

Improving Governance of Protected Areas in Belize: institutional, management and legislative requirements.

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SUMMARY

This document distils the substantive outputs under Result Three of the National Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan Project (NPAPSP). Result Three required recommendations for management procedures and sustainable use, especially: “mechanisms for forms of governance over the protected areas system, that reflect the full range of interests and rights in, and management options for, natural resource management that are compatible with effective biodiversity conservation”.

Community Uses of Protected Areas Resources

Consultations were held in Orange Walk, Placencia, Punta Gorda and Dangriga. The purpose of these consultations were to identify who are the main protected areas resource users, what were the protected areas resources that were used, how many people in the community depended on the resources for their livelihood, and what were some of the problem/concerns and potential solutions that needed attention.

Most of the communities depended on the protected areas for fishing, hunting, medicinal plants, wood and other materials. Although they knew that their activities were illegal, they felt that they had no choice, because there were no alternatives for securing their livelihoods, and they had enjoyed traditional rights of access and use of these resources. The Government of Belize however, does not officially recognise any traditional rights of access or use of natural resources by the indigenous people or local communities. The participants further identified a range of marine and terrestrial impacts on the resources of protected areas in or adjacent to their communities

Since there were no detailed field assessments, the extent, severity, significance, or importance of the range of impacts including those of current resource use practices by communities, could not be determined. Nevertheless, there are mechanisms related to governance systems that could be utilised to mitigate much of these impacts.

Joint governance was suggested as an appropriate mechanism for managing protected areas in Belize. This mechanism requires that authority, responsibility and accountability are shared among a variety of parties, likely to include one or more Government agencies, local communities, private landowners and other stakeholders.

Site Management Through Co-Management

Protected areas in Belize have been managed using a variety of approaches that is dependant on the entity with lead responsibility for the site and its preferred operational procedures. The approaches used by several key government agencies and by the owner of a large private reserve are summarised and some guidelines on the co-management process is provided to improve on site management. The key elements of co-management includes:

Identification of Management Unit and Stakeholders

- Identify the preliminary protected area management unit and the main relevant stakeholders.
- Assess the need and feasibility for co-management.
- Assess the available human and financial resources.
- Create a Start-up Team.

Preparing for the Partnership

- Gather information and tools (e.g. maps) on the ecological and socio-economic issues and problems at stake.
- Launch and maintain a social communication campaign on the need for co-management and the process expected to bring it about.
- Contact the relevant social actors, facilitate their appraisal exercises and continue the ecological and socio-economic analysis in a participatory way.
- As necessary, help the relevant social actors to develop an internal consensus on their management interests, concerns and capacities, to organise themselves and to identify representatives.
- Propose a set of procedures for the negotiation phase and in particular, for the first meeting of relevant stakeholders.

Developing the Agreement

- Hold the first meeting of relevant stakeholders on the negotiation procedures.
- Hold one or several meetings to review the socio-ecological situation and its trends, and agree on a long-term, common vision for the area at stake.
- Hold a ceremony to formalise and promote the agreed common vision.
- Hold meetings to identify a strategy towards the long-term vision.
- Hold meetings to negotiate specific agreements (e.g. management plans, contracts, memoranda of understanding) for each component of the strategy; support the mediation of conflicts, as needed; clarify zoning arrangements and specific functions, rights and responsibilities of the relevant actors; agree on follow-up protocol.
- Hold meetings to agree on all the elements of the partnership institution (e.g. principles, rules, organisations in charge of implementing, enforcing and reviewing the agreements).
- Legitimise and publicise the co-management institution(s).

Implementation and Review of the Agreement

- Implement and enforce the agreements, organisations and rules (including management plans for the protected areas).
- If necessary, clarify the entitlements and responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders.
- Collect data to monitor progress and impacts.
- As appropriate, experiment with innovation (e.g. as a result of new information, refinement of technical solutions and/or wider scale applications of activities).

- Organise review meetings at regular intervals to evaluate the results obtained and lessons learnt; as necessary, modify activities and/or develop new management agreements.

Co-management Agreements

Written co-management agreements were made between NGOs and CBOs and the relevant government agency when it was felt that there was a strong desire and some capacity of the NGO/CBO to manage the site. The co-management arrangements of three state agencies: the Forest Department, the Fisheries Department, and the Institute of Archaeology are summarised and reviewed. Generally, overall content of the agreements is good and covers the key anticipated issues related to co-managing the protected areas.

However, a few weaknesses were identified in the agreements which included: lack of or insufficient stakeholder participation in the preparation of management plans; lack of clarity on the implementation of regulations; insufficient details on dispute/conflict resolution; and lack of a mechanism for recovery of investment cost upon termination of the agreement.

Conflict Management

Competing demands for use of protected areas resources will always lead to some form of conflict. The extent and duration of the conflict usually depends on the ability of the protected areas management agency to manage such conflicts. In Belize, the range of identified conflicts result from uses of protected areas resources by communities with customary rights or access, illegal large-scale harvesting of timber, other forest products and fish, and poorly regulated visitor use of some protected areas.

The various aspects of conflicts and their management are outlined to help stakeholders develop a better understanding of the use of conflict resolution as a tool in protected areas management. The major strategies for conflict management include: Avoidance; Adjudication; Mediation; Negotiation; Arbitration; Coercion. Mechanisms for participatory conflict management and resolution are based on negotiation and mediation and have been referred to as alternative conflict management (i.e. alternative to national legal systems based on adjudication and arbitration). The objectives of alternative conflict management are to:

- Improve communication and information sharing among interest groups;
- Address the causes of conflicts in a collaborative manner;
- Transform the conflict management process into a force promoting positive social change;
- Build capacity of communities to manage their conflicts; and
- Limit the occurrence and intensity of future conflicts.

Policy Framework for Co-management

Co-management is really a type of governance involving a range of different interest groups with varying capacities, sharing responsibility for and benefits of managing a protected area. Currently, there is no national policy on co-management of natural resources. A national policy on co-management will provide overall guidance on the process, aspects and scope of co-management. However, the needs of the people of Belize and the country's obligations under multilateral environmental agreements, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Article 8 (In-situ Conservation) and Article 10 (Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity), can provide the framework for the construction of a policy on co-management of protected areas.

Further, co-management policy guidance is also found in the CBD Decision VII/28 Programme of Work on Protected Areas, particularly under the following goals as listed in that Decision:

- Goal 1.1 – To establish and strengthen national and regional systems of protected areas integrated into a global network as a contribution to globally agreed goals
- Goal 1.4 – To substantially improve site-based protected area planning and management
- Goal 1.5 – To prevent and mitigate the negative impacts of key threats to protected areas
- Goal 2.1 – To promote equity and benefit-sharing
- Goal 2.2 – To enhance and secure involvement of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders
- Goal 3.1 – To provide an enabling policy, institutional and socio-economic environment for protected areas
- Goal 3.2 – To build capacity for the planning, establishment and management of protected areas
- Goal 3.3 To develop, apply and transfer appropriate technologies for protected areas
- Goal 3.5 – To strengthen communication, education and public awareness
- Goal 4.4 – To ensure that scientific knowledge contributes to the establishment and effectiveness of protected areas and protected area systems

Institutional Arrangements for Managing Protected Areas

Following a review of several proposed alternative structures by the NPAPSP Task Force, two options were selected for further consideration: 1) A statutory agency for the management of all state declared protected areas. This agency will be comprised of the existing staff and infrastructure of the Forest Department, the Fisheries Department, Coastal Zone Management Authority/Institute, and the Institute of Archaeology. This agency, the 'National Protected Areas Service' (NPAS) was chosen as the ideal institutional arrangement. 2) A statutory agency the 'Forest and Wildlife Authority' to give the Forest Dept full control of its finances, staffing, and operations and a similar agency 'Wildlife Authority/Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority' is also established

for the Fisheries Dept (the Coastal Zone Management Authority/ Institute may also be incorporated into this agency).

In option 2) above, a national protected areas coordination mechanism will be established by Cabinet to guide policy development and implementation, resource demands and deployment, conflict management and product development. This coordinating mechanism will be comprised for senior officers from key agencies, including the NICH.

Legal Framework

The main pieces of legislation that govern protected areas in Belize are the: National Parks System Act, Fisheries Act, Forest Act and National Institute of Culture and History Act. The major weaknesses in the NPSA relates to the nature of the designation of, and rules for the various categories of protected areas. These have been largely inconsistent with the needs of the key stakeholders, and do not have appropriate management prescriptions that cater to sustainable use. The Act will need revision to accommodate the institutional framework that is selected for the management of protected areas. However, other key areas for revision include: adoption of the IUCN protected areas categories; the requirement that management plans be prepared before any new areas are designated under the Act; the procedure for declaration, de-reservation or alteration of protected areas; delegation of management responsibility to any legally registered local body; zoning prescriptions; increased fines; and appointment of officers.

Application of IUCN Protected Areas Categories

The IUCN guidelines propose six categories of protected areas, based on the primary management objective. At least 75% of the designated protected area must be managed for the primary objective. The definitions, objectives for management and guidance on selection of sites are provided for Categories I-VI. In terms of sustainable use of natural resources, Categories IV-VI allow for exploitation as important objectives. Natural resource use in Category III is not often considered as an objective. Categories II and Ib permit some resource use often in the context of needs of indigenous people, or people living in or adjacent to the site. Category I does not allow resource extraction and limits public access to the area.

The use of natural resources within each protected area category should be governed by the management objectives for which each site was designated. These objectives are further developed and implemented through the management plan created for each site. The creation of management zones can be used to meet the varied objectives within a category. The identification of potential zones will be based on an understanding of the natural resource abundance, distribution, health, use and threats. This information will be gathered through surveys and engagement of resource users and communities adjacent to the site. The active and transparent participation of the stakeholders will lead to a zoning plan that is agreeable to all parties, and likely to require little effort by state agencies for enforcement.

Criteria for Declaration, Declassification or Alteration of Protected Areas

There are no written departmental guidelines for the declaration, de-reservation, reclassification or alteration of protected areas in Belize. Usually, interests external to the Forest and Fisheries Departments are the ones who start lobbying for the declaration of selected areas as protected areas. The relevant government department then investigates the claim and records the locations of proposed boundaries for the site. A report is then submitted to the Minister who may then decide to declare the area protected under the relevant Act. Declaration of Fisheries Reserves follow a similar procedure, except that there are usually extensive consultations with key stakeholder groups, leading to the preparation of a management plan, before the Minister is advised to declare the area protected.

The purposes for which protected areas are declared or altered should be based on the needs of the majority of stakeholders or in the national interest. The purpose of the protected areas should be clearly articulated so as to guide management interventions. A range of biological and socio-economic attributes, as well as site design and planning considerations can serve as the criteria for selection of targeted sites. These attributes can be weighted and utilised to assess the characteristics of potential sites. The total score from this assessment can then be ranked and prioritised to determine the selection or de-selection of targeted sites.

A key element in the procedure for alteration or reservation of a site will be the legislative support. The following clause for inclusion in the National Parks System Act is recommended: Before any area of land and sea is established as a protected area, de-reserved, reclassified or altered, the Minister in consultation with the agencies responsible for protected areas management shall publish three weeks in advance, at least three consecutive Notices in the Gazette and the local newspapers, that -

- (a) specifies the situation and limits of the area of land or sea which is to be established as a protected area, de-reserved or modified;
- (b) provides reasons why the area has been selected for protected area status or for de-reservation, or for modification;
- (c) invites all persons or agencies who enjoy any rights within such areas of land or sea specified in the Notice to submit their claims and objections to the Minister;
- (d) appoints a date and a place for the hearing of any claims and objections relating to such area of land and sea specified in the Notice;
- (e) appoints an independent technical committee to analyse and advise on the validity of claims and feasibility of change in the status of the area as specified in the Notice.

The Independent Technical Committee should also utilise the criteria in the preceding section to assist in their analysis of the situation. A cost/benefit analysis of the proposed

change-in-use should be mandatory to additionally assist the Technical Committee in its decision.

However, for proposed modification to an established protected area, a socio-economic and ecological impact assessment of the proposed changes to the site should be undertaken, consistent with the Environmental Protection Act and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations. The individual or agency proposing the change in the status or alteration of the protected area will be responsible for the conduct of the impact assessment. In this case, the National Environmental Appraisal Committee (NEAC), will be the *de facto* Technical Committee required to evaluate the environmental impact statement of the proposed changes to the protected area.

Critical Next Steps

The lead agencies for protected areas management in Belize should organise themselves to plan for implementation of the recommendations and use of the guidelines outlined in this document. The following specific activities are considered critical:

- Seek experienced legal advice on the recommendations for change in the National Parks System Act.
- Get political support for the preferred institutional arrangement for protected areas.
- Promote and get key stakeholders support for the recommended changes and processes.
- Provide orientation of staff on the IUCN protected areas categories
- Determine the primary and other management objectives of all protected areas, in order to assign each protected area to an IUCN protected areas category.
- Conduct orientation of staff on the guidelines contained in the document
- Provide training for staff in the use of these guidelines.

In the event that no institutional change for the administration of protected areas is likely in the short to medium term, most of the legislative changes suggested in this document can be made to the existing National Parks Systems Act. These changes will allow for better, more inclusive and transparent management of protected areas in Belize.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BAS	Belize Audubon Society
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COP	Conference of Parties
FAMRACC	Forest and Marine Reserve Association of Caye Caulker
Fis	Fisheries Department
FMRA	Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority
For	Forest Department
FWA	Forest and Wildlife Authority
IA	Institute of Archaeology
IUCN	World Conservation Union
MBRS	Meso-american Barrier Reef System
MNREI	Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Industry
NEAC	National Environmental Appraisal Committee
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NICH	National Institute for Culture and Heritage
NPAPSP	National Parks and Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan
NPAS	National Protected Areas Service
NPSA	National Parks System Act
PACT	Protected Areas Conservation Trust
PCM	Protected Areas Coordinating Mechanism
SATIIM	Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management
TASTE	Toledo Association For Sustainable Tourism and Empowerment
TIDE	Toledo Institute for Development and Environment
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

INTRODUCTION

IMPROVING GOVERNANCE OF PROTECTED AREAS IN BELIZE: INSTITUTIONAL, LEGISLATIVE AND MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS.

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This document distils the substantive outputs under Result Three of the National Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan Project (NPAPSP). Result Three required recommendations for management procedures and sustainable use, especially: “mechanisms for forms of governance over the protected areas system, that reflect the full range of interests and rights in, and management options for, natural resource management that are compatible with effective biodiversity conservation”.

This component of the NPAPSP consultancy reviewed existing documentation on the protected areas system legislation, administration and management. Consultations with key stakeholder groups within the government and selected communities were also undertaken to assist in the preparation of recommendations that are considered appropriate for application in Belize.

This document is written for practitioners in the field of protected areas management, particularly the government agencies with jurisdiction over protected areas and the NGOs and CBOs who manage these areas. Most of the recommendations take the form of guidelines that can be directly applied, while concise prescriptions are provided to remedy the existing legislative and administrative weaknesses.

The format of the guidelines and recommendations also provides for easy reading. Excessive descriptions of the existing situation were not provided since the practitioners are already quite familiar with the issues and constraints impacting on local protected areas management and these were already documented in Result One and elsewhere.

It is anticipated that application of the guidelines provided in this document will be preceded by an orientation on its use. Some staff will require appropriate training in the use of the guidelines and perhaps some practice through ‘role playing’ with colleagues, before attempts are made to engage protected areas resource users.

Users of this document are encouraged to deepen their understanding of the issues and approaches to protected areas management by consulting the documentation listed in the References.

CHAPTER ONE

IMPACTS ON PROTECTED AREAS AND GOVERNANCE

Background

Impacts on protected areas result from the uses of these areas by a range of stakeholders, but are also due to indirect impacts from adjacent communities and development. The key protected areas stakeholders include tour operators and sea transport operators, commercial fishermen, sport fishermen, scuba divers, snorkelers, swimmers, subsistence fishers, hotel and resort owners, restaurant and gift shop operators, commercial logging operations, hikers, bird watchers, researchers, subsistence gatherers of wood, leaves and other forest products, hunters, farmers, government agencies, and NGO/CBOs.

The types of impacts can be broadly classified as: 1) physical, affecting air quality, hydrology, surface water, coastal water, soil, and land use; 2) flora and fauna, affecting habitats and species; and 3) socio-cultural/economic, affecting land use and resource availability, cultural heritage, and human beings. The range of impacts can either be significant or insignificant, positive or negative, long term or short term, reversible or irreversible, localised or regional in effect, and in terms of the local context, either important or unimportant.

A review of the available literature concluded that there were no thorough assessments of the impacts caused by the range of users on protected areas in Belize. However, an indication of the impacts on selected protected areas was obtained through a series of community consultations held in several districts between 24th March and 13th April, 2005.

Identification of Impacts Based on Community Consultation

The consultations were held in Orange Walk (24th March), Placencia (5th April), Punta Gorda (6th April) and Dangriga (13th April). The purpose of these consultations were to identify who are the main protected areas resource users, what were the protected areas resources that were used, how many people in the community depended on the resources for their livelihood, and what were some of the problem/concerns and potential solutions that needed attention.

Due to budgetary constraints the list of communities originally identified in the NPAPSP project document was further reduced to geographically different communities near protected areas that were considered as having different resource use issues. The targeted protected areas were: Honey Camp National Park, Fresh Water Creek Forest Reserve, Corozal Wildlife Sanctuary, Laugh Bird Caye National Park, Gladden Spit/Silk Cayes Marine Reserve, Billy Barquedier National Park, Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, Gra Gra Lagoon National Park, Mayflower Bocawina National Park, Sarstoon Temash National Park, Rio Blanco National Park, Port Honduras Marine Reserve and Agua Caliente Wildlife Sanctuary.

Most of the communities depended on the protected areas for fishing, hunting, medicinal plants, wood and other materials. Although they knew that their activities were illegal, they felt that they had no choice, because there were no alternatives for securing their livelihoods, and they had enjoyed traditional rights of access and use of these resources. The Government of Belize however, does not officially recognise any traditional rights of access or use of natural resources by the indigenous people or local communities.

The impacts that were identified by the community participants were:

Marine

- decline in fish stocks, possibly from overfishing and illegal commercial fishing;
- pollution of the bay from sewage from Chetumal;
- damage to manatees by boats as well as hunting of manatees by Mexicans;
- destructive fishing practices especially from near-shore trawling;
- pollution from discharges of the shrimp farms and agrochemicals;
- unsupervised excessive visitation by tourists at marine sites leading to degradation/ destruction of parts of the coral reef;
- lack of pump-out stations for sailboats leading to dumping of sewage at sea;
- catching some marine animals out of season and under size, causing a reduction in abundance of mature animals.

Terrestrial

- land clearing for farming;
- extensive licensed logging causing a decline in easily available valuable species;
- illegal and uncontrolled large-scale extraction of timber;
- cutting of mangroves used for construction or cleared for development;
- pollution of the river from the sugar factory;
- careless use by some resource users causing large forest fires.

Since there were no detailed field assessments, the extent, severity, significance, or importance of the range of impacts including those of current resource use practices by communities, could not be determined. Nevertheless, there are mechanisms related to governance systems that could be utilised to mitigate much of these impacts.

Governance Mechanisms for Mitigation of Impacts on Protected Areas

Governance is about power, relationships and accountability. It is about who has influence, whom decides, and how decision makers are held accountable. It can be defined as the interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power is exercised, how decisions are taken on issues of public concern, and how citizens and other stakeholders have their say (Borrini-Feyerabend and Johnson, 2003). Good governance depends on the legitimacy of the political system and on the respect shown by the people for its institutions. It also depends on the capacity of such institutions to respond to problems, and to achieve social consensus through agreements and compromise (Borrini-Feyerabend *et al* 2000).

With respect to protected areas, there are four types of governance mechanisms that can be distinguished based on who holds management authority and responsibility, and who will be held accountable according to legal, customary or otherwise legitimate rights. CMWG and TILCEPA (2004) described the four governance types as:

1. Governance by the Government

Authority, responsibility and accountability rest with a Government ministry or an agency at national, regional or municipal level. The land and resources are subjected to use rules and regulations under the law, and often included as part of a system of protected areas. Management may be directly exercised or delegated but the government retains full ownership and control. At times, the Government is committed to inform or consult other concerned parties prior to making management decisions.

2. Joint governance by several concerned parties

Authority, responsibility and accountability are shared among a variety of parties, likely to include one or more Government agencies, local communities, private landowners and other stakeholders. The parties recognize the legitimacy of their respective entitlements and chose or are required to collaborate. Examples include co-managed protected areas and conservation easements.

3. Private governance

Authority and responsibility rest with the landowners, which may exercise it for profit (e.g., tourism businesses, resource extraction) or not for profit (e.g., foundations, universities, conservation NGOs). Usually, the landowners are fully responsible for decision-making and their accountability to the society at large is quite limited.

4. Community governance

Authority and responsibility for managing the natural resources rest with the indigenous peoples and/or local communities with customary and/or legal claims over the land and natural resources. The communities have in place, some forms of traditional governance, or otherwise locally agreed organisations and rules. Land and resources are usually collectively owned and managed, but partial private or clan-based “ownership” can also be accommodated. Accountability to society at large remains usually limited, although is at times achieved as a counterpart of recognised rights or economic incentives.

Current Situation in Belize

The planning and declaration of protected areas have generally excluded the local resident populations. The concerns and practices of most of these communities and their very presence, are often considered as incompatible with conservation. This situation usually leads to antagonism, mistrust, conflicts in resource use, unsustainable resource use, and a lack of respect for the prescribed rules of the protected areas.

The current situation in Belize indicates that Option 1 is not effective, primarily because the government agencies responsible for protected areas have continually lacked adequate financial, human and material resources for efficient management of protected areas. Option 2 has been encouraged over the past decade and seems likely to offer a better arrangement, however, the co-management arrangements have been between the Government and an NGO or CBO. In many cases, the communities adjacent to the protected areas seem to have been left out of the planning and management of these areas. Option 3 or the privatisation of the protected areas in Belize is not likely to be an acceptable solution, because of the large number of communities depending on these areas for their livelihoods. Option 4 may be considered in the future, because currently, the local communities and CBOs do not seem to have the requisite sustained individual, institutional and systemic capacities to effectively manage protected areas.

Therefore the appropriate mechanism at this time, will be Option 2 and the strengthening of the partners to fully engage in co-management, inclusive of the communities adjacent to the protected areas, especially those who depend on the resources from these areas for their livelihoods.

CHAPTER TWO

JOINT GOVERNANCE: CO-MANAGEMENT

Background

Protected areas in Belize have been managed using a variety of approaches that is dependant on the entity with lead responsibility for the site and its preferred operational procedures. This chapter summarises the approaches used by several key government agencies and by the owner of a large private reserve. The next section provides some guidelines on the process that could be employed to improve site management.

The Fisheries Department engages communities and other key stakeholders in a series of discussions on any site that is being considered for declaration as a marine reserve. Such consultations can last for up to three years and often result in the development of a management plan, which then leads to the formal declaration of the marine reserve. Community based organisations are identified, selected and participate in a co-management agreement. Four of the eight marine reserves have co-management agreements with community-based organisations. Local advisory committees are also set up to assist in the management of the site. With the exception of one site, the Fisheries Dept. has the lead responsibility for the day-to-day management of the protected areas. The marine reserves each have basic field stations with four staff, including a marine reserve manager, dedicated to each station.

The Forest Department negotiates agreements with NGOs and CBOs who have an interest in the management of selected protected areas. NGO/CBOs must satisfy the following requirements (Ravndal, 2002):

1. Communities must demonstrate interest in managing the PA and indicate this interest in writing to the Protected Areas Programme.
2. Three general community meetings must take place to present the idea of co-management to the communities bordering or actively using the PA. These meetings should be organised by the proponent group, which must advertise on radio and newspaper that such community consultations are planned at least 2 weeks prior to the meetings.
3. Letters of recommendation must be presented from a) the Area Representative; b) the Village Council Chairperson; c) any existing tourism associations; and, d) any other active groups that may exist in the community.
4. The proponent group must be a legally established organisation.

There are 47 protected areas under the jurisdiction of the Forest Department. Twenty-six of these protected areas have co-management agreements with either NGOs or CBOs. The co-management agreement usually requires that a management plan be prepared for

each site within one year of the signing of the agreement. The NGO/CBO has lead responsibility for the day-to-day management of the site. Advisory committees made up of representatives of organised groups, including the Village Councils, and government agencies are set up to oversee management of the site. The Forest Dept. has a total of four staff dedicated to its national parks programme, however, Forest Guards do assist with patrols and enforcement within the protected areas.

The Institute of Archaeology manages all of its 11 archaeological reserves, many of which have management plans and at least a Park Warden and two Park Rangers per site. Communities adjacent to these sites are engaged in consultations regarding the development of these sites and are often involved in facility management, including the operation of gift shops. Recently, the Institute of Archaeology signed a co-management agreement with the Belize Audubon Society for the Actun Tunichil Muknal Natural Monument, where both parties are expected to contribute equally to the resources required for managing the site.

The Programme for Belize owns and manages the largest private reserve in Belize. There are no co-management arrangements for the site with any agency, NGO or CBO. The area has historically been privately owned and no communities are resident within the area. However, former workers of the estate have been engaged in livelihood opportunities through the efforts of the Programme for Belize. The site (Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area) has a management plan for the period 2001-2006. The area is managed by an Executive Director, senior management staff, and managers for the two Field Stations. Focus is on implementation of protection, research and forestry activities; tourism activities, non-extractive research and community liaison.

There appears to be no written procedures or guidelines that are consistently utilised by government agencies to assess the feasibility of co-management and to guide the process of co-management. The following section provides some guidelines that could be adopted by agencies wanting to pursue co-management of protected areas. The co-management approach for protected areas has the potential of minimising stakeholder conflicts, identification of conservation and sustainable use priorities and zones, facilitation of equity among the partners, greater awareness on protected area functions and benefits, and improvement in broad-based responsibility for and cooperation in the implementation of agreed objectives.

Initiating the Co-Management Process

Co-management is really a type of governance involving a range of different interest groups with varying capacities, sharing responsibility for and benefits of managing a protected area. Borrini-Feyerabend *et al* (2000) defines co-management as a situation in which two or more social actors negotiate, define and guarantee amongst themselves a fair sharing of the management functions, entitlements and responsibilities for a given territory, area or set of natural resources. **Appendix I** provides further details on the process of co-management, including a range of helpful checklists.

CHAPTER THREE

PROTECTED AREA CO-MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS IN BELIZE

Background

Co-management arrangements for protected areas in Belize have been a relatively new approach, utilised only within the past ten years. This approach was used primarily as a means to ensure active management at sites that were often neglected because of limited human and financial resources within the government agency responsible for their management.

Written co-management agreements were made between NGOs and CBOs and the relevant government agency when it was felt that there was a strong desire and some capacity of the NGO/CBO to manage the site. It should be noted however, that there seems to be no clear distinction among some key stakeholders in the use of the terms CBO and NGO, since both terms are used interchangeably.

The co-management arrangements of three state agencies: the Forest Department, the Fisheries Department, and the Institute of Archaeology are summarised and reviewed in this chapter.

Summary of Co-Management Agreements In Belize

A co-management agreement usually specifies:

- The agreement's purpose, the parties in the agreement and the relevant territory, area or natural resources;
- Benefits and responsibilities assigned to the parties to the agreement;
- Means of protecting the investment each party makes in the agreement;
- Means of resolving disputes;
- Specification of the duration of the agreement;
- Schedules and procedures for review, reporting, monitoring and evaluation;
- Confidentiality and other special clauses (Borrini-Feyerabend *et al*, 2004).

The review of written co-management agreements in Belize was based on the following samples:

1. Forest Department and Belize Audubon Society (For/BAS) for nine protected areas declared under the National Parks Systems Act.
2. Forest Department and Toledo Institute For Development & Environment (For/TIDE) for Payne's Creek National Park.

3. Forest Department and Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management (For/SATIIM) for Sarstoon/Temash National Park.
4. Fisheries Department and Toledo Association for Sustainable Tourism & Empowerment (Fis/TASTE) for Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve.
5. Institute of Archeology and the Belize Audubon Society (IA/BAS) for Actun Tunichil Muknal Natural Monument.

Agreement Purpose/Parties And Relevant Area

All agreements clearly define the parties and the relevant area. The purpose is stated as:

“...may continue the work of cooperating in the development and management of areas declared under the National Parks System Act.” (For/BAS)

“...may continue the work of cooperating in the management of the Payne’s Creek National Park.” (For/TIDE)

“...may continue the work of cooperating in the management of the Sarstoon/Temash National Park.” (For/SATIIM)

“...may continue the work of cooperating in the management of the Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve.” (Fis/TASTE)

“...may continue the work of cooperation in the protection, management and use of the Cave and Park for tourism related activities as well as other activities deemed necessary for the full enjoyment and protection of both.” (AI/BAS)

Benefits and Responsibilities Assigned to the Parties to the Agreement

Joint management is prescribed in all of the agreements however the extent of management responsibilities delegated to the NGO/CBO varies among the agreements as follows:

For/BAS:- “...the Society in consultation with the Forest Dept shall formulate detailed plans for the development and management of that protected area.” The text goes on to specify the level of detail needed for the plan and specifies that “...the Forest Dept and the Society shall as far as practicable consult with relevant communities and stakeholders....” in the formulation of the development and management plans.

“The Society shall be responsible for the day-to-day management of the protected area and for providing the necessary staffing and personnel”; further the Society has

responsibility for “...implementation, development and management of all recreational activities.....public awareness and environmental education campaigns....”.

The Society is authorised to collect fees, establish an endowment fund or undertake grants, loans, subsidies or procure other funds for the operation of the protected area. However, 80% of concession fees and 80% of other fees can be retained by the Society. 20% of concession fees go to the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT); 20% of other fees go to the Forest Dept.

“The Forest Dept shall be responsible for securing the implementation of regulations...” needed for the site, as well as for law enforcement and shall be “partially responsible for the provision and maintenance of infrastructure....”.

The Forest Dept will facilitate the granting of exemptions and other benefits to which the Society is entitled. The Forest Dept will grant approvals for the operation of recreational services by third parties, and grant permits as required under Section 7 of the National Parks Systems Act.

For/TIDE:- Similar conditions apply as in the previous paragraphs, with the exception that a Management Committee is prescribed that supervises the activities of TIDE with respect to management of Payne’s Creek National Park. The terms of reference for the Management Committee gives details of its supervisory and administrative role, including the facilitation of involvement of adjacent communities and other agencies. Representatives are appointed by the Chief Forest Officer and are selected from several local organisations that have interest in, use of, or jurisdiction over the area.

There are no requirements for community or stakeholder consultation in the preparation of management plans.

Any concessional arrangements or activities must have agreement among the government, TIDE and the Management Committee. 10% of all fees collected by TIDE are deposited into the government’s Consolidated Revenue Fund; 20% of fees collected will be paid into a Forestry Development Fund (to be established); and 70% of the fee collected is retained by TIDE for management and development of the site.

For/SATIIM:- The benefits and responsibilities are similar to that in the For/TIDE agreement, except that there is no Management Committee prescribed for oversight the operations. There are also no requirements for community or stakeholder consultation in the preparation of management plans.

Fis/TASTE:- The Fisheries Dept and TASTE “...along with the Coastal Zone Management Institute and other agencies and NGOs as appropriate shall together formulate and implement detailed management plans”. Details of the content of the plan are also given.

“The staff of the Marine Reserve shall be responsible for the day-to-day management of Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve with direct advice of TASTE”. The Fisheries Dept will also establish a Management Committee to include representatives from other government departments/agencies and persons who can give pertinent advice.

Implementation of all recreation activities will be the responsibility of the Marine Reserve staff who will consult with TASTE. The Fisheries Dept will process all applications, approve or refuse all or any activities in the Marine Reserve in consultation with TASTE.

The Marine Reserve staff is responsible for collecting all fees which shall be shared as follows: 70% will go to the Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve Trust Fund and used for management and development of the site; 20% of the fee will go to PACT; and 10% will go to FAMRACC for institutional strengthening.

The Fisheries Dept will assist TASTE in getting tax exemptions and other benefits to which the organisation is entitled related to management activities of the site.

TASTE is “.....permitted to extract fish and other marine life from within the Marine Reserve, pursuant to permits issued by the Fisheries Administrator”.

Note: There is a Fisheries Dept/TIDE co-management agreement for the Port Honduras Marine Reserve that is similar to the Fis/TIDE agreement; except that TIDE has the day-to-day management responsibility for the site. TIDE is the only CBO that has such an arrangement with the Fisheries Dept.

AI/BAS:- “The parties shall together formulate and implement detailed annual operational plans for the development of the Cave and Park...”. The details of the plans are also outlined. There are no requirements for community or stakeholder consultation in the preparation of the plans.

The agreement further states that the “Parties shall be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Cave and Park where each organisation will provide an equal amount of staff to execute said activities”. Joint responsibility is also prescribed for implementation of all aspects of the management, including public awareness and education.

“The Parties shall be jointly responsible for providing and funding, in equal amounts, for all infrastructure unless otherwise agreed.....”. Revenue derived from fee collection will be divided equally between both parties. Tourism related concession and activities will be undertaken jointly or parties will have the right to first refusal. Profits from such operations will also be shared equally.

Both Parties are allowed to accept or establish endowments, trust funds, loans, subsidies or other funds for exclusive use as defined in the priorities for the Cave and the Park.

The Institute of Archaeology will process all applications for scientific research permits and will grant or refuse approval in consultation with BAS. The Institute of Archaeology will be responsible for all management activities related to ancient monuments.

Means of Protecting the Investment Each Party Makes in the Agreement

None of the agreements contain any clear provision for safeguarding the investment made by each party, especially with respect to the NGO/CBO partner. However, the AI/BAS agreement contains a statement in the final termination clause, that upon termination of the agreement the complaining party can: “.....immediately retain the areas under their jurisdiction”. Similarly, in the For/SATIIM agreement the final clause states that: “Termination of this agreement shall not terminate or otherwise adversely affect any rights to concessions or activities operated or managed by SATIIM”.

Means of Resolving Disputes

All of the agreements contain similar clauses that outlines the procedure for resolving conflicts or disputes:

For/BAS:- “In the event of non-observance of any of the terms of this agreement by a party, the other party may make a complaint to that party and the parties shall then use their best efforts to resolve the matter within six months of the date of the complaint”. If no satisfactory resolution is reached during that period then: “...the complaining party may by further notice of at least 30 days terminate this agreement.”

For/TIDE:- Any dispute arising between the Management Committee and TIDE regarding their roles, requires that: “....either party may in writing refer such dispute to the Chief Forest Officer for his decision on the matter, which shall be final”.

“In the event of infringement or non-compliance of any of the terms of this agreement or the management plans, either party hereto may make a complaint and shall give written notice thereof to the other party, and the party shall then use their best efforts to resolve the matter within six months of the date of such notice”. If no satisfactory resolution is reached during that period then: “...either party may by further notice in writing of at least 30 days, terminate this agreement.”

For/SATIIM:- “In the event of infringement of any terms of the agreement, the non-infringing party shall give notice thereof and the parties shall then use their best efforts to resolve the matter within six months of the date of infringement”. If no satisfactory resolution is reached during that period then: “...either party may by further notice of at least 30 days after the expiration of the period....., terminate this agreement.”

Fis/TASTE:- “In the event of infringement of any of the terms of this agreement the party making a complaint shall give notice thereof and the parties shall then use their best efforts to resolve the matter within three months of the date of the infringement”. If no

satisfactory resolution is reached during that period then: "...the complaint may be taken to an agreed arbitrator".

If there is still no satisfactory resolution of the dispute then the complaining party: "...may by further notice of at least 30 days, after the expiration of the period..... terminate this agreement." This clause also states that neither party shall incur any liabilities in the dissolution of the agreement.

IA/BAS:- "In the event of infringement of any of the terms of this agreement the party making a complaint shall give notice thereof and the parties hereto shall then use their best efforts to resolve the matter within six months of the date of the infringement". Mediators in this process are identified as the President of the National Institute of Culture and History, and the Chief Forest Officer.

If there is still no satisfactory resolution of the dispute or conflict then the complaining party: "...may by further notice of at least 30 days, after the expiration of the period.....terminate this agreement and immediately retain the areas under their respective jurisdiction."

Note: **Appendix II** provides some general guidelines on conflict resolution for protected areas management.

Specification of The Duration Of The Agreement

The duration of the agreements varies. The For/BAS agreement is for a period of ten years; the For/TIDE and For/SATIIM agreements each has a five-year duration. The Fis /TASTE and IA/BAS agreements do not specify a duration.

Schedules and Procedures for Review, Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation

For/BAS:- BAS is expected to provide the Chief Forest Officer with: "...semi-annual financial statements, annual reports and reports on any major revision in the development and management plans". If requested in writing from BAS, the Forest Dept will provide "...relevant financial information pertaining to the protected areas". Quarterly meetings to report on progress are scheduled between BAS and the Forest Dept, and may include other relevant agencies or ministries.

For/TIDE:- TIDE is expected to provide the government with: "...quarterly financial statements, annual reports and reports on any major revision in operations regarding management of the park". The clause on the content of management plans also require them to: "...specify the assessment methods to monitor accomplishments and shall provide the necessary periodic evaluations and refinements". If requested in writing from TIDE, the government will provide "...information relevant to the management and development of the park".

For/SATIIM:- Identical clauses to those on reporting and management plans in the For/TIDE agreement exists (see preceding paragraph).

Fis/TASTE:- The Marine Reserve staff and TASTE will provide to the Fisheries Administrator the following reports: "...quarterly financial statements, annual reports and reports on any major revision in operations regarding management of the Marine Reserve". The clause on the content of management plans also require them to: "...specify the assessment methods to monitor accomplishments and shall provide the necessary periodic evaluations and refinements". If requested in writing from TASTE, the Fisheries Dept. will provide "...relevant financial information pertaining to the Marine Reserve".

IA/BAS:- Their agreement has no clause that deals with periodic review of the activities and reporting. However, there is a clause that requires the operations plans to: "...specify the assessment method to monitor accomplishments and shall provide the necessary periodic evaluations and refinements where necessary."

Confidentiality and Other Special Clauses

None of the agreements have any confidentiality clause. However there are special clauses that provide for amendments and early withdrawal from the agreement by either party.

For/BAS:- Changes to the agreement: "...shall be recorded in writing and signed by both parties in order to take effect".

The Forestry Dept. could resume sole responsibility of the site by seeking agreement with the other party on a transition period which should not exceed two years.

BAS in consultation with the Forest Dept may withdraw from the agreement by giving notice of its intention at least six months in advance. Thereafter further consultation on the handover process is required.

For/TIDE:- There is no specific clause for amendment or alteration of the agreement.

The government could resume sole responsibility of the site either by seeking agreement with the other party on a transition period which should not exceed one year; or if there is no agreement with TIDE or TIDE refuses to cooperate, the government can take control of the site in one year of indicating its intention to do so.

Whenever it deems necessary and in consultation with the Forest Dept., TIDE may withdraw from the agreement by giving notice of its intention at least six months in advance.

For/SATIIM:- Similar conditions apply as in the For/TIDE agreement.

Fis/TASTE:- “This agreement shall be amended where such proposed amendment is reduced to writing and signed by both parties”.

The Fisheries Dept. is required to consult with TASTE wherever the Dept. is ready to terminate the agreement; provided that notice of at least six months is given to TASTE.

AI/BAS:- This agreement notes that any revision in part or whole, is conditional on both parties getting ‘adequate’ notification and that both parties are in agreement with the proposed revisions.

There is no specific clause for early withdrawal (without cause) from the agreement.

All of these co-management agreements are quite similar. The variations in or omissions of some clauses perhaps reflect the differential capacities of the co-management partners. The IA/BAS agreement seems to offer greater equity but requires matching resources and efforts from the NGO partner. The Fis/TASTE agreement (Fishery Dept co-management agreements are with CBOs only) illustrated the lack of capacity of the CBO to adequately manage the site, hence the Fishery Dept’s lead role. The For/BAS, For/TIDE, and For/SATIIM agreements demonstrate the Forest Dept’s dependency on the NGO and CBOs to undertake the lead management role. The assumption inherent in this relationship is that the NGO and CBOs have more or better capacity to manage these sites.

Other Observations on the Co-Management Agreements

The overall content of the agreements is good and covers the key anticipated issues related to co-managing the protected areas. The following points illustrate a few weaknesses identified in the agreements.

1. In terms of the preparation of management plans only one agreement stated that some form of participation be considered e.g.:“.....shall as far as practicable consult with relevant communities and stakeholders...”. That clause needs to be rewritten to ensure that key stakeholder groups be encouraged to participate in the formulation of the management plans. This approach builds ownership of the plan among the stakeholders, minimises the extent of conflicts, and sets or strengthens the foundation for co-management with the communities. Co-management agreements that fail to prescribe community stakeholders participation in the planning and management of protected areas, are really missing the point of co-management.
2. Clauses that refer to responsibility “....for securing the implementation of regulations.....” requires some clarity. Does the statement mean that the government Dept will prepare and arrange for the passing of regulations by the legislature, and then implementation of the regulations? Is it understood that it will be done during the period of the agreement?

3. Clauses that state the government agency: “....shall be responsible for law enforcement within the PA and shall be partially responsible for.....”, may be a bit confusing. Do both parties have a clear understanding of what "shall be partially responsible" really mean? Perhaps the extent or meaning of this phrase should be clearly outlined in the agreement.
4. In terms of dispute resolution, perhaps a new clause should be introduced to provide some details. This new clause should specify that both parties agree to identify a mechanism and draw up within 6 months of this agreement, a procedure for arbitration in the event of disagreements. The procedure could be based on the experience or guidance from good industrial relations practices.
5. In the event of termination of the agreement, what is the process or mechanism or guarantee for recovering each party’s investment costs (at fair market value) for infrastructure or protected area development, e.g. site improvements, buildings, etc.? Some effort should be given to deciding on an appropriate mechanism.
6. Since the agreements are signed by several persons who that have the requisite authority of the institutions they represent; the agreements are legally binding. Should either party require the court to settle a dispute, the agreement provides the basis of determining the agreed roles, responsibilities and entitlements. In one of the agreements, there is a clause which indicated that: “....it is not intended that this Agreement create any legal relationship between the parties”. This statement is possibly misleading.

Additionally, the 2002 amendment to the PACT Act has removed the requirement for 20% of concession fees going to the PACT, so future agreements will not have this clause. Parties to existing co-management agreements may wish to give consideration to further amendments as appropriate in the context of the preceding sections.

CHAPTER FOUR

POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR PROTECTED AREAS CO-MANAGEMENT

Background

Co-management is really a type of governance involving a range of different interest groups with varying capacities, sharing responsibility for and benefits of managing a protected area. Currently, there is no national policy on co-management of natural resources. A national policy on co-management will provide overall guidance on the process, aspects and scope of co-management. However, the needs of the people of Belize and the country's obligations under multilateral environmental agreements, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity, can provide the framework for the construction of a policy on co-management of protected areas.

A policy will prescribe a course of action to be taken by a range of sectors to deal with specific issues in order to fulfill particular goals or objectives. A range of co-management supportive policies is often required rather than one policy on co-management. Borrini-Feyerabend *et al* (2004), found that policies which create environments favourable to co-management seemed to follow three types of goals, namely:

1. Sustainability – seeking human activities and resource use patterns compatible with ecological sustainability;
2. Equity – securing the rights of people and communities, enhancing social and economic benefits, and combating inequalities, such as the ones responsible poverty and exclusion;
3. Good governance – empowering civil society in decision-making and democratising government institutions and structures, and markets.

These goals are often not pursued in an integrated and coherent manner, however, co-management approaches can still be fostered in sectoral policies, which may include the following areas (Borrini-Feyerabend, 2004):

- Building the capacities of any relevant actor in a variety of ecological and social aspects of natural resource management;
- Promoting social communication initiatives and soliciting the active participation of disfavoured (marginalised) groups;
- Facilitating equitable access to natural resources by recognising and preserving rights, securing tenure, or allocating entitlements through devolution mechanisms;
- Managing resource use conflicts, and harmonising conservation with resource use and human development;

- Optimising, securing and fairly sharing the social and economic benefits generated from the use of natural resources;
- Strengthening the identity and culture of indigenous peoples and local communities, in particular regarding customary rights on natural resource management and conservation;
- Fostering the appreciation of cultural diversity, in particular through different ways of satisfying human needs and managing natural resources respectful of customary laws and practices;
- Strengthening inclusive democratic processes at various levels including for culturally sensitive issues and customary practices;
- Placing limits on the concentration of economic power, both nationally and internationally, and promoting corporate and state responsibility;
- Safeguarding local communities, institutions and economies against the negative impacts of unchecked globalisation.

The range of co-management supportive policy instruments therefore, transcends the partnership agreements among agencies, NGOs and CBOs, and the protection of biological diversity.

Policy Framework Related to Co-Management Adopted by the Government

Local needs with respect to protected areas are primarily: greater transparency and involvement among stakeholders in the planning and management of protected areas, as well as capacity development and the provision of sustainable livelihood opportunities. The wise use of natural resources and equity among stakeholders are other important aspects.

The need to involve stakeholders as part of the Government's national obligation under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is more clearly articulated in the provisions of the CBD. The CBD, among other things, promotes the establishment and management of protected areas as a major tool for the conservation of biodiversity. The Government of Belize signed on to the CBD on 13th June, 1992 and is required to fulfill the mandate prescribed in the Articles of the CBD. This mandate should serve as a national policy document with respect to biodiversity. Two of the articles of the CBD can guide policy formulation with respect to co-management:

Article 8. In-situ Conservation

Each Contracting Party shall, as far as possible and as appropriate:

8(j) Subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices;

Article 10. Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity

Each Contracting Party shall, as far as possible and as appropriate:

10(c) Protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements;

10(d) Support local populations to develop and implement remedial action in degraded areas where biological diversity has been reduced; and

10(e) Encourage cooperation between its governmental authorities and its private sector in developing methods for sustainable use of biological resources.

Further, at the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP) held in Kuala Lumpur in February 2004, the COP adopted Decision VII/28 on Protected Areas and its Annex that outlined a programme of work on protected areas. Implementation of the programme of work is the responsibility of the Government through its relevant agencies but clearly provides for the inclusion of a range of stakeholders in its activities. The relevant co-management policy guidance is illustrated in the following extract from the CBD Decision VII/28 Programme of Work on Protected Areas (UNEP, 2004).

Goal 1.1 – To establish and strengthen national and regional systems of protected areas integrated into a global network as a contribution to globally agreed goals

Suggested activities of the Parties

1.1.4. By 2006, conduct, with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders, national-level reviews of existing and potential forms of conservation, and their suitability for achieving biodiversity conservation goals, including innovative types of governance for protected areas that need to be recognized and promoted through legal, policy, financial institutional and community mechanisms, such as protected areas run by government agencies at various levels, co-managed protected areas, private protected areas, indigenous and local community conserved areas.

1.1.7. Encourage the establishment of protected areas that benefit indigenous and local communities, including by respecting, preserving, and maintaining their traditional knowledge in accordance with article 8(j) and related provisions.

Goal 1.4 – To substantially improve site-based protected area planning and management

1.4.1. Create a highly participatory process, involving indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders, as part of site-based planning in accordance with the ecosystem approach, and use relevant ecological and socio-economic data required to develop effective planning processes.

Goal 1.5 – To prevent and mitigate the negative impacts of key threats to protected areas

1.5.6. Develop policies, improve governance, and ensure enforcement of urgent measures that can halt the illegal exploitation of resources from protected areas, and strengthen international and regional cooperation to eliminate illegal trade in such resources taking into account sustainable customary resource use of indigenous and local communities in accordance with article 10(c) of the Convention.

Goal 2.1 – To promote equity and benefit-sharing

2.1.1. Assess the economic and socio-cultural costs, benefits and impacts arising from the establishment and maintenance of protected areas, particularly for indigenous and local communities, and adjust policies to avoid and mitigate negative impacts, and where appropriate compensate costs and equitably share benefits in accordance with the national legislation.

2.1.2. Recognize and promote a broad set of protected area governance types related to their potential for achieving biodiversity conservation goals in accordance with the Convention, which may include areas conserved by indigenous and local communities and private nature reserves. The promotion of these areas should be by legal and/or policy, financial and community mechanisms.

2.1.3. Establish policies and institutional mechanisms with full participation of indigenous and local communities, to facilitate the legal recognition and effective management of indigenous and local community conserved areas in a manner consistent with the goals of conserving both biodiversity and the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities.

2.1.4. Use social and economic benefits generated by protected areas for poverty reduction, consistent with protected-area management objectives.

2.1.5. Engage indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders in participatory planning and governance, recalling the principles of the ecosystem approach.

2.1.6. Establish or strengthen national policies to deal with access to genetic resources within protected areas and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization, drawing upon the Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising out of their Utilization as appropriate.

Goal 2.2 – To enhance and secure involvement of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders

2.2.1. Carry out participatory national reviews of the status, needs and context-specific mechanisms for involving stakeholders, ensuring gender and social equity, in protected areas policy and management, at the level of national policy, protected area systems and individual sites.

2.2.2. Implement specific plans and initiatives to effectively involve indigenous and local communities, with respect for their rights consistent with national legislation and applicable international obligations, and stakeholders at all levels of protected areas planning, establishment, governance and management, with particular emphasis on identifying and removing barriers preventing adequate participation.

2.2.3. Support participatory assessment exercises among stakeholders to identify and harness the wealth of knowledge, skills, resources and institutions of importance for conservation that are available in society.

2.2.4. Promote an enabling environment (legislation, policies, capacities, and resources) for the involvement of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders in decision making, and the development of their capacities and opportunities to establish and manage protected areas, including community-conserved and private protected areas.

2.2.5. Ensure that any resettlement of indigenous communities as a consequence of the establishment or management of protected areas will only take place with their prior informed consent that may be given according to national legislation and applicable international obligations.

Goal 3.1 – To provide an enabling policy, institutional and socio-economic environment for protected areas

3.1.4. Consider governance principles, such as the rule of law, decentralization, participatory decision-making mechanisms for accountability and equitable dispute resolution institutions and procedures.

3.1.6. Identify and establish positive incentives that support the integrity and maintenance of protected areas and the involvement of indigenous and local communities and stakeholders in conservation.

Goal 3.2 – To build capacity for the planning, establishment and management of protected areas

3.2.2. Establish effective mechanisms to document existing knowledge and experiences on protected area management, including traditional knowledge in accordance with Article 8 (j) and Related Provisions, and identify knowledge and skills gaps.

3.2.4. Strengthen the capacities of institutions to establish cross-sectoral collaboration for protected area management at the regional, national and local levels.

Goal 3.3 To develop, apply and transfer appropriate technologies for protected areas

3.3.2. Assess needs for relevant technologies for protected area management involving indigenous and local communities and stakeholders such as the, research institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

3.3.3. Encourage development and use of appropriate technology, including technologies of indigenous and local communities with their participation, approval and involvement in accordance with Article 8(j) and Related Provisions, for habitat rehabilitation and restoration, resource mapping, biological inventory, and rapid assessment of biodiversity, monitoring, *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, sustainable use, etc.

Goal 3.5 – To strengthen communication, education and public awareness

3.5.2. Identify core themes for education, awareness and communication programmes relevant to protected areas, including *inter alia* their contribution to economy and culture to achieve specific end results such as compliance by resource users and other stakeholders or an increased understanding of science-based knowledge by indigenous and local communities and policy makers and an increased understanding of the needs, priorities and value of indigenous and local communities' knowledge, innovations and practices by governments, non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

3.5.3. Strengthen, and where necessary, establish information mechanisms directed at target groups such as the private sector, policy makers, development institutions, community-based organizations, the youth, the media, and the general public.

3.5.4. Develop mechanisms for constructive dialogue and exchange of information and experiences among protected-area managers, and between protected area managers and

indigenous and local communities and their organizations and other environment educators and actors.

Goal 4.4 – To ensure that scientific knowledge contributes to the establishment and effectiveness of protected areas and protected area systems

4.4.4. Encourage collaborative research between scientists and indigenous and local communities in accordance with Article 8(j) in connection with the establishment and the effective management of protected areas

4.4.7. Develop and strengthen working partnerships with appropriate organizations and institutions which undertake research studies leading to an improved understanding of biodiversity in protected areas.

Draft National Policy on Protected Areas in Belize

A final draft of the National Policy on Protected Areas in Belize was recently prepared and submitted for approval in March 2005 under the NPAPSP project. In reference to co-management, the draft policy included the following statement: “Participatory mechanisms which are vital to optimising socio-economic benefits, such as collaborative management agreements and landscape level management plans, shall be encouraged to maintain the cultural and ecological integrity of the protected areas.”

If the desire is to strengthen co-management initiatives in protected areas management, then the draft policy may require some revision consistent with Decision IV/28 and its Annex on the Programme of Work on Protected Areas as outlined in the preceding section.

Conclusion

A framework for co-management of protected areas already exist under Decision VI/28 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which should guide the development of local policy. This framework however, needs to be disseminated among all protected area stakeholder groups for review, consolidation and eventual adoption at the community and national levels.

CHAPTER FIVE

ALTERNATIVE INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING PROTECTED AREAS IN BELIZE

Background

Protected areas in Belize are currently the responsibility of the Forest Department (Forest Reserves declared under the Forests Act and protected areas declared under the National Parks Systems Act); Fisheries Department (Marine Reserves declared under the Fisheries Act), National Institute of Culture and History (National Institute of Culture and History Act). Co-management arrangements with NGOs and the Forest Department for the management of selected protected areas and with CBOs and the Fisheries Department for selected Marine Reserves, exist with varying degrees of effectiveness. Privately owned and managed lands have also been designated protected areas and are recognised by the government.

The level of coordination among agencies and active management of all protected areas in Belize varies, based on national resource allocation, stakeholders priority and the capacity and commitment to manage these sites. There appears to be consensus among key stakeholder groups, on the need for better coordination and management of protected areas, which reflect the socio-political realities of governance, and the needs of these stakeholder groups.

The following options were identified for consideration as potential institutional structures for managing protected areas in Belize:

Option 1 – National Protected Areas Service

A statutory agency for the management of all state declared protected areas could be established. This agency will be comprised of the existing staff and infrastructure of the Forest Department, the Fisheries Department, Coastal Zone Management Authority/Institute and the Institute of Archaeology.

Implications

Administrative: In terms of accounting and administration, there would no longer be the need for separate staff in three different ministries to handle these processes. The organisation will need to be streamlined for better reallocation and deployment of staff.

Economic: Potential cost savings, pooled resources and improved cost efficiency from this unified structure. A major advantage of this statutory agency is the ability to collect and disburse its own funds, rather than income generated having to return to the government's consolidated account.

PA Management: Improved coordination, standardised methodologies and operational processes, better conflict management, and better resource allocation.

Option 2 – Expand MNREI to include Fisheries Dept

In this option, the Fisheries Dept is moved from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Industry. The Institute for Archaeology remains with NICH.

Implications

Administrative: Only need staff in one ministry to handle accounting and administration.

Economic: Potential cost saving, but not as much as in Option 1. Heavy dependence on government budgetary allocations; any funds raised returns to consolidated account.

PA Management: This should improve coordination, but no guarantee of improved efficiency or standardisation of methodologies and processes.

Option 3 – Biodiversity Conservation Authority (only Protected Areas declared under the National Parks Systems Act)

A statutory agency could be established under the MNREI that would have responsibility only for the protected areas declared under the National Parks Systems Act (NPSA). The Forest Dept. will retain responsibility for Forest Reserves declared under the Forests Act and the Fisheries Dept. will retain responsibility for Marine Reserves declared under the Fisheries Act. Both departments to remain in their respective ministries.

Implications

Administrative: This institution will need new staff for accounting, administration and operations.

Economic: Increased cost for additional human resources and infrastructure for the establishment of this new agency. Managing its own account will be an advantage as well as reduced dependence on government budgetary allocations.

PA Management: This should improve coordination and management among the protected areas declared by the NPSA, however, Marine and Forest Reserves will be outside of their jurisdiction. This structure will not significantly improve on coordination of other protected area activities of the Forest and Fisheries Departments.

Option 4 – Improved *Status Quo* (with National Coordinating Mechanism).

The Fisheries Dept, the Forest Dept and NICH will continue to manage the protected areas under their jurisdiction within their respective ministries. However a national coordination mechanism will be established by Cabinet to guide policy development and implementation, resource demands and deployment, conflict management and product development. This coordinating mechanism could have a composition similar to the present NPAPSP Task Force but also including the NICH.

Implications

Administrative: No new staffing will be required for this institutional arrangement.

Economic: No increased cost or additional human resources and infrastructure are anticipated. The need for improved mechanisms for the Fisheries Dept and the Forest Dept to generate, keep and utilise funds will still be a priority. Heavy dependence on government budgetary allocations.

PA Management: This should improve coordination in management activities among the protected areas and may lead to better resource deployment.

Option 5 – Forest and Wildlife Authority/Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority

A statutory agency is established to give the Forest Dept full control of its finances, staffing, and operations. A similar agency is also established for the Fisheries Dept (the Coastal Zone Management Authority/Institute could also be incorporated into this agency). All terrestrial protected areas will be managed by the Forest and Wildlife Authority, all marine protected areas will be managed by the Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority. NICH will continue to manage Archaeological Reserves.

The National Coordinating Mechanism proposed in Option 4 should also be utilised here.

Implications

Administrative: In terms of accounting and administration, existing staff could be redeployed among the new agencies.

Economic: No immediate cost savings are anticipated. A major advantage is the statutory agencies ability to collect and disburse its own funds, rather than income generated having to return to the government's consolidated account. However, since there will be two separate statutory authorities, the legal cost to establish these will be greater than the legal cost to establish the National Protected Areas Service (Option 1).

PA Management: Improved coordination, better conflict management, and efficient resource allocation.

Following a review of these alternative structures by the NPAPSP Task Force, two options were selected for further consideration: Option 1-National Protected Areas Service (NPAS) was chosen as the ideal institutional arrangement; and, Option 5- Forest and Wildlife Authority/Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority, was selected as the next best alternative that could possibly be established in the short term. Further details on these two options are presented below.

National Protected Areas Service

The National Protected Areas Service (NPAS) will be established by an Act of Parliament to undertake the roles and responsibilities as prescribed in the National Parks Systems Act, the Fisheries Act, the Forests Act and the Functions of the Institute of Archaeology. The NPAS will be governed by a Board of thirteen directors, including the Executive Chairman. The directors will be nominated by their constituent groups to include: two NGO representatives (one from the fishery sector), two CBO representatives (one from the fishery sector), one senior Ministry of Finance representative, one senior Attorney General representative, one senior Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment representative, one senior representative from the Geology and Petroleum Dept., one senior Belize Tourism Board representative, one senior PACT representative, one senior NICH representative, and one representative of the Association of Chartered Accountants.

The Executive Chairman will serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the NPAS (similar to the role of the President of NICH). The chief technical officers will be a Director of Forest and Wildlife, a Director of Fisheries and Marine Resources, and a Director of Archaeology, all of whom report to the Executive Chairman. The NPAS will subsume the existing Forest Dept., the Fisheries Dept., and the Institute of Archaeology. The chief technical officers will be *ex-officio* board members.

The major programmatic areas that ought to comprise the functional scope of the NPAS will include:

- Forest resource management (P1)
- Fisheries and marine resource management (P2)
- Wildlife management (P3)
- Protected areas (including archaeological reserves) management (P4)
- Financial management (P5)
- Information management (P6)
- Surveillance and enforcement (P7)
- Monitoring and research (P8)
- Multilateral agreements (P9)
- Public awareness and stakeholder relations (P10)

The institutional structure is illustrated in the following diagram (Figure 1):

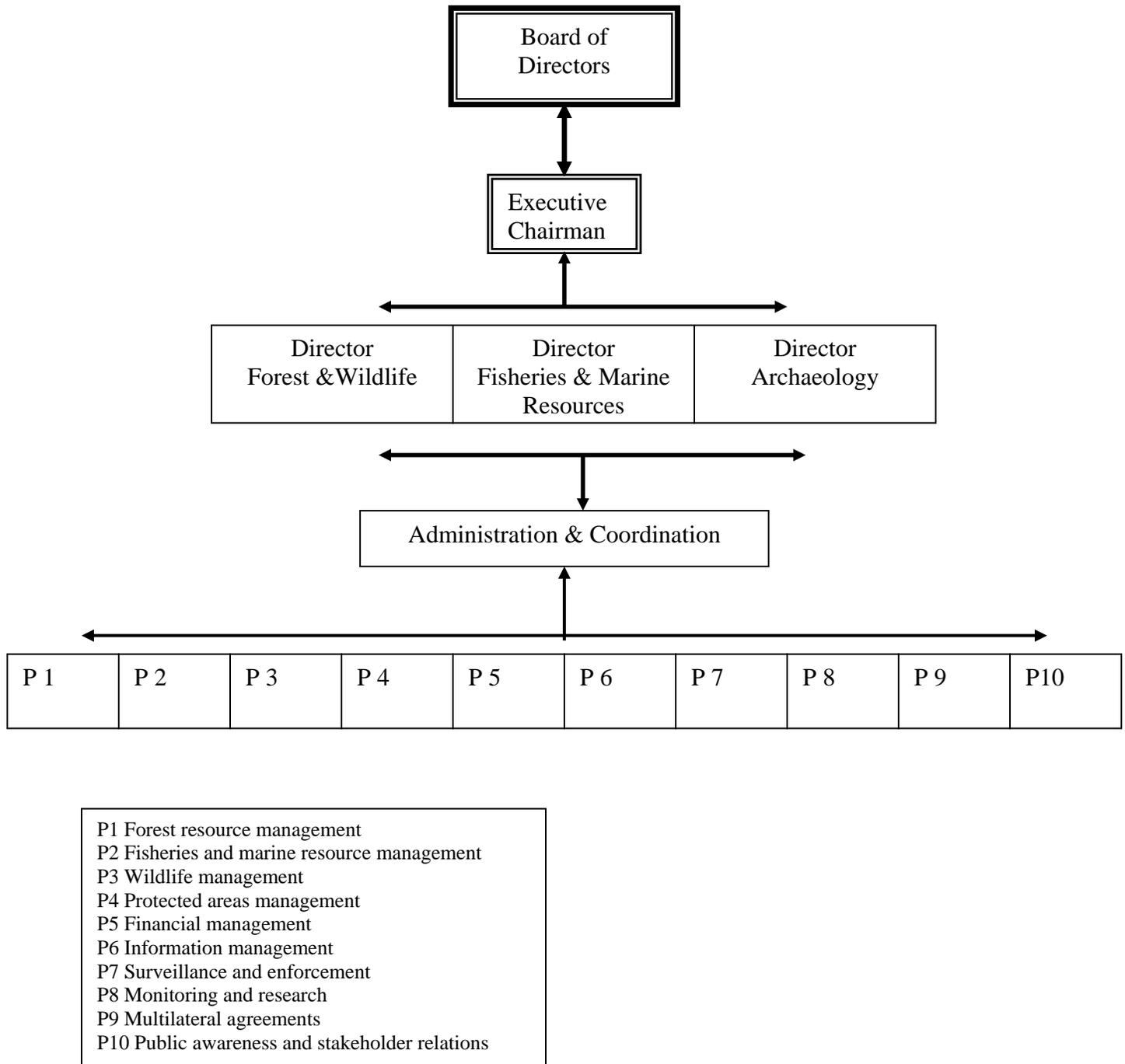


Figure 1: Diagram showing institutional structure of the proposed National Protected Areas Service.

Forest and Wildlife Authority/Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority

These two statutory agencies will be established by Acts of Parliament, each with its own Board of Directors. The current Forest Dept will become the Forest and Wildlife Authority (FWA) and the current Fisheries Dept will become the Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority (FMRA). However, there is no compelling reason why the members of the Board for each of these two agencies should not be the same. This will further strengthen the coordination of protected area and other management activities. The Boards will have a similar composition to that of the National Protected Areas Service, except that the Chairman will not be the Chief Executive Officer.

The Chief Executive Officer of the FWA will be the position currently known as the Chief Forest Officer and the Chief Executive Officer of the FMRA will be the position currently known as the Fisheries Administrator. The Chief Executive Officers will be *ex-officio* board members.

If, for whatever reason, the members of the Boards for both agencies cannot be the same persons, then another mechanism will be needed to enhance the coordination of operations and standardisation of procedures of both agencies. There should then be a Protected Areas Coordinating Mechanism (PCM) established by statutory instrument, perhaps under the National Parks Systems Act, and similar to the National Environmental Appraisal Committee. This PCM will be comprised of seven persons: the Director of Forest and Wildlife, the Director of Fisheries and Marine Resources, President of National Institute of Culture and History, Chief Executive Officer of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Executive Director of PACT, the Inspector of Mines (Geology and Petroleum Dept.), and the Director of Tourism. The PCM may meet on a quarterly basis or as needed, to deal with specific issues.

The primary role of the PCM will be to ensure coordination of activities related to protected areas management, between the FWA and the FMRA, especially:

- Discharge of national obligations under relevant multilateral agreements;
- Active stakeholder participation in the planning and management of protected areas;
- Capacity building, including co-managing NGO/CBOs;
- Standardisation of methodologies and procedures;
- Surveillance and enforcement;
- Monitoring and research; and
- Public awareness and stakeholder relations.

The programmatic areas of the FWA and the FMRA will be the areas that are currently developed and implemented by the Forest Dept and Fisheries Dept. Figure 2 illustrates the organisational structures.

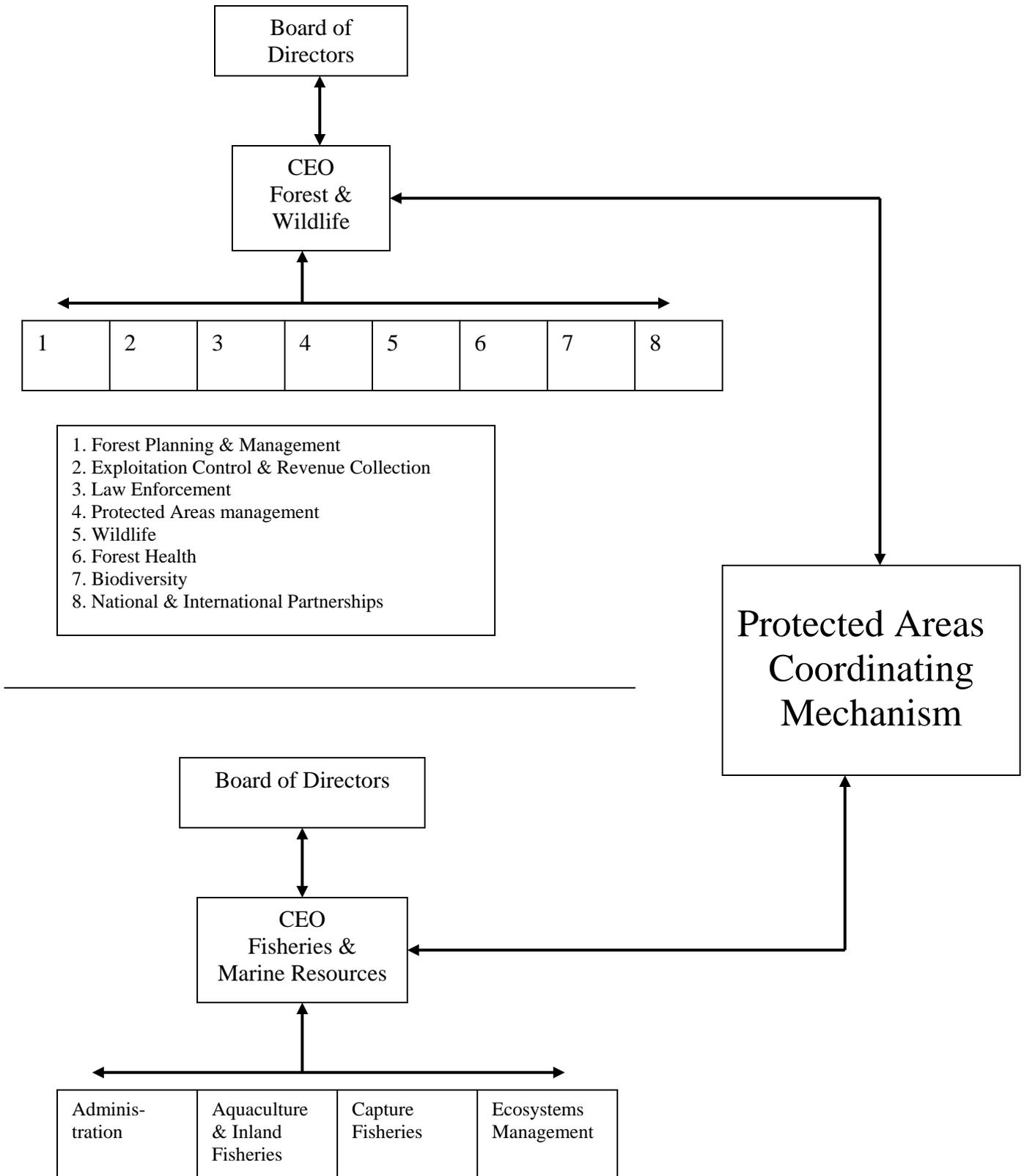


Figure 2: Diagram showing institutional structures of the alternative Forest and Wildlife Authority and the Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority.

Potential Modification to the National Protected Areas Service

Further discussions with senior decision makers indicated that it may also be feasible to have fisheries management and forestry activities under separate agencies (as exist right now) rather than under the jurisdiction of the National Protected Areas Service. The reasons given were that fisheries and forestry management involve commercial extraction as the major activities and that management approaches are different to protected areas conservation. However, it could also be argued that IUCN protected areas Category VI designation of marine and forest reserves also caters to commercial extraction of resources as major activities.

Potential for Phasing the Institutional Arrangement

The National Protected Areas Services was considered by most senior decision makers to be the ideal institutional arrangement. However, it was felt that in the short to medium term, the option for the Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority/Forest and Wildlife Authority may be more feasible. If that is so, it may be possible that after several years of operation of the FMRA/FWA, consideration may be given to having these agencies evolve into the NPAS if the circumstances warrant such action.

Enhancing Technical Capacity

The Acts that establish the agencies in either option, should also have a clause that provides for the setting up of advisory committees. These committees will be comprised of technical experts (local or foreign) selected by the Board to advise on specific issues as the need arises. These committees will have defined terms of reference, specific outputs and their assignment will be of limited duration. This mechanism is designed to formalise technical assistance to the agencies for problem solving, especially when there is no or inadequate in-house expertise on the matters requiring attention.

A Note on Private Protected Areas

Private protected areas can get official recognition and designation from the agency or agencies responsible for protected areas management in Belize. However, these private protected areas will need to conform with the protected areas categories and management guidelines adopted by the national protected areas management agency or agencies. Further discussion among the relevant stakeholders on the criteria for recognition and designation will be needed, as well as clarification on the obligations of these private reserves and the potential coordination role expected of the national protected areas agency or agencies.

CHAPTER SIX

RECOMMENDATIONS ON LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROTECTED AREAS ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Background

The main pieces of legislation that govern protected areas in Belize are the: National Parks System Act, Fisheries Act, Forest Act and National Institute of Culture and History Act. Other related legislation includes the Wildlife Protection Act, Mangrove Regulations, the Land Utilisation Act that establishes Special Development Areas and the National Land Rules (66 feet buffer). The National Parks System Act (NPSA) of 1981 was developed at a time when the operations of protected areas in developing countries were not yet well understood. The relationship with traditional resource users and customary rights were often ignored in the planning and designation of such protected areas, and published guidelines were not available at that time for use by the relevant government authorities.

The major weaknesses in the NPSA relates to the nature of the designation of, and rules for the various categories of protected areas. These have been largely inconsistent with the needs of the key stakeholders, and do not have appropriate management prescriptions that cater to sustainable use. This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section outlines the main proposed legal framework for protected areas administration and the second section outlines the key recommendations for designation and regulation of protected areas

Legal Framework for Protected Areas Administration

Two options are being considered as the legal entity with administrative responsibility for protected areas management in Belize. These options are:

- (1) The establishment of a statutory agency called the National Protected Areas Service for all protected areas declared under the NPSA, Forest Act and Fisheries Act. This agency will be comprised of the existing staff and infrastructure of the Forest Department and the Fisheries Department.
- (2) The establishment of a statutory agency called the Forest and Wildlife Authority to give the Forest Dept full control of its finances, staffing, and operations, with responsibility for all terrestrial protected areas. A similar agency is also established for the Fisheries Dept (the Coastal Zone Management Authority/Institute may also be incorporated into this agency) and called the Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority, with responsibility for all marine protected areas and matters under the Fisheries Act.

If option (1) is favoured, then the revised NPSA will need to include clauses such as the following:

- (a) There is established a body to be called the National Protected Areas Service which shall be responsible for the enforcement of regulations and the management and administration of protected areas established pursuant to this Act.
- (b) There is established a body to be called the National Protected Areas Board which shall set policy for the operations of the National Protected Areas Service and shall have an overall supervisory role. The National Protected Areas Board will also serve to advise the Minister on matters affecting the long-term conservation of biological resources and management of protected areas.
- (c) The National Protected Areas Board shall consist of 13 members to include:
- the Executive Chairman of the National Protected Areas Service,
 - two NGO representatives (one from the fishery/marine sector),
 - two CBO representatives (one from the fishery/marine sector),
 - one senior Ministry of Finance representative,
 - one senior Attorney General representative,
 - one senior Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment representative,
 - one senior Belize Tourism Board representative,
 - one senior PACT representative,
 - one senior Geology and Petroleum Dept., representative
 - one senior NICH representative, and
 - one representative of the Association of Chartered Accountants.

Much of the legislation relating to administration could be similar to that of the National Institute of Culture and History Act. The existing Fisheries Act and the Forest Act may then need to be repealed and incorporated into the new National Protected Areas Service Act.

If option (2) is selected, then the Act that establishes the Forest and Wildlife Authority will need to incorporate the provisions of the proposed revision to the NPSA (above) and the Forest Act. This new Act can be similar in administrative structure to the National Institute of Culture and History Act, but will need to include a clause for a coordinating mechanism with the Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority for protected areas. This clause could have the following form:

“There is established a body to be called the National Protected Areas Coordinating Mechanism which shall set policy for the operations of protected areas and shall coordinate protected areas interventions. The National Protected Areas Coordinating Mechanism will also serve to advise the Minister on matters affecting the long-term conservation of biological resources and management of protected areas.”

This National Protected Areas Coordinating Mechanism will be comprised of six persons: the Director of Forest and Wildlife, the Director of Fisheries and Marine Resources, President of National Institute of Culture and History, Chief Executive

Officer of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inspector of Mines (Geology and Petroleum Dept.), Executive Director of PACT, and the Director of Tourism

The Act that establishes the Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority may be administratively similar to the National Institute of Culture and History Act and will incorporate the existing Fisheries Act and Regulations.

The Board of Directors of the Forest and Wildlife Authority and the Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority will have a composition similar to that proposed for the National Protected Areas Service.

Standardising Protected Area Categories

The management of protected areas must meet the needs of the majority of stakeholders including, the government, conservation interests, communities adjacent to the protected areas, and in particular, those groups whose livelihoods depend on protected area resources either directly or indirectly. Consistent with the IUCN Guidelines for Protected Areas Management Categories (IUCN, 1994), it would be necessary to change the name of the Act to “National Protected Areas Systems Act” so as to remove the ambiguity in definition of ‘Park’. It is proposed that Part II Section 3 (1) of the NPSA should be changed to designate protected areas categories such as:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Category Ia: | Protected area managed mainly for science or wilderness protection. |
| Category Ib: | Protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection. |
| Category II: | Protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation. |
| Category III: | Protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features. |
| Category IV: | Protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention. |
| Category V: | Protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation. |
| Category VI: | Protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems. |

Locally, protected areas could still be called by whatever name is commonly used, but existing signage will need to be modified to additionally show the Category to which the particular site has been classified.

Part I Section 2 of the NPSA which defines the different categories will need to be deleted and Part II Section 4 on the essential features for protection, should be replaced with these management definitions; noting that at least 75% of the area must be managed for these purposes:

Category Ia: Area of land and/or sea possessing some outstanding or representative ecosystems, geological or physiological features and/or species, available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring.

Category Ib: Large area of unmodified or slightly modified land, and/or sea, retaining its natural character and influence, without permanent or significant habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural condition.

Category II: Natural areas of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation detrimental to the purposes of designation of the area and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.

Category III: Area containing one or more specific natural or natural/cultural feature that is of outstanding or unique value because of its inherent rarity, representative or aesthetic qualities or cultural significance.

Category IV: An area of land and/or sea subject to active intervention for management purposes so as to ensure the maintenance of habitats and/or to meet the requirements of specific species.

Category V: Area of land with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.

Category VI: Area containing predominantly unmodified natural systems, managed to ensure long-term protection and maintenance of biological diversity, while providing at the same time, a sustainable flow of natural products and services to meet community needs.

Note: **Appendix III** provides some guidelines on applying the IUCN protected areas categories.

Management Plans and Regulations

The legislation should also require that management plans be prepared before any new areas are designated under the Act. The preparation of such plans should be based on extensive consultations with at least, all key stakeholder groups through a co-management process. When the management plan is developed, it will better inform the drafting of regulations for the protected area. Where protected areas already exist, a broad-based stakeholder review of the management plans leading to revised editions will

be best to inform the drafting of regulations for those particular sites. Such a process will improve the development of appropriate regulations that are likely to be respected by all stakeholder groups who participate in the co-management process. This is similar to how regulations were drafted for the marine reserves under the Fisheries Act. Part II Section 9 (2) of the NPSA will need to be changed to accommodate this approach.

A further clause is needed in the Act that allows for delegation of management responsibility for protected areas, especially if the government intends to strengthen its policy for encouraging co-management. The additional clause could have the following form:

(1) The Minister, on the advice of the Administrator, may delegate management responsibility for any protected area declared under this Act, to any legally registered local body that:

- (a) is willing, and has the capacity or will soon acquire the capacity to manage the protected area;
- (b) agrees to implement the management plan that exists for the site;
- (c) agrees to prepare or periodically update the management plan, based on the inputs from broad-based protected area stakeholder consultations;
- (d) agrees to comply with any other requirements consistent with the purposes for which the site was declared a protected area.

(2) The Minister shall cause the preparation of a legally binding agreement that details the duration, terms and conditions for the co-management of the protected area between the State and the body to whom delegation of management responsibility is intended.

If this process is adopted, then several other sections in the existing NPSA will need to be replaced, for example, Part II Sections 6, 7, and 8. These sections could be replaced with the following three clauses:

- No person shall, within any protected area, except with the written authorisation of the Administrator (or CEO of the National Protected Areas Service as appropriate), and subject to zoning prescriptions and to other authorisations required under any other Act:--
 - (a) permanently reside in or build any structure of whatever nature whether as a shelter or otherwise;
 - (b) damage destroy or remove from its place therein any species of flora or fauna;
 - (c) remove or destroy any antiquity, cave formation, coral or other object of cultural or natural value;
 - (d) deface, destroy or remove any sign, facility or infrastructure provided for public use and enjoyment;
 - (e) carry firearms, spears, traps, nets or other means for hunting or fishing or animal capture in areas not so designated;

- (f) introduce organic or chemical pollutants or any waste materials;
- (g) clear lands for cultivation or other purposes in areas not so designated;
- (h) graze domestic livestock in areas not so designated;
- (i) introduce exotic species of flora and fauna;
- (j) catch fish by any means whatsoever in areas not so designated;
- (k) do any other act which may be prohibited by any Order made by the Minister from time to time.

- (1) Any person who—
 - (a) carries out any development in a protected area, except in accordance with the terms of a grant of development permission made under the Act; or
 - (b) fails to comply with any restriction imposed by an Order made under the Act;

shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 dollars or to six months imprisonment or to both such fine and imprisonment.

(2) The court before which any person is convicted under the provisions of this section may order the demolition of any structure erected or the reinstatement of anything altered or removed in contravention of the provisions referred to in this Act, and in default of compliance with any such order of the court, the Minister may cause the necessary work to be carried out and may recover as a civil debt the cost of so doing from the person in default.

(3) An appeal shall lie to the High Court from any decision or order of the Magistrate's Court made under this section.

- The Minister may make regulations for carrying into effect the purposes and provisions of this Act:—
 - (a) for the control and management of protected areas;
 - (b) the conditions subject to which members of the public shall be permitted to enter and use any category of protected area, and for the issue of licences to permit persons to enter any protected area for any particular purpose;
 - (c) for the zoning and control or prohibition of any hunting or fishing in or the removal of any living organism or plants or any substance from any protected area.

Appointment of Officers

Part III Section 10 (1) should additionally be modified to have the Public Service Commission appoint the CEO of the National Protected Areas Service (NPAS) and other park officers as may be deemed necessary. However, the CEO of the NPAS should be assigned the responsibility for the appointment of persons as wardens and for the conferring on such wardens of powers to enforce the regulations.

Part III Section 10 (2) requiring the Chief Forest Officer to be responsible for this Act will then be deleted and replaced by the CEO of the National Protected Areas Service.

Reservation, De-Reservation, Reclassification and Alteration of Boundaries

Part II Section 3 (2) will need to be written to provide greater transparency to the process and rationale for a change in protected area status. The following clause is suggested:

Before any area of land and sea is established as a protected area, de-reserved, reclassified or altered, the Minister in consultation with the agencies responsible for protected areas management shall publish three weeks in advance, at least three consecutive Notices in the Gazette and in the local newspapers, that -

- a) specifies the situation and limits of the area of land or sea which is to be established as a protected area, de-reserved or modified;
- b) provides reasons why the area has been selected for protected area status or for de-reservation, or for modification;
- c) invites all persons or agencies who enjoy any rights within such areas of land or sea specified in the Notice to submit their claims and objections to the Minister;
- d) appoints a date and a place for the hearing of any claims and objections relating to such area of land and sea specified in the Notice;
- e) appoints an independent technical committee to analyse and advise on the validity of claims and feasibility of change in the status of the area as specified in the Notice.

Alternative Immediate Action

In the event that no institutional change for the administration of protected areas is likely in the short to medium term, most of the legislative changes suggested above can be made immediately to the existing National Parks Systems Act. These changes will allow for better, more inclusive and transparent management of protected areas in Belize.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR DECLARATION, DE-RESERVATION, RECLASSIFICATION OR ALTERATION OF PROTECTED AREAS IN BELIZE

Background

Article 8 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) requires, among other things, each Contracting Party to:

- Establish a system of protected areas or areas where special measures need to be taken to conserve biological diversity [*this has been done for Belize, initiated long before the CBD was developed or ratified*];
- Develop, where necessary, guidelines for the selection, establishment and management of protected areas or areas where special measures need to be taken to conserve biological diversity.

There are no written departmental guidelines for the declaration, de-reservation, reclassification or alteration of protected areas in Belize. Usually, interests external to the Forest and Fisheries Departments are the ones who start lobbying for the declaration of selected areas as protected areas. The relevant government department then investigates the claim and records the locations of proposed boundaries for the site. A report is then submitted to the Minister who may then decide to declare the area protected under the relevant Act. Declaration of Fisheries Reserves follow a similar procedure, except that there are usually extensive consultations with key stakeholder groups, leading to the preparation of a management plan, before the Minister is advised to declare the area protected.

In terms of de-reservation or alteration of the status of a protected area, the Fisheries Act, Forest Act and National Parks Systems Act all have provisions for the Minister to alter, vary or revoke the Order that declared the protected area. There is no provision in any of these Acts that prescribes a review or justification process or criteria for the de-reservation or alteration of the status of legally declared protected areas. Local circumstances may at some time, warrant the change in status or size of selected protected areas, however, objective criteria and clear processes will be required to guide such decisions in the best interest of the majority of stakeholders.

This chapter outlines biological and social criteria that could rationalise the declaration, de-reservation or alteration of protected areas. Additionally a process is described for utilising the criteria to guide decision-making.

Criteria for Identification and Selection of Protected Areas

The purposes for which protected areas are declared or altered should be based on the needs of the majority of stakeholders or in the national interest. The purpose of the protected areas should be clearly articulated so as to guide management interventions. The following lists of the potential importance of protected areas were adapted from WWF (2001) and can serve as the criteria for selection of targeted sites:

Biological Importance

- The site contains a **globally threatened ecosystem**.
- The site contains globally **rare, threatened or endangered species**.
- The site contains regionally or locally rare, threatened or endangered species.
- The site has high levels of biological diversity.
- The site has a high number of **endemic species**.
- The site provides a **critical landscape function**.
- The site is large enough to support minimum viable populations of key species, or is relatively large for the region.
- The site contains **exemplary and intact ecosystems**.
- The site significantly contributes to the overall representativeness of the ecosystems or protected areas system.
- The site contains important, high quality habitat types for **key species**.

Socio-economic Importance

- The site provides economic opportunities for individuals within or near the site.
- The site demonstrates opportunities for **sustainable development**, consistent with the protected areas objectives.
- The site has a high level of subsistence and/or traditional use by local communities.
- The site has religious or spiritual significance.
- The site has unusual features of aesthetic importance (e.g. caves, scenic vistas, geoheritage areas).
- The site contains species of high social or economic value (e.g. medicinal value, food prototypes).
- The site has high value for education and or scientific research.
- The site has high recreation value.
- The site has high value for mineral or petroleum exploitation.
- The functions of the ecosystems within the protected area contribute significant social or economic benefits (e.g. water recharge area).
- The local community or economy is highly dependent, either directly or indirectly, upon the resources in the protected area.

Site Design and Planning Considerations

- The layout and configuration of the area optimizes the conservation of biodiversity.
- The land use in the surrounding landscape enables effective site management (e.g. the site is surrounded by either a buffer zone of undeveloped area, or near the boundary of a neighbouring country or by a designated **low-impact land use zone**).
- The siting of the protected area is consistent with the objectives.
- The size is sufficient to meet the protected area objectives (e.g. large enough to support **minimum viable populations of key species**).
- The protected area is linked, either via a protected corridor or by direct proximity, to another area of **conserved** and/or protected land.

The following table illustrates how these criteria could be utilised to prioritise the identification and selection of potential sites for protected areas declaration. For sites that are being considered as having a greater social importance a weighting of 77 points total (i.e., a 2-point increase per attribute) should be allocated against the biological importance of 30 points total (i.e., a 2-point decrease per attribute), and vice versa. The weighting should be agreed before hand by the team who is assembled to conduct the evaluation.

Table 1: Criteria for Identification and Selection of Potential Protected Area

CRITERIA	SCORE	COMMENTS
Biological Importance (50 points total)		
The site contains a globally threatened ecosystem (5)		
The site contains globally rare, threatened or endangered species (5)		
The site contains regionally or locally rare, threatened or endangered species (5)		
The site has high levels of biological diversity (5)		
The site has a high number of endemic species (5)		
The site provides a critical landscape function (5)		
The site is large enough to support minimum viable populations of key species, or is relatively large for the region (5)		
The site contains exemplary and intact ecosystems (5)		
The site significantly contributes to the overall representativeness of the ecosystems or protected areas system (5)		
The site contains important, high quality habitat types for key species (5)		

Socio-economic Importance (55 points total)		
The site provides economic opportunities for individuals within or near the site (5)		
The site demonstrates opportunities for sustainable development, consistent with the protected areas objectives (5)		
The site has a high level of subsistence and/or traditional use by local communities (5)		
The site has religious or spiritual significance (5)		
The site has unusual features of aesthetic importance (e.g. caves, scenic vistas, geoheritage areas) (5)		
The site contains species of high social or economic value (e.g. medicinal value, food prototypes) (5)		
The site has high value for education and or scientific research (5)		
The site has high recreation value (5)		
The site has high value for mineral or petroleum exploitation (5)		
The functions of the ecosystems within the protected area contribute significant social or economic benefits (e.g. water recharge area) (5)		
The local community or economy is highly dependent, either directly or indirectly, upon the resources in the protected area (5)		
Site Design (15 points total)		
The layout and configuration of the area optimizes the conservation of biodiversity (3)		
The land use in the surrounding landscape enables effective site management (e.g. the site is surrounded by either a buffer zone of undeveloped area, or near to the boundary of a neighbouring country or by a designated low-impact land use zone) (3)		
The location of the protected area is consistent with the objectives (3)		
The size is sufficient to meet the protected area objectives (e.g. large enough to support minimum viable populations of key species) (3)		
The protected area is linked, either via a protected corridor or by direct proximity, to another area of conserved and/or protected land (3)		
GRAND TOTAL (120 points)		

The following rating and weighting scale (adapted from Cifuentes *et al*, 2001) could be used to determine the priority of the site for declaration as a protected area. The percentages in the table below are calculated from the results of the Criteria Table above.

Table 2: Rating and Weighting Scale

Percentage Score	Importance for Protection	Priority Rating
< 35 %	Not important	0
36-50%	Minimally important	1
51-75%	Moderately important	2
76-90%	Important	3
91-100%	Very important	4

Sites with scores leading to a Priority 3 or 4 rating should be considered highly desirable for more focused attention that will lead to their declaration as protected areas. The proponents of the selected site should then utilise the co-management process of broad-based stakeholder participation, which will lead to the preparation of a site management plan.

Process for Legal Decision Making

See Chapter Seven (Reservation, De-Reservation, Reclassification and Alteration of Boundaries). The Independent Technical Committee recommended in Chapter Seven should also utilise the criteria in the preceding section to assist in their analysis of the situation. A cost/benefit analysis of the proposed change-in-use should be mandatory to additionally assist the Technical Committee in its decision.

However, for proposed modification to an established protected area, a socio-economic and ecological impact assessment of the proposed changes to the site should be undertaken, consistent with the Environmental Protection Act and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations. The individual or agency proposing the change in the status or alteration of the protected area will be responsible for the conduct of the impact assessment. In this case, the National Environmental Appraisal Committee (NEAC), will be the *de facto* Technical Committee required to evaluate the environmental impact statement of the proposed changes to the protected area.

The decision of the NEAC will therefore provide further advice on whether or not the alteration of the protected area should proceed and under what conditions should the proposed changes be made.

CRITICAL NEXT STEPS

The lead agencies for protected areas management in Belize should organise themselves to plan for implementation of the recommendations and use of the guidelines outlined in this document. The following specific activities are considered critical:

- Seek experienced legal advice on the recommendations for change in the National Parks System Act.
- Get political support for the preferred institutional arrangement for protected areas.
- Promote and get key stakeholders support for the recommended changes and processes.
- Provide orientation of staff on the IUCN protected areas categories
- Determine the primary and other management objectives of all protected areas, in order to assign each protected area to an IUCN protected areas category.
- Conduct orientation of staff on the guidelines contained in the document
- Provide training for staff in the use of these guidelines.

In the event that no institutional change for the administration of protected areas is likely in the short to medium term, most of the legislative changes suggested in this document can be made to the existing National Parks Systems Act. These changes will allow for better, more inclusive and transparent management of protected areas in Belize.

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APPENDIX I

GUIDELINES FOR CO-MANAGEMENT

All of the foregoing sections in this appendix were extracted from: “Sharing Power. Learning by doing in co-management of natural resources throughout the world” by Borrini-Feyerabend *et al* (2004); and “Co-management of Natural Resources: Organising, Negotiating and Learning-by-doing” by Borrini-Feyerabend *et al* (2000).

It should be noted that the process of co-management is expected to deal with the social complexity of different value systems, power, legitimacy and interests among stakeholder groups as well as the political willingness to share power and resources. The co-management process outlined below represents a generic situation where one or more stakeholders are willing to engage in negotiation towards a management relationship for an identified area. The major steps will include:

1. Identification of the management unit (protected area) and main stakeholders with interests, concerns and capacities to manage the area.
2. Joint assessment of the need and feasibility of co-management in the specific context and for the area.
3. If co-management is found to be needed and feasible, then identification of the human and financial resources available to support the process.
4. Establishment of a “Start-up Team” to promote and facilitate the process up to the setting up of the multi-party negotiating forum.

Often the steps above are not always undertaken or are not followed in sequence. Co-management is sometimes initiated to take advantage of a specific financial opportunity, or in an attempt to resolve a conflict, or because of political expediency. Sooner or later the specific needs, feasibility and resources available will need to be analysed to help rationalise the process.

The initial phases of the process can sometimes be long, difficult, costly, and very time consuming. But if the stakeholders are prepared to commit themselves to the process, the outcome will be positive, leading to better management, less conflicts, equity, and community development.

Identification of the Management Unit and Stakeholders

The natural resource or protected area management unit must be clearly defined by the initial promoters of the co-management process. This will include the essential elements of the ecosystems, species requirements and human use so as to assist in the planning and implementation of required activities. Once this is done then the relevant stakeholders will need to be identified (not analysed at this stage). A list could be compiled of the agencies, organisations, groups and individuals with an interest in, concerns on, or

responsibility for the site. The following checklists will help to identify potential stakeholders, their capacities and comparative advantages.

Checklist for Stakeholder Identification

Affected Groups: Are there communities, groups or individuals actually or potentially affected by management decisions? Who lives and works in or around the protected area? Are there historic occupants and other traditional resource users with customary rights of ownership or use of area's resources? Are there recent migrants to the area? Non-resident users of the resources? Major secondary users of local resources (e.g. buyers, tourists, etc.)? Is the area and resources currently being accessed? Are the territories or resources currently being accessed and used? By whom specifically? Are people of different gender, age, class or economic power differently affected and concerned? Are there businesses and industries potentially impinged upon by the protected area management decisions? How many employees (national and international) live in the area because of such projects? Are these people active in natural resource management?

Concerned Groups: Are there communities, groups or individuals with specific concerns about management decisions? Are there government agencies with a specific mandate to manage all or part of the relevant resources? Is anyone officially responsible for them? Which government sectors and ministry departments share some such responsibility? Are there local associations or NGOs dealing with natural resources? Are there research, development or conservation projects in the area? Are there local authorities or local and national politicians with a specific stake in the area or resources? Are there national and/ or international bodies involved because of specific laws or treaties?

Dependent Groups: Are there communities, groups or individuals dependent on the resources at stake? Is their dependency a matter of livelihood or economic advantage? Are these resources replaceable by others, possibly in less ecologically valuable or fragile areas?

Groups With Claims: Are there communities, groups or individuals upholding claims, including customary rights and legal jurisdiction over the territory, area or resources at stake? Are there communities with ancestral and/ or other types of acquired rights? Are indigenous peoples involved? Are tribal minorities involved? Are various government sectors and ministry departments involved? Are there national and/ or international bodies involved because of specific laws or treaties? In general, who are the social actors with recognised entitlements and the ones with unrecognised claims on the area or resources at stake?

Impacting Groups: Are there communities, groups or individuals whose activities impact on the area and its resources? In addition to those of local users, are there activities that take place outside the area and that impact on its resources and their sustainability?

Special Circumstances: Are there seasonal/ geographical variations in resource use patterns and interests of the users? Are resource uses geographically and seasonally stable (e.g., are there seasonal migration patterns)? Are there major events or trends currently affecting local communities and other social actors (e.g., development initiatives, land reforms, migration, important phenomena of population mobility or natural growth or decline)?

Checklist for Identification of Capacities and Comparative Advantages

Managers and Users: Who is currently managing the area or resources? With what results? Who used to manage those in the past? With what results? Who has access to the land, area or resources at stake? Who is using the natural resources at present— whether permanently, seasonally, occasionally or temporarily? In what ways? Has this changed over time?

HOLDERS OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS: Who are the people or groups most knowledgeable about, and capable of dealing with the area or natural resources? Are there examples of valuable “local knowledge and skills” for the management at stake?

Neighbours: Are there communities or individuals living in close proximity with the resources and thus able to monitor and survey them with relative ease and comparative advantage?

Traditional Authorities: Who are the main traditional authorities in the area at stake? Are there respected institutions, to which people refer in a variety of needs and circumstances? Are there agencies and organisations capable of offering human resources, technical capacities and financial resources to the management cause?

National Authorities: Which local or national authorities have the mandate to develop and implement rules, policies, legislation and accompanying measures for the benefit of the area or resources at stake?

Well Trusted Individuals: Are there groups or individuals trusted by the majorities of the relevant social actors and possessing convening power, and/ or negotiation and conflict management skills?

Potential Investors: Are there local and non-local groups and individuals who may wish to invest human or financial resources in developing a more ecologically and socially sound situation in the local context?

Special Circumstances: Are there people who can convey lessons from examples of similar areas and resources managed with good results in relatively similar social contexts? Are there projects that may be willing to provide technical or financial help? Are there NGOs and associations that may provide some form of assistance?

The preliminary identification of the stakeholders should be extensive and detailed. More stakeholders may lead to more controversies and greater discussions, but excluding some of them may be costly in the long run, and may cause them to direct their energies against the co-management process. The list of stakeholders will provide the opportunity to explore potential management roles within the capability of these groups or individuals.

From the list of stakeholders, the process promoters will need to clarify the range of interests and concerns over the area with each party. They will also need to determine whether or not the stakeholders are organised to communicate and promote these interests and concerns, and whether they are willing to commit time and resources to the co-management process.

A relevant community may not be sufficiently organised to speak with one voice and there may be different perspectives on different issues. Whether or not all of the different interests groups within a local community are brought into the discussion table depends on the pros and cons of the situation. Sometimes the community may speak with one voice on selected issues but may speak with many voices on other issues. Allowing the range of views until the groups get more organised and select their spokesperson can minimise potential conflicts.

At this stage the co-management promoters could begin by asking the potential relevant stakeholders whether they consider that they have a fair claim to participate in the management of the protected area and, if so, on what grounds. In this way they will obtain a list of factors and characteristics that at least some people recognise as legitimate “roots of entitlements” in the local context.

Assessing the Feasibility of Co-Management

In some situations the co-management promoters need to use their best judgment before undertaking a process that may be unacceptably long or destined for failure under prevailing conditions. When rapid decisions are needed in an emergency situation, for example, to stop a fast ecological deterioration of an area, it may be better to act unilaterally than to achieve a broad consensus on how to protect the devastated area. Generally the decision to pursue the co-management process should be based on an analysis of technical and political needs.

Management partnerships are needed when: a) the active commitment and collaboration of various stakeholders are essential for the sustainable management of the natural resources; and b) the access to the natural resources is essential for the livelihood security and cultural survival of one or more stakeholders.

From the point of view of Government agencies with legal jurisdiction over an area or resources, it may be appropriate to pursue partnership agreements and prevent wasteful conflicts when one or more of the following conditions apply:

- Local stakeholders have historically enjoyed customary/legal rights over the area or resources;
- Local livelihoods are strongly affected by natural resource management decisions;
- The decisions to be taken are complex and controversial;
- The current natural resource management system has failed to produce the desired results and meet the needs of the local stakeholders;
- The relevant stakeholders are ready to collaborate and request to do so;
- There is ample time to negotiate.

From the point of view of local communities who have customarily enjoyed full access to the relevant area or resources, it may be appropriate to pursue co-management arrangements when:

- Powerful non-local stakeholders are forcing their way into the area or extracting resources with no respect for traditional customary rules and rights (in this case a partnership agreement with the government or some NGO may help assure some protection and respect for customary practices);
- Customary practices are falling into disarray and an open-access status has ensued with resources being extracted in unsustainable ways;
- The government is willing to provide legal recognition to the customary rights as part of the co-management agreement.

A co-management feasibility analysis begins by a broad assessment of the existing management system, structure and practices, the recognised entitlements and the unrecognised claims for the area or resources at stake. This should involve not only an analysis of the *de jure* conditions (the existing legal entitlements) but also of the *de facto* conditions, i.e., the management roles actually taken up by various people and institutions. Other relevant questions include: who takes decisions? Who knows about those decisions? Who is accountable to whom? Who plans? Who advises? Who has access to the resources? Who benefits from the resources? Who evaluates whether protected areas activities need to change?

Together with the list of identified relevant stakeholders, this offers a picture of the power system and relationships at stake. The promoters of the co-management process need to examine this in the light of the legal, political, institutional, economic and socio-cultural characteristics of the context at stake. The checklist on investigating co-management feasibility (below), do not spell out all the conditions that need to be met for co-management to be successful. They offer, however, an idea of the potential obstacles and difficulties that may be encountered in any specific context.

Checklist for Investigating Co-management Feasibility

Is the process legally feasible?

Who has the mandate to control the land and resources? Can a pluralist approach be accommodated within the existing customary/ legal frameworks? Examine traditional, customary law and modern laws, regulations, permits, etc.

Is the process politically feasible?

What is the history of land management and resource use in the territory or area at stake? Examine current political will and stability, the capacity to enforce decisions, the confidence in the participatory process, the presence of phenomena such as corruption and intimidation. Are there relevant stakeholders with strong interests to maintain the status quo? If some actors are better served by the absence rather than the presence of co-management agreements (for instance they currently enjoy undue benefits and/or have others bear substantial costs in their place) they have no incentive to enter into a process of negotiation and may attempt to block it or sabotage it from the outside. This is sometimes expressed as the presence of actors with strong “better alternatives to a negotiated solution” (BATNAs)— a powerful feasibility obstacle to co-management.

Is the process institutionally feasible?

Is there a chance of building a pluralistic management institution for the territory, area or natural resources? Examine inter-institutional relations and their possible conflicts, existing examples of multiparty resource management organisations and rules, the capacity of stakeholders to organise themselves and to identify representatives to convey their interests and concerns.

Is the process economically feasible?

Are there economic opportunities and alternatives to the current, possibly inefficient exploitation of natural resources? Examine local opportunities to reconcile the conservation of nature with the satisfaction of economic needs, examine the extent of poverty in the region, the availability of capital for local investments.

Is the process socio-culturally feasible?

Are or were there traditional systems of natural resource management in the context at stake? What are (or were) their main features and strengths? Are those still valid today? Are the traditional natural resource management systems still in use? Regardless of the answer, why? Who is keeping them alive? What is specifically sustaining or demeaning them? If they are not being used any more, does anyone have a living memory of the systems (for instance, are there elders who practiced them and still remember “how it was done”)? Examine the current population status, population dynamics and structure, the main socio-cultural changes under way. Examine social and cultural diversity amongst the relevant social actors and the history of group relations among them. Examine factors affecting opportunities for social communication, including:

- language diversity
- varying degrees of access to information
- different attitudes, for example with regard to speaking in public or defending personal advantages
- traditional and modern media currently used in the particular context

An important question is also, “For all main relevant stakeholders, what are the best alternatives to a negotiated agreement (BATNA)?” If some of them are better served by the absence rather than the presence of co-management agreements (e.g., if they enjoy undue benefits and/ or have others bear substantial management costs, so that their

BATNA is the maintenance of the existing situation), they will have no incentive to enter into the process of negotiation and they may attempt to block it or sabotage it from the outside. This can be a crucial feasibility obstacle in any environment.

It is important to understand whether some stakeholders with vested interests in the *status quo* may stall the process of change. In such cases the feasibility of co-management is severely reduced, and outright opposition to the co-management process can be expected. Some special incentives, coaxing or even law enforcement and coercive measures may be needed before all stakeholders agree to negotiate. Outsiders, however, should carefully investigate the local situation before assuming that a group is blocking negotiations to maintain an unfair advantage. A stakeholder may rightly feel better protected by a firm and uncompromising stand than by entering into a negotiation as the weakest among several parties.

Identification of Resources and Establishment of the Start-up Team

The co-management process demands energy, passion, willingness, creativity, sacrifice, continuity... and it needs at least one and possibly more “champions”—dedicated individuals for whom work is a matter of personal satisfaction and pride, more than a job or a duty. As stressed by professionals with direct field experience, the development of co-management regimes has much more to do with informal than with formal relationships. For instance, it depends crucially on the capacity of some individuals to communicate with others on a personal basis, and elicit their confidence, trust and support. In addition to the uncommon human qualities of the process promoters, specific capacities and technical support may also be required for a variety of tasks— from mediating conflicts to understanding ecosystem functioning, from social organising to setting up economic enterprises. The co-management promoters need to be able to recognise when such forms of technical support are needed, and where they can be accessed.

Typical sources of personnel are the lead government agencies with responsibility for the area or resource, NGOs, CBOs and volunteer groups/service organisations. Financial support to a co-management process is very useful to sustain social communication activities, carry out specific studies or provide professional assistance to the negotiation process and to understand all the issues at stake.

As soon as the human and financial resources are set aside, it is advisable to create a co-management “Start-up Team” to be in charge of preparing and launching the whole process. The team may play the main facilitating role in the process or it may decide to use the services of a third party to facilitate negotiation of the co-management agreement. It is important that the team members have high personal motivation but that they are also socially recognised as credible and trustworthy. All stakeholders should be able to relate easily with at least one person on the Start-up Team, even if they do not feel represented by that person.

A good Start-up Team is active, efficient, multi-disciplinary, transparent in all its activities and determined to launch but not to lead or dominate the co-management process. The team's role and responsibility are limited to only one phase of the process, namely, the one in which the partnership is prepared and rooted in the local context. After that, the stakeholders themselves need to take charge.

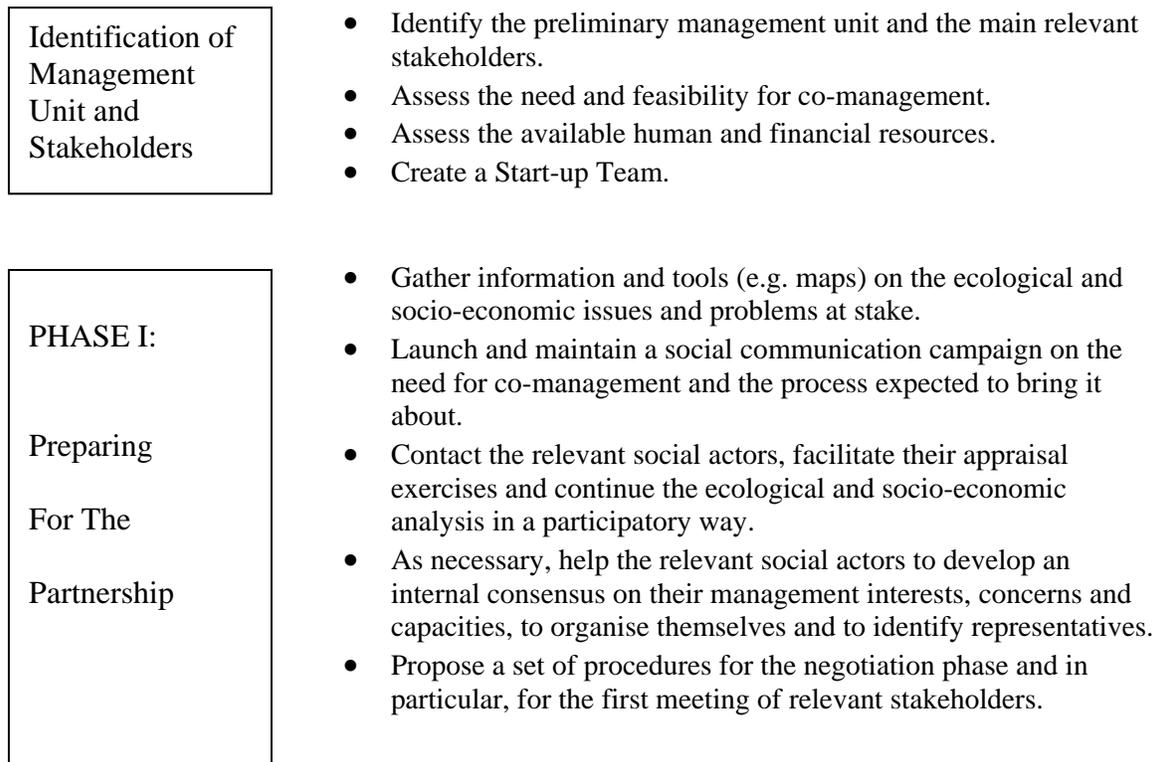
There is no fixed recipe for developing a management partnership. In every new situation the partners themselves need to decide on the most appropriate process to follow. In other words, there is no "right process" to develop a "right management partnership" but the quality of the process is extremely important, as a partnership is generally as strong or as weak, as the process that generated it.

Phases in the Co-Management Process

In general, three phases in the co-management process can be broadly identified:

1. Organising for the partnership;
2. Negotiating the co-management agreements and organisations;
3. Implementing and reviewing the agreements and organisations (learning by doing)

The following schematic was adapted from Borrini-Feyerabend *et al* (2004) and summarises the key elements of the co-mangement phases:



PHASE II

Developing

The

Agreement

- Hold the first meeting of relevant stakeholders on the negotiation procedures.
- Hold one or several meetings to review the socio-ecological situation and its trends, and agree on a long-term, common vision for the area at stake.
- Hold a ceremony to formalise and promote the agreed common vision.
- Hold meetings to identify a strategy towards the long-term vision.
- Hold meetings to negotiate specific agreements (e.g. management plans, contracts, memoranda of understanding) for each component of the strategy; support the mediation of conflicts, as needed; clarify zoning arrangements and specific functions, rights and responsibilities of the relevant actors; agree on follow-up protocol.
- Hold meetings to agree on all the elements of the partnership institution (e.g. principles, rules, organisations in charge of implementing, enforcing and reviewing the agreements).
- Legitimise and publicise the co-management institution(s).

PHASE III

Implementing

And

Reviewing

The

Agreement

- Implement and enforce the agreements, organisations and rules (including management plans for the protected areas).
- If necessary, clarify the entitlements and responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders.
- Collect data to monitor progress and impacts.
- As appropriate, experiment with innovation (e.g. as a result of new information, refinement of technical solutions and/or wider scale applications of activities).
- Organise review meetings at regular intervals to evaluate the results obtained and lessons learnt; as necessary, modify activities and/or develop new management agreements.

The heart of the co-management process is the negotiation among the representatives of the various interest groups on concrete decisions, such as a management plan and one or more complementary initiatives. The interest groups that participate in the negotiation need to be well informed, knowledgeable and aware of the issues and concerns, all of which can be achieved by well-designed social communication efforts. Social communication is about providing the conditions for interactive learning and informed decision making in society. It is the on-going dialogue and information flow between the

Start-up Team and the interest groups, including regular meetings, discussions and information bulletins.

Preparing for the Partnership

In the co-management preparatory phase, social communication promotes an open debate and critical understanding of issues, including content questions, such as: “Do we have any problem regarding our protected areas?”; “Are there opportunities we should seize?”; “What could be done about them?”. There are also questions, such as: “What is co-management?”; “Is it needed here?”; “If so, how do we develop it?”.

In other words, one would need to start with a discussion on existing environmental and development problems and opportunities, and move at a comfortable and unhurried pace, towards what capacities exist to do something about those, and what roles different stakeholders may wish to play.

The meetings in the organising phase offer the occasion for the Start-up Team to deepen and refine the preliminary situations analysis and stakeholder analysis with the help of the stakeholders themselves. Each stakeholder can be asked to discuss about other stakeholders and about their relative rights and responsibilities to participate in managing the area or resources at stake. The following checklist is adapted from Borrini-Feyerabend *et al* (2004) provides some guidance.

Checklist on Questions and Ranking Exercises to Engage Relevant Stakeholders

Questions for each “relevant actor”

- Do you care about the protected area or natural resources at stake?
- Why? What does it represent for you? Why is it important?
- Do you have any specific worry about what is happening or may happen to the area?
- Who is managing the area?
- Are you at all involved?
- Do you have any special knowledge or capacity to manage the area?
- Should you be involved in managing it?
- If yes, would you wish to take an advisory role? A decision-making role? An executive role?
- Would you wish to have a share in the benefits deriving from the natural resources?
- If you wish to take on a management role and receive protected area benefits, do you believe you are entitled to it? If yes, why (on what grounds)?
- In light of the above, what management responsibilities are you ready to take on?
- Besides yourselves, who are the main social actors (e.g., agencies, groups, entities, individuals) who can contribute to and should receive benefits from the management of the protected area?
- Why, in your view, are they entitled? On what grounds?
- What do they have to offer? Specifically, could they contribute to developing the situation analysis, taking decisions, advising decision makers, planning,

implementing activities, monitoring and reviewing results or to any other useful activity?

- What management responsibilities could be confided to them?
- What benefits should they receive in compensation for what they would offer?
- If some management decisions need to be taken, who among all the actors you identified should sit in a “committee” in charge of taking decisions?
- Who should be advising that committee?
- Who should take part in implementing the decisions?

Ranking exercises (comparing the various stakeholders, including the respondent)

- Between stakeholders A and B, who is “more entitled” to take management decisions?
- Why?
- Between stakeholders A and B, who is “more entitled” to assume management responsibilities?
- Why?
- Between stakeholders A and B, who is more “more entitled” to receive benefits from the area or natural resources?
- Why?

Assisting Local Communities to Organise

Local communities, groups of natural resource users, and especially disadvantaged groups such as women or ethnic and religious minorities, are rarely capable of defending their interests and concerns with competence and forcefulness through avenues and systems too often defined and controlled by outsiders. To be sure, however, if they wish to participate effectively in negotiation processes, they need to do so. In other words, they need to “organise themselves.” What does it mean? Three main components of a generic organising process (not necessarily in the given order) are:

- Acquiring specific capacities (e.g., to attend meetings, to negotiate, to be recognised as a legal entity, to survey natural resources, to monitor biological diversity, etc.);
- Developing an internal agreement on their own values, interests and concerns about the area or natural resources at stake; and
- Appointing a representative to convey such “internal agreement” to the negotiation forum.

In all these components, some external support may play an important role, and the Start-up Team is well placed to assist in the process, especially in the acquisition of specific capacities. A variety of social actors, including governmental agencies, benefit from or even require support to build their capacity towards more participatory forms of

natural resource management. This may comprise changes in their structure, organisational culture, attitudes, skills and work programmes.

From its experience in capacity-building for participatory natural resource management in the insular Caribbean, the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) developed a framework for understanding and assessing organisational capacities. The framework includes the following elements:

- World view: a coherent frame of reference that the organisation or group uses to interpret the environment in which it operates and define its place within it. This includes a vision and mission for the organisation, providing a rationale for all other aspects of capacity;
- Culture: a way of doing things that enables the organisation or group to achieve its objectives, and believe it can be effective and have an impact;
- Structure: a clear definition of roles, functions, lines of communication and mechanisms for accountability;
- Adaptive strategies: practices and policies that enable an organisation to adapt and respond to changes in its operating environment;
- Skills: needed knowledge, abilities and competencies;
- Material resources: needed technology, finance and equipment;
- Linkages: an ability to develop and manage relationships with individuals, groups and organisations in pursuit of the organisation's vision and mission.

In the experience of CANARI it is the collective sum of these elements that constitutes capacity and that can be rather simply assessed to determine the extent to which the organisation is able to participate meaningfully in management processes and institutions.

In summary, "capacity-building" initiatives in co-management processes can support stakeholders to:

- Understand what co-management entails and how a social actor can organise to participate;
- Master knowledge and information about the natural resources at stake, including knowledge of existing environmental problems, needs, constraints and opportunities (comprising the costs and benefits of various management options), and assess relevant change;
- Become a socially recognised (legitimate) actor (this may imply taking on a legal identity);
- Deal effectively with agenda of meetings, records, accountings, financial reports, proposals, etc.;

- Communicate clearly with other stakeholders, listen to them with an open and respectful attitude and think afresh, including about new management options on the basis of various points of view; and
- Participate in preparatory and protected area negotiation meetings through covering the costs of travel and accommodation.

Two last considerations. First, the capacity building process is inevitably time-consuming and effective results may take years to unfold, a fact that clashes against the shorter time spans of usual “projects”. Second, while external support is often important to stimulate new capacities and action, care should be taken that such support, for instance to attend meetings and training sessions, does not become an “end in itself”.

Developing an Internal Consensus

A stakeholder has a place at the negotiation table insofar as it presents the coherent point of view of a cohesive unit or group. In general, however, any stakeholder willing to participate in a negotiation needs to form its opinion on the values, interests and concerns to take forward and on the desired outcomes of items in the agenda of the negotiation. For this, it needs to organise internally, with mechanisms to exchange ideas and arrive at a common position. Ideally, this will be a consensus position, implying a well-informed constituency and, as necessary, a rich internal debate. More commonly, this will be a majority or an expert position, with one form or another of voting or expressing a preference.

Unfortunately it is not uncommon that the position of a “social actor” is determined not by a well-informed internal consensus but by the opinion of one or more persons in power within the group. In some cases, the opinions expressed in the name of the group may even be contrary to its best interests. In the case of elected professional politicians, they rarely engage their constituencies in the analysis of specific issues, e.g., what is needed to manage an area or body of natural resource. More often they simply assume management responsibilities— i.e., they take and enforce decisions—even when they hardly master the relevant implications and subtleties.

The stakeholders who wish to take part in the negotiation process need to identify and appoint one or more individuals to represent them vis-à-vis other stakeholders. For some (e.g., an established government agency, a cohesive traditional community, a well organised modern municipality), this may require little effort. For others (e.g., a heterogeneous community or a resource user group some of whose members may be in internal competition), this may require a major investment in time and resources and the Start-up Team may be requested, again, to provide support. In some cases a split between the protected areas opinions and views of community members and those of the people officially in charge of representing them becomes apparent.

Identifying a representative involves finding an effective compromise through participatory democracy. Participatory democracy stresses the direct involvement of communities and individuals through their active roles in a variety of social duties. In this

sense, representation is a more complex process, and each act of representing a group is backed by prior discussions, collective analyses, and even referendum-based decisions. The Start-up Team should be supportive but “hands off” with regard to the choice of representatives of each social actor. Before representatives are admitted at the table of negotiation, however, it should make sure of a few points. Is each representative actually an agreed spokesperson for the group he or she is representing? Can this be independently verified? Also, what reporting mechanisms are in place to ensure that the local communities or other represented stakeholders will receive comprehensive information on the participatory management processes and decisions? If the co-management process is done in isolation from the grassroots, the result may be their disaffection or even their opposition to the decisions taken in their name. A genuine participatory process accommodates the grassroots involvement in the discussions through their representatives, but also allows enough time for the information to flow among the relevant peoples and to be internally discussed before decisions are taken. This can and should be explicitly monitored in the co-management process.

Preparing for Negotiation

Once the key relevant actors are organised to take part in the negotiation, the co-management process is quite advanced. The next task for the Start-up Team is to identify a preliminary set of procedures and rules about how the negotiation should be held—an advice charged with cultural and political implications. The task also involves the organisation of the logistics for the meetings. A Start-up Team in tune with the relevant stakeholders will know about the existence of traditional or community procedures for negotiating agreements, and will eventually agree on linking the protected area management negotiation with appropriate, culturally specific institutions and events. The following checklist outlines the procedures and logistics.

Checklist for Clarifying the Procedures and Logistics for Negotiating Meetings

- Who will need to be present at the negotiation meetings? (Who are the main relevant actors in protected areas in our specific context? Have all been contacted? Have we missed anyone so far? Can new participants “volunteer” to attend? What are the procedures for new “relevant actors” to be accepted?)
- The representation shall be formal (written affidavit) or accepted also in informal ways? (The appropriateness of a written affidavit should be gauged according to the context, including the relative number of literate versus nonliterate people in the communities.)
- What percentage of the total relevant actors has to be present to declare the meeting valid? (Consider possible coalitions of social actors who may wish to boycott meetings.)
- What language(s) shall we speak? Is there a need for interpreters? (This is a fundamental issue to assure a fair and equitable negotiation.)

- What are the aims of the CM process, as identified by the Start-up Team? Are those well known by the relevant actors? Will those be recalled, discussed and finalised in the first negotiation meeting?
- Who is the convener of the first meeting? How are invitations transmitted? How far in advance of the meeting itself?
- Has the preliminary agenda of the first meeting been transmitted to the relevant actors? Will it be recalled, discussed and finalised during the first meeting? By whom?
- Who will act as Chair of the first meeting? Is there a need for one (or more) facilitator(s)? Could the facilitator be a local person, or should we call for a professional from outside? Is a Chair needed at all, i.e., could the meeting simply be managed by a facilitator?
- Where shall they meet and, at least approximately, when? (Consider seasonal changes in workload of rural communities.)
- Approximately, how many times are the actors expected to meet during the negotiation phase? (This should be communicated during the first meeting)
- How shall people be seated in plenary meetings? (Round arrangements, with or without tables, are generally preferable.) Will observers be allowed? What is the maximum number of people allowed in the main meeting room?
- Are facilities available for smaller meetings of working groups, close to the main meeting room?
- What toilet facilities are available? Are those in good working conditions?
- Are refreshments to be served? Meals? Drinks? If not, can those be found near by the meeting venue?
- Where will drinking water be made available?
- What is the total budget available to support the negotiation phase? Who provides those resources? When and how will the providers be acknowledged?
- On which basis shall travel costs be reimbursed? If people cannot afford to advance the travel costs, how can such costs be disbursed in advance? Who handles the money?
- Is there a need for chairs, tables, rugs and mats, lamps, boards, paper, cards, felt pens, sticking tape, soft boards, pins, projectors, microphones, standing tables and/ or other materials to support discussions and presentations? Will everyone feel comfortable using those means for presentations? If not, how can cultural sensitivities be accommodated?
- Are special requirements catered for? For instance, for vegetarians, for people with handicaps, for women in need of someone to care for small children?
- Who is responsible for the smooth functioning of the logistics (e.g., send a reminder to the agreed participants, get the premises opened, cleaned, make sure that light is available if the meeting will last after sunset, etc.)?

The rules of a negotiation process should be culturally sensitive to minimise the imposition of culturally alien requirements. The Start-up Team should propose such

preliminary rules to the relevant stakeholders during their first negotiation meeting. The following checklist provides some examples of key rules.

Checklist of Sample Rules for the Negotiation Process

- All identified relevant stakeholders are invited to the negotiation meetings and participate via formal representatives;
- Participation is voluntary but whoever does not come is taken as not being interested in taking part in decisions; however, if more than 40% of the relevant actors are not present for a meeting, the meeting will be adjourned;
- Language should always be respectful (people should refrain from insults and verbal abuse) and disrespectful individuals shall not be recognised as legitimate representatives;
- Everyone agrees not to interrupt people who are speaking but also no one is allowed to speak about a specific point for more than 3 minutes (or 5 minutes);
- Everyone agrees on talking only on the basis of personal experience and/ or concrete, verifiable facts;
- Everyone agrees about not putting forth the opinions of people who are not attending the meetings (and are not represented officially);
- Consensus is to be reached on all decisions and voting should be resorted to in most exceptional cases only;
- “Observers” are welcome to attend all negotiation meetings;
- A facilitator will always be present to moderate the discussion and ensure its fairness, but he/ she will never discuss or take side on substantive issues;
- Meetings will never last more than 4 hours; evening meetings will always end before or at 10:00 p.m.

The Start-up Team is also the prime guarantor of fairness and equity throughout the co-management process. Generally, equity can be sought by:

- Promoting the recognition of entitlements held by unprivileged groups;
- Promoting the recognition of entitlements rooted in valid and legitimate grounds (as defined by the relevant society) versus entitlements rooted in the exercise of some form of power;
- Promoting a fair share of management functions, benefits and responsibilities among the entitled actors, and a fair negotiation process to decide about it.

The following checklist provides some examples in promoting equity.

Checklist for Promoting Equity in Co-management

- Disseminating information on the environmental values, opportunities and risks of relevance for all stakeholders;
- Disseminating information on various protected area management options;
- Ensuring freedom of expressing views and organising for action;
- Providing support to the social actors, and in particular the weakest actors, to organise (e.g., to build their own capacities, to develop an internal agreement on protected area issues, to develop a fair system of representation);
- Promoting a fair setting (forum, platform) to negotiate management functions, rights, benefits and responsibilities; this should be non-discriminatory, follow agreed procedures and be assisted by an impartial and competent facilitator;
- Helping the stakeholders, and in particular the weakest group or individual, to participate in the negotiation process (e.g., by supporting them to travel, by offering translation service, by providing training in negotiation and conflict management techniques);
- Allowing a fair hearing to the “grounds for entitlement” and views put forth by every stakeholder;
- Utilising a variety of forms of participation (consultation, advice, technical committees, etc.) to reach the broadest possible mutual satisfaction of all relevant stakeholders;
- Utilising a variety of flexible natural resource management mechanisms (zoning, detailed rules of use, etc.) to accommodate the interests and concerns of different stakeholders;
- Promoting a tight proportionality between the management entitlements and responsibilities and the benefits and costs assigned to each relevant stakeholder;
- Adopting deliberations by consensus (coupled with fair negotiation rules) among the key relevant stakeholders;
- Keeping an open door to new stakeholders who may identify themselves as the discussion develops, and offer to contribute;
- Supporting participatory action research, adaptive management and a fair measure of democratic experimentalism (learning by doing), allowing to adjust natural resource management plans, agreements, organisations and rules on the basis of concrete experience;
- Assuring that the negotiated co-management plans, agreements and rules are fairly and effectively enforced.

It is also useful to consider that co-management processes can expose the disadvantaged groups to the risks of manipulation and control by the more powerful ones. As a matter of fact, the more advantaged in societies are also likely to be the people best capable of exploiting participatory approaches and participatory management systems. This can only be counteracted by some form of affirmative action, i.e., special support for marginalised groups. In order to promote more just outcomes, the politics at work should be discussed openly. Some steps can be taken to help place the vulnerability of the disadvantaged groups at the centre of concerns (see Checklist below).

Checklist on Some Ideas for “Leveling the Playing Field”

- Inform participants fully about to whom conveners and facilitators are accountable;
- Give disadvantaged groups the options of not participating in negotiations (avoid being more “visible” to powerful stakeholders);
- Create possibilities for disadvantaged groups to use alliances with more powerful groups in negotiations;
- Acknowledge the right of disadvantaged groups to identify “non-negotiable” topics, or items they view as inappropriate for discussion in the negotiations;
- Acknowledge that not each group may wish to support fully and unconditionally the agreements to be developed. Encourage stakeholders to express their doubts about impending agreements. View a “consensus” too easily reached as a possible way to mask differences in perspective and discount the input of disadvantaged groups;
- Assess the likelihood that external events require revisions in agreements and make provisions for disadvantaged groups to be involved in those revisions;
- Approach negotiations as one strategy among several that disadvantaged groups may pursue simultaneously, and in particular help them identify alternative strategies in case the good will of other stakeholders may not last;
- Assess the legitimacy of processes, decisions and agreements in terms of the role and implications for disadvantaged groups; for each group participating in negotiations analyze the reasons for participation or non-participation, how groups are represented, and the history of relationships among groups;
- View negotiations as a long-term, iterative process and be ready to monitor impacts and adjust strategies to assist disadvantaged groups accordingly.

Negotiating the Co-management Agreement and Organisation

Typically, the stakeholders involved in the negotiation face two main challenges. The first one is process-related and concerns “communication” in its richest sense. How can a partnership be developed among people who, besides having different interests and concerns, often do not share the same values, attitudes, capacities, ways of working, reference systems and languages— in a word, people who belong to different “cultures”? This implies overcoming serious communication difficulties, both verbal and non-verbal. And yet, communication difficulties are not insurmountable, and the secret, if one is there, seems to be a combination of determination, time, resources and an encouraging social environment.

The second main challenge is more related to the products of the co-management partnership than to its process. Is it possible for a partnership to distribute the benefits and responsibilities of natural resource management in an efficient and equitable manner, starting from a situation that, quite likely, is neither efficient nor equitable? No matter whether the relevant social actors identified by the Start-up Team are many or few, whether they are formally or informally organised, whether they share interests and

concerns or are opposed by strongly contrasting positions and values, they need to meet and discuss issues of common concern.

Every negotiation process is unique and needs to respond to the specific conditions and needs at hand. Nevertheless, some broadly similar steps are taken by many processes of negotiation for the management of natural resources. Those, which can be taken to represent some “process milestones”, include:

- A long-term shared vision (ecological and social) for the natural resource management unit(s) at stake;
- An agreed strategy to approach such a vision, based on a common understanding of the issues and obstacles that currently prevent the realisation of that vision;
- A specific agreement on how to implement the strategy (usually including a co-management plan for the protected areas at stake and complementary accords, as necessary, to address relevant socio-economic issues, cultural issues, etc.);
- A pluralist organisation set up to implement the strategy and review it, as necessary, on an on-going basis.

In a first procedural meeting the members of the Start-up Team or a facilitator (if one is present) can illustrate a proposed set of procedures and rules for the negotiation phase as well as a proposed schedule of meetings. The discussion can then be opened until a broad accord is achieved. In this context, the participants can be invited to state a commitment to fairness and equity in the process. All of them (and especially the professional experts!) can also be invited to agree to a mature, non-paternalist and non-ethnocentric attitude, and to acknowledge the legitimacy of values, interests and opinions different from their own. A skilled facilitator may succeed in getting this point included as part of the basic rules for discussion.

At the moment of agreeing upon who shall attend the next meeting, some people may object to the very presence of others and attempt to exclude them. The facilitator can help diffuse these potential disruptive objections by assuring that an inclusive approach at the discussion table does not mean that everyone will equally share in entitlements and responsibilities for protected area management. It will be the task of all representatives together to identify everyone's role and weight in terms of substantive issues and decisions. Some people may also push to discuss substantive issues well before the procedures and rules are agreed upon. A skilled facilitator will not allow this to happen. He/ she can remind the participants that substantive agenda items will be discussed in future meetings, as the rules need to be agreed upon before the discussion can go ahead in an effective way. A productive and friendly first meeting is an important foothold for the subsequent ones, in which specific and often sensitive problems, needs, resources and opportunities will be identified and discussed.

The facilitator may also remind the participants that for every unit of natural resources there exist a multiplicity of good and poor management options (the terms good and poor referring to the wide range of goals and objectives to be defined by the process), and that conflicts of interest among the social actors are inevitable but, in most cases, manageable.

The concerned parties do not even have to agree on the same goals or priorities, provided they can reach a practical compromise. Importantly, in the light of the complexity of ecological and social systems, the best approach is generally one of adaptive management (learning-by doing). This means that the decisions taken at the negotiation forum should be strictly adhered to until they produce some measurable results, after which they will be revisited and evaluated. On the basis of the evaluation and other intervening change, the decisions could then be adjusted or changed. As a matter of fact, even a satisfactory natural resource management solution does not remain valid forever, as the surrounding ecological, economic and social conditions do change and management rules and practices need to change in response to them— something everyone has to be prepared for. Flexibility can be embedded in the final agreement through specific monitoring and evaluation procedures (sometimes called “a follow-up protocol”) that allow the agreement to adapt and respond to change.

One of the key tasks of the process facilitator— whoever is playing that role— is making sure that all the relevant actors express their concerns, that no one dominates the meetings and that the discussion is adequately structured and proceeds towards the shared objectives. The facilitator can also assist in managing conflicts, usually by helping people to move from apparently irreconcilable claims and positions into the fundamental interests of the parties. The facilitator is also called to prevent the process from being unduly determined and run by “partisan politics”. Party positions are often rigid stands made for the sake of visibility, and clever politicians are more capable of arousing divisive tendencies than collaboration and agreements on common concerns. The following checklist outlines the qualities and tasks of a good facilitator.

Checklist of Qualities and Tasks of a Good Facilitator/Mediator for a Co-management Process

A process facilitator should be:

- Recognised as independent;
- Respected by all those involved in the negotiation;
- Capable of relating with everyone in the negotiation;
- Extremely able to listen;
- Calm, insightful and capable of posing the key questions (for example, on the root causes of the various problems and the feasibility of the options put forward);
- Capable of eliciting the best out of the participants and helping them to see a different future for themselves and their communities.

Tasks of a process facilitator:

- Helping the Start-up Team and the relevant actors to identify and agree upon the rules and procedures of the negotiation meetings;
- Being responsible for the logistics of the meetings (e.g., selection of venue, agenda, seating arrangements, translation services, discussion tools, transportation arrangements, etc.);

- Ensuring that the process takes place in accordance with the agreed rules (ensuring a comfortable situation in the meetings) and that everyone has a fair chance to participate;
- Checking out that the representatives of the social actors truly represent them (e.g., they are not merely self-appointed);
- Helping the group to be conscious of itself and of its goals, mission and opportunities;
- Refusing to state his/ her opinion on substantive issues and never deciding for the group on substantive matters;
- Promoting the best possible communication among social actors, e.g., by re-phrasing points, asking questions, suggesting the exploration of key ideas in depth;
- Helping the group to broaden the range of its options and open up to constructive attitudes, for example encouraging and assisting the group members to:
 - Talk to each other directly, if this was impossible before;
 - Take time to listen to and respect the positions of other groups;
 - Raise new points of doubt and self-doubt;
 - Clarify and enhance their own perception of the situation and opinions of other participants;
 - Bring new information to the attention of everyone;
 - Discover points of agreement that promise to be sustainable and deal with them before other contentious subjects.

Developing a Common Vision

At the beginning of the substantive negotiations, after the partners have agreed on the rules and procedures to guide the process, one or more meetings can be devoted to establishing a base of common interests and concerns among all the relevant actors. In such meetings, the participants are encouraged to discuss their long-term wishes for the areas or resources at stake, i.e., the kind of environment, natural resources and living conditions they would like, ideally, to leave to their children and grandchildren. The time frame is usually set to twenty or more years from the present, so that people can free themselves, if at all possible, from pressing needs and current controversies. This is a crucial moment in the development of a co-management setting, as it is the first time in which different values and views come to face one another openly and publicly. One of the most powerful confrontations is likely to take place between “local” perspectives and values, often practical, hard-headed and locally wise, and more “general” and abstract perspectives and values, including scientific and ecological views, biodiversity conservation values and the “development” concerns of national governments and private sector interests.

Acknowledging the existence of such differences, the facilitator can nevertheless help the participants to develop a consensus on a common vision of a desired future, with specific descriptions— as visual and concrete as possible— of the ecological and socio-economic situation in the protected area. This can be done through visioning exercises, scenario-building or simply through dialogues and broad discussion sessions. Visioning exercises

are commonly done in many environments and they can be more or less comfortable for the people involved according to local customs and to the homogeneity of participants.

A visioning exercise should not be taken lightly. If done with appropriate preparation and care it is a powerful moment in the life of a community and should be respected as such. Unfortunately, many projects and donor agencies promote visioning as just “another step” in a rapid appraisal exercise, raising hopes and expectations and later failing to respond to them. This is a dangerous pitfall. External actors should refrain from promoting participatory visioning and planning exercises if they do not have the intention of helping the community carry them through, at least in part.

The social consensus on a vision of a desired future is extremely important for the negotiation of effective co-management plans and agreements. If conflicts and disagreements will surface during the negotiation process, the facilitator will be able to bring everyone back to the vision they developed together. For this, it is useful to record the agreed common vision on a large sheet of paper (or other appropriate support) and pin it on a visible surface at the site of the negotiation. It is also good to transform the vision into a charter of principles or other appropriate form of social contract. In many cases it is also appropriate to develop a drawing, portrait or tri-dimensional map of the vision. When different stakeholders develop their own drawings and show it to one another, they often discover previously unappreciated commonalities. Last but not least, it is important that people feel free to describe their vision in the local language, as local languages are very rich and in translation may lose part of the meaning that a common vision needs to convey.

An agreement is legitimised when it is accepted and recognised as binding not only by the social actors who developed it, but also by society as a whole. The process by which such legitimisation is achieved, however, is different according to the importance of the agreement. A simple local rule is easily accepted and easily undone. A common vision of the desired future of an entire community, instead, is a sort of constitutional agreement. In many cultures this calls for a strong ritual, respected and acknowledged by the whole society. Such a ritual helps raise the common vision to the spiritual and symbolic level, making it valid in the long term and particularly difficult to disavow.

The choice of the appropriate type of ritual is a culturally specific act, concerning the moral, spiritual and often religious values of the social actors at stake. Traditional practices are often at the heart of such ceremonies. When non-traditional stakeholders and/ or governmental representatives are involved, however, it is advisable that they also produce and sign a written document. In this case, the ceremony held to formalise and promote the vision could include both a traditional ritual and a modern ritual. The latter could be the public reading, signing and celebration of a document, such as a charter of principles for natural resource management and development approaches in the area at stake.

The common vision of a desired future is a most appropriate type of agreement to

formalise and promote. If such a vision is ritualised, in fact, it will be regarded as intangible and sacrosanct. As such, it will be possible to use it as a common ground where all stakeholders can reconcile the controversies and conflicts that may present themselves in the course of negotiations. It cannot be said, on the other hand, when it is best to hold the ritual ceremony. In certain cases, the ceremony precedes the negotiation of specific plans and agreements. In others, the ritual comes only after the agreements, as some partners need to see that something concrete can come out of their vision before committing the time and social capital necessary to celebrate it with a strong ritual.

Developing a Strategy to Approach the Common Vision

Once a shared vision of the desired future has been agreed upon and, possibly, formalised and promoted, the social actors may wish to compare it with the current ecological, social and economic situation and trends, and thus identify issues and obstacles that currently prevent the realisation of that vision and need to be addressed. This is done in one or more subsequent meetings, where the discussion can start on the basis of a short report illustrated by the Start-up Team (possibly submitted in advance to all social actors), taking care that the report does not define the limits of the discussion. Some of the parties in the discussion, for instance government agencies and conservation NGOs, may also have specific information and analyses to offer to the attention of the others. It is particularly important to review reliable data on issues perceived by the parties as “urgent problems” in protected areas management.

Other good starting points are participatory exercises, such as historical mapping of the management unit at stake, discussion of desirable and undesirable trends with the participation of local elders, or a transect walk. A facilitator can accompany these exercises and pose the crucial questions: “what are the main points of difference between the situation as it is and the situation as we would like to be, i.e., our shared vision? Is society moving towards or away from our vision? What are the key problems and obstacles blocking progress towards it? What opportunities, resources and assets can we rely on?” A realistic discussion of these points may take some time, and result in agreed lists of problems and opportunities. It is then the time to focus attention on a short- to medium-term strategy to achieve the common vision. “What needs to change for us to attain our vision?” What would be the main components (dimensions of work, key performance areas) of an effective strategy towards it? What tangible results could constitute its “building blocks”?

The methods and tools that can be used to facilitate the development of an agreed strategy include: a) brainstorming and structured brainstorming; b) analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; c) situation analysis and problem analysis; and d) graphical conceptual framework (a schematic illustration of the relationships between an issue or problem, the phenomena contributing to creating and maintaining it, and the consequences arising from its existence).

The group negotiating the protected areas management agreement needs to be conscious of the institutional setting in which it is nested and identify ways to connect with other

stakeholders and institutions at various levels. This is essential for all those bodies and authorities whose decisions will bear upon the plans and agreements to be discussed by the specific group of stakeholders.

A strategic agreement does not need to enter into the details of everything that is to happen but needs to specify:

- The key areas or problems to be tackled (i.e., the components of the strategy);
- The broadly desirable outcomes (objectives) for each such component; and
- The main ways chosen to attain them.

If the discussion proceeds well and the key components of a strategy are agreed upon by the relevant social actors, the facilitator may challenge the group to go a step forward, i.e., to understand and evaluate the relationships among the components of the strategy, watching for the possible synergies or oppositions among the identified objectives and checking for its overall coherence.

The process facilitators should also be aware that specific factors and forces may encourage or oblige some of the stakeholders to drop out of the negotiation exercise. Powerful groups, for example, may be inclined to use their political and economic influence to seek desired results outside of the agreed process. Weaker stakeholders may find themselves progressively marginalised, or may at some point lose confidence in the ability of the process to deliver a fair outcome. Facilitators should be consistently vigilant to such occurrences, they should look out for signs of possible exclusion, and use all available means, including mass media and other forms of public scrutiny, to encourage all actors to remain faithful to the process.

Negotiating and Legitimising the Co-management Agreement and Organisation

Progressing from the vision to the strategy, matters become a bit more explicit. The identified strategic objectives are generally still broad and need to be transformed into agreed work plans that answer specific questions such as:

- What exactly shall be done?
- Who shall do it?
- By when?; Where?; How?
- With what financial means and human resources?
- To what specific aims?
- What indicators will be used to measure progress?

This is the moment when everything becomes concrete, a multiplicity of options and choices becomes apparent to everyone, different points of view abound, and conflicts surface in all their power and complexity. The parties in the negotiation have to find an agreement that answers these questions for each one of the strategic objectives, or at the very least for the ones that are of high priority. In addition, they have to identify or create

a body to remain in charge of implementing, reviewing and modifying the agreement, as necessary through time.

The discussion will likely focus on a management plan and organisation for the area or resources at stake, but a variety of complementary accords and initiatives will need to be associated with it to make the plan viable and acceptable to all. These may span new by-laws and policies, changes in local taxation systems, improved services, contracts assigning exclusive rights, training and research projects, as well as investments in a variety of initiatives, from productive activities to conservation measures and communication infrastructures. In other words, the agreement will cover a “package” including a management plan for the natural resources at stake as well as various complementary accords. The accords—which can be seen as conservation incentives or compensations for relevant losses—create a concrete link between the interests of the parties and the interest of conservation. The negotiation meetings are in charge of conceiving such a package agreement and figuring out the conditions for its setting into operation. In this sense, an enormous challenge emerges if the management plan demands important changes in the livelihood system of one or more parties. The complementary accords may need to identify nothing less than alternate means of livelihood for a potentially large group of people, a daunting task indeed!

For each dimension of the strategy the stakeholders need to consider the various options for action to reach the agreed objectives and, among them, select the one best suited to the conditions and needs of the context and to the capacities available among the parties. The discussion may involve examining the experiences and lessons learned in other natural resource management situations, assessing competencies, requirements, procedures and regulations, and refining options through extensive bargaining and compromising. Complex problems require complex and detailed solutions, and everyone should contribute. For this type of discussion small groups work better than large ones, and a dedicated committee or working group may be formed for each component of the strategy, making sure that it includes representatives of the stakeholders most directly affected by the issues under discussion. The following checklist summarises the methods and tools that can lead to a course of action.

Checklist of Methods and Tools to Agree on a Course of Action

- **Breaking down large issues into smaller or sectoral ones.** A strategic objective that is too broad and complex is difficult to treat. A way of overcoming a related impasse is to break it down into smaller sub-objectives and to assign those for discussion to sub-groups and task forces. Moments of common discussions and an overall strategic view, however, should be maintained.
- **Stimulating the explicit discussion of the hypotheses and assumptions underlying the proposed activities.** Why it is thought that a certain action will lead to a desired outcome? Taking a natural resource management plan as an example, the expected results of implementing the plan should be made explicit (e.g., by specifying the expected change in biological and environmental indicators) and the ecological

plausibility of achieving those values should be addressed. The results to be expected from socio-cultural or economic interventions should also be made explicit, for example by identifying expected change in social or economic indicators. The plausibility of the assumptions should be examined in the light of the lessons learned from similar interventions in the past or in other places.

- **Calling upon expert opinion on controversial issues.** If disagreements among the social actors exist over matters of fact, it may be useful to call upon the service of expert professionals. This is not to say that expert opinion should be followed, nor that, indeed, different experts may not disagree. On the contrary. But expert opinions (especially when free from economic and political conditioning) can be helpful to elucidate a controversial discussion.
- **Providing effective conflict mediation.** Conflict mediation focuses on the fact that an agreement that satisfies every party is likely to be more long-lasting and more satisfactory than win-lose results. In the long run, compromise may be the best way to serve everyone's interests, especially when overt conflict is replaced by the stability and predictability of a mutually agreeable solution. An effective mediator brings the conflicting parties to agree upon a compromise solution with the help of several expedients. One expedient is to provide space and time for everyone concerned to clearly explain their views and positions: what they want and why. Another expedient is to recall the common vision of the desired future (coming back to the present from the future). If all relevant actors have agreed upon, and perhaps even formalised a common vision of the desired future, it is difficult for anyone of them to abandon the negotiation table. The mediator can explain the disagreements as a matter of different paths to reach the same goal. If this is clear, then such paths can be compared with respect to various criteria (see below).
- **Comparing alternative options vis-à-vis a number of criteria.** Alternative paths, positions and options can be examined with respect to various criteria, such as effectiveness; feasibility; cost in human, material and financial resources; expected benefits and impacts (in particular impacts in terms of environment and social equity, and contribution to social needs, such as community identity and solidarity); sustainability; and so on. The open comparison of alternative options is a very useful tool to help a group decide on selecting one option over many. The discussion can be easily summarised on a board, with alternative options listed in columns and criteria in rows. First the group agrees on the criteria. Second, for all the criteria chosen by the group, the alternative options are assessed and "scored". The matrix is compiled to offer a broad comparative view of options and scores.

Agreements, Disagreements, Consensus And Compromise

The ideal method of deliberating in a co-management negotiation is the consensus. Deliberations by consensus are based on the informed, conscious, voluntary and active development of an agreement among various parties, which often benefit from facilitation

and conflict resolution support. Contrary to what is commonly believed, consensus does not mean that everyone is entirely and totally satisfied by the decision collectively taken, but that no one feels strong enough to block the wishes of everyone else over a point of disagreement.

Given the multiple perspectives involved and the importance of perceptions and values in forging agreements, deliberations by consensus are commonly developed through incremental compromise, accommodation and inventiveness. Working by consensus also implies collective responsibilities for the parties involved, as the agreement brings at least some benefits and some response to the concerns of every one of them.

Deliberations by consensus are facilitated by the use of flexible instruments, such as the zoning of the area to be managed and/ or the specification of multiple uses and detailed conditions of resource use (such as by type, time, season, users and technology). Zoning basically involves subdividing a territory or area into sub-areas subjected to different objectives, conditions and rules. Multiple uses refer to one or more resources in the same area and the relevant rules that balance their utilisation by various stakeholders. While there are plenty of opportunities for controversy, there are also for synergy and mutual benefits. Finally, important flexible instrument in natural resources management are rules detailing the conditions of resource use. Examples include quantities of resources that can be harvested, level of maturity, time of day or season, legitimate users, and extraction and processing technologies that can and cannot be employed. Specifying the zoning of an area, its allowed multiple uses of resources and the detailed conditions of such uses greatly enhances the spectrum of options available to the negotiation partners. Overall, it enhances the flexibility of an the resource management plan and the chances of its fitting the needs and capabilities of a given social environment.

Other flexible instruments that facilitate the development of consensus decisions regulate the access to natural resource and the sharing of benefits and rights assigned to the relevant social actors. Rather than “yes or no” answers to access problems, a plethora of instruments such as leases, concessions, use permits, licenses, quotas, collector’s identity cards, certificates and customary rules can be utilised to regulate access. In particular, access to resources can be assigned to specific groups only and on conditions of the use of certain types of technology and not others.

Conflicts may arise between opposing parties based on a complex combination of social elements intertwined with all sorts of natural resource management problems. In such cases the negotiation may need to address the various aspects of “local peace” and can take several months if not years to get to a satisfactory conclusion. The issues at stake need to be explored thoroughly and external mediators are crucially useful, as also may be a variety of tools and external inputs. For instance, some social conflicts have been resolved by external inputs that helped to enhance the security and productivity of natural resource use.

Despite best efforts, a working group may not arrive at an agreement on any one given option for a strategy component because of a variety of contingent reasons. In this case, a

possibility is to present all the retained alternatives to the larger group and ask for advice. The assembly may again examine and compare alternative options vis-à-vis a number of specific criteria but also with respect to the actions retained for the other components of the strategy. Examining at once all the strategy's components may reveal, for instance, that the "losers" in one of the dimensions are the "winners" in another one. Or the discussion may advance with the help of proposals for cross component compensations and incentives.

The final aim of the negotiation phase is a broadly shared agreement on what needs to happen for each component of the agreed strategy, including specific aims, stakeholders, means, activities and a follow-up protocol. As mentioned, this is likely to include specific co-management plans for the relevant unit(s) of natural resources, but also complementary accords rendering viable the building blocks of the common vision of the desired future. The co-management plans specify a share of functions, benefits and responsibilities for the various parties and are usually co-signed by them. The complementary accords are approved as appropriate (they may include project implementation contracts, letters of intent, municipal by-laws, the endorsement of traditional authorities, etc.). The more actors and the more important the resources involved, the more advisable it is for the plans and agreements to be made binding (such as formal or legal contracts). The signatories should be those individuals who are directly assigned responsibility in the plans and agreement (and not the authorities who may represent them!).

Ultimately, the effectiveness of an "agreement package" depends on a number of factors, including the capacity of the relevant social actors to take on the agreed functions and responsibilities and to absorb the agreed benefits. In this sense, it has been found that well-organised social actors are more capable of taking advantage of incentives, and especially so when the incentives are provided through time and distributed equitably. Another important feature of successful agreements is their expected capacity of providing benefits in the long-term.

Once an agreement (e.g., a consensus over a management plan and a given sharing of rights and responsibilities) is reached, it should be recorded in terms clear and comprehensible to all and in both official and local languages. The agreement should certainly be written on paper (various copies should be kept by various parties) and publicised as widely as possible within the relevant communities and among the relevant stakeholders.

A good agreement includes provisions for how to deal with exceptional situations (e.g., who should take responsibility for what in case of acute ecological stress or social crisis). It also makes clear what results are expected and how those are to be monitored and evaluated. Following such evaluation, certain provisions of the management plan may also be reviewed and modified. Some forms of complementary accords, such as a memorandum of understanding, are also usually flexible and allow for revisions. Other forms, such as contracts among legally recognised parties and involving substantial economic and financial resources, are less easily modified. Even less so are agreements

formalised as a local by-law or enshrined in legislation. While it is useful to have flexibility embedded in an agreement, it has also been observed that co-management agreements incorporated in legislation—including in “weak” legislation that calls for voluntary compliance—are stronger and tend to be better respected than the others.

At this stage the co-management plan and the complementary accords are implemented based on the availability of resources and the agreed schedule of activities. Some of the early activities may include the setting up of several co-management arrangements for the same area, for instance an advisory body, a body to develop technical proposals, an executive secretariat, and a decision-making board. The co-management plan will require on-going monitoring, evaluation, experimenting and learning, the process of negotiating and implementing the agreement is never “finished”.

Learning by Doing Through Monitoring and Evaluation

It is rare that the management plans and complementary accords are perfect in the form in which they were first agreed and do not require adjustments along the way. In view of this, the partnership should start with a basic agreement, but also foresee some reviews at specific times during implementation, to develop and adjust the details. As a matter of fact, the adaptive management approach implies that much of the learning takes place during the implementation phase. Even when the initial plans are very well thought out, there is a need to review them as they are implemented in practice. Too often, organisations wait until there is a crisis to undertake reviews, but monitoring, evaluation and adaptation are more effective when they are part of the normal life of organisations and institutions. In this way, “crises” are replaced by on-going learning and adjustments.

Monitoring and reviews should be inclusive of multiple perspectives and as participatory as possible. The relevant parties may learn by gathering the data specified in the follow-up protocol developed as part of the management plan and on other relevant information. Such data and information should be documented and analysed, to understand in detail the factors that have an impact on the natural resources and resident communities. And this should be done in the sense of both positive and negative impacts and influences or benefits accruing to them. These factors should be brought to the attention of the responsible co-management organisations in the monitoring, evaluation and review meetings.

Throughout implementation, meetings should be held to evaluate the results and impacts of the co-management agreements. If the activities and the financial and human commitments are substantial, the evaluation should be both internal (carried out by the key relevant stakeholders) and external (carried out by independent experts), and the results of those evaluations should be compared and analysed together. Various participatory methods can be used to support both the internal and external evaluations, including methods already familiar to the stakeholders who participated in the other phases of the co-management process.

In the evaluation exercises, the evaluators assess whether the co-management agreements succeeded in progressing towards the short-term environmental and social objectives the parties agreed upon as well as the longer-term vision and goals subscribed by all of them. For this, they use result and impact indicators. Examples of result indicator are the existence of a zoning plan subscribed by all parties (if one of the objectives was to set up such a plan) and the number of non-compliance to the plan identified in one year of operations. Environmental impact indicators may be the viable presence of a species within a defined area or the level of water in a lagoon. Social impact indicators may include the engagement of women and minorities in decision-making about protected areas, the improvement in average household income or the change (increase or decrease) in local conflicts over natural resources. The evaluators examine these indicators and also whether the hypotheses and assumptions on which the agreement was designed remain correct or whether the context conditions have changed.

The evaluators may also assess whether the process that developed the agreement has been appropriate and is still on the right track. For this, they need to use process indicators. An example of a process indicator is the fairness of negotiation, which may be measured by some objective information (were all the parties informed on time? Treated with dignity? Asked to present their views? Listened to carefully?), but also by the perception of participants. Interestingly, some process indicators are also indicators of social impact. For instance, the process may succeed in informing and engaging some parties in protected areas management that were not involved before. This is a process result that, in itself, also constitutes a positive social impact. On the basis of discussions of process, results and impacts, the parties decide whether the co-management agreements have to be modified and, if so, what modifications are needed and who should carry them out. If necessary, the process reverts to a phase of negotiation—although generally at a faster pace than the first time. It is also useful to have an emergency plan for situations in which fast intervention is needed.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of both the process and results of the co-management initiatives is needed to assess and fill gaps in design and implementation, and to gauge whether progress is being made and is likely to remain sustainable. For both, essential ingredients are baseline data and adequate resources to sustain the collection and analysis of information through time.

Monitoring should be carried out at an appropriate frequency and the measured data and collected information should be made accessible to the relevant actors and the general public. The indicators should be identified on a case-by-case basis. The following checklists provide some examples of indicators for the different phases of a co-management process may provide useful ideas.

Checklist of Examples of Process and Result Indicators to Assess the Co-management Preparatory Phase

- A shared understanding of the protected areas to be managed, identified on the basis of ecological and social considerations;

- Available lists of relevant parties to include in negotiation, and preliminary analysis of their respective entitlements, claims and power differentials and of the protected areas conflicts, both existing and potential, among them;
- Information and tools (e.g., maps) on the main ecological and social issues at stake in the identified protected areas gathered and made available to all parties;
- Understanding of the key political and social factors and institutions that determine resource access and use;
- A “name” and a description of the co-management process that are culturally valid and broadly understood and accepted in the context at stake;
- Social communication initiatives that opened and maintain two-way communication channels between the Start-up Team and the relevant actors, and foster a broad discussion of protected areas management issues in society;
- The parties reasonably well-informed, organised (e.g., they have identified their own representatives and key interests at stake in the management of natural resources) and willing to negotiate a co-management agreement;
- Enhanced local confidence of the parties in being able to manage natural resources;
- Social emergence of previously unorganised or marginalised groups.

Checklist of Examples of Process and Result Indicators to Assess the Co-management Negotiation Phase

- Knowledge and understanding of the relevant actors about the co-management process itself;
- Existence of mechanisms for exchange and dissemination of protected areas information as well as regular meetings to debate and negotiate co-management agreements;
- Use of informal media and means, in order to involve and consult those who are unwilling or unable to participate in formal processes such as meetings and workshops;
- Stakeholders ease and fairness of access to communication and negotiation meetings (can all the parties attend the meetings? Are some actors discriminated against?);
- Availability of competent facilitators to assist during meetings, mediate conflicts and help relevant stakeholders to communicate among themselves and effectively negotiate agreements;
- Active participation of the relevant actors in the development of a common vision and the negotiation of co-management agreements (presence at meetings, effective expression and arguing about their own interests and concerns, willingness to assume responsibilities, etc.);
- Existence of a broad common vision among all parties about the desired future of the territory and resources to be managed;
- Effectiveness and fairness of the negotiation process as perceived by the relevant parties;

- Existence of co-management agreements (either oral or written, formal or informal) providing the parties with a clear understanding of their respective protected areas management functions, entitlements and responsibilities;
- Existence of a clear plan and set of procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of the agreement (follow-up plan);
- Existence of co-management organisations (with executive, advisory, decision making or mixed roles and with enough resources to carry out their required tasks) expressing a plurality of protected areas entitlements in the context at stake;
- Quantity and quality of knowledge of the parties about the relevant co-management stakeholders; the agreed plans, the rules, the organisations and the roles they are expected to play;
- Improved social relationships and trust among the parties participating in the negotiation.

Checklist of Examples of Process and Result Indicators to Assess the Co-management Implementation Phase

- Availability of adequate resources to carry out monitoring and evaluation initiatives;
- Availability of competent personnel to clarify entitlements and responsibilities and mediate in the event of conflicts among the relevant stakeholders during implementation of the plans and agreements;
- Adherence and compliance of the parties with their agreed entitlements and responsibilities;
- Perception of the parties that they are learning through the implementation process, and maintenance of a constructive attitude in solving problems;
- Satisfaction of the parties about the way in which the co-management agreements and organisations are working;
- Fair distribution among the parties of the actual benefits and costs of the agreements;
- Decrease in frequency and seriousness of conflicts among the parties now bound to the agreements;
- Long-term commitment of the parties demonstrated by initiatives to promote political and policy changes that facilitate implementing the co-management agreements.

Assessing the Co-management Results

Appropriate indicators allow the relevant actors to assess whether the management objectives have been achieved (what results were obtained) and the degree to which the cooperation of various parties contributed to such achievements. A main management objective is the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Another frequent aim is support to the livelihoods of local communities without undermining ecological functions and biological diversity and with due attention to empowering, and not disempowering, the communities themselves.

Some professionals suggest combining at least three types of indicators in a single process:

- Indigenous or experiential indicators used by rural people and reflecting experience-based changes in environmental or socio-economic conditions; these are site-specific and reflect the diverse needs and expectations of community members;
- Technical or scientific indicators that are universal, disciplinary and quantitative enough to allow for comparisons between locations and across time;
- Indicators that can help relate scientific knowledge and methods to local peoples experiences.

Different stakeholders may have different views of what constitutes a positive impact as well as different criteria of evaluation. It is important to include such plural views, indicative of how co-management contributes to:

- Community empowerment in planning, implementing, and assessing results;
- Resolving conflicts;
- Fostering cooperation with government and outside organisations;
- Regenerating or maintaining the health of natural resources; and
- Sustaining local livelihoods and equity.

The following checklist provides some aspects of co-management that could be assessed to determine its social impact.

Checklist to Determine the Success and Social Impact of Co-management

Did co-management:

- Provide a framework for cooperative action?
- Facilitate and promote fora to develop effective compromises?
- Help organise people to generate and use their own knowledge and research to advocate their own rights?
- Mediate for more equitable access to resources?
- Help secure sustainability in natural resource management?
- Organise labour resources?
- Mobilise the local economic resources to effectively manage natural resources (credit, savings, marketing)?
- Assist some groups to gain new access to productive resources?
- Provide social infrastructure at the village level?
- Provide a link between rural people and external agencies involved in research and development and natural resource management?
- Influence policy institutions that affect it in turn?
- Improve access of rural populations to information?
- Improve information flow from the local context to governments and NGOs?

Conclusion

Co-management is achieved through a cyclical process of dialogue, action, and reflection. An important characteristic of successful co-management is thus to value and support such a process without focusing entirely on the results it should achieve. The “process” approach is based on the assumption that when several institutional stakeholders are at stake they need time to get to know their respective needs and capacities. The learning process involves acting together, creating knowledge, and developing an active institution through trial and error. Such a process must be flexible, and responsive to highly differentiated needs and site-specific conditions. No one can predict how ecological conditions and needs will evolve over time. Co-management bodies must “learn by doing”, building upon the motivation, confidence and rapport amongst all the parties involved. An approach based on social experimentation treats error as a source of information to adapt procedures rather than as a reason to abandon the process.

APPENDIX II

GENERAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTED AREAS MANAGEMENT

Background

Competing demands for use of and resources in protected areas will always lead to some form of conflict. The extent and duration of the conflict usually depends on the ability of the protected areas management agency to manage such conflicts. In Belize, the range of identified conflicts result from uses of protected areas resources by communities with customary rights or access, illegal large-scale harvesting of timber, other forest products and fish, and poorly regulated visitor use of some protected areas.

The various aspects of conflicts and their management outlined in this chapter are adapted from Hart and Castro (2000), and are intended to help stakeholders develop a better understanding of the use of conflict resolution as a tool in protected areas management.

Why Do We Have Conflicts Related to Protected Areas?

Conflicts in protected areas management are often based on competing demands, rights (customary or legal), power imbalances and access to resources. Conflicts will develop or intensify if a new management regime is introduced for the area that is inconsistent with traditional resource use, and through misunderstandings and a lack of communication on the need for and objectives of programmes or projects designed for the area. Conflicts will arise if resource users are excluded from participation in the planning and management of protected areas or are powerless to ensure that they are consulted. Contradictions between stated policy and practice, as well as ambiguous laws and inconsistent or uncoordinated planning, management or programme interventions will invariably lead to conflicts.

Who are Involved in Conflicts?

Conflicts often involve the state agency or NGO with responsibility for managing the protected area and the resource users (fisherfolk, farmers, hunters, gatherers, etc) in or adjacent to the site. However, conflicts may also arise between state agencies, between NGOs or CBOs, with private or commercial interests, within a community and between communities, as well as any combination of these groups/agencies. Most conflicts tend to have multiple stakeholders with each stakeholder group having factions with varying interests or different agendas. Generally, the greater the power and knowledge gap among stakeholders, the greater the chance of conflicts arising out of natural resource usage.

What are the Signs That Conflicts Exist?

The nature of conflicts are variable and may involve non-violent activities such as illegal harvesting of forest or marine products, refusal to cooperate with the management authorities, active street/town protests, open disputes or sabotage and violence. Sometimes the signs of conflict are not immediately detected, either as a strategy or because of fear, distrust, peer pressure, financial constraints, and exclusion from or the inability to influence conflict resolution processes.

What are the Major Conflict Management/Resolution Strategies?

The following approaches outline the major strategies that have been in use:

Avoidance: Acting in ways to keep a conflict from becoming publicly acknowledged. This approach provides little practical relief and will eventually aggravate the situation.

Adjudication: Relying on a judge or administrator to make a binding decision. This results in a win-lose situation, but hostility and restricted cooperation is likely to continue.

Mediation: Using a third party to facilitate the negotiation process (a mediator lacks the authority to impose a solution). The proposed solution may not completely satisfy one or both parties and therefore the solution may not be implemented either partly or completely.

Negotiation: Following a voluntary process in which parties reach agreement through consensus. This often provides for a win-win situation and is likely to provide the most appropriate solution with support from all parties.

Arbitration: Submitting a conflict to a mutually agreeable third party, who renders a decision. Before the arbitration process begins, all parties need to agree to abide by whatever decision is made by the third party. Some residual conflicts may be evident since all members within a party may not necessarily agree or support the final decision.

Coercion: Threatening or using force or incentives to impose one's will. The use of threats or force may be a short-term solution and could breed further hostility or cause one or more parties to the conflict to be more discreet in their activities. The use of incentives can offer a more equitable solution but when the incentives run out or are terminated, the conflict may re-emerge.

How Could We Prevent or Minimise the Risk of Conflict?

Protected area staff will need to manage the process of changing beliefs, attitudes and the behaviour of people through voluntary engagement of these stakeholders via communication, education and public awareness. The use of strategic communication can

directly influence the social environment of stakeholder groups to stimulate desired changes in behaviour. Key principles and approaches for strategic communication (Hesselink, 2004) include:

- Engaging stakeholders and opinion leaders;
- Developing partnerships;
- Building capacity in organisational management and communication skills;
- Focusing on positive word of mouth and reputation; and,
- Conducting thorough monitoring and evaluation.

These approaches demand a lot of time and face to face contact. Opinion leaders should be identified through formal and informal meetings of the stakeholder groups. Opinion leaders may not necessarily be the official representatives of the group, but they often have considerable influence and are usually well informed of the activities and issues of their group or community. Partnership with the opinion leaders and the official village leaders as the core of multidisciplinary teams should be used to explore issues.

Focus groups comprising of about six to ten persons from the stakeholder group could also be encouraged to meet with a skilled moderator or communications expert knowledgeable on the issue be discussed. Consultants should be used to build the capacity of the protected areas staff in communication skills and to engage in negotiation and mediation. Focus groups are part of the process that is used to get more detailed information, opinions, values and motives as well as a means of developing trust. It can also identify the leverage point for change or win-win outcomes and will contribute to planning further interventions.

Part of strategic communication involves focusing on changes that will generate positive word of mouth among stakeholder groups. Creating satisfaction in the engagement process that leaves stakeholders with a sense of success will encourage more persons to join in this participatory communication. This helps in building trust and enhancing the reputation of the protected areas staff.

Monitoring and evaluation of the outcome of the engagement of stakeholders and the follow-up activities are essential to identifying further problems and solutions. This should also be conducted in a participatory manner with the stakeholders or focus groups.

Strategic communication therefore requires that protected areas staff change their traditional major focus of enforcement of conservation regulations to a more people centred, relationship management orientation.

How Do We Manage or Resolve Existing Conflicts?

Mechanisms for participatory conflict management and resolution are based on negotiation and mediation and have been referred to as alternative conflict management (i.e. alternative to national legal systems based on adjudication and arbitration). The objectives of alternative conflict management (Hart and Castro, 2000) are to:

- Improve communication and information sharing among interest groups;
- Address the causes of conflicts in a collaborative manner;
- Transform the conflict management process into a force promoting positive social change;
- Build capacity of communities to manage their conflicts; and
- Limit the occurrence and intensity of future conflicts.

The strategic communication approach could be used. Selecting a skilled negotiator and defining the conflict is usually the first stage. The key preliminary questions that need to be answered are:

- Who are the parties to the conflict?
- Are they willing to participate in negotiation?
- Can credible spokespersons for the parties in the conflict be identified?
- What are the boundaries to the conflict?
- What is the problem and can it be defined by mutual agreement?
- What are the causes of the problem?
- What are the interests of the parties?
- What are the hidden agendas?

The skilled negotiator will need to engage the stakeholders to establish the method agenda and deadline for negotiating a mutual agreement.

What Are Some of the Rules and Techniques in the Negotiation Process?

The concept of tolerance is fundamental in the negotiation process. Engaging in dialogue is expected to be neutral, fair and democratic, sharing an identification of the objectives of the process, and securing commitments leading to win-win outcomes. Some of the rules and techniques that could be used in the negotiation process (MBRS 2004) include the following:

- Don't negotiate principles; positions make the process difficult; it is easier to progress based on interests.
- Don't try not to lose, but to give in as little as possible.
- Don't concentrate on differences but rather on points of convergence.
- Make brief summaries of what you hear the speaker saying every so often.
- Emphasize and enlarge achievements and agreements even though they appear to be simple.
- Establish the point or points of interest of each party.
- Determine a methodology to follow.
- Build scenarios and alternatives as far as possible.
- Make an effort to listen to the speaker before listening to yourself.
- Give credit to all parties.
- When you get stuck, take a break or change the subject.

- Make a list of possible solutions with an analysis of advantages and disadvantages.
- Determine the best solution and get commitment from all parties to implement it.

How Can Protected Areas Staff Make Best Use of These Guidelines?

Protected area managers are often trained in the biological sciences and have little or no specialised training in the social sciences, especially in terms of human behaviour, managing inter-personal relationships, public relations, rural development, etc. Protected areas staff should get relevant training that helps them to develop a sound understanding and knowledge of conflict and conflict management as it applies to natural resources or protected areas management. A typical course of training will include the following elements:

- The conflict management process
- Key elements of conflict
- How conflict management strategies relate to broader activities of community-based or collaborate management
- Theory of conflict analysis
- Review of conflict management options
- Guides to developing a management strategy
- Techniques (including communication skills) for facilitating conflict management
- Design and implementation of participatory training workshops

In the absence of such specialized training, protected areas staff with appropriate interpersonal skills could use the guidelines in the field. However, a role playing exercise with volunteers from among the staff should first be tried, to ensure that persons get some practice in using and understanding the guidelines.

Conclusion

Strategic communication begins when we stop focusing on explaining the importance of protected areas and biodiversity conservation (by providing scientific information) and trying to convince people to act accordingly. Instead, protected areas managers have to start seeing the issue as how to introduce an innovation among a large group of potential ‘customers’, in order to motivate them to a new behaviour. Managing change is undoubtedly at the core of protected areas management. With continuous change comes the need for continuous learning at the individual, organisational, and social levels. Strategic communication is the means by which change can be managed, and building the capacity of protected area management in the field is essential (Hesselink, 2004).

APPENDIX III

GUIDELINES ON APPLYING THE IUCN PROTECTED AREAS CATEGORIES

Background

A protected area is defined in the IUCN Guidelines for Protected Area Management Categories (IUCN, 1994) as: ‘An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means’. If a site does not fit this definition, it is not considered a protected area in the IUCN category system. The IUCN definition requires that:

- Protected areas can include marine and terrestrial environments;
- There should be a special policy for conservation of biodiversity;
- Allowance be made for conservation of natural resources, and those cultural resources which are associated with these; and
- A management regime is in place, whether or not it is a traditional form of management or some other formal or legal means.

The IUCN guidelines propose six categories of protected areas, based on the primary management objective. At least 75% of the designated protected area must be managed for the primary objective. The key rules for application of the categories system are:

1. The management unit is the protected area for the purpose of the categories system: this will usually be a separate legally designated area.
2. Size is not a relevant factor in the assigning the categories, though the size should be sufficient for the area to fulfill its objectives.
3. Zoning within protected areas may allow for uses that would not be accepted throughout: but at least 75% of the area should be managed for the primary purpose.
4. Management responsibility may rest with the public, private, community or voluntary sectors, regardless of category.
5. Ownership of land may similarly be in the public, private, community or voluntary sectors, regardless of category.
6. Regional flexibility is intended to be a feature of the application of the system.
7. Multiple classifications may arise when several protected areas in several different categories are contiguous or surround one another.
8. International designations (such as Biosphere Reserve or World Heritage Site) are to be considered as quite separate from the categorisation exercise.

Protected Area Categories

The following section is adopted from the IUCN Guidelines and provides some details on each of the categories. These categories are directly applicable to the system of protected areas in Belize.

CATEGORY I: Protected area managed mainly for science or wilderness protection. [Equivalent names: Strict Nature Reserve/Wilderness Area; Scientific Reserve]

CATEGORY Ia Protected area managed mainly for science. [Equivalent names: Strict Nature Reserve; Scientific Reserve]

Definition

Area of land and/or sea possessing some outstanding or representative ecosystems, geological or physiological features and/or species, available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring.

Objectives of Management

1. To preserve habitats, ecosystems and species in as undisturbed a state as possible;
2. To maintain genetic resources in a dynamic and evolutionary state;
3. To maintain established ecological processes;
4. To safeguard structural landscape features or rock exposures;
5. To secure samples of the natural environment for scientific studies, environmental monitoring and education, including baseline areas from which all avoidable access is excluded;
6. To minimise disturbance by careful planning and execution of research and other approved activities; and
7. To limit public access.

Guidance for Selection

- The area should be large enough to ensure the integrity of its ecosystems and to accomplish the management objectives for which it is protected.
- The area should be significantly free of direct human intervention and capable of remaining so.
- The conservation of the area's biodiversity should be achievable through protection and not require substantial active management or habitat manipulation (see Category IV).

CATEGORY Ib: Protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection.
[Equivalent name: Wilderness Area]

Definition

Large area of unmodified or slightly modified land, and/or sea, retaining its natural character and influence, without permanent or significant habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural condition.

Objectives of Management

1. To ensure that future generations have the opportunity to experience understanding and enjoyment of areas that have been largely undisturbed by human action over a long period of time;
2. To maintain the essential natural attributes and qualities of the environment over the long term;
3. To provide for public access at levels and of a type which will serve best the physical and spiritual well-being of visitors and maintain the wilderness qualities of the area for present and future generations; and
4. To enable indigenous human communities living at low density and in balance with the available resources to maintain their lifestyle.

Guidance for Selection

- The area should possess high natural quality, be governed primarily by forces of nature, with human disturbance substantially absent, and be likely to continue to display those attributes if managed as proposed.
- The area should contain significant ecological, geological, physiographic or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historic value.
- The area should offer outstanding opportunities for solitude, enjoyed once the area has been reached, by simple, quiet, non-polluting and non-intrusive means of travel (i.e. non-motorised).
- The area should be of sufficient size to make practical such preservation and use.

CATEGORY II: Protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation. [Equivalent name: National Park]

Definition

Natural areas of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation detrimental to the purposes of designation of the area and (c) provide a

foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.

Objectives of Management

1. To protect natural and scenic areas of national and international significance for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational or tourist purposes;
2. To perpetuate, in as natural a state as possible, representative examples of physiographic regions, biotic communities, genetic resources, and species, to provide ecological stability and diversity;
3. To manage visitor use for inspirational, educational, cultural and recreational purposes at a level which will maintain the area in a natural or near natural state;
4. To eliminate and thereafter prevent exploitation or occupation detrimental to the purposes of designation;
5. To maintain respect for the ecological, geomorphologic, sacred or aesthetic attributes which warranted designation; and
6. To take into account the needs of indigenous people, including subsistence resource use, in so far as these will not adversely affect the other objectives of management.

Guidance for Selection

- The area should contain a representative sample of major natural regions, features or scenery, where plant and animal species, habitats and geomorphological sites are of special spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational, and tourist significance.
- The area should be large enough to contain one or more entire ecosystems not materially altered by current human occupation or exploitation.

CATEGORY III: Protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features. [Equivalent names: Natural Monument; Natural Landmark]

Definition

Area containing one or more specific natural or natural/cultural feature which is of outstanding or unique value because of its inherent rarity, representative or aesthetic qualities or cultural significance.

Objectives of Management

1. To protect or preserve in perpetuity specific outstanding natural features because of their natural significance, unique or representational quality, and/or spiritual connotations;

2. To an extent consistent with the foregoing objective, to provide opportunities for research, education, interpretation and public appreciation;
3. To eliminate and thereafter prevent exploitation or occupation detrimental to the purpose of designation; and
4. To deliver to any resident population such benefits as are consistent with the other objectives of management.

Guidance for Selection

- The area should contain one or more features of outstanding significance (appropriate natural features include spectacular waterfalls, caves, craters, fossil beds, sand dunes and marine features, along with unique or representative fauna and flora; associated cultural features might include cave dwellings, cliff-top forts, archeological sites, or natural sites which have heritage significance to indigenous peoples).
- The area should be large enough to protect the integrity of the feature and its immediately related surroundings.

CATEGORY IV: Protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention. [Equivalent names: Habitat/Species Management Area; Nature Conservation Reserve; Managed Nature Reserve; Wildlife Sanctuary]

Definition

An area of land and/or sea subject to active intervention for management purposes so as to ensure the maintenance of habitats and/or to meet the requirements of specific species.

Objectives of Management

1. To secure and maintain the habitat conditions necessary to protect significant species, groups of species, biotic communities or physical features of the environment where these require specific human manipulation for optimum management;
2. To facilitate scientific research and environmental monitoring as primary activities associated with sustainable resource management;
3. To develop limited areas for public education and appreciation of the characteristics of the habitats concerned and of the work of wildlife management;
4. To eliminate and thereafter prevent exploitation or occupation detrimental to the purposes of designation; and
5. To deliver such benefits to people living within the designated area as are consistent with the other objectives of management.

Guidance for Selection

- The area should play an important role in the protection of nature and the survival of species, (incorporating as appropriate, breeding areas, wetlands, coral reefs, estuaries, grasslands, forests or spawning areas, including marine feeding beds).
- The area should be one where the protection of the habitat is essential to the well-being of nationally or locally important flora or to resident or migratory fauna.
- Conservation of these habitats and species should depend upon active intervention by the management authority, if necessary through habitat manipulation (compare with Category Ia).
- The size of the area should depend on the habitat requirements of the species to be protected and may range from relatively small to very extensive.

CATEGORY V: Protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation. [Equivalent name: Protected Landscape/Seascape]

Definition

Area of land with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.

Objectives of Management

1. To maintain the harmonious interaction of nature and culture through the protection of landscape and/or seascape and the continuation of traditional land uses, building practices and social and cultural manifestations;
2. To support lifestyles and economic activities which are in harmony with nature and the preservation of social and cultural fabric of the communities concerned;
3. To maintain the diversity of landscape and habitat, and of associated species and ecosystems;
4. To eliminate where necessary, and thereafter prevent, land uses and activities that are inappropriate in scale and /or character;
5. To provide opportunities for public enjoyment through recreation and tourism appropriate in type and scale to the essential qualities of the areas;
6. To encourage scientific and educational activities which will contribute to the long term well-being of resident populations and to the development of public support for the environmental protection of such areas; and

7. To bring benefits to, and to contribute to the welfare of, the local community through the provision of natural products (such as forest and fisheries products) and services (such as clean water or income derived from sustainable forms of tourism).

Guidance for Selection

- The area should possess a landscape and/or coastal and island seascape of high scenic quality with diverse associated habitats, flora and fauna along with manifestations of unique or traditional land-use patterns and social organisations as evidenced in human settlements and local customs, livelihoods, and beliefs.
- The area should provide opportunities for public enjoyment through recreation and tourism within its normal lifestyle and economic activities.

CATEGORY VI: Protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems. [Equivalent names: Resource Reserves; Multiple Use Management Area; Managed Resource Area]

Definition

Area containing predominantly unmodified natural systems, managed to ensure long term protection and maintenance of biological diversity, while providing at the same time, a sustainable flow of natural products and services to meet community needs.

Objectives of Management

1. To protect and maintain the biological diversity and other natural values of the area in the long term;
2. To promote sound management practices for sustainable production purposes;
3. To protect the natural resource base from being alienated for other land-use purposes that would be detrimental to the area's biological diversity; and
4. To contribute to regional and national development.

Guidance for Selection

- The area should be at least two-thirds in a natural condition, although it may also contain limited areas of modified ecosystems; large commercial plantations would *not* be appropriate for inclusion.
- The area should be large enough to absorb sustainable resource uses without detriment to its overall long-term natural values.

Matrix of Key Management Objectives and IUCN Protected Area Categories

Categories should be assigned on the basis of primary management objectives as contained in the legal definitions on which the protected area was established; site management objectives are of supplementary value (IUCN, 1994). The matrix below illustrates the range of management objectives associated with each category.

Management Objective	Ia	Ib	II	III	IV	V	VI
Scientific research	1	3	2	2	2	2	3
Wilderness protection	2	1	2	3	3	0	2
Preservation of species and genetic diversity	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
Maintenance of environmental services	2	1	1	0	1	2	1
Protection of specific natural/cultural features	0	0	2	1	3	1	3
Tourism and recreation	0	2	1	1	3	1	3
Education	0	0	2	2	2	2	3
Sustainable use of resources from natural ecosystems	0	3	3	0	2	2	1
Maintenance of cultural/traditional attributes	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Key: 1 Primary objective (<i>at least 75% of the protected area should be managed for this purpose</i>) 2 Secondary objective 3 Potentially applicable objective 0 Not applicable							

In terms of sustainable use of natural resources, Categories IV-VI allow for exploitation as important objectives. Natural resource use in Category III is not often considered as an objective. Categories II and Ib permit some resource use often in the context of needs of indigenous people, or people living in or adjacent to the site. Category I does not allow resource extraction and limits public access to the area.

A survey among senior decision makers in Belize was recently conducted to identify what persons felt were the primary, secondary and potentially applicable objectives of declared protected areas. The preliminary results indicated widely varying opinions and often, conflicting primary objectives (strict protection with recreational use) were indicated for the some sites. **The primary management objectives of the declared protected areas in Belize (hence IUCN PA category) need to be determined as a matter of priority through a process of consultation of the key stakeholder groups.**

Natural Resource Use Within Protected Areas

The use of natural resources within each protected area category should be governed by the management objectives for which each site was designated. These objectives are further developed and implemented through the management plan created for each site. The creation of management zones can be used to meet the varied objectives within a category.

Zoning

Zoning defines what can and cannot occur in different areas of the protected area, in terms of natural resources management; cultural resources management; human use and benefit; visitor use and experience; access; facilities and park development; maintenance and operations. Through management zoning, the limits of acceptable use and development in the protected area are established (Young and Young 1993, cited in Thomas and Middleton, 2003).

Zoning will identify where, when and with what intensity, specific activities should take place. Management prescriptions through zoning could include:

- Protection for critical or representative habitats, ecosystems and ecological processes;
- Separation of conflicting human activities, especially resource extraction;
- Protection of natural and/or cultural qualities while allowing a range of reasonable human uses; and
- Provision for damaged areas to be set aside for recovery or restoration.

Identifying Zones and Preparing a Zoning Plan

The identification of potential zones will be based on an understanding of the natural resource abundance, distribution, health, use and threats. This information will be gathered through surveys and engagement of resource users and communities adjacent to the site. The active and transparent participation of the stakeholders will lead to a zoning plan that is agreeable to all parties, and likely to require little effort by state agencies for enforcement. Some factors that should be considered during the zoning exercise will include (Thomas and Middleton, 2003):

- Protection of exceptional resource values;
- Constraints imposed by landscape and other ecological determinants e.g. slope, soil type and hydrology, landscape values;
- Provision of a diverse range of appropriate visitor use experiences;

- Elimination or minimisation of uses and activities that either damage protected area resources or create an undue burden on management;
- The capability of the protected area to support different types of desired uses and development;
- The results of public participation and consultations during the process of plan preparation;
- Government policy and decisions regarding land use; and
- Established uses by people and local communities.

Conclusion

Successful sustainable natural resource use is dependent on an understanding of the attributes of the range of resources that are available at each site, and the manner of engagement and support from key stakeholder groups. Strategic communication and co-management are the best approaches to developing the most appropriate natural resource management regimes for protected areas.
