Financing of Conservation in Belize
- The Experience of Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT Belize)

Sustainable Finance Stream
V World Park Congress
Friday, September 12th 2003
Durban, South Africa

Background
- Belize: 8,867 square miles
- 250,000 population
- Over 40% of land mass under some legal protected status
- Diverse and large NGO movement
- Assistance from WWF, TNC, CI, HIVOS…

The Institutional-Legal Structure

- Government of Belize
- Ministry of Tourism
- Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment
- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
- National Institute of Culture and History
- Forest Department
- Fisheries Department
- National Parks, National Monuments, Nature Reserves, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Forest Reserves
- Archaeological Sites and Reserves
- Marine Reserves
- NICH Act
- Forest Act
- National Parks System Act
- Fisheries Act

Protected Areas of Belize

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Introduction - Why PACT?

- NGO movement
- Consultation workshops
- Visitor willingness surveys to pay
- Expressed need for a sustainable financing mechanism
- National entity for conservation
- Sustainable financing mechanism

What is

- Revolving Fund
- Statutory Board Structure
- Capitalization (02/03): USD$1,773,540.00

Primary Objective:
Assist, via grants, the management, conservation, development of protected areas and wildlife species (CITES)

Establishment

- The Protected Areas Conservation Trust Act (1995)
- Its offices opened in June of 1996
- USAID gave initial resources (USD$36,000)
- Statutory board via Ministry of Natural Resources
- Act amended in November 2002

Revenue Streams
**Revenue Collected 1996 to 2003**

- **Revenue Collection**:
  - 1996/1997: $381,632.55
  - 1997/1998: $528,890.01
  - 1998/1999: $547,096.11
  - 1999/2000: $623,391.79
  - 2000/2001: $680,866.38
  - 2002/2003: $1,097,534.00

**Major Supporters**
- Conservation Tax paid by tourists
- Cruise Ship Passenger’s 20% commission
- Individual donations
- Government of Belize via legislation

- Conservation Tax: 52%
- Commission: 40%
- Other Donations: 8%

**Financial Issues**
- **Annual Operating Budget**: US$1 million
- **Endowment Fund**: USD$500,000

  - Target: Minimum 60% of revenue on grants
  - Maximum 40% admin and capital

  - Heavily dependent on tourism
  - Tax alone does not support the system
  - Need to diversify funding

**Expense Distribution Chart**
- **21%**: Grant Program
- **16%**: Operational/Capital
- **63%**: Staff

Year end 02/03
**Fundraising Strategy**

Very initial stages of developing a strategy

**Pre-requisites:**
- Revision of legislation = more autonomy
- Review of governance structure
- Compliance with donors’ requirements
- PACT Foundation

**Overview of Grant Program:**

- Small Grants: up to $18,000
- Medium Grants: up to $60,000 **
- Scholarships: up to $5,000 ea.
- Short term Training
- Community Outreach
- Donations (community goodwill)
- Promotions

**Eligibility Requirements**

- Non-government organization
- Community based organization
- Established & registered a minimum of one year
- Some government agencies
- Successfully completed previous PACT funded projects and other agency grants

**Grants Program Process**

- **No calls for proposal this year**
- Previous arrangement: 3 calls per year
- Screening Process > Management Team
- Technical Evaluation > Advisory Council
- Board Decision
Activities Funded

- Demarcation of boundaries
- Research
- Institutional Strengthening
- Infrastructure Development
- Scholarships/Short-term training
- Promotional Materials
- Environmental Education
- Monitoring Activities
- Minimal Capital/Office Equipment

Management

- Interim audit at half year
- Full audit at end of year
- Budget based on projects in the pipeline and historical trends of revenue
- Management team drafts budget
- Budget approved at Board
- Every 2 years, external evaluation of projects

Our Strengths

- Public/Private Sector management
- Secured operational expenses
- Network and dialogue with NGO
- Active Support to Government policies:
  - Debt for Nature Swap
  - Protected Areas Policy and Plan
- Coordinating role
Lessons Learnt

• Autonomous and effective Board
• Active government support
• Programs need to be focused and clear
• Outreach to community groups is vital
• Specialized training of fund’s staff
• Evaluation for management effectiveness
• Capacity issues with grant recipients
• Diversification/Fundraising Campaign
• Basic Needs/Poverty Alleviation

Challenges

• Limited financial base
• Governance structure
• Lack of national policy
• Diversification of funds
• Recipient’s capacity
• Project vs Programme
• Donor buy-in to PACT

Future Plans

• Mid-term evaluations of the Fund
• Multi-year, larger projects
• Clear Priority guidelines
• Equitable/Practical distribution of funds
• More autonomous Board/New Legislation
• Development of a fundraising campaign
• Programme Strategy

Thank You