

WWF Environmental and Social Safeguards - Risk Categorization Memorandum

Version 2.1 November 2020

Project Name: Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in the tourism sector of the protected areas and strategic ecosystems of San Andres, Old Providence and Santa Catalina islands	Date: 07 July 2021
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Executing Agency/ies: CORALINA and Conservation International

Landscape Categorization on E&S Risks:

High Risk - (A) ___ and/or (Special Consideration) ___ /Medium Risk (B) ___ / Low Risk (C) X

Substantive Safeguard Standards Triggered:	Yes/ TBC	No
Natural Habitats		X
Pest Management		X
Indigenous Peoples		X
Restriction of Access & Resettlement		X
Community Health, Safety and Security		X
Physical and Cultural Resources		X

In addition to the Substantive Safeguards above, the four Process Standards apply to all projects:

- Environmental and Social Risk Management
- Consultation and Disclosure
- Community Stakeholder Engagement
- Grievance Mechanism

Landscapes categorized as low risk have been screened in accordance to the Standard on E&S Risk Management.

Project Area Context

The project will be implemented in the Seaflower Marine Protected Area associated with the islands of San Andrés, Old Providence and Santa Catalina (11,623 ha including key coral reef and seagrass ecosystems of the total 6,501,700 ha of the Seaflower MPA) and in the three regional protected areas of Jhonny Cay (44.2 ha), Old Point (247.56 ha) and The Peak (10.52 ha). Interventions will also focus on the non-protected but key terrestrial ecosystems of the islands of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina, especially in the mangroves (133.93 ha) and sandy beaches. Table 1 presents a characterization of the PAs included in the project, and protected areas maps with geo-coordinates and legend are presented in Appendix A.

Environmental Context

In 2005, the Seaflower Marine Protected Area was declared within the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve, further protecting key coral reef and seagrass ecosystems that are intimately linked to important terrestrial ecosystems including mangroves and sandy beaches. This was reaffirmed in 2014 when CORALINA (Corporation for the Sustainable Development of the Archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina) reasserted it as an Integrated Management District (DMI). This designation, recognized in the National System of Protected Areas, allows the development of sustainable activities

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from the cultural, ecological and economic point of view, such that "*the Seaflower protected area must guarantee the conservation of representative samples of marine and coastal biodiversity, of the basic ecological processes that support the environmental offer of the Archipelago and of the social and cultural values of the population*". This area covers 34% of the Colombian Caribbean territorial sea. It is one of the largest MPAs in the world and the largest in the Caribbean, covering 10% of the Caribbean Sea. The Seaflower MPA is found within the Western Caribbean Coral Reef Hotspot, identified by Conservation International, and contains about 78% of all the coral areas of Colombia (142,000ha)¹. Overall, the MPA contains more than 200,000 hectares of significant corals, mangroves and seagrass beds that provide feeding and breeding grounds for birds, reptiles, fish and invertebrates, including many endemic, vulnerable, threatened and endangered species.

The adjacent and surrounding areas of the Seaflower MPA include globally important biodiversity, encompassing the largest and most productive open-ocean coral reefs in the Caribbean and providing a continuum of habitats that support significant levels of marine biodiversity. With the presence of 192 Red-Listed species, this reserve is an important site for the conservation of endangered and threatened species of global concern. While the main islands are threatened with over-visitation, much of the Reserve remains under-explored, featuring barrier reefs, reef lagoons, reef slopes, deep coral plateaus, seamounts, deep coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass and algal beds, soft and hard bottoms, beaches, and open ocean. The Seaflower MPA provides an exceptional example of marine habitat diversity, complexity, and inter-connectivity on a regional basis, with a few overpopulated islands that threaten the surrounding natural capital. Important characteristics of the Seaflower Biosphere Reserve include at least 48 species of Scleractinia coral species; habitat and nesting grounds for 4 IUCN Red-listed sea turtle species: the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*, EN), the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*, CR), the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*, EN) and the leatherback turtle, (*Dermochelys coriacea*, CR); home to another 188 Red-Listed species of marine mammals, fish and invertebrates; mangroves including *Rhizophora mangle*, *Avicennia germinans*, *Laguncularia racemosa* and *Conocarpus erectus*; 126 migrant bird species including the endemic *Vireo caribaeus* plus 12 endemic subspecies; and is home to a globally significant population of range-restricted Black Crab, which is under consideration by IUCN to be listed as Endangered (EN).

Socioeconomic Context

The land area of the archipelago is 52 km², of which 27km² corresponds to San Andres, 17 km² to Old Providence and 1 km² to Santa Catalina. The rest are uninhabited cays and banks. On the three principal islands, according to the last Census in 2018 from the Departamento Nacional de Estadística (DANE) released the figure of 48,299; however, it is not a credible number, since the Office of Control & Residence (OCCRE) calculates the number around 120.000 inhabitants according to their accounts.

The San Andres Archipelago has a long social and economic history distinct from that of Colombia. Indigenous islanders (now named Raizales) descend from European (mainly English) settlers and Africans (slaves and runaway slaves from other islands) who came to these islands in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Their culture is defined by an Anglo-puritan/African heritage, Protestantism, and English and Creole languages.

Their culture and resource base and are now protected by the Constitution of 1991 (Art. 310). For centuries the community had a high degree of autonomy, controlling their own resources and economy until the latter half of the 20th century. Traditionally islanders pursued a mix of livelihoods; within a single household it was common to fish; farm including raising animals like cattle, pigs, and chickens; hold an outside job; and perhaps go to sea or own a small business. As seamen and boat-builders, islanders had been trading with Caribbean countries for centuries (main exports were coconut products and citrus). With modernization, informal trade was abolished, and products had to be sold to the

¹ GEF Project Identification Form (PIF). Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in the tourism sector of the protected areas and strategic ecosystems of San Andres, Old Providence and Santa Catalina islands. GEF Project ID: 10578

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mainland at fixed prices. Soon artisanal fishers had to request permission from naval authorities to go to sea. Losing control over their livelihoods and knowing little about the introduced models of commerce and tourism, native islanders became economically marginalized and their quality of life and natural resource base declined.

According to (DANE) the Raizal indigenous people are 25,515, Indigenous people make up about 30% of the population. The state recognize their rights on paper but in reality they said state, has permitted mass immigration that in the end has been profoundly affected by acculturation and loss of values, principles and customs of the islander people.

Project Description

The project's Objective is to promote biodiversity conservation mainstreaming and green recovery efforts in the tourism sector for enhanced resilience of the Seaflower MPA. The project's concept and overall intervention is centered on addressing the barriers prohibiting the integration of biodiversity conservation in tourism activities, and on the logic that the strengthening of capacities and the inter-institutional articulation with the small-scale private sector, as well as the first-hand knowledge of the impacts produced by tourism on biodiversity, will allow informed decision-making and the participatory implementation of measures for the effective management of ecosystems and their respective conservation. Likewise, the support and strengthening of biodiversity friendly and culturally-rich local tourism initiatives - based on the principles established by the national government regarding green businesses - will promote a change in the local tourism sector towards one that not only has an impact on conservation but also is an agent of change that can be used in favor of biodiversity.

Component 1: Planning and institutional framework for a biodiversity and green recovery focused tourism sector in the MPA, PAs and the three islands of the Archipelago, in the context of the POMIUAC

Component 2: Management of tourism impacts on key biodiversity of the MPA, PAs and the three islands

Component 3: Biodiversity mainstreaming in innovative coastal and marine local tourism development in the MPA, PAs and three islands

Component 4: Monitoring and Evaluation, awareness raising and knowledge management

Summary of Key Safeguard Issues

This project consists of low-risk activities including policy and institutional framework planning, biodiversity assessment and monitoring and capacity building for the tourism sector. Because of these activities, the project is not anticipated to trigger any Safeguards, and no mitigation plans are necessary.

An additional note is that although the project is not working specifically or exclusively with the Indigenous Raizal population, they comprise 35-40% of the population of the Archipelago. According to the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, they were specifically consulted about the project and as part of the group of small, individually-run tourism sector businesses, they will be prioritized for capacity building.

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Summary of Cross Cutting Issues; (Human Rights, Gender Equality and Women's Rights, Children's Rights, Conflict Sensitivity and Climate Change).

Although there are landscape-level human rights issues that exist in the project area, they are not anticipated to either affect project implementation nor be exacerbated by it. In the case of conflict sensitivity, the screening identifies the potential for the project to improve sectoral collaboration. The project will address Gender equality and women's rights issues through the Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan. And as is the case for all island and coastal communities, climate change poses an existential threat, but is not project specific. To address climate change issues that may have a negative impact on project implementation, a climate risk screening will be conducted.

Required Actions for Impact Assessment (ESIA) and Mitigation Framework (ESMF):

A Gender Analysis and Action Plan are required for this project to ensure the equitable inclusion and participation of women in the project activities.

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been created for the project, which identifies three categories of stakeholders:

- Level 1: persons and groups who can influence and decide the outcomes and the manner of the Project implementation or make decisions based on the outputs of the project, and mainly includes national and local government institutions
- Level 2: persons and groups that participate in the project directly or indirectly, and mainly includes local government institutions, academia who will assist with monitoring, local tourism operators and the Native Raizal Community Representative body
- Level 3: persons and groups affected directly or indirectly by the outcomes of the Project implementation, and mainly includes local NGOs and some private sector actors.

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