-governmental sources for eight participating PAs; and
- iv. A national training program to sustain long-term capacity building for PAs that would be developed to train staff from 20 co-managed PAs in management and business plan development, administration, and financial planning, as well as 90 staff from the PA's administrative body in PA management and monitoring techniques.

Terminal Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

This terminal evaluation was conducted to provide conclusions and recommendations about the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of the Project. The evaluation also aimed to identify lessons from the Project for future similar undertakings, and to propose recommendations for ensuring the sustainability of the results. The evaluation was an evidence-based assessment and relied on feedback from persons who have been involved in the design, implementation, and supervision of the project, review of available documents and records, and findings made during field visits.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

This project was developed at a time of relatively high optimism that there was sufficient political will in place to advance the legislative and institutional reforms called for as part of the National Protected Area Policy and System Plan (NPAPSP), which was approved by the government in 2006. There are opinions documented in various project progress reports and reviews explaining how the reforms envisioned were overly ambitious, and did not fully respect the bureaucracy involved in processing legislation through the political system in Belize, particularly if the adjustments include changes to fee policies and responsibilities associated with allocation of funds. This viewpoint does seem to be supported to a certain degree, certainly in hindsight, but an overwhelming number of stakeholders interviewed as part of the terminal evaluation stressed that there was a general belief at the time of project preparation that the requisite circumstances were aligned to realize genuine change.

Imparting change, however, takes time and requires broad-based support. With respect to time, there was not much of it allocated for project implementation, in fact only 3 years, which was extended an additional year because of slow progress due largely to institutional inertia during the time when the new Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development (MFFSD) was established following the 2012 general elections. Indeed, it would have been advisable to carry out a critical path analysis during the project preparation phase, and design the **stakeholder involvement** and resource allocation plans accordingly.

The incremental reasoning behind approval of the GEF grant was that strategic legal and institutional reforms in Belize were not taking place under business-as-usual conditions. The designed **project governance structures**, however, were more consistent with the business-as-usual scenario, e.g., the project board was basically made up of the same individuals who are on the National Protected Areas System Technical Committee. As the name implies, this committee plays an advisory role on technical issues, while the changes promoted in the alternative strategy supported by the GEF funding called for legal and institutional transformation. Early warnings were made and the project board was regularly updated, but the board was unable to facilitate resolutions on some of the key impasses among the involved stakeholders. It probably would have been advisable to engage new participants to the process. This might have included representation from the Cabinet of Ministers, such as an advisory committee or individual(s), and also an independent facilitator having expertise in mediation.

The **advocacy** capacity of UNDP, in this context, might have also been better utilized. The program manager of the UNDP CO was actively involved in the project, attending nearly all of the quarterly project board meetings and providing both operational and strategic support to the project implementation team. But, it might have been also prudent to advocate for the legal and institutional reforms at a higher level within the political system, e.g., directly to the Cabinet of Ministers.

The decision by the Government of Belize to establish the MFFSD in 2012 is the first time a ministry was created in the country with the specific responsibility for sustainable development. Creation of the MFFSD also resulted in consolidating the main regulatory agencies responsible for terrestrial and marine protected areas under one ministry. The project did a notably good job at adapting to these institutional restructurings; an estimated delay of 8 months was attributed to the time needed for institutional re-grouping took place within the MFFSD. Certain consultancies needed to be suspended

during this time period, and then re-started, as new agency officials needed to be briefed on project objectives and activities.

Recognizing that there were a number of institutional changes over the lifespan of the project, the level of country ownership was also inconsistent, but there was more intensive governmental level participation, including by the MFFSD minister, following the midterm review. And, the MFFSD provided more than USD 100,000 in additional co-financing contributions from what was pledged at the time of project approval.

The MFFSD Minister and CEO have taken steps in recent months to overcome the lack of progress made regarding legal and institutional reforms, and although proactive and well-intended, there has been insufficient communication with other stakeholders regarding what additional modifications to the NPAS and PACT Bills are recommended by the Ministry. Despite the fact that the NPATC recommendation for a new statutory body for the NPAS is not in line with the political realities and current economic situation of the country¹, the **participatory process** should be continued, in the opinion of the evaluator. Garnering eventual support from the Cabinet of Ministers will require buy-in from key agencies, including ones in other ministries, not to mention the civil society and the constituency at large. Under the current circumstances, both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders are second guessing what changes the MFFSD are drafting, and this has partly undermined the strengthened collaborative capacity facilitated by the project.

Importantly, co-financing contributions from non-governmental sources were more than double the amount committed at the time of project approval. **Civil society organizations**, which continue to manage more than half of the protected areas in Belize, were instrumental in facilitating the development of the NPAPSP in 2005, and they remain in the forefront in driving reform and in introducing innovation to the national protected area system. The participatory process, including stakeholders from the civil society, needs to be maintained in order to achieve genuine and sustainable legal and institutional change.

While the legal, institutional, and operation reforms did not materialize as planned, the project sponsored production of **substantive outputs**, including draft legislative acts, fee structures worked out through the IUCN consultancy, a revised collaborative management template, etc. The project also facilitated a comprehensive rationalization of the national protected area system, and some of the recommendations raised have already been implemented. For example, the rationalization process helped expedite the establishing the Turneffe Atoll as marine protected area in November 2012; this provides critical open sea representation among the marine protected area system. Also, some terrestrial protected areas have been consolidated, including the Tapir Mountain National Park, to improve overall management efficiencies.

Besides legal and institutional reform, there were two other components of the project, focusing on improving financial sustainability and management capacity among the PA system; two of the barriers highlighted in the incremental cost analysis. In fact, approximately 57% of the total project cost was spent on activities under Outcome 2, which focused in improving the financial sustainability of the national PA system. The financial sustainability objectives were partly linked to the envisioned legal reform, for instance, there is still governmental budgetary allocation for protected areas

¹ Statutory bodies are often not financially sustainable and require Government subventions, and, hence, the Government of Belize is currently reviewing statutory bodies in the country.

management, so it is difficult to ascertain how the gap in allocating sufficient funds to at least reach basic levels of management is being closed.

Under Outcome 2, the project was also positioned to sponsor development of a business planning framework for the national PA system and individual business plans for eight priority protected areas. These plans were partly sidelined, due to a disputed procurement process for the consultancy to carry out the business planning framework. The project board agreed to re-package the allocated funds for this component of the project to support strategic investments at select protected areas, and also to facilitate business planning among the some CBO co-managers, who are generally much less capacitated than the larger NGO's. The support to CBO business planning, facilitated by APAMO, was a particular noteworthy achievement of the project, making practical contributions to strengthening capacities of the engaged CBO's. In fact, PACT has since provided additional funding to APAMO to expand this service to other CBO's.

The small grants disbursed to the protected areas and regulatory agencies addressed basic investment needs, including upgrades to PA infrastructure¹, and also strengthened the capacities of the protected area management organizations to generate more and diversified revenue. Overall, the project results with respect to improving financial sustainability of the PA system has had limited impact to date, however, and the relative **value-for-money** for the funds disbursed for Outcome 2 is considered to have been relatively low. The project board did, in fact, make a decision to use some of the funds earmarked under this activity for infrastructure improvements in some of the PA's.

The most significant achievement under Outcome 3, which focused on strengthening management capacity, was the development and piloting of a national protected areas management training program. The ERI of the University of Belize led these efforts, starting with a needs assessment, followed by development of course modules, and finally piloting the trainings, with a total of 67 individuals participating. Understandably, the pilot courses had some challenges, including the realization that the educational background of typical NGO staff is generally much higher as compared to their CBO counterparts. Thus, it was difficult to accommodate both of these groups in common training courses. Constraints on participation logistics were also experienced, as many CBO staff members are volunteering their time, and hence it is not easy to arrange leave from their full-time workplaces to attend the trainings. All in all, however, the efforts under this outcome were satisfactory, and have provided **catalytic support** to a program that had only been envisaged on paper earlier.

Evaluation Ratings

Based upon the summary outlined above, a rating of **moderately satisfactory** is applied to the overall project results achieved. Detailed ratings are tabulated below in **Exhibit 2**.

Exhibit 2: Evaluation Rating Table		
Criteria	Rating	Comments
1. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)		
M&E Design at Entry	Satisfactory	The M&E plan was reasonably well put together, using the template for GEF-financed projects, and sufficient funds were allocated;

¹ The Project Board reached a strategic decision to expend some of the small grant funds for infrastructure improvements in some of the PAs.

Exhibit 2: Evaluation Rating Table		
Criteria	Rating	Comments
M&E Plan Implementation	Satisfactory	Regular monitoring and quarterly stage reports provided project board with frequent feedback on project performance;
Overall Quality of M&E	Satisfactory	The effectiveness of follow-up actions to shortcomings reported in monitoring reports was moderately satisfactory, particular with respect to legislative and institutional reforms.
2. Implementing Agency (IA) and Lead Implementing Partner (Executing Agency - EA) Execution		
Quality of IA (UNDP) Execution	Satisfactory	UNDP's wealth of experience on biodiversity projects in Belize and globally, and their favorable standing with the Government of Belize was a strong comparative advantage. However, advocacy capacity of UNDP not fully capitalized upon;
Quality of EA Execution	Satisfactory	There was high level participation among key officials from the implementing partners, particularly after the midterm review;
Overall IA-EA Execution	Satisfactory	There was a high level of continuity among the PMU staff; Institutional restructuring among governmental stakeholder agencies resulted in significant project delays.
3. Assessment of Outcomes		
Overall Quality of Project Outcomes	Moderately Satisfactory	Through extensive adaptive management, the project was able to moderately satisfactorily achieve the intended outcomes. Although the legal and institutional reforms were not realized as envisaged, the substantive project outputs including the PA system rationalization, fee structure prepared by the IUCN consultancy, collaborative management agreement template, and other draft legislation and legal instruments, provide a solid framework for decision makers moving forward. There were improvements in some sections of the financial sustainability scorecard compared to baseline scoring results. And, the investment grants to select protected areas and regulatory agencies contribute to their capacity to enhance their financial viability. Also, the business planning support to certain CBO's, facilitated by APAMO, was a particularly noteworthy achievement, and PACT has since provided additional funding to APAMO to expand their support to other CBO's. Development and piloting of the national PA management training program was also a commendable achievement of the project. Although several challenges and lessons identified during the piloting will need to be addressed in further development of the program, the project provided catalytic support to this capacity building objective.
Relevance	Relevant	The Project is relevant with respect to national development priorities. The Project also is closely aligned with the Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy for GEF-4 particularly Strategic Objective One, "To Catalyze Sustainability of Protected Area Systems". The project is also relevant with respect to the UNDP Country Program Document for 2013-2017, which includes a focus on strengthening national capacities for effective land and water resources management and on the creation of poverty and environmental linkages within national medium- and long-term planning and policy making processes.
Effectiveness	Moderately Satisfactory	Outcome 1 is rated as Moderately Satisfactory; Outcome 2 is rated as Moderately Satisfactory; Outcome 3 is rated as Satisfactory;

Exhibit 2: Evaluation Rating Table		
Criteria	Rating	Comments
Efficiency	Moderately Satisfactory	<p>The GEF funding addressed key barriers holding back effective and sustainable PA management;</p> <p>Total co-financing contributions exceeded committed amount, including substantial additional resources mobilized from MFFSD;</p> <p>The delays due largely to institutional restructuring among key governmental agencies diminished the overall efficiency of the project;</p> <p>Moderately satisfactory achievement of intended outcomes, within the available budget and under an additional year of implementation time.</p>
4. Sustainability		
Overall Likelihood of Risks to Sustainability	Moderately Likely	<p><u>Enhances sustainability:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Strengthened collaborative capacity among key stakeholders; ✦ Substantive outputs provide solid frameworks for moving forward with proposed legal, institutional, and operational reforms; ✦ Piloting of the national training program has highlighted a few challenges, sparking a constructive national debate; ✦ Business planning support for certain CBO co-managers, facilitated by APAMO, has made significant contributions to bridging the capacity gap between the NGO's and CBO's; ✦ The non-governmental sector continues to drive change and introduce innovation into the national PA system; <p><u>Diminishes sustainability:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The inability to advance the proposed legislative and institutional reforms through the Belizean political process; — The continued gap in PA financing, not reaching base levels, and there have been limited advances in making adjustments to fees; — The participatory process associated with the proposed legal and institutional has been diminished in recent months due to limited communication by MFFSD to other stakeholders, resulting in a sense of disappointment and uncertainty among several governmental and non-governmental stakeholder groups; — There have been a few publicly reported cases of shortfalls in social and environmental accountability, e.g., with respect to granting extraction rights within protected areas.
Financial	Moderately Likely	
Socio-Economic	Moderately Likely	
Institutional Framework and Governance	Moderately Likely	
Environmental	Likely	
5. Impact		
Environmental Status Improvement	Minimal	<p>If the systems-based approach is implemented as outlined in the draft legal, institutional, and operation reforms, there is a high likelihood that verifiable improvements in ecological status would be realized</p> <p>During the lifespan of the project, mangrove coverage with the national PA system increased more than 65%; and the Turneffe Atoll marine reserve was established, significantly increasing representation of open sea ecosystems under protected status.</p> <p>The development and piloting of the national PA management training program was also a significant contribution with respect to progress toward ecological stress/status change.</p>
Environmental Stress Reduction	Minimal	
Progress towards stress/status change	Significant	
Overall likelihood of impact	Moderately Likely	
6. Overall Project Results	Moderately Satisfactory	<p><u>Barrier No. 1: Fractured institutional, legal, and operational framework of PA management:</u></p> <p>The project sponsored amendments to the NPAS Act and PACT Act, but</p>

Exhibit 2: Evaluation Rating Table		
Criteria	Rating	Comments
		<p>there remain no consensus among key stakeholders, and the proposed bills have not yet been taken to Cabinet for approval.</p> <p><u>Barrier No. 2: Ineffective financial system that fails to address PA management needs:</u></p> <p>Without agreement on the proposed new PACT Act, the PA financial system remains fragmented and allocated resources are not meeting the basic level of service required. The project did make substantial contributions through development of a PA fee structure, and in facilitating business planning among the CBO community, enabling them to be better able to identify and develop revenue associated with the services provided by the protected areas they are managing.</p> <p><u>Barrier No. 3: Weak institutional and individual management capacity:</u></p> <p>The project sponsored development and piloting of a national PA management training program. This is an important first step at operationalizing sustained capacity building among PA managers.</p>

Recommendations

ACTIONS TO FOLLOW UP OR REINFORCE INITIAL BENEFITS FROM THE PROJECT

1. A sustainability strategy should be prepared, outlining a “road map” for achieving the legal, institutional, and operational reforms that were not realized by the end of the project. The strategy should indicate roles and responsibilities, and also identify where external support might be warranted to facilitate the process.
2. An advocacy campaign should be implemented for the additional modifications to the draft NPAS Act and PACT Act that the MFFSD Minister and CEO are promoting, as many of the enabling stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, are uncertain of the proposed changes to the drafts that were approved by the National Protected Areas Technical Committee and project board before operational closure of the project.
3. The participatory process for advancing the proposed legal, institutional, and operational reforms should be re-started, enlisting the support of an independent mediator who has not been involved up to now.
4. The results of the project and lessons learned should be distilled into one or more knowledge products, which could then be disseminated among relevant stakeholder groups.
5. While the ERI completed a needs assessment with respect to national PA management training program, it would also be beneficial to carry out a stock-taking evaluation of training capacity in the country, and what partnership opportunities could be leveraged to inter-link these for further development of the national training program. For example, the Fisheries Department has research and training capacity within their fisheries stations, a number of NGO's, including the Ya'axché Conservation Trust and Friends for Conservation and Development, are running their own training programs.
6. The beneficiaries of the small grants under Outcome 2 should monitor impacts to financial sustainability and submit annual reports for the next 3 years to the national protected areas

secretariat (or relevant PA coordination mechanism). An evaluation strategy should be developed that could be used for other grant financing within the PA system for assessing and disseminating best practices and lessons learned in implementation of financial sustainability interventions.

PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE DIRECTIONS UNDERLINING MAIN OBJECTIVES

7. As outlined in the rationalization report sponsored by the project, ensuring conservation within the delineated eco-corridors will require close collaboration among productive sectors, including forestry, agricultural, and tourism operators. Considering the financial and management capacity shortfalls within the existing protected area system, biodiversity mainstreaming might be a more sensible approach to achieving the conservation goals envisaged for the eco-corridors, rather than expansion of the PA system. Pilot implementation of biodiversity mainstreaming within one or more of the eco-corridors should be considered, with the involvement of stakeholders responsible for land use planning and local economic development, as well as the relevant productive sector operators.
8. Pilot implementation of a payment for ecosystems services (PES) scheme should be made, e.g., within a protected area where safeguarding one of more ecosystem services, such as water catchment, constrains the park from developing revenue generating activities. Such a pilot PES scheme could be used scale up to benefit the wider national protected area system.
9. The status of PACT as an accredited implementation entity under the Adaption Fund mechanism should be leveraged, by developing more projects that integrates biodiversity conservation with climate change adaptation¹. Such an intervention would strengthen PACT's implementation capacity under the Adaptation Fund, enhance their credibility nationally as a suitable statutory body to facilitate management of the national PA system, and also, demonstrate how the management strategy of the target protected area(s) could be enhanced by taking into account climate change adaptation.

¹ The Marine Conservation and Climate Adaptation Project (MCCAP), funded by the World Bank and implemented by PACT, was launched in Mar 2015.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Exchange Rates on 15 Mar 2015: Belizean Dollar (BZD): USD = 1.94680

APR	Annual Project Report
APAMO	Association of Protected Areas Management Organizations
BAPPA	Belize Association of Private Protected Areas
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community-based Organization
CZMAI	Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute
ERI	Environmental Research Institute (University of Belize)
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
IA	Institute of Archaeology
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
MBR	Mesoamerican Barrier Reef
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MPA	Marine protected area
MSP	Mid-size Project
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPAA	National Protected Areas Authority
NPAC	National Protected Areas Committee
NPAPSP	National Parks and Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan
NPASP	National Protected Areas System Plan
NPAS	National Protected Areas System
NPASA	National Protected Area System Act
NPSA	National Parks System Act
PA	Protected area
PACM	Protected Areas Coordinating Mechanism
PACT	Protected Areas Conservation Trust
PEG/PB	Project Execution Group/Project Board
PFB	Programme for Belize
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PMU	Project Management Unit
POWPA	Programme of Work for Protected Areas
PPA	Private protected area
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
RAPPAM	Rapid Assessment and prioritization of Protected Area Management
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
SATIIM	Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
ToR	Terms of reference
TPC	Tripartite Committee
UB	University of Belize
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDP CO	United Nations Development Program Country Office
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of Evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation were to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

1.2. Evaluation Scope and Methodology

The terminal evaluation (TE) was an evidence-based assessment and relied on feedback from persons who have been involved in the design, implementation, and supervision of the project, and also review of available documents and findings made during field visits.

The overall approach and methodology of the evaluation followed the guidelines outlined in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects¹.

The evaluation was carried out by one international consultant, and included the following activities:

- ✓ A TE mission was carried out from 7-16 March 2015; the itinerary is compiled in **Annex 1**.
- ✓ Key project stakeholders were interviewed for their feedback on the project; interviewed persons are listed in **Annex 2**.
- ✓ Field visits were made to Cockscomb Wildlife Sanctuary, the Chiquibul National Park, and the Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve. A summary of the field visits is presented in **Annex 3**;
- ✓ The evaluator completed a desk review of relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project progress reports, financial reports, mid-term review, and key project deliverables. A compilation of actual financial expenditures is included in **Annex 4**, and a complete list of information reviewed is compiled in **Annex 5**;
- ✓ A debriefing of the TE findings was in Belmopan on 13 March 2015.

As a data collection and analysis tool, an evaluation matrix was adapted from the preliminary set of questions included in the TOR (see **Annex 6**). Evidence gathered during the fact-finding phase of the evaluation was cross-checked between as many sources as practicable, in order to validate the findings. The project logical results framework was also used as an evaluation tool, in assessing attainment of project objective and outcomes (see **Annex 7**).

1.3. Structure of the Evaluation Report

The evaluation report starts out with a description of the project, indicating the duration, main stakeholders, and the immediate and development objectives. The findings of the evaluation are broken down into the following sections in the report:

- ✓ Project Formulation
- ✓ Project Implementation
- ✓ Project Results

¹ Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects, 2012, UNDP.

The discussion under **project formulation** focuses on an evaluation of how clear and practicable were the project's objectives and components, and whether project outcomes were designed according to SMART criteria (see **Exhibit 3**).

Exhibit 3: SMART Criteria	
S	Specific: Outcomes must use change language, describing a specific future condition
M	Measurable: Results, whether quantitative or qualitative, must have measurable indicators, making it possible to assess whether they were achieved or not
A	Achievable: Results must be within the capacity of the partners to achieve
R	Relevant: Results must make a contribution to selected priorities of the national development framework
T	Time-bound: Results are never open-ended. There should be an expected date of accomplishment
Source: Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects, 2012, UNDP	

Also, project formulation covers whether or not capacities of executing agencies were sufficiently considered when designing the project, and if partnership arrangements were identified and negotiated prior to project approval. An assessment of how assumptions and risks were taken into account in the development phase is also included.

The report section on **project implementation** first looks at how the logical results framework was used as an M&E tool during the course of the project. Also, the effectiveness of partnerships and the degree of involvement of stakeholders are evaluated. Project finance is assessed, by looking at the degree of co-financing that was materialized in comparison to what was committed, and also whether or not additional or leveraged financing was secured during the implementation phase. The cost-effectiveness of the project is evaluated by analyzing how the planned activities met or exceeded the expected outcomes over the designed timeframe, and whether an appropriate level of due diligence was maintained in managing project funds.

The quality of execution by both the implementing agency and the lead implementing partner (executing agency) is also evaluated and rated in the project implementation section of the report. This evaluation considers whether there was sufficient focus on results, looks at the level of support provided, quality of risk management, and the candor and realism represented in the annual reports.

The project implementation section also contains an evaluation and rating of the project M&E system. The appropriateness of the M&E plan is assessed, as well as a review of how the plan was implemented, e.g., compliance with progress and financial reporting requirements, how were adaptive measures taken in line with M&E findings, and management response to the recommendations from the mid-term review.

In GEF terms, **project results** include direct project outputs, short- to medium-term outcomes, and longer term impact, including global environmental benefits, replication efforts, and local effects. The main focus is at the outcome level, as most UNDP supported GEF financed projects are expected to achieve anticipated outcomes by project closing, and recognizing that global environmental benefit impacts are difficult to discern and measuring outputs is insufficient to capture project effectiveness.

Project outcomes are evaluated and rated according to relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency:

Relevance: The extent to which the activity is suited to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time. Also, relevance considers the extent to which the project is in line with GEF Operational Programs or the strategic priorities under which the project was funded.

Effectiveness: The extent to which an objective has been achieved or how likely it is to be achieved.

Efficiency: The extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible; also called cost effectiveness or efficacy.

In addition to assessing outcomes, the report includes an evaluation of country ownership, mainstreaming, **sustainability** (which is also rated), catalytic role, mainstreaming, and impact.

With respect to **mainstreaming**, the evaluation assesses the extent to which the Project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

In terms of **impact**, the evaluator assessed whether the Project has demonstrated: (a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, (b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or (c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.

Finally, the evaluation presents **recommendations** for reinforcing and following up on initial project benefits. The report concludes with a discussion of **lessons learned** and **good practices** which should be considered for other GEF and UNDP interventions.

1.4. Ethics

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators, and the evaluator has signed the Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement form (**Annex 8**). In particular, the evaluator ensures the anonymity and confidentiality of individuals who were interviewed and surveyed. In respect to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, results are presented in a manner that clearly respects stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.

1.5. Limitations

The evaluation was carried out in March 2015; including preparatory activities, field mission, desk review, and completion of the evaluation report, according to the guidelines outlined in the Terms of Reference (**Annex 9**).

As the operational closure of the project was the end of October 2014, there was a concern that people involved during implementation might not be available during the evaluation mission. However, the evaluator was able to hold interviews with key stakeholders, including the former project manager.

There were no limitations with respect to language, as the official language of Belize is English, and original versions of project documents are in English.

Interviews were held with each of the three stakeholder groups managing protected areas: community-based organizations (CBO's), non-governmental organizations (NGO's), and governmental departments (i.e., the Forest Department). There were no interviews held with officials of the

National Institute of History and Culture (NICH), which is the governmental body responsible for management of archaeological reserves. Although these reserves also fall under the national protected area system in Belize, the evaluator was informed that they were excluded from the legislative and institutional reforms promoted by the project.

The evaluator visited 3 of the 8 priority protected areas involved in outcome 2 of the project. The information obtained from the field visits is assumed to be representative of the each of the priority protected areas.

1.6. Evaluation Ratings

The findings of the evaluation are compared against the targets set forth in the logical results framework, and also analyzed in light of particular local circumstances. The effectiveness and efficiency of project outcomes are rated according to the 6-point GEF scale, ranging from Highly Satisfactory (no shortcomings) to Highly Unsatisfactory (severe shortcomings). Monitoring & evaluation and execution of the implementing and executing agencies were also rated according to this scale. Relevance is evaluated to be either relevant or not relevant.

Sustainability is rated according to a 4-point scale, ranging from Likely (negligible risks to the likelihood of continued benefits after the project ends) to Unlikely (severe risks that project outcomes will not be sustained). Impact was rated according to a 3-point scale, including significant, minimal, and negligible. The rating scales are compiled below in **Exhibit 4**.

Exhibit 5: Rating Scales		
<p>Ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, IA & EA Execution</p> <p>6. Highly Satisfactory (HS): The project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency</p> <p>5. Satisfactory (S): There were only minor shortcomings</p> <p>4. Moderately Satisfactory (MS): There were moderate shortcomings</p> <p>3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): The project had significant shortcomings</p> <p>2. Unsatisfactory (U): There were major shortcomings in the achievement of project objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency</p> <p>1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The project had severe shortcomings</p>	<p>Sustainability Ratings:</p> <p>4. Likely (L) Negligible risks to sustainability</p> <p>3. Moderately Likely (ML): Moderate risks to sustainability</p> <p>2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): Significant risks to sustainability</p> <p>1. Unlikely (U): Severe risks to sustainability</p>	<p>Relevance Ratings:</p> <p>2. Relevant (R)</p> <p>1. Not relevant (NR)</p> <p>Impact Ratings:</p> <p>3. Significant (S)</p> <p>2. Minimal (M)</p> <p>1. Negligible (N)</p>
<p>Additional ratings where relevant:</p> <p>Not Applicable (N/A)</p> <p>Unable to Assess (U/A)</p>		
<p>Source: Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects, 2012, UNDP</p>		

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1. Project Start and Duration

Key project dates are listed below:

PIF approval:	23 February 2009
PPG approval:	23 March 2009
Approval date:	11 May 2010
Government of Belize approval:	30 September 2010
GEF Agency (UNDP) approval:	5 October 2010
Project inception meeting:	16-17 November 2010
Midterm review:	July 2013
Project completion (original)	31 October 2013
Project completion (actual)	31 October 2014
Terminal evaluation	March 2015

The project was first initiated in 2008, to support implementation of the National Protected Areas Policy and System Plan (NPAPSP), which was approved by the Government of Belize in 2006. The PIF was approved in February 2009, and the project preparation grant (PPG) was approved shortly thereafter, in March 2009. Upon completion of the project design, presented in the project document, a GEF grant of USD 975,000 for implementation of the medium-sized project was approved on 11 March 2010.

The Government of Belize, through the Ministry of Economic Development, approved the project on 30 September 2010, and the GEF implementing agency, the UNDP, signed the project document a few days later, on 5 October 2010.

The project manager was then recruited and started work on 1 November 2010. This is effectively considered the start of the 3-year implementation phase, and the completion date was set at 31 October 2013.

The months of November and December 2010 were used to start up the project, including procuring computer equipment and one vehicle, and also arranging the project inception workshop, which was held on 16-17 November 2010.

A one-year “no cost” extension was approved by the project board in 2013, after the midterm review, extending the project completion date to 31 October 2014. The justification for the extension was primarily associated with delays caused as a result of the institutional restructuring of the executing agency, including moving the project under the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development (MFFSD), which was newly formed following the general election in March 2012.

The final project board meeting was held in July 2014, and operations effectively closed at the end of October of that year, although some project activities continued to the end of 2014, while others were still underway at the time of the terminal evaluation mission in March 2015, including implementation of some of the activities funded through the small grants allocated under Outcome 2 for improving the financial sustainability of certain priority protected areas.

2.2. Problems that the Project Sought to Address

More than 36% of all national lands in Belize are under some type of protection status, and marine protected areas represent more than 7% of national marine territories¹ (see **Exhibit 5**).

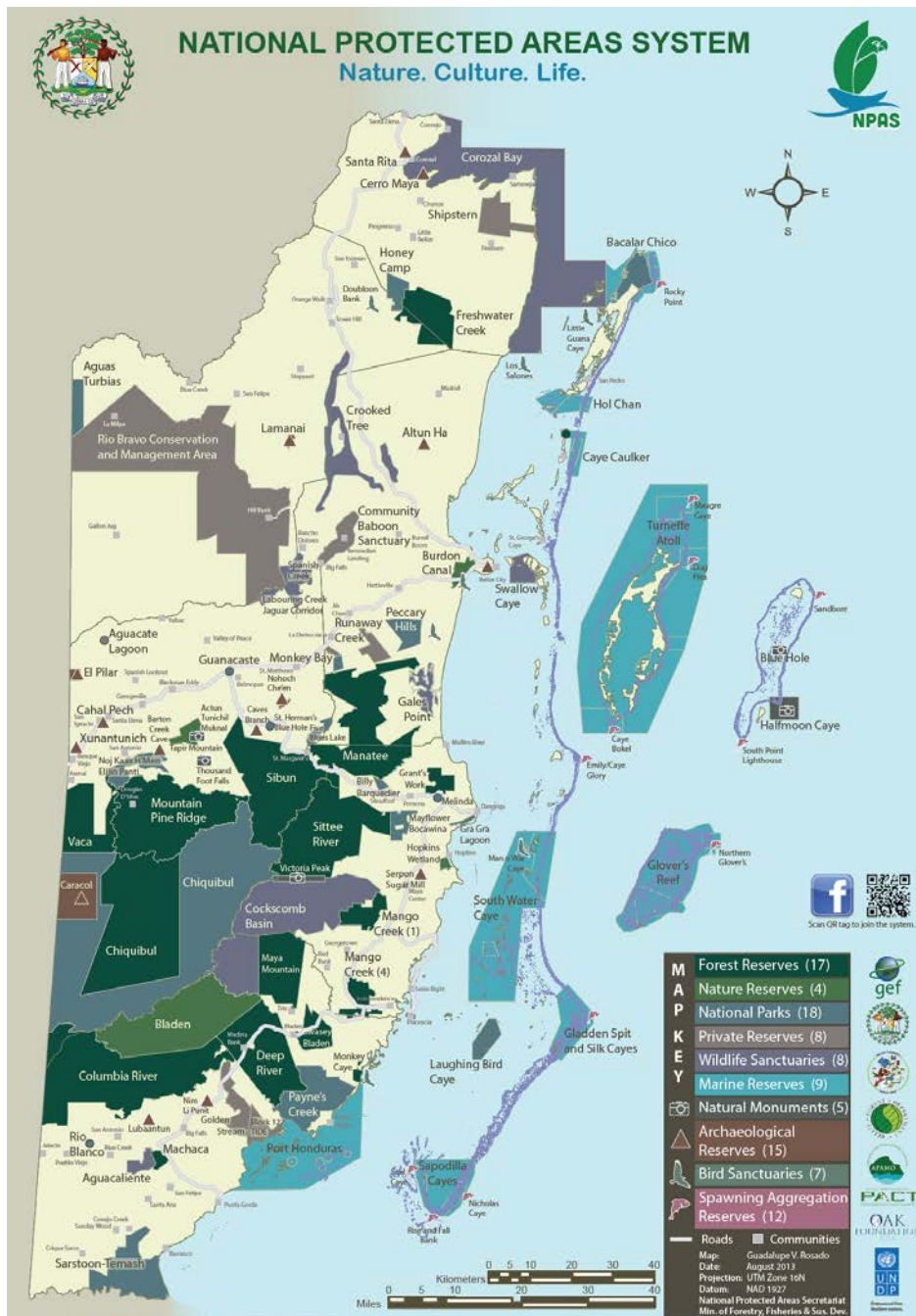


Exhibit 5: Map of the National Protected Area System of Belize (Protectedareas.gov.bz)

Economic growth in Belize is primarily dependent upon natural resources, and, in fact, services provided by the national protected area system contribute, both directly and indirectly, approximately 20% of the country's GDP. The fractured PA network, however, lacks effective

¹ Source: project document

management and insufficient funding is invested into the system. The project document outlines three main barriers that are impeding progress improving the effectiveness of protected area management in Belize are as follows:

Barrier No. 1: Fractured institutional, legal, and operational framework of PA management

At the time when the project was designed, protected areas were administered in Belize by three independent government agencies (the Forest Department, Fisheries Department, and the Institute of Archaeology within the National Institute of Culture and History), which were each under a different ministry. Each agency had a different management focus and separate budgets, staffing, and operational organizations. Coordination among the agencies was weak, and the institutional, legal, and organization reforms called for under the National Protected Areas Policy and System Plan were not being advanced.

Barrier No. 2: Ineffective financial system that fails to address PA management needs

The protected network was not financially sustainable, being overly reliant on direct central government funding and international donors. Despite the important ecosystem services and functions provided by the protected areas in the country and the critical role of nature-based tourism in the country, there were no formalized mechanisms in place to capture relevant compensation for these services, and the vast majority of protected areas were functioning below mission-critical levels of financing.

Barrier No. 3: Weak institutional and individual management capacity

Limited resources allocated for protected areas management were spread thin among the three governmental agencies and the numerous non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and community based organizations (CBO's) who manage a large proportion of protected areas in Belize under collaborative management arrangements with the government. In general, institutional and individual capacities were insufficient to achieve effective planning, management, and monitoring among the national protected area system.

2.3. Immediate and Development Objectives of the Project

The **project goal** was to safeguard globally significant terrestrial, coastal, and marine biodiversity of Belize.

And, the **objective** was that by the end of the project, Belize will have effectively developed legal, financial, and institutional capacities to ensure sustainability of the existing NPAS.

2.4. Baseline Indicators Established

The following baseline indicators were established through the design phase of the project.

Legal and institutional arrangements for a national protected areas system

One of primary actions recommended in the NPAPSP, completed in 2005, was the need for harmonization of legislation, not only among the sectors involved in protected area management but also with those linked to national and sectoral development. The NPAPSP also called for enactment of new legislation to address gaps within the national protected areas system. Although there had been several initiatives and international donor-funded projects aimed at streamlining PA legislation, the

situation at the time of project design remained largely uncoordinated and the gaps identified in the NPAPSP had not been adequately resolved.

One of the gaps was related to the administrative management structures associated with protected area management. In order to address shortcomings in NPAS governance, the government commissioned a study in 2005, which is commonly referred to by national stakeholders as the *Homer Document (June 2005)*¹. The *Homer Document* presented five possible management structures to PA stakeholders and underwent significant national consultation and discussions with PA stakeholders. As a result of this development/validation process, these five options were reduced to a possible two structures which were thought to be most suited to national realities and that responded best to sustainability concerns. Of the two proposed structures, one of these (Option 1) recommends the establishment of a single statutory agency for the management of all state-declared PAs. This agency, to be known as the “National Protected Areas Service” would comprise the existing staff and infrastructure of the Forest and Fisheries Departments, the CZMAI, and the IA. The second structure (Option 2) proposes the establishment of a single statutory agency referred to as the “Forest and Wildlife Authority” that would give the Forest Department complete control of its finances, staffing, and operations complemented by the establishment of a sister agency called the “Wildlife Authority/Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority” to oversee management of marine areas. This proposal creates an opportunity for the participation of the CZMAI to be incorporated into this agency.

Since the initial presentation of the Homer findings, APAMO, as a part of its response to a 2007- 2010 framework document developed by PA stakeholders to guide the operationalization of the NPAPSP², has commissioned several processes of legislative review. Key among these was the review of the NPSA, Chapter 215 of the Substantive Laws of Belize. The outcome of this review resulted in proposed recommendations for amendments to the Act which included the articulation of a “Part IV, Section 24 through 42.” This proposed amendment develops a structure for what is to be called the “National Protected Areas Authority.” The proposed “National Protected Areas Authority” is closely aligned to the recommendations made by Homer in Option 1 and is felt to provide adequate basis for the project’s contribution to the removal of Barrier No. 1, which speaks to “fractured institutional, legal, and operational framework of protected area management.”

PA financial sustainability

During the project design phase, an analysis using the UNDP Financial Sustainability Scorecard concluded that the combined NPAS was operating at 37.9% below mission critical levels, i.e., finances injected into the system were inadequate to support the basic required structures for effective PA management.

The results of an evaluation of the NPAS using the management effectiveness tracking tool (METT) indicated that more than 85% of the protected areas in Belize were operating with insecure budgets, with the bulk of the NPAS budget attributed to external grants, funded by a large cross section of donor organizations. An independent survey carried out by the UNDP CO found that on average 80% of national park budgets were financed by grant funds.

¹ Homer, Floyd. 2005. Improving Governance of Protected Areas in Belize: institutional, management and legislative requirements. National Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan Project (NPAPSP).

² National Protected Areas System Plan –Belize (Operational Framework : Principal Themes and Areas of Actions).

PA management capacity

As indicated in the project document, the Government commissioned APAMO in 2009 to make an assessment of the effectiveness of protected areas management, using the national management effectiveness tool that was developed through the NPAPSP process and considers seven indicator categories, including resource information, resource administration, management and protection, participation, education and socioeconomic benefits, management planning, governance, human resources, and financial and capital management. The overall management effectiveness of the NPAS was rated as Good (2.44 out of 4.0). These results were consistent with an evaluation made by the project development team, applying the METT for the NPAS by averaging individual PA scores. The METT evaluation reported an overall result of 70.06%, indicating Medium effectiveness. The METT identified specific deficiencies as it relates to relationships with commercial and/or tourism operators as well as in the management of fees.

2.5. Main Stakeholders

Governmental stakeholders key to the implementation of this project included the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development (MFFSD), and the Forest and Fisheries Department, both of which are regulatory agencies under the MFFSD. Other involved stakeholders included NPAS, also part of MFFSD, and PACT, APAMO, BAPPA, Oak Foundation, and NGO's and CBO's who are managing PA's in Belize under collaborative management agreements with the government. Descriptions of the key stakeholders and their role in project implementation are outlined below.

Stakeholders	Description of Stakeholders' Roles in Project Implementation
Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development (MFFSD); formerly Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE)	The MFFSD was formed as a new ministry after the national elections of 2012, and served as the executing agency (implementing partner) for the project; taking over this role from the former Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.
National Protected Areas Secretariat (NPAS); formerly National Protected Areas Commission (NPAC)	The National Protected Areas Technical Committee replaced the NPAC. However, as the NPAS Secretariat is housed under the Ministry, the decision was taken for the project to be under the Secretariat.
Forest Department - MFFSD	The Forest Department is mandated through national legislation to provide management oversight for all PAs designated under the Forest Act and the NPSA. The Forest Department was one of the responsible parties on the implementation of the project, served on the Project Board, and also was one of the project co-financers.
Fisheries Department - MFFSD	The Fisheries Department is mandated through national legislation to provide for the establishment and management of marine reserves within the system. The Fisheries Department was one of the responsible parties on the implementation of the project, served on the Project Board, and also was one of the project co-financers.
Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT)	The PACT is a National Trust established to provide financial support to the NPAS. The PACT has significant roles in park financing, and as such, in the financial sustainability of the system. The PACT served as one of the main co-financers of the project and was expected to contribute to project oversight through their participation on the Project Board/ Project Execution Group.
Association of Protected Areas Management Organizations (APAMO)	APAMO is Belize's leading network of environmental non-governmental organizations, particularly in the areas of PA management. Members of APAMO co-manage a significant proportion of the national PA system.

Stakeholders	Description of Stakeholders' Roles in Project Implementation
	Membership includes both NGO's and CBO's. The APAMO was meant to have a critical role in advising project delivery, ensuring synergies among project components and ongoing national efforts.
Belize Association of Private Protected Areas (BAPPA)	BAPPA is an umbrella organization representing all private PA (PPA's) managers. PPAs contribute significantly to ecosystem connectivity and the protection of areas of biodiversity significance. BAPPA's role in the project was envisioned as an advisory one, as well as to provide assurance (i.e., ensuring the consideration of PPA's in overall project delivery).
Individual Park Managers/ Co-managers	A large proportion of PA's in Belize are managed by NGO's and CBO's through collaborative management agreements with the government. As these organizations are directly responsible for PA planning and management activities, they were important stakeholders to this project. So of the NGO's and CBO's were also directly involved as beneficiaries of small grants under Outcome 2 aimed at improving financial sustainability of the PA's.
Oak Foundation Belize	The Oak Foundation is an international NGO/ Foundation which supports large and small grants, including for marine conservation programs. Nationally the Oak Foundation has contributed significantly to the restructuring and strengthening of the NPAS, particularly the MPA sub-system. The organization was one of the project co-financers, supporting the operation of the NPAS and Outcome 1, aimed at strengthening of the national legislative framework supporting PA management and financing.
Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI)	The CZMAI is the leading marine scientific research organization in Belize. The Institute's main functions are to conduct marine research, maintain a data centre, provide information as required by the Authority, organize training courses, support other agencies involved in CZM, maintain coastal monitoring programmes, and to assist with preparation of a national CZM plan. The CZMAI was envisioned to participate in project implementation through their representation on the Project Board/ Project Execution Group. The CZMAI participated in project development workshops/discussions.
Institute of Archaeology (IA)	The IA is a quasi-governmental agency established in 2003, which replaced the Department of Archaeology. The IA is dedicated to the research, protection, preservation, and sustainable management of Belize's cultural and archaeological resources. It has among its objectives the sustainable development and effective management of all public archaeological reserves and parks.
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	TNC is an international NGO with presence in Belize whose work directly supports interventions to ensure sustainable management of the natural resource base, financial sustainability of PAs, and improved management effectiveness of PAs. TNC's established work program complements closely the work included in the project. Some of their planned programs were viewed as indirect co-financing to project components, and because of the close linkages in programs, participation of TNC in project implementation was seen as a means of synergizing national efforts.
United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Belize	UNDP-Belize served as the GEF Implementing Agency, and also provided technical backstopping for project implementation.

2.6. Expected Results

Through the incremental support extended through the GEF grant, the following results were expected:

The National PA System is supported by legal and institutional reforms furthering efforts in attaining sustainability of the system

- ✓ Enactment of the National PA System Act serves as the foundation for institutional, financial, operational, and PA management reforms.
- ✓ Establishment of statutory authorities responsible for PA management within the Fisheries and Forest Departments with the support of a national coordination body allows for effective coordination of efforts for PA management and biodiversity conservation.
- ✓ New legal instruments and the amendment of existing instruments regarding tourism fees and concessions, royalties and concessions for petroleum and mineral extraction, and water use fees allow long-term support from productive sectors for the financial sustainability of National PA System.

Modernize and diversify financing for the sustainability of the National PA System

- ✓ The development of a set of instruments and mechanisms enables investments in PA's and increased PA revenues. By project's end the following will be achieved: a) the annual government budgeting for PA's will increase by 25% and the National PA System will have a national budgetary allocation that will cover basic operating costs; b) the income generated by non-governmental sources for eight participating PAs will increase by 25%; and c) there will be an increase in fees and revenues collected in the PAs by 35%.
- ✓ A revenue collection accountability system in place allows full and timely PA income reporting from the private sector and co-managers to the Government of Belize.

National PA System is supported by enhanced management capacity

- ✓ A national training program to sustain long-term capacity building for PA administrative staff (government and non-government) and PA co-managers including PA management and business plan development, administration, financial planning, and monitoring techniques.
- ✓ PA management organizations develop and use skills that allow them to effectively manage the PA's, including the systematic use of PA management effectiveness assessment techniques.

2.7. Budget and Finance Breakdown

The total cost for implementation of the project was estimated to be USD 2,054,971, including a GEF grant of USD 975,000 and a combined co-financing sum of USD 1,079,971, as shown below in **Exhibit 5** broken down among the three outcomes and project management.

Exhibit 6: Breakdown of Project Budget and Financing			
Component	GEF Grant Prodoc Budget % of Total	Committed Co-Financing	
		Source	Value
Outcome 1: The NPAS is supported by legal and institutional reforms furthering efforts in attaining sustainability of the system	USD 196,250 20.1%	Oak Foundation Forest Department Fisheries Department UNDP	USD 200,000 USD 16,750 USD 7,500 USD 30,000
Outcome 2: Modernize, and diversify financing for the sustainability of the NPAS	USD 580,000 59.5%	PACT Forest Department Fisheries Department	USD 385,000 USD 7,750 USD 13,500
Outcome 3: NPAS is supported by enhanced management capacity	USD 102,250 10%	PACT APAMO	USD 200,000 USD 112,471
Project Management	USD 96,500 9.9%	Forest Department Fisheries Department UNDP	USD 31,500 USD 55,500 USD 20,000
Total:	USD 975,000	Total:	USD 1,079,971

Source: Project Document

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Project Design / Formulation

3.1.1. Analysis of Logical Results Framework

The project design was in alignment with the strategic actions outlined in the Belize National Protected Areas System Plan¹, formulated in 2005, including:

- ✓ Establishment of a National Protected Areas Commission to ensure coordinated action in system development (this strategic action was covered under Outcome 1 of the project);
- ✓ Revision of the National Parks System Act as the National Protected Areas System Act, to give legislative underpinning to the plan (this strategic action was also covered under Outcome 1 of the project);
- ✓ Provision of support services to protected area managers across the system, to enhance management capacity. This includes a national training programme and site-specific assistance in administration, financial management, survey and research, as well as management and business planning (these strategic actions were covered under Outcomes 2 and 3 of the project, improving finance sustainability and enhancing management capacity, respectively).

In this context, the design was highly relevant with respect to national priorities, and there was generally broad stakeholder support for the project when formulated, possibly with the exception of the Institute of Archaeology, which does not seem to have supported the concept of the single protected areas coordination mechanism that would also have responsibility over the archaeological reserves. The design was complemented with inclusion of management tools widely adopted on UNDP-GEF biodiversity projects, including the financial sustainability scorecard and the management effectiveness tracking tool (METT).

With respect to SMART criteria, the main design shortcoming was with respect to achievability of some of the indicator targets, particularly those including approval of new legislation and administrative structures. According to TE interview discussions, the evaluator understands that there was a high level of optimism at the time when the project was developed that the proposed legislative and institutional changes could be achieved. However, for a 3-year project, it seems to have been an overly ambitious expectation, when considering the required timelines. Interviewed stakeholders from governmental agencies indicated that drafting a new legislation requires on average one year, and an additional year is required to complete relevant national consultations and garner political support. This does not include the time to draft and approve the subsequent secondary legislation to facilitate implementation. The project targets assumed that changes would occur within the timeframe of the project, as a result of the approved new legislation and administrative structures, e.g., existence of a national budget for the PA system.

The limited time is one aspect, but equally important are the exogenous factors that are out of the control of the project, including institutional changes as a result of change in government.

¹ Belize National Protected Areas System Plan, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, November 2005

As outlined below in **Exhibit 7**, the achievability of other indicator targets was also moderately unlikely. For example, the increase in self-generating revenue from the participating 8 protected areas, receiving small grants under Outcome 2 to improve financial sustainability. The 3-year timeline of the project and the expectation that revenue would increase by 25% before project closure was fairly unrealistic, as time is required to procure the grants, and then allow the beneficiary organizations time to implement the improvements. Also under Outcome 2, the target to achieve 10 cooperation agreements with public and private sectors to underwrite PA management costs was unlikely, considering that the Covenant Conservation Act drafted in 2003 has still not been approved.

Under Outcome 3, achieving improvements in METT scores by project closure was also fairly unrealistic, as the national training programme on protected area management need to first be developed, and this was followed with piloting the training at some of the PA's. It is not realistic to expect that these trainings would be sufficient to impart notable improvement in management effectiveness in such short time.

Exhibit 7: SMART Analysis of Logical Results Framework							
No.	Indicator	Target	S: Specific	M: Measurable	A: Achievable	R: Relevant	T: Time-bound
Project Objective: By July 2013, Belize will have effectively developed legal, financial, and institutional capacities to ensure sustainability of the existing National Protected Areas System (NPAS)							
Obj.1	Existence of a reformed NPAS Increase in financial capacity of NPAS in Belize as measured through the Total Average Score for all PAs in the UNDP Financial Scorecard	Institutionally articulated NPAS under the management of a statutory national coordination body Legal and regulatory framework: 58% Business planning: 40% Tools for revenue generation: 48% Total: 56.8%	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Obj.2	Change in the financial gap to cover basic PA management costs and investments	≤ \$4,743,897 USD/yr	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Obj.3	Change in coverage of key terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems within NPAS	Lowland broad-leaved forests: 546,904 ha Sub-mountain broad-leaved forests: 195,844 ha Mangroves: 17,075 ha	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Obj.4	Existence of a reformed NPAS	Institutionally articulated NPAS under the management of a statutory national coordination body	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Outcome 1: The NPAS is supported by legal and institutional reforms furthering efforts in attaining sustainability of the system							
1.1	Change in the institutional framework for the NPAS	Single statutory agencies within the Forest and Fisheries Departments (i.e., "Forest and Wildlife Authority" and "Wildlife Authority/Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority," respectively) with a permanent/participatory Protected Areas Coordinating Mechanism (PCM)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y

Exhibit 7: SMART Analysis of Logical Results Framework

No.	Indicator	Target	S: Specific	M: Measurable	A: Achievable	R: Relevant	T: Time-bound
1.2	Number of legal instruments (new and amended) which directly support the financial sustainability of the NPAS	Tourism (fees and concessions) = 2 Petroleum & Mineral Extraction (concessions and royalties) = 1 Water use (fees) = 1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
1.3	Number of officials from the GOB and other key stakeholders supporting the national coordination body for NPAS management	45 members (government members: 26, quasi-governmental members: 9; non-government members: 10)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Outcome 2: Modernize and diversify financing for the sustainability of the NPAS							
2.1	Existence of a national budget for the PA system	National budgetary allocation for NPAS	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2.2	Increase in annual government budgeting for PAs	\$2,897,714 USD/yr	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2.3	Increase in income generated by non-governmental sources for eight (8) participating parks	A 25% increase over the baseline	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
2.4	Increase in tourism-based fees collected in PAs and accounted for by the GOB	\$2,598,966 USD/yr	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
2.5	Number of long-term/biodiversity-friendly investment plans established with key productive sectors (e.g., tourism, fisheries, forestry, electricity generation, and mineral extraction and oil)	At least four (4) representing diversified sectors	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
2.6	Number of cooperation agreements with public and private sectors to underwrite PA management costs	Up to 10 medium- to long-term cooperation agreements	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Outcome 3: NPAS is supported by enhanced management capacity							
3.1	Increase in PA management effectiveness as measured by METT scores for 28 PAs (3 Forest Reserves, 7 Marine Reserves, 4 National Monuments, 5 National Parks, 2 Natural Reserves, 4 PPAs, and 3 Sanctuaries) Number of PA administrative staff (government and non-government) trained in PA management and monitoring techniques	High: 18 PA Medium: 10 PA Low: 0 PA Based on the following definitions: High (75+), Medium (55-74), Low (<55) Up to 90 additional trained PA staff	Y	Y	N	Y	Y

Exhibit 7: SMART Analysis of Logical Results Framework							
No.	Indicator	Target	S: Specific	M: Measurable	A: Achievable	R: Relevant	T: Time-bound
3.2	Number of PA administrative staff (government and non-government) trained in PA management and monitoring techniques	Up to 90 additional trained PA staff	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
3.3	Number of PA management organizations with tools for effective management in place	50% of participating PA management organizations are using management tools in their planning)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

*Change made to logical results framework through early consultation with the PSC.

3.1.2. Assumptions and Risks

The project document contained breakdown of the following five risks facing implementation:

<u>Risk</u>	<u>Risk Rating</u>
Reduction in Government and PA stakeholders' commitment to NPAPSP implementation.	Low
Recent global economic turmoil negatively impacts tourism revenue generation potential as tourism-related travel decreases.	Medium
Inability to maintain adequate co-financing of actions.	Low
Compromising the integrity of NPAS through de-reservations.	Medium
Climate Change	Low

At the inception workshop, the following additional risk was added and assigned a rating of "high":

Change in institutional arrangement results the PEG (project board) not achieving and/or maintaining optimum collaboration for Project Execution

Project risks were regularly assessed during project implementation, new ones added, and relevant issues were documented in a dedicated risk log. The PMU did a good job keeping the project board updated on issues affecting the performance of the project and called for mitigation as needed, including advocating during the project board meeting in October 2013 that Issue No. SNC.PAS 24, pertaining to supporting the operationalizing of the new structure for administration of the national protected areas system would be escalated from an issue to a critical risk; and the risk would be brought to the attention of decision makers in the MFFSD.

During project implementation, and documented in the quarterly stage reports, certain critical project assumptions, including the following ones, were not being realized:

- ✓ *Cabinet approves the National Protected Areas System Act (NPASA) and authorizes the establishment of NPAS;*
- ✓ *There is a high level of political will to organize and administer Belize's PAs as an articulated system.*

Certain adjustments to project governance were recommended during the midterm review, as it was observed that many of the members of the national protected areas technical committee were the same as those on the project board, and there was insufficient representation regarding the political side of the process of approving the NPASA and the administrative structure of administering the PA system. The stakeholder involvement plan, formulated at the project development stage, probably should have been more linked to the risks and assumptions. For example, some level of participation by the cabinet of Ministers, possibly through a committee advising them on environmental matters, could have facilitated progress on the gaining relevant political approval.

3.1.3. Lessons from other Relevant Projects

The key findings, related to biodiversity conservation, of the GEF-financed National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA)¹ made in 2005 were reflected in the project design. For example, the key priority actions of the NCSA included:

- ✓ Formulation and promulgation of a Protected Areas Management Bill;
- ✓ Make co-management agreements successful through capacity building and technical support.

The project document also outlines how lessons from the following two projects were integrated into the project design. Key lessons from the World Bank-GEF *Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef* (MBR) project, which worked to harmonize policies and regulation for the sustainable management of transboundary coastal and marine resources, included:

- a) Best practices certification for marine tourism development;*
- b) Harmonized regulations governing extraction of marine resources; and*
- c) The development of the base of an improved information system to encourage public and private participation in MBR conservation.*

Although a coastal zone management strategy was developed with support from this World Bank-GEF project, financing, largely through tourism based fees, could not be secured to support the authority earmarked to coordinate implementation of the strategy². This lesson does not seem to have been fully considered, when setting targets for increased government funding for PA system management.

The UNDP-GEF *Integrating Protected Areas and Landscape Management in the Golden Stream Watershed* project (GSW) operated in the early 2000s, and one of the outputs of that project was drafting of legislation to ensure formalization of private protected areas in to the national system. This Conservation Covenant Act, drafted in 2003, has still not been approved by the cabinet. This highlights the time required for legislation to pass through the political process, and this lesson was also not fully taken into account when assuming that a new National Protected Areas System Act could be drafted, approved, and implemented within the 3-year project timeframe.

3.1.4. Planned Stakeholder Participation

Participation by the two main regulatory agencies responsible for terrestrial and marine protected areas, the Forestry Department and Fisheries Department, respectively, was quite good during the project implementation phase. Both the Forest Director and Fisheries Administrator were actively

¹ NATIONAL CAPACITY SELF ASSESSMENT FOR GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, UNDP/NCSA/00039629, 21 Nov 2005

² Personal communication during TE mission, March 2015

involved, including as members of the NPAS technical committee and the project board. Department staff members were also engaged in the project, some participating in trainings and workshops, others involved in the small grants aimed at improving financial sustainability, and also supporting the consultancies sponsored by the project.

The Program Director for the National Protected Areas Secretariat (NPAS) was actively involved, on a daily basis, as the PMU was hosted by the NPAS within the MFFSD office building. Participation by the MFFSD Minister and CEO increased in the last year of the project, partly as a result of one of the recommendations from the midterm review, suggesting that MFFSD decision makers need to be more actively involved.

The frequent meetings held by the project board, quarterly, and the technical committee facilitated rather active stakeholder involvement, including by PACT, APAMO, as well as individual NGO's, BAPPA, and academia, specifically the Environmental Research Institute of the University of Belize (ERI-UB). ERI-UB was also engaged as a contracted service provider, developing and delivering the national training program for national protected area management under Outcome 2. Several NGO's and CBO's managing protected areas in Belize also participated, as part of trainings and workshops, and some of them were direct beneficiaries of the small grants sponsored by the project to facilitate improved financial sustainability.

Other governmental level stakeholders that were involved, e.g., on the project board, include the Ministry of Economic Development and the Coastal Zone Management Institute (CZMI). One particular government agency that was not actively engaged is the Institute of Archaeology (IoA), which through their National Institute for Cultural and History (NICH), manage the archaeological reserves, which are included under the national protected areas system. The evaluator did not have an opportunity to interview representatives from NICH, but was informed that there has been long-standing reluctance by NICH to agree to an administrative structure that would entail transferring authority from NICH to a separate statutory body responsible for all financial management of all protected areas, including the archaeological reserves. According to interviewed NPAS staff, the IoA was involved through the National Protected Areas Technical Committee and participated in the discussion and consultations relating to the key outputs including the PA rationalization report, legislation and Fee policy/framework.

The level of participation by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) was also lower than envisioned in the project design, which envisioned closer linkage with national programs that TNC is supporting in Belize. There was, however, synergies with TNC's other work in Belize, for example, they have been in joint collaboration with the Fisheries Department in the expansion of the national replenishment zone in the marine protected area system.

Finally, the UNDP country was an active stakeholder throughout project implementation, supporting both administrative and strategic aspects. The UNDP program manager was consistently participating in the quarterly project board meetings, ad hoc meetings, workshops, etc., and also UNDP CO staff supported the PMU with procurement and other administrative assistance. The UNDP regional technical advisor on biodiversity projects also provided technical backstopping to the PMU and UNDP CO.

3.1.5. Replication Approach

The project design had a strong replication dimension, as the legal, institutional, and operation improvements were envisioned to have system-wide impacts. Furthermore, the grants provided to priority PA's for helping to achieve better financial sustainability could be replicated at other PA's in the country, particular at those managed by the same organizations receiving the grants. Similarly, through the national training program for effective PA management, capacitated PA managers and staff could potentially scale up the knowledge and skills gained toward improved management of the parks under their oversight.

There were also expectations that the lessons learned from the system-wide reforms implemented in Belize on the project could be replicated in other countries in the region, including Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic, where there were similar GEF-financed projects on PA system-wide management.

The project design included an indicate cost of USD 4,500 to cover dissemination of knowledge and lessons learned. Largely due to the impasse in advancing the planned legislative and institutional reforms, which affected progress on the other project outcomes as well, there no specific knowledge products generated that synthesized best practices and lessons learned. Knowledge dissemination occurred mostly at the national level through meetings, and consultation with stakeholders and APAMO. Project reports were also shared widely. The Project Manager also participated in a regional workshop in Panama where lessons learned and best practices were also shared.

3.1.6. UNDP Comparative Advantage

The UNDP comparative advantage in the design of the Project was based on their extensive experience working in Belize, and their favorable standing among national stakeholders, including the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and the MFFSD, formed in 2012.

Through UNDP's large portfolio of GEF-financed biodiversity projects, the agency has built up a considerable body of work and knowledge on facilitating interventions aimed at improving management effectiveness and financial sustainability of protected areas.

Examples of specific support the UNDP has provided the Government of Belize:

- ✓ Belize National Sustainable Development Report, 2014
- ✓ IV National Report to the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity, 2010
- ✓ National Capacity Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management, 2005
- ✓ Belize National Protected Areas System Plan and Policy, 2005
- ✓ Belize National Biodiversity Strategy, 1998

3.1.7. Linkages between Project and other Interventions

The project was designed to implement some of the strategic actions recommended in the NPAPSP, and the oversight by the NPAS Technical Committee was envisioned to ensure coordination and synchronization of other projects under the NPAPSP program. One of the complementary projects that was the "Sustainable Finance for the Implementation of the Belize National Protected Areas System Plan, Cost of the System and Economic Valuation" which was financed by GEF and executed

by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). One of the outputs of this UNOPS-GEF project was the “Sustainable Finance Strategy and Plan for the Belize Protected Area System”, completed by Drumm Consulting; the project directly benefited from the information provided in this strategy and plan.

The project also had some linkages with the Belize National Replenishment Zones project, which is being implemented by the Belize Fisheries Department and several NGO’s, with the aim to promote the expansion of “no-take” of fishery replenishment, zones nationally in Belize to reach a target of 20% of the country’s territorial sea by 2015.

Furthermore, representatives from APAMO and BAPPA were included on the project board, to help facilitate linkages with projects and programs implemented by these organizations.

3.1.8. Management Arrangements

Management arrangements are illustrated in the organizational chart shown below in Exhibit 8.

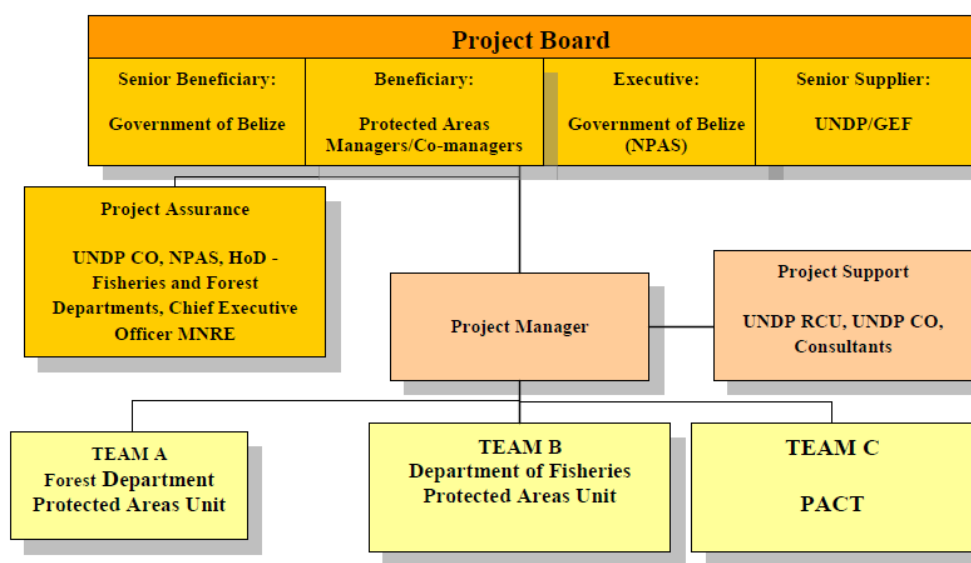


Exhibit 8: Project organization structure (source: inception phase report, Dec 2010)

The structure shown in **Exhibit 8** was reformulated from the original plan presented in the project document. Between the time of project development and the November 2010 inception workshop, the Government of Belize established the National Protected Areas Secretariat (NPAS) to coordinate the work under the National Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan (NPAPSP). And, at the same time, a National Protected Areas Technical Committee was established to advise the government via the NPAS on matters pertaining to the NPAPSP implementation. These changes in institutional arrangements led to the following changes in the management arrangements of the project:

- a. Instead of having two project directors (Chief Forest Officer (CFO) and Fisheries Administrator (FA)), the NPAS Program Director would be the sole project director, and the CFO and FA were Technical Project Directors;
- b. Instead of housing the project management unit in the Fisheries Department in Belize City, the PMU was hosted by the NPAS in Belmopan at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment office (later moved to the MFFSD, when this ministry was formed in 2012);

- c. The positions of project director (NPAS program director) and project manager would be separate posts.

The management arrangements also envisioned that the project would be supported by three teams:

- Team 1:** Personnel from the Forest Department for primary support pertaining to Component 1 – Legislation;
- Team 2:** Personnel from the Fisheries Department for Component 2 – Financial Sustainability; and
- Team 3:** Personnel from the Protected Areas Conservation Trust for Component 3 – Capacity Building.

Under actual implementation, support was not confined to the team structures indicated above, but rather through broader, participatory arrangements.

3.2. Project Implementation

3.2.1. Adaptive Management

The original Project objective and the three outcomes remained unchanged throughout the implementation timeframe. With respect to the outcome indicators and targets, one of the issues pointed out in the midterm review was that the target for indicator 1.1 (see below) could be perceived as a pre-determined result of the rationalization exercise:

Single statutory agencies within the Forest and Fisheries Departments (i.e., “Forest and Wildlife Authority” and “Wildlife Authority/Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority,” respectively) with a permanent/participatory Protected Areas Coordinating Mechanism (PCM)

This matter was taken up by the project board and recognized as a shortcoming, although the midterm review occurred rather late in the implementation phase, and the board did not respond to the recommendations until the second half of 2013.

Also, the indicator 3.2 under Outcome 3 called for a number of PA management staff receiving training in PA management and monitoring techniques. ERI, the service provider that developed and delivered the training program, pointed out that it would be sensible to spend a bit more time assessing the training needs of the individuals, rather than just aiming for a total number to receive the training.

There were a number of exogenous conditions that the Project needed to adapt to during the implementation period. Prior to the project inception, a decision was made to host the PMU within the newly formed National Protected Areas Secretariat (NPAS), rather than at the Fisheries Department in Belize City. As this decision was made before the project started implementation, there were no particular delays associated with this change; the day to day interactions with the Fisheries Department were not as convenient as originally planned. The national elections held in 2012 did result in delay in project implementation, as the governmental level stakeholders were reshuffled as part of the creation of the new Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development (MFFSD). This change brought the two main regulatory agencies responsible for terrestrial and marine protected areas, the Forestry Department and Fisheries Department, respectively, into a single ministry, but as this was a completely new ministry, a considerable amount of time was required before the requisite institutional structures were in place and the Minister and CEO were sufficiently briefed on the project objectives. These institutional changes resulted in a

reported 8-month delay, which was the main reason behind approving the no cost extension of the project end date to October 2014, instead of October 2013.

During the institutional transition period, the project needed to actively adapt to the priority changes among the governmental agency stakeholders. Several consultancies needed to be suspended and re-oriented as a result, for example.

The work activities under Outcome 2 also were substantially adapted, partly due to a legal dispute associated with the procurement of the originally planned business planning framework and business plans for 8 priority PA's. Firstly, a decision was reversed after first selecting a service provider for this assignment, as some of the participants worked for government agencies, and this was viewed as a deviation from the procurement rules. A letter of intent was issued to a second service provider, Zephyr Services Ltd., but an agreement was not reached due to the cost of service compared to available resources. The service provider filed a legal claim, as they understood there was sufficient evidence of being awarded a contract for the tendered assignment. While the legal claim was being processed, the project board agreed that it would best not to re-tender the same service, but rather re-consider the objectives under Outcome 2 and re-package the work outputs accordingly.

One adaptive measure implemented in response to the legal claim with Zephyr was a decision to facilitate business planning among the CBO community, facilitated by APAMO. This adaption was prudent and timely, as the capacity gap between the NGO and CBO co-management organizations is quite large, and the business planning support to the CBO's was a deliberate contribution aimed at strengthening the requisite financial management capacity of CBO's in identifying and developing revenue generating opportunities associated with the PA's under their management.

Also under Outcome 2, the project board also agreed to proceed with extending small grants for specific investments at the 8 priority PA's, instead of having the business plans produced first. The majority of the financed investments were sufficiently justified by the park managers, e.g., the investment at the Crooked Tree wildlife sanctuary was in response to a loss of equipment and structures as a result of a devastating flood there. The evaluator did, however, observe some evidence that the supported investments lacked strategic planning. For example, new visitor center financed at the Chiquibul national park was indeed a component of their management plan, but there are broader strategic plans under discussion to capitalize upon synergies with the adjoining Mountain Pine Ridge forest reserve and the Caracol archaeological reserve. The business planning efforts originally planned might have sorted out whether a new visitor center at Chiquibul was the most sensible investment at this time.

Also included among the adaptive management measures implemented in response to the re-packaging of activities under Outcome 2, the project also procured a vehicle, which facilitated logistics for administering and monitoring the small grants component, and also investments were made in information technology equipment and some field surveillance equipment for the Forest and Fisheries Departments.

3.2.2. Partnership Arrangements

As the project was run under a national implementation modality (NIM), the signed project document was formalized the partnership arrangements with the lead implementing partner, the MFFSD, and the two responsible partners, the Forestry and Fisheries Departments. The work activities completed

under the various outputs were arranged through contracts with service providers or individual consultants, and mostly based upon competitive bidding. The arrangement with the Environmental Research Institute (ERI) of the University of Belize for developing and delivering the national PA management training program was also based upon competitive bidding, although the ERI felt that their role as developer of the training program was pre-determined when the NPAPSP was formulated and endorsed by the government in 2005-2006.

3.2.3. Feedback from M&E Activities used for Adaptive Management

The project board meetings were the main decision-making mechanisms used for adaptive management. The board met frequently, on a quarterly basis throughout the four years of implementation. Based upon review of the meeting minutes, participation was consistently good, and issues were openly and constructively discussed. One shortcoming with respect to the project board was the inability to advance progress on certain key outcomes, particularly including legislative and institutional reform. The project manager raised this issue during several of the meetings and also documented the concerns in the quarterly stage reports. The midterm review also pointed out that the many of the members of the NPAS Technical Committee and project board were the same individuals, and there was insufficient representation of political decision makers. The MFFSD Minister and CEO became more active in 2014, forming a task force to help facilitate some of the issues at impasse, but this was rather late in the process, as the operational closure of the project occurred in October 2014. At the project design phase, the stakeholder involvement plan should have included political stakeholders, possibly represented by the cabinet of Ministers or by an advisory committee to the cabinet.

3.2.4. Project Finance

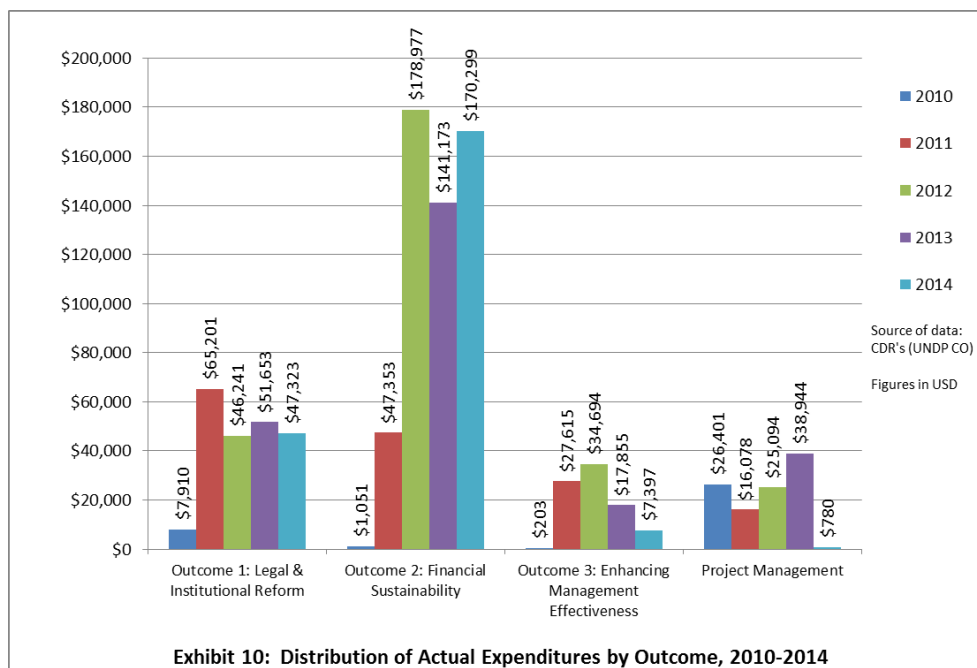
Financial Expenditures

The total cost expended for project implementation through end of 2014 was USD 954,494 (see **Exhibit 9**). The sum is approximately USD 20,000 short of the GEF grant of USD 975,000, and the difference is for residual costs in 2015, including for the terminal evaluation.

Exhibit 9: Breakdown of Project Budget and Actual Expenditures		
<i>Component</i>	<i>GEF Grant Prodoc Budget % of Total</i>	<i>Actual Expenditure % of Total</i>
Outcome 1: The NPAS is supported by legal and institutional reforms furthering efforts in attaining sustainability of the system	USD 196,250 20%	USD 218,327 23%
Outcome 2: Modernize, and diversify financing for the sustainability of the NPAS	USD 580,000 59%	USD 538,853 57%
Outcome 3: NPAS is supported by enhanced management capacity	USD 102,250 10%	USD 87,764 9%
Project Management	USD 96,500 10%	USD 107,297 11%
Total:	USD 975,000	USD 952,241

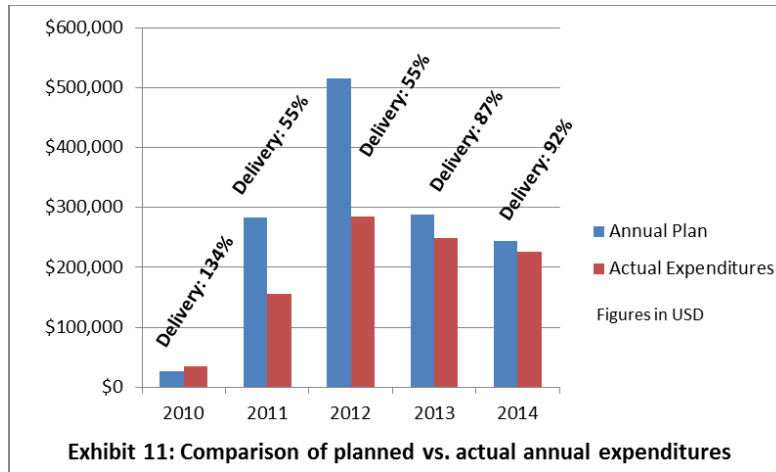
Source: Project Document, and CDR's for years 2010 through 2014

As shown above in **Exhibit 9**, cost breakdown by outcome roughly follows the indicative distribution outlined in the project document. Spending under Outcome 2 was delayed in 2011, due partly to the legal claim for the business planning framework activity. Issuing the grants under this outcome continued into 2014, as shown below in **Exhibit 10**.



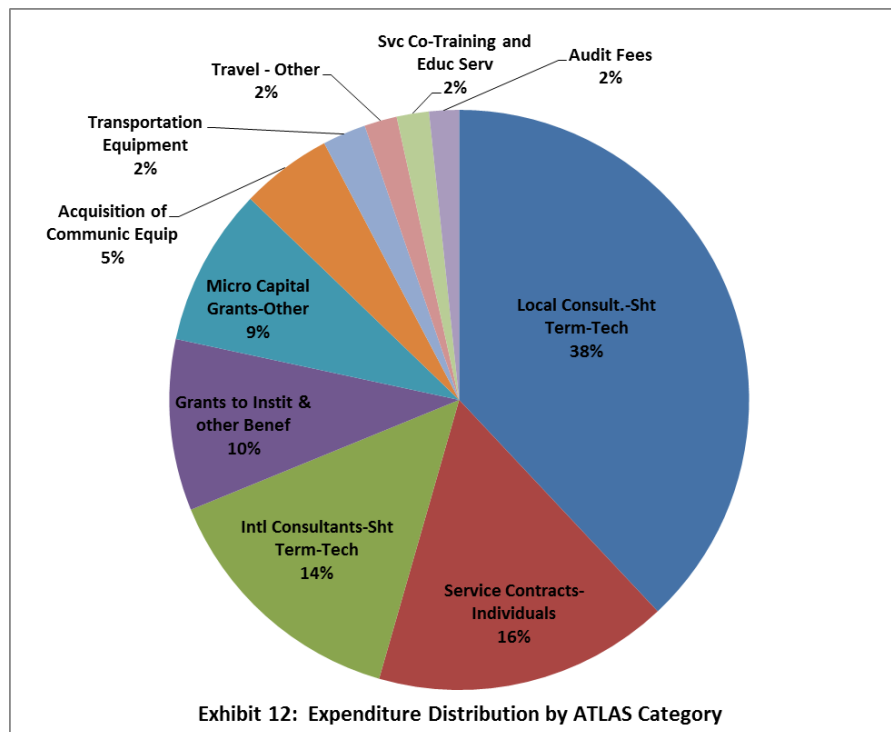
Expenditures under Outcome 3 were slightly lower than estimated in the project design, and the project management costs ended up being approximately 11% of the total cost, slightly higher than the 10% indicative value. In fact, only USD 780 in project management cost was booked in 2014, although the project closed later in October of that year. In order to maintain an approximate 10% in project management cost, it seems that some additional costs for the PMU were allocated to the outcomes. Such allocation is reasonable in one aspect, because the project manager was providing technical assistance to the activities carried out under the three outcomes. But, the allocation also partly masks the additional administrative burden incurred when no-cost time extensions are granted.

The challenges the project faced in the first couple of years, during the time when there were significant institutional restructuring taking place, is manifested in the 55% delivery rates realized in 2011 and 2012 (see **Enclosure 11**). Delivery rates were considerably better in the final two years of the project, 87% and 92%, respectively in 2013 and 2014, as the enabling environment for implementation was improved.



In evaluating the actual expenditures broken down by category, as shown below in **Exhibit 12**, the largest share, 38%, was for short-term technical assistance from local consultants. This is very much in line with the indicative 37.4% forecasted in the breakdown included in the project document. Similarly, the share spent on service contracts with individuals, 16%, is essentially the same as the 15.7% estimated in the project design. The proportion expended on international consultants, 14%, is higher than the 2% (USD 20,000) indicated in the design breakdown, but in fact, a contribution of 14% from international experts seems reasonable, as information on best practices in PA legislation, financial sustainability, and management effectiveness was an integral part of the project.

The amount of money spent on grants, approximately 19% of the total, was lower than the 24.7% estimated in the project design. The lower amount of spending on grants is largely due to the re-packaging of the activities carried out under Outcome 2.



According to a fixed asset register provided by the PMU, the total purchase value of assets was USD 85,218. This sum includes USD 21,050 for a vehicle, and the remaining is made up of computer equipment, some field supplies like surveillance cameras, and office furniture. The final transfer of these assets will need to be arranged prior to the administrative closure of the project.

According to interviews with UNDP CO staff, there were independent financial audits completed during project implementation, and costs of the audits are included in the combined deliver reports. The audit report for 2014 indicated satisfactory ratings for each audited category, except for review of project progress, which a finding was made, citing “end stage reports indicated delayed activities with insufficient details”. The TE evaluator found that project progress reports were in fact detailed, and reasons for delays were outlined in the project risk log and reiterated during project board meetings.

Co-Financing

As broken down below in **Exhibit 13**, the total amount of co-financing realized was USD 1,456,089, which is approximately 35% higher than the USD 1,079,971 committed when the project was approved. The amount of co-financing from government sources was about 5% more than the pledged amount, including USD 121,087 from the MFFSD that were mobilized after approval of the project.

Non-governmental co-financing contributions, including the Oak Foundation and APAMO, were more than double the USD 312,471 committed. And, UNDP contributed USD 40,641 in co-financing, slightly less than the USD 50,000 pledged.

Exhibit 13: Co-Financing Table									
Co-Financing Source	Type	UNDP (USD)		Government (USD)		Other Sources (USD)		Total Co-Financing (USD)	
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
UNDP	Cash	50,000							
BZE/09/38			30,000						
BZE/09/40			10,000						
UWI 9/09			325						
11287			316						
Sub-Total, UNDP			40,641						
PACT	Grant			585,000					
2010					39,730				
2011					146,743				
2012					45,673				
2013					46,658				
2014					93,363				
Sub-Total, PACT					372,167				
Fisheries Department	In-Kind			76,500					
2010					625				
2011					20,625				
2012					20,625				
2013					20,625				
2014					152,125				
Sub-Total, Fisheries Department					214,625				
Forest Department	In-Kind			31,000					
2010					1,303				
2011					3,909				
2012					10,503				
2013					3,910				
2014					3,909				
Sub-Total, Forest Department (In-Kind)					23,534				
Forest Department	Cash			25,000					
2010					1,303				
2011					3,910				
2012					10,503				
2013					3,910				
2014					3,910				
Sub-Total, Forest Department (Cash)					23,535				
Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development	In-Kind			0					
2010					6,338				
2011					24,749				
2012					30,000				
2013					30,000				
2014					30,000				
Sub-Total, MFFSD (In-Kind)					121,087				
Oak Foundation	Grant					200,000			
2010							14,431		
2011							23,298		
2012							155,146		
2013							28,909		
2014							78,282		
Sub-Total, Oak Foundation							300,066		
APAMO	Cash					112,471			
2010							40,713		
2011							90,375		
2012							94,540		
2013							61,708		
2014							73,096		
Sub-Total, APAMO							360,433		
Total Co-Financing for Project Implementation:		50,000	40,641	717,500	754,949	312,471	660,499	1,079,971	1,415,448

Source: PMU records

3.2.5. Monitoring & Evaluation

Overall Quality of Monitoring & Evaluation is rated as: Satisfactory

Supporting Evidence:

- + Sufficient funds were indicatively allocated for the M&E plan in the project document;
- + PIR reports contained feedback from key stakeholders and provided detailed summaries of project performance;
- + The quarterly stage reports were informative, and reported issues related to M&E and other project performance aspects;
- + The project board met frequently, quarterly, and the NPAS technical committee provided regular feedback;
- + GEF tracking tool for biodiversity projects was diligently completed, and included quantitative support to progress toward project performance indicators;
- The logical results framework was reviewed at the inception phase, but there were no adjustments made at that time;
- The midterm review was rather late in the process, in mid-2013, and the management response was later in 2013, approximately a year prior to operational closure of the project;
- The effectiveness of follow-up actions to shortcomings reported in monitoring reports was moderately satisfactory, particular with respect to legislative and institutional reforms.

Monitoring & Evaluation design at entry is rated as: Satisfactory

The M&E plan was reasonably extensive, sufficient activities and funds were allocated. The total indicative cost for Project M&E was 57,500 USD¹, which is approximately 6% of the USD 975,000 implementation budget (GEF grant). The cost estimate was made using the standard M&E project document template used for GEF-financed project, and an expanded version, including more details on reporting schedules, was worked out prior to the project inception workshop.

Baseline information was sufficiently compiled, including using the UNDP financial scorecard and the management effectiveness tracking tool (METT). Although there is no dedicated government budget for protected areas management, the baseline data was sensibly formulated.

Implementation of Monitoring & Evaluation Plan is rated as: Satisfactory

The project kicked off with a 2-day inception workshop, with the first day spent to inform the broader group of key stakeholders, and the second day was more constructive, with reviews of implementation arrangements, roles and responsibilities of the implementation partners, and the logical results framework. There were, however, no adjustments made to the results framework. If a critical path analysis was made at that time, the team might have been in a position to highlight tight time allocated to achieve the planned legislative and institutional reform. For example, governmental

¹ USD 57,500 was estimated from the GEF grant, and an additional USD 31,000 from co-financing contributions.

agency stakeholders informed the evaluator during the TE mission that drafting of a new legislation requires on average one year, and consultations and advancing the bill through the political approval process requires an additional year. These timelines could be considered best case scenarios.

The PMU did a good job at preparing informative and timely progress reports, including the quarterly stage reports and the annual project implementation reviews (PIR's). The financial scorecard, METT, and GEF tracking tool were also diligently prepared, and the team provided as much quantitative information as available. Issues requiring action by the project board were well documented in the reports and discussed and recorded in the quarterly project board meetings. The frequent meetings provided board members a more or less running account of project progress and problems faced. On some matters, the board was not able to advance certain issues, including suspension of various consultancies during the time when the newly formed MFFSD was being established. And, the board was largely not able to facilitate the legislative and institutional reforms planned under Outcome 1.

Some of these issues were highlighted in the midterm review (MTR), although the MTR was made rather late in the implementation phase, in mid-2013, roughly a year before the operational closure of the project. One of the management responses to the MTR recommendations was an increased level of involvement by the MFFSD Minister and CEO, starting in 2014, but again this happened late, and there was not sufficient time by project closure to submit the draft NPAS Act and the PACT Act to the cabinet for approval. In fact, the MFFSD arranged changes to the draft acts in late 2014, without consultation by the NPAS Technical Committee.

There were a number of recommendations raised as part of the MTR, and the project team made several adjustments accordingly, including:

- ✓ The Chief Forest Officer was named the sole project director, rather than having two project directors (formerly including the Fisheries Administrator);
- ✓ The target under Indicator 1.1 (*Single statutory agencies within the Forest and Fisheries Departments (i.e., "Forest and Wildlife Authority" and "Wildlife Authority/Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority," respectively) with a permanent/participatory Protected Areas Coordinating Mechanism (PCM)*), was modified to allow the recommendation of the administration structure to be made as part of the rationalization process;
- ✓ An increase in the participation in the PA management trainings under Outcome 3 was facilitated;
- ✓ The PMU and the NPAS held more frequent meetings with the project director, to try to resolve critical issues holding back overall project performance;
- ✓ Certain improvements were made in the drafting of ToR's for consultancies, e.g., International Union for Conservation of Nature and Flora and Fauna International supported the drafting of the final ToR of the project (under Output 1.5);
- ✓ The contract with Communications Officer was extended to April 2014 and to help facilitate socialization of project outputs, particularly those including proposed legislative and institutional reforms;
- ✓ Arrangements were made to accommodate a no-cost time extension until the end of October 2014.

3.2.6. Implementing Agency (IA) and Implementing Partner (Executing Agency-EA) Execution

Overall IA-EA Execution: Satisfactory

Supporting Evidence:

- + UNDP's wealth of experience on biodiversity projects in Belize and globally, and their favorable standing with the Government of Belize was a strong comparative advantage;
- + High level participation among key officials from the implementing partners was consistent throughout the implementation phase;
- + The PMU remained intact and consistent throughout the implementation period, with no change in personnel;
- + Quarterly and annual reports contained candor accounts of project performance;
- + Risk management was proactive, with a regularly updated risk log, with sufficient notification of increasing and critical risks;
- Institutional restructuring among governmental stakeholder agencies resulted in significant project delays;
- The implementing partners were constrained in responding to certain implementation problems, particularly those related to advancing the proposed legislative and institutional reforms;
- Targeted advocacy support by UNDP to political leaders, e.g., the cabinet of Ministers, might have helped facilitate the proposed legislative and institutional reforms;
- There was a certain level of uncertainty and inconsistency with respect to procurement procedures, between UNDP and governmental rules.

Quality of Implementing Agency (UNDP) Execution is rated as: Satisfactory

The UNDP has implemented several biodiversity projects in Belize, throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, and globally. This experience was a strong comparative advantage, enabling sharing of lessons learned and best practice on PA management. UNDP's favorable standing with the Government of Belize was also beneficial, in terms of a respected advocacy partner.

The UNDP CO provided regular support to the project, including active participation on the project board, and assistance with procurement, logistics, and financial reporting. In the first couple of years, the project was run under a supported national implementation modality (NIM), meaning that the UNDP provided more assistance with administration, including procurement, than under a full NIM Project. The modality changed to full NIM, and it seems that this created some confusion regarding which procurement rules to follow, the UNDP or public procurement ones. For example, this uncertainty was manifested when processing the legal claim made by Zephyr Consulting Ltd., which went through the Belizean legal process, while the UNDP CO staff felt that the case should have been handled outside the national process, according to the cooperation agreement between the UN and the Government of Belize.

The UNDP CO staff made regular recommendations to the project board and implementation team, and the UNDP regional technical advisor also provided assistance on technical issues, as needed. With

respect to the impasse in advancing the proposed legislative and institutional reforms, the UNDP might have been able to plan more of an advocacy role, promoting the reforms directly to political leaders, e.g., to the cabinet of Ministers.

Quality of the Implementing Partner Execution is rated as: Satisfactory

There was high level and consistent participation by the two main regulatory agencies responsible for terrestrial and marine protected areas, the Forestry Department and Fisheries Department, throughout the implementation phase, with both the Chief Forest Officer and Fisheries Administrator acting as joint project directors (later only the Chief Forest Officer), chairing the project board, and providing regular assistance to the implementation team. After the formation of the new ministry in 2012, the MFFSD Minister and CEO became increasingly involved in the project, as well, particularly in 2014, when a new CEO was hired, and upon some of the recommendations raised in the midterm review.

The institutional restructuring that followed the 2012 general elections and including the formation of the MFFSD, resulted in significant delays in project implementation, with the general estimate of 8 months documented in project reports. Unlike changes in earlier years following election cycles, the amount of time required for the newly appointed stakeholders to become briefed on various projects under their agencies was substantially more in 2012, because a completely new ministry was formed, and responsibilities under the former Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment were spread out over four different ministries.

On a positive note, the project management unit (PMU) was consistent throughout the entire implementation period, until the end of October 2014, with no changes to the project manager or project assistant positions. This provided a high level of continuity to the process. The reporting, risk management, and liaison with the implementing partners were proactively managed by the PMU. The frequent project board meetings allowed for regular interaction between the PMU and key stakeholders. The board was hampered on realizing certain decisions required to advance project performance. This was partly due to the institutional transition that occurred midway into the project implementation; e.g., certain consultancies needed to be suspended until feedback from the ministry was provided. But, for other issues, the decisions required by the board were beyond their control, and these were mostly related to the proposed legislative and institutional reforms. Considering the designed project outcomes, it might have been prudent at the preparation phase to constitute a recommended project board with sufficient political decision making authority, e.g., some type of representation by the cabinet of Ministers, possibly through an advisory committee or individual to the cabinet.

3.3. Project Results

3.3.1. Overall Results (Attainment of Objective)

Attainment of the Project Objective is rated as: Moderately Satisfactory

Project Objective: By July 2013, Belize will have effectively developed legal, financial, and institutional capacities to ensure sustainability of the existing National Protected Areas System (NPAS)

Through an executive decision by the MFFSD, a draft amendment to the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) Act outlines the PACT as the statutory body responsible for coordination, management, and funding of the national protected areas system. A charter has also been prepared detailing the role and responsibilities of the envisioned PACT. By the time of the TE, in March 2015, the draft legislation has not yet been presented to the cabinet of ministers for approval.

With respect to the financial capacity of the NPAS, measured through the average score using the UNDP financial sustainability scorecard, the end of project results represented an increase of more than 22% from baseline levels, although short of the target.

The gap in funding for basic PA management has decreased to USD 5,487,696 in 2014, representing a reduction of USD 509,552 as compared to the 2010 baseline. The reduction is attributed to an increase in the Government's allocation to the Forest and Fisheries Departments, and also an increase in grants entering the system.

With respect to change in coverage of key terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems within NPAS by project closure, the results of an assessment made in June 2014 indicated the following:

Total lowland broadleaf forests: 408,918 ha (2010 baseline was in 407,776 ha, not the 546,904 ha indicated in the project document), representing a slight increase.

Sub-mountain broadleaf forests: 226,499 ha; representing a decrease of approximately 0.2%, which is attributed to some deforestation in the protected areas of the Maya Mountain Massif.

Mangroves: 28,060 ha; which is a 65% increase from 2010 baseline levels.

Overall, achievement of the project objective is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Outcome 1: The NPAS is supported by legal and institutional reforms furthering efforts in attaining sustainability of the system

Indicative budget in project document: USD 196,250

Actual cost incurred on this outcome: USD 218,327

With respect to the target of achieving institutional reform with respect to coordination of the national protected areas system, the midterm review pointed out that the target should be a single statutory body, not one in each the Forest and Fisheries Department.

In 2010, after the National Protected Areas Commission had gone defunct, the National Protected Areas Technical Committee (NAPTC) was established to advise the Government, and the National Protected Areas Secretariat was formed to administer the work of the NPATC. A draft amendment to the PACT Act, outlines PACT as the statutory body responsible for coordination, management, and financing the national protected area system, but the act has not yet been brought up to the cabinet of ministers for approval. At the time of the TE in March 2015, the Secretariat was still serving as the temporary protected areas coordination mechanism, but continuation of funding was uncertain.

Regarding the number of new and amended legal instruments which directly support the financial sustainability of the NPAS, the project facilitated drafting of regulations to guide development concessions in protected areas. And, two templates, one in the tourism sector and one in the extractive industries sector, were prepared. A template on water use (fees) was not prepared as planned, because circumstances changed with the formation of the National Integrated Water

Resource Management Authority, which is responsible for establishing and implementing water use policies.

Members of the National Protected Areas Technical Committee, which includes the following, continue to support the Secretariat:

1. Belize Association of Private Protected Areas (BAPPA) – comprised of 32 members
2. Association of Protected Areas Management Organization – comprised of 12 members
3. Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute
4. Protected Areas Conservation Trust
5. Forest Department
6. Fisheries Department
7. Lands Department
8. Institute of Archaeology
9. Ministry of Tourism
10. Agriculture Department
11. University of Belize/Environmental Research Institute (ERI)

In addition to the above, the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Cane Farmers Association, BELTRADE (investment promotion), and protected areas management organizations such as Friends of Conservation and Development and Corozal Sustainable Future Initiative (formerly Shipstern Nature Reserve Belize Ltd.) are supportive of the NPATC and the Secretariat.

Achievement of Outcome 1 is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Outcome 2: Modernize and diversify financing for the sustainability of the NPAS
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Indicative budget in project document: USD 580,000

Actual cost incurred on this outcome: USD 538,853

By project closure, direct allocation for the National Protected Areas System in the national budget was not achieved. PA financing continues to be managed through departmental budgets. Through support extended by the project, a proposed formula for determining budgetary allocation, based upon conservation objectives, was developed.

There has been an increase in annual government budgeting for PA's. In 2014, a total of USD 2,532,323 was contributed, representing an increase of USD 214,152 over 2010 project baseline, but somewhat short of the target. Consider the project spanned the economic downturn resulting from the global financial crisis in 2008-2010, the increase in funding is considered a satisfactory achievement.

With respect to collection of tourism based fees, the figure reported in 2014, USD 1,610,587 is a reduction from the baseline, and attributed to the fact that some protected areas no longer have active on the ground management.

One of the planned activities under Outcome 2 was development of a PA system wide business planning framework, followed by individual business plans for 8 identified priority protected areas. This activity, however, was not realized because of a legal dispute during the procurement for the consultancy. As an adaptive management measure, the project board agreed to spend the earmarked money on grants for various improvements to the priority protected areas and also for upgrading

information technology capacity within the Forest and Fisheries Departments. In total, more than USD 235,000 in grants were disbursed, as outlined below.

Protected Area/Department; description of activities		Beneficiary	Value of Grant
1	Half Moon Caye Natural Monument; invested to increase/improve visitor experience and management of the park.	Belize Audubon Society	USD 15,000
2	Chiquibul National Park; invested in a visitor's center, exhibition boards, and additional solar panels for the park.	Friends for Conservation and Development	USD 23,000
3	Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary; invested in upgrading visitor's center, providing Internet service to the park, developing a bicycle trail, and purchase of a few bicycles.	Belize Audubon Society	USD 15,000
4	South Water Caye Marine Reserve; invested with the aim of the MPA generating funds for assistance to buffer communities and to increase compliance with fee payments.	Fisheries Department	USD 15,000
5	Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve; invested to increase the effectiveness of sustainable resource use management within the reserve, through site level infrastructure upgrades.	Southern Environmental Association (SEA)	USD 15,000
6	The Forest Department; invested in information technology equipment, e.g. laptops, projectors, etc. aimed at increasing the capacity of the Forest Department's regional office to better engage the public.	Forest Department	USD 30,000
7	The Fisheries Department; invested in information technology equipment for field use.	Fisheries Department	USD 30,000
8	Association of Protected Areas Management Organization; invested in strengthening APAMO Financial Sustainability by working at developing a business plan model and initial implementation of same in Mayflower Bocawina National Park.	APAMO	USD 17,250
9	Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary; invested with a view of improving the daily operations and the management of the Crooked Tree, and repair of damage to park infrastructure following a devastating flood.	Belize Audubon Society	USD 15,000
10	Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve; invested to improved infrastructure at the Douglas D'Silva Forest Station with a view of improving daily operation for improved management.	Forest Department	USD 15,450
11	Golden Stream Corridor Reserve/Baden Nature Reserve; investment aimed at improving income generating capacity for the reserve.	Ya'axché Conservation Trust	USD 15,000
12	Caye Caulker Marine Reserve; invested in buoys and other equipment/infrastructure at the protected areas. Such were deemed necessary after the completion of the 2014 METT.	Fisheries Department	USD 30,000

*Value of grants issued in BZD converted to USD using an exchange rate of 2.

The project did a good job at setting monitoring guidelines, so that the beneficiaries could report on the impacts the grants had on their financial sustainability. In most cases, there was insufficient time to collect reliable information regarding impacts. The evaluator visited four of the above protected areas, including the Mayflower Bocawina National Park, Cockscomb Wildlife Sanctuary, Chiquibul National Park, and the Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve (see **Annex 3**). For the most part, observations and discussions during the TE field mission revealed that the grants were spent on pressing investment needs at the priority protected areas. For example, the CBO co-managing the Mayflower Bocawina National Park were able to procure a small office in nearby town and close to the main road, allowing visitors the opportunity to obtain more information. And the business planning assistance facilitated to them from APAMO has clearly helped them in starting to develop

possible revenue generating opportunities. The Cockscomb Wildlife Sanctuary is a much larger and more established protected area, under the management of the Belize Audubon Society. The grant disbursed to them was used to upgrade their visitor center, including extending Internet service there, allowing them to accept bankcard payments by their visitors. The money was also used to develop a bicycle trail and procurement of a few bicycles; a new activity that the local management has estimated would be a viable, additional income generating activity.

A brand new visitor center was built at the Chiquibul National Park. Although there are currently no entrance fees collected at Chiquibul and visitors are fairly limited, there are longer term plans to collaborate with the Caracol archaeological reserve and/or the Mountain Pine Ridge forest reserve. While the visitor center was one of the strategic actions included in the management plan for Chiquibul, proceeding with construction before working out strategic possibilities with the other protected areas was a bit premature. The grant provided to the Forest Department for refurbishment of living quarters at the Mountain Pine Ridge forest reserve was certainly welcomed by local management, as the majority of the stock of buildings at the reserve are in a state of disrepair, and reserve staff are unable to reside at the park, rather commuting daily from San Ignacio, spending a considerable amount of money on fuel along the way. But the investment at Mountain Pine Ridge was not particularly strategic, rather filled a gap in maintenance that the Forest Department has not tended to. In fact, the project board made a strategic decision to use some of the funds under this component for infrastructure improvements in some of the selected PA's.

Limited progress was made regarding establishing and operationalizing long-term/biodiversity-friendly investment plans with key productive sectors (e.g., tourism, fisheries, forestry, electricity generation, and mineral extraction and oil). The project board made a decision to hold off substantive discussions with the productive sector until the enabling environment is in place. However, an agreement was reached with a cooperative from Placencia village for commercial sea-weed production in a marine reserve.

According to the project terminal report, at least eight agreements with public and private sectors to underwrite PA management costs have been signed, in some cases new agreements and in others extensions.

Nearly 57% of the total project cost was spent under Outcome 2. The project was indeed able to reasonably well adapt to the cancellation of the planned PA system wide business wide framework, but all in all, the results achieved under this component of the project had relatively low value-for-money. And, achievement of Outcome 2 is, accordingly, rated as **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Outcome 3: NPAS is supported by enhanced management capacity

Indicative budget in project document: USD 102,250

Actual cost incurred on this outcome: USD 87,764

The management effectiveness tracking tool completed in 2014 indicated the following for the 28 targeted protected areas:

High: 12 PA

Medium: 10 PA

Low: 6 PA

The average 2014 score was 67.38%, reflecting a decrease in 3.61% from 2010. The decrease has been attributed by the project management team to the following factors:

- a. A change in the management arrangements at the Sarstoon Temash National Park and Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve, i.e. the management of these PA's are now the sole responsibility of the forest Department as the previous co-management partners are no longer involved in day-to-day management. The results has been that with limited resources the Forest Department has not been able to maintain the same level of management as when the co-management arrangement was in operation.
- b. With the knowledge gained by some PA managers through the training sponsored by the project, they subsequently scored their respective PA's more stringent.

The management effectiveness tracking tool is required to be included on GEF biodiversity projects, but not necessarily as a performance indicator. For a 3-year project, it is unreasonable to expect system level change, and the evaluator, accordingly, does not take too much stock in the fact that METT scores, before and after project implementation have not changed as envisioned. A more sensible use of the METT and financial sustainability scorecard tools is to have the regulatory agencies and co-managers integrate them into their management frameworks. The project team pointed out that the NPAPSP did not contain any indicators to enable assessment of progress toward strategic actions, and consequently the draft NPAS Act contains an monitoring and evaluation (M&E) guidelines, including adoption of the METT and financial sustainability scorecards.

After completing a national training needs assessment, the ERI (University of Belize) developed a national training program for protected areas management. The focus of the program was to offer specific training courses on the following six priority areas identified in the needs assessment:¹

Priority Area 1: Institutional and Organizational Strengthening

- ✓ Operational Policies and Procedures Level 1
- ✓ Operational Policies and Procedures Level 2
- ✓ Financial Management Level 1
- ✓ Financial Management Level 2
- ✓ Human Resources Management

Priority Area 2: Research and Monitoring in PAs

- ✓ Research and Monitoring for PAs Management Level 1
- ✓ Research and Monitoring for PAs Management Level 2

Priority Area 3: Specialized Ranger Training

- ✓ Ranger Training: Core Skills and Competencies
- ✓ Ranger Training: Practical Field Skills
- ✓ Ranger Training: Law Enforcement

Priority Area 4: Conservation/Sustainable Financing for PAs

- ✓ Conservation/PA Management Sustainable Financing - Basic
- ✓ Conservation/PA Management Sustainable Financing - Advanced

Priority Area 5: Protected Area Management Effectiveness

- ✓ Protected Area Management Effectiveness

Priority Area 6: Protected Area Management Planning

- ✓ Protected Area Management Planning

¹ National Training Programme for Protected Areas Management, 2012

The contents of each of the training courses under the six different priority areas were validated in September 2011 via two national stakeholder workshops held in Belize City and Dangriga, respectively.

The project also supported the piloting of implementation of the training program. All in all, a total of 67 individuals attended one or more of the courses offered. This is considered a noteworthy achievement. Even though the target was 90 persons, ERI sensibly spent more time screening the background of the individuals to ensure higher quality participation.

Courses supported with project funding included:

1. Conservation Finance 1 – attended by 14 individuals
2. Financial Management (Level 1) – attended by 13 individuals.
3. PA Management Effectiveness – attended by 11 individuals.
4. PA Management Planning – attended by 15 individuals.
5. Research and Monitoring 1 – attended by 15 individuals.

After their contract with the project expired in June 2014, ERI received additional funding from PACT and the University of Belize to continue piloting of the training program, with delivering of the following additional courses:

1. Conservation Finance – Advanced
2. Financial Management 2
3. Research and Monitoring 2

24 entities participated in the national training programme for protected areas management. Of this amount 20 are directly involved in protected areas management; included in these are the Forest and Fisheries Department. This means that approximately 90% of all protected areas management organizations in Belize were delivered introductory knowledge and skills for effective management. As also highlighted by ERI in their assessment of the piloting results of the training program, the training provided should not be considered a one-off, but rather the national training program will likely include a framework for regular training updates.

Achievement of Outcome 3 is rated as **Satisfactory**.

3.3.2. Relevance

Relevance is rated as: Relevant

The Project is relevant across a number of criteria. The Nation Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan reflects the Constitution and is founded on the need to ensure that biodiversity conservation becomes an important and integral part of national social and economic development. Protected areas make up a significant proportion of the territory of Belize, and with key productive sectors, including forestry, fisheries, agricultural, and tourism are dependent upon sustainable stewardship of the valuable natural resources in the country.

The project was also closely aligned with the Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy for GEF-4, and in fact, particularly Strategic Objective One, *“To Catalyze Sustainability of Protected Area Systems”*:

Strategic Program 1: Sustainable Financing of Protected Area Systems at the National Level

Strategic Program 2: Increasing Representation of Effectively Managed Marine Protected Areas in Protected Area Systems

Strategic Program 3: Strengthening Terrestrial Protected Area Networks

The project design closely matches the strategic programs listed above.

UNDP Country Program Document for 2013-2017 also incorporates the project objective of developing legal, financial, and institutional capacities to ensure sustainability of the existing National Protected Areas System (NPAS), by also focusing on strengthening national capacities for effective land and water resources management and on the creation of poverty and environmental linkages within national medium- and long-term planning and policymaking processes. A specific objective of the proposed program of work is to align the management of the country's natural resource base to the economic development needs of the country¹.

3.3.3. Effectiveness & Efficiency

Effectiveness & Efficiency are rated as: Moderately Satisfactory

Supporting Evidence:

- + The GEF funding addressed key barriers holding back effective and sustainable PA management;
- + The total co-financing contribution exceeded committed amount;
- + Substantial additional co-financing contributions were provided by the MFFSD;
- The delays due largely to institutional restructuring among key governmental agencies diminished the overall efficiency of the project;
- The legal case associated with the disputed procurement with Zephyr Consulting Ltd under Outcome 2 resulted in a re-packaging of the activities associated with business planning;
- Moderately satisfactory achievement of intended outcomes, within the available budget resources and under an additional year of implementation time.

With respect to an incremental cost analysis, the effectiveness and efficiency of the project are considered to have been moderately satisfactory:

Barrier No. 1: Fractured institutional, legal, and operational framework of PA management

The project sponsored amendments to the NPAS Act and PACT Act, but there remain no consensus among key stakeholders, and the proposed bills have not yet been taken to Cabinet for approval.

Barrier No. 2: Ineffective financial system that fails to address PA management needs

Without agreement on the proposed new PACT Act, the PA financial system remains fragmented and allocated resources are not meeting the basic level of service required. The project did make substantial contributions in facilitating business planning among the CBO community, enabling them to be better able to identify and develop revenue associated with the services provided by the protected areas they are managing.

¹ UNDP Belize, Country Program Document, 2013-2017

Barrier No. 3: Weak institutional and individual management capacity

The project sponsored development of a national PA management training program, and funding was also secured to pilot the implementation of the program. This is an important first step at operationalizing sustained capacity building among PA managers.

Project efficiency was enhanced by the fact that the total amount of co-financing contributions exceeded the pledged amounts. Significant financing was provided by both governmental and non-governmental sources.

Overall project efficiency was diminished by the delays associated with the institutional restructuring among the key governmental agencies. Decisions on certain project outputs were delayed, consultancies suspended, and by the end of the project there was an impasse with respect to the proposed legislative and institutional reforms. The project implementation timeframe was extended by one year, largely due to these delays, but only moderately satisfactory achievement of the intended outcomes was realized through this extended schedule.

The legal claim associated with the disputed procurement with Zephyr Consulting Ltd also had an adverse effect on project efficiency, as the planned business planning framework and business plans were not carried out. Thus the contributions toward enhancing financial sustainability of the PA system fell short of the expectations for this particular outcome.

3.3.4. Country Ownership

Supporting Evidence:

- + The project concept was directly aligned with the NPAPSP;
- + Creation of a ministry (MFFSD) with the specific responsibility for sustainable development;
- + Relevant country representatives, including governmental officials, civil society representatives, and academic professionals, were actively involved in the project;
- + More than USD 100,000 of leveraged resources were contributed by the MFFSD;
- Although involvement by the MFFSD Minister and CEO was proactive, their participation was rather late in the process, from 2014, partly as a result of some of the recommendations raised by the midterm review;
- The government has not yet approved the proposed legislative and institutional reforms promoted by the project, and, in fact, the proposed acts have not yet been formally submitted to the cabinet of ministers;
- Participation by some government agency staff was a bit apathetic, e.g., low involvement in filling out the METT scorecards for the PA's.

The project was designed to implement some of the strategic actions outlined in the National Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan (NPAPSP), approved by the Government of Belize in 2006, so the project concept very much had its origin within national priorities.

During project design and implementation, the key country representatives were involved, including governmental officials, civil society representatives, and academic professionals. Participation by

some government agency staff was fairly apathetic, e.g., as demonstrated through the low involvement of agency staff in filling out the METT scorecards.

3.3.5. Mainstreaming

The project objective is in conformance with the agreed priorities in the UNDP country program for 2013-2017, specifically the program on environmental and natural resource management, disaster risk reduction and climate change mainstreamed into public policies and development processes, which includes the aim of highlighting the poverty-reducing potential of sound natural resource management practices.

The Project did not have a specific gender objective, but it should be noted that women were well represented among the key stakeholders, including the MFFSD Minister and CEO, the fisheries administrator, the UNDP program manager, the NPAS program director, the PACT executive Director, the Oak Foundation executive director, the Belize Audubon Society executive director, and several more. There are also active women groups, particularly among indigenous communities, involved in alternative livelihoods near protected areas.

With respect to indigenous communities, the NPAPSP was based partly on the importance of local and indigenous community knowledge, and the draft NPAS Act indicates a condition requiring PA management be made in harmony with traditions and indelible rights of indigenous communities. In fact, there is an ongoing legal case between the Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management (SATIIM) and the Government of Belize oil exploration and drilling in the Sarstoon Temash National Park and surrounding predominantly Mayan communities in the far south of Belize, in the Toledo District. Non-governmental stakeholders are keenly observing the outcome of this legal case, and the possible precedent it might create for other protected areas in the country.

3.3.6. Sustainability

Sustainability is generally considered to be the likelihood of continued benefits after the GEF funding ends. Under GEF criteria, each sustainability dimension is critical, so the overall ranking cannot be higher than the lowest one.

The Overall Likelihood of Risks to Sustainability is Rated as: Moderately Likely

Supporting Evidence:

- + The frequent consultations facilitated through the quarterly project board meetings and other interactions during the project has led to an increased level of collaboration among key stakeholders;
- + The project has produced substantive outputs that provide solid frameworks for moving forward. These include the rationalization review, draft legislation, fee policy and framework, draft collaborative management, national training program;
- + Piloting of the national training program has highlighted a few challenges, sparking a constructive debate among national stakeholders regarding strategic direction in this regard;
- + Business planning support for certain CBO co-managers, facilitated by APAMO, has made significant contributions to bridging the capacity gap between the NGO's and CBO's, and PACT has since provided some additional grant funding to APAMO to expand their support

to other CBO's;

- + The accreditation of the PACT by the Adaptation Fund as the national implementing entity for Belize enhances the likelihood that the agency could leverage AF funds for climate change initiatives that are complementary to biodiversity conservation objectives within the national PA system;
- + Co-financing contributions, particularly from non-governmental sources exceeded the committed amounts;
- + The non-governmental sector continues to drive change and introduce innovation into the national PA system;
- The inability to advance the proposed legislative and institutional reforms through the Belizean political process;
- The inability to pass the Conservation Covenant Act, for nearly 10 years, and the continued exclusion of private protected areas into the national PA system;
- The continued gap in PA financing, not reaching base levels, and there have been limited advances in making adjustments to fee structures;
- As a result of suspending the participatory process involved in agreeing to the proposed legal, institutional, and collaborative reforms, a sense of disappointment and uncertainty has developed among several governmental and non-governmental stakeholder groups.
- The continued reluctance of the NICH to consider including the archaeological reserves under the responsibility of the proposed statutory body responsible;
- There remains a relatively large capacity gap between NGO's and CBO's involved in PA management;
- There have been a few publicly reported cases of shortfalls in social and environmental accountability, e.g., with respect to granting extraction rights within protected areas;

Financial Risks

The Financial Risks dimension is rated as: Moderately Likely

The aim of having a direct allocation for the National Protected Area System in the national budget was not realized by project closure, or by March 2015 when the TE was carried out. PA financing continues to be managed through agency budgets. The project did make substantive contributions, for example supporting the development of a formula for determining budgetary allocation, based on conservation objectives, and sponsoring the socialization of the PA financial sustainability strategy, which was developed under a complementary UNOPS-GEF project.

There was no specific timeline indicated to the evaluator for when a decision is expected regarding the proposed institutional changes, in fact there is not yet a consensus regarding the structure and extent of authority of the envisaged statutory body. The continued limited progress in this regard diminishes the likelihood that a decision will be made in the short term.

As the business planning framework under Outcome 2 was not carried out as planned, contributions to improved financial sustainability to the PA system were hence lower than expected. The business planning support to the CBO community, facilitated by APAMO, has addressed an important shortfall with respect to the capacity gap between NGO and CBO co-managers. The fact that PACT has since provided some additional funding to expand APAMO's support to CBO co-managers enhances the probability that these results will be sustained after project closure.

The annual amount of tourism generated fees reduced from a baseline amount of USD 1,925,160 in 2010, to USD 1,610,587 in 2014. This trend further diminishes the likelihood that the supported results will be sustained moving forward.

Socio-Economic Risks

The Socio-Economic Risks dimension is rated as: Moderately Likely

The country has rebounded from lower tourism levels experienced during the financial crisis in 2008-2010, but economic output has still been rather sluggish. These circumstances have led to the reluctance for governmental decision makers to make upward adjustments to the level of tourism fees collected, as well as to PA entrance fees, thus on average PA financing allocations are not meeting basic funding levels.

There also continue to be legal disputes regarding social and environmental accountability, e.g., with respect to the extractive industry sector, such as the case with SATIIM in southern Belize, where oil exploration is being permitted within a protected area.

Concerns about de-reservation in certain areas are also fueling distrust between non-governmental and governmental stakeholders.

Institutional Framework and Governance Risks

Institutional Framework/Governance Risks dimension is rated as: Moderately Likely

The fact that the draft NPAS Act and PACT Act, outlining the legislative and institutional changes envisioned for the PA system, have not yet been submitted for approval to the cabinet of Ministers, in fact, the drafting of the acts is not yet completed, is a significant risk to the overall sustainability of the project results. The inability to pass the Conservation Covenant Act, for nearly 10 years, and the resulting continued exclusion of private protected areas into the national PA system is a further indication that legal reform will not come easy.

The continued reluctance of the NICH to consider including the archaeological reserves under responsibility of a PA system-wide authority is a long-standing issue which will unlikely be resolved in the foreseeable future.

The project also supported drafting of an updated collaborative management template, but there is a high level of dissatisfaction among the NGO/CBO community, e.g., the agreements are only valid for 5 years. Further consultation will be required before this co-management framework can be operationalized on a system-wide scale.

The project has produced substantive outputs that provide solid guidelines for supporting efforts moving forward. These include the rationalization review, draft legislation, fee policy and framework, and the national PA training program. Piloting of the national training program has highlighted a few

challenges, sparking a constructive debate among national stakeholders regarding strategic direction in this regard.

As demonstrated by their significant co-financing contributions, and their active involvement with international research organizations, the non-governmental sector continues to drive change and introduce innovation to the national PA system in Belize. Thus, a certain degree of responsible governance will likely continue even without realizing the proposed legal and institutional changes.

Environmental Risks

The Environmental Risks dimension is rated as: Likely

The project design indicated that the ecosystems represented in the national protected areas system are expected to be impacted by climate change. Some of these impacts would occur of the long-term, while others could be more acute, for instance, as outlined in the midterm review, the risk of fire resulting from damage to forest cover after hurricane Richard in 2010.

There is an increasing level of support driven by the international donor community to mitigate climate change risks. For example, the accreditation of the PACT by the Adaptation Fund as the national implementing entity for Belize enhances the likelihood that the agency could leverage AF funds for climate change initiatives that are complementary to biodiversity conservation objectives within the national PA system. PACT, however, has not yet been able to access any AF funds, due to the national impasse regarding the strategic direction of the organization.

3.3.7. Catalytic Role

Although the proposed legal, institutional, and operational reforms were not formalized by project closure and the envisioned system-wide impacts were not realized, the project did have a catalytic effect. For example:

- ✓ Partly as a result of the findings of the rationalization process supported by the project, the Turneffe Atoll marine protected area was officially established in November 2012 as Belize's largest and most diverse marine reserve, which significantly increases the open sea representation within the marine protected area system for the country;
- ✓ The rationalization process also triggered some consolidation within the protected area system, including the Tapir Mountain Reserve;
- ✓ ERI is continuing to work on the national PA management training program, receiving leveraged funding from PACT to further pilot the courses and also develop a certification program;
- ✓ PACT has also extended some additional funding to APAMO to build upon the business planning support to CBO co-managers, something that was initiated by the project;
- ✓ The Fisheries Department is applying some of the tools developed as part of the sustainable financing component of the project, e.g., by infusing more private sector participation, such as seaweed farming activities, which also have economic benefits for surrounding communities.

3.3.8. Impact

Assessing impact with respect to verifiable improvements to ecological status or reductions on stress to ecological systems is not particularly feasible, as realizing these impacts will take more time than

allocated for implementation of this project. Even though the envisaged legal, institutional, and operational reforms were not realized by project closure, the outputs produced provide a solid framework for facilitating these changes once the political will is in place. The development and piloting of the national PA management training program was also a significant contribution toward the eventual improvement in ecological status and reduction in stress on ecological systems, as PA management staff become more capacitated on state-of-the-art management and monitoring best practices.

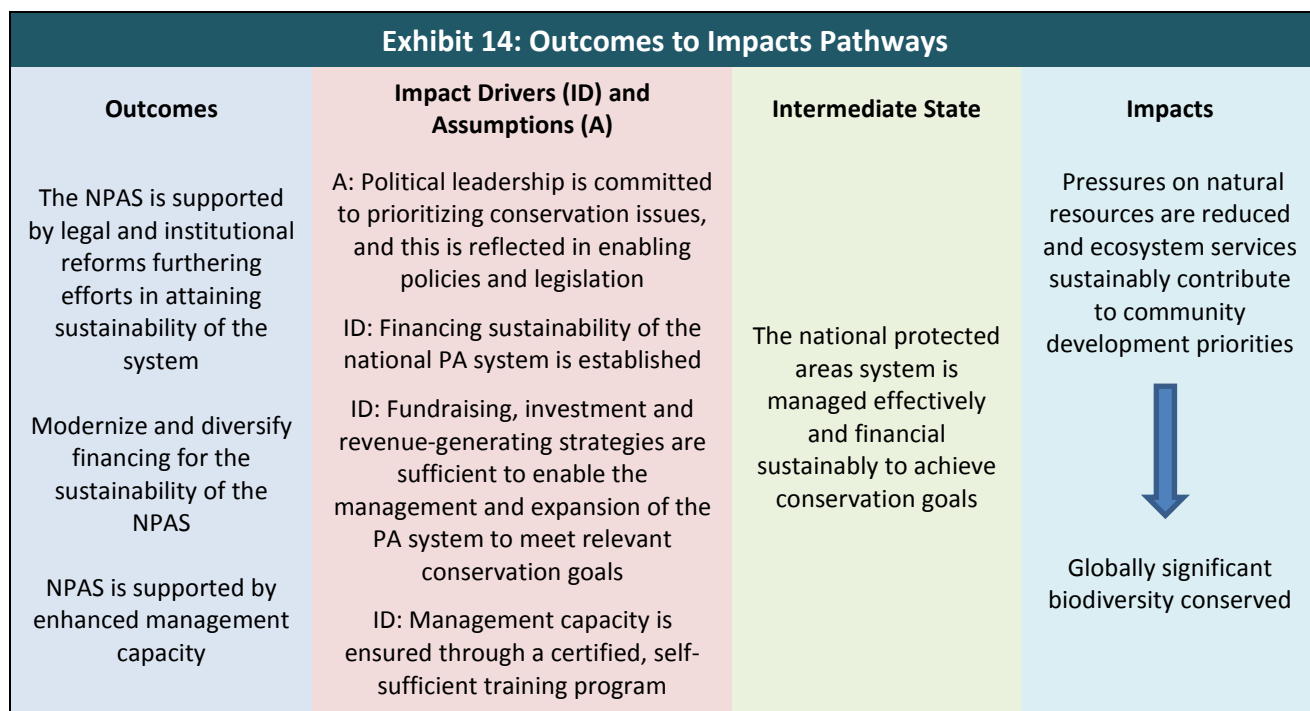
During the lifespan of the project there was a slight decrease in the coverage of lowland broadleaf forests and sub-mountain broadleaf forests within the national PA system, due to deforestation, but the area of mangroves within the national PA system increased to 28,060 ha, 65% more than the 2010 baseline. Also, in November 2012, the Turneffe Atoll was established as a new marine protected area, which considerably added to the open sea representation within the marine PA system. Designation of the Turneffe Atoll marine reserve was one of the strategic actions highlighted in the rationalization sponsored by the project.

An evaluation of the status of the impact indicators outlined in the terms of reference of the TE is summarized below.

Impact Indicator	Comments	Impact Rating
Verifiable improvements in ecological status	If the systems-based approach is implemented as outlined in the draft legal, institutional, and operation reforms, there is a high likelihood that verifiable improvements in ecological status would be realized.	Minimal
Verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems	Once the national PA management training program is rolled out nationally, with sustained funding, there is a high likelihood that verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems will be affected, as a result of improved management and monitoring practices.	Minimal
Progress towards stress/status change	During the lifespan of the project, mangrove coverage with the national PA system increased by 65%; and the Turneffe Atoll marine reserve was established, significantly increasing representation of open sea ecosystems under protected status. The development and piloting of the national PA management training program was also a significant contribution with respect to progress toward ecological stress/status change.	Significant

As mentioned above, it is generally too early to evaluate verifiable impacts, so the likelihood of achieving the intended impacts was estimated, using the general guidelines of the *Review of Outcomes to Impacts* (ROtI¹) method, which applies a Theory of Change approach to assess the overall performance of environmental management projects. The first step was to evaluate relevant outcomes to impacts pathways (see below in **Exhibit 14**).

¹ The ROtI Handbook, Towards Enhancing the Impact of Environmental Projects, Aug 2009, Global Environmental Facility.



A ROTI desk assessment was then made, based on review of project deliverables and other findings of the terminal evaluation, and the results are summarized below in **Exhibit 15**.

Exhibit 15: Review of Outcomes to Impacts

Outcome	Outcome Rating (A-D)	Intermediate State (IS)	IS Rating (A-D)	Impact	Impact Rating (+)	Overall
<p>The NPAS is supported by legal and institutional reforms furthering efforts in attaining sustainability of the system</p> <p>Modernize and diversify financing for the sustainability of the NPAS</p> <p>NPAS is supported by enhanced management capacity</p>	B	<p>The national protected areas system is managed effectively and financially sustainably to achieve conservation goals</p>	C	<p>Pressures on natural resources are reduced and ecosystem services sustainably contribute to development priorities</p> <p>Globally significant biodiversity conserved</p>		BC
<p>Outcome Rating Justification: Although the legal, institutional, and operational reforms envisioned under the project outcomes were not achieved by project closure, the collaborative capacity among PA stakeholders was strengthened, and the project sponsored production of substantive outputs which provide a framework for realizing the proposed reforms.</p>						
<p>Intermediate States Rating Justification: The project has made substantive contributions in developing legal, institutional, and operational frameworks, which would likely lead to effective and financially sustainable PA system management if eventually approved and implemented. The non-governmental sector continues to drive change and introduce innovation into the national PA system.</p>						
<p>Definitions (adapted from the ROTI Handbook, Aug 2009, GEF):</p>						
Outcome Rating		Intermediate States Rating			Impact Rating	

Exhibit 15: Review of Outcomes to Impacts					
D: The project's intended outcomes were not delivered.		D: The conditions necessary to achieve intermediate states are not in place.		Rating "+": Measurable impacts or threat reduction achieved and documented within the project life-span.	
C: The outcomes were partially delivered, and were not designed to feed into a continuing process after funding.		C: The conditions necessary to achieve intermediate states are not in place, but the frameworks supporting the requisite reforms are largely developed.			
B: The outcomes were partially delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process but with unclear allocation of responsibilities after funding.		B: The conditions necessary to achieve intermediate states are in place, with moderate likelihood that they will progress toward the intended impacts.			
A: The outcomes were delivered and designed to feed into a continuing process with specific allocation of responsibilities after funding.		A: The conditions necessary to achieve intermediate states are in place and have produced secondary outcomes or impacts, with high likelihood that they will progress toward the intended impacts.			
Overall Likelihood of Impact Achievement:					
Highly Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
AA BA AB CA BB+ CB+ DA+ DB+	BB CB DA DB AC+ BC+	AC BC CC+ DC+	CC DC AD+ BD+	AD BD CD+ DD+	CD DD

As outlined above, the outcomes-to-impact assessment results indicate that the likelihood of impact achievement is **moderately likely**. Although the legal, institutional, and operational reforms envisioned under the project were not achieved by the time of closure, the project has made substantive contributions in development of the requisite frameworks, which would likely lead to effective and financially sustainable PA system management if eventually approved and implemented. This, however, does not seem likely in the short term, as the gains achieved through the project support have been considerably weakened as a result of the shutdown of the participatory process, and garnering the required support among the cabinet of ministers, once the draft legislation is presented to them, will be unlikely without broad support from the agency leaders and also at the constituency level at large. This impasse will unlikely be overcome without facilitation by through independent mediation, or other external support.

The likelihood of achieving impacts is enhanced by the sustained advocacy led by the non-governmental sector.

4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS, GOOD PRACTICES

4.1. Conclusions

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS/STRENGTHS

Project design was closely aligned with proposed strategic actions of the NPAPSP

The project was designed to implement some of the key strategic actions called for in the National Protected Areas Policy and System Plan (NPAPSP), approved by the government in 2006, and there was widespread support among governmental and non-governmental stakeholders for the project at the time of project preparation.

Strengthened collaborative capacity among key stakeholders

The activities on the project and the project board meetings facilitated focused collaboration among governmental agency leaders and staff, non-governmental co-managers, local and regional experts, and academic professionals. These interactions have led to strengthened collaborative capacity among these key stakeholder groups.

Development and piloting of national PA management training program

The project supported development and piloting of the national PA management training program, something that had previously only been conceptualized in the NPAPSP. Several challenges surfaced as part of the piloting process, but these have enabled the developers to make further improvements to meet the needs of the PA managers.

Outputs on draft legal, institutional, and operational reform provide strategic frameworks

The project sponsored production of a number of substantive outputs, which provide a solid framework for decision makers moving forward, with respect to the proposed legal, institutional, and operational reforms. These outputs included:

- ✓ Rationalization review of the national PA system;
- ✓ Draft amendments to the NPAS Act and PACT Act;
- ✓ PA fee structures worked out in the IUCN consultancy;
- ✓ Collaborative management agreement templates.

Facilitated incremental strengthening of business planning capacity among CBO co-managers

The support facilitated by APAMO to certain CBO co-managers to strengthen their capacity in business planning was money well spent. There continues to be a substantial capacity gap between NGO and CBO co-managers with respect to developing revenue generating opportunities, but change is incremental and the project was able to catalyze a strategic mindset shift for the engaged CBO's. In fact, PACT has since provided additional funding to APAMO to expand their assistance to other CBO co-managers.

Consistent and proactive project management

The staff of the project management unit remained unchanged over the duration of the project, providing a high level of continuity. Project reporting was particularly good; risks were regularly evaluated and communicated to the project board; and the project manager had the requisite

professional expertise to provide meaningful support to the outputs under each of the three outcomes.

Effective adaptive management

The project did a notably good job at adapting to a variety of exogenous conditions, establishment of the new Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development (MFFSD) after the 2012 general election. As the key governmental agencies responsible for PA management, including the Forest Department, the Fisheries Department, and the National Protected Areas Secretariat were contained within this new ministry, the project needed to adapt while the institutional re-grouping took place, an estimated 8 months in total. Certain consultancies needed to be suspended during this time period, and then re-started, as new agency officials need to be briefed on the project. Further adaptive management was required under Outcome 2, after procurement of a consultancy for developing a business planning framework was disputed.

KEY SHORTCOMINGS

Inefficient project governance structures

The project design was flawed with respect to conceiving project governance structures. Facilitating the proposed legal, institutional, and operational reforms should have included specific enabling stakeholders, e.g., representation by the cabinet of Ministers, possibly through an advisory committee or individual(s). The project board, which was mostly made up of members of the NPAS Technical Committee, was able to support the process with respect to technical issues, but was not effective at garnering the required political buy-in. It might have also been advisable that the person leading the facilitation efforts be a specialist in mediation, from outside the process.

Project timelines did not match those of the political process necessary to advance legal and institutional reforms

The 3-year implementation period allocated for the project did not match the time needed to advance the proposed legal and institutional reforms. The inter-dependent project outcomes were dependent on not only reaching an agreement on the administrative structures surrounding the PA system, but also implementation of these legislative changes. Carrying out a critical path analysis when the project was designed might have highlighted the time constraints in the process.

Participatory process was diminished due to limited communication

Near the end of the project, in 2014, the MFFSD Minister and CEO solicited external support to modify the draft legislative documents that were produced through the participatory process sponsored by the project. Although the evaluator recognizes that ministry officials were frustrated with the lack of progress, the limited communication extended to other stakeholders has diminished the gains made during the participatory process, and has led to a situation of uncertainty and mistrust among the other stakeholders involved in the process, undermining some of gains facilitated by the project. Achieving eventual approval of the proposed legal and institutional reforms without support from these key stakeholders, including the non-governmental sector, is unlikely.

Relatively low value-for-money on activities under Outcome 2

Nearly USD 540,000 was spent on Outcome 2, improving financial sustainability of the PA system, which is roughly 57% of the total project cost. Development of the business planning framework and

the business plans for 8 priority protected areas were not completed as planned, partly because of a disputed procurement process. Adaptive management measures were implemented to re-package the activities under this component of the project, and, for example, the business planning support facilitated by APAMO to CBO co-managers was quite successfully. But, the overall results under this outcome with respect to improving financial sustainability of the PA system were limited.

Overall project efficiency was reduced due to delays associated with institutional restructuring

Institutional restructurings over the course of the project resulted in significant delays in implementation, reducing the overall project efficiency.

Advocacy capacity of UNDP not fully capitalized on

The UNDP CO staff members were actively involved in both operational and strategic aspects of the project, attending each of the quarterly project board meetings and providing regular support to the project implementation team. Considering UNDP's favorable standing with the Government of Belize, the agency's advocacy capacity was not fully capitalized on, e.g., advocating directly to the cabinet of Ministers might have facilitated progress with respect to the impasse regarding the proposed legal and institutional reforms.

4.2. Recommendations

ACTIONS TO FOLLOW UP OR REINFORCE INITIAL BENEFITS FROM THE PROJECT

1. A sustainability strategy should be prepared, outlining a "road map" for achieving the legal, institutional, and operational reforms that were not realized by the end of the project. The strategy should indicate roles and responsibilities, and also identify where external support might be warranted to facilitate the process.
2. An advocacy campaign should be implemented for the additional modifications to the draft NPAS Act and PACT Act that the MFFSD Minister and CEO are promoting, as many of the enabling stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, are uncertain of the proposed changes to the drafts that were approved by the National Protected Areas Technical Committee and project board before operational closure of the project.
3. The participatory process for advancing the proposed legal, institutional, and operational reforms should be re-started, enlisting the support of an independent mediator who has not been involved up to now.
4. The results and lessons learned from the project have not been effectively synthesized into readily available knowledge products. The results of the project and lessons learned should be distilled into one or more knowledge products, which could then be disseminated among relevant stakeholder groups.
5. While the ERI completed a needs assessment with respect to national PA management training program, it would also be beneficial to carry out a stock-taking evaluation of training capacity in the country, and what partnership opportunities could be leveraged to inter-link these for further development of the national training program. For example, the Fisheries Department has research and training capacity within their fisheries stations, a number of NGO's, including

the Ya'axché Conservation Trust and Friends for Conservation and Development, are running their own training programs.

6. The beneficiaries of the small grants under Outcome 2 should monitor impacts to financial sustainability and submit annual reports for the next 3 years to the national protected areas secretariat (or relevant PA coordination mechanism). An evaluation strategy should be developed that could be used for other grant financing within the PA system for assessing and disseminating best practices and lessons learned in implementation of financial sustainability interventions.

PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE DIRECTIONS UNDERLINING MAIN OBJECTIVES

7. As outlined in the rationalization report sponsored by the project, ensuring conservation within the delineated eco-corridors will require close collaboration among productive sectors, including forestry, agricultural, and tourism operators. Considering the financial and management capacity shortfalls within the existing protected area system, biodiversity mainstreaming might be a more sensible approach to achieving the conservation goals envisaged for the eco-corridors, rather than expansion of the PA system. Pilot implementation of biodiversity mainstreaming within one or more of the eco-corridors should be considered, with the involvement of stakeholders responsible for land use planning and local economic development, as well as the relevant productive sector operators.
8. Pilot implementation of a payment for ecosystems services (PES) scheme should be made, e.g., within a protected area where safeguarding one of more ecosystem services, such as water catchment, constrains the park from developing revenue generating activities. Such a pilot PES scheme could be used scale up to benefit the wider national protected area system.
9. The status of PACT as an accredited implementation entity under the Adaption Fund mechanism should be leveraged, by developing a project that integrates biodiversity conservation with climate change adaptation. Such an intervention would strengthen PACT's implementation capacity under the Adaptation Fund, enhance their credibility nationally as a suitable statutory body to facilitate management of the national PA system, and also, demonstrate how the management strategy of the target protected area(s) could be enhanced by taking into account climate change adaptation.

4.3. Good Practices and Lessons Learned

GOOD PRACTICES

Frequent convening of the project board

The project was able to consistently organize project board meetings on a quarterly basis. This frequent convening of the board allowed key stakeholders ample opportunity to stay informed on project progress and make corrective action decisions on a timely basis, at least for issues within their control.

APAMO support to CBO co-managers in business planning

The business planning support that APAMO has facilitated among certain CBO co-managers was an appropriate adaptive measure to the activities under Outcome 2, after the board decided not to

pursue with the PA system wide business planning framework, due to the legal case surrounding the disputed consultancy procurement. Since the project has closed, PACT has extended further funding to APAMO to expand their assistance to other CBO's.

Introduction of an M&E framework into the draft national protected areas system

The project team highlighted the fact that the national protected areas policy and system plan did not have a defined monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, defining indicators for measuring progress made toward the strategic objectives. In response to this observation, an M&E framework is integrated into the draft national protected areas system plan that is defined in the draft PACT charter¹. The framework indicates that tools will be implemented to evaluate management effectiveness and financial sustainability, and a regular assessment will be made to ensure sufficient progress is being made toward achieving the relevant management objectives.

Monitoring and evaluation efforts were commendable

The project did a good job at monitoring and evaluation of specific activities, including the investments made to the priority protected areas under Outcome 2 and the national PA management training program in Outcome 3. Even though there was insufficient time to realize discernable improvements in financial sustainability and also because some of the investments were not targeted to revenue generation capacity but, in some cases, infrastructure maintenance, the monitoring reports that the protected area managers need to fill out provided them with practical insight into financial sustainability assessment techniques.

Co-financing by the Oak Foundation enhanced the likelihood for project results to be sustained after GEF funding ceases

The Oak Foundation provided an additional approximately USD 130,000 in co-financing, near the end of the project, to support the continued operation of the national protected areas secretariat. This strategic co-financing contribution enhanced the likelihood that project results will be sustained after GEF funding ceases.

LESSONS LEARNED

Project governance structures should be consistent with the project objectives

For projects that are promoting legal and institutional reform, the project governance structures should have sufficient representation and authority to affect the envisioned change.

Important to keep in context the incremental reasoning behind GEF support

The incremental reasoning of the GEF support was to deploy an alternative strategy to the business-as-usual approach undertaken to manage and finance the national protected area system. With this context in perspective, it is advisable to include stakeholder participants that have heretofore not been involved in the process, for example, it might had been advisable to commission the assistance of independent mediator to facilitate the envisage legal and institutional reform.

¹ Charter for the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT), Belize, 22 February 2015

Project timelines should match those of the enabling national processes

Also with respect to interventions aimed at achieving legal and/or institutional change, the project timeline should coincide, as practicably as possible, with the enabling national processes required to advance the changes to legislation and/or institutional frameworks.

Advocacy is an important part of the process

Often such projects are focused on delivering the programmed outputs within the allocated budgets and timeframes, and there is insufficient focus on the role of advocacy in the process. Advocacy should not start at the end, but rather as early as possible, so that project interventions can efficiently adapt to feedback from high-level decision makers.

The non-governmental sector continues to drive change and introduce innovation to the PA system in Belize

As demonstrated by the co-financing contributions from non-governmental sources being more than twice as much as pledged at the time of project approval, and the collaborations with international organizations and universities within the protected areas under their co-management, the non-governmental sector continues to drive change and introduce innovation into the national protected area system in Belize

Piloting of the national PA management training highlighted some constructive lessons that will be useful when scaling up the program

The piloting of the national PA management training program highlighted several lessons, including:

- ✓ Training curriculum needs to take into account the knowledge and educational gap between NGO and CBO co-managers;
- ✓ The participants, mostly the CBO co-managers, have limitations regarding the duration of a training course, as many of them need to take leave from full-time jobs;
- ✓ The online piloting results yield unfavorable results, as it was difficult to measure whether the participants successfully and independently completed the assignments;
- ✓ Follow-up training is essential for maintaining the knowledge and capacity gained in the courses;
- ✓ Conservation finance was a particularly important topic of concern for the participants.

Monitoring and evaluation of small grant investments should continue after project closure

Monitoring impacts often requires longer timeframes than a typical GEF-financed project. As a condition of grant funding, beneficiaries should be obliged to agree to continue monitoring and reporting for a sufficiently long period of time to allow for impact evaluation.

Sustainability structures should be built into project design, including co-financing allocation

As demonstrated by the additional funding provided by the Oak Foundation to support continued operation of the national protected areas secretariat, phasing the allocation of co-financing contributions, including support for post-closure activities, should be considered at the project design phase, as part of the sustainability strategy.

5. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation Mission Itinerary (7-16 March 2015)

7 March, Saturday	Evaluator Arrives to Belmopan, Belize Belmopan, Briefing with UNDP Program Manager
8-9 March	Belmopan, Desk review
10 March, Tuesday	Belmopan, Debriefing with CEO of MFFSD and Director of NPAS Belmopan, Interview with CEO of MFFSD Belmopan, Interview with Executive Director and Chairman of APAMO Belmopan, Interview with Director of NPAS Belmopan, Skype with Communications Director of Ya'axché Conservation Trust Belmopan, Interview with former Project Manager
11 March, Wednesday	Belmopan, Interview with Chief Forest Officer, Forestry Department Belmopan, Interview with Director of Environmental Research Institute (UB) Belmopan, Interview with Minister of MFFSD Belmopan, Interview with Project Assistant, NPAS
12 March, Thursday	Belize City, Interview with Fisheries Administrator, Fisheries Department Belize City, Interview with Director and Staff of Belize Audubon Society Belize City, Interview with Director of Programme for Belize Belize City, Interview with Director of Oak Foundation
13 March, Friday	Debriefing with MFFSD CEO and NPAS Director Interview with Chairman of CBO managing Mayflower Bocawina National Park Field visit to Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary Interview with Belize Audubon Society Director and Staff
14 March, Saturday	Field visit to Chiquibul National Park Interview with Executive Director of Friends for Conservation and Development Field visit to Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve Interview with Officer-in-Charge of Douglas D'Silva Forest Station
15 March, Sunday	Consolidating mission notes
16 March, Monday	End of mission, evaluator departs Belize

Annex 2: List of Persons Interviewed

Name	Position	Organization
Hon. Min. Lisel Alamilla	Minister	Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development
Adele Catzim Sanchez	Chief Executive Officer	MFFSD
Beverly Wade	Fisheries Administrator	Fisheries Department-MFFSD (and GEF Focal Point)
Wilbur Sabido	Chief Forest Officer	Forestry Department-MFFSD
Martin Alegria	Chief Environmental Officer	Environmental Department-MFFSD (former GEF focal point)
Arlene Maheia-Young	Director	National Protected Areas Secretariat (NPAS)
Aretha Mortis	Administrative and Finance Assistant	NPAS
Ansel Dubon	Former Project Manager	SNC Project
Dr. Elma Kay	Science Director (Terrestrial)	Environmental Research Institute, University of Belize
Imani Morrison	Executive Director	Oak Foundation
Nayari Diaz Perez	Executive Director	Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT)
Natalie Rosado	Former Executive Director	PACT
Cristina Garcia	Executive Director	Ya'axché Conservation Trust (and former executive director of Belize Association of Private Protected Areas-BAPPA)
Maximiliana Caal	Communications Manager	Ya'axché Conservation Trust
Jose Perez	Executive Director	APAMO
Anthony Hislop	Chairman	APAMO
Amanda Acosta	Executive Director	Belize Audubon Society
Edilberto Romero	Executive Director	Programme for Belize (and past chair of APAMO)
Rafael Manzanero	Executive Director	Friends for Conservation and Development
Tanya Santos Neal	Project Manager	Key Biodiversity Areas Project
German Novelo	Officer-in-Charge	Douglas D'Silva Forest Station, Forestry Department
Diane Wade-Moore	Programme Manager	UNDP Belize
Ismirla Tillett Andrade	Programme Associate	UNDP Belize
Dr. Santiago Carrizosa	Senior Technical Adviser: Biodiversity and Ecosystems	UNDP Regional Center for Latin American and the Caribbean
Dr. Winston McCalla	Regional Consultant	Winston Consulting

Annex 3: Summary of Field Visits

Visit to Mayflower Bocawina National Park Information Center, 13 March 2015



Mayflower Bocawina Visitor Center, 13 Mar 2015

The CBO that manages the Mayflower Bocawina National Park was formed in 2001. They have 3 rangers, would like to expand that number to 5, and a volunteer chairperson. The park covers approximately 7,000 acres, and contains a number of attractions, including birding sites, 5 waterfalls, and an archaeological site. The park charges an entrance fee, USD 10 for non-Belizeans and 2 USD for Belizeans, maintains a camp ground, charging 10 USD per night, and a private company has operated the Bocawina zip line since 2002.

The CBO obtained a USD 5,000 grant from the project to purchase a mobile trailer that they converted into an information center. Some of the money was also used to purchase uniforms for the rangers. The CBO is also working with APAMO on business planning training; this support was also financed by the project. As part of their revenue-generating options, they are considering opening a gift shop, expanding the sale of hand-made crafts, and a cafeteria at the national park site. The CBO representatives indicated that the two main challenges for their operation are boundary delineation and transportation. Enforcement is difficult for them, as the boundaries of the park are not delineated. Also, their rangers are limited to patrolling by bicycle and on foot; they do not have vehicles. In fact, the Forest Department also does not have sufficient transportation logistics.

Capacity for responding to health and safety risks is also a concern. For example, a tourist recently was injured near one of the waterfalls in the park, and it took the rangers, with the help of the zip line operators, more than half a day to extract the person out to safety.

Visit to Cockscomb Wildlife Sanctuary, 13 March 2015



Information Sign for Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, 13 Mar 2015



Refurbished Visitor Center, Cockscomb Basin W.S., 13 Mar 2015

The Belize Audubon Society (BAS) has been involved in management of protected areas in Belize since the early 1980's, and they started co-management of the Cockscomb Wildlife Sanctuary in 1981. Presently, BAS provides about 47 rangers in the country, where the total number is approximately 200. The Forest and Fisheries Department have combined number of about 75 rangers; thus, the non-governmental sector employs well more than half of all rangers.

Entrance fees to the parks BAS manages make up about 60% of their operating costs; the remainder is secured from grants. Only a small amount is contributed through grant funding from PACT, which has a relatively small grant budget to work from.

The co-management agreement developed by the government in 2012-13 is more of a contract than a collaborative management agreement.

The rationalization process sponsored by the project helped urge the decision by BAS to step out of the co-management agreement of Tapir Mountain.

BAS received investment grants from the project, through a competitive proposal based procurement process. The grant for the Cockscomb Wildlife Sanctuary was: USD 29,930

Objective 1: To improve communications at CBWS.

Objective 2: To improve visibility and aesthetics of reception area, while generating revenue.

Objective 3: To improve visitor's experience by adding a new activity along with interpretational signs.

Over the course of eight (8) months under the three main objectives, communication onsite at CBWS was improved, infrastructural upgrades to the office/giftshop were completed, signs were installed to create awareness and visibility of the site and a new activity was introduced to offer additional services to visitors. Overall, each objective was tied to increasing the financial sustainability of the site.

Also, Internet service was extended to the park, allowing them to accept credit card payment. These improvements have certainly improved the park's capacity to generate revenue, but there has been insufficient time to quantify the impacts. For example, 2014 was a particularly rainy during high season, so their visitation numbers were adversely impacted by those circumstances.

At Half Moon Caye, they used the grant money to upgrade the communal kitchen, upgrade the accommodations at the camp ground. At the Crooked Tree National Park, the grant went to upgrade certain infrastructure that was damaged during a recent flood there. In fact, the Crooked Tree staff members often help the community members (and BDF and Coast Guard personnel) with logistics during the rainy season.

Visit to Chiquibul National Park, 14 March 2015



Visitor Center, Chiquibul National Park, 14 Mar 2015



View from Chiquibul National Park, 14 Mar 2015

The NGO Friends for Conservation and Development (FCD) is not part of APAMO.

Their revenue streams are limited, they do not charge entrance fees, but have some eco-tourism revenue, e.g., ATV access. Base annual operating cost is estimated to be approx. USD 1.3 million. They are able to raise USD 0.5-0.6 million, through grant funding.

There are a number of visitors passing through on their way to Caracol, one of the most significant archaeological reserves in the country.

As the park borders Guatemala, FCD is de facto assisting the government in border security. Through national and international funding, they are monitoring forest cover and land use activities, through LANDSAT review and regular aerial surveys.

With respect to payment for ecosystem services, there was a carbon stock assessment made in recent years, estimating a value of USD 1 billion; the Chiquibul forest covers about 7.7% of Belize's territory.

The grant FCD received from the project was used for construction of new visitor center, exhibition displays, and an increase in solar power capacity. The visitor center was included in their management plan, but they, in fact, have not yet completed a business plan. Their longer term plans include collaboration with Caracol and Mountain Pine Ridge, but they thought that it would be best to construct the visitor center now, with the opportunity for funding.

FCD did not participate in the training developed and piloted by ERI. They have their own training program, and the logistics of sending their rangers for 5 days was decided to be prohibitive for them.

Visit to Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve, 14 March 2015



Refurbished Staff Quarters, Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve,
14 Mar 2015



View from Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve, 14 Mar 2015

The Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve is managed by the Forest Department, and there are 4 professional staff assigned to the reserve and more than 20 support staff. There are a number of buildings and other structures within the reserve, but in general, they are mostly in a state of disrepair. In fact, there are no suitable living-quarters, and consequently the staff members are commuting daily to/from San Ignacio. Forest Department management has stressed displeasure with these arrangements, as the fuel costs are extraordinarily high.

The project provided grant funding of approximately USD 30,000, to be used to procure materials required to refurbish 3 of the structures on the reserve, to bring them up to a level that would accommodate the staff as

living-quarters. The Forest Department has contributed approximately USD 15,000 in co-financing, mostly in the form of labor for executing the refurbishment works.

Although there is a dire need to arrange suitable living-quarters, the investment by the project was not very strategic, i.e., it basically covered general maintenance that should be covered under the operating budget of the Forest Department. The chief forest officer for the reserve indicated that they have an eco-tourism development plan, prepared several years ago by university group from the United States, but they have not yet been able to operationalize it.

The reserve retains only minimal self-generating revenue. Concession payments made by logging companies are directed to the governmental central fund, the reserve is able to generate some income with respect to salvage logging; e.g., trees being cleared out that have been damaged by bark beetle infestation. There is no entrance fee, although there are a number of features, such as an extensive cave system, that tour operators regularly bring guests. There are also three hydropower stations along the river at one of the edges of the reserve; but there are no concessions or payment for ecosystem services type revenue generated for the reserve.

Annex 4: Financial Expenditure Details, 2010-2014

Atlas	Description	Outcome 1					Outcome 2					Outcome 3					Project Management					Total	
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		
71205	Intl Consultants-Sht Term-Tech				13,931	32,000				37,150	41,794												124,875
71305	Local Consult.-Sht Term-Tech		41,995	30,000	34,201	39,010		30,200	41,862	25,003	2,778		15,765	22,191	16,564	7,397	665				22,545		330,174
71405	Service Contracts-Individuals	3,000	14,375	14,398	1,198			14,376	43,085	1,198	833		10,000	10,000	833		3,000	12,776	12,798	1,065	105		143,041
71605	Travel Tickets-International	4							5,125								356						5,485
71610	Travel Tickets-Local										140												140
71615	Daily Subsistence Allow-Int								4,634		5,000			698									10,332
71620	Daily Subsistence Allow-Local			30																			30
71635	Travel - Other		1,281	416	1,629	231		529	2,233	1,574	4,108		61	172	108		84	1,118	773	902	613		15,833
72120	Svc Co-Trade and Business Serv																						0
72135	Svc Co-Communications Service									878	3,333												4,212
72145	Svc Co-Training and Educ Serv		937	607		5,282	848	56		3,653	1,055			715	162		100	1,981	115	125			15,635
72205	Office Machinery								55		5,291												5,346
72215	Transportation Equipment					-29,200					29,200						21,050						21,050
72220	Furniture		2,171			0															154		2,325
72305	Agri & Forestry Products																						0
72320	Wood & Paper Products										149												149
72405	Acquisition of Communic Equip		56							36,526	7,708												44,290
72410	Acquisition of Audio Visual Eq									3,118													3,118
72415	Courier Charges		15	26						17	820	30											908
72420	Land Telephone Charges		275	88																			363
72505	Stationary & other Office Supp	50	980	27	89			107	192		123							196	427				2,175
72510	Publications		2,171					1,139	176				868				1,147						5,500
72605	Grants to Instit & other Benef								76,715	6,250													82,965
72615	Micro Capital Grants-Other									17,663	58,997												76,660
72805	Acquis of Computer Hardware	4,654								2,270	6,040												12,964
72810	Acquis of Computer Software		169								4,111												4,280
72815	Inform Technology Supplies		68								38												106
73410	Maint. Oper of Transport Equip		804										42									62	908
73505	Reimb to UNDP for Supp Srvs							745															745
74105	Management and Reporting Srvs																				4,525		4,525
74110	Audit Fees																		4,855	9,629			14,483
74205	Audio Visual Productions																						0
74210	Printing and Publications			488	399					2,069	3,025	1,484		176	765								8,405
74215	Promotional Materials and Dist										1,639												1,639
74230	Audio & Visual Equipment			8																			8
74505	Insurance	203					203						203										608
74525	Sundry		-96	154	205			203	543	205	557		703	154	205			8	6,127				8,964
76135	Realized Gain																						0
		7,910	65,201	46,241	51,652	47,323	1,051	47,353	178,977	141,173	170,299	203	27,615	34,694	17,855	7,397	26,401	16,078	25,094	38,944	780		952,240

Notes: Figures are in USD; Source of information: Combined Delivery Reports (UNDP CO)

Annex 5: List of Information Reviewed

1. Project Document
2. Project Inception Report, Dec 2010
3. Project Internal Operational Manual, Dec 2010
4. Monitoring & Evaluation Plan
5. Project Communication Plan
6. RACI Stakeholder Matrix for Project Implementation and M&E
7. Consultation Guidelines
8. Midterm review (MTR) report, 2013
9. Management response to recommendations made in midterm review, updated 30 Jun 2014
10. Annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIR 2012, PIR 2013, PIR 2014)
11. Draft Project Terminal Report
12. Annual Work Plans (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014)
13. Quarterly Stage Plans (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014)
14. Project Board meeting minutes for meeting Nos. 1 through 16
15. Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scoring sheets for 28 PA's, for years 2010, 2013, 2014
16. Completed GEF Tracking Tool for Biodiversity Projects, 2014
17. Consolidated Financial Sustainability Scorecard (undated)
18. Combined Delivery Reports for years 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014
19. Project Asset Register, internal document
20. Project Co-Financing Spreadsheet, internal PMU file
21. Audit Report for Fiscal Year 2014, Moore Stephens Magana LLP, 31 December 2014
22. Rationalization Report (Wildtracks Belize), 2013
23. Draft Legislation documents, including:
 - a. NATIONAL PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM BILL;
 - b. FISHERIES RESOURCES BILL, 2014;
 - c. FISHERIES (AMENDMENT) BILL;
 - d. FORESTS (AMENDMENT) BILL;
 - e. NATIONAL INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES (AMENDMENT) BILL;
 - f. NATIONAL LANDS (AMENDMENT) BILL;
 - g. NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CULTURE AND HISTORY (AMENDMENT) BILL;
 - h. PROTECTED AREAS CONSERVATION TRUST (AMENDMENT) BILL
24. Draft Protected Areas Conservation Trust Act, 19 Feb 2015
25. Charter for the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT), Belize, 22 Feb 2015
26. Updated Co-Management Agreement template

27. Draft Concession Contract Regulations for National Protected Areas System
28. Fee Policy (Increasing the Efficiency in the Collection, Administration and Investment of Protected Areas Fees in Belize), Feb 2014
29. Final Technical Report on the Assessment of the Priority Protected Areas and Suitable Mechanisms and Avenues for Income Generation, 2012 (Nextera)
30. Sustainable Finance Strategy and Plan for the Belize Protected Area System, Drumm Consulting, Nov 2011
31. Strategies and Guidelines for Investing in Protected Areas in Belize, 2013 (Nextera)
32. Memorandum of Understanding between ERI and Fisheries Department, Feb 2011
33. Memorandum of Understanding between MAR Fund and Fisheries Department, Nov 2011
34. Memorandum of Understanding between Wildlife Conservation Society and Fisheries Department, Apr 2012
35. National Training Programme for Protected Areas Management, 2012
36. Challenges and Lessons Learned of Piloting Implementation of National Training Programme for Protected Areas Management
37. Technical Report: Basic Assessment of Key Ecosystem Coverage of Belize Protected Areas, E. Cherrington, Jul 2014
38. Charter for the National Protected Areas System, Belize, 6 Dec 2014
39. Proposals and Completion Reports for Small Grants Extended to Priority Protected Areas
40. Belize National Sustainable Development Report
41. Belize National Biodiversity Strategy, Sep 1998
42. The Belize National Protected Areas System Plan, Nov 2005
43. The National Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for Belize
44. Government of Belize, IV National Report to UN Convention on Biodiversity, May 2010
45. UNDP Belize, Country Programme Document, 2013-2017
46. United Nations Development Assistance Framework, Belize, 2013-2016

Annex 6: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Relevance: How does the Project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?			
To what extent is the principle of the project in line with sub-national and national priorities?	Level of participation of the concerned agencies in project activities. Consistency with relevant strategies and policies.	Minutes of meetings, Project progress reports, national and regional strategy and policy documents	Desk review, interviews
To what extent is the Project aligned to the main objectives of the GEF focal area?	Consistency with GEF strategic objectives	GEF Strategy documents, PIRs, Tracking Tools	Desk review, interview with UNDP-GEF RTA
Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the Project been achieved?			
Assessment of progress made toward achieving the indicator targets agreed upon in the logical results framework (see Annex 7)			
Efficiency: Was the Project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
The extent of achievement of Project objective and outcomes according to the proposed budget	Percentage of expenditures in proportion with the results	Progress reports, Project Implementation Reviews	Desk review, interviews
Was the Project efficient with respect to incremental cost criteria?	Activities supported by the Project not commonly included among "business as usual" planning and development priorities	National strategies and plans	Desk review, interviews
Country Ownership:			
Are project outcomes contributing to national and regional development plans and priorities?	Plans and policies incorporating initiatives	Government approved plans and policies	Desk review, interviews
Have the relevant country representatives from government and civil society been involved in the Project?	Effective stakeholder involvement	Meeting minutes, reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Have the recipient governments and co-financers maintained their financial commitment to the Project?	Committed co-financing realized	Audit reports, project accounting records, PIRs	Desk review, interviews
Have governments approved policies or regulatory frameworks in line with the Project objective?	Plans and policies incorporating initiatives	Government approved plans and policies	Desk review, interviews
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
Is there evidence that NPAS funding has increased?	Availability and amount of national and subnational budget allocation	Progress reports, PIRs, testimonial evidence	Desk review, interviews
Has institutional capacity for supporting NPAS management been strengthened, and are governance structures capacitated and in place?	Institutional and individual capacities	Progress reports, PIRs, testimonial evidence, training records	Desk review, interviews
Are there social or political risks that may threaten the sustainability of project outcomes?	Socio-economic risks	Socio-economic studies, macroeconomic information	Desk review, interviews

Evaluation Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Are there ongoing activities that pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outcomes?	Environmental threats	State of environment reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?			
Has the project made verifiable environmental improvements	Impact	Progress reports, PIRs	Desk review, interviews
Has the project made verifiable reductions in stress on environmental systems	Impact	Progress reports, PIRs	Desk review, interviews
Has the project demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements?	Impact	Progress reports, PIRs	Desk review, interviews
Stakeholder Involvement:			
Has the Project consulted with and made use of the skills, experience, and knowledge of the appropriate government entities, NGOs, community groups, private sector entities, local governments, and academic institutions?	Active stakeholder involvement	Meeting minutes, reports, interview records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Have relevant vulnerable groups and powerful supporters and opponents of the processes been properly involved?	Active stakeholder involvement	Meeting minutes, reports, interview records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Has the Project sought participation from stakeholders in (1) project design, (2) implementation, and (3) monitoring & evaluation?	Record of comments and response	Plans, reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Catalytic Role:			
Explain how the Project has had a catalytic or replication effect in the country and/or region.	Reference by other projects, programs	Interview records, project fact sheets	Desk review, interviews
Synergy with Other Projects/Programs			
Explain how synergies with other projects/programs have been incorporated in the design and/or implementation of the project.	Reference to other projects/programs	Plans, reports, meeting minutes	Desk review, interviews
Preparation and Readiness			
Were project objective and components clear, practicable, and feasible within its time frame?	Project efficiency, stakeholder involvement	Logical results framework	Desk review, interviews
Were the capacities of the executing institution(s) and its counterparts properly considered when the Project was designed?	Project efficiency and effectiveness	Progress reports, audit results	Desk review, interviews
Were partnership arrangements properly identified and roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to Project approval?	Project effectiveness	Memorandums of understanding, agreements	Desk review, interviews
Were counterpart resources, enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements in place at Project entry?	Project efficiency and effectiveness	Interview records, progress reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Financial Planning			

Evaluation Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allowed management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allowed for timely flow of funds?	Project efficiency	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews
Has there been due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits?	Project efficiency	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Has promised co-financing materialized?	Project efficiency	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews
Supervision and Backstopping			
Has GEF Agency staff identified problems in a timely fashion and accurately estimate their seriousness?	Project effectiveness	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews
Has GEF Agency staff provided quality support and advice to the project, approved modifications in time, and restructured the Project when needed?	Project effectiveness	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews
Has the GEF Agency provided the right staffing levels, continuity, skill mix, and frequency of field visits for the Project?	Project effectiveness	Progress reports, back-to-office reports, internal appraisals	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Delays and Project Outcomes and Sustainability			
If there have been delays in project implementation and completion, what were the reasons?	Sustainability of Project outcomes	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews
Have the delays affected project outcomes and/or sustainability, and, if so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?	Sustainability of Project outcomes	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews
Monitoring & Evaluation			
Has the Project M&E plan been implemented according to plan?	Project effectiveness	PIRs, M&E reports	Desk review, interviews
Has there been sufficient focus on results-based management?	Project effectiveness	PIRs, M&E reports	Desk review, interviews

Annex 7: Matrix for Rating Achievement of Project Objective and Outcomes

No.	Indicator	End of Project Target(s)	TE Comments	Rating	Rating Score
Objective: By July 2013, Belize will have effectively developed legal, financial, and institutional capacities to ensure sustainability of the existing National Protected Areas System (NPAS)					
Obj-1	Existence of a reformed NPAS	Institutionally articulated NPAS under the management of a statutory national coordination body	Through an executive decision by the MFFSD, a draft amendment to the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) Act outlines the PACT as the statutory body responsible for coordination, management, and funding of the national protected areas system. A charter has also been prepared detailing the role and responsibilities of the envisioned PACT. By the time of the TE, in March 2015, the draft legislation has not yet been presented to the cabinet of ministers for approval.	Moderately Satisfactory	70
Obj-2	Increase in financial capacity of NPAS in Belize as measured through the Total Average Score for all PAs in the UNDP Financial Scorecard	Legal and regulatory framework: 58% Business planning: 40% Tools for revenue generation: 48% Total: 56.8%	Legal and regulatory framework: 57.74% Business planning: 38.98% Tools for revenue generation: 49.30% Total: 48.89% With respect to the financial capacity of the NPAS, measured through the average score using the UNDP financial sustainability scorecard, the end of project results represented an increase of more than 22% from baseline levels, although short of the target.	Satisfactory	80
Obj-3	Change in the financial gap to cover basic PA management costs and investments	≤ \$4,743,897 USD/yr	The gap in funding for basic PA management has decreased to USD 5,487,696 in 2014, representing a reduction of USD 509,552 as compared to the 2010 baseline. The reduction is attributed to an increase in the Government's allocation to the Forest and Fisheries Departments, and also an increase in grants entering the system.	Moderately Satisfactory	75
Obj-4	Change in coverage of key terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems within NPAS	Lowland broad-leaved forests: 546,904 ha Sub-mountain broad-leaved forests: 195,844 ha Mangroves: 17,075 ha	The results of an assessment made in June 2014 indicated the following: Total lowland broadleaf forests: 408,918 ha (2010 baseline was in 407,776 ha, not the 546,904 ha indicated in the project document), representing a slight increase. Sub-mountain broadleaf forests: 226,499 ha; representing a decrease of approximately 0.2%, which is attributed to some deforestation in the protected areas of the Maya Mountain Massif. Mangroves: 28,060 ha; which is a 65% increase from 2010 baseline levels.	Satisfactory	80
Project Objective			TE Outcome Rating Score	Rating	
			76	Moderately Satisfactory	

No.	Indicator	End of Project Target(s)	TE Comments	Rating	Rating Score		
Outcome 1: The NPAS is supported by legal and institutional reforms furthering efforts in attaining sustainability of the system							
1.1	Change in the institutional framework for the NPAS	Single statutory agencies within the Forest and Fisheries Departments (i.e., "Forest and Wildlife Authority" and "Wildlife Authority/Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority," respectively) with a permanent/participatory Protected Areas Coordinating Mechanism (PCM)	The midterm review pointed out that the target should be a single statutory body, not one in each the Forest and Fisheries Department. In 2010, after the National Protected Areas Commission had gone defunct, the National Protected Areas Technical Committee (NAPTC) was established to advise the Government, and the National Protected Areas Secretariat was formed to administer the work of the NPATC. A draft amendment to the PACT Act, outlines PACT as the statutory body responsible for coordination, management, and financing the national protected area system, but the act has not yet been brought up to the cabinet of ministers for approval. At the time of the TE in March 2015, the Secretariat was still serving as the temporary protected areas coordination mechanism, but continuation of funding was uncertain.	Moderately Unsatisfactory	65		
1.2	Number of legal instruments (new and amended) which directly support the financial sustainability of the NPAS	Tourism (fees and concessions) = 2 Petroleum & Mineral Extraction (concessions and royalties) = 1 Water use (fees) = 1	The project facilitated drafting of regulations to guide development concessions in protected areas. And, two templates, one in the tourism sector and one in the extractive industries sector, were prepared. A template on water use (fees) was not prepared as planned, because circumstances changed with the formation of the National Integrated Water Resource Management Authority, which is responsible for establishing and implementing water use policies.	Satisfactory	80		
1.3	Number of officials from the GOB and other key stakeholders supporting the national coordination body for NPAS management	45 members (government members: 26, quasi-governmental members: 9; non- government members: 10)	Members of the National Protected Areas Technical Committee include the following: 1. Belize Association of Private Protected Areas (BAPPA) – the association is comprised of some 32 members. 2. Association of Protected Areas Management Organization – this organization is comprised of 12 members. 3. Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute 4. Protected Areas Conservation Trust 5. Forest Department 6. Fisheries Department 7. Lands Department 8. Institute of Archaeology 9. Ministry of Tourism 10. Agriculture Department 11. University of Belize/Environmental Research Institute. In addition to the above, the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Cane Farmers Association, BELTRADE (investment promotion), and protected areas management organizations such as Friends of Conservation and Development and Corozal Sustainable Future Initiative (formerly Shipstern Nature Reserve Belize Ltd.) are supportive of the NPATC and the Secretariat.	Satisfactory	80		
Sub-total, Outcome 1			Amount Spent	Weighted Cost	TE Outcome Rating Score	Weighted Score	Rating
			USD 218,327	0.26	75	20	Moderately Satisfactory

No.	Indicator	End of Project Target(s)	TE Comments				Rating	Rating Score
Outcome 2: Modernize and diversify financing for the sustainability of the NPAS								
2.1	Existence of a national budget for the PA system	National budgetary allocation for NPAS	By project closure, direct allocation for the National Protected Areas System in the national budget was not achieved. PA financing continues to be managed through departmental budgets. Through support extended by the project, a proposed formula for determining budgetary allocation, based upon conservation objectives, was developed.				Moderately Unsatisfactory	65
2.2	Increase in annual government budgeting for PAs	USD 2,897,714 /yr	In 2014, a total of USD 2,532,323 was contributed, representing an increase of USD 214,152 over 2010 project baseline, but somewhat short of the target. Consider the project spanned the economic downturn resulting from the global financial crisis in 2008-2010, the increase in funding is considered a satisfactory achievement.				Satisfactory	80
2.3	Increase in income generated by non-governmental sources for eight (8) participating parks	A 25% increase over the baseline	Baseline Figures: 1. Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary = USD 90,236 2. Blue Hole/Half Moon Caye Natural Monument = USD 52,842 3. Hol Chan Marine Reserve = USD 491,500 4. Chiquibul National Park = USD 15,207 5. Caye Caulker Marine Reserve = USD 81,055 6. Gladden Spit MR = USD 67,695 7. Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve = USD 23,450 8. Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve = USD 0	End-of-Project Figures: 1. USD 158,970 2. USD 536,737 3. USD 437,215 4. ? 5. USD 69,685 6. USD 107,880 7. USD 30,645 8. USD 0	Satisfactory		80	
2.4	Increase in tourism-based fees collected in PAs and accounted for by the GOB	USD 2,598,966 USD/yr	With respect to collection of tourism based fees, the figure reported in 2014, USD 1,610,587 is a reduction from the baseline, and attributed to the fact that some protected areas no longer have active on the ground management.				Moderately Unsatisfactory	65
2.5	Number of long-term/biodiversity-friendly investment plans established with key productive sectors (e.g., tourism, fisheries, forestry, electricity generation, and mineral extraction and oil)	At least four (4) representing diversified sectors	Limited progress was made regarding establishing and operationalizing long-term/biodiversity-friendly investment plans with key productive sectors. The project board made a decision to hold off substantive discussions with the productive sector until the enabling environment is in place. However, an agreement was reached with a cooperative from Placencia village for commercial sea-weed production in a marine reserve.				Moderately Satisfactory	70
2.6	Number of cooperation agreements with public and private sectors to underwrite PA management costs	Up to 10 medium- to long-term cooperation agreements	At least eight agreements have been signed, in some cases new agreements and in others extensions.				Satisfactory	80
Sub-Total, Outcome 2			Amount Spent	Weighted Cost	TE Outcome Rating Score	Weighted Score	Rating	
			USD 538,853	0.64	73	47	Moderately Satisfactory	

No.	Indicator	End of Project Target(s)	TE Comments	Rating	Rating Score		
Outcome 3: NPAS is supported by enhanced management capacity							
3.1	Increase in PA management effectiveness as measured by METT scores for 28 PAs (3 Forest Reserves, 7 Marine Reserves, 4 National Monuments, 5 National Parks, 2 Natural Reserves, 4 PPAs, and 3 Sanctuaries)	High: 18 PA Medium: 10 PA Low: 0 PA Based on the following definitions: High (75>), Medium (55-74), Low (<55)	The management effectiveness tracking tool completed in 2014 indicated the following: High: 12 PA Medium: 10 PA Low: 6 PA The average 2014 score was 67.38%, reflecting a decrease in 3.61% from 2010. The decrease has been attributed by the project management team to the following factors: a. A change in the management arrangements at the Sarstoon Temash National Park and Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve, i.e. the management of these PA's are now the sole responsibility of the forest Department as the previous co-management partners are no longer involved in day-to-day management. The results has been that with limited resources the Forest Department has not been able to maintain the same level of management as when the co-management arrangement was in operation. b. With the knowledge gained by some PA managers through the training sponsored by the project, they subsequently scored their respective PA's more stringent.	Moderately Satisfactory	75		
3.2	Number of PA administrative staff (government and non-government) trained in PA management and monitoring techniques	Up to 90 additional trained PA staff	The project supported the development and piloting of implementation of the national training program on PA management. All in all, a total of 67 individuals attended one or more of the courses offered. This is considered a noteworthy achievement. Even though 90 persons were set as the target, ERI sensibly spent more time screening the background of the individuals to ensure higher quality participation. Courses supported with project funding included: 1. Conservation Finance 1 – attended by 14 individuals 2. Financial Management (Level 1) – attended by 13 individuals. 3. PA Management Effectiveness – attended by 11 individuals. 4. PA Management Planning – attended by 15 individuals. 5. Research and Monitoring 1 – attended by 15 individuals. After their contract with the project expired in June 2014, ERI received additional funding from PACT and the University of Belize to continue piloting of the training program, with delivering of the following additional courses: 1. Conservation Finance – Advanced 2. Financial Management 2 3. Research and Monitoring 2	Satisfactory	85		
3.3	Number of PA management organizations with tools for effective management in place	50% of participating PA management organizations are using management tools in their planning (tentative)	24 entities participated in the national training programme for protected areas management. Of this amount 20 are directly involved in protected areas management; included in these are the Forest and Fisheries Department. This means that approximately 90% of all protected areas management organizations in Belize were delivered knowledge and skills for effective management.	Satisfactory	85		
Sub-Total, Outcome 3			Amount Spent	Weighted Cost	TE Outcome Rating Score	Weighted Score	Rating
			USD 87,764	0.10	82	8	Satisfactory

No.	Indicator	End of Project Target(s)	TE Comments		Rating	Rating Score
Overall Outcome Rating			Amount Spent	Overall Outcome Score	Rating	
			USD 844,944	75	Moderately Satisfactory	

Notes:

Weighted scores are based upon the weighted costs of each outcome. The weighted outcome costs are based upon the total amount spent for Outcomes 1-3, excluding project management.

The TE rating scores are based upon the judgement of the evaluator, according assessed achievement toward each outcome, using the following qualitative rating scale:

Qualitative Rating	Rating Score
Highly Satisfactory	90 – 100
Satisfactory	80 – 90
Moderately Satisfactory	70 – 80
Moderately Unsatisfactory	60 – 70
Unsatisfactory	50 – 60
Highly Unsatisfactory	<50

Annex 8: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement Form

Evaluator:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and: respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/ or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: James Lenoci

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed in Belmopan on 10 March 2015

Signatures:



James Lenoci
Terminal Evaluator

Annex 9: Terms of Reference (excluding annexes)

TERMINAL EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the Strengthening National Capacities for the Operationalization, Consolidation, and Sustainability of Belize’s Protected Areas System (PIMS # 4207.)

The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows:

PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

Project Title:	Strengthening National Capacities for the Operationalization, Consolidation, and Sustainability of Belize’s Protected Areas System			
GEF Project ID:	4207		<i>at endorsement</i> <i>(Million US\$)</i>	<i>at completion</i> <i>(Million US\$)</i>
UNDP Project ID:	00074617	GEF financing:	975,000.00	975,000.00
Country:	Belize	IA/EA own:	25,000.00	25,000.00
Region:	LAC	Government:		
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Other:	947,471.00	947,471.00
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):		Total co-financing:	972,471.00	972,471.00
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Forestry Fisheries and Sustainable Development	Total Project Cost:	1,947,471.00	1,947,471.00
Other Partners involved:	Forest Department/ Fisheries Department	ProDoc Signature (date project began):		September 30, 2010 (November 1 st 2010)
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: December 31 2013	Actual: October 31, 2014

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The project was designed to: safeguard globally significant terrestrial, coastal, and marine biodiversity of Belize. The project objective is that by July 2013, Belize will have effectively developed legal, financial, and institutional capacities to ensure sustainability of the existing NPAS. This objective will be achieved through three interrelated outcomes that will generate the flow of global-, national-, and local-level benefits for:

- a) enhanced protection of over 1.22 million ha of terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems, including 546,904 ha of lowland broadleaf forests, 195,844 ha of sub-mountain broadleaf forests, and 17,075 ha of mangroves;

- b) improved management effectiveness for 28 PAs (3 Forest Reserves, 7 Marine Reserves, 4 National Monuments, 5 National Parks, 2 Natural Reserves, 4 Private Protected Areas, and 3 Sanctuaries);
- c) an increase in the financial capacity of Belize's NPAS by 30%, which is currently at 26.4% as measured through the total average score for all PAs in the UNDP Financial Scorecard, including an increase of annual government budgeting for PAs from \$2.3 million USD to \$2.9 million USD per year and doubling the income generated by non-governmental sources for eight participating PAs; and
- d) a national training program to sustain long-term capacity building for PAs that will be developed to train staff from 20 co-managed PAs in management and business plan development, administration, and financial planning, as well as 90 staff from the PAs' administrative body in PA management and monitoring techniques.

The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects.

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHOD

An overall approach and method¹ for conducting project terminal evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact**, as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects. A set of questions covering each of these criteria have been drafted and are included with this TOR (Annex C) The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, in particular the GEF operational focal point, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission to Belize including the following project sites:

- **Chiquibul National Park**
- **Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary (CBWS)**
- **APAMO Office**
- **National Protected Areas Secretariat**

Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum:

- **Martin Alegria** – Chief Environmental Officer and Past GEF Operational Focal Point
- **Beverly Wade**- Fisheries Administrator
- **Wilber Sabido**- Chief Forest Officer/ Project Director
- **Jose Perez**- Executive Director, Association of Protected Areas Management Organization

¹ For additional information on methods, see the [Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 7, pg. 163

- **Nayari Diaz Perez**- Protected Areas Conservation Trust
- **Natalie Rosado**- Past Acting Executive Director, Protected Areas Conservation Trust
- **Imani Fairweather Morrison** – Oak Foundation
- **Colin Gillett**- Past Representative of Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute
- **Amanda Burgos Acosta**- Belize Audubon Society
- **Arlene Maheia Young** – National Protected Areas Secretariat
- **Elma Kay** – Environment Research Institute
- **Adele Catzim Sanchez**- CEO, Ministry of Forestry Fisheries and Sustainable Development
- **Diane Wade Moore**- United Nations Development Programme
- **Rafael Manzanero** – Friends for Conservation and Development
- **Edilberto Romero** – Past Chair of Association of Protected Areas Management Organization
- **Anthony Hislop**- Chair, Association of Protected Areas Management Organization
- **Hon. Minister Lisel Alamilla**- (was the past Representative of BAPPA at the inception of the project)
- **Christina Gacia**- Belize Association of Private Protected Areas (BAPPA)

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in [Annex B](#) of this Terms of Reference.

EVALUATION CRITERIA & RATINGS

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework (see [Annex A](#)), which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**. Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in [Annex D](#).

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	<i>rating</i>	2. IA& EA Execution	<i>rating</i>
M&E design at entry		Quality of UNDP Implementation	
M&E Plan Implementation		Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	
Overall quality of M&E		Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	
3. Assessment of Outcomes	<i>rating</i>	4. Sustainability	<i>rating</i>
Relevance		Financial resources:	
Effectiveness		Socio-political:	
Efficiency		Institutional framework and governance:	
Overall Project Outcome Rating		Environmental :	
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	

PROJECT FINANCE / COFINANCE

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures.

Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator(s) will receive assistance from the Country Office (CO) and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (mill. US\$)		Government (mill. US\$)		Partner Agency (mill. US\$)		Total (mill. US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Actual	Actual
Grants								
Loans/Concessions								
• In-kind support								
• Other								
Totals								

MAINSTREAMING

UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

IMPACT

The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.²

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions, recommendations and lessons**.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP CO in Belize. The UNDP CO will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project Team will be responsible for

² A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office: [ROtI Handbook 2009](#)

liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

EVALUATION TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the evaluation will be 15 days according to the following plan:

Activity	Timing	Completion Date
Preparation	2 days	February 2nd 2015
Evaluation Mission	7 days	February 5th -11th 2015
Draft Evaluation Report	5 days	March 5th 2015
Final Report	1 day	March 26th 2015

EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
Inception Report	Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method	No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission.	Evaluator submits to UNDP CO
Presentation	Initial Findings	End of evaluation mission	To project management, UNDP CO
Draft Final Report	Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission	Sent to CO, reviewed by RTA, PCU, GEF OFPs
Final Report*	Revised report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to CO for uploading to UNDP ERC.

*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

EVALUATOR'S REQUIREMENT

The consultant shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Experience with GEF financed projects is an advantage. The evaluator selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

The evaluator must present the following qualifications:

- Minimum 5 years of relevant professional experience
- Knowledge of UNDP and GEF
- Previous experience with results-based monitoring and evaluation methodologies;
- Technical knowledge in the targeted focal area(s)

EVALUATOR ETHICS

Evaluation consultant will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct (Annex E) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the [UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'](#)

PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

%	Milestone
10%	At contract signing
40%	Following submission and approval of the 1ST draft terminal evaluation report
50%	Following submission and approval (UNDP-CO and UNDP RTA) of the final terminal evaluation report

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are requested to apply online (indicate the site, such as <http://jobs.undp.org>, etc.) by **4:30 pm on January 2nd 2015**. Individual consultants are invited to submit applications together with their CV for these positions. The application should contain a current and complete C.V. in English with indication of the e-mail and phone contact. Shortlisted candidates will be requested to submit a price offer indicating the total cost of the assignment (including daily fee, per diem and travel costs).

UNDP applies a fair and transparent selection process that will take into account the competencies/skills of the applicants as well as their financial proposals. Qualified women and members of social minorities are encouraged to apply.