

Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System Project (MBRS)

Design and Implementation of a Regional Forum on Tourism

The Belize Position

This first deliverable will address the following concerns:

- A list of key organizations, groups or entities that contribute in any way to the management of Belize's coastal resources and contact information. These groups should be involved in the Forum.
- A list of tourism and Coastal zone management issues that the Regional Sustainable Tourism Forum should address.
- Recommendations concerning the organization and implementation of the Regional Sustainable Tourism Forum. Issues such as a possible mission and outcomes and recommend activities that should be included in the Forum.

Issues to Address at the Forum

1. Balance between conservation and development.
2. Cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary discussion among the agriculture sector, service sector, finance sector, the Government, non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, civil society groups etc. This discussion should focus on issues related to human dimensions on the coast.
3. High quality research and data gathering to be the basis for management decisions and policy making.
4. Advocate sound environmental principles in development. There should be adequate Environmental Impact Assessments and proper monitoring of the mitigatory activities.
5. Meaningful incorporation of local communities in any decision making process that will affect them.
6. Provide fiscal incentives and other financial assistance guidelines to locals who may desire to get involved in the tourism industry but could not afford or cannot compete with other developers.
7. Balance traditional use of coastal resources with strict conservation practices.
8. Through relevant training, build or improve the human resource capacity so that locals can get involved in the tourism sector at all levels.
9. Educate locals as to the value of coastal property.
10. Ensure adequate enforcing of legislations so as to reduce or avoid illegal fishing, illegal cutting of mangroves and other such misdemeanors.
11. Provide relevant education to coastal communities so as to build awareness of the value of protecting this sensitive resource.
12. Review legislations and policies to ensure that current concerns are addressed. Too often the laws are old and obsolete.

Organization and Implementation of the Regional Sustainable Tourism Forum

The Forum should have four components:

1. Academia – Universities in the region should use the forum as an opportunity to present research findings and learn from each other in finding possible solutions to common problems that the countries face.
2. Government – Chief Executive Officers or Permanent Secretaries and other prominent government officials from related ministries can get together to discuss possible solutions to common issues.
3. Community Based Organizations and Non-governmental Organizations - Gives an opportunity for these groups to share their experiences and learn from others. They will also voice their concerns to Government officials and to donor agencies that are present.
4. Tourism Developers – Gives them an opportunity to voice their concerns and state expectations from local communities, government and academia.

Mission:

For Participating countries to engage in meaningful dialogue to promote sustainable tourism development in the region.

Recommended Activities:

- Key presenters from the above four components followed by small breakout groups to discuss issues related to the topic presented. These groups should report back to plenary.
- There should be presentations of case studies from each country. These presentations should look at positive and negative aspects of the cases.
- Field trips looking at various scales of tourism development.
- Receptions and cultural presentations are always main attractions at such forums.
- The Forum should last at least three days.

This Forum should take place every two years with rotating venue. The first should take place in Belize. Belize for several reasons but the most obvious being the presence of the Barrier Reef (the main tourism attraction) in Belize.

Name	Contact person	Address	Phone	Fax	Email
Fisheries Department (Gov of Belize)	Beverly Wade		224 4552		
Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute	Imani Morrison				
Belize Audubon Society	Valdemar Andrade		223 4987		
Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation Project (COMPACT)	Rene Ogaldez		227 5616		
FAMRAC (Caye Caulker)					
Toledo Institute of Sustainable Development of the Environment (TIDE)	Wil Maheia		722 2274		
Toledo Association for Sustainable Tourism Empowerment (TASTE)	Jack Nightingale				
Friends of Nature (Placencia)					
The Nature Conservation	Wil Hayman				
WWF	Melanie Mcfield				
World Conservation Society (WCS)	Janet Gibson				
Green Reef	Mito Paz				
Amigos De Los Bahias					
MesoAmerican Barrier Reef Project (MBRS)	Noel Jacobs				
Toledo Development Corporation (TDC)	Ludwig Palacio				
Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA)	Andrew Godoy		227 1144		
Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT)	Valerie Woods				
University of Belize	Eden Garcia		223 2732		
Friends of Gra Gra Lagoon	Timothy Flores				