

JAPAN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

**“Promoting Sustainable Natural Resource-Based Livelihoods in
Belize”**

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

BELIZE ENTERPRISE FOR SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGY

AND

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CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Belize's natural resource base holds the key to its developmental prospects in terms of sustainable growth and poverty reduction among the most vulnerable populations. The poorest people and communities in Belize are predominantly rural and their livelihoods depend largely on access to land and natural resources.

The Sustainable Natural Resource-Based Livelihoods (SNRL) Project is financed by the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) through the World Bank (WB). The Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology (BEST) has been selected as the implementing agency for this project.

SNRL is a four year project designed to provide much needed support to inland and marine communities located around protected areas in Belize. It is aimed at the involvement and empowerment of local communities in the co-management of Belize's natural resources in such a way that local people will become an integral part of the decision making process. Also, it will encourage these communities to protect and use the natural resources sustainably. It will make resources available to community members in the targeted areas in order to provide the necessary skills and initial capital for alternative sustainable livelihood ventures.

This Culturally Appropriate Consultation and Participation Plan is part of the environment and social management safeguards required by the World Bank's Operational Policy 4.10 in relation to Indigenous Peoples. It reaffirms the rights of citizens and indigenous peoples guaranteed in the Constitution of Belize and in international conventions ratified by the Government of Belize. The Plan establishes measures through which Indigenous Peoples and targeted communities who are adversely affected by the project will receive culturally appropriate social and economic benefits. Measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential adverse effects are also included.

The term "Indigenous People" for this Plan is used in a generic sense to refer to a distinct, vulnerable, social and cultural group possessing the following characteristics in varying degrees:

- (a) self-identification as members of a distinct indigenous cultural group and recognition of this identity by others;
- (b) collective attachment to geographically distinct habitats or ancestral territories in the project area and to the natural resources in these habitats and territories;
- (c) customary cultural, economic, social, or political institutions that are separate from those of the dominant society and culture; and
- (d) an indigenous language, often different from the official language of the country or region.

Given that the targeted communities are composed of diverse ethnic and cultural groups, the Plan takes a community-wide approach and as such includes all affected communities in addition to the considerations given to Indigenous Peoples as the potential challenges and opportunities they face are similar.

This document is organized as follows: Section 2 provides description of the project including the main components and activities. Section 3 identifies potential social impacts on Indigenous People and targeted communities. Section 4 presents the potential social impacts and mitigating measures. Section 5 outlines a participation plan including a culturally appropriate consultation process and gender considerations. Section 6 defines the restoration and mitigation plan. Section 7 outlines a grievance redressal mechanism and procedures. And finally, Section 8 closes with the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Consultation and Participation plan.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The **project development objective** of the Sustainable Livelihoods project is to promote viable and sustainable natural resource-based livelihoods for poor communities in Belize, thereby reducing anthropogenic pressures on the key natural resources through:

- 1) Support for social mobilization, facilitation and community co-management of natural resources;
- 2) Development of community based sustainable livelihoods of non-timber forest products in and around the selected protected areas;
- 3) Support for innovative models of green livelihoods of fishing communities through mari-culture development; and
- 4) Community led monitoring and knowledge dissemination.

2.2 PROJECT COMPONENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The project has four components, these being:

- a) Community management support.
- b) Sustainable use of non-timber forest products and related activities.
- c) Marine-based sustainable alternative livelihoods; and
- d) Project management, monitoring and evaluation and knowledge dissemination.

Community Management Support:

The objective of this component is social mobilization, facilitation, and community co-management to precede the livelihood investments under Components 2 and 3. The component would finance the following activities:

Sub-component 1.1 Community Mobilization and Co-management

(i) Community Alternative Livelihoods Plans: Community workshops will be undertaken in each target community to discuss and develop plans for specific livelihood activities to be supported. Using participatory approaches, alternative livelihoods would be selected and validated by communities in the targeted areas to invest in livelihood enhancing activities which support the functional integrity of the ecosystems.

(ii) Community-based decision making: This component will also support the development of mechanisms to ensure that local preferences dictate terms, roles, responsibilities, and program parameters are subject to co-production rules.

(iii) Gender Analysis: A focused gender analysis will be conducted on a range of livelihood plans to ensure gender equitable objectives are met.

Sub-component 1.2 Training

(i) Training: A comprehensive training program targeting men, women and youth will be implemented to facilitate the transition to the selected alternative livelihoods in order to strengthen the resilience of local communities and their livelihoods as they depend on the natural resources.

(ii) Natural Resources Vigilance Team: Involvement of local communities in monitoring and vigilance is an approach that can have a significant long-term impact. They are trained to help official agencies monitor and report violations of hunting laws and also participate in education and research activities in the protected areas. .

Sustainable Use of Non-Timber Forest Products and Related Activities

This component is aimed at supporting the community-based sustainable use of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in and around the selected protected areas. The grant would support the full cycle of commercialization of NTFP, i.e., planning, production, processing, packaging, branding and marketing, and distribution. The target communities are those residing in the buffer zones of protected areas where the people are poor and deforestation and overexploitation are a major threat to the natural resources.

Sub-component 2.1 Participatory NTFP Management Sub-projects

The Grant would support innovative NTFP activities that involve local communities in conservation by demonstrating direct links between sound development and conservation at local level, at the same time, show potential for generating environmentally sustainable sources of income for targeted communities. An examples of NTFP that has been shown to be viable in Belize but is not well developed is the extraction of “popta” seeds which come from the palmetto palm. Other examples include the cultivation of bay leaf palm (*Sabal muritiformis*) for thatching, xate palms (*Chamaedorea* sp.) for ornamental use, palmetto palm (*Acoelorrhapha wrightii*) for construction of fish and lobster traps, beekeeping and honey production, and cohune palm (*Attalea cohune*) for harvesting of thatch and palm oil.

(i) Sub-grants: A sub-grant per location would be provided as the initial capital investment for multiple NTFP sub-projects. The NTFPs that are suitable for cultivation/domestication and other natural resource-based livelihoods (e.g., mangoes, peppers, pig rearing) would also be supported to demonstrate a reduction in harvesting pressures on wild resources. The investments include support for building community farms/nurseries as well as for purchasing adequate equipment for cultivation, harvesting and/or processing.

(ii) Training: The communities would be provided with training to foster local trainers who would in turn train other participants of the NTFP activities. Training would cover the production techniques, development of management plan, harvesting techniques, quality control, information systems, product processing, and monitoring and vigilance.

(iii) Technical Assistance: The Grant would take advantage of existing knowledge by partnering with local organizations and the relevant ministries to provide technical assistance, information, seeds and plants to the participating communities. The Grant would also finance the identification and sharing of best practices, promotion of greater collaboration in areas such as marketing to build synergies, and improve capacity of communities.

Sub-component 2.2 Business development and marketing

This activity would assist the communities in the development of the business plan for NTFPs for each location. Included in this process would be the product and resource base information, marketing plan, organizational plan, operating plan, and financial plan.

Marine based Sustainable Alternative Livelihoods:

The objective of this component is to support innovative models of green livelihoods for fishing communities in Toledo, Corozal, and Stann Creek Districts through mari-culture development. The Government of Belize has placed very high priority on supporting measures that would provide viable livelihood opportunities for those communities that are heavily reliant on reef areas targeted for enhanced protection.

Sub-component 3.1 Participatory Marine-based Sustainable Livelihoods Sub-projects

(i) Sub-grants and Training for seaweed cultivation-based poly-culture: Sub-grants and training will be provided to marine-based sustainable livelihoods activities, selected and validated by the participating communities. With fish stocks being depleted, as a result of overfishing, pollution, climate change and other

factors, mari-culture is not only an alternative means of economic benefit for the communities but also a means of reducing pressure on the wild populations and to fill the demand for these products, while keeping the communities' sea faring traditions alive. The main thrust of this component is **Poly-culture** which is the growing of one or more species in conjunction with the primary target species of cultivation. In this case seaweed (the primary species) would be grown in conjunction with **lobsters, sea cucumber, conch, and crab**. Other potential marine-based activities for Grant support include:

(ii) **Harvesting crab claws:** A potential sub-project is to develop wild harvest of crab claws of the Florida Stone Crab (*Menippe mercenaria*). The species is distributed in northern Belize. There is open market and high demand for crab claws in Mexico. The claws are sold in the US for the price range between US\$ 16/pound and US\$ 33/pound depending on the claw size.

(iii) **Crab farming:** Channel Clinging Crab known as Caribbean King Crab (*Mithrax spinosissimus*) or Emerald crab (*Mithrax sculptusd*) have a potential for commercialization based on the knowledge and experiences in the Caribbean (Grenada). Caribbean King Crab is sold to local restaurant and Emerald crab for aquarium owners.

(iv) **Tourism:** It is also envisaged that marine tourism-based activities such as tour-guide training, whale shark tourism, dive master, sailing, would be selectively supported by the Grant based on their economic viability and sustainability.

Sub-component 3.2 Business development and marketing

This activity would assist the communities in the development of business plans for each mari-culture production. The same approach as NTFP would be envisioned, such as marketing plan, organizational plan, operating plan, and financial plan. A marketing expert would assist in the marketing of products including the identification of the potential markets, development of the marketing materials, identification of potential business partners and distributors where possible.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation and Knowledge Dissemination

This component will ensure that community members are equipped to monitor their projects and can learn from other projects being implemented in other areas of the country.

(i) Participatory Performance Monitoring. Community members will be trained to monitor progress and performance of the activities. The information collected by the community will be used as inputs to the regular supervision reports to be compiled by the Project Management Unit (PMU).

(ii) Baseline, Mid-term and Final Impact Evaluation Surveys. Multi-stakeholder surveys will be conducted at the start, mid-term, and end of project to collect adequate data to monitor the performance of the Grant activities, using the key outcome and output indicators.

(iii) Knowledge Dissemination for Replication: The Grant would support community-to-community exchange of experience gained through the implementation of sub-projects. This would not only benefit the communities, but also foster ownership of the communities.

(iv) Dissemination of Project Results. At the end of project, an event to disseminate results and lessons learned will be organized. The target audience is relevant government officials, policy makers, media and NGOs in addition to the project participants.

3.0 INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The Constitution of Belize recognizes indigenous peoples through its preamble where it affirms the rights of citizens. The preamble which was amended by Act No. 2 of 2001 makes explicit reference to the indigenous peoples of Belize. The relevant parts are quoted here:

*“WHEREAS the people of Belize ... (a) affirm that the Nation of Belize shall be founded upon principles which acknowledge ... faith in human rights and fundamental freedoms ... and the equal and inalienable rights with which all members of the human family are endowed ... (e) require policies of state which protect ... the identity, dignity and social and cultural values of Belizeans, including Belize’s **indigenous peoples** ... with respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings among nations.”* (Emphasis added)

The Constitution also guarantees the same protection of fundamental rights to indigenous peoples as it does for the rest of the citizens. Section 3 (a) guarantees that *“every person in Belize is entitled to ... life, liberty, security of the person, and the protection of the law.”* Citizens including indigenous people are also protected from discrimination under the provisions of Section 16 where it states that *“no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect and no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person or authority.”* Discrimination, under the Constitution is done when:

“...means affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by sex, race, place of origin, political opinions, colour or creed whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject or are accorded privileges or advantages which are not accorded to persons of another such description.”

As a member of the international community, Belize as a State is also required to protect the rights of indigenous people based on its commitments and subscriptions under international law and treaty obligations. Belize is a party to several international treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); and The Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS); all of which speaks to the importance of respecting the rights of indigenous peoples over their land and resources. In 1997, the Committee for the Elimination of the All Forms of Racial Discrimination called on all States:

“...to recognize and protect the rights of indigenous peoples to own, develop, control and use communal lands, territories and resources and where they have been deprived of their lands and territories traditionally owned or otherwise inhabited or used without their free and informed consent, to take steps to return these lands and territories.”

The United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIPS) also provides an international framework for the recognition and support for the rights of indigenous peoples. The UNDRIP was adopted by resolution of the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007. It is a non-legally binding aspirational document that describes both individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples around the world. It addresses issues such as culture, identity, language, health and education and provides guidance to states, the United Nations, and other international organizations on harmonious, cooperative relationships with Indigenous Peoples. It is based on the principles of equality, partnership, good faith and mutual respect. UNDRIPS specifically calls for the protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples under Article 26 where it states:

- 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.*
- 2. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.*
- 3. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.*

Similarly, the OAS Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man adopted in 1948 in Bogota, Colombia, also sets out human rights including cultural rights to be enjoyed by citizens of member states. While not necessarily binding, the provisions of the declaration have become a source of legal norm for Belize since becoming a member of the OAS in 1981. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) is an organ of the Organization of

American States (OAS) that promotes the observance and defense of human rights and to serve as a consultative organ of the OAS. The human rights advanced by the IACHR are enshrined in the American Convention on Human Rights and the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man among others. Indigenous people in Belize have used this mechanism to advance respect for their rights by the State.

3.2 MANDATE OF VILLAGE COUNCILS

All villages in Belize have a local governance system through a Village Council. The Village Council Act, Chapter 88, of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, establishes and empowers village councils to act on the good government and improvement of their respective villages. The Act allows community members to establish a village council through democratic elections that serves for a period of three years. All of the identified villages under consideration for this project have such village councils established. According to the Act, they are responsible for the general wellbeing of the community including the care and maintenance of public property and to make regulations to improve the quality of life for residents. Most village councils however remain weak and are challenged by limited capacity. They often do not have the financial resources or the leadership capacity to carry out their mandate.

3.3 MANDATE OF TOWN BOARDS

There are six administrative districts in Belize. Each district has a locally elected Town Board consisting of seven members. The Cayo district has two Town Boards. A Town Board is a democratically elected form of government for small municipalities. Each Town Board consist of a Mayor and six councilors whom are directly elected in municipal elections every three years. Town Boards are responsible for a range of functions including street maintenance and lights, drainage, refuse collection, public cemeteries, infrastructure, parks and playgrounds. Punta Gorda town, being the only town included in this project falls under this administration.

3.4 NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Much of the lives of the targeted communities are affected by local non-government and community based organizations. Non-government Organizations (NGOs) are required to register under the Non-Government Organizations Act, Chapter 315 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000. The Act defines an NGO, establishes minimum standards of operation and binds them to fiscal transparency. The Act requires NGOs to register under the Act and to submit annual financial reports to the government. It is uncertain whether NGOs in Belize fully comply with requirements of the Act.

NGOs are active in all the geographic areas targeted by this project. In Sarteneja, the Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation and Development (SACD) is an active local NGO that promotes environmental conservation and community development. SACD's membership is made up of other community based organizations, namely, the Sarteneja Fishermen's Association, the Sarteneja Tour Guides Association, Wildtracks and the Shipstern Nature Reserve among others. These groups collectively guide the development of the community and are used as a platform to voice the needs and concerns of the community. It gives the community very strong representation at the national level. This is crucial given that the Village Council itself appears to be relatively weak. In the South, the Southern Environmental Association (SEA) plays a similar role. It promotes marine conservation and sustainable development of fishing communities. SEA actively works with the Placencia community.

3.5 COOPERATIVES AND ASSOCIATIONS

The cooperative movement started in Belize in the late 1940s and is based on the principle of membership, democracy and economic participation. There are many cooperatives and associations in Belize. Associations working in the area this project is targeting include the Toledo Fishermen Association and the Sarteneja Fishermen Association. The Belize Fishermen's Federation (BFF) is attempting to bring together independent fishermen and their associations. It is however in its nascent stages and it is uncertain at this time how much impact it can really have given its weak structure and limited membership.

There are four Cooperatives that have membership within the targeted area. These are the Northern Fishermen Producers Cooperative Society Ltd., National Fishermen Producers Cooperative Society Ltd., Placencia Fishermen Producers Cooperative Society Ltd. and Toledo Fishermen Producers Cooperative Society Ltd. These four cooperatives are important members of the Belize Fishermen’s Cooperative Association (BFCA). While cooperatives provide an ideal platform for the representation of fishermen and farmers, they are challenged by weak capacity both in leadership and in management. Membership in cooperatives also seems to be on the decline as there are many members who are registered but are considered inactive. Nonetheless, having been around for more than fifty years, cooperatives remain an important organizational feature in Belize’s fishing and agriculture industries. All cooperatives are governed under the Cooperative Societies Act, Chapter 313 of the Laws of Belize.

4 PROFILE OF TARGETED COMMUNITIES

4.1 PROJECT AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

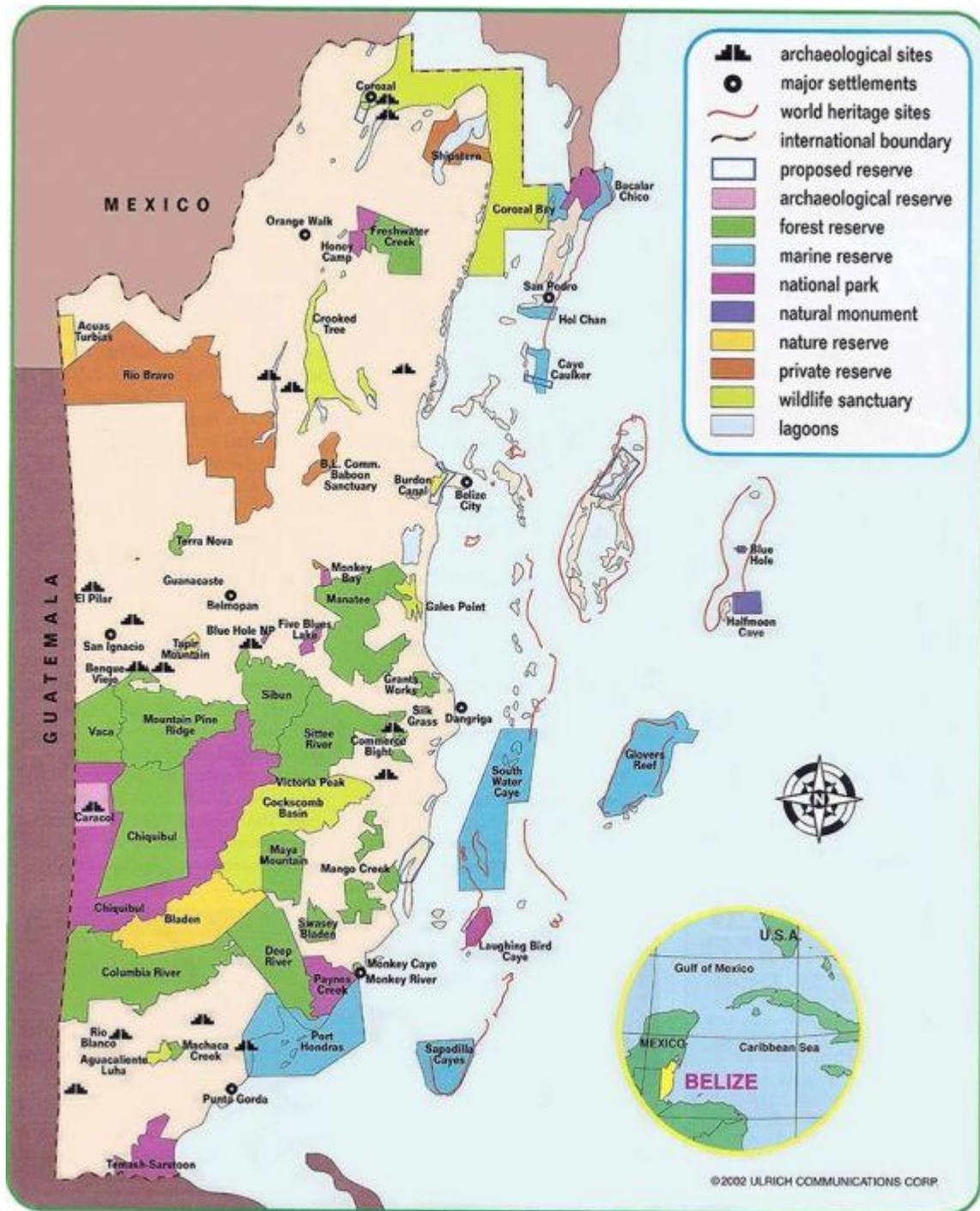
The Project will be implemented in all six districts of Belize including rural and urban communities, inland and coastal communities. These communities border several protected areas. The communities affected by the primary geographic focus of the project are identified and shown in Table 1 below. The identified communities are those whose residents are dependent in varying degrees on the targeted protected areas. Of the twenty five communities targeted, two are inhabited primarily by the indigenous Garinagu people, one is inhabited by the indigenous Maya people. Only one community is considered urban while the remaining twenty four are rural.

TABLE 1: PROJECTED TARGETED COMMUNITIES AND PROTECTED AREAS

COMMUNITY	PROTECTED AREA	RURAL/URBAN
<u>COROZAL DISTRICT:</u>		
Sartenja Village	Shipstern Nature Reserve	Rural
<u>ORANGE WALK DISTRICT:</u>		
San Felipe	Rio Bravo Conservation Management Area	Rural
San Carlos	Rio Bravo Conservation Management Area	Rural
Indian Church	Rio Bravo Conservation Management Area	Rural
<u>BELIZE DISTRICT:</u>		
Rancho Dolores	Spanish Creek Wildlife Sanctuary	Rural
Bermudian Landing	Community Baboon Sanctuary	Rural
St. Paul’s Bank	Community Baboon Sanctuary	Rural
Willows Bank	Community Baboon Sanctuary	Rural
Double Head Cabbage	Community Baboon Sanctuary	Rural
Isabella Bank	Community Baboon Sanctuary	Rural
Scotland Half Moon	Community Baboon Sanctuary	Rural
Flowers Bank	Community Baboon Sanctuary	Rural
<u>CAYO DISTRICT:</u>		
San Antonio	Chiquibul National Park	Rural
Seven Miles	Chiquibul National Park	Rural
Cristo Rey	Chiquibul National Park	Rural
<u>STANN CREEK:</u>		
Placencia Village	Gladden Spit, Silk Caye Marine Reserve, Sapodilla Caye Marine Reserve and Laughing Bird Caye National Park	Rural

<u>TOLEDO DISTRICT:</u>		
Bella Vista	Paynes Creek National Park	Rural
Bladen	Paynes Creek National Park	Rural
Trio	Paynes Creek National Park	Rural
San Isidrio	Paynes Creek National Park	Rural
San Miguel	Paynes Creek National Park	Rural
Punta Gorda Town		Rural
Barranco		Rural
Punta Negra		Rural
Monkey River		Rural

FIGURE 1: LOCATION OF PROTECTED AREAS



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4.2 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN PROJECT AREA

4.2.1 THE GARIFUNA

Belize's population is a mixture of various ethnicities and cultures each with its own unique history. The largest ethnic groups include the Mestizo, Kriol, Maya, Garifuna and Mennonite. The Mestizos are the largest group now making up approximately 50% of the entire population. Indigenous groups namely the Maya and Garifuna make up 10% and 4.6% respectively.

Punta Gorda, Barranco, San Isidrio and San Miguel are the four communities within the project area of impact that are considered indigenous. While indigenous peoples in Belize, the Garifuna and Maya, can be found in every district of the country they are concentrated mostly in the southern districts of Stann Creek and Toledo. The Garifuna are historically fishermen and farmers and many still practice this age-old seafaring tradition today. Their communities are mostly found along the coast of southern Belize and make up about 4.6% of the national population.

The Garifuna settled along the coast of southern Belize around the early 19th Century. After resisting British and French colonialism, they were exiled from the Caribbean Island of St. Vincent to Roatan, Honduras in 1797. From there they made their way up to the Caribbean coast of Guatemala and on to Belize. Their arrival to Belize is commemorated every year on the 19th of November, which is celebrated as a national holiday. The Garifuna trace their origins to the Carib and Arawak peoples of the Lesser Antilles and Africans who had escaped from slavery. The Garifuna people developed a strong maritime culture and lived chiefly from fishing and agriculture. Their communities can now be found along the coasts of Honduras, Guatemala and Belize.

The British colonial rulers in 1858 created a land tenure system that supported a system of indirect rule among indigenous Maya and Garifuna peoples. This system allowed the Maya and Garifuna peoples to govern their own settlements through their village *Alcaldes*. The *Alcalde* system was adopted from the Spanish system of local government. While they system has lasted within Maya communities to this day, this system is no longer practiced in Garifuna communities. Like most villages in Belize today, Garifuna communities are integrated into the Village Council system legally mandated by the Government of Belize. Each Village has a Chairperson assisted by the seven Councilors. Garifuna urban centers are managed by legally mandated Town Councils. Decisions regarding the communities are usually done in open community meetings.

While the Garifuna continue to recreate their culture over time, there are some longstanding traditional practices that continue to play a significant role within their communities. Garifuna women especially, even with their changing roles, remain prominent in traditional practices. Rituals for the dead, for example, often have female organizers. Ceremonies such as *dugu* and even other celebrations often have women as dancers, singers and *trancers*. The *buyei* or healer/spirit-medium positions are held by men.

Given their history and ancestry, Garifuna spirituality is a mixture of Christianity (Catholicism), African and indigenous beliefs. Belief in and respect for the ancestors is at the very core of their faith. They believe that the departed ancestors mediate between the individual the external world. The religious system thus implies certain responsibilities and obligations between the living and deceased. Food and drink should occasionally be laid out for the ancestors. With the incorporation of Catholicism in Garifuna spirituality, church masses are also requested as well. The ancestors often appear to make these requests to the individual in dreams. If the individual satisfies the ancestors then all will be well with him. If not, there will be disruption and this is usually manifested by the form of persistent and recurring misfortune (*lamiselu*) or illness that cannot be cured by conventional medical practices.

To perform the *dugu* ritual a spiritual leader, the *buyei*, leads the contact of a family with the deceased. As part of the preparations for the spiritual gathering, healing, drumming, dancing, and a feast of seafood, meat and cassava bread is prepared. The *dugu* ceremony is not an open public event but engages large sections of the community

through familial relations. It is not uncommon to have relatives from the other countries come in to participate. The ceremony generally lasts for about a week.

A death in the community also means that community members will be engaged in celebrating the life of the deceased through a customary practice called the *beluria*. Beluria consists of prayers for nine nights after the death occurred. While there is a solemn aspect that involves prayers and hymns, there is a part of ritual that actively celebrates the life of the deceased through storytelling, games, and eating and drinking. It is a sort of a farewell celebration to please the spirit of the departed.

Renowned Garifuna scholar, Roy Cayetano in an essay, *Songs and Rituals as a Key to Understanding Garifuna Personality* (1974) indicates that a strong sense of egalitarianism pervades in Garifuna communities. He goes on to explain how a strong orientation of the individual towards the kingroup creates a strong social pressure is brought on by a collective expectation. This strong sense of individual obligation to one's community is still experienced today.

In 2001, the creative culture of the Garifuna people was recognized internationally when UNESCO proclaimed their language, dance and music as a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity.

4.2.2. THE MAYA

The earliest record known of the Maya in Belize dates back to 2500 B.C. when they inhabited the area now known as Cuello. Belize formed only a small part of their great cultural society. Today, we have only a few Maya who are direct descendants of those ancient people. Occupying an area of several hundred miles, the Maya empire included the Mexican states of Yucatan, Campeche, Tabasco; the eastern half of Chiapas, Quintana Roo; most of Guatemala; Belize, and the western parts of El Salvador and Honduras.

The peak of Maya civilization – the Classic Period – when at least 400,000 Maya inhabited Belize, extended from about A.D. 250 to A.D. 1000. Shortly after this, the Maya societies declined due to still unspecified causes. Among the reasons put forward for the abandonment of their great cities are: soil exhaustion, disease, and the most probable one that the common people revolted and massacred the ruling class. The loss of administrative power, as well as the decline of social and economic systems, dismantled the Maya civilization and their splendid cities.

Many Maya still lived in Belize when the Europeans (Spanish and British) came in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries. Displaced by the British occupation, the Maya remained in the interior of the country until the mid-nineteenth Century when they began to resist the colonial invasion. They were defeated by the British in 1867 and 1872, after which they became integrated into the Belizean society but kept their culture to a great extent.

There are presently three groups of Maya living in various areas of Belize. The Yucatec Maya, who migrated from the south of Mexico, live in the northern districts and have merged to a great extent with the Mestizo population. The Mopan Maya came from San Luis in the Peten region of Guatemala, and settled in San Antonio, Toledo. Today, they can also be found in Santa Cruz, San Jose, Santa Elena, and Pueblo Viejo in the Toledo District; as well as Santa Rosa, Maya Mopan, and San Roman in the Stann Creek District. The Mopan Maya of the western area of Belize are a mixed Peten and Yucatecan origin. One of their larger villages is San Jose Succotz in the Cayo District. Immigrating from San Pedro Corcha in Guatemala, the Kekchi Maya inhabit several villages in the Toledo District, including: Dolores, Otoxa, Crique Sarco, San Lucas, Santa Teresita, San Benito Poite, Machaca, and Mabilha.

The Maya language group today includes about twenty diverse, but related, dialects. There are two Maya languages spoken in Belize: Northern Maya, or Yucateco, is the idiom of the greater part of the rural population of the northern districts. A distinct dialect variously called Itza or Mopanero is spoken by the San Antonio Maya of the Toledo District. Another Maya language, spoken mostly in the southern villages of San Pedro Columbia, Dolores, and Crique Sarco, is Kekchi. Many Maya people speak English as well as their mother tongue, and mainly through long contact with the Spanish culture of Mexico and Guatemala, also speak Spanish.

The life of the Maya, especially those living in the south, centers around agriculture; and their very existence is bound with their crops which they grow in clearings called milpas. The most common food of the Maya is corn, prepared in a variety of ways. Tortillas and tamales are eaten in all areas; and caldo (chicken soup) is popular in the south. Most Maya drink coffee, and other popular drinks made from corn include posol, sacha, and pinol. Beans, pork, and fish are eaten, as well as game meat, and a variety of fruits.

The mode of dress tends to be more “modern” or “western” for the men; while the women in most Kekchi villages wear embroidered blouses with long skirts. The Maya of the Toledo District have several musical instruments which are all locally made. These include: the harp, guitar, marimba, violin, flute, kettle drum, and rattle. All the dances they perform at the important feasts are by masked dancers, and include the Cortez, the Moor, the Deer, and the Devil dances. In the west, dances are held about once a month in the villages, and the marimba is the only instrument used. Succotz village celebrates an annual fiesta which lasts for nine days, in honor of its patron saint, San Jose.

A tradition which is unique to the Maya is the appointment of an alcalde, or headman, in each village. His main function is to ensure that the laws of the village are not broken, and in this relation he can try cases and impose fines.

The Maya believe that the air is filled with the souls of the dead, and that the forests and rivers contain deities including the Tata Duende, Alux, La Sirena, and Sisimito.

Comprising about ten (10) percent of the population, the Maya live largely in spaciouly laid-out villages usually with rivers and streams flowing next to the village. Some settlements are in close proximity to sites of the earliest Maya settlements with their ceremonial construction. Names like Altun Ha, Xunantunich, Cuello, Lubaantun, and Lamanai are some of the sites still maintained as tourist attractions, and as reminders of the magnificent past of the Maya.

4.3 GENERAL POPULATION

As identified above, the communities to be affected by the project are mostly rural communities with one urban area. Rural communities present a unique case given that some are almost entirely dependent on agriculture, fishing and marine resources for their livelihoods. The table below (Table 2) indicates the population of project-affected communities.

TABLE 2: Population of Targeted Communities

Protected Area	Community	Households	Male Headed	Female Headed	Population
Paynes Creek National Park	Bella Vista	827	636	191	3508
	Bladen	110	98	12	466
	San Isidrio	73	71	2	674
	San Miguel	96	88	8	537
	Trio	188	183	5	899
Community Baboon Sanctuary	Bermudian Landing	43	28	15	183
	St. Paul’s Bank	37	29	8	153
	Willows Bank	46	34	12	185
	Double Head Cabbage	102	55	46	406
	Isabella Bank	37	32	6	143
	Scotland Half Moon	70	58	12	259
	Flowers Bank	31	27	4	121
Gladden Spit and Silk Caye Marine Reserve, the	Placencia	644	451	193	1,752

Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve and Laughing Bird Caye National Park					
	Barranco	54	38	15	157
	Punta Gorda Town	1358	841	517	5351
	Punta Negra				43
	Monkey River	37	34	3	196
Spanish Creek Wildlife Sanctuary	Rancho Dolores	48	27	21	217
Chuiquibul National Park	San Antonio	381	328	53	1847
	Cristo Rey	212	2	45	874
	Seven Miles	96	82	14	482
Rio Bravo Conservation Management Area	San Felipe	332	280	52	1500
	San Carlos	29	26	2	138
	Indian Church	66	51	15	267
Shipstern Nature Reserve	Sarteneja	431	395	36	1824

Data is based on 2010 Census Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

As indicated in Table 2, the largest communities within the footprint of the project are Punta Gorda, Bella Vista and Placencia in the south, Sarteneja and San Felipe in the north and San Antonio in the west. These communities represent different ethnic groups namely, Garifuna, Mestizo, Creole and Maya. The majority of these communities depend on agriculture, fishing and tourism. Placencia is heavily involved in tourism. Punta Gorda is the only urban area targeted by this project.

Inland rural communities depend largely on agriculture while coastal communities are very involved in fishing. Since 2004 there has been a steady increase in the number of fishers who are issued with fishing licenses. In 2011, there were 2,582 licensed fishermen, which show an increase of 4.5% compared to 2010. Seven hundred and fifty two boat licenses were also issued in 2011. There are approximately 1,377 registered fishing vessels currently involved in the fishing industry.

4.4 ETHNIC COMPOSITION AND SOCIAL GROUPING

4.4.1 MESTIZOS

The northern communities of Sarteneja, San Felipe, Indian Church and San Carlos are all located within the Corozal and Orange Walk districts and share a common history, culture and ethnicity. These communities are inhabited predominantly by the Mestizos. Mestizos, who are descendants of indigenous Maya and European Spaniards, first came into northern Belize from southern Yucatan, Mexico as refugees of the Caste War of Yucatán in 1848. The Caste War was a Maya uprising against the Spaniards but it eventually became a war against the Mestizos. The Mestizos, mixed Spanish and Maya (indigenous), were allies of the Spaniards, and thus became targets of attacks by the Mayas. They came over to Belize to escape from these attacks and eventually settled in most of northern Belize. The communities of Bella Vista, Trio and Bladen in the south are also inhabited by primarily Mestizos but they are largely immigrants from neighboring El Salvador whom came to Belize originally as refugees. Many today are economic migrants working in the banana plantations.

Even though Belizean Mestizos of the north share Mayan ancestry they do not as an ethnic group self-identify as indigenous peoples. Most consider themselves Mestizos and do not claim indigenous status. While a few speak the Maya Yucatec language, the predominant language spoken is Spanish.

4.4.2 URBAN AND RURAL CREOLES

Belize City is the country's largest population center in the country with a population of approximately 53,532. It also serves as the main commercial hub for the country. Given that it was the capital city until the capital was moved inland to Belmopan in 1970, it represents a historical center as well. The population of Belize City, like that of other large cities is mixed, with all of Belize's ethnic and cultural groups represented. Nonetheless, Belize City remains a predominantly Creole area. Belizean Creoles are afro-descendants of British colonialists and African slaves. Creoles continue to represent a significant segment of Belize's population second only to Mestizos, who are the largest group, in terms of population size. Belize City is also considered the commercial capital of the country as most of the countries trading companies, banking and light manufacturing industries are headquartered there.

Placencia, Rancho Dolores, Bermudian Landing, and all the communities in the Belize River valley are ethnically similar to Belize City and are considered old logging and fishing villages. Placencia is now a major tourism destination and is becoming more ethnically mixed with more people of different backgrounds moving into the area. There is a large expatriate community residing in Placencia mostly from North America and Europe who are involved in tourism development as well. Rancho Dolores, Bermudian Landing, St. Paul's Bank and the other communities in the Belize River valley were traditionally logging communities. These communities now primarily practice agriculture.

4.5 CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

4.5.1 CULTURAL EVENTS

Rural communities in Belize and especially indigenous communities have strong cultural practices that distinguish them either individually or as a collective. These traditions and practices are important aspects of community life. They also help to shape and perpetuate their collective identities. While some cultural events tend to be geared towards tourism, they are nonetheless locally produced, authentic and provides a platform for cultural expression.

Placencia, to augment its tourism product, holds the annual Placencia Lobster Fest, and the Placencia Peninsula Arts Festival. These events bring together large groups of locals and visitors to showcase local cuisine, art and entertainment. Sarteneja in the north holds an Annual Easter Regatta, which is a boat race. The boats used in the race are handcrafted wooden sailing boats and is a showcase of boating skills as well as boat craftsmanship. Recently, additional entertainment activities have been added on to the event. It attracts a large turnout of people especially from the northern districts. Many of the villages in the Belize River Valley such as Bermudian Landing participate in the Baron Bliss Day River Regatta and have activities around this time. St. Paul's Bank is now holding an annual "firehearth" day, where all types of creole food are prepared over a wooden fire.

For the Garifuna communities, celebrations such as Garifuna Settlement Day are highly significant. Since 1943, November 19th has been a public holiday in the Stann Creek and Toledo districts. From 1977 it has been a county wide public and bank holiday. It entails a week-long celebration of arts, culture and entertainment. Punta Gorda, Barranco, and Dangriga are some of the main areas where this is held in Belize.

4.5.2 FISHING PRACTICES

Over time fishing communities and families have developed unique practices to support their engagement in fishing. For instance, not every fisherman owns a boat. There is a traditional practice within fishing communities where a boat captain allows other fishermen on his boat in order to fish. Arrangements are made where fishermen are allowed to fish along with the boat captain and they pay him either in cash or in kind (fish). Similarly, fishermen often trade goods when they are out at sea. For instance if a fisherman is running out of ice he may trade his gas for ice and vice versa. This form of reciprocity is important to the lifestyle of being a fisherman. The engagement of family members to support fishing activities is also common. At times entire families join the male fishermen on fishing expeditions. At other times, they are involved in preparing the fishermen for their fishing trips. This includes preparing gear and food for such trips.

Fishers have also developed informal rules for fishing. For example, it is prohibited to pull of the trap of other fishermen and small fish should be returned to the waters. Fishermen also feel that catch should be cleaned away from where it was caught in order not to drive other fish away. Similar *do's and don'ts* have also been developed by Garifuna fishermen. These include acknowledging one's first catch for the day is special. To do this, one should scrape a few of its scales into the sea to guarantee catching more. Smaller fish should be put back into the sea so they could be feed for the bigger ones. One should not contaminate the waters by throwing back dead fish. It scares the fish away. Some men further believe that they attract sharks, which in turn chase away the fish normally caught.

4.5.3 AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

The majority of the farmers in Belize, especially in the smaller rural communities practice small scale agriculture referred to as "milpa" using the slash and burn method. Larger farmers are now getting more into mechanization. The communities this project is targeting practice small scale agriculture. The average size of a farm is approximately 2-3 acres. Vegetables, onion and potatoes are primarily grow in the north, while central Belize produce vegetables, onion and a variety of fruits. Western Belize produce vegetables, potato, peanuts and grains. In the south farmers cultivate pineapples, mango, rice, beans, and corn.

4.5.3 GENDER DIMENSIONS

Fishing in coastal communities is generally dominated by men as they are usually the ones who go out to sea, sometimes for extended periods of time. Most of the members of fishing associations and

cooperatives are also men. While there are a few female fishers who hold a fisher's license, it would appear that women perform mostly social reproductive roles such as housework. It appears as if traditional fishing is a responsibility that is shared by both men and women even though this is done through distinct roles.

Before men go out at sea, the women are the ones who usually prepare them for the extended trips at sea. Women wake up early in the morning, usually around 3:00 am to not only prepare food but also to assist in preparing the fishing gears and supplies enough to last over several days. This entails packing ice in large coolers, clothing, raincoats, and GPS equipment. It is only after men leave for their fishing trip that the women begin to prepare food for their children and prepare them for school. There are instances however where women accompany the men on fishing trips. On such trips, women engage in every aspect of fishing from picking up conch to boat handling. They however maintain their gender roles as they are often expected to prepare meals on fishing expeditions as well.

Similar to fishing, agriculture in rural communities is usually seen as a male dominated activity. Although the men play the primary role and do most of the manual labour, the women and the children do assist especially in times of planting and harvesting. In instances where the men have to travel long distances to get to their milpa or plantation, the women wake early in the morning and prepare meals for them to take with them. Apart from the cash crop cultivated by the men, women in these communities might have a small garden next to their homes where they grow herbs, hot pepper and some vegetables for easier access by the home.

The women also prepare themselves early in the morning to head out to the market to sell agricultural produce and fish at the local markets. While most of the fish products, especially conch and lobster are sold to the cooperatives, fin fish is usually sold at the local market. In some instances, women also go out into the community to sell fish. Fish that is not sold is shared among family members and friends. Agricultural products are mainly sold at the local markets. Anecdotal evidence shows that in many instances women helping their husbands have to be at the markets from two in the mornings to ensure they have a spot to sell from or some sleep at the market.

Another key role women have is the management of the family finances. This is especially critical when the fishermen need to return to sea immediately during open season. Women are the ones most often left with the responsibility to purchase household needs such as groceries, pay utility bills, pay down debts and pay for the cost of health care and educational services for the children. In farming communities, women are the ones usually whom have to budget to ensure that the cash or income lasts from one harvest to the other. It is apparent that women have a direct and meaningful role in the agricultural and fishing practices of rural communities in addition to their social reproductive and community roles.

4.6 SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

4.6.1 LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Residents from the targeted communities are educated formally mainly to the primary level though there are some who have completed secondary school. According to the Baseline survey conducted for this project, 58.9% have completed primary education and 23.9% have completed secondary education. 9.6% has attained tertiary level education. 5.3% had no formal education at all. The low level of education at times has proven to be an impediment for organization and proper representation of their interests to policy-related bodies. While limited in formal education, residents are very knowledgeable about the numerous aspects of fishing and agriculture ranging from reading the tides and weather, identifying rich fishing grounds, sea navigation, rich soils and methods of pest control.

4.6.2 INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

According to the Baseline Survey conducted for this project, the majority of the respondents depend on agriculture as a source of income. 27.2% of the men interviewed depend on agriculture while 11.1% of the female interviewed depend on agriculture. This was found mainly in the inland communities which outnumber the coastal communities. The communities of San Antonio, Seven Miles and Cristo Rey in the west are very involved in agriculture production. This is also the case for Trio, Bella Vista, Bladen, San Isidrio and San Miguel in the south. The communities in the Belize River valley area also depend to a large extent on agriculture but many are employed in the private sector. The communities of San Carlos ad Indian Church in the north are also involved in agriculture but are involved in other sectors as well such as tourism.

According to the survey many are also involved in fishing. 12.2% of the males interviewed were involved in fishing while 2.2% of the females reported they were also involved in fishing. This is especially true for the coastal areas such as Punta Gorda, Monkey River, Punta Negra, Placencia and Sarteneja.. However, many of the fishermen in Sarteneja and Placencia are also involved in agriculture, small livestock rearing and tourism as a means of supplementing their income. 7.6 percent of the males interviewed reported that they were involved in tourism while 12.7% of the females reported that they are involved in tourism as a means of livelihood. This was found mainly in areas such as Placencia, Sarteneja, Punta Gorda, and Bermudian Landing.

The northern fishing villages are the ones most heavily dependent on fishing. There are traditional fishermen who engage in fishing only as their means of livelihood. However, most fishermen engage in tourism related activities along with their main fishing activity. During the tourist season (November to April) they are involved in tour guiding, working at resorts or other like activities. They return to fishing once the season is over. Similarly, there are others who, when there is open season for conch and lobster, leave tourism temporarily to take advantage of the open season. There are others who add farming to their livelihood strategies and also take up other forms of employment in the construction industry or as wage labourers at nearby resorts.

The average income of the targeted communities is BZ\$1,100.73 per month. The larger communities generally earn the highest income. The income of fishermen generally ranges from BZ\$2,000 to BZ\$30,000 per annum. Some studies have shown that the average fishermen income per capita is around BZ\$16,000 per annum (BZ\$1,333 per month).

4.6.3 POVERTY AND HOUSING

The 2009 Country Poverty Assessment report shows that 41.3% of Belizeans are poor. Poverty in rural areas is higher compared to urban areas nationally. Rural poverty was at 55.3% while urban poverty was at 27.9% of the total population living below the poverty line. All of the communities targeted in this project are urban based with the exception of Punta Gorda town. The reports also shows that the districts with the highest incidence of poverty are Toledo at 46.4% followed by Corozal at 46.1%.

The targeted communities generally fit this characteristic of being poor. All of these communities depend to a large extent on subsistence farming and small scale fishing. Many of the residents seek employment outside their communities as manual labourers or factory workers. Although Punta Gorda town is an urban community, it is also considered poor, not having many economic activities. According to a CARICOM regional study, about 45% of fishing households in Belize are poor or vulnerable to poverty. Of all the targeted communities, Punta Gorda town, Placencia and Sarteneja are relatively the most developed. Sarteneja is the most dependent on fishing. Punta Gorda town and Placencia seem to be more diversified.

The majority of residents from the rural communities own the houses they live in though not all are constructed of durable materials. In these areas, houses are constructed of bay leaves, wood or pimento, the majority having zinc roofs. Some own ferro-concrete homes while the homes of others are made of partial concrete and wood with zinc roofing. The quality of the houses range from having modern amenities to those that are very basic. In Punta Gorda town and Sarteneja most of the homes are made of concrete with zinc roofing and also have modern amenities including electricity and potable running water. All of the targeted communities have access to electricity with the majority having access to potable water.

4.7 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

4.7.1 BASIC NEEDS

Most of the communities under consideration for this project have fair access to basic services to meet their basic needs. Given the disperse and isolated characteristics of rural communities in general they often do not have access to immediate health care services and usually need to travel outside of their communities to access them. Where available, the quality of services is often lacking. Seeking health care is often a time consuming process and sometimes public facilities do not have basic medications.

Access to potable running water in Belize in general is high. The majority of rural communities have access to potable water through established community water systems that have good storage and distribution capacity. Even where there is a water system, some community members continue to use small private wells or vats to collect rain water. Proper sanitation on the other hand is not as high as the potable water coverage as rural communities do not have sewage systems. There are households that have site septic systems around their homes and use an indoor toilet while others use outdoor pit latrines. A recent study by MDG Score Card released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Belize shows there is need to improve sanitation in both urban and rural areas. The share of the national population with improved sanitation facilities was approximately 70% in 2008.

All of the communities under consideration have access to primary education facilities and services. Each village has a primary school at the minimum while Punta Gorda and Sarteneja have secondary schools within the village. Urban areas have several primary schools, secondary schools and even tertiary level educational facilities.

According to the most recent Population Census (2010), liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) remains the most popular source of cooking fuel in Belize. In rural areas this is supplemented by the use of charcoal/firewood.

5.0 COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Community consultations were conducted prior at the project formation and development stage and after project development. A large component of this project is that of Community Mobilization and Sensitization. To ensure that communities are involved in all stages of project development and implementation a consultant will be hired to work on the initial mobilization.

The Consultant will be responsible for:

- Conducting community mobilization workshops with special consideration to women, youth and vulnerable groups;
- Discuss, select and develop plans for alternative livelihoods activities with the community members;

- Establish participatory decision making mechanisms for the management of livelihood activities in each community;
- Assist communities at workshops with developing and prioritizing a menu of sustainable livelihood projects;
- Assist in the identification of community members whom can act as Community Coordinators to support the coordination of project activities in each community; and
- Identify the training needs required for the implementation of the selected livelihood activities.

To ensure this is accomplished the Consultant will conduct the following activities:

- Visit with as many as possible community leaders, (village council, women’s groups, youth groups, sports group, PTA, CBOs and NGOs) in each community/area.
- Visit existing livelihood projects.
- Invite community members to workshops via posters and flyers distributed at bus stops, schools, community centers, post offices, village council members and other group members.
- Plan workshops at the time most convenient to community members.
- Ensure the participation of all groups in each community.

6.0 PARTICIPATION PLAN

6.1 CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE CONSULTATION

The World Bank recognizes that the identities and cultures of Indigenous Peoples are inextricably linked to the lands on which they live and the natural resources on which they depend. These distinct circumstances expose Indigenous Peoples to different types of risks and levels of impacts from development projects, including loss of identity, culture, and customary livelihoods, as well as exposure to disease. In considering the objectives, approach and potential impacts of the project, the consultation protocol is being expanded to include and consider non-indigenous communities as well since the principles also apply to them. This protocol is to ensure that indigenous peoples and communities impacted by the project will have an opportunity to provide their views and feedback in a culturally appropriate manner during project implementation as well as to ensure access to appropriate project benefits.

6.1.1 CONSULTATION PRINCIPLES

The World Bank’s Operational Policy 4.10 requires an engagement of such peoples in a process of free, prior, and informed consultation. Free, prior and informed consultation is defined as follows:

- Free – the engagement should be free of coercion, corruption, interference and external pressures. Community members should have the opportunity to participate regardless of gender, age or standing.
- Prior – the engagement should be during the design phase and prior to the execution of any implementation activities. Times of engagement should be mutually agreed in advance.
- Informed – information used in consultation should be timely, sufficient, and accessible and should cover the potential impacts of the project whether positive or adverse.
- Consultation - the consultation process is to be carried through in good faith, is

meaningful and that it meets the conditions set out by the consultation principles, and established steps must be followed prior to initiation of consultation activities.

The other critical aspect is that any such consultations must be carried out in a manner that is gender and culturally appropriate. Culturally appropriate is defined as ensuring that information is provided in the appropriate language, traditional decision-making processes are respected and seek to maximize community input into the process regardless of age or gender.

6.1.2 INITIATING CONTACT

Local communities have established systems of leadership. Often this is established through the Village Councils which is a local governance system mandated by Belizean law and the Alcalde as is the case for Maya communities. Considerations should also be given to other forms established by the affected groups such as their Cooperatives and Associations. Nonetheless, the leaders in these positions are to be approached first and any arrangements for meetings are to be done through them.

The steps are as follows:

- Identify community leaders and representative organizations.
- Contact and make request for meeting with community members or general membership.

When making request, provide a rationale for the meeting and explain the importance of having their participation. Community leaders get meeting requests all the time and so help them to distinguish the purpose of calling them together. If leaders are clear on why the meeting should be held, it helps to motivate them to call on others to attend.

The notice of meeting should be made at least one calendar week prior to date of the meeting. Undertaking activities including consultations within communities without the notification of community leaders is considered disrespectful by both indigenous and non-indigenous communities in Belize. Failure to follow these steps can lead to the process being stalled or opposed outright by community leaders who often have considerable influence.

6.1.3 PROVISION OF INFORMATION

The affected communities must be provided with all relevant information about the project activities in a culturally appropriate manner at each stage of its implementation. The most important element regarding the format and medium of delivering the information should be based on an appreciation of the characteristics of the target community. The following will be observed:

- The information should be concise and technical terminology used in project concept and other documentation must be simplified.
- Use the most appropriate language. In northern Belize, especially in the rural areas and in immigrant communities, it is expected that oral presentations will be done in Spanish and translators must be made available during all sessions. If the facilitator has a strong command of the Spanish language then a translator is not necessary. In the affected Garifuna communities, given their high level of use of the English language, presentations need not be done in Garifuna. However if community

members would appreciate expressing themselves and being spoken to in Garifuna, then this should be accommodated. Similarly, in Mayan communities, the meetings may be done in the English language, unless otherwise requested. In many instances, translations are done by the community members for those whom do not understand English. A translator should always be present to be utilized if the need arise.

- The sessions must be participatory and should use formats that take advantage of various learning styles and incorporate adult learning principles.
- The information must be delivered in an objective format.

6.1.4 MEETINGS LOGISTICS

Given that the majority of the communities being targeted are rural communities primarily involved in subsistence farming and fishing, the following logistical considerations should be observed in order to maximize their participation.

- Hold meetings at night or on weekends. If the consultations are being done during fishing seasons it is likely that fishermen will not be available during the day or during the week. Farmers will usually be available in the evenings. Follow community leaders' guidance on when is the best time to hold meetings.
- Identify an appropriate venue. The locations of the meetings must be the most suitable but also the most neutral. Some locations in the communities are associated with special interests groups and selecting such a location may deter some from attending. The location should also allow maximum participation from those who attend. Usually a community center provides the most suitable location in rural communities.

6.1.5 COMMUNITY DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Usually, decision making in rural communities or small organizations is done by consensus. While some decisions can be made immediately, this very seldom occurs. Unless it is a matter that community leaders feel that they can take, decisions will often be deferred in order for them to think through the matter and engage their community members or general memberships before coming to a conclusion. In this case, the community's process of decision making must be respected in the following way:

- If communities decide they wish to consult their membership before giving a final perspective on the various aspects of the project, they should be allowed a reasonable amount of time for a response to be given. Allow them to set a reasonable date on which a response can be expected.
- Set up a follow up meeting where necessary and establish who to communicate with.
- Allow time for community members present at meetings to discuss the topics among themselves without interference from the facilitators. Usually a general consensus emerges from these discussions.
- It is reasonable to expect a delay in getting a response if the topics being discussed are being shared with them for the first time.
- Ensure there is follow up with the established points of contact.

6.1.6 CULTURAL TRADITIONS AND PRACTICES

Rural communities in Belize and especially indigenous communities have strong cultural practices that distinguish them either individually or as a collective. These traditions and practices are important aspects of community life. They also help to shape and perpetuate their collective identities and as such must be respected.

One of the main ways indigenous people and rural communities manifest their culture is through community gatherings and celebrations. These events normally engage the entire community and as such focus on other activities are often deferred. For the consultations to ensure maximum participation while respecting their culture it is important to consider the following:

- For the Garifuna communities, celebrations such as the 19th of November (Garifuna Settlement Day) are highly significant and must be respected. There should be no consultation activities arranged around this time.
- Similarly, the *dugu* ceremony which is done periodically in Garifuna communities, while not a public event, engages large sections of the community through familial relations. This must be respected and consultation activities should not be carried out during this time. The *dugu* ceremony is a healing ritual to appease ancestral spirits through a celebration and a feast. It generally lasts for about a week.
- A death in a Garifuna community also means that community members will be engaged in celebrating the life of the deceased according to local customs. A death in all rural communities implies that a large part of the community will be in mourning. There should be no consultations or project activities arranged during this time.
- Other communities such as Placencia and Sarteneja have events and festivals, Placencia Lobster Fest and Sarteneja Easter Regatta for example, that occur only in those communities. Consultations meetings should be planned taking these events into account.

6.2 GENDER CONSIDERATIONS

The majority of the traditional fishers, farmers and main breadwinners in rural communities are men. However since this project seeks diversification of livelihoods and the inclusion of women and youth, there should also be focus on other members of the household. Some effects on women will be indirect, as wives or children of fishers and farmers, but others will be directly focused on women's participation in sub-project activities in various ways.

In order to ensure their participation in the implementation process, the following points will be considered:

- Where necessary, hold meetings separately with women to ensure their participation. This is especially important in Mayan communities;
- Conduct visits to the home to conduct interviews or surveys to reach women who are not able to attend a community meeting;
- When inviting to meetings, ensure that the venue is convenient considering that often they have young children to care for;
- Hold meetings in the late mornings or early afternoon as these times are the most convenient ; and
- Ensure that the most appropriate language is used.

Women must also be given the opportunity to participate in alternative livelihoods sub-projects as they are a critical part of the household.

7 MITIGATION AND FACILITATION PLAN

The overall aim of the restorative and mitigation measures is to diversify the livelihoods of the affected users of the reef and MPAs. The Project will support the development of community-based income generating ventures that can leverage the opportunity cost of fishing and provide an alternative livelihood opportunity. The process of developing these ventures and alternative livelihood strategies will be participatory and will be underlined by equity and community driven decision-making. The business ventures will be developed through a guided process as each venture will have a business plan to support the development of products and services all the way through to distribution and service delivery.

The process to achieve this will naturally be starting with mobilizing affected community members and their households to ensure that they have the space and opportunity to consider the options available to them. Because the alternative livelihoods component of the project is taking a community-based approach, then the affected persons within their respective communities will have access to project resources on equal, fair and inclusive terms. The community mobilization aspect will provide the extra support needed by community members (indigenous and non-indigenous) to be able to effectively participate by supporting their engagement and planning activities. The activities to achieve this are as follows:

7.1 COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND PLANNING

Targeted community members will be supported to mobilize themselves in order to identify viable livelihoods activities in a participatory manner. The approach will help to ensure that there is equity in the process and that all affected users including vulnerable groups, such as women, elderly and indigenous peoples, have the opportunity to become involved in and benefit from alternative livelihoods assistance being provided by the Project. Taking this approach will acknowledge culturally appropriate decision-making patterns while supporting small communities to develop their capacity to assess their own needs, and design community level actions and solutions in the future. This process will be facilitated by a community mobilization consultant engaged by the project. The project will assist community members to mobilize themselves through:

a) Community Needs Assessments - Initial meetings will be held to create an awareness of the goals of the project in terms of protected areas management and to discuss the opportunities for the development of alternative livelihoods for affected users. This will be followed by needs assessment workshops to facilitate the direct engagement of community members, including women, in devising and developing ideas for potential alternative livelihoods activities. This process will assist community members to map out their own resources and assets, identify and diagnose constraints to local social and economic development from household to community level, and identify required management and technical skills. The main outputs of this process will be the: a) establishment of a common vision on how to pursue alternative livelihood strategies, b) active engagement of community members to ensure buy-in for the sub-projects, c) gender empowerment by ensuring a process that seeks the input of both men and women and d) the identification of potential business ventures and investment opportunities. These

will then be prioritized based on viability and other collectively established criteria.

b) Participatory Subproject Planning Workshops - The second step in the participatory planning process will be the further development of the prioritized subproject ideas and potential opportunities and the completion and submission of the sub-project proposal to the PIU. This process will establish subproject goals and objectives, identify the main activities and inputs, identify the target beneficiaries and developing a budget. In-kind contribution will be required from sub-project beneficiaries to ensure commitment. The sub-project proposal will then be submitted to the Project Implementation Unit for consideration and approval through a Technical Advisory Committee.

c) Development of Business Plans – Business plans will be developed by community members with the support of a specialist once the subproject proposal has been approved by the Steering Committee. Development of business plans involves providing technical assistance to subproject proponents in order to get their alternative livelihoods ventures off the ground. Included in this process will be identification of information on resources and raw materials to be used as inputs, organizational plan, operating plan, financial plan, and a marketing component. The business plan is essential in various aspects: a) to commercialize the production; b) to rationalize the management structure; c) to develop an efficient operation; d) establish roles and responsibilities for participating members; e) to understand the risks and have a plan to deal with them; f) to identify their niche and explore new markets; and g) to inform investors and attract additional investment into the production.

d) Business and Marketing Support - The project will place an emphasis on assistance in marketing for each approved business plan. A marketing expert will assist in the identification and development of the potential niche markets, development of marketing materials, advising on packing and product and service quality, and identification of potential business partners/distributors where possible. Alternative livelihoods activities will be undertaken at scale in order to ensure maximum returns and benefits for the communities and the environment. The marketing expert will also ensure that each business venture is registered with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE) in order to ensure continuous business support over the long term.

7.2 SKILLS TRAINING TO FACILITATE TRANSITION TO ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

The project will provide training necessary to build the skills of community members to transition to alternative livelihoods and will be based on training needs identified during the community mobilization phase. This will be done by focusing on skill sets that supports small business development and individual marketable skills. The types of training to be provided include:

a) Training in business development - A training program will be established for beneficiaries under the project. This is to ensure that such participants develop the skills necessary to sustain and maintain the development of and transition to alternative livelihoods. This includes training in financial literacy, business management, production, marketing, quality control and financial management. Beneficiaries whose subprojects are already under implementation or have an approved sub-project are eligible to participate in the training activities. These trainings will be coordinated by the PIU.

b) **Technical Training** - The targeted communities will be provided with training to foster local trainers who will in turn train other participants. Training will cover identified production techniques, harvesting techniques, quality control, product processing, project monitoring and environmental vigilance.

c) **Technical Assistance:** This Project will take advantage of existing knowledge by partnering with local organizations and relevant government ministries to provide technical assistance, information, seeds and plants to the participating communities. The Project will also finance the identification and sharing of best practices, promotion of greater collaboration in areas such as marketing to build synergies and improve capacity of communities. Permits and certificates required will be obtained from Forestry Department, Fisheries Department and the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) where appropriate.

7.3 SUB-GRANTS MECHANISM FOR COMMUNITY-BASED BUSINESS VENTURES

The Project will provide funding support for viable and sustainable community-based business ventures. The sub-grants mechanism will be developed to provide financial resources as initial capital investment to support the start-up or expansion of business ventures identified by the affected community members. The operation of the sub-grants mechanism will be according to an established process. This is defined in the Operations Manual.

80 GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM AND PROCEDURES

8.1 PURPOSE

A Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) is required by the World Bank's OP 4.12 in order to identify procedures to effectively address grievances arising from project implementation. A GRM can help project management significantly enhance operational efficiency in a variety of ways, including generating public awareness about the project and its objectives; deterring fraud and corruption; mitigating risk; providing project staff with practical suggestions/feedback that allows them to be more accountable, transparent, and responsive to beneficiaries; assessing the effectiveness of internal organizational processes; and increasing stakeholder involvement in the project.

It is very important that the project's management and staff recognize and value the grievance process as a means of strengthening public administration, improving public relations, and enhancing accountability and transparency. Grievance redress should be integrated into the project's core activities. This can be done by integrating grievance redress functions into project staffs' job descriptions and regularly review grievances data and trends at project management meetings.

8.2 PRINCIPLES OF GRM

Effective GRMs usually embody six core principles:

- **Fairness.** Grievances are treated confidentially, assessed impartially, and handled transparently.
- **Objectiveness and independence.** The GRM operates independently of all interested

parties in order to guarantee fair, objective, and impartial treatment to each case. GRM officials have adequate means and powers to investigate grievances (e.g., interview witnesses, access records).

- ***Simplicity and accessibility.*** Procedures to file grievances and seek action are simple enough that project beneficiaries can easily understand them. Project beneficiaries have a range of contact options including, at a minimum, a telephone number, an e-mail address, and a postal address. The GRM is accessible to all stakeholders, irrespective of the remoteness of the area they live in, the language they speak, and their level of education or income. The GRM does not use complex processes that create confusion or anxiety (such as only accepting grievances on official-looking standard forms or through grievance boxes in government offices).

- ***Responsiveness and efficiency.*** The GRM is designed to be responsive to the needs of all complainants. Accordingly, officials handling grievances are trained to take effective action upon, and respond quickly to, grievances and suggestions.

Speed and proportionality. All grievances, simple or complex, are addressed and resolved as quickly as possible. The action taken on the grievance or suggestion is swift, decisive, and constructive.

- ***Participatory and social inclusion.*** A wide range of project-affected people -community members, members of vulnerable groups, project implementers, civil society, and the media - are encouraged to bring grievances and comments to the attention of project authorities. Special attention is given to ensure that poor people and marginalized groups, including those with special needs, are able to access the GRM.

8.3 DEFINITION OF GRIEVANCE

Grievance is defined for the purpose of this mechanism as an issue, concern, problem, claim (perceived or actual) or complaint that an individual or group wants the project to address and resolve. When community members present a grievance, they generally expect to receive one or more of the following:

- Acknowledgment of their problem
- An honest response to questions about project activities
- An apology
- Compensation
- Modification of the conduct that caused the grievance
- Some other fair remedy.

8.4 TYPES OF GRIEVANCE

GRM is designed to respond to four types of complaints that are likely to arise:

- (a) Comments, suggestions, or queries;
- (b) Complaints relating to nonperformance of project obligations;
- (c) Complaints referring to violations of law and/or corruption; and
- (d) Complaints against project staff or community members involved in project management.

8.5 GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM STRUCTURE

The GRM is being established at the project level for the SNRL and costs will be carried as part of the administrative costs of project implementation. This is a field level mechanism where matters can be addressed immediately. A GRM Committee made up of a few members of PSC and PIU staff will be established to assist in addressing grievances put forward to the project. The other level of the GRM is at the national level. This includes the judicial levels where the process is more formalized and complex. The Judicial level includes formal litigation. Also at the national level is the Office of the Ombudsman who is able to take up issues directly related to the project. While not necessarily expected to have a direct bearing on the project, the regional level involving the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is discussed as this is available as an option especially for indigenous people under the relevant conventions.

8.5.1 FIELD LEVEL

At the field level, the Project Coordinator (PC) will be appointed to officially respond to grievances raised by individuals and groups of community members. Grievances can be presented orally or in writing, in person or by using information and communication technology (telephone or email). Where presented orally, the PC must ensure that the grievance is documented in writing. This is further elaborated below in the procedures section below.

8.5.2 NATIONAL LEVEL

a) **Judicial System** - Community members may seek to have their grievances addressed directly by the legal and judicial system in Belize. They may choose to go there directly if they feel that that legally guaranteed rights have been violated or if they are not satisfied with the response and resolution provided by the project GRM. In this instance, it is the community members' responsibility to take up the matter in a court of law and seek his or her own legal representation. The project will abide by the ruling of any Belizean court in regards to the matter presented and adjudicated. Grievances can be heard in lower magistrate's court or in constitutional cases; they are heard in the Supreme Court of Belize. This process is open to any community member who feels that they need to pursue this avenue.

b) **Office of the Ombudsman** - The Ombudsman is also an avenue that is open for community members to see redress for grievances. The Ombudsman Act, Chapter 5 of the Laws of Belize establishes the Office of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman investigates complaints made by any person or body of persons who claim to have sustained injustice, injury, or abuse (including any act of discourtesy, or refusal to act, or any act motivated by discrimination based on religion, language, race, colour or creed), or who claims that an authority has been guilty of corruption or other wrongdoing. Authorities who are subject to investigation are:

- Ministry, Department or agency of Government;
- The Belize Police Force
- A City Council or a Town Board
- Other statutory body or authority, including any company in which the Government or an agency of government owns not less than 51%.

Approaching the Ombudsman's office to register a complaint is a simple process that can initially be done orally and thereafter in writing. There is also no charge for registering a complaint.

8.5.3 REGIONAL LEVEL

At the regional level, aggrieved persons may take up their cases with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). The IACHR is an organ of the Organization of American States (OAS) created to promote the observance and defense of human rights and to serve as a consultative organ of the OAS. The human rights advanced by the IACHR are enshrined in the American Convention on Human Rights and the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man among others. In fulfilling its function, the IACHR:

- a) Receives, analyzes, and investigates individual petitions that allege violations of human rights, with respect to both the Member States of the OAS that have ratified the American Convention, and those Member States that have not ratified it.
- b) Observes the general situation of human rights in the Member States and publishes special reports on the situation in a given Member State when it considers it appropriate.
- c) Makes on-site visits to Member States to conduct an in-depth analysis of the general situation and/or to investigate a specific situation. In general, these visits give rise to the preparation of a report on the human rights situation observed, which is published and presented to the Permanent Council and General Assembly of the OAS.

According to the Charter of IACHR, any person or group of persons or nongovernmental entity legally recognized in one or more of the Member States of the OAS may submit petitions to the Commission, on their behalf or on behalf of third persons, concerning alleged violations of a human right recognized in, any of the conventions under its jurisdiction. Because Belize as a State has not yet ratified the American Convention, petitioners can only make claims under the American Declaration. The entire process for taking up human rights cases with the IACHR is spelled out in the Rules of Procedure of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

While the IACHR observes and promotes the respect for human rights in member states of the OAS it is also able to refer cases to the Inter-American Court for Human Rights. In the case of Belize however, it has not recognized the Court's jurisdiction and as such petitioners will not be able to use the Court. As of June 30, 2010, 21 States party to the American Convention have recognized the Court's contentious jurisdiction; Belize is not one of them.

8.6 PROCEDURES OF THE FIELD LEVEL GRM

a) **Registration** - Receiving and registering complaints is a simple process where local people can inform the PIU about concerns directly and if necessary, through third parties. Once a complaint has been received, it will be recorded in the complaints log or data system. The log can be kept in hardcopy or electronic form. Various types of grievances typically require different follow-up actions—for example, some grievances can be resolved by means of a simple explanation or apology, while others may require more extensive investigations. Therefore, grievances will be categorized, assigned priority, and routed as appropriate.

b) **Sort and Process** - This step determines whether a complaint is eligible for the grievance mechanism and its seriousness and complexity. The complaint will be screened however this will not involve judging the substantive merit of the complaint. The following is a guide

to determine whether or not a complaint is eligible or not:

Eligible complaints may include those where:

- The complaint pertains to the project.
- The issues raised in the complaint fall within the scope of issues the grievance mechanism is authorized to address.
- The complainant has standing to file.

Ineligible complaints may include those where:

- The complaint is clearly not project-related.
- The nature of the issue is outside the mandate of the grievance mechanism.
- The complainant has no standing to file.
- Other project or community procedures are more appropriate to address the issue.

If the complaint is rejected at this stage, the complainant will be informed of the decision and the reasons for the rejection. It is advisable to give complainants the benefit of the doubt and engage in a conversation before deciding to reject a complaint. Complainants often provide incomplete information. The PIU should make an effort to truly understand the grievance before responding. All complaints whether eligible or not, must be logged for reference.

When evaluating and investigating complaints the parties, issues, views, and options should be clarified:

- Identify the parties involved.
- Clarify issues and concerns raised by the complaint.
- Gather views of other stakeholders, including those of project staff.
- Classify the complaint in terms of its seriousness (high, medium, or low). Seriousness includes the potential to impact both the project and the community. Issues to consider include the gravity of the allegation, the potential impact on an individual's or a group's welfare and safety, or the public profile of the issue. A complaint's seriousness is linked to who in the project's management needs to know about it and whether the Project Steering Committee is advised.

c) **Acknowledge and Follow Up** - When a complaint is registered, the PIU through appropriate staff will acknowledge its receipt in a correspondence that outlines the grievance process; provides contact details and, if possible, the name of the contact person who is responsible for handling the grievance. The PIU must respond and acknowledging the issue within 7 working days. In responding to the complaint the PC may seek and hold a meeting with the aggrieved party(ies). Complainants should then receive periodic updates on the status of their grievances.

d) **Evaluate, Investigate and Take Action** - This step involves gathering information about the grievance to determine its validity, and resolving the grievance. The merit of grievances should be judged objectively against clearly defined standards such as the Environmental and Social Safeguards, legal requirements and the Project Operations Manual. Grievances that are straightforward (such as queries and suggestions) can often be resolved quickly by contacting the complainant and providing an appropriate response. Grievances that cannot be resolved at the project level should be referred to the most competent authority.

In general, there are four basic approaches design teams should consider when evaluating what array of resolution approaches to offer:

- The PIU proposes a solution.
- The PIU and the community decide together how best to address the issue.
- The PIU and community may defer to a third party to decide.
- The PIU and community utilize traditional or customary practices where appropriate.

8.7 IMPLEMENTING THE GRM

a) **Build Awareness of GRM** – The GRM is to be presented by project staff to community members during the project inception workshop and during community consultations. Other ways to publicize the GRM to the local communities include the following:

- Simple, visually engaging marketing materials will be developed. These will describe the process for handling people’s concerns and the benefits that can result. The materials will also inform the local communities about where to go and who to contact if they have a complaint.
- Face-to-face, formal and informal meetings in local communities will be used as the main method for building awareness about the GRM. Activities during these sessions will be participatory in order to get people to buy into and use the system.
- Communities will be consulted about any risks or fears they have associated with using the system. Information about what else they might need to voice a complaint and participate effectively in the mechanism will be elicited and used to update the GRM.

b) **Train Staff on GRM** – Project staff will be educated about community GRM and procedures. This is to ensure that staff members are able to accept complaints, or to participate in on-the-spot resolution of minor problems. The following will be considered when developing training sessions for project staff:

- Sessions will focus on why the grievance mechanism is in place, its goals, benefits, and how it operates.
- Roles and expectations of project staff (what to do if a member of the community approaches them with a grievance, how best to respond to aggrieved stakeholders and the importance of listening, remaining objective, and taking stakeholder concerns seriously).
- The constructive role of community dissent in project operations, by encouraging the view that complaints and opposition are a source of valuable information that can lead to improved operations, reduce risk, and develop a supportive relationship with the community.
- Emphasize that there will be absolutely no reprisals and the participation of community members in Field Level GRM does not diminish their rights or entitlement to benefit from the project in any way. This same information can be shared with local communities.

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