



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**TELLING OUR  
STORY**

## **SUCCESS STORY – PREP SHEET**

### **Headline**

This is the title - maximum 45 characters (about 4-7 words). Good titles are simple, jargon-free, and have impact; summarize the story in a nutshell; and use action verbs that bring the story to life.

**Headline:** Forest protection success in the Maya Biosphere

### **Subhead**

This is a summary of the story and its success in 60 characters or less (about 8 words). This grabs readers' attention and interests them to read more. Use quantitative measures when possible.

**Subhead:** Over one hundred thousand hectares recuperated in the MBR

### **Photograph's Caption**

Write a brief sentence that describes the picture, identifies people in the picture, and captures interest in the story it represents. The caption should not run longer than 150 characters (about 25 words).

**Caption:** During 2010, 109,000 hectares of threatened forest areas were recuperated within the Multiple-use Zone and national parks of Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve

### **Pullout Quote**

Provide a quote that represents and summarizes the story. This quote should capture the success of the program and will be highlighted in the piece, and is limited to 100 characters (about 15 words).

**Pullout Quote:** USAID support for forest protection helped preserve the Maya Biosphere Reserve's economic potential

*Continue to page 2.*



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## SUCCESS STORY – PREP SHEET (cont.)

### Body Copy

The body is the meat of the story – it should vividly tell the story behind the photograph and quote. Use statistics or quotes to describe how USAID actions or programs have benefited an individual, community, or nation. Length is limited to 2800 characters (about 500 words).

**Paragraph:** The Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR) is one of the most well known protected areas in the Americas, home to spectacular biodiversity, the epicenter of the ancient Maya civilization, and Central America’s most successful community-based forest management regime. Over the last decade however, the reserve has been increasingly degraded by illegal colonization, cattle ranching, and the lack of governance in remote sections of the reserve, especially those adjacent to Mexico. This intensification of threats has not only affected the ecological stability of Central America’s largest reserve, but also has put at risk important economic development initiatives based on sustainable natural resource use and tourism. Of the threats faced, perhaps the major threat is uncontrolled fire resulting from its use in clearing agricultural fields prior to planting. In 2000, smoke emitted by raging fires across the Maya Biosphere resulted in the closure of the Houston airport during three days. During subsequent years, fires ravaged hundreds of thousands of hectares, affecting the natural resource base essential to the economies of communities living within the reserve.

In response to growing threats, support from USAID allowed the Wildlife Conservation Society and national partners to develop an integrated forest protection program focused on the economically productive areas of the Maya Biosphere Reserve. Technical accompaniment and in kind material support was provided to Guatemala’s national park service (Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas – CONAP), and the Guatemalan fire prevention authority (Sistema de Prevencion y Control de Incendios Forestales- SIPECIF), as well as national and community based partners working to reduce threats in their respective areas. Collaboration from Lighthawk was also obtained to permit regular over flights of the MBR during the dry fire season when threats are most severe.

Results over the 18-month program were exemplary. By the end of the 2010 dry season, CONAP technicians and local partners estimated that 109,000 hectares of the reserve were “recuperated”, an area nearly twice the size of the MBR’s most well known park: Tikal. All of the recuperated areas were found to be free of new deforestation, fire, and settlement during the 2010 dry season, whereas during 2009 all had been severely affected. The MBR Forest Protection Program helped demonstrate that targeted investments in the protection of the reserve are one key element in a sound, long term development strategy, providing tangible benefits that ensure the long term economic and ecological sustainability of the Hemisphere’s most spectacular landscapes

### Other Elements

Before uploading your work, be sure to prepare all the necessary information for these elements:

**Photograph** (original graphics file in .jpg format with at least 300 dpi)

**Photographer’s Name and Organization**

**Country and Region/City of Story**

**USAID Program**

When you have finished, visit [stories.usaid.gov](http://stories.usaid.gov), to upload your story. To copy and paste, click on the appropriate text **three times** in quick succession to highlight your work and copy it.