

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Programme for Belize

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): A National Co-Management Policy for Protected Areas in Belize

Implementation Partners for this Project: Association of Protected Areas Management Organizations (APAMO)

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): 1 December, 2007 – 31 December, 2009

Date of Report (month/year): April 2010

II. OPENING REMARKS

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

In 2007 APAMO lobbied government for the establishment of the National Protected Areas Commission (NPAC) and was successful in negotiating with the previous government, 5 NGOs seats on this commission. The purpose of the Commission was to:

- Advise the Ministers responsible for protected areas in matters pertaining to the implementation of the National Protected Areas System Plan (NPASP) as well advise on issues affecting protected areas.
- Support efforts to identify and access funds for the implementation of the NPASP.
- Promote and oversee the revision of the National Parks System Act and other protected area legislation, and oversee the preparation of consolidated protected area legislation, titled as the National Protected Area System Act (NPASA).
- Serve as a body for national coordination and consultation between government agencies, national NGO's and CBO's, international NGO's, and others.

However, in 2008 there was a change in government and with the resignation of the NPAC coordinator in February 2009, very little effort has been made to date by the current government to re-activate NPAC and as such NPAC is currently non functional. This has contributed significantly to the delays in the endorsement of the co-management framework and agreement and proposed amendments to the NPAC to legalize the co-management agreements.

The change in government required for us to socialize the objectives of the project to get the commitment and support from this new government. This has been challenging as it relates to those activities that address policy since this started under the previous government. Never the less, APAMO has made every effort to meet with the Ministers of Natural Resources and the Environment and the Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: *Increased legal stability and improved capacities for the effective management of the co-managed protected areas of Belize*

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level: Increased legal stability and improved capacities for the effective management of the co-managed protected areas of Belize	
<i>Indicator 1: A Memorandum of understanding developed and signed between APAMO and Forest and Fisheries Departments indicating their agreement to collaborate and support a process for the development, consultation, approval and adoption of the co-management policy and framework agreements</i>	A Letter of Understanding (LOU) was signed at the beginning of the project, by both the Chief Forest Officers and the Fisheries Administrator, both co-chairs of the National Protected Areas Commission (NPAC), committing to developing a National Co-management Framework for the Protected Areas of Belize and strengthening the co-management agreements as a component of the National Protected Areas System Plan (NPASP) for Belize.
<i>Indicator 2: A letter of commitment from the Forest and Fisheries department indicating the commitment to promote the approval and adoption of the final co-management policy by the Government of Belize by the end of the project</i>	The LOU signed also outlined that a joint and agreed upon approach would be taken to ensure that the Minister of Natural Resources can make appropriate representation to Cabinet on behalf of the sector to garner support for the subsequent endorsement of the framework by the government.
<i>Indicator 3: At least US\$100,000 committed by donors for APAMO to continue providing support to its members to address the issues affecting protected areas.</i>	In August 2008 APAMO secured a large grant titled: “Strengthening the Institutional and Financial Capacities of the Association of Protected Areas Management Organizations and its member agencies” for US \$300,000 from the Oak Foundation and more recently a medium grant titled: “Support for Capacity Building for improved Protected Areas Management in Belize” from the Protected Areas Conservation Trust for the sum of US \$112,471. Both grants are aimed at providing continued support to its members to address the issues affecting protected areas, improving protected areas management and ensuring that the integrity and security of the protected areas are maintained.

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

We consider that the project has been successful in achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators. Even though the National Co-management Framework and the proposed amendments to the National Parks System Act have not been officially endorsed by the government, they have been completed and have placed us one step closer towards increasing the legal stability of the co-managements and the security of the protected areas. We recognize that as an association we will need to continue our advocacy and lobbying efforts to get the official endorsement by the government. None the less, the National Co-management Framework, which provides the first clear description of co-management and the first set of technical guidelines for co-management in Belize, and while not officially endorsed by the government, is being used by APAMO and its members.

APAMO is focusing on building the capacities of co-managers to be able to meet their obligations and carry out their functions under the framework, effectively thereby increasing the effective management of our protected areas, hence the capacities of protected area managers are being improved.

These products have also been recognized by UNDP who is currently committed to supporting the implementation of the National Protected Areas System Plan.

The support from CI CEPF has also allowed APAMO to leverage close of half a million US dollars in additional funding from other donors towards the continued efforts in policy development and capacity building for the increased effectiveness of protected areas management in Belize.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Project Outputs:

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<p>Output 1: A National Co-Management Policy and four models of co-management agreements developed in consultation with all stakeholders and presented to the Government of Belize for adoption.</p>	
<p><i>Indicator 1.1: A Co-management Policy developed with the participation of the relevant government agencies and the protected areas management organizations and other key stakeholders (buffer communities) and the final products presented to the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Belize and accepted by the end of the project.</i></p>	<p>A National Protected Areas Co-Management Framework for Belize was developed and completed in December 2008. This was officially submitted to the Forest and Fisheries Departments, through NPAC, for their perusal. This was done with the input, review and recommendations from the environmental NGOs and CBOs co-managing protected areas both APAMO and other co-managing organizations as well as the technical staff from Forest and Fisheries Departments.</p> <p>The last NPAC meeting was held in December 2008 and after the resignation of the coordinator in February 2009, the post has not been filled to date and NPAC has not been functional. Never the less, the Forest Department undertook a vetting process of the co-management framework and conducted its own consultations during 2009. This was finalized in December 2009. Although the framework has not been formally adopted by government, it is being used by APAMO and its members. APAMO is still awaiting adoption from the Ministry of Natural Resources.</p>
<p><i>Indicator 1.2: Four co-management agreement frameworks designed and validated with the government agencies and the protected areas management organizations by the end of the project.</i></p>	<p>It was agreed that only one co-management agreement template was necessary which could be applied to both the terrestrial and marine protected areas. This is developed and completed and officially submitted to the Forest and Fisheries departments in December 2008 and is still awaiting endorsement from these Ministries. This template as validated by the Forest department in 2009.</p>
<p>Output 2: A communications strategy to promote support to the co-management policy developed and implemented</p>	
<p><i>Indicator 2.1: A communications strategy developed by the third quarter of the project</i></p>	<p>A communications strategy to promulgate the recommendations and proposed provisions of the Co-Management Framework among all protected area stakeholder groups with a view to generating support for the eventual adoption of the framework at the community and national levels was developed and completed in December 2008.</p>
<p><i>Indicator 2.2: Number of communications activities implemented with key stakeholders by the end of the project.</i></p>	<p>The Communication Strategy consist of four <u>communication levels</u>, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication among organizations involved in protected areas management – Strengthen sharing of experiences, knowledge and resources among organizations working in protected areas co-management.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate within the APAMO membership – Undertake in-house advocacy for internalization of the recommendations and provisions of the National Protected Areas Co-Management Framework. • Communicate to civil society and the general public – Activate resources for awareness-raising, advocacy and lobbying on co-management issues. • Communicate with regulatory agencies and legislators – Create and/or activate co-management support and information exchange networks at various levels. <p>APAMO has presented the final framework to its member primarily through membership meetings and its newsletter.</p> <p>APAMO also held two meetings with the new Minister of Natural Resources to present the framework as well as to the Internal Protected Areas Management Advisory Committee of the Forest Department which includes representatives from other departments such as the department of the environment, the policy unit of the Ministry of Natural Resources, UNDP, other local co-managing NGOs and CBOs. (see attached report)</p>
<p>Output 3: Increased capacity of the APAMO members to address co-management issues (de-reservation, re-alignment, development, financial sustainability of protected areas, etc.) and to increase the effective management of the co-managed protected areas.</p>	
<p><i>Indicator 3.1:: 50% of participants in training activities will be in the process of developing operational and monitoring plans by the end of the project</i></p>	<p>Based on discussions with its member organizations, it was noted that many of these organizations had never received training in basic organizational development and considered that this was important prior to receiving training on developing operational and monitoring plans as this would set the stage for these trainings. As such APAMO decided to host a 4 day workshop aimed at building the capacity of APAMO and its members in organizational effectiveness skills to support achievement of their missions. The workshop took place over a period of four days, and was designed to be highly interactive and participatory in nature. It covered the following topics, among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Healthy organization approach ○ Functions of an organization ○ Organizational skills ○ Partnerships ○ Effective boards ○ Governance ○ Capacity approach and capacity building ○ Organizational life cycles ○ Organizational culture ○ Process design ○ Strategic/action planning ○ Evaluation ○ Capacity organizations <p>The Specific Workshop Objectives were to:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Provide an overview of organizations and organizational effectiveness</i> 2. <i>Explore what is an effective board</i> 3. <i>Introduce participants to the capacity approach to planning and problem solving</i> 4. <i>Introduce and provide an understanding of the healthy organization approach.</i> 5. <i>Provide a framework to produce effective partnerships</i> 6. <i>Introduce participants to intangibles that affect organizations e.g. organizational culture</i> 7. <i>Take participants through an Indigenous friendly strategic planning process and explain the principles involved.</i> 8. <i>Provide an overview of organizational evaluation and provide a framework to develop an evaluation plan.</i> 9. <i>Display the difference between capacity and deficiency organizations</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach for the workshop involved mini-lectures and plenary discussions, small group work • Participation averaged about 17-20 per workshop day and was of high quality with several participants sharing their experiences on different aspects of their organizational effectiveness. • The process used individual, small group and large group sessions, as well as combining visual, oral and kinesthetic participant opportunities to ensure all participants had a way to participate that was comfortable for them. • Facilitator lecture and presentations kept to a minimum. • Interactive processes were used to help participants bond and learn from each other and to see each other as resources. <p>APAMO requested a Peace Corps volunteer with expertise in organizational development institutional strengthening. Ms. Keri Robison officially joined the APAMO Team in October 2009. Mrs. Robison will be spending the next two years providing support to APAMO staff and members. During the last quarter in 2009 the APAMO Peace Corps Volunteer started working closely with several APAMO members, particularly the smaller Community Based Organizations (CBOs), which represents 50% of APAMO's members, to conduct a self assessment that will identify areas to strengthen within their organizations These self-assessments will be utilized as a baseline on which to build from over time.</p> <p>She has already started working with 7 CBO APAMO members in developing <i>operational and monitoring plans</i>. Some of the other projects she will be working on include developing policy and procedures, capacity building for members, and assist in the institutional strengthening of APAMO.</p>
<p><i>Indicator 3.2:: 3 priorities for APAMO (including the co-management policy and framework, de-reservation, large scale development which place the integrity of protected areas at risk, financial sustainability</i></p>	<p>With NPAC becoming dormant since February 2009 with the last meeting being held in December 2008, APAMO has spent much effort in advocating for the re-activation of NPAC. In an effort to be more focused and organized in its approach for doing advocacy to preserve and protect</p>

<p><i>of protected areas) will have been presented and negotiated at the NPAC level by the end of the project.</i></p>	<p>Belize's protected areas and so as to have an impact it was decided that APAMO needed to have an Advocacy Plan of Action. This Advocacy Plan was developed through sessions with the APAMO Executive Committee in August and September 2009 and the membership in November. The issue that was chosen for the main advocacy campaign is Keep Protected Areas Intact. The campaign focuses on the following Goal and Objectives.</p> <p>Goal: The 26% of national land and marine territory that is officially recognized as part of the national protected areas system is maintained intact.</p> <p>Objective 1: Demonstrated progress has been made in the implementation of the National Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The National Protected Areas Commission (NPAC) performs as a functional entity. b) APAMO's amendments to the National Parks Systems Act have been endorsed by NPAC and the government. c) The co-management framework has been adopted by GOB. d) Interim letters of agreement are in place for all currently co-managed protected areas pending implementation of new legislation. <p>Objective 2: Belizeans have increased knowledge of the value of protected areas and show more support for the protected areas system.</p> <p>In addition to activities focused on these objectives, the plan also includes activities designed to increase the capacity of APAMO and its member organizations to develop and carry out advocacy work.</p> <p>Never the less, APAMO continues to lobby government on various issues affecting protected areas including: securing and legalizing the co-management agreements, unsustainable and large scale development within or near protected areas, mangrove clearance and dredging inside protected areas, de-reservation, and financial sustainability of protected areas. APAMO continues to be the watchdog for protected areas in Belize and made several public denouncements on various issues affecting protected areas.</p> <p>APAMO has played a key role and has been instrumental in reversing government decisions on issue that affect protected areas one recent one being the proposed sale of land within a reserve namely Krooman's Lagoon situated in Belize City. This case was taken to court and the chief justice ordered that the land be reacquired by government because of its reserve status</p>
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<p><i>Indicator 3.3: A base line survey of the management effectiveness of the protected areas under co-management in Belize will have been implemented by the end of the project.</i></p>	<p>A full report on the management effectiveness of all the protected areas of Belize both terrestrial and marine has been completed. The report title: the Status of Protected Areas in Belize 2009 provides an overview of the state of protected area in Belize today, with recommendations for improving future management effectiveness across the system. A series of individual reports have also been produced, providing the assessment results per protected area with site level recommendations for use by protected area managers to assist in adaptive management. The assessment was conducted through a series of workshops and meetings, held between May and August 2009 with representatives from the two management authorities and all co-management agencies. Site level self assessments were completed by protected area representatives for each of the terrestrial and marine protected areas, to enable evaluation of the status of biodiversity within individual protected areas and across the protected area system. Information was also collected from protected area reports and management plans and through meetings with specific protected area managers, staff and stakeholders, to address identified information gaps. The results from this assessment will serve as a base line for improving protected areas management effectiveness</p>
<p>Output 4: A financial sustainability strategy and fund raising plan for APAMO, developed and adopted by the membership.</p>	
<p><i>Indicator 4.1: A financial strategy and fund raising plan developed and approved by the APAMO members by the third quarter of the project</i></p>	<p>APAMO's financial strategy and fund raising plan was developed and completed by its member organizations through a series of workshop sessions. the final strategy and plan was presented and socialized with its membership. In addition, APAMO members were trained in basic fund raising techniques.</p> <p>APAMO has developed brochures on APAMO, 2 Annual Reports (2008 and 2009) and other materials as part of developing its Fundraising packet.</p> <p>APAMO has developed a protected areas video showcasing the important benefits and services protected areas provide, the challenges and threats they fact, why every Belizean should care and how they can support conservation efforts in Belize.</p>
<p><i>Indicator 4.2: A least three project proposals presented to potential donors by the end of the project</i></p>	<p>Since this project started APAMO submitted 3 proposals – 2 large grant proposals and 1 small grant – all of which have been approved and currently being implemented. The first was from the Oak Foundation for US\$300,000, the second from the FAO for US \$25,000 and the third from the Protected Areas Conservation Trust for US \$112,471. All of these continue building on the efforts started by this project such as capacity building of conservation NGOs and CBOs, policy development and advocacy.</p> <p>APAMO also received donations for other activities throughout 2008 and 2009 to the amount of US\$32,000.</p>

Describe the success of the project in terms of delivering the intended outputs.

All the intended outputs were successfully achieved with the exception of the official adoption of the National Co-Management Framework and proposed amendment to the National Parks System Act to legalize the co-management agreements. However APAMO recognizes and is committed to continue lobbying and advocating for these policies to be endorsed by the government.

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

With the National Co-management framework and the proposed amendments to the National Parks System Act not adopted and endorsed by the government as yet the security and stability of these protected areas are still at risk.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

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

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.

When developing policy it was found that it is not a clear cut process. A great amount of effort is spent in dialoging with the various stakeholders. It is ambitious to try to develop any one policy in a period of one year – at least two years is needed for this process as it is a process that requires time for meaningful consultations ensuring that everyone is involved from the initial to the end, especially the ministries that are expected to take the lead in promoting and getting these endorsed by cabinet. Time has to be allowed for several review processes to ensure everyone is satisfied and agrees with the final policy developed. Although APAMO considers it did all it could with regards to keeping the government stakeholders involved throughout the process of developing the co-management framework and agreement templates – governments are still slow in their process of endorsing this initiative. Never the less, APAMO has ensured that it keeps pressuring them to approve this important framework and will continue to do so. All the other stakeholders have agreed that this is needed for the effective management of our protected areas. And while government recognizes the need for the co-management framework and have agreed to it in principle - it still seems to be difficult for them to embrace it completely particularly if they perceive they would be losing some control. Change is not an easy task, particularly with governments and there is a need to take this into consideration at all times and keep aggressively pushing for this if not we will be faced with such obstacles of delay in getting it endorsed.

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

The readily available support from the very capable and willing CI CEPF technical staff contributed significantly to the successful implementation of the project. This was a positive aspect of the project.

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

The format for reporting was very easy to complete and the one month period provided for the submission of each report allows for reports to be done without rushing. My experience as a grantee of CI CEPF has been very positive.

VII. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
The Oak Foundation	A	\$300,000	
PACT	A	\$112,471	
FAO	A	25,000	
PACT	A	\$25,000	

***Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** *Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)*
- B** *Complementary funding (Other donors contribute to partner organizations that are working on a project linked with this CEPF project)*
- C** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*
- D** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Provide details of whether this project will continue in the future and if so, how any additional funding already secured or fundraising plans will help ensure its sustainability.

APAMO will continue to work towards ensuring that the ecological integrity and long term permanency of the co-managed protected areas of Belize are secured while the financial sustainability of these areas is achieved contributing to the sustainability of a well represented protected areas system of Belize. Fund already secure from the Oak foundation and PACT will ensure the sustainability of this.

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

APAMO's achievement under this project has contributed significantly toward the increased effective management of our protected areas and the security of these. For the first time Belize has a clear definition of co-management, clear roles and responsibilities for both the NGOs and CBOs and the government agencies, and clear technical guidelines that guide the process and scope of the co-management of protected areas in Belize. APAMO is grateful for CEPF's support in providing the necessary resources to develop these valuable products such as the proposed amendments to the NPSA to legally recognize co-management and private protected areas, the co-management framework and agreement template and the report on the state of protected areas. Having these even if they are still pending endorsement and adoption by government has been a major advancement towards maintaining the integrity of our protected areas as well as increasing the management effectiveness of these.

VIII. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. One way we do this is by making programmatic project documents available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these in our newsletter and other communications.

These documents are accessed frequently by other CEPF grantees, potential partners, and the wider conservation community.

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