

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

EVALUATION REPORT  
ON A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT:  
AN INPUT TO THE INTER-AMERICAN STRATEGY FOR PARTICIPATION

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This document constitutes the final evaluation report on the project entitled: A Participatory Approach to Managing the Environment: An Input to the Inter-American Strategy for Participation (ISP), administered by the Organization of American States/Unit for Sustainable Development (OAS/USDE) and sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme with Global Environment Facility funding. The purpose of the evaluation is to document the ISP project's experience and to determine its impact on the regional, national, and local institutions' ability willingness, and capacity for garnering responsible and effective citizen participation in environment and sustainable development decision-making.
2. This evaluation involved a desk review and qualitative investigation of the outcomes generated by the ISP project. It included site visits to three selected demonstration sites in the Gulf of Honduras, Jamaica, and Peru. The overall goal of the ISP is to promote transparent, effective, and responsible public participation in decision-making and in the formulation and execution of policy related to sustainable development in the Americas. To fulfill this mission, the ISP developed seven separate but complementary components six of which received support from the Global Environmental Facility. These components are the focus of this evaluation report.

### A. Component I: Public participation demonstration sites

#### 1. Findings

3. The demonstration site component provides a critical contribution to the overall ISP. The demonstration projects continue to offer on the ground models which test the view that public participation leads to long-term environmental protection.
4. The demonstration sites present three distinct views of the benefits and challenges of public participation in environmental decision-making and management. Each of the sites offers a valid approach toward increasing public participation appropriate to the socio-economic and ecological context. Each case provides abundant information about the mechanics of civic participation under varying conditions which can be used to inform similar conservation efforts in other regions of the world.
5. The demonstration projects in the Gulf of Honduras and in Jamaica continue to help shape the concept of protected area co-management in the Americas. In both of these cases, project managers are pioneering efforts to legislate that decision-making within protected areas rests with democratically elected citizen's councils.
6. The ISP strategy of providing small grants to existing projects had the positive outcome of generating a resounding form impact from relatively small investment. ISP funding was used to support ongoing, grassroots activities or to fulfill previously planned community-wide consultations. In some cases, participation in the ISP helped organizations activate and secure other sources of funding to continue project activities.

Inevitably, demonstration site managers complained that the available funding was insufficient for the purpose of fulfilling all the proposed activities.

## 2. Recommendation

7. The sites provide substantive case studies demonstrating the actual mechanisms and processes of civic participation unfolding at the community level. The ISP should focus future efforts on building upon the experience and lessons gleaned from this component in order to replicate similar community-based conservation strategies in other regions of the world. As a first step, the ISP should work to strengthen the capacity of existing non-governmental as well as governmental agencies who are demonstration site partners to sustain existing projects and to replicate them on a national scale. Then, in collaboration with its partners, the ISP should develop an implementation strategy which should include training and technical support so as to lend itself to replication in terms of demonstrated public participation in other countries.

### B. Component 2: Legal and institutional frameworks

#### 1. Findings

8. All the stakeholders I interviewed regarded this component as the most successful because:

(a) It was designed and executed through a transparent and participatory process;

(b) The legal component's final report is accurate, comprehensive and applicable; and

(c) It laid a solid foundation for countries to continue work towards the development and reform of environmental law.

#### 2. Recommendations

9. The legal component's final report should be developed into a training manual appropriate for natural resource managers, non-governmental organization representatives, and other civil society stakeholders.

10. ISP should replicate the collaborative process used to produce the legal component's final report in future projects.

### C. Component 3: Information network

#### 1. Findings

11. The information network relies on the internet as the primary tool for communication among the various governmental and civil society stakeholders. The web site works as a very efficient delivery, outreach, and consultation facility but only for those stakeholders with access to the internet. Inevitably, the majority of stakeholders at the community level who lack access to computers are at a disadvantage and must depend on non-governmental organizations for transferring information to and from the ISP.

12. The ISP's formal and informal networks have expanded over the life of the project. Through the consultation process, the ISP has become part of an increasing number of intra-country networks beyond the single national focal point. This is demonstrated through the expanding civil society roster available on the ISP web site.

#### 2. Recommendations

13. The ISP Information Coordinator should continue to track statistics on site use to inform the development and expansion of the web site.

14. The future focus of this component should be on building the capacity of ISP partners and stakeholders to enable them implement communication strategies and techniques described in the information and communication guidance manual that was produced as part of this project.

### D. Component 4: Technical assistance and training

#### 1. Findings

15. The training seminar participants I spoke with all indicated the two primary benefits arising from the workshops were that:

(a) The training programmes utilized case-studies and simulations based on actual, regional situations; and

(b) The workshops offered opportunities for colleagues to compare and contrast their own experiences about land management, with special relationship to the training topic.

16. The trainees who took part in the regional technical seminar on Participatory methods for the Management of Biodiversity and Coastal Resources in Meso, America were especially impressed by the experiential, participatory methodology employed by the trainers.

## 2. Recommendations

17. ISP trainers should encourage trainees to utilize newly acquired knowledge and skills in their work by incorporating concrete action planning into the training programme. Prior to the actual session, prospective trainees should be informed that they will be expected to demonstrate the skills acquired from the training by applying them to their actual work through specific activities.

18. Workshop participants highlighted the opportunities they had to discuss and work with colleagues in small groups on actual problems. All ISP training programmes should continue to maximize the use of practical, participatory methods, and to minimize on lectures as much as possible.

19. Because of the variation in opportunities and experience in civic participation among the OAS member countries, it would be helpful to bring participants from different parts of the region together to focus on one particular case study. Such a field-based training programme would provide the ideal situation for stakeholders or decision makers lacking models in their own countries to borrow from.

### E. Component 5: Consultative fora

#### 1. Finding

20. Outcomes of ISP sponsored fora combined with a professional legal analysis resulted in a series of lessons learned and recommendations summarized in the ISP framework document. The guidelines and recommendations emerging from this component, especially the legal review, provide practical tools for developing effective fora at the local and national levels.

#### 2. Recommendation

21. The recommendations and guidelines on developing effective consultative fora generated through this component should be developed into a hands-on, participatory training programme targeting appropriate leaders at the local and national level.

### F. Component 6: Participation in environment policy and decision-making

#### 1. Finding

22. The inventory and analysis of different financing mechanisms employed throughout the region to encourage participation by citizens in sustainable development are applicable and relevant to OAS member countries. The information was collected from documented case studies, ISP experiences and lessons learned, and meetings with experts.

## 2. Recommendation

23. The recommendations and case studies on financing public participation generated through this component should be developed into a hands-on, participatory training programme targeting appropriate user groups at the local and national levels.

### G. Component 7: ISP framework (This component did not receive GEF funding)

#### 1. Finding

24. The consultation process for the ISP was by far the most controversial and heated topic among the stakeholders I spoke with, including OAS staff, PAC members, CSO members, and NFPs most of whom spoke passionately about it. Many thought the opportunities for consultation were more than adequate and appreciated the OAS/ISP team's efforts to adopt input regarding the process. Some individuals felt that the consultation process was too long and unnecessary, others felt it was inadequate. Two individuals suggested that the power plays among the government PACs, the CSOs, and the OAS staff dominated the process. The range of input I received regarding the consultation is an indication that the ISP framework reflects a genuine process, well beyond expression.

#### 2. Recommendation

25. The perceived differences among some of the ISP project advisors regarding decision making could be minimized through written guidelines and procedures which define the role of the OAS staff, the PAC, and the technical group. Additionally, whenever possible, it would be beneficial to use an outside facilitator for PAC and NFP meetings and conferences, and to keep detailed minutes of these official meetings.

### H. Monitoring and evaluation system

26. Formal monitoring of the ISP was undertaken by the GS/OAS in collaboration with UNEP. The responsible agent for each activity compiled data which determined whether or not objectives had been met. The GS/OAS verified the implementation and performance, and recommended the necessary changes. Regular quarterly progress reports were submitted to the UNEP/GEF coordination office. Individuals interviewed for this report, including GS/OAS staff as well as UNEP staff, indicated their overall satisfaction with the monitoring system. In the process of carrying out this evaluation, I found no discrepancies between the content of the reports and the work actually completed.

## I. Conclusion

27. The summarized findings clearly indicate that overall the ISP project has fulfilled its primary objective and satisfactorily provided the expected outcomes according to the indicators listed in the original project document. The ISP represents a genuine commitment on the part of Governments of the Americas to institutionalize meaningful citizen participation in environmental decision-making related to biodiversity and international waters at the local, national, and regional levels. The ISP project operates within the premise that the key to creating long-term, stable solutions to sustainable development is through an inclusive decision-making process. Although this evaluation revealed a range of opinions about the ISP, especially regarding specific outcomes and the structure of the process, the stakeholders I contacted unanimously supported the overall ISP concept and were enthusiastic about being a part of it. The endorsement of the ISP framework by CEPACIDI demonstrates that the ISP has accomplished the important initial steps toward enabling OAS member countries to have responsible and effective public participation in environmental decision-making.

28. Through the six components that contributed to the final framework, the ISP project demonstrated that achieving participation, dialogue, and consensus are far from concrete, short-term goals. The demonstration sites offered the most concrete and direct impacts on the environment, and continue to be living models which attest to the conclusion that public participation leads to long-term environmental protection. Perhaps even more important than the endorsed ISP framework document itself are the networks, institutions, and processes that were developed (and are being developed) over the duration of the ISP. As a result of these developments, stakeholders are now in a better position to apply participatory concepts and principles advanced through the ISP process.

## J. General recommendations

29. The ISP constitutes an important initial step toward public participation in environmental decision-making. In order to build upon this first step, the process should be continued through concrete action plans, participatory training programmes and other methodologically tested channels for transferring the practical knowledge necessary for civic participation to government decision-makers and civil society leaders who are in most need of such knowledge.

30. During my visit to the demonstration sites, it became abundantly clear that the extent to which projects were able to motivate community participation and collaborative action in environmental issues depended upon the leadership and technical capacity of key individuals. The ISP can strengthen this key ingredient so as to successfully realize good project implementation, and further replication through leadership training programmes targeting key partners and other important change agents identified from the ISP civil society roster.

## I. INTRODUCTION

31. This document constitutes the final evaluation report of the project entitled: A Participatory Approach to Managing the Environment: An Input to the Inter-American Strategy for Participation (ISP), administered by the Organization of American States/Unit for Sustainable Development OAS/USDE and sponsored by the United Nations Environment Program with Global Environment Facility funding. The purpose of the evaluation is to document the ISP project's experience and impact on the ability of regional, national, and local institutions' willingness and capacity to garner responsible and effective citizen participation in decision-making affecting environmental and sustainable development issues.

32. This evaluation involved a desk review and qualitative investigation of the outcomes generated by the ISP project. It included site visits to three selected demonstration sites in the Gulf of Honduras, Jamaica, and Peru. The overall goal of the ISP is to promote transparent, effective, and responsible public participation in decision-making, and in the formulation and execution of policy related to sustainable development in the Americas. To fulfill this mission, the ISP developed seven separate but complementary components, six of which received support from the GEF. These components are the focus of this evaluation report.

### A. Evaluation design and questions

33. The evaluation questions and design are based upon the terms of reference generated by UNEP's office of evaluation for this contract. They were as follows:

(a) Determine how and to what extent the project's objectives were met. The assessment must take into account established project indicators;

(b) Determine the quality and usefulness of the project's outputs and the impact it has created at the regional, national, and local levels;

(c) Review the effectiveness of the implementation and administrative arrangements;

(d) Assess to what extent the project reached the target groups envisaged in the project document. Establish the mechanism used by the project to reach the target groups;

(e) Establish how and what lessons were learned by the project's implementing and executing agencies. How were these lessons applied by these agencies?

(f) Was the project able to catalyze broader interest in, awareness, and understanding of public participation, as well as leverage new actions in the region?

(g) Review the adequacy of the monitoring and evaluation system developed to supervise the implementation of the project.

34. The design consisted of developing a set of evaluation questions derived from the objectives and indicators listed in the original project document for each of the project components. The specific questions are included in the results section of this report. Drawing on the evaluation questions, interview guidelines were developed based on the relationship of the selected persons to the ISP project. Data from the different gathering methods was compiled and organized, dictated by the nature of the ISP components. Analysis consisted of pulling out the key themes from the different sources addressing the pre-determined evaluation questions. The findings were summarized and form the bulk of this document.

#### B. Evaluation methods

35. Data gathering, analysis, and reporting methods used for this evaluation consisted of a combination of qualitative methods and a document review. Data sources included:

(a) Interviews with members of the ISP technical group and the project advisory committees, ISP national focal points, UNEP/GEF staff, and staff of the organizations managing the different demonstration sites;

(b) Formal interviews and focus group discussions with demonstration site project stakeholders;

(c) Informal discussions with community residents or resource users that came across during the field visits;

(d) Observations of project administrators and community leaders interacting during meetings that coincided with my field visits; and

(e) Review of project documents, outputs, monitoring reports, and supporting material for the seven different ISP components.

36. Below, is provided a brief description of the qualitative methods used in collecting data for this evaluation:

##### 1. Semi-structured interviews

37. Over the course of this evaluation, I completed 35 interviews as can be gleaned from the annexed list at the end of this report. For the most part, the interviews I conducted were semi-structured and open-ended. In this instance, semi-structured interviews can be defined as guided conversations in which only the topics are predetermined and new questions or insights arise as the discussion progresses. I used a general interview guide as a checklist to ensure that our discussion covered the areas identified in the evaluation questions. Rather than a formal, structured interview

consisting of specified questions and anticipating similar answers, I encouraged the interviewees to comment on areas that they perceived as important to the project. And only when there was a natural pause in the discussion, or when it otherwise become necessary would I prod the interviewees to comment on topics they had not yet addressed, but which were included in my interview guide. I sometimes taped the interviews while simultaneously taking notes. At the end of each day, or within one or two days, I would review the tapes and my notes, and add some commentary if I deemed it necessary.

## 2. Focus groups

38. A focus group is practically an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic. The focus group method emerged from the field of social marketing in which advertisers surmised that consumer decisions are made in a social context, often growing out of discussions with other people. For the purposes of this evaluation, I used focus groups as a research method to obtain information from a small group of stakeholders, usually upto 5 in number. During the focus group, participants reflected on issues and questions I presented to them. The primary purpose was for me to obtain information and perspectives in a safe, social context where people could consider their own views in relation to the views of others.

## C. Observations

39. Observations made up a substantial portion of the demonstration site data used in this study. I tried to learn as much as I could by observing project managers, resource users, and other stakeholders at their jobs or in the community.

40. From the outset, I made clear what my presence and role as an evaluator was for. I was genuinely displayed interest in how people lived and wanted them to show me what they did and why they did it. This attitude contributed greatly to the amount and quality of information I received. By seeing genuine interest in what was going on demonstrated by me, often times individuals I interacted with would go to great lengths to show me what they did and why they did it. The process of focusing on what fisherman were doing rather than asking them directly what they were thinking usually led to less inhibited conversation and a frank description of the problems they faced.

41. I would take fieldnotes daily. Whenever possible, I took immediate notes of observations and encounters as they were happening. In the evenings, I took the time to expand on these notes and reflect on the day. I made notations about events which especially impressed me.

## II. RESULTS

### A. Public participation demonstration sites

42. Rather than focus the evaluation on the individual goals and objectives of each of the demonstration sites, the purpose of this inquiry is to assess if and how the demonstration projects contributed towards the fulfillment of the overall ISP goals and objectives. The summarized results for each of the demonstration sites is presented separately followed by a general assessment of the demonstration site component in relation to the larger ISP. More detailed information about each of the demonstration sites is available through archived ISP project documents.

#### 1. Gulf of Honduras

43. Did the Gulf of Honduras project provide a relevant model for increasing public participation in environmental planning and decision making? What worked well in the site? What didn't work so well?

44. This demonstration site serves as a valuable model because it presents a two-pronged approach towards increasing citizen participation. The Trilateral Alliance for the Conservation of the Gulf of Honduras consists of nine non-governmental organization members. The lead organizations for each country are: Fundaci3n para el Ecodesarrollo y la Conservaci3n (FUNDAECO), Guatemala; Toledo Institute, and Honduras. It is working both at the grassroots level to organize and strengthen existing community stakeholder groups and at the legislative level to facilitate access of the resource users to the decision-making process that affects them. Two important innovations resulting from the process are the establishment of multiple use areas and the concept of co-management. For example, FUNDAECO facilitated a series of consultations with local fishermen to develop a fisheries management plan for the proposed Rio Sarst3n protected area. Fisherman actively participated and gradually assumed greater responsibility over the process. They were motivated in part by the prospect of long term sustainable harvests and more immediately by the security that comes with government fishing licenses. Within the existing system, the expense and complex bureaucracy associated with obtaining a license make it nearly impossible for an artisan fisherman to function. Yet, technically, it is illegal to fish Guatemalan waters without a license, a factor which creates an atmosphere of insecurity for subsistence fishermen. FUNDAECO is working closely with the Guatemalan Protected Area Commission (CONAP) to make valid, inexpensive licenses available on-site to local fishermen. FUNDAECO has also lobbied congress to officially, legislate community participation through a proposed co-management strategy for the Rio Sarst3n Protected Area. Though the protected area has yet to be formally declared, due to the increased visibility brought on by the Alliance and the ISP, FUNDAECO administrators are confident it will pass.

Communication and collaboration among the Alliance member countries has been strengthened through the ISP. The Alliance took advantage of ISP funding to meet and develop key tools for public participation for coastal zone protected areas through

mechanisms for co-management. One of the products resulting from these meetings was an inventory of public participation methodologies used by the Alliance and its membership. Other collaborative activities include an ongoing exchange of technical information; for instance the ecological monitoring of the manatee, and the joint production of public information/education materials like posters and videos. Despite these developments initiated through the ISP, the administrators I spoke with felt that organizational, funding, and logistical constraints have inhibited the Alliance from reaching the level of collaboration envisioned at the start of the project. Alliance representatives are, however, confident that their efforts will eventually result in measurable improvements in the Gulf's marine and coastal ecosystems. Land managers observe that it is still too early to obtain valid data indicating significant improvements. Project administrators complain that the ISP provided inadequate funding for the ambitious project activities.

45. Is the Gulf of Honduras' experience relevant to OAS member countries?

46. The Gulf of Honduras Trinational Alliance is a relevant case study for the region because it demonstrates the role of civil society at the local, national, and international levels. Although still in its infancy, the Alliance is attempting to:

- (a) Coalesce diverse stakeholder interests;
- (b) Integrate resource users into the technical and logistical aspects of land management;
- (c) Increase public awareness about coastal and other environmental issues; and
- (d) Lobby elected government officials to legislate mechanisms for public participation in protected area management.

47. What direct effect did ISP sponsorship have on the project's implementation? What indirect outcomes resulted from ISP sponsorship?

48. The trinational project to protect the Gulf began in 1996 well before the ISP. Administrators emphasize that ISP funding was minimal and most project activities would have been carried out regardless of ISP support. However, ISP involvement did increase the visibility and credibility of the project. Administrators at FUNDAECO suggest that the legislative process for approving the co-management structure proposed for Rio Sarst?n (and perhaps for Punto Manabique) will be greatly facilitated because of the ISP. The FUNDAECO executive director believes that the international exposure associated with the ISP played a role in the organizations' capacity to obtain other funding from the Inter-American Development Bank.

49. Is this demonstration site experience being replicated in other parts of the country? In other countries?

50. The Alliance is not structured into a single, replicable model or strategy. Each country has its own process for establishing protected areas. To a limited extent, participating non-governmental organizations have used the Alliance as a technical resource and as a forum for sharing experiences. In the case of Guatemala, although some form of co-management is operating in other protected areas, Rio Sarst?n will be the first time the practice is mandated by the state. CONAP and other land management agencies intend to monitor the Rio Sarst?n case closely, because it has a high potential of being replicated in other parts of the country.

51. Are lessons learned, recommendations and conclusions generated through this case study accessible to OAS members through the ISP information network? Is the system of documentation and dissemination adequate?

52. The Gulf of Honduras experience has been incorporated into most of the other components of the ISP, including:

(a) A description of the project being included in the ISP web site which is, theoretically, available to all OAS member countries;

(b) Presentations by Alliance representatives at most ISP meetings, seminars, workshops, and training programmes;

(c) The OAS sponsored independent evaluation of the demonstration site to document lessons learned and assess the projects according to participation performance indicators;

(d) The Gulf of Honduras' experience being highlighted throughout the recommendations for action section of the ISP framework; and

(e) A final report of the demonstration sites component being prepared to be included in a comprehensive ISP publication.

53. To what extent does the project reach the target groups envisaged in the project document? What is the mechanism used by the project to reach the target groups?

54. Seeking out participation of community groups traditionally marginalized from the decision-making process was not a priority for the Alliance. In fact, the Alliance prefers to work with existing community stakeholder groups such as those involved with agriculture, fishing, and tourism. These interest groups are traditionally directed by men and are often ethnically divided. Women, ethnic minorities, and indigenous groups have been involved in the project only to the extent of their representation within pre-existing community groups. Primary mechanisms for working with target groups have included:

(a) Hiring and training local community promoters to carry out project activities in their own communities;

- (b) Field extension and training workshops in a wide range of activities in sustainable agriculture, fishing, ecotourism, and microenterprise activities;
- (c) Radio spots and public service announcements;
- (d) Interpretive trails and exhibits targeting local as well as external visitors;
- (e) Public meetings to inform and consult community members in the preparation of master plans, regional projects, sustainable fishing plans, and land surveying efforts;
- (f) Campaigns to increase environmental awareness; and
- (g) Educative posters, print media, and videos.

55. How is the experience from this project incorporated into the overall ISP framework?

56. The Gulf of Honduras' experience is featured throughout the recommendations for action annex of the ISP framework.

## 2. Portland Bight, Jamaica

57. Did the Portland Bight project provide a relevant model for increasing public participation in environmental planning and decision-making? What worked well in this site? What didn't work so well?

58. The goal of the project in Jamaica is parallel to ISP's mission in that it strives to promote and institutionalize citizen participation and empowerment in the decision-making process for the conservation and sustainable development of the Portland Bight Protected Area (PBPA). The project strives to demonstrate that local communities empowered to manage their land and the resources they depend upon will act as effective change agents toward sustainable development. The Caribbean Coastal Area Management (CCAM) is the non-governmental organization responsible for administering the Portland Bight Sustainable Development Area. Its approach consists of training and supporting stakeholder councils to gradually assume complete management responsibility within a five-year period. CCAM works with both interest groups, for instance fisheries, and existing citizens' associations to form councils. The councils bring together community groups, government agencies, and resource users to identify, prioritize, and address community issues. CCAM's approach is unique in that it puts community interests like electrification, roads, and telephones first, confident that environmental issues will eventually be addressed as the councils' develop their organizational capacity and leadership skills. CCAM is firm in its belief that ultimately the protection of Portland Bight's biodiversity depends on the economic and social well-being of the communities within the protected area. A unique component of this project

is the provision for a community developed mechanism for self - policing through the Honorary Game Warden system. Part of the Wildlife Protection Act enacted a generation ago to regulate elite game hunters and converted it into a state-sanctioned mechanism was cleverly resurrected by CCAM for fishermen to regulate themselves. To date, the Fisheries Management Council is very pleased with the arrangement. CCAM is pursuing a similar arrangement for community, volunteer Litter Wardens.

The Portland Bight project receives no funding from the government of Jamaica; therefore CCAM must depend on a combination of grants and project money to survive. Because so much of CCAM's staff time is dedicated to project reports and grant application, the director feels that the organization's public outreach and community mobilization efforts have suffered. However, it should be noted that through CCAM's participatory approach, Portland Bight communities are simultaneously developing the capacity to seek funding and manage natural resources independent of external organizations.

59. Is the Portland Bight experience relevant to OAS member countries?

60. The PBPA is an outstanding case study for the ISP because it showcases a grassroots effort by community members to act as effective change agents toward their own sustainable development. CCAM's approach of treating sustainable development as a participatory process in which protecting natural resources is only one component of a larger package of soci-economic activities necessary for long-term quality of life may provide a powerful alternative model to the typical conservation focused methodology employed by the majority of environmental agencies. Similar to the Gulf of Honduras' case study, Portland Bight presents a functioning relationship (pending upcoming legislative approval) between the Jamaican government CCAM and civil society made up of Portland Bight communities. The dynamic progression of this relationship over time should prove to be a valuable case study for other countries implementing or considering similar protected area management strategies.

61. What direct effect did ISP's sponsorship have on project implementation? What indirect outcomes resulted from ISP sponsorship?

62. The PBPA began well before the ISP. The CCAM director emphasizes that ISP funding was minimal and most project activities would have been carried out regardless of that support. Despite this claim, the ISP did fund activities demonstrating a genuine civic process rather than merely plans on paper. Also, CCAM administrators indicate that ISP involvement as well as other sources of international support did increase the visibility and credibility of the project. NRCA officials point out that the legislative process for approving CCAM management of the PBSA will be facilitated because of ISP involvement.

63. Is this demonstration site experience being replicated in other parts of the country? In other countries?

64. The PBPA mission of improving the quality of life of residents as well as protecting coastal biodiversity through community involvement at all stages of planning and implementation is unique to Jamaica. The project is still in the early stages but is considered a model by the NRCA as well as other Caribbean conservation organizations. Therefore, it has a very high probability for replication in other parts of Jamaica, as well as the Caribbean and the rest Latin America.

65. Are lessons learned, recommendations and conclusions generated through this case study accessible to OAS members through the ISP information network? Is the system of documentation and dissemination adequate?

66. The PBPA experience has been incorporated into most of the other components of the ISP, including:

(a) A description of the project is included in the ISP web site, which is available to all OAS member countries and individuals with internet access;

(b) Presentations by PBPA representatives at most ISP meetings, seminars, workshops, and training programmes;

(c) The OAS sponsored an independent evaluation of the demonstration site to document lessons learned and assess the projects according to participation performance indicators;

(d) The PBPA experience is highlighted throughout the recommendations for action section of the ISP framework; and

(e) A final report of the demonstration sites component is being prepared and will be included in a comprehensive ISP publication.

The PBPA demonstration has been documented and disseminated as extensively as possible through the ISP network.

67. To what extent does the project reach the target groups envisaged in the project document? What is the mechanism used by the project to reach the target groups?

68. The proposed management structure of the PBPA is intended to be democratic. Stakeholder and citizen councils ultimately (following a five-year transition) will be given management responsibility of the entire protected area. Councils are made up of elected delegates representing every community and resource use group in the protected area. The delegates represent communities that are marginalized in that they are economically disadvantaged with little formal education. However, CCAM intentionally works with existing community groups that don't necessarily represent gender or minority interests within communities.

69. How is the experience from this project incorporated into the overall ISP framework?

70. The Portland Bight experience is featured throughout the recommendations for action annex of the ISP framework.

### 3. Chimbote, Peru

71. Did the Restoration of the Bay of Ferrol Project provide a relevant model for increasing public participation in environmental planning and decision-making? What worked well in the site? What didn't work so well?

72. The bay restoration project is one of several Regional Environmental Commissions (CAR) managed by the Peruvian National Environmental Agency (Comisi?n Nacional del Medio, (CONAM). It is relevant to the ISP project because unlike the other non-governmental led grassroots initiatives, the CAR- Ancash is a government led strategy to bring together different sector stakeholders to develop a regional environmental management plan. CONAM has the lead role in developing the planning process, selecting sector representatives, producing and approving project documents, and establishing operating procedures. Some questions must be raised about the level of genuine civil participation possible within the present structure. At the same time, it should be recognized that CONAM assumed direct responsibility for project execution only after irreconcilable differences arose between the non-governmental organization leading the effort and the municipality.

Chimbote is an important Peruvian fishing and industrial port that has a long history of severe environmental degradation from various sources, including uncontrolled industrial and municipal discharges, coastal erosion due to the over construction of piers and water breaks, and unplanned municipal expansion. Interviews with civil society representatives (non-governmental organizations, dioceses, the university, and the municipality) indicate one of the greatest barriers to environmental control is the perception of residents that smoke from fish processing factories means jobs. This perception has been reinforced in recent years because of the unpredictability and decline of fish harvests linked to El Ni?o and overfishing. CONAM project administrators point out the difficult circumstances informing the project, and have limited the projects' short-term objectives to building an inter-sectoral process and to education. An example of an educational activity are the workshops demonstrating the economic advantages of cleaner technology and compliance with environmental regulations. Through the cooperation of all the participating organizations, the project has produced an analysis outlining different stakeholders' contribution to the overall contamination of the Bay. This document led to the collaborative development of a regional, ten-year environmental action plan. The process of developing a concrete action plan reduced much of the initial resistance and mistrust among the different stakeholders and overcame the perception that CAR-Ancash was just another bureaucratic exercise.

73. Is the CAR- Ancash experience relevant to OAS member countries?

74. The CAR-Ancash is a relevant case study because it demonstrates the role of a government agency as an enabler or catalyst in promoting civic participation in environmental mediation. It contrasts the other two ISP demonstration sites in that it is a government rather than a non-governmental led initiative, meant to decentralize and strengthen the capacity of regional institutions and civil society. Such a model is appropriate to any government agency striving to be more responsive to pressing regional environmental concerns.

75. What direct affect did ISP sponsorship have on project implementation? What indirect outcomes resulted from ISP sponsorship?

76. Similar to the other case studies, the CAR-Ancash restoration project predates ISP. The CONAM representative who is the president of CAR-Ancash is also the ISP national focal point representative for Peru. He indicates that the design and implementation for the stakeholder participation component of the CAR- Ancash was heavily influenced by the overall ISP project. Through ISP funding, CAR-Ancash was able to organize actual stakeholder consultations that resulted in the collaborative development of a regional, ten-year environmental action plan.

Although CONAM administrators have no concrete data, they feel that ISP involvement did generate greater project visibility and may have leveraged other funding sources.

77. Is this demonstration site experience being replicated in other parts of the country? In other countries?

78. CAR-Ancash is one of several regional commissions active throughout Peru. They all share the same goal of creating room for multi-stakeholder dialogue about regional environmental policy. CAR-Ancash's strategy of developing an action plan for the Restoration of the Bay of Ferrol through a consensus-based process is being monitored by CONAM and considered a model for the other CARs.

79. Are lessons learned, recommendations and conclusions generated through this case study accessible to OAS members through the ISP information network? Is the system of documentation and dissemination adequate?

80. CAR-Ancash was the only ISP demonstration site that did not change over the 2½ year course of the project. Also, because the president the CAR, Mariano Castro, also happens to be the national focal point representative, this demonstration site had a better opportunity, both formally and informally, to benefit from the other ISP components. For example, as the national focal point and CONAM representative, Mariano participated in the preparation of the legal case study on Peru's energy and mining sector constituted for the legal framework component of the ISP project. The CAR-Ancash experience has been incorporated into most of the other components of the ISP, in the following manner:

- (a) A description of the project is included in the ISP web site, which is available to all OAS member countries and individuals with internet access;
- (b) Presentations by PBPA representatives at most ISP meetings, seminars, workshops, and training programmes;
- (c) The OAS sponsored an independent evaluation of the demonstration site to document lessons learned and assess the projects according to participation performance indicators;
- (d) A final report of the demonstration sites component is being prepared and will be included in a comprehensive ISP publication; and
- (f) The Bay of Ferrol demonstration site has been documented and disseminated as extensively as possible through the ISP network.

81. To what extent does the project reach the target groups envisaged in the project document? What is the mechanism used by the project to reach the target groups?

82. The composition of CAR-Ancash was influenced and shaped by CONAM. It reflects the diverse stakeholders present in the region, including:

- (a) Local and regional government;
- (b) Industry;
- (c) Fisheries;
- (d) Agriculture (primarily cane plantations);
- (e) Dioceses of Chimbote;
- (f) A non-governmental organization (Natura); and
- (g) A national university.

However, several stakeholders such as small private businesses, women's groups, or tourism are not represented. The single participating non-governmental organization, Natura, is supposed to represent the views of all the others. However, the Natura representative indicated that though she tries to consult with the other organizations often times interests and opinions differ. She did not feel that Natura could adequately represent all those which have a stake in the project. CONAM administrators recognize these limitations and anticipate expanding participation in the CAR gradually. They felt it was more important to begin the process with interested and established stakeholder groups.

83. How is the experience from this project incorporated into the overall ISP framework?

84. The CAR-Ancash experience is highlighted throughout the recommendations for action section of the ISP framework.

#### 4. Observations about the demonstration site component

85. The demonstration site component provides a critical contribution to the overall ISP. The demonstration projects continue to offer on the ground models attesting to the fact that public participation leads to long-term environmental protection.

86. The demonstration sites present three distinct views of the benefits and challenges of public participation in environmental decision-making and management. Each of the sites offers a relevant approach towards increasing public participation appropriate to their socio-economic and ecological contexts. Each case provides abundant information about the mechanics of civic participation under varying conditions that could inform similar efforts throughout the hemisphere. Although each of the demonstration sites garnered a higher level of public participation than would ever have existed without the project, each case differs in scope, size, and approach.

87. In the case of the Gulf of Honduras, the Trinational Alliance integrates local, national, and community interests towards the common goal of biodiversity protection and sustainable use of natural resources. Citizen participation is being encouraged at the local level, to the extent that it coincides with the biodiversity protection mission of the participating non-governmental organizations.

88. In Jamaica, CCAM is seeking a deeper level of citizen participation. Although CCAM has (or will soon have) a mandate for managing the protected area, the organization is empowering the communities to map out their own path to sustainable development. CCAM is willing to transfer power to the councils in the process losing some control, because it is confident that the communities will finally realize that it is in their own best interest to protect forest, water, and coastal resources.

89. In Peru the CAR-Ancash project is laying the groundwork for a greater extent of public participation. Over the years the citizens of Chimbote have developed a high degree of apathy and cynicism toward any government project. There is such discernable apathy towards environmental issues because the majority of households in Chimbote are dependent on the fishing industry. CAR-Ancash has made significant progress by bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders and developing a concrete regional environmental action plan. Through the ISP, the Bay of Ferrol project has managed to accomplish an important initial step towards meaningful citizen participation in environmental control and decision-making.

90. The demonstration projects in the Gulf of Honduras and Jamaica continue to help shape the concept of protected area co-management in the Americas. In both of these

cases, project managers are pioneering efforts to legislate protected area decision-making power to democratically elected citizen councils.

91. An important outcome of the ISP is the opportunity it afforded demonstration site managers and other stakeholders to share and analyze their experiences with colleagues from other parts of the region. The ISP/OAS team went to great lengths to ensure the dissemination of the demonstration site experience throughout the ISP network through presentations at meetings, regional workshops and several forms of documentation. Administrators from the sites were all in agreement that one of the greatest benefits of their experience with the ISP were the relationships and informal networks that they developed with colleagues throughout the region. Still, several project managers and ISP/PAC members felt that the OAS/ISP team should have provided clearer guidelines regarding the role of the demonstration sites within the overall ISP. Administrators from Guatemala and Jamaica critiqued the format of some of the meetings on grounds that too little time and attention to structure were dedicated to analysis of the demonstration site experiences.

92. In retrospect, members of the ISP technical team and advisors thought that the first demonstration site selection process was a little too rushed and arbitrary. Although there was an extensive selection process, due to the infancy of the ISP network and tight deadlines, relatively few proposals were initially submitted for funding. A team member indicated that over the course of the project, the ISP has been able to generate a much stronger civil society network in each of the OAS member countries. Therefore, if the ISP had to do the competitive selection process over again, it is in a much better position to disseminate requests for proposals through a larger and more diverse network. Also, OAS team members have developed a clearer sense of the characteristics a project should possess to maximize on use of ISP funding.

93. In July 1999 the ISP completed an independent evaluation of the demonstration sites according to pre-determined participation indicators. The evaluation produced not only an accurate assessment of the demonstration sites, but also valuable data which compared the effectiveness of different strategies for garnering citizen participation in environmental decision-making. Demonstration site administrators similarly complained about the requirement for regular reporting to the OAS. They felt that the demand for quarterly reports taxed their already overworked staff. The OAS/ISP team considered this system necessary for fulfilling their regular reporting obligations to UNEP/GEF. Members of the ISP staff thought that the quality of the reports from each of the demonstration sites varied significantly.

94. The ISP strategy of providing small grants to existing projects had the positive outcome of generating a resounding impact from a relatively small investment. ISP funding was used to support ongoing, grassroots activities or to fulfill previously planned community-wide consultations. In some cases, participation in the ISP helped organizations secure other sources of funding to continue with their project activities. Inevitably, demonstration site managers complained that the available funding was insufficient to fulfill all the proposed activities. One administrator from the Trinational

Alliance suggested shifting funds from other projects altogether in order to complete consultations with local fishermen.

## 5. Recommendations

95. The sites provide substantive case studies demonstrating the actual mechanisms and processes of civic participation unfolding at the community level. The ISP should focus future efforts on building upon the experience and lessons gleaned from this component by facilitating the replication of similar community based conservation strategies in other parts of the region. As a first step, the ISP should work to strengthen the capacity of existing non-governmental as well as governmental demonstration site partners to sustain existing projects and to replicate them nationally. In collaboration with its partners, the ISP should then develop an implementation strategy, including training and technical support, so that other organizations can adopt the demonstrated public participation approaches in their own countries. Some specific aspects that should be addressed in any expansion or replication of the demonstration site component include:

(a) Taking advantage of the expanded ISP network to develop a more effective project selection process;

(b) Creating more effective avenues for promoting dialogue among demonstration site managers, PAC members, and ISP managers. A development sociologist or educator with expertise in participatory community development strategies should be included in such promotional exercise; and

(c) Carefully considering the level of funding for each of the demonstration sites. It may be more beneficial to select fewer demonstration sites but fund them adequately so as to achieve a greater impact within a shorter time.

### B. Legal and institutional frameworks

96. Do the outcomes of the legal framework component affect OAS member countries' capacity to increase participation in environmental planning and decision-making?

97. The primary outcome of this component was the establishment of a baseline summary for governments to assess existing environmental, legal, and institutional frameworks. Such a baseline is critical for setting national and regional goals and for measuring any progress toward those goals. The inventory resulted from the collaboration between 18 different institutions and 15 contributing authors. The study compiles the results of extensive internal reviews undertaken by 12 regionally representative countries. A total of 296 laws were studied. ISP team members as well as other stakeholders familiar with the project in Guatemala, Jamaica, and Peru indicate that the legal framework component produced the most immediately utilizable outcomes of the entire ISP project. In Guatemala, the inventory

developed for the ISP legal framework component was continued through Trinational Alliance sponsorship and resulted in a useful bi-country document: Rapid Appraisal of Legal and Institutional Mechanisms for Public Participation in Protected Areas for Guatemala and Honduras, IDEADS and Fundaeco, February, 2000. In Peru, CONAM representatives commented on the utility of the internal review and the comprehensive document as both an organizational as well as an instructional tool.

98. Are the outcomes and recommendations resulting from this component applicable and replicable to OAS member countries?

99. Yes. Every stakeholder representative I spoke with reinforced the validity of legal component final report. It serves as an informative baseline from which concrete action plans can be adapted for strengthening legal and institutional frameworks throughout the Americas. The design and language of the report make it accessible to lay people, so that it can be used to inform grassroots community groups as well as judicial branches of government.

100. Are case studies, recommendations and conclusions generated through this component accessible to the appropriate stakeholders within the focal countries? Is the system of documentation and dissemination adequate?

101. The legal framework component was one of the first ISP projects. It has been disseminated through several ISP channels, including:

(a) The Legal Component Final Report (to date in English only) which is available at the ISP web site, making it accessible to anyone with internet facilities;

(b) PAC members being made aware of the availability of the report at meetings;

(c) Legal case studies being used in some of the technical training seminars, especially in the Participatory Water Resource Management Seminar held in Uruguay;

(d) Analysis and results of the legal framework component being used heavily in the formulation of both the policy and action sections of the final ISP framework; and

(e) In Guatemala, the non-governmental organizations, Fundaeco and IDEADS, using both the in-country inventory as well as the ISP legal component final report to both lobby legislators and educate protected area community stakeholder groups. Similar efforts may be occurring in other countries, but I was unable to ascertain this within the limited scope of this evaluation.

102. Is this component collaborative? Has it led to hemispheric and national dialogue (shared experiences, lessons learned) among countries and stakeholders on legal reform within regions and countries?

103. The process involved collaboration of 18 different public sector and non-governmental institutions. Fifteen authors from the 12 regionally representative countries contributed research and case studies. The final report was compiled by a single author who indicated that he was pleased with the collaborative approach utilized, but would have preferred to have one more round of consultations with the contributing authors prior to submitting the final document.

In all, the demonstration site administrators are incorporating legal measures to strengthen public access to coastal zone management. In Guatemala and Peru, administrators specifically indicated that they were using the legal framework inventory to assist in project planning.

104. How is this component incorporated in the overall ISP framework?

105. Analysis and results of the legal framework component were used heavily in the formulation of both the policy and action sections of the final ISP framework.

1. Observations about the legal framework component

106. All the stakeholders I interviewed regarded this component as the most successful because:

- (a) It was designed and executed through a transparent, participatory process;
- (b) The legal component final report is accurate, comprehensive and applicable; and
- (c) It laid a solid foundation for continued work in this area.

2. Recommendations

107. The legal component final report should be developed into a training manual aimed at natural resource managers.

108. ISP should replicate the collaborative process used to produce the legal component final report in future projects.

C. Information network

109. Do the outcomes of this component affect focal countries' capacity to increase participation in environmental planning and decision-making?

110. The goal of the information network component was to demonstrate and strengthen the best models of consultative approaches between governments and civil society. The outcomes of this component include:

- (a) Creation of the ISP web site;
- (b) Roster of civil society as well as governmental organizations;
- (c) Publication and distribution of the information and communication guidance document and forms; and
- (d) Facilitation of the regional consultation process for the final ISP framework document though this one was not funded by GEF.

The extensive information and communication networks formed through this component form the foundation, not only to the consultative process for the development of the ISP framework, but also to effective public participation itself.

111. To what extent does the ISP regional network reach within countries? Internationally? Are marginalized groups without access to the internet or with limited/no literacy skills included?

112. The broad range of government and civil society stakeholders embraced by the ISP complicates the information network component. The effectiveness of the national focal points as a communication bridge between the civil society sector in their own country and the ISP team varied substantially among the OAS member countries. Several of the less active national focal points pointed to serious funding and staffing constraints. Under the current structure, dialogue between target audiences and ISP organizers as well as the dissemination of materials is highly dependent on the availability and enthusiasm of the national focal points. Similarly, the extent to which marginalized groups are included varies depending upon the national focal points' own network as well as the in-country networks of other project stakeholders, such as the civil society PAC members.

The roster of civil society organizations listed on the web site continues to grow. Information about the extent to which these organizations use the roster to communicate or build coalitions among themselves is not known.

113. How is this component incorporated in the overall ISP framework?

114. It forms the basis for the ISP framework consultation process and is featured in the document itself.

## 1. Observations

115. The information network relies on the internet as the primary tool for communication among the various governmental and civil society stakeholders. The web

site works as a very efficient delivery, outreach, and consultation mechanism but only for those stakeholders with access to the internet. ISP organizers recognize this shortfall but feel that national focal points and other key civil society representatives will transfer the information to pre-existing regional, national, and local communication networks that don't depend on computers. Inevitably, the majority of stakeholders at the community level who lack computer access are at a disadvantage and must depend on non-governmental organizations for transfer of information to and from the ISP. The ISP web site designer attempted to accommodate individuals with older software and expensive server access by keeping it free of complex graphics and non-essential information.

116. It should also be noted that ISP formal and informal networks have expanded over the life of the project. Through the consultation process, the ISP has become part of an increasing number of intra-country networks beyond the single national focal point. This is demonstrated through the expanding civil society roster available on the web site. All the same, the ISP information network still remains out of the direct reach of traditionally marginalized groups.

117. The communication guidance manual provides concrete methods for developing effective communication strategies to reach target audiences.

## 2. Recommendations

118. The ISP Information Coordinator should continue to track statistics on site and use them to inform the development and expansion of the web site.

119. The future focus of this component should be on building the capacity of ISP partners and stakeholders to implement communication strategies and techniques described in the information and communication guidance manual that was produced as part of this project.

120. As part of the information technology component, the ISP management team considered a pilot project of providing internet accesses through public terminals in selected demonstration site communities. Such a project, coupled with a communication education programme, may prove to be a valuable tool for demonstration.

### D. Technical assistance and training

121. What impact have the training programmes had on focal countries' capacity to increase participation in environmental planning and decision-making?

122. The ISP held three training seminars:

(a) The Regional Technical Seminar on Participatory Management of Biodiversity and Coastal Management in the Caribbean;

(b) The Regional Technical Seminar on Water Resources Management in Transboundary Watersheds in South America; and

(c) The Regional Technical Seminar on Participatory Methods for the Management of Biodiversity and Coastal resources in Meso, America. These seminars provided opportunities for government and civil society organizations to share experiences and to identify best practices that can help inform national as well as regional policies.

123. Are the training content and methodology applicable and replicable in project focal countries? How are the short-term training outcomes being implemented and replicated by focal countries?

124. The training topics were selected to address the priority natural resource management issues for each of the regions. Although the training design varied for each workshop, the emphasis was on generating some form of dialogue among the participants on alternative strategies to increase participation in biodiversity protection and coastal management issues based on actual case studies.

The few training participants I had an opportunity to speak with during my visit to the demonstration sites indicated that they try and apply the new information they acquired during the training to their own work. I was unable to ascertain the extent to which the outcomes of the training are being applied and replicated in the region. Final reports, including policy recommendations, which emerged from the Caribbean, South American, and Meso, American indicated training programmes are available through the ISP.

125. Were the training programmes participatory? Have they led to increased regional and national dialogue (shared experiences, collective learning, lessons learned) among countries and stakeholders on public participation best practices. Has the international dialogue extended beyond the training event?

126. All the training programmes were participatory and experiential. Though the training methodology varied according to the trainers, the programmes all shared a similar format of discussions and small group work using actual regional case studies. The individuals who participated in the Meso, American training indicated that they were able to develop relationships with their international colleagues. Although it was too soon after the training to say whether or not organizational collaboration will result from the training experience, the participants indicated that this was a strong possibility.

127. How is this component incorporated in the overall ISP framework?

128. Technical assistance and training is featured throughout the document. It is also an important component of the follow-up implementation strategy.

## 1. Observations

129. The training seminar participants I spoke with all indicated the two primary benefits arising from the workshops were that:

(a) The training programmes utilized case-studies and simulations based on actual, regional situations; and

(b) The workshops offered opportunities for colleagues to compare and contrast their own land management experiences as they related to the topic under discussion.

130. The trainees who took part in the Regional Technical Seminar on Participatory Methods for the Management of Biodiversity and Coastal Resources in the Meso, America workshop were especially impressed by the experiential, participatory methodology employed by the trainers.

## 2. Recommendations

131. ISP trainers should encourage trainees to apply any newly acquired knowledge and skills to their work by incorporating concrete action planning into the training knowledge. Prior to the actual training, candidates should be informed that they will be expected to demonstrate how they will apply the training knowledge they acquire to their work through the development of specific action plans.

132. Workshop participants highlighted the opportunities they had to discuss and work with colleagues in small groups on actual problems. All ISP training programmes should continue to increase the use of practical, participatory methods and rely less upon lectures.

133. Because of the variation in opportunities and experience in civic participation among the OAS member countries, in some cases, it would be helpful to bring participants from different parts of the region together to focus on one particular case study. Such a field-based training programme may provide the necessary context for stakeholders or decisionmakers who lack models in their own countries.

## E. Consultative fora

134. What impacts have the consultative fora had on OAS member countries' capacity to increase participation in environmental planning and decision-making?

135. This component consisted of a review and analysis of different consultative forum models. Over the two years of the project, several types of fora were considered, including the ISP/PAC itself. The bulk of this component focused on two national fora, the National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCSD) in the Meso, American region and the case of the National Convergence Forum (FONAC) in Honduras. A kind

of participatory analysis of the NCS D was conducted in Costa Rica. The results of the Costa Rica forum combined with the results of a legal analysis made up the series of lessons learned and recommendations summarized in the ISP framework document.

136. To what extent is the consultative fora approach applicable and replicable in OAS member countries? How are the results of this component being implemented and replicated by focal countries?

137. The guidelines and recommendations emerging from this component, especially the legal review, provide practical tools for developing effective fora at the local and national levels.

The outcomes are highlighted in the ISP framework document and are intended to be demonstrated and replicated through the follow-up implementation plan.

138. Were the fora participatory? Have they led to increased hemispheric and national dialogue among countries and stakeholders on strengthening public/private partnerships? Has the international dialogue extended beyond the individual event?

139. The NCS D seminar held in Costa Rica included representation from seven different Central American countries. The results of this seminar led to the development of the Legal and Institutional Review, including recommendations to strengthen councils in the region. Participants at the San Jose conference agreed that the NCS Ds have the potential of providing opportunities for genuine citizen participation in the creation of environmental and development policy. They identified the principal impediments faced by the councils as being the ambiguity of the legislation supporting them and the lack of financial resources for conducting activities. At the conference, the NCS D representatives agreed that the success of the councils as well as the level of civic participation hinged on the following key factors:

- (a) Strengthening legal frameworks;
- (b) Developing institutional capacity;
- (c) Promoting civil society involvement; and
- (d) Lobbying the legislature to recognize NCS Ds as legitimate fora for formulating and influencing national policy.

140. Data documenting the extent to which the workshop participants are following through on the recommendations in their own countries is not available through the ISP, although, in many cases the national consultation process for the overall ISP framework utilized the national council network.

141. Were marginalized groups included in the consultative fora?

142. Not directly. The focus of this component was an analysis and review of different consultative models. It did include an analysis of participation issues in the selected models, like selection, fair representation, and access to information.

143. 5. How is this component incorporated in the overall ISP framework?

144. The recommendations and case studies derived from the consultative fora component are highlighted in the ISP framework in the, Opportunities and Mechanisms for Public Participation category.

#### 1. Recommendations

145. The legal and institutional review of NCSD should be made available at the ISP web site.

146. The recommendations and guidelines on developing effective consultative fora generated through this component should be developed into a hands-on, participatory training programme targeting appropriate leaders at the local and national levels.

#### F. Participation in environment policy and decision-making

147. What impact does the sixth component have on focal countries' capacity to increase participation in environmental planning and decision-making?

148. This component focused on follow-up to the ISP project. The two principle activities were:

(a) An inventory and analysis of different financing mechanisms employed throughout the region to enable citizen participation in sustainable development. Information was collected from documented case studies, ISP experiences and lessons learned, and meetings with experts. Recommendations were generated from the assembled information and are published in the final ISP strategy document; and

(b) An organized process to reflect on the ISP experience and anticipate challenges contained in the final ISP strategy document which those countries implementing recommendations will face. As a result of this activity, a framework plan for supporting public participation in environmental decision-making through specific technical assistance activities was produced.

During my field visit to the demonstration sites, the most common response to the question, what are the major barriers to citizen participation? was lack of funding. Based on my experience and conversations with ISP project advisors, the outcomes of this component will fulfill an important role in providing practical tools to local government officials and other managers who are amenable to the concept of participation but resistant to changing the current state of affairs.

149. To what extent is the sixth component applicable and replicable in project focal countries? How are the results of this component being implemented and replicated by focal countries?

150. The outcomes are applicable and relevant because the case studies and recommendations are drawn from actual experiences. The recommendations for financing strategies and relevant case studies are available in both the policy and action sections of the ISP document. The ISP intends to utilize the framework plan for supporting public participation in environmental decision-making through specific technical assistance activities in the follow-up implementation support programme.

151. Is this sixth component participatory? Has it led to increased hemispheric and national dialogue (shared experiences, collective learning, lessons learned) among countries and stakeholders on public participation best practices.

152. Most of the work for this component came from individual consultants and ISP staff. There was at least one meeting of several professionals familiar with the issue of financing participation that contributed to the data. The final recommendations for financing mechanisms for public participation in environmental decision-making were discussed and revised through the extensive ISP framework consultation process. ISP intends to apply the recommendations for financing strategies through a participatory process in the implementation support programme.

153. Are case studies, recommendations, and conclusions generated through this component accessible to the appropriate stakeholders within the focal countries? Is the system of documentation and dissemination adequate?

154. Recommendations and case studies generated through this component are available through the ISP framework. The framework was distributed to all the national focal points and is available at the ISP web site. This was one of the final components completed. From my experience in the demonstration sites, it has not yet reached the community level.

155. How is this component incorporated in the overall ISP framework?

156. Analysis and results of the component were used heavily in the formulation of both the policy and action sections of the final ISP framework.

#### 1. Recommendation

157. The recommendations and case studies on financing public participation generated through this component should be developed into a hands-on, participatory training programme targeting the relevant user groups at the local and national levels.

#### G. ISP framework

(This component did not receive GEF funding)

158. What impact does the ISP framework have on focal countries' capacity to increase participation in environmental planning and decision-making?

159. This component is key to facilitating the application of the outcomes of the other six components. Its endorsement by CEPCIDI in December 1999 is also the primary indicator listed in the project document that demonstrates fulfillment of the ISP project goal. The approved document has a profound impact on OAS member countries' ability to implement participation mechanisms, because it is the tangible outcome of the 1996 Bolivia Summit where government leaders made a commitment to bring civil society into the decision-making process. Regional approval will inevitably influence policies that affect citizen participation at all levels of environmental planning and decision-making.

160. Was the process for developing the framework participatory? Did it embody the ISP principles of participation? Has it led to increased hemispheric and national dialogue (shared experiences, lessons learned) among countries and stakeholders?

161. Yes, on several levels:

(a) Baseline information for guidelines, case studies, and recommendations shaping the strategy came from the other six ISP components that emerged from a participatory process;

(b) The process for actually writing the strategy was a team effort followed by consultations with the PAC;

(c) The final document went through a country by country consultation process prior to being presented at a general meeting of NFPs and CSOs; and

(d) The final strategy went through another round of consultations and minor revisions before finally being approved by the OAS Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development.

The consultative process itself generated abundant regional as well as national dialogue around the issue of civil society and democracy.

162. Are the outcomes and recommendations within the framework applicable and replicable in the project focal countries?

163. The framework document culminates in over two years of work based on actual experience and case studies from OAS member countries. The outcomes and recommendations are applicable because rather than being developed by an external panel of experts, they are the products of a participatory process generated by the experience of the very stakeholders they are intended to benefit.

164. To what extent did the consultative process for the ISP framework reach the diverse civil society groups targeted by the project? To what extent were traditionally marginalized groups included?

165. A draft version of the framework has been available on the web for comments and consultation since 1999. The regional consultation process was carried out through the NFPs, the international press and the internet. The process was facilitated through the dissemination of a consultation kit. This provided the NFPs with the structure for using a variety of outreach mechanisms to expand on the inclusion and effectiveness of the consultation process as well provide some structure to the responses. At least 18 of the 34 member countries responded and the number of individuals participating in each country varied greatly, e.g. Canada 700, Peru 30, Paraguay 120, Grenada 22, Mexico 148. Obviously, the availability, commitment and enthusiasm of the NFP in each country influenced the extent of the consultation. Also, the timing of the consultations during the traditional vacation months of July and August affected the response rate. Organizations representing the traditionally marginalized groups of women and indigenous people provided responses. The national governments, PAC, and other CSOs had at least two opportunities to consult the document.

166. Are the other six components adequately represented in this overall ISP framework?

167. Yes.

#### 1. Observations

168. The consultation process for the ISP was by far the most controversial and passionate topic among the stakeholders I spoke with, including OAS staff, PAC members, CSO members, and NFPs. Many thought the opportunities for consultation were more than adequate and appreciated the OAS/ISP team's efforts to adopt input regarding the process. Some individuals felt that the consultation process was too long and redundant, others felt it was inadequate. Some felt that their input was ignored. Two individuals suggested that the power dynamics at play among the government PACs, the CSOs, and the OAS staff dominated the process. The range of input I received regarding the consultation is an indication that the ISP framework reflects a genuine process, well beyond expression.

#### 2. Recommendation

169. The differences in decision-making power perceived by some of the ISP project advisors could be minimized through written guidelines and procedures defining the role of the OAS staff, the PAC, and the TG. Also, whenever possible it would be beneficial to use an outside facilitator for PAC and NFP meetings and conferences, and to keep detailed minutes of such official meetings.

#### H. Monitoring and evaluation system

170. Formal monitoring of the ISP was undertaken by the GS/OAS in collaboration with UNEP. The responsible agent for each activity compiled data reflecting whether or not objectives were met. The GS/OAS verified execution and performance and implemented the necessary changes required. Regular quarterly progress reports were submitted to the UNEP/GEF coordination office. Individuals interviewed for this report, including GS/OAS staff and UNEP staff, indicated their overall satisfaction with the process. During this evaluation, I found no discrepancies between the content of the reports and the work actually completed.

171. The reporting system between the demonstration sites and the ISP management team was less straightforward. Some demonstration site managers felt that quarterly reports were too frequent and repetitive. The quality of the reports varied among the sites. The OAS/ISP team considered this system necessary for fulfilling their regular reporting obligations to UNEP/GEF. In July 1999, the ISP completed an independent evaluation of the demonstration sites according to predetermined "participation indicators". This produced not only an accurate assessment of the demonstration sites, but also valuable data comparing different strategies of garnering citizen participation in environmental decision-making.

172. Progress reports were submitted to the PAC regularly. Inherent to the open project structure was the capacity for continuous evaluation. Meetings and consultations with PAC members encouraged constant review and refinement of project objectives based on lessons learned as well as shifting priorities.

### 1. Recommendations

173. Although a PAC report summarizing the deliberations of various meetings was completed and distributed after each meeting by the OAS/ISP team, two members of the PAC felt that verbatim transcripts should be made available. This would provide some accountability for follow-through on decisions or actions agreed upon during the meetings and would help avoid controversy about items or comments being intentionally or unintentionally omitted.

174. Reporting from the demonstration sites through a standardized format should be streamlined.

## III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

175. The summarized findings clearly indicate that overall, the ISP project has fulfilled its primary objective and satisfactorily completed the outcomes according to the indicators listed in the original project document. The ISP represents a genuine commitment on the part of Governments of the Americas to institutionalize meaningful citizen participation in environmental decision-making related to biodiversity and

international waters at the local, national, and regional levels. The ISP project operates under the premise that the key to creating long-term stable solutions to sustainable development is through an inclusive decision-making process. Although this evaluation revealed a range of opinions about the ISP regarding specific outcomes and the structure of the process, the stakeholders I contacted unanimously supported the overall ISP concept and were enthusiastic about being a part of it. The combined outcomes of the seven components listed in the preceding section together with the endorsement of the ISP framework by CEPACIDI, demonstrate that the ISP has accomplished the important initial steps toward enabling OAS member countries to have responsible and effective public participation in environmental decision-making.

176. Through the six components that contributed to the final framework, the ISP project demonstrated that achieving participation, dialogue, and consensus are far from concrete, short-term goals. The demonstration sites offered the most concrete and direct impacts on the environment and continue to be living models attesting to the belief that public participation leads to long-term environmental protection. Perhaps even more important than the endorsed ISP framework document itself are the networks, institutions, and processes that were developed (and are being developed) over the course of the ISP. As a result of these developments, stakeholders are now in a better position to apply participation issues and principles advanced through the ISP process.

177. Through my discussions with key project stakeholders and review of project documents, I was able to identify general factors that either facilitated or inhibited the implementation of the overall ISP project.

A. Factors contributing towards the realization of the ISP/GEF objective

178. The ISP/GEF objective was to enable countries of the region to have responsible and effective public participation in activities related to biodiversity and international waters, by demonstrating and applying concrete experiences in civil society participation. This objective was realized because of:

(a) Sincere commitment on the part of the ISP management team, technical group, project advisory committee members, national focal points, and civil society representatives to the mission and goals of the ISP project. The management team worked well together and demonstrated their commitment by devoting long hours to complete the project activities. Members of the different advisory groups volunteered their time because of having a genuine commitment to the concept and ideology of participation;

(b) From the outset, the ISP was intended to model the basic principles of public participation. The organizational structure was designed to ensure input from different stakeholders, including government representatives and civil society members representing diverse sectors of society;

(c) The UNEP/GEF project advisor and the ISP project manager had a good working relationship. This arrangement contributed to the flexibility of the ISP and allowed the project manager to adjust and refine the process and outcomes according to the changing context;

(d) Over 15 official meetings and seminars with PAC members and other stakeholders created opportunities for consultation and cross-fertilization of experiences and ideas;

(e) Through the national focal points and civil society representatives an extensive ISP network was created to collect and disseminate information. The network expanded over the life of the project and the ISP took advantage of this communication tool to disseminate information, promote dialogue and gather input about the final ISP framework; and

(f) Demonstration site managers' commitment to integrating local citizen participation in protected area management or environmental control extended well beyond ISP funding.

B. Factors hindering the realization of  
ISP/GEF objective

179. There were various factors which hampered the realization of the ISP objective. These included:

(a) The ISP management team was overwhelmed at times trying to manage seven components across 34 OAS member countries while maintaining ongoing communication with the technical group, PAC members, national focal points and individual consultants; and

(b) Because the ISP organizational structure attempted to integrate input from government representatives as well as civil society, an advisory structure evolved through implementation. Several individuals commented that at times the ambiguity of the organizational structure combined with the diverse stakeholder interests created an atmosphere of frustration.

C. General recommendations

180. The ISP has culminated in an important initial step toward public participation in environmental decision-making. In order to build upon this first step, the process should be continued through concrete action plans, participatory training programme, and other methodologies for transferring the practical tools for civic participation to the government decision makers and civil society leaders who need such tools most.

181. During my visit to the demonstration sites, it became abundantly clear that the extent to which projects were able to motivate community participation and collaborative

action in environmental issues depended upon the leadership and technical capacity of key individuals. The ISP can strengthen this key ingredient to successful project implementation and replication through leadership and project management training programmes targeting key partners and other important change agents identified through the ISP civil society roster.

#### D. Acknowledgement

The OAS/ISP team, FUNDAECO staff , CCAM staff and CONAM Peru staff should be commended for facilitating this report. This evaluation would not have been possible without their willingness to provide me with all the necessary information and enthusiastic support throughout the data collection process.

## Annex I

### PERSONS INTERVIEWED OR CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

1. Zoila Girón, ISP Project Manager, USDE, OAS
2. Joseph Kershner, Assistant Project Manager, USDE, OAS
3. Fernando Bambaren, Information and Communications Specialist, USDE, OAS
4. Ramón Daubón, Executive Director, Caribbean Environment and Development Institute
5. Rohit Khanna, GEF Operations Officer
6. Eric Dannenmaier, Environmental Law Programme, North-South Centre
7. Michael Franklin, Executive Director, Organization of Africans in the Americas
8. Christi Jorge, Ex-Assistant Project Manager to the ISP
9. Olga Marina Pinto, NFP, CONAMA, Guatemala
10. Mr. Franklin McDonald, NFP, Executive Director, National Resources Conservation Authority, Jamaica
11. Mariano Castro, NFP, Director, CONAM, Peru
12. Marco Vinicio Cerezo, Executive Director, FUNDAECO, Guatemala
13. Emilia Baechli, FUNDAECO, Guatemala
14. Julio Enrique, President, Fundación Mario Dary, Guatemala
15. Lilian Yvonne Ramirez, Fundación Mario Dary, Guatemala
16. Alejandra Sobenes, President, Instituto de Derecho Ambiental y Desarrollo Sostenible (IDEADS), Guatemala
17. Carlos Paredes, CONAP, Guatemala
18. Giovanni Zamora, FUNDAECO, Puerto Barrios, Guatemala
19. Claudia Ruiz, PROARCA, Puerto Barrios, Guatemala
20. Oscar Rosales, FUNDAECO, Puerto Barrios, Guatemala
21. Arnulfo Lopez, protected area citizen council member, Puerto Barrios, Guatemala
22. Wendy Guzman Elizondo, CONAMA, Puerto Barrios, Guatemala
23. Peter Espeut, Executive Director, CCAM, Jamaica
24. Ingrid Parchment, CCAM, Jamaica
25. Raymond Davis, CCAM, Jamaica
26. Fishing association member, Barmouth Fishing Beach, Portland Bight, Jamaica
27. Ronald Pascoe, Lionel Town, Jamaica
28. David Solano, CONAM, Peru
29. Esteban Horna Bances, Universidad Nacional del Santa, Peru
30. Maria Elena Foronda, NATURA, Peru
31. Julio Villanueva, Municipalidad Provincial del Santa, Peru
32. Flor Cavero Saragoza, Ministerio de Industrias, Peru
33. Guillermo Mejia, Siderper?, Peru
34. Werner Correa, Siderper?, Peru
35. Luis Bambaren, Diocesis, Chimbote, Peru

## Annex II

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Independent Contractor (hereinafter referred to as “The Consultant”) will be technically responsible to Mr. Backson Sibanda, Chief of the Evaluation and Oversight Unit of the UNEP/GEF Coordination Office, for fulfilling the obligations established by the following terms of reference of this contract.

#### 1. Introduction

The Consultant is a specialist who has over 15 years experience designing and implementing training programs for educational professional, NGO representatives and government officials in the areas of community mobilization, sustainable development and organizational capacity building. Demonstrated expertise in project evaluation and program development. Directed or assumed the lead training role for over 30 training programs from 18 different countries under funding from USAID, USIA, UN, FAO, UNDP, Peace Corps and other private voluntary organizations and foundations.

#### 2. Project Introduction

(a) The ISP project was the first Medium-sized project approved by the GEF under the new expedited procedures for projects under US \$750,000. The goal of the project was to improve the performance and impacts of projects and programme in the GEF focal areas through the institutionalisation and operationalization of public participation in national and regional actions. Specifically, the project's objective was to develop an Inter-American Strategy for Public Participation (ISP) and its endorsement by the member governments of the OAS. GEF funding was provided for six technical components to inform and support the preparation of the Strategy, as well as plan for its follow-up implementation

(b) In accordance with UNEP/GEF policy, an external evaluator contracted by UNEP funding evaluates all GEF projects. The General Secretariat of the Organisation of American States (GS/OAS) will contract on behalf of UNEP the external consultant evaluator, selected by the UNEP/GEF Coordination Office

(c) The objective of the evaluation is to document the experience with the design, implementation and impacts of the ISP project -- particularly, the project's impact on regional, national and local institutions involved in the project, in terms of their willingness and ability to conduct responsible and effective public participation in environment and sustainable development decision-making.

#### 3. Terms of Reference

The Consultant will undertake the following activities:

(a) Determine how and to what extent the project's objectives were met. The

assessment must take into account the indicators listed in the project document

(b) Determine the quality and usefulness of the project's outputs and the impact it has created at the regional, national and local levels

(c) To review the effectiveness of the implementation and administrative arrangements

(d) Assess to what extent the project reached the target groups envisaged in the project document. The evaluator must also establish the mechanism used by the project to reach the target groups

(e) To establish how and what lessons were learned by the project's implementing and executing agencies. The evaluator must determine how these lessons were applied by these agencies

(f) Whether the project was able to catalyse broader interest in, awareness and understanding of public participation, as well as leverage new actions in the region.

(g) Review the adequacy of the monitoring and evaluation system developed to supervise the implementation of the project, and

(h) Based on the findings, provide recommendations that could help future GEF projects.

The evaluation will be conducted by an external evaluator contracted by the GS/OAS on behalf of UNEP/GEF, and supervised by the Chief, Evaluation and Oversight in consultation with the task manager. The evaluation will be based on:

(a) Desk review of the project document, outputs, monitoring reports (such as the quarterly reports to UNEP and the 1999 Project Implementation Review report), and relevant correspondence.

(b) Interviews with members of the Project Technical Group and Project Advisory Committee, UNEP and GS/OAS staff, ISP National Focal Points, and staff of the co-executing agencies and

(c) Brief visits to the three demonstration sites:

Demonstration Site: A Participatory Environmental management Model for the Restoration of the Ferrol Bay, Chimbote, Perú.

Counter part: CONAMA

Location: Lima

Time frame: 4 days

Demonstration Site: Capacity Building Program on Public Participation to Manage the Terrestrial and Marine Natural Resources within the Portland Bight Sustainable Development Area in Jamaica

Counter Part: CCAM

Location: Jamaica

Time frame: 4 days

Demonstration Site: Training and Capacity-Building Program on Public Participation for the Management of the Shared Ecosystem of the Gulf of Honduras

Counter Part: FUNDAECO

Location: Guatemala

Time frame: 4 days

The evaluator will be encouraged to develop a participatory evaluation methodology.

4. The outputs of the evaluation will be a report to UNEP, not exceeding 15 pages. The Consultant should submit to the Chief of the Evaluation and Oversight Unit of the UNEP/GEF Coordination Office a draft report by the 7<sup>th</sup> of April 2000 for review and comments. The final report should be submitted no later than April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2000.

