

MESOAMERICAN REEF FUND

FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

Annex 5

1. Title page:

- Project Number: RG-OAK-SACD-2017
 - Project name: Strengthening SACD's management and institutional capacity to improve long term financial and management sustainability
 - Grantee: Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation and Development (SACD)
 - Author of the report: Autumn Kyne
-
- Period covered in the report and date of presentation: October 2017 to 2020 (extended to February 2021) – Report presentation 15th March 2021.

2. Executive summary to date: briefly describe activities and their results to date. Complete executive summary for final report.

SACD has reached the final stage of the three-year project and was successful in meeting most of the expected results, except in some instances where it was affected by the Pandemic (Covid-19) in the closing phase. An example of this was the challenges associated with meeting our 10% funding from other sources, thereby reducing SACD's dependency in grant funding. This was because of the impact on our targeted business venture being tourism hosting. These will be discussed further down, though, generally the results were positive, strengthening SACD's management and institutional capacity to improve long term financial sustainability for the effective management of Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary (CBWS) while contributing to the larger seascape.

SACD established and is implementing basic monitoring and evaluation framework for the organization and is also working with the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) to align its monitoring and evaluation frameworks at the national level. The SACD Strategic Plan (2019-2023) was completed on December 19, 2018 and has been under implementation since 2019. The strategies have been continuously integrated in the organization yearly annual workplans and budget, up to 2021 and will continue to be integrated into future annual workplans and budgets. SACD continues to be recognized as a fully compliant NGO in good standing, participating as an active member of both the Belize Network of NGOs (BNN) and The Association of Protected Area Managers Organization (APAMO).

Capacity building visits for staff, board members and Corozal Bay Advisory Committee (CBAC) members were successfully completed. In December 2017, four board members and the Executive Director visited Port Honduras in an exchange with Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE) in southern Belize to learn about the challenges and opportunities that TIDE has had in their stakeholder communities regarding fisheries

management. It was also an opportunity to learn about TIDE's institutional and governance system. In March 2018, SACD hosted a two-day workshop with 16 CBAC members with presentations on the importance of replenishment zones, protected areas and managed access, and the structure, rules and responsibilities of CBAC members as part of the Advisory Committee. Additionally, four CBAC members visited Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve (managed by Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association - TASA) with presentations on fisheries regulations, managed access, and replenishment zones – facilitated by WCS and Fisheries Department. In December 2018, two board members and two staff participated in the two-day TIDE Conservation Festival to learn about strategies TIDE uses to fundraise and engage with community stakeholders. The CBAC and the Board of Directors of SACD continues to be actively involved in the decision making of the Protected Area, understanding their role and responsibility.

The business structure for SACD was fully registered as “SACD Green Ltd.” in September 2019 and under this umbrella SACD also registered a sub-business under the name “Corozal Bay Eco Adventures” to serve as main outlet for the tourism business. The licensing for Corozal Bay Eco Adventures as a tour operator under the Belize Tourism Board was completed in February of 2021, with all processes completed and submitted pending the license certificate. A parcel of land for the development of the hosting facility was acquired with this project and support from MAR Fund/KfW, and the blueprint for the infrastructure to be developed was completed. Partial funds were acquired for the facility but due to not securing the counterpart funds during 2020, SACD was unable to proceed with the investment and was placed on hold pending the counterpart funding.

SACD has well structured financial systems in place with integrated QuickBooks systems. The SACD Financial Officer received six weeks of training from an Accountants for International Development (AfID) volunteer in September to October 2017 and has been the lead person in successfully completing the organization's financial audit and financial reporting requirements. He also received additional training via Beltraide in accounting, bookkeeping, cash flow and QuickBooks software from period April 26th 2018 to August 23rd, 2018. We envision the Financial Officer contributing to the establishment of the accounting systems for SACD Green Ltd. as we move forward. The Financial Officer has been instrumental in following through with the completion of SACD's Financial Audit Reports year after year, from 2017 to 2019 and currently engaged in the 2020 audits.

The current number of full-time staff employed by SACD on a full salary has increased from six to nine within this three-year period. SACD also has one part-time janitor and two contracted services (Development Officer and Marketing Officer) for a total of 12 personnel. There was steady decrease dependency for salaries and operations from within this project as projected, with only 30% of our total salaries covered by this project in 2020. An average of 178 patrols per year were carried out during a four-year period (2017 – 2020), which is an average of 3.7 patrols per week. This meets and exceeds the 3 patrols per week target. The system level and transboundary patrols were showing significant improvement in 2019 but again decreased in 2020 due the restrictions and procedures associated with the Pandemic. For 2020, only 10 joint patrols were carried out with the Belize Coast Guard, Hol Chan rangers and IBANQROO from the Mexican State Government. The infraction varied, showing an increase from 2017 (44 infractions) to 2018 (50 infractions) by 13% and a decrease from 2018 (50 infractions) to 2019 (36 infractions) by 28% but with a slight increase again in 2020 (38 infractions) from 2019 (36 infractions) by 5.55%. With the exception of 2018, the trend of infractions from 2017, which is the baseline have shown a decrease of infractions. The data also show that compliance has improved when comparing inspections vs infractions. In 2018 for almost every inspection (55 in total) there was an infraction (50 in total), while in 2020 for 93 inspections there were 39 infractions which shows approximately 50% improvement in compliance from fishers.

By 2019, SACD had seen an increase in the monitoring of its conservation targets with 6 of its 8 conservation targets being monitored or addressed (three fully "water quality, bird nesting colonies and manatees" and 3 partially "Mangroves, Seagrass and commercial fish species"). Though, during 2020 the efforts were unable to be maintained primary because of the restrictions established to prevent the spread of the COVID-19. Though, as the restrictions are being lifted, we aim to reinstate our monitoring activities to position ourselves back to where we were. We do have complete data sets for water quality, bird nesting sites and manatees, with the only

exception being commercial fish species as required by the project. This was because we were hoping to use catch data from the fishers until the monitoring framework under the sustainable fishery plan was completed. Though, it was learned afterwards that the fishermen were not recording the data as required by the Fisheries Department. The plan experienced several delays, so we were not able to start the monitoring as expected in 2020. These research activities provided tangible information on the health of the ecosystems for better management of the PA following its management plan (2020-2024) submitted and recognized by the Forest Department. SACD also continues to have 2 fully operational vessels and has very recently added a third vessel to be fully operational by March of 2021.

3. Objectives:

To strengthen SACD's management and institutional capacity to improve long term financial sustainability for the effective management of Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary (CBWS) – contributing to the larger seascape.

- Objective 1: To strengthen SACD management capacity as the co-manager of Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary with an increased management effectiveness score.
- Objective 2: To strengthen SACD's financial management and financial sustainability with improved cost effectiveness, diversification of income and continued transparency.
- Objective 3: To maintain the continuity of SACD's programmatic activities and staff during the three-year transition period.

4. Project progress:

Expected results of Objective 1.

1. SACD is a strong, well-established organization with motivated and capable staff and Board members, effectively implementing its strategic, management and organizational plans.
2. The management effectiveness score is of 70% or above – based on the Belize national management effectiveness tool.

SACD is a well-established organization, meeting all its legal requirements, with increased number of staff and increased capacity. Being a recognized and active member of national networks such as the Network of NGOs and the Association of Protected Area Managers Organization (APAMO). Effectively implementing its strategic plan and management plan for the protected Area.

The management effectiveness score surpassed the project end target of 70%. An internal management effectiveness evaluation has not been completed for 2020 but expected to be done between the months of February and March of 2021. For this reporting period we will be using the national scores derived from the national assessment completed in 2020 for year 2019. The score was established at 77.5% which is in a very good

category using the revised national management effectiveness tool that includes the alignment with the World Commission of Protected Areas (WCPA). The report provided show improvement in all seven (7) indicator categories used in the report when compared to the 2009 national report. Resource information showed an increase from 65.9% to 81.25%, Resource Administration, Management and Protection showed an increase from 60.0% to 72.5%, Participation, Education and Socio-Economic Benefit showed an increase from 60.7% to 79.9%, Management Planning showed an increase from 54.25% to 77.1%, Governance showed an increase from 54.2% to 100.0%, Human resources showed an increase from 68.8% to 92.9%, and Financial and capital investment showed an increase from 68.75% to 85.94%. An updated score will be provided when our MEE is completed in March 2021 for year 2020.

Activity 1.1: Revise and implement the SACD's Strategic Plan for period 2019 – 2023 with integrated monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

The SACD Strategic Plan (2019-2023) was successfully completed on December 19, 2018 and has been under implementation since 2019. The strategies are integrated into the SACD Annual workplans and budgets every year, up to 2021. SACD was able to establish a monitoring and evaluation framework for assessing implementation (Annex 1_Table for assessing implementation) but was unable to complete a full monitoring and evaluation framework for assessing outputs and results. We aim to have a complete ME framework by the end of this year 2021. This is something that we initially started to work internally and then eventually joined the discussion at national level within the Network of Marine Protected Areas, Association of Protected Areas Managers Organization and Network of MPAs to join the effort to be aligned at the national level, unfortunately due to restrictions and limitations associated with the Pandemic (COVID-19), the national efforts were stagnated without any progress but discussion have already started to restart the re-engagement, with the aim to have a national ME framework for the system of protected areas in Belize. (Annex 2_ SACD Strategic Plan_2019_2023 and Annex 3_CBWS Management Plan 2020_2024)

Activity 1.2: Design and implement effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the organization – for staff, Board and organizational and MPA plans (strategic, management and operational plans)

The process to develop a full monitoring and evaluation framework was started in 2018 but was discontinued to adhere to national efforts of having a standardized approach which would result in comparable data across all protected areas, especially related to outputs and results. Unfortunately, the national effort has not been accomplished due to setbacks associated with the Pandemic. Though, monitoring and evaluation for implementation of the strategic plan and the management plan have been established. As well as staff and board evaluations. The implementation of the strategic plan and management plan are well above 75% implementation, the board self-evaluation is primarily on the “do well” category and the staff have

maintained a “superior” performance rating. (Annex 4_Staff evaluation form and Annex 5_Board Self Evaluation)

The Strategic Plan of SACD and Management Plan for the PA are assessed for implementation at annual basis, as well as the board evaluation. The Staff evaluations are conducted bi-annually, with some gaps during the project timeframe, with SACD missing some of the mid-term evaluations for the staff due to complications with scheduling especially for the senior staff that requires the board interventions. They were conducted in July 2018 and then December 2019 and then July 2020 and February 2021 for the fulltime SACD staff, all of which have maintain an acceptable category based on the appraisal form between 7 to 10 (superior to outstanding). The strategic plan implementation was evaluated at the end of 2019 and 2020 with an implementation rating of 76.8% by the end of 2020 using the assessment tool (Annex 6_ SP complete assessment). The management effectiveness was done for 2019 with a rating of 77.5% as part of the national assessment and is pending for 2020. This has not happened because it takes time and normally take 2 to 3 months into the next calendar year. Which means that for this reporting period the evaluation has not been completed. The management plan implementation evaluation was not done since the plan was adopted in 2020, meaning that the first year of evaluation is scheduled for the month of March 2021, which again does not fit within this reporting period. The board self-evaluation was not completed for the year 2019 but was completed in March 2021 for year 2020, identifying priority areas for improvement, primary in areas of the board composition, effective sub-committees and board-staff relationships.

Activity 1.3: One capacity building visit for staff, board and CBAC members to another marine protected area co-management organization to improve understanding of roles in protected area management (replenishment zones and Manage access).

Four board members plus the Executive Director participated in site visit to Port Honduras Marine Reserve in an exchange with Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment in southern Belize in December 2017. The visit was focused on discussing lessons learnt over the growth of TIDE, organizational and Board structures, financial management systems, and community challenges with the introduction of replenishment zones and Managed Access. The experience was useful in addressing issues of engagement with the fishermen, which saw the introduction of the Corozal Bay Advisory Committee, it also guided the development of our financial management and reporting systems and the updating of our Articles of association to reflect the NGO structures which is the structure SACD is now operating under.

SACD hosted a two-day workshop with 16 Corozal Bay Advisory Committee members in March 2018 with presentations and discussions on the importance of replenishment zones, protected areas and Managed Access and the structure, rules and responsibilities of CBAC members as part of the Advisory Committee. We can say that this capacity and information sharing

session assisted in ensuring a functional and highly active CBAC committee, obtaining an average of 73.4% participation in the CBAC meetings in the last 4 meetings. We can also assume that the session was essential in obtaining the support of the CBAC members for the Sustainable Fishery Plan and the realignment and re-designation proposals to the Government of Belize. That while they have not been legally instituted they have very good support from the stakeholder communities.

Four members visited Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve (managed by TASA) with presentations on fisheries regulations, Managed Access and replenishment zones – facilitated by WCS and Fisheries Department. -all 16-member demonstrated improved knowledge in all areas covered as captured on post survey reports. (Annex 7_post survey report). This was essential in promoting a sustainable fishery for CBWS and receiving the support and engagement in the development of the Sustainable Fisheries Plan (SFP) and the proposals for realignment and redesignations of the protected area, to include replenishment zones.

On December 13-14, 2018 two board members and two staff participated in the TIDE Conservation Festival to learn about strategies TIDE uses to fundraise and engage with community stakeholders. This allowed them to experience firsthand how TIDE successfully continues conservation of natural resources in southern Belize and how it could be applied to similar work in northern Belize. This experience influenced SACD's last Fisherfolks Fair (May 26, 2019) (Annex 8_pictures of Event) and had more people participate than previous years. The strategies included more activities such as live music and interactive games. It was noted in the exchange that there are more opportunities for fundraising, such as charging fees for dance and fishing tournaments. These activities also increase community engagement, expanded activities and entertainment within the community, and provided an opportunity for wider community members to sell a wider variety of products and foods. This is held annually, but none was held in 2020 due to new regulations to control the spread of COVID- 19 but should resume when it is safe to do so.

The exchanges provided for this period resulted in an increased understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each sector (CBAC, BoD and Staff) in the protected area management. The exchanges also increased the capacity and understanding of the board members guide the updating of the SACD Strategic Plan (2019-2023) and the CBWS Management Plan 2020-2024. The staff was also critical in the development of the Plans and the integration of them into the annual workplans and budgets. The CBAC has also maintained an average of 73.4% participation (this was affected by the pandemic in the later part of the project, limiting participation due to access to online platforms) in quarterly meetings and have become advocates for the CBWS to become a designated Category II Wildlife Sanctuary with a Sustainable Fishery Plan supported by MAR Fund/KfW.

Activity 1.4: To facilitate the transition of SADC to an NGO, in full compliance with the Belize NGO Act. (The compliance requires for annual filing of all relevant documentation to the Attorney General office to acquire a good standing certificate – a legal recognition of operating in legal standards.)

SADC is registered as an NGO and is in full compliance with the Belize NGO's Act and is recognized as an NGO in good standing. SADC has been registered as an NGO since March 2019 and has maintain its good standing status up to date, with the next scheduled filing due in March 2021. The good standing position enables SADC to be recognized as a compliant NGO, meeting all its requirements, and gaining credibility of sound management at national level, including being part of the decision making as it relates to the business of the Network of NGOs that is tasked to nominate a Senate Member (13 senator) for the Cabinet of Belize.

Expected results of Objective 2.

1. SADC has reduced the current 100% dependency in grant funding by a minimum of 10%, with increased financing from other sources.

In 2019, SADC was able to obtain approximately 7% of its annual revenues from none grant based schemes for that year. These included pilot expeditions and sub-contracts for water quality monitoring and project implementation. In 2020, it was expected that this percentage would have increased because of the structures and systems invested in the development of the tourism (expedition hosting) but as we know we were affected by the Pandemic and almost everything had collapsed, especially related to tourism, where our focus was placed. Notwithstanding that, in 2020, SADC obtained approximately 3.79% of its annual revenues from none grant schemes. These only included sub-contracts for water quality monitoring and project implementation. We expect that as we recover from the pandemic, we will recover to reach closer to the end target of 10% of our annual revenues as expected.

Activity 2.1: To implement one priority financial mechanism from the SADC Financial Mobilization Plan schedule for completion by the end of July 2017

SADC identified tourism expeditions hosting and tourism packages as the financial mechanism to be implemented, as recommended by its Financial Mobilization Plan. The business (SADC Green Limited) has been registered as well as the tour company (Corozal Bay Eco Adventures). The budget under this activity was decided to be used for the effective hosting of expeditions through investing to establish a hosting facility, with the purchase of coastal property in a prime location. The land was identified, valued, deemed appropriate and purchased on May 5, 2020.

Pandemic impacted the tourism industry to practically eliminating any tourism in the country thereby having a direct impact to the results expected with the generation of funds from this business venture.

Activity 2.2: To establish and register a business structure for SADC, to support the organization operations.

The business structure for SADC was fully registered as “SADC Green Ltd.” in September 2019. Under this umbrella SADC also registered a sub-business under the name “Corozal Bay Eco Adventures” to serve as main outlet for the tourism business. The Corozal Bay Eco Adventures already have all the systems in place, including the branding and tour packages. The application with all relevant documentation has been submitted to the Belize Tourism Board for final processing – the license itself will be available for March 2021 (Annex 9_tour operator material).

Activity 2.3: Contract a Development Officer to assist with the development and implementation of funding diversification mechanisms (development of at least two large project proposals to cover the transition period).

Activity 2.4: To continue building capacity of SACD financial officer in NGO's accounting and integration of business management into the accounts management systems via the mentoring of a volunteer accountant provided by Accountants for International Development (AFiD)

The SACD Financial Officer received 6 weeks training from an AFID volunteer in September to October 2017 in accounting controls and processes for potential income generating activities, development and management of annual budgets, operating budgets, cost benefit analysis for potential business ventures and development and maintenance of a fixed assets register, and mechanisms for disposal of fixed assets. This has been instrumental in achieving the organization accounting requirements. He also received additional training via Beltraide in accounting, bookkeeping, cash flow and QuickBooks software from period April 26th, 2018 to August 23rd, 2018. The Financial Officer has been the lead person in successfully completing the organization's financial audit and financial reporting requirements. He is also one of the directors, along with the Executive Director and the SACD President for the business arm "SACD Green Ltd." to ensure the financial systems are established and followed through. SACD has sound financial management systems and procedures in place, which will be adopted for the business structure as the systems are being established, primary in terms of checks and balances. The business structure will establish its own policies and procedures manual as it relates to financial management. A business Quickbook system which is not the same as the NGO system that is currently being used by SACD will also be integrated (Annex 12_SACD Policies and Procedures Manual).

Activity 2.5: To produce annual financial audits for each fiscal year (January to December).

- The annual financial audits have been carried out at annual basis (year after year) with the most recent one currently under way to be completed for March 2021. Grant Thornton LLT was contracted for the 2017, 2018 and 2019 financial audits. Based on our policies and procedures manual, an audit firm can only work with SACD for three consecutive years, after which a new firm has to be identified and engaged, after approval of the SACD Board of Directors. Therefore, a new financial agency was contracted in December 2020 for the next 3 years (2020 to 2022). The Audit Firm is Shawn M. Mahler, CA, CISA, who are already conducting the annual audit for the year ending 2020, to be delivered on March 2021. The financial audit is key in meeting a good standing status under the NGO's legal requirement.

Expected results of Objective 3.

1. SACD has maintained critical operations and all staff during the three-year transition period and has a structure in place to sustain its operations beyond the project timeframe

SACD was able to increase the number of staff on a full salary from six to nine within the three-year period of the project. SACD was also able to hire one part-time janitor and two contracted services (Development Officer and Marketing Officer) for a total of 12 personnel. With that staff SACD was able to maintain its operations and during the entire project, including the maintenance and operations of major equipment such as vessels and vehicles.

Patrols were maintained to an average of 3.7 patrols per week for the entire duration of the project. The infraction varied, showing an increase from 2017 (44 infractions) to 2018 (50 infractions) by 13% and a decrease from 2018 (50 infractions) to 2019 (36 infractions) by 28% but with a slight increase again in 2020 (38 infractions) from 2019 (36 infractions) by 5.55%. With the exception of 2018, the trend of infractions from 2017, which is the baseline showed a decrease of infractions and an increase in compliance when comparing inspections to infractions.

Overall SACD was also able to maintain the monitoring of its conservation targets with 6 of its 8 conservation targets being monitored or addressed (three fully “water quality, bird nesting colonies and manatees” and 3 partially “Mangroves, Seagrass and commercial fish species”) during the three-year project timeframe. While, in 2020 the efforts were unable to be maintained primary because of the restrictions established to prevent the spread of the COVID-19, we aim to re-establish the ongoing monitoring for year 2021.

Activity 3.1: To maintain the current # of full-time staff of SACD to six (6) during the transition period with a full salary scale as an incentive to increase motivation and effectiveness.

The current number of full-time staff employed by SACD on a full salary is now nine with the addition of a new ranger. SACD also has one part-time janitor and two contracted services (Development Officer and Marketing Officer) which makes a total of 12 personnel. SACD is implementing a salary scale, laid out in the Policy and Procedures Manual that allows for increments where applicable, based on the annual staff performance evaluations, as an incentive for motivation and effectiveness of the full-time personnel. The evaluations encountered some challenges with some gaps during the three years primary because of the load of work on the administrative staff. Though, the evaluations were conducted January 2020 for period (January to December 2019) and was also carried out in February 2021 for period (January to December 2020) with most staff demonstrating very good performance levels and motivation with recommendation for capacity building needs such as the green laws training and fisheries

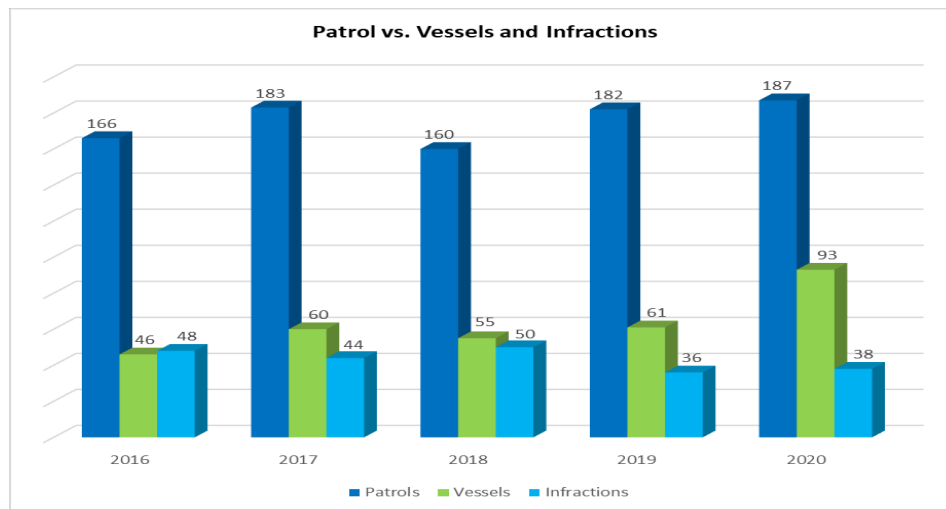
regulations as well as the need for improved conflict resolution. Training needs that were addressed included special constable, financial management, first aid and first response and applied underwater research methods

Activity 3.2: To maintain effective patrols at site level by targeting the replenishment zones currently being established.

In 2020, the patrol team conducted a total of 187 patrols, with an average of 3.6 patrols per week. Despite the pandemic, the number of patrols were maintained with an increase of 2.7% compared to 2019. This year the highest infractions recorded were the use of prohibited gear, including gill nets and spear guns, and fishers engaging in commercial fishing without a valid or expired Fisherfolk license. Trends show an increase at the start of the state of emergency, with 16 infractions recorded for April 2020. The majority of offenders engaged in illegal fishing activities were nontraditional fishermen entering the reserve with unrestricted gear. Most were first time offenders, mainly reef fishers who were unable to access their traditional fishing areas. Due to the socio-economic issues associated with the pandemic it required a level of flexibility and education rather than arrest and prosecution. A total of 11 gillnets were confiscated and destroyed and two recurrent offenders were charged for illegal fishing activities. A total of 38 infractions were recorded in 2020 with a slight increase of 5.2% when compared to 2019. In November, SACD hired one additional ranger, totaling four rangers, to the patrol team and implemented a three-week rotating schedule strategy with the objective to strengthen surveillance and enforcement, now patrolling seven days of the week to increase the number of patrols and address illegal activities more efficiently.

Though, when analyzing the data for the last four years (2017 – 2020), an average of 3.7 patrols per week were conducted over the four years. This meets and exceeds the 3 patrols per week target. Compliance was also improved, while there is a slight increase of infraction in 2020, when compared to 2019, it can be seen that in 2018 for almost every inspection (55 in total) there was an infraction (50 in total), while in 2020 for 93 inspections there were 39 infractions which shows approximately 50% improvement in compliance. The table below show the patrols, versus inspections vs infractions and the variation of percentage increase or decrease for 2017 to 2020 (Annex 13_Patrol report).

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total Patrols	183	160	182	187
% variation	10.24%	-12.57%	13.75%	2.75%
Single patrols	91	45	136	176
Joint patrols	92	109	46	11
% variation	n/a	18.47%	-57.79%	-76.08%
Inspections	60	55	61	93
% variation	30%	-8.33%	10.90%	52.45%
infractions	44	50	36	38
% variation	-8.33%	13.63%	-28%	5.55%
Compliance	26.67%	9.10%	40.99%	57.78%



Activity 3.3: To strengthen coordinated system-level patrol with enforcement and protected areas partners.

SACD continues to partner with conservation and enforcement entities to deploy effective daily patrols within CBWS and its borderlines to reduce all illegal activity. Joint patrols in 2020 were hindered due to Covid-19 and drastically affected the continuous support of the Forest Department, Belize Coast Guard, Hol Chan Marine Reserve, and our Mexican partners, IBANQROO (managers of Satuario del manati bahia de Chetumal), due to the restriction of physical contact. Out of the 187 patrols in 2020, 10 were joint patrols. Between January and February, 4 patrols were conducted with the Hol Chan Marine Reserve Rangers targeting surveillance at the southern boarder shared by both reserves. The team conducted 2 special joint patrols with the Belize Coast Guard which resulted in the confiscation of 2 unregistered gill nets. Four coordinated joint patrols were conducted with IBANQROO which deterred transboundary illegal activities. Joint patrols have resulted in greater coverage of the protected area and the entire

Northern Belize Coastal Complex including the Belize/Mexico maritime border and has successfully eliminated transboundary incursions from the crab trap fishermen from the Mexican that were entering into Belize territory. It is important to note that in 2019, 22 joint patrols were carried out which approximate 2 patrols per month which was already close to the target of 3 patrols per month, which would more than likely would have been achieved in 2020 if not for the Pandemic challenges. Below is a table that show the number joint patrols and the number of times each entity participated within the duration of the project between 2017 and 2020 and the infractions recorded

Institutions	2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Patrols	Infractions	Patrols	Infractions	Patrols	Infractions	Patrols	Infractions
Total Joint Patrols	92		109		46		11	3
Belize Coast Guard	83	20	67	35	11	3	2	3
Forest Department	5		25	4	22	5		
Fisheries Department			7	4	4	6		
Hol Chan							5	
Sarteneja Police	3		1		1			
IBANQROO	1	1	9	2	8	1	4	

Activity 3.4: To maintain water quality physio-chemical monitoring

A total of 74 points were surveyed during 3 consecutive days in each season (Rainy, Dry and Norte). The data analyzed for the 3 seasons indicates that the overall quality of the water in CBWS is at an acceptable standard. The physical parameters tested have shown a slight increase of PH near Sarteneja Village and Corozal District which can be attributed to the runoff of wastewater and construction occurring along the coastline. It is important to note that dissolved oxygen levels in the entire system is better compared to 2019 when the New River had an extremely low dissolved oxygen level.

SACD collaborated with Hol Chan to expand the monitoring program to include the Hol Chan Marine Reserve and obtain a more complete snapshot of Northern Belize Coastal Complex (NBCC). The Dry Season water quality monitoring was successfully conducted simultaneous with Hol Chan. Hol Chan's multiparameter probe failed and were unable to contribute to other seasons but through a partnership project under GEF, the multiparameter is going to be repaired and in 2021, it is expected that the entire system (the Northern Belize Coastal Complex) will be monitored using a standard methodology developed with the support of ECOSUR (Annex 14_Monitoring report).

Through the support of MAR Fund, SACD purchased a new portable handheld multiparameter device (YSI EXO2) to continue with the monitoring of physical parameters as well as a Spectrophotometer to conduct in house water sample analysis to monitor nutrients and contaminants levels. The training in the use of the spectrophotometer by the Belize Formulators

Limited is pending. The delay has been primarily due to the pandemic, which means that the equipment has not been used as yet but expected to be integrated in 2021, as soon as the training is completed. This has been beneficial at system and national levels - with the trainings provided to different conservation organizations and information being used by the Department of the Environment and Forest Department.

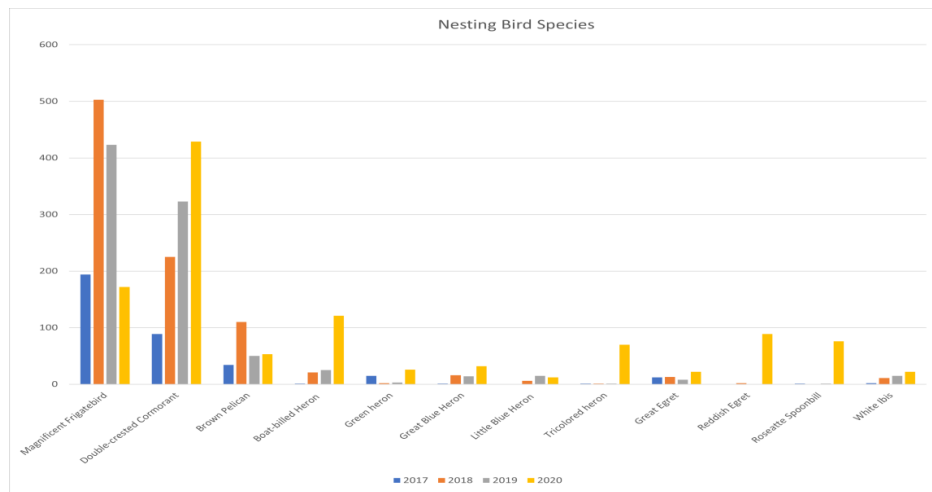
Activity 3.5: To maintain the monitoring of manatees, fish larvae recruitment, fish catch and bird nesting sites.

There were some challenges with meeting all our monitoring requirements in 2020 due to the restrictions associated with the Pandemic. Though, overall SACD was able to maintain the monitoring of manatees and bird nesting colonies but not commercial species for the year 2020. With the support of counterpart funding, a fish and larvae study using barcoding were completed in 2019 to identify the species that are using the area as recruitment and nursery. Of the 166 specimens that were sequenced, 29 species from 23 families were identified with two species of commercial importance, which were the striped Mojarra and the bonefish (this were important findings). The results of this research is being used to inform the zonation process and also to confirm with evidence the importance of the PA as an important nursery and recruitment area (Annex 15: Fish Larvae Report).

The bird nesting colonies that were monitored also provided important information. SACD monitored two important bird colonies, Cayo Falso and Wildtracks mangrove cayes. During the entire period from 2017 to 2020 a total of 4,209 species were counted that make up 63 species (both migratory as well as residential). During the same period 13 species were registered to be nesting within CBWS, also showing an increase of 221.14% from 2017 (350 counts) to 2020 (1124 counts). The trends seem to be stable but identified to be in high risk due to coastal development and destruction of habitats (mangrove cayes). Using the information generated, SACD has join efforts with Hol Chan to seek government assistance to establish these sites as bird sanctuaries. The information is also used to showcase the importance of CBWS as a nesting and foraging site for globally important species such as the reddish egret. We are building partnership to also identify other nesting sites and building the capacity of the NBCC partners to also incorporate the monitoring of these species into their management work (Annex 16_Birds raw data). Below is a table showing the counts per year of the different nesting birds and the total nests per specie. Generally showing an increase of individuals per specie for year in 2020 and a trend of increase in the number of nests from 2017 to 2020.

Year	2017		2018		2019		2020	
Species	# of Birds	# of Nests	# of Birds	# of Nests	# of Birds	# of Nests	# of Birds	# of Nests
Magnificent Frigatebird	194	0	503	0	423	0	172	0
Double-	89	25	225	43	323	35	429	50

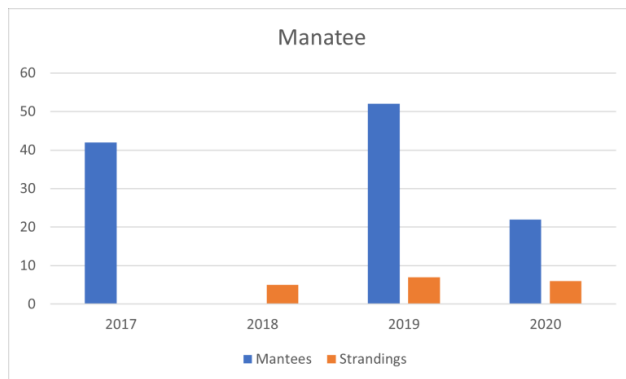
crested Cormorant								
Brown Pelican	34	2	110	3	50	5	53	10
Boat-billed Heron	1	0	21	2	25	5	121	5
Little Blue Heron	0	0	6	2	15	6	12	4
Tricolored heron	8	5	10	12	18	16	70	19
Green heron	15	0	2	0	3	0	26	0
Great Blue Heron	1	0	16	0	14	0	32	0
Great Egret	12	1	13	2	8	2	22	8
Reddish Egret	0	0	2	1	79	8	289	18
Roseatte Spoonbill	1	0	10	2	30	8	76	15
White Ibis	2	0	11	4	15	6	22	12
Total	357	33	929	71	1003	91	1324	141



Along the course of the project timeframe, different methods were used monitor the manatee congregation sites. In 2017 the surveys were done via observations from boat based where 42 individuals were counted. This was found to be very intrusive and created concerns of disturbances to the individuals and therefore in 2018 the surveys were discontinued new and a new method via done based was investigated. No surveys were carried out during 2018. In 2019 the boat-based drone surveys were adopted and

launched, using the same sites with an average time of 29 minutes for each site (point), with 52 individuals counted. 2020 saw a reduced number of surveys due to some restrictions in vessel use etc. due to the covid-19 pandemic which resulted in a reduced number of individuals counted, 22 in total. During the same period, the SACD team also responded to 18 cases of stranding (5 in 2018, 7 in 2019 and 6 in 2020). Though, it is concerning that the manatee deaths have been increasing, especially in 2019-2020, thereby assuming that there is a decrease in populations and the need to identify the issues for better management strategies. Such as determining no-wake zones and identification of manatee conservation zones, within the zonation process of the CBWS (Annex 17_Manatee drone surveys raw data). Below is a table showing the number of individuals counted vs the standings recorded during 2017 to 2020.

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
Mantees	42	0	52	22
Strandings	0	5	7	6



Activity 3.6: To provide equipment maintenance and licensing for critical operational equipment.

The operations and maintenance of critical equipment has been on-going and is considered vital in ensuring the continuity of SACD's work in the management of CBWS. With the support of this project, SACD has been able to ensure the scheduled maintenance activities for two vessels and one vehicle used for patrols, education and outreach, and research and monitoring activities. SACD continue to have two operational vessels and was able to increase the number of vehicles to two as well that are fully operational and continue to support the operations of SACD. Additionally, SACD integrated a third vessel that is currently being refurbished and equipped for full operations in March 2021.

- 5. Obstacles:** Indicate if there have been any obstacles to the development of the project that have prevented achieving the planned goals or complying with the timetable, and how you have solved or plan to solve the situation.

There were a few partial delays that required additional time for completion of activities that were resolved with a request for an extension to the project timeframe. There were also obstacles associated with the pandemic that prevent us from reaching or meeting some of the targets and results. Specifically, as it relates to reducing our grant dependency in grant funding by a minimum of 10%, with increased financing from other sources such as, the expedition hosting and diversification of income sources. The COVID-19 pandemic was our greatest obstacle of the past year, coming to the final phase of the project. It was planned that for 2020 SADC would have had a fully operations tourism venture that would contribute to relying less on grant funding and increasing financial sustainability through eco-tourism, but because of lack of tourism due to COVID and border closures, the development of tourism activities were delayed. While we are now better prepared with the structures and systems in place, with the extremely limited influx of visitors it ultimately affected our end target of reducing our dependency on grant funding by at least 10%. Notwithstanding that, SADC continues to be in a good position, retaining its employees and its operations beyond the project timeframe with a reduced dependency on this project for operations and salaries.

Additionally, the mechanisms to prevent the spread of the Virus restricted us from physical contact and in most cases forcing us to close our office. SADC had to establish mechanisms to ensure the continuity of work and did efforts to work-from-home with limited movement and contact. Not every office worker was prepared with reliable access to internet or workspaces, which ultimately limited productivity. The office eventually adapted to a new method of communication and once work-from-home orders were lifted, productivity was regained, and operations became 100% operational for all programme areas, Education and outreach, Surveillance and Enforcement and research and monitoring.

6. Links with other organizations: Describe any alliances established as a result of the project development.

The project has been critical in ensuring additional funding for the management of the protected area.

SADC also continues to maintain alliances with all the following stakeholders:

The National Biodiversity Office: The Forest Department has been transitioning its role to the National Biodiversity Office under which Corozal

Bay Wildlife Sanctuary is now being overseen. No joint patrols were conducted but the National Biodiversity Office has been very responsive and supportive to address issues associated with the protected area, including setting the stage for the reclassification of the area and addressing the extractive uses of the PA. They have also provided timely support in providing support letters for getting condition stamps for our international volunteers and duty free for equipment purchased under this and other projects. They are supportive of the tourism initiatives within CBWS.

Belize Fisheries Department (FiD): The government authority responsible for management of fisheries resources personnel have completely re-engaged to address coordinated efforts at system level. Physical patrols were very limited due to the restrictions (internal and external) associated with the Pandemic. Though, SADC and Hol Chan partnered to submit a project to the GEF -SGP that aims to boost system level collaboration, aimed at improved surveillance and enforcement and research and monitoring activities. The project was approved and is already under implementation. Before the Pandemic, there was a good level of support from the Fisheries Department Personnel in the collaboration efforts in the Northern Belize Coastal Complex (NBCC).

Ministry of Tourism (Belize Tourism Board): The Government authority responsible for tourism in Belize. Over the years, SADC has built its communication with them to the point where they have committed the financing for a welcome center for CBWS. This will be the main facility that will assist in providing information to visitors to promote best practices and sustainable resource use within CBWS. This welcome center is proposed for to be established in 2021 as a second phase to the current SADC Headquarters (Annex 18_Welcome center blueprint).

IBANQROO: has also been very involved and committed in supporting coordinated surveillance and enforcement along the border line despite the issues associated with the Pandemic. Patrols were conducted along the international boarder shared by Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary in the Belize side and Santuario del Manati in the Mexican side the first few months of 2020 before the Pandemic and when some of the restrictions were softened in July and December, though, virtual meetings were sustained for the planning and execution of activities and for developing the work plans for year 2021, that is already under implementation (Annex 19_Transboundary Patrol work plan _2021).

The Belize Coast Guard: has also been very supportive, while not much joint operations were carried out, there were coordinated efforts to address illegal fishing. Especially during the spike of illegal fishing at the start of the Pandemic in April of 2020. The ranger team have maintained constant communication with the Coast Guard team, and they have been supportive in responding to critical issues. Due to our internal procedures, the SADC team was unable to carry out joint operations (where the Coast Guard will be hosted in the SADC vessels), but they responded from their own vessels when required. In December of 2020, the SADC admin team met with the

Coast Guard team to discuss the development of a formal agreement to outline the collaboration. This is expected to be completed by March of 2021.

The Hol Chan Marine Reserve: personnel have completely re-engaged to address coordinated efforts at system level. Physical patrols were very limited due to the restrictions (internal and external) associated with the Pandemic. Though, SADC and Hol Chan partnered to submit a project to the GEF -SGP that aims to boost system level collaboration, aimed at improved surveillance and enforcement and research and monitoring activities. The project was approved and its schedule to begin in 2021, the first steps is to hire a Northern Belize Coastal Complex coordinator that will ensure that the collaboration is well established.

Sarteneja Beach Trap “Pesca Tours’ Association (Pesca Tours): A registered community-based group of 18 beach trap fishers and their families, committed to supporting the sustainable fishery through participation in CBWS fishery meetings, and in income diversification trainings and development of the tourism packages.

Sarteneja Tour Guide Association (STGA): A registered community-based group of over 60 STGA members based in Sarteneja. STGA is participating in capacity building and best practices trainings and workshops. They will also benefit from the employment opportunities under the Corozal Bay Eco_Adventures (CBEA) tour packages.

Sarteneja Homestay Group: A registered women-led community group of 13 families providing cultural homestay / guesthouse experiences. They are committed to supporting the establishment of the tourism packages and will benefit from the employment opportunities and increased visitation to the area.

The Corozal Bay Advisory Committee: has been the most engaged in the decision-making process of the management of the protected area. Despite the restrictions associated with the Pandemic, we were able to maintain virtual communication. SADC was able to complete three meetings, two of which were face to face and one was virtual. Participation was at 75% average per meeting, where issues associated with jetties, jet skis, water parks and gill nets were discussed and followed through. A community liaison office is now providing structured follow up on matters associated with the CBAC and its affairs as it relates to the protected area and their concerns.

Wildtracks: is a None profit entity focused on manatee rehabilitation, also providing support throughout in the monitoring, standings and recuses of manatees in CBWS

7. **Project development table:** Complete the project development table for the period being reported by indicating percentage of accomplishment of

indicators/products. Please add any new activities and their indicators/products.

See attached_ Development Table

8. **Lessons learned:** Emphasize, besides the technical issues, the social and administrative aspects that may be useful in future projects regarding the same topic or developed under similar conditions.

One of the greatest lessons learnt during this period is the importance of documenting socio economic information. Never SADC had documented the reach of the education and outreach activities to the communities, Schools etc. Therefore, having no quantitative information about the number, age range or gender of persons reached during school presentations, community outreach activities etc. SADC has been gradually improving in putting in place systems to ensure that the number of people and youth or children that are reached is documented by community, age range, gender, etc.

The same has been for socio economic benefits derived from the protected area. We have records receipts and payments made but there was no other register system to track or quantify the number of labor days and direct earnings made through SADC or its business arm. This is important to be able to quantify the economic benefits directly associated with the work of SADC in the protected Area. A system has been established to register and document the number of people directly benefiting through the community researchers programme and through SADC business arm, separated by activity, amount of earnings and gender.

Other lessons learnt during this period was the fact that international volunteers with a focus on proposal writing have a high risk of being unsuccessful. While most of them are good at writing not all can learn the national context required for proposal writing for protected areas in Belize. This was a lesson for us for the Development officer position. Additionally, we learnt that while an individual may not have the capacity, they have invested in travel and other costs, which raise some level of unconformity from their part if their contract is terminated after the probationary period, based on their level of investment in travel. A situation that does have some level of conflict and recognizing the need to develop local capacity.

Another lesson was our capacity to adapt in the use of technology for education and other programme activities. Even in house, working from home was not productive. Most staff do not have a working environment conducive for virtual or online engagement and participation. If this was the case with our own staff, then much worse, was the capacity of stakeholder to engage using technology. There were cases where we provided data for participants and they were still not able to join because of their limited ability to use, a cellular phone for zoom meeting or other kinds of platforms. We learnt that we needed to use social media platforms to have slightly more engagement and put in placed competitions and other incentive to encourage people to like our page to have grater reach.

We were not prepared for a shock such as the one from the Pandemic and more so, it reaffirmed the need for financial sustainability. Though, the lesson learnt was the fact that we cannot depend on just one venue for income generation. As we saw with the Pandemic, which was unusual but happened. We need to have diverse mechanisms of income support that are not just reliant in tourism.

9. Effects of the project: Have the results of the project promoted environmental, social or economic changes? How was this determined/measured?

One of the major effects of the project is the promotion of environmental protection, 2020 was a unique year for protected areas managers because of the Pandemic, but this simply reiterated the importance of our work in securing and protecting our natural heritage through improved protection and conservation of priority protected areas and ecosystems. At the start of the Pandemic in April of 2020, SACD saw a spike on the number of infractions - one infraction per inspection was being noticed with a record number of 16 infractions in just April 2020. This was an issue where fishermen were not able to travel to their respective fishing grounds due to the travel restriction and with the economic crisis people started to move into the reserve to have access to food (another effect of the project in food security as part of protected areas management). With the support of the project, SACD was able to implement several strategies, including the sharing of information and education and increase in presence and enforcement. All those strategies contributed to the reduction in infractions in just one month after the Pandemic, showing a direct result of the project investment in promoting environmental protection.

The above effect of the project can also be measured from the management effectiveness evaluation done in 2020 for 2019. The Management Effectiveness Evaluation have confirmed that CBWS scores show a drastic increase from 71.3% in 2017 to 84.2% in 2019 using the comparative indicators of the evaluations. This confirms that the investment towards Biodiversity and ecosystem protection is already enabling the health of the ecosystems, contributing to the national protected areas systems. SACD is now working to assess the possibility of subscribing CBWS to the green listing which will add an additional step for the PA and for Belize, again contributing to environmental changes.

The project also supported the enabling environment for economic support towards the protected area through the establishment of the SACD business arm known as the SACD Green Ltd, under which a tour operator is being established known as the Corozal Bay Eco – Adventures. While this was directly affected by the Pandemic and the tourism collapse in the country, we see ourselves having all the necessary structure to explore revenue generation when the country starts to recover from the Pandemic's Crisis.

Adding to the above, the project investment continues to contribute to the socio-economic benefits derived from the protected area, directly and as a result of this project. In summary, through the project investment, we were able to create employment opportunities and supported the salaries of 9 staff members directly coming from the biggest stakeholder community of the protected area (Sarteneja) (Including the 3 new staff members). We were also able to provide opportunities for 8 community researchers, directly from 2 stakeholder communities (Sarteneja and Chunox) of the protected area, paid at stipend basis. The work of SADC, supported by the project, also contributes to securing the livelihoods and food security of the fishermen as fishermen which is a direct socio-economic benefit (estimated to be in the amount of BZE\$171,000.00 (approximately 19 families at \$1,000.00 per month for 9 months). With support of counterpart funding from MCCAP and MAR Fund, we were also able to support the establishment of the Beach Trap Pesca Tour Association completely made up of beach trap fishers and their family members (11 women and 8 men) who benefited from equipment, training, and technical support in the amount of BZE\$120,579.97. The total number of fishers who benefitted from the “pesca tours” initiatives represent 66.6% of the total number of beach trap fishers and approximately 30.8% of the total number of fishers currently known by SADC. Within the 8 households involved, a total of BZE\$2,820.00 was generated through the livelihood project, which was additional revenue of approximately Bz\$1,000.00 per month as part of their fishing operations. This means that each family made BZE\$352.50 additional income for participating in three days of “Pesca Tours” as part of the pilot expeditions created by SADC and the protected area.

10. Communication of results: What mechanisms have been used or will be used to communicate the results, and to what audiences?

The results will be delivered through all possible channels including social media posts (Facebook and Instagram), quarterly newsletter, website, annual report, CBAC meeting, general stakeholder meeting, and speaking to fishers directly (one and one). This will be done to ensure fishers, stakeholders, social media followers and any other interested parties are aware of the results and its achievements. The next scheduled annual report is set for April 2021, the next scheduled CBAC Meeting is also scheduled for April 2021, which will be the first two avenues where the results of the project will be communicated.

11. Project continuity: Will the processes established by this project continue operating? How will it be done? Who will provide follow-up?

We are aware of all the issues associated with the Pandemic and how it really affected the efforts associated with tourism that were being put in place as a means of income generation. Tourism expedition hosting was the main targeted financial mechanism that was being pursued. Though, the

Pandemic restricted most or all international travelling which made it difficult for us. We do believe that we have all the structures now in place that will help us to get back on track once we start recovering from the economic crises. A business arm known as the SADC Green limited was established under which a sub tour operator was created, and land was acquired for the establishment of a hosting facility to be the primary resource available for some level of financial diversification towards the continued operations of SADC and the management of the protected area. The hosting facility infrastructure is planned to be constructed in two phases, the first will be a meeting center and the second will be the hosting or bunk house facility to be able to use it in different stages during the hosting of our expeditions expected to re-start in 2021. We are also working to develop online courses and tours for universities as an option to bridge some of the travelling limitations at this point in time, in partnership with Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve and Hol Chan Marine Reserve. All of these being supported by the Marketing and Product Development Officer, which we have renewed his contract for another year. This is the initial step towards establishing a revenue generation system that is none-traditional donor funding. We are also looking at ways to make the Development Officer position more effective in getting returns on investment in terms of grant proposals and submissions. SADC has also established a system to provide technical support for water quality work in northern Belize. Currently, SADC has done this in 2019 and is in discussion of being sub-contracted again in 2021 to provide water quality testing services in portions of new river and laguna seca in relationship with the two bridges being proposed at these two sites as part of the Corozal to Sarteneja road construction. The intention is to establish a system to sell a service to the private sector or other consultants that require of this service. In addition, we have secured funds to complete the first phase of the expedition hosting facility in the new plot of land. This new site is expedited to be developed in phases and is expected to be operations by April 2022, providing the basis under which SADC would develop a tourism product for income generation.

Additionally, the management interventions being funded under this project are following the management plan, which are ongoing and are being built into current and pipeline projects being pursued into the future. While project based is not the most sustainable mechanism, it does ensure that the interventions do have a level of continuity into the future until they can be self-sustained.

12. Due diligence:

- Updated list of Board Members with copy of valid ID
- Bylaws of the organization (if there were modifications during the project)
- Last annual report
- Last institutional external audit
- Certificate of Legal registration
- Tax clearance / Certificate of good standing

Please attach graphic materials and publications that illustrate the results and are samples of the project products.

Annex 3: CBWS Management Plan_2020_2024