

FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Name: Environmental Law Institute, Center for Native Lands

Project Title: Indigenous Peoples and Biodiversity Conservation in the Northern and Southern Mesoamerican Hotspots (exploratory work)

Implementation Partners for this Project:

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): December 1, 2002 – Sept. 30, 2003

Date of Report (month/year): April 15, 2005

II. OPENING REMARKS

Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.

The exploratory work conducted under this grant has been helpful in determining the needs of the indigenous and conservation communities throughout Mesoamerica, and has fed Native Lands' own plans in conjunction with indigenous and conservation partners for future work to address these needs. The work has created important opportunities to fund collaborative projects. While no funding has been forthcoming so far, we will continue to seek the support needed to carry out these initiatives.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: *Enter project purpose from the Logical Framework worksheet of the approved project proposal.*

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level:	
<i>Specific initiatives underway that link indigenous peoples with the conservation community in co-developing and implementing corridor conservation strategies.</i>	This indicator and the third are related, as all initiatives are dependent on technical and financial support. Native Lands has facilitated the initial planning for a Ngöbe mapping project in the Bocas del Toro region with CEASPA/APRORENANB and for the <i>Third Indigenous Conference on Land, the Environment, and Culture</i> in Nicaragua, with URACCAN. The design of these projects was to facilitate strong interaction between the indigenous peoples and conservation community. The projects themselves are not currently underway due to funding constraints.
<i>Information and data regarding indigenous peoples</i>	This purpose has been met through our active

<p><i>throughout the region readily available for, and used by, conservation actors.</i></p>	<p>participation in the development and preparation of the E.P. for the North Mesoamerica region. Native Lands provided to the profile development team a copy of its database of the map <i>Indigenous Peoples and Natural Ecosystems of Central America and Southern Mexico</i>. Mac Chapin participated in the February 2003 workshop in Guatemala City, and both Mac and Kenn Rapp traveled for three weeks with the CI team to help prepare the E.P. In addition to these activities that were carried out in the region, we met and corresponded several times with CI staff in Washington to discuss the E.P. and provided written memos outlining our thoughts and advice. These written communications are attached. Despite our active participation, we are concerned that the final E.P. does not adequately take into account the views of the indigenous peoples who populate the Northern Mesoamerican conservation corridors.</p> <p>We also completed a community-level assessment of the Rama Indians near Bluefields. A final report on the outcomes of this activity is attached.</p>
<p><i>Technical and financial support available for conservation initiatives in indigenous areas of focal corridors.</i></p>	<p>As described above, Native Lands has been successful in providing technical support in the initial planning work for a number of initiatives. We supported CEASPA/APRORENANB in the preparation of its LOI for CEPF and we worked with URACCAN to complete the budget and agenda for the <i>Third Indigenous Conference</i>, and prepare a proposal for financial support. The proposal, agenda, and budget are attached.</p> <p>We hope to move forward with these initiatives as soon as we are able to secure funding.</p>

Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.

Our work has been successful in meeting our objectives for providing data/information inputs for conservation planning and providing technical support for proposal and project development. While specific initiatives are not yet underway, the groundwork has been completed.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Our work created a strong expectation within the indigenous communities where proposals were developed that there would be interest by donors in the work we identified. This was expected – what was unexpected is the fact that we have not been able to identify and secure the financial resources necessary to carry forward the proposed activities. Many funders over the past two to three years have severely limited the availability of funding for work in the region. While the economic and financial situation of funders is outside our control, it has helped to cause the negative unexpected impact of raising expectations within the region for the implementation of

important identified activities, and the disappointment within the indigenous communities that the work must be placed on hold until adequate financial support can be located.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Project Outputs: Enter the project outputs from the Logical Framework for the project

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Output 1: Active participation in the Northern Mesoamerica Ecosystem Profile preparation process provided in accordance with required needs of the CEPF E.P. preparation team.	
<i>All requested baseline data to be used as material preparation for the January workshop compiled and submitted to the E.P. preparation team by mid-December 2002.</i>	In December 2002, we met with the E.P. preparation team to identify data and informational needs related to indigenous occupation and use of priority conservation areas. After this meeting, we provided digital geographic data as well as reports addressing opportunities for indigenous-conservationist collaboration. These documents are attached.
<i>Participation of at least one Native Lands representative in the January 2003 workshop carried out.</i>	Mac Chapin attended this workshop in February 2003.
<i>Continued technical assistance and information gathering provided during the post-workshop period in which it is planned that small teams carry out focused visits to potential priority areas.</i>	Mac Chapin and Kenn Rapp traveled with the CI E.P. development team for three weeks in Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize. Continued to provide additional consultative and written inputs to the E.P. team throughout the grant. All written memos and reports are attached to this report.
Output 2: Exploratory work in the Southern Mesoamerica region carried out with the aim of developing a series of initiatives in which both indigenous peoples and conservationists would partner in targeted corridors.	
<i>Assistance on proposal development to intermediary organizations working with the Ngöbe in the Bocas del Toro region of northwestern Panama and the Rama region of Nicaragua.</i>	We worked with CEASPA and APRORENANB to develop a proposal for mapping Ngöbe lands in Bocas del Toro.
<i>Initial dialogues and site visits carried out in the Bocas del Toro region of northwestern Panama and the Rama region of southeastern Nicaragua.</i>	Native Lands has met with indigenous and conservation organizations to discuss mapping in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. As noted above, a full proposal for mapping activities was developed for Ngöbe territories in Panama. Additionally, we conducted an in-depth assessment of indigenous issues in the Punta Gorda-Cerro Silva Natural Reserves in collaboration with URACCAN, and Rama, Creole, and mestizo communities south of Bluefields in Nicaragua. The full report is attached.
<i>Plan for The Third Indigenous Conference on Land, Environment, and Culture in Central America and Southern Mexico developed and proposals for funding submitted by the end of 6 month project period.</i>	We have held numerous meetings with URACCAN staff to plan for the Third Indigenous Conference, and have developed a full proposal including a broad agenda, and budget. The proposal, agenda, and budget are attached.

<p><i>Plans for future participatory mapping developed and agreed to by key conservation actors within the CEPF focal corridors.</i></p>	<p>Our work with the Kuna in east Panama and the Rama of Nicaragua (funded by other sources) provides a strong documentation for the potential of participatory mapping to provide mutual benefits to indigenous peoples and conservationists. As discussed above, we have helped APRORENANB in developing a full proposal for mapping work among the Ngöbe in west Panama in partnership with CEASPA.</p>
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Describe the success of the project in terms of delivering the intended outputs.

All intended outputs were realized, and, as the project was intended, these outputs have positioned Native Lands and our partners in the region so that they are prepared to move forward with the next logical steps, as soon as additional funding can be secured.

Were any outputs unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

N/A

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

All of the work carried out under this grant was confined to studies, evaluations, and the design of projects to protect natural ecosystems and indigenous culture. There were no required actions related to environmental or social safeguard policies.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT

Describe any lessons learned during the various phases of the project. Consider lessons both for future projects, as well as for CEPF's future performance.

The intentional design of this project was to explore the needs of the region and develop projects based on our interaction with both indigenous and conservation communities. The openness of the goals and the time dedicated to working together with communities to develop ideas into workable projects was essential to meeting this objective. What is startling, though, is that we have not been able to raise any funding for the projects identified. In particular, we interpreted early discussions with CEPF officials to indicate that there was opportunity for significant funding from CEPF to support the identified projects. This message was confused in later conversations, where indications from CEPF officials were in direct conflict with what we heard early on.

We hope that our experiences will carry a lesson for CEPF. The cardinal rule for a donor is “do no harm.” The greatest harm that a donor can do is to allow a potential applicant to believe that a donation, especially a sizeable one, is within reach. It is better to let a potential applicant err on the side of feeling discouraged, rather than encouraged, in regard to a potential donation. A consistent message, from start to

finish, with potential applicants would greatly increase successful interactions with future grantees.

As indicated in recent email correspondence, we believe that there is another lesson for CEPF related to these projects. This one relates to how it can best integrate indigenous peoples into conservation strategies. The last meeting that CEPF had with representatives from CEASPA and APRORENANB for the proposed Ngöbe mapping project in the Bocas del Toro region did not go well. Representatives from CEASPA and APRORENANB said the conversation was “unilateral,” that CEPF told them what it wanted, would not listen to what they had to say, and suggested changes in the project that they felt “did not take into account the needs of the communities.”

The lesson here is that if CEPF wants indigenous peoples to help it with conservation schemes, it must first develop trust within the indigenous community. One of our guiding principles is that indigenous peoples must be treated with the utmost respect, whether or not you agree with them. Indigenous peoples throughout Mesoamerica can add substantially to the conservation agenda, so long as the conservation goals take equal account of the needs of the indigenous agenda. In future dealings with indigenous peoples, we suggest that conversations and outcomes provide avenues for both the conservation and indigenous agendas to move forward in concert, and most importantly, that the indigenous peoples be considered equal at the table.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/failure)

As stated above, the broad goals and flexible timeframes contributed greatly to the successes achieved.

Project Execution: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/failure)

In a similar vein to our comments under lessons learned above, the execution of the E.P. development process appeared to take no more than a cursory interest in the social aspects of the region, particularly indigenous peoples’ understanding of the region’s needs. Although Native Lands participated as actively as possible in the E.P. process, our opportunities for constructive input into the E.P. development process were limited and disorganized, and despite our efforts to the contrary, there were no opportunities for direct input from indigenous representatives. In our view, this resulted in a final E.P. with very little understanding of the views of the indigenous peoples who populate the Northern Mesoamerican conservation corridors.

VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Notes regarding our financial report:

In reviewing our year-end finances, we identified expenses for payments to our regional contract employee, Amilcar Castañeda related to his execution of work for this project (planning and fundraising for the Third Indigenous Conference) that were mistakenly charged to another expense area. We reclassified these expenses in the final quarter of the grant. This accounts for the large increase in costs shown on the professional services line.