



STRENGTHENING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TO REDUCE WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

Guatemala – Belize Transboundary Protected Areas

ISSUE: Wildlife poaching and illegal logging of CITES species, often associated with other illicit activities (e.g., drug and human trafficking), not only reduces the wild populations of the target species, but results in the degradation of the overall ecosystem through the illegal construction of roads and human settlements in these habitats.

LOCATION: The **Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR)** & the **Maya Mountain Chiquibul (MMC)** trans-boundary protected areas:

- Part of the largest tropical forest north of the Amazon Basin,
- Home to numerous **CITES species**,
- Home to thousands of ancient Maya **archaeological sites**, and
- **Highly threatened** by the trafficking of drugs, wildlife, timber, archaeological artifacts, & illegal human settlements, fires, etc.



USDOJ ROLE: Under the framework of **CAFTA-DR/Pathways** environmental cooperation, the U.S. Department of the Interior's International Technical Assistance Program (**USDOJ-ITAP**), in partnership with the Department of State's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (**DOS-OES**), is working closely with the **Government of Guatemala (GOG)** to build capacity in:

- Public participation
- Environmental governance
- Law enforcement

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: APPLYING LESSONS LEARNED – 'SOUTH TO SOUTH' CAPACITY BUILDING

USDOJ helped facilitate the establishment of a fully functioning **Multi-Sector Roundtable** with the GOG, local NGOs, and community leaders to support public participation for the highly-threatened **Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR)**. The successes of this venue led to efforts to share best practices with their neighbors to the south and east, in the **Maya Mountain Chiquibul (MMC)**, the Guatemala-Belize transboundary protected areas.

Maya Biosphere Reserve Multi-Sector Roundtable

- Strengthened this **public-private forum** to promote information sharing, consensus-building, decision-making, and influencing GOG priority-setting for MBR planning and management
- Roundtable has successfully guided collaborative planning during **3 Presidential Administrations**
- Roundtable has been showcased as **model in 10+ countries** in Latin America and Africa

Inter-sectorial Roundtable for the Maya Mountain Chiquibul Area

- Lessons learned from MBR Multi-sector Roundtable strengthened this Forum focused on improved decision-making in the **adjacency zone with Belize**
- DOI supported "**south-to-south**" **capacity building** to increase impact
- Improved protection interventions in Guatemala, yielding increased patrols and disruption of Chinese mafia trafficking timber from Guatemala & Belize.



DOI IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:

USDOJ-ITAP relies on teamwork and the in-country expertise of its Implementing Partners to directly lead & share their own experiences and lessons learned, as they promote innovative solutions to complex governance issues.

They are:

- Wildlife Conservation Society (International)
- Asociación BALAM (Guatemalan)
- Friends for Conservation & Development (Belizean)



REPLICATION OF USDOJ APPROACH: DIRECTLY BY USDOJ AND THROUGH ITS PARTNERS

USDOJ-ITAP leverages USG investment in Guatemala by working with other USG agencies (DOS, USAID, DOD, DHS), host-country national governments, and civil society partners to replicate lessons learned in protected area. Current goals include:

Promote Cooperation between Guatemala and Belize to Cross-Border Improve Wilderness Governance

- Support a Bi-national Plan developed by civil society for public participation, field protection and governance monitoring
- Strengthen Belizean civil society organizations and their ability to engage with Guatemalan partners

Reduce Trafficking of Wildlife and Archaeological Heritage

- Implement "Guatemala-Mexico-Belize Tri-National Action Plan" established with support of U.S. DOS-OES
- Technical assistance to pilot enforcement operations along selected threatened archaeological sites in Guatemala near Mexico border

SUCCESSES: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRENGTHENED AND INSTITUTIONALIZED ACROSS BORDERS

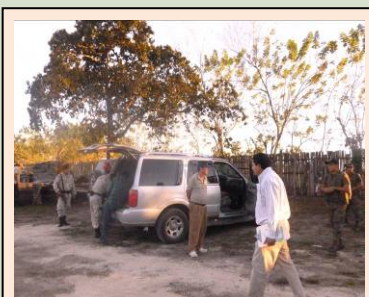
Through experienced and knowledgeable guidance, USDOJ-ITAP partners, Balam and WCS, have successfully promoted:

- Reactivation of MMC Roundtable: readily convinced the Mayors from 4 Guatemalan municipalities in the MMC area (southern Petén) to reactivate a Roundtable of their own.
- Agreement, Strategy and Action Plan Developed: Under the leadership of the MMC Roundtable, the GOG and communities have signed an MOU with stated objectives and responsibilities, as well as agreed upon and signed a written Strategy and Action Plan, all currently under implementation
- Governance Baseline: The MMC Roundtable members are working to collect data against which to measure their progress
- Belizean Counterparts Join: The Belizean NGO, Friends for Conservation and Development (FCD), were invited by DOI's Partners and are participating in the Roundtables and collaborating on implementation

SUCCESSES: COMBATTING TRAFFICKING AT THE BELIZE-GUATEMALA BORDER

Increased public participation in the Guatemalan municipalities adjacent to Belize yielded consensus support for improved interdiction of natural resource pillaging in the area. USDOJ-ITAP partners provided the GOG with technical assistance to establish mobile control posts, as used in the MBR, leading to increased confiscations of valuable timber (i.e., Rosewood) poached from Guatemala and Belize by Chinese mafias.

Net impact: Disruption of natural resource trafficking by Chinese mafias on the Guatemala-Belize border



Mobile checkpoints



Increased rosewood interdiction



Disruption of Chinese mafias