

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office, APR 2016

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		3861	
GEF Agency project ID		4207 (PIMS)	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-5	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNDP	
Project name		Strengthening National Capacities for the Operationalization, Consolidation, and Sustainability of Belize's Protected Areas System	
Country/Countries		Belize	
Region		Latin America and Caribbean	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		SO1: Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems. SP1: Sustainable Financing of Protected Area Systems at the National Level SP2: Increasing Representation of Effectively Managed Marine Protected Areas in Protected Area Systems SP3: Strengthening Terrestrial Protected Area Networks	
Executing agencies involved		Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development (lead executing agency) Forest Department (co-executing agency) Fisheries Department (co-executing agency)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Through consultations only	
Private sector involvement		Through consultations only	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) / Approval date (MSP)		March 2010	
Effectiveness date / project start		July 2010	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		August 2013	
Actual date of project completion		October 2014	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	.025	.025
	Co-financing	.046	NA
GEF Project Grant		.975	.952241
Co-financing	IA own	.05	.040641
	Government	.718	.754949
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	0	0
	Private sector	0	0
	NGOs/CSOs	.312	.660499
Total GEF funding		1.0	.977241
Total Co-financing		1.126	1.415
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		2.126	2.367689
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		March 2015	
Author of TE		James Lenoci	
TER completion date		December 3 rd , 2016	

TER prepared by	Caroline Laroche
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)	Molly Watts

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF IEO Review
Project Outcomes	MS	MS	--	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes		ML	--	ML
M&E Design		S	--	MS
M&E Implementation		S	--	S
Quality of Implementation		S	--	S
Quality of Execution		S	--	MS
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report		--	--	S

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The project's environmental goal is "to safeguard globally significant terrestrial, coastal, and marine biodiversity of Belize" (PD p.30).

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The project's objective is "that by July 2013, Belize will have effectively developed legal, financial, and institutional capacities to ensure sustainability of the existing NPAS" (PD p.30). This will be accomplished by focusing on the following outcomes:

- Outcome 1: The National PA system is supported by legal and institutional reforms furthering efforts in attaining sustainability of the system.
- Outcome 2: Modernizing PA Financing for Sustainability.
- Outcome 3: NPAS is supported by enhanced management capacity

3.3 Were there any **changes** in the Global Environmental Objectives, Development Objectives, or other activities during implementation?

There were no changes in objectives or planned activities during project implementation.

4. GEF IEO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

Please refer to the GEF Terminal Evaluation Review Guidelines for detail on the criteria for ratings.

Relevance can receive either a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory rating. For Effectiveness and Cost efficiency, a six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess. Sustainability ratings are assessed on a four-point scale: Likely=no or negligible risk; Moderately Likely=low risk; Moderately Unlikely=substantial risks; Unlikely=high risk. In assessing a Sustainability rating please note if, and to what degree, sustainability of project outcomes is threatened by financial, sociopolitical, institutional/governance, or environmental factors.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

4.1 Relevance	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE rates the project as relevant. This TER rates project relevance as satisfactory due to its good alignment with Belize’s national priorities in terms of biodiversity conservation, and with the GEF-4 biodiversity objective.

Belize’s biodiversity is facing several threats: deforestation, rapid coastal development, invasive species, oil extraction and climate change are a subset of those (PD p.14). While the country is keen to address those threats and protect biodiversity, its current protected area (PA) governance framework is weak, with too many different agencies involved and lacking coordination (PD p.12). Clearly, the country’s “fractured network of PAs” (PD p.17) needs to be turned into a “cohesive NPAS (National Protected Areas System (NPAS), with the appropriate legal, administrative, and institutional restructuring that would allow Belize to realize its strong commitment to biodiversity conservation” (PD p.17). This being exactly what this project aims to achieve, therefore the project is highly relevant.

The project is also in line with the demonstrated priorities of the Government of Belize. In 1993, Belize joined the Convention on Biological Diversity. Nationally, several legal instruments are supporting PAs: the National Parks System Act (NPSA), the Forest Act, the Fisheries Act, and the Ancient Monuments and Antiquities Act” (PD p.11). More recently, Belize developed the National Parks and Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan (NPAPSP), “the result of two years’ effort from the Protected Areas Task Force, an inter-ministerial group charged with the development of a coherent approach to PA establishment and management on a national scale. It identified four strategic objectives that should be implemented along a critical path to improve PA system management in Belize. The four strategic objectives were designed to make the existing network function effectively so that it can assimilate the modifications needed to ensure comprehensive coverage of PA management across the country” (PD p.27). “The NPAPSP resulted from extensive consultation with local communities, government agencies, NGOs, and other PA stakeholders” (PD p.27). This project having been developed as a response to the NPAPSP, it is highly relevant to Belize’s demonstrated needs and priorities.

The project is also in line with GEF-4 biodiversity priorities. In particular, “project component 2 specifically addresses GEF Strategic Priority 1, ‘Sustainable Financing of Protected Area Systems at the National Level’ as PA managers and co-managers having gained necessary capacities, supported by key planning tools and frameworks, to address PA system/PA financial sustainability through outcome delivery. The project is also expected to create an operational, centralized PA network and consolidate

PA units to allow for greater effectiveness in their management (Component 3) as well as a more coherent approach for expansion of the country's PA system at the landscape level." (PD p.26)

The project is also in line with the following 3 GEF strategic programs:

- SP1: Sustainable Financing of Protected Area Systems at the National Level
- SP2: Increasing Representation of Effectively Managed Marine Protected Areas in Protected Area Systems
- SP3: Strengthening Terrestrial Protected Area Networks

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE rates effectiveness as moderately satisfactory due to its furthering of legal, financial and institutional capacities of the National Protected Areas System in Belize, but its coming short on several project targets. For the same reasons, this TER also rates it as moderately satisfactory. In the paragraphs below, we discuss the extent to which the project successfully attained the outcomes it was set to achieve:

Overall 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)

The overall project objective appears to have been successfully achieved. 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" (TE p.31). While the draft legislation is not yet implemented, there is movement in the right direction. The National Protected Areas System (NPAS)'s score against the UNDP financial sustainability scorecard has increased by 22% from baseline, but fell short of the target. Funding for PA management has increased as government allocations to the Forest and Fisheries Departments have increased. However, there was only a modest improvement to the coverage of key terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems within NPAS by project closure. The objective has not been achieved to the full extent expected, and its achievement is therefore rated as moderately satisfactory.

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

As mentioned above, 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" (TE p.31). However, "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. " (TE p.31). In addition to its work towards establishing the PACT as the single body responsible for PA management in Belize, the project also drafted a number of regulations to guide the development of concessions in protected areas. Achievements under this outcome are moderately satisfactory.

Outcome 2: Modernize and diversify financing for the sustainability of the NPAS

At project end, “direct allocation for the National Protected Areas System in the national budget was not achieved. PA financing continues to be managed through departmental budgets” (TE p.32). However, “through support extended by the project, a proposed formula for determining budgetary allocation, based upon conservation objectives, was developed” (TE p.32). Annual government budgets for PAs have increased by \$214,152 (from 2010 to 2014), but fallen short of the project target. Fees collected from tourism decreased during the project. Finally, “limited progress was made regarding establishing and operationalizing long-term/biodiversity-friendly investment plans with key productive sectors” (TE p.34). Achievements under this outcome appear to have been moderately unsatisfactory.

Outcome 3: NPAS is supported by enhanced management capacity

The average 2014 score in the management effectiveness tracking tool (METT) was lower in 2014 than it was in 2010. According to the TE, this is due to (1) “a change in the management arrangements at the Sarstoon Temash National Park and Tapir Mountain Nature Reserve” (TE p.35) and (2) the fact that, PA managers, with the knowledge gained through the training sponsored by the project, “subsequently scored their respective PA’s more stringently” (TE p.35). The METT and UNDP financial sustainability scorecard tools have been integrated into the management framework of the draft National Protected Areas Systems (NPAS) Act, which should help maintain and further management capacity. Finally the project supported the implementation of training programs for PA staff, which should increase management capacity. 67 individuals attended one or more of the courses offered, which is slightly below the project target. Achievements under this outcome appear to have been moderately satisfactory.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE rates efficiency as moderately satisfactory due to important project delays having negatively affected project outcomes, and the limited achievement of those outcomes even with an additional year of implementation time. This TER instead rates efficiency as satisfactory as the delays incurred were outside the control of the project team, and were dealt with very efficiently.

The project was designed with the intention of focusing on cost-effective interventions for the improvement of Belize’s PA system. It was determined that focusing on “removing the structural, institutional, and financial barriers to the effective management of Belize’s PAs as an integrated system, and following NPAPSP recommendations regarding necessary PA system reforms” (PD p.41) was the most cost-effective way to accomplish this objective.

Total co-financing for the project was higher than expected, which increased project efficiency. Outcomes were moderately satisfactorily achieved within the available budget and roughly within the expected timeframe, with under a year of additional implementation time required. Financial management was sound, with actual expenses very similar to planned expenses. Delivery rates were low

during the first two years of the project (about 55%), but “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”(TE p.24).

Indeed, the delays incurred by the project during its first two years of implementation were largely due to institutional restructuring among key governmental agencies and instability in the lead up to and following the 2012 national elections. While this did affect implementation, the project was able to adapt to those circumstances and condense delivery in the second half of the project. Overall, the project team appears to have successfully dealt with implementation issues that came in the way of efficiency.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Moderately Likely
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The TE rates sustainability as moderately likely. This TER agrees with this rating as institutional stability appears moderately unlikely, but financial and socio-economic sustainability appear moderately likely. Environmental risks appear to be of marginal relevance to this project.

Financial Risks – Sustainability Moderately Likely

The TE rates financial sustainability as moderately likely as, by closure, the project had not yet met its goal of ensuring a direct allocation for the National Protected Area System (NPAS) in the national budget. At the time when the TE was written, in Belize, PA financing continued to be managed through agency budgets. During the course of the project, the fees generated from tourism decreased from \$1,925,160 to \$1,610,587. On the other hand, the NPAS’ score against the UNDP financial sustainability scorecard has increased by 22% during the course of the project, and funding for PA management has increased. Overall, financial sustainability appears moderately likely.

Socio-Economic Risks – Sustainability Moderately Likely

The TE rates socio-economic sustainability as moderately likely. Politicians are still reluctant to increase PA entrance fees due to the fear of hurting the tourism industry, and there are ongoing conflicts with indigenous groups in certain protected areas. However, there are no other important socio-economic risks to the project. Socio-economic sustainability appears moderately likely.

Institutional Risks – Sustainability Moderately Unlikely

The TE rates institutional/governance sustainability as moderately likely. The government appears to be only moderately committed to enacting the reforms proposed as part of this project, with several acts and legislations still being stalled. “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” (TE p.41). On the other hand, the project has produced important outputs supporting the strengthening of PA management institutions in Belize, including new legislation and training programs. Institutional sustainability appears moderately unlikely.

Environmental Risks – Sustainability Likely

The TE rates environmental sustainability as likely. The ecosystems protected by PAs in Belize are and will continue to be vulnerable to climate change. However, this would only reinforce the need for the institutional strengthening of PAs in Belize, and not pose additional risks to the project's achievements so far. Environmental sustainability is therefore rated as likely.

5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes

5.1 Co-financing. To what extent was the reported co-financing essential to the achievement of GEF objectives? If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, then what were the reasons for it? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

Materialized co-financing was about 35% higher than expected. This increase largely came from NGOs, with the Oak Foundation and APAMO having contributed double what they had committed. The TE does not mention the extent to which this higher-than-expected co-financing influenced project outcomes.

5.2 Project extensions and/or delays. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

Important delays took place during the first half of the project. In 2012, national elections led to a reshuffling of relevant project stakeholders as part of the creation of the new Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development (MFFSD). This brought together the project's two executing agencies (Forestry Department and Fisheries Department), but the institutional reorganization significantly slowed down project implementation – 8 months according to the TE. As a result, the project was granted a one year no cost extension, and the project end date was changed from October 2013 to October 2014. (TE p.21)

5.3 Country ownership. Assess the extent to which country ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability? Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links:

The TE describes country ownership as moderate. While “relevant country representatives, including governmental officials, civil society representatives, and academic professionals, were actively involved in the project” (TE p.38) and substantial financial resources were contributed, government involvement reportedly diminished towards the end of the project, and government failed to approve “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” (TE p.38).

6. Assessment of project's Monitoring and Evaluation system

Ratings are assessed on a six point scale: Highly Satisfactory=no shortcomings in this M&E component; Satisfactory=minor shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Satisfactory=moderate shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Unsatisfactory=significant shortcomings in this M&E component; Unsatisfactory=major shortcomings in this M&E component; Highly Unsatisfactory=there were no project M&E systems.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 M&E Design at entry	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE rates M&E design at entry as satisfactory. This TER rates M&E design as moderately satisfactory due to the completeness of its M&E plan, but noting the lack of achievability of certain indicators.

M&E activities planned and described included the following: project inception workshop followed by inception report, project review meetings, regular monitoring, quarterly meetings with UNDP, Annual Project Report (APR), PIR (PIR), quarterly progress reports, project terminal report, technical reports, mid-term and final evaluations. For each of those activities, the PD included details on responsible parties, budget and time frame required. The total project budget devoted to M&E activities (\$88,500 excluding staff time and travel expenses) appeared appropriate for the size of the project. (PD p.73)

The strategic results framework presented in the PD (pp.53-56) is complete, with all outputs and outcomes being accompanied by baseline values, targets, means of verification and assumptions. Indicators appear to meet the SMART criteria, but the TE criticizes the strategic results framework for not being achievable:

“(T)he 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. ^[1]_{SEP}” (TE p.12)

The targets for legislative and administrative approval were not the only ones to be overly ambitious. Other targets, including that of ‘self-generating revenue from the participating 8 PAs to increase by 25%

during the course of the project’, were also ambitious (TE p.13). For this reason, a rating of moderately satisfactory is assigned.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE rates M&E implementation for the project as satisfactory due to the implementation of the full M&E plan and the use of M&E evidence for adaptive management. This TER also rates it as satisfactory.

According to the TE, 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” (TE p.28).

The Mid-Term Review was conducted late in the implementation phase – just one year before the project’s operational closure – but the recommendations were still well received and acted upon. For example, following recommendations made in the MTR, “the PMU and the NPAS held more frequent meetings with the project director, to try to resolve critical issues holding back overall project performance” (TE p.28).

Overall, the project’s M&E operations ran smoothly and the evidence generated was used for adaptive management.

7. Assessment of project implementation and execution

Quality of Implementation includes the quality of project design, as well as the quality of supervision and assistance provided by implementing agency(s) to execution agencies throughout project implementation. Quality of Execution covers the effectiveness of the executing agency(s) in performing its roles and responsibilities. In both instances, the focus is upon factors that are largely within the control of the respective implementing and executing agency(s). A six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

7.1 Quality of Project Implementation	Rating: Satisfactory
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The implementing agency for this project was the UNDP. In the TE, the UNDP’s quality of implementation for this project is rated as satisfactory. This TER also rates it as satisfactory due to the constant support the UNDP provided to the project.

The UNDP was selected as the implementing agency for this project due to its longstanding relationship with the Government of Belize in the area of sustainable development, and its vast experience implementing biodiversity projects in the country. UNDP was also party to the development of the

NPAPSP (National Parks and Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan), which serves as the basis for this project. (PD p.29)

The TE describes the UNDP country office as having providing constant and reliable support to the project throughout its implementation, including “active participation on the project board, and assistance with procurement, logistics, and financial reporting” (TE p.29). UNDP 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” (TE p.29). However, the TE criticizes the UNDP for not pushing the institutional reforms planned as part of the project more as “the UNDP might have been able to plan more of an advocacy role, promoting the reforms directly to political leaders” (TE p.29). Despite that small shortcoming, project implementation was overall satisfactory.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The executing agencies for this project were the Forestry Department and the Fisheries Department, which later on merged into the Ministry of Forests, Fisheries and Sustainable Development (MFFSD). In the TE, their quality of execution for this project is rated as satisfactory. This TER instead rates it as moderately satisfactory due to the important delays that the departments’ internal restructuring imposed on the project.

The project management unit “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” (TE p.30). Overall, the project management unit appears to have very efficiently managed the project, frequently reassessing project risks and keeping the project board updated with progress and issues encountered (TE p.15). The two executing agencies were highly and consistently involved, “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. “ (TE p.30)

In 2012, national elections led to a reshuffling of relevant project stakeholders as part of the creation of the new Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development (MFFSD). This brought together the project’s two executing agencies (Forestry Department and Fisheries Department), but the institutional reorganization significantly slowed down project implementation – 8 months according to the TE. As a result, the project was granted a one year no cost extension, and the project end date was changed from October 2013 to October 2014. (TE p.21) Because this internal reorganization created an important delay, project execution is only rated as moderately satisfactory, but this TER notes that, outside of the reorganization period, execution was very effective.

8. Assessment of Project Impacts

Note - In instances where information on any impact related topic is not provided in the terminal evaluations, the reviewer should indicate in the relevant sections below that this is indeed the case and identify the information gaps. When providing information on topics related to impact, please cite the page number of the terminal evaluation from where the information is sourced.

8.1 Environmental Change. Describe the changes in environmental stress and environmental status that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

As with several biodiversity projects, the real environmental impact of this project will only materialize later in the future, far beyond project completion. Capturing direct environmental impact from the project immediately at completion always proves difficult. Some indicators of environmental wellbeing were captured through the project's M&E system. First, "the area of mangroves within the national PA system increased to 28,060, 65% more than the 2010 baseline" (TE p.43). Second, a new atoll was established as a marine PA, thereby adding to % of Belize protected under the National Protected Areas System (TE p.43). As mentioned in the effectiveness section above, the envisaged reforms were not realized by project closure, and no environmental impact took place as a result. However, this TER shares the TE's assessment that the project made "a significant contribution toward the eventual improvement in ecological status and reduction in stress on ecological systems" (TE p.43).

8.2 Socioeconomic change. Describe any changes in human well-being (income, education, health, community relationships, etc.) that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

No socioeconomic change is reported as part of the TE.

8.3 Capacity and governance changes. Describe notable changes in capacities and governance that can lead to large-scale action (both mass and legislative) bringing about positive environmental change. "Capacities" include awareness, knowledge, skills, infrastructure, and environmental monitoring systems, among others. "Governance" refers to decision-making processes, structures and systems, including access to and use of information, and thus would include laws, administrative bodies, trust-building and conflict resolution processes, information-sharing systems, etc. Indicate how project activities contributed to/ hindered these changes, as well as how contextual factors have influenced these changes.

a) Capacities

The project developed and piloted the national PA management training program, which has contributed to improving management capacity in PAs. A new set of management effectiveness tools have also been defined and are now being used. (TE p.v)

b) Governance

N/A

8.4 Unintended impacts. Describe any impacts not targeted by the project, whether positive or negative, affecting either ecological or social aspects. Indicate the factors that contributed to these unintended impacts occurring.

Not unintended impacts were reported as part of the project.

8.5 Adoption of GEF initiatives at scale. Identify any initiatives (e.g. technologies, approaches, financing instruments, implementing bodies, legal frameworks, information systems) that have been mainstreamed, replicated and/or scaled up by government and other stakeholders by project end. Include the extent to which this broader adoption has taken place, e.g. if plans and resources have been established but no actual adoption has taken place, or if market change and large-scale environmental benefits have begun to occur. Indicate how project activities and other contextual factors contributed to these taking place. If broader adoption has not taken place as expected, indicate which factors (both project-related and contextual) have hindered this from happening.

Replicability was considered as part of project design (PD p.44), but the TE does not mention the project having been replicated or scaled up.

9. Lessons and recommendations

9.1 Briefly describe the key lessons, good practices, or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects.

The report presents the following lessons learned:

1. 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.

2. 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 have been advisable to commission the assistance of independent mediator to facilitate the envisaged legal and institutional reform.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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

6. 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; [L] [SEP]
- 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; [L] [SEP]
- The online piloting results yield unfavorable results, as it was difficult to measure whether the participants successfully and independently completed the assignments; [L] [SEP]
- 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.

7. 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. [L] [SEP]

8. Sustainability structures should be built into project design, including co-financing allocation [L] [SEP]

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. [L] [SEP]

(TE pp.50-51)

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The report makes the following 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. [L] [SEP]
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. [L] [SEP]
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. [L] [SEP]
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. [L] [SEP]
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. [L] [SEP]
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 [L] [SEP] 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. ^[L]_{SEP}
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. ^[L]_{SEP}
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*. ^[L]_{SEP}

(TE pp.vii-viii)

10. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

A six point rating scale is used for each sub-criteria and overall rating of the terminal evaluation report (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory)

Criteria	GEF IEO comments	Rating
To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?	Outcomes are assessed, and project achievements against all indicators are described. The project's impact and overall achievement of its objective is discussed and evidenced.	S
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	All available M&E evidence appears to have been reviewed and used as part of the report. Most ratings are well substantiated and clearly explained.	S
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	Sustainability is discussed, but some key points under each aspect of sustainability are only presented as bullets, without an accompanying discussion.	MS
To what extent are the lessons	The lessons learned/recommendations section is detailed,	S

learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	supported by evidence provided in the report, and appears comprehensive.	
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	Actual total project costs, project costs per activity, and actual co-financing figures were provided.	S
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The TE provides a detailed assessment of the project's M&E design and implementation, analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the framework, and describing the M&E activities that took place.	S
Overall TE Rating		S

11. Note any additional sources of information used in the preparation of the terminal evaluation report (excluding PIRs, TEs, and PADs).

No additional sources of information were used in the preparation of this TER.