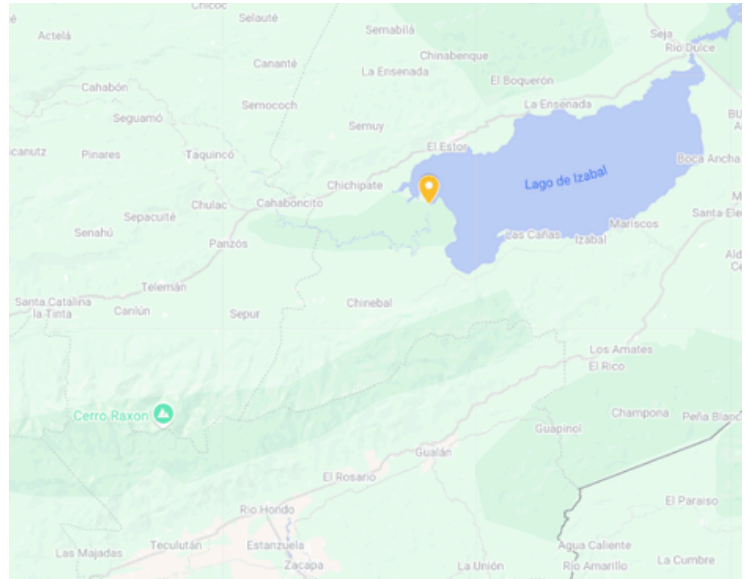


PROTECTION OF MARITIME RESOURCES IN CENTRAL AMERICA III (PHASE III)

The Phase III project represents a joint effort to strengthen the effective management of coastal and marine protected areas of the Mesoamerican Reef System. With financial contribution from the German Cooperation through the KfW, and the active participation of managers and co-managers of the CMPAs, this regional initiative enhances the protection of strategic ecosystems and contributes to sustaining the benefits they provide to local communities.



Location of the Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge, Izabal.



Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge

Map Data © 2026 Google



Photo: Rocío Paz / FDN

TOWARDS EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE AND PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT OF WETLANDS IN THE BOCAS DEL POLOCHIC WILDLIFE REFUGE

Country	Guatemala
Coastal Marine Protected Area (CMPA)	Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge (RVSBP)*
Comanager	Fundación Defensores de la Naturaleza (FDN)*
Duration	June 2024 – June 2027
Reach	20,760 hectares of protected area and 2,500 beneficiaries

* The acronyms refer to the names in Spanish.

PROJECT SUMMARY:



The project aims to ensure that management decisions in the Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge are based on up-to-date information and tools, strengthening the environmental and social management of the protected area.

Standardized methodologies for biological monitoring of birds, fish, water quality, and manatees will be developed, and governance will be improved through collaborative surveillance strategies.

A forest restoration plan will be designed that includes biological connectivity zones and a plan for sustainable use of firewood, developed in conjunction with government entities and local stakeholders.

In addition, activities will be carried out to strengthen community adaptation to climate change and promote the sustainable use of resources. Spaces for exchange and coordination among stakeholders will be reactivated to improve the management of natural resources and protected areas.

KEY TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES



CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- Develop and update monitoring methodologies for fish, birds, manatees, and water quality adapted to the RVSBP.
- Design a Freshwater Finfish Management Plan for the RVSBP and Izabal Lake, developed through a participatory process and shared with key stakeholders.
- Assess the management effectiveness of the RVSBP.
- Develop and implement a three-year control and surveillance strategy for the RVSBP to reduce local-level illegal activities.
- Strengthen the technical capacities and equipment of the CMPA for biological and water quality monitoring, applied through pilot tests.
- Develop a Forest Restoration Plan, considering areas with the highest biological connectivity within the protected area.



SUSTAINABLE USE WITH LOCAL PARTICIPATION

- Develop and implement a sustainable firewood use plan for the RVSBP and its areas of influence.
- Strengthen a youth network for the provision of tourism services with an emphasis on birdwatching (aviturismo), incorporating a gender perspective.
- Strengthen and improve the fish value chain in the area of influence of the RVSBP, with a gender perspective, supporting fisher associations to enhance cooperation and coordination among local fishers.



STRENGTHENING AMONG KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND GOVERNANCE

- Update the Conservation Agenda for the Izabal Lake and Río Dulce Watershed through a participatory process involving all key sectors.
- Reactivate the Environmental Technical Working Group for the “Izabal Lake Micro-watershed” as support for the evaluation of the water quality monitoring methodology.
- Support the Co-management Committee and other governance and experience-sharing platforms.

Visit the QR code to learn more:

