

PROJECT ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT  
Tortuguero Conservation and Development

Grant 515-0249.00G with Caribbean Conservation Corporation  
March 31, 1994 - May 30, 1994

Summary:

USAID Costa Rica signed a 3-year Grant Agreement with Caribbean Conservation Corporation (CCC) which successfully carried out the Tortuguero Conservation and Development Project.

1. Project Status vs. Planned Outputs

- The Regulatory plan was completed and given final approval by Municipipalidad of Pococi on 10/19/93.
- The Environmental Interpretation and Extension Center building was completed and final installation of exhibit work was carried out.
- The legal status for the Tortuguero mountain is uncertain, property is not legally titled. Funding was obtain for purchase and for improvements, but the owner refused to sell the 88 ha property to the CCC. Inclusion as part of biological corridor will be negotiated by MIRENEM.
- New brochures on the EIE program were printed, guide courses were given in Tortuguero and Parismina, and a slide and a video program on Tortuguero were developed with Paseo Pantera funding.
- The Green Turtle Research Station was 100% completed on May 10, 1994.
- The CCC worked with the Neotropica Foundation and Danish NGO Nepenthes on purchasing land for the corridor (Zona Protectora). Most of the land has been purchased (except for land owned by PORTICO) and one portion is being disputed in appeals court by the group called Desarrollo El Triángulo S.A.
- A guide for the area is being sold to the tourists.

2. Planned vs. actual Inputs: Inputs were provided as planned.

### 3. Progress toward planned purpose:

The goals were met beyond expectations. A tourist guide association was formed which provides guide services to the tourist to see the turtles rookery at night. National Park Services enforced that all tourist entering the beach after dark must be accompanied by a guide. Tickets are sold from the CCC Kiosk on the Tortuguero village. A training program for guides was institutionalized and the handbooks, procedures etc. for it were provided, after several courses were offered by the CCC; the Tortuguero National Park Office continues providing the course under the supervision of the CCC station manager.

The Regulatory Plan for Tortuguero has become the development guide for the area of Tortuguero as well as for the development of the Atlantic coast.

### 4. Post-project monitoring requirements:

The CCC has been conducting research and providing the leadership on green turtle conservation for Tortuguero area since early 1950. This institution is world known for its commitment to the preservation of the green turtle.

The EIE, during tourist season, received about 300 visitors per week and has become the main information center for the area. The EIE Center as well as the research station are self-sufficient. The future of the station operations looks very bright, and there is considerable initial interest in Tortuguero on the part of professors of university courses, U.S.-based bird observatories and their members, and members of the turtle conservation groups. The CCC will also be expanding its green turtle tagging volunteer program to ten weeks and will debut a leatherback program next March. Tortuguero Park and the wildlife refuge to the north have been little studied, and the agenda is wide open for investigations in conservation biology, aquatic ecology, species inventory, population dynamics and movement, and tropical lowland forest ecology.

### 5. Lessons learned:

Hiring an effective manager was the most important point, and maintaining good coordination and relations with the local community the second. The time required to coordinate and obtain legal approval from several government organizations is always an enigma even with the full support of the country's vicepresident.