

Safeguards Compliance Memorandum

Project Information

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
GEF Focal Area	Biodiversity
Safeguards Categorization	C

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

Project Location and Salient Physical Characteristics Relevant for the Safeguards Analysis

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.

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 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). 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 caribaeusplus*, 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 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 recognizes 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.

Safeguards Standard	Triggered	Explanation
Natural Habitats	No	
Indigenous People	No	
Restriction of Access and Resettlement	No	
Community Health, Safety and Security	No	
Pest Management	No	
Cultural Resources	No	

Summary of Key Safeguards Issues

Describe any safeguard issues and impacts associated with the proposed project. Identify and describe any potential large scale, significant and/or irreversible impacts:

This project consists of low-risk activities only. No risks from a safeguards perspective exist that require further mitigation efforts.

Describe measures taken by the Project Team to address safeguard policy issues. Provide an assessment of borrower capacity to plan and implement the measures described:

Gender equality and women's rights issues will be addressed through the Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan, and climate change issues will be screened through the climate risk screening. The only other required safeguard measure is the creation of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, which the project team has completed. The project team has working relationships with the project stakeholders, and have shared the SEP both virtually and in person with stakeholders, and have demonstrated they have the capacity to implement the plan.

Identify the key stakeholders and describe the mechanisms for consultation and disclosure on safeguard policies, with an emphasis on potentially affected people:

A stakeholder analysis in early project preparation confirmed seven primary stakeholder groups:

- 1) artisanal and industrial fishers,
- 2) recreational users including the tourist industry,
- 3) native rights organizations representing traditional users),
- 4) conservation interests,
- 5) educational institutions offering marine resource management programs,
- 6) the public of the Archipelago, and
- 7) government agencies with relevant jurisdictions at local and national levels.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan lays out in detail how all of these stakeholders will be engaged during project implementation, as well as detailing the consultations that happened during project design. Despite COVID-related challenges, monthly virtual and even in-person consultations happened between October 2020 and August 2021, and inputs from these consultations were incorporated into the project design.

As this is a Category C project, only the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Grievance Redress Mechanism and a Gender Action Plan are required. The project team has met the requirements for consultation and disclosure of these documents.

Monitoring and Compliance

Have satisfactory calendar, budget and clear institutional responsibilities been prepared for the implementation of measures related to safeguard policies? Yes No NA

Have costs related to safeguard policy measures been included in the project cost? Yes No NA

Does the Monitoring and Evaluation system of the project include the monitoring of safeguard impacts and measures related to safeguard policies? Yes No NA

Have satisfactory implementation arrangements been agreed with the borrower and the same been adequately reflected in the project legal documents? Yes No NA

Have relevant safeguard policies documents been sent to WWF-US? Yes No NA

Have relevant documents been disclosed in-country in a public place in a form and language that are understandable and accessible to project-affected groups and local NGOs? Yes No NA

Disclosure Requirements

[List required safeguards mitigation plans here.]

Gender Action Plan, Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Date received by WWF-US	May 26, 2022
Date Disclosed on WWF-US website	May 30, 2022
<i>In Country Disclosure</i>	
Date Disclosed on : CORALINA and Conservation International's website	May 26, 2022
Date Disclosed in [list localities of project areas]	N/A

Approvals

Adrienne McKeehan, Safeguards Coordinator	DocuSigned by: <i>Adrienne McKeehan</i> CF36CBFE14D14A7...	Date: 6/30/2022
Brent Nordstrom, Safeguards Compliance Officer	DocuSigned by: <i>Brent Nordstrom</i> DD6030B6C7E2446...	Date: 6/30/2022