

Safeguards Compliance Memorandum

Project Information

Project Name	Integrated Ridge to Reef Management of the Mesoamerican Reef Ecoregion (MAR2R)
GEF Focal Area	International Waters
Safeguards Categorization	B

Project Description

The proposed project will enable countries to enhance regional collaboration for the ecological integrity of the Mesoamerican Reef ecoregion (MAR) and scale up the ridge to reef approach for improved management as outlined in the Tulum+8 Regional Action Plan.

The proposed project aims to create the enabling conditions necessary to bring together the unique actors along the ridge to reef continuum for the first time. In doing so, demonstration projects and existing frameworks, strategies, and plans/policies where Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Integrated Coastal Marine Management (ICMM) communities can be most effective will be identified. The proposed project objective is to support regional collaboration for the integrated ridge-to-reef management of the Mesoamerican Reef ecoregion by demonstrating its advantages and improving regional, national and local capacities for the integrated management and governance of its freshwater, coastal, and marine resources. The project has four components designed to scale up existing baseline programs to address key threats and barriers to the integrated management and conservation of the MAR:

- Component 1: Strengthen resource governance and regional collaboration for integrated ridge to reef management in the MAR
- Component 2: Integrated ridge to reef management of watersheds and freshwater resources
- Component 3: Integrated ridge to reef management of coastal and marine resources
- Component 4: Project Monitoring and Evaluation, and knowledge sharing

Project location and salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis

The Mesoamerican Reef ecoregion (or MAR) encompasses the second largest barrier reef in the world and more than 400 watersheds. The Mesoamerican Reef extends along the coastline over 1,000 km from the northeastern tip of the Yucatan peninsula southward to the seacoast of Belize, Guatemala and Honduras. It includes several UNESCO World Natural Heritage Sites, including Rio Platano Biosphere in Honduras, Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve in Mexico and the Belize Barrier Reef. The reef is the repository of some of the world's most treasured marine life including coral reefs, a myriad of fish species, and invertebrate fauna. It is also a major tourist attraction because of the beautiful beaches that line the shore and the opportunities for snorkeling and scuba diving. The watersheds beginning at the ridgeline on terra firme and extending to the coast, are part of the MAR ecoregion. These watersheds comprise a rich mosaic of natural habitats hosting jaguars, spider and howler monkeys, Baird's tapir and the horned guan, among

others. The ecoregion is a critical flyway for at least 225 migratory species. There are also rich cultural resources along the coast including archaeological ruins of Mayan civilization.

The project's geographic scope includes the Caribbean draining watershed of the four MAR countries and the corresponding coastal and marine zone, with eight prioritized watersheds for the development of demonstration subprojects aimed at contributing to the health and sustainability of the MAR (see below).

Priority 1

- Chamelecon river (Honduras)
- Hondo river (Belize, Guatemala and Mexico)
- Motagua river (Guatemala and Honduras)

Priority 2

- Belize River (Belize and Guatemala)
- Ulua River (Honduras)
- Yucatan Peninsula, North Zone from Tulum to Cancun (Mexico)

Priority 3

- Monkey River (Belize)
- New River (Belize)

Specific subproject locations have not yet been determined completely.

It is necessary for each participating NGO to design and implement subprojects in collaboration with CCAD. Site requirements will vary according to the nature of the subproject design.

<i>Safeguards Policies</i>	<i>Triggered</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Natural Habitat	Yes	WWF's Policy on Natural Habitat is triggered as the project directly targets positive impacts in freshwater and coastal ecosystems helping rehabilitate, restore and protect degraded critical areas that are important to preserve the Mesmerican Reef ecoregion. The ESMF explicitly forbids any support for subprojects that would convert or degrade any critical natural habitats. Thus, the MAR2R project will not lead to any forest or forest ecosystem conversion or degradation but will support rehabilitation and restoration of critical forest areas such as in the Pasabien and Manchaguala sub watersheds, in Guatemala and Honduras respectively.
Indigenous People	Yes	Although it is unlikely that the project would impact indigenous peoples (IP), since the locations of the demonstration projects are unknown and the priority watersheds have several Indigenous People, the WWF Indigenous Peoples

		Policy was triggered. An Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) was prepared as part of the ESMF. Once it is determined if Indigenous People will be present in the project sites, an Indigenous People Plan (IPP) will be prepared to ensure project interventions will allow those Indigenous People to participate and benefit from project activities in ways which are culturally appropriate to provide for culturally appropriate benefits, mitigation measures and mechanisms to ensure the meaningful participation of IP in the project.
Involuntary Resettlement	No	The MAR2R project will not cause resettlement or land taking or any restrictions to natural resources. However, the ESMF outlines the procedures necessary in the event that such impacts occur.
Pest Management	Yes	While the demonstration projects include agricultural and agro forestry activities, the project will not finance chemical pesticides or lead to the increased use of other agricultural chemicals unless an Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPMP) is developed and applied. The ESMF includes guidelines for rational and efficient pesticide management, and a need for developing a specific IPMP will be identified during the sub-project categorization. When needed, an IPMP will be developed before sub-project implementation.

Summary of Key Safeguards Issues

Describe any safeguard issues and impacts associated with the proposed project. Identify and describe any potential large scale, significant and/or irreversible impacts:

The Project is classified as a Category B for safeguard purposes. The project is essentially a conservation initiative, expected to generate significant positive and long-lasting social, economic and environmental benefits. Any anticipated impacts will be small scale, site-specific, and can be mitigated. There will be no large scale, significant, or irreversible impacts.

The exact nature of these demonstration projects has not yet been determined but it is likely that the project will focus on integrated watershed management activities including: the establishment of agroforestry systems; the promotion of better agriculture practices to generate positive impacts on freshwater ecosystems; and the integration of coastal marine management activities, including restoration of critical coastal and marine habitats such as

mangroves and coral reefs. Since these subprojects have not yet been defined in detail and potential environmental and social impacts have not been identified, an ESMF is the appropriate instrument to guide the subproject design and to evaluate their potential impacts, and thus an ESMF was developed for the MAR2R project.

The ESMF outlines the categorization of subprojects and the safeguard procedures required for each category. In the case of category “C” subprojects, no further environmental and social analysis is required. For subprojects categorized as “A” or “B” Environmental and Social Management Plans will be required. The ESMF presents examples of possible subprojects and their potential impacts. It also presents a brief characterization of each of the priority watersheds. Although it is unlikely that the subproject will impact indigenous peoples, or cause resettlement or land taking, the ESMF also outlines the procedures necessary if such impacts will occur. The ESMF also contains a “negative list” suggesting that certain subproject types be avoided and offers a “Checklist” of steps needed to comply with WWF’s Environment and Social Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP).

Describe measures taken by the Project Team to address safeguard policy issues. Provide an assessment of the Executing Agency’s capacity to plan and implement the measures described

CCAD contracted technical consultant/s to prepare the necessary safeguard instruments with guidance and review provided by the WWF GEF Agency Safeguards specialist. CCAD prepared an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) to conform to World Wildlife Fund’s Environment and Social Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP) triggered by the project and the applicable national regulations.

Institutionally, overall coordination of the project's implementation of applicable national environmental and social laws and regulations will be the responsibility of CCAD/PMU. The PMU Project Manager will be supported by a safeguards specialist to be hired for the PMU. The MAR2R partner Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) will each, in accordance with their area of responsibility under the project, be responsible for the implementation of safeguard measures.

CCAD has limited capacity and experience on environmental and social screening of projects within the framework. None of the participating bodies have earlier experience on implementing WWF’s safeguards measures.

WWF GEF Agency Safeguards specialist will provide applicable safeguards training to the responsible PMU members and other relevant stakeholder groups at Project inception and during implementation on an as-needed-basis. Reporting on the implementation of the ESMF/IPPF will be provided to WWF GEF Agency as part of the biannual progress reports. Safeguard compliance will be verified during WWF GEF Agency annual supervision missions, which will include the WWF GEF Agency Safeguards specialist.

Identify the key stakeholders and describe the mechanisms for consultation and disclosure on safeguard policies, with an emphasis on potentially affected people.

The key project stakeholders are: * Ministries of the Environment/Natural Resources of the

four MAR countries (Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and México) * OSPESCA * Fisheries authorities of the four MAR countries * Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute * Tourism and tourism development sector actors * PA managers and co-managers * Watersheds Councils/Committees/Alliances/task forces * local NGOs * MAR Fund * Fisher households * Communities located in priority watersheds and coastal areas.

The final ESMF was translated into Spanish and will be validated with project stakeholders before the commencement of project activities. The final ESMF was disclosed on the websites of WWF-US, CCAD, and the four countries ministry of environment.

Gender Mainstreaming

Describe how the project has incorporated gender into the project design to ensure participation of both men and women.

The project will ensure equal opportunities for men and women to lead and/or represent organized groups in all project activities and warrant that the project's social and economic benefits reach both men and women equally. Women's participation in project activities will be ensured by their full involvement in project planning and management, training, technical assistance, in decision making structures, and by applying gender-sensitive M&E indicators.

A gender focus is applied in the project by responding to women-specific needs for capacity building relevant to their role in natural resources management (water, firewood, etc.) and also their key and increasing role as heads of households. Examples of how the project will seek to integrate women in specific project activities include:

In Component 2 (IWRM in priority watersheds) capacity building on participatory watershed planning, adaptation to climate change, and other IWRM relevant topics will include both men and women representatives of community-based organizations, local water committees and associations, as well as women specific organizations and committees in the prioritized watersheds. These local stakeholders will not only receive training but will also participate in the development/update of the IWRM plans, their validation, and then their implementation process.

IWRM plans include on the one hand activities focused on supporting the ecological integrity of the watershed such as protection and restoration of degraded areas, and on the other hand the plans will include activities focused on the communities and their livelihoods, some of which will be directed at women specifically. These activities include: efficient wood stoves, mini-irrigation system/water tanks, small greenhouses, family/home gardens and tree nurseries, as well as alternatives for sustainable livelihoods including agroforestry systems. The women-specific activities will be defined during the participatory consultation process for the design of the IWRM plans to ensure that they respond to their priorities as well as their long-term sustainability, and will encompass capacity building and technical assistance.

Similarly, Component 3 will include active participation of local key stakeholders in integrated coastal and marine management activities. The project will ensure that both men

and women are fairly represented among project participants and leaders in the defined activities which include training and technical assistance on better management practices for coastal and marine restoration and their implementation. The project will work with women in community based mangrove and coral restoration activities.

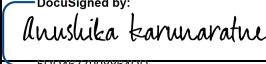
Monitoring and Compliance

Have satisfactory calendar, budget and clear institutional responsibilities been prepared for the implementation of measures related to safeguard policies? Yes [X] No [] NA []
Have costs related to safeguard policy measures been included in the project cost? Yes [X] No [] NA []
Does the Monitoring and Evaluation system of the project include the monitoring of safeguard impacts and measures related to safeguard policies? Yes [X] No [] NA []
Have satisfactory implementation arrangements been agreed with the borrower and the same been adequately reflected in the project legal documents? Yes [X] No [] NA []
Have relevant safeguard policies documents been sent to WWF-US? Yes [X] No [] NA []
Have relevant documents been disclosed in-country in a public place in a form and language that are understandable and accessible to project-affected groups and local NGOs? Yes [X] No [] NA []

Disclosure Requirements

Environment and Social Management Framework/Indigenous People Planning Framework	
Date received by WWF-US	July 5 th , 2016
Date Disclosed on WWF-US website	July 7th, 2016
Date Disclosed on WWF MAR website	July 22 nd , 2016
Date Disclosed on CCAD website	July 26 th , 2016
In country Disclosure: Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico	Mexico: March 27, 2017 Guatemala: November 22, 2016 Honduras: September 22, 2016 Belize: September 22, 2016

Approvals

Name	Date	Signature
Anushika Karuanratne, Safeguards Coordinator	4/27/2017	<p>DocuSigned by:</p>  <p>5DD4677908864DD...</p>
David Mc Cauley, Safeguards Compliance Officer	5/4/2017	<p>DocuSigned by:</p>  <p>50F200E57D854C5...</p>