

**ENHANCING COLLABORATION FOR CONSERVATION AND
DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN BELIZE**

by

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ABSTRACT

Like many places in the world, Belize is exploring ways to balance the sometimes complementary and sometimes conflicting objectives of economic development and natural resource conservation. Collaboration among individuals and organizations is increasingly used to resolve natural resource conflicts and to facilitate integrated conservation and development at an ecosystem scale. A team of graduate students from the School of Natural Resources and Environment at the University of Michigan conducted field research in the Toledo District of Belize to develop an understanding of collaborative processes in a Belizean context. The research team interviewed more than 60 individuals involved in conservation and development, including key government ministers and agency personnel, NGO staff, community leaders, and representatives from the private sector. Four case studies were selected and analyzed: the Maya Mountain Marine Area Transect, the Toledo Watershed Association, the Golden Stream Corridor, and the Bladen Management Consortium. The research team disaggregated these case studies to understand the factors that constrain and promote collaboration, and to identify opportunities for building on existing multi-stakeholder conservation and development initiatives in the Toledo District and beyond. Analysis of the case studies revealed that lack of trust among stakeholders, differing visions and strategies, conflict and competition, resource constraints, power and politics, organizational barriers, and community related constraints present challenges to collaboration in the District. Nonetheless, when collaboration does take place it is because of the power of existing relationships, political support, potential for joint gains, shared concerns, and an interest in moving forward. While collaborative resource management poses challenges, it holds promise as an effective means to integrate complex interests and goals into decisions regarding conservation and economic development.

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Throughout our study, we were impressed and encouraged by the growing awareness of the need to develop partnerships and other collaborative arrangements across all stakeholders in the Toledo District and other parts of Belize. This growing awareness shows that people can work together to facilitate more integrated management of natural resources.

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FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS

AMMA	Ancient Monuments and Antiquities Act
ANDA	Association of National Development Agencies
APAMO	Association of Protected Areas Management Organizations
BACONGO	Belize Alliance of Conservation Non-Governmental Organizations
BAS	Belize Audubon Society
BCER	Boden Creek Ecological Reserve
BCES	Belize Center for Environmental Studies
BFREE	Belize Foundation for Research and Environmental Education
BGA	Banana Growers Association
BITI	Belize Indigenous Training Institute
BLE	Belize Lodge & Excursions
BNIC	Belize National Indigenous Council
BTB	Belize Tourism Board
BTIA	Belize Tourism Industry Association
CARD	Community-initiated Agriculture and Resource Development
CBO	Community-based organization
CI	Conservation International
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CREP	Caribbean Regional Environmental Program
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Authority
EDF	EcoLogic Development Fund
EEV	EcoLogic Enterprise Ventures
ESTAP	Environmental and Social Technical Assistance Project
FFI	Fauna & Flora International
FON	Friends of Nature
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GOB	Government of Belize
GSC	Golden Stream Corridor
GSCP	Golden Stream Corridor Preserve
IACHR	Inter-American Commission for Human Rights
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ICC	Inuit Circumpolar Conference
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILRC	Indian Law Resource Center
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IUCN	World Conservation Union
KCB	Kekchi Council of Belize
MBCP	Mesoamerican Biological Corridors Project
MBRS	Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System
MED	Ministry of Economic Development
MLA	Maya Leaders' Alliance
MMAAP	Maya Mountains Archaeological Project
MMMAT	Maya Mountain Marine Area Transect

MMMC	Maya Mountain Marine Corridor
MNRECI	Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment, Commerce and Industry
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine protected area
NGC	National Garifuna Council
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPSA	National Parks System Act
OAS	Organization of American States
PA	Protected area
PACT	Protected Areas Conservation Trust
PCNP	Payne's Creek National Park
PFB	Programme for Belize
PHMR	Port Honduras Marine Reserve
PHWA	Port Honduras Watershed Association
PUP	Peoples' United Party
REAs	Rapid Ecological Assessments
RDP	Regional Development Plan
SAGE	Southern Alliance for Grassroots Empowerment
SATIIM	Sarstoon-Temash Institute for Indigenous Management
SCMR	Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve
SCP	Site Conservation Plan
SIT	School for International Training
SPEAR	Society for the Promotion of Education and Research
SRDC	Southern Region Development Corporation
STNP	Sarstoon-Temash National Park
SWA	Sibun Watershed Association
TAA	Toledo Alcaldes Association
TASTE	Toledo Association for Sustainable Tourism and Empowerment
TDC	Toledo Development Corporation
TIDE	Toledo Institute for Development and Environment
TMCC	Toledo Maya Cultural Council
TMWC	Toledo Maya Women's Council
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TRIGOH	Tri-national Alliance for the Gulf of Honduras
TWA	Toledo Watershed Association
UDP	United Democratic Party
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
YCT	Ya'axche' Conservation Trust

