



Assessment of Priority Tourism Policies Recommendations and Action Plan

for the inclusion of
Biodiversity Conservation
in Tourism Policies



**ASSOCIATION OF PROTECTED
AREAS MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS
(APAMO)**



**CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM
PARTNERSHIP FUND**

**ASSESSMENT
OF
PRIORITY TOURISM POLICIES
RECOMMENDATIONS
&
ACTION PLAN
FOR THE INCLUSION OF
BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION
IN TOURISM POLICIES**



**ASSOCIATION OF PROTECTED
AREAS MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS
(APAMO)**

Prepared by

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The contents, information and ideas expressed of this report are the sole responsibility of the Association of Protected Areas Management Organizations and not necessarily reflect the views or position of Counterpart International and Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund.

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Finally, we would like to thank Counterpart International and CEPF for partnering with Belize in this initiative. We trust that the results will pave the way for increased collaboration

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Protected areas have a long history tied to cultural norms and practices. As far back as two millennia ago, there is evidence of protection of natural resources in India. In Europe nearly a thousand years ago, protected areas were tied to the rich and powerful and declared to reserve hunting grounds. An evolution over time allowed for the inclusion and usage of the community providing for visitation purposes (tourism). Early nineteenth century evidence of declaration of protected areas arose in the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa. In the case of Belize, 36% of the land mass is under some terrestrial protective status, while 13% in the marine zone are under some marine protective declaration.

This theme of the use and enjoyment by the public runs through the early history of protected areas, fostering a bringing together of people as much a part of the concept, as the land and the natural and cultural resources. This would seem to begin to present a justification for the fundamental goal and objectives of this project. To analyze policies geared at the promotion of the use of enjoyment of these resources by the public in a manner that preserves its value and availability for future years. In short then, allowing for the development of tourism in harmony with the protection of natural and cultural resources.

APAMO spearheaded the national evaluation of Tourism Policies in Belize as part of a larger project implemented by Counterpart International and funded by the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund. Recommendations and an action plan were developed to integrate Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development into national tourism policies for Belize. The objective of the project was to complete an analysis of the relevant tourism policy documents achieved via a consultative basis with stakeholders – including protected areas management organization, APAMO officials, and other key national stakeholders. In addition and integrally important is a document as an action plan to aide a process to achieve implementation of recommendations in the area of policy reform for the industry.

Belize's tourism industry saw its roots as a means of economic diversification during a time when the agricultural sector, particularly sugar and bananas were experiencing a down turn. Then like now, the tourism industry was a means to increase foreign exchange, generate new job opportunities and maintain a diversified mix in the economy.

Travel tourism has been accepted as an economic activity that has significant ripple effect with national economies, impacting many sectors with its positive effects evident in employment and contribution to GDP. Equally accepted is that tourism is “a double-edged sword” and much of the international debate has now been concentrated on the need to minimize the actual and potential negative impact that is often associated with its development. The discussion of tourism's impact tends to focus on issues such as overuse of water resources, air pollution, land degradation, waste and litter problems, inadequate sewage treatment, aesthetic pollution, habitat destruction and alteration of ecosystems. Recent debate has now become centered on the opportunities and threats of the industry pose for biodiversity.

Process to Assess Belize Tourism Policies for Biodiversity Conservation:

Primarily, the project was geared at accomplishing an assessment of priority tourism policies for Belize from a view of biodiversity conservation with the development of an action plan to guide the implementation process for making biodiversity conservation reflective in policies and industry planning. For the purpose of the analysis, the following priority policies were identified. These included:

- a) The Blackstone Report of 1998
- b) Cruise Tourism Policy of 2003
- c) Cruise Action Plan of 2008

1998 Blackstone Tourism Strategy: The strategy was drafted as a response to a downward turn in tourism. The strategy was derived via a broad consultative process and was meant to guide the targeted development of the industry with due consideration for all its linkages.

2005 Tourism Policy: The policy was to serve as an update to the 1998 Strategy post the industry surpassing the earlier projections for overnight tourism and realization of an exponential increase in cruise tourism.

2003 Cruise Tourism Policy: The policy was drafted as a response to the exponential growth in this sub-sector and with a hope to guide development with the central goal of averting any negative impact to the image of the tourism product being promoted – one with an eco-ethic consideration.

The weakness of the policies were observed not so much in the essence of the policy as was it apparent in actual implementation and operationalizing the expressed intent. Although not explicitly presented, it can be derived from the examination of the policies that there is some intent to approach tourism planning and management in a collaborative and integrative manner with some consideration for the preservation of the environment and sustainability. The 1998 Blackstone Report was probably the most targeted and focused in citing the need for environmental protection and mitigation of the impacts from the operations within the tourism industry. The Blackstone Strategy as well attempted to detail a manner for operationalizing not only the eco-ethic approach but also the collaborative integrated planning and management seen as crucial for the sustainable development of the industry.

Recommendations for Including Biodiversity Conservation in Tourism Policies:

The recommendations are geared to improve on implementation to meet policy intent and integrate biodiversity conservation into policies. Recommendations included:-

- To build on current policies via a revision in order to result with one policy that explicitly expounds on inter-sectoral planning, decision making and management for the tourism industry.
- To harmonize tourism policies with other relevant sectors and policies, i.e. National Biodiversity Strategy Policy, the National Protected Areas Policy and any policy to address poverty alleviation

- To reinforce the overarching planning and management mechanism for the tourism industry
- To reinforce planning and product development initiatives ensuring broad inclusion and consultation, while remaining responsible in the use and management of natural and cultural resources
- To ensure that tourism planning, management and development strongly consider the importance and health of protected areas as a central component of the product
- To establish certification programs, standards and codes for an industry that responsibly utilizes natural and cultural resources with the final outcome being industry sustainability
- To continue to ensure that the tourism industry is broadly inclusive and respects cultural resources
- To ensure that the stakeholders understand the importance of responsible management and protection of natural and cultural resources as the foundation of industry viability
- To investigate with a view to adopt incentive schemes (financial and otherwise) for the tourism industry to reinforce responsible management and protection of natural and cultural resources

The relationship between tourism and biodiversity conservation is symbiotic - one that requires commitment and proactive decision making at all levels of government and from all stakeholders alike.

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PART ONE

1.0 Introduction & Industry Background

Belize's tourism industry saw its roots as a means of economic diversification during a time when the agricultural sector, particularly sugar and bananas were experiencing a down turn. Then like now, the tourism industry was a means to increase foreign exchange, generate new job opportunities and maintain a diversified mix in the economy. Today, tourism accounts for 17%¹ of the GDP via tourists expenditures and is touted to provide one in four jobs.

That economic contribution was realized due to a concerted effort to develop the industry and focus its operations. Via a 1998 Blackstone Report commissioned by the Belize Tourism Board, the development of the industry received a real push. The report was based on analysis of tourism's contribution and its role on the regional and global scene. The Blackstone Report fuelled an aggressive market approach which included:

- ❖ Establishment of the new brand image for Belize's tourism product
- ❖ Inclusion of inland adventure attractions and Belize's cultures to highlight the image of a diverse product
- ❖ Use of market surveys to identify Belize's most suitable market segments
- ❖ Incorporation of low cost high yield advertising media
- ❖ Revision and development of quality literature, promotional materials and images that emphasized the product
- ❖ Collaborative advertising plans with the private sector
- ❖ Analysis of the effectiveness of promotional activities

Industry public sector proponents will inform the real evidence of the strategy paying off was in 2003 when the growth for overnight tourism saw arrivals increase by over 44,000 visitors, surpassing even the modest proposals of 20,000 in the Blackstone Report.

Since 1998, the industry has experienced exponential growth due to cruise tourism. That growth only increased post the September 2001 incident. Cruise arrivals moved from modest beginnings to over three hundred thousand in 2002 and peaked in 2004 with eight hundred thousand plus visitors. In 2005, the industry appeared to begin to level off and visitor arrivals for 2006 and 2007 reduced to six hundred fifty five thousand and six hundred twenty four thousands, respectively.¹

Tourist Arrivals (Overnight)²

Mode of Arrival	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Air	151,978	162,675	174,636	178,552	183,133
Land	60,154	60,018	54,096	60,207	58,822
Sea	8,442	8,139	7,841	8,550	9,700
TOTAL	220,574	230,832	236,573	247,309	251,655

¹ Statistics from the Belize Tourism Board website – www.belizetourism.org

² Tourist Arrivals, Tourist Expenditures and Cruise Tourism Arrivals -- Statistical information taken from Belize Tourism Board website

Tourism Revenues³

Percentage of GDP
(GDP at Factor cost, Current Policies)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Tourist Exp (BZ\$M)	265.6	311.4	345.3	349.4	398.8
Employment Hotels & Restaurants	6,466	6,453	7,108	8,722	8,878
Employment Tourism (CSO)	7,972	8,315	11,062	12,865	13,198
GDP(BZ\$M)	1,849	1,974	2,071.2	2,2144.4	2,372.0
Tourism Expenditure % of GDP	14.4	15.8	16.7	15.8	16.8

(Currency BZ million dollars)

Cruise Tourism Arrivals⁴

Arrivals	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	319,690	575,196	851,436	800,331	655,931	624,128

1.1 Conservation Organizations and Protected Areas in Tourism

Within the global financial arena and the changing dynamics of funding sources and grant agencies, Protected Area Managers have had to accede to the notion that protected areas are mandated to generate a significant source of the funding necessary for the management of their protected areas. Managers of these protected areas have had to bring conservation to the people. If there is no supporting base or constituency for conservation, there will be a collapse of the areas themselves. Eco-tourism, among other channels, has been a critical link in meeting this objective, not only as a tool for income generation. There is therefore a direct fundamental tie between eco-tourism and protected areas. This fundamental has been recognized not only by managers of protected areas but also by public sector authorities.

Forested areas remain the most extensive land cover in Belize where natural formations, modified to some degree by human activity, extend over 70% of the country. Natural forest in Belize has a long history of use and often of over-use, with timber as the primary resource. Once dominant, there has been a steady decline in the importance of this use. Tourism has now become a very key source for foreign-currency in the country of Belize. Tourism is diverse in Belize, not only supporting orthodox agencies and tourism service suppliers but also being well integrated with environmental education and with protected area management by NGO's and CBO's.

Today, the rich resources of protected areas are an integral component of our national tourism product. This portion of the product serves overnight and cruise tourism, with the sub-sector of cruise tourism presenting a higher urgency for Belize to respond to the

³ Statistics taken from Belize Tourism Board website

⁴ Statistics taken from Belize Tourism Board website

question of its developmental direction in the area of tourism – mass tourism vs. sustainable tourism. Statistics show that for 2007, tourism (both overnight and cruise) earned a dollar figure of \$590.4 Million dollars, with an overnight tourism arrival record of 251,655 persons vs. 624,128 cruise passengers for the year 2007. While the overnight tourism arrivals remains modest (as described by public sector authorities in comparison to our Central American and Caribbean competing destinations), our cruise tourism has experienced exponential growth post September 11, 2001 and only now showing signs of decline. It is this exponential growth of cruise tourism that has caught the attention of tourism stakeholders, conservation activists and protected areas managers and spurred a continuous dialogue over our tourism growth direction.

2.0 Project Process & Methodology

APAMO is an association of non-governmental protected areas management organizations that advocates for the sustainability and improved management of Belize's protected areas system. APAMO is currently comprised of 18 founding members and is governed by an Executive Council.

The main objectives of the Association are:

- To provide a forum for increased communication, discussion and networking among its members in an effort to enhance coordination and collaboration among them,
- To create a networked voice for member agencies,
- To represent its member agencies
- To participate proactively in lobbying for action related to protected areas issues
- To continuously build the institutional capacity of the member agencies of the Association.
- To secure the financial sustainability of the protected areas

Counterpart International is a 42-year old non-profit NGO whose mission is “giving people a voice in their future through smart partnerships, offering options and access to tools for sustained economic, social and environmental development.” Counterpart's primary organizational purpose is to build the capacity of local communities, and the institutions which serve them, to address self-defined needs in sustainable, practical and culturally appropriate ways.

This initiative spearheaded by APAMO is the result of the Belize component of a Counterpart International project. The funding for the project was realized via Critical Ecosystems Protection Fund (CEPF) which supports the promotion of policy reforms related to the most critical issues for conservation where civil society can make a difference. These include agriculture, infrastructure development, forest management and tourism development. It was believed that these four issues together have the strongest influence on biodiversity.

The objective of the project was to conduct an analysis of the relevant tourism policy documents achieved via a consultative basis with stakeholders – including protected areas management organizations, APAMO officials, and other key national stakeholders. In addition and integrally important was a document as an action plan for APAMO to be able to move forward in a process to achieve implementation of recommendations in the area of policy reform for the tourism industry.

A major component of the project was a consultative process with a view to analyze the current policies and receiving critical feedback and recommendations from the stakeholders. The Consulting Team worked in close coordination with the project's key participants, the member groups of APAMO, who are protected areas managers – many of whom operate sustainable tourism projects or whose facilities currently support the components of Belize's tourism destination. In addition, the project team consulted with other stakeholders across sectors in the area of tourism, conservation and sustainable development.

3.0 Rationale for the Assessment of Tourism Policies

Travel tourism has since been accepted as an economic activity that has significant ripple effect with national economies, impacting many sectors with its positive effects evident in employment and contribution to GDP. Equally accepted is that tourism is “a double-edged sword” and much of the international debate has now been concentrated on the need to minimize the actual and potential negative impact that is often associated with its development. The discussion of tourism's impact tends to focus on issues such as overuse of water resources, air pollution, land degradation, waste and litter problems, inadequate sewage treatment, aesthetic pollution, habitat destruction and alteration of ecosystems. Recent debate has now become centered on the opportunities and threats the industry poses for biodiversity.

Biodiversity is essential for human development with an estimated 40% of the global economy based on biological products and processes. While tourism's potential impact is a global concern, there is also a growing appreciation that tourism can make significant contributions to local environments and the conservation of biodiversity. The industry can be a source of financing for conservation and provide economic justification for protected areas, while offering economic alternatives for local communities.

3.1 Economic Justification to consider Biodiversity Conservation

Tourism generates a vast amount of revenue for economies globally representing over 6% of global exports and contributes almost 4% of estimated gross domestic product (GDP). With spin off effects, GDP contribution is estimated at over 10% generating millions of jobs globally. The industry ranks among the top five exports for 83% of countries and is the main source of foreign currency earning for 38% of nations.

Land-based overnight tourists in Belize have been majority sourced by the United States market 61%, Canada 7% and UK 4%. The significance of the U.S. sector increases dramatically when the cruise market is examined as approximately 84% of worldwide cruise guests originate from the U.S.

In Belize, the rate of growth in tourism has been significant. Earnings from tourism for Belize has been 17% of GDP according to Belize Tourism Board statistical data on the agency's website and touted to provide one in four jobs. These are compelling figures for the viability of an industry. Future global market trends only serve to bolster the viability of the industry.

Belize tourism industry is strongly rooted in nature-based attractions, adventure, some cultural and more recently community based tourism. This basis for the industry was strongly rooted in both the Blackstone Tourism Strategy for Belize of 1998 and the Tourism Policy of 2005. The tenets of both the 1998 Strategy and the 2005 Policy stressed a need to focus on responsible tourism with an approach that embraced the ethics of responsible and sustainable tourism.

The 1998 Strategy called for a vision to develop tourism as a national priority, with a primary focus on responsible tourism aimed at natural history, marine tourism/diving and personalized adventure markets. Development and promotion of the industry will be carried out to encourage a strong eco-ethic to ensure environmental and socio-cultural sustainability, to promote equitable distribution of economic benefits, and to develop a strong, positive image of Belize as a destination that cares.

Blackstone Strategy Report

Belize's tourism vision is to develop a vibrant and progressive tourism industry through a responsible approach which embraces a strong "eco-ethic" and effective destination management that seeks to improve the quality of life for all Belizeans.

2005 Tourism Policy

The cornerstone of both policy documents appear well informed as in 1998 World Tourism Organization (WTO) predicted that cultural and other closely related forms of special interest tourism such as nature based tourism were among the hottest trends of the century. This prediction was supported by other think-tanks and researchers with evidence available for two broadly defined markets segments that form part of what is coined the experiential travel market.

- a.) Historic/cultural travelers who tend to include some type of history or culture in their travel activities
- b.) Geo-tourists defined as consumers whose attitudes, behaviors and travel habits show a high incidence of travel and a preference toward culturally and socially related travel, participating in cultural, social, educational and environmentally conscious activities.

Experiential Travel

Belize is particularly well positioned for future growth in stay-over tourism. The movement towards experiential tourism is evident in almost all facets of the industry and has become the primary consideration on the part of travel trade intermediaries. In 1998, the World Tourism Organization predicted that cultural and other closely associated forms of special interest tourism such as nature tourism would be among the hottest trends of the 21st Century. This prediction was recently confirmed by the Pisa Forum, an annual think-tank comprised of leaders of the global tourism sector, who noted that current market trends show that tourists are increasingly seeking experiential tours and offerings. Express Travel and Tourism (2003) added their voice to this viewpoint, noting that demand for authentic experiences that focus on local culture,

learning, closeness to nature and wellness is on the rise, especially among older age groups.

While the above segments are overlapping, some key findings from the research are significant for Belize:

- the WTO estimates that 37% of all international trips include a culture/heritage component and that the market is growing at an annual rate of 15%;
- in the U.S. alone, it is estimated that 81% of U.S. adults that travelled in the last year are considered historic/cultural travellers (118 million);
- the geo-tourist market identified by the US Travel Industry Association (TIA) and the National Geographic Traveller identified a consumer market of 55 million of which:
 - 21.2 million adult travellers are oriented to large city destinations and their cultural experiences and attractions (urban sophisticates),
 - 16.3 million travellers are distinguished by their interest in environmentally-oriented travel (Geo-Savvys); and
 - an estimated 34.5 million American adults are heritage tourism enthusiasts.

The geo-tourism market segment is particularly interesting as it is the first study of its kind conducted by the Travel Industry Association of America to examine attitudes of tourists related to sustainable tourism behavior. Their 2002 study showed at least 55 million Americans who could be classified as sustainable tourists who have high expectations for unique and culturally authentic travel experiences that preserve and protect the ecological and cultural environment. The study indicated that a further 58 million travelling Americans could also be moving in this direction and be classified in the future as "geo-tourists". The majority (39 million) of the geo-tourist market segment seek the following activities:

- visiting destinations with authentic historic and archaeological sites;
- travel to experience people, lifestyles and cultures different from their own;
- believe it's important to learn about the destination's people, history and culture; and
- believe it's important that their visit to a destination does not damage its environment.

Also of particular interest to Belize is the fact that 81% of the geo-savvy segment (16.3 million American adults) report that they prefer to stay in small-scale accommodations and visit small towns and rural areas.

These predictions and the expected ongoing growth of the global tourism industry to double in size by 2020 have continued to fuel a discussion over tourism's impacts. The increasing awareness of the economic potential of the industry and its potential impacts has motivated many destinations to become strategic in their role in managing the industry. Both the UNEP/Conservation International report of 2003 and the World Travel and Trade Council report "Blueprint of New Tourism" outlines that the roles and responsibilities for the management of the industry is cross-sectoral. The reports accept a mutually beneficial situation between the tourism industry and the environment.

Developing this symbiotic relationship between tourism and biodiversity conservation needs commitment and proactive decision making at all levels of government and from all stakeholders alike.

*CPEC Document Considerations for
Updating the National Tourism Policy
for Belize*

Most naturally, the compelling direction of world travel trends would seem to provide a strong argument for Belize with an industry base founded in biodiversity – natural and cultural – to seek an integrated approach for the planning and management of the tourism industry with a central focus on biodiversity conservation. Consideration for biodiversity conservation and proper environmental management would be assumed to be in the self-interest of the tourism industry since the very raw material or attractions central to the product are the natural resources of the country.

This position of integrated planning and management, and the central policy direction of the 1998 Strategy and 2005 Policy were publicly embraced by the Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation and the Prime Minister of Belize during their presentations at the 2008 Tourism Industry Presentation and Consultation event.

The Prime Minister as keynote speaker for the event stated...

“If we are to move this country forward, consultation must constitute the lynchpin of our efforts. ... I venture to say no where is this more important than in the tourism industry.... In my view, it is a no-brainer that overcoming the challenges will require consultation, will require genuine partnership. ...You have nurtured each and every small aspect of our product in your own way. Most admirably, you have already started the charge for sustainable tourism development. You have made it your mission to retain the unfolding Belizean story as a special brand, a unique mix of culture, history, adventure, comfort and natural style.”

Prime Minister Dean O. Barrow
at 2008 Industry Presentation

4.0 Defining Sustainable Development and Sustainable Tourism

The architects of both tourism strategy/policy documents defined a responsible approach to tourism with a strong eco-ethic to ensure sustainability. No doubt many different interests can benefit from making tourism operations more sustainable.

- The primary beneficiaries in the industry can be those enterprises seeking long term profitability. These enterprises can develop a responsible corporate image

in the process to sustainability with the staff becoming more conscious about protecting the immediate environment and natural resources.

- Local communities seeking prosperity can improve their quality of life without damaging the environment
- Environmentalists concerned about the impact of human interaction with the environment find an economic justification for their conservation activities
- Tourists seeking a high quality experience in a safe and attractive environment can satisfy their demand while becoming increasingly aware of the impacts of their traveling.

Achieving sustainability is the responsibility of all players in the industry, with government taking on a principal role as policy maker, enabler and enforcer. While most of the impacts of tourism are felt at the private sector level via enterprise activities, government can take the leading role. While individual investments would find it difficult to yield results and positive impact, governments can achieve results via its regulatory framework, offering economic incentives and utilizing the resources of its institutions and agencies to promote the enabling environment and disseminating good practices.

According to the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), sustainable development is *a process to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.*⁵ Sustainable development then is based on sound husbandry of the worlds' resources, equity in the usage of resources and the distribution of its benefits.

Since Rio 1992 UN Conference on the Environment and Development and the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, there are now three accepted pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Economic Sustainability refers to generating prosperity at different levels of society and addressing cost effectiveness. In essence, it is achieving viability of enterprises over the long term.

Social Sustainability means respecting human rights and offering equal opportunities for all; requiring equitable distribution of benefits and a focus on poverty alleviation. Often, there is a requirement for a focus on local communities being able to maintain and improve their quality of life.

Environmental sustainability refers to conserving and managing resources, especially those that are non-renewable. It requires minimizing pollution to air, land and water and responsible usage of resources, maintaining biological diversity and natural heritage.

⁵ Making Tourism More Sustainable – A Guide for Policy Makers – United Nations Environment Program & World Tourism Organization 2005

4.1 Tourism Contribution to Sustainable Development

It is broadly accepted that tourism can yield positive benefits across sectors and as such make a contribution to sustainable development. Tourism is dynamic and its future projected growth offers promise of increased economic benefits for countries and communities. Tourism is as well an economic activity that puts its buyers (visitors) in close contact with its environment and local communities offering the possibility for increased understanding and positive impact (as well as the possibility for negative). The interdependence between the host community and the consumer is not replicated in other sectors. It is this interdependence and ability to swing both ways (ability to cause both positive and negative impacts) that international literature holds the industry to a huge responsibility for sustainable development. Strong policy making at the level of governments is cited as the avenue to which the development can be positively challenged. Accepting this high level of industry onus is not only about good citizenship but should be fuelled by a strong element of self-interest, since harm that is inflicted to the natural, cultural and social environment of host communities can lead to eventual destruction and loss of tourism values.⁶

According to the World Tourism Organization, “**defining sustainable tourism is tourism that takes full account of current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of the visitor, the industry, the environment and the host communities**”. These needs and impacts must be included in policy making, planning, development and operation of the industry. Just as sustainable development is a process, sustainable tourism has to be a process.

5.0 The Process for the Assessment of Belize Tourism Policies

Primarily, the project was geared at accomplishing an assessment of priority tourism policies for Belize from a view of biodiversity conservation along with the development of an action plan to guide the implementation process for making biodiversity conservation reflective in policies and industry planning. For the purpose of the analysis, the following priority policies have been identified and were those assessed under the project. These included:

- a.) The Blackstone Report of 1998
- b.) Cruise Tourism Policy of 2003
- c.) Cruise Action Plan of 2008

As well, the review process consulted related documents leading to the development of the policies. These included:-

- d.) White Paper for Considerations for Updating the National Tourism Strategy for Belize, June 2005
- e.) Belize Tourism Sector Diagnostic 1998 - 2004

⁶ Making Tourism More Sustainable – A Guide for Policy Makers – United Nations Environment Program & World Tourism Organization 2005

Since much of the areas related to tourism are regulated under separate legislations and form the basis of much policy directions, the following legislations were as well consulted. These included:

- f.) The Belize Tourism Board Act, Chapter 275 Revised 2003
- g.) Hotels and Tourist Accommodation Act, Chapter 285 Revised May 2003
- h.) Hotels and Tourist Accommodations Act, Chapter 285 Revised October 2003
- a.) The National Institute of Culture and History Act
- b.) The Coastal Zone Act
- c.) The Environmental Protection Act
- d.) The Belize Port Authority Act
- e.) The Fiscal Incentive Act, 1990
- f.) The Export Processing Zone Act, 1990
- g.) The Commercial Free Zone Act, 1994
- h.) The Retired Persons Incentive Act, Chapter 62 Revised 2003

Two other environment related policies were consulted to identify any linkage with tourism. These included the National Biodiversity Strategy Policy and the National Protected Areas Policy.

5.1 Structure for National Consultations

A preliminary assessment of the priority tourism policies were conducted by the consulting group. Thereafter, the process utilized the key resource of industry stakeholders in a consultative process that were conducted and allowed for feedback and recommendations to be tendered. The consultations were organized by sectors: primarily to include the public sector, private sector and civil society. The following were the groupings that attended the consultations. Several other organizations were invited to attend and while physical presence was not received, comments were fielded and offered via written communication. The annex includes a complete list of those invited and that fielded comments.

Public Sector Consultation

- a.) Belize Tourism Board
- b.) Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation
- c.) Fisheries Department
- d.) Forestry Department
- e.) Department of Environment
- f.) Protected Areas Conservation Trust
- g.) Customs Department
- h.) Ministry of Economic Development
- i.) BELTRAIDE

Private Sector Consultation

- a.) Belize Tourism Industry Association
- b.) Belize Hotel Association
- c.) Belize Tour Guide Association
- d.) Belize Chamber of Commerce
- e.) Belize Tourism Industry Association - San Pedro
- f.) Galen University

- g.) Spanish Lookout Caye
- h.) Fort Street Tourism Village
- i.) Caribbean Shipping Agencies

Civil Society Consultation

- a.) Association of Protected Areas Management Organizations
- b.) Belize Audubon Society
- c.) Mayflower Bocawina National Park
- e.) COMPACT
- f.) Oak Foundation
- g.) The Nature Conservancy
- h.) Friends of Swallow Caye Wildlife Sanctuary
- i.) Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management
- j.) Wildlife Conservation Society
- k.) Conservation International
- l.) World Wildlife Foundation
- m.) Belize Association of Private Protected Areas
- n.) Toledo Alliance for Sustainable Tourism
- o.) Conservation International
- p.) Community Baboon Sanctuary

6.0 Results of the Assessment of Priority Tourism Policies

For the purpose of the project, *policy was defined as a set of guiding principles or a course of action adopted toward a specific goal and set of objectives and/or a program of action adopted by government , or set of principles on which decisions are based.*⁷

During the execution of the project, three priority tourism specific policy documents were examined. These included:

- a.)The Blackstone Report of 1998
- b.)Cruise Tourism Policy of 2003
- c.)Cruise Action Plan of 2008

Considering the inter-related nature of the development and operations of tourism to natural resources and environmental management, two additional policies were reviewed for their content and reference to tourism promotion and management.

- a.) National Biodiversity Policy
- b.) National Protected Areas and Systems Policy

As well, the review process consulted related documents leading to the development of the tourism policies. These included:-

- a.)White Paper for Considerations for Updating the National Tourism Strategy for Belize, June 2005
- b.)Belize Tourism Sector Diagnostic 1998 - 2004

⁷ Definition taken from Random House Dictionary and Encarta Dictionary (2006)

Since much of the areas related to tourism are regulated under separate legislations and form the basis of much policy directions that impact tourism. These included:

- a.) The Belize Tourism Board Act, Chapter 275 Revised 2003
- b.) Hotels and Tourist Accommodation Act, Chapter 285 Revised May 2003
- c.) Hotels and Tourist Accommodations Act, Chapter 285 Revised October 2003
- d.) The National Institute of Culture and History Act
- e.) The Coastal Zone Act
- f.) The Environmental Protection Act
- g.) The Belize Port Authority Act
- h.) The Fiscal Incentive Act, 1990
- i.) The Export Processing Zone Act, 1990
- j.) The Commercial Free Zone Act, 1994
- k.) The Retired Persons Incentive Act, Chapter 62 Revised 2003

1998 Blackstone Tourism Strategy: The strategy was drafted as a response to a downward turn in tourism. The strategy was derived via a broad consultative process and was meant to guide the targeted development of the industry with due consideration for all its linkages.

2005 Tourism Policy: The policy was to serve as an update to the 1998 Strategy post the industry surpassing the earlier projections for overnight tourism and realization of an exponential increase in cruise tourism.

2003 Cruise Tourism Policy: The policy was drafted as a response to the exponential growth in its sub-sector and with a hope to guide development with the central goal of averting any negative impact to the image of the tourism product being promoted – one with an eco-ethic consideration.

6.1 The General Policy Making Environment of Belize

A detailed analysis of Belize's policy making environment was conducted in the recent works concluded by the Katalyst Institute for Public Policy and Research (May 2008). This current exercise did not seek to analyze that general policy making framework but key conclusions from the Katalyst exercise bore relevance to the policy making environment for tourism.

The Katalyst exercise concluded the following:⁸

- a.) The national policy context is characterized by inconsistencies in national development planning
- b.) Sporadic policy analysis practices
- c.) Mixed policy coordination
- d.) Significant levels of policy evaporation
- e.) Difficulties in measuring the impact of policy
- f.) Public policy formats are poorly defined and policies tend to develop via a wide variety of formal and informal procedures with varying levels of stakeholder involvement.

⁸ The Policy-Making Process in Belize – Issues and Challenges for the New Millennium, May 2008

The Katalyst report largely described Belize's policy making approach as a top down one centralized in the governance systems. Resource constraints have impacted civil society's involvement in the policy making process but recently has increasingly played an advisory role. Arising out of the exercise was a recommendation echoed over time, the need to embark on an inclusive process to determine national development plan and strategy promoting better policy coherence and harmonization of activities, guiding the involvement of international agencies and mitigating the influence of politicization in the process.

The conclusions of the Katalyst exercise bore relevance to this immediate effort to analyze tourism policies in that the fragmentation in policy making and implementation for tourism was clearly visible. While acknowledging the industry's ability to impact across sectors (positively and negatively), tourism policies as guiding development directives made little if any connection to policies for linkage sectors, particularly as it related to policies geared at the management and usage of natural resources. While policy documents like the National Biodiversity Strategy Policy and National Protected Areas Policy recognized tourism as an economic justification for conservation and natural resource protection; acknowledged the need for sustainable use of the natural resources, and recognized the need for cross-sectoral planning and involvement of stakeholders in the preservation of biodiversity and the management of protected areas, the tourism policies did not extend likewise. In the tourism policies, there were no connections in the document to these policy areas, even while verbalizing the importance of the natural and cultural resources of the country for the industry.

In several areas of the varying tourism policies, the industry was determined to utilize broad coordination in planning so as to ensure broad dissemination of benefits and ability to improve the quality of life for Belizeans. However, the policies did not make any connection to poverty alleviation plans, strategies or policies. If tourism is to become broadly beneficial and improve the quality of life for citizens by providing employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, the industry must as well seek to harmonize its development direction with those determined for poverty alleviation.

In summarizing one of the comments offered by a member of a stakeholder public sector agency, Belize has been known for well-written policy documents that expound noble ideals and intent. However, in an environment where central development planning and coordination is non-existent, the country is plagued by an inability and lack of capacity to translate rhetoric to reality. A tangible example offered was the community of Georgeville that sits at the foothills of the popular tourist destination of the Mountain Pine Ridge, but demonstrates no visible and tangible benefits from tourism for the local residents of the community. The anecdotal account chronicled the visible flow of transportation with tourists heading to the Mt. Pine Ridge destinations and very little stop over in the village or effort to energize the entrepreneurial abilities of the community to be able to serve as part of the attraction to the area.

At the conclusion of this project exercise, the above comment seemed to legitimately identify the challenge facing the tourism industry and its public sector proponents. How is spirit and noble intent in policy translated to action? How is the vital cross sectoral linkages and coordination in planning and decision making operationalized?

6.2 Tourism Policy Objectives for Biodiversity Conservation Considerations

The central objectives and developmental direction suggested by the policy were analyzed from seven key considerations for any policy with a focus on biodiversity conservation.

The methodology mirrored one utilized by Counterpart International in achieving their assessment of relevant tourism policies. The methodology was drawn from a several research works done for conservation and tourism.

The 1998 Blackstone Strategy drafted for the development of the tourism industry in Belize represented a real attempt to be targeted and foster responsible planning. The Strategy called for the development of a responsible tourism industry. Summary ethic of the strategy stated: *..... a proactive approach by all relevant stakeholders to develop, market and manage the industry with a view to creating a competitive advantage, maintaining environmentally sound tourism, cultural promotion and develop respect for local cultures, involvement by local people through community tourism and by developing strong linkages with other sectors.*

Key relevant sections included in the 1998 Strategy and relevant to the project's assessment are:-

- a.) A Proposed National Tourism Policy
- b.) Institutional Development for Tourism
- c.) Tourism Land Use Framework: Planning and Infrastructure
- d.) Tourism and Environmental Management Linkages
- e.) Community Based Initiatives
- f.) Training and Awareness Building

The 2005 Policy simply tried to update the strategy considering the realized development in the industry. However, the more detailed policy and development strategy were anchored in the 1998 Blackstone Strategy.

Both 1998 and 2005 Policy document were rooted in an integrated collaborative approach to planning and management. Recently, this policy directive was underscored via a presentation made at the 2008 Tourism Industry Presentation by the new Prime Minister of Belize Hon. Dean O. Barrow. As well clearly expressed in the presentation was this Government's support to development in the industry in a manner that respects and responsibly manages environmental and cultural resources.

The weakness of the policies was assessed as not so much in the essence of the policy as it may be apparent in actual implementation and operationalizing of the expressed intent. Summarily, the consultancy found the following:-

- a. The 1998 Blackstone Strategy was detailed in surveying the linkages for tourism and recommendations toward achieving a cross sectoral direction and development. The Strategy as well recognized the dependency on the natural and cultural environment as raw materials for the tourism industry. The Strategy made specific recommendations for achieving broad based

targeted planning via an institutional framework. Included in the Strategy were considerations for ensuring the sustainability of the industry and protection of the natural environment that served as the basis of the product. The Strategy recommended the importance for impact assessment and monitoring as well as identifying and implementing mitigation and adaptive measures in the event of negative impact.

- b. The 2005 Policy sought to update the Strategy. This policy document although it implied that there was an inter-sectoral nature of the industry, its collaborative recommendations were more implicit – leaving industry managers to determine the extent to which cross sectoral linkages and collaboration would be achieved. In relation to environmental protection, while the policy recognized its importance, it did not address the matter in a targeted and specific manner.

To achieve the eco-ethic central to the policy vision, it is recommended that an initiative to build on this document be examined with a view to stress objectives for inter-sectoral collaboration and coordination and specifically identify responsible environmental management and protection as fundamental for an industry heavily resource based.

- c. Perhaps most identifiable from the exercise to assess the policies, is the weakness not only in the expression of implementation as related to the cross-sectoral collaboration and environmental protection, but also a shortfall in regard to the execution to achieve the objectives and intent of the policy directive of 2005

It is with the intent to build on policy directives toward achieving its true spirit that forms the focus for recommendations gearing at -- increasing the probability of realizing actual objectives and yielding the results that were intended in the policies.

As stated in the previous section of a summary analysis of the overall policy making environment of Belize, tourism policies made no recognition or likeness to the policies of linkage areas for biodiversity conservation strategy and protected areas management. The tourism policies and plans need to reflect a link to these areas while as well ensuring adequate provisions for meeting the objectives and goals of international agreements and conventions ratified in the areas of environmental management, biodiversity conservation and climate change.

For a tourism policy that considers biodiversity conservation, the objectives of the policy should include several key points that at its heart hold consideration for its importance and the value to the industry.

- o ***Tourism becomes a support tool for biodiversity conservation in the future, ensuring that it's performed under the right conditions.***

The policies considered and addressed the importance of biodiversity conservation and environmental management. However, the policies while acknowledging a relationship of symbiosis do not strongly assert that tourism is the support tool for biodiversity conservation., Rather, they seem to accede to the fact that environmental protection and

biodiversity preservation are foundation products of tourism (in a sense the raw material of the industry).

- ***Society and the environment are able to absorb the negative impacts originated by tourism practices, benefiting at the same time from the positive impacts in a sustainable way.***

In this area, once again the policies recognize a need for responsible development, monitoring of impacts and environmental preservation. The foundation of the industry is to be broadly inclusive and beneficial improving the quality of life for Belizeans through employment creation and income generation. The policies fall short in delineating the manner in which it will be ensured that negative impacts are able to be absorbed, although the 1998 Strategy mentions the need for impact assessment, monitoring and mitigation or adaptive measures.

- ***Negative impacts from tourism are minimized in the society and the environment.***

This point is more strongly identified in the 1998 Blackstone Strategy, where a complete area of assessment focused on Tourism and Environmental Management Linkages. However, the actual implementation of a program to be able to assess, monitor and make decisions based on environmental considerations needs to be clearly defined and implemented.

The Environmental Protection Act (EPA) and the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulation chiefly seek to ensure that proper consideration is made prior to the commencement of any development project. A principal weakness in the EIA process however identified that the projects are evaluated on an individual basis and not for any cumulative developmental impact for the area that the project is proposed. In addition, projects are pursued and developed in absence of Strategic Environmental Assessments for the development area, which may include important guidelines on environmental issues as well as planning and regulation.

- ***Tourism contribution to local economies, conservation of natural and cultural resources, and life quality of both hosts and visitors is maximized.***

Again, the industry identifies employment of an integrated collaborative approach to planning and management. As well, the industry aims to remain broadly beneficial. The issue of sustainability both environmentally and culturally is explored in several areas across the '98 Strategy and mentioned in the succeeding 2005 Policy, however the actual implementation of an institutional framework to realize the goals is necessary.

- ***Quality of natural resources and the environment is maintained acting as main basis to achieve tourism economic viability.***

The policies do not specifically state that the quality of natural resources and the environment is key to achieve economic viability but it does allude to a symbiotic relationship and the importance of proper management and monitoring of the health of these systems. The industry is promoted as “responsible tourism” which would further support its many mentions of a need to consider environmental conditions in its planning

and management. The policies are as well strong on maintaining its current eco-ethic image and maintaining a high quality of experience for the tourist.

- **There is coordination and cooperation between all entities related to tourism development and biodiversity conservation at the national level.**

The policies call for a broadly integrated and collaborative approach. The 1998 Strategy went so far as to suggest a broad planning council with the view of achieving coordination and cooperation between entities related to tourism development. This as well included consideration for environmental management. While the legislation for such a Council was passed, the entity was never operationalized as the central planning and coordinating mechanism. Only one conservation organization is included as managers of government owned protected areas.

Again, it must be mentioned that current tourism policies do not draw a link to biodiversity conservation policies and strategies currently adopted by relevant public sector agencies.

- **Sustainable tourism – low impact becomes one of the main uses in high biodiversity areas with potential for its development.**

This issue is not specifically addressed in this fashion in the policies. However, the policies do broadly call for establishing acceptable limits of change and limitations of visitation within sites. The 1998 Blackstone Strategy mentioned the need to assess and monitor impacts of tourism and implementing mitigation/adaptive measures.

A National Protected Areas Systems Policy and Plan has been drafted and while there remains in large part an absence of a concerted effort to adopt the programs enshrined in these documents, the tourism policies should at the very least recognize the existence of the documents and seek to promote the programs from the standpoint of its potential for impact in governance and the economy.

6.3 Tourism's Institutional Framework

Key in this area is the need to establish a strong coordinating mechanism that will guide the tourism planning and management. The policies do generally reinforce the need to be collaborative in planning and management however the recommended coordinating mechanism while suggested and legislated was never actually operationalized into the tourism institutional structure. Along with operationalizing this mechanism – the National Tourism Council – the roles and responsibilities of the grouping as a whole needs to be delineated as well as those for the members of the Council.

As well, the allocation of resources (financial and human) will need to be clearly determined for the coordinating mechanism to realize its goals and objectives. The grouping will need to ensure that its membership is indeed reflective of the components and linkage sectors for the industry and reinforce as a high priority environmental management and conservation.

The legislation for the NTC was enacted since 2000 but a lack of political will never operationalized the council. With that, there is no evidence from which to draw to

determine the effectiveness or lack thereof for the Council to be able to impact policy making, industry planning, decision-making and management.

Since shortly after 1998, the Ministry of Tourism in essence was made defunct. Its policy making role was passed on to the Belize Tourism Board. Since March 2008, the Ministry of Tourism has been revived. With that, there is a compelling need to rationalize the role of the entities that now make policy, decisions and manage the industry. Will the Belize Tourism Board return to its original legislated purpose and become more a policy implementer and industry marketer? What will be the role of the Product Development Unit enshrined with the Belize Tourism Board in relation to its Ministry? With the revival of the National Tourism Council, there is a need to ensure that the role of all entities are clearly defined, linkages clearly established, separation of powers achieved so as to avoid duplication or authority uncertainties.

The revival of the National Tourism Council as well raises a need to analyze from a legal perspective whether a council retains sufficient political and legal clout to effect change, policy and policy monitoring. Some stakeholders go so far as to suggest that perhaps the analysis of the legislation for an Authority-type institution is required and decision taken to elevate the Council to that level.

6.4 Planning and Product Development

The establishment of a Product Development Unit was accomplished as one of the objectives set out in the 1998 Blackstone Strategy. This was a response to the weakness in the institutional framework for tourism, where the Ministry of Tourism did not have a Tourism Department that would see to the technical planning for the industry. Some stakeholders suggest an analysis of whether the Product Development Unit currently located within the Belize Tourism Board is proper placement, and if placement in the Ministry is not more applicable. Even as currently established, the coordination of this Unit with other linkage sectors may be in need of reinforcement, achievable via the legislated National Tourism Council.

As well necessary under a Planning and Product Development initiative is the need to establish acceptable limits of change/visitation limitations for tourism sites and zoning, especially for those sites demarcated as protected areas. The policies broadly call for the establishment of such limits, codes of conduct and standards for activities in these areas. Any such limits, codes and standards should be subject to review and formalization with the assistance of relevant environmental and conservation agencies. The sustainable use of natural resources and determination of acceptable levels of change are issues centrally included in the National Protected Areas Systems Policy. Determination of such limits of change requires cross coordination with the entities responsible for protected areas – public sector and civil society environmental organizations and collaboration with other economic sectors and private sector.

The NPASP had as well called for the establishment of a National Protected Areas Commission that would be charged with harmonizing the management of these areas. With the NPAC now operational, harmonization with the roles and responsibilities of this group with the cross cutting tourism planning mechanism (possibly NTC) will require further analysis in relation to protected areas management, the tourism sector and coordination with the sector.

The broad coordination of product development with linkage sectors must include collaboration with agencies responsible for infrastructure development, and municipal bodies and community leadership charged with the management and development of their respective areas.

The integrated planning and development would as well require looking at the fiscal aspect of the industry – more specifically incentive programs designed for the industry particularly those geared at achieving responsible planning and management with conservation at its core. Currently, the tourism industry has no specifically relevant incentive program.

6.5 Protected Areas

The policies do not speak specifically to protected areas; however it does speak strongly in the 1998 Blackstone Strategy to the establishment of limits of change and environmental management and consideration in tourism planning. As mentioned before, the tourism policies do not acknowledge the existence of National Biodiversity Strategy Policy and National Protected Areas Policy, while these policies recognize the tourism industry as a strong economic justification and tool for the continued work in conservation.

Via the national coordinating mechanism, there is room for the role of conservation groups in the tourism industry. Currently, the legislation for the NTC allows for the inclusion of one individual environmental group which currently manages government owned protected areas in a co-management arrangement. This allocation for the involvement of environmental organizations should include a group that more broadly represents management organizations for the protected areas entrusted to their care and one that promotes conservation advocacy and represent countrywide conservation concerns.

Development within protected areas is not covered by the policy. Typically this is left to the mandate of those departments in charge of protected areas – for example Forestry Department for forested reserves, Fisheries Department and Coastal Zone Management for marine areas and respective organizations and their management plans for their individual and respective protected sites.

Protected areas managers should be prepared to demonstrate the value of their contribution to the industry by establishing the value of the natural resources within the respective properties being managed and the value of these areas to the tourism product.

6.6 Certification in the Industry

While the policies have often recommended certification and classification within the industry, action has not yet been taken. The 1998 Strategy and the 2005 Policy recommends consideration of standards programs that will be marketable and increase the benefits to the industry. The 1998 Strategy/policy recommends that the promotion of these standards programs is generated with biodiversity conservation as a foundation. The 2005 Policy recommends that focus is placed on improving standards of operation

within the industry but is more geared at preserving the product image and the quality of experience for the visitor.

It is necessary that these programs specifically state that the one of its goals is to achieve biodiversity conservation and responsible environmental management, so that stakeholders can clearly accept the connection between their industry and the need to conserve and manage the environment responsibly.

6.7 Community Involvement in Tourism

The world trends in tourism show that new tourism – including community based, geo and experiential tourism – are the rising market trends. Belize's entire industry has as its lynchpin our natural and cultural resources. With that, consideration for the continued development of community based tourism continues to see initiatives for development.

The policies of the industry are to result in improved quality of life via income generation and employment creation. While there are initiatives to include communities as beneficiaries and stakeholders in tourism, the policies of the industry need to formalize via its broadly coordinating mechanism the role of communities in planning, management and decision making for tourism in their area.

In addition, tourism policies should acknowledge and seek to reflect strategies and plans for poverty alleviation.

6.8 Education, Training & Awareness for Tourism

The '98 Strategy spoke heavily to the development of a training facility and programs to support the industry. Since the drafting of the 1998 Strategy, a Tourism Training Unit has been established and formal tourism training courses have been introduced in tertiary level education. There have been several publicity building initiatives. However, these education, training and awareness initiatives now need a strong tie-in to environmental management, biodiversity conservation and its importance to the overall economic viability of the tourism industry.

This awareness needs to be fostered from the highest public sector level and on to include the industry stakeholders, general public and tourists local and international alike.

6.9 Marketing for Tourism

Marketing initiative should continue as per the policies to focus on Belize as a responsible tourism destination with a strong eco-ethic. Belize has already achieved the international acclaim for protection of its environment. However, it is believed that the reality of the industry and the visitor experience does not hold up to the product being marketed. This has the potential to negatively impact the industry.

While, marketing needs to continue to focus not only on the general attributes of the product but Belize as a sustainable eco friendly destination, real work needs to be done in order to guarantee that the experience of the visitor will equal the image being presented.

To be able to do this, the policy objectives have to focus on reinforcing this ethic in all aspects of the industry operation. These may include marketing for certification regimes, marketing for environmental management strategies and marketing of community based initiatives focused on preserving natural and cultural resources through responsible tourism.

6.10 Monitoring & Evaluation for Tourism

Similar to initiatives of product and development, monitoring and evaluation should ensure proper management of environmental resources, the industry needs to formalize policy directives into the collection of baseline data, conducting impact assessment, monitoring and initiating mitigation/adaptive measures.

The National Biodiversity Strategy, National Protected Areas Systems Policy, National Environmental Policy and the 1998 Strategy highlighted the importance of performing baseline assessments on the condition of the resources, impact assessment, monitoring and the design of mitigation activities. All policies stressed the need to collaborate with other agencies in conducting these assessments and monitoring.

As previously mentioned, there is the need to establish acceptable limits of change/visitation limitations for tourism sites and zoning, especially for those sites demarcated as protected areas. The tourism and environmental policies broadly call for the establishment of such limits, codes of conduct and standards for activities in these areas. Any such limits, codes and standards should be subject to review and formalization with the assistance of relevant environmental and conservation agencies.

The legislated National Tourism Council is a key mechanism that can be used to harness the collaboration with linkage sectors and utilize a broadly integrated approach necessary to ensure proper monitoring and evaluation, generating data that can feed back into policy formulation, management plans and implementation for the industry.

6.11 Incentives for Tourism

There are no established incentive programs for the tourism industry. The policies do mention the need for looking at this situation with a view comparative to those of our Caribbean countries. As well necessary is to ensure that financial incentives are pinned to responsible tourism management and initiatives geared at biodiversity conservation.

While the policies have often recommended specific incentive programs within the industry, action has not yet been taken. The 1998 Strategy and the 2005 Policy recommends consideration of incentive programs that will be marketable and increase the benefits to the industry. For example, the 1998 Strategy/policy recommends that the promotion of these incentive programs be tied to standards programs formulated with biodiversity conservation as a foundation. The 2005 Policy recommends that focus is placed on improving standards of operation within the industry but is more geared at preserving the product image and the quality of experience for the visitor.

The establishment of incentive programs needs to be tied to sector plans and destination development plans, monitored for effectiveness and satisfying identified project goals. Automatic approval should be discontinued.

PART TWO: RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTION PLAN

7.0 Recommendations for a Broadly Inclusive Industry

Natural ecosystems and biological resources provide the very goods and services that underpin the tourism industry. Sustainable tourism can generate employment and income, thus providing a strong incentive for conservation. Sustainable tourism has the potential to reconcile economic and environmental concerns and give practical meaning to sustainable development.

*Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
2004*

The Convention on Biological Diversity Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development were the result of extensive consultation involving differing parties, organizations, indigenous and local communities. The guidelines were initially presented by a group of experts at a workshop held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in 2001 and were finally adopted by the 7th Meeting of the Conference of Parties held in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia in February of 2004.

The guidelines were meant to be highly adaptive for the purpose of public sector planning and industry management, private sector industry projects design, planning and management as well as by civil society groups and local communities involved in the tourism industry and biodiversity planning and conservation. Some of the recommendations offered here find its roots in the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism.

7.1 Objectives for an Industry with Biodiversity Conservation as central

The objectives of the Belize's tourism policy include several points that hold consideration for the importance and the value of biodiversity to the industry. The central objectives and developmental direction suggested by the policies were analyzed from seven key considerations for any policy with a focus on biodiversity conservation.

- Tourism becomes a support tool for biodiversity conservation in the future, ensuring that it's performed under the right conditions.
- Society and the environment are able to absorb the negative impacts originated by tourism practices, benefiting at the same time from the positive impacts in a sustainable way.
- Negative impacts from tourism are minimized in the society and the environment
- Tourism contribution to local economies, conservation of natural and cultural resources, and life quality of both hosts and visitors is maximized.
- Quality of natural resources and the environment is maintained acting as main basis to achieve tourism economic viability.
- There is coordination and cooperation between all entities related to tourism development and biodiversity conservation at the national level.

- Sustainable tourism – low impact becomes one of the main uses on high biodiversity areas with potential for its development.

Although in many instances not explicitly presented, it can be derived from the examination of the policies that there is some intent to approach tourism planning and management in a collaborative and integrative manner with consideration for the preservation of the environment and sustainability. The 1998 Blackstone Report was probably the most targeted and focused in citing the need for environmental protection and mitigation of the impacts from the operations within the tourism industry. The Blackstone Strategy as well attempted to detail a manner for operationalizing not only the eco-ethic approach but also the collaborative integrated planning and management seen as crucial for the sustainable development of the industry.

Recommendation No. 1:-

To build on current policies via a revision to result with ONE policy directive and industry development strategy that guides the sector's growth and explicitly expounds on inter-sectoral planning, decision making and management for the tourism industry.

Actions:-

- ❖ While the policies may attempt a focus at delineating an ethic for the planning and management of tourism, it is recommended that equally as the Blackstone Strategy of 1998, the policy of 2005 is reviewed with a view to include a targeted policy directive on growth of a sustainable industry with environmental protection, management and mitigation of the impacts of the industry at its core.
- ❖ Perhaps a strong complement to the policies would be that implementation strategies for realizing the objectives of the policy become more targeted in structure so as to capitalize on the true benefits possible from the approach idealized in the policy.

The institutional framework and a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities of the players in the framework is central to yielding the maximum benefits for an industry desiring to employ an integrated and collaborative planning and management approach; realizing cross-sectoral and broadly distributed benefits while protecting and preserving the very basis of the industry – the natural and cultural resources.

7.2 Tourism's Institutional Framework

Recommendation No. 2:-

To reinforce the overarching planning and management mechanism for the tourism industry

The industry via policy content has made some progress in realizing the institutional framework needed in order to pave the way for progress in the industry. These included:

- Verbalizing an integrated collaborative multi-sectoral planning approach
- Passing legislation for a National Tourism Council – meant to be the driver of the integrated planning approach

- Establishing a Product Development Unit
- Establishing a Tourism Training Unit

The next key step is to reinforce the functionality of the institutional framework.

Actions:-

- ❖ **Operationalize a cross sectoral policy making and planning mechanism:** The NTC legislation was passed in 2000 but never really became functional due to a lack of political will. It is recommended that the legislation be reviewed with a view to improve its legal instrument so as to support its operations. ***It is recommended that serious consideration be given to converting the mechanism from a mere council (NTC) to the legal level of an authority.***

The explicit hope is that an elevation in structure from a Council to an Authority will give the National Tourism planning mechanism more “teeth” to effect change and legally guide the development in the industry.

- ❖ **Develop Terms of Reference for the coordinating planning mechanism:** A terms of reference would clearly define the role and responsibilities of the mechanism, structure of the partnership with other tourism public sector entities and any other technical working groups/committees formulated to support the functions of the planning body.

- ❖ **Expand Membership of the planning mechanism:** Currently, the NTC legal structure calls for members as follows: the Minister of Tourism as Chairperson, the Chairperson of the BTB; Ministry of Tourism representative; Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, NICH, Director of Tourism; Immigration & Nationality Department, Presidents of key private sector stakeholders (BTIA, BNTOA, Water Taxi Assoc., BTGA, BHA), representative from Belize Audubon Society and Belize Airline Operators Association, representative for the international air carriers in Belize, BCCI, PACT and Ministry of Human Development and the Mayors Association.

If the NTC is to be revived and serve as an overarching collaborative planning mechanism, it is recommended that the legislation be revised to include membership from the following agencies.

The Association for Protected Areas Management Organizations: While the Belize Audubon Society currently manages several of the government protected areas via a co-management agreement, several other protected areas not under this management currently comprise Belize’s tourism product. These include private protected areas, community based reserves and other government owned sites under some sort of co-management arrangement not with the Audubon Society. It is important that an organization that represents some sort of umbrella role and national environmental policy advocacy role be included on an integrated collaborative planning mechanism for an industry that has as its core the natural and cultural resources of the country. APAMO’s eighteen (18) members are responsible for management of twenty five (25) protected areas, representing a majority of the thirty (30) protected areas currently under co-management agreements with the government.

The Department of Transport: Transportation is a key component in the industry and establishing standards in the industry that reflects tourism concerns is necessary.

The Ministry of Works: The expansion of infrastructure is integral to the development of the industry and harmonizing plans will be a key to success.

The Ministries of Economic Development & Finance: If tourism is to be a priority sector it is important that economic development plans and tourism plans be harmonized and that realization of a national budget considers this priority factor.

❖ **Operationalizing an Expanded National Tourism planning mechanism:**

Due to resource shortage – human and financial – an expanded National Tourism planning mechanism can achieve the resource intensive goal of operating an industry via the integrated collaborative approach. The goal of operationalizing an expanded national tourism planning mechanism would be via establishing a mechanism that allows for the availability and consideration of all necessary input and advice.

Perhaps a way to achieve this is via technical working groups/committees each with its operating guidelines. It is recommended that a system of working groups/committees or similarly targeted mechanism be considered as a technical advisory level for the national tourism planning mechanism. The role of these technical groups would be to gather the necessary data, perform the necessary technical analysis providing such to the wider national tourism planning mechanism to allow for planning, decision making and management.

The working groups or similarly target mechanism would allow for the following necessary institutional strengthening and inter-sectoral linkages:-

a.) Tourism & Natural Resources, the Environment and Cultural Resources – focused on monitoring, assessment of impact and mitigation. A key role of this initiative would be to conduct and update baseline assessments, monitor and assess impacts of the industry and recommend mitigation activities; develop sector plans (e.g. tourism and archaeology, tourism and protected areas, land use plans, tourism and culture promotion etc.)

b.) Tourism, Fisheries and Coastal Zone Management - A key role of this initiative would be to conduct and update baseline assessments, monitor and assess impacts of the industry and recommend mitigation activities; develop sector plans.

c.) Tourism and Economic and Fiscal Planning - The planning nationally and sectorally needs harmonization if tourism is to truly be the lynchpin of the national economy and priority sector. Fiscally as well, the country needs to harmonize planning so as to ensure the deployment of resources is broadly beneficial to those sectors and areas that promise maximum yields.

d.) Tourism and Infrastructure Management – This technical group would seek to consider tourism needs in relevant planning, while as well harmonizing

countrywide development plans for the improvement of the country's infrastructure network.

e.) Tourism and Sub-National bodies and Communities – To become broadly inclusive, sub-national bodies and communities can not only be viewed from an angle of becoming beneficiaries from the spill over of the industry but as well play a key role in planning and decision making, especially as it relates to their respective geographical areas. This working group should include the National Alliance of Village Councils (NAVCO)

The structures are meant to have the critical inclusion of the three broad sectors – public, private and civil society.

- ❖ It is as well recommended that serious consideration be given to whether the Product Development Unit is adequately enshrined within BTB or whether a relocation to the Ministry would be most applicable and allow for better implementation of role (relocation with all necessary resources – human and financial).

It is as well recommended that the Product Development entity develops departments to be specifically responsible for the tourism sub-sectors – one for cruise and one for overnight – allowing for the identification of expertise and accommodation in planning with both respective sectors in mind.

A suggested organogram for the public sector tourism structure includes a product development authority/national tourism authority as a separate body with its own legislations and replacing the Council. This Authority would be alongside BTB and the Border Management agency within an amended organogram.

- ❖ Clearly define the roles, responsibilities, necessary linkages and powers of authority one to another of public sector tourism bodies – BTB, Ministry, PDU and National Tourism planning mechanism (with legislative powers and responsibilities of an Authority).

7.3 Planning and Product Development

Recommendation No. 3:-

To reinforce planning and product development initiatives ensuring broad inclusion and consultation, while remaining responsible in the use and management of natural and cultural resources

Achieving an industry with a strong eco-ethic would seem to require focus on the very resources that underpin the industry – natural and cultural – while establishing industry-wide standards and best practices.

Actions:-

- ❖ Strengthen current initiatives of plans to develop a rating system for the hotels, recognizable and compatible with internationally known systems, including management considerations that address environmental issues.

- ❖ Strengthen current initiatives of develop an industry certification program internationally recognized and marketable.
- ❖ Strengthen current initiatives to identify a system that guides industry operations and management with a strong guide for qualification as being eco-friendly. Perhaps this could be tied to some industry incentive.
- ❖ Establish broadly acceptable codes of conduct and standards of operation for different sub-sectors with a view to uphold industry's eco-ethic and consideration for preservation and protection of natural and cultural resources.
- ❖ Establish a system that amplifies current goals of the EIA process by establishing a respective and parallel system to analyze socio-economic impacts of projects and development initiatives.
- ❖ Utilize the EIA process in conjunction with Strategic Environmental Assessments and destination plans, land use plans so as to harmonize and inform project consideration and approval process.
- ❖ Utilize environmental organizations as a technical advisor in the EIA process.
- ❖ Develop Strategic Environmental Assessment for key tourism areas that will form the basis for developing destination plans. Utilize the resources of the Department of Environment and environmental organizations working in these areas to inform, shape and conduct the assessment necessary
- ❖ Develop destination plans for strategic tourism areas in harmony with other sectors, land use plans and Strategic Environmental Assessments
- ❖ Work with the Ministry of Natural Resources to develop any zoning plans, zoning legislation so as to ensure that the zoning plans will work in harmony with land use plans for the surrounding area of the zoned destination.
- ❖ Establish strong baseline data and information on the condition of natural and cultural resources – assessing impact and offering mitigation activities. (Via collaboration with agencies already conducting such initiatives such as the University of Belize, the Healthy Reefs for Healthy People Initiative, Wildlife Conservation Society, the Belize Audubon Society, the Coastal Zone Management Institute and Authority, the Fisheries Department, the Forest Department, Environmental NGOs etc).
- ❖ Reinforce the continued gathering and updating of above data and utilize in industry planning, decision making and management, via collaboration with agencies already conducting such initiatives.
- ❖ Establish countrywide acceptable limits of change for protected sites that form part of the tourism product – not meant to be immobile but allow for adjustment based on real situation, via collaboration with agencies already conducting such initiatives.

Critical for the usefulness of this and the above two stated recommendations is a clearly established frequency for continued updating of the data and revamping of industry plans and decisions based on the data.

- ❖ Establish a financing structure along with the relevant public sector bodies for budgeting of resources to conduct the necessary periodic assessment and monitoring activities, including allocations for any mitigation actions.

7.4 Protected Areas in Tourism

Recommendation No. 4:-

To ensure that tourism planning, management and development strongly considers the importance and health of protected areas as a central component of the product

Belize has earned an international name for its protection of natural resources. Several of our sites are internationally recognized either as World Heritage Sites or RAMSAR Sites. It is this strong eco-friendly base that underpins the very development of the tourism industry and earned the country popularity among those visitors seeking such an eco-responsible product.

To ensure that the country maintains its reputation and allows for the resources-based tourism industry product to maintain economic viability, these protected areas are critical.

Actions:-

- ❖ Harmonize tourism policies with those of National Biodiversity Strategy and National Protected Areas Systems Plan and Policy
- ❖ Ensure tourism policies reflect those agreements and obligations required of government and included in international agreements and conventions ratified by Belize.
- ❖ Work with PACT to ensure that resources earned via the tourism industry are re-invested for the continued benefit of biodiversity conservation and reinforcement of the viability of the tourism product. This is to be done not by PACT but by grant funding to organizations already conducting these activities.

Funds should continue to be invested primarily for aiding monitoring programs, impact assessment initiatives and mitigation efforts. As well important is for the continued establishment of eco-friendly infrastructure within sites that will support the site relevant tourism activities.

Some stakeholders recommended that serious consideration be given to reverse the central government agreement to award 33% of the contribution from PACT to the Belize City Council received via the cruise tourism head tax.

- ❖ Reclassify tourism activities within protected areas so as to be site specific considering the biodiversity and sensitivity of the eco-system.

- ❖ Establish tourism zones with particular focus on activities sensitive to particulars of respective sites.
- ❖ Strongly encourage and support site managers to establish codes of ethics and codes of conduct for tourists, guides, operators, the general public within these sites and all users of the protected sites
- ❖ Utilize the National Tourism planning mechanism structure and relevant technical working group to offer advice to the NPAC on any new site designations or de-reservations. According to the National Protected Areas Policy and Plan, the National Protected Areas Commission is to be chiefly responsible for site designation and de-reservation, however the policy accepts that consultation and coordination is important.
- ❖ Strengthen current plans to develop cruise tourism specific sites with capacity limits, codes of conducts and codes of ethics. Eliminate cruise tourism visitation from sites declared particularly sensitive and valuable to biodiversity conservation.
- ❖ Incorporate international biodiversity treaties and agreements into tourism planning and management.
- ❖ Strengthen current plans to establish and incorporate the National Protected Areas Policy System and a National Protected Areas Council and establish strong coordination with tourism planning.
- ❖ Review the EIA Regulation with a particular focus on requirements for energy management and conservation, water usage, waste management (sewage systems) and solid waste, perhaps even for the inclusion of recycling initiatives.
- ❖ Support Government initiatives and processes to realize the Solid Waste Management Program for the Western Corridor
- ❖ Ensure that Government realizes a national solid waste management plan for the entire country utilizing the above program for establishing acceptable solid waste management systems in areas not included in this program, especially in high tourism areas such as Hopkins, Placencia, Toledo and the Northern Corridor of the country.
- ❖ Utilize the revenues garnered via the Environmental Tax to fund a national solid waste management program. This is in keeping with the Environmental Tax legislation.
- ❖ Exempt bio-friendly products from the Environmental Tax. Reduce import duties on bio-friendly products.

7.5 Certification

Recommendation No. 5:-

To establish certification programs, standards and codes for an industry that responsibly utilizes natural and cultural resources with the final outcome of industry sustainability

Belize has for years marketed itself as an eco-friendly destination, but stopped short of establishing a certification program with acceptability among biodiversity conservation and industry stakeholders and is internationally recognized. Several studies on the sector have made reference and suggestion towards this end. Additionally these same studies of the sector have advised on establishing acceptable export ready standards and service quality among operators in the different sub-sectors.

In relation to establishing standards and best practices in the industry, Programme for Belize (an APAMO member) in a project in conjunction with Rainforest Alliance had developed an applicable best practice program for tourism with due consideration for environmental management and biodiversity conservation. That program now currently forms as the foundation and basis for the promotion of best practices in the industry via the Belize Hotel Association, with endorsement from Belize Tourism Board.

Actions:

- ❖ Strengthen current initiatives to adopt best practices for the tourism industry ensuring its local applicability and applicability for all sub-sectors of the industry.
- ❖ Strengthen current plans to develop a rating system for the hotels, recognizable and compatible with internationally known systems with focus on management regime that respects natural and cultural resources.
- ❖ Recommend duty exemption and/or lower customs duties on environmentally friendly technologies, encouraging investors to utilize such in their operations – solar panels, 4-stroke engines, hybrid vehicles etc.
- ❖ Eliminate Environmental Tax from the importation of environmentally friendly products and technologies.
- ❖ Strengthen current initiatives to develop an industry certification program that is internationally recognized, is marketable and yields real benefits to participants.
- ❖ Strengthen current initiatives to identify a system that shapes industry operations and management with a strong guide for qualification of being eco-friendly.

Perhaps this could be tied to some industry incentive. These can include programs geared towards being energy conscious, prudent water usage, using product sensitive to natural resources protection, grounds management and preservation of surrounding ecosystems and resources etc.

7.6 Community Involvement in the Industry

Recommendation No. 6:-

To continue to ensure that the tourism industry is broadly inclusive and respect cultural resources

Community based tourism is cited in the policies as an area of increasing popularity and growth on the international scene. The policies as well encourage continued development of community based tourism initiatives as an effective means of improving quality of life and the quality of the tourism experience for visitors.

Community based tourism can as well effectively serve the purpose of biodiversity conservation, protecting the very base of Belize's tourism industry and working effectively towards economic viability.

Actions:-

- ❖ Harmonize tourism policy and planning with poverty alleviation strategies and plans.
- ❖ Ensure that tourism policies, plans and operations are respectful of people's cultures and cultural assets
- ❖ Utilize the central coordinating and planning mechanism to receive the input of local communities and sub-national bodies (municipalities) in the planning for tourism.
- ❖ Empower sub-national bodies and local communities to contribute effectively to the industry decision making process via the central coordinating and planning mechanism.
- ❖ Investigate and adopt ways to directly channel training and resources to local communities so as to increasingly become beneficiaries and decision makers for a broadly inclusive tourism industry and biodiversity conservation promoters.

7.7 Education, training and public awareness

Recommendation No. 7:-

To ensure that the stakeholders understand the importance of the responsible management and protection of natural and cultural resources as the foundation of industry viability

Since the 1998 Strategy recommended strong public awareness to curb the attitudes demonstrated towards tourism, Belize has effectively implemented several campaigns. Among these were the "Service not Servitude campaign", the "have you hugged a tourist today campaign" and "Tourism is for all of us be a part of it campaign – to name a few.

Cited in the 100 Day Outlook is a campaign entitled “I AM BELIZE”. The campaign is rightly captioned and can be used to capture the different faces of the Belize tourism industry – from cultural, to tourism sites, to biodiversity flora and fauna, tourism activities and many other aspects of what makes Belize a unique travel and tourism product.

Actions:

- ❖ Utilize PACT grant funding to APAMO and other environmental organizations as strong proponents for conservation public awareness programs and training. It is recommended that the science to action approach be supported for its utility and ability to convince and mobilize.

This is not meant to have PACT function as the environmental educator but for the organization to utilize its grant funds to support the initiatives of environmental organizations in the area.

- ❖ Review the *primary education* curriculum with a view to introduce conservation and environmental management in the science curriculum for students.
- ❖ Foster awareness initiatives that seek to educate at the highest level of public sector of the symbiotic relationship between tourism and biodiversity conservation
- ❖ Foster awareness initiatives that seek to educate all levels of the NTC planning mechanism to the symbiotic relationship between tourism and biodiversity conservation.
- ❖ Foster awareness initiatives among the general public and especially within communities that are tourism stakeholders of the symbiotic relationship between tourism and biodiversity conservation.
- ❖ Foster awareness initiatives among private sector as a whole and those engaged as tourism stakeholders of the symbiotic relationship between tourism and biodiversity conservation.
- ❖ Foster awareness initiatives among civil society and environmental organizations of the symbiotic relationship between tourism and biodiversity and tourism as an economic activity that can generate financial support for biodiversity conservation.
- ❖ Review current formal education training programs for natural resources management and tourism to ensure that aspects of both disciplines are included in the respective programs.
- ❖ Foster general awareness initiatives for the tourists and Belizean public of the importance of biodiversity conservation and its natural foundation for a key economic earner – tourism.
- ❖ Review training programs promoted by the BTB and other tourism stakeholders to ensure an inclusion of biodiversity awareness and importance of conservation.

7.8 Marketing

Recommendation No. 8:-

To ensure that the stakeholders understand the importance of the responsible management and protection of natural and cultural resources as the foundation of industry viability

With the institutionalization of above listed recommendations and actions, Belize can truly continue to promote itself as an eco-friendly destination, whose tourism development is responsible and considers biodiversity conservation and protection of natural resources.

Actions:-

- ❖ By all means, we must continue to promote Belize as an eco-friendly, responsible tourism destination.
- ❖ Promote the realization of any certification and best practice management programs geared at natural resources protection and sustainable management
- ❖ Promote the realization of incentive programs for investors to operate sustainably, eco-friendly and with consideration for natural resource protection

7.9 Monitoring & Evaluation

Recommendation No. 9:-

To establish acceptable monitoring and evaluation programs complete with the identification of those responsible for data collection, analysis, collection schedules and indicators with a view to incorporate into planning, decision-making and management

For Belize to maintain economic viability in the tourism industry, it is important that the very basis of the industry is protected, monitored, evaluated and mitigation measures included in planning and operations.

Quite a few of the recommended actions are reiterated for emphasis and applicability (cross cutting nature) to several areas in the Recommendations.

Actions:-

- ❖ Harmonize activities in this regard with the entities responsible in public sector and civil society for natural resource management and with activities identified in National Biodiversity Strategy Policy and National Protected Areas Systems Plan and Policy
- ❖ Establish broadly acceptable codes of conduct and standards of operation for different sub-sectors with a view to uphold industry's eco-ethic and consideration for preservation and protection of natural and cultural resources.

- ❖ Establish a system that amplifies current goals of the EIA process by allowing for a respective system to analyze socio-economic impacts of projects and development initiatives.
- ❖ Establish strong baseline data and information on the condition of natural and cultural resources – assessing impact and offering mitigation activities.
- ❖ Reinforce the continued gathering and updating of above data and utilize in industry planning, decision making and management, via collaboration with agencies already conducting such initiatives.
- ❖ Establish countrywide acceptable limits of change for protected sites that form part of the tourism product – not meant to be immobile but allow for adjustment based on real situation, via collaboration with agencies already conducting such initiatives.
- ❖ Critical for the usefulness of this and the above two statement recommendations is a clearly established period for continued updating of the data and revamping of industry plans and decisions based on the data.
- ❖ Establish a financing structure along with the relevant public sector agencies for budgeting of resources to conduct the necessary periodic assessment and monitoring activities, including allocations for any mitigation actions.
- ❖ Review the EIA Regulation with a particular focus on requirements for energy management and conservation, water usage, waste management (sewage systems).

7.10 Incentives for Tourism

Recommendation No. 10:

To investigate with a view to adopt incentive schemes (financial and otherwise) for the tourism industry reinforce responsible management and protection of natural and cultural resources

Currently, there exist no financial incentive programs unique to the tourism industry. The industry stakeholders and investors apply for approval to general across the board incentive programs that include the fiscal incentive programs, export processing zones and commercial free zone programs.

It is important that like countries in the Caribbean that employ programs specific to the tourism industry that Belize considers likewise.

Actions:-

- ❖ Institute a financial incentive program tied to a certification program for medium to large scale tourism investments.
- ❖ Institute financial incentives for those operators – small, medium and large – who desire to establish management programs which at its heart considers conservation – biodiversity and resources management regimes.

- ❖ Promote these financial incentive programs to new and existing investors.
- ❖ Monitor financial incentive programs for effectiveness and individual investments for satisfying stated goals and objectives.
- ❖ Peg incentive programs to destination and development plans as well as Strategic Environmental Assessments for key destinations and areas.
- ❖ Consider tax breaks (Environmental Tax) and duty reduction and/or elimination for environmentally friendly products and technology.
- ❖ Allow for tax rebates for those enterprises that implement environmentally friendly products and technology in management and operations

PART THREE: THE WAY FORWARD

8.0 *The Way Forward*

The intention of the project is to serve as national assessment of priority tourism plans for biodiversity conservation, while making recommendations and presenting an action plan to move towards implementation. With that in mind, this document seeks to present a trajectory for moving the process forward to achieving implementation of the stated recommendations and action plan.

8.1 *Establishing an Advocacy Committee*

While the National Tourism Council has been recommended as the vehicle for establishing inter-sectoral planning and management of the tourism industry, there likewise needs to be a mechanism to move the recommendations and action plan forward resulting from this project. It is our view that an Advocacy Committee is crucial to this end.

Membership & Role of the Advocacy Committee

The committee should be representational of the three sectors that were chiefly consulted during the execution of this analysis project. The recommended composition is two (2) civil society members, two (2) private sector members and three (3) public sector members representing key organizations in the public sector relevant to the industry and its main linkages. The recommendation would go so far as to suggest that APAMO chairs the Advocacy Committee – since the organization was the local proponent for this project

The role of the Advocacy Committee members will be to educate their sector and members on the components of the project that represents their view for improving tourism policies and operations for the inclusion of biodiversity conservation. The members will lobby their sector for support and work with the Chair of the Advocacy Committee and the Ministry of Tourism in moving the recommendations and components of the Action Plan forward.

8.2 Recommending Three Priority Projects

Project Title: **Project to Revitalize a National Tourism Planning and Coordinating Mechanism (whether the NTC or differently named body)**

Project Objective: Advocacy Committee meets with Ministry of Tourism to receive ratification on the way forward and result in revitalization a National Tourism Planning Mechanism

Activities:

- a.) Review of the Legislation & Membership
- b.) Amendment of the Legislation (with strong consideration to elevate to level of Authority)
- c.) Determination of Terms of Reference
- d.) Determination of Budgeting/Financing Structure
- d.) Identification of working groups/committees
- e.) Determination of Terms of Reference for groups
- f.) First Meetings called to determine a calendar of operational activities

Project Title: **Project for Establishment of Baseline Data on the Environment in Key Destinations**

Project Objective: The project will seek to conduct and collate an environmental baseline data assessment for key tourism destinations in the country – to be determined during project preparation phase.

Activities:

- a.) APAMO takes lead to work with Natural Resources/Environment working group do draft a proposal
- b.) Proposal Goal: Via collaboration with key stakeholders and biodiversity conservation organizations research, gather and collate baseline data on key tourism destinations.
- c.) Proposal submitted to Counterpart International, CEPF and CI for funding
- d.) Results of the Project – presented to Ministry of Tourism, NTC, and stakeholders.
- e.) Awareness conducted on results of the project
- g.) Advocacy to ensure results of the project are utilized in subsequent sector plans, policies and destination plans

Project Title: **Determination of New Industry Strategy**

Project Objectives: Currently, the Ministry of Tourism is pursuing activities to arrive at a new Tourism Master Plan and Zoning Plan and Zoning Legislation. During consultation, we learned that there were divergences within the broader tourism sector of just which of the policies took central guiding force. This has the potential to segment and introduce fragmentation into the industry. This project seeks to support ongoing processes to establish a new master plan/strategy for the industry and efforts to conduct critical exercises such as arriving at a Zoning Plan and Zoning Legislations.

Activities:

- a.) Advocacy Committee with APAMO as advisor plays an integral and visible role in the discussions and plans to determine the environmental and biodiversity component of both initiatives (*Tourism Master Plan and the Zoning Plan and Zoning Legislation process*)

- b.) Advocacy Committee works to ensure that the process to arrive at the Tourism Master Plan and Zoning Plan and Legislation are conducted via the National Tourism Council mechanism

- c.) Advocacy Committee ensures that broad-based consultation is conducted to ensure input of all relevant stakeholders into the Tourism Master Plan and the Zoning Plan and Legislation.

9.0 Conclusion

The relationship between tourism and biodiversity conservation is a symbiotic one that requires commitment and proactive decision making at all levels of government and from all stakeholders alike.

It is broadly accepted that tourism can yield positive benefits across sectors and as such make a contribution to sustainable development. Tourism is dynamic and its future projected growth offers promise of increased economic benefits for countries and communities.

Achieving sustainability is the responsibility of all players in the industry, with government taking on a principal role as policy maker, enabler and enforcer. While most of the impacts of tourism are felt at the private sector level via enterprise activities, government can take the leading role. Individual investments would find it difficult to yield results and positive impact, but governments can achieve results via its regulatory framework, offering economic incentives and utilizing the resources of its institutions and agencies to promote the enabling environment and disseminating good practices.

Strong policy making at the level of governments is the avenue to which the development can be positively challenged. Achieving sustainability in tourism is a process.

RESOURCES CONSULTED

A Tourism Strategy Plan for Belize, Blackstone Corporation, June 1998

Tourism Sector Diagnostic 1998- 2004, Launchpad Consulting, January 2004

Cruise Tourism Policy, Belize Tourism Board, 2004

White Paper – Considerations for Updating the National Tourism Strategy for Belize, Project Supported by CPEC, June 2005

Tourism Policy for Belize, Launchpad Consulting, 2005

100 Day Outlook, Ministry of Tourism & Civil Aviation, May 2008

National Biodiversity Policy, Vincent Gillett, George Myvett & Allan Herrera, May 2006

National Environmental Policy & Strategy, Department Solutions Limited, 2006

National Protected Areas Systems Plan, Belize's Policy on Protected Areas, Eugenia Wo Ching, Feb 2005

The Belize National Protected Areas System Plan, November 2005

The Policy Making Process in Belize: Issues and Challenges for the New Millennium, Katalyst Institute for Public Policy & Research, May 2008e

Protecting Belize's Natural Heritage: An Action Plan for Shared Stewardship of a Cruise Destination, Conservation International, 2008

Breaking Barriers – Managing Growth - The Global Travel & Tourism Summit Highlights, World Travel & Tourism Council, Lisbon, May 2007

Making Tourism More Sustainable – A Guide for Policy Makers, United Nations Environment Program and World Tourism Organization, 2005

Guidelines for Biodiversity & Tourism Development, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2004

Blueprint for New Tourism, World Travel & Tourism, 2003

Corporate Social Leadership in Travel & Tourism, World Travel & Tourism, 2002

Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas – Guidelines for Planning & Management, Cardiff University, United Nations Environment Program, World Tourism Organization, IUCN – World Conservation Union, 2002

ANNEX I: ASSESSMENT MATRIX

No.	Standard Requirements	Tourism Policy in Protected Areas
OBJECTIVES		
1	Tourism becomes a support tool for biodiversity conservation in the future, ensuring that it's performed under the right conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy does not necessarily promote tourism as a tool to support biodiversity conservation but does expound that it is an internationally accepted premise that tourism can be a support for conservation offering a natural economic justification and a way to get communities involved in biodiversity conservation. ✓ The 2005 Policy's central focus is on eco-ethic. Mentioned in several areas of policy is that tourism development must bear in mind protection of natural resources. ✓ The 2003 Cruise Policy states in its intro that environmental facts must be considered in the growth of tourism. Mentioned in policy consideration is that development is to be guided by national policy, maintaining eco-tourism product image and environmental considerations in development are mentioned in several areas of the policy. ✓ 100 Day Outlook mentions environmental concerns in Objective 1 Develop sustainable market position and Objective 5 Ensure environmental sustainability
2	Society and the environment are able to absorb the negative impacts originated by tourism practices, benefiting at the same time from the positive impacts in a sustainable way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy was clear in stating that a responsible tourism ethic considers the impact on environment and resources. The Strategy as well called for a linkage with the environment sector ensuring that monitoring of impacts and assessments are conducted complete with mitigation and adaptive activities. ✓ The 2005 Policy implies in several areas the need for sustainable development. In pgs 3&4, #1 Guiding Principle is that tourism should improve quality of life... and #3 mentions the need to foster meaningful local participation in the industry. On pg 16 – the policy calls for sustainable tourism objectives with inclusion of heritage and cultural protection as well as environmental management. ✓ The central focus in the policy is on an industry with an “eco-ethic”. The policy in several areas mentions the improvement of the quality of life for all and speaks to the inclusion of broad benefits ✓ 2003 Policy speaks in several areas of maintaining ecotourism image; maintaining quality experience for visitors; limitations to sites visited; standards and guidelines for cruise lines while in harbor; purchasing of locally owned tour packages; support for

		<p>local communities in and around the sites. Objective and Guidelines state “Protect and optimize site utilization by making recommendations in visitation levels”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cruise lines are supposed to sign and adhere to a compliance and monitoring plan. Cruise Policy has quite a few “non-negotiable” clauses – limitations to sites, utilizing local services etc. (Not yet fully implemented). ✓ 100 Day Outlook – Objective #1 Sustainable Market position; Objective 3 Involve local communities in the development of the industry; Objective #5 Ensure environmental sustainability;
3	Negative impacts from tourism are minimized in the society and the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy did discuss the need to form a link with the environment sector and consider tourism’s impact, establish monitoring and assessment protocols and adaptive measures. Policy Area 6 recommends that facilities will be developed in an environmentally and culturally sensitive manner. Policy 7 talks about making environmental protection a cornerstone for all policies related to tourism. ✓ Addressed in that the 2005 Policy calls for sustainable development, respect of eco-ethic – emphasis however on improving/maintaining quality of experience for visitors. ✓ The intro to 2003 cruise tourism policy – environmental considerations are a must to consider. Objective – establish site limits and port calls, policy consideration is on proper management, key environmental concerns are listed in the policy and the requirement of adherence to a compliance and monitoring plan for cruise lines. ✓ 100 Day Outlook – Objective #5 Environmental Sustainability -- private sector voting seat on NEAC, Support for a national protected areas policy system and call for a national protected areas commission; call for new investors to utilize environmental mgmt systems and waste management. ✓ Policies speak to establishment of limits to sites with assistance of NGOs; practices to minimize human footprint on the environment; raise awareness of potential environmental problems associated with poor tourism planning and management.
4	Tourism contribution to local economies, conservation of natural and cultural resources, and life quality of both hosts and visitors is maximized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy does not necessarily promote tourism as a tool to support biodiversity conservation but does expound that it is an internationally accepted premise that tourism can be a support for conservation offering a natural economic justification and a way to get communities involved in biodiversity conservation. The 1998 Strategy as well discussed that tourism should be developed with broad distribution of benefits for economic empowerment. ✓ 2005 Policy central focus is in improvement of quality of life via an industry that respects eco-ethic.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2003 Cruise Policy mentions very much the need to be complementary to national policy and fueling employment and income generation. ✓ 100 Day Outlook – calls for an industry that is broadly inclusive, maintain quality of experience for visitors; community tourism initiatives; mention role of NICH in cultural tourism; inclusive of community training to become beneficiaries of the industry and focused on infrastructure improvements to support industry development in the respective areas of concern.
5	Quality of natural resources and the environment is maintained acting as main basis to achieve tourism economic viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy recognized natural and cultural resources as the basis of the industry and its health and protection as critical to sustainability of the industry. ✓ 2005 Policy addresses the issue of consideration for protection of natural and cultural resources in sections on Product Development; Destination Management & Development. While the natural and cultural resources are seemingly accepted as basis of the industry the policy does not advance it as the “basis/fundamental principle to achieve economic viability”. ✓ 2003 Cruise Policy and 100 Day Outlook places consideration on environmental sustainability with a view to maintain product image
6	There is coordination and cooperation between all entities related to tourism development and biodiversity conservation at the national level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy was strong in establishing tourism as a highly intersectoral industry with possibility for inter-sectoral negative and positive impacts and for that reason calling for the establishment of an inter-sectoral planning and management mechanism and ethic. ✓ Coordination in the industry is central in all policies. Several public & private sector agencies are admitted as key stakeholders in planning and management of industry. NGOs mentioned in a few areas but stops short of defining roles in overall planning, management and decision making for the tourism industry.
7	Sustainable tourism – low impact becomes one of the main uses on high biodiversity areas with potential for its development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy did not discuss specifically low impact activities in these areas but in Policy 7 it did mention that there should be a review of activities, use and facilities associated with national protected parks and reserves that form parts of the tourism product. ✓ Not mentioned as activity to promote in said areas but mentions in several areas as necessary to establish limits. ✓ Cruise Policy mentions NGOs in setting limits for sites, private sector mentioned as key to diversifying sites to broaden package available and maintain eco-tourism product image. ✓ 2005 Policy mentions the development of specific sites for cruise tourism visits.

GUIDELINES		
0	Obtaining and systematizing information that allows assessing the current situation of tourism and biodiversity, as well as other variables related to sustainable management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy in Chapter 10 Tourism and Environmental Management linkages calls for tourism industry to address the issue and develop strong policies of environmental protection. The Chapter as well speaks to establishing limits in the industry as it relates to use of natural areas, monitoring and assessing impacts and proposing and implementing mitigative measures ✓ Not mentioned in 2005 Policy– compilation of this type of database of info – its usage in planning only in so far as establishing visitation limits for sites.
INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK		
1	Promoting the coordination among national tourism sector and conservationist sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy expounded an intersectoral nature of the industry and a need to be likewise in planning – including conservation and environmental managers. ✓ The 2005 Policy seems to have accepted that the national environment is important for the industry. The policies stress collaboration across sectors. Operationalizing the integrative approach needs more elaboration.
2	Defining clearly the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved in tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy expounded the intersectoral nature, it did briefly speak to roles and responsibilities. In the view of the strategy the NTC was a means to be able to establish these roles and responsibilities. ✓ Roles and responsibilities as it relates to public sector is defined and set out in several industry related legislations. Private sectors role in industry investment and development is somewhat elaborated. Roles of NGOs and civil society not defined. NGOs are specifically mentioned in relation to setting visitation limits (2003 Policy) ✓ Policy needs to elaborate in detail on how the roles of agencies is to be utilized in planning, decision making and management.
3	Strengthening local tourism authorities with needed resources in order to fulfill their role and ensure the conservation of the natural resources, which represent the main tourism attractions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy encourages the inclusion of communities in tourism, conservation, management of resources and monitoring for the industry. The strategy as well speaks to an industry that must improve the quality of life for communities. ✓ Policies speak heavily to training but mostly in the areas of education development for service providers, licensing of operations and guides. Does not speak to institutional strengthening or resources for private sector or civil society. ✓ 100 Day Outlook and 2005 Policy speaks to <u>conscientization</u> and awareness building, education as it relates to communities taking advantage of the industry

Assessment of Priority Tourism Policies & Action Plan for the Inclusion of Biodiversity Conservation

4	Implementing international agreements related to tourism and biodiversity conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy does not speak to this. ✓ Not covered in the policies
5	Implementing effective control mechanisms and sanctions for those who infringe the imposed regulations to control tourism impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy does not address sanctions directly but does insist that management of the industry and maintaining standards is an issue that falls as the responsibility of all involved. The strategy does speak to establishing standards and limits and quality control mechanisms in the industry to ensure product integrity. ✓ The 2005 Policy speaks to establishing controls in so far as limits for visitation sites. ✓ 2003 Cruise Policy speaks to adherence of compliance and monitoring plans for cruise lines. ✓ Other sanctions and control mechanisms covered in respective legislations.
6	Ensuring to harmonize both tourism and biodiversity strategies through mutual consultation between government and other interested groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy does speak to an interlinkage between tourism and environmental management and the need for tourism to have strong policy support for environmental protection ✓ The policies stress a collaborative integrative approach, but does not specifically speak to harmonization of policies in the area of tourism and bio-diversity. ✓ Policies do mention concerns for sustainable development; concern for resources management; environmental concerns.
7	Establishing a sustainable tourism committee in national level (integrating biodiversity and tourism, public and private sector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy was the genesis for the NTC – recommending such an intersectoral coordinating mechanism ✓ 2005 Policy speaks to cross-sectoral collaboration in planning and management. ✓ Policies call for utilization of a National Tourism Council – cross sectoral – however inclusion is only in so far as one NGO and not an organization that represents PAs countrywide ✓ Cruise Policy recommends establishment of Sustainable Development Fund but does not detail management of fund.
8	Promoting associations with NGO's to promote connections between decision makers and tourism planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy does speak to an interlinkage between tourism and environmental management and the need for tourism to have strong policy support for environmental protection ✓ The most specific mention is of BAS in the legislation for National Tourism Council. ✓ However, policies reinforce cross sectoral approach in planning and management.

9	Ensuring technical assistance on planning, administration and finances for local communities in high biodiversity areas, supporting the coordination with the private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy does speak to the inclusion of communities not solely as beneficiaries of the industry but players in the planning process for tourism ✓ The policies do speak to getting communities involved and prepared to become beneficiaries of the industry. (training, technical assistance via training) ✓ However, it does not speak to financing assistance for local communities ✓ Private sectors are able to make use of the same training resources. ✓ No specific mention of any financial assistance.
Planning / Product Development		
10	To diversify destinations and relieving pressure from visitors in other destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy speaks strongly to product development and establishing limits for sites. ✓ Mentioned in diversifying product; improving and maintaining sites and visitation limits; specifically mentioned in the 2005 Policy to develop cruise specific sites.
11	Promoting demand management and troubles reduction originated by tourism <u>temporality</u> through marketing and price techniques promoting tourism in low seasons or alternate destination distributing tourism flux	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Only in so far as it relates to establishing limits for visitation sites with a view to maintaining the product image and quality of visitor experience
12	To promote and regulate tourism planning (public use) in natural areas (either protected or not) before its development and/or promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The policies (2005 and 1998 Strategy) speak to maintaining visitation limits with a view to maintain product image. ✓ General standards for operations are covered in so far as the legislation in specific areas detail such. ✓ 100 Day Outlook makes a call for environmental sustainability in the same way as 2005 Policy called for considerations of natural and cultural resources protection.
13	Regulation of tourism infrastructure in natural areas (either protected or not) reducing the potential visual and/or environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy speaks to the review of activities, facilities and use of national parks and reserves – to be done with help of linkage ministries and NGO management of the sites. ✓ General standards for operations are covered in so far as the legislation in specific areas detail such. ✓ 100 Day Outlook makes a call for environmental sustainability in the same way as 2005 Policy called for considerations of natural and cultural resources protection.
14	Ensuring the implementation of codes of conduct, guidelines, regulations and ethics codes to minimize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy does encourage standards in the industry, environmental and cultural sensitive development, international standards in development of facilities and

	visitors impact in natural areas	<p>adhering to licensing processes in the different sub-sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2005 Policy in the section on Attraction Development in the Policy Statement for Product Development advocates for establishing standards in operations – “export ready standards”, classification system for hotels ✓ Other policies like the 100 Day Outlook calls for increased training and certification in tours and guides, hotel classification ✓ Codes of Conduct in visitation areas normally covered by individual PA managers ✓ Specific legislations will detail regulations as it relates to the respective area – EPA, transport, Belize Port Authority, Hotels & Accommodations Act , tour guide and operators legislation etc. ✓ Policy does not seek to summarize or be all inclusive and specific as it relates to these regulations, details of certification for tourism properties or licensing requirements, and/or codes of conduct
15	Promoting re-use and restoration of existing buildings in natural areas instead of the construction of new ones for tourism development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy does not speak directly to this but does call for a review of facilities in these areas. ✓ The policy speaks heavily to the improvement of infrastructure with a view to improve and maintain quality of visitor experience. ✓ Policy does not speak specifically to this point.
16	Ensuring that products or projects marketed as “ecotourism” fulfill the minimum criteria that characterize this type of tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy recommended moving away from the “ecotourism” label that had been compromised often on international scale to “responsible tourism” that speaks more to an ethic and practice and ensuring adherence to the practice. ✓ Policies identify the eco-ethic as central, need for sustainable tourism and concern for environment, natural and cultural resources but does not have any specifics on certification programs. ✓ Policies call strongly for a export ready product and adhering to normal business principles in operaton.
17	To promote and incentive the development of handicrafts and sale of products that avoid the use of endangered species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy and the 2005 Policy called for a consideration of a financial and broader incentive program for the industry ✓ Industry currently has no specific incentive programs
18	Encouraging private sector to support biodiversity conservation, by maintaining habitats in their lands and supporting local conservation initiatives (in-cash or in-kind)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy does not speak specifically to this although calls for a strong forging of a link with environmental protection ✓ 2005 Policy does not speak to such a program to encourage biodiversity conservation, but speaks generally to concerns for sustainability, concerns for natural resources.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 100 Day Outlook speaks to minimizing environmental footprint.
19	Ensuring the implementation of tourism zoning in natural areas (based in general zoning, where applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy did not call specifically for zoning but did call for a look at the limits for sites, activities and facilities being developed in sites and also for development plans for areas. ✓ 2005 Policy makes mention of zoning as it relates to visitation sites – especially in light of cruise tourism and its potential for impact on the product image.
20	Adopting effective programs for monitoring, control and carrying capacity management for tourism destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy did call for these considerations and even suggested the involvement of the linkage Ministry and NGO environmental organizations in this regard ✓ While the need for establishing site visitation limits is “non=negotiable” (2003 Cruise Policy), such limits have not yet been set ✓ 2005 Policy did call for a rationalization between the two sub-sectors (cruise and overnight) and consideration for impact on destinations ✓ No mention in the policy as it relates to programs for monitoring and control.
21	Allowing nothing but nature based tourism and ecotourism in high biodiversity areas in order to minimize negative impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy did not call specifically for this – but did call for a review of activities taking place in these areas, limits in visitation and review of the kinds of facilities located in these areas. ✓ Although 2005 Policy calls for development of specific cruise tourism visitation sites, the emphasis is placed on visitation limitations. ✓ 2005 Policy does speak to zoning but specifics are not elaborated.
22	Ensuring the recognition of tourism and biodiversity conservation as a potential use of lands in any national land use classification system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy does have a section on land use planning and calls for consideration of this aspect of planning and the coordination between the sectors. ✓ In Polcy 5 Integrated Tourism Development Policies of 2005 Policy mentions the need to harmonize tourism with land use planning.
23	Promoting the use of Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) and Visitor Impacts Management (VIM), as strategies to establish carrying capacity in high biodiversity areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy supports the establishment of the LAC and conducting industry impact assessments and taking mitigative action ✓ In Policy #5 Integrated Tourism Development Policies of 2005 Policy mentions the need to harmonize tourism with land use planning. ✓ No details on how the integrative and consultative approach is to be employed – NGOs mentioned in 2003 Policy as integral to setting visitation limits
24	Biodiversity planners shall work with tourism planners and operators to identify measures to minimize negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy does call for a strong linkage between tourism and environmental management with reinforcing policies for environmental protection, monitoring, impact

	impacts of massive tourism on biodiversity	<p>assessment and mitigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policies central focus is to be collaborative, consultative, integrative. ✓ Roles of biodiversity planners included only in so far as public sector entities and one NGO ✓ Discussion of massive tourism not addressed – only in so far as it relates to cruise tourism and potential impacts and need to establish visitation limits.
25	Developing “Codes of Conduct” or “Ethics Codes” for different industry sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy does make a call for the establishing standards and best practices ✓ Tourism industry covers codes of conduct , general standards and regulations of this sort under respective legislations not in policy ✓ 2005 Policy and 100 Day Outlook do call for establishing export ready standards and certification of aspects of the product.
26	Supporting regulations and enforcement to improve drainage systems and solid waste management in tourism destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy does not discuss enforcement specifically but calls for consideration on impacts and establishing programs for waste management in the industry. ✓ 2005 Policy in Objective #5 does speak to Integrated Tourism Development policies and on pg 26 of same objective speaks to considerations for waste management considerations ✓ Other specifics as it relates to dealing with waste water and solid waste are covered on regulations like those covered under the EPA
Protected Areas		
27	Promoting the declaration of nature areas with tourism potential as legally established protected areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy does accept that tourism can be the economic justification for protected areas and conservation. ✓ The policies do not address the declaration of new areas. The policies seem to consider sites already declared and in the sector.
28	Promoting guidelines and regulations for sustainable tourism development in protected areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The policies do not address regulations for sustainable tourism in protected areas. The policies seems to consider regulations in general and presents only a consideration of limits for sites in order to maintain product image and preserve visitor experience. Regulations are addressed only in respective legislations.
29	Ensuring that tourism development plans in protected areas comply with the regulations established in their management plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy does discuss reviewing activities and facilities within national parks and reserves and calls for strong policy support to environmental protection. ✓ Not addressed by 2005 policy. These regulations are covered in PA managers management plans and in general national regulations for protected areas and reserves
30	Ensuring the reinvestment of revenues from tourism in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Not addressed in policy. The only conservation organization directly receiving public

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	protected areas in maintenance and conservation activities, in the areas they were generated.	funds from tourism initiatives is PACT. Distribution of these funds are managed via PACT's grant funding policies. Some conservation NGOs receive funds via entrance fees charged to visitors.
31	Developing agreements and concessions for the provision of tourism services for private sector and local communities that offer benefits for biodiversity conservation and management of ecosystems.	✓ Not addressed in the policy. Tourism does not have specific incentives and concessions packages for those in the industry.
32	Creating protected areas networks, and developing a brand for sustainable tourism	✓ A network of protected areas is not addressed in the policy although such a network exists. This is covered in National Protected Areas Policy. However, the policies does speak heavily to maintaining a sustainable industry with an eco-ethic focus.
Certification		
33	Ensuring that any certification system offers tangible benefits for tourism service providers, and allowing tourists to make the right selection, generating benefits for local communities and biodiversity conservation	✓ The policies do not go into details about certification, but do call for export ready standards and classification of hotels and best practices. There is no specifics on promoting specifically tourism products from local communities and those biodiversity conservation.
34	Ensuring that the certification program is recognized and understood by tourists. Using clearly logos from their tourism products satisfying the certification criteria	✓ The policies do not go into details about certification, but does call for export ready standards and classification of hotels, establishing of standards and best practices.
35	Promoting incentives for the certification and the implementation of good management practices for sustainable tourism	✓ The tourism industry does not have specific industry incentives.
36	Making periodical revisions of certification standards	✓ Currenrntly there are no certification programs established.
37	Tourism services providers make an efficient use of their resources (water, energy, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The policies does not specifically specify such measures. However, the policies do raise concerns for the management strategies in relation to waste management. Standards and best practices in the industry ✓ General EPA Regs and Compliance and Monitoring plans deal with regulations as it relates to these.
Community Involvement		
38	Maximize tourism economic benefits for local communities, so it becomes an income alternative for activities affecting negatively biodiversity conservation	✓ The policies mention in several areas the need to ensure that the industry is broadly beneficial and improves the quality of life. There is as well mentions of concerns for environmental management and concerns for protection of natural and cultural

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		resources
39	Motivate the acquisition of products and services that benefit local communities and don't affect negatively the conservation of biodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The policies do speak to encourage sustainable tourism policies and seek to establish a broadly beneficial industry. The 1998 Strategy accepts that tourism can provide the economic justification for conservation by involving communities in both. The 2003 Cruise Policy as well makes specific mention of supporting locally owned tour operations and tours stopping at communities in and around the sites to support local entrepreneurs. The matter is not approached from a viewpoint of not affecting biodiversity conservation.
40	Direct part of tourism incomes to social development and biodiversity conservation projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy does speak to the need for ensuring environmental protection and commitment to establishing policies as well as mitigation activities. ✓ The 2005 policy do not speak specifically to that. The 2003 Cruises Policy on pg 6 does mention that the organizations with this charge should receive funding support but no specifics mention. ✓ Currently the only organization benefiting from direct receipt of public funds from tourism initiatives is PACT – distribution is covered by relevant policies of the organizations grant funding program.
41	Empowering local communities to participate in decision making processes related to tourism development and conservation in their areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy accepts that tourism can provide the economic justification for conservation by involving communities in both ✓ The tourism policies does not speak specifically to such, but does try to foster broad inclusion. ✓ There is mention of inclusion of municipal bodies and communities to be able to become beneficiaries of the industry. ✓ NTC legislation calls for inclusion of representative from Mayor's Association. ✓ PA managers have begun to employ co-management programs with consideration for communities around conservation sites
42	Making sure that tourism planning processes promoted by government are inclusive and respond to local needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy promotes the inclusion of communities in the development and planning for tourism in their areas. ✓ The policies all seek to promote a broadly integrative, collaborative stakeholder approach ✓ More emphasis is needed on delineating the operationalization of the approach.
Education, training and awareness		
44	Visitors become aware of biodiversity conservation through good quality guides, interpretation programs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy speaks to forming strong linkages with policies for environmental protection and ensuring the education on the linkage of environmental protection to

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	visitors centers and educational projects for local communities and private sector	<p>the industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The policies encourage training especially to industry service personnel. ✓ The 100 Day Outlook speaks strongly to the expansion of network for education and training of service personnel and new cadre of industry stakeholders. ✓ The policies speak as well to awareness initiatives – like the I Am BELIZE campaign. ✓ Policies awareness building initiatives need a tie-in to biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation
45	To generate educational programs to create local awareness about biodiversity conservation (with special emphasis in creating awareness for the private sector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy speaks to forming strong linkages with policies for environmental protection and ensuring the education on the linkage of environmental protection to the industry ✓ The policies encourage training especially to industry service personnel. ✓ The 100 Day Outlook speaks strongly to the expansion of network for education and training of service personnel and new cadre of industry stakeholders. ✓ The policies speak as well to awareness initiatives – like the I Am BELIZE campaign. ✓ Policies awareness building initiatives need a tie-in from tourism to biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation
46	Private sector becomes aware of the importance of protecting biodiversity as raw material for tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ The policies encourage training especially to industry service personnel. ✓ The 100 Day Outlook speaks strongly to the expansion of network for education and training of service personnel and new cadre of industry stakeholders. ✓ The policies speak as well to awareness initiatives – like the I Am BELIZE campaign. ✓ Policies awareness building initiatives need a tie-in from tourism to biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation
47	Educating and creating awareness on biodiversity solicitor about the importance of tourism as a support tool for conservation of natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy speaks to forming strong linkages with policies for environmental protection and ensuring the education on the linkage of environmental protection to the industry ✓ The policies encourage training especially to industry service personnel. ✓ The 100 Day Outlook speaks strongly to the expansion of network for education and training of service personnel and new cadre of industry stakeholders. ✓ The policies speak as well to awareness initiatives – like the I Am BELIZE campaign. ✓ Policies awareness building initiatives need a tie-in from tourism to biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation
48	Training biodiversity solicitors in aspects related to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy speaks to forming strong linkages with policies for environmental

	tourism entrepreneurship	<p>protection and ensuring the education on the linkage of environmental protection to the industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The policies encourage training especially to industry service personnel. ✓ The 100 Day Outlook speaks strongly to the expansion of network for education and training of service personnel and new cadre of industry stakeholders. ✓ The policies speak as well to awareness initiatives – like the I Am BELIZE campaign. ✓ Policies awareness building initiatives need a tie-in from tourism to biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation
49	Provide training for the private sector in good environmental practices and conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy speaks to forming strong linkages with policies for environmental protection and ensuring the education on the linkage of environmental protection to the industry ✓ The policies encourage training especially to industry service personnel. ✓ The 100 Day Outlook speaks strongly to the expansion of network for education and training of service personnel and new cadre of industry stakeholders. ✓ The policies speak as well to awareness initiatives – like the I Am BELIZE campaign. ✓ Policies awareness building initiatives need a tie-in from tourism to biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation
50	Integrating biodiversity conservation in tourism technical and professional programs' curricula at the national level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy speaks to forming strong linkages with environmental protection organizations and ensuring the education on the linkage of environmental protection to the industry. ✓ The policies encourage training especially to industry service personnel. ✓ The 100 Day Outlook speaks strongly to the expansion of network for education and training of service personnel and new cadre of industry stakeholders. ✓ The policies speak as well to awareness initiatives – like the I Am BELIZE campaign. ✓ Policies awareness building initiatives need a tie-in from tourism to biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation
51	Including in schools' curricula the importance of tourism and biodiversity conservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy was the genesis of the BTB training unit ✓ The policies encourage training especially to industry service personnel. ✓ The 100 Day Outlook speaks strongly to the expansion of network for education and training of service personnel and new cadre of industry stakeholders. ✓ The policies speak as well to awareness initiatives – like the I Am BELIZE campaign. ✓ Policies awareness building initiatives need a tie-in from tourism to biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation

52	Educate the media about the importance of conservation for tourism development in the country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The policies encourage training especially to industry service personnel. 1998 Strategy speaks to the inclusion and education of communities about tourism and environment ✓ The 100 Day Outlook speaks strongly to the expansion of network for education and training of service personnel and new cadre of industry stakeholders. ✓ The policies speak as well to awareness initiatives – like the I Am BELIZE campaign. ✓ Policies awareness building initiatives need a tie-in from tourism to biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation
53	Ensuring the awareness of massive tourism sectors (airlines, amusement parks, golf fields and stadiums) about the negative impacts originated from their industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The policies encourage training especially to industry service personnel. ✓ The 100 Day Outlook speaks strongly to the expansion of network for education and training of service personnel and new cadre of industry stakeholders. ✓ The policies speak as well to awareness initiatives – like the I Am BELIZE campaign. ✓ Policies awareness building initiatives need a tie-in from tourism to biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation
54	Minimize waste production and the impact of solid waste materials (awareness campaigns)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The policies do not specify such measures. However, the policies do raise concerns for the management strategies in relation to waste management. General EPA Regs and Compliance and Monitoring plans deal with regulations as it relates to these. ✓ Policies awareness building initiatives need a tie-in from tourism to biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation
Marketing		
55	The country is positioned as a nature destination, promoted as a great biodiversity destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policies (2005 and 1998 Strategy) strongly focus on an industry that respects an eco-ethic. ✓ Policies recognize that image of the tourism product is tied to ecotourism, sustainable development and consideration for protection of natural and cultural resources.
56	Promote community based products that support biodiversity conservation (marketing, awards and recognition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The policies do not specifically speak to the promotion of community based products that support biodiversity conservation. ✓ However, both 2005 Policy and 1998 Strategy speaks to communities becoming beneficiaries of the industry and involved in planning. ✓ 1998 Strategy accepts tourism as being able to provide economic justification for conservation.
57	Promoting incentives for sustainable tourism certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The industry does not have a specific tourism incentive program.

Monitoring and Evaluation		
58	Monitoring and evaluation of the impacts from tourism activities on natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1998 Strategy does specifically call for the monitoring and impact assessment and mitigative actions as it relates to use of the natural resources. ✓ This sort of monitoring program is not specifically covered in the 2005 policy. ✓ Policies speak to limits to visitation at sites, consideration for environmental impacts and concern for protection of natural and cultural resources
59	Design sustainability indicators to evaluate performance of tourism destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The 1998 Strategy does call for monitoring and assessment to be done – environmental as well as economic and socio economic. ✓ Indicators to evaluate performance of tourism destinations is not specifically outlined in the policy ✓ However the 2005 Policy does speak to introducing normal business practices in planning and management – to include targets, performance indicators and trends
60	Involving local communities in the development and maintenance of an indicators system for a sustainable development of tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The policies (2005 and 1998 Strategy) do address involvement of local communities in so far as becoming beneficiaries of a broadly inclusive industry. ✓ 1998 Strategy does call for their inclusion in planning for the industry ✓ Communities not specifically mentioned in the development of these indicators system for sustainable development, but the general introduction of normal business practices is mentioned in the management of the tourism industry.
FINANCIAL INCENTIVES		
61	Removing subsidies awarding tourism activities that degrade the environment, and replace them with positive incentives to promote marketing activities seeking the achieve environment and biodiversity conservation goals at the same time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The tourism industry does not have a specific tourism incentive program.
62	Supervise the distribution and use of taxes designed for government entities in protected areas,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This is not covered in the policy. The only organization that receives direct industry related public funding is PACT. Belize City municipal body receives a portion of the cruise tourism head tax via an agreement with the BTB. Some conservation NGOs receive funds via an entrance fee charged to visitors.
63	Promoting payment for environmental services to Private Nature reserves that carry out ecotourism activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This is not specifically covered in the policy. PACT is a beneficiary and PACT's grant funding guidelines covers distribution.

ANNEX II: INTEGRATED MATRIX

Integrated Matrix
Analysis of Tourism Policies for
Integration of Biodiversity Conservation

Policy 1: 1998 Blackstone Strategy for Belize.

Policy 2: 2005 Tourism Policy.

Policy 3: 2003 Cruise Tourism Policy.

- Issue not absolutely addressed
- Issue addressed, but needs strengthening
- Issue addressed in the policy

No.	Requirements or Standards	Policy 1	Policy 2	Policy 3
	OBJECTIVES			
1	Tourism becomes a support tool for biodiversity conservation in the future, ensuring that it's performed under the right conditions			
2	Society and the environment are able to absorb the negative impacts originated by tourism practices, benefiting at the same time from the positive impacts in a sustainable way			
3	Negative impacts from tourism are minimized in the society and the environment			
4	Tourism contribution to local economies, conservation of natural and cultural resources, and life quality of both hosts and visitors is maximized			
5	Quality of natural resources and the environment is maintained acting as main basis to achieve tourism economic viability			
6	There is coordination and cooperation between all entities related to tourism development and biodiversity conservation at the national level.			
7	Sustainable tourism – low impact becomes one of the main uses on high biodiversity areas with potential for its development.			
	Objectives			
	Obtaining and systematizing information that allows assessing the current situation of tourism and biodiversity, as well as other variables related to sustainable management.			

	Institutional Framework			
1	Promoting the coordination among national tourism sector and conservationist sector	Green	Yellow	Red
2	Defining clearly the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved in tourism	Yellow	Red	Red
3	Strengthening local tourism authorities with needed resources in order to fulfill their role and ensure the conservation of the natural resources, which represent the main tourism attractions.	Green	Yellow	Red
4	Implementing international agreements related to tourism and biodiversity conservation	Red	Red	Red
5	Implementing effective control mechanisms and sanctions for those who infringe the imposed regulations to control tourism impacts	Red	Red	Red
6	Ensuring to harmonize both tourism and biodiversity strategies through mutual consultation between government and other interested groups.	Yellow	Yellow	Red
7	Establishing a sustainable tourism committee in national level (integrating biodiversity and tourism, public and private sector)	Green	Yellow	Red
8	Promoting associations with NGO's to promote connections between decision makers and tourism planners	Green	Yellow	Yellow
9	Ensuring technical assistance on planning, administration and finances for local communities in high biodiversity areas, supporting the coordination with the private sector	Green	Yellow	Red
	Planning & Product Development			
10	To diversify destinations and relieving pressure from visitors in other destinations	Green	Green	Yellow
11	Promoting demand management and troubles reduction originated by tourism temporality through marketing and price techniques promoting tourism in low seasons or alternate destination distributing tourism flux	Red	Red	Red
12	To promote and regulate tourism planning (public use) in natural areas (either protected or not) before its development and/or promotion	Yellow	Yellow	Red
13	Regulation of tourism infrastructure in natural areas (either protected or not) reducing the potential visual and/or environmental impacts	Green	Yellow	Red
14	Ensuring the implementation of codes of conduct, guidelines, regulations and ethics codes to minimize visitors impact in natural areas	Green	Yellow	Red
15	Promoting re-use and restoration of existing buildings in natural areas instead of the construction of new ones for tourism development	Red	Red	Red
16	Ensuring that products or projects marketed as	Yellow	Yellow	Red

	"ecotourism" fulfill the minimum criteria that characterize this type of tourism	Yellow	Yellow	Red
17	To promote and incentive the development of handicrafts and sale of products that avoid the use of endangered species	Red	Red	Red
18	Encouraging private sector to support biodiversity conservation, by maintaining habitats in their lands and supporting local conservation initiatives (in-cash or in-kind)	Yellow	Red	Red
19	Ensuring the implementation of tourism zoning in natural areas (based in general zoning, where applicable)	Green	Yellow	Red
20	Adopting effective programs for monitoring, control and carrying capacity management for tourism destinations	Green	Yellow	Yellow
21	Allowing nothing but nature based tourism and ecotourism in high biodiversity areas in order to minimize negative impacts	Yellow	Yellow	Red
22	Ensuring the recognition of tourism and biodiversity conservation as a potential use of lands in any national land use classification system	Yellow	Red	Red
23	Promoting the use of Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) and Visitor Impacts Management (VIM), as strategies to establish carrying capacity in high biodiversity areas	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
24	Biodiversity planners shall work with tourism planners and operators to identify measures to minimize negative impacts of massive tourism on biodiversity	Yellow	Red	Red
25	Developing "Codes of Conduct" or "Ethics Codes" for different industry sectors	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
26	Supporting regulations and enforcement to improve drainage systems and solid waste management in tourism destinations	Green	Yellow	Red
	Protected Areas			
27	Promoting the declaration of nature areas with tourism potential as legally established protected areas.	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
28	Promoting guidelines and regulations for sustainable tourism development in protected areas	Yellow	Red	Red
29	Ensuring that tourism development plans in protected areas comply with the regulations established in their management plans	Green	Red	Red
30	Ensuring the reinvestment of revenues from tourism in protected areas in maintenance and conservation activities, in the areas they were generated.	Yellow	Red	Red
31	Developing agreements and concessions for the provision of tourism services for private sector and local communities that offer benefits for biodiversity conservation and management of ecosystems.	Yellow	Red	Red
32	Creating protected areas networks, and developing a	Red	Red	Red

	brand for sustainable tourism			
	Certification			
33	Ensuring that any certification system offers tangible benefits for tourism service providers, and allowing tourists to make the right selection, generating benefits for local communities and biodiversity conservation			
34	Ensuring that the certification program is recognized and understood by tourists. Using clearly logos from their tourism products satisfying the certification criteria			
35	Promoting incentives for the certification and the implementation of good management practices for sustainable tourism			
36	Making periodically revisions of certification standards			
37	Tourism services providers make an efficient use of their resources (water, energy, etc)			
	Community Involvement			
38	Maximize tourism economic benefits for local communities, so it becomes an income alternative for activities affecting negatively biodiversity conservation			
39	Motivate the acquisition of products and services that benefit local communities and don't affect negatively the conservation of biodiversity.			
40	Direct part of tourism incomes to social development and biodiversity conservation projects			
41	Empowering local communities to participate in decision making processes related to tourism development and conservation in their areas			
42	Making sure that tourism planning processes promoted by government are inclusive and respond to local needs			
43	Regulating local communities active participation in ecotourism projects in natural areas (promote associations between communities and private sector)			
	Education, training & Awareness			
44	Visitors become aware of biodiversity conservation through good quality guides, interpretation programs, visitors centers and educational projects for local communities and private sector			
45	To generate educational programs to create local awareness about biodiversity conservation (with special emphasis in creating awareness for the private sector			
46	Private sector becomes aware of the importance of protecting biodiversity as raw material for tourism			
47	Educating and creating awareness on biodiversity solicitor about the importance of tourism as a support tool for conservation of natural resources			
48	Training biodiversity solicitors in aspects related to			

	tourism entrepreneurship.			
49	Provide training for the private sector in good environmental practices and conservation			
50	Integrating biodiversity conservation in tourism technical and professional programs' curricula at the national level.			
51	Including in schools' curricula the importance of tourism and biodiversity conservation.			
52	Educate the media about the importance of conservation for tourism development in the country			
53	Ensuring the awareness of massive tourism sectors (airlines, amusement parks, golf fields and stadiums) about the negative impacts originated from their industries			
54	Minimize waste production and the impact of solid waste materials (awareness campaigns)			
	Marketing			
55	The country is positioned as a nature destination, promoted as a great biodiversity destination			
56	Promote community based products that support biodiversity conservation (marketing, awards and recognition)			
57	Promoting incentives for sustainable tourism certification			
	Monitoring & Evaluation			
58	Monitoring and evaluation of the impacts from tourism activities on natural resources			
59	Design sustainability indicators to evaluate performance of tourism destinations			
60	Involving local communities in the development and maintenance of an indicators system for a sustainable development of tourism			
	Financial Incentives			
61	Removing subsidies awarding tourism activities that degrade the environment, and replace them with positive incentives to promote marketing activities seeking the achieve environment and biodiversity conservation goals at the same time			
62	Supervise the distribution and use of taxes designed for government entities in protected areas			
63	Promoting payment for environmental services to Private Nature reserves that carry out ecotourism activities.			

ANNEX III: MATRIX FOR RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTION PLAN

RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTION MATRIX
TO INTEGRATE BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION INTO TOURISM POLICIES

No.	Standard Requirements	Tourism Policy in Protected Areas
POLICY FOR TOURISM		
1	<p>To build on current policies via a revision to result with ONE policy directive and industry development strategy that guides the sector’s growth and explicitly expounds on inter-sectoral planning, decision making and management for the tourism industry.</p>	<p>Actions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ While the policies may attempt a focus at delineating an ethic for the planning and management of tourism, it is recommended that equally as the Blackstone Strategy of 1998, the policy of 2005 is reviewed with a view to include a targeted policy directive on growth of a sustainable industry with environmental protection, management and mitigation of the impacts of the industry at its core. ❖ Perhaps a strong complement to the policies would be that implementation strategies for realizing the objectives of the policy become more targeted in structure so as to capitalize on the true benefits possible from the approach idealized in the policy. <p>The institutional framework and a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities of the players in the framework is central to yielding the maximum benefits for an industry desiring to employ an integrated and collaborative planning and management approach; realizing cross-sectoral and broadly distributed benefits while protecting and preserving the very basis of the industry – the natural and cultural resources.</p>
INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK		
1	<p>To reinforce the overarching planning and management mechanism for the tourism industry</p>	<p>Actions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Operationalize a cross sectoral policy making and planning mechanism: The NTC legislation was passed in 2000 but never really became functional due to a lack of political will. It is recommended that the legislation be reviewed with a view to improve its legal instrument so as to support its operations. <i>It is recommended that serious consideration be given to converting the</i>

		<p><i>mechanism from a mere council (NTC) to the legal level of an authority.</i></p> <p>The explicit hope is that an elevation in structure from a Council to an Authority will give the National Tourism planning mechanism more “teeth” to effect change and legally guide the development in the industry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Develop Terms of Reference for the coordinating planning mechanism: A terms of reference would clearly define the role and responsibilities of the mechanism, structure of the partnership with other tourism public sector entities and any other technical working groups/committees formulated to support the functions of the planning body. ❖ Expand Membership of the planning mechanism: Currently, the NTC legal structure calls for members as follows: the Minister of Tourism as Chairperson, the Chairperson of the BTB; Ministry of Tourism representative; Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, NICH, Director of Tourism; Immigration & Nationality Department, Presidents of key private sector stakeholders (BTIA, BNTOA, Water Taxi Assoc., BTGA, BHA), representative from Belize Audubon Society and Belize Airline Operators Association, representative for the international air carriers in Belize, BCCI, PACT and Ministry of Human Development and the Mayors Association. <p>If the NTC is to be revived and serve as an overarching collaborative planning mechanism, it is recommended that the legislation be revised to include membership from the following agencies.</p> <p>The Association for Protected Areas Management Organizations: While the Belize Audubon Society currently manages several of the government protected areas via a co-management agreement, several other protected areas not under this management currently comprise Belize’s tourism product. These include private protected areas, community based reserves and other government owned sites under some sort of co-management arrangement not with the Audubon Society. It is important that an organization that represents some sort of umbrella role and national environmental policy advocacy role be included on an integrated collaborative planning mechanism for an industry that</p>
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		<p>has as its core the natural and cultural resources of the country. APAMO's eighteen (18) members are responsible for management of twenty five (25) protected areas, representing a majority of the thirty (30) protected areas currently under co-management agreements with the government.</p> <p>The Department of Transport: Transportation is a key component in the industry and establishing standards in the industry that reflects tourism concerns is necessary.</p> <p>The Ministry of Works: The expansion of infrastructure is integral to the development of the industry and harmonizing plans will be a key to success.</p> <p>The Ministries of Economic Development & Finance: If tourism is to be a priority sector it is important that economic development plans and tourism plans be harmonized and that realization of a national budget considers this priority factor.</p> <p>❖ Operationalizing an Expanded National Tourism planning mechanism: Due to resource shortage – human and financial – an expanded National Tourism planning mechanism can achieve the resource intensive goal of operating an industry via the integrated collaborative approach. The goal of operationalizing an expanded national tourism planning mechanism would be via establishing a mechanism that allows for the availability and consideration of all necessary input and advice.</p> <p>Perhaps a way to achieve this is via technical working groups/committees each with its operating guidelines. It is recommended that a system of working groups/committees or similarly targeted mechanism be considered as a technical advisory level for the national tourism planning mechanism. The role of these technical groups would be to gather the necessary data, perform the necessary technical analysis providing such to the wider national tourism planning mechanism to allow for planning, decision making and management.</p> <p>The working groups or similarly target mechanism would allow for the following necessary institutional strengthening and inter-sectoral linkages:-</p>
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		<p><i>a.) Tourism & Natural Resources, the Environment and Cultural Resources –</i> focused on monitoring, assessment of impact and mitigation. A key role of this initiative would be to conduct and update baseline assessments, monitor and assess impacts of the industry and recommend mitigation activities; develop sector plans (e.g. tourism and archaeology, tourism and protected areas, land use plans, tourism and culture promotion etc.)</p> <p><i>b.) Tourism, Fisheries and Coastal Zone Management -</i> A key role of this initiative would be to conduct and update baseline assessments, monitor and assess impacts of the industry and recommend mitigation activities; develop sector plans.</p> <p><i>c.) Tourism and Economic and Fiscal Planning -</i> The planning nationally and sectorally needs harmonization if tourism is to truly be the lynchpin of the national economy and priority sector. Fiscally as well, the country needs to harmonize planning so as to ensure the deployment of resources is broadly beneficial to those sectors and areas that promise maximum yields.</p> <p><i>d.) Tourism and Infrastructure Management –</i> This technical group would seek to consider tourism needs in the relevant planning, while as well harmonizing countrywide development plans for the improvement of the country's infrastructure network.</p> <p><i>e.) Tourism and Sub-National bodies and Communities –</i> To become broadly inclusive, sub-national bodies and communities can not only be viewed from an angle of becoming beneficiaries from the spill over of the industry but as well play a key role in planning and decision making, especially as it relates to their respective geographical areas. This working group should include the National Alliance of Village Councils (NAVCO)</p> <p>❖ It is as well recommended that serious consideration be given to whether the Product Development Unit is adequately enshrined within BTB or whether a relocation to the Ministry would be most applicable and allow for better implementation of role (relocation with all necessary resources – human and financial).</p>
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		<p>It is as well recommended that the Product Development entity develops departments to be specifically responsible for the tourism sub-sectors – one for cruise and one for overnight – allowing for the identification of expertise and accommodation in planning with both respective sectors in mind.</p> <p>A suggested organogram for the public sector tourism structure includes a product development authority/national tourism authority as a separate body with its own legislations and replacing the NTC. This Authority would be alongside BTB and the Border Management agency within an amended the organogram.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Clearly define the roles, responsibilities, necessary linkages and powers of authority one to another of public sector tourism bodies – BTB, Ministry, PDU and National Tourism planning mechanism (with legislative powers and responsibilities of an Authority).
PLANNING & PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT		
2	<p>Recommendations:- To reinforce planning and product development initiatives ensuring broad inclusion and consultation, while remaining responsible in the use and management of natural and cultural resources</p>	<p>Actions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Strengthen current initiatives of plans to develop a rating system for the hotels, recognizable and compatible with internationally known systems, including management considerations that address environmental issues. ❖ Strengthen current initiatives of develop an industry certification program internationally recognized and marketable. ❖ Strengthen current initiatives to identify a system that guides industry operations and management with a strong guide for qualification as being eco-friendly. Perhaps this could be tied to some industry incentive. ❖ Establish broadly acceptable codes of conduct and standards of operation for different sub-sectors with a view to uphold industry’s eco-ethic and consideration for preservation and protection of natural and cultural resources. ❖ Establish a system that amplifies current goals of the EIA process by establishing a respective and parallel system to analyze socio-economic

		<p>impacts of projects and development initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Utilize the EIA process in conjunction with Strategic Environmental Assessments and destination plans, land use plans so as to harmonize and inform project consideration and approval process. ❖ Utilize environmental organizations as a technical advisor in the EIA process. ❖ Develop Strategic Environmental Assessment for key tourism areas that will form the basis for developing destination plans. Utilize the resources of the Department of Environment and environmental organizations working in these areas to inform, shape and conduct the assessment necessary ❖ Develop destination plans for strategic tourism areas in harmony with other sectors, land use plans and Strategic Environmental Assessments ❖ Work with the Ministry of Natural Resources to develop any zoning plans, zoning legislation so as to ensure that the zoning plans will work in harmony with land use plans for the surrounding area of the zoned destination. ❖ Establish strong baseline data and information on the condition of natural and cultural resources – assessing impact and offering mitigation activities. (Via collaboration with agencies already conducting such initiatives such as the University of Belize, the Healthy Reefs for Healthy People Initiative, Wildlife Conservation Society, the Belize Audubon Society, the Coastal Zone Management Institute and Authority, the Fisheries Department, the Forest Department, Environmental NGOs etc). ❖ Reinforce the continued gathering and updating of above data and utilize in industry planning, decision making and management, via collaboration with agencies already conducting such initiatives. ❖ Establish countrywide acceptable limits of change for protected sites that form part of the tourism product – not meant to be immobile but allow for adjustment based on real situation, via collaboration with agencies already conducting such initiatives.
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		<p>Critical for the usefulness of this and the above two stated recommendations is a clearly established frequency for continued updating of the data and revamping of industry plans and decisions based on the data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Establish a financing structure along with the relevant public sector bodies for budgeting of resources to conduct the necessary periodic assessment and monitoring activities, including allocations for any mitigation actions.
PROTECTED AREAS		
3	<p>To ensure that tourism planning, management and development strongly considers the importance and health of protected areas as a central component of the product</p>	<p>Actions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Harmonize tourism policies with those of National Biodiversity Strategy and National Protected Areas Systems Plan and Policy ❖ Ensure tourism policies reflect those agreements and obligations required of government and included in international agreements and conventions ratified by Belize. ❖ Work with PACT to ensure that resources earned via the tourism industry are re-invested for the continued benefit of biodiversity conservation and reinforcement of the viability of the tourism product. This is to be done not by PACT but by grant funding to organizations already conducting these activities. <p>Funds should continue to be invested primarily for aiding monitoring programs, impact assessment initiatives and mitigation efforts. As well important is for the continued establishment of eco-friendly infrastructure within sites that will support the site relevant tourism activities.</p> <p><i>Some stakeholders recommended that serious consideration be given to reverse the central government agreement to award 33% of the contribution from PACT to the Belize City Council received via the cruise tourism head tax.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Reclassify tourism activities within protected areas so as to be site specific considering the biodiversity and sensitivity of the eco-system. ❖ Establish tourism zones with particular focus on activities sensitive to particulars of respective sites.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Strongly encourage and support site managers to establish codes of ethics and codes of conduct for tourists, guides, operators, the general public within these sites and all users of the protected sites ❖ Utilize the National Tourism planning mechanism structure and relevant technical working group to offer advice to the NPAC on any new site designations or de-reservations. According to the National Protected Areas Policy and Plan, the National Protected Areas Commission is to be chiefly responsible for site designation and de-reservation, however the policy accepts that consultation and coordination is important. ❖ Strengthen current plans to develop cruise tourism specific sites complete with capacity limits, codes of conducts and codes of ethics. Eliminate cruise tourism visitation from sites declared particularly sensitive and valuable to biodiversity conservation. ❖ Incorporate international biodiversity treaties and agreements into tourism planning and management. ❖ Strengthen current plans to establish and incorporate the National Protected Areas Policy System and a National Protected Areas Council and establish strong coordination with tourism planning. ❖ Review the EIA Regulation with a particular focus on requirements for energy management and conservation, water usage, waste management (sewage systems) and solid waste, perhaps even for the inclusion of recycling initiatives. ❖ Support Government initiatives and processes to realize the Solid Waste Management Program for the Western Corridor ❖ Ensure that Government realizes a national solid waste management plan for the entire country utilizing the above program for establishing acceptable solid waste management systems in areas not included in this program, especially in high tourism areas such as Hopkins, Placencia, Toledo and the Northern Corridor of the country.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Utilize the revenues garnered via the Environmental Tax to fund a national solid waste management program. This is in keeping with the Environmental Tax legislation. ❖ Exempt bio-friendly products from the Environmental Tax. Reduce import duties on bio-friendly products.
CERTIFICATION		
4	<p>To establish certification programs, standards and codes for an industry that responsibly utilizes natural and cultural resources with the final outcome of industry sustainability</p>	<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Strengthen current initiatives to adopt best practices for the tourism industry ensuring its local applicability and applicability for all sub-sectors of the industry. ❖ Strengthen current plans to develop a rating system for the hotels, recognizable and compatible with internationally known systems with focus on management regime that respects natural and cultural resources. ❖ Recommend duty exemption and/or lower customs duties on environmentally friendly technologies, encouraging investors to utilize such in their operations – solar panels, 4-stroke engines, hybrid vehicles etc. ❖ Eliminate Environmental Tax from the importation of environmentally friendly products and technologies. ❖ Strengthen current initiatives to develop an industry certification program that is internationally recognized, is marketable and yields real benefits to participants. ❖ Strengthen current initiatives to identify a system that shapes industry operations and management with a strong guide for qualification of being eco-friendly. <p>Perhaps this could be tied to some industry incentive. These can include programs geared towards being energy conscious, prudent water usage, using product sensitive to natural resources protection, grounds management and</p>

		preservation of surrounding ecosystems and resources etc.
	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	
5	To continue to ensure that the tourism industry is broadly inclusive and respect cultural resources	<p>Actions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Harmonize tourism policy and planning with poverty alleviation strategies and plans. ❖ Ensure that tourism policies, plans and operations are respectful of people's cultures and cultural assets ❖ Utilize the central coordinating and planning mechanism to receive the input of local communities and sub-national bodies (municipalities) in the planning for tourism. ❖ Empower sub-national bodies and local communities to contribute effectively to the industry decision making process via the central coordinating and planning mechanism. ❖ Investigate and adopt ways to directly channel training and resources to local communities so as to increasingly become beneficiaries and decision makers for a broadly inclusive tourism industry and biodiversity conservation promoters.
	EDUCATION, TRAINING & PUBLIC AWARENESS	
6	To ensure that the stakeholders understand the importance of the responsible management and protection of natural and cultural resources as the foundation of industry viability	<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Utilize PACT grant funding to APAMO and other environmental organizations as strong proponents for conservation public awareness programs and training. It is recommended that the science to action approach be supported for its utility and ability to convince and mobilize. <p>This is not meant to have PACT function as the environmental educator but for the organization to utilize its grant funds to support the initiatives of environmental organizations in the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Review the <i>primary education</i> curriculum with a view to introduce conservation and environmental management in the science curriculum for students.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Foster awareness initiatives that seek to educate at the highest level of public sector of the symbiotic relationship between tourism and biodiversity conservation ❖ Foster awareness initiatives that seek to educate all levels of the NTC planning mechanism to the symbiotic relationship between tourism and biodiversity conservation. ❖ Foster awareness initiatives among the general public and especially within communities that are tourism stakeholders of the symbiotic relationship between tourism and biodiversity conservation. ❖ Foster awareness initiatives among private sector as a whole and those engaged as tourism stakeholders of the symbiotic relationship between tourism and biodiversity conservation. ❖ Foster awareness initiatives among civil society and environmental organizations of the symbiotic relationship between tourism and biodiversity and tourism as an economic activity that can generate financial support for biodiversity conservation. ❖ Review current formal education training programs for natural resources management and tourism to ensure that aspects of both disciplines are included in the respective programs. ❖ Foster general awareness initiatives for the tourists and Belizean public of the importance of biodiversity conservation and its natural foundation for a key economic earner – tourism. ❖ Review training programs promoted by the BTB and other tourism stakeholders to ensure an inclusion of biodiversity awareness and importance of conservation.
MARKETING		
7	<p>To ensure that the stakeholders understand the importance of the responsible management and protection of natural and cultural resources as the foundation of industry viability</p>	<p>Actions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ By all means, we must continue to promote Belize as an eco-friendly, responsible tourism destination. ❖ Promote the realization of any certification and best practice management

		<p>programs geared at natural resources protection and sustainable management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Promote the realization of incentive programs for investors to operate sustainably, eco-friendly and with consideration for natural resource protection
MONITORING & EVALUATION		
8	<p>To establish acceptable monitoring and evaluation programs complete with the identification of those responsible for data collection, analysis, collection schedules and indicators with a view to incorporate into planning, decision-making and management</p>	<p>Actions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Harmonize activities in this regard with the entities responsible in public sector and civil society for natural resource management and with activities identified in National Biodiversity Strategy Policy and National Protected Areas Systems Plan and Policy ❖ Establish broadly acceptable codes of conduct and standards of operation for different sub-sectors with a view to uphold industry’s eco-ethic and consideration for preservation and protection of natural and cultural resources. ❖ Establish a system that amplifies current goals of the EIA process by allowing for a respective system to analyze socio-economic impacts of projects and development initiatives. ❖ Establish strong baseline data and information on the condition of natural and cultural resources – assessing impact and offering mitigation activities. (Via collaboration with agencies already conducting such initiatives such as the University of Belize, the Healthy Reefs for Healthy People Initiative, Wildlife Conservation Society, the Belize Audubon Society, the Coastal Zone Management Institute and Authority, the Fisheries Department, the Forest Department, Environmental NGOs etc). ❖ Reinforce the continued gathering and updating of above data and utilize in industry planning, decision making and management, via collaboration with agencies already conducting such initiatives. ❖ Establish countrywide acceptable limits of change for protected sites that form part of the tourism product – not meant to be immobile but allow for adjustment based on real situation, via collaboration with agencies already conducting such initiatives.

		<p>Critical for the usefulness of this and the above two statement recommendations is a clearly established period for continued updating of the data and revamping of industry plans and decisions based on the data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Establish a financing structure along with the relevant public sector agencies for budgeting of resources to conduct the necessary periodic assessment and monitoring activities, including allocations for any mitigation actions. ❖ Review the EIA Regulation with a particular focus on requirements for energy management and conservation, water usage, waste management (sewage systems).
INCENTIVES		
9	<p>To investigate with a view to adopt incentive schemes (financial and otherwise) for the tourism industry reinforce responsible management and protection of natural and cultural resources</p>	<p>Actions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Institute a financial incentive program tied to a certification program for medium to large scale tourism investments. ❖ Institute financial incentives for those operators – small, medium and large – who desire to establish management programs which at its heart considers conservation – biodiversity and resources management regimes. ❖ Promote these financial incentive programs to new and existing investors. ❖ Monitor financial incentive programs for effectiveness and individual investments for satisfying stated goals and objectives. ❖ Peg incentive programs to destination and development plans as well as Strategic Environmental Assessments for key destinations and areas. ❖ Consider tax breaks (Environmental Tax) and duty reduction and/or elimination for environmentally friendly products and technology. <p>Allow for tax rebates for those enterprises that implement environmentally friendly products and technology in management and operations</p>

ANNEX IV: NOTES FROM CONSULTATION MEETINGS

BELIZE

INITIAL PROJECT PRESENTATION MEETINGS
WITH KEY
TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS

<u>INSTITUTION/BUSINESS NAME:</u> Belize Tourism Industry Association
<u>INSTITUTION/BUSINESS ADDRESS & CONTACTS:</u> North Park Street BTIA office
<u>NAMES OF PERSON CONSULTED:</u> Mr. Andrew Godoy
The meeting was held on Wednesday, July 23, 2009 at 9:00a.m at the Belize Tourism Industry Association Office. The BTIA management in principle supports the project and its objectives. The BTIA as a show of support can offer assistance in advocating for implementation of the recommendations.
<u>PRIMARY TOURISM POLICY:</u> The BTIA recognizes the individual policy initiatives as those including the 1998 Blackstone Strategy, the 2005 Tourism Policy, the 2004 Cruise Policy and the 100Day Outlook Policy. The 100 Day Outlook policy is used as key in suggesting and presenting this government's commitment to the industry and its developmental direction as a new government. For the BTIA, the 2005 Policy takes central focus as it was drafted to update the policy to reflect industry current scenario – inclusion of cruise tourism.
<u>Areas of Concern for the Industry</u> Using the discussion as a guide, the following issues appeared pivotal for the BHA:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revival of the National Tourism Council -- as a key planning and policy making mechanism, not just a rubber stamp, reviewing membership and role to ensure effective. The consultant shared the idea of a two-tier structure for the NTC with the second tier being technical advisory groups or committees. BTIA agreed with the structure of utilizing sub-committees at a technical level to carry out assessment and offer information to guide policy making. BTIA saw the NTC as the one mechanism that can accomplish cross-sectoral coordination bringing everyone to the table 2. BTIA agrees with instituting of Best Practices in the industry 3. BTIA agrees that it is time for establishing financial incentives that consider the sector and encourage best practices 4. BTIA informed that the industry is investigating national certification, rating systems and standards programs for the industry 5. Strengthening training programs for the sector.

BELIZE

INITIAL PROJECT PRESENTATION MEETINGS
WITH KEY
TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS

INSTITUTION/BUSINESS NAME:

Belize Hotel Association

INSTITUTION/BUSINESS ADDRESS & CONTACTS:

Fort Street
Smokey Mermaid premises

NAMES OF PERSON CONSULTED:

Mr. Kenrick Theus

The meeting was held on Thursday, July 24, 2008 at 3:00p.m. at the Belize Hotel Association Office.

The BHA leadership in principle supports the project and its objectives. The BHA as a show of support can offer assistance in advocating for implementation of the recommendations as well as educate their membership on the recommendations and the goals and benefits behind the recommendations

PRIMARY TOURISM POLICY:

The BHA recognizes the individual policy initiatives as those including the 1998 Blackstone Strategy, the 2005 Tourism Policy, the 2004 Cruise Policy and the 100Day Outlook Policy.

The 100 Day Outlook policy is used as key in suggesting and presenting this government's commitment to the industry and its developmental direction as a new government.

For the BHA leadership, the 1998 Blackstone Strategy is seen as central as it remains in their view the most comprehensive development guide for the industry. BHA recognizes however that the face of tourism has changed and that the industry has surpassed projections in the Strategy. BHA sees the need for a new development direction that recognizes the current state of the industry and accomplishments realized while presenting a comprehensive guide for continued development.

Areas of Concern for the Industry

Using the discussion as a guide, the following issues appeared pivotal for the BHA:-

- Revival of the National Tourism Council -- as a key planning and policy making mechanism
- Instituting of Best Practices in the industry – especially the hotel sector
- Establishing financial incentives that consider the sector and encourage best practices
- Investigating national certification, rating systems and standards programs for the industry
- Strengthening training programs for the sector.

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BELIZE

INITIAL PROJECT PRESENTATION MEETINGS
WITH KEY
TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS

<u>INSTITUTION/BUSINESS NAME:</u> Ministry of Tourism and Belize Tourism Board
<u>INSTITUTION/BUSINESS ADDRESS & CONTACTS:</u> Regent Street BTB Office
<u>NAMES OF PERSON CONSULTED:</u> Mr. Mike Sing – CEO Mr. Yashin Dujon – Technical Advisor (MoT) Ms. Laura Esquivel – Product Development Director (BTB)
The meeting was held on Monday, July 28, 2008 at 10:00p.m at the Belize Tourism Board office. The Ministry of Tourism in principle supports the project and its objectives. Ministry especially requires concrete recommendations and assistance from APAMO to advance the recommendations
<u>PRIMARY TOURISM POLICY:</u> The Ministry recognizes the individual policy initiatives as those including the 1998 Blackstone Strategy, the 2005 Tourism Policy, the 2004 Cruise Policy and the 100 Day Outlook Policy. However, the Ministry is actively moving towards the completion of an updated, tangible, proactive all encompassing Tourism Master Plan. The plan will be the guide for the development of the industry
<u>Areas of Concern for the Industry</u> Using the discussion as a guide, the following issues were discussed, recommended by the consultants and appeared pivotal for the Ministry:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Revival of the National Tourism Council -- as a key planning and policy making mechanism –and wants to ensure that it is tangibly operational and effective➤ Consultants recommend the two tier structure for the NTC with the second tier functioning as a technical advisory body (including private, public and civil society sectors). The first tier being the policy making level again including the three main sectors mentioned.➤ Consultants recommended the review of the legislation to expand membership, strengthen the Council and clearly define its purpose and powers➤ The Ministry appeared willing to look at membership of the NTC and structure with a view to make effective➤ The Ministry is moving towards several initiatives – Zoning legislation and Authority (with emphasis on relevance to different areas and activities), Greening the Industry initiative and others.➤ The Ministry is looking at instituting of Best Practices in the industry with the assistance

of BHA. The consultants recommended the inclusion of APAMO or an environmental group and publicity for the program of best practices – publicity in the industry among stakeholders, the public, communities in tourism and to buyers/visitors

- The Consultants recommended that with the Ministry moving towards zoning and promoting best practices, there were sufficient issues to take to a reconvened National Tourism Council and receive their input, assistance and support.
- The Consultants discussed with the Ministry and the Ministry shares an understanding for the importance of incentive programs to accomplish the implementation of some of the certification, greening and zoning necessary to manage the industry
- The Ministry is investigating national certification, rating systems and standards programs for the industry, with a view to make it relevant to sub-sectors
- The Ministry looking at ways to strengthen training programs for the sector.
- The Ministry suggested APAMO's assistance in transferring buy-in for this greening of Belize and PRIDE in Belize – with public awareness including school aged children.
- The BTB requested assistance from PFB via a project proposal to improve the training for tour guides (with a view to offering specialization and improving the standards of the training).

BELIZE

CONSULTATION WITH KEY TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS

SECTOR CONSULTED: Civil Society

The structure of the consultation was done in two sessions. The first session presented an assessment on the priority tourism policies. The second session presented a series of recommendations for improving policy making, planning and management for the tourism industry.

As a result of the structure much of the matters addressed by participants were clarified and dealt with in the second session on the recommendations for improving tourism policies consideration for biodiversity conservation and its necessary linkages to other sectors, ministries, agencies and legislations.

The sections on the assessment of policies and recommendations for improving policies were reinforced for the particular areas highlighted below

Feedback on Assessment

- Requested reinforcing the assessment of the policy addressing any links with other important pieces of legislation and other ministries, that is the lack of such linkages in the policy
- Requested reinforcing the assessment on current structure of management for tourism. E.g. BTB Structure, other committees etc.
- Requested inclusion of an expanded assessment on the proposed changes to that structure and assess that structure
- Assess the impact of the lack of a National Development Plan
- Requested that the assessment highlight that while policies are concerned about the image the industry is marketing, the image being marketed and the reality are different and that visitors experience the reality which does not match marketing and creates a problem for the industry
- Requested a review the role of civil society since 1998 in affecting policy, especially the role in overcoming silos. A comment was made that civil society is more permanent than government (political parties in government).
- A view was expressed that the 2005 Policy came more out of considering marketing for the industry and less so out of consideration for product development
- Assess why the NTC did not work previously
- Assess private sector role in making policy e.g. BTIA's role
- Assess large financial flows into the tourism industry from multilateral agencies and the consultation undertaken with civil society in relation to these. When should consultation take place and how is it necessary for civil society to be organized to be effective to participate in any consultation? A comment was made that civil society

needed to identify those bodies on which they should be represented/ or should be consulted by government for identification of representation.

- It was mentioned and reinforced that there is a need for tourism to assess for its impacts on the environment and its real economic impact.

Feedback on Recommendations

- Requested reinforcing that in absence of a National Development Plan, the tourism industry needed to operationalize a structure that includes other sectors
- The National Tourism Council as a planning mechanism may be insufficient as legislations for "Councils" lack "teeth" and may require strengthening to the level of an Authority. The recommendation is for the legislation be revised to elevate from a Council to an Authority with true decision-making powers that can affect change.
- It was recommended that the Product Development Unit be removed from the BTB and inserted under the Ministry. This Unit's role would then be supervised and chartered by a Product Development Authority or National Tourism Authority.
- Product Development Authority should have its own board with all linkage sectors present on the Board
- It is recommended that the Product Development Authority has a unit for Cruise tourism and Stay Over tourism sub-sectors to adequately plan for the respective sub-sector and harmonize the development of both sub-sectors
- BTB becomes chiefly responsible for marketing and full marketing agency
- Recommended that the Ministry of Natural Resources creates a Land Use Unit responsible for a zoning authority (that covers tourism and other sectors)
- Recommends that action be taken to strengthen municipal authorities and sub-national bodies ability to regulate tourism in their respective areas
- Recommended that environmental organizations be prepared to contribute information and communicate their real value to the tourism industry via a communication on the value of the protected areas that they manage. (Any preliminary data could be included in the report).
- Protected areas managers stand ready to be partners in development and possibly be utilized as a technical resource in the EIA and NEAC process and in other areas related to sustainability planning – at a level as entities responsible for monitoring and evaluation.
- Recommended that the policy considers protected areas and the buffer communities as central components of the industry and that action be taken to ensure that benefits spill over into buffer communities in real terms
- Recommended that to achieve these real terms economic benefits, that communities must become increasingly involved in the planning, decision making and determination of management for the industry in their respective areas
- It is recommended that incentives include financial and non-financial – with a view to reinforce biodiversity conservation and improve practices for environmental management in the industry and private enterprises' activities. Incentives should be tied to best practices programs and standards programs – that are locally applicable.
- Recommended to proceed with the identification and implementation of a best practices program for the industry, hotel sector and other sub-sectors for tourism.
- Recommended that Belize concentrates on rebuilding its image as an eco-friendly

- destination via emphasizing eco-ethic management regimes and programs and emphasize such in marketing strategies and activities.
- Recommended that environmental groups be included to function as technical advisors in any programs to promote the adoption of Best Practices in the industry – best practices must have central to its program environmental practices and must span all sub-sectors of the industry (tour operations, tour guiding, hotels etc.)
 - Recommended that the tourism policy reinforces directives for protected areas in tourism
 - Recommended that PACT institutes grant funding specifically for addressing the impacts of cruise tourism. In this area, it was recommended that the 33 cents contributed by PACT to the Belize City Council from the cruise tourism head tax be discontinued as it goes against PACT legislation and has no demonstrated tangible benefit to the management for the environment and protected areas.
 - Expand the recommendation that reads -- Continue to encourage protected areas managers in establishing codes of conduct – to include encourage protected areas managers, tour operators, tour guides, international and local tourists to establish and abide by codes of conduct within the broader industry and protected areas.
 - The recommended presence of APAMO on the NTC was reinforced and APAMO was encouraged to lobby for such a presence/inclusion
 - It was recommended that protected areas managers and environmental organizations be presented in the document as key technical advisors and more importantly key contributors to ensuring that the baseline data information is gathered and utilized in planning and in the continuing need to perform assessments, monitoring and recommend mitigative actions
 - It was recommended that APAMO plays a key role in reinforcing and conducting activities that seek to educate, train and build awareness in relation to the importance of biodiversity conservation and environmental management.
 - It was recommended that such conscientization efforts take science to action approach
 - It was recommended that the EIA process be utilized as a process key to establishing a balance between biodiversity conservation and development
 - It was recommended that tourism policies reflect and address emerging global issues e.g. freshwater and energy management, impacts of climate change etc.
 - It is recommended that it be reinforced that there is a continued need to discover innovative partnerships in industry management – public, private and civil society
 - It is recommended that the industry encourages and enforces policy directives and initiatives that ensure local ownership in the industry and reinforces broad participation and benefits by locals.

BELIZE

CONSULTATION WITH KEY TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS

SECTOR CONSULTED: PRIVATE SECTOR

Feedback on Assessment

The private sector group – like the other consultations – agreed with the assessment as preliminarily prepared by the consultants. The following inclusions were requested for the assessment

- Policies for Tourism be harmonized with other policies – for example National Protected Areas Policy and National Biodiversity Policy
- Tourism consider the impact that harmonization of public authorities currently responsible for managing protected areas into a National Protected Areas Commission will have on its operations and policy making
- Protected Areas and environmental organizations be prepared to offer up their value to the tourism industry via a valuation of the product they represent (protected areas)
- Tourism policies should be harmonized with poverty alleviation policies, recognizing as well that in those impoverished areas surrounding protected areas and where tourism occur, there is the greatest possibility for negative impacts to the environment by local communities. Attention to poverty alleviation via increased economic benefits realized from tourism can mitigate this

Feedback on Recommendations

The following are recommendations emanating from the meeting.

- Recommend that the NTC takes on the structure and legal powers of an authority so as to be able to “have teeth” and effect real changes
- Recommend the legislation be reviewed in this regard so as to be applicable and allow for the above
- Recommend that the NTC include the national university
- Recommend that the structure be clearly defined so as to have clear separation of responsibility and authority for the BTB, the NTC and the Ministry.
- Recommend that there be clear separation of powers and clear linkages established within players – so that no one entity that act without duly informing or receiving the necessary authorizations
- Recommend that the fines be reviewed for environmental damages and mismanagement with a view to establish stricter more prohibitive fines, reflective of the gravity of the damages.
- Recommend that processes be reviewed and legal instruments be designed to allow for prior violators be obliged to make compensation for violations.
- Recommend that the fiscal incentives established for the industry be enforced – ensuring that investors are meeting and satisfying targets and development plans as

- specified in the application for incentives
- Recommend that fiscal incentives as well contain an avenue for existing local investors to be able to renovate and innovate and receive incentives for such
- Recommend consideration of a bonus system that is translated into tax breaks/refunds for compliance with environmental standards and innovations that are environmentally friendly.
- Recommend that the hotel rating system should consider/include environment and natural resources management as a requirement
- Recommend that public awareness and promotion be conducted for any agreement to establish tax breaks and duty exemptions for energy efficient items
- Recommend duty exemption or reduction for environmentally friendly products and equipment (solar panels, hybrid vehicles, 4-stroke motor engines etc).
- Recommend that the requirement to conduct baseline assessments and impacts for individual projects/investments be carried out via the EIA process PRIOR to commencement of the project and not after
- Recommend that the necessary budget be identified for conducting national assessments to achieve baseline data and establish impacts of the industry – whether via PACT and other public sector entities' budgets
- Recommend the designation of certain sites being off-limits to cruise ships and cruise tourism so as to reduce impact on environment and natural resources (e.g. for certain critically sensitive sites)
- Recommend that PACT supports environmental education and awareness for schools and the public through established organizations and not on their own as Trust
- Recommend a review of the contributions to conservation currently made by cruise tourism vs. overnight tourism. Perhaps harmonizing this contribution with the reality of the respective impacts caused by the sub-sectors.
- Recommend using this as any persuasive position to demonstrate and determine focus of the industry – contributions (economically) of both sectors in relation to the other.
- Recommend broad based publicity and education on the contents of policies, its impact on livelihood and its true intent to ensure that communities are beneficiaries of better policy making.

BELIZE

CONSULTATION WITH KEY TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS

SECTOR CONSULTED: PUBLIC SECTOR

Feedback on Assessment

- There is no lack of political will. Policies in Belize need the ability and capacity to translate from good intentions to output in a meaningful way. Moving from rhetoric to reality
- Sustainable tourism: For sustainable tourism to be achieved sound policy and planning will have to be accompanied by an improvement/strengthening of environmental management in Belize.
- EIA process may fall short in that each project is evaluated individually. Project may go through the full process of developing an EIA and pass the NEAC but there is no mechanism to integrate development in the sectors for the respective areas the development is being realized. There may be a need for an SEA – Strategic Environment Assessment tool that must form part of the process and projects and the respective EIA evaluated in light of the respective SEAs.
- There is need for integrated planning to be factored into policy making. For example, Coastal Zone coordinates development for coastal zone areas only but need to include consideration watershed management and other tools of integrated economic development as well.
- Development needs to be planned based on its suitability for the respective area
- Policy making should state, understand and consider natural strengths of the country.
- Tourism should not only benefit the protected area or destination area but spillover into the surrounding areas. E.g. Georgeville is at the foothill of the Mt. Pine Ridge area a popular tourist destination – but no tourism benefit is evident in the village. Policy making should set the stage for benefits to spill over in real terms.
- Tourism policy making should allow for inter/intra generational principles and benefits to be secured. Industry must allow for equal access and equal benefits for locals and small stakeholders
- NPASP 2006 – review and incorporate livelihood issues in the assessment on tourism policies
- Natural resources assets should not be devalued by any use. The policy must state specifically and articulate efforts for mitigation
- Sector Policies when drafted are more often than not sound documents. However, the major shortcoming is in integration with other sectors and for a comprehensive integrated planning. Must move from sector plans to macro economic plans
- Financial incentives for the industry should not be automatic. Approval should be strategic, informed and consistent with sector plans and policies and based on good production and environmental practices.

- Assessment of tourism policies should acknowledge the overall in legislations that often weakens the ability for agencies to respond as who has authority is uncertain.
- Belize has capitalized on natural resources but not there yet with the same for culture.
- The system utilized for the Coastal Zone Management could be replicated for the NTC and its technical committees.

Feedback on Recommendations

The BTB representative at the consultation rose to offer a review on the feedback and offer some information on actions that are in the planning for the industry from a regulators perspective.

- Agrees that the process needs a central coordinating mechanism that allows for bringing all persons to the table in order to achieve integrated approach – allowing to move from rhetoric to reality.
- There are some inconsistencies with statistics as it relates to tourism's contribution to GDP. Central Bank reports 17% of GDP while BTB believes more in line with 20+%. In light of this, BTB investigating the Tourism Satellite Account system, however is quite expensive and needs identification of financial resources.
- The Ministry is reviving the NTC – with first meeting scheduled for August 11, 2008
- Ministry has expressed consideration to introduce a second tier to the process – for technical working groups
- A rating system for hotels is being considered. BTB is working with BHA. Need to identify a symbol for the rating system. Level of symbol will be granted based on green management regime employed by the enterprise.
- Ministry working on zone legislation and zone authorities for destinations. The White Paper for this is going to Cabinet in two weeks time. Five destinations/zones identified so far – Belize City, Placencia, San Pedro, Mountain Pine Ridge and Corozal Northern Border. Zone legislations will respond to the NTC and NTC will set the agenda for the direction the industry takes in these areas.
- Shortcoming of the proposed zoning proposal is it only covers the immediate zoned area and not the areas that surround the zone – needs MNRE to step in to assist with land use plans for the areas outside of the zones.
- Consultation will be conducted on the development of these zone areas, zone plans and legislation.
- Incentives for the tourism industry are being investigated. Incentives to be considered for those that reduce imports, identify local products for use and emphasize using local products; for those that employ green technology. As well, Ministry investigating granting incentives and exemption of environmental tax on green technology imported.
- Training is being reviewed. The training system currently focuses on training guides. Ministry wants to expand the training to include other front line service personnel – Customs, Immigration, Forestry and Fisheries staff etc.

ANNEX V: LIST OF INVITEES TO THE CONSULTATIONS

CIVIL SOCIETY/NGO STAKEHOLDERS		
1	Melanie McField	Healthy Reefs for Healthy People Initiative
2	Janet Gibson	World Conservation Society
3	Alejandro Martinez	The Nature Conservancy
4	Imani Morrison	Oak Foundation
5	Edilberto Romero	Programme for Belize
6	Anna Hoare	Belize Audubon Society
7	Celia Mahung	Toledo Institute for Development and Environment
8	Greg Ch'oc	Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management
9	Lindsay Garbutt	Friends of Nature
10	Jessie Young	Community Baboon Sanctuary Women's Group
11	Julian Lewis	Friends of Gra Gra Lagoon Conservation Group
12	Bartolo Teul	Ya'axche Conservation Trust
13	Cindy Joseph	Spanish Creek Wildlife Sanctuary
14	Ellen McRae	Forest and Marine Reserve Association of Caye Caulker
15	Rafael Manzanero	Friends of Conservation and Development
16	Florentino Pop	Agua Caliente Management Team
17	Leonel Heredia	Friends of Swallow Caye Wildlife Sanctuary
18	Jack Nightingale	Toledo Association for Sustainable Tourism and for the Environment
19	Terrence Salam	Friends of May Flower Bocawina National Park
20	Hyacinth Ysaguirre	Steadfast Tourism and Conservation Association
21	Omar Gale	United Nations Development Programme
22	Nellie Catzim	National Protected Areas Commission
23	Candy Gonzalez	Belize Alliance of Conservation Non-Government Organizations
24	Dennis Jones	Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology
25	Mito Paz	Green Reef
26	Valintine Rosado	Coral Reef Alliance
27	Valerie Woods	Conservation International
28	Selenie Matus	Conservation International
29	Shalinie Cawich	World Wildlife Fund
30	Nadia Bood	World Wildlife Fund
31	Noel Jacobs	Mesoamerican Barrier Reef Systems
32	Anselmo Castaneda	Belize Association of Private Protected Areas
33	Angel Tzec	Belize National Indigenous Council
34	Sharon Matola	Belize Zoo & Tropical Education Center

PUBLIC SECTOR

1	Yashin Dujon	Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation
2	Juliet	Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation
3	James Azueta	Fisheries Department
4	Iaisas Majil	Fisheries Department
5	Wilber Sabido	Forest Department
6	Hannah St. Luce	Forest Department
7	Craig Moore	Geology and Petroleum Department
8	Beverly Wade	Fisheries Department
9	Duane Belisle	Ministry of Economic Development
10	George Myvett	Fisheries Department
11	Gabino Canto	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
12	Brian Woodye	Archeology Department
13	Guadalupe Lima	Belize Investment and Trade Development Service
14	Martin Alegria	Department of Environment
15	Tracey Panton	Belize Tourism Board
16	Laura Esquivel	Belize Tourism Board
17	Sharon Perrera	Protected Areas Conservation Trust
18	Valdemar Andrade	Protected Areas Conservation Trust
19	Virginia Vasquez	Coastal Zone Management Authority & Institute
20	Major Lloyd Jones	Belize Port Authority

PRIVATE SECTOR

1	Kenrick Theus	Belize Hotel Association
2	Andrew Godoy	Belize Tourism Industry Association
3	Cassian Aguet	Belize Tour Guide Association
4	Joel Torres	Belize National Tour Operators Association
5	Kevin Herrera	Belize Chamber of Commerce
6	Tom Vidrine	San Pedro Chamber of Commerce
7	Santos Mahung	University of Belize
8	Elma Kay	University of Belize
9	Colin Young	Galen University
10	Mike Heusner	Belize Hotel Association/Belize River Lodge
11	Bridget Cullerton	Citrus Growers Association
12	Mike Green	Belize Eco Tourism Association
13	David Gegg	Cruise Solutions
14	Mark Castillo	Discovery Divers
15	Stanley Longsworth	Caribbean Shipping Agency
16	Stacey Martinez	Euro Caribe Shipping Agency
17	James Nisbet	Fort Street Tourism Village
18	Teresa Parkey	Hugh Parkey's Belize Dive Connection
19	Christian Riveroll	Brown Sugar Market Place
20	Linda Searle	Sea Sports Belize
21	Catherine Paz	Belize Tourism Industry Association -- San Pedro
22	Maria Vega	Belize Tourism Industry Association -- Caye Caulker