

3708 - Strengthening Institutional Capacities for Coordinating Multi-sectoral Environmental Policies and Programmes



EXTRACT from 2010 Annual Project Review (APR) / Project Implementation Report (PIR)

INTRODUCTION: This project is the first of its kind in the region, based on a new concept which was initially a difficult sell to stakeholders who saw it as a usurpation of their power. The team was able to meaningfully engage the stakeholders by designing a transparent consultative process. The NREPS process has gained much traction among the Ministries, and has sparked debates for its possible migration to the Office of the Prime Minister for a more national impact. The PCPU was also instrumental in providing capacity building and strengthening to the MNRE to enhance the quality of service delivery, and improve the organizational effectiveness of the Ministry from a human capital development perspective, allowing the Ministry to effectively carry out its legislative mandate in the most customer friendly manner. This included training consultancies and equipment purchases for the departments in the Ministry. The NREPS consultation process has sparked the re-commissioning of the National Energy Policy which has attracted funding offers from multiple IFAs, thus reviving the awareness of the issue of energy security in the country. This project is the lead agent being considered by the government for expanding inter-ministerial coordination to a national level, and is currently being benchmarked as the prototype for the re-structuring of policy units within other ministries.

Project Title: 3708 - Strengthening Institutional Capacities for Coordinating Multi-sectoral Environmental Policies and Programmes

Project Summary: Belize is committed to environmentally sound and sustainable development, and has signed on to over 25 multilateral environmental agreements. However, the inadequacy of Belize's institutional framework limits the ability to meet these obligations. This stems in large part from the many pieces of legislative instruments that directly and indirectly affect the management of natural resources and the environment and a lack of coordination in the application of these tools.

This project sets out to minimize the overlapping and conflicting natural resource and environmental policies relevant to the goals and principles of the CBD, CCD and FCCC, as well as to fill identified policy gaps. The multitude of legislation and associated responsible departments will be rationalized in terms of cost-effectiveness and attainment of immediate objectives, such as the development and implementation of co-managed projects among multiple departments that produce synergies. Both government and non-state stakeholders will be better enabled to undertake activities that are mutually supportive of each other, including co-managed projects (such as integrated resource management projects).

Two main outcomes will be funded through this project: A) strengthened policy coordination and planning mechanisms within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE); and B) Increased capacities for integrating natural resource and environmental management issues into national development framework. A third outcome relates to monitoring, evaluation and the adaptive collaborative management of the project.

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Other Significant Results: The project's NREPS structure has been extremely successful and well received by government counterparts. The introduction of the CEO caucus has provided a national platform for intersectoral discussions and thematic areas aside from NRM have been added to discussion agendas through the NREPS process. One such important advance is the use of the CEO caucus to address national disaster risk management concerns. Recognizing the importance of the PCPU strengthened under this initiative, the Office of the Prime Minister has submitted a request for the placement of the PCPU in the Office of the Prime Minister. The UNDP CO has also received requests from 2 key ministries (Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Human Development and Social Transformation) to possibly replicate the PCPU structure piloted in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. It should be mentioned, however, that there now exists a possible overdependence on the PCPU by the Ministry; this has resulted in a stretching of the existing capacities of the PCPU. There is a need for expansion of the PCPU to take on the additional duties that are being assigned to it by the Government.

CO Staff Site Visits during reporting period: 2/12/2009 (M& E meeting to discuss project delivery rates and workplan advances/ 2010 AOP development); 19/10/ 2009 (Project reporting), 05/10/2009 (Training of Project staff- Project management/ Procurement);22/09/2009 (M&E- project oversight)

Progress towards meeting Development Objective (DO)

Description	Description of Indicator	Baseline Level (4)	Target Level at End of Project	Level at 30 June 2009	Level at 30 June 2010
<p>OBJECTIVE: The overall objective of this project is to coordinate Belize's natural resource and environmental policies in such a way that they create synergies for the national implementation of the CBD, CCD and FCCC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Non-state stakeholders and senior government technocrats systematically review natural resource and environmental policies in a holistic manner. ▫ Policy recommendations to modify policy interventions are reviewed and acted upon in a timely manner by Cabinet. ▫ Fewer incidences of policy overlap, duplication and conflict. Policy gaps identified and filled. 	<p>1. Natural resource and environmental policies are implemented with little coordination with other related natural resource and environmental policies. 2. Policy interventions often result in overlap, duplication of effort, and weak implementation due to stretch human and institutional capacities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ By the end of the project, a consultative approach made up of the NSSC and NREPS is established, tested and institutionalized to systematically assess the implications of policies and their interventions. ▫ By the end of the project, the staffing and administration of the Policy Coordination and Planning Unit to service the NSSC and NREPS is financed through government appropriations 	<p>NREPS has been systematically developed through a comprehensive consultative process using working groups. NGO, CBO, Civil Society consultation have been initiated to define this complementing structure. Government have initiated measures to absorb/ formalize positions created through NCSA process. Policy team currently 5 individuals strong.</p>	<p>1.0) The consultative process has been established and the NREPS Charter has been officially reviewed by government officials at the highest departmental level, and a Memorandum of Understanding has been developed to be signed by the end of the year (2010) by the various stakeholders in the process (from NREPS-TC, NREPS-OSC, NREPS-CEO). This Charter sets out procedures for policy revision and the roles of each body as it relates to Policy interventions and recommendations. The development of the Charter in itself was a trial of the consultative approach outlined in the said Charter document. The process for consultation was also tested with the Second Meeting which consisted of the national MSI Review. The resulting information uncovered through this review process is being used to determine national advances in sustainable development and to chart a roadmap of further actions required. This includes the identification of further necessary policy interventions. 2.0) The Ministry of Natural Resources has drafted documents to the Public Service formalizing the new staffing positions within the PCPU being supported through project funds. This is the first step for these positions to become permanently established and for responsibility to be transferred over to the government.</p>
					<p>Basic overview/ situation analysis of overlaps and gaps in policy from the perspective of Department Heads is commenced with the development of a strategic planning background survey which will be used in the upcoming reporting year to better determine ministerial gaps, needs, strengths, and overlaps.</p>

<p>Outcome 1: Strengthened policy coordination and planning mechanisms within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE).</p>	<p>Output 1.1:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NREPS is chaired by the MNRE CEO 2. The NREPS is comprised of senior directors of key governmental departments and agencies, in particular MNRE, MAFC and Finance. 3. The NREPS meets every six months, with a minimum of 70% quorum at the senior director level 4. NREPS recommendations are deemed technically and politically feasible, and under implementation within one year of being made. 5. Policy and programme reforms underway on the basis of Cabinet directives initiated under the NREPS. 	<p>a. Natural resource and environmental issues are the responsibility of the NHDAC. However, these issues are marginally considered at best, with little oversight on the impacts of policy interventions.</p> <p>b. Consultations between and among departments and agencies are not systematic (many are ad hoc). They do not fully know what each other are doing.</p> <p>c. Policy interventions are stalled when unforeseen consequences arise due to overlap, duplication or conflicting strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Within six months of project implementation, the NREPS has been constituted. ▣ By the mid-point of the project, the NREPS has met at least twice. ▣ By the mid-point of the project, the NHDAC has effectively incorporated policy recommendations from the NREPS and reported these to Cabinet. ▣ At the project mid-point and end, Cabinet has issued policy reform directives in response to policy recommendations initiated under the NREPS. ▣ At the end of year 3, the independent evaluation has confirmed the best modality for the institutional sustainability of the NREPS as a consultative mechanism proposed by the PSC. ▣ By the end of the project, all NHDAC members have attended at least one sensitization workshop. 	<p>NREPS has been systematically developed through a comprehensive consultative process using working groups. On Thursday 7th July, 2009 at the Cedar Cabins Resort Conference Room. There was a 95% attendance at this inaugural meeting and the NREPS Charter was finalized by the body on that inaugural meeting. During the reporting period there has been two meetings of senior policy makers within the CEO Caucus which represent the top tier of NREPS representation. To date the Policy Coordination and Planning Unit representing the NREPS have addressed Cabinet twice regarding proposed policies originated in the MNRE and from stakeholder groups. The policy Unit through the NREPS structure also included in the national structure for the development and revision of the National Poverty Elimination strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<p>The NREPS Policy System is now in full operation and in its testing stage. The Technical Committee (TC) has met twice. The other two Committees have met at least once officially. The NREPS Process went through a series of national consultations which included all the stakeholders involved in natural resource management. One of the results of this consultation is the development of a streamlined system where the naming structure was adjusted to produce: a) NREPS TC (Technical Committee), NREPS OSC (Other Stakeholders Committee and NREPS CEO (CEO Caucus). All three of these bodies are now operational with NREPS TC already convening two meetings and strengthening its local and regional coordination. The second session of the NREPS TC focused on the development of the National Energy Policy and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation in Belize. The session enjoyed a 92% attendance by chartered members. Cabinet directives have stated the need for a National Energy Policy and the re-constitution of the NPAC Committee.</p>
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	<p>Output 1.2</p> <p>1. The NSSC is composed of the full range of non-state stakeholders.</p> <p>2. The NSSC is composed of the full range of non-state stakeholders.</p> <p>3. The NSSC meets every six months and prior to the meetings of the NREPS.</p> <p>4. NSSC is chaired on a rotating basis.</p> <p>5. Increased number of non-state stakeholders are registered under the NGO Act</p> <p>6. NGO capacity is strengthened to galvanize the impact of their efforts by improved cooperation, collaboration and partnership, as well as their increased role in informing policy and programme reforms.</p>	<p>¶ Non-state stakeholders do not effectively coordinate their programmes, including those that are members of NGO associations.</p> <p>¶ Non-state stakeholders do not have meaningful way to inform policy and programme reform and modifications, limited through personal networks and historical relationships.</p> <p>¶ Relevant activities of non-state stakeholders are not considered as part of Belize's actions to implement Rio Conventions.</p>	<p>¶ Within six months of project implementation, the NSSC has been constituted.</p> <p>¶ At the mid-point of the project, the NSSC has met at least twice.</p> <p>¶ At the project mid-point and end, the NREPS has effectively incorporated policy recommendations from the NSSC.</p> <p>¶ At the end of years 1, 2 & 3 non-state stakeholders deem the NSSC as a legitimate organizational mechanism.</p> <p>¶ At the end of year 3, the independent evaluation has confirmed the best modality for the institutional sustainability of the NSSC as a consultative mechanism proposed by the PSC.</p> <p>¶ By the end of the project, a doubling of NGOs registered under the NGO Act (from 51 to at least 100).</p> <p>¶ By the end of the project, at least 50 non-state stakeholders attended sensitization workshops</p>	<p>Non state stakeholders introduced to concept of NSSc. Through an initiation/ validation session some 35 non state actors reaffirmed the need for a NSSC. Regional meetings being hosted with nonstate actors to agree on an operational NSSC structure</p>	<p>The NSSC has been constituted under a new name - Other Stakeholders Committee (OSC). This begun with the proposal of an Organizational chart which has been developed and consulted extensively even prior to the consultation using the formally documented NREPS Process. Consulted groups currently include Belize Audubon Society (BAS) on 21st October, 2009; Southern Environmental Alliance (SEA) on 6th October 2009; Programme for Belize (PFB) on 20th October 2009; Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment on 7th October 2009; Ya' che (YCT) on 8th October 2009, other Private Sector Representatives and Quasi-Governmental Representatives were also sensitized. Several recommendations were made and recorded by the Policy Unit to be used to determine the OSC charter and Organogram, as well as functions of the Advisory Council of NREPS. NREPS OSC held elections during their first meeting for its executive officers in which Mr. Robert Tillett of the Public Utilities Commission was elected President, Dr. Collin Young was elected Vice President and Ms. Lumen Cayetano was elected Secretary.</p>
					<p>NREPS TC and NREPS OSC have both met during this reporting period. NREPS OSC has elected its executive body and approved the Charter. The NREPS TC meeting was primarily focused on providing background on sustainable development in Belize in order to chart a way forward with Policy Development.</p>

<p>Outcome 2: Increased capacities for integrating natural resource and environmental management issues into national development framework.</p>	<p>Output 2.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ PCPU is effectively servicing the NREPS and channelling inputs from the NSSC to government agencies and NREPS. ▫ Policy interventions of individual government agencies are more streamlined. ▫ Increased inter-agency collaboration and cooperation in policy and programme formulation, implementation, M&E ▫ Non-state stakeholders increase submissions to PCPU on their programmes and activities, and are better informed of natural resource and environmental policy interventions. ▫ Web portals within an existing CHM serve to receive on-line inputs from non-state stakeholders and to provide updates on policy coordination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ The PCPU presently exists, and was recently staffed with two additional contract officers through extra-budgetary resources. ▫ There is some overlap between the policy coordination activities of the PCPU and those of individual departments and agencies. ▫ PCPU does not provide adequate briefing materials to MNRE and NHDAC. ▫ Non-state stakeholders' access to decision-making processes is the result of personal connections and ad hoc, with high transaction costs for new entrants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ By project's end, the PCPU operations to continue the same level of policy coordination are fully financed through government budgetary appropriations, not extra-budgetary resources. ▫ By project mid-point, agreements among departments, agencies, and non-state stakeholders concluded for the systematic sharing of data and information. ▫ By project mid-point, programming document prepared outlining strategic implementation of policy interventions. ▫ By project mid-point, training provided to PCPU staff. ▫ At the end of years 2 & 3, assessment of policy coordination effectiveness compared against baseline study undertaken at project onset. ▫ At the end of years 1, 2 & 3, large sample size surveys undertaken. 	<p>The PCPU was established by the CEO Caucus of NREPS to be the official Secretariat of the NREPS tripartite process which includes NREPS Technical Committee NSSC and the NREPS CEO Caucus. The PCPU's TOR was set out at the CEO Caucus and enshrined in the following Excerpt, adapted on 14th July, 2009 :</p> <p>CHAPTER 6: THE POLICY COORDINATION AND PLANNING UNIT (PCPU, MNRE)</p> <p>Article 10</p> <p>The PCPU, MNRE is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the briefing material for CEO Caucus, NREPS, and NSSC. • to disseminate information to and from the CEO Caucus, NREPS, and NSSC. <p>i. The PCPU, MNRE is tasked to facilitate the meetings of NREPS.</p> <p>ii. The PCPU, MNRE is also charged with providing recommendations and/or suggestions for actions to the CEO Caucus, and the Advisory Council.</p>	<p>1.0) A Data-Sharing Protocol has been drafted through the Sustainable Land Management Project. The PCPU is now working to formalize the said protocols and to work to mainstream them into the MNRE working environment/ culture. There exists a shared server space for the PMU to share information. 2.0) In terms of capacity building, training has been provided to the staff of the PCPU and relevant Ministry staff in Public Relations, Management, Spanish, and Legal Procedures. Furthermore, the PMU also facilitated the purchasing of much needed basic equipment. The training and equipment assisted greatly in streamlining the efforts of the various departments and bridging the gaps that existed due to lack of training and equipment. 3.0) A large cross-section of state and non state actors have been consulted in order to determine the need for and the role of the PCPU in policy coordination. The result has been positive in that most stakeholders find the unit and the mechanism for coordination to be useful in expediting national policy processes. Initial feedback is that coordination and communication have improved significantly with the strengthening of the unit. 4.0) The PCPU has drafted a manual for policy development and review. This manual will be validated among members of the various NREPS bodies.</p>
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<p>Outcome 3: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptive Collaborative Management</p>	<p>NSSC and NREPS meetings include an agenda item “Lessons Learned”, focusing on opportunities, successes and failures to improve policy coordination</p>	<p>§ Valuable experiences exist with respect to the challenges to effective policy coordination; however, these are not effectively channelled in ways to effect institutional improvements.</p>	<p>a. NREPS and NSSC meeting minutes include a summary of the lessons learned discussion. B. At the end of years 1, 2 & 3, lessons learned prepared and widely disseminated.</p>	<p>The PCPU has established a lessons learned element to all its meetings and has included this as a part of the evaluation process of NREPS. An officer takes into consideration and notes all the comments made by attendants regarding processes that did not perform at their optimal. These are then circulated to all members and incorporated where consensus on their applicability is established. Lessons of the NREPS and its functions has also been shared across the government through the CEO Caucus. The NREPS structure has been broadly accepted and a decision taken that the body will be cochaired by the CEO within the Prime Minister's office. There are talks of the replication of the PCPU structure within other government Ministries.</p>	<p>The PCPU has established a lessons learned element to all its meetings and has included this as a part of the evaluation process of NREPS. Lessons of the NREPS and its functions have also been shared across the government ministries (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Works, Ministry of Economic Development) through the Reports produced at the end of each NREPS TC and NREPS OSC Meeting. The NREPS have also presented directly to the Cabinet (Ministers of Belize's 13 ministries) and through the CEO Caucuses (quarterly meeting of the vice ministers), these 13 Ministries are engaged in the transfer of information, developments, advances.</p>
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Implementation Progress (IP)

<p>Outcome 1: Strengthened policy coordination and planning mechanisms within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE)</p>	<p>The NREPS Charter has been officially reviewed by government officials at the highest departmental level, and a Memorandum of Understanding has been developed to be signed by the end of the year by the various stakeholders in the process (from NREPS-TC, NREPS-OSC, NREPS-CEO). This set the stage for the consultative, coordination, and planning mechanisms as they relate to environmental issues. Within the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, the Policy Coordination activities have assisted with local and international conference attendance in areas where financial and human resource constraints would have otherwise created barriers to access.</p>
	<p>The Unit, because of its budgetary flexibility and Policy focus, has been able to ensure regular local and high level international attendance on key issues including: REDD, CDM, Sustainable Development, Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, Carbon Markets, Adaptation FUND and a slew of regional Energy and Climate forums and workshops.</p>
	<p>The NREPS have initiated discussions on the development/ finalization of Belize's National Energy Policy and sustainable development policies.</p>
	<p>There exists open access for private sector participation in policy negotiation/ development. This process has been openly applauded by the non-state actors in sustainable development.</p>

<p>Outcome 2: Increased capacities for integrating natural resource and environmental management issues into national development framework.</p>	<p>In order to increase capacities for the proper functionality of various departments, training was provided as needed/requested in the areas of Management, Public Relations, Spanish (Language), Legal Procedures, Project Introduction to Microsoft. These were the weaker areas of work, and the requests were made by the various Departments.</p>
	<p>Much needed basic supplies for the operationalization of Departmental Duties were acquired via this project. These investments significantly enhance the capabilities, range and effectiveness of the departments in natural resource and environmental management to monitor and enforce policies that are already in place. These capacity building activities underscore a paradigm shift in strengthening the functionality of the various departments as it was clear that a lack of adequate modern equipment was a significant barrier for the limited human resources to effectively execute their duties. Clearly there needs to be a greater injection of resources in the acquisition of the necessary tools for officers to enhance their capacity to effectively perform their duties.</p>
<p>Outcome 3: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptive Collaborative Management</p>	<p>As a component of both the NREPS TC and OSC meeting reports, there exists a recommendations/suggestions component that incorporates best practices, procedural deficiencies, needs for re-alignment or re-structuring of mechanisms of operation of the NREPS Committees.</p>
	<p>Adaptive collaborative management is a part of the daily operations of the PMU, as they meet weekly to discuss progress and methods being used, look for best practices scenarios, and learn from and adapt to methods that have worked, or re-structure those that have not yielded adequate results.</p>

Partnerships

This Project has created a policy coordination mechanism that consists of three main committees of which one was created specifically for civil society representation which includes Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, Private Sector, and Quasi-Governmental Institutions. The NGO community has assisted in the structuring of this committee through the consultations undertaken by the PMU in which the views of all parties involved were taken into consideration for a process that would be applicable and feasible for all parties to participate in fully.

Environmental management is a complex process in which there needs to be extensive collaboration and consultation. It is when parties are not consulted that potentially harmful decisions get made due to lack of historical, ecological, or indigenous knowledge of the area. The NGO Community is willing to work together, however many times try to exceed their roles in the creation of policy, hence, the need for a formalized mechanism that clarifies the roles of all parties involved.

The private sector community is represented through the Belize Chamber of Commerce and those companies with large environmental/carbon footprints such as the Belize Electricity Limited, Belize Water Services Limited and Belize Natural Energy Limited. The private sector has assisted in the structuring of this committee through the consultations undertaken by the PMU in which the views of all parties involved were taken into consideration for a process that would be applicable and feasible for all parties to participate in fully. Although the private sector partners have not and are not expected to commit to any financial support, they are expected to come to the meeting of the NREPS-OSC and fully participate in relevant discussions. Private Sector organizations operate under the philosophy that "time is money"; hence, public sector-private sector partnerships must be cognizant of this and be able to produce results in a time-effective manner. For meetings to be effective and not lose private sector input, there needs to be concise objectives and agendas.

Through the NREPS-OSC, there is indigenous community representation via the seat for Community Based Organizations. The person that holds this seat is expected to consult with all Indigenous/Community Based Organizations prior to meetings in order to ensure that decisions take into account widespread consultative views.

Gender Relevance

The project does not specifically have a gender component; however, maintaining a gender balance is considered within the execution of all project-related tasks. This is particularly the case with regard to opportunities arising from the project; both genders have an equal opportunity to access training and capacity building. To date 35% of all persons trained under the project are women. Gender is also considered in the representation on the various advisory bodies formed under the project.

The project considers traditional roles/ mandates taken on in natural resource management and attempts to negotiate the participation of non-traditional actors in these roles. In Belize most Heads of Departments managing natural resources are male; in considering this, the project has opened training sessions to all senior staff allowing for a greater participation of women in these opportunities. It is believed that the project has been able to fully develop both genders equally, hence, taking full advantage of the coordination efforts and potential for collaboration across the board.