



GEF Evaluation Office



UNDP Evaluation Office

Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme

Country Program Case Study: Belize

Prepared by

**Patricia B. Mendoza
ABEN Services and Consulting Limited**

Belize City, Belize

June 2007

Contents

Acknowledgments.....	ii
Foreword.....	iii
Abbreviations.....	iv
Executive Summary	v
1 Background.....	1
1.1 Objective and Methodology	1
1.2 Country Description	2
1.3 Country Development and Environmental Priorities	4
2 Overview of Belize’s GEF Activities	9
2.1 FSPs, MSPs, and Enabling Activities.....	9
2.2 The Start of the SGP and COMPACT Program in Belize.....	9
2.3 The SGP’s Strategic Thrust	10
2.4 Analysis of Belize Small Grants Portfolio and Operations	12
3 Further Assessment of Program Performance and Protocols	27
3.1 Relevance to National Priorities.....	27
3.2 Relevance of the SGP to GEF Priorities.....	29
3.3 Effectiveness/Impact	31
3.4 Efficiency.....	35
3.5 Issues and Lessons from Evaluation Sample Projects.....	38
4 Summary Findings	41
4.1 Main Achievement and/or Benefit of the SGP.....	41
4.2 Innovations	41
4.3 Strengths	42
4.4 Challenges	42
4.5 Final Recommendations	43
Annex A: Documents Reviewed and/or Cited.....	45
Annex B: Overall Grading of Evaluation Sample Projects	47

Acknowledgments

The authors take this opportunity to thank the many stakeholders for their invaluable input during this evaluation process. Appreciation is extended especially to the SGP grantees who gave so generously of their time and who were open and forthright in their communication. We thank the Belize SGP staff—Philip Balderamos, Miguel Usher, and Omar Gale—for the readiness with which they provided information, clarification, and documentation and for their willingness to share their time, experiences, and views with us. Appreciation is extended also to the National Steering Committee for sharing their time and insights into the grant-making process of the Belize Country Programme. Thanks are extended also to the UNDP staff for assisting with information processing and sharing their views, and in particular to Diane Wade-Moore for her valuable suggestions. Last, but certainly not least, appreciation is extended to John R. Wilson of Barbados, an environmental specialist and associate of ABEN Consulting, for his review of and suggestions on the final versions of this report.

Foreword

In accordance with the 2006 Monitoring and Evaluation Policy of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), one of the overarching objectives of the GEF with respect to monitoring and evaluation is to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its partners as a basis for decision making on policies, strategies, program management, and projects; and to improve knowledge and performance. In this context, the GEF Evaluation Office is pleased to present nine country program case studies that were part of the data collected for the Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (SGP).

In June 2006 the GEF Council requested the GEF Evaluation Office undertake an independent evaluation of the SGP. The GEF Evaluation Office invited the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Evaluation Office to participate in this initiative. The purpose of the joint evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and cost effectiveness of SGP objectives in relation to the overall GEF mandate. In addition, the evaluation assessed the results of the SGP, the factors affecting these results, and the monitoring and evaluation systems of the program as implemented. It also traced the evolution of the SGP, the changes that have taken place in the program, and the drivers of these changes. Country case studies were prepared as part of the evaluation. Although the studies are unique and particular to each country, the analytical framework used was that provided by the evaluation's approach paper.

Although the findings and conclusions are the responsibility of the authors, the case studies were undertaken under the direction of the GEF and UNDP evaluation officers with relevant regional experience. National consultants were hired to carry out the majority of the project site visits. Staff from the GEF and UNDP Evaluation Offices provided methodological guidance to the local consultants, participated in the initial site visits, and supervised the drafting of the case studies to ensure consistency within and among the country studies.

The contents of this report are based on the findings of the evaluation team and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of GEF or UNDP.

The GEF Evaluation Office would like to thank all who collaborated with the evaluation: its staff and consultants, national coordinators, members of the national steering committees, and the staff from the country offices. In addition, we would like to acknowledge and thank the main authors of the reports.

Abbreviations

BBRWHS	Belize Barrier Reef World Heritage Site
CBO	community-based organization
CBS	Community Baboon Sanctuary
COMPACT	Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation
CPMT	Central Programme Management Team
CPS	Country Programme Strategy
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DOE	Department of the Environment
FSP	full-size project
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IUCN	World Conservation Union
MBRS	Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System
MSP	medium-size project
NARMAP	Natural Resource Management and Protection Project
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NPAPSP	National Protected Areas Policy and System Plan
NSC	National Steering Committee/National Selection Committee
OP	operational phase
PACT	Protected Areas Conservation Trust
SGP	Small Grants Programme
TOR	terms of reference
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Executive Summary

This assessment is part of the an independent evaluation of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP). As described in the terms of reference, this evaluation differs from earlier ones in that it is aimed at assessing the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of SGP concepts and processes. On the other hand, earlier evaluations sought to identify lessons learned and measures needed to improve SGP internal operations.

Consistent with the terms of reference, the Belize SGP has been evaluated in terms of relevance to national environmental and development priorities and to national development plans. Assessment of the program's effectiveness was done by determining the extent to which the program has raised awareness of and influenced behavior toward the environment and the extent to which the outcomes have or can be expected to translate to global benefits. Efficiency was mainly evaluated through an examination of the cost ratios of the SGP operations, its governance and administrative functions, and its business processes.

The methodology used for this assessment entailed an analysis of the SGP database and financial information recorded in ATLAS, review of documents, interaction with stakeholders, and project site visits. Of the 13 sample projects, site visits were conducted for 10 and a telephone interview was undertaken for an additional project. Based on responses of the interviewees and on file information, two survey instruments were completed for each of the 13 projects. These are the performance review protocols and the monitoring and evaluation questionnaires. Instruments were also completed to sharpen the assessment of the monitoring and evaluation protocol used by SGP staff and committees and of the quality of the Belize Country Programme Strategy.

The evaluation shows that the Belize SGP is relevant to both national and GEF priorities. The heavy biodiversity focus (94.1 percent of full grants) identified is consistent with the evolution of the country's policy, legislative, and institutional framework. This is further supported by the fact that the proportion of Belize's GEF enabling activities, medium-size projects, and full-size projects mirrors this biodiversity focus. Furthermore, many of the biodiversity projects were aimed at building community capacity to co-manage resources and, up to 2004, to advocate for protected area designation. A significant number of projects also had the following objectives: education and awareness, alternative or sustainable livelihoods, resource monitoring, and protection of endangered species.

Several aspects of the evolution of the institutional framework influenced the SGP's biodiversity focus. These include the development of a country environmental program marked by the establishment of the Department of the Environment, the Conservation Division (within the Forest Department), and the Land Information Centre (within the Lands and Surveys Department) between 1992 and 1993. In the latter year, two major biodiversity projects started: the Natural Resource Management and Protection project and the Forest Planning and Management Project. Other relevant milestones were the establishment of the Protected Areas

Conservation Trust in 1996 and of the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute in 1998.

The SGP's consistency with national priorities in its first 10 years was supported by the structure of its National Selection/Steering Committee (NSC). Until the beginning of 2004, the committee's membership was based on institutional representation; the Natural Resource Management and Protection and the Forest Planning and Management Project, followed later by the Protected Areas Conservation Trust and the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute, fielded members. In addition, representatives of government departments were responsible for marine and terrestrial protected areas and representatives of statutory bodies for tourism and tertiary education. Although these areas of focus were compatible with the GEF mandates, this basis for representation resulted in heavy weighting of the committee toward the public sector. Representation criteria implemented in 2004 led to a transformation of the structure of the NSC and to a strengthened SGP. This was manifested mainly in improved stability of the NSC and more concerted efforts at strategic planning, which resulted mainly from a better complement of technical skills among NSC members and their personal commitment to the program.

Of further note, the SGP's application of the Country Programme Strategy has significantly improved since 2004, thanks in part to guidance notes on strategic shifts and expected results from the Country Programme Management Team. These were taken on board by a revitalized NSC, which undertook position papers, presentations, and facilitation of discussions by NSC members. Positive results of these changes included recognition that the term indigenous peoples included the Garinagu as well as the Maya, as well as acknowledgment that the ongoing geographic focus of the SGP was appropriate, given high levels of poverty in Belize's southern districts. The NSC committed to maintaining a focus on those areas for which poverty estimates are highest. In general, these commitments are supported by better use of GEF-provided templates for project preparation and monitoring and evaluation, and an improved approach by the NSC for scoring projects.

Analyses of the SGP project database and the 13 sample projects show improvement in governance and in the extent of relevance to GEF priorities, particularly in the past three years. In addition, the projects show that the SGP has been highly effective in supporting nascent community-based organizations (CBOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), especially in executing co-management commitments and advocating for protected areas. NGOs and CBOs account for 62.5 percent and 37.5 percent, respectively, of the value of all SGP full grants since the program's start in 1993. More significantly, CBOs have received a total of 55.5 percent of the value of all planning grants in the life of the program. The SGP portfolio consists of 87 full grants and 44 planning grants. Of the full grants, 42 were disbursed for projects under the Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation (COMPACT) program.

During the third operational phase (OP3), the COMPACT program has contributed significantly to the SGP's effectiveness. In both OP2 and OP3, the COMPACT program accounted for just under half of all SGP disbursements. Consistent with the expectation expressed in the GEF SGP

Operating Guidelines, both programs had been placed in host NGOs at or near the beginning of their implementation. In each case, performance within the host NGO was not satisfactory. Each program was therefore moved at different times into the country office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Consequently, the COMPACT program now operates side by side with the SGP at the UNDP country office; the local coordinator and the SGP program assistant both report to the national coordinator. This physical location offers fairly equal access to the immediate stakeholders of the Belize Barrier Reef World Heritage Site, who reside within four administrative districts.

Despite its small staff, SGP performance is highly effective when measured by the ease of access for grantees and the quantum of financial resources mobilized. These aspects are highlighted by comparison with similar grant funding agencies. Most notably, SGP, including COMPACT, annual disbursements averaged \$399,499 between 2001 and 2004, compared with the Protected Areas Conservation Trust's annual average disbursement of \$142,700.¹ The SGP has also been effective in targeting indigenous peoples and vulnerable communities and in adopting at least two innovations to support grantees: use of regional grant writers and a flipchart proposal format.

Although the SGP functions did improve significantly since the program was placed in the UNDP country office, its operations can be further improved. The evaluation process highlighted a number of issues in this regard. First, demands have consistently been placed on staff that are outside the scope of their individual terms of reference, compelling them regularly to work more than the 260 working days, less their 40 vacation and holiday entitlement, and to lose leave not used each year. Second, a gap exists in the level and types of skill sets required to meet the growing demands of the SGP adequately. Third, the SGP filing system is underdeveloped and not conducive to efficient record management and archiving.

Because the Belize SGP has been operating since 1993, it appears to be an ideal candidate for graduation; however, a number of considerations must be taken into account in determining a strategy for achieving this objective. First, despite the program's age, many of its strongest features have emerged since 2000. In addition, restructuring of the NSC and improved focus on strategic issues during 2004 and 2005 were watershed developments. From this perspective, the program is still relatively young. Furthermore, its placement within UNDP helps it to draw on a number of advantages that lend it administrative efficiencies and program effectiveness. The most important to program effectiveness, given Belize's small population base, is a reputation as a neutral agent when helping to resolve conflict during project implementation. This important advantage should be maintained, along with many other aspects of the SGP.

In summary, the Belize SGP has been relevant to country and GEF priorities and relatively effective. It has been particularly instrumental in the growth of communities and expansion of protected areas. Governance and administrative systems have improved significantly, especially

¹ All dollar amounts are U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.

since 2004. The SGP is cost effective, but requires support to improve its business processes and to build staff capacity to levels commensurate with growing demands. In addition, the need exists to increase the number of projects in climate change, land degradation, and persistent organic pollutants; however, this will require supportive policy and legislative changes. In this regard, the SGP can collaborate with UNDP to advocate for policy shifts that will provide a framework for addressing issues in these areas.

1 Background

1.1 Objective and Methodology

The joint evaluation of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP), being conducted at the global level, is the fourth independent evaluation of the program since its start in 1992. This evaluation differs significantly from the first three in that it focuses on assessing the relevance, effectiveness (results), and efficiency of SGP objectives, concepts, and processes. In comparison, the earlier evaluations were aimed at assessing the processes and outputs of the SGP and identifying methods to improve SGP operations.

The evaluation of the Belize GEF SGP was guided by the terms of reference (TOR) for the national consultant (GEF and UNDP Evaluation Offices, 2007, pp. 6–9). The TOR requires that assessment of relevance be measured in terms of how well the country SGP “fits” with national priorities and GEF SGP strategic focus. Effectiveness is to be measured by taking account of the extent to which expected results that contribute to local and global benefits are achieved; in this regard, outcomes such as increased awareness of environmental issues and changes in community behavior are to be identified. Assessment of efficiency should take account of factors, such as the ratio of SGP budgets spent on administrative costs and the efficiency of SGP operations.

The approach used to evaluate the Belize SGP included a literature review, analysis of the SGP projects database and of financial information, visits to sample project sites, and interviews, discussions, and workshops involving stakeholders. The focus of the analysis was supported by the completion of specific instruments to evaluate performance and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of 13 sample projects, as well as the quality of the program’s country strategy and M&E practices.

The results of the evaluation are presented in this document as follows:

- Background information on Belize’s physical attributes and socioeconomic situation and the policy and institutional framework within which the SGP operates
- Identification of national development and environment priorities
- Analysis of the Belize SGP portfolio and financial data
- Description of the main features of the program in terms of the strategic points indicated above
- Indication of the strengths exhibited and challenges faced by the program
- Recommendations for improvement.

Although not emphasized in the TOR, the Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation (COMPACT) program is important to the analysis of the Belize SGP. This is because of the strong interrelationship between the two programs in Belize. The COMPACT program operates as an integral part of the SGP within the Belize United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country office and accounts for 37.2 percent of the total Belize SGP portfolio.¹ In light of this strong link and for completeness, this evaluation will include COMPACT activities and administrative arrangements along with those of the SGP.

1.2 Country Description

Physical Location and Attributes

Belize is located on the east coast of Central America immediately south of Mexico and northeast of Guatemala. It is divided into six administrative districts, of which two are in the north (Corozal and Orange Walk), two are central (Belize and Cayo), and two are in the south (Stann Creek and Toledo). Belize's mid-2005 population is estimated by the Central Statistical Office (CSO) at 291,800 persons. This is a low population density, as the country's total land mass is 5.7 million acres (2.3 million hectares), according to the CSO's *Environmental Statistics for Belize 2004* (p. 28). The draft National Environmental Policy and Strategy asserts that the country "has 30 perennial river basins, approximately forty-four inland and coastal lagoons, and a few freshwater lakes" (DOE 2006, p. 12).

Main Socioeconomic Features

The agriculture, tourism, and marine and aquaculture sectors are critical to the economic survival and development of Belize. An important consideration for the GEF SGP is that these activities are highly dependent on the country's natural resource base. In the tourism industry, recent expansion in the cruise subsector builds on a foundation of nature-based adventure travel, anchored by diving and hiking. In the case of the marine and aquaculture sectors, traditional fishing has long been the mainstay of coastal communities in the Corozal, Toledo, Stann Creek, and Belize Districts. This sector was propelled by strong international marketing arrangements, crafted by various fishing cooperatives. Its activities were complemented by the emergence of the farmed shrimp sector in the early 1990s and one for tilapia at the turn of the century.

Notwithstanding growth in the key economic sectors outlined above, Belize has relatively high levels of poverty. This is of particular importance to the SGP, because in two of the three districts with the highest estimated poverty—Southern Toledo and Stann Creek Districts—forest cover and biodiversity are mostly intact. In these two districts, the population living below the poverty line is estimated to be 34.8 percent and 79.0 percent respectively. As the analysis shows, just under a third of SGP-supported projects have been executed in these areas (see table 2.8). Notably, Orange Walk, the third of the three districts with the highest incidences of poverty

¹ Unless otherwise stated, any percentages of portfolio indicated refer to value.

(34.9 percent), is located in the north of the country where forest cover is lowest and the SGP has disbursed just three grants, excluding projects with a national scope.

Environmental Systems of Critical Importance

According to the CSO (2004), in 2004 a total of 1.9 million acres (768,902 hectares) or an estimated 39.1 percent of Belize's land mass held protected status (p. 55) and the country's marine reserves totaled 388,029 acres or 157,030 hectares (p. 66). Belize's Draft Environment Policy describes the country's marine ecosystems as including mangroves, sea grass beds, and corals, which contain 594 genera and 1,040 species of organisms (DOE 2006, p. 12). These ecosystems are of global importance, because it includes the Belize Barrier Reef World Heritage Site (BBRWHS), as designated by UNESCO in 1996. The site protects almost the entire length of Belize's 174-mile coastline.

Environmental Priorities

Belize's environmental priorities reflect a historical evolution. Because of its start as a timber colony, the country has a strong tradition of forest management and protection. This is evident in the objectives of the only written Forest Policy, which dates back to 1929. The protected areas established under that policy have since been pivotal in a shift in emphasis on biodiversity. This shift started with the decline of the world timber trade and rise of agriculture in Belize in the 1950s. It was solidified with the start of a focused environment program during the period immediately before and after the 1992 Rio Summit. Key factors solidifying the program were passage of the 1992 Environmental Protection Act and establishment of the Department of the Environment in 1993.

Because of the country's reliance on its natural resources, great emphasis is placed on the health of Belize's marine and terrestrial biodiversity. This has influenced the focus of SGP country implementation and program strategies since 1994. More recently, pressure on these resources has been increasing, a fact included in *Belize's Interim First National Report* to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Belize 1998). Factors contributing to these pressures include large-scale real estate development and mineral extraction activities. Combined with a series of extreme climatic events experienced since 1999, these activities have highlighted and brought public attention to climate change and land degradation.² There have also been greater efforts to promote awareness in persistent organic pollutants.

² In addition to the threat of Hurricane Mitch (1999), these events included Hurricanes Keith (2000) and Iris (2002), Tropical Storm Chantal (2001), and a series of prolonged and unusual dry spells (2003 onward).

1.3 Country Development and Environmental Priorities

National and Environmental Planning Frameworks

Development and Poverty Elimination Plans

Development plans and strategies, and sector and thematic plans inform the context within which the Belize GEF SGP operates. Five-year medium-term strategies and poverty reduction or elimination plans have traditionally underpinned development planning. The objectives of the Belize SGP Country Programme Strategy (CPS) 1999 show that contributing to poverty alleviation is one of the SGP's priorities. The CPS included a commitment to “ensure that the SGP fits into the national efforts for the eradication of poverty by reaching marginal populations and isolated communities (GEF SGP Belize, p. 5).” Furthermore, the minutes of NSC meetings show that this issue is usually raised when project proposals are being considered. The cumulative result of these considerations has been that most SGP grant recipients are from remote areas in the southern Stann Creek and Toledo Districts and northern Belize District.

To enhance the approach to poverty alleviation, the NSC took into account the outputs of the National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan 2006–10 initiative. Most significantly, the NSC examined poverty maps at a strategic session in 2005. The maps showed that the highest incidences of poverty are recorded for communities in the southern Toledo and Stann Creek and the northern Orange Walk Districts. In light of this, the NSC reaffirmed the SGP's commitment to initiatives in the south and resolved to target the north better. These decisions have been incorporated in the draft CPS 2007, which has been conditionally approved by the NSC.

Environmental Plans and Policies

Belize's environmental priorities are enshrined in various related plans and policies. Aside from the 1929 Forest Policy, dedicated environmental policies and strategies before and including 2000 include a 1992 Environment Policy and a 1996 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. As a result of a number of initiatives undertaken since, there is now a Cabinet-approved National Protected Areas Policy and System Plan (NPAPSP), and draft Biodiversity, Integrated Water Resource Management, and (updated) Environment Policies are pending submission. Notably, no policy has yet been drafted on energy or climate change. In addition, although land has been critical to Belize's development from the pre-colonial era, no land management policy or strategy has been approved.

Multilateral Environmental Agreements

In terms of international commitments, Belize has signed more than 21 multilateral environmental agreements. These include the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The effective dates of signature or accession to and ratification of these conventions, which are central to the GEF, are set out below.

Convention	Signed/acceded	Ratified
UN Convention on Biological Diversity	June 1992	December 1993
UN Convention to Combat Desertification	November 1997	July 1998
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change	1992	1994

The country's capacity to implement convention commitments at the national level has been improved through a number of initiatives. These include but are not limited to the following GEF enabling activities approved on the dates indicated.

- Formation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Its Implementation, January 28, 1997
- Enabling Belize to Prepare Its Initial National Communication in Response to Its Commitment to the UNFCCC, January 6, 1998
- Clearing House Mechanism Enabling Activity, December 7, 1998
- Assessment of Capacity Building Needs and Country-Specific Priorities in Biodiversity, March 12, 2002
- National Capacity Self-Assessment, December 31, 2003
- Initial Assistance to Enable Belize to Fulfill Its Obligations under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, February 17, 2005

Although Belize signed onto both the UNCBD and UNFCCC in 1992, the main emphasis for most of the period of SGP operation to date has been biodiversity. This is reflected in the country's environmental priorities (outlined below) and in the focus of the enabling activities listed above. Between 2003 and 2005, the enabling activities were complemented by other initiatives such as the Forest Department Institutional Strengthening Project and the work of a Task Force on the NPAPSP. These coincided with national efforts and international events that supported an expansion in emphasis beyond biodiversity such as the following:

- Belize's 2002 endorsement of an initiative sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme on land degradation
- Establishment of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre in Belize in 2003
- Public awareness campaigns on climate change and desertification
- Entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol on its ratification by Russia in 2004

Major Initiatives and Institutional Change

Most of the efforts aimed at formulating strategies and policies and expanding beyond a biodiversity focus, outlined above, started after 1998. This is notable because it marked the end of the second of two major initiatives—the Natural Resource Management and Protection (NARMAP) and the Forest Planning and Management Project (FPMP). These initiatives both started in 1993 and ended in 1996 and 1998. During its implementation, the NARMAP project fielded a representative on the NSC. In addition, the projects contributed separately to the establishment of the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) in 1996 and the Coastal Zone Management Authority in 1998. After the close of their related projects, these latter agencies also fielded NSC representatives.

The start of the NARMAP and the FPMP also coincided with the period of transition from an institutional arrangement dominated by the timber industry to one that included a biodiversity focus. During this transition, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) focused on conservation proliferated.

Remaining Capacity Constraints

Despite the policy and legislative environment and the transformed institutional framework, a number of factors remain that continue to inhibit Belize’s ability to meet its commitments fully under the three main multilateral environmental agreements. These were identified through an assessment of legal and cross-cutting issues under the National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) enabling activity. Recommendations for addressing the issues include improving intra- and inter-institutional coordination of environmental management agencies, modernizing and harmonizing environment-related legislation, and updating old and formulating new policies. This latter measure was especially recommended for land management and sustainable development (Trench-Sandiford 2004).

Development- and Environment-Related Priorities Relevant to the SGP

The draft policies cited above identify some key priorities that are useful for determining the extent of fit and relevance of the GEF SGP to national priorities. These are described below.

From the National Protected Areas Policy and System Plan (2005)

The NPAPSP initiative was commissioned by the cabinet in an effort to rationalize Belize’s protected areas system. The initiative resulted in a proposed system plan, recommended on the basis of critical system analysis, and a protected areas policy. The specific objectives of the policy, which has been approved by the cabinet, are to “Promote the sustainable use of Belize’s protected areas by educating and encouraging resource users and the general public to properly conserve the biological diversity contained in these areas in order to maintain and enhance the quality of life for all” (Task Force on the Protected Areas, n.d., p. 2).

This report further asserts that the policy

- is hinged on the ecosystem approach and the precautionary principle,

- recognizes the importance of science, local and indigenous community knowledge, and monitoring and evaluation procedures,
- incorporates cost-effective and efficient activities.

From the Draft Biodiversity Policy (2006)

Belize's draft biodiversity policy is guided by 10 principles, which include priority for in situ conservation; respect for traditional knowledge; and the importance of ecological, economic, and social sustainability of public education to biodiversity conservation, and of coordinated regional and global initiatives.

From the Draft Environment Policy (2006)

Two of the more relevant goals of the draft National Environmental Policy for the GEF SGP are the following:

- Enhancing environmental management capacity through individual and institutional capacity building at various levels of government and community (goal 2)
- Promoting public awareness, advocacy, and public-private sector and community empowerment for responsibility on environmental management principles and an appreciation and understanding of environmental terminologies (goal 3)

Public Policy, Community Empowerment, and the SGP

In the context of an endemic capacity constraint, official natural resource management agencies in Belize view community involvement as critical to effective resource management. In this regard, the Department of the Environment (DOE) relies on community alerts for effective environmental monitoring. Also, the Ministries of Natural Resources and the Environment and of Agriculture and Fisheries consistently collaborate with community organizations to manage protected areas jointly. One of the most recent support measures in this regard is the proposed Toledo Healthy Forests Initiative (THFI). The THFI is a round table collaboration in forest management between the government and CBOs, NGOs, and private sector companies in Toledo. It is promoted by the Ministry of Natural Resources through the Forest Department.

The importance of communities also resonates through commitment and action related to national development. This includes positions articulated in the National Poverty Elimination Strategy (NPES) and the draft National Poverty Elimination Action Plans (NPEAP) and, more significantly, enactment of key legislation. The most important legislative action has been passage and later amendment of the Village Councils Act, chapter 88 of the *Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000–2003*. This legislation provides for consulting with village councils in a variety of public policy actions, such as allocation of national lands, within their respective villages.

These circumstances collectively provide a niche for the SGP. The program seeks consistency with public policies and strategies by requiring endorsement of the relevant official agency as a precondition for final approval of any project proposal.

NGO and CBO Operating Environment

In assessing the SGP in Belize, the effect of the legislative framework on NGO and CBO access to funding must be taken into account. NGOs are typically membership based and have a governance structure that includes a board of directors, whereas CBOs are less structured and often more open to community participation. This structured feature of NGOs is enshrined in the Non-Governmental Organizations Act chapter 315 of the *Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000–2003*. The act requires all NGOs to register with the Ministry of Human Development and defines them in section 3 (1) as follows:

...a legal entity formed as a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Act whose aims, nature, and objects, direct or indirect, are consistent with the principles enshrined in the preamble to the Belize Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all those international and regional human rights treaties and instruments to which Belize is a party, and are designed to contribute to sustainable human development in Belize.

NGOs are further defined in section 3 (2) of the act to be independent of government, focused on achieving sustainable human development on a voluntary and nonprofit basis, and governed by a board of directors, of which no member should have an interest in accruing personal gain through the organization.

The definitions above may constitute a barrier to entry for new NGOs. In addition, the act also enshrines requirements for maintaining good standing, including the submission of audited accounts on an annual basis. Some NGOs have described these as onerous. The provisions are of special note for the SGP, because grant funding is impeded where access to funding by NGOs and CBOs is premised on compliance with the act. To date the SGP does not require such compliance.

2 Overview of Belize’s GEF Activities

2.1 FSPs, MSPs, and Enabling Activities

Initiatives supported by the GEF have been implemented in Belize since the SGP’s pilot phase. An examination of the GEF projects database shows that the country has or is implementing 12 country-level initiatives. The country is also included in 16 region-level initiatives, which are either completed or under implementation.¹ The country-level initiatives are a combination of medium-size projects (MSPs), full-size projects (FSPs), and enabling activities described above. Together they make up total grants of \$12.8 million.

Of the total of Belize MSP, FSP, and enabling activity country-level activities, there are eight projects amounting to \$12.1 million or 94.2 percent of the portfolio of MSPs, FSPs, and enabling activities that fall in the biodiversity focal area. On the other hand, of the 16 regional projects in which Belize is included, five are in the biodiversity focal area and six are in the climate change focal area. These represent 42.3 percent and 31.6 percent respectively of the total value of \$78.7 million.

2.2 The Start of the SGP and COMPACT Program in Belize

Belize’s SGP operation is made up of GEF Small Grants Programme and COMPACT initiatives. NSC members indicate that preparations were being made for the SGP as early as 1992 (pers. comm., March 6, 2007). The program began operating in the country in 1993 under the aegis of the NGO Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology. In 1995 it was transferred to the UNDP country office. The Belize COMPACT program started within the SGP Office at UNDP in 2001. To accelerate start-up, this program was transferred to a host NGO—the Programme for Belize—after the first six months of operations. By 2004, however, the COMPACT program was transferred back to the SGP. The transition of both programs from host NGOs to the UNDP country office followed a series of administrative changes that inhibited the efficiency of their operation. The changes were therefore undertaken to achieve stability and improve effectiveness. This experience runs counter to the approach encouraged by the GEF of nurturing the SGP to a certain level of maturity within the UNDP country office and then transferring it to a host NGO.

The COMPACT program primarily targets “the local communities living in and around the selected World Heritage Sites” The program seeks to emphasize indigenous peoples, women, and other vulnerable groups (UNDP, n.d.2, p. 6). In Belize, the COMPACT program focuses on the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System, which was declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1996. The synergies between the COMPACT program and the SGP are significant, because the National Steering Committee (NSC) approves and oversees both SGP and COMPACT projects. In addition, certain

¹ One project that the GEF Web site indicates has been dropped was excluded from this total.

guidelines, such as the eligibility of applying agencies and for the most part the project M&E instruments, are similar to those of the SGP.

Table 2.1 shows the SGP and COMPACT OPs with their respective approximate lengths. Notably, the phases overlap and vary significantly in length. When the programs are managed together, as in the case of Belize, this lends increased dynamism to program management.

Table 2.1: SGP and COMPACT Phases

SGP				COMPACT			
Phase	Start year	End year	Approximate length (years)	Phase	Start year	End year	Approximate Length (years)
Pilot	1992	1996	4	1	2001	2004	4
OP1	1997	1999	2	2	2005	2010	5
OP2	1999	2005	6				
OP3	2005	2007	3				

2.3 The SGP's Strategic Thrust

The SGP is aimed at securing global environmental benefits in the biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, and persistent organic pollutants focal areas. In the case of the Belize SGP, the main thrust described by the CPS 1999 is “to link the GEF focal areas to sustainable livelihoods, especially income-generating strategies, which will help to secure enduring global environmental benefits” (UNDP 1999, p. 1).

The CPS also covers ensuring that the SGP fits into national efforts for eradication of poverty by reaching marginal populations and isolated communities (UNDP 1999, p. 1). The strategy was built on a five-year vision and included the following two-year objectives/key results:

- Agroforestry/community forested area management and research on indigenous plants that are considered endangered under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species or the World Conservation Union (IUCN) Red Book.
- Development of community-based advocacy mechanisms to address unsustainable harvesting techniques of threatened natural resources
- Promotion of CBOs as co-managers of protected areas
- Training of CBOs to participate in community-based resource inventories
- Protection of endangered species and their habitats that have important conservation and economic importance and of commercial marine species considered overexploited (The introduction of technologies to reduce the impact of overexploitation or alternative harvesting techniques will be considered.)

- Model community-driven environmental education programs targeting the GEF’s three focal themes.

The minutes of the NSC meetings show an intention to update the CPS 1999, which was not achieved before the start of this evaluation. Since then, a draft CPS 2007 has been completed and conditionally accepted by the NSC.

Although changes had not been incorporated into the CPS 1999 document, its application was adjusted in accordance with the SGP’s strategic shifts. To ensure adoption of Central Programme Management Team (CPMT) guidance, the NSC undertook a strategic planning session in December 2005 to discuss thematic issues and develop a plan to target beneficiaries effectively.

The strategic shifts were communicated through global and regional workshops and by emails and guidance notes from CPMT. The notes required country programs to increase emphasis on key results and on access by *indigenous peoples* and *vulnerable communities*. The key results communicated by the CPMT, toward which SGP country programs were to be geared as of OP3, were transmitted by email (M. Khan, April 1, 2005) as follows:

- *Impact orientation.* This shift provides for focused assessment of the expected and realized impacts of projects proposed and implemented. The areas of impact promoted are environment, poverty reduction, and local empowerment.
- *Focusing for greater impact.* This entails clustering of projects in terms of geographic and or thematic distribution to achieve critical mass.
- *Resource mobilization/cofinancing.* Encouragement for grantees to access alternative resources so that their initiatives may be up-scaled, replicated, and sustained. The intention indicated is that grantees become less dependent on SGP funds.
- *Building sustainability.* This shift underscores the requirement for projects to incorporate a sustainability strategy and for the CPS to incorporate provisions for sustaining the SGP beyond depletion or withdrawal of GEF resources.
- *Corporate strengthening.* This is a shift intended to promote improved synergies with the UNDP country office as well as with strategic partners of the SGP and the other two GEF Implementing Agencies—the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank.

In addition to these shifts and key results, the NSC took note of decisions on approaches, such as a commitment made at a regional SGP meeting in Yucatan, Mexico, in 2005 to promote beekeeping as a method of forest protection and encourage the use of improved tools for supporting community-led project development.

The Belize SGP strategic thrust is also influenced by COMPACT objectives because of the joint management and operation of the two programs in the country. The thrust of the COMPACT

program during phase I was to reduce threats to the Belize Barrier Reef World Heritage Site. This is expressed in the document *COMPACT Country Programme Strategy for Belize* (Programme for Belize and others, n.d., p. 32), in which the objectives listed below are outlined.²

- Expanding sustainable livelihoods opportunities of the communities that use the protected areas within the site
- Increasing awareness of the value and protection of the BBRWHS
- Developing the capacities of CBOs, NGOs, and associations whose existence and future prospects are closely linked to the BBRWHS
- Enhancing the institutional capabilities of community-based organizations to participate in the co-management of the protected areas.

To achieve these objectives, the strategy document recommended giving priority to projects that provide for *alternative livelihoods options, sustainable fishing, tourism services, development of co-management capacities, and educational programs.*

2.4 Analysis of Belize Small Grants Portfolio and Operations

Size, Status, and Evolution of the Belize GEF SGP Portfolio

Portfolio Size and Composition

Reflecting the length of SGP operations in Belize, 131 projects totaling \$3.1 million in grants have been executed or are under implementation within the portfolio (see table 2.2). Small grants projects span the program’s pilot phase and first, second, and third operational phases, and include 42 COMPACT grants.

² The COMPACT Phase II Site Strategy, an intended output of one of the evaluation sample projects, is available in draft form. The relevant sample project is entitled *Updating of the Conceptual Model and Site Strategy for COMPACT Phase II*. Its project number BZE/UNF-GEF/05/02.

Table 2.2: Belize Small Grant Portfolio per Operational Phase

Phase	No. of projects	Grant amount (\$)	No. of projects	Grant amount (\$)	No. of projects	Grant amount (\$)
Full grants						
		SGP		COMPACT		Total
Pilot	15	308,399	0	-	15	308,399
OP1	15	435,735	0	-	15	435,735
OP2	22	853,125	18	820,937	40	1,674,062
OP3	9	330,540	8	321,176	17	651,716
<i>Total</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>1,927,799</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>1,142,113</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>3,069,912</i>
Planning grants						
		SGP		COMPACT		Total
Pilot	0	-	0	-	0	-
OP1	8	7,096	0	-	8	7,096
OP2	13	15,477	9	9,362	22	24,839
OP3	7	11,660	7	10,601	14	22,261
<i>Total</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>34,233</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>19,963</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>54,196</i>

Table 2.3 shows SGP and COMPACT grants as percentages of the full and planning grants portfolio, and underscores the importance of the COMPACT program. Disbursements under that program accounted for approximately half of the SGP portfolio during OP2 and OP3.

Table 2.3: Percentages of SGP and COMPACT Grants

	Full		Planning	
	SGP	COMPACT	SGP	COMPACT
Pilot	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
OP1	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
OP2	51.0	49.0	62.3	37.7
OP3	50.7	49.3	52.4	47.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>62.8</i>	<i>37.2</i>	<i>63.2</i>	<i>36.8</i>

Main Thematic Focus

As in the case of Belize's portfolio of MSPs, FSPs, and enabling activities, SGP grants are heavily weighted toward the *biodiversity* focal area (see table 2.4). Table 2.4 also shows that this focal area accounts for 94.1 percent of all SGP full grants. Within the portfolio, only two grants each in the climate change, international waters, and land degradation focal areas have objectives. It is important to note that the climate change projects were implemented in the earlier two phases, whereas the land degradation and international waters projects are more recent initiatives.

Table 2.4: Belize SGP Full Grants by Focal Area

	Pilot	OP1	OP2	OP3	Total
Grant totals (\$)					
Biodiversity	298,399	420,733	1,624,062	544,646	2,887,840
Climate change	10,000	15,002	0	–	25,002
International waters	–	–	50,000	40,000	90,000
Land degradation	–	–	–	67,070	67,070
<i>Total</i>	<i>308,399</i>	<i>435,735</i>	<i>1,674,062</i>	<i>651,716</i>	<i>3,069,912</i>
Percentages of all full grants					
Biodiversity	9.7	13.7	52.8	17.8	94.1
Climate change	0.3	0.5	–	–	0.8
International waters	–	–	1.6	1.3	2.9
Land degradation	–	–	–	2.2	2.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>10.0</i>	<i>14.2</i>	<i>54.5</i>	<i>21.3</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Number of projects					
Biodiversity	14	14	39	14	81
Climate change	1	1	0	0	2
International waters	0	0	1	1	2
Land degradation	0	0	0	2	2
<i>Total</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>87</i>

Note: The table does not include the statistics of planning grants, which show a like proportion of 96.9 percent biodiversity focus.

The SGP database shows support for co-management of protected areas as the most prevalent objective among SGP non-COMPACT projects. This was consistent with the second and third key results intended in the CPS 1999. On the other hand, COMPACT projects had the highest level of livelihoods objectives, consistent with the approach recommended in the Belize COMPACT Programme Strategy 2001 to 2003.

Searches of the SGP database by keywords show a high incidence of both capacity building (21 projects) and education (50 projects) objectives. At least one project each was intended to support research in plants and in agroforestry, and at least seven projects focused on managing or conserving one of the endangered species below, listed in table 2.5 with their respective IUCN Red List status.

Table 2.5: Species Targeted through Belize SGP Projects

Species	IUCN Red List status
Black howler monkey (<i>Alouatta pigra</i>)	endangered
Central American river turtle (Hiccatee) (<i>Dermatemys mawii</i>)	critically endangered
Harpy eagle (<i>Harpia harpyja</i>)	near threatened
Hawksbill turtle (<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>)	critically endangered
Nassau grouper (<i>Epinephelus stiiatus</i>)	endangered
West Indian manatee (<i>Trichechus manatus</i>)	vulnerable
Yellow-headed parrot (<i>Amazona oratrix</i>)	endangered

Grantee Access and Support

Unlike similar grant funding agencies, the SGP registration requirements to access grant funding are minimal. This is especially true for CBOs, and SGP support and nurturing to that group is exceptional. This is evidenced by the information in table 2.6, which shows that 60.4 percent of planning grants were disbursed to CBOs in the life of the SGP. Moreover, the proportion of planning grants to CBOs exceeded 60 percent in both OP1 and OP3. Regarding full grants, intensified efforts to reach CBOs in OP3 resulted in that group experiencing the highest proportion of grant funds since the start of the SGP.

Table 2.6: Grant Totals and Percentages by Grantee Type and Operational Phase

Phase	Planning grants			Full grants		
	NGO	CBO	Total	NGO	CBO	Total
Grant amount (\$)						
Pilot	–	–	–	148,340	160,059	308,399
OP1	2,010	6,915	8,925	207,030	228,705	435,735
OP2	12,656	12,168	24,824	1,304,330	369,732	1,674,062
OP3	6,090	12,590	18,680	260,985	390,731	651,716
<i>Totals</i>	<i>20,756</i>	<i>31,672</i>	<i>52,428</i>	<i>1,920,685</i>	<i>1,149,228</i>	<i>3,069,912</i>
Percentages of total grants per operational phase						
Pilot	–	–		48.1	51.9	
OP1	22.5	77.5		47.5	52.5	
OP2	51.0	49.0		77.9	22.1	
OP3	32.6	67.4		40.0	60.0	
<i>Totals</i>	<i>39.6</i>	<i>60.4</i>		<i>62.5</i>	<i>37.5</i>	

Repeat and Successor Grantees

A number of grantees have had more than one project supported by the SGP. Of a total of approximately 60 recipients, at least five CBOs and seven NGOs have received more than one full grant in the life of the program. Also, at least eight grantees include former members of groups that had previously received grants and were no longer functioning, suggesting an even

higher level of repeat grantees. Notably also, two of the successor groups were NGOs and six were CBOs. This highlights the SGP’s support in building grantee capacity.

Grantee Absorptive Capacity

Development in grantee capacity levels is indicated by improvement in their ability to manage financial resources. Minutes of NSC meetings and recommendations of the CPS 1999 (UNDP 1999) show that the SGP grappled with grantees’ difficulty in absorbing grant funds. This was especially challenging in the pilot phase and OP1. To address the resulting implementation lags, a decision was made to lower the upper limit for funding to \$25,000. As the program matured, the frequency of discussion of this issue declined and the upper limit for funding was raised to the SGP global level. Table 2.7 demonstrates this growth in grantee capacity by showing generally higher average grant sizes in the later phases of the program.

Table 2.7: Average Grant Size per Operational Phase

Phase	Full grants	Planning grants
Pilot	20,560	-
OP1	29,049	887
OP2	41,852	1,129
OP3	38,336	1,591
<i>Totals</i>	<i>35,286</i>	<i>1,232</i>

Geographic Dispersion of SGP-Related Activities

As shown in table 2.8, the majority of the SGP full projects have been undertaken in the southern Stann Creek and Toledo Districts, the Belize District, and at the national level. The concentration of the southern districts in part reflects a strategy of supporting the buffer communities around protected areas and coastal zones per the CPS 1999 (UNDP 1999, p. 4). Most of Belize’s protected areas are located in the Stann Creek, Toledo, and Cayo Districts. In practice, the focus was realized by applying the funding source—the SGP or the COMPACT program—appropriate to the type of initiatives proposed. For example, of the 26 COMPACT grants disbursed, nine have been for initiatives executed in the Stann Creek and Toledo Districts. Because of the location and nature of the BBRWHS, more than half of the COMPACT projects implemented were executed either on the Cayes, in multiple districts, or at a national level.

Table 2.8: Geographic Distribution of SGP Projects

District/area	Projects (number)		
	SGP	COMPACT	Total
Belize	15	2	17
Cayes	4	4	8
Cayo	8	0	8
Corozal	1	1	2
Orange Walk	1	0	1
Stann Creek	5	5	10
Toledo	15	4	19
National	7	8	15
Multiple	5	2	7
<i>Totals</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>87</i>

SGP Access by Vulnerable Groups, Indigenous Peoples, and Women

The SGP's support to projects in the Toledo and Stann Creek Districts, where poverty is estimated to be the highest, has helped to target vulnerable communities. This is reinforced by the fact that the Toledo District has the highest concentration of Maya communities, one of Belize's two indigenous groups. Of the 19 SGP full grants disbursed in the Toledo District since the program's start, 12 were to groups that were entirely or predominantly Maya. Furthermore, two Maya community groups were among the six groups that benefited from SGP grants in the Cayo District.

Although the highest concentration of Garinagu, Belize's second largest indigenous group, is found in the Stann Creek District, the SGP's direct support to that group has been marginal. Indirect benefits would only have accrued to this group because a number of stakeholder communities for projects supported by the SGP are predominantly Garinagu; this includes St. Bight and Hopkins Villages, which are part of the buffer community of the Laughing Bird Caye National Park. The Garinagu's lower level of access, compared with the Maya, may be due to the mainly coastal locations of their communities. Maya communities, in contrast, concentrate inland and generally closer to protected forest areas; they also rely more heavily on forest resources to help meet basic needs, such as food and housing. These differences have provided the group a comparative advantage in accessing and using SGP grants. Garinagu are further disadvantaged because they are not members of cooperatives, nor are any of their community groups part of a marine co-management agreement.

Women lead or are actively involved in a number of SGP projects. These include projects executed by the Community Baboon Sanctuary (CBS) Women's Conservation Group, which has been instrumental in securing the CBS as a private reserve. Other initiatives, such as the Noj Kaax Meem Elijio Panti National Park Co-Management through Capacity Building and Community Outreach Project (BZ/03/05) and the Spanish Creek Biodiversity Protection Project

(BZE/98/06), have had the active participation of women. At least four projects have had objectives that actively target women as beneficiaries. Most projects that actively involve or benefit women have been implemented in OP2 and OP3.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

In the past three years, the project M&E practices of the SGP have improved significantly. This has been achieved in part through the use of project preparation forms based on GEF SGP templates. Project documents increasingly include an M&E framework with specific and measurable indicators. Indicators used in the M&E plans for a number of sample projects are not time bound.

The SGP commissions end-of-project evaluations for clusters of completed projects at reasonable intervals. The results of these evaluations and of mid-term assessments, such as the 2002–04 Biennial Programme Review, are used to inform adjustments to the program. As an example, the above biennial review recommended better targeting of indigenous peoples, vulnerable communities, and women; subsequent efforts addressed these issues.

Organizational Arrangements

The SGP operates in accordance with provisions of a project document that underpins an agreement between UNDP and the GEF. Under this agreement, UNDP has responsibility for implementing the SGP on behalf of the three GEF Implementing Agencies—the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, and United Nations Environment Programme.

Since the start of SGP operations in Belize, the program has provided oversight for an NSC.³ The committee coordinates formulation of country program strategies and is directly responsible for approval of both GEF and COMPACT projects. Where the COMPACT program is concerned, the committee benefits from the input of a local consultative body, which reviews proposals and forwards recommendations for approval. In addition to the GEF focal area strategies, the NSC is guided by national plans and strategies.

For the first 12 years of the program, NSC members represented agencies. Members were drawn from 3 umbrella NGOs, 3 government ministries, 1 umbrella private sector organization, 1 national university, 1 quasi-government institution, 2 large-scale environmental projects, and UNDP. Except for the appointment of a PACT representative after completion of the NARMAP, NSC composition remained virtually unchanged until 2004, when in an effort to improve participation and continuity, the basis for membership was changed from agency representation to individual expertise, interest, and commitment (NSC, pers. comm., March 6, 2007); thereafter the only agencies with institutional representation on the NSC were the GEF operational focal point, the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology, and UNDP.

³ As is the case at the global level, this body was referred to in the early stages as the National Selection Committee.

Table 2.9 shows respective areas of expertise of NSC members since the 2004 change in composition.

Table 2.9: Main Areas of NSC Member Expertise and Experience

Member	Expertise
Joseph Palacio	Social anthropology
Gaspar Martinez	Agriculture, international and community development, and advocacy
Patrick Scott	Agronomy, and community development
Glenford Eiley	Community leadership, fishing, diving, and tour guiding
Velda Aguet	NGOs and advocacy
Osmany Salas	Forest and protected areas management, advocacy, and NGO sector
Mariam Roberson	Hospitality management, and tourism
Janet Gibson	Marine biology, and integrated coastal zone management
Juan Rancharan	Agriculture, and policy coordination (GEF operational focal point)
Ramon Frutos	Hydrology and climate change
Diane Wade-Moore	Environmental management (UNDP environment program officer)

Given the new approach to determining NSC membership, the NSC has no government representative for the marine sector. In addition, the representative for land-based natural resources (forestry, and land management) sits on the NSC as the GEF operational focal point. These facts are notable because government and quasi-government agencies responsible for coordinating land and marine resource management are the main official partners of the SGP. Since the start of this evaluation, the NSC has made a decision to address the issue by inviting the Fisheries Department to name a representative to the committee.

SGP Governance

NSC and Local Consultative Body Functions

The key elements of the SGP governance structure are the role and composition of the NSC and the local consultative body, the interrelationship of the SGP and the COMPACT program, and the reporting and accountability relationships with the CPMT and UNDP. Where the role and responsibility of the NSC are concerned, the 2004 change in composition had at least three positive effects on the group's function.

The first was a reduction in the level of government (and quasi-government) representation on the NSC. Although the SGP Operational Guidelines recommend that a minority of NSC members are government members, the combination of government (3), academia (1), and project representatives (3) on the earlier NSC translated to a disproportionate level of public sector representation, which was reinforced by the appointment of quasi-government representatives after the close of the NARMAP and the FPMP. An immediate benefit of reducing the level of public sector representatives was the intended elimination of the once prevalent high

turnover in meeting attendees. This change is evident from an examination of the minutes of the NSC meetings.

The second improvement resulting from the change in NSC composition is a better complement of relevant technical expertise among NSC members. The group has benefited from this new expertise on key strategic issues. For example, one member's expertise in social anthropology changed how the NSC understood the definition of indigenous peoples, which led the committee to expand its targeting to include the Garinagu, in addition to the Maya. This change is obvious by comparing the CPS 1999 with the draft CPS 2007.

The third and perhaps most important result of the change in the basis of NSC membership and composition has been a shift in the level of discussions at meetings and subsequently in quality of decision making. Before the 2004 change, NSC meeting minutes show discussions centering almost entirely on deliberations of project proposals. Since January 2004, however, the minutes show an increasing trend toward discussions on such key strategic issues as the following:

- Updating the CPS to incorporate CPMT-indicated strategic shifts
- Incorporating national priorities in SGP country strategies
- Making provision for more structured orientation support to new members
- Identifying the requirements and expectations of biennial program reviews.

Other important changes in NSC activities and practices in 2004–07 include closer scrutiny of project proposals using an improved scoring criteria and a readiness to defer scoring pending further information or inputs. These practices may be required in areas such as project budgets or commitment confirmation by cofinancing partners. Assessment of the congruence of proposals with GEF priorities has also improved considerably, especially following an NSC meeting in which the UNDP country office representative led discussions on the topic.

Potential Conflict of Interest and the NSC

During the two stages in the evolution of the NSC, separated by the 2004 change in membership composition, at least three members have belonged or still belong to grantee or potential grantee agencies. This has presented a potential for conflict of interest. Although no tailored procedures are currently in place for NSC meetings, the committee has developed standard unwritten protocols, which are consistent with the GEF SGP guidelines.⁴ They include a requirement that members who belong to agencies that stand to benefit from SGP decisions be excluded from discussion on issues that affect their organizations (NSC, pers. comm.). Given the relatively small size of both Belize's population and its NGO community, this treatment of proposals by

⁴ Core procedures are set out in the GEF SGP Operational Guidelines (n.d.2).

organizations to which sitting NSC members belong is appropriate (see GEF SGP Operational Guidelines [n.d.2], para. 58).

Another potential conflict of interest for NSC members might arise from any undertaking by members of planning grant or program review initiatives. Although the earlier NSC may have experienced this possibility on at least one occasion (see NSC meeting minutes, July 7, 2000), NSC meeting minutes from 2004 onward show active efforts, championed especially by the UNDP representative, to ensure that such situations do not arise.⁵ This was especially notable in discussion on the 2004 Biennial Programme Review (see NSC meeting minutes, April 30, 2004).

Another area of potential conflict of interest is the extent of NSC member involvement in the project incubation process, which is undertaken most intensively by SGP staff. The role of the national coordinator as secretary for the NSC with voice and no vote helps to mitigate this risk. This person's role and the risk of conflict of interest, in general, could benefit from tailored guidelines for NSC meeting procedures.

SGP Administration

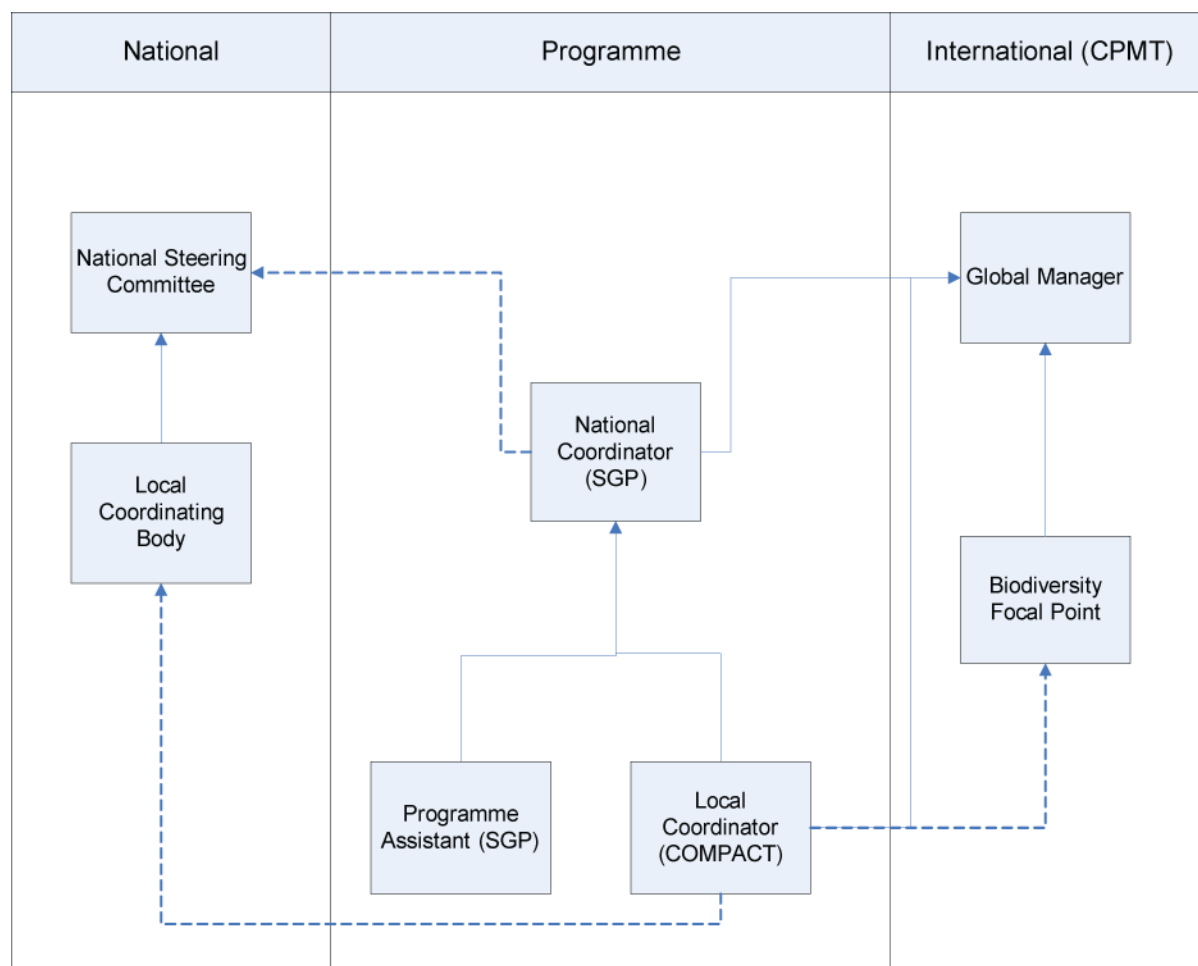
Reporting Relationships

Whereas the NSC provides guidance regarding project proposals, the SGP team is accountable to the CPMT of the GEF Small Grants Programme. In practical terms, the team consists of an SGP national coordinator, program assistant, and COMPACT local coordinator. This reflects the TOR of the COMPACT coordinator, which stipulates that he/she report to both the Belize SGP national coordinator and the SGP global manager at the New York-based CPMT. It must be noted, however, that this dual reporting relationship contributes the potential for conflict of interest, particularly regarding the extent that procedures and decision making on COMPACT initiatives should be harmonized with SGP protocols. *This potential suggests the need for significant effort toward achieving coordination and synergies by both the SGP national coordinator and the COMPACT local coordinator.*

Figure 2.1 reflects this potential for conflict of interest by showing the interrelationships of the Small Grants team with the national committees and the CPMT. Broken lines represent indirect reporting and liaising relationships, whereas solid lines denote direct reporting relationships. A broken line links the COMPACT coordinator with the local consultative body at the national level and the CPMT biodiversity focal point at the CPMT. In both of these cases, the coordinator liaises on technical matters.

⁵ In this case, the consultant hired to conduct independent post-project evaluation was a staff member of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment and, at that point, attached to the Forest Department. This was one of two departments (the other was the Environment Department) of that ministry that fielded NSC members at the time. The minutes show that the ministry staff member/consultant represented the Forest Department at NSC meetings from time to time. When discussion of the post-evaluation study arose, the staff/member was excused from the meeting, in accordance with the protocol.

Figure 2.1: Belize-SGP Interrelationships at the National and International Levels



Use of Staff Time

During consultations for this evaluation, SGP stakeholders raised concerns about efficiency and potential overlap of responsibilities of SGP team members. Collation of time use by SGP staff on various groups of activities during 2006 helped in assessing these issues (see table 2.10). Reflecting the high level of commitment to the program and the small team size, the table shows that each member worked more than 100 percent of the 260 working days, less holiday and vacation leave.

To reach stakeholders more efficiently, team members use a significant number of weekend days for project development and activity monitoring in the field. The table also shows that no team member used the full 40 days of vacation and official holidays to which they were entitled. SGP team members and UNDP country office staff indicated separately that this is typical behavior. Like many other organizations, UNDP has a use-it-or-lose-it policy on vacation leave, so accrued leave not taken does not carry over to the next year.

Table 2.10: Use of Time by Belize SGP Staff for the Period January 1 to December 31, 2006

Tasks and duties	SGP program assistant		COMPACT local coordinator		SGP national coordinator	
	Days (no.)	% of 260 working days, less holiday & vacation entitlement	Days (no.)	% of 260 working days, less holiday & vacation entitlement	Days (no.)	% of 260 working days, less holiday & vacation entitlement
1. Project development (as indicated earlier for incubation)	34	15.5	38	17.3	40	18.2
2. Project monitoring and implementation support	13	5.9	29	13.2	20	9.1
3. Project evaluation	6	2.7	5	2.3	3	1.4
4. Office administration, ATLAS, procurement of services, etc.	158.5	72	86	39.1	94	42.7
5. Internal coordination and planning meetings	17	7.7	50	22.7	33	15.0
6. General awareness raising (including coordination and advocacy)	9	4.1	13	5.9	18	8.2
7. Training/workshops	18	8.2	43	19.5	44	20.0
Total days worked: actual and as a percentage of working days and vacation entitlement	255.5	116.1	264	120.0	252	114.5
Vacation and official holidays taken (of total entitlement of 30 vacation days and 10 days for official holidays)	29.5		37		31	

Table 2.10 also underlines the significant variations in the TORs of SGP staff. In the case of the program assistant, the TOR requires leadership in administrative and procurement duties and a supportive role for program activities. In practice, however, the program assistant exercises a high level of initiative in program-related responsibilities. This is demonstrated by the 24.1 percent of time spent on project incubation and M&E (tasks 1–3). The program assistant, therefore, has a significant function as a program officer in addition to his administrative role, which is generally accepted by the team because of the size constraint. This suggests a need to revisit the recommendation of the third independent evaluation to determine staffing structure to suit individual country programs (Wells and others 2003).

Variation in the local coordinator TOR reflects an issue raised by NSC members (pers. comm., June 13, 2007). In addition to project development and monitoring responsibilities, the local coordinator must liaise regularly with the local consultative body and the NSC. The local coordinator takes notes at local consultative body meetings, while presenting project proposals to and engaging with NSC members. The local coordinator is usually pressed thereafter to provide minutes of the meeting, in addition to any technical report that may be required. Notably, the local coordinator also takes on filing and procurement duties.

Administrative Procedures

During this evaluation, a number of administrative issues were identified, as outlined below, that affect SGP operational efficiency.

- Standard procedures for filing records are not fully applied within the SGP office. Although project files are numbered in accordance with the GEF SGP protocol, minutes sheets and enclosure numbers are not applied. In a number of cases, enclosures are out of sequence. In addition, references are made to attachments that are often not included. This occurs especially with NSC minutes. Several comprehensive notes that are undated and unsigned are also included in the project files. These issues collectively impede efficient record management and archiving.
- A number of inconsistencies exist in the projects database, and the SGP team advises that in fact no protocol for verification of data input is being applied. Further inconsistencies include misclassifications that arise in some cases because of limitations within the computerized system, for example, classifications of PACT and the Belize Tourist Board in some cases as “national government” and in others as “national NGO.” The program assistant notes that the options for classifying grantees and cofinancing agencies in the system do not include “statutory bodies” or “quasi-government institutions.”

The NSC indicates that grant-making activities are more active this year than they were in 2006. Consequently, it is expected that both program management and administrative demands will increase significantly. Because the SGP team already uses more than 100 percent work time and in light of the indicated need for streamlining the TORs and improving procedures, some administrative support—at least part-time—would significantly help improve efficiency. The current team members should share this support, which should provide for the necessary improvement in systems.

Cost Ratios

As an indicator that it is reaching its intended beneficiaries, the SGP targets an administrative cost ratio of no more than 25.0 percent of total disbursement. Analysis of 2006 budget and expenditures (see table 2.11) shows that the SGP and COMPACT programs together achieved an administrative cost ratio of 29.0 percent. The table shows that the targeted ratio for the combined programs was in fact 16.0 percent.

Table 2.11: Budgeted and Actual SGP Expenditures for 2006

	SGP		COMPACT		TOTAL	
	Budgeted	Expended	Budget	Expended	Budget	Expended
Budgeted and actual expenditures (\$)						
Grant	245,809	110,731	150,000	91,332	395,809	202,063
Administration	75,655	82,716	–	–	75,655	82,716
Capacity building	500	591	–	–	500	591
Knowledge management	450	456	–	–	450	456
<i>Total</i>	<i>322,414</i>	<i>194,494</i>	<i>150,000</i>	<i>91,332</i>	<i>472,414</i>	<i>285,826</i>
Budgeted and actual expenditures (percent)						
Grant	76.0	57.0	100.0	100.0	84.0	71.0
Administration	24.0	43.0	–	–	16.0	29.0
Capacity building	0.0	0.0	–	–	0.0	0.0
Knowledge management	0.0	0.0	–	–	0.0	0.0

SGP Partnerships

NGOs and International Government Cofinancing

Table 2.12 shows the Belize SGP partners with respective percentages of total resources provided in cofinancing since the start of the program. Notably, the OAK Foundation and the PACT have provided the highest levels of cash cofinancing, whereas grantees collectively provide the bulk of in-kind cofinancing. The national coordinator indicates that, although the method for estimating cofinancing has improved over the years, significant omissions were likely in the earlier calculations of in-kind support (P. Balderamos, pers. comm., April 13 2007). The levels of private sector in-kind cofinancing indicated in the table are also significant. In many instances, these are drawn from the communities within the projects being executed. In addition to community strengthening, this suggests considerable benefits in terms of SGP reputability.

Another outstanding aspect of SGP partnership arrangements is the level of in-kind cofinancing provided by the Peace Corps. This represents a strategic use of voluntary time within the individual projects, where U.S. Peace Corps volunteers, who are regularly assigned to Belize independent of the SGP, are active. Their involvement in SGP activities provides an opportunity for win-win collaboration. Through the partnerships, community groups gain in-kind cofinancing and knowledge transfer, while the volunteers gain experience. Volunteers drawn from other organizations—such as The Nature Conservancy and Wildtracks—realize the same kinds of benefits; some of the volunteers gain the additional advantage of achieving objectives related to biodiversity conservation.

Table 2.12: Contributions of Major SGP Partners to Belize Program since 1993

SGP partner	Cofinancing			
	Cash contribution (\$)	In-kind contribution	Cash cofinancing as a % of GEF grant total	In-kind cofinancing as a % of GEF grant total.
NGOs				
Artists United for Nature	41,708	–	1.3	–
AVINA	12,039	–	0.4	–
Caribbean Regional Environmental Programme (EU funded)	10,372	–	0.3	–
Darwin Initiative	49,922	–	1.6	–
Fauna and Flora International	–	11,450	–	0.4
Lighthawk Flights	–	29,920	–	1.0
Nando Perretti Foundation	48,847	–	1.6	–
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	19,800	–	0.6	–
OAK Foundation	208,201	–	6.7	–
PACT	117,528	–	3.8	–
Peregrine Fund Panama	20,000	–	0.6	–
The Nature Conservancy	12,645	47,400	0.4	1.5
Trees Belize	2,928	16,650	0.1	0.5
TrekForce International	1,845	103,375	0.1	3.3
U.S. Peace Corp	–	181,260	–	5.8
Wildlife Conservation Society	4,995	11,900	0.2	0.4
Wildlife Land Trust	27,925	–	0.9	–
Wildlife Trust	13,500	13,130	0.4	0.4
Wildtracks	–	17,314	–	0.6
National NGOs	16,658	245,345	0.5	7.9
<i>Subtotal, NGOs</i>	<i>608,913</i>	<i>677,743</i>	<i>19.5</i>	<i>21.7</i>
Governments, grantees, and private sector				
Foreign governments	21,400	–	0.7	–
Government of Belize	2,500	27,191	0.1	0.9
Statutory bodies	–	76,804	–	2.5
Grantees	150,001	492,384	4.8	15.8
Private sector	12,725	219,641	0.4	7.0
Universities	–	20,500	–	0.7
<i>Subtotal: governments, grantees, and private sector</i>	<i>186,626</i>	<i>836,519</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>26.8</i>
Other	54,099	43,072	1.7	1.4
<i>Total</i>	<i>849,638</i>	<i>1,557,334</i>	<i>27.2</i>	<i>49.8</i>

3 Further Assessment of Program Performance and Protocols

3.1 Relevance to National Priorities

Co-management Support

As indicated above, the biodiversity focus of the SGP reflects the national priorities and legislative and institutional framework developed since 1992. Taking into account the various national development plans and strategies, the SGP is congruent with a number of national priorities, including community strengthening and capacity building, and livelihoods. Also, the CPS strategic thrusts of advocacy and support for community co-management are consistent with a biodiversity policy of in situ conservation. Belize's commitment to biodiversity conservation propelled these thrusts and was later supported by them. The high numbers of grants that supported co-management NGOs and CBOs coincided with an expansion in the number of protected areas legally established after the start of the SGP (see table 3.1). The SGP supported groups in executing co-management responsibilities and/or advocating for specific areas to be vested with protected status.¹ These responsibilities were integral to co-management agreements with either the Forest or Fisheries Departments.

Furthermore, table 3.1 shows that most of the nonarcheological protected areas were declared from 1993 to 2004. Notably, all but 1 of the 16 national parks and 10 of the 15 wildlife sanctuaries and marine reserves were established during that period. These designations restrict use more (mainly IUCN categories Ia, II, and IV) than does the designation of forest reserve (IUCN category VI). The limitation on extractive activity thus allows for beneficial participation in protective management by buffer communities. The emphasis noted already on sustainable or alternative livelihoods was therefore part of a win-win strategy consistent with the overarching national priority of community empowerment.² *It must be noted that 2004 also marked the start of a moratorium on declaring new protected areas, which was instituted at the start of the NPAPSP initiative.*

¹ SGP grantees advocated for the designation of the Five Blues Lake, Gra Gra Lagoon, Laughing Bird Caye, and Mayflower Bocawina National Parks. Grantees were also the lead advocates for the Gales Point and Spanish Creek Wildlife Sanctuaries.

² Commitment to this approach was advanced with the establishment of annual meetings of Forest Department co-managers. The second such meeting was held June 27–28, 2007. At the opening ceremony, both a co-management NGO and co-management CBO of the year were announced: Friends for Conservation and Development and Friends of Swallow Caye, respectively. The selection criteria included management effectiveness and financial sustainability. Both groups have been beneficiaries of at least one SGP grant.

Table 3.1: Numbers of Protected Areas Established Pre- and Post-1993

	Pre-1993	1993 to 2004	Total
Forest reserves	10	7	17
Marine reserves	2	6	8
National parks	1	15	16
Natural monuments	1	3	4
Nature reserves	2	2	4
Wildlife sanctuaries	2	5	7
All areas	18	38	56

In addition to public protected areas, the SGP has provided grant funding to two community groups managing private protected areas. These are the CBS and the Golden Stream Reserve. Besides supporting community groups, these two initiatives are notable because they are led and implemented by, respectively, women and indigenous peoples.

Capacity Building and Alternative Livelihoods

In addition to the high number of biodiversity projects, a significant level of activity is geared to community training and alternative livelihoods incorporated in the portfolio projects. This reflects the combined priorities of the SGP and COMPACT strategies with their focus on empowering communities in and around forests and protected areas through sustainable livelihoods initiatives. In this regard, too, the NSC has adopted a strategy of twinning a capacity building initiative with one in alternative livelihoods or a GEF thematic area. This approach is intended to provide some critical mass and take into account the gradual nature of organizational maturation.

To support the grantees' capacity building process, since 2004 the SGP has also attempted to ensure that organizations—especially new CBOs—have or develop strategic plans (NSC, pers. comm., June 15, 2007). Once the plans are established, SGP staff work with the respective grantee organizations throughout implementation of SGP projects to ensure consistency with the strategic plans.

A second measure intended to encourage capacity building has been to support pairing arrangements between NGOs and CBOs. This approach has been used in a number of projects so far (see table 3.2). The projects represent arrangements in one of the following three categories:

- *Partnerships.* NGOs and CBOs work jointly to develop and implement a project.
- *NGO-led arrangements, providing for knowledge transfer to a CBO.* The NGO leads development and implementation of the project and provides for skills transfer to the CBO. The national coordinator sees this arrangement as the most disadvantageous for CBOs, especially where NGO commitments are not specific.

- *CBO-led arrangements, with NGO technical support.* The CBOs lead project development and implementation, and access technical support from NGOs in areas that may include proposal writing, M&E, and technical training.

Table 3.2: SGP Grants with NGO and CBO Partnerships

NGO	CBO	Project name (number)
Partnership arrangements		
Green Reef Environmental Institute	Caribeña Producers Cooperative	Assessment of Commercially Important Species in Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve Utilizing Traditional Commercial Fishermen (BZE/UNF-GEF/02/06)
Wildtracks	Sarteneja Wildlife and Ecotourism Environment Team	Capacity Building and Infrastructure for Sarteneja Wildlife Environment and Ecotourism Team (BZE/OP3/1/06/07)
NGO led with provision for knowledge transfer to CBO		
Programme for Belize	Red Bank Scarlet Macaw	Red Bank Scarlet Macaw Conservation and Tourism Development Project (BZE/97/03)
Programme for Belize		Arts and Crafts as Complementary Activity in the Community Outreach Programme (BZE/94/01)
CBO led with NGO technical support		
Friends of Nature	Placencia Producers Cooperative	Placencia Fishermen: Traps and Shades Rehabilitation Project (BZE/UNF-GEF/03/04)
Friends of Nature	Monkey River Village	Adopting Sustainable Lobster Harvesting Techniques using Concrete Shades in the Marine Areas Adjacent to Monkey River Village (BZE/UNF-GEF/05/05)

CBO Sustainability Risk

Although the level of CBO access conforms to the SGP objective of reaching vulnerable communities, interviewees expressed concerns regarding the financial sustainability of grantees beyond project life. The main issue raised was CBO capacity to achieve self-sustainability beyond the project implementation term. Although CPMT guidelines stress the need for initiatives to benefit communities directly (D. Ganapin, pers. comm., Nov 2, 2005), SGP stakeholders recognize the challenge faced by newly formed groups that are required to apply and manage resources toward a common goal. Respondents particularly identified a significant demand on the SGP staff for conflict resolution.

3.2 Relevance of the SGP to GEF Priorities

The SGP “Fit”

Examination of sample project files shows that explicit links to the global environmental priorities are not always included in the project proposals; however, the minutes of NSC meetings for 2000 to 2006 record regular discussions during project appraisal and scoring of the “fit” of the individual proposals to environmental priorities. To support this analysis, the NSC evaluation instrument is made up of criteria that emphasize an impact orientation (see table 3.3).

These criteria resulted from a revision exercise, whose results the NSC accepted on June 3, 2005 (see minutes of the NSC for that date).

Table 3.3: Representation of Belize NSC Project Scoring Criteria

Criteria	Scores (each criterion graded as X of 5 by NSC member)	Weights	Weighted scores	Maximum scores possible
1	Justification	3		15
2	Geographic distribution	1		5
3	Impact orientation	4		20
4	Resource mobilization	3		15
5	Sustainability	3		15
6	Organizational structure	2		10
7	Budget	2		10
8	Evaluation and monitoring plan	2		10
	<i>Total scores</i>			<i>100</i>

Note: 1 is poor, 3 is satisfactory, and 5 is excellent.

The extent of fit is noted too from the objectives of the 13 sample projects for the Belize SGP evaluation. These projects' objectives relate to biodiversity of coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems, as indicated for OP2, and to forest ecosystems, as outlined in OP3. This is borne out by an overview of the objectives of the full database. In addition to the OPs, the overview shows relevance to broader GEF objectives through the promotion of environmental awareness and education.

Support for Nascent CBOs

The inconsistency in providing explicit links to GEF priorities in project proposals over the years in part reflects emphasis on accommodating community involvement in environmental management. This is consistent with a decision at the SGP global level not to insist on the use of standard project tools, such as logical frameworks. Given the level of difficulty involved, requirements to apply standard tools in project formulation is often discouraging to nascent community groups and NGOs. A participant from the Toledo District emphasized this at the April 26, 2007, stakeholders meeting for this evaluation.³ This person indicated that potential grantees did not daily and consciously deal with the concept of “global environmental benefits” and could in fact deter would-be SGP applicants. In this regard, the use of innovative communications tools, such as a flipchart proposal format (discussed below), might prove helpful.

³ The Toledo District has the highest concentration of Maya, one of Belize's two indigenous groups.

3.3 Effectiveness/Impact

Target Beneficiary Access

The SGP has been highly effective and recognized by other donor agencies and potential grantees as an agency willing to take on “at-risk” groups. A number of CBOs have been nurtured to “viability” through the program and have accessed funding from other agencies subsequent to or concurrent with implementation of SGP projects. A number of SGP beneficiaries have also exhibited resilience, in that decline of their groups has been followed by the emergence of new and active teams. This is the case, for instance, for the Sarteneja Wildlife Environment and Ecotourism Team and the CBS Women’s Conservation Group. The team was formed by members of the Sarteneja New Vision Association for Development, which had received a planning grant, and the CBS Women’s Group formed after the decline of the CBS Management Committee.

Project Incubation

As shown from the earlier analysis of the distribution of the SGP portfolio to NGOs and CBOs, access by community groups is a priority of the program. Consequently, SGP staff spend a significant amount of time assisting the applicant agencies in improving the quality of submissions. Staff often work with proponents to firm up concepts and initiate the formulation of either a concept note or a project proposal. When the NSC defers the scoring of applications pending provision of required information, the staff supports the proponents in the follow-up process wherever possible. Altogether, this translates to significant investment in project incubation, which is unparalleled among other grant-making organizations operating in Belize.

Innovations

The Belize SGP implemented two innovations to support improved access to grant funding by communities. The first was a practice of encouraging proponents to use any of a number of regional technical writers to help in the preparation of concept notes and/or project proposals. The staff indicated, however, that the quality of submissions from these arrangements has not met the anticipated standards. Consequently, training sessions are being planned to impart proposal writing concepts and GEF SGP priorities to writers.

The second innovation employed by the Belize SGP—applied in only two cases so far—is the use of a flipchart proposal format adapted from the Guatemala SGP. The chart is a user-friendly tool that facilitates group formulation of project concepts and proposals. It is also used for guiding project implementation and monitoring. SGP staff indicate that, in the two cases in which this tool has been used so far, groups have developed concepts into full project proposals that were subsequently approved and are under implementation. The flipchart is currently being applied in the preparation of four new project concepts (O. Gale, pers. comm., June 7, 2007). The SGP staff is committed to improving the flipchart’s applicability to Belize and its ease of use, as well as to ensuring that the linkages to environmental benefits are brought out more clearly in the identification process. In addition, measures are being taken to accommodate the

process of transcribing the flipchart outputs to electronic format. This will facilitate documentation, dissemination, and project monitoring.

Linkages and Alternative Livelihoods

Little evidence is available of linkages with FSPs and MSPs; a specific link existed with the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute in the past through the NSC composition. In addition, because of the visibility of the Meso-American Barrier Reef System Project, a regional FSP located in Belize, a number of SGP project proponents recognized the project as a potential partner for initiatives focusing on the World Heritage Site. The four components of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System (MBRS) FSP are

- marine protected areas,
- a regional environmental monitoring and information system,
- promotion of sustainable use of the MBRS,
- public awareness and environmental education.

From the perspective of the CPS, these areas coincide with capacity building (particularly of fishermen) and CBO involvement in resource monitoring objectives. In addition, because the MBRS is a regional project, it provides a strategic advantage for linkages in monitoring and pollution control in shared international waters (see CPS 1999, 10).

Alternative Livelihoods Results

The effectiveness of alternative livelihoods options promoted by the SGP and aimed especially at reducing overfishing remains unclear. An examination of the database and interaction with stakeholders show that attempts by the SGP and the COMPACT program to build capacity for alternative livelihoods tend to be training, mainly in tour guiding, diving, and fly-fishing. Discussions with stakeholders during the first phase of this evaluation exercise indicate that, although a number of fishermen have transitioned to alternative livelihoods initiatives, such as tour guiding, there are at least two significant factors impeding the effectiveness of this approach:⁴

- Those fishermen trained in alternative livelihoods that have transitioned to a different economic activity may be replaced either proportionately or more than proportionately by new fishermen entering the industry (including from Belize's inland areas) and by heightened illegal fishing, especially by residents of neighboring countries. During the

⁴ These inhibiting factors were noted by the evaluation team, particularly through the site visit to the Sarteneja Wildlife and Ecotourism Projects and through separate discussions with the Belize Audubon Society and Belize District stakeholders.

evaluation field visits, members of two grantee agencies related experiences of confrontations with new fishermen in the open sea.

- Fishing is seen by a number of those engaged in it as a calling and therefore not all of the target population readily accept learning new skills and transitioning to a different economic activity.

Another issue concerning alternative livelihoods is the extent to which the activities promoted are viable income-earning options for the target groups. Consistent with the global SGP strategy communicated by CPMT, alternative livelihoods are promoted as a win-win strategy to encourage a transition from extractive activities, under the assumption that it reduces stresses on the natural environment. It appears, however, that a number of trainees use their new skills to supplement their extractive activities, rather than as an alternative. This implies that a higher trade-off is involved in the options promoted and a continued need exists to identify options that are economically viable for beneficiaries.

Expanding Beneficiaries and Focal Areas

SGP grants have been disbursed mainly to rural communities. The program has attempted to reach into urban areas and provide access for another of the vulnerable groups: youth. This resulted in one grant each to the Young Women’s Christian Association and the Young Men’s Christian Association, both based in Belize City. The SGP has also provided funding for an initiative implemented by the Scout Association. The national coordinator indicates that experience with these projects has demonstrated that urban populations are not sufficiently vested in natural resource management issues to maintain a focus on management- and protection-related initiatives.

In addition to difficulty in expanding the types of grantees, the SGP project has been challenged in moving beyond the biodiversity portfolio, because of some endemic factors. In the main, these include the orientation of both the policy and institutional framework and the NGO and CBO communities toward biodiversity and the current supporting systems.⁵ In this regard, the influence of international NGOs after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) through the NARMAP and the FPMP in supporting the development of environment and biodiversity is notable. More recent developments should contribute to increasing the level of nonbiodiversity initiatives. These include the NPAPSP as a measure for rationalizing the protected areas system and the emerging and growing public interest in climate change and sustainable land use.

⁵ The draft SGP Country Programme Strategy (CPS) for 2007 (p. 10) identifies at least 20 NGOs and CBOs as potential SGP grantees. Virtually all of these have already benefited from SGP grants, and all have missions centered on environmental conservation or biodiversity protection.

Replication and Upscaling

SGP initiatives to help NGOs and CBOs manage protected areas and promote sustainable livelihoods have been significantly replicated. In light of the proliferation of new protected areas since 1993, this partly reflects the high level of demand from buffer communities for benefits from the surrounding natural resources. This demand is also partly driven by incidences of poverty in areas where biodiversity is still relatively abundant. Given the geographic distribution of the target communities, replication has helped to ensure the development of a critical mass for the continued promotion of environmental management at the community level.

The ability of the SGP to scale up initiatives is affected by two features of Belize's GEF operations. The first is that the numbers of SGP activities far outstrip the number of MSPs and FSPs. Second, because both portfolios exhibit the same trend toward biodiversity and given the extent of replication already noted for the SGP, little scope exists for transferring knowledge or new approaches from the SGP to MSPs or FSPs. Notably, respondents point to the capacity developed within CBOs and NGOs to manage resources better and thereby access grants from larger agencies as the most likely form of upscaling in the Belize context.

Global Impact and Environmental Benefits

To the extent that the BBRWHS is the target beneficiary of COMPACT projects and given the level of such projects within the SGP portfolio, the program can be said to have global benefits. In addition, the SGP continues to operate on the premise that, particularly given Belize's small size, global benefits are achieved through local action. Over the years, SGP contributions to advocacy for protected areas, capacity building of protected area buffer communities, and environmental education are significant local-level actions that support the global agenda. In addition, increasing recognition of land-based sources of pollution and the importance of protected areas to watershed protection, along with more recent SGP targeting of land degradation further suggests indirect benefits to the BBRWHS.

SGP Visibility and Reputation

Interviewees indicated that the SGP has earned a reputation for its work with community groups over the years. The program is seen by one pair of respondents as being instrumental in providing rural communities with the capacity to participate in protected area management (Miller and Arzu, pers. comm., March 5, 2007). Respondents from the comparable grant funding agencies—OAK Foundation and PACT—pointed to the level of SGP staff efforts and investment in supporting the development of new community groups as a benefit on which they can build. These respondents indicated, in fact, that they rely on the foundations that the SGP nurtures, through which groups mature enough to receive funding. In the case of PACT, opportunities to forge a more active relationship with the SGP are being actively pursued. In this regard, the organizations' representatives at the April 26, 2007 consultation on this assessment requested a list of SGP grantees. It is their intent to use this list to improve decision making on project proposals received and achieve synergy with the SGP.

A further indicator of SGP reputability is that a number of the respondents see it as a program that helps to close critical gaps. In the case of larger initiatives, such as the Meso-American Barrier Reef System Project, the SGP provides an advantage in transmitting lessons and skills gleaned from regional activities to the local level. The MBRS director indicated that, given the regional aspect of the MBRS, the SGP’s reach into communities provides for an opportunity for the outputs of the full-scale project to be shared at the community level (N. Jacobs, pers. comm., March 6, 2007).

3.4 Efficiency

Resource Leveraging

Assessment of the SGP project database shows that the program has been able to leverage \$0.78 for each \$1.00 of GEF resources. This leveraged amount consists of \$0.28 cash and \$0.50 in kind (see table 3.4). When adjustments are made to exclude the baseline assessment and site strategy projects from the pool, the leverage ratio improves to \$0.80 for each \$1.00 and consists of \$0.28 in cash and \$0.52 in kind. As seen in table 3.4, cofinancing ratios improved significantly after the pilot phase and were highest during OP2. *It is important to recall that this was the longest operational phase (approximately six years) of the SGP.*

Table 3.4: Values and Percentages of Belize SGP Disbursement and Cofinancing

	GEF disbursement	Cash cofinancing	In-kind cofinancing	Total resources mobilized
Values (\$)				
Pilot	308,399	43,346	112,593	464,338
OP1	442,831	48,640	301,317	792,788
OP2	1,698,901	488,923	952,797	3,140,622
OP3	673,977	268,729	190,627	1,133,334
<i>Total values</i>	<i>3,124,108</i>	<i>849,638</i>	<i>1,557,334</i>	<i>5,531,081</i>
Percentages				
Pilot	5.6	0.8	2.0	8.4
OP1	8.0	0.9	5.4	14.3
OP2	30.7	8.8	17.2	56.8
OP3	12.2	4.9	3.4	20.5
<i>Total percentages</i>	<i>56.5</i>	<i>15.4</i>	<i>28.2</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Comparison of SGP Proposal Process to other Small Grants Programmes

Compared with the PACT and the OAK Foundation—two small grant funding agencies operating in Belize—the SGP has a number of advantages. First, the grantees’ access to the SGP is easier because of an open window for submission of proposals. In comparison, the PACT and the OAK foundation use structured approaches to call for project proposals. In the case of the PACT, proposal calls are made once or twice a year, with specified deadlines for submissions. In

addition, whereas SGP staff provides significant support through the project formulation stage, the PACT employs a hands-off approach to supporting project proponents through the process of formulating proposals. The PACT executive director indicated that the underlying rationale for this approach is the organization's wish not to send the signal that projects are approved before the evaluation and selection process.

Second, the SGP has no requirement on how long an NGO or CBO must exist before accessing grants, whereas the PACT does. By law, potential grantees are required to be in operation for at least one year to be eligible for PACT funding. In addition, PACT requires that NGOs register under the NGO Act, whereas the SGP accepts certificates of business name registration under the Business Names Act, chapter 247 of the *Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000–2003*. This latter legislation does not require incorporation, as the Companies Act does, or annual audits, as the NGO Act does.⁶ These differences contribute to the SGP's niche position as far as nascent community groups are concerned.

Comparative Disbursement Levels of SGP and Other Grant-Funding Agencies

Despite a significant difference in operational sizes, SGP grant disbursements compare favorably to that of PACT. Since its establishment in 1996, the PACT has grown into an internationally recognized trust fund.⁷ It has a steady stream of income from PACT fees, which have been boosted lately by cruise tourism receipts.⁸ In addition, PACT staff size is about 12 to 15 persons, compared with a combined SGP and COMPACT staff of three persons. Despite these differences, SGP disbursements averaged \$399,499 a year between 2001 and 2005, compared with PACT's average annual small grants disbursements of \$142,700 in the same period.⁹

Many of the SGP grantees do not qualify for grants from the OAK Foundation, because the lower limit for small grants from that agency is typically \$250,000; OAK Foundation grantees must therefore have large absorptive capacities. This has proved to be a challenge for most NGOs and CBOs in Belize over the years. The funding gap contributes further to the SGP's niche of supporting nascent CBOs and NGOs.

⁶ Chapter 250 of the *Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition, 2000–2003*.

⁷ PACT expanded its program in 2005 to include large grants of up to \$400,000 and medium-size grants of about \$150,000

⁸ PACT fees are levied on nonresident travelers leaving Belize at the rate of \$3.75 per person. In addition, PACT earns a portion of a head tax levied on cruise travelers. PACT revenue from this latter source has lately been boosted, because of the explosion in the cruise tourism sector.

⁹ This comparison is more difficult from 2004 onward, because of the start of PACT disbursement of medium and large grants. Although these facilities were not formalized until 2005, the first PACT large grant was approved in 2004–05.

Benefits of the SGP's Relationship with UNDP

In terms of administration, the Small Grants Programme realizes a number of benefits from its relationship with UNDP. First, efficiencies are gained from sharing rental expenses with UNDP. Second, inclusion of SGP utilities and fuel expenses on UNDP accounts serves to reduce the impact of lags in transfers of operational funds from the United Nations Office for Project Services. Third, access to UNDP office equipment and supplies provides redundancy, which helps reduce down time in SGP operations.

Regarding technical expertise, the program benefits from proximity to and accessibility of the UNDP environmental program officer, thereby sustaining a high level of input into strategic planning and key operational activities and supporting UNDP obligations under the project document that frames SGP operations.

Capacity and Training Needs

A second issue revealed by an assessment of the SGP administration is the need for additional training in areas that would support the team's grant-making functions. Discussions with SGP team members and expectations expressed by the stakeholders throughout this evaluation process reveal several areas in which the team's skill complement may not be adequate for meeting increasing demands.

There is also the need indicated above for training of grantees and grant writers to improve the quality of proposals submitted. To address the most immediate needs, the team indicates its intention to undertake or coordinate the activities listed below, which would have to be executed in conjunction with current and emerging technical/operational and administrative demands:

- Building capacity of and using resource persons to support the design of SGP project proposals
- Developing and delivering training modules on project implementation and reporting
- Developing presentations to promote the SGP at the community level.

In addition to building capacity of trainers and grantee organizations and supporting the development, monitoring, and evaluation of projects, SGP staff must lead or participate in activities such as strategic planning and conflict resolution. The latter arises especially when nascent community groups are required to execute financial responsibilities and the demands on staff time and level of effort are significant. Table 3.5 shows the main skills required of SGP staff.

Table 3.5: Skills Required of SGP Staff

Project design	Workshop facilitation
Project M&E	Strategic planning ^a
Community development	Networking
Resource mobilization*	Interpersonal communication
Financial management*	Writing
Training of trainers*	Conflict resolution*

a. Skill areas in which staff training is recommended.

Graduation

Given the size of its operations, the Belize SGP appears to be an ideal candidate for graduation. In this regard, due consideration is to be taken of a number of factors: The strongest growth in the program's level of resource mobilization occurred since 2000/2001. This trend was mirrored by program expansion, as three of the six nonbiodiversity projects were implemented in OP3. Governance and administrative functions advanced and strengthened significantly since 2001 with watershed developments during 2004–05. These issues together suggest that key aspects of the SGP are still relatively new, notwithstanding the length of program operation.

The physical placement of the SGP and the benefit of affiliation with UNDP must also be factored into considerations of graduation. Given Belize's small population size, the program's placement within the UNDP country office supports efficient administration and provides an advantage in conflict resolution. SGP staff indicate that grantees view their interventions as neutral because of the program's relationship with UNDP. This contributes to effective conflict resolution. This aspect, as well as those outlined above, must be factored into a design for graduation in order to maintain and improve the SGP's effectiveness.

3.5 Issues and Lessons from Evaluation Sample Projects

Grades from individual project review protocols for 13 Belize SGP and COMPACT projects are presented in annex B, organized in order of respective implementation dates. The grades show overall improvement in SGP project design and implementation since the start of the program in 1992. Sample projects designed and implemented during OP3 show better congruence with GEF strategic focus than do earlier projects. Notably, the first two projects of the sample are graded unsatisfactory for exit strategies and M&E. These projects had neither explicit nor implicit exit strategies.

Examination of project records reveals that the latter projects are better documented and that forms used are based on templates provided in the SGP GEF Operational Guidelines. This better accommodated evaluation of project performance and the input of the SGP team. Conversely, the earlier projects used less structured formats and information that would indicate the extent of monitoring. More detailed observations from the sample trends follow.

Relevance

The review of the sample projects bears out that the relevance of SGP initiatives to GEF priorities has been generally satisfactory in the life of the program. Notably, of four sample projects graded as highly satisfactory, two are critical for the effective design and implementation of the COMPACT Phase II Programme.¹⁰ The other two are aimed at monitoring marine resources and improving sustainable harvesting methods. These projects are also notable because the stakeholders—fishermen—participated actively in project design and implementation.

Effectiveness

The level of effectiveness for the 13 sample projects was mostly moderate. Effectiveness is measured in terms of (1) capacity development and (2) community awareness and understanding of environmental issues. The latter is especially difficult to assess for SGP projects because of the extent to which they coincide with GEF enabling activities and the ongoing high level of publicity campaigns undertaken by PACT. Additionally, there is no sustained mechanism for tracking the results of capacity-building and environmental awareness activities beyond the life of SGP projects.

Efficiency

Implementation efficiency, like effectiveness, has been moderate for the sample projects. Efficiency is measured by comparing project inputs and outputs and by assessing the win-win and trade-off decisions and measures taken. A win-win result is seen as the achievement of GEF objectives that coincide with those of the project community. For the most part, SGP projects target sustainable livelihoods as a method for achieving a win-win. Of the 13 sample projects, five have objectives related to sustainable or alternative livelihoods. Other projects designed for a win-win within the sample include the two aimed at resource monitoring.

Learning

Learning is assessed by the extent to which projects draw from lessons of similar initiatives and the approaches and outcomes are expected to be applied to other efforts. Of the 13 sample projects, eight are graded as either moderately satisfactory or moderately unsatisfactory. This generally reflects the fact that some key lessons have not been applied across the sample. These lessons mainly relate to synchronizing project implementation with stakeholders' work schedules and providing sufficient incentives to gain sustained participation from community members.

Interaction

Project interaction across the sample is generally satisfactory, and risk levels are low enough that many of the expected outcomes are or will be realized. In both of these areas, the projects partly

¹⁰ These are the Updating of the Baseline Assessment for the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage Site (BZE/UNF-GEF/05/01) and Updating of the Conceptual Model and Site Strategy for COMPACT Phase II (BZE/UNF-GEF/05/02).

benefit from the operating environment. Information sharing and coordination is done routinely in Belize. This is particularly so for those projects implemented by CBOs or NGOs that have or are pursuing co-management agreements for protected areas. These agreements translate to joint management between the government agency responsible for the marine or terrestrial protected area and the NGO or CBO concerned. As a result, any SGP project is automatically included in the areas of collaboration. Satisfactory levels of interaction also reflect the close and established network of stakeholders, which include MSP and FSP managers (such as for the Golden Stream Corridor Project and the MBRS), quasi-government institutions (such as the Belize Tourist Board), and private sector organizations (such as the Belize Tourism Industry Association).

Exit Strategies

Exit strategies for SGP projects are mainly implicit, consisting of the successful completion of the project. With the exception of the oldest two projects, the exit strategy for the sample projects was or is either satisfactory or moderately satisfactory.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment of the quality of M&E for the 13 projects ranged from moderately satisfactory to highly satisfactory. Of four sample projects rated as highly satisfactory, two were conducted by the more mature NGOs—the Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology and the Programme for Belize.¹¹ The other two projects for which M&E was rated highly successful were each undertaken by NGOs staffed by experienced and skilled proposal writers. These are the Belize Zoo and the Tumul K'in Center of Learning.

M&E plans were generally much improved in the latter sample projects, as seen from annex B. This reflects in part the separation of M&E from implementation plans and identification of measurable indicators.

¹¹ Notably, these were the host NGOs for the SGP and COMPACT program at their respective startups.

4 Summary Findings

The analysis of the Belize SGP portfolio shows that, of the 131 projects implemented, only six are in the nonbiodiversity focal areas; notwithstanding, the program is relevant to both country and GEF priorities. It has been particularly instrumental in the growth of communities and expansion in protected areas during a period when active efforts spurred the policy, institutional, and legislative framework to develop that focal area at a national level. Much of this development occurred from 1997 to 2004, when national awareness of climate change, land degradation, and persistent organic pollutants began to increase. This increased awareness, coupled with a change in the NSC and a renewed focus on GEF priorities and on processes, should support an increase in the number of nonbiodiversity SGP projects in the near future.

4.1 Main Achievement and/or Benefit of the SGP

- The SGP provides an opportunity for the rural communities to be involved in the management of natural resources. In the process of doing so, the program has contributed significantly to community empowerment, capacity building, and protection of habitat.
- The program helps to maintain sustained focus on environmental issues and efforts to address local priorities. These by extension contribute to global benefits, especially when the Belize Barrier Reef World Heritage Site is targeted.
- The SGP has maximized on its niche for providing support to CBOs in their maturation process and has contributed to institutional strengthening and “graduation” of NGOs.
- The SGP’s focus on the south and on northern Belize District have helped in targeting indigenous peoples and vulnerable communities. The program’s targeting of a third vulnerable group—women—is demonstrated by the significant number of projects either promoted by or targeting this group.
- SGP governance and administrative systems have improved significantly, especially since 2004. The SGP is cost effective, but requires support to improve its business processes and build staff capacity to levels commensurate with growing demands.

4.2 Innovations

A number of the constraints documented above have been addressed through the application of various innovations by the SGP staff, grantees, and partners. These include the following:

- Encouraging and supporting partnerships of established NGOs with CBOs in project planning, proposal, and implementation
- Using regional writers to support preparation of project concepts and grant proposals by CBOs

- Supporting the reinforcement of projects carried out by CBOs in order to achieve critical mass for institutional strengthening and synergy for greater impact at the community level.

4.3 Strengths

- The restructured National Steering Committee appears from its records to be more stable and, given a good complement of expertise, able to formulate and lead strategic action.
- The SGP provides seed funding and nurtures new community organizations that no one else funds.
- The nurturing process is enhanced by excellent support for the grant writing process. The SGP also aligns itself with its grantees, so that grant recipients are clearly committed to the program and strongly collaborate with SGP staff.
- As in the case of the MBRS, the SGP has been successful in at least one instance in closing gaps between larger projects and the communities.
- The SGP has good linkages, which it has recently been actively strengthening, with PACT and other donors, such as the OAK Foundation.
- The strong link with the COMPACT program allows for intense focus on the World Heritage Site and, by extension, sustained activity aimed at generating global environmental benefits.
- The SGP can draw on resources outside of the NSC and local consultative body to ensure relevance and effectiveness. This is mainly due to the excellent interrelationships among agencies. The program itself has contributed indirectly to this through its support for co-management groups.
- Members of the SGP staff and NSC and local consultative body committees are highly committed and motivated. This is evident especially from comparison of the SGP's grant levels to those of PACT and of its grant-making processes to both PACT and the OAK Foundation. In terms of grant levels, the SGP's annual average disbursements are almost twice as much as that of the PACT, notwithstanding a stark difference in the size of human and financial resources.

4.4 Challenges

- Stakeholders advocated strongly for policy changes that would more effectively accommodate sustainable extraction of resources and data sharing. As it did with the establishment of protected areas, the SGP must find a way to support CBO participation in strengthening the legislative environment in this regard.

- Representation on the NSC of the two main areas of natural resource management and/or national focal points for the UNCBD, UNFCCC, and UNCCD should be formalized.
- Although a geographic focus exists, it is difficult to assess the SGP’s impact. This may be improved if the SGP matches its geographic concentration with thematic focus. Biodiversity protection continues to be the suggested main focus for the central and southern region of the country. Because agriculture has surpassed forestry in the north and given the SGP’s low presence there, land degradation may be the optimal focus for that region. Focus on international waters should be concentrated in the south and north, and in the central west where access to water bodies are shared with neighboring countries.
- New strategies must be devised to target women and the second of the two indigenous groups—the Garinagu—better. The latter will remain elusive if the program maintains a focus on buffer communities of forest areas.
- Specific strategies or a different perspective is required on upscaling. For linkages, both collaboration with large-scale projects in the conceptual stages as well as strengthened strategic partnerships with other small grants agencies, such as PACT, are recommended.
- Risk to newly formed groups should be addressed with strategies aimed at achieving critical mass and supporting “graduation” of projects. The strategic planning support that the NSC has already initiated should be maintained. Community commitment to a clear plan will help to overcome the risk of failed teamwork and financial failure.
- To meet the needs of grantees, SGP staff is pressed to provide support even beyond the current remarkable levels. Capacity to do so can only be bolstered by training in areas such as conflict resolution, resource mobilization, strategic planning, and training.
- SGP staff members face a dual demand to deliver on the technical/programmatic and administrative levels. Although this cannot be completely eliminated, the extent to which program officers need to take on administrative and technical roles simultaneously should be reduced. In addition, office procedures that are critical for transparency, such as effective record management, need to be undertaken by dedicated staff.

4.5 Final Recommendations

- The SGP can leverage high visibility and links with UNDP to increase the impact of SGP spending. This is especially critical for access to desired strategic partners and for improved collaboration on MSPs and FSPs during discussion stages.
- Structured evaluation strategies should be incorporated in the SGP operating protocol. This is especially important in terms of strengthening M&E provisions within the projects. Because the SGP has worked since 1992 with CBOs, this can provide for critical improvement at the community level.

- Strategies should be adopted to expand the SGP beyond biodiversity to target other focal areas. Given the dearth of NGOs and CBOs in nonbiodiversity focal areas, this requires innovative approaches. Methods to be considered may include the following:
 - Encouraging initiatives in specific focal areas at each of the emerging geographic regions
 - Identifying an established NGO to champion a nonbiodiversity focal area and partner with a community group to undertake joint initiatives therein.
- Given the high number of projects targeting fishermen, the NSC composition should be amended to include a representative of the Fisheries Department. Moreover, procedures should be adopted to ensure retention of the input of the UNCCD, UNCBD, and UNFCCC focal points, regardless of any variation in Cabinet portfolio assignments. It would be important to ensure, however, that any changes made to the NSC retain the current features of a good complement of expertise and a majority nongovernmental membership.
- It is clear that the SGP in Belize has evolved to the point at which strategic input in policy direction would lend greater effectiveness. This could be achieved by ensuring increased dialogue at the highest administrative levels (chief executive officers and department heads) within ministries. It is important that this be done in order to provide input into the direction and shape of developing and new policies. The support of and coordination with UNDP, given that agency's established rapport with official bodies, would be critical in this process. For maximum effect, clarity in strategic direction between the two agencies is also advisable, so that no occasion arises in which UNDP's and the SGP's respective objectives are undermined.
- Although upscaling is best concluded by the Implementing Agencies, it is important for the SGP to support its grantees in achieving maturity as far as possible. In this regard, implementation of one or more multiple area projects by a more mature CBO may be an effective strategy. Recommended focal area combinations include land degradation and climate change, or land degradation and biodiversity. Given the trend toward improving CBO capacity, the SGP should utilize approaches for multiple focal area projects that would utilize GEF provisions for grants larger than the standard \$50,000.00.

Annex A: Documents Reviewed and/or Cited

Belize. *Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000–2003*.

———. 1998. *Belize's Interim First National Report*. Ministry of Natural Resources, Belmopan.

Belize Enterprise for Sustained Technology. 2007. *Community Management of Protected Areas Programme (COMPACT) Phase II. Site Strategy 2006–2009*.

Central Statistical Office. 2004. *Environmental Statistics for Belize 2004*.

———. *Belize: 2005 Mid-Year Population Estimates by Region and Sex*. Belize www.cso.gov.bz/stats_population.html. Accessed June 5, 2007.

Department of the Environment (DOE). 2006 (March 8). “National Environmental Policy and Strategy 2006.” Draft report.

GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP). n.d.1. “GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) Country Programme Strategy. Guidance to National Coordinators and National Steering Committee in Formulating the CPS.”

———. n.d.2. “Operational Guidelines.”

———. n.d.3. “Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Third Operational Phase.”

———. n.d.4. “Strategic Framework. Third Operational Phase.”

GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) Belize. 2000–2006. Minutes of National Steering Committee Meetings, March 2000–November 2006.

———. n.d.1. “Country Programme Overview Paper Belize.”

———. n.d.2. “Country Programme Strategy 2007.” Draft.

GEF and UNDP Evaluation Offices. 2007 (March). “Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme Terms of Reference for National Consultant.”

Gillette, Vincent, George Myvette, and Alan Herrera. 2006. “Belize National Biodiversity Policy.” Draft.

British Honduras. 1954. *Forest Policy of British Honduras*. Colonial Secretary's Office.

Iyo, J., P. Mendoza, J. Cardona, A. Cansino, and D. Davis. 2003. “Belize: Land Policy, Administration, and Management in Belize.” In Dr. A. Williams (ed.) *Land in the Caribbean. Issues of Policy, Administration, and Management in the English-Speaking Caribbean*.

National Human Development Advisory Committee. 2006 (June). “National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan 2006–2010. Public Consultations” and “National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan 2006–2010. Poverty Map Development for Belize.”

———. 2007. *National Poverty Elimination Strategy 2007–2011*.

———. n.d. “National Poverty Elimination Action Plan 2007–2011.” Draft.

Programme for Belize, Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Development, and the Association of National Development Agencies. n.d. *Belize COMPACT Programme Strategy 2001 to 2003. Involving Communities and Users in the Conservation of the BBRWHS.*

Task Force on Belize Protected Areas Policy and System Plan. n.d. *The Belize National Protected Areas System Plan.*

Trench-Sandiford, Carolyn. 2004. *Consultancy on Legal and Cross-Cutting Issues of Three United Nations Conventions on Biological Diversity, Framework Conventions on Climate Change, and the Convention to Combat Desertification.* pp. 1–18.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 1999 (April). *Belize Country Programme Strategy.* Global Environment Facility, Small Grants Programme.

———. n.d.1. “Sustainable Land Management.” Project document.

———. n.d.2. “SGP Community Management of Protected Areas Conservation (COMPACT) Phase II.” Project document.

———. n.d.3. “The GEF Small Grants Programme. Second Operational Phase.” Project document.

———. n.d.4. “The GEF Small Grants Programme. Third Operational Phase.” Project document.

Wells, Michael P., Meehran Hosain, Bolaji Ogunseye, and Julio C. Tresierra. 2003. *Report of the Independent Evaluation of the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme, 1999–2002.* GEF Unit, UNDP, Washington, DC.

Annex B: Overall Grading of Evaluation Sample Projects

No.	Project no.	Project title	Amount	Status	Recipient type	Recipient
1	BZE/93/04	Conservation Management Community Development in the Rainforest	\$24,782.00	Closed	CBO	Association of Friends of 5 Blues
2	BZE/97/13	Gales Point Preservation and Conservation Project	\$36,808.00	Closed	CBO	Gales Point Progressive Cooperative
3	BZE/UNF/02/07	Training Component of Capacity-Building for Self-Sustainability Project	\$18,383.84	Closed	NGO	Belize Fisherman's Cooperative Association
4	BZE/UNF/02/05	The Belize Zoo Reef Outreach Education Program	\$30,964.00	Closed	NGO	The Belize Zoo and Tropical Education Center
5	BZE/UNF-GEF/02/06	Assessment of Commercially Important Species in Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve Utilizing Traditional Commercial Fishermen	\$50,000.00	Closed	NGO	Caribeña Producers Cooperative
6	BZE/UNF-GEF/04/03	Community Field Studies at Laughing Bird Caye National Park	\$49,740.00	Under implementation	NGO	Friends of Nature
7	BZE/UNF-GEF/04/04	Strengthening Fisheries Monitoring & Data Gathering Capacity for Co-Management of the Lighthouse Reef Atoll Marine Protected Area	\$38,575.00	Under implementation	NGO	National Fishermen Producers Cooperative Society Ltd
8	BZE/04/05	The Promotion of Community-Based Tourism Enterprise to Regional and International Markets	\$20,070.00	Closed	NGO	Programme for Belize
9	BZE/05/04	Alternative Livelihoods through Education and Honey Production	\$39,795.00	Under implementation	NGO	Tumul K'in Center of Learning
10	BZE/UNF-GEF/05/01	Updating of the Baseline Assessment for the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage Site	\$50,000.00	Under implementation	NGO	Programme for Belize
11	BZE/UNF-GEF/05/02	Updating of the Conceptual Model and Site Strategy for COMPACT Phase II	\$46,149.75	Under Implementation	NGO	Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology
12	BZE/OP3/1/06/07	Capacity Building and Infrastructure for Sarteneja Wildlife Environment and Ecotourism Team	\$32,387.50	Under Implementation	CBO	Sarteneja Wildlife, Environment and Ecotourism Team
13	BZE/UNF-GEF/PH2/1/06/07	Creating Alternative Livelihood Opportunities for Residents of Sarteneja Village	\$30,884.50	Under Implementation	CBO	Sarteneja Wildlife, Environment and Ecotourism Team

No.	Project no.	Project title	Overall relevance	Effective-ness	Efficiency	Learn-ing	Inter-action	Risk	Exit strategy	M&E
1	BZE/93/04	Conservation Management Community Development in the Rainforest	S	MS	MU	MS	MU	U	MU	MS
2	BZE/97/13	Gales Point Preservation and Conservation Project	S	MS	MS	MU	MS	MU	MU	U
3	BZE/UNF/02/07	Training Component of Capacity Building for Self-Sustainability Project	MS	MS	MS	MS	S	MU	MS	MS
4	BZE/UNF/02/05	The Belize Zoo Reef Outreach Education Program	S	S	S	S	HS	L	S	HS
5	BZE/UNF-GEF/02/06	Assessment of Commercially Important Species in Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve Utilizing Traditional Commercial Fishermen	HS	S	HS	S	S	L	MS	MU
6	BZE/UNF-GEF/04/03	Community Field Studies at Laughing Bird Caye National Park	S	MS	U	MU	MU	MU	MS	S
7	BZE/UNF-GEF/04/04	Strengthening Fisheries Monitoring and Data Gathering Capacity for Co-Management of the Lighthouse Reef Atoll Marine Protected Area	HS	MS	HS	S	S	L	MS	S
8	BZE/04/05	The Promotion of Community-Based Tourism Enterprise to Regional and International Markets	S	S	S	MS	S	L	MS	MS
9	BZE/05/04	Alternative Livelihoods through Education and Honey Production	S	HS	S	HS	HS	L	S	HS
10	BZE/UNF-GEF/05/01	Updating of the Baseline Assessment for the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage Site	HS	MS	MS	MS	S	L	S	S
11	BZE/UNF-GEF/05/02	Updating of the Conceptual Model and Site Strategy for COMPACT Phase II	HS	S	S	HS	HS	L	S	HS
12	BZE/OP3/1/06/07	Capacity Building and Infrastructure for Sarteneja Wildlife Environment and Ecotourism Team	MS	MS	MS	S	S	ML	MU	S
13	BZE/UNF-GEF/PH2/1/06/07	Creating Alternative Livelihood Opportunities for Residents of Sarteneja Village	S	MS	S	S	HS	ML	MS	S