



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



EVALUATION

Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project

MID-TERM EVALUATION FINAL REPORT

AUGUST 31, 2023

This document was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by International Development Group LLC under the USAID Technical Assistance Project for Economic Growth (TAP EG).

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project Mid-Term Evaluation

AUGUST 31, 2023

Activity Title:	Mid-Term Evaluation of the Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project
Sponsoring USAID Office:	USAID/E-CAM
Under Contract:	Technical Assistance Project for Economic Growth (TAP EG)
Contract Number:	47QRAD20DD1072/7200AAN00006
Contractor:	International Development Group LLC (IDG)
Submission Date:	June 07, 2023
Revision 3:	August 31, 2023
Cover photo credit:	TAP EG Evaluation Team
Photo description:	TAP EG Evaluation Team interviewing project beneficiaries who are members of Cayo Quemado, a women's organization, in Livingston, Guatemala, in February of 2023.

Prepared by:

Alejandro Arrivillaga, Evaluation Team Leader
Hugo Cabrera, Environment/Bio-commerce Specialist
Leila Orellana, Environmental Economist and Gender Specialist
Beatriz Cardillo Cury, Research Assistant

DISCLAIMER: *The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development of the United States Government.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms	V
Abstract	VII
Executive Summary	1
Evaluation Purpose and Evaluation Questions	8
Evaluation Purpose	8
Evaluation Questions	9
How the report is organized	9
Background	10
Evaluation Methods and Limitations	12
Evaluation methods	12
Document review:	12
Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Groups Discussions (FGD):	12
Online survey:	13
Desk review of performance indicators:	13
Evaluation Activities	14
Analysis	14
Evaluation Limitations	14
Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations	15
Evaluation Question 1: Have RCBP's biocommerce interventions contributed to sustainable benefits for stakeholders in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?	15
Findings	15
Entrepreneurial training and business plans	16
Access to markets and socio-economic sustainability	16
Beekeeping biocommerce in Río Paz	16
Integration platforms	17
Access to communications and the internet	18
Theory of change	18
Conclusions	19
Recommendations	20
Entrepreneurial training and business plans	20
Access to markets and socio-economic sustainability	21
Jellyfish and FIN fish markets	21
Beekeeping biocommerce in Río Paz	21
Community-based tourism	21
Integration platforms	22
Access to communications and internet	22
Evaluation Question 2: Have RCBP's governance and/or regulatory interventions contributed to sustainable improvements in natural resource management practices for target stakeholders in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?	22
Findings	22
Río Paz	23
Río Motagua	24
Karataska Lagoon System	24
Conclusions	25

Recommendations	25
Evaluation Question 3: Have RCBP interventions contributed to changes in beneficiary knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of sustainable biodiversity practices in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?	26
Findings	26
Conclusions	28
Recommendations	28
Evaluation Question 4: Has RCBP’s approach to gender and inclusion affected equity in conservation practices in target communities? If so, how? If not, why not?	29
Findings	30
Río Paz	30
Río Motagua	30
Karataska Lagoon System	31
Migration data	31
Conclusions	31
Recommendations	32
Evaluation Question 5: Has the biophysical condition in RCBP areas of influence changed since the project began? How has RCBP contributed to these changes?	33
Findings	33
Biocommerce and biodiversity conservation	33
Fisheries biocommerce and biodiversity	34
Mangrove landscape restoration (mangrove channels unclogging)	34
Forest conservation incentives	35
Connectivity in the Transboundary Omoa-Cuyamel Manabique sustainable biological corridor	35
Monitoring	35
Sustainability of outcomes	37
Designation of fisheries replenishment zones	37
Resource condition	38
Conclusions	38
Recommendations	39
Annexes	41
Annex I: Timeline	42
Annex II: Evaluation Statement of Work	43
Annex III: Evaluation Methods and Limitations	56
Annex IV: Data Collection and Analysis Tools	64
Annex V: Sources of Information	107
Annex VI: Disclosure of Any Conflicts of Interest	109
Annex VII: Evaluation Team Members	113
Annex VIII-IX: Meeting Notes	115
Annex X: Schedule	116
Annex XI: Tables, Graphs, Maps, and Pictures Taken During Site Visits	120
Annex XII: Performance Indicators Analysis	127
Annex XIII: Statement of Differences	135

ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directives System
AMUDIS	Asociacion Multicultural de Mujeres para el Desarrollo Integral y Sostenible
ASOPROGAL	Asociación Programas de Gestión Ambiental Local
ASPRODE	Asesoría a Programas y Proyectos de Desarrollo
AUMH	Hawaii Multiple Use Area
CCAD	Central American Commission for Environment and Development
CCO	Omoa Conservation Corps
CENTROMAR	Centro de Procesamiento de Productos del Mar
CISP	International Cooperative for Community Development, Italy
COAL	Comité Asesor Local
CONAP	Protected Area Management Agency, Guatemala
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer' Representative
CPUE	Catch Per Unit Effort
DDI	USAID's Bureau of Development, Democracy, and Innovation
DDL	Development Data Library
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
DIGIPESCA	Direccion General de Pesca y Acuicultura
DO	Development Objective
DOI	Diffusion of Innovation
EMD	Center for Emerging Markets and Development
EQ	Evaluation Question
ET	Evaluation Team
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRZ	Fish Replenishment Zone
GIS	Geographic Information System
IDG	International Development Group LLC
ILO SYB	International Labor Organization's Start Your Business
INAB	National Forestry Institute, Guatemala
IP	Implementing Partner

IR	Intermediate Result
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practices
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
MAR fund	Mesoamerican Reef Fund
MARN	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OCRET	Office of Control of State Reserve Areas, Guatemala
OSPESCA	Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
PIRS	Performance Indicators Reference Sheets
PLAS	Local Sustainable Use Plan
RCBP	Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project
RDCS	Regional Development and Cooperation Strategy
REDPESCAH	Red de Pescadores de la Costa Norte de Honduras
SBC	Sustainable Biological Corridor
SGP	Small Grants Program
SICA	Central American Integration System
SOW	Scope of Work
TAP EG	Technical Assistance Project for Economic Growth
TOC	Theory of Change
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNES	Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/E-CAM	USAID/El Salvador and Central America Mission
USG	United States Government

ABSTRACT

The USAID Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project (RCBP), a seven-year, \$13.4 million project—implemented by a consortium of partners led by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)—aims to address threats to biodiversity in targeted coastal-marine areas and associated upland ecosystems in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The project started in 2017 and ends in 2024. This mid-term performance evaluation conducted by the Technical Assistance Project for Economic Growth (TAP EG) implemented by International Development Group LLC (IDG), assesses project achievements, implementation challenges, and lessons learned. Data collection efforts, including 16 key informant interviews (KII), 22 group interviews, and one focus group discussion (FGD), were conducted between November 2022 and March 2023.

The evaluation team concludes that RCBP has advanced biocommerce ventures, improving the living conditions of vulnerable people. RCBP implemented coastal governance instruments, leading to recovery and sustainable use of landscapes. RCBP made progress in including a gender lens and equity, and women have increased their participation in biocommerce ventures and in leadership roles. The changes observed include increased awareness and knowledge of gender roles, changes in fish sizes, increased participation in river cleaning campaigns, and implementation of closed fishing seasons. The team found that most of the ventures lacked knowledge and use of business plans. RCBP biocommerce ventures could benefit from better market access, improved business capabilities, and entrepreneurial training.

Executive Summary

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The USAID/EI Salvador-Central America and Mexico Regional Mission (USAID/E-CAM) has engaged the Technical Assistance Project for Economic Growth (TAP EG) to conduct a mid-term performance evaluation of the Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project (RCBP). The evaluation aims to assess project achievements, implementation challenges, and lessons learned and provide empirical evidence to support USAID's Biodiversity and Development Research Agenda. The evaluation also assessed the validity of the theory of change (TOC) and informed program modifications for an approved two-year project extension. The evaluation's principal audiences are USAID's Economic Growth and Education Office, Regional Program Office, and Mission Management, among others. This mid-term evaluation focused on five Evaluation Questions (EQs):

1. Have RCBP's biocommerce interventions contributed to sustainable benefits for stakeholders in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?
2. Have RCBP's governance and/or regulatory interventions contributed to sustainable improvements in natural resource management practices for target stakeholders in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. Have RCBP interventions contributed to changes in beneficiary knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of sustainable biodiversity practices in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. Has RCBP's approach to gender and inclusion affected equity in conservation practices in target communities? If so, how? If not, why not?
5. Has the biophysical condition in RCBP areas of influence changed since the project began? How has RCBP contributed to these changes?

BACKGROUND

RCBP, a seven-year, \$13.4 million project, implemented by a consortium of partners led by the IUCN, aims to address threats to biodiversity in targeted coastal-marine areas and associated upland ecosystems in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The project started implementation in November 2017 and was supposed to end in November 2022, but has since been approved for a two-year extension. RCBP was designed to promote biocommerce and climate-smart landscape management practices to decrease degradation of forest and mangrove landscapes, seagrasses, and coral, enhance climate-smart economic opportunities, and promote sustainable use of natural resources in target communities. The major threats to coastal-marine biodiversity in the region are loss and/or degradation of natural habitat, overexploitation of resources, pollution, and impacts imposed by climate change. RCBP implemented an integrated landscape management approach that included coastal-marine habitat types, including mangroves, seagrasses, and corals, and associated upstream watersheds. The geographic areas of intervention included the Karataska Lagoon System, on the Miskito Coast of Honduras, the bordering

coastal ecosystems by Río Motagua, shared between Honduras and Guatemala, and Río Paz, shared between El Salvador and Guatemala.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS, DESIGN, METHODS, AND LIMITATIONS

The evaluation methodology aimed to assess the implementation and realized outputs, outcomes, and overall goal of RCBP, and used a combination of data collection methods for quantitative data and qualitative information, followed by rigorous analysis. This allowed us to evaluate program performance from the implementing partner to a wide range of counterparts, NGOs, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders. The main data collection methods included a document review, KIIs and FGDs, an online survey, and a desk review of performance indicators.

The evaluation team conducted a thorough review of documents related to the RCBP project, including progress reports, work plans, and gender strategy. The team held KIIs and FGDs with stakeholders to gather their perspective on the project's impact and benefits in all three project sites. A total of 16 KIIs, 22 group interviews, and one FGD were conducted. An online survey was used to gather specific information from the RCBP-supported biocommerce ventures and assess their readiness for online commerce. The team also conducted a desk review of performance indicators to assess whether they provided sufficient data or information on RCBP's expected results, outcomes, and assumptions.

The team faced some expected limitations, including the challenge of attribution due to the nonexistence of a counterfactual as well as risks of recall bias, response bias, and selection bias in the KIIs and FGDs. To minimize these risks, the team conducted as many in-country KIIs and FGDs as possible given time and budget constraints, explained the evaluation requirements clearly to beneficiaries and stakeholders interviewed, and used multiple sources of information to corroborate findings.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

EVALUATION QUESTION 1: HAVE RCBP'S BIOCOMMERCE INTERVENTIONS CONTRIBUTED TO SUSTAINABLE BENEFITS FOR STAKEHOLDERS IN PROJECT AREAS OF INFLUENCE? IF SO, HOW? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

Based on the interviews and focus group discussions conducted, the perception of the beneficiaries is that RCBP has provided important assistance to strengthen the performance of biocommerce ventures, both existing and new, improving the living conditions of vulnerable people in the region. The online survey responses showed that both existing and newly created biocommerce ventures recognized the value of RCBP support in improving their production, commercial, organizational, and business capabilities, and that they all considered themselves to be in a better situation than before the project. The survey also showed that all ventures include women and youth as part of their businesses, contributing to the creation of economic opportunities to help prevent irregular migration from the region.

The evaluation also found that, while RCBP provided support to biocommerce ventures and advised them on business development, most of the ventures lacked knowledge and did not use the business plans developed by RCBP. Additionally, most of the supported enterprises sold informally to local markets and relied on intermediaries for sales, with limited access to diversified sales channels and little knowledge of end buyers'

purchasing requirements. This situation is worsened by the rejection of orders from local buyers of dried and salted fish, apparently due to poor quality of the products.

While marketing honey has been difficult due to competition and lack of experience, honey producers are motivated to continue with their businesses even after the end of the project. Despite these activities not being highly profitable, beekeeping does provide an additional source of income. Even though fishermen do not have detailed records of their crab fishing activities, according to key informant interviews, beekeeping biocommerce reduced the time fishermen in Río Paz spend on crab and other fishery practices.

In this context, the report highlights the importance of networks and business service providers in marketing small enterprises to customers. Two examples of this are REDPESCAH (Red de Pescadores de la Costa Norte de Honduras) and Caribe Maya. REDPESCAH is a successful model for marketing fishing enterprises in the Caribbean of Honduras, while Caribe Maya is a central booking facility for a group of community-based tourism providers in the Caribbean off Guatemala. Nevertheless, both REDPESCAH and Caribe Maya need support to legalize and scale up their operations, and to formalize their legal status and get registered. The report also notes that most biocommerce ventures lack tech education and skills to use the internet to improve their marketing.

Based on the Evaluation Question I (EQ 1) findings, the evaluation team concludes that biocommerce's economic sustainability has not been demonstrated and would require more time to show progress. The weakest element is economic sustainability, which depends on conditions linked to business capabilities and market access. Both of which need to be strengthened to guarantee continuity of the ventures. Social sustainability practices, on the other hand, were more prevalent. The ventures evaluated come from socially and culturally-based groups, such as fishing, community organizations, and community tourism. Benefits from these activities are shared with the community.

EVALUATION QUESTION 2: HAVE RCBP'S GOVERNANCE AND/OR REGULATORY INTERVENTIONS CONTRIBUTED TO SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR TARGET STAKEHOLDERS IN PROJECT AREAS OF INFLUENCE? IF SO, HOW? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

RCBP updated and implemented coastal governance instruments in each site, to strengthen the sustainable use of the landscape. In all, 20 different regulations have been developed in collaboration with communities. A total of 14 new laws, policies and regulations have been approved or implemented at the time of the evaluation.

The RCBP coastal governance instruments were implemented in each site, which led to improvements in recovery conditions and sustainable use of the landscape, and facilitated access to fishery products for local consumption. Improvements in governance conditions were achieved by increases in community participation in resource management and conservation in the three sites, sustainable use plans in Río Paz, the management group for the sustainable biological corridor in Río Motagua, and the indigenous governance committees in Karataska Lagoon. The use of adaptive methodologies to local contexts was successful, but allocation of financial resources to strengthen governance capacities varied across the three sites. Governance was promoted using local governance tools and mechanisms, including the Sustainable Use Plans in Río Paz (PLAS), the promotion of the Management Group of the Cuyamel-Omoa Manabique biological corridor, and strengthening of the Indigenous Governance Committees in Karataska Lagoon.

The implementation of PLAS in Río Paz has empowered women and youth and advanced recovery of degraded mangrove channels, through increased community patrolling. Although increased community patrolling activities

was the main reason for mangrove recovery reported in interviews with beneficiaries, the unclogging and cleanup of mangrove channels and canals and mangrove planting were also mentioned as contributing to improved hydrology and water circulation, helping mangrove recovery and favoring conditions for marine species reproduction.

The experience acquired in the use of funds and accountability strengthened the PLAS. In Río Motagua, governance mechanisms such as inter-institutional and mangrove technical committees have helped to comply with social and environmental safeguards. The strengthening of the Caribe Maya, through capacity building and equipment provided by RCBP, has created more than 150 jobs and satisfied the basic needs of vulnerable indigenous groups. All Caribe Maya organizations indicated in interviews that their members were able to generate income, alleviating financial pressures during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the Karataska lagoon system, approval of a Fisheries and Aquaculture Management Plan has promoted conservation of the marine ecosystem and sustainability of livelihoods, leading to the increased income for 80 communities and an estimated population of 19,857 inhabitants.

Strengthening governance mechanisms is crucial to empower communities to adopt natural resource management practices and improve coastal marine ecosystems. RCBP support to PLAS has empowered local committees in conservation and management of the mangrove ecosystem, leading to the recovery of degraded mangrove channels. Governance instruments developed by RCBP have contributed to the consolidation of local organizations.

EVALUATION QUESTION 3: HAVE RCBP INTERVENTIONS CONTRIBUTED TO CHANGES IN BENEFICIARY KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE BIODIVERSITY PRACTICES IN PROJECT AREAS OF INFLUENCE? IF SO, HOW? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

EQ 3 centered on changes in beneficiaries' knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of eleven different sustainable practices. Some of the sustainable practices promoted include increased awareness and knowledge of masculinities, changes in fish capture size, increased awareness and participation in waste management and river/beach cleaning campaigns, decreased tree cutting, promotion of backyard gardens for self-consumption, and the implementation of a closed fishing season calendar in Karataska.

While RCBP has promoted changes in knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of sustainable practices, not all changes have taken place. Some people were already practicing the promoted behaviors before the intervention. For example, according to surveys conducted by RCBP in 2019, 26 percent of respondents indicated compliance with closed seasons, and 2 percent with fish replenishment zones. Monitoring and achieving changes in behavior is challenging and is currently measured through the adoption of environmental practices. The perception survey implemented indicates that 50 percent of the fishers think the current condition of the fishery resources has "decreased a lot" compared to three years ago. Additionally, 36 percent think the resources "have decreased".

EQ3 findings indicate that to properly measure the adoption of sustainable practices, a well-designed campaign needs to be implemented. RCBP pre-intervention surveys focused only on perceptions, missing important information on knowledge and adoption of sustainable practices. A clear baseline of beneficiaries' knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of sustainable practices is needed to assess the effectiveness of interventions.

EVALUATION QUESTION 4: HAS RCBP'S APPROACH TO GENDER AND INCLUSION AFFECTED EQUITY IN CONSERVATION PRACTICES IN TARGET COMMUNITIES? IF SO, HOW? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

Regarding EQ 4, which aimed to assess the Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy, progress has been made in including a gender lens and gender equity across project activities. Women and young people have increased their participation in the economy through biocommerce products, and women have participated in leadership roles. For example, women's participation in biocommerce training was 41 percent, and the perception in interviews was that women's participation has increased due to project activities. Training has been provided on issues of gender-based violence prevention and masculinity roles. On the other hand, empowering facilitators in violence prevention and masculinity roles remain a challenge, because gender issues are still not a priority and chauvinism and patriarchy are high in these countries and even higher in rural communities.

The evaluation team assessed the participation of women, youth, and indigenous people in different training and organizational structures. In Río Paz, 31 percent of participants in the trainings were women, and 39 percent of beneficiaries of small grant funds in beekeeping, fishing, and tourism were women. In Río Motagua, there was a 23 percent increase in the participation of women, youth, and indigenous people in various organizational structures. In the Karataska Lagoon System, 38 percent of participants in training activities were women, youth, and indigenous people. Participation and social cohesion of organized groups in the territory is a favorable condition to reduce the intention to migrate, particularly for women and young people.

EQ4 findings indicate that the theory of change has had positive successes in reducing gender gaps and increasing capacities of women and youth. RCBP contributed to reducing gender gaps in leadership and organizational structures, thus promoting female inclusion. The intervention in Río Paz fostered the adoption of regulatory mechanisms and progress in territorial management, through training for biocommerce and climate monitoring technicians. In Karataska, the intervention facilitated knowledge changes in local organizations' governance structures, resulting in the leadership of the first woman in charge of a Territorial Council.

EVALUATION QUESTION 5: HAS THE BIOPHYSICAL CONDITION IN RCBP AREAS OF INFLUENCE CHANGED SINCE THE PROJECT BEGAN? HOW HAS RCBP CONTRIBUTED TO THESE CHANGES?

For EQ 5, the evaluation team divided the findings into several themes, including biocommerce and biodiversity conservation, fisheries biocommerce, mangrove landscape restoration, forest conservation incentives, connectivity in the sustainable biological corridor, designation of fisheries replenishment zones, and resource conditions.

RCBP implemented various interventions to protect biodiversity in the region, including public awareness campaigns, no-fishing zones proposed by fishers, landscape restoration, and updated management plans. The project promoted diversification of catches and opening of new fishery product options like kawacha fish, to reduce pressure on overexploited resources. Biocommerce has helped reduce pressure on natural resources, and mangrove coverage has remained stable in recent years. The project has supported updating of management plans in different areas and has undertaken actions to restore water flows in mangrove channels and identified new fishery products, like kawacha fish. However, there is no solid baseline to determine if there has been an improvement in the ecosystems.

The project aims to reduce pressure on overexploited resources in different areas, including in Río Paz, Livingston, Manabique, and Karataska. Based on information provided in interviews with beneficiaries and participating

organizations, industrial shrimp fishing is the main threat to artisanal fisheries in Río Paz, while water pollution and gillnet fishing¹ have negatively impacted fisheries in Livingston. Lobster landings monitoring data in Manabique indicates stable lobster sizes and few ovate females caught, and that the sea bass has many juveniles. In Karataska, the project has expanded to other fisheries to reduce pressure on the sea bass.

Interviewed beneficiaries report that RCBP had a significant impact on the recovery of the salt forest in Río Paz due to the restoration of water flow in the mangrove channels. This perception is supported by the data collected by the community scientist, measuring water quality (temperature, salinity and oxygen), who observed positive changes. However, RCBP has not analyzed and reported this data. Community groups have also been strengthened, and have participated in activities to clean and clear canals in the mangrove forest. In Barra de Santiago, the mangrove coverage has been stable in recent years and the community is more aware of the importance of natural resource conservation. The perceived recovery of the mangrove in Barra de Santiago was achieved through various activities, including dredging and cleaning, increased presence and surveillance by the PLAS, and mangrove reforestation.

In addition, RCBP supported a project within Guatemala's forestry incentive program, PROBOSQUE,² in Punta de Manabique, which was initiated with support from the Mesoamerican Reef Fund or MAR Fund. One local person has already completed the application process and will receive the forestry incentive, and additional people have applied for the program. Despite some opposition in the community, access to the forestry incentive program in mangrove areas was successful and has served as an example for other communities. The beneficiaries of the program are required to comply with their management plan, which is verified by the National Forestry Institute (INAB) and the Protected Area Management Agency in Guatemala (CONAP). The PROBOSQUE contract is for 10 years and can be extended for a further five years, for a total of 15 years.

RCBP has also achieved the creation of a sustainable biological corridor in Cuyamel-Omoa Punta de Manabique, which serves as a tool to influence policies and support local authorities and communities. Although the proposal for the bilateral designation of this transboundary management area is not yet official, the managing committee has submitted it to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Guatemala (MARN). On the other hand, the unclogging of mangrove channels has led to increased fish abundance and improved water quality in Río Paz. The participation of community members in monitoring activities, through the community scientists, has led to increased sustainability of monitoring. Biocommerce ventures can help reduce pressure on natural resources; however, except for fishery minimum catch size, RCBP monitoring data has not yet proven their effectiveness.

The sustainability of monitoring efforts in the Manabique-Omoa Biological Corridor is a challenge, but annual operational plans and community involvement can help ensure long-term monitoring. Fish landing monitoring lacks important details, and echosounders have limitations. Fish replenishment zones are perceived as effective in maintaining abundance levels and new fishing recovery zones have been created. Mangrove reforestation has taken place in Kruta, and biocommerce is perceived as having helped reduce pressure on traditional resources. RCBP contributed to renovating existing Fish Replenishment Zones (FRZ) and identifying new ones.

In conclusion, the general perception is that conditions have improved, yet there is no solid baseline to assess improvement in ecosystems. The Hawaii area has a well-preserved mangrove swamp, but some people still cut mangroves down. The Manabique-Omoa corridor area has 333 hectares of mangrove, which is 0.6 percent of the biological corridor area. In Karataska, fishing conditions are perceived as being better than 20 years

1 Gillnets are fishing gear that uses the shape and behavior of fishes to catch them by trapping them by the operculum as they swim by.

2 PROBOSQUE is a Guatemalan government program that provides economic incentives for forest conservation.

ago, and fishing could improve with the creation of fisheries recovery zones. Finally, monitoring actions in Los Cobanos helped identify previously undocumented coral species in El Salvador. The evaluation team concludes that biocommerce has supported biodiversity conservation in the region by reducing pressure on depleted resources and introducing new products. The sustainability of the mangrove, seagrass, and coral ecosystems is difficult to determine, but efforts such as clearing channels and reforestation have helped restoration. Fisheries monitoring reports need to be improved to aid resource management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR RCBP

RCBP should provide entrepreneurial training, technical assistance, and establish a marketing/business development unit to improve market strategies and identify potential clients for biocommerce ventures. Additionally, RCBP should identify direct markets for various species and conduct exploitation capacity studies to ensure sustainability and promote digital literacy for marketing.

FOR RCBP AND FUTURE USAID WORK

Capacity strengthening of biocommerce companies is recommended to enable them to have regional competitiveness. It is also recommended to establish agreements with sugarcane growers and cattle ranchers to support the governance of Río Paz, and to strengthen organizational structures and leadership in each site. Strategic alliances with related bilateral projects and programs are recommended to expand results in prevention of gender-based violence. Seeking guidance on developing a sustainable practices adoption campaign and using knowledge, attitude, and practices surveys to monitor behavior adoption is also suggested.

Finally, regarding changes in the biophysical conditions related to the project's interventions, RCBP should explore the reactivation of CENTROMAR³ in Punta de Manabique, Guatemala, as a fishing biocommerce venture. RCBP should also continue promoting the official bilateral declaration of the Cuyamel-Omoa Manabique biological corridor, perhaps via the involvement of local communities and conservation organizations, both local and international. RCBP should explore the possibility of replicating the municipality of Livingston's fish landings' monitoring activities with other municipalities like Omoa and Puerto Barrios, and seek guidance from the University of Rhode Island (URI) to improve fish landings data and analysis and use the results for fisheries management.

3 CENTROMAR (Centro de Procesamiento de Productos del Mar) is a fish processing plant, located in Punta de Manabique, established more than 10 years ago, but it is currently not operating.

Evaluation Purpose and Evaluation Questions

EVALUATION PURPOSE

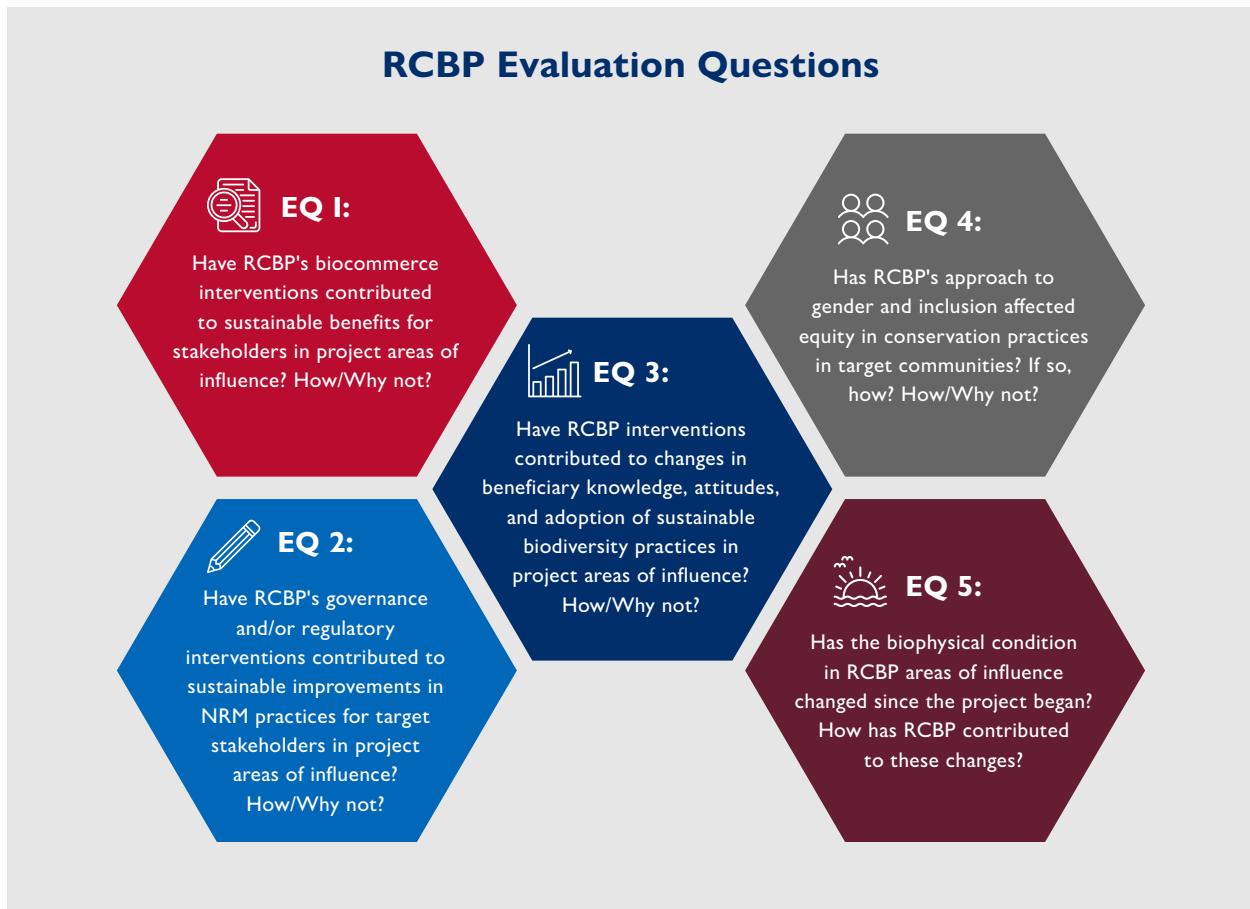
USAID/EI Salvador-Central America and Mexico Regional Mission (USAID/E-CAM) engaged the Technical Assistance Project for Economic Growth (TAP EG)—a buy-in mechanism through USAID’s Bureau of Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI) Center for Emerging Markets and Development (EMD) implemented by International Development Group LLC (IDG)—to conduct an independent mid-term performance evaluation of the Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project (RCBP).

The purpose of this mid-term performance evaluation is to assess project achievements, implementation challenges, and lessons learned. Evaluation findings will 1) test the validity of the theory of change; 2) inform program modifications for an approved two-year project extension; 3) inform future conservation and biodiversity work in the region; and 4) provide empirical evidence to support USAID’s Biodiversity and Development Research Agenda.

The principal audiences for this evaluation are the Economic Growth and Education Office, Regional Program Office, and Mission Management at the USAID/E-CAM Mission; Economic Growth offices in USAID Missions in Honduras and Guatemala; the environment team in the USAID/Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Bureau; and the Center for Environment, Energy, and Infrastructure in the USAID DDI. Other key non-USAID stakeholders include RCBP’s consortium of implementing partners, led by IUCN. Finally, regional environmental agencies involved in project implementation may have an interest in the evaluation findings.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This midterm evaluation focused on the Evaluation Questions (EQs) below, which seek to test RCBP's Theory of Change and identify enabling conditions and challenges to achieve the activity's desired outcome:



HOW THE REPORT IS ORGANIZED

The evaluation report is organized as follows: Section two (Background) provides an overview of the project, the regional context, and the project objectives. Section three (Evaluation Methods and Limitations) outlines the evaluation methodology, data collection efforts, and limitations. Section four (Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations) presents the findings, conclusions, and recommendations by evaluation question. All the Evaluation Team (ET) recommendations included under the five evaluation questions can be done in the time RCBP has remaining. However, some recommendations may need to be prioritized over others depending on budget availability.

Background

This Final Report presents the findings, conclusions, and recommendations compiled by the TAP EG Evaluation Team on the mid-term performance evaluation of the Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project (RCBP). RCBP is a seven-year, \$13.4 million project implemented by a consortium of partners led by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to address threats to biodiversity in targeted coastal-marine areas and associated upland ecosystems in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. It was awarded to IUCN through agreement number 72051918CA00001. The project started implementation in November 2017 and was supposed to end in November 2022, but has since been approved for a two-year extension, which led the Mission to commission a mid-term performance evaluation to inform future implementation activities.

RCBP was designed to promote biocommerce and climate-smart landscape management practices to decrease degradation of forest and mangrove landscapes, seagrasses, and coral; enhance climate-smart economic opportunities; and promote sustainable use of natural resources in target communities.

Regional Context

The major threats to coastal-marine biodiversity in the region include loss and/or degradation of natural habitat, overexploitation of resources, pollution, and impacts of climate change. RCBP implemented an integrated landscape management approach to define geographic bounds for planning and project interventions. The project's geographic focus included coastal-marine habitat types, including mangroves, seagrasses and corals, and associated upstream watersheds, selected based on biological significance, threats to biodiversity, and consultation with regional institutions, national governments, local governments, and non-government stakeholders. The geographic areas of intervention included the Karataska Lagoon System on the Miskito Coast of Honduras and the bordering coastal ecosystems by Río Motagua, shared between Honduras and Guatemala, and Río Paz, shared between El Salvador and Guatemala.

Development Hypothesis

The Project Theory of Change, updated during a “pause and reflect” session in 2020, states that:

*“If coastal communities improve their livelihoods through the promotion of climate-smart biocommerce, increase their education on evidence collection and understanding of the role of scientific evidence in decision making, the governance and regulatory framework of coastal natural resources are strengthened and better landscape management climate-smart practices are implemented, **then** coastal-marine biodiversity will be conserved, beneficiaries will have improved their personal and community development and thus will contribute to the prosperity, governance and security in Central America’s Northern Triangle area.”*

Results Framework

To address these threats and drivers, the RCBP results framework identified the following objectives:

1. **OBJECTIVE 1: Increase scientific capacity, education, and community engagement, especially of women, youth, and other under-represented groups, to facilitate evidence and ecosystem-based biodiversity conservation.** RCBP addresses gaps in the ability of regional stakeholders to measure, monitor, and evaluate the status and value of coastal biodiversity. Educational outreach activities seek to improve the ability to access and utilize data, methods, and tools to inform conservation decision-making in target communities, actively engaging women and other vulnerable populations that would benefit from community-focused activities.
2. **OBJECTIVE 2: Improve livelihoods through promotion of climate-smart biocommerce activities that reduce threats to biodiversity.** RCBP integrates ecosystem-based biodiversity conservation principles into commercial and non-commercial resource management practices and expands economic opportunities that rely on biodiversity as a principal factor of production or community well-being, such as ecosystem services. The Project aims to improve the enabling conditions for biocommerce activities by building technical capacity and advancing social inclusion of underrepresented groups like women, youth, and indigenous populations. The Project promotes tools such as biodiversity baselines and conservation management plans that further contribute to long-term economic and environmental sustainability.
3. **OBJECTIVE 3: Strengthen local and regional governance of biodiverse resources.** RCBP aims to improve poor regulatory frameworks and inadequate enforcement of biodiversity regulations. The Project seeks to enhance local governance capacity and ensure that local efforts are harmonized with regional, national, and sub-national policies. These efforts serve to strengthen the biocommerce, science capacity and public education objectives described above.
4. **OBJECTIVE 4: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in forest landscapes to increase resilience to climate change (adaptation-based mitigation).** RCBP incorporates an adaptation-based mitigation approach to climate change, supporting activities to enhance carbon stocks at the landscape level while also increasing sustainable livelihoods.

Evaluation Methods and Limitations

EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation methodology is aimed at assessing the implementation and the realized outputs, outcomes, and the overall goal of RCBP. It consisted of a combination of data collection methods for quantitative data and qualitative information, followed by rigorous analysis. This allowed the Evaluation Team to evaluate program performance from the implementing partner, and a wide range of counterparts, partner NGOs, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders. The data collection methods used for each evaluation question are presented in Annex III: Evaluation Methods and Limitations. The main data collection methods are discussed in the sections below.

DOCUMENT REVIEW:

The team conducted an extensive desk review and synthesis of RCBP progress reports: Annual Progress Reports from the first five years of implementation, Work Plans, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan targets and achievements, Performance Management Plans, gender strategy, and project reports. A complete list of the documents reviewed by the ET is included in Annex III.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KII) AND FOCUS GROUPS DISCUSSIONS (FGD):

The Evaluation Team conducted KIIs and FGDs to gather their perspectives on RCBP impact to date, as well as their perceptions of the benefits of participating in the project. The team used question guides and questionnaires, and conducted purposive sampling on select interviewees based on characteristics, roles, experience, and specialization. First, based on the desk review, the team developed a list of all key RCBP stakeholders, including implementing partners, local NGOs, beneficiaries, academia, and government agencies, and shared the list with the RCBP Chief of Party (COP). Together with the COP, the Evaluation Team discussed the role of each key stakeholder and identified the most relevant stakeholders to be included in the final list of interviewees and FGD participants.

The Evaluation Team conducted field work (KIIs, surveys, FGD, site visits, and direct observation) in February 2023 at all three project sites in the three countries to collect on-site direct observations. In some cases, a stakeholder group had to travel to a central location to meet with the Evaluation Team, to reduce time and maximize the number of groups interviewed.



Group Interview

Photo: TAP EG Evaluation Team

In all, the team conducted 16 KIIs, 22 group interviews, and one focus group discussion (please refer to table 1 for a breakdown by country). A number of KIIs were conducted virtually with stakeholders that were not able to meet in person. The team interviewed all RCBP groups targeted. A complete list of stakeholders and groups interviewed is included in annex V.

TABLE 1: Number of Interviews (KIIs, Group Interviews, FGDs) Conducted by Country

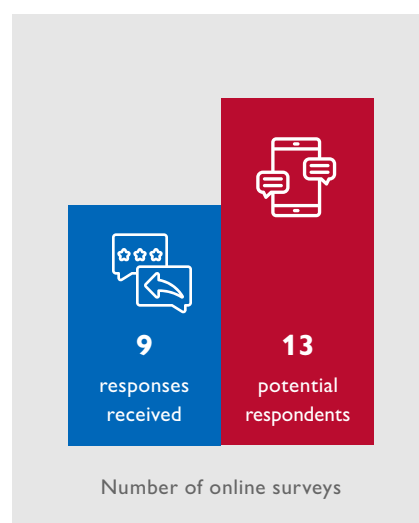
COUNTRY	GOVERNMENT AGENCY KII	IUCN/ GOAL KII	LOCAL NGOS KII	BENEFICIARY GROUP INTERVIEWS	BENEFICIARY FGDS
El Salvador	2	1	2	8	1
Guatemala	2	2	4	7	-
Honduras	1	1	2	7	-
Total	5	4	7	22	1
Original Goal	4	4	5	-	7

ONLINE SURVEY:

The team used an online survey to capture information from a wide range of project beneficiaries. This online survey was directed at RCBP-supported biocommerce ventures with the dual purpose of gathering specific information and assessing their readiness for online commerce and overall internet capabilities. The online survey was distributed to 13 cooperatives; nine responses were received. Annex III includes the list of cooperatives that received the survey.

DESK REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

The Evaluation Team reviewed performance indicator data to assess the degree to which performance indicators provided sufficient data or information on RCBP expected results, outcomes, and assumptions, as defined in RCBP’s Theory of Change and/or Results Framework.



The Evaluation Team analyzed the supporting evidence collected for each indicator measurement included in the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan. The analysis is included in annex XIII.

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

A work plan, detailing the evaluation methodology, was prepared in advance and approved by USAID before the ET began formal interviews with stakeholders. The schedule for the Work Plan is contained in annex I, while an Evaluation Matrix showing each EQ, the corresponding evaluation method used for data collection and analysis, and data sources is contained in annex III.

After completion of field work, the Evaluation Team debriefed the Mission on progress achieved during field visits, preliminary observations made, and received feedback prior to the preparation of this Evaluation Report.

ANALYSIS

Qualitative data was analyzed using theme analysis techniques using a Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations Matrix tool. Content from transcripts was organized by question into the matrix. The themes from each question were summarized. To draw conclusions, the findings were triangulated with secondary sources. The online survey was analyzed using a frequency table.

EVALUATION LIMITATIONS

The evaluation sought to understand the extent to which observed results relate to overall project goals. To answer these questions, the Evaluation Team tried to identify opportunities to analyze possible differences in findings related to gender, indigenous communities, or other social identities (particularly for historically excluded groups) and, whenever relevant and feasible, integrated this analysis into the evaluation's overall findings, conclusions, and recommendations. However, attribution of changes to the project is a challenge in the absence of a counterfactual, limiting the interpretation of the results.

An additional risk was gathering accurate information from KIIs that the Evaluation Team could not corroborate with data and/or documents. Some of the challenges identified in this evaluation were the following:

- **Recall bias** occurs when interviewees and FGD participants may not recall events and experiences clearly, if at all, so their responses may not be meaningful. To mitigate this bias, the ET conducted as many KIIs and FGDs as possible to triangulate responses to increase the validity of the evaluation findings, and probed respondents' answers to ensure accurate recollections.
- **Response bias** is the risk that key informants may be motivated to provide responses that would be considered socially desirable. The ET mitigated this risk by explaining evaluation requirements clearly at the beginning of each KII or FGD.
- **Selection bias** is an inherent risk when the activity implementer refers the ET to more sympathetic and supportive counterparts or recipients. To mitigate this risk, the ET identified people with some involvement with the project and arranged meetings directly without project assistance. The ET sought project assistance to reach targeted informants only when they were hard to reach.

To minimize all these risks, each evaluation question has multiple sources of information to corroborate the findings.

Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This section presents the findings, conclusions, and recommendations per EQ.

EVALUATION QUESTION 1: HAVE RCBP'S BIOCOMMERCE INTERVENTIONS CONTRIBUTED TO SUSTAINABLE BENEFITS FOR STAKEHOLDERS IN PROJECT AREAS OF INFLUENCE? IF SO, HOW? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

FINDINGS

RCBP has proven helpful in improving the performance of biocommerce ventures in marine coastal sites in Central America. This improves the living conditions of vulnerable people living in those regions. The answers from the online survey demonstrate that all biocommerce ventures recognize the value of the support received from RCBP in improving their production, commercial, organizational, and business capabilities. They all consider themselves to be in a better situation than before the implementation of the project. It also shows that all ventures include women and youth as part of their businesses, which is related to the creation of economic opportunities that prevent irregular migration in the region.

RCBP designed biocommerce interventions based on the strategy assessment conducted at the end of Year 1. The strategy included the identification of key actors and assessment of business capacity, review of financing mechanisms, review of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) biocommerce principles, and an action plan for RCBP starting Year 2. The strategy identified six thematic areas for RCBP to incorporate that focus on improving the biocommerce environment across crosscutting activities:

- Strengthen governance and regulatory frameworks
- Promote the development of the value chains/business models
- Access new markets
- Financing mechanisms
- Research and innovation
- Knowledge management.

Using these themes, RCBP developed an integrated approach toward biocommerce activities at each of the three sites through biocommerce deals, which incorporated the following aspects: governance and management, scientific information, impact indicators, target population, financing needs, investment opportunities, and facilitating commercial agreements and business planning. Below we present the common findings when reviewing the RCBP biocommerce deals.

ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING AND BUSINESS PLANS

Based on the interviews held, RCBP promoted 20 biocommerce ventures, advised on how to develop their businesses, and provided training. The reports indicated GOAL/RCBP provided training using the Resilience for Social Systems (R4S) methodology, and the beneficiaries confirmed they received the training. However, biocommerce ventures reported they are not using their business plans as a practical tool to conduct business and plan ahead, nor to design market strategies to sell their products. There is a general lack of basic business knowledge among the respondents, such as costing, administrative controls, financial planning, and clear market strategies. This could be due to a lack of understanding of the content of the training, as well as the low educational level of the entrepreneurs.

ACCESS TO MARKETS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Most of the RCBP-supported enterprises interviewed, except for Caribe Maya, indicated they sell informally to local markets, are not registered ventures or groups, and sell without formal invoices and do not pay sales or income taxes. They rely on selling to intermediaries and do not have skills or training for formal marketing or access to diversified sales channels. They often do not know the end buyer and specific purchasing requirements, leaving them without bargaining power and knowledge to adequately respond to specific market and quality standards. This puts pressure on these enterprises to accept low prices, small orders, and increases the likelihood of product rejections, which is unsustainable in the long term.

BEEKEEPING BIOCOMMERCE IN RÍO PAZ

The promotion of beekeeping biocommerce ventures in Río Paz reduced the time spent on crab and other fishery activities and generated an additional source of income. These honey-producing ventures sell products locally (to local stores, neighborhoods or in local fairs), which does not require any special entrepreneurial knowledge or capabilities in marketing or sales. This results in low prices for their products as locals are not willing to pay high prices for mangrove honey products. Mangrove honey producers compete for low prices with other local producers. This was observed during the ET interviews and was also commented on the RCBP January 2023 report titled “Evaluating Behavioral Changes as Outcomes”, which stated:

“The marketing of honey has been one of the most difficult factors for the cooperatives, due to the competition that exists in their communities for the sale of honey and the lack of experience in selling and promoting their product. One of the causes of the poor commercialization of this product is that the operation of these enterprises was not defined from the beginning with a market approach and another factor that may influence is that market strategies have not been implemented to position this product and sell with it the environmental component that is linked to the production of this honey; even the labels designed for the product do not highlight the value that it is produced in a mangrove ecosystem”.

However, during the interviews, honey producers demonstrated a high level of motivation to continue with their businesses, as they have begun to generate some income. Based on the interview responses, they will keep on operating sustainably after the end of the project, even though it is not a scalable or highly profitable activity.

INTEGRATION PLATFORMS

Networks and business service providers are successful models that help market small enterprises to customers and access new markets. There are two successful examples under RCBP: Caribe Maya and REDPESCAH. Both platforms allow small member cooperatives and enterprises to access markets. REDPESCAH—developed with support from another project, is a collection center and is the main marketing channel for fishing enterprises

from the Caribbean of Honduras and Muskitia—has grown its sales significantly since inception, having more orders than production capacity at this time.

The integration of Izabal’s sustainable and community-based tourism was achieved through the creation of a central booking system, called Caribe Maya, which provides an orderly and systematic channel for tourism operators. Caribe Maya became an important factor for the community-based tourism marketing strategy and a tool to access sustainable markets. For instance, Caribe Maya has allowed several small tourism providers to gain market access, which otherwise would not be reachable by tourism operators and tourists planning to visit the region. These efforts are especially important since they come after the COVID-19 pandemic, which halted tourism activities in all destinations; and Caribe Maya has become an important tool to regain sales.

Caribe Maya and REDPESCAH have not formalized their legal status and registry (including sanitary and health licensing for REDPESCAH), which prevents them from growing into larger platforms and generating opportunities for smaller companies and co-ops. They also lack access to working capital funds to finance all their member co-ops despite having an increased demand for fishery products for supermarkets such as La Colonia.

ACCESS TO COMMUNICATIONS AND THE INTERNET

Most biocommerce ventures have little tech education on how to use the internet and digital tools to improve marketing of products and services. This was particularly evident when sending out the online survey—as most



The Evaluation Team Leader visiting Caribe Maya Office

Photo: Evaluation Team

people do not have an email address—as well as during the interviews. The majority have and use WhatsApp as the main tool of online communication.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The ET evaluated RCBP’s theory of change against the available evidence. From our analysis, the theory of change has several conditions that are essential to achieve the expected results: coastal-marine biodiversity conserved, beneficiaries with improved personal and community development, and a prosper, well governed and secure Central America’s Northern Triangle area. The ET looked at the underlying assumptions in the theory of change and contrasted these assumptions with the facts found during the evaluation. As noted on page 3, RCBP’s theory of change is:

“IF coastal communities improve their livelihoods through the promotion of climate-smart biocommerce, increase their education on evidence collection and understanding of the role of scientific evidence in decision making, and IF governance and regulatory framework of coastal natural resources are strengthened and better landscape management climate-smart practices are implemented, THEN coastal-marine biodiversity will be conserved, beneficiaries will have improved their personal and community development and thus will contribute to the prosperity, governance, and security in Central America’s Northern.”

We assessed whether RCBP’s interventions along the theory of change lead to the specific development change desired, based on the evidence available. The ET understands development challenges are complex, and are typically caused by many factors and layers that are embedded in the way society functions. From that perspective, our assessment of the validity of RCBP’s theory of change indicates that most of the assumptions have been met. For example, education levels on the collection of evidence have increased through certifications (diplomados) and other training in biophysical monitoring. The level of understanding of the importance of scientific information has also increased, as evidenced by the explanations provided by community members regarding the climate vulnerability their communities are experiencing. In support of the governance and regulatory framework assumption, two examples represent how RCBP has progressed in this regard: 1) the fisheries management plan for Karataska Lagoon, and 2) the Rio Motagua binational sustainable corridor. Finally, in terms of improvements in management practices, although results are mixed, at least half of the surveyed population has adopted some form of improved natural resource use practice. The only aspect of the theory of change that remains to be demonstrated is the assumption of increased revenue. The ET acknowledges that increases in revenue are hard to achieve, and the COVID-19 pandemic represented an added hurdle for increasing income. The two-year extension granted to RCBP would be an opportunity to document increases in revenue in biocommerce enterprises.

The following findings relate to each of the outcomes as per the TOC described above:

- *Outcome 2.1 - Offer of products and services of improved biocommerce:* Products and services improved, especially organizational aspects and the diversification of products and services.
- *Outcome 2.2. - Demand for enhanced biocommerce products and services (market access):* Some market access has improved, although there is a lack of linkages to become sustainable businesses or biocommerce companies.
- *Outcome 2.3. - Strengthened financial mechanism:* Financial mechanisms are not currently being promoted to link to financial services. However, with the creation of savings and credit groups, RCBP is teaching entrepreneurs how to handle financial tools such as savings and credit in a very basic manner, laying the groundwork for entrepreneurs to use these new skills when the scale of their businesses allows it.

- *Outcome 2.4. - Improved and more equitably distributed social and economic benefits of biocommerce:* According to the online survey, a third of the start-ups noted that sales have indeed increased thanks to RCBP. However, there is no evidence to affirm that benefits have been distributed more equitably. RCBP conducts activities in an inclusive way, with the participation of women and youth in the enterprises.

CONCLUSIONS

There seems to be a disconnect between the biocommerce strategy and the recommendations in its action plan, and what RCBP can implement and was able to implement, based on the realities of each site. Based on the ET's observations, the changes made in the implementation of the biocommerce strategy are linked to the socio-economic context these communities are facing. Given the predominant culture of economic subsistence, the ET recognizes it is difficult to establish a culture of mid- and long-term planning that allows for the long-term sustainability of their ventures. However, it was unclear from RCBP project documents, how the project incorporated new findings on the ground into the project's adaptive management. Specifically, it was unclear how RCBP made the decision to amend the biocommerce strategy activities to adapt to the diverse realities on the ground and what the reasons were to maintain each site and why.

The ET observed RCBP efforts concentrated primarily on the creation of biocommerce groups and the promotion of their legal status, as governance mechanisms were previously non-existent. This was the case particularly in Río Paz sites in El Salvador and Guatemala. However, it is also important to note the heterogeneity of conditions in the different sites. In Motagua and Omoa for instance, there were already some businesses that had been working competitively for some time before the beginning of the project, and for them the transition to biocommerce was easier than for groups that had no previous business background. The discrepancy the ET found was that RCBP's approach was to engage all biocommerce ventures to help them become fully developed without taking into account the context of economic subsistence present in many of the sites. A more reasonable approach—and one that would have been better documented in RCBP report for each site—would be to help biocommerce ventures progress along a continuum from a subsistence venture to a simple [or surplus] enterprise and then to help it penetrate into more complex markets.

The biocommerce benefits are sustainable, but the five-to-seven-year project timeline is not sufficient to consolidate biocommerce initiatives and achieve significant progress. The USAID project cycle only permits three years of implementation in a five-year project. The profitability of apiculture companies is hindered by the current prices of mangrove honey, which is being sold at the same price as commercial honey in local markets, without any differentiation. The project seeks to help unorganized fishermen become entrepreneurs, and to do so, it is necessary to strengthen their organizations. Becoming an entrepreneur and launching an enterprise are processes that need effort, training, time, learning, and experience. The project has encouraged women's participation and the strengthening of human capital in governance and awareness.

In the Río Paz watershed, biocommerce has supported natural resource management and sustainable management of protected areas. The local population relies on fishing, firewood, and other mangrove products for their livelihoods. Biocommerce has promoted community involvement in monitoring and restoring ecosystems, including mangrove hydrological restoration. Honey production has been one of the biocommerce initiatives supported by RCBP, aimed at reducing fishing pressure and promoting tourism. However, local sales of honey have been challenging due to competition, taste preferences, and lack of business skills among the cooperatives. In Los Cobanos, biocommerce activities include whale watching tours, which have been developed through training and capacity building provided by RCBP. The sustainability of these initiatives relies on the participation

of local organizations, which will continue to work in the area after the end of the project. The main challenge is ensuring that the benefits of biocommerce reach the communities directly, which requires improved organization and business skills. Umbrella organizations such as FDN and the Asociación Programas de Gestión Ambiental Local (ASOPROGAL) provide support in this regard.

The benefits of biocommerce are sustainable, but defining whether sustainability has been achieved is difficult. Biocommerce's economic and environmental sustainability have not been demonstrated and would require more time to show signs of progress. The project has been successful in getting people to recognize the importance of the connection between people's well-being and resources, and that resource management leads to sustainability. The Kauma group now fishes red fish in the sea, while previously, there was much pressure on snook. In the case of catfish, the product is now presented as fish sticks. The project has also achieved success with wild tilapia. Circular⁴ and blue economies⁵ could also be promoted by RCBP or other projects.

The weakest element is economic sustainability, which depends on conditions linked to business capabilities and market access, which need be strengthened to guarantee continuity of the ventures. Social sustainability practices, on the other hand, were more prevalent. The ventures evaluated come from socially and culturally based groups, such as fishing, community organization, and community tourism. Benefits from these activities are shared with the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The ET acknowledges the diversity of conditions present in each project site and recommends that USAID and IUCN set realistic goals and targets for future projects. We also recommend IUCN (and any future IPs) hold annual learning events to discuss the progress made, document changes made to the implementation approach, and summarize the discussions in learning briefs. It is important to have these changes documented in writing, rather than having to be reliant on the institutional knowledge of current/former staff. Below we provide recommendations that can be implemented under the current situation observed on the ground by the Evaluation Team.

ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING AND BUSINESS PLANS

RCBP should conduct entrepreneurial training and technical assistance to biocommerce ventures on business plans and market strategies with a practical, learn-by-doing approach. This will help the sustainability of the business ventures. The training should be provided in a manner that can guarantee the application of concepts, tools, easy-to-use formats, and accompanying the entrepreneurs to make sure they learn by doing the business and marketing processes of their companies. The RCBP ventures received the training but did not utilize the tools in practice. There are training methods, such as the International Labor Organization's Start Your Business (SYB), Start and Improve Your Business, that can be used.

ACCESS TO MARKETS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

RCBP should aim to create conditions for biocommerce ventures to continue fishing, producing honey and operating tourism businesses in a sustainable manner, training them to become self-sufficient businesses with

4 According to the European Parliament, the circular economy is a model of production and consumption that involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/economy/20151201STO05603/circular-economy-definition-importance-and-benefits>

5 According to the World Bank, the blue economy is the "sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem." https://www.un.org/regularprocess/sites/www.un.org/regularprocess/files/rok_part_2.pdf

access to markets and income opportunities. They need to improve their business and commercial capabilities to be able to better access markets and function properly.

RCBP should implement a marketing or business development unit, to allow for the identification of potential clients, facilitate the first sales of the ventures with the producers, and reduce intermediation channels to make sales sustainable. The marketing unit could also develop product and market data sheets, with technical specifications and market access requirements for each client and product; train producers to ensure they know how to and are committed to comply with market's specifications and requirements in a sustainable manner.

JELLYFISH AND FIN FISH MARKETS

After interviewing three fishers' cooperatives it became evident that jellyfish biocommerce exports to Asian markets had been an important inclusive business opportunity for the Karataska fishers' associations. Even though RCBP didn't support jellyfish fishery, due to concerns about the environmental sustainability of this trade, it provides income and employment opportunities for women and disadvantaged groups and reduces pressure on traditional species like snook. With the loss of the jellyfish market, due to the only buyer developing his own fishing company, many people have been left without income and are only fishing for self-consumption.

RCBP should identify direct markets for jellyfish, fin fish, and shellfish species in Asia (like Japan and South Korea) and in other specialized markets. The fishers' associations have the necessary personnel and infrastructure to generate the needed income, which is currently not from traditional fishery products. Prior to the intervention it is necessary to look at the whole value chain to understand where the bottlenecks exist and make sure associations do not depend only on one buyer and establish the conditions and measures to comply with quality standards. Efforts should be coordinated with bi-national chambers of commerce and trade facilitation organizations. It is also convenient to perform exploitation capacity studies for jellyfish and the other species to ensure a sustainable approach to each resource.

BEEKEEPING BIOCOMMERCE IN RÍO PAZ

It is advisable to continue supporting beekeeping biocommerce ventures in Río Paz, training and assisting them to improve their access to markets by identifying conscious and/or organic marketing channels that can buy their products at fair prices. The main challenge in these markets is formalization, thus a cost analysis is needed to determine whether the activity would be profitable through formal channels.

COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

The post-COVID-19 recovery of tourism activities in Izabal has been assisted by the integration of sustainable and community-based tourism products and services within the Caribe Maya central booking system. These efforts are especially important since they come after the COVID-19 pandemic halted tourism activities in all destinations.

RCBP could help strengthen Caribe Maya commercial promotion and market access capacities by promoting familiarization trips, supporting the legalization of the association as a formal business, linking it with private tourism chambers, and strengthening its marketing capacities and presence in social networks and tourism directories. RCBP should conduct a capacity needs assessment of Caribe Maya partners and improve all their capabilities, so that tour operators can include the entire offer in their tourism packages. Scaling and replicating the Caribe Maya experience to the other biocommerce ventures is also recommended.

INTEGRATION PLATFORMS

Business networks and associative trade efforts can boost economies of scale and facilitate market access for small and vulnerable producers and service providers. It is worth investing in networking and associative marketing efforts to facilitate market access and integrate the supply of several small producers and/or service providers in vulnerable conditions.

ACCESS TO COMMUNICATIONS AND INTERNET

Access to the media and the internet can become a tool to improve biocommerce businesses, as it can lead to contacts with potential customers using digital channels and promotion in social networks. RCBP could conduct training sessions for biocommerce businesses on digital literacy and the use of social networks to improve marketing.

EVALUATION QUESTION 2: HAVE RCBP'S GOVERNANCE AND/OR REGULATORY INTERVENTIONS CONTRIBUTED TO SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR TARGET STAKEHOLDERS IN PROJECT AREAS OF INFLUENCE? IF SO, HOW? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

FINDINGS

RCBP updated and implemented coastal governance instruments in each site to strengthen the sustainable use of the landscape. In total, 20 different regulations have been developed in collaboration with communities (proposed, approved, or implemented). A total of 14 new laws, policies, and regulations have been approved or implemented. Another six laws or policies are proposed.⁶ One of the obstacles to the official approval of regulations is the turnover rate of government agencies personnel. Some management plans are implemented without being official, others are approved and implemented. In Barra de Santiago, changes in governance have been observed, particularly greater involvement of PLAS in surveillance, etc. The number of court cases has increased due to a greater institutional presence.

Of the 14 instruments implemented or approved, six targeted Río Paz, four targeted Río Motagua, and four targeted the Karataska Lagoon:

1. Indigenous Territorial Council Protocol for the management of natural resources (Muskitia-Honduras). *Approved.*
2. Seasonal fishing ban in the Caribbean area of Guatemala 2019 (Guatemala-Motagua). *Implemented.*
3. Co-management agreement in the Garita Palmera Protected Area (El Salvador-Río Paz). *Implemented.*
4. Agreement between INAB and the Office of Control of State Reserve Areas of Guatemala (OCRET) to allow mangrove co-management areas access to the Probosque Incentive Law in Guatemala (Guatemala-Río Paz). *Implemented.*
5. Agreement to form the fisheries governance structure in Karataska (Muskitia-Honduras). *Implemented.*
6. Regulations for the Fisheries Governance Committee in the Karataska Lagoon System (Muskitia-Honduras). *Implemented.*

⁶ The process is as follows, new or updated laws, policies, and regulations are first proposed, then approved, and finally implemented.

7. The Declaration of the Protected Area Cuyamel-Omoa with decree No.101-2019 (Honduras-Motagua). *Approved*
8. Agreement No. 126. National Plan Conservation for Cetaceans (El Salvador-Río Paz). *Implemented.*
9. Karataska Fisheries Management Plan (Muskitia-Honduras). *Approved*
10. The seasonal fishing closure calendar for the Guatemalan Caribbean, with the approval of two signed ministerial agreements: Ministerial Agreement No. 292-2020 Spiny Lobster Ban; Ministerial Agreement No. 49-2021 ratifying the XVI Calendar for the seasonal fishing restriction period for fishing in the Caribbean (Guatemala-Motagua). *Implemented.*
11. Update the Management Plan for the Los Cóbanos Natural Protected Area Complex (El Salvador-Río Paz). *Implemented.*
12. Internal regulations to operationalize Comité Asesor Local (COAL) and Ramsar Committees in Barra de Santiago, Río Paz (El Salvador-Río Paz) *Approved 2022*
13. Tariff Specifications for Los Cóbanos Complex National Protected Area. Agreement No. 433, Official Gazette, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN). (El Salvador-Río Paz). *Approved 2022.*
14. XVII Calendar of Caribbean Vedas (Seasonal Fishing Restrictions, Ministry Agreement 84-886) 2022 (Guatemala-Motagua). *Implemented.*

Relevant governance documents produced by RCBP include the closed season calendar for the Caribbean of Guatemala and the Fishery Resource Management Plan for Indigenous Territories in Laguna de Karataska, with the participation of five indigenous territorial councils. According to a participant in an FGD, previously, management plans were developed in the capital and then taken to the territories, but now it is the other way around, allowing plans to be rooted in local realities. Another major governance achievement is the creation of fishery recovery zones. In the Laguna de Karataska, the project led to the construction of a participatory management plan for the lagoon system. The plan still needs to be approved by the Dirección General de Pesca y Acuicultura (DIGEPESCA), but in the territory, it has been adopted as a voluntary plan. They have already started establishing fishery recovery zones and adopting minimum size limits.

Findings regarding governance mechanisms per intervention site are described below.

RÍO PAZ

The alliance with MARN to enable PLAS as a natural resource management tool has been effective in strengthening local marine governance organizations. Interviewed beneficiaries report knowledge of improved resource management practices. PLAS implementation in conjunction with other local community groups is very valuable. For instance, this was very effective in the process of desilting and recovery of degraded mangrove channels, where the project provided an economic incentive. This type of intervention has a positive return that is gradual, through the increase of community patrolling, the recovery of flora and fauna, improved tourist environments, access to food security, and in inclusive relations with national authorities and the private sector.

The funds provided by RCBP to UNES (Unidad Ecológica de El Salvador) and ASPRODE (Asesoría a Programas y Proyectos de Desarrollo) helped the work of local PLAS. Thanks to these funds nine of the PLAS organized themselves and created Asociación Probosque (an alliance of nine PLAS). Through Probosque, these PLAS would be able to receive funding directly from donors without having to rely on intermediaries, strengthening local organizations in the field. The production of sugar cane and cattle remains a threat, due to the upstream use of river water.

Among the successes encountered is the empowerment of community networks in territorial management, through public and private alliances and realistic action plans. This interaction with private initiative can meet local needs, offering income, jobs, and access to food security, to reverse the migration of young people and families. The inclusion of local partners in joint plans, offering strategic capacity support aimed at strengthening local groups, is another important achievement in Río Paz. For example, this includes facilitating letters of commitment for biocommerce products and services with market linkage, or the group of women from the community of Las Lisas involved in the sale of products generated from fish waste.

Finally, another effective intervention in Río Paz was the training of biocommerce technicians and environmental monitors at the sites.

RÍO MOTAGUA

The governance mechanism of the biological corridor of Río Motagua, implemented through the inter-institutional committee and the mangrove technical committee, has contributed to the compliance of social and environmental safeguards.

The institutional strengthening of Caribe Maya boosted the tourist offerings of products and services with added value. Caribe Maya supported 13 small tourist enterprises that provided new income opportunities, created more than 150 jobs, and satisfied the demand for basic needs of vulnerable indigenous groups.

The development of regulatory instruments to control sizes and introduce a closed fishing calendar for certain species such as shrimp, and the establishment of fishing recovery zones in the Manabique-Cuyamel Omoa biological corridor in Río Motagua was effective. For example, the successful case of the community-promoted fish recovery zone, PAMUCH, managed by the Cuerpos de Conservación de Omoa (CCO), allowed interinstitutional coordination, patrolling, and delimitation of areas with buoys. Another identified effective mechanism is the environmental compensation mechanisms examples for mangrove ecosystem services, such as forestry incentives, PROBOSQUE, in Punta de Manabique. These mechanisms promote mangrove protection through economic incentives.

The indigenous employability strategy reflects the inclusion of women and youth in the service market at the national level. These ventures not only train, but also link 320 young people in jobs, which has the effect of lowering migration expectations. To date, they have managed to incorporate 25 percent of the population of the Q'eqchi' ethnic group, generating jobs, income, food, and climate security.

KARATASKA LAGOON SYSTEM

Among the advances in governance in the Miskito indigenous territory of Honduras, the approval of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Management Plan by the five territorial councils stands out. These advances in regulations and protocols represent an enabling condition for the conservation of the coastal marine ecosystem and sustainability of the biocommerce companies established and the generation of income for 80 communities with an estimated population of 19,857 inhabitants.

Participation and leadership of women and youth in decision-making roles improved. In particular, territorial council boards of directors and the governance committee of the Karataska lagoon changed to incorporate women and youth in management positions. The strengthening of leaders and changing the roles of women and youth influenced the cooperation and the institutional framework of the fisheries management plan, to promote the sustainability of the governance committee.

CONCLUSIONS

Given the ET findings described above, it is possible to conclude that governance mechanism strengthening is a favorable condition for empowering communities to adopt national resource management (NRM) practices to improve the coastal marine ecosystem. RCBP support to the PLAS has been extremely valuable, empowering local committees in the actions of conservation and management of the mangrove ecosystem, which facilitated desilting and recovery of degraded mangrove channels in Barra de Santiago.

The governance instruments developed contributed to improvement of landscape conditions, given the fact that the regulations are accepted by local groups that use natural resources. In this context, the project extension is likely to lead to more strengthened and consolidated organizations.

The theory of change, in terms of governance, has had positive successes in reducing gender gaps, strengthened capacities of women and youth, and enhanced knowledge and awareness of indigenous peoples in restoration, cleaning, and reforestation. The adequacy of regulatory instruments in hostile and extreme poverty contexts demonstrates control and management of community leadership, with respect for safeguards and improvements in biocommerce competitiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RCBP project sites show valuable advances as a result of the institutional governance interventions. RCBP regulatory instruments were developed using participatory practices tools and mechanisms and used socio-environmental safeguards. Due to this approach, the new regulations have the acceptance of local groups as they are seen as responding to the needs of the families that use the ecosystem services. However, it is important to continue supporting capacity-strengthening of biocommerce companies to enable them to have regional competitiveness. In this sense, it is recommended to disseminate the success stories of governance mechanisms to national government authorities and regional bodies, like the Central American Commission on Environment and Development, CCAD.

Furthermore, to support governance in Río Paz, it is recommended to establish agreements with sugarcane growers and ranchers. That way the governance related to the use of river water can improve. RCBP could make efforts to link and familiarize the private sector in the commitment of corporate responsibility in the territories to increase participation and strengthen governance.

Additional recommendations include:

- Continue strengthening organizational structures and leadership in each site. For example, Asociación Probosque in Río Paz, and Caribe Maya in Río Motagua. Likewise, to CCO in Omoa and its governance structure for the biological corridor committee, and in the Karataska Lagoon with the Karataska Governance Committee with the inclusion and leadership of women and youth.
- Link environmental monitors with relevant early warning systems and the national authority to help them mitigate the impact of natural disasters like flash floodings.

EVALUATION QUESTION 3: HAVE RCBP INTERVENTIONS CONTRIBUTED TO CHANGES IN BENEFICIARY KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE BIODIVERSITY PRACTICES IN PROJECT AREAS OF INFLUENCE? IF SO, HOW? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

FINDINGS

Based on the information collected through KIIs and the FGD, RCBP has promoted changes in knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of sustainable practices. Some of the promoted changes identified were the following:

- Change in men's behavior and role models through knowledge of masculinities.
- Increase in fish minimum capture size, through change in the mesh size of cod end-nets.
- Increase in the knowledge and awareness about solid waste,
- Participation in river and beach cleaning campaigns.
- Decrease in cutting trees due to the fines that are imposed.
- Promotion of home gardens to produce legumes for self-consumption.
- Development of a closed fishing season calendar (as requested by fishers in Karataska).

RCBP acknowledges that not all changes have taken place. Some of the reasons RCBP has not achieved all changes include the COVID-19 pandemic and the limitations it imposed on field activities. Some changes simply take a longer time to take place, such as the increase in fish minimum capture size. Nevertheless, RCBP also recognizes that some people were already practicing a promoted behavior from the beginning of the intervention.



Sustainable fish nets sold at Caribe Pesca (left); Carbe Pesca marketing material (right)

Photo: TAP EG Evaluation Team

For example, a few sardine fishers in Punta de Manabique, Río Motagua, Guatemala, had adopted the promoted practice of using larger mesh size in their nets to allow for the escape of undersize fish and shrimp. Behavior adoption experts call these groups of people “innovators” who, according to the diffusion of innovation theory, represent approximately 2.5 percent of the target population. Innovators are the type of people that want to be the first to try a new sustainable practice. They are venturesome and interested in new ideas, and are willing to take risks, often being the first to develop these new ideas.⁷ Very little, if anything, needs to be done to appeal to this population.

A government official indicated in an interview that some communities in the Barra de Santiago area are already more organized and aware of the importance of sustainable management. On the other hand, an interviewee recognized that monitoring and achieving changes in behavior is challenging, and that it is currently measured through the adoption of environmental practices.

In November of 2021, RCBP conducted a survey of fishers in the Río Motagua, Guatemala area to gather information about their knowledge and opinion regarding the condition of fisheries resources and about closed fishing seasons. A total of 211 people from 23 communities in the Caribbean coast of Guatemala participated in the survey. The fishers’ perception survey indicates that 87 percent of the fishers perceive current conditions to be worse than three years before (50 percent of the fishers think the current condition of the fishery resources has decreased a lot and 37 percent think the resources have decreased). Only 13 percent of the respondents perceive fisheries conditions to be the same as three years before.

The awareness campaigns implemented by RCBP have been effective in Barra de Santiago, probably due to the efforts of the project, but also thanks to the structure provided by the PLAS groups created by the Ministry of Environment before the beginning of the project. This finding was observed via interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries, but also interviews with other project implementing partners and government officials. According to one of the RCBP performance indicators, “EG.10.2-3: Number of people who improve their economic benefits from the sustainable management of natural resources and/or the conservation of biodiversity as a result of assistance from the Government of the United States of America”, a total of 3,042 people were reported by the end of year 5.

Regarding the way RCBP is measuring this indicator and reports the changes in beneficiary knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of sustainable biodiversity practices, an assessment conducted by University of Rhode Island (URI) in 2022 noted that the basis for the data is not presented adequately, making it difficult to understand how sampling data is connected with population variables. This issue seems to still exist during the evaluation team’s review of the performance indicators (see annex XIII) as RCBP is using surveys to measure behavior change by asking community members their knowledge, level of satisfaction, and degree of completeness of the information received regarding current regulations. The URI authors suggested using a scale to map behavior change. The scale proposed uses progress markers to measure changes in beneficiary knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of sustainable biodiversity practices. The progress markers proposed by URI are:

- Expect to see—We expect that people will be willing to learn a new activity and come to workshops and training courses to learn more about it.

⁷ <https://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/mph-modules/sb/behavioralchangetheories/behavioralchangetheories4.html>

- Like to see—We would like to see people committing to the activity, continue learning and start to work together as a unit.
- Love to see—Income is earned from the activity; reduction in fishing activity; connected to market so when project is over the activity will continue.

CONCLUSIONS

In addition, to successfully measure adoption of sustainable practices, a formal campaign needs to be developed and implemented. Pre-intervention surveys were implemented, however, these focused on perceptions only, missing knowledge and adoption of sustainable practices. A clear baseline of beneficiaries' knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of sustainable practices is needed to assess effectiveness of interventions. Such a baseline was not presented to the evaluation team.

RCBP has implemented a sustainable practices and awareness campaign in the Barra de Santiago area, resulting in changes in behavior and adoption of sustainable practices among the inhabitants. These changes include an increase in knowledge about solid waste, participation in river and beach cleaning campaigns, promotion of home gardens for self-consumption, and development of a closed fishing season calendar. However, not all changes have taken place, and monitoring and achieving changes in behavior remain challenging.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the success of the awareness campaigns in Barra de Santiago, replicating the methods used there in the other intervention sites is recommended. Moreover, by monitoring fish landings, it is possible to verify if the fishing closures are being respected to assess compliance with minimum sizes. Finally, it would be relevant to seek guidance from URI or others on how to develop a sustainable practices adoption campaign.

In addition to the URI recommendation to improve EG.10.2-3, the ET recommends also use other methods to monitor behavior adoption. One method is using Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices (KAP) surveys. A KAP survey is a quantitative method with predefined questions formatted in standardized questionnaires that provides access to quantitative information to reveal misconceptions or misunderstandings that may represent obstacles to the activities that we would like to implement and potential barriers to behavior change.⁸

The KAP survey method is based on the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory. The DOI Theory, developed by E.M. Rogers in 1962, is one of the oldest social science theories. It originated in communications to explain how, over time, an idea or product gains momentum and diffuses (or spreads) through a specific population or social system. The result of this diffusion is that people, as part of a social system, adopt a new idea, behavior, or product. Adoption means that a person does something differently from what they had previously been doing (for example, purchase or use a new product, acquire and perform a new behavior, etc.). The key to adoption is that the person must perceive the idea, behavior, or product as new or innovative. It is through this that diffusion is possible.⁹

Behavior adoption occurs along a continuum that includes sequential steps in an innovation-decision process as follows:

⁸ https://www.spring-nutrition.org/sites/default/files/publications/annotation/spring_kap_survey_model_0.pdf

⁹ <https://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/mph-modules/sb/behavioralchange/theories/behavioralchange/theories4.html>

- **Knowledge:** The individual becomes aware of the innovation's existence and starts to understand how it works.
- **Persuasion:** The individual develops an attitude towards a specific innovation.
- **Decision:** An individual who is aware of an innovation and has formed an attitude towards it will at some point decide whether to adopt the innovation. This often involves a trial phase by the individual herself or by a peer.
- **Implementation:** The individual starts using the innovation. She continues learning about it and overcomes problems, further reducing the innovation's uncertainty.
- **Confirmation:** After having implemented an innovation, an adopter will continue to collect information that reinforces her decision. If this leads to conflicting information, the adoption may be reversed.¹⁰

EVALUATION QUESTION 4: HAS RCBP'S APPROACH TO GENDER AND INCLUSION AFFECTED EQUITY IN CONSERVATION PRACTICES IN TARGET COMMUNITIES? IF SO, HOW? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

RCBP has implemented a Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy as a cross-cutting component to take into consideration the inclusion of gender in RCBP programs, as well as the inclusion of youth, indigenous people, and other marginalized groups in conservation efforts.

From a gender perspective, the project made significant progress including a gender lens in the sustainable conservation of the regional landscape. There is evidence of age and gender equity across project activities. For example, young people represent 62 percent of the total beneficiaries¹¹ while 52 percent are from indigenous people included in activities such as fishing, honey, and tourism. Women participated in 41 percent of the small grants program, 41 percent in biocommerce activities, and 45 percent of climate monitoring technicians are women.

RCBP implemented actions to reinforce the rights to livelihoods of women and vulnerable groups, including creating two manuals on masculinities and reducing violence as well as training trainers on these subjects. Workshops on masculinities were well received by the communities. Additionally, RCBP created the Protection Network against Violence, where women who attend workshops participate. The network helps identify the steps to file a complaint and provides shelter for people threatened by domestic violence. Examples of organizations led by women and young people are Cayo Quemado and the Asociacion Multicultural de Mujeres para el Desarrollo Integral y Sostenible (AMUDIS). Finally, RCBP has made interventions to promote gender and inclusion through masculinities workshops, with the governance committee of Karataska and the fishing network of the Caribbean in Guatemala.

Among capacity-building activities, 42 percent of the beneficiaries are women.¹² Role changes were promoted in the leadership of the board of directors, both in PLAS, as well as in the Councils, coastal-marine governance committees, companies, and associations.

¹⁰ <https://leif.me/on-the-diffusion-of-innovations-how-new-ideas-spread/>

¹¹ In contrast, youth population in Honduras, in average is about 30% and in Municipio de Ahuas, Honduras, youth population is 25%.

¹² RCBP data analyzed from file BD_CAPACITADOS_REPORTADOS.xlsx

Regarding training, of the 922 people who participated in various training topics, almost 27 percent participated in trainings on issues of gender-based violence prevention and the strategy of trainer of trainers in masculinity roles. This is an appropriate level for a project that is not focused only on gender issues.

One of the challenges in gender and social inclusion is empowering facilitators in issues of violence prevention and masculinity roles, among the implementing partners and in social networks, because gender issues are still not a priority and chauvinism and patriarchy are high in these countries, particularly in rural communities. The alliances established with the Office of Equality and Women's Empowerment (Advancing Gender in Environment, Agent-USAID) were effective, resulting in the diagnosis and design of the gender strategy for all the sites, giving relevance to the work that has been done in the region concerning gender in environmental issues.

FINDINGS

RÍO PAZ

In Río Paz, 31 percent of the participants in the trainings were women. Furthermore, 39 percent of the beneficiaries of the small grant program in beekeeping, fishing, and tourism were women, with 96 percent reporting income between \$100 to \$300 per month. The participation of women in technical training for biocommerce technicians was only 5 percent, whereas 58 percent of participants in climate monitoring technicians were women. In addition MARN El Salvador hired two local women trained by RCBP as rangers. The low level of participation of women in biocommerce trainings, compared with trainings in climate monitoring, may be due to social and cultural factors, as biocommerce activities are traditionally conducted by men. In terms of migration, beneficiaries interviewed reported that participation and social cohesion of organized groups in the territory is favorable to reduce the intention to migrate, particularly in women and young people, because they are empowered to care for the livelihoods of the coastal marine ecosystem.

RÍO MOTAGUA

The level of participation of women in governance structures of local organizations is 81 percent. Women representation in local organizations membership is 67 percent.

Additionally, 57 percent of participants in violence prevention and masculinities trainings were women; 10 organizations in Río Motagua participated in the small grants program. These organizations have on average 57 percent of women in their membership. On the other hand, 12 enterprises in the tourism sector reported monthly income of \$45 to \$2,781, due to the support of two tour operators in the sale of tourist packages. The participation of women and young people in trainings reached 18 percent in biocommerce technicians' trainings, and 23 percent in climate monitoring technicians' trainings. The low level of participation of women in biocommerce trainings, compared with trainings in climate monitoring, may be due to social and cultural factors, as biocommerce activities are traditionally conducted by men.

On migration issues, beneficiaries claimed that participation and social cohesion of organized groups in the territory was favorable to reduce the desire to migrate outside the country, particularly women and young people. Income generation and temporary employment opportunities generate roots in the community and support climate resilience, given the recurring hurricanes in the territory.

KARATASKA LAGOON SYSTEM

In Karataska, women, youth, and Miskito indigenous peoples represented 38 percent of participants in the trainings facilitated by RCBP, with changes reported in organizational structures of the Karataska Lagoon governance committee and in the territorial councils, evidenced by the leadership of the first woman in charge of a Territorial Council.

In the training covering themes of violence prevention and masculinities, the participation of women and youth represented 40 percent, through the training of facilitators. Six organizations in Karataska Lagoon received funds from the small grants program for fishing and tourism activities. These six organizations have on average a 33 percent of women in their membership. In general, 53 percent of beneficiary women in Karataska have a monthly income between \$100 and \$300, while 47 percent have a monthly income of more than \$300 in the fishing sector.

Young women represented 18 percent of biocommerce technicians and 19 percent of climate monitoring technicians.

On migration issues, those interviewed indicated that the territorial councils have noticed close to 100 migration cases per year, due to lack of employment and income in Karataska. These migrants are mostly men. However, they believed that strengthening of business groups in the territory is favorable to reduce the intention to migrate outside the country, particularly for women and young people.

MIGRATION DATA

The migration data collected by RCBP includes information on the intention to migrate in the next three years. 17.96 percent of beneficiaries expressed intentions to migrate in the next three years (11 percent for men and 6.11 percent for women). These results are lower than the average for each of the three Northern Triangle countries, Honduras at 40 percent, El Salvador at 36 percent, and Guatemala at 27.2 percent (CEPAL, 2018). In the case of Guatemala, the intention to migrate among beneficiaries of Río Motagua has decreased, in part due to the economic alternatives of biocommerce and the opportunities for education and training for young people.

In the case of the Karataska site, members of the Indigenous Territorial Councils perceive that young people are not likely to migrate when their families have a secure employment environment, income from the sale of fish products, and opportunities for continuous training, as a way for labor insertion in programs, projects, local governments, and family entrepreneurship initiatives.

In the case of El Salvador, at the Río Paz site, young people trained by the project and members of biocommerce initiatives in tourism and beekeeping, are perceived by the population as examples to follow in the community, which raises their self-esteem and attachment to the community.

CONCLUSIONS

The intervention in Río Paz contributed to reducing the gender gaps between local groups, in leadership roles and organizational structures, previously dominated by men. In addition, the adoption of regulatory mechanisms, in favor of natural resources management, was fostered by the leadership and inclusion of women in the project's activities. The positioning of women and young people in informal employment, but in charge of administrative and marketing issues, allowed them to have access to basic goods to alleviate poverty, given the sale and marketing of local consumption products from biocommerce ventures.

In Río Paz, the project achieved progress in territorial management, in the face of climate change, with the technical training for biocommerce and climate monitoring technicians. RCBP provided capacity building and empowered PLAS to co-manage governance and biocommerce initiatives and helped increase greater participation of women in managerial positions.

In the case of Río Motagua, RCBP contributed to reducing the gender gaps between local groups in leadership roles and organizational structures, previously dominated by men, particularly in tourism and fishing. In addition, the inclusion of women and young people increased, given the opening of internships in the hotel industry and restaurants in the surrounding area and in the capital city in customer service, gastronomy, administrative management, and marketing. Per the ET interviews, the masculinities approach was only partially perceived as effective by the beneficiaries of Río Motagua and Karataska. This may have been related to the fact that while there were three workshops on masculinities in Río Paz, there were only one in Karataska Lagoon and one in Río Motagua.

Both in Karataska and Omoa, RCBP intervention reduced the gender gap among local groups in leadership roles and general organizational structures, promoting female inclusion and leadership. An example of the participation of women and youth is in the leadership of the Kauma company.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the above conclusions, it is recommended that RCBP finalizes the processes of gender awareness in new approaches to masculinities among beneficiaries during the project extension and validates the gender approach with the key stakeholders of Río Motagua and Karataska. The project should also partner with bilateral projects that are implementing activities in the three countries to replicate the training program and reach a higher number of beneficiaries.

It would be important to carry out a second survey of the beneficiaries, to compare family income data with those reported in the 2019 baseline. The income reported in two sites, Río Paz and Río Motagua, must be compared at the end of 2023.

It is also recommended that the governance mechanisms in all sites include gender equality principles, to enhance the inclusion of women in decision-making. This can be achieved through the continuous formulation of new laws, particularly focusing on indigenous peoples, and ventures led by women.

RCBP should also consider establishing a specific financial mechanism for women to support and broaden the incorporation of young women as facilitators in accredited educational programs.

Finally, the ET also recommends promoting and increasing the training of women as biocommerce and climate monitoring technicians for formal jobs as strategic assistance to local governments and support for incoming projects in the region. However, the first action should be to conduct a survey to understand the underlying reasons as to why women's participation in biocommerce and climate monitoring training is so low compared with men.

The alliances established with the Office of Equality and Women's Empowerment (Advancing Gender in Environment, Agent-USAID) were effective, resulting in the diagnosis and design of the gender strategy for all the sites, giving relevance to the work that has been done in the region on gender in environmental issues. USAID should use this example and form strategic alliances with bilateral programs and projects using innovative tools validated by RCBP.

EVALUATION QUESTION 5: HAS THE BIOPHYSICAL CONDITION IN RCBP AREAS OF INFLUENCE CHANGED SINCE THE PROJECT BEGAN? HOW HAS RCBP CONTRIBUTED TO THESE CHANGES?

FINDINGS

BIOCOMMERCE AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

The RCBP project has helped protect biodiversity in the region through various interventions, such as public awareness campaigns, no-fishing zones proposed by fishers themselves, landscape restoration actions, and updated management plans.

Overexploitation of some fisheries has led to a decline in fish populations, and RCBP has promoted diversification of catches and opening of new product options to reduce pressure on overexploited resources.

In Barra de Santiago, the project has helped recover the salt forest through mangrove channels and canals restoration and strengthening community groups. Biocommerce has also helped reduce pressure on natural resources, and the mangrove coverage has remained stable in recent years, with the community more aware of the importance of conservation. Reforestation and canal cleaning, opening of river mouths, and surveillance in mangrove areas with the participation of local organizations are among the most notable results in Barra de Santiago. Monthly fish abundance monitoring by community scientists has helped recover fish populations, and the project has promoted the use of the appropriate fishing gear and techniques.

However, there is no solid baseline to determine if there has been an improvement in the ecosystems, even though management conditions have improved. The changes in the condition of mangroves, seagrasses, and corals remain undocumented. Furthermore, fisheries governance in Honduras is facing challenges due to changes in authorities and the updating of the fisheries law.

Biocommerce helps protect biodiversity by raising public awareness and reducing levels of exploitation of traditional resources. In addition, product diversification has helped reduce pressure on traditional resources. RCBP interventions to strengthen biodiversity conservation have included actions to restore hydraulic flow in mangrove channels in Barra de Santiago, the installation of a committee for the restoration of mangrove plots in Omoa and Barra de Motagua, and the identification of new fishery products, such as red sea fish in Karataska. In Los Cobanos area, RCBP supported the updating of management plans, including the Los Cobanos Management Plan, the Fishing Regime Plan, and the Cetacean Conservation Plan for El Salvador.

In Río Paz, the ecosystems present are mangroves and corals, while in Río Motagua there are mangroves, seagrasses and corals. In Karataska the ecosystems present include mangroves and coastal lagoons. Seagrasses are almost nonexistent, except in some freshwater lagoons.

Biocommerce is a new initiative, and the adoption of the new term has not been easy. Two of the nine respondents to the online survey indicated they were not a biocommerce venture, which demonstrates the lack of familiarity with the term. Demonstrating significant changes in the condition of mangroves, seagrasses, and corals is challenging. RCBP does not yet have quantitative evidence of the change. According to a government official, biocommerce in Barra de Santiago has helped by reducing pressure on traditional natural resources.

FISHERIES BIOCOMMERCE AND BIODIVERSITY

Fisheries biocommerce activities support the protection of biodiversity by reducing pressure on overexploited resources and opening options for new products. Diversification of fisheries promoted by RCBP has reduced pressure on overexploited resources. According to the artisanal fishers interviewed, the main threat to artisanal fisheries in Río Paz is industrial shrimp fishing, due to the use of trawl nets, which disturbs the seafloor and results in large proportions of unwanted by-catch. Industrial shrimp fishing boats cannot fish within three miles of the coast, and five miles in reefs and mouths, although the regulation is not always respected. Shrimp abundance has increased, in part because industrial fishing has retired. Fish have become more abundant recently.

In the Livingston area, fishing has declined because there now are more gillnet fishers.¹³ Water pollution has also had a negative impact on fisheries. The condition of fishery resources has changed, very small sizes have been observed in shrimp, even below the size of first maturity. One of the biocommerce ventures in Livingston employs Garifuna fishermen as musicians and dancers for folk acts to entertain tourists. At first, fishers had to decide whether it was more convenient for them to go fishing or work in tourism. More recently, due to the decline in fishing, fishermen prefer to work in tourism. In this way, tourism biocommerce turns out to be an alternative during bad fishing seasons.

Lobster monitoring data in Punta de Manabique indicate that the sizes are adequate, with lobsters presenting over 14 cm of tail. Lobster sizes have been stable, with few ovate females present. As for finfish, sea bass has many juveniles, but there are problems identifying the species, which can result in biases in the estimation of sizes.

There are about 70 species of fish in Karataska, but the pressure was exclusively on the sea bass, affecting the balance of the ecosystem. RCBP then expanded to other fisheries to diversify catches and promote fishing of Kawacha and catfish and thereby reduce pressure on the most caught species. According to interviews in Karataska, RCBP did not focus on jellyfish fishing because the market is China. RCBP business plans focus on fish and not jellyfish.

MANGROVE LANDSCAPE RESTORATION (MANGROVE CHANNELS UNCLOGGING)

One of the major impacts of the project in Río Paz has been the recovery of the salt forest, through restoration of the flow of water in the mangrove channels. In this area, the water flow had been reduced, partly by climate change, but above all due to river water use in agriculture. RCBP also strengthened community groups to participate in activities to clean and clear canals in the mangrove forest.

In Barra de Santiago, mangrove coverage has been stable in recent years and the community is more aware of the importance of natural resource conservation. The recovery of the mangrove has been achieved in part by the dredging and cleaning activities, but also by having more presence and surveillance by PLAS. Mangrove reforestation activities have also contributed, although they are sometimes affected when mangrove propagules are eaten by livestock, which also graze on the leaves of mangrove trees.

Mangrove reforestation is an activity RCBP has implemented at all three sites. Participants receive a stipend for supporting reforestation, depending on how long they work. The Barra de Santiago community indicated in interviews they have seen positive impacts from their landscape restoration activities, especially in the recovery of the salt forest.

¹³ Gillnet fishers are fisherfolk that use gill nets.

FOREST CONSERVATION INCENTIVES

RCBP supported a project within Guatemala's forestry incentive program, known as PROBOSQUE,¹⁴ in Punta de Manabique. This support involved preparation of mangrove management plans for an area of 22.56 hectares, that was later presented to OCRET-INAB for review and approval.

The PROBOSQUE project was initiated with support from the Mesoamerican Reef Fund. One local, a member of the Punta de Manabique community, completed the project already and will receive the forestry incentive. Additional people have applied for the program. Some people in the community opposed the incentives as they believed that because the process involved measuring land, someone might take the land away.

Nevertheless, based on interviews, access to Guatemala's forest incentive program in mangrove areas was successful because it demonstrated that receiving forest incentives is a real possibility for local community members. PROBOSQUE forestry incentives in mangrove areas have served as an example for other communities. ASOPROGAL identified six possible owners, and it is expected to have at least one other community beneficiary. The PROBOSQUE contract is for ten years, and can be extended for five more years, for a total of 15 years. Beneficiaries must only comply with their management plans, which is verified by INAB and CONAP.

CONNECTIVITY IN THE TRANSBOUNDARY OMOA-CUYAMEL MANABIQUE SUSTAINABLE BIOLOGICAL CORRIDOR

The Cuyamel-Omoa Punta de Manabique sustainable biological corridor is an important achievement of the project. The sustainable biological corridor creates a tool to influence policies and to support local authorities and communities in this transboundary area. The biological corridor proposal is not yet official. The biological corridor managing committee has gathered the information and the proposal has been submitted to MARN Guatemala. In Honduras, CCO presented the proposal to the previous authorities. Local organizations monitor yellow-headed parrots and provide logistical support.

To better understand connectivity in the sustainable biological corridor, RCBP selected a few terrestrial species for monitoring. RCBP uses camera traps to monitor jaguar and yellow-headed parrot. In all, there are 18 major species of birds and mammals in the corridor. The manatee is monitored through aerial censuses. CISP (International Cooperative for Community Development, Italy) made a preliminary study to quantify the existing forest in the corridor and find the areas of connectivity.

MONITORING

Biophysical monitoring showed that cleaning and clearing helped mangrove channels and canals increase fish populations, and improve water quality, with more dissolved oxygen and lower salinity in the water. The punche crab has also increased. Before RCBP, the value caught was \$1 or \$2 per person, now it is \$6. MARN established closures, based on RCBP results, for punche crabs. Community members have taken care of the resources, and have confiscated punche crabs when the crabs are under size, or fished in large numbers. The community itself declares the closures and each PLAS group can undertake surveillance. Another beneficial activity for biodiversity has been the monitoring of the growing fish populations.

¹⁴ The Incentive Program for the Establishment, Recovery, Management, Production and Protection of Forests in Guatemala, PROBOSQUE, aims to promote the forestry development through sustainable forest management, reduced deforestation, and promotion of reforestation of forest areas currently without forest. The Guatemalan state grants economic incentives to landowners, including municipalities, who engage in reforestation, the maintenance on forest lands, and the management of natural forests. Beneficiaries can also include individuals and social groups with legal arrangements to occupy land owned by the municipalities.



CCO Executive Director show monitoring sites

Photo: TAP EG Evaluation Team

A notable achievement is the involvement of community members in biological monitoring and the systematization of experiences, which will help increase sustainability of interventions after RCBP ends. In the most recent project meeting, local community members sought sustainability in monitoring, even after the end of the project, which is ensured through annual operational plans. They have the equipment, programming, and personnel to carry out monitoring. Community scientists conduct daily monitoring of fishing landings and mangrove restoration. The community scientists receive payment from RCBP for their activities, and young men and women have incorporated themselves into RCBP monitoring.

MARN carries out mangrove monitoring in Río Paz, with community scientists. The condition of the mangroves in the area has improved, as illegal logging has decreased, and reforestation has taken place. Fishing has also improved, and blue crab has increased. In 2010 fisheries were in crisis, but the mangrove management plan helped improve the situation.

In Río Paz, there are local organizations that carry out biophysical monitoring. The groups have weather stations and share monitoring data through a WhatsApp group. They have been collecting data for three years now. They have rain gauges in the communities, which serve to warn them when there is rain in the upper parts of the basins. In some communities, wells have dried up due to the extraction of water for sugarcane production, and salinity has risen. Monitoring of well water reveals levels, salinity, and pH. Water quality monitoring in Río Paz estuaries has made it possible to measure temperature, dissolved oxygen, and salinity in the water. A group of community scientists have worked on fishing landings and mangrove restoration. Community members are paid for their activities, and young men and women have joined.

Landings monitoring takes place in five different locations in the Caribbean of Guatemala and includes lobster, shrimp, sardines, and finfish. Monitoring is done daily, resting weekends. Data collection is done by community scientists and there is a field technician for each community. In some places the number of fishermen has decreased, so there are days without fishing activity. Technicians receive a monthly salary with project funds. Apart from the four technicians, there is a technician who is responsible for tabulating the data. The technicians review the data and share it by WhatsApp.

Not all fishermen understand the importance of monitoring. There are still some fishermen who think that the monitoring information will result in more closures. The relationship between monitors with the fishers is not always amicable, despite being members of the same community. The condition of resources has changed, and undersized shrimp are present in catches, even below the size of first maturity. To return information to the communities, RCBP has made bulletins for each site, which are infographics for popular dissemination.

Reef assessments data and results have served to declare the fishing restoration zone in Cuyamel. The reefs have experienced bleaching and contamination. Daily monitoring of landings in the Caribbean of Guatemala covers lobster, shrimp, mangrove crabs, and scale fish. Community scientists collect daily fish landings data. In Río Motagua, Guatemala, the number of fishers has decreased, resulting in days without fishing activity. Technicians or community scientists receive a monthly salary funded by the project.

Biocommerce ventures can help reduce pressure on natural resources, but monitoring has not yet proven their effectiveness. At best, monitoring results indicate stabilization of fish and lobster sizes in the catch. Biological monitoring can help influence policies and position with authorities and communities, as seen in the Manabique-Omoa Biological Corridor. Daily monitoring of landings in Río Motagua through the Community Scientist Program has been successful, due to local people's involvement, which increases awareness on the condition of natural resources. The community scientist program is a RCBP initiative, whereby local community members receive training and equipment from the project to conduct biological and environmental monitoring.

However, landing monitoring reports through PESCA CONCIENCIA, RCBP general public publications that presents fish monitoring results, do not allow one to establish changes in resource conditions in relation to project activities, since these reports only show results for a specific monitoring period. Comparisons with previous measurements are not possible. And commercial fishing species are not sustainable due to the capture of juvenile individuals. Monitoring fish abundance with echosounders has limitations, like the need to acquire the equipment, receive the proper training, and the fact that echosounders cannot identify fish species and cannot determine the conservation status of defined species.

SUSTAINABILITY OF OUTCOMES

The sustainability of outcomes is a major challenge. Monitoring fish landings can provide information to assess the impact of conservation measures and could be sustainable. However, current landing monitoring reports do not allow for changes in the condition of resources. Only cumulative data is presented without a time series and catch per unit effort (CPUE) information is not included.

Fish monitoring with echosounders has sustainability limitations due to the technology required. In addition, it does not identify species, so it is not possible to determine the conservation status of certain species.

The sustainability of monitoring activities in the biological corridor is secured by annual operational plans. There is programming, equipment (camera traps) and they have the staff to do the monitoring.

Originally, there was no capacity to monitor landings to continue after the project was completed. However, the municipalities of Puerto Barrios and Livingston in the Río Motagua, Guatemala area, created coastal marine offices that will continue monitoring.

DESIGNATION OF FISHERIES REPLENISHMENT ZONES

Fish replenishment zones (FRZ) have worked, but not all fishers comply with regulations. As a consequence, some become disillusioned. The fishing situation in the Omoa area is regular, stable, and abundance levels have

been maintained. Reef assessment and monitoring was used to declare the area as an FRZ. Non-fishing zones have been proposed by the fishermen themselves.

RCBP contributed significantly to the process of renovation of the existing fish replenishment zones in Manabique, and the identification of new areas in Karataska. The changes observed in Karataska lagoon include the creation of fishing recovery zones where small mesh nets cannot be used. Fishing declined over the past 20 years due to an increase in small mesh nets. The ecosystems in Karataska include mangroves and coastal lagoons, with little seagrass areas in some freshwater lagoons. Mangroves are in good condition and are regenerating but are affected by the sea cucumber processing activity, as it uses mangrove wood for cooking. RCBP has conducted mangrove reforestation in Kruta and will do the same in Kaukira, with participants receiving payment from RCBP, depending on the amount of time they work. Biocommerce has helped reduce pressure on traditional resources by diversifying products, with red fish being a new product marketed.

RESOURCE CONDITION

There is no solid baseline to definitely state there is improvement in ecosystems. However, it is noted that driving conditions have improved. The mangrove swamp in the Hawaii area is well preserved, even though there are people who cut mangroves down.

The Manabique-Omoa corridor area has 333 hectares of mangroves, which is 0.6 percent of the 55,431 hectares of the biological corridor area.

In Karataska, fishing conditions approximately 20 years ago were much better and they used fewer trammel nets. In 2020, the abundance of fish in the Karataska Lagoon was evaluated with an echosounder and there was almost no fish. Now, there is fishing again. The 2020 evaluation was done by RCBP and has been done again in 2023, although the results are not yet available.

The mangroves in Karataska are in good condition and are regenerating. But sea cucumber processing affects mangroves due to the use mangrove firewood to cook the sea cucumbers.

Monitoring actions in Los Cobanos increased knowledge of previously undocumented coral species in El Salvador.

CONCLUSIONS

- Biocommerce supports biodiversity conservation, by reducing pressure on already depleted resources and opening options for new products. Fisheries diversification has resulted in reduced pressure on overexploited resources. One of RCBP's most important achievements is the introduction of biocommerce in the region and working in rural areas in El Salvador. RCBP is effectively working in transboundary areas, with support from regional bodies like CCAD, the Central American Integration System (SICA), and the Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization (OSPESCA). RCBP is effectively working in transboundary areas where there is a continuity of mangrove ecosystems, seagrasses, and coral reefs, working in sites of high biodiversity. This is one of the key aspects that makes RCBP one of the few USAID projects that focuses on areas in the Northern Triangle that are outside of the capital. Bi-national biological corridors have shown the potential to harmonize conservation efforts across national borders.
- The environmental benefits of biocommerce in El Salvador are palpable; however, according to a government official, the economic benefits are often masked by remittances or economic income from illegal sources. Other important achievements are the development of studies regarding saline water intrusion in drinking water wells in Barra de Santiago.

- Defining whether sustainability has been achieved is difficult. So far, populations have recognized the important link between human well-being and sustainable resource management. Regarding the condition of mangrove, seagrass, and coral ecosystems, demonstrating if changes are sustainable is a challenge that has not been fully overcome. The clearing of canals and reforestation of mangroves has helped restoration. As for corals, knowledge of coral species, not previously documented in El Salvador, has increased.
- Fisheries landings monitoring reports need to be modified to be able to be used for resource management, since PESCA CONCIENCIA reports' format does not allow for comparisons of fish landings data through time. Also, fish abundance monitoring with echosounders has limited sustainability at intervention sites, due to the equipment needed and the necessary training to interpret results. On the other hand, municipalities adopting landings monitoring among their responsibilities can supplement national authorities' limitations for monitoring activities.
- Finally, there is potential for more plots to access forest conservation incentives in Río Motagua, Guatemala. Also, it is worth noting that, although some management plans have not been approved by the central government, some activities such as monitoring committees are functioning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The implementation of biocommerce activities has been challenging in Manabique. No biocommerce alternatives have been identified there, and some initiatives only work during the duration of projects. RCBP could explore the reactivation of CENTROMAR¹⁵ in Punta de Manabique, as a biocommerce venture for fishing and the eco-hotel managed by a group of women in Estero Lagarto.
- The changes in the condition of mangroves, seagrasses, and corals remain undocumented. Furthermore, fisheries governance in Honduras is facing challenges due to changes in authorities and updating of the fisheries law. Monitoring data collected by RCBP needs to demonstrate a link between biocommerce activities and changes in biophysical condition in areas of influence since the project start. For example, apiculture activities have an impact reducing mangrove deforestation, as the presence of beekeepers in mangrove areas tend to discourage illegal logging and firewood extraction. To demonstrate this impact, mangrove areas with and without apiculture can be compared for differences in mangrove cover and density.

RCBP should consider conducting specific studies as follows:

- Since the reproductive season of different species does not always coincide, conducting research on their reproductive biology would allow for fine tuning of closed fishing seasons, resulting in better management and conservation of fishing resources. RCBP should conduct research on the reproductive biology of sharks, rays, catfish, and mackerel. In addition, RCBP could consider segmenting the monitoring of fish species by site; for example, manjúa in Puerto Barrios, shrimp in Livingston, and lobster in Quetzalito. Segmenting monitoring efforts based on commercial fish species in each site would result in time and resources savings.
- Secure continuation of hydrological studies to identify areas needing mangrove channels dredging and clearing.
- Given the success of the first PROBOSQUE incentive received, there is a potential for increased conservation by involving more landowners and communities. RCBP should consider completing studies to identify potential recipients for forest incentives and complete the necessary paperwork.

¹⁵ CENTROMAR (Centro de Procesamiento de Productos del Mar) is a fish processing plant, located in Punta de Manabique, established more than 10 years ago, but is currently not operating.

RCBP should also promote the official bilateral declaration of the biological corridor and explore the possibility of reproducing the experience in Río Paz, between Guatemala and El Salvador. The official bilateral declaration of the sustainable biological corridor Omoa-Cuyamel Punta de Manabique could enhance opportunities for fund raising to support conservation efforts beyond RCBP.

It is also recommended that the project explores the possibility of replicating the adoption of fish landings monitoring activities by municipalities in other sites and that it seeks guidance from URI to improve fish landings data and analysis to be used for fisheries management.

Finally, RCBP should also train and equip local partners in the use of echosounders.

Annexes



ANNEX I: Timeline

Task	Ownership	Nov-22	Dec-22					Jan-23					Feb-23					Mar-23				Apr-23		June-23	July-23	Aug-23			
		2022 11-28	2022 12-05	2022 12-12	2022 12-19	2022 12-26	2023 01-02	2023 01-09	2023 01-16	2023 01-23	2023 01-30	2023 02-06	2023 02-13	2023 02-20	2023 02-27	2023 03-06	2023 03-13	2023 03-20	2023 03-27	2023 04-03	2023 04-10			2023 06-05	2023 07-17	2023 08-28			
		M1	M2					M3					M4					M5					M6						
		W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12	W13	W14	W15	W16	W17	W18	W19	W20	W21	W22	W23	W24				W32	W38	W44		
Recurring																													
Weekly Briefings	ET																												
Evaluation Design																													
Submission of Evaluation Design Plan	AM, ET, PD																												
Pre-Field Work Debrief with USAID	TL																												
Submit the Final Evaluation Design Plan	AM, ET, PD																												
Field Work																													
Schedule KIIs and FDGs	PD																												
Obtain Country Clearances	PD																												
Data collection in El Salvador	ET																												
Data collection in Guatemala	ET																												
Data collection in Honduras	ET																												
Data Analysis and Report Writing																													
Analyze data	TL, ET																												
Validation workshop with USAID and IP	TL, ET																												
Submit Draft Evaluation Report to USAID	TL																												
Submit final Evaluation Report to USAID (Revision 1)	TL																												
Submit final Evaluation Report to USAID (Revision 2)	TL																												
Submit final Evaluation Report to USAID (Revision 3)	TL																												
Dissemination																													
Submit the One-Page Brief	TL																												
Submit the Raw Data	TL																												
Conduct Final Presentation	TL, ET																												

LEGEND = Activity ET = Evaluation Team PD = Project Director
 = Deliverable AM = Activity Manager TL = Team Leader

ANNEX II:

Evaluation Statement of Work

INTRODUCTION

USAID/Central American and Mexico (ECAM) intends to conduct a final performance evaluation of its Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project (RCBP), a 7-year, \$13.4 million project implemented by a consortium of partners led by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to address threats to biodiversity in targeted coastal-marine areas and associated upland ecosystems in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. RCBP promotes biocommerce and climate-smart landscape management practices to decrease degradation of forest and mangrove landscapes, seagrasses, and coral; enhance climate-smart economic opportunities; and promote sustainable use of natural resources in target communities. Launched in 2017, RCBP was originally scheduled to close on November 28, 2022, but has since been extended two years and will end in November 2024.

The purpose of this final performance evaluation of RCBP is to assess project achievements, implementation challenges, and lessons learned. Evaluation findings will:

1. test the validity of the theory of change;
2. inform program modifications for an approved two-year project extension;
3. inform future conservation and biodiversity work in the region; and
4. provide empirical evidence to support USAID's [Biodiversity and Development Research Agenda](#).

BACKGROUND

Project Name:	Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project (RCBP)
Contractor:	International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
Contract #:	72051918CA00001
Total Estimated Cost:	\$13.4 million
Life of Program/Project:	November 2017 - November 2024
Countries:	Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador
RDCS Development Objective (DO) and Intermediate Result (IR):	DO 2, "Regional climate-smart economic growth enhanced": 1. Intermediate Result (IR) 2.1, "Low carbon development increased;" 2. IR 2.2, "Resiliency of humans and the environment to climate change impacts;" and 3. IR 2.3, "Transboundary natural resources management strengthened."

The USAID Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project (RCBP) is a 7-year, \$13.4 million project implemented by a consortium of partners led by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to address threats to biodiversity in targeted coastal-marine areas and associated upland ecosystems in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.¹⁶ RCBP promotes biocommerce and climate-smart landscape management practices to decrease degradation of forest and mangrove landscapes, seagrasses, and coral; enhance climate-smart economic opportunities; and promote sustainable use of natural resources in target communities. Launched in 2017, RCBP was originally scheduled to close on November 28, 2022, but has since been extended two years and will end in November 2024.

RCBP implements an integrated landscape management approach that uses the landscape (or seascape) as the management unit and to define geographic bounds for planning and Project interventions, independent of national, sub-national, or municipal geopolitical borders. The Project's geographic focus includes the following coastal-marine areas (e.g., mangroves and coral reefs) and associated upstream watersheds, selected based on biological significance, threats to biodiversity, and consultation with regional institutions, national governments, local governments, and non-government stakeholders:

1. Karataska Lagoon System on the Miskito Coast (Honduras)
2. Río Motagua watershed (Honduras and Guatemala)
3. Río Paz watershed (El Salvador and Guatemala)

The major threats to coastal-marine biodiversity in the region fall within four major categories: 1) loss and/or degradation of natural habitat; 2) overexploitation of resources; 3) pollution; and 4) impacts imposed by climate change.

RCBP was designed to support the [2015-2019 Regional Development and Cooperation Strategy](#) (RDCS) for Central America and Mexico. Under the 2015-2019 RDCS, the Project contributes to Development Objective 2, "Regional climate-smart economic growth enhanced."¹⁷ The project also currently contributes to Pillar I ("Addressing Economic Insecurity and Inequality") of the [U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America](#).¹⁸

THEORY OF CHANGE

The Project Theory of Change, updated during a "pause and reflect" session in 2020, posits the following:

*If coastal communities improve their livelihoods through the promotion of climate-smart biocommerce, increase their education on evidence collection and understanding of the role of scientific evidence in decision making, the governance and regulatory framework of coastal natural resources are strengthened and better landscape management climate-smart practices are implemented, **then** coastal-marine biodiversity will be conserved, beneficiaries will have improved their personal and community development and thus will contribute to the prosperity, governance and security in Central America's Northern Triangle area.*

16 Other consortium partners include GOAL International; the Agency for the Development of the Miskito (MOPAWI) in Honduran Muskitia; Defenders of Nature Foundation in Motagua, Guatemala; the Salvadoran Ecological Unit in Río Paz, El Salvador; and the Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Association in Río Paz, Guatemala. CCO, a local environmental Honduran NGO working in Omoa, signed an agreement with the project to implement activities in the project's Motagua area of Honduras.

17 Under RDCS DO 2, the project contributes to Intermediate Result (IR) 2.1, "Low carbon development increased;" IR 2.2, "Resiliency of humans and the environment to climate change impacts;" and IR 2.3, "Transboundary natural resources management strengthened."

18 RCBP was originally designed to support the U.S. Strategy for Engagement with Central America ("CEN Strategy") and Alliance for Prosperity Plan in the Northern Triangle ("Alliance for Prosperity"), which have now been replaced by the RCS and Collaborative Migration Management Strategy.

RESULTS FRAMEWORK

To address these threats and drivers, the RCBP results framework identified the following objectives:

1. **OBJECTIVE 1: Increase scientific capacity, education, and community engagement, especially of women, youth, and other under-represented groups, to facilitate evidence- and ecosystem-based biodiversity conservation.** RCBP addresses gaps in the ability of regional stakeholders to measure, monitor, and evaluate the status and value of coastal biodiversity. Educational outreach activities seek to improve the ability to access and utilize data, methods, and tools to inform conservation decision-making in target communities, actively engaging women and other vulnerable populations who would benefit from community-focused activities.
2. **OBJECTIVE 2: Improve livelihoods through promotion of climate-smart biocommerce activities that reduce threats to biodiversity.**¹⁹ RCBP integrates ecosystem-based biodiversity conservation principles into commercial and non-commercial resource management practices and expands economic opportunities that rely on biodiversity as a principal factor of production or community well-being, such as ecosystem services. The Project aims to improve the enabling conditions for biocommerce activities by building technical capacity and advancing social inclusion of underrepresented groups like women, youth, and indigenous populations. The Project promotes tools such as biodiversity baselines and conservation management plans that further contribute to long-term economic and environmental sustainability.
3. **OBJECTIVE 3: Strengthen local and regional governance of biodiverse resources.** RCBP aims to improve poor regulatory frameworks and inadequate enforcement of biodiversity regulations. The Project seeks to enhance local governance capacity and ensure that local efforts are harmonized with regional, national, and sub-national policies. These efforts serve to strengthen the biocommerce, science capacity, and public education objectives described above.
4. **OBJECTIVE 4: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in forest landscapes to increase resilience to climate change (adaptation-based mitigation).** RCBP incorporates an adaptation-based mitigation approach to climate change, supporting activities to enhance carbon stocks at the landscape level while also increasing sustainable livelihoods.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this final performance evaluation of RCBP is to assess Project achievements, implementation challenges, and lessons learned. Evaluation findings will 1) test the validity of the theory of change; 2) inform program modifications for an approved two-year project extension; 3) inform future conservation and biodiversity work in the region; and 4) provide empirical evidence to support USAID's [Biodiversity and Development Research Agenda](#).

The principal audiences for this evaluation are the Economic Growth and Education Office, Regional Program Office, and Mission Management at the USAID/ECAM Mission; Economic Growth offices in USAID Missions in Honduras and Guatemala; the environment team in the USAID/Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Bureau; and

¹⁹ USAID/ECAM defines biocommerce as the production, processing, and commercialization of goods and services derived from nature and managed with criteria for environmental, social, and economic sustainability. The term was adopted at the 6th Conference of the Parties of the CDB in 1996 and has appeared in other references. See Lozada Perdomo, Paola Andrea and Gómez Díaz, José Antonio, "Organization of Community-Based Biocommerce Enterprises: Lessons from the Implementation of MA&D Methodology in Colombia," in Small and Medium Enterprise Development for Poverty, 2007. Also found in USAID Sustainable Forests and Coasts Final Report, June 2014.

the Center for Environment, Energy, and Infrastructure in the USAID Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI). Other key non-USAID stakeholders include RCBP’s consortium of implementing partners, led by IUCN. Finally, regional environmental agencies involved in Project implementation may participate in the evaluation and/or have an interest in the evaluation findings.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation should address the following evaluation questions, which seek to test RCBP’s Theory of Change and identify enabling conditions and challenges to achieve the Activity’s desired outcome:

1. **Have RCBP’s biocommerce interventions contributed to sustainable benefits for stakeholders in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?**

This question should consider environmental, social, and economic benefits of biocommerce for a variety of stakeholders, including biocommerce producers and consumers (e.g., fish buyers). For reference, sustainability principles and criteria for terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic biodiversity-based products and services are defined by the [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development BioTrade Initiative](#).

As laid out in the UNCTAD sustainability principles, economic sustainability includes fair and equitable sharing of biodiversity benefits. In the context of this evaluation, economic sustainability should consider equitable improvements in the economic well-being of target communities and may be defined, for example, in terms of prices for products and services, real change in income, or perceptions of economic well-being (e.g., self-reported income, perceived capacity to increase income, or perceptions of whether one is better or worse off than a year ago). Other resources on biodiversity conservation enterprises can be found at USAID’s Conservation Enterprise Learning Group resource page, which includes a theory of change for conservation enterprises.

In explaining the sustainable benefits of biocommerce interventions (the “how/why?”), the Evaluation Team should identify the conditions (present or not) that enabled or constrained benefit creation.

2. **Have RCBP’s governance and/or regulatory interventions contributed to sustainable improvements in natural resource management practices for target stakeholders in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?**

This question addresses governance and regulatory conditions as key enabling factors contributing to the achievement of biocommerce and other conservation outcomes. Target government stakeholders may include fishing, environmental management, and tourism authorities (see a list of key stakeholders under “Evaluation Methods” below).

Governance and regulatory outcomes of interest will vary by government stakeholder, and may include adoption of conservation laws, policies, or regulations; improved organizational capacity or institutionalization of best practices for key stakeholders; improved resource allocation; employment of participatory practices for policy-making and natural resource management; female empowerment in natural resource management; improved service delivery; etc.

The evaluation should also be sure to consider improvements in the use of evidence for natural resource management decision-making. (For example, IUCN has introduced various tools to improve the use of evidence for decision-making. These include InVest, a GIS mapping tool to identify restoration sites; and a socio-ecological “Report Card” to set baselines and measure change over time. Additionally, IUCN contracted the University of Rhode Island to advise on the use and collection of biological evidence.)

3. **Have RCBP interventions contributed to changes in beneficiary knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of sustainable biodiversity practices in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?**

The evaluation design should consider (and compare) changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of both direct project participants (e.g., small grant recipients), as well as community households that did not directly participate in RCBP activities but which may have been exposed to RCBP communications campaigns. The Evaluation Team should consult with IUCN to identify the target audiences of the RCBP communications campaigns. The Evaluation Team should also consider, to the extent feasible, differential outcomes associated with gender, youth, or social groups, particularly historically marginalized or excluded groups (people with disabilities, indigenous populations, etc.).

4. **Has RCBP's approach to gender and inclusion affected equity in conservation practices in target communities? If so, how? If not, why not?**

RCBP has implemented a Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy as a crosscutting component. The evaluation should consider gender inclusiveness in RCBP programming as well as inclusion of youth and indigenous and other marginalized groups in conservation efforts. Equity may be measured in terms of opportunity to access resources and participate in natural resource decision-making and governance.

5. **Has the biophysical condition in RCBP areas of influence changed since the project began? How has RCBP contributed to these changes?**

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In the conduct of this evaluation, the Evaluation Team should consider the following:

1. **Disaggregation by gender and other socioeconomic or demographic characteristics:** For each evaluation question, the Evaluation Team should analyze, to the extent feasible, differential outcomes associated with gender, youth, or social groups, particularly historically marginalized or excluded groups (people with disabilities, indigenous populations, etc.).
2. **Framework for Monitoring, Evaluating, and Learning from Conservation Enterprises:** For additional reference, the USAID Conservation Enterprise Learning Group has developed a [Framework for Monitoring, Evaluating, and Learning from Conservation Enterprises](#) to inform the adaptive management of their conservation enterprise programs. The Evaluation Team may draw upon this framework as appropriate to inform the evaluation design.
3. **Assessment of data validity:** The Evaluation Team will be expected to provide an assessment of validity and limitations of available project data for measuring desired outcomes, including sustainable livelihood and biodiversity and conservation-related outcomes. For example, the Evaluation Team may map available indicator data against the Results Framework to identify gaps and assess whether the selected indicators are the right indicators to measure results (outcomes). This assessment may include, but need not be limited to, the following:
 - a. Does RCBP have a functional baseline to evaluate the progress of expected outcomes? How can USAID improve baseline data collection for conservation and biodiversity programming in the future?
 - b. How can RCBP improve its indicator selection and design and data collection processes (e.g., data collection timing, frequency, etc.) to allow for better determination of contribution and/or attribution of reported results to the four objectives in the Results Framework?

4. **Evidence for the Biodiversity and Development Research Agenda:** How can this evaluation contribute to USAID's [Biodiversity and Development Research Agenda](#)?

METHODOLOGY

USAID envisions a non-experimental mixed-methods design that combines a comprehensive, rigorous analysis of existing quantitative data with qualitative techniques designed to elicit primary data from a wide range of government counterparts, partners, beneficiaries, and other relevant stakeholders. The approach should allow for triangulation of various data sources to test underlying assumptions in the theory of change and elucidate linkages between activity inputs, outputs, and outcomes.

The evaluation should include, at a minimum: 1) a desk review of relevant documents such as the cooperative agreement, work plans, quarterly and annual performance reports, and any assessments conducted during Project implementation; 2) review of activity performance monitoring and context data; 3) key informant interviews and/or focus group discussions with key stakeholders; and 4) direct observation through site visits.

The Evaluation Team is encouraged to propose additional or alternate data collection and analysis methods in the Evaluation Plan (see Deliverables below) that they believe will yield a credible, evidence-based narrative of RCBP's contribution to the outcomes identified in the evaluation questions. Participatory methods that enhance collaboration and dialogue among counterparts are highly encouraged.

DESK REVIEW OF RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

USAID will provide the Evaluation Team with all relevant strategy and activity documents, including the cooperative agreement; project monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan; pre-implementation assessments; annual work plans; quarterly and annual performance reports and performance data; and any other assessments, studies, or evaluations conducted by the implementing partner. The Evaluation Team should review these documents and other literature provided by USAID and others before meeting with local stakeholders for interviews. The Evaluation Team is expected to conduct its own literature review and create a Review Matrix to be delivered to USAID as part of the final Evaluation Report, which indicates how key information extracted from reviewed documents and other methodologies link to each evaluation question.

Other relevant background documents may include:

- [Systematic Review: Are Alternative Livelihood Projects Effective at Reducing Local Threats to Specified Elements of Biodiversity and/or Improving or Maintaining the Conservation Status of Those Elements?](#)
- [Building a Conservation Enterprise: Keys to Success](#)
- [A Framework for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning from Conservation Enterprises](#)
- [The Nature of Conservation Enterprises: A 20-Year Retrospective Evaluation of the Theory of Change Behind this Widely Used Approach to Biodiversity Conservation](#)
- USAID/ECAM Central America Regional Tropical Forest and Biological Resources Assessment (conducted as part of the RDCS, as required under Sections 118/119 of the Foreign Assistance Act)

REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

RCBP has a project-specific Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan and collects data on a number of standard and custom indicators as part of activity implementation. This monitoring data should serve as an important data source for measuring progress toward project objectives and outcomes. The Evaluation Team may use

performance monitoring data as part of the evaluation analysis and should report on it in the Final Report insofar as it relates to the evaluation questions stated above and satisfies relevant data quality standards. Context data should also be considered to the extent possible to inform and explain findings when answering the evaluation questions.

As noted above, USAID is requesting the Evaluation Team's assessment of the validity of available project data for measuring sustainable livelihood and biodiversity and conservation-related outcomes.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS, SURVEYS, FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The Evaluation Team should engage with stakeholders through key informant interviews, focus groups interviews, group interviews, and/or short surveys if appropriate. For each data collection method, the Evaluation Team should develop a sampling approach in consultation with USAID and the implementing partner that is representative of each of the three Project implementation areas and each country context. In its consultations with stakeholders, the Evaluation Team should include both men and women and representatives of vulnerable groups where applicable. USAID or the implementing partner, IUCN, will provide key informant contact information once the evaluation begins.

At minimum, the Evaluation Team should interview the following key informants:

- Direct beneficiaries from project interventions, particularly beneficiaries from the small grants program
- Key USAID staff at the USAID/ECAM Mission in El Salvador (e.g., the Agreement Officer's Representative) and bilateral USAID Mission counterparts in Guatemala and Honduras
- IUCN staff and other partner staff based in San Salvador
- IUCN and other partner staff based in the field (e.g., site coordinators)
- Host country counterparts in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, including fishing, environmental management, and tourism authorities (e.g., DIPESCA, CONAP, MARN, OCRET in Guatemala; DIGIPESCA, ICF and MiAmbiente in Honduras; CENDEPESCA, MARN in El Salvador)
- Local line departments of national fishing, environmental management, and tourism authorities
- Random representatives of communication campaigns target audiences

The Evaluation Team must engage directly with project beneficiaries and other local stakeholders, including, but not limited, to the following:

- Representatives of Indigenous Territorial Councils (ITCs)
- Representatives of Community Assemblies
- Representatives of the financial services sector
- PLAS and other community environmental groups
- Beneficiary biocommerce enterprises or groups (e.g., production and commercialization cooperatives, associations, or committees, etc.)
- Beneficiaries from the project's Small Grant Program and other assisted groups.

Final selection of data sources should be determined in collaboration between the Evaluation Team and USAID. The evaluation team may work with IUCN or other local staff to identify key informants and coordinate interviews

and focus groups. Where feasible, the team should use local interviewers and/or focus group leaders who will be trusted by respondents, taking into account sensitivities related to gender, demographic, and cultural factors.

SITE VISITS AND DIRECT OBSERVATION

The Evaluation Team, in consultation with USAID and IUCN, will select relevant site visits based on a sampling plan to be included in the evaluation design. Final site selection should be determined in collaboration between the evaluation team and USAID. At a minimum, the Evaluation Team should expect to visit the following sites, to be corroborated with the implementing consortium:

- **El Salvador:** Garita Palmera, Barra de Santiago, Los Cobanos, San Salvador.
- **Guatemala:** Playa Las Lisas, Playa Hawaii, Livingston, Puerto Barrios, Punta Manabique, Rio Dulce, Quetzalito, Guatemala City
- **Honduras:** Omoa, Motagua Viejo, Karataska Lagoon system, Puerto Lempira, Tegucigalpa

The Evaluation Team is further encouraged to attend events hosted or sponsored by RCBP during fieldwork to conduct direct observation. The Evaluation Team may use these events to speak with stakeholders, conduct interviews, or collect other additional data. USAID and the implementing partner will provide the Evaluation Team with a list of events once the evaluation begins.

When meeting key in-country representatives or attending Project-related events, the Evaluation Team may be accompanied by one or more members of the USAID bilateral missions where Missions consider it appropriate.

TEAM PLANNING MEETING(S)

An initial team planning kick-off meeting will be held virtually at the start of the activity between USAID and the Evaluation Team. Additional meetings may be held as deemed necessary by USAID and/or the Evaluation Team. These meetings are especially critical prior to the submission of the Evaluation Plan so that USAID can clarify expectations and guidelines and respond to any questions from the Evaluation Team. The expected results of the meeting(s) are to:

- Clarify team role and responsibilities;
- Confirm anticipated timeline and deliverables;
- Discuss preliminary expectations for data collection tools and methodologies, by evaluation question, to be presented in the Evaluation Plan; and
- Identify communications logistics and how the Evaluation Team, USAID, and the implementing partner will communicate with one other.

USAID DATA QUALITY STANDARDS

All data collection methods shall be systematic and designed to yield data that complies with the USAID data quality standards of validity, integrity, precision, reliability, and timeliness.²⁰ Specific interview, survey, and/or focus group protocols will be appended to the Evaluation Plan (see deliverables below) and finalized with approval from USAID.

²⁰ http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadw118.pdf

Data collected in response to the evaluation questions should be disaggregated based on sex, age, and other relevant demographic characteristics for which differential outcomes may be expected under the Theory of Change. At a minimum, per the USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, all data must be disaggregated and analyzed for differences between programmatic effects on male and female participants.²¹

Data collection and analysis methods must consider sensitivities related to sex and/or social status, and should follow applicable Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidance on data security to ensure safety and confidentiality of all individuals providing data or information for the evaluation.

DELIVERABLES

USAID/El Salvador estimates that the Evaluation Team will require approximately 145 calendar days to complete a high-quality evaluation as required under this SOW. During that timeframe, the evaluation team shall submit the following deliverables (timelines are illustrative):

1. **Evaluation Plan:** The Evaluation Plan should be completed by the Evaluation Team no later than 4 weeks after the kick-off team planning meeting. USAID will receive the Evaluation Plan via electronic mail and provide comments no later than 5 working days after receiving the document. The Evaluation Plan will provide details of how the various deliverables, tasks, and activities will be undertaken, and should include the following:
 - a. *Evaluation Background:* The evaluation background should include a project description of RCBP and background elements of the RCBP development hypothesis that are relevant to the evaluation design.
 - b. *Evaluation Design:* The evaluation design should include an explanation of design elements, corresponding data collection methods, sampling approach for each data collection method, design and methodological limitations, and measures that will be taken to mitigate these limitations. Specifically, the sampling plan should describe participant selection, sampling disaggregation, and sample size considerations for all data sources, including key informant interviews, focus groups discussions, and/or surveys, and should clearly state the extent to which the proposed approach is representative of and/or generalizable to the beneficiary or general population.
 - c. *Analysis Plan:* The analysis plan may take the form of a “Getting to Answers” matrix or other format that clearly summarizes the following information for each evaluation question:
 - i. Summary of evidence required to answer each evaluation question;
 - ii. Data sources corresponding to each evaluation question;
 - iii. Data collection methods corresponding to each data source;
 - iv. Technique(s) for data analysis corresponding to each data collection method/data source, with an explanation of each analysis technique, its limitations, and measures that will be taken to mitigate these limitations.²²

21 USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/GenderEqualityPolicy_0.pdf)

22 Some examples of data analysis techniques include parallel, conversion, sequential, multilevel, data synthesis, content analysis, etc.

- d. *Data Collection Plan*: The data collection plan should provide a detailed summary of data sources, respondent selection, and sample size by data source and data collection method; data collection timeline and milestones (including tentative starting date for data collection and duration of each evaluation stage); site visit plan; and any additional considerations that may affect the data collection process, such as protocols for recruiting and locating respondents and recording interviews.²³
- e. *Data Management Plan*: The data management plan should describe how data will be captured (for example, interview notes or live recording), stored, and transferred, and how data will be handled to protect the personally identifiable information (PII) of respondents.
- f. *Data Collection Protocols*: The Evaluation Team shall submit for USAID review and approval of all data collection instruments and protocols, including questionnaires and key informant interview or focus group discussion guide(s), interview scripts, consent forms, etc.
- g. *Evaluation Team Composition and Roles*: Illustrative team composition and roles are provided below.

The Evaluation Team may provide USAID and RCBP with a preliminary briefing on the Evaluation Plan prior to the beginning of data collection. The Evaluation Plan, including the evaluation design and data collection and analysis plans, must be approved by USAID prior to the start of data collection and fieldwork. All interview protocols must be submitted in English and Spanish. Upon completion of USAID's review, the Evaluation Team will have no more than 10 working days to make any necessary changes. Once the Evaluation Plan is approved, the Evaluation Team will submit to USAID a PDF copy. Any subsequent change to the Evaluation Plan must be approved by USAID.

2. **Pre-Fieldwork Debrief**: The Evaluation Team shall provide USAID and the Implementing Partner with a preliminary briefing on the Evaluation Plan prior to final submission and prior to the beginning of data collection.
3. **Weekly Briefings**: The evaluation team should provide USAID with weekly status updates, in bulleted or other form as determined by USAID and the Evaluation Team, to be submitted to the manager of this evaluation by electronic mail due every Monday by the close of business. USAID and the Evaluation Team will agree upon the content and frequency of regularly scheduled check-ins.
4. **Validation and/or Recommendations Workshop(s)**: USAID encourages the Evaluation Team to validate findings, conclusions, and recommendations with USAID and/or other relevant stakeholders to ensure recommendations are evidence-based, actionable, practical, and specific. Inputs provided from the Mission, IUCN, and other stakeholders during the Recommendations Workshop(s) should supplement learning from the field and strengthen final recommendations in the report. The Evaluation Team will define the number and duration of workshops required and, in consultation with USAID, determine whether these workshops should take place in person or virtually. The Evaluation Team should corroborate inputs before incorporating them into findings. Any changes based on stakeholder validation should be treated as data and properly documented so as to have a record of the change. The Evaluation Team has ultimate discretion over final recommendations.
5. **Draft Final Evaluation Report**: The Evaluation Team will submit a Draft Final Report for review no later than 70 calendar days after the approval of the Evaluation Plan via electronic mail. USAID will be responsible for distributing the draft report to the implementing partner and other stakeholders for comments. USAID will consolidate all comments and return the draft to the Evaluation Team within

²³ If underage persons (less than 18 years old) will participate in this performance evaluation, the Evaluation Team must make sure to comply with all national regulations related to Child Protection.

10 working days. All reports and papers will be considered draft versions until they are approved by USAID. These draft documents should be labeled with the word “DRAFT” in watermark.

At a minimum, and in accordance with the USAID Evaluation Policy and ADS 201, the Final Report and its draft versions must include the following sections:

- a. An abstract of not more than 250 words briefly describing what was evaluated, evaluation questions, methods, and key findings or conclusions. The abstract should appear on its own page immediately after the evaluation report cover
- b. Executive Summary of the purpose, background, evaluation questions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations, not to exceed 5 pages;
- c. Evaluation purpose, including intended audience and intended use(s) of evaluation findings;
- d. Project information, including award number, award date, funding levels, and implementing partner;
- e. Brief background information, including region and/or sector context; specific problem or opportunity the intervention addresses; and the development hypothesis, theory of change, or explanation of how the intervention addresses the problem;
- f. Evaluation questions;
- g. Thorough description of the evaluation design and any challenge/limitations²⁴, with emphasis on the timeliness and methods for data collection and data analysis;
- h. Relevant data analysis tables;
- i. Findings and conclusions drawn from the analysis of the findings²⁵;
- j. Action-oriented, practical and specific recommendations with defined responsibility for the action;
- k. A dissemination plan of findings, conclusions, and recommendations to intended users of the evaluation; and
- l. Appendices:
 - i. Original SOW, annotated with any changes approved by USAID;
 - ii. Evaluation and data collection team composition and roles;
 - iii. Conflict of interest disclosures (all real or possible conflicts of interest must be disclosed by each member of the Evaluation Team in writing);
 - iv. Data collection protocols and instruments, including questionnaires and checklists;
 - v. Review matrix of documents consulted;
 - vi. Meeting notes;
 - vii. Complete schedule of evaluation activities, meetings, and interviews;
 - viii. List of individuals and organizations interviewed and sites visited; and
 - ix. Tables, graphs, and pictures taken during site visits, maps.

24 The Evaluation Team must identify (a) steps taken to mitigate limitations, and (b) how/whether the limitations affect any particular finding, conclusions, or recommendations.

25 In moving from findings to conclusions, the analysis must be clear as to how findings are synthesized through different techniques such as divergence, convergence, and amalgamation; propensity; weighting; etc.

6. **Draft Report Briefing:** The Evaluation Team will brief USAID and other stakeholders on the contents, findings, conclusions, and recommendations included in the Draft Final Report. The Draft Report briefing may be conducted in English or Spanish, depending on the audience. Only the Team Leader needs to be present for this briefing; however, local/regional Evaluation Team members may also attend. The briefing will be used by the Evaluation Team as a feedback and validation exercise prior to submission of the Final Report.
7. **Final Evaluation Report:** The final report should be submitted in PDF, font Gill Sans size 12, and should not exceed 40 pages in its body, excluding the cover page, Table of Contents, Acronyms List, and Appendices. USAID/EI Salvador will assess the quality of the Draft Report using the [Evaluation Report and Review Template](#). The approved Final Report must adhere to USAID's Evaluation Policy and ADS 201 Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation Report.²⁶ The report should be submitted in English and Spanish and have incorporated USAID's comments to the Draft Report, as appropriate. The Final Report will be due to USAID/EI Salvador 10 working days after the Evaluation Team receives comments on the draft.
8. **One-Page Brief:** The Evaluation Team shall provide a one-page summary of the evaluation purpose, findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Data visualization and/or graphics are encouraged for broader dissemination. The One-Page summary will be prepared in English and Spanish in PDF.
9. **Raw Data:** The Evaluation Team shall submit all raw data (qualitative or quantitative) in electronic form (DVD or flash drive, in original format of Word, Excel, etc.) no later than 100 calendar days after the starting date of the evaluation. As per ADS 540, the Evaluation Team must submit to the Development Data Library (DDL) at www.usaid.gov/data, in a machine-readable, non-proprietary, ADS 508-compliant format, a copy of any quantitative datasets (and corresponding English-language codebooks) that are used (or of sufficient quality) to produce an Intellectual Work.
10. **Final Presentation:** The Evaluation Team shall present findings, conclusions, and recommendations (with PowerPoint slides) to USAID staff and any other stakeholders that USAID considers relevant. Depending on the audience, the presentation may take place in English or Spanish. take place no later than 100 calendar days after the starting date of the evaluation. Only the Team Leader needs to be present for the final presentation; however, local/regional Evaluation Team members may also attend. The Evaluation Team will upload the final 508-compliant presentation to the DEC and submit an electronic copy of the final presentation to the COR of this evaluation.
11. **Other Deliverables:** The Evaluation Team shall submit other deliverables as identified during the Team Meeting and agreed to by USAID and the Evaluation Team.

The Final Evaluation Report must address all evaluation questions in the Statement of Work (SOW) or otherwise document approval by USAID for not addressing an evaluation question. The structure of the main body of the report should present findings, conclusions, and recommendations for each evaluation question, whereby 1) findings are specific, concise, and supported by strong quantitative and qualitative evidence and not based on anecdotes, hearsay, or the compilation of people's opinion; 2) conclusions are supported by a specific and clearly defined set of findings; and 3) recommendations are supported by a specific or clearly defined set of findings and conclusions.²⁷

²⁶ See ADS mandatory reference 201maa

²⁷ For additional information on the criteria to ensure the quality of Evaluation Reports, see the USAID's How-To Note "Preparing Evaluation Reports" (https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/How-to-Note_Preparing-Evaluation-Reports.pdf), and Annex 1 of the USAID Evaluation Policy (<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/USAIDEvaluationPolicy.pdf>).

The evaluation team should further consider the following best practices when presenting its findings:

- The report must be concise and easy to understand by diverse audiences with various levels of technical expertise.
- Where appropriate, the Evaluation Team should contextualize its presentation of all quantitative and qualitative data, documenting any biases, limitations, or threats to data validity that may have affected data collection, analysis, or presentation of findings, particularly when reporting on respondent perceptions.
- When quoting an individual, the Evaluation Team should provide the context or circumstances of the quote.
- Correcting a grammatical error in the quote may be valid, but not rewording an entire phrase. When translating quotes from one language to another, the Evaluation Team should do so in an idiomatic way and care must be taken to ensure that the tone and intention of the translation is equivalent to that of the original quote. Where translated quotes risk diverging significantly from their intended meaning, such quotes should be footnoted in their original language.
- To ensure unbiased findings, there is no expectation that findings will be modified in response to USAID comments. The Evaluation Team is expected to investigate and corroborate as objective any suggestion before incorporating it into the findings. All changes should be noted in the draft document or comment log so as to have a record of the changes.

All reports must comply with the USAID Graphic Standards Manual and the ADS Style and Format Guide.²⁸ Once a Final Report has been approved by USAID, the Evaluation Team will make it 508-compliant and submit it to the DEC.²⁹ The Evaluation Team will send by electronic mail to USAID the DEC link where the evaluation reports are available. USAID will assess the quality of all evaluation reports using the Evaluation Report and Review Template.³⁰ USAID may attach a Statement of Differences as an Annex to any Final Report if any differences remain in the final version.

28 See USAID Graphic Standards Manual at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADB334.pdf and ADS Style and Format Guide at <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/501mac.pdf>. The Evaluation Team may use the Evaluation Report Template available in <http://usaidelearninglab.org/library/evaluation-report-template>.

29 Per Automated Directives System 540, documents and development assistance projects materials produced or funded by USAID must be submitted for inclusion in the DEC: <https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/Create.aspx?ctID=ODVhZjk4NWQzM2YyMi00YjRmLTkxNjktZTcxMjM2NDhmY2Uy>

30 See the Evaluation Report and Review Template at http://usaidelearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/template-evaluation_report_checklist_and_review_aug2015.pdf.

ANNEX III:

Evaluation Methods and Limitations

GENERAL ANALYTICAL APPROACH

EVALUATION QUESTION	ANALYSIS APPROACH	DATA COLLECTION METHOD
1. Have RCBP's biocommerce interventions contributed to sustainable benefits for stakeholders in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?	Gather information on the biocommerce interventions from document review. Conduct outcome harvesting with the stakeholders to determine benefits and discuss sustainability.	KIs, Online Survey, document review
2. Have RCBP's governance and/or regulatory interventions contributed to sustainable improvements in natural resource management practices for target stakeholders in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?	Gather information on the biocommerce interventions from document review. Review government documents and regulatory framework to confirm changes in the resource management resulting from the interventions. Confirm finding through KIs with experts and government officials	KIs, document review
3. Have RCBP interventions contributed to changes in beneficiary knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of sustainable biodiversity practices in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?	Gather information from project progress reports, direct observation and KIs to compare the levels of adoption of new behaviors pre-post implementation of activities as well as with control sites and analyze evidence of sustainability of the behavioral change promoted.	KIs, FGD, document review
4. Has RCBP's approach to gender and inclusion affected equity in conservation practices in target communities? If so, how? If not, why not?	Gather information from KIs, project progress reports, research studies and other official documents to analyze the intersectionality and gender data reported, analyze case records, and analyze data according to the evaluation matrix.	KIs, FGD, document review
5. Has the biophysical condition in RCBP areas of influence changed since the project began? How has RCBP contributed to these changes?	Gather information from monitoring reports showcasing baseline conditions of biophysical indicators, evidence from management plans and other official documents as well as FGDs and other direct observation to perform means comparison, statistical significance tests for the differences between baseline and monitoring as well as document content analysis.	KIs, FGD, document review

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED:

DOCUMENTS SENT BY IUCN:

2018:

- Plan de Trabajo RCBP Sep 10 2018.pdf
- RCBP 1st Annual Report FY2018.pdf
- 1,571,020 RCBP QR3.pdf
- 409,333 RCBP Quarterly Report FY2018 Q1-Q2.pdf

2019:

- QR1 FY2019 Quarterly report.pdf
- QR2 FY2019 april15 2019 FINAL.pdf
- RCBP 2nd Annual Report FY2019.pdf
- RCBP REPORT QR3 FY2019.pdf
- Work Plan FY2019 Final.pdf

2020:

- QR3 FY2020 ENGLISH 08.17.2020 approved Word.pdf
- RCBP 3rd Annual Report FINAL approved FY2020.pdf
- RCBP Q1 FY2020 Report Approved.pdf
- RCBP QR2 FY2020 report approved.pdf
- WP FY2020-RCBP LR 23.10.2019 FINAL.pdf

2021:

- 4th Annual RCBP Approved.pdf
- ENG. QR2 FY2021 RCBP.pdf
- QR3 FY2021 RCBP Approved.pdf
- RCBP QR1 FY2021 approved.pdf
- RCBP WP4 FY2021 Approved.pdf

2022:

- ENGLISH QR3 FY2022 FINAL Approved.pdf
- Q2 Report approved .pdf
- RCBP Quarterly Report QR1 FY2022 approved.pdf
- RCBP WP6 FY2023 26.09.2022 FINAL VERSION REVIEWED.pdf

Propuestas:

- Estrategia de Genero Sept. 2019.pdf
- Final RCBP Technical Application_2nd proposal.pdf
- First application proposal.pdf
- RCBP MEL Approved.pdf
- RCBP Program Extension final_2022.pdf

2023:

- RCBP 5th Annual Report FY2022 approved.pdf
- ESTRATEGIA BIOCOMERCIO INTEGRADA_final_22nov.pdf
- LOGROS_DE_MI_PESCA[1].pdf
- Monitoreo_Desembarques_INFORME ANUAL 2020-2022_UICN-SDO.pdf
- Expected_results_and_activities.xlsx
- Presentacion breve RCBP Planteamiento Estratégico 2022-2024.pptx
- Lista de documentos recibidos.docx
- RCBP Linea Base 8-15-2019 (2) RCBP.docx
- Resultados2 Propuesta ajustada 2019.docx

Documents received March 2023:

- Pequeños_Pesqueros_Costa_Norte_Vf.pdf
- Plan de Manejo ANP Complejo Los Cobanos 22.06.2021_FINAL.pdf
- PMPA Karataska_B02.pdf
- PRBC_ResultadospreCampaña y percepción.pdf
- Protocolo de Pesca Indigena CTI costeros.pdf
- R4S Turismo Comunitario_2020_2SM_2_B01_RCBP.pdf
- Reglamento comité de gobernanza.pdf
- Historias de éxito.docx
- 16 HN 006 Pg 02 Informe_PLAS_El Salvador - A02.pdf
- Deliverable 5 - RCBP 2021 Before and After - 20220425 documento final.pdf
- Deliverable 5 - RCBP 2021 Before and After - 20220425 documento final_rev AA.pdf
- Estudio dinamica de cobertura de mangle CBS Cuyamel-Omoa-PManabique.pdf
- FINAL DE ESTRATEGIA DE GOBERNANZA.pdf
- IUCN RCBP Inception Meeting Report 20190822 Final.pdf
- IUCN RCBP Inception Meeting Report 20190822 Final_revAA.pdf
- iucn-manual-navegando-masculinidad UICN USAID.pdf
- ManualGVBEdicionFinal13Agosto.pdf
- Multifisheries in Karataska Lagoon System of La Moskitia A03.pdf

MEL documents:

- Indicador_Custom_1
 - » Reporte OCA_ apícola_2022.pdf
 - » Reporte de mapeo de alcance_ apícola_Revisada.pdf
- Indicador_Custom_2
 - » Reporte de mapeo de alcance_ apícola_Revisada.pdf
 - » Reporte OCA_ apícola_2022.pdf
 - » Datos personas implementan buenas prácticas.xlsx
- Indicator_Custom_3
 - » Beneficiarios indirectos.pdf
 - » Beneficiarios indirectos_RESTAURACION.xlsx
 - » Censo Pescadores Caribe 2022.xlsx
 - » Beneficiarios indirectos_2018-2022.docx
- Indicator_Custom_4
 - SISTEMATIZACION BUENAS PRACTICAS RCBP.pdf
 - Beneficiarios Indirectos 2019_final.xlsx
 - Información de población beneficiaria Mopawi.docx
 - Indicador Custom_4
 - Beneficiarios Indirectos 2019.xlsx
- Datos_pesca
 - » Areas reportadas en el 2021.docx
 - » Biological monitoring with observations incorporated Cu_ZR_JK.docx
 - » Verificacion_datos_pesca.xlsx
 - » Areas con condiciones biofísicas mejoradas.pptx
- Indicador_EG 10.2-1
 - » Corredor biológico
 - Monitoreo CBS
 - Lora_Jaguar
 - Producto 2_Informe de Capacitación_Monitoreo Jaguar.pdf
 - Producto 3_Monitoreo Jaguar.pdf
 - ppt_Capacitacion Mejoras.pdf
 - Producto 1_Plan de trabajo_Monitoreo Jaguar y Loro.pdf
 - Manati
 - Primer informe de resultados.pdf
 - Producto 1_Plan de trabajo_Monitoreo Manati.pdf
 - Producto 2_Primer informe de resultados.pdf
 - Informe final de resultados (002).docx

- PLAN ESTRATEGICO CORREDOR CUYAMEL OMOA- MANABIQUE 1o. version (22-9-20).docx
- Porcentajes diferentes areas del CBS Cuyamel Omoa Manabique (1).docx
- Presentación Corredor Biologico Sustentable martes 22 de septiembre 2020.pptx
- » Monitoreo biologico de peces
 - Desembarque diario-octubre 2020.pdf
 - Langosta -octubre, 2020 Quetzalito y Cabo.pdf
 - Manjúa-octubre, 2020 Liv-PuertoBarrios-Cabo.pdf
 - Peces -octubre, 2020 Que-PuertoBarrios-Cabo.pdf
 - Camaron -octubre, 2020_Livingston.pdf
 - BD_Desembarque Las Lisas.xlsx
 - BD_Monitoreo Desembarques Caribe_UICN (al 28feb23).xlsx
 - Formato para muestreo de abundancia.pdf
 - Protocolo de monitoreo Biologico y Pesquero_2019_2022.pdf
 - TEST_BD_Monitoreo Desembarques Caribe_UICN (al 28feb23).xlsx
 - A. UICN-SDO 2020-2021_Fichas monitoreo
 - B. UICN-SDO 2021_Fichas de monitoreo
 - C. UICN-SDO 2022_Fichas de monitoreo
 - Abundancia Peces.xlsx
 - Areas de pesca delimitadas por especies.docx
 - Base Sensores RCBP.xlsx
- » Restauracion de manglar
 - Protocolos de Monitoreo AUMH.pdf
 - BD parcelas permanentes.xlsx
 - Establecimiento de parcelas permanentes de muestreo.pdf
- Indicador_EG 10.2-2
 - » Karataska
 - Plan de manejo pesquero-SLK-Diagramado.pdf
 - » Motagua
 - PLAN ESTRATÉGICO - Corredor biológico sostenible, Cuyamel-Omoa Punta de Manabique digital.pdf
 - VALORACIÓN ECONÓMICA - Corredor biológico sostenible, Cuyamel-Omoa Punta de Manabique digital.pdf
 - CBS Para estudiantes CUARTA REVISION.pdf
 - ESTUDIO BIOLÓGICO - Corredor biológico sostenible, Cuyamel-Omoa Punta de Manabique digital.pdf
 - ACUERDO MINISTERIAL 49-2021 Veda tallas mínimas.pdf
 - ACUERDO MINISTERIAL 88-2022.pdf
 - ACUERDO-MINISTERIAL-69-2019.pdf
 - INFILE - ACUERDO MINISTERIAL 292-2020 langosta.pdf
 - Maps of the area under improved management.pdf
 - ACUERDO MINISTERIAL 40-2020 _26 PESQUERIAS GUATEMALA.pdf

- » Río Paz
 - MARN-DEB-158-2020- PLAN DE RESTAURACIÓN HIDROLÓGICA DE LAS ZONAS DEL MANGLAR EL TAMARINDO Y EL BOTONCILLO.pdf
 - Plan de comanejo Garita Palmera.pdf
 - Plan de desazolve Manglar_Final_.pdf
 - Plan de Manejo ANP Complejo Los Cobanos 22.06.2021_FINAL.pdf
 - Plan de Monitoreo para una Hectárea en proceso de Restauración.pdf
 - PLAS APROBADO BARRA DE SANTIAGO.PDF
 - Actualización Régimen Pesquero_Régimen.pdf
 - Seguimiento acciones restauracion_junio2021.pdf
 - Seguimiento acciones restauracion_mayo2021.pdf
 - Plan de manejo de fauna AUMH_Final.pdf
 - Protocolos de Monitoreo AUMH.pdf
- Indicador_EG 10.2-3
 - » Consolidado Beneficiarios final 2019-2022.xlsx
 - » Formato beneficiarios_Biodiversidad Costera_Final.pdf
 - » ~\$BD_PBCostera_Rev.xlsx
 - » BD_PBCostera_Rev.xlsx
 - » LIQUIDACION APMEC 2021 Y 2022.PDF
 - » Liquidacion EPMY 2022.PDF
 - » LIQUIDACION KRUTA 2021 Y 2022.PDF
 - » LIQUIDACION DE VENTAS KAUMA
 - » EST. FIN.ENERO ADICIEMBREKAUMA 2021A.pdf
- Indicador_EG 10.2-4
 - » Lista de Asistencia Taller Empresarial Registro Contable Livingston.pdf
 - » Prueba Contabilidad.pdf
 - » Prueba de Crédito.pdf
 - » Taller Contabilidad.pdf
 - » Taller Credito.pdf
 - » Taller Empresarialidad Livingston del 22 al 26 de febrero 2021.pdf
 - » Asitencia a jornadas de formación Empresarial Admnsitración del Crédito Livingston.xlsx
 - » Asitencia a jornadas de formación Empresarial Registro Contable Livingston.xlsx
 - » Caja de Ahorro y Crédito.pdf
 - » Lista de Asistencia Taller Empresarial Administración del Crédito Livingston.pdf
 - » Formación Apicultura El Salvador.pdf
 - » Listas de Asistencia a la Formación Apicola Grupo 1.pdf
 - » Asitencia a Jornadas de Formación Apicola Grupo 1.xlsx
 - » Guion metodológico Taller directrices voluntarias pesqueras.pdf
 - » Lista Asistencia Taller Directrices Voluntarias de pesca KRUTA.pdf
 - » Lista de Asistencia Taller Directrices Voluntarias de Pesca EMPY.pdf
 - » Lista de Asistencia Taller Directrices Voluntarias de Pesca APMEC.pdf
 - » Lista de Asistencia Taller Directrices Voluntarias de pesca KAUMA.pdf

- » Asistencia a Taller Directrices Voluntarias de Pesca (APMEC).xlsx
 - » Asistencia a Taller Directrices Voluntarias de Pesca (EMPY).xlsx
 - » Asistencia a Taller Directrices Voluntarias de Pesca KAUMA.xlsx
 - » Asistencia a Taller Directrices Voluntarias de Pesca KRUTA.xlsx
 - » Direcctrices de PPE.pdf
 - » Evaluación DPPE.pdf
 - » Capacitación dipesca.0003.jpg
 - » Capacitación dipesca.0004.jpg
 - » Capacitación dipesca.0005.jpg
 - » Instrumento de carta didáctica Evaluación de Recurso Pesquero.doc
 - » Prueba de conocimientos.docx
 - » ~Instrumento de carta didáctica Evaluación de Recurso Pesquero.doc
 - » Asitencia a jornadas de formación DIPESCA Nov.xlsx
 - » Capacitación dipesca.0001.jpg
 - » Capacitación dipesca.0002.jpg
 - » GUIAS COMUNITARIOS PARA TURISTAS - PLAN DE CLASE SEMANA II.pdf
 - » LISTA DE ASISTENCIA FORMACION GUIAS COMUNITARIOS PARA TURISTAS LIVINGSTON - JORNADA I.pdf
 - » LISTA DE ASISTENCIA FORMACION GUIAS COMUNITARIOS PARA TURISTAS LIVINGSTON - JORNADA II.pdf
 - » Prueba COMUNITARIO TURISTAS.pdf
 - » PruebaS COMUNITARIO TURISTAS 2.pdf
 - » Asitencia a jornadas de formación Guías Comunitarios para Turistas Livingston - Jornada I.xlsx
 - » Asitencia a jornadas de formación Guías Comunitarios para Turistas Livingston - Jornada II.xlsx
 - » GUIAS COMUNITARIOS PARA TURISTAS - PLAN DE CLASE SEMANA I.pdf
 - » GUIAS COMUNITARIOS PARA TURISTAS - PLAN DE CLASE SEMANA I.pdf
 - » GUIAS COMUNITARIOS PARA TURISTAS - PLAN DE CLASE SEMANA II.pdf
 - » LISTA DE ASISTENCIA FORMACION DE GUIAS COMUNITARIOS PARA TURISTAS HAWAII - JORNADA I.pdf
 - » LISTA DE ASISTENCIA FORMACION DE GUIAS COMUNITARIOS PARA TURISTAS HAWAII - JORNADA II.pdf
 - » Asistencia a jornadas de formacion Guias Comunitarios para Turistas Hawaii-Jornada I.xlsx
 - » Asistencia a jornadas de formacion Guias Comunitarios para Turistas Hawaii-Jornada II.xlsx
 - » BD_CAPACITADOS_REPORTADOS.xlsx
 - » BD_CAPACITADOS_REPORTADOS1.xlsx
- Indicador_EG 10.2-5
 - » Decreto No.101-2019 Cuyamel-Omoa.pdf
 - » Expediente Corredor Biologico Cuyamel-Omoa-Manabique.pdf
 - » Reconocimiento del Corredor biologico Cuyamel-Omoa-Manabique.pdf
 - » Plan comanejo Garita Palmera.pdf
 - » Acuerdo_OCRET_INAB.pdf
 - » Resolución Aprobacion de INAB Eustaquio Ochoa_20230120_0001.pdf
 - » Plan de manejo pesquero-SLK-Diagramado.pdf
 - » Protocolo para el Manejo de los Recursos Naturales de los Concejos Territoriales Costeros.pdf

- » Reglamento Comité de Gobernanza.pdf
- » Acta de aprobación de Normativa.pdf
- » Acta de Socialización del PMPA.pdf
- » Acuerdo de conformación de comité.pdf
- » Analisis marco legal.pdf
- » Analisis tecnico limite de esfuerzo pesquero.pdf
- » Oficios dictamen tecnico para DIPESCA.pdf
- » Diario Oficial Tarifario FAE MARN 2022.pdf
- » DO Acreditación Comité Local Ramsar Los Cóbano 08-04-2021.pdf
- » DO reglamento COAL AC Los Cóbano 19-07-2021.pdf
- » PROPUESTA DE REGLAMENTO COAL 25 DE MARZO 2021.pdf
- » Acuerdo plan de manejo los cóbanos.pdf
- » Decreto avistamiento de cetáceos.pdf
- » Diario Oficial se aprueba el Plan de Manejo ANPCLC 14-05-2021 (2).pdf
- » Contrato Laguna de Palos.PDF
- » Mapa área que rodea Laguna de Palos.pdf
- » resolucion aprobada ASOPESMA.pdf
- » INFILE - ACUERDO MINISTERIAL 292-2020 langosta.pdf
- » ACUERDO MINISTERIAL 40-2020 _26 PESQUERIAS GUATEMALA.pdf
- » ACUERDO MINISTERIAL 49-2021 Veda tallas mínimas.pdf
- » ACUERDO MINISTERIAL 88-2022.pdf
- » ACUERDO-MINISTERIAL-69-2019.pdf

ANNEX IV:

Data Collection and Analysis Tools

KII/FGDS QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE

A multi-person Evaluation Team has been assembled to conduct field interviews as a main component of the Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project (RCBP) Evaluation. This questionnaire guide will ensure efficient and effective data collection, consistency of approach among all evaluators, and overall quality assurance as program partners and other relevant stakeholder groups are interviewed in priority sites across the region.

USAID has created a set of four evaluation questions that will guide the evaluation. Building on this framework, the Evaluation Team has tailored questionnaires for four interviewee groups, including the following (note there is no priority or logical sequence to this list; it has been created simply to organize data collection and analysis):

- Group 1 – USAID staff and Government agency officials
- Group 2 – Program implementer (IUCN)
- Group 3 – Local Implementing Partners (Goal, FDN ARCAS, MOPAWI, UNES)
- Group 4 – Fishers and relevant stakeholders

Questionnaire structure

A template data collection document (questionnaire) has been developed for each stakeholder group. USAID evaluation questions are embedded in each template for easy reference during interviews, and to help enable structured data collection and subsequent analysis. All evaluators should maintain familiarity with the predefined evaluation questions, as they should be utilized to guide each interview.

Pre-interview preparation

Evaluators should read the *RCBP Progress Reports* prior to conducting interviews in any given program site, to gain familiarity with program activities, achievements and challenges for which interviewees may have been involved, directly or indirectly. This will enable evaluator fluency of past and present program activities and thereby foster an ability to ask critical follow-up questions and dig deeper on issues as interviews unfold.

Evaluation talking points at outset of interview

All evaluators should open each interview with standardized talking points. That said, evaluators should strive to keep this opening to 5 minutes or less. Key talking points include:

- Welcome, thank interviewee(s) for taking the time to help facilitate this important evaluation. (Evaluators should wear name tags for Focus Group Discussions; potentially for participants as well; also, be cognizant of taking too much time setting up).
- Suggest a round of introductions that allows each individual present to share their name, affiliation/profession and brief description of their connection to the RCBP.
- Briefly but clearly review the purpose and expected benefits of the evaluation. Respectfully ask interviewees to allow you to get through the following points, then provide an opportunity for questions or comments before beginning the interview.
 - » This is a project evaluation requested by USAID and facilitated by International Development Group LLC.
 - » The purpose is to provide USAID, IUCN and other stakeholders with independent findings, conclusions and recommendations regarding RCBP since its inception
 - » Evaluation will enable USAID and IUCN to make any needed course adjustments for the extension of RCBP, highlight successes to date, and bring evidence forward to design and/or implement future, regional coastal biodiversity conservation initiatives
- Interviewers will read the Informed Consent disclaimer and ask participants for their approval.
- The evaluators will practice non-attribution in preparing the draft and final evaluation report. In other words:
 - » All information collected will be kept confidential with the Evaluation Team
 - » No responses will be attributed to specific individuals
 - » Feel free to tell us anytime if you would like to speak off the record
 - » Ultimately, participation in the interview is voluntary
- We therefore encourage you to be candid in your responses to make this evaluation as beneficial as possible to all parties involved in or affected by the RCBP.
- Finally, we will ask for your patience, as we have a lot of questions to get through so part of what we will need to do is keep us moving through the interview
- Do you have any questions before we get started?

Enabling candid *interviewee responses*

For the field-based data collection process to be efficient and effective, evaluators must simultaneously build rapport and trust with interviewees and skillfully facilitate interviews. To do this, evaluators should put the following principles into practice:

- **Listen actively** – People want to be heard and know their viewpoints are valuable
- **Stay impartial** – Focus at this stage on the process of conducting the interview rather than evaluating or passing judgement on anything that you hear
- **Show empathy** – This is relevant when interviewees speak of challenging work or circumstances that are sometimes beyond their control but affect the work they do
- **Clarify when needed** – Whenever you are unsure of something said, or didn't understand someone, pause and ask for clarification so that you get the data right
- **Draw people's ideas out.** Help participants speak clearly and share their comments.

“Why is it that you would say that?”

“Can you tell me more about that?”

“What do you mean when you say that?”

- **Paraphrase.** Help participants see they have been heard by sharing their words.

“I believe I heard you say...”

“Let me see if I’m understanding you correctly...”

“I think you said...did I get that right?”

- **Manage time wisely** – Make sure you manage time so that interviewees can answer all interview questions; this can be difficult but is of paramount importance to the data collection process that you complete the questionnaire.

Additional principles to guide Focus Group Discussions

- **Stack people fairly.** Help Focus Group Discussion participants take turns in a conversation by “stacking” them in the order that they raise their hands.
- **Encourage people to contribute.** Create opportunities for people to participate in the discussion without making them feel uncomfortable.

“Who else has an idea to share?”

“What do others think?”

“I’d like to hear from those who haven’t spoken yet.”

- **Draw people’s ideas out.** Help people to speak clearly and develop their ideas.

“Why is it that you would say that?”

“Can you tell me more about that?”

“What do you mean when you say that?”

- **Balance different perspectives.** Broaden group participation and ensure a fair and inclusive discussion amongst all participants.

“Are there other perspectives on this issue?”

“Does everyone agree with what has been said?”

- **Listen for common ground.** Help groups acknowledge different perspectives but also focus on areas of agreement.

“I’m hearing differences but also similarities. For example...”

“However, you all seem to agree on...”

“Did I get this right?”

- **Clarify acronyms or uncommon labels.** If someone in a group is using an acronym or a label that is perhaps unclear, whether to the evaluator or anyone else in the room, make sure to ask this person to clarify said acronym or label so everyone in the room understands its meaning.

Standard file saving nomenclature

Evaluators will use the below standard file naming systems when saving interview documents. The nomenclature is broken down as follows: Site, category, agency/organization name, Focus Group Discussion, interview date.

- GOH_1_Agency1_2023-01-17
- GOH_2_Agency2_2023-01-17
- GOH_3_FisherAsoc_2023-01-17
- GOH_4_IUCN_2023-01-17
- GOH_5_USAID_2023-01-17

Intervention site codes:

Gulf of Honduras – GOH

Río Paz – RPZ

Laguna Karataska – LKT

QUESTIONNAIRES AND ONLINE SURVEY

GROUP 1 – USAID STAFF AND GOVERNMENT AGENCY OFFICIALS

Interview Questionnaire for USAID staff and Government agency officials (El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala)

USAID predefined questions are embedded for easy reference during interviews. This will keep interviewers consistently abreast of the overarching expected results and pre-defined questions which guide the overall RCBP mid-term performance evaluation.

- Sites: Río Paz (RPZ), Gulf of Honduras (GOH), Karataska Lagoon (LKT);
- Agency/Organization: Fundacion Defensores de la Naturaleza (FDN); Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña (UNES), ARCAS (ARC), Cuerpos de Conservación de Omoa (CCO), MOPAWI (MPW);
- Focus group discussion (FGD), / Key Informant Interview (KII);
- Date: YYYY_MM_DD;

Standard file saving nomenclature – Site_Group category_Agency name_Questionnaire type_Date

Examples:

- RPZ_3_UNES_FGD_2023_01_15
- LKT_1_Digepesca_KII_2023_01_18
- GOH_4_ManabiqueFishers_FGD_2023_01_20
- RPZ_2_IUCN_KII_2023_02_01

Background Information

Evaluator Name:

Focus group participant / group name:

Agency/Organization:

Date:

Location:

Participant names/affiliation/contact (facilitation notes: pass voluntary sign in sheet around):

NAME	AFFILIATION	EMAIL	PHONE

List of Interview Questions

1. Have RCBP's biocommerce interventions contributed to sustainable benefits for stakeholders in project areas of influence?

1.a. Are the benefits received by stakeholders environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable?
Interview question: Do you consider the benefits derived from RCBP to be sustainable for the environment, the society and the economy? Please explain why you think the benefits are (are not) sustainable.
Potential additional questions (only ask if beneficiaries are aware of plan): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have there being changes in stakeholders' income?• Are the benefits inclusive and equitable? How?• Were any companies created? Why not?• Were good practices differentiated by gender identified?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.b How were existing biocommerce organizations strengthened?
Interview question: Do you know if before the RCBP started there were any biocommerce organizations in this site? Please name the biocommerce organizations that existed before the RCBP. Facilitation notes: Make sure interviewees understand the term biocommerce.
Potential additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which of the biocommerce organizations are led by women and youth?• What kind of business relationships have improved the situations of women and vulnerable groups? Have women and vulnerable groups been involved in decision-making spaces?• How has access to markets (supply and demand) improved?• Have the products and/or services been diversified (Payment for environmental services, PES)?• How has access to financing improved through new conditions created through the SGP (Small Grants Program) or with the leverage of PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships)?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.c What are the environmental benefits achieved in the biocommerce activities supported by the RCBP?
Interview question: Can you describe the environmental benefits derived from the biocommerce activities supported by RCBP? Facilitation notes: If answered in the affirmative, capture 1) what activities and 2) about when they started to occur.
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is biodiversity now better conserved thanks to the RCBP?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.d What are the biocommerce interventions that have been implemented in each of the sites and how were they selected (beekeeping, fisheries, nature-based tourism, etc.)?
Interview question: In the process for implementing the RCBP project, what biocommerce activities were supported here? Facilitation notes: If answered in the affirmative, capture 1) what activities and 2) about when they started to occur.
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they new companies or are they pre-existing ones? • What are the main challenges for companies? • What other biocommerce interventions have potential in the area?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

2. Have RCBP’s governance and/or regulatory interventions contributed to sustainable improvements in natural resource management practices for target stakeholders in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?

2.a What are the governance instruments produced and/or improved by RCBP?
Interview question: What type of governance document (laws, policies, regulations, local directives) were developed by RCBP? If participants do not know these terms or do not have a response, that’s a finding that should be noted. But then ask it this way: What kind of fishing or tourism regulations have been promoted in this site?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the status of the governance and regulatory instruments developed by RCBP (draft, approved, implemented)? • What are the challenges to move from one level to the next one? For example, from draft to approved, or from approved to implemented.
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

2.b What progress has taken place about governance?
Interview question: What were the most needed changed in governance in this site? What progress has been made thanks to the RCBP?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the governance regulations promoted by RCBP been adopted?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

2.c What has been the impact of the governance and regulatory interventions implemented by RCBP?
Interview question: Out of the regulations promoted by RCBP, what has been the most important impact?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the authorities in charge of compliance with regulations in this site? • How often do you see the new regulations being enforced?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

3. Have RCBP interventions contributed to changes in beneficiary knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of sustainable biodiversity practices in project areas of influence? If so, how?

3.a What have been the changes in behavior promoted by RCBP at each site?
Interview question: Are you aware of human behavior changes being promoted by RCBP at this site?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know how were these behavior changes selected? • What knowledge-building interventions were conducted to improve the social inclusion of underrepresented groups such as women, youth, and indigenous populations?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

4. Has RCBP’s approach to gender and inclusion affected equity in conservation practices in target communities? If so, how? If not, why not?

4.a What have been the interventions of the gender, social inclusion, youth, and indigenous people’s strategy implemented by RCBP?
Interview question: Do you know the gender, youth, and social inclusion strategy of RCBP? If so, what parts of the strategy have been implemented to date? How has the inclusion of women and young people in decision-making spaces and productive activities changed?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the participation of women and youth in decision making improved, yes/no, why? • Did RCBP activities contribute towards the basic needs of women and vulnerable groups? In what way? • Out of the total interventions at the site, which one represents a success story for replication among women and vulnerable groups?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

4.c Did the population and beneficiaries perceive that safe channels were created for the prevention of violence against women and vulnerable groups?
Interview question: In the context of the RCBP, do you know if local populations perceive that safe channels for the prevention of violence against women and vulnerable groups were created by the project?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the planned resources (human and financial) adequate for the implementation of gender-differentiated project activities?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

5. Has the biophysical condition in RCBP areas of influence changed since the project began? How has RCBP contributed to these changes?

5.a How much has the biophysical condition of mangroves, seagrass, and corals improved at each site, regarding the baseline?
Interview question: Are there mangroves, seagrasses and corals in this site? Do you know what the status of these resources is? Has the condition changed since the beginning of RCBP? Facilitation notes: Only ask about the ecosystems present at the site. For example, do not ask about corals if there are no corals at this site.
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who monitors the biophysical condition of resources at this site? • How frequently? • Who analyzes the monitoring data?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

5.b What is the status of developed biodiversity management plans (draft, approved, implemented)?
Interview question: Do you know if a management plan was developed for (mangroves, corals, or seagrasses) at this site? For what resources? Facilitation notes: Only ask about the ecosystems present at the site. For example, do not ask about corals if there are no corals at this site.
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who uses the management plans developed by RCBP? • How are the management plans being used and by whom? • Out of the main threats to seagrass, mangroves, and coral, which were addressed and in what proportion did the threat levels change?
Supporting evidence: policy documents, yearly progress reports, interviews
Potential coding for this question:

5.c What actions has the project implemented to facilitate/ensure the sustainability of the natural resource management plans?

Interview question: Of the management plans developed, which actions do you think would continue after RCBP ends?

Potential follow-up questions:

- Who will continue supporting these actions?
- Who will finance these actions?

Supporting evidence: policy documents, yearly progress reports, interviews

Potential coding for this question:

5.d Do biocommerce activities contribute to the protection of biodiversity and natural resources in priority sites?

Interview question: The promotion of biocommerce activities at this site helps the protection of coastal biodiversity? How?

Potential follow-up questions:

- Do biocommerce ventures possess financial resources and good practices?

Supporting evidence provided during the interview:

Potential coding for this question:

Summary comments

Action items – Capture the following: 1) the needed follow-up action; 2) who is the responsible party and 3) deadline for completion (e.g. sub-grantee needs to send supporting documentation they said they could provide, but which they did not have available during the interview)

Preliminary findings:

Trends (optional):

Any other notable issues/items:

GROUP 2 – PROGRAM IMPLEMENTER (IUCN)

Interview Questionnaire for IUCN (El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala)

USAID predefined questions are embedded for easy reference during interviews. This will keep interviewers consistently abreast of the overarching expected results and pre-defined questions which guide the overall RCBP mid-term performance evaluation.

- Sites: Río Paz (RPZ), Gulf of Honduras (GOH), Karataska Lagoon (LKT);
- Agency/Organization: Fundacion Defensores de la Naturaleza (FDN); Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña (UNES), ARCAS (ARC), Cuerpos de Conservación de Omoa (CCO), MOPAWI (MPW);
- Focus group discussion (FGD), / Key Informant Interview (KII);
- Date: YYYY_MM_DD;

Standard file saving nomenclature – Site_Group category_Agency name_Questionnaire type_Date

Examples:

- RPZ_3_UNES_FGD_2023_01_15
- LKT_1_Digepesca_KII_2023_01_18
- GOH_4_ManabiqueFishers_FGD_2023_01_20
- RPZ_2_IUCN_KII_2023_02_01

Background Information

Evaluator Name:

Focus group participant / group name:

Agency/Organization:

Date:

Location:

Participant names/affiliation/contact (facilitation notes: pass voluntary sign in sheet around):

NAME	AFFILIATION	EMAIL	PHONE

List of Interview Questions

1. Have RCBP's biocommerce interventions contributed to sustainable benefits for stakeholders in project areas of influence?

1.a. Are the benefits received by stakeholders environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable?
Interview question: Do you consider the benefits derived from RCBP to be sustainable for the environment, the society and the economy? Please explain why you think the benefits are (are not) sustainable.
Potential additional questions (only ask if beneficiaries are aware of plan): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have there being changes in stakeholders' income?• Are the benefits inclusive and equitable? How?• Were any companies created? Why not?• Were good practices differentiated by gender identified?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.b How were existing biocommerce organizations strengthened?
Interview question: Do you know if before the RCBP started there were any biocommerce organizations in this site? Please name the biocommerce organizations that existed before the RCBP. Facilitation notes: Make sure interviewees understand the term biocommerce.
Potential additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which of the biocommerce organizations are led by women and youth?• What kind of business relationships have improved the situations of women and vulnerable groups? Have women and vulnerable groups been involved in decision-making spaces?• How has access to markets (supply and demand) improved?• Have the products and/or services been diversified (Payment for environmental services, PES)?• How has access to financing improved through new conditions created through the SGP (Small Grants Program) or with the leverage of PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships)?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.c What are the environmental benefits achieved in the biocommerce activities supported by the RCBP?
Interview question: Can you describe the environmental benefits derived from the biocommerce activities supported by RCBP? Facilitation notes: If answered in the affirmative, capture 1) what activities and 2) about when they started to occur.
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is biodiversity now better conserved thanks to the RCBP?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.d What are the biocommerce interventions that have been implemented in each of the sites and how were they selected (beekeeping, fisheries, nature-based tourism, etc.)?
Interview question: In the process for implementing the RCBP project, what biocommerce activities were supported here? Facilitation notes: If answered in the affirmative, capture 1) what activities and 2) about when they started to occur.
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they new companies or are they pre-existing ones? • What are the main challenges for companies? • What other biocommerce interventions have potential in the area?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.e What capacities were installed or strengthened to promote biocommerce activities (business, productive, organizational, commercial, financial)?
Interview question: What type of biocommerce capacity strengthening activities were implemented in each site? Facilitation notes: If answered in the affirmative, capture 1) what activities and 2) about when they started to occur.
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what kind of activities did the companies participate with the purpose of promoting biocommerce products and services (fairs, business roundtables, missions)? • Were environmental or social standards (seals, certifications) established thanks to the implementation health, quality, and good practice standards in biocommerce? • Were enabling conditions that facilitated biocommerce established? • Which ones (infrastructure, regulations, seals, financial services, institutions, etc.)? • Did the project intervention stimulate the generation of electronic financial services with the opening of businesses?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

2. Have RCBP’s governance and/or regulatory interventions contributed to sustainable improvements in natural resource management practices for target stakeholders in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?

2.a What are the governance instruments produced and/or improved by RCBP?
Interview question: What type of governance document (laws, policies, regulations, local directives) were developed by RCBP? Facilitation notes: If participants don’t know these terms or don’t have a response, that’s a finding that should be noted. But then ask it this way: What kind of fishing / tourism regulations have been promoted in this site?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the status of the governance and regulatory instruments developed by RCBP (draft, approved, implemented)?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

2.b What progress has taken place about governance?
Interview question: What were the most needed changes in governance in this site? What progress has been made thanks to the RCBP?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the governance regulations promoted by RCBP been adopted?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

2.c What has been the impact of the governance and regulatory interventions implemented by RCBP?
Interview question: Out of the regulations promoted by RCBP, what has been the most important impact?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the authorities in charge of compliance with regulations in this site? • How often do you see the new regulations being enforced?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

3. Have RCBP interventions contributed to changes in beneficiary knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of sustainable biodiversity practices in project areas of influence? If so, how?

3.a What have been the changes in behavior promoted by RCBP at each site?
Interview question: Are you aware of human behavior changes being promoted by RCBP at this site?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know how were these behavior changes selected? • What knowledge-building interventions were carried out to improve the social inclusion of underrepresented groups such as women, youth, and indigenous populations?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

3.b What audiences were selected for each of the behavioral change interventions?
Interview question: How did you identify the specific audience to promote a behavior change in each site?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the target audience selected? • Were the audiences segmented to have a greater adoption of new behaviors?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

3.c Is there a baseline for behavior adoption prior to each intervention?
Interview question: Do you know if some people were already practicing the desired behavior at the beginning of the intervention in each site?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What methods or instruments were used to determine the levels of adoption of new behaviors before promoting them?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

4. Has RCBP’s approach to gender and inclusion affected equity in conservation practices in target communities? If so, how? If not, why not?

4.a What have been the interventions of the gender, social inclusion, youth, and indigenous people’s strategy implemented by RCBP?
Interview question: Do you know the gender, youth, and social inclusion strategy of RCBP? If so, what parts of the strategy have been implemented to date? How has the inclusion of women and young people in decision-making spaces and productive activities changed?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the participation of women and youth in decision making improved, yes/no, why? • Did RCBP activities contribute towards the basic needs of women and vulnerable groups? In what way? • Out of the total interventions at the site, which one represents a success story for replication among women and vulnerable groups?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

4.b What is the perception of stakeholders regarding the achievement and sustainability of the RCBP intervention?
Interview question: What is being done?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been the specific actions aimed at strengthening local capacities that include women and vulnerable groups in improving the coastal marine ecosystem?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

4.c Did the population and beneficiaries perceive that safe channels were created for the prevention of violence against women and vulnerable groups?
Interview question: In the context of the RCBP, do you know if local populations perceive that safe channels for the prevention of violence against women and vulnerable groups were created by the project?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the planned resources (human and financial) adequate for the implementation of gender-differentiated project activities?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

4.d Did RCBP intervention actions contribute towards the psychosocial change in favor of the protection of the human rights of women and vulnerable groups?
Interview question: What actions towards the protection of human rights of women and vulnerable groups were implemented by RCBP in each site?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did RCBP identified the main concerns towards human rights of women and vulnerable groups in each site?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

5. Has the biophysical condition in RCBP areas of influence changed since the project began? How has RCBP contributed to these changes?

5.a How much has the biophysical condition of mangroves, seagrass, and corals improved at each site, regarding the baseline?
Interview question: Are there mangroves, seagrasses and corals in this site? Do you know what the status of these resources is? Has the condition changed since the beginning of RCBP? Facilitation notes: Only ask about the ecosystems present at the site. For example, do not ask about corals if there are no corals at this site.
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who monitors the biophysical condition of resources at this site? • How frequently? • Who analyzes the monitoring data?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

5.b What is the status of developed biodiversity management plans (draft, approved, implemented)?
<p>Interview question: Do you know if a management plan was developed for (mangroves, corals, or seagrasses) at this site? For what resources?</p> <p>Facilitation notes: Only ask about the ecosystems present at the site. For example, do not ask about corals if there are no corals at this site.</p>
<p>Potential follow-up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who uses the management plans developed by RCBP? • How are the management plans being used and by whom? • Out of the main threats to seagrass, mangroves, and coral, which were addressed and in what proportion did the threat levels change?
Supporting evidence: policy documents, yearly progress reports, interviews
Potential coding for this question:

5.c What actions has the project implemented to facilitate/ensure the sustainability of the natural resource management plans?
<p>Interview question: Of the management plans developed, which actions do you think would continue after RCBP ends?</p>
<p>Potential follow-up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will continue supporting these actions? • Who will finance these actions?
Supporting evidence: policy documents, yearly progress reports, interviews
Potential coding for this question:

5.d Do biocommerce activities contribute to the protection of biodiversity and natural resources in priority sites?
<p>Interview question: The promotion of biocommerce activities at this site helps the protection of coastal biodiversity? How?</p>
<p>Potential follow-up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do biocommerce ventures possess financial resources and good practices?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:
<p>Summary comments</p> <p><i>Action items</i> – Capture the following: 1) the needed follow-up action; 2) who is the responsible party and 3) deadline for completion (e.g. sub-grantee needs to send supporting documentation they said they could provide, but which they did not have available during the interview)</p> <p><i>Preliminary findings:</i></p> <p><i>Trends (optional):</i></p> <p><i>Any other notable issues/items:</i></p>

GROUP 2 – PROGRAM IMPLEMENTER (GOAL)

Interview Questionnaire for GOAL (El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala)

USAID predefined questions are embedded for easy reference during interviews. This will keep interviewers consistently abreast of the overarching expected results and pre-defined questions which guide the overall RCBP mid-term performance evaluation.

- Sites: Río Paz (RPZ), Gulf of Honduras (GOH), Karataska Lagoon (LKT);
- Agency/Organization: Fundacion Defensores de la Naturaleza (FDN); Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña (UNES), ARCAS (ARC), Cuerpos de Conservación de Omoa (CCO), MOPAWI (MPW);
- Focus group discussion (FGD), / Key Informant Interview (KII);
- Date: YYYY_MM_DD;

Standard file saving nomenclature – Site_Group category_Agency name_Questionnaire type_Date

Examples:

- RPZ_3_UNES_FGD_2023_01_15
- LKT_1_Digepesca_KII_2023_01_18
- GOH_4_ManabiqueFishers_FGD_2023_01_20
- RPZ_2_IUCN_KII_2023_02_01

Background Information

Evaluator Name:

Focus group participant / group name:

Agency/Organization:

Date:

Location:

Participant names/affiliation/contact (facilitation notes: pass voluntary sign in sheet around):

NAME	AFFILIATION	EMAIL	PHONE

List of Interview Questions

1. Have RCBP's biocommerce interventions contributed to sustainable benefits for stakeholders in project areas of influence?

1.a. Are the benefits received by stakeholders environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable?
Interview question: Do you consider the benefits derived from RCBP to be sustainable for the environment, the society, and the economy? Please explain why you think the benefits are (are not) sustainable.
Potential additional questions (only ask if beneficiaries are aware of plan): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have there been changes in stakeholders' income?• Are the benefits inclusive and equitable? How?• Were any companies created? Why not?• Were good practices differentiated by gender identified?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.b How were existing biocommerce organizations strengthened?
Interview question: Do you know if before the RCBP started there were any biocommerce organizations in this site? Please name the biocommerce organizations that existed before the RCBP. Facilitation notes: Make sure interviewees understand the term biocommerce.
Potential additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which of the biocommerce organizations are led by women and youth?• What kind of business relationships have improved the situations of women and vulnerable groups? Have women and vulnerable groups been involved in decision-making spaces?• How has access to markets (supply and demand) improved?• Have the products and/or services been diversified (Payment for environmental services, PES)?• How has access to financing improved through new conditions created through the SGP (Small Grants Program) or with the leverage of PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships)?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.c What are the environmental benefits achieved in the biocommerce activities supported by the RCBP?
Interview question: Can you describe the environmental benefits derived from the biocommerce activities supported by RCBP? Facilitation notes: If answered in the affirmative, capture 1) what activities and 2) about when they started to occur.
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is biodiversity now better conserved thanks to the RCBP?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.d What are the biocommerce interventions that have been implemented in each of the sites and how were they selected (beekeeping, fisheries, nature-based tourism, etc.)?
Interview question: In the process for implementing the RCBP project, what biocommerce activities were supported here? Facilitation notes: If answered in the affirmative, capture 1) what activities and 2) about when they started to occur.
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they new companies or are they pre-existing ones? • What are the main challenges for companies? • What other biocommerce interventions have potential in the area?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.e What capacities were installed or strengthened to promote biocommerce activities (business, productive, organizational, commercial, financial)?
Interview question: What type of biocommerce capacity strengthening activities were implemented in each site? Facilitation notes: If answered in the affirmative, capture 1) what activities and 2) about when they started to occur.
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what kind of activities did the companies participate with the purpose of promoting biocommerce products and services (fairs, business roundtables, missions)? • Were environmental or social standards (seals, certifications) established thanks to the implementation health, quality, and good practice standards in biocommerce? • Were enabling conditions that facilitated biocommerce established? • Which ones (infrastructure, regulations, seals, financial services, institutions, etc.)? • Did the project intervention stimulate the generation of electronic financial services with the opening of businesses?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

2. Have RCBP’s governance and/or regulatory interventions contributed to sustainable improvements in natural resource management practices for target stakeholders in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?

2.a What are the governance instruments produced and/or improved by RCBP?
Interview question: What type of governance document (laws, policies, regulations, local directives) were developed by RCBP? Facilitation notes: If participants don’t know these terms or don’t have a response, that’s a finding that should be noted. But then ask it this way: What kind of fishing / tourism regulations have been promoted in this site?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the status of the governance and regulatory instruments developed by RCBP (draft, approved, implemented)?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

2.b What progress has taken place about governance?
Interview question: What were the most needed changes in governance in this site? What progress has been made thanks to the RCBP?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the governance regulations promoted by RCBP been adopted?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

2.c What has been the impact of the governance and regulatory interventions implemented by RCBP?
Interview question: Out of the regulations promoted by RCBP, what has been the most important impact?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the authorities in charge of compliance with regulations in this site? • How often do you see the new regulations being enforced?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

4. Has RCBP's approach to gender and inclusion affected equity in conservation practices in target communities? If so, how? If not, why not?

4.a What have been the interventions of the gender, social inclusion, youth, and indigenous people's strategy implemented by RCBP?
Interview question: Do you know the gender, youth, and social inclusion strategy of RCBP? If so, what parts of the strategy have been implemented to date? How has the inclusion of women and young people in decision-making spaces and productive activities changed?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the participation of women and youth in decision making improved, yes/no, why? • Did RCBP activities contribute towards the basic needs of women and vulnerable groups? In what way? • Out of the total interventions at the site, which one represents a success story for replication among women and vulnerable groups?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

4.b What is the perception of stakeholders regarding the achievement and sustainability of the RCBP intervention?
Interview question: What is being done?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been the specific actions aimed at strengthening local capacities that include women and vulnerable groups in improving the coastal marine ecosystem?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

5. Has the biophysical condition in RCBP areas of influence changed since the project began? How has RCBP contributed to these changes?

5.a How much has the biophysical condition of mangroves, seagrass, and corals improved at each site, regarding the baseline?
<p>Interview question: Are there mangroves, seagrasses, and corals in this site? Do you know what the status of these resources is? Has the condition changed since the beginning of RCBP?</p> <p>Facilitation notes: Only ask about the ecosystems present at the site. For example, do not ask about corals if there are no corals at this site.</p>
<p>Potential follow-up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who monitors the biophysical condition of resources at this site? • How frequently? • Who analyzes the monitoring data?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

5.b What is the status of developed biodiversity management plans (draft, approved, implemented)?
<p>Interview question: Do you know if a management plan was developed for (mangroves, corals, or seagrasses) at this site? For what resources?</p> <p>Facilitation notes: Only ask about the ecosystems present at the site. For example, do not ask about corals if there are no corals at this site.</p>
<p>Potential follow-up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the management plans developed by RCBP important for biocommerce? • Who uses the management plans developed by RCBP? • How are the management plans being used and by whom? • Out of the main threats to seagrass, mangroves, and coral, which were addressed and in what proportion did the threat levels change?
Supporting evidence: policy documents, yearly progress reports, interviews
Potential coding for this question:

5.c What actions has the project implemented to facilitate/ensure the sustainability of the natural resource management plans?
Interview question: Of the management plans developed, which actions do you think would continue after RCBP ends?
<p>Potential follow-up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will continue supporting these actions? • Who will finance these actions?
Supporting evidence: policy documents, yearly progress reports, interviews
Potential coding for this question:

5.d Do biocommerce activities contribute to the protection of biodiversity and natural resources in priority sites?
Interview question: The promotion of biocommerce activities at this site helps the protection of coastal biodiversity? How?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do biocommerce ventures have access to financial resources? • Do they implement good practices?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:
<p>Summary comments</p> <p><i>Action items</i> – Capture the following: 1) the needed follow-up action; 2) who is the responsible party and 3) deadline for completion (e.g., sub-grantee needs to send supporting documentation they said they could provide, but which they did not have available during the interview)</p> <p><i>Preliminary findings:</i></p> <p><i>Trends (optional):</i></p> <p><i>Any other notable issues/items:</i></p>

GROUP 3 – LOCAL IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS (FDN ARCAS, MOPAWI, UNES)

Interview Questionnaire for RCBP Partner NGOs (FDN, UNES, ARCAS, CCO, MOPAWI)

USAID predefined questions are embedded for easy reference during interviews. This will keep interviewers consistently abreast of the overarching expected results and pre-defined questions which guide the overall RCBP mid-term performance evaluation.

- Sites: Río Paz (RPZ), Gulf of Honduras (GOH), Karataska Lagoon (LKT);
- Agency/Organization: Fundacion Defensores de la Naturaleza (FDN); Unidad Ecologica Salvadoreña (UNES), ARCAS (ARC), Cuerpos de Conservación de Omoa (CCO), MOPAWI (MPW);
- Focus group discussion (FGD), / Key Informant Interview (KII);
- Date: YYYY_MM_DD;

Standard file saving nomenclature – Site_Group category_Agency name_Questionnaire type_Date

Examples:

- RPZ_3_UNES_FGD_2023_01_15
- LKT_1_Digepesca_KII_2023_01_18
- GOH_4_ManabiqueFishers_FGD_2023_01_20
- RPZ_2_IUCN_KII_2023_02_01

Background Information

Evaluator Name:

Focus group participant / group name:

Agency/Organization:

Date:

Location:

Participant names/affiliation/contact (facilitation note: pass voluntary sign in sheet around):

NAME	AFFILIATION	EMAIL	PHONE

List of Interview Questions

1. Have RCBP's biocommerce interventions contributed to sustainable benefits for stakeholders in project areas of influence?

1.a. Are the benefits received by stakeholders environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable?
Interview question: Do you consider the benefits derived from RCBP to be sustainable for the environment, the society, and the economy? Please explain why you think the benefits are (are not) sustainable.
Potential additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the benefits inclusive and equitable? How?• Were any companies created? Why not?• Were good practices differentiated by gender identified?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.b How were existing biocommerce organizations strengthened?
Interview question: Do you know if before the RCBP started there were any biocommerce organizations in this site? Please name the biocommerce organizations that existed before the RCBP. Facilitation notes: Make sure participant(s) use the term biocommerce in their activities.
Potential additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which of the biocommerce organizations are led by women and youth?• What kind of business relationships have improved the situations of women and vulnerable groups? Have women and vulnerable groups been involved in decision-making spaces?• How has access to markets (supply and demand) improved?• Have the products and/or services been diversified (Payment for environmental services, PES)?• How has access to financing improved through new conditions created through the SGP (Small Grants Program) or other mechanisms / partnerships?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.c What are the environmental benefits achieved in the biocommerce activities supported by the RCBP?
Interview question: Is biodiversity now better conserved thanks to the RCBP? Facilitation notes: The NGO has to know the parameters to determine biodiversity health to answer this question.
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you know if biodiversity is better?• Who says so?• With what parameters?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.d What are the biocommerce interventions that have been implemented in each of the sites and how were they selected (beekeeping, fisheries, nature-based tourism, etc.)
Interview question: In the process for implementing the RCBP project, what biocommerce activities were supported here? Facilitation notes: If answered in the affirmative, capture 1) what activities 2) about when they started to occur, and 3) did any activity fail?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they new companies or are they pre-existing ones? • What are the main challenges for companies? • What other biocommerce interventions have potential in the area?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

1.e What capacities were installed or strengthened to promote biocommerce activities (business, productive, organizational, commercial, financial)?
Interview question: What type of support did your organization provide through the RCBP? What activities did your organization facilitate to promote biocommerce products and services (fairs, business roundtables, missions)?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were environmental or social standards (seals, certifications) established thanks to the implementation health, quality, and good practice standards in biocommerce? • Were enabling conditions that facilitated biocommerce established by RCBP? • Which ones (infrastructure, regulations, seals, financial services, institutions, etc.)? • Did the project intervention stimulate the generation of electronic financial services with the opening of businesses?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

2. Have RCBP’s governance and/or regulatory interventions contributed to sustainable improvements in natural resource management practices for target stakeholders in project areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?

2.a What are the governance instruments produced and/or improved by RCBP?
Interview question: What type of governance document (laws, policies, regulations, local directives) were developed by RCBP? Facilitation notes: If participants don’t know these terms or don’t have a response, that’s a finding that should be noted. But then ask it this way: What kind of fishing or tourism regulations have been promoted in this site?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the status of the governance and regulatory instruments developed by RCBP (draft, approved, implemented)?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

2.c What has been the impact of the governance and regulatory interventions implemented by RCBP?
Interview question: Out of the regulations promoted by RCBP, what has been the most important impact?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the authorities in charge of compliance with regulations in this site? • How often do you see the new regulations being enforced?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

3. Have RCBP interventions contributed to changes in beneficiary knowledge, attitudes, and adoption of sustainable biodiversity practices in project areas of influence? If so, how?

3.a What have been the changes in behavior promoted by RCBP at each site?
Interview question: Are you aware of human behavior changes promoted by RCBP at this site?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know how were these behavior changes selected? • What knowledge-building interventions were carried out to improve the social inclusion of underrepresented groups such as women, youth, and indigenous populations?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

3.b What has been the target audience selected for each of the behavioral change interventions?
Interview question: How did you identify the specific audience to promote a behavior change in each site?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the target audience selected? • Were the audiences segmented to have a greater adoption of new behaviors?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

3.c Is there a baseline for behavior adoption prior to each intervention?
Interview question: Do you know if some people were already practicing the desired behavior at the beginning of the intervention in each site?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What methods or instruments were used to determine the levels of adoption of new behaviors before promoting them?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

4. Has RCBP's approach to gender and inclusion affected equity in conservation practices in target communities? If so, how? If not, why not?

4.a What have been the interventions of the gender, social inclusion, youth, and indigenous people's strategy implemented by RCBP?
Interview question: How has the inclusion of women and young people in decision-making spaces and productive activities changed?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the participation of women and youth in decision making improved, yes/no, why? • Did RCBP activities contribute towards the basic needs of women and vulnerable groups? In what way? • Out of the total interventions at the site, which one represents a success story for replication among women and vulnerable groups?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

4.b What is the perception of stakeholders regarding the achievement and sustainability of the RCBP intervention?
Interview question: What do you think are the main achievements of the project in this site?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been the specific actions aimed at strengthening local capacities that include women and vulnerable groups in improving the coastal marine ecosystem?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

4.c Did the population and beneficiaries perceive that safe channels were created for the prevention of violence against women and vulnerable groups?
Interview question: What is being done?
Potential follow-up questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the planned resources (human and financial) adequate for the implementation of gender-differentiated project activities?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

4.d Did RCBP intervention actions contribute towards the psychosocial change in favor of the protection of the human rights of women and vulnerable groups?
Interview question: How did they contribute to the matter? Facilitation notes: Only ask if the NGO promotes human rights of women and vulnerable groups.
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

5. Has the biophysical condition in RCBP areas of influence changed since the project began? How has RCBP contributed to these changes?

5.a How much has the biophysical condition of mangroves, seagrass, and corals improved at each site, regarding the baseline?
<p>Interview question: Are there mangroves, seagrasses and corals in this site? Do you know what the status of these resources is? Has the condition changed since the beginning of RCBP?</p> <p>Facilitation notes: Only ask about the ecosystems present at the site. For example, do not ask about corals if there are no corals at this site.</p>
<p>Potential follow-up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who monitors the biophysical condition of resources at this site? • How frequently? • Who analyzes the monitoring data?
Supporting evidence provided during the interview:
Potential coding for this question:

5.b What is the status of developed biodiversity management plans (draft, approved, implemented)?
<p>Interview question: Do you know if a management plan was developed for (mangroves, corals, or seagrasses) at this site? For what resources?</p> <p>Facilitation notes: Only ask about the ecosystems present at the site. For example, do not ask about corals if there are no corals at this site.</p>
<p>Potential follow-up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who uses the management plans developed by RCBP? • How are the management plans being used and by whom? • Out of the main threats to seagrass, mangroves, and coral, which were addressed and in what proportion did the threat levels change?
Supporting evidence: policy documents, yearly progress reports, interviews
Potential coding for this question:

5.c What actions has the project implemented to facilitate/ensure the sustainability of the natural resource management plans?
<p>Interview question: Do your actions have an impact in the sustainability of the natural resource management plans?</p> <p>Facilitation notes: Only ask about the ecosystems present at the site. For example, do not ask about corals if there are no corals at this site.</p>
<p>Potential follow-up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you mention an example or success story that demonstrate sustainability of the natural resource management plans?
Supporting evidence: policy documents, yearly progress reports, interviews
Potential coding for this question:

5.d Do biocommerce activities contribute to the protection of biodiversity and natural resources in priority sites?

Interview question: The promotion of biocommerce activities at this site helps the protection of coastal biodiversity? How?

Potential follow-up questions:

- Do biocommerce ventures possess financial resources and good practices?

Supporting evidence provided during the interview:

Potential coding for this question:

Summary comments

Action items – Capture the following: 1) the needed follow-up action; 2) who is the responsible party and 3) deadline for completion (e.g. sub-grantee needs to send supporting documentation they said they could provide, but which they did not have available during the interview)

Preliminary findings:

Trends (optional):

Any other notable issues/items:

GROUP 4 – FISHERS AND RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

Focus Group Questionnaire for RCBP Beneficiaries (Fishers, honey producers and tourism ventures)

USAID predefined questions are embedded for easy reference during interviews. This will keep interviewers consistently abreast of the overarching expected results and pre-defined questions which guide the overall RCBP mid-term performance evaluation.

- Sites: Río Paz (RPZ), Gulf of Honduras (GOH), Karataska Lagoon (LKT);
- Agency/Organization: Fundación Defensores de la Naturaleza (FDN); Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña (UNES), ARCAS (ARC), Cuerpos de Conservación de Omoa (CCO), MOPAWI (MPW);
- Focus group discussion (FGD), / Key Informant Interview (KII);
- Date: YYYY_MM_DD;

Standard file saving nomenclature – Site_Group category_Agency name_Questionnaire type_Date

Examples:

- RPZ_3_UNES_FGD_2023_01_15
- LKT_1_Digepesca_KII_2023_01_18
- GOH_4_ManabiqueFishers_FGD_2023_01_20
- RPZ_2_IUCN_KII_2023_02_01

Background Information

Evaluator Name:

Focus group participant / group name:

Agency/Organization:

Date:

Location:

Participant names/affiliation/contact (facilitation notes: pass voluntary sign in sheet around):

NAME	AFFILIATION	EMAIL	PHONE

1. Have the RCBP biocommerce interventions delivered sustainable benefits for key stakeholders in the project's areas of influence?

<p>1.a. Are the benefits received by biocommerce ventures sustainable from an environmental, social and economic point of view?</p>
<p>FGD question: Do you consider that the benefits derived from the biocommerce ventures promoted by the RCBP are positive and friendly for the environment, society and the economy? Please explain why you think the benefits may or may not be enjoyed by future generations and how they are environmentally friendly.</p> <p>Facilitation notes: Depending on the group, the terms "biocommerce" and "sustainable" may need to be explained. For example, for future generations, durable, maintained over time. Make sure they understand the term biocommerce³¹.</p>
<p>Possible additional questions (just ask if recipients are aware of benefits):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the benefits shared and include everyone (men, women and indigenous groups) equally (inclusive and equitable)? How? • Was any new company or business created in this place? Why not? • Were good biocommerce practices designed for both men and women (differentiated) identified?
<p>Evidence provided during the interview:</p>
<p>Possible coding for this question:</p>

<p>1.b How did the RCBP strengthen existing biocommerce companies?</p>
<p>FGD question: Do you know if there were any biocommerce companies on this site before the RCBP started? Please name the biocommerce companies that existed before the start of the RCBP.</p> <p>Facilitation notes: Make sure that the FGD participants know the start date of the RCBP and distinguish which companies existed before and which new ones were created.</p>
<p>Possible additional questions (explain to the FGD participants the terms biocommerce, vulnerable groups, payment for environmental services, financing, etc. Ask if they know about the RCBP small grants program):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there biocommerce companies run by women and youth? • Have the new businesses and the buying and selling deal improved the situation of women and disadvantaged groups (unprotected, weakened or vulnerable)? • Do women and other vulnerable groups participate in decision-making? • Has access to financing been made easier thanks to the Small Grants Program or through the support of other entities (leveraging public-private partnerships, government programs, other organizations)? • Has access to financing been made easier thanks to the Small Grants Program or through the support of other entities (leveraging public-private partnerships, government programs, other organizations)? • How have sales to different customers or locations improved (access to markets, supply and demand)? • Have new products and/or services been created (for example, payment for environmental services)? • Has access to financing been made easier thanks to the Small Grants Program or because of the support of other entities (leverage of public-private partnerships, government programs, other organizations)?
<p>Evidencias proporcionadas durante la entrevista:</p>
<p>Posible codificación para esta pregunta:</p>

³¹ Biocommerce are those activities of collection, production, transformation, and commercialization of goods and services derived from native nature (genetic resources, species, and ecosystems) carried out with conservation and sustainable use, and are generated with environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Meaning, coming from nature and doesn't affect it adversely.

1.d What new biocommerce companies were created on this site with the support of the RCBP?
FGD question: Which biocommerce companies were created or supported by the RCBP here? How were these companies selected (beekeeping, fishing, nature tourism, etc.)? Facilitation notes: If yes, ask 1) which companies and 2) when they started business. Make sure that the participants are familiar with biocommerce and that they identify the companies created thanks to the RCBP from those that existed before the project.
Possible additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they new companies or are they pre-existing? • What are the main problems faced by these companies? • What other biocommerce activities have potential here?
Evidence provided during the interview:
Possible coding for this question:

1.e What capacities were installed or strengthened to promote biocommerce activities (business, productive, organizational, commercial, financial)?
FGD question: What kind of support did your association (or cooperative enterprise) receive from the RCBP? What kind of activities did your association (or cooperative) participate in to promote your biocommerce products and services (fairs, business roundtables, missions)? Did they receive training, equipment, access to markets, etc.? Facilitation notes: Before conducting the focus group, make sure you know if there were any trainings or equipment donations on this site, in case the participants do not remember. If they answer that there was no support, offer the information to help refresh their memory.
Possible additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are your products sold with any seal or certification? If so, does certification require special (biocommerce) processes? • How did the RCBP support the creation of an enabling environment (ideal or improved conditions) for business such as infrastructure, regulations, stamps, financial services, institutions, etc., to facilitate biocommerce? • Did the RCBP intervention help to have financial services for biocommerce businesses?
Evidence provided during the interview:
Possible coding for this question:

2. Have RCBP’s regulatory and/or governance interventions contributed to sustainable improvements in natural resource management practices for key stakeholders in the project’s areas of influence? If so, how? If not, why not?

2.a What are the governance instruments produced and/or improved by RCBP?
FGD question: What type of new governance instruments (forms or ways of managing or guiding the use of natural resources), such as local laws, policies, regulations, regulations, ordinances and directives, were developed with the support of the RCBP? Facilitation notes: If the participants do not know the term “governance instruments”, or do not have an answer to this question, that is a finding that should be taken into account. But then ask this way: What kind of fishing or tourism regulations were promoted on this site with the support of the RCBP?
Possible additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current situation of the proposals for change in the way of managing or guiding the people in the use of resources that were promoted by the RCBP? • Are the new regulations already being applied by the authorities?
Evidence provided during the interview:
Possible coding for this question:
2.c What has been the impact of the regulatory and governance interventions implemented by RCBP?
FGD question: What has been the most important impact of the regulations promoted by RCBP?
Possible additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the authorities in charge of compliance with regulations on this site? • How often have you seen the new regulations applied?
Evidence provided during the interview:
Possible coding for this question:

3. Have the RCBP interventions contributed to changing the knowledge, attitudes and adoption of sustainable biodiversity practices of the beneficiaries in the project’s areas of influence? If so, how?

3.a What have been the behavior changes promoted by RCBP at each site?
FGD question: Are you aware of any human behavior that the RCBP has promoted to change on this site? If so, which changes were promoted? Facilitation notes: To facilitate the understanding of the term behavior change, examples such as quitting smoking, exercising, saving, etc. can be used.
Possible additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know how these behaviors that you want to change were selected? • What activities did the RCBP implement to increase knowledge about the behaviors it wanted to change in this setting? • Do you know if the activities tried to improve the social participation of groups of women, youth and indigenous populations • What factor provoked a greater social participation of groups of women, youth, or indigenous populations?
Evidence provided during the interview:
Possible coding for this question:

3.b What has been the target audience selected for each of the behavior change interventions?
FGD question: Do you know who or whom the RCBP directed behavior change activities at this site? Could you please describe. Facilitation Notes: Focus group participants may not easily understand this question. If so, leave it and move on to the next one.
Possible additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the target audience selected? • Do you know if there were people who changed their behavior?
Evidence provided during the interview:
Possible coding for this question:

4. Has the RCBP approach to gender and inclusion affected equity in conservation practices in the target communities? If so, how? If not, why not?

4.a What have been the most significant interventions of the gender, social inclusion, youth and indigenous people's strategy implemented by the RCBP?
FGD question: Has the degree of participation of women and youth in decision-making and productive activities changed since the RCBP began? Facilitation notes: Make sure that the participants understand the concepts of decision-making, productive activities, and participation. Verify that the answers are focused on women and young people.
Possible additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the participation of women and youth in decision-making changed, yes/no, why? • Has the RCBP contributed to meeting the basic needs of women and the most disadvantaged or unprotected (vulnerable) groups? • How? Of all the RCBP activities at this site, which one represents a story that could serve to improve the participation of women and vulnerable groups at other sites?
Evidence provided during the interview:
Possible coding for this question:

4.b What is the perception of key stakeholders regarding the most important achievement and sustainability of the RCBP intervention?
FGD question: In your opinion, has the RCBP been beneficial to this place? If the answer is yes, ask, What are the most important achievements of the project on this site? Why do you think that? Facilitation notes: Try not to lead the participants to answer YES, if it is perceived that the participants of the focus group do not consider that the project has been beneficial in this site.
Possible additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been the specific actions of the RDBP to improve the conditions, qualities or aptitudes (local capacities) of women and the most disadvantaged or unprotected vulnerable groups? • What have been the specific actions of the RDBP to improve the conditions, qualities or aptitudes (local capacities) of women and the most disadvantaged or unprotected vulnerable groups? • What recommendations would you give to increase the attachment and permanence of young people to this place (retention of young people in the community)? • Are the project activities related in any particular way to changes in the retention of people in the community?
Evidence provided during the interview:
Possible coding for this question:

4.c Did the population and beneficiaries perceive, that safe channels were created for the prevention of violence against women and vulnerable groups?
FGD question: What is the situation regarding violence against women and indigenous people in this place? Has this situation changed in the last 3 years?
Possible additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you satisfied with the way in which financial and human resource support is allocated for both men and women?
Evidence provided during the interview:
Possible coding for this question:

5. Has the biophysical condition in the RCBP areas of influence changed since the project began? How has RCBP contributed to these changes?

5.a How much has the biophysical condition of mangroves, seagrass and corals changed at each site, from the baseline?
FGD question: Are there mangroves, sea grasses and corals at this site? Do you know what the status of these resources is? Has the state of resources changed in recent years? Facilitation notes: Just ask about the ecosystems present on the site. For example, don't ask about corals if there are no corals at this site. This question is relevant only if focus group participants are aware of resource monitoring.
Possible additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who monitors the state of natural resources at this site? • How often are the monitoring done and who analyzes the data? • How has the RCBP affected or benefited the state of natural resources here?
Evidence provided during the interview:
Possible coding for this question:

5.b What is the status of developed biodiversity management plans (drafts, approved, implemented)?
FGD question: Do you know if there are any management plans for (mangroves, corals or seagrasses) at this site? For what resources? Do you know what management plans are for and what they include? What has been the participation or support of the RCBP for these management plans? Facilitation notes: Just ask about the ecosystems present on the site. For example, don't ask about corals if there are no corals at this site.
Possible additional questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the development of management plans been jointly and participatory with the community? • Who uses the management plans developed by RCBP? • How are management plans used and by whom? • Of the main threats to seagrasses, mangroves and corals, which were addressed and by what proportion did threat levels change?
Evidence provided during the interview:
Possible coding for this question:

5.d Do biocommerce activities contribute to the protection of biodiversity and natural resources in priority locations?

FGD question: Do you think biocommerce activities have helped or hurt the protection of coastal resources at this site? How?

Facilitation notes: ask if the participants remember the concept of biocommerce discussed at the beginning and if they know the term "biodiversity". If the answer is yes, check that they can define those terms in their own words.

Possible additional questions:

- Do biocommerce companies have their own funds or access to loans to carry out their activities?
- Have biocommerce companies implemented good practices, that is, have they somehow changed the way they do their activities? Which?

Evidence provided during the interview:

Possible coding for this question:

Summary of observations

Action Items: Capture the following: 1) follow-up actions as needed; 2) who is the key actor for that follow-up activity, and 3) the deadline to receive supplemental information (for example, the beneficiary must submit supporting documentation that they said they could provide, but was not available during the interview, or if the participants identify other people with more or better information).

Preliminary conclusions:

Trends (optional):

Any other problem or noteworthy aspect:

ONLINE SURVEY FOR RCBP BENEFICIARIES (Fishers, honey producers and tourism ventures)

International Development Group LLC (IDG) is conducting a survey on behalf of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to gather information on the USAID Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project (RCBP) to assess project achievements, implementation challenges, and lessons learned. This study has been commissioned by USAID and it is part of its commitment to rigorous and high-quality program evaluation – the systematic collection and analysis of information to understand and improve the impact of its development programs.

If you agree to participate in this online survey, please answer the questions contained in this form to the best of your ability and knowledge. The survey is expected to take 15 minutes. Any information you provide that can identify you will be kept strictly confidential by the parties conducting this study, including USAID employees and researchers, to the maximum extent permitted by the laws of the United States of America and the laws of El Salvador/Guatemala/Honduras. These users will use data for qualitative research purposes.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose not to answer any or all questions for any reason. In other words, you have the alternative to not participate and there will be no consequences for non-participation. You may contact Alejandro Arrivillaga, the Evaluation Team Leader of International Development Group LLC, at aarrivi@hotmail.com if you have questions, concerns or complaints about the study or your rights as a participant.

Thank you for your valuable contribution!

1. Email:
2. Do you know what Biocommerce means?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Biocommerce Concept

USAID/E-CAM defines biocommerce as the production, transformation and sale of goods and services derived from nature and managed according to criteria of environmental, social and economic sustainability.

3. Do you have a biocommerce enterprise?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

ENTERPRISE DATA

This section asks basic information on the venture as well as contact information.

4. Name of the Enterprise
5. Name of the respondent
6. Phone number
7. Address (location, municipality, department)

8. Country
 - a. El Salvador
 - b. Guatemala
 - c. Honduras

9. Coastal marine site location
 - a. Karataska Lagoon, Mosquitia
 - b. Omoa, Río Motagua
 - c. Puerto Barrios, Río Motagua
 - d. Pacific, Guatemala, Río Paz Basin
 - e. Pacific, El Salvador, Río Paz Basin

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENTERPRISE

This section asks about the enterprise, its current situation and main activities.

10. Does your enterprise have legal status as a legal instrument supported by the project to develop the business plan?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

11. What is your Biocommerce activity?
 - a. Multifishing
 - b. Apiculture
 - c. Nature tourism
 - d. Other

12. Could you describe in one sentence what your enterprise does?

13. Are your activities environmentally friendly and friendly with coastal marine nature?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

14. How many people work in your enterprise?
 - a. 1-5
 - b. 6-10
 - c. 11-15
 - d. 16-20
 - e. More than 20

15. Who works in your enterprise?
 - a. Adults only
 - b. Adults and youth

RCBP PROJECT SUPPORT

This section refers to the support or benefits that your enterprise received from the RCBP Project.

16. Did your enterprise/company start thanks to RCBP support, or did it already exist before?
 - a. It was created with the support of RCBP
 - b. It existed before RCBP

17. What kind of support or capabilities has your RCBP enterprise received? (you can check several options).
 - a. Business Plan
 - b. Technical assistance for production
 - c. Organizational support
 - d. Business Training
 - e. Assistance for good environmental practices/sustainable management
 - f. Sales support
 - g. Seed capital
 - h. Exchange of experiences(s)
 - i. Legalization support
 - j. None
 - k. Other:

ENABLING OR NECESSARY CONDITIONS TO DO BUSINESS

In this section, we ask about RCBP support in negotiations with third parties or authorities to improve the business environment on your site.

18. Did you receive support from the RCBP to achieve the necessary conditions to do business on your site? (public services, infrastructure, regulations, seals, financial services, institutions, others)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

19. What necessary conditions to do business have improved on your site? Please include social aspects.
 - a. Public services
 - b. Infrastructure
 - c. Regulations or certifications
 - d. Financial services
 - e. Institutions
 - f. Other:

PRODUCTION, SALES AND ACCESS TO FINANCING

20. Did your enterprise improve production with RCBP support?
- Yes
 - No
21. How?
22. What are your enterprise's current annual sales? (if you want to specify, select "other").
- US\$ 50 - 100
 - US\$ 101 - 1,000
 - US\$ 1,001 - 10,000
 - US\$ 10,001 - 100,000
 - More than \$100,000
 - Other:
23. Did your enterprise improve sales with RCBP support?
- Yes
 - No
24. How?
25. Did your company improve access to financing with RCBP support?
- Yes
 - No
26. How?

PRODUCT DIVERSIFICATION, PROMOTION AND GENDER COMPOSITION

27. Did your enterprise diversify its products or services? (i.e. now you produce or sell something in addition to what you used to sell before?)
- Yes
 - No
28. What kind of activities did your company participate in to promote your products or services?
- Local fairs
 - Specialized fairs
 - Business roundtables
 - Trade missions
 - None
 - Other:
29. How many women and how many men are part of your enterprise?

30. Has the number of women participating in your enterprise changed?
- a. It has increased
 - b. It has decreased
 - c. It is the same as before

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION AND BIOPHYSICAL CONDITIONS

31. Did your enterprise have to comply with any environmental regulations to be able to sell?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
32. Does your company now have an environmental or organic seal or certification?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not yet, but we are in the process of obtaining one
33. How would you describe your relationship with the authorities that oversee environmental compliance?
- a. Friendly and collaborative
 - b. Neutral
 - c. Conflictive and antagonistic
34. With RCBP support, have the biophysical and/or environmental conditions of the site improved?
- a. Yes, they have improved
 - b. No, they have gotten worse
 - c. It is the same
35. How has it improved?
- a. There is more fishing
 - b. The weather has improved
 - c. Mangroves are in better condition
 - d. Seagrasses are in better condition
 - e. The coral reef has improved
 - f. Other:

EMPLOYMENT

36. Has your enterprise generated new employment opportunities?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

37. Did these jobs include women and youth?
 - a. Yes, women and youth
 - b. Only youth
 - c. Only women
 - d. No

38. Can you specify the number of jobs generated in your enterprise and whether they were for youth and women?

End of the survey

We appreciate your cooperation in completing this survey. Neither USAID nor the Evaluation Team will share the names of the people who responded to this survey, nor their responses. They will only be used to analyze the situation and project performance. In addition, they will be taken into account for the future of the project.

ANNEX VI:

Disclosure of Any Conflicts of Interest

Name	Alejandro Arrivillaga
Title	Climate Change Specialist/Evaluation Team Leader
Organization	International Development Group LLC (IDG)
Evaluation Position	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number <i>(contract or other instrument)</i>	Contract No. 47QRAD20DD1072, Task Order No. 7200AAN00006
USAID Activity(s) Evaluated <i>(Include activity name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</i>	Activity: Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project (RCBP) Implementing Partner: International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Award number: 72051918CA00001
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the activity(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose activities are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the activity(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the activity design or previous iterations of the activity. 	

CONTINUED

If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:

Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:

4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated.
6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular activities and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Date	18 April 2023
Signature	

Name	Hugo Cabrera
Title	Expert - Environment/Bio-Commerce Specialist
Organization	International Development Group LLC (IDG)
Evaluation Position	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number <i>(contract or other instrument)</i>	Contract No. 47QRAD20DD1072, Task Order No. 7200AAN00006
USAID Activity(s) Evaluated <i>(Include activity name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</i>	Activity: Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project (RCBP) Implementing Partner: International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Award number: 72051918CA00001
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the activity(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 8. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose activities are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 9. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the activity(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the activity design or previous iterations of the activity. 	
CONTINUED If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 11. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 12. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular activities and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation. 	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Date	04/18/2023
Signature	

Name	Leila Orellana
Title	Expert - Environmental Economist/Gender Specialist
Organization	International Development Group LLC (IDG)
Evaluation Position	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number <i>(contract or other instrument)</i>	Contract No. 47QRAD20DD1072, Task Order No. 7200AAN00006
USAID Activity(s) Evaluated <i>(Include activity name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</i>	Activity: Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project (RCBP) Implementing Partner: International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Award number: 72051918CA00001
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i> 13. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the activity(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 14. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose activities are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 15. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the activity(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the activity design or previous iterations of the activity.	
CONTINUED If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i> 16. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 17. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 18. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular activities and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Date	18.04.2023
Signature	

ANNEX VII:

Evaluation Team Members

Evaluation Team Leader/ Environment/Climate Change Specialist – Alejandro Arrivillaga. Alejandro Arrivillaga has over 35 years of experience in complex, multi-country conservation and sustainable resource management projects in government and non-governmental settings. He has also managed multifaceted programs on marine resources including fisheries, coastal zone management, and research on coastal ecosystems, including coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, and water quality. Mr. Arrivillaga has implemented or evaluated development projects across the world, including in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras. His work has required teamwork development, leadership and networking with local and regional authorities, academia, conservation agencies, and stakeholders in a process of feedback and improvement. Most recently, Mr. Arrivillaga worked for the USAID Guatemala Biodiversity Project. He started working for the project as a Technical Director/Deputy Chief of Party, managing the overall MEL process. Due to his excellent performance, Mr. Arrivillaga was promoted to Chief of Party in the last year of the project's implementation. Prior to this, he led the mid-term performance evaluation of the USAID Caribbean Marine Biodiversity Program.

Environment/Bio-commerce Specialist - Hugo Cabrera Paz. Hugo Cabrera has over 25 years of experience in development, with the last 10 years serving as a senior consultant for projects, nonprofits, and agencies, in particular USAID, government entities and the private sector. His main experience is linked to the artisanal and forestry sectors of Central America, although he also has experience in the tourism, agriculture, agroindustry, and recyclable materials productive sectors. Mr. Cabrera has experience establishing public-private partnerships and facilitating dialogue between actors from different sectors, as well as with indigenous communities and civil society entities to promote business relationships, public policies, self-sustainability models and rural development. He has carried out project analysis and evaluations, assessed and developed intervention strategies for development cooperation entities, designed strategies to promote and strengthen micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), designed sustainable and profitable business models, and evaluated public policies proposing improvement measures. Mr. Cabrera also has experience developing programs to support the productive and commercial improvement of rural enterprises, evaluation tools to determine the administrative and financial health of MSMEs and producer organizations, and grant programs to improve producers' competitiveness and access to markets.

Environmental Economist and Gender Specialist - Leila Orellana. Leila Orellana is an agricultural economist specializing in environmental economics and sociology with 15 years of experience working on development projects in Honduras with a focus on gender. Ms. Orellana has excellent knowledge of the environmental issues facing Honduras and their context. She has conducted several evaluations, including assisting in evaluation design and formulating baseline studies. Ms. Orellana has implemented projects for the local and national Honduran government and for various other organizations, including the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), FAO, JICA, and COPECO, among others. As Economic Development Specialist, she prepared a feasibility study for the implementation of the environmental management plan and land use plans for an important habitat of the endangered Honduran emerald hummingbird, including economic valuation

and a socio-economic analysis. Ms. Orellana has extensive experience in biocommerce, having consulted on commercializing sustainably sourced timber as well as providing technical coordination and monitoring on a baseline study of sustainable value chains for multiple enterprises on the Mosquito Coast.

Logistics Coordinator - Aracely Villalta. Aracely Villalta is a results-oriented professional with over 20 years of experience. Her experience includes managing projects funded by international cooperation agencies such as USAID and USDA. She has overseen project operations and administration, including project start-up/close-out, human resources, financial management, negotiation and monitoring and evaluation. Recently, Ms. Villalta served as Administrative Consultant and Consultant for the Health Policy Plus Project in Palladium Group, South-South Cooperation Specialist, Deputy Program Manager, and Project Lead in the USAID Regional Trilateral Cooperation Project, and as the Administrative Manager for the USDA Coffee Rehabilitation and Agriculture Diversification Project. She possesses organizational, coordination, planning, public relations and communication, and negotiation skills, in addition to proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Acrobat, Google Apps, and Skype. She received her M.B.A from Universidad Francisco Gavidia in El Salvador, a Post Grade in Education from the same university, and a B.A. in Public Relations from Universidad Leonardo Da Vinci in El Salvador.

Project Coordinator/Research Assistant - Beatriz Cardillo Cury. Beatriz Cardillo Cury is an economic development professional with diverse academic and professional background. The majority of Ms. Cury's role at International Development Group is in supporting the MCC-funded Roads Evaluation Project in Mozambique. She is knowledgeable in both the operational and technical activities of the project, providing backstopping of the project related to project financials, contractual oversight, and technical assistance. She has knowledge of international development monitoring and evaluation methodology gained through both academic coursework and the MCC Roads Project. Beatriz holds a master's in public administration from Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the University at Albany with a minor in Environmental Policy, a Bachelor of Science in International Politics and Government from Bocconi University, in Italy, and a Bachelor in Public Administration from Fundação Getulio Vargas, in Brazil. She is also working towards obtaining her Master of Science in Economics and Management of Government and International Organizations from Bocconi University.

IDG Home Office MEL Lead – Oleksandr Rohozynsky. Oleksander Rohozynsky will provide overall technical guidance to the Evaluation Team and will ensure all quality assurance processes are followed for all reports to meet IDG and USAID's quality standards.



ANNEX VIII-IX:

Meeting Notes

Meeting notes and transcripts will be sent to USAID as a separate attachment for internal use.

ANNEX XII:

Performance Indicators Analysis

REVIEW OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AND EVIDENCE FOR THE RESULTS OF THE RCBP INDICATORS

The Evaluation Team reviewed the monitoring data provided by IUCN as the main source of information for the progress toward the achievement of stated objectives and outcomes reported in Annual Reports. The Evaluation Team assessed the performance indicator data to verify the degree to which performance indicators provided sufficient data on RCBP outcomes and analyzed the supporting evidence collected for each measurement reported in the MEL Plan. The ET conducted the review and reached the following conclusions broken down by indicator, as described in the Performance Indicators Reference Sheets (PIRS):

EG.10.2-1: NUMBER OF HECTARES OF BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS WITH IMPROVED BIOPHYSICAL CONDITIONS AS A RESULT OF ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TOTAL PROJECT TARGET 2024	TOTAL ACHIEVED	% TOTAL PROGRESS	FY: 2022 TARGETS	YEAR 5 ACHIEVED	% ANNUAL PROGRESS
82,636	75,110	91%	75,503	75,110	99.50%

YEAR	TOTAL HECTARES	RÍO PAZ	RÍO MOTAGUA	KARATASKA LAGOON
Year 1 (2018)	0	0	0	0
Year 2 (2019)	0	0	0	0
Year 3 (2020)	0	0	0	0
Year 4 (2021)	56,386	0	56,386	0
Year 5 (2022)	75,110	21	75,089	0
Total Achieved	75,110	21	75,089	0

- **2021 results:** 56,386 hectares correspond to the lobster fishing area in the Caribbean of Guatemala, with improved biological conditions. 95% of the landed lobsters meet the minimum size criteria.
- **2022 results:** 75,110 hectares, of which 75,089 represent fishing closure areas in Guatemala and 21 hectares of reforested mangroves in El Salvador. Fish areas in Guatemala showed improved biophysical conditions indicated by catch size data of lobster, majua anchovies, snook, and snapper, through fish landing surveys. In these hectares, the catch size has improved due to the management of closures and fishing gear promoted by the Project, together with governance (pages 12 and 42).
- The indicator is not cumulative, even when the PIRS indicates the contrary.
- Biological monitoring of species in the Manabique – Cuyamel Omoa Sustainable Biological Corridor, is an activity carried out and reported as per the Biological Corridor management plan. The species monitored are yellow head parrot, manatee, and jaguar. Data collected through this monitoring serves to inform about the health status of the ecosystems of the area, using camera traps and transects, in coordination with CONAP. Nevertheless, these data are not used to calculate areas for any indicator.
- No areas with improved biophysical conditions were reported for Río Paz Guatemala, Río Motagua Honduras, nor Karataska Lagoon system.

EG.10.2-2: NUMBER OF HECTARES OF BIOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS UNDER IMPROVED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AS A RESULT OF USG ASSISTANCE

TOTAL PROJECT TARGET 2024	TOTAL ACHIEVED	% TOTAL PROGRESS	FY: 2022 TARGETS	YEAR 5 ACHIEVED	% ANNUAL PROGRESS
800,000	167,970	21%	167,866	167,970	101%

YEAR	TOTAL HECTARES	RÍO PAZ	RÍO MOTAGUA	KARATASKA LAGOON
Year 1 (2018)	0	0	0	0
Year 2 (2019)	102,590	0	102,590	0
Year 3 (2020)	23,086	1,015	22,071	0
Year 4 (2021)	165,792	?	55,445	?
Year 5 (2022)	167,970	167,970	0	0
Total Achieved	167,970	23,326	144,644	0

- **2019 results:** The project contributed to improve natural resource management of 102,590 hectares because of the seasonal fishing ban in the Caribbean of Guatemala and establishing minimum catch sizes.

- **2020 results:**

SITE	AREA	HECTARES
Motagua - Honduras	FRZ Pamuch	1,015
Río Paz - El Salvador	Los Cóbános Management Plan	21339
	Costa Brava	69
	La Chacara	82
	El Embarcadero	156
	Los Limones	210
	Los Mangos	82
	Garita Palmera	133
		23,086

- **2021 results:** 55,445 hectares correspond to the area of the Sustainable Biological Corridor reported by the Management Group for the Initiative. The ET was not able to identify where the other hectares are located.
- **2022 results:** 167,970 hectares reported under better management correspond to the following sites:

SITE	IMPROVED MANAGEMENT	EL SALVADOR	GUATEMALA	HONDURAS
Río Paz	Management Plan for Hawaii Multiple Use Area (AUMH). Monitoring restoration processes, production of blue carbon, and strengthening governance.		2,108	
Río Paz	Los Cobanos Natural Protected Area Management Plan, implementation of the National Plan for the Conservation of Cetaceans updating the fishing regime and strengthening governance.	20,763		
Río Paz	Local Sustainable Use Plans (PLAS). Establishment of catch quotas, mangrove restoration and reforestation, economic alternatives to improve the area's resources (beekeeping) and strengthening governance.	322		
Río Paz	Garita Palmera co-management plan (MARN ES - AMBAS), strengthen the governance and restoration activities.	133		
Río Motagua marine	Guatemalan Caribbean Seasonal Closure Periods, monitoring species and biophysical parameters, establishment of governance roundtables by species, communication campaign		102,590	

SITE	IMPROVED MANAGEMENT	EL SALVADOR	GUATEMALA	HONDURAS
Río Motagua terrestrial	Biological corridor; management plan and monitoring of emblematic species.		24,870	
Río Motagua	Biological Corridor Marine Area			2,471
Río Motagua	Biological Corridor Land Area			14,713
		21,218	129,568	17,184

EG.10.2-3: NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO IMPROVE THEIR ECONOMIC BENEFITS FROM THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND/OR THE CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY AS A RESULT OF ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TOTAL PROJECT TARGET 2024	TOTAL ACHIEVED	% TOTAL PROGRESS	FY: 2022 TARGETS	YEAR 5 ACHIEVED	% ANNUAL PROGRESS
3,800	3,042	80%	950	987	104%

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE	RÍO MOTAGUA	RÍO PAZ	KARATASKA LAGOON
Year 1 (2018)	0	0	0	0
Year 2 (2019)	537	0	158	379
Year 3 (2020)	788	0	137	651
Year 4 (2021)	730	367	92	271
Year 5 (2022)	987	987	0	0
Total Achieved	3,042	1,354	387	1,301

Source: Consolidado Beneficiarios final 2019-2022.xlsx

In FY2019 the Project conducted 271 interviews at all three sites. Information on monthly income was reported in the baseline document.

In 2020, 497 interviews were conducted. We have not found the results in the reports. Information from file: Consolidated Beneficiaries final 2019-2022.xlsx

The supporting documents sent regarding the number of people with improved economic income do not indicate the number of people, they only record the sales of the companies.

According to the PIRS file, the number of people reported corresponds to the number of registered members in the organizations benefiting from the project's support in biocommerce activities. According to the file BD_PBCostera_Rev.xlsx the membership of the organizations is only 541.

EG.10.2-4: NUMBER OF PEOPLE TRAINED IN SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND/OR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION WITH USG ASSISTANCE

TOTAL PROJECT TARGET 2024	TOTAL ACHIEVED	% TOTAL PROGRESS	FY: 2022 TARGETS	YEAR 5 ACHIEVED	% ANNUAL PROGRESS
1,500	922	62%	200	196	98%

FISCAL YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE	EL SALVADOR	GUATEMALA	HONDURAS
FY18	0	0	0	0
FY19	233	92	29	112
FY20	247	101	12	134
FY21	243	143	65	35
FY22	199	73	33	93
Total Achieved	922	409	139	374

RCBP counts all people who participate in training, and not just those who improve their knowledge.

Info from file: BD_CAPACITADOS_REPORTADOS1.xlsx

EG.10.2-5: NUMBER OF LAWS, POLICIES, OR REGULATIONS THAT ADDRESS BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND/OR OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES OFFICIALLY PROPOSED, ADOPTED, OR IMPLEMENTED WITH USG ASSISTANCE

TOTAL PROJECT TARGET 2024	TOTAL ACHIEVED	% TOTAL PROGRESS	FY: 2022 TARGETS	YEAR 5 ACHIEVED	% ANNUAL PROGRESS
25	20	800%	5	3	60%

YEAR	LAWS, POLICIES OR REGULATIONS	RÍO PAZ	RÍO MOTAGUA	KARATASKA
Year 1 (2018)	0			
Year 2 (2019)	4			
Year 3 (2020)	4			
Year 4 (2021)	5			
Year 5 (2022)	3			
Total Achieved	20			
Total project target 2024	25	9	7	4

List of laws and policies proposed, passed, implemented:

15. Indigenous Territorial Council Protocol for the management of natural resources (Muskitia-Honduras). Approved.
16. Seasonal fishing ban in the Caribbean area of Guatemala 2019 (Guatemala-Motagua). Implemented.
17. Co-management agreement in the Garita Palmera Protected Area (El Salvador-Río Paz). Implemented.
18. Agreement between INAB and OCRET to allow mangrove co-management areas access to the Probosque Incentive Law in Guatemala (Guatemala-Río Paz). Implemented.
19. Agreement to form the fisheries governance structure in Karataska (Muskitia-Honduras). Implemented
20. Regulations for the Fisheries Governance Committee in the Karataska Lagoon System (Muskitia-Honduras). Implemented
21. The Declaration of the Protected Area Cuyamel-Omoa with decree No.101-2019 (Honduras-Motagua). Approved
22. Agreement No. 126. National Plan Conservation for Cetaceans (El Salvador-Río Paz). Implemented
23. Laguna de Palos Contract within the Legal Decree 126-97 (Guatemala-Río Paz). Proposed
24. Karataska Fisheries Management Plan (Muskitia-Honduras). Approved
25. The seasonal fishing closure calendar for the Guatemalan Caribbean, with the approval of two signed ministerial agreements: Ministerial Agreement No. 292-2020 Spiny Lobster Ban; Ministerial Agreement No. 49-2021 ratifying the XVI Calendar for the seasonal fishing restriction period for fishing in the Caribbean (Guatemala-Motagua). Implemented
26. Legal opinion for a fisheries recovery zone in Motagua Viejo Guatemala. (Guatemala-Motagua). Proposed
27. Fishing Effort Limits for shrimp in the Guatemala Caribbean (Guatemala-Motagua). Proposed
28. Strategic plan for the Sustainable Biological Corridor (SBC) (Guatemala-Honduras, Motagua). Proposed
29. Update the Management Plan for the Los Cóbános Natural Protected Area Complex (El Salvador-Río Paz). Implemented
30. Updated to the Special Fishing Regime for Los Cóbános Natural Protected Area and RAMSAR Site (El Salvador-Río Paz). Proposed
31. Internal regulations to operationalize COAL and Ramsar Committees in Río Paz Guatemala (Guatemala-Río Paz) Approved 2022
32. Tariff Specifications for Los Cóbános Complex National Protected Area. Agreement No. 433, Official Gazette, Ministry of the Environment. (El Salvador-Río Paz). Approved 2022
33. Technical opinion and draft decree for National Cetacean Day in El Salvador (El Salvador-Río Paz). Proposed
34. XVII Calendar of Caribbean Vedas (Seasonal Fishing Restrictions, Ministry Agreement 84-886) 2022 (Guatemala-Motagua). Implemented

CUSTOM INDICATOR 1: NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO HAVE APPLIED IMPROVED TECHNOLOGIES OR MANAGEMENT PRACTICES WITH USG ASSISTANCE

The Evaluation Team reviewed the data provided by the IP as supporting evidence for the number of people reported as having applied improved technologies or management practices as per Year Five's Annual Report. This data contained 633 individuals who were reported to be applying improved technologies or management practices with USG assistance. It was compiled in Excel format and contained information on the year it was collected, including beneficiaries' personal information such as age, sex, income levels, and occupation. The IP clarified this registry was compiled by applying a self-declaration survey at the beginning, when registering beneficiaries, and at the end of the project enquiring what good practices participants applied, if any. Improved technology or management practices listed included complying with fishing quotas and with minimum fishing sizes, being a member of organized groups for sustainable resource exploration, as well as engaging in mangrove cleaning and desilting actions.

CUSTOM INDICATOR 2: NUMBER OF USG-ASSISTED ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS STRENGTHENED WHO SERVE BENEFICIARIES POPULATION

The Evaluation Team identified an inconsistency in the number of organizations reported as having been strengthened by the project as per the Annual Reports, which cumulatively reported 30 organizations in total, while the final Annual Report from Year Five listed 18 organizations. The IP clarified the 30 organizations listed in the progress reports refer to the total number of organizations that work with sustainable management. The reduced number of organizations refers only to those institutions that apply the biocommerce aspect of the project, not including those that only deal with sustainable management. It would be helpful to have this information clarified over the progress reports to ensure consistency over the years and that the numbers reported refer only to what is contained in the indicators' PIRS.

CUSTOM INDICATOR 3: NUMBER OF INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES AS A RESULT OF USG ASSISTANCE

The Year Five Annual Report indicates a total of 30,133 people as being "indirect beneficiaries" of the project. These were defined both as participants of community events and activities, those affected by online and in-person events and campaigns, viewers of online content as well as communities positively affected by the improvement in ecosystem services and benefits. The data and supporting evidence were collected by local organizations and institutions and subsequently reported to the IP. An example are the figures provided by indigenous governance councils such as in Laguna de Karataska where improved sustainable management practices were reported to benefit the entire community which depended on the natural resources identified. The IP also clarified that included in the number of "indirect beneficiaries" were those that received technical assistance, used training materials, methods, equipment, or other benefits from restoration of environmental services. It would be useful to differentiate categories of indirect beneficiaries when breaking down the data for this indicator in order to differentiate the number of people who were more actively involved in the project's activities and that might have been more intensely affected by project activities.

CUSTOM INDICATOR 4: NUMBER OF BEST PRACTICES FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF COASTAL MARINE RESOURCES ADOPTED, SYSTEMATIZED, PUBLISHED AND DISSEMINATED

RCBP defines best practices as “successful initiatives resulting from effective joint work between different actors involved, which once validated for their effectiveness, are replicated and adopted. This adoption required a small systematization exercise for the construction of a process of experiences, allowing the generation of knowledge through the analysis and reflection of these by actors who participated in them since their implementation.” The systematization of best practices was achieved by classifying these activities along three axis: gender analysis; capacity-building; and governance and participation. The best practices were properly documented and detailed in a final report titled “Sistematización de buenas prácticas 2018-2022” which clearly listed and described the good practices identified by the project. No perception survey was reported as being implemented in the context of this indicator.

Overall, the IP had sufficient monitoring data and supporting evidence to justify the numbers reported in Annual Reports, including the Year Five Annual Report as well as an appropriate level of disaggregation included in the compilation of the data. However, a more consistent reporting system for these indicators through the Annual Reports could facilitate the understanding of the data reported. In a number of instances indicators were misnumbered or provided information related to a different indicator. Further, providing a more detailed explanation of what each indicator would capture and the methodology to collect the data and report it would also be useful.

A final recommendation for compiling, systematizing, and reporting monitoring data would be to have a final MEL report containing the progress towards the achievement of each indicator by year and explaining the rationale and methodology behind the number reported for each. This would not only facilitate the assessment of the monitoring efforts in the context of the project but would also facilitate the extraction of lessons learned and best practices in the context of the RCBP. United States Agency for International Development El Salvador and Central America Mission (USAID/E-CAM).



ANNEX XIII:

Statement of Differences

The Implementing Partner, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), reviewed the evaluation report and accepted the findings and conclusions.

