

MAKING TOURISM BENEFIT COMMUNITIES ADJACENT TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES (MTBCAAS) - FED/2012/306-304

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE ACTION



Noel D. Jacobs, Institutional Development Consultant

Final Report, September 8th, 2015



EUROPEAN UNION



Making Tourism Benefit Communities Adjacent to Archaeological Sites

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DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this report are those of the Consultant and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Project Execution Unit, Government of Belize, the Belize Tourism Board, the National Institute for History and Culture or the European Union.

ACRONYMS

ATM	Actun Tunichil Muknal
BBS	Belize Bureau of Standards
BRDP II	Belize Rural Development Project II
BTB	Belize Tourism Board
BTIA	Belize Tourism Industry Association
DAC	Development Advisory Committee
EC	European Community
EOP	End of Project
EU	European Union
IA	Institute of Archaeology
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTCCA	Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation
MTBCAAS	Making Tourism Benefit Communities Adjacent to Archaeological Sites
NAO	National Authorizing Officer
NICH	National Institute of Culture and History
NGO	Non-government Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator
PEU	Project Execution Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SIB	Statistical Institute of Belize
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TAT	Technical Advisory Team
VSS	Visitor Satisfaction Survey

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1. Consultant Terms of Reference for the Final Evaluation
2. MTBCAAS Logical Framework Matrix
3. Consultant Site Visit Confirmation During the Final Evaluation
4. List of Targeted Stakeholders in the Final Evaluation

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Government of Belize has received funding from the European Union via the Belize Rural Development Program II (BRDP II) for the project “Making Tourism Benefit Communities Adjacent to Archaeological Sites” (MTBCAAS). The Project was implemented by the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) and managed by a Project Execution Unit (PEU), with additional implementation responsibilities by the National Institute of History and Culture (NICH) and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation (MTCCA).

The MTBCAAS Project was initially conceived as a 24 month action, but had a total final implementation period of 31 months, consistent with Addendum No. 3 to Grant Contract No. FED/2012/306-304. The action sought to promote improvement of economic opportunities and reduction of the incidence of poverty in the rural communities adjacent to archaeological sites, in addition to enhancing the tourism experience through improvement to tourism infrastructure and services at nine selected archaeological sites. The expected results of the project included improved product and service monitoring systems; improved health and safety provisions at selected archaeological sites and diversified community based tourism products and services.

At EOP under '**Result 0 – PEU Created and Functional**' have been met at a level of 100%, with the M & E Plan at 100%. Delivery of programmatic '**Result 1 – Improved Product and Services Monitoring**' at EOP have been met at a level of 100%, with statistically significant samples of Visitor Satisfaction Surveys (VSS) collected at eight of nine sites with the technical assistance of the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB), Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software acquired, staff of the BTB and NICH trained in the use of the SPSS software, and NICH continuing to administer the VSS at targeted sites, except Blue Creek due to a lack of a physical NICH office at that site and current negotiations between NICH and a third party (International Zoological Expeditions).

Programmatic '**Result 2 – Improved Health & Safety Provisions**' has been delivered at a level of 100% at EOP, with the Health & Safety Standards fully developed and passed into law and the corresponding Health & Safety Manual completed and handed over to NICH and the BTB. Training to tour guides in Cave & Swift Water Rescue was completed with forty-two (42) guides trained of which twelve (12) were women, including the production of a corresponding training manual. The purchase and installation of interpretive signs at sites have been partially completed, with a total of 45 signs installed from 184 that were purchased, noting that 56 signs were acquired a day before the implementation deadline of June 27, 2015. Less than 50 percent of the signs were installed and 4.60 kilometre or 38 percent of the trails were installed, even though the Final Site

Infrastructure Inspection Report of July 31st, 2015 suggests that the amount of trails proposed originally may have been excessive within the context of the project life, budget, and capacity of NICH. Table 1 below presents the status of sign acquisition and installation at EOP and as reported in the **Final Site Infrastructure Inspection Report of July 31st, 2015**. At EOP the rehabilitation of sites in terms of infrastructure is quite impressive, as can be appreciated in the many inauguration events and press releases conducted by the MTBCAAS as part of its Visibility and Communication Action Plan. Overall infrastructure works at the 9 project sites were reported as listed in Table 2 at the last PSC Meeting held on June 16th 2015, and has been compared with the Final Site Reports of June 2015.

Table 1. Summary of Sign Purchased and Installed at the Nine Targeted Sites at EOP

No.	Sites	Purchased	Cost	Installed	Cost	Remaining	Cost
1	Lamanai	78	\$13,995	18	\$2,073	60	\$11,922
2	Altun Ha	64	\$15,912	49	\$10,378	15	\$5,534
3	Caves Branch	48	\$9,571	27	\$3,373	21	\$6,198
4	ATM	36	\$8,582	14	\$4,290	22	\$4,293
5	Barton Creek	26	\$9,423	12	\$1,225	14	\$8,199
6	Xunantunich	55	\$10,735	21	\$5,491	34	\$5,245
7	Nim Li Punit	43	\$9,064	25	\$3,293	18	\$5,771
8	Lubaantun	33	\$9,221	18	\$1,709	15	\$7,512
9	Blue Creek	27	\$6,832	0	\$0	27	\$6,832
TOTAL		410	\$93,335.75	184	\$31,831	226	\$61,505

Table 2: Level of Works Completed at 9 Archaeological Sites at EOP

Archaeological Site	Percent of Planned Works Completed at June 2015
Altun Ha	99%
Lamanai	92%
Actun Tunichil Muknal	100%
Xunantunich	100%
Caves Branch	82%
Barton Creek	48%
Nim Li Punit	100%
Lubaatun	100%
Blue Creek	100%

It is important to note that in the case of Blue Creek, works were intentionally reduced at the request of NICH based on a reassessment and reorganization of immediate priorities at the site, in view of ongoing negotiations with International Zoological Expeditions at the site. Altun Ha and ATM benefitted from this realignment at Blue Creek with enhanced infrastructure. At EOP, infrastructure and signs investment totalled \$1.454 million or 92 percent of the corresponding budget.

Consistent with the Visibility Planner for period June 2015 through September 2015 as well as relevant press releases, inauguration of works at Caves Branch, ATM, and Barton Creek were held on July 29, 2015 at Caves Branch, Cayo; while inauguration at Lamanai took place on July 31, 2015.

Programmatic '**Result 3 – Diversification of Community Based Tourism Products and Services**' at EOP was fully (in excess of 100%) delivered. Based on information reported at the last PSC Meeting held on June 16th 2015, 64 participants were trained in Small Business and Product Development (Unique Belize), forty-two (42) of which were women. A total of ninety-four (94) persons benefitted from the Site Specific Guide Training, of which thirty-three (33) were women. Several key tourism development tools geared at enhancing the human capital and product offering at archaeological sites were produced, including Mechanisms for Product Development and Quality Control for Locally Produced Arts & Craft; Site Guide Training Program; A Site Specific Guide Training Manual; and a Unique Belize Catalogue – A Collection of Local Artisans Portfolios, which was distributed officially to the Ministry (10 copies), BTB (20 copies) and NICH (20 copies).

The PSC manifested its satisfaction for the incredible achievements of the MTBCAAS Project above and beyond the scope envisioned, particularly in the following planned outputs.

Table 3: Outputs Achieved by the MTBCAAS in Soft Components as Reported in Draft Minutes of the 12th Project Steering Committee Meeting of June 16th, 2015

Planned Outputs	Proposed Performance Indicator	Actual Performance	Final Performance (Proposed + Variance)
Training in Cave Rescue & Health & Safety	30	42	140%

Certified in Cave Rescue & Health & Safety	30	42	140%
20 Products Introduced to Arts & Craft Certification System	20	200	1,000%
Training in Product Enhancement	24	64	266%
Select Persons for Site Guide Training	60	100	167%
Certified in Community Site Guides	50	94	188%

It is the professional opinion of the Final Evaluation Consultant that overall performance by the contracting parties and other key agencies at EOP has been satisfactory, notwithstanding delays experienced prior to the mid-term. Members of the Steering Committee and other key stakeholders believe that the PEU's performance has been more than satisfactory. The project delivered well on administration and in field implementation and it is the Final Evaluation Consultant's opinion that this is a clear reflection of the dedication and hard work of the PEU.

The delivery of Project Results 1, 2 and 3 as described above will increase user satisfaction, safety and security and ensure the development of quality products and services at the sites targeted by the project. The HSS and infrastructure improvements achieved will provide a foundation for sustained protection and maintenance of all facilities and natural assets at targeted sites, and the enhancement and promotion of tourism both domestically and internationally. Training and capacity building delivered to local artisans and tour guides will continue to facilitate and strengthen their position in the tourism value chain at archaeological sites and contribute to poverty reduction in rural communities. Additionally, NICH and BTB is now better positioned to provide strategic guidance and day-to-day support to tourism development associated with archaeological sites.

At the last PSC Meeting of June 16th 2015, it was reported by the PEU that 71% of the entire project budget had been used, but during the inception meetings in August 2015, the PEU provided the updated figure of 85% having been disbursed (Patrick Tillett, Finance and Procurement Officer of the MTBCAAS Project, Pers. Comm.).

The Overall Performance Rating of the MTBCAAS Project has been determined in this evaluation to be **HIGH** for all primary evaluation criteria.

		EVALUATION CRITERIA				
		RELEVANCE	EFFECTIVENESS	EFFICIENCY	IMPACT	SUSTAINABILITY
Overall Project Rating per Criteria	Project per Criteria	High	High	High	High	High

2.0 OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND APPROACH

2.1 Background

The Government of Belize has received funding from the European Union via the Belize Rural Development Program II (BRDP II) for the project “Making Tourism Benefit Communities Adjacent to Archaeological Sites” (MTBCAAS). The Project was implemented by the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) and managed by a Project Execution Unit (PEU), with additional implementation responsibilities by the National Institute of History and Culture (NICH) and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation (MTCCA).

The MTBCAAS Project was initially conceived as a 24 month action, but had a total final implementation period of 31 months, consistent with Addendum No. 3 to Grant Contract No. FED/2012/306-304. The action sought to promote improvement of economic opportunities and reduction of the incidence of poverty in the rural communities adjacent to archaeological sites, in addition to enhancing the tourism experience through improvement to tourism infrastructure and services at nine selected archaeological sites. The expected results of the project include improved product and service monitoring systems; improved health and safety provisions at selected archaeological sites and diversified community based tourism products and services. Targeted communities include those adjacent to the archaeological sites of Xunantunich, Lamanai, Actun Tunichil Muknal, Nohoch Che'en, Nim Li Punit, Barton Creek, Lubaantun, Blue Creek, Altun Ha and Lamanai (See Map 1 below).

2.2. Objectives of the Final Evaluation

The Final Evaluation is intended to assess the performance, and success of the project against expected outcomes. It looks at signs of potential impact of project activities on targeted beneficiaries and communities and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development, taking into consideration the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Advisory Committee (OECD/DAC) and European Community (EC) specific evaluation criteria. The Evaluation also identifies and documents lessons learned and makes recommendations that project partners and stakeholders might use to improve the design and implementation of other related projects and programs.

The specific objectives of the final evaluation are as follows:

- a. Assess the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the Project management, monitoring and implementation;
- b. Measure achieved results and impact;
- c. Identify and judge unexpected results;
- d. Assess the sustainability of the intervention's benefits;
- e. Analyze Project Management overall management scheme (organisations and structures, including the relationships and positions of the stakeholders such as PSC, NAO, TAT, grantees, Townships, contractors, contractors, etc.)
- f. Draw lessons from the implementation of the intervention;
- g. General (mostly for future projects) recommendations on the Project management scheme (organizations and structure): position of all key stakeholders over the implementation period of the project

The Terms of Reference for the assignment are attached in Annex 1.

2.3 Scope and Approach to the Evaluation

The evaluation applies to the period November 27, 2012 through June 27, 2015 and includes an analysis of the achievements of the program's actual results and outcomes, compared against the planned results, outcomes and indicators as per the project logical framework.

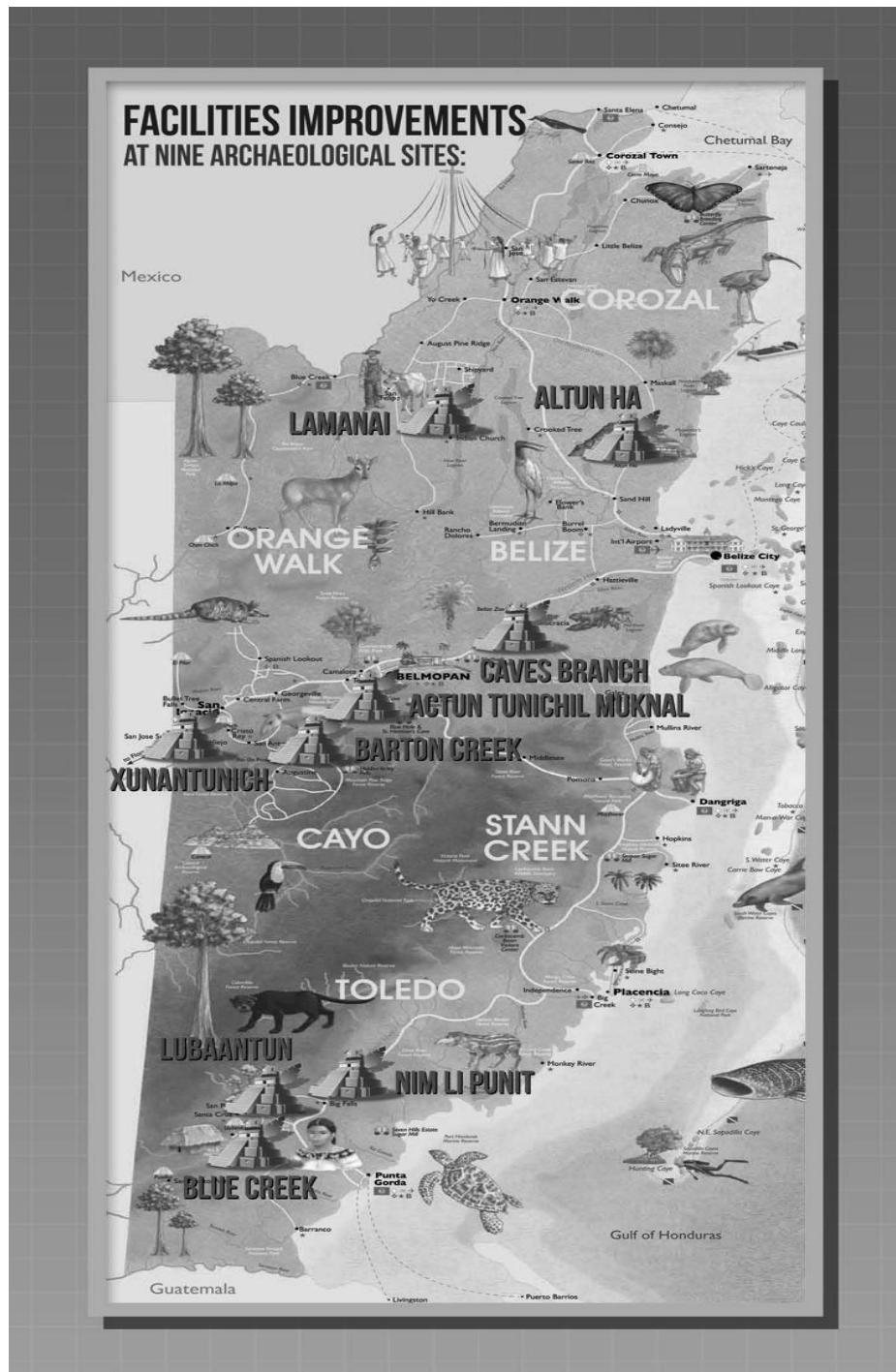
Consistent with the methodology proposed in the Inception Report of the Final Evaluation, this report builds on the approach, findings, and performance baseline reported in the Mid Term Evaluation of the MTBCAAS submitted in July 2014, guided by the five (5) evaluation criteria of the OECD/DAC and the two (2) evaluation criteria of the EC, with their corresponding questions as presented below in Sections 4 thru 9. Data collection activities to inform the analysis included:

- An initial meeting was held between the Final Evaluation Consultant and the staff of the MTBCAAS PEU on the 4th August 2015. This meeting focused firstly at interpreting and understanding the specifics of the Terms of Reference for the consultancy as it relates to post mid-term project activities as well as for the project implementation as a whole. It also served to obtain a first impression of the perceptions of the PEU on post mid-term project implementation challenges and successes, and impressions of overall project

effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability and impact. This opportunity was also used to further request and clarify the availability of certain project documents as well as clarifications regarding key issues that had posed challenges at the time of the mid-term evaluation. A more detailed consultation meeting was held with the MTBCAAS Project Coordinator on August 5th 2015; other consultations for purpose of clarification or information request were also conducted with MTBCAAS staff on an as needed basis during the final evaluation process.

- Desktop review of key project documents including the Loan Contract, Project Logical Framework; five (5) Interim Narrative Reports prepared by the PEU (Monitoring & Evaluation Reports), Schedule of Works, Training Manuals, Sign Schedule, Stakeholder & Beneficiaries List, Visibility and Communication Action Plan, Visibility Planner, Final Site Reports at June 2015 for all nine (9) archaeological sites, Updated Action Plans, Monthly Financial Reports, Terms of Reference of the Project Steering Committee, and Minutes of the Final Steering Committee Meeting held in June of 2015. An intense internet research of media and publicity of the project was also conducted.
- Key Informant Interviews with project stakeholders and beneficiaries. The list (Annex 4) includes stakeholders from public and tourism industry organizations, PEU staff, community based organizations, service providers, goods providers, trainees, facilitators, and the Contracting Parties to the MTBCAAS Grant Contract.
- Site visits to all nine archaeological sites were conducted between August 8-16, 2015 (See Consultant Site Visit Confirmation in Annex 3), to carry out field observations and confirmation of works completed, and to conduct informal interviews with users of the sites when possible.

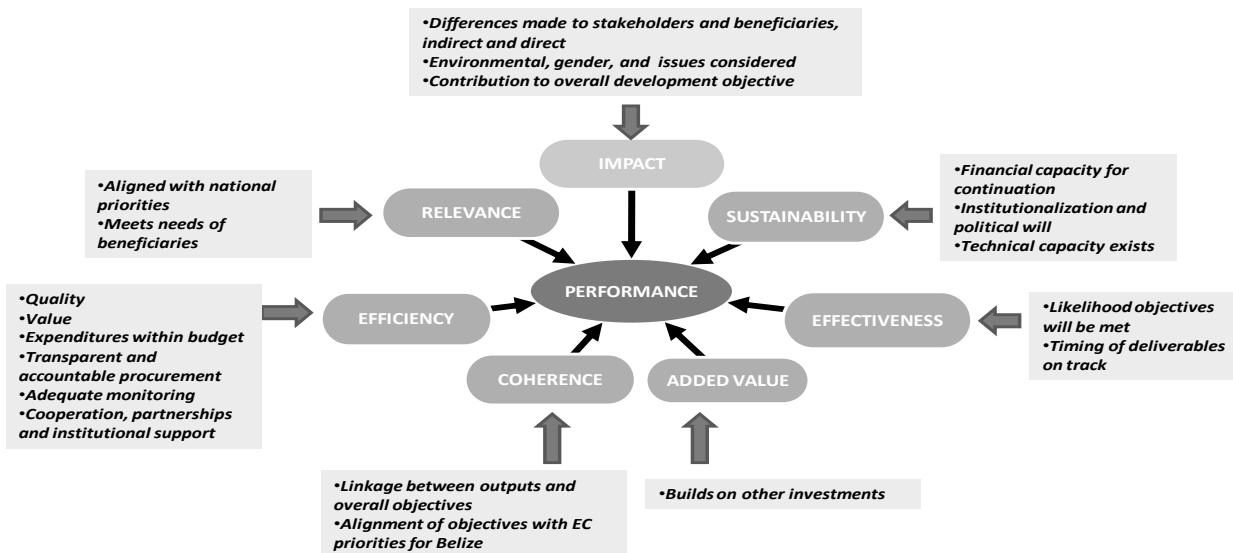
Map 1: Archaeological Sites that Received MTBCAAS Support



(Map produced by the MTBCAAS Project)

The Inception Report detailing the evaluation methodology was presented to the PEU on 5th August 2015 and agreed upon with minor revisions. Analysis of primary and secondary data was for the most part a qualitative evaluation according to the OECD criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability and the 2 additional EC criteria of Coherence and Added Value. In reaching a “Performance Rating” of High, Medium-High, Medium, Medium-Low or Low for each of these criteria, the factors below (Figure 1) were considered as the key expressions of the criteria, and are consistent with the approach used in the Mid Term Evaluation, thus allowing for an effective comparison of project implementation progress at project inception, the mid-term, and end of project (EOP).

Figure 1: Factors considered within evaluation criteria



3.0 SUMMARY FINDINGS

3.1 Project Design & Timeline

Despite the high level of achievement of the project, at EOP some stakeholders still have mixed feelings about the advantages and disadvantages of the project having been designed to target nine (9) archaeological sites as opposed to concentrating larger scale investments at fewer sites. While it is easy to see the wisdom associated with such feelings, project beneficiaries must be cognizant of the global objective of the project as it relates to contributing to the reduction of poverty in rural communities. Investments in fewer sites may mean better infrastructure, safety, and quality of experience for visitors, but poverty alleviation support would be limited to local

guides and artisans at fewer communities, inconsistent with the global intended outcome of the MTBCAAS Project. Clearly, the strategy of the project was to achieve the best possible balance between enhancements in infrastructure, the strengthening of human capital, and the maximization of benefits to communities adjacent to the archaeological sites, within the possibilities of the project budget and the capacity of the project partners. Also, it must be understood that the achievements of the project provide a solid baseline upon which additional capacity building efforts can be made, enhancing even further the readiness of local communities to take advantage of economic opportunities adjacent to archaeological sites.

The project's design apparently did not make provisions for proper prefeasibility assessments of proposed works at targeted archaeological sites to adequately inform architectural and engineering design of works. Prefeasibility assessments of proposed works can support prioritization and planning of works with more realistic timeframes for delivery.

While there may be many reasons which resulted in a four (4) month delay in the start-up of the MTBCAAS project, some stakeholders believe that proper start-up procedures and conditions of first disbursement were not clearly defined in the project design, especially as it relates to creation of the PEU and the hiring of the project's staff. In an effort to compensate for lost time, adjustments in execution strategies were made continuously in terms of accelerating delivery of project outputs where possible. Some stakeholders believe that that the delay experienced at project start-up is normal for most projects of this nature and should be anticipated.

3.2 Institutional Arrangements

The primary contracting parties to the MTBCAAS Project are the National Authorizing Office of the EU in the Ministry of Finance & Economic Development (MFED), BTB and NICH. The project receives direction and oversight from a Project Steering Committee (PSC) that is chaired by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation. The PSC has eight (8) members as described below:

- (1) Two Representatives of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation
- (2) Two Representatives of the Belize Tourism Board
- (3) One Representative of the National Institute of Culture and History
- (4) One Representative of the Belize Tourism Industry Association
- (5) One Representative of the Association of Cruise Ship Service Providers
- (6) One Representative of the Belize Bureau of Standards
- (7) One Representative of the Ministry of Health (Public Health)

(8) One Representative of Ministry of Rural Development

The regular meeting schedule of the PSC is quarterly; however, records revealed that a total of twelve (12) PSC meetings were held between project inception and EOP, with the last meeting held on June 16th 2015. A review of the attendance records revealed that attendance to the PSC meetings overall averaged 80%.

In addition to the list above, a representative of the EU-funded Belize Rural Development Program II is invited to participate in PSC meetings as an observer. The staff of the PEU is also present in the PSC meetings to deliver project progress reports and clarifications as may be required by the PSC. While the PSC may recommend direction to be taken by the PEU, the ultimate liabilities of all decisions of the PSC rest with the Contracting Parties; i.e., the BTB and NICH.

Daily project execution is tasked to a Project Execution Unit (PEU), which reports directly to the PSC. The Project Execution Unit comprises of the following staff:

1. Project Coordinator
2. Policy Coordinator (up until the mid-term only)
3. Financial/Procurement Officer
4. Works Manager
5. Administrative Officer

Based on interviews conducted with the staff of the PEU during the final evaluation process, and reiterating the findings of the Mid Term Evaluation, a learning curve was necessary in project procurement procedures and other project implementation due diligence at project start-up. This certainly affected overall project execution and delivery efficiency by the PEU as staff went through the learning process. While the original Project Coordinator had received training in visibility and EU procurement requirements at inception, no formal project management or procurement training was received by the PEU staff who actually delivered the project up until the end. However, Annex 4 of the MTBCAAS Grant Contract defines the standards for procurement and financial management and reporting to be followed by the PEU, including the need to ensure consistency with the procedures and standards of the contracting parties and the country.

There were quarterly meetings convened by the Technical Advisory Team (TAT) of the Belize Rural Development Program (BRDP) in which challenges, successes, experiences, and lessons learned in project implementation were exchanged among different BRDP II projects; however, the staff of the MTBCAAS PEU does not believe that these exchanges were sufficient to address the need for formal training in EU procedures and guidelines, as it relates to procurement and other EU policies, even though there were also technical assistance provided on two occasions by an EU consultant on logical framework, but not on EU procurement. Nevertheless, it is important to note that these quarterly inter-project meetings provided a useful and strategic opportunity for the PEU to table and solicit recommendations to address project challenges from project peers and from BRDP II personnel. It may be useful to consider the provision of formal training in procurement and reporting requirements to essential project staff, either through a structure such as the TAT or outsourced to a firm or person to be recommended by the EU.

Presentations on project implementation progress were made by PEU staff at PSC meetings held every three (3) months and thus provided an opportunity for the PSC to assess and provide quarterly advisory assistance to the PEU. Comprehensive Interim Narrative Reports by the PEU were done for every six (6) month period only as required by Article 4.1 of the Grant Contract of the project, and the actual reports were submitted on an average of two to four months after the concluded reporting semester, as can be appreciated from the date on the submission cover letters which accompany the said reports. The PSC, therefore, was able to conduct a comprehensive review of project progress only twice per year at best. While it is clear that the Loan Contract requires six-monthly narrative reports against which payment requests by the EU were processed, it is the informed opinion of the Final Evaluation Consultant that the PSC could have benefitted from more comprehensive reports on a quarterly basis, submitted not more than thirty (30) days after the reporting quarter. This is standard practice in project reporting and is used by many international funding agencies, including the World Bank, the Inter-American Development, United Nations Development Program, among others. The submission of these quarterly narrative reports is more for the benefit of the PSC, and does not change the fact that for budget replenishment purposes, the international organization funding the project may still require a narrative every six months.

Representatives from the PEU, the BTB, NICH and the MTCCA participated in bid evaluation processes of the MTBCAAS and provide an essential procurement function to the project.

3.3 Key Achievements & Implementation Performance

Documents reviewed, interviews with members of the PSC and the PEU, and physical observations conducted by the Final Evaluation Consultant in August 2015 have all confirmed that all outputs anticipated at EOP under '**Result 0 – PEU Created and Functional**' have been met at a level of 100%, with the M & E Plan at 100%. Delivery of programmatic '**Result 1 – Improved Product and Services Monitoring**' at EOP have been met at a level of 100%, with statistically significant samples of Visitor Satisfaction Surveys (VSS) collected at eight of nine sites with the technical assistance of the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB), Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software acquired, staff of the BTB and NICH trained in the use of the SPSS software, and NICH continuing to administer the VSS at targeted sites, except Blue Creek due to a lack of a physical NICH office at that site and current negotiations between NICH and a third party.

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Select Persons for Site Guide Training	60	100	167%
Certified in Community Site Guides	50	94	188%

It is the professional opinion of the Final Evaluation Consultant that the overall performance by the contracting parties and other key agencies at EOP has been satisfactory, notwithstanding delays experienced prior to the mid-term. Members of the Steering Committee and other key stakeholders believe that the PEU's performance has been more than satisfactory. The project delivered well on administration and in field implementation and it is the Final Evaluation Consultant's opinion that this is a clear reflection of the dedication and hard work of the PEU. At the last PSC Meeting of June 16th 2015, it was reported by the PEU that 71% of the entire project budget had been used, but during the inception meetings in August 2015, the PEU provided the updated figure of 85% having been disbursed (Patrick Tillett, Finance and Procurement Officer of the MTBCAAS Project, Pers. Comm.).

3.4 Monitoring & Evaluation

The PEU developed and implemented an appropriate M&E Plan which allowed for the proper tracking of project progress over time. However, presentations at quarterly PSC meetings and Interim Narrative Reports produced by the PEU every semester were the primary M&E tools used by the PSC and the EU. There are concerns to be mentioned regarding the indicators used to measure the project's global objective. While the Visitor Satisfaction Survey (VSS) Report will assist in establishing a suitable baseline for future monitoring of services and products, reliable statistics on poverty at the community level by district is not available to measure the global project indicator, and the next Poverty Assessment Report will not be published until 2016. Even though this was identified in the project's logical framework, there are lessons to be learned here for future project design as far as the definition of project indicators are concerned, especially for the monitoring of project impact which may require measurement beyond the life of the project.

As noted in the Mid Term Evaluation, this Final Evaluation would like to emphasize the specific observation regarding the VSS, in terms of the restrictive time series represented in the data thus far, from the perspective of a baseline and the intended uses and applications of the data. A sustained VSS program must be based on an initial baseline with a time series that captures both high and low seasons over a sustained 12-month period. Besides statistical robustness and completion of a proper time series, there are much more benefits to be extracted and extrapolated from the data and its interpretation, if done with the intention to maximize the returns from the investment and the effort of the data collection and analysis. This was discussed with the IA as the institution responsible for the VSS implementation at sites during the final evaluation process, and is in full agreement with this assessment of the VSS.

The project extensions that were received allowed for the definition and implementation of adjustments and strategies to ensure completion of works and a more balanced delivery of project results, evidence of which is clearly visible in the final outputs produced by project interventions.

4.0 PROBLEMS AND NEEDS (RELEVANCE)

Relevance is measured by the extent that objectives meet the needs and contexts of the beneficiaries and the priorities of the government of Belize.

Evaluation Questions:

How does the action's goals and programmatic targets align with local and national development policies and priorities and do they remain relevant considering any changes in context since start-up? How important is the intervention for the target group and subgroups and to what extent does it address their needs and interests?

- 1) The overall objective of the action is “to improve economic opportunities in rural communities and contribute to the reduction of poverty” with a specific objective “to enhance the tourism experience through improvements to tourism infrastructure and service development at nine selected archaeological sites”. These objectives did not change during project implementation and continue to be highly relevant to the priority development needs of the country and the tourism industry at EOP.
- 2) The focus on tourism as a pro-poor mechanism to improve the capacity and ability of rural communities to earn increased income and combat poverty is increasingly relevant given the significant contribution of Belize’s travel and tourism sector to the GDP, being 36.6% of GDP in 2013 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2014).
- 3) The outputs and outcomes continue to be well aligned to national policy, as is clearly illustrated in written policy documentation and was verified by key stakeholders. Poverty reduction and economic development remain as a top priority on the country’s agenda as identified in Horizon 2030. In addition, in October 2012 the National Sustainable Tourism Development Plan was endorsed by the Government of Belize, guiding the direction of tourism development in Belize until 2030. Cultural tourism development was identified as one of the top national priority, with pro-poor tourism mechanisms, tour guide training and industry standards included as necessary programmes for the sector to achieve sustainability and improved quality assurance.

- 4) The current development of a cruise port for Norwegian Cruise Lines at Harvest Caye is timely to provide much needed visitation to Lubaantun and Nim Li Punit, which are much better equipped now to provide better offering and quality of local handicrafts and products of interest to tourists. A high proportion of cruise visitors are aging with an increasing number of disabled travellers with special needs, thus making recent investments by the project to accommodate the disabled quite relevant. It must be noted, however, that further and continued works are always required at these sites, especially those required expanded and enhanced parking, road access, restrooms and visitor facilities, to increase further their capacities to host visitors at a high standard and quality of experience. Archaeological sites are an essential tourism asset in Belize, and all investments to enhance the visitor experience at these sites are direct investments in upgrading Belize's tourism product.
- 5) The inventory of local artisans and products is of high relevance to the sector and much needed by the agencies involved for further development of the cultural product. Stakeholders who benefitted directly from the project's soft components (women, artisans, tour guides) expressed that the MTBCAAS helped them address the areas needed to develop their business and increase sales, especially in terms of pricing and product development, and assisted them in better understanding the market and meeting buyers' demands.
- 6) The training and certification of site guides and wardens in cave rescue, health and safety are intimately linked to quality of the visitor experience and was thus quite relevant to the tourism sector, however, it is hereby recognized by this report that continued training, re-training, and certification will always be relevant and necessary to sustain overall quality of the visitor experience.

5.0 ACHIEVEMENT OF PURPOSE (EFFECTIVENESS)

Effectiveness is measured by the extent to which the activities and outputs are contributing to achieve outcomes or whether they are being achieved on track or not.

Key Evaluation Questions:

How likely is it that the objectives of the project will be achieved given current performance? How do actual results of the project compare to the planned objectives? To what extent have outputs been achieved within the timeframe? How flexible and responsive was the programme in adapting to changing needs, if and when recommended? Are the disbursements and project expenditures in line with expected budgetary plans?

Table 4: Log Frame Analysis

Intervention Logic		OVI of Achievement	Likelihood of Compliance
Overall Objective: To improve economic opportunities in rural communities and contribute to the reduction of poverty		1% reduction in poor populations in the targeted districts by November 2014	This is difficult to measure at the district level due to lack of specific district-level statistics and even more so to link any reduction in poverty to project interventions at specific sites in a district.
Specific Objective: To enhance the tourism experience through the improvements to tourism infrastructure and service development at selected sites (Nine archaeological sites)		All 9 sites rehabilitated by end of 2014 Total number of tourist visitors per year at the 9 sites	Completed at 100%. Not measurable yet at EOP; VSS and broader data collection must be able to confirm that increases are due to better infrastructure and services at sites supported by the MTBCAAS.
Activity	Progress at EOP (%)	Observation	Level of Completion
Result 0			
Project Execution Unit created and functional	100	Delays in establishing the PEU, but completed nevertheless; PEU effective for the most part	Completed
Visibility plan developed	100	Completed early in project implementation and being used effectively to ensure visibility of the project and its partners	Completed
Project M&E system developed	100	Completed and appropriately allowing for project progress to be tracked by result and semester	Completed
Result 1			
Product and service baseline survey	100	Two surveys successfully conducted for August and September 2013 and ongoing at EOP.	Completed
Operational data MIS	100	BTB and NICH show commitment to allocating staff time to training and data entry to meet project obligation. BTB indicates commitment beyond project life. Ongoing at EOP.	Completed
Result 2			
Health and Safety Manual	100	Multi-step process required gazetted Statutory Instrument prior to manual development. All steps have been completed at EOP.	Completed
All 9 sites rehabilitated	100	References made to 'incomplete' works on the part of NICH at EOP do not affect the overall OVI, since all nine sites have been upgraded; the level of the upgrade is not one of the OVIs in the MTBCAAS Logical Framework, additionally, the missing works will not affect the effectiveness of the project's interventions.	Completed
Training in health and safety and cave rescue	140	Activity completely delivered at EOP. Exceeded Target.	Completed
Result 3			
Vendor markets constructed at 3 sites	100	Evidence of completed construction at all 3 sites at EOP.	Completed
Market occupancy by artisans at site		All sites with varying levels of occupancy observed during final evaluation process.	

Tour guides licensed	176	Community Guide and Site Guides: total combined target of (50+60) =110; exceeded target at EOP	Completed
Artisans trained(24)	266	A total of 64 artisans were trained; exceeded target at EOP.	Completed

- Progress reports and observation in the field indicate very high level of achievement of objectives, notwithstanding minor omissions in works at a few sites.
- Extensions to the project resulted in a total implementation period of 31 months as indicated earlier; clearly highlighting that delivery did not exactly follow the planned timeline. This was anticipated in the Mid-Term Evaluation due to delays in works and procurement challenges. The level of completion of planned results at EOP provides strong evidence that the extensions granted were well warranted.
- Disbursements against contracted works were for the most part on track, with minor revisions required in a few instances, due mainly to unforeseen technical or circumstantial details of the site.
- At contracting it was agreed that the timeframe for the certification and branding as per the original project design was ambitious and challenging to meet. However, the project delivered the Unique Belize branding output within the initially planned project cycle with a considerable amount of success in performance. Some stakeholders felt that more craft specialization training was needed in order to maximize the benefits to be had from the support the project provided.
- Some trainees feel that the project should have provided more direct benefits. They feel like the benefits to the communities are indirect- loose, based on assumptions and not easily felt. Some stakeholders stated during the final evaluation that whilst the training was good, there is no connection between the training and enhanced business and improved income. Certain participants suggest the training should have embraced more elements of the tourism value chain at each site, in order to maximize the benefits to be generated from the project intervention; it is felt by some that the training alone will not have a direct impact on increased income generation for the participant who received the training. The MTBCAAS Project delivered the interventions at the sites as conceived within the context of the project document, and clearly, these concerns from stakeholders are after the fact.

However, it is the professional opinion of the Final Evaluation Consultant that the concerns raised do contain certain level of legitimacy and can be valuable for future project design, and such, this consideration is also recorded the 'Lessons Learned' section of this report.

- Some wood carvers at Altun Ha believe that an opportunity exists to brand Altun Ha as the niche for woodcarving in Belize, especially since 85% of the three adjacent communities depend upon woodcarving for livelihoods. Clearly the necessary feasibility assessments would have to be conducted to substantiate or quantify the opportunity, and this observation is thus made within the context of future project design.
- Communication between the project partners was effective enough to ensure delivery of all planned outputs.
- The activities and outputs of the project have and continue to contribute to the delivery of anticipated outcomes in a very effective manner as indicated in the Log Frame Analysis above.

6.0 SOUND MANAGEMENT AND VALUE FOR MONEY (Efficiency)

Efficiency equates to how well the time and resources are being used to achieve the objectives.

Key Evaluation Questions:

Is the relationship between input of resources and results achieved appropriate and justifiable? Were financial and personnel resources managed in a transparent, accountable, cost effective manner and monitored accordingly? Were work methodologies etc. shared among agencies, institutions, other Programs? To what extent have public/private national resources and/or counterparts been mobilized?

- The Grant Contract defined detailed activities and most stakeholders interviewed believe that activities were in line with the schedule defined within the Grant Contract for the most part, although timing was delayed for the completion of some outputs.
- Project reports suggest that the PEU has followed a transparent accountable process and delivered high quality outputs through detailed planning and engagement of stakeholders,

and key project partners recognized and admired the level of due diligence exercised by the PEU in the preparation and execution of payments.

- Despite challenges experienced in securing the required counterpart contributions in the earlier part of project implementation, the PEU was satisfied that at EOP counterpart contributions were made at 100%.
- Given that contracts for goods and services have been slightly lower than the reference budgets in most cases, yet have resulted in high quality outputs, it is believed that value for money was achieved in most cases. Another example is the Craft Market at Nim Li Punit, Lubaantun, and Blue Creek, in which the said markets are well done in terms of structural integrity and aesthetics, but pose a major challenge in accommodating vendors. This is due to the fact that the design contemplated the use of 'floor space' only with no walls or backing or shelving to allow vendors to use the three-dimensional space available, as opposed to just the space on the floor. The available floor space is limited and thus limits how many vendors can be accommodated; this fact is already creating challenges and conflicts among vendors at Nim Li Punit, as expressed to the final Evaluation Consultant by stakeholders and NICH staff in the area.
- All indications from financial and narrative project reports, website and internet search of media release, indicate that project resources have been managed in a transparent manner. A program operating manual of policies and procedures was developed at start up and used though-out project implementation to guide transparent and fair procurement procedures.
- Review of project reports suggests that strong coordination, participation and engagement among other agencies exist. Methodologies, lessons learnt etc were shared between at quarterly meetings of BRDP and non-BRDP projects.
- All stakeholders and participants considered the arts and craft training to be very well delivered and took into consideration language barriers. The training and training materials were of high quality and expenditures are within budgeted amounts.
- Procurement of works for infrastructure were moderately efficient, with delays and necessary re-tendering in more than one instance, except in minor cases such as the

procurement of signs and the installation of same by NICH. In fairness to the PEU, it must be stated that it was difficult to secure contractors willing to bid on relatively small contracts for works to be executed in areas where access can be challenging, such as several of the archaeological sites which received investments under the MTBCAAS project.

7.0. ACHIEVEMENT OF WIDER EFFECTS (Impacts)

Impacts examine the differences which have been made as a result of the interventions. It should be noted that while some benefits and/or negative effects may be reported, most impacts will not be apparent at the final evaluation stage, and may require monitoring beyond the project cycle.

Key Evaluation Questions:

What positive, negative, intended and unintended differences has the project made to the stakeholders and beneficiaries? Were gender issues, diverse abilities and environmental factors considered?

- In some cases, it may be too early to conduct proper measurements of impact due to the need for continuous post-project monitoring and systematization of lessons learned. Observations in this section include perceptions of immediate positive impacts of the project at EOP, as well as the likeliness of an impact in the future, with due consideration of the quality of the outputs achieved by the project at EOP.
- It would appear that there are high satisfaction levels among training participants but no ongoing monitoring, evaluation or documentation of the effects since completion of project activities. Consideration should be given to ensure mechanisms to effectively monitor post-project impacts are put in place by the project principals.
- Observations made by stakeholders suggest that there were negative impacts on the tourist experience through construction activity on the trails, signs, etc. While this is expected during construction, informative signs of the ongoing construction and request for '*pardon and tolerance*' could have been helpful in showing sensitivity to the tourists visiting the sites during construction.
- Infrastructure design of proposed and ongoing works followed environmental compliance and targeted those with diverse abilities, even though at least two stakeholders expressed

concern over the fact that the restroom facilities at ATM should have been a compost toilet, and not a conventional toilet with septic tank placed near to an existing river in the reserve. It was not clear at EOP whether this was ever communicated to the PEU before the construction of the said restroom facilities started.

- There is an immediate impact that is clearly visible in terms of the physical infrastructure at the nine sites, including access ways and seating friendly to the disabled, proper signage to meet international standards, enhanced visitors' centres, enhanced restrooms, improved access platforms at Caves Branch and Lamanai, physical spaces where artisans can present their products for sale at Blue Creek, Lubaantun and Nim Li Punit.
- Women were effectively included in the project activities as expressed in the numbers of women trained and participating in Unique Belize, Cave Rescue Training, and Site Specific Guide Training, as reported in the Draft Minutes of the 12th PSC Meeting held on 16th June 2015.
- Vendors who received training in presentation of products have had positive comments on the high quality of their products.
- All trainees confirmed immediate increase knowledge after training, but emphasized that craft-specific practical training is needed to increase the project impact.
- Some product providers who have been trained have shared what they learned with other family members, members of women's group, etc. thus increasing the reach of the project beyond the target.
- Although the MTBCAAS artisans and products are the focus, the training tools and marketing recommendations being produced, these are applicable and are intended to extend to marketing of all authentic made-in-Belize artisan items. Unique Belize provides a suitable platform for this to be achieved through properly showcasing artisan products and assisted marketing and branding through the Unique Belize brand. The Institute of Creative Arts of NICH was officially handed the Unique Belize Program to pursue its continuity, and a vetting committee consisting of the BTB, MTCCA and NICH is already in place to begin the assessment and certification of authentic Belizean products.
- It must be noted that a formally structured monitoring system to measure future impacts of project outputs does not exist. While it is clearly understood and assumed that continuity

of actions initiated by the project and their required monitoring would be addressed under the institutional vision and long term plans and activities of the key project partners such as the BTB and NICH, a Project Exit Strategy is a good practice at project closure which provides details of responsibility of project partners for different actions, from the perspective of continuity and long term sustainability. Such a strategy was not developed at EOP. This observation is independent of whether such a strategy was 'required' or not by the Loan Contract and is recaptured under the 'Lessons Learned' Section of this report.

8.0 LIKELY CONTINUATION OF ACHEIVED RESULTS (SUSTAINABILITY)

Sustainability is concerned with the probability of the long term benefits continuing following project completion.

Key Evaluation Questions: To what extent will activities, results and effects be expected to continue after the action has ended? How well is the program embedded in institutional structures (national and local) that will survive beyond the life of the program? Do these institutions have technical capacity, leadership commitment and financial capacity to continue using results and applying good practices? What monitoring framework has been put in place to date.

- In terms of the infrastructure provided by the project to the nine archaeological sites, the IA expressed unequivocally that these will be maintained and upgraded when necessary as part of the institutions regular park maintenance exercise, and as such, sustainability of infrastructure is guaranteed, consistent with the NICH Strategic Plan.
- In terms of database for monitoring visitor satisfaction, the results and effects will only be optimized if BTB and NICH institutionalize the VSS exercise and work jointly in a systematic fashion to ensure that the existing partial baseline is enhanced and that subsequent implementation of the VSS is planned, budgeted, and executed in a supervised manner. For the most part there has been a positive commitment to data collection and monitoring and potential technical issues through training (i.e. SPSS). The BTB has shown every intention of institutionalizing the Monitoring Information System and NICH continues with the implementation of the VSS at all sites, except Blue Creek.
- Health and Safety Standards (HSS) and regulations will need on-going awareness, training and enforcement by NICH and BBS. The corresponding manual developed for the HSS is applicable to all archaeological parks, not just the 9 sites of the MTBCAAS, thus increasing

the likeliness that the outcomes of the project will be sustained, and will be evidenced by increase in user satisfaction, safety, and security. Additionally, the HSS has established a solid foundation on which future standards for the tourism sector can be built, as the sector continues to evolve as a key contributor to the socio-economic development of Belize. To ensure proper monitoring of compliance of the Health and Safety Standards, it will be necessary for NICH to update its site management policies to incorporate provisions for effective HSS monitoring.

- All training cannot be standalone efforts and need to be sustained over time and adopted as formal training for the industry. Partner agencies and the industry have embraced the training and the actions of the project thus far which is a positive indicator for the institutionalization.
- To increase the sustainability of the outcomes and increase the sales of Belizean artisan products, Unique Belize will require support in terms of institutionalization, systems, and processes in order to give it the operational support and structure it needs to be successful. This clearly is a role for multiple players and NICH alone will not be able to take on the responsibility for the success or failure of Unique Belize. Private sector and the industry have a key role to play in the production, branding, marketing, distribution, and continued capacity building aspects of Unique Belize, and a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) will be indispensable in this endeavor.

9.0 MUTUAL REINFORCEMENT (Community Added Value and Coherence)

Community Added Value examines the extent to which the project/programme adds benefits to what would have resulted from Member States' interventions in the same context.

Key Evaluation Question: Do the interventions of the project build on or provide incremental value to other existing national programs?

Coherence assesses the alignment of the project objectives with that of the EC and the logic between the results and overall development objectives

Key Evaluation Questions: Do the outputs of the project allow the objectives to be achieved? Could activities be integrated to maximize the desired outcomes and achieve economy of scale? Do the activities of the project provide complement EC priorities for Belize

- The inclusion of ATM and Xunantunich sites as beneficiaries for the action has provided added-value to recent facility investments made through the Sustainable Tourism Program.
- The policy and development objectives of the project clearly complement the strategic priorities of other national programs and policies in efforts to create more economic opportunities for rural communities, rural poverty reduction, and sustainable tourism development, such as Horizon 2030, Poverty Alleviation Strategy, Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy, Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, the Draft National Cultural Policy, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Tourism Expos, and the Tourist Trails of Southern Belize.
- The project outcomes are highly relevant to the EU Belize Country Program for rural development as alternative income generation, as is clearly evidenced by its placement under Result 1 of the BRDP II program, which seeks to increase rural household incomes and food security through participation in rural market expansion.
- The project outcomes are building on work initiated by the OAS for branding and authenticity and are also building on BTBs cultural tourism development and Quality Standards programs.

10. VISIBILITY

- The project developed and implemented the MTBCAAS Visibility Plan early in the project, with clear and measurable successes as evidenced by the many billboards highlighting the different archaeological sites of priority to the project and respective completed works at each site; brochures, archaeological sites map in colour; brochure; press releases; televised and radio coverage of inauguration ceremonies; the project's website; and clear visibility of EU-GOB-BTB-NICH partnership on project vehicles. All stakeholders interviewed believe that the MTBCAAS Project did extremely well in terms of visibility of project outputs.

11.0 OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND PERFORMANCE RATING

The overall performance of the project is influenced by the delivery of programmatic results in support of the project's global objective. In this Final Evaluation, performance considers delivery at EOP, as well as likeliness of the project to produce the desired impacts as planned, and the probability of sustainability.

No programmatic result of the project was identified or formulated in isolation, but rather as a set of strategically placed priorities organized to collectively and logically deliver a larger and hierarchically higher global objective. The suitability and readiness of the project's enabling environment, that is, its institutional arrangements, policies and processes are part and parcel of the evaluation of the performance equation, and have thus been considered in the ratings below in Table 4, which are based on the findings and evaluation criteria described above. The table suggests a **High Overall Performance Rating** of the project, with deficiencies faced in early stages of project implementation having been corrected and all OVI_s of the project's logical framework delivered at 100% or more in some cases, with positive impacts produced immediately in terms of physical infrastructure and training, while other impacts will be dependent on a detailed post-project monitoring program being developed and implemented by project partners. Sustainability of most project outputs is highly probable, with the exception of Unique Belize which requires structural support in a Public Private Partnership in order to be fully effective and sustainable, recognizing that a vetting committee already exists. The sustainability and impact of the HSS is totally dependent on effective and continuous awareness building and enforcement by the BBS, NICH and the BTB. Medium-High ratings were applied only in cases where evidence was lacking to suggest that impact and sustainability will be guaranteed, even though probable.

Table 4: MTBCAAS Final Evaluation Performance Rating

EXPECTED RESULTS & INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT	EVALUATION CRITERIA				
	RELEVANCE	EFFECTIVENESS	EFFICIENCY	IMPACT	SUSTAINABILITY
Result 1: Improved Product and Service Monitoring Systems	RELEVANCE	EFFECTIVENESS	EFFICIENCY	IMPACT	SUSTAINABILITY
1. Product & Service baseline survey database completed by November 2014	High	High	High	Medium-High	Medium-High
2. Operational and fully utilized data MIS	High	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium-High
Result 2: Improved Health & Safety Provision	RELEVANCE	EFFECTIVENESS	EFFICIENCY	IMPACT	SUSTAINABILITY
3. Health & Safety Manual produced	High	High	High	High	Medium-High
4. All 9 sites rehabilitated by end of November 2014	High	High	High	High	High
5. 30 persons trained in Health & Safety and Cave Rescue technique	High	High	High	High	High
Result 3: Diversification of Community Based Tourism Products and Services	RELEVANCE	EFFECTIVENESS	EFFICIENCY	IMPACT	SUSTAINABILITY
6. 80% level of market occupancy by vendors attained by end of 2014	High	High	High	High	High
7. Vendors market constructed at Nim Li Punit, Lubaantun, and Blue Creek	High	High	High	High	High
8. Artisans Trained	High	High	High	High	Medium-High
9. Tour Guides Licensed	High	High	High	High	High
Overall Project Rating per Criteria	High	High	High	High	High

Ranking: Each Indicator of Achievement is given a rating using a five-point rating scale (**High, Medium-High, Medium, Medium-Low, or Low**) per criteria. High is the best rating while Low is the worst rating. The rest are within the equally-spaced ratings, and therefore Medium is midway between worst and best. To determine **Overall Project Rating per Criteria**, the mode of the ratings was used as a representative overall indicator of the criteria.

12.0 LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons learned have been summarized and presented below as per two main categories relevant for future project design and implementation: Project Design & Planning and Project Execution.

Project Design & Planning

- Based on the views expressed by many stakeholders regarding the project's focus on 9 sites as opposed to fewer sites with greater investments, it is recommended that in future projects the rationale and logic of the project approach needs to be better articulated in project documents and explained persistently to project stakeholders.
- It is suggested that better prefeasibility assessments of infrastructure needs with due attention to details and specifics of the environment at each site could have better informed the design of works. Prefeasibility assessments can support prioritization and planning of works with more realistic timeframes for delivery.
- In an effort to maximize the probability of impact, it may be necessary to assess all the steps and phases required to achieve the desired impact, and then structure project actions to encompass all those steps along that '*value chain*', as opposed to targeting only some of the steps which may not guarantee the desired impact.
- The call for site-specific branding from one group of stakeholders is not a far-fetched one, and is actually aligned with the concept of local destination marketing and branding as proposed in the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan. Future expansion of activities and support to specific sites should give this serious consideration.
- Better due diligence in defining the project's global indicators was necessary. Linking project outputs to the prescribed district-level poverty reduction indicator is a long stretch, and will require major extrapolations and assumptions to establish a measurable link.

Project Execution

- Training of project staff and the definition of proper start-up procedures and conditions of first disbursement could have been handled better. It is not uncommon to include formal

orientation and training to project staff in the requirements, systems, and processes of the donor at project start-up. New staff to the project must also be trained if and when they are hired, if not at start-up. This is becoming more and more a regular practice by many international organizations in an effort maximize efficiencies in project execution.

- Notwithstanding the Interim Narrative Report due after every 6 month period as required by the Grant Contract for budget replenishment purposes, for a project with a short implementation cycle, it is crucial that written and comprehensive Project Progress Reports be submitted to the oversight bodies in order to facilitate meaningful and timely advice and guidance when such guidance is most useful. Project Management best practice would suggest quarterly reports submitted within 30 days of the completion of the reporting period.
- When designing training programs for local site interpretation and guiding, such programs should be intentionally designed to include a section to be taught by a local guide from the community in all aspects of site-specific interpretation, and efforts must be made to standardize the quality of local site training at all site.
- It is necessary to ensure proper vetting of the content of all signs and interpretation materials before printing and before installation. While most of the signs were correct, there are spelling mistakes on a few signs at ATM, Caves Branch and in the interpretation information at the Altun Ha Visitors' Centre.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the spirit of ensuring that this Final Evaluation provide useful information in support of knowledge generation and contribute to the design of other projects, the following recommendations are provided for general consideration:

- Now that the EOP has been reached, it is crucial that a specific Memorandum of Understanding be developed between BTB, NICH and SIB to institutionalize data collection, management and upgrade of the Monitoring Information System.
- In an effort to better link the training received by artisans and the income they generate, it is strongly advised that BTB and NICH should work with its cruise ship, tour operator and tour guide association partners to explore how a minimum time policy can be put in place

because the issue is perhaps the most serious one negatively affecting the sale of artisan items at the archaeological sites.

- NICH, BTB and the MTCCA should strengthen the process to pursue the institutionalization of Unique Belize as matter of urgent priority, building on the multi-agency vetting committee already established to assess and certify authentic Belizean products.
- The MTCCA should work closely with NICH and the BBS to monitor the implementation of the HSS and to oversee necessary updates in response to industry needs and in order to enhance the effectiveness of the HSS.

14.0 CONCLUSIONS

The project delivered all of its outputs and indicators as planned despite challenges faced at the inception and challenges in the delivery of certain infrastructure works. The delays in works were remedied and extensions granted to allow for a 31 months implementation period helped tremendously to off-set the effects of procurement delays and those caused by rains. Many of the OVI's as proposed in the project's Logical Framework were exceeded as a consequence of effective project execution.

The performance of both executing agencies was satisfactory as evidenced by PSC participation and provision of counterpart contributions and technical inputs. The PSC provided the guidance necessary to ensure that the project was successfully executed and did a fairly good job in keeping a watchful eye on project results and the overall project management. It is the opinion of many stakeholders interviewed that the PEU did an exceptional job and should be commended.

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ANNEX 1 - Consultant Terms of Reference for the Final Evaluation**CONSULTANT FINAL EVALUATION SERVICES**

Project Title: “Making Tourism Benefit Communities Adjacent to Archaeological Sites”.

1. Project Description

The Government of Belize has received counterpart funding from the European Union via the Belize Rural Development Program II (BRDP II) to finance a project entitled “Making Tourism Benefit Communities Adjacent to Archaeological Sites.” Co-financing for the project is being provided by the Government of Belize through the Ministry of Tourism and Culture represented by the Belize Tourism Board and the National Institute of Culture and History. The project is being implemented by the Belize Tourism Board and the National Institute of Culture and History through a Project Execution Unit housed at the Belize Tourism Board offices.

The objectives of the project are:

- ***To improve economic opportunities in rural communities and contribute to the reduction of poverty;***
- ***To enhance the tourism experience through improvements in tourism infrastructure and services at selected sites.***

The project intends to achieve three main sets of results:

- ***Results One: Improve the monitoring systems at archaeological sites;***
- ***Results Two: Improve health and safety provisions and infrastructure at archaeological sites;***
- ***Results Three: Enhance the diversification of community based tourism products and services offered at archaeological sites in Belize.***

The Project targets communities adjacent to the following nine archaeological sites:

Xunantunich, Actun Tunichil Muknal, Nohoch Che'en (Caves' Branch), Nim Li Punit, Barton Creek, Lubaantun, Blue Creek, Altun Ha, and Lamanai.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

The Evaluation is intended to assess the performance, and success of the project against expected outcomes. It looks at signs of potential impact of project activities on targeted beneficiaries and communities and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development, taking into consideration EC specific evaluation criteria

The Evaluation also identifies/documents lessons learned and makes recommendations that project partners and stakeholders might use to improve the design and implementation of other related projects and programs.

3. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation is expected to cover the following project components:

Results One: Improve the monitoring systems at archaeological sites;

Results Two: Improve health and safety provisions and infrastructure at archaeological sites;

Results Three: Enhance the diversification of community based tourism products and services offered at archaeological sites in Belize.

Results Four: Review the infrastructural improvements at the 9 selected archaeological sites.

The specific objectives of the final evaluation will be as follows:

- h. Assess the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the Project management, monitoring and implementation;
 - i. Measure achieved results and impact;
 - j. Identify and judge unexpected results;
 - k. Assess the sustainability of the intervention's benefits;
 - l. Analysing Project Management overall management scheme (organisations and structures, including the relationships and positions of the stakeholders such as PSC, NAO, TAT, grantees, Townships, contractors, contractors....)
 - m. Draw lessons from the first years of the intervention implementation;
- n. Recommend adjustments to the contents of the on-going intervention in relation to realities in the field and/or contextual developments;
- o. Propose practical recommendations to improve the intervention under way and its results.
- p. Generally (and mostly for future projects) recommendations on the Project management scheme (organisations and structure) : position of all key stakeholders over the implementation period of the project

4. Deliverables

The structure and content of the report should meet the requirements of the European Union Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. The length of the Report should not exceed 30 pages in total (excluding the annexes).

The Report should:

- Contain an executive summary (mandatory)
- Be analytical in nature (both quantitative and qualitative)
- Be structured around issues and related findings/lessons learnt
- Include conclusions

- Include recommendations

5. Timing and Duration

The total duration of the evaluation will be **20 days** within the period of June 29 to August 21st, 2015.

Preparation (2days)

- Collection of and acquaintance with the project document, project progress reports and other relevant project-related materials;
- Designing the detailed evaluation scope and methodology (including the methods for data collection and analysis);
- Setting up the mission dates and preparation of the detailed mission programme in cooperation with the Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator will organize the schedule of the mission, arrange transportation for the consultant.

Mission (10 days)

- Meeting with relevant officials and stakeholder
- Site Visits to: (3) three sites in Toledo, four sites in Cayo and one site in Belize District and Orange Walk respectively.

Elaboration of the draft report (4 days)

- Additional desk review
- Completion of the draft report
- Presentation of draft report for comments and suggestions
- Additional information and further clarification with Belize Tourism Board, National Institute of Culture and History, Ministry of Tourism, BRDP, Project Execution Unit.

Elaboration of the final report (4 days):

- Incorporation of comments and additional findings into the draft report
- Finalization of the report

6. Required Qualification

Interested parties should possess a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in tourism enterprise development, tourism/marketing management or cultural business development including qualifications/experience in economic assessment and/or cost benefit analysis. A graduate degree is preferable. Experience in working with rural artisans and conducting training in cultural tourism product development in Belize or the Caribbean would be a distinct asset.

ANNEX 2 – MTBCAAS Logical Framework Matrix

BTB/NICH LOGICAL FRAMEWORK – FINAL
Making Tourism Benefit Communities Adjacent to Archaeological Sites

Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators of Achievement	Sources and Means of Verification	Assumptions
Overall Objective: To improve economic opportunities in rural communities & contribute to the reduction of poverty.	- 1% reduction in poor populations in the targeted districts by November 2014	- Country Poverty Assessment Report 2016. - District Poverty Assessment Report 2016.	- Tourism industry focused on communities, inland progress and is promoted in Belize, - No occurrence of major natural disasters. - A steady global tourism trend is sustained.
Specific Objective: To enhance the tourism experience through the improvements to tourism infrastructure and service development at selected sites – (Nine archaeological sites).	- All 9 sites rehabilitated by end of 2014. - Total no. of tourist visitors per year @ the 9 sites.	- Archeological Park visitation records. - Visitors certification survey reports - Project M&E Reports - New database management system installed and in operation at BTB and NICH with survey data entered - Certificate of training in GIS and SPSS for personnel at BTB and NICH	- Beneficiaries maintain strong commitment to the action. - Participation and support from local leaders & other stakeholders. - Timely disbursement of funds by EU
Expected Results: 0. PEU created and functional.	- Project Execution Unit created and functional within 6 months from project start. - Visibility plan developed within 6 months from project start - Project M&E System developed within the 1st year from project start	- Signed Contracts - Project progress report	
1. Improved Product and Service Monitoring Systems	- Product & Service baseline survey database completed by November 2014 - Operational & fully utilized data MIS	- New database management system installed and in operation at BTB and NICH with survey data entered - Certificate of training in GIS and SPSS for personnel at BTB and NICH	
2. Improved Health and Safety Provisions	- Health and Safety Manual produced - All 9 sites rehabilitated by end of November 2014 - 30 personnel trained in Health and Safety and Cave rescue technique	- Gazetted Statutory Instrument for Health and Safety Standards - Approval and sign off on final inspection reports by Works Manager - Attendance training logs and certificate records - Project progress report	
3. Diversification of Community Based Tourism Products and Services	- 80% level of market occupancy by vendors attained by end of 2014	- Market survey assessment on certified products	



BTB/NICH LOGICAL FRAMEWORK – FINAL
Making Tourism Benefit Communities Adjacent to Archaeological Sites

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vendors market constructed at Nim Li Punit, Lubaantun, Blue Creek - Artisans and tour guides licensed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visitors Satisfaction Survey Assessment report - Project progress report 	
Activities:	Means:	Budget (BZ\$):	
Results 0: PEU created and functional 0.1 Establish Project Management Unit 0.2. Develop and implement a visibility plan 0.3. Prepare process for internal and external audits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Human Resources 2. Travel 3. Equipment and Supplies 4. Local Office 5. Other Cost and Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General - Evaluations & Audits - Visibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$702,400 \$14,400 \$491,000 \$86,400 \$694,200 \$95,000 \$100,000 	
Results 1: Improved Product and Service Monitoring Systems. 1.1 Undertake customer satisfaction survey & establish baseline data – [Services + Products]. 1.2 Develop & operationalize data MIS.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Other Cost (Infrastructure Improvement) 	\$1,434,500	
Results 2: Improved Health and Safety Provisions 2.1 Develop Health & Safety standards 2.2 Gazette statutory instruments & publish Health & Safety Operational manual 2.3 Undertake infrastructural works at 9 sites. 2.4 Train 30 personnel in Health, Safety Management & Cave rescue.	<p>Sub-total</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Contingency reserve 8. Administrative Cost <p>TOTAL Eligible Costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$3,617,900 \$180,895 \$265,916 <u>\$4,064,711</u> 	
Results 3: Diversified Community Based Tourism Products and Services 3.1 Develop product standards, branding & quality control. 3.2 Introduce & conduct national product branding and certification. 3.3 Train 24 people – [Trainers (ToT), Assessors & Artisans] in product enhancement, presentation, sales & marketing. 3.4 Recruit, train & certify 50 local people as community tour guides across all 9 sites. 3.5 Construct 3 Craft markets (Lubaantun, Nim Li Punit & Blue Creek) by end of project.			

ANNEX 3. Consultant Site Visit Confirmation during the Final Evaluation



EUROPEAN UNION

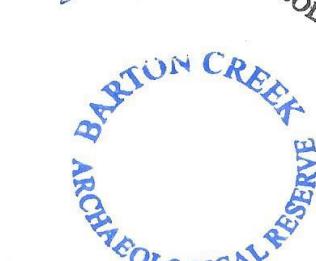
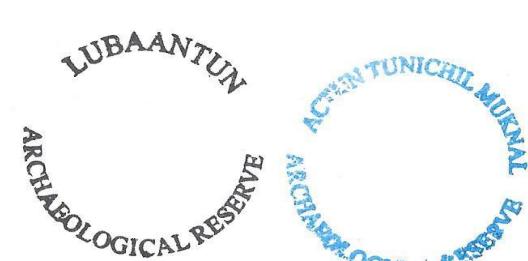
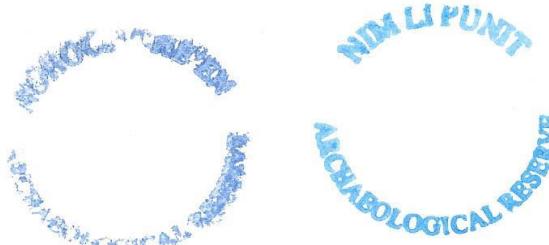
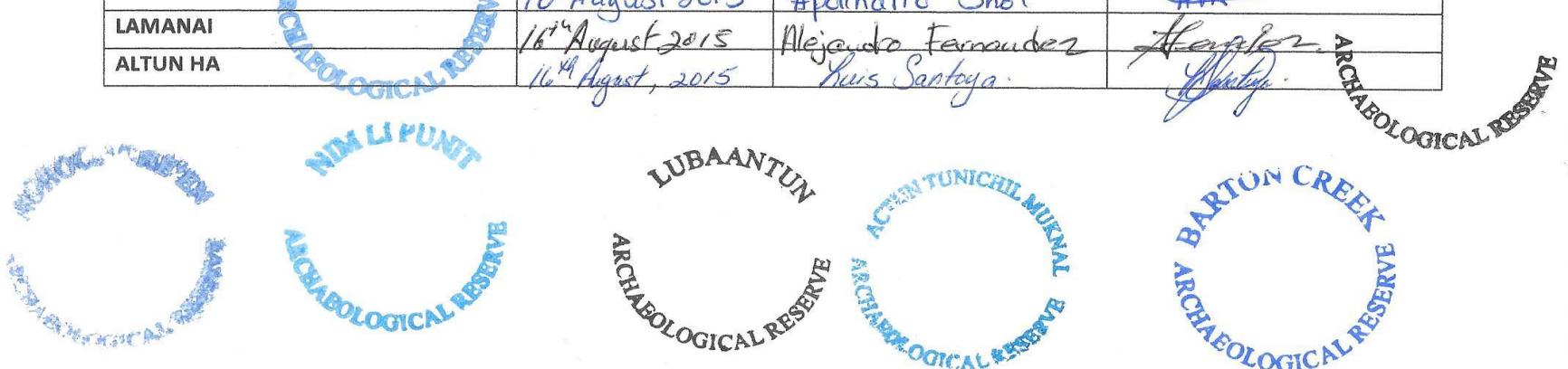


NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CULTURE AND HISTORY

Making Tourism Benefit Communities Adjacent to Archaeological Sites

-FINAL EVALUATION CONSULTANT SITE VISIT SHEET -

NAME OF SITE	DATE VISITED	NAME OF NICH REPRESENTATIVE	SIGNATURE OF NICH REPRESENTATIVE
XUNANTUNICH	08 th August 2015	Kevin Diaz	
CAVES BRANCH	13 th August 2015	Carlos Repech	
BARTON CREEK	09 August 2015	Silvia Gonzalez	
ACTUN TUNICIL MUKNAL	9 / August 2015	Johnny Rech	
BLUE CREEK	 ALTUN HA	—	
NIM LI PUNIT	10 August 2015	Anselmo Cholom	
LUBAATUN	10 August 2015	Apolinario Shol	
LAMANAI	16 th August 2015	Alejandro Fernandez	
ALTUN HA	16 th August, 2015	Yours Santoya	



LAMANAI

ALTUN HA

ANNEX 4. List of Targeted Stakeholders in the Final Evaluation

(Interviewed between August 4th – 19th, 2015)

Interviewee	Agency or Relevance	Interview Method
Kevin Gonzalez	Director of Special Projects, BTB	Face-to-Face
Karen Bevans	Director, Belize Tourism Board	Attempted questionnaire by email
Abil Castaneda	Chief Tourism Officer, Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Civil Aviation	Face-to-Face
Denis Lesueur	SOFRECO – BRDP II Management/EU	Attempted questionnaire by email
Pietro Nardi	Task Manager, EU Office	Face to face
Diane Haylock	President of NICH	Face to face
Dr. John Morris	Director, Institute of Archaeology - NICH	Face to face
George Thompson	Associate Director, Institute of Archaeology - NICH	Face to face; follow-up clarifications by telephone
John Burgos	Executive Director of the BTIA	Face-to-Face
Lourdes Smith	Director, Association of Cruise Service Providers	Face-to-Face
Jose Trejo	Director, Belize Bureau of Standards	Attempted questionnaire by email
Kathryn Mendez	Deputy National Authorizing Officer for the EU in the Ministry of Economic Development	Face-to-Face
Lisa Sanchez Marin	Public Health Inspector – Grade 1, Ministry of Health	Attempted questionnaire by email
Jorge Alpuche	Senior Public Health Inspector, Ministry of Health	Attempted questionnaire by email
Orlando Jimenez	Rural Community Development Officer, Rural Development Department	Face to face
German Magana, Xunantunich	Received Training as Training Facilitator	Attempted Interview by telephone
Javier Mendez, Altun Ha	Received Training as Participant	Interviewed by telephone
Elva Wiltshire, Lamanai	Received Training as Participant	Attempted Interview by telephone
Prudencia Cucul, Nim Li Punit	Received Training as Participant – UNIQUE BELIZE	Interviewed by telephone
Petrona Hun, Fajina Women's group	Received Training as Participant – UNIQUE BELIZE	Interviewed by telephone
Geronimo Coc	Tour Guide, Lubaatun	Face-to-Face
Ian Morrison	Project Coordinator, PEU, MTBCAAS	Face-to-Face
John Arana	Works Manager, PEU Unit, MTBCAAS	Face-to-Face
Patrick Tillett	Finance & Procurement Officer, PEU, MTBCAAS	Face-to-Face
Rubicelli Bradley	Administrative Officer, PEU, MTBCAAS	Face-to-Face