

Partners in Protected Area Conservation

Experiences of the Parks in Peril Program in Latin America and the Caribbean

Ana Maria González V. and Angela Sue Martin



Innovations in Conservation

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For further information on the Parks in Peril Program, please visit www.parksinperil.org

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Foreword

The Parks in Peril (PiP) Program began in 1990 as the U.S. Agency for International Development's and The Nature Conservancy's urgent effort to safeguard the most imperiled natural ecosystems, ecological communities, and species in the Latin America and Caribbean region. A partnership among the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and governmental and non-governmental organizations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, over time PiP evolved through three distinct phases until 2007, adapting to changing needs and priorities in the region and promoting an advancing strategy to conserve increasing amounts of biodiversity. For 17 years, the program operated in threatened national parks and reserves of global biological significance, seeking to conserve these critically important ecosystems by building local institutional capacity for site management. USAID – both the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Bureau in Washington, as well as individual Missions – invested more than \$77 million in the program; with TNC and partner match, the total that flowed through PiP was more than \$104 million. PiP activities also resulted in indirect leverage – funding attracted by sites and partners strengthened by PiP, or complementing PiP investment – of more than \$450 million.

PiP has become well known for its success in transforming “paper parks” into functional protected areas through what is called “site consolidation” – the process of consolidating the infrastructure, staff, tools, institutional and technical capacity, and financing necessary to protect and manage protected areas, and to ensure their management can respond to threats that may arise in the future. PiP has consolidated 45 protected areas in 18 countries, totaling more than 18 million hectares. Through Multi-Site and Alliance Strategies developed during the third phase of PiP (2002-07), PiP changed the way entire systems of protected areas are managed, bringing together multi-institutional alliances to collaborate on significant conservation challenges. Nearly all the achievements of Parks in Peril have depended vitally on the diligence, insight, and ingenuity of the staff of PiP's countless partner organizations in the countries where PiP worked.

As part of the process of closing “PiP 2000 – A Partnership for the Americas,” USAID, TNC, and partner staff described the program's seminal thematic achievements in the Parks in Peril Innovations in Conservation Series. The series includes bulletins, which provide a quick survey of a topic and PiP's contributions, as well as publications, which provide a much more thorough treatment of each topic for an audience interested in greater detail. The other bulletins and publications of the Innovations in Conservation Series, as well as PiP's End-of-Project Reports and about 700 other publications of the Parks in Peril program, may be found on the final PiP DVD (published in March, 2008) and on the Parks in Peril website, www.parksinperil.org. Added to the capacity for science-based conservation and participatory management that PiP fostered in the region, these publications constitute an indelible legacy – a foundation for future conservation and development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Jim Rieger, Ph.D.
Director, Parks in Peril Program

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1. Introduction

When the Parks in Peril (PiP) Program began in Latin America and the Caribbean in 1990, there was an abundance of possible sites within which to work. Therefore, it was necessary to develop a site selection process to concentrate the investment of available resources in order to maximize impacts and leverage best practices to other places. This selection process was based on a set of criteria including management capacity and opportunity.¹ One of the elements constituting this criterion was the existence (or non-existence) of local support organizations to carry out biodiversity conservation and sustainable use activities in protected areas. After selecting the sites, the implementation alternatives were analyzed to address the challenges associated with the conservation of these protected areas. The analysis determined that the most effective way to make the investment sustainable beyond the end of the program was to channel resources to local and national organizations so that they could play a pivotal role in implementing management activities. The purpose of working through these organizations, herein called partners,² was to establish priorities, develop strategies, and implement actions related to resource conservation and sustainable use based on the organizational knowledge and experience of the local context (Hardy, 2005b).

In the process of working with partners, TNC considered it essential to support local capacity building and organizational strengthening so that the established partnerships would be effective at promoting conservation and sustainable management of protected areas. In some cases, TNC and the partner organizations reached the mutual conclusion that these institutions did not have sufficient institutional capacity to intervene in addressing threats in the protected areas. Therefore, support was provided to strengthen these organizations so that TNC's intervention would not be necessary in the future. As a result, in addition to investing in field actions, PiP financed institutional strengthening projects with partners in Latin America and the Caribbean, seeking to boost local organizational, financial, and technical capacity.

According to the External Assessment of PiP carried out in 2004, one of the most satisfactory and significant results of the program has been the development of partner capacities to improve the effectiveness of protected area management (FOS, 2004). In some countries, strengthening of individual organizations achieved through investments in training and instruction paved the way for the development of other organizations, thus extending the scope of action and influence beyond the areas initially selected by PiP.

However, TNC's activities have evolved over the years and its main efforts, in addition to working with individual local organizations, are now concentrated on supporting the formation of coalitions made up of these local organizations and other institutions, both public and private, all involved in conservation of protected areas. The new approach has consisted of using the sites and previously strengthened organizations as platforms to leverage successes and disseminate lessons learned about the most effective strategies for large-scale conservation.

TNC's approach to working with partners has evolved from intensive investments in individual local organizations to the dissemination of applicable knowledge to other organizations involved in conservation and finally to inter-institutional work at larger scales. This evolution has involved the continual development of methodologies and tools suited to these changes. This sequence has not been followed in all countries; however, it is a trend that has allowed us to draw important lessons. Also, the approaches are not mutually exclusive, since it has been possible to support interinstitutional initiatives in tandem with the strengthening of individual organizations.

TNC's partners are a diverse group of institutions with different origins and capacities, which are dedicated to both conservation and other aspects of development. In general, the roles local NGOs have assumed in protected areas—and in the framework of agreements with agencies in charge

of the areas—have included technical, administrative and financial assistance, community work for the development of projects in sustainable natural resource use, and environmental education, among others. The group of partners includes governments, multilateral institutions, bilateral agencies, private companies, research institutions, indigenous and traditional communities, rural communities, conservation NGOs, and other non-profit organizations. The diversity of partners has shown that working collaboratively cannot always be handled in the same manner using standard mechanisms. Thus, strengthening efforts have been tailored to the organizations' particular characteristics.

The purpose of this publication is to present the lessons learned from the different approaches to working with partners, based on TNC's experience with the Parks in Peril Program. This publication includes experiences gleaned from protected areas in Latin America and the Caribbean that have received support from PiP.

This publication has four main sections. Chapter 2 outlines the different approaches TNC has taken to working with its partners in the framework of PiP, including a description of the tools used as well as their most significant results. Chapter 3 presents the lessons learned from the process of working with the partners, from both the perspective of TNC and that of the local organizations. Some of the experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean are included in Chapter 4, while Chapter 5 presents conclusions and final reflections.

The core of the Conservancy's approach is to build partnerships to ensure conservation of large landscape areas, preserving the best examples of natural diversity in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

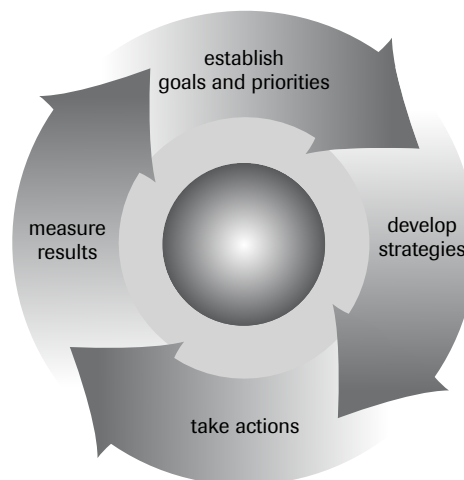
(Brandon et al., 1998)

2. Approaches to working with partners

As a fundamental principle, the process of selecting and establishing partnerships should have a concrete objective that contributes to achieving the institution's conservation aims. TNC has defined a cycle of basic elements that follow an adaptive management scheme to establish goals and priorities, develop strategies, take actions, and measure results, as illustrated in Figure 1. Partnerships must be established in such a way that they are incorporated into this scheme. This implies that the partnerships should contribute to achieving specific goals and priorities related to the parties' common areas of interest through the development of joint strategies that are put into action and, later, periodically evaluated.

In the process of selecting and establishing relations with partners—either individual organizations or coalitions made up of several institutions—TNC recommends the use of a tool that makes it possible to identify these organizations' limitations and strengths, reach agreement on and negotiate critical aspects of the partnership, and, in general, make the best decisions to further the objectives of the joint work. The stages presented in the following graphic and table have sought to guide the work of PiP—as well as other TNC programs—in different approaches; these stages constitute a systematic framework of guidance known as the Partnership Approach. These stages are interrelated and can occur at different points in time over the course of

**Figure 1. Conservation by Design:
A strategic framework for mission success**

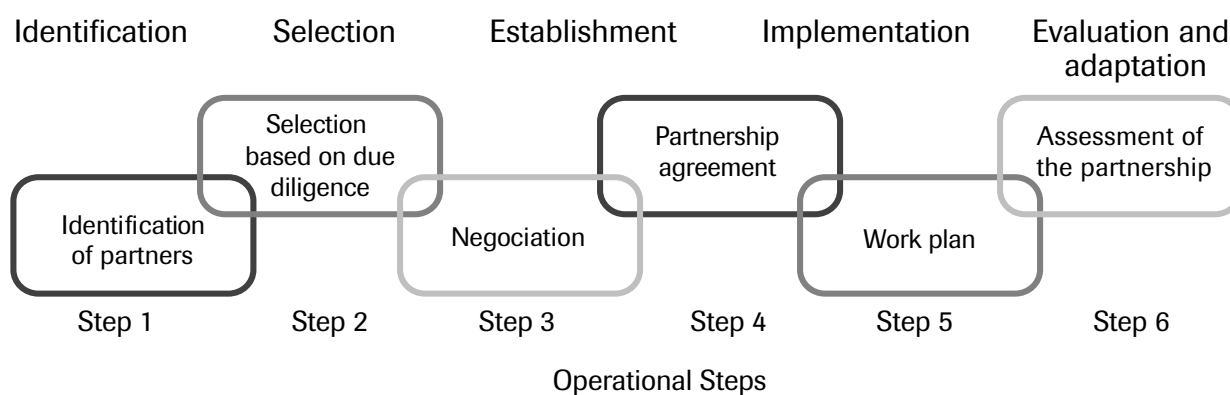


Source: TNC, 2007b

a partnership. The specific time and way in which these stages are implemented depends on different local realities, the stage the partnership is in—beginning, under implementation, or ending—and the particular context of the work being done with the organizations (TNC, 2007a).

During the implementation of PiP, several approaches to working with the selected partners were established. The following approaches refer to the main processes used with them.

Figure 2. Partnership development cycle



Source: TNC, 2007a

Table 1. Stages in the establishment of partnerships

Stages	Description. This stage:
Identification and Selection	
1. Identification of partners	Identifies the possible governmental agencies, corporations, non-profit organizations, community groups, multilateral agencies, and non-governmental organizations, among others, that can contribute to the management of protected areas and have the corresponding interest and capacity to design and implement action strategies.
2. Selection of partners based on due diligence	Includes research and dialogue with the group of organizations identified in Stage 1. Due diligence supports identification of the management risks and considerations that can affect the decision concerning the feasibility of establishing the partnership and how it should be done. This process makes it possible to estimate the conservation and sustainable use opportunities that can be addressed through the partnership with each organization in particular. The result of this stage is selection of the partners.
Formalization of Agreements	
3. Negotiation	Considers a structured set of discussion points, which are used to cover various topics such as: the objectives of the partnership; expected results; use of logos; terms of the partnership; the geographic, methodological, conceptual, and thematic focus of the joint work; funding needs and sources; procedures for resolving differences, etc.
4. Agreement for the formation of the partnership	Refers to the legal document describing the framework for the partnership that was negotiated in the previous stage.
5. Work plan	Includes the design of a periodic plan of activities including the main actions, persons responsible for implementation and funding, and the schedule of activities.
Monitoring and Evaluation	
6. Assessment of the partnership	Establishes indicators that will enable measurement of the partnership's progress in terms of benefits for conservation as well as the costs to achieve these benefits. This stage includes the implementation of monitoring and evaluation activities that make it possible to measure impacts and obtain lessons learned.

2.1. STRENGTHENING OF INDIVIDUAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

During the design of PiP, it was observed that the governments of most of the prospective countries faced fiscal difficulties that limited their capacity to provide economic support for management of the protected areas. Therefore, it was decided that one of the first critical stages, to be carried out in tandem with the joint conservation actions, should be to offer multi-annual funding packages within the framework of agreements with appropriate authorities, to strengthen the agencies directly responsible for managing the areas, as well as other, mainly non-governmental, organizations with the interest and capacity to contribute to conservation of protected areas³ (Brandon et al., 1998). These organizations were thereafter considered partners. The specific

strengthening and capacity-building needs were identified through a participatory and open process involving TNC and these partner organizations.

In addition to providing financial support, PiP supplied local partner organizations with technical assistance to increase their capacity to support protected area administrators in their management roles. This assistance included support with hiring and training staff, building infrastructure and providing equipment, developing inventories, monitoring biodiversity, controlling illegal activities, carrying out environmental education actions, and mitigating threats to the areas through community work. The aim was to facilitate the means for organizations to acquire a series of capacities,⁴ based on their particular circumstances that coincide with

those identified by Lockwood et al. (2006) as being the most essential for protected area management:

- The capacity to conceptualize, formulate, and implement policies, laws, strategies, and programs.
- The capacity to promote agreements and generate consensus among the stakeholders involved.
- The capacity to generate and disseminate information and knowledge.
- The capacity to monitor, evaluate, report on, and learn from the lessons generated.

In addition to the above-mentioned capacities, a very important aspect of the sustainability of the organizations supported by PiP related to the development and improvement of their capacity to attract funding for future work. In this phase, TNC was concerned with using PiP to support the consolidation of strong and financially-autonomous local institutions (Dourojeanni, 2005). In general, the aim was to develop the technical, analytical, and strategic capacity of partners, so that they could continue their work in natural resource conservation and sustainable use even after the end of PiP funding. Capacity building and strengthening was understood as a means to achieve conservation purposes, but also as an end in itself.

In particular, support was provided through the organization's Institutional Development Program and local staff hired as external consultants to offer direct on-site technical assistance. In some cases—despite certain difficulties—many partner capacities improved in aspects that facilitated conservation actions in protected areas, including community work, strategic planning, strengthening of boards of directors, ecological monitoring, financial self-sustainability, accounting system management, and use of geographic information systems, among others (Martin and Rieger, 2003).

The following chapter describes in greater detail some of the topics covered to build the capacities of PiP-supported organizations.

2.1.1. Application of organizational strengthening tools

To address the strategic action areas identified as necessary for organizational strengthening, TNC used a variety of practical tools and methodologies designed by TNC itself or other agencies; these techniques were applied in the framework of PiP according to the characteristics of each institution. The experiences of working with partner organizations through PiP also made it possible to develop and improve some of these tools. Table 2 shows the strategic areas required for organizational sustainability and some of the main tools developed around these areas.⁵

The Institutional Self-Assessment (ISA) has been one of the most used institutional strengthening tools. Systematically applied, this tool served to guide the strengthening actions taken with a large number of PiP partners. A first application of the ISA instrument—in a participatory setting—produces a baseline to identify strengths and weaknesses for each of the indicators⁶; based on that baseline, partners then determine training priorities and ways to monitor progress in achieving the goals established. The application of the ISA tool also promotes a proactive and reflective attitude by staff, resulting in better field work outcomes, and also demonstrates organizational professionalism to other potential partners and donors.

In terms of lessons learned, the analysis of the ISA results (self-assessments carried out by 31 partner organizations between May 2001 and September 2002) concluded that it is advisable to have an outside person act as a facilitator of the self-assessment process as opposed to having evaluations performed exclusively by the organization's staff or supported by a TNC specialist. This outside person can promote the critical analysis of each of the institutional components to be evaluated and is generally perceived as being neutral with respect to the results and scores obtained. The presence of a TNC staff member may impede accurate representation of the results since the organization may consider TNC as a donor that will base its resource allocation decisions on the evaluation score. However, if a TNC specialist familiar with the organization's history, institutional context, and relationship with TNC is accompanied by an external facilitator who

Table 2. Strategic areas for institutional strengthening



- **Mission, vision, and strategic planning.** Having a vision and mission that clearly reflect an institution's aims and goals is considered an important characteristic of an effective organization. Once a planning culture has been established in an organization, the group should be capable of translating strategic short-, medium-, and long-term objectives into annual plans linked to the human, financial, and technical resources available for their effective implementation.

Tool: *Integrated Strategic and Financial Planning for Non-governmental Organizations* (McLeod et al., 2002).

URL: http://www.parksinperil.org/files/integrated_strategic_financial_eng.pdf.

- **Strong leadership.** No one style of leadership or uniform concept is suitable for all organizations and contexts⁷. In many organizations, one of the most indicative elements of a good level of leadership is a strong, active, and committed board of directors. Many of the most effective organizations have succeeded in creating a solid work team including the executive director, long-standing staff members, and the members of the directorate or board of directors. This team leads strategic actions and is capable of continually renewing itself, facing organizational changes in a positive way, and maintaining high standards of conduct in the organization. Effective work among the managerial staff increases internal controls and builds a level of trust that attracts potential donors.

Tool: *Rumbo al Éxito: Una Guía para Juntas Directivas de Organizaciones sin Fines de Lucro*. (Hitz-Sánchez et al., 1997).

- **Administrative and management structure and systems.** The growth of an organization normally implies a greater need for administrative systems and procedures to assure donors and the public in general that the organization is well managed. Internal requirements, such as the demand for clear human resource policies and better filing systems, can also help to improve the process of developing management capacity. The correct balance between internal control and operational response capacity will vary for different groups.

- **Qualified, committed, and competitive staff members.** Effective human resource administration is reflected in a low level of staff turnover because an employee who feels valued and rewarded is less interested in changing jobs. In addition to the tangible (or dependable) reward of paid work, many employees find satisfaction in less tangible factors such as contributing to a valuable cause, the possibility of advancing their career, and professional development opportunities.

Tool: *Human Resource Development*. (López, 2001).

- **Effective resource development.** The cornerstone of an organization's long-term financial viability is the development of a comprehensive financing and strategic development plan integrated with other functional areas of the organization. The process should begin by analyzing the financial needs established, based on the objectives and activities described in the organization's strategic plan. Once the strategic plan has been quantified in monetary terms, the organization's financing needs can be identified, a development and fundraising plan can be designed, and a strategy can be created to expand its base of funding sources.

Tools: *Integrated Strategic and Financial Planning for Non-governmental Organizations* (McLeod et al., 2002).

URL: http://www.parksinperil.org/files/integrated_strategic_financial_eng.pdf.

Long-term Financial Planning for Parks and Protected Areas. (TNC, 2001b).

URL: http://www.parksinperil.org/files/finance_english.pdf.

- **Effective financial management.** The organization's accounting procedures and programs should correspond to the organization's stage of institutional development. The system should make it possible to generate timely financial reports and to adapt the report format to respond to donor preferences. Cash flow projections make it possible to develop plans should a liquidity deficit occur. Internal financial and accounting controls should facilitate auditing so as to build trust with the donors and the general public regarding administration of their funds.

Tools: Four Pillars of Financial Sustainability. (León, 2001). URL: http://www.parksinperil.org/files/four_pillars_eng.pdf

Core Costs and NGO Sustainability. (Ortiz, 2003). URL: http://www.parksinperil.org/files/core_costs_eng.pdf

- **Strong support groups/strategic alliances/extension.** The effectiveness of an organization depends increasingly on the organization's ability to establish mutually beneficial relationships with external entities, including other institutions, governmental agencies, international organizations, academic institutions, communications media, community-based groups, and the private sector.

Tools: Building Coalitions for Conservation (TNC 1999).

- **Effective programs and projects.** Good organizations develop projects and programs that fit with their declared objectives; good organizations develop capacity to verify progress towards achieving these objectives, in order to make corrections as they go along. They also acquire the ability to assess or estimate the impact of their work on the achievement of their mission, which helps them obtain new funding for their programs. Many of the most effective programs develop mechanisms to involve or commit the project's beneficiaries in the process, from design through evaluation.

- **An enabling legal and socioeconomic environment.** To be effective, an organization needs to operate in an environment in which the laws, financial regulations, and society in general provide support for the organization's daily management and mission. Since the environment is not static, NGOs should get to know and interact with this environment to improve it and make it more conducive to achieving the organization's mission and the participation of civil society in decision-making.

Source: TNC, 2003a.

approaches the task with objectivity and neutrality, this complementarity can generate the best results. The analysis also recommended that the presence of at least one member of the organization's board of directors be a requirement for the self-assessment process. To the degree possible, other agencies working with the organization should be invited to participate in some phase of the self-assessment process. Having an outside perspective enables the organization to be mindful of the perceptions of external stakeholders when designing institutional-strengthening plans. Finally, it is not necessary for all of the indicators to be used in applying the self assessment; indicators may be added, according to the specific characteristics of the organization to be evaluated. In general, for the assessment to be effective, it should be adapted to the local context, without losing the objectivity of the indicators and results.

With respect to the set of tools used in the organizational strengthening of individual partners, several training events were held, in addition to distributing publications developed for dissemination of the tools. These events included the Conservation Training Weeks (CTW) which TNC organized in

the following countries: Panama (1991), Dominican Republic (1993), Ecuador (1995), Mexico (1997), and United States (Miami, 1999 and 2001). These events, attended by over 2,200 participants, were designed to train conservation specialists in a variety of both scientific and administrative topics. Some of the institutional strengthening topics covered in the Conservation Training Weeks were:

- Financial sustainability
- Innovative financial mechanisms
- Finance and human resource management
- Fundraising strategies
- The role of a board of directors
- Management in executive transition processes
- Techniques for negotiation and effective conflict resolution
- Development of communication strategies.

The Conservation Training Weeks also served as opportunities for the participants to learn about specific methodologies with the potential to contribute to their strengthening, to receive copies of recent publications, and finally, to be able to meet in formal and informal settings, allowing for the exchange of experiences and specific products with other partners working in different parts of the world.

2.1.2. Application of conservation tools for technical strengthening

To achieve the Parks in Peril objective of contributing to development of the necessary technical and strategic capacity to improve effective long-term management of protected areas, it was deemed necessary to increase partner organizations' local technical capacity. This capacity refers not only to the administrative and management elements addressed through the tools discussed in the previous section, but also to technical elements related to the design and start-up of conservation activities.

Technical and scientific capacities were strengthened by disseminating and applying the conservation tools and methodologies designed by TNC to enable organizations to support management of the areas, either directly or through the government organizations responsible for the areas. In some cases, the challenge involved establishing or strengthening the environmental component of organizations primarily focused on other development issues⁸. Some of the tools most widely disseminated to partners were:

- **Rapid Ecological Assessment.** This methodology makes it possible to carry out a flexible and rapid study of the types of vegetation and species in a specific area or region. Since their development in the 1980s, Rapid Ecological Assessments (REAs) have undergone a process of continual improvement based on previous experiences. According to the manual for this methodology, "REAs use a combination of remote sensing images, surveillance flights, field data, and spatial data visualization to generate useful information for multi-scale conservation planning" (Sayre *et al.*, 2002: 2). The tangible products of REAs are basic biophysical data, maps, and documents that facilitate conservation planning. Their appli-

cation has also contributed to institutional strengthening of participating organizations, thus facilitating effective conservation work. From the initial planning stages to the publication of the final report, a REA normally takes a year to complete.

- **Ecoregional Conservation Planning.**⁹ The purpose of this methodology is to select and design networks of conservation sites to preserve diversity of species, communities, and ecological systems in an ecoregion. Ecoregional plans are part of TNC's general strategy for conservation work and involve various stages: ecoregional planning, site planning (described below), the implementation of conservation actions, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of these actions. The product of ecoregional planning is a portfolio of conservation sites understood as significant areas for biodiversity, which are identified according to six criteria: coarse-scale focus, representativeness, efficiency, integration, functionality, and totality. Since ecoregional plans generally identify more areas than it is possible to intervene in at any given time, it is later necessary to establish priorities to select the sites (Groves *et al.*, 2000).

"Thanks to the Parks in Peril Program in Bosawas, I learned new training techniques and tools in the area of institutional strengthening and biodiversity monitoring. I learned a lot about local processes for the CAP analysis and was even able to see PRONATURA and TNC's experience in Colombia during a CAP workshop where we exchanged experiences."

— Bismark Saballos V., President, Association for the Development of the Miskitos and Sumos of the Lower Basin (ADEMSCUM), Indigenous Association in the Li Lamni Territory, Bosawas, Nicaragua

- **Conservation Area Planning (CAP).**¹⁰ TNC developed this methodology to establish priorities, develop strategies, and measure

the success of conservation projects in parks, reserves, and other conservation areas. It has been implemented in a participatory manner and draws on the principle of adaptive management to develop successful conservation strategies. The basic steps in the CAP process are the identification of the main conservation targets requiring attention, identification of critical threats to these targets, development of conservation objectives and strategic actions, and establishment of success measures.

- **Site Consolidation Scorecard.**¹¹ This scorecard was developed by TNC to assist administrators of the sites included in PiP in measuring progress toward consolidation, with consolidation understood as the moment when the institutions responsible for managing the site obtain the necessary resources to support long-term conservation. These resources include financial, technical, and human resources, in addition to adequate infrastructure, support from active local groups, the capacity for strategic planning, political support, and adequate ecological information. The scorecard consists of a series of indicators that are periodically scored. These indicators fall under four main categories: strategic planning, basic on-site protection, long-term financing; and support for the protected area from active local groups.

PiP provided several members of partner organization technical staff with training in management of the technical tools, both directly on site and at regional and international workshops. Conservation Training Week was one of the vehicles selected for that purpose; in addition to offering workshops on organizational strengthening topics, it provided training on other topics such as the following:

- Climate change and conservation policy
- Conservation on private lands
- Ecoregional-scale conservation
- Marine resources conservation
- Mapping and geographic information systems

- Coalition building for conservation
- Participatory planning
- Compatible economic development
- Ecotourism with communities and the private sector

“The PiP Project helped CIDEDER to have updated management tools and this gives us a competitive advantage over other NGOs.”

— Filmar J. Montaña N., CIDEDER Administrator, Bolivia

Learning about these topics—together with specific training on the application of the tools—supported technical strengthening of the partners, which were able to make use of the methodologies in other areas of their work besides PiP. It was also possible for the partners to disseminate the technical tools to other local stakeholders. The responsibility for implementing various PiP activities gave the local partners the opportunity to develop and apply the conservation planning tools (TNC, 1995).

2.1.3. The effects of strengthening individual partners

One of the main challenges presented by the strategies for working with partners consisted of defining the appropriate time to suspend support for an organization’s institutional development. In certain circumstances where it has been determined that satisfactory levels have not yet been reached, it has been advisable—technical and financial resources and time permitting—to continue supporting the institutional strengthening of key organizations in topics such as strategic planning, financial management, political administration, and communication strategies. In cases where the decision is made to continue with the strengthening processes, issues related to financial sustainability and resource management have been identified over and over again as a priority for partners¹².

In many cases, the decision of when to reduce or suspend support for strengthening was guided by the results of the Institutional Self-Assessment insofar as it facilitated determining whether the organizations had advanced satisfactorily with respect to the different criteria. According to Polly Morrison, Institutional Development Director for TNC's Andean and Southern Cone Division until 2003, "The process of ceasing to strengthen organizations is often a natural one, when it is clear that the organization already has the necessary basic elements and what is being offered does not generate any added value."¹³

After observing a number of cases and gathering partner experiences with the process of organizational and technical strengthening, several minimum elements have been identified that partners should be expected to have for their sustainability:

- Strategic planning with a concrete definition of the partner's vision, mission, and objectives. Purposes that are clear and acceptable to the local community.
- Good relations with the government through formal and informal communications and working agreements. This enables the partner to advocate for institutionalization of natural resource conservation and sustainable use processes in protected areas.
- Authority and legitimacy to make decisions about the natural resources on the site.
- Ability to raise funds based on a diverse portfolio of possibilities.
- Clear leadership within the organization, especially represented on the board of directors or in the group of associates who will sustain the decisions over the long term.
- Ability for the organization to renew itself and adapt to institutional and environmental changes.
- Having technical support from experts in different disciplines and topics.

- Staff including people from the region.
- A transparent accountability system and system for monitoring the organization's actions.

In addition, if organizations receive large amounts of funds without the guidance of strategic planning, this can generate dependence by the partners, which does not lead to financial self-sustainability. Funds that are relatively easy to receive carry the risk of the leaders of the organizations abandoning the task of raising sufficient local unrestricted funds to cover basic operating costs and maintain a base of support that grants legitimacy and local support (Dourojeanni, 2005). Therefore, the means used to strengthen the organization should seek to create capacity for the generation of financial and technical resources from other funding sources, as well as self-generated resources sufficient to cover part or all of the recurring costs.

For example, in Ecuador, in response to USAID and TNC requirements, partner organizations working on the conservation of the Condor Biosphere Reserve began to develop institutional financing plans in an effort to reduce their dependence on the financial resources of these foreign organizations. This was done with support from the non-profit organization PACT Ecuador, which specializes in institutional development and was contracted to work with Ecociencia and the Antisana and Rumicocha Foundations. In the PiP self-assessment conducted in 2005, the overall dependence of the organizations on external resources had been reduced from 100% at the start of the project to 40% at the time of the assessment—with some being more successful than others. Work in the following years concentrated on ensuring that most of the partners' activities had other sources of financing or they had managed to transfer responsibilities to other organizations such as the Ministry of Environment, community organizations, private landowners, or municipalities.

In addition to the aforementioned example related to Ecuador, the group of PiP partners made positive progress toward financial sustainability. This progress was confirmed by the results of the Scorecard, which included the financial self-sustainability of

the partner NGOs as one of its indicators. This indicator sought to analyze the degree of financial self-sustainability that enabled the NGOs to continue to function indefinitely as either protected area administrators or partners of the responsible government agency, or otherwise. According to the proposed model, a consolidated protected area would be supported by a local NGO that had developed a strategy to achieve its own economic self-sufficiency, and had begun its implementation and monitoring. The benchmarks for this indicator are as follows:

5	NGO fully implementing plan ¹⁴ for achieving operational self-sufficiency, results corresponding approximately to goals set.
4	NGO has completed plan for operational self-sufficiency and has begun implementation and monitoring of results.
3	NGO completing plan for operational self-sufficiency.
2	NGO beginning plan for operational self-sufficiency.
1	NGO has no plan for achieving operational self-sufficiency.

The average of the results for this indicator for the main non-governmental partners in 31 of the sites¹⁵ supported by the PiP program is recorded in the following table. This table shows a positive evolution in the scores for the year PiP began supporting the site, the year it ended support, and the score generated for 2007.

Table 3. Average of results for the indicator "Financial Self-Sustainability of Partner NGOs" ¹⁶			
	First Year Score	Last Year Score	2007 Score
Average	1.58	3.58	3.52

An example of progress toward financial self-sustainability is that of Programme for Belize (PFB), responsible for the Río Bravo Conservation and Management Area. PFB achieved the commercialization of wood certified by the U.S. and U.K. certifiers Smartwood and Woodmark, which recognized this organization's compliance with strict environmental sustainability requirements. The 2004 evaluation report on PiP and the 2005 Work Plan for the Amboro-Carrasco National Parks in Bolivia also emphasize the satisfactory progress the Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza (FAN) made in generating unrestricted funds through the publication of books and other materials. The organization has also car-

ried out studies and consultancies for government agencies in exchange for resources (TNC, 2005).

Besides working on financial self-sustainability, these almost 30 partner organizations received various tools and instruments provided by PiP according to their particular needs for technical and strategic strengthening. The purpose of these tools was to boost their capacity to effectively manage protected areas and/or establish effective collaboration efforts with government agencies and local area stakeholders in the future. Strengthening the capacities of several of these organizations' leaders contributed to the formation of a network of people committed to creation and growth of the conservation NGO sector in Latin America and the Caribbean. In turn, this strengthening of leaders generated multiplier effects in partner organization staff, as well as in other related organizations.

Furthermore, according to the final report on the 1996-2002 phase of PiP, partner capacity increased in different areas such as the strengthening of their boards of directors, strategic planning, financial accounting, ecological monitoring, and geographic information system-based analysis, among others (TNC, 2002). The 2002 report also shows other results worth noting:

- 30 of the 37 sites supported by PiP in this period completed long-term financial plans and the remaining sites began the process in 2002. As a result of these plans, three of the sites — Río Bravo in Belize, and Amboró and Noel Kempff in Bolivia— managed to raise sufficient funds to finance all of the operating costs of these protected areas.
- The financial planning methodology developed by PiP in 1995, later improved in 1999, was widely adapted by the partners and other organizations involved in the sites. For example, Peru's National Institute of Natural Resources used the methodology for all of the country's federal protected areas.

Finally, an additional example is that of ProNatura Noreste A.C.,¹⁷ which has been TNC's partner in the Cuatro Ciénegas Valley. According to Miguel Angel Cruz and Arturo Lerma, this institution man-

case 1

*Identification and strengthening of partners in La Amistad International Park, Costa Rica and Panama*¹⁸

When Parks in Peril began its work in La Amistad International Park (Parque Internacional La Amistad, PILA), expectations were very soon created among communities and local and national organizations regarding access to available resources to carry out joint activities. However, the actions did not begin with the selection of partners but, rather, with design of the Conservation Area Plan, based on which threats to conservation and priorities for work were identified. The process of developing the plan was complemented by intense reconnaissance and validation field work carried out by Felipe Carazo, PiP Coordinator in PILA. The purpose of these field trips consisted of “understanding the site, getting to know its dynamics so as to be able to make the best decisions.”

“It was totally clear to us that without Felipe Carazo’s participation, it would have been very hard for us to have access to these resources since it is easier for these organizations [TNC] to continue to give resources to larger organizations than ours. It was a difficult but rewarding time, since after overcoming so many problems, we were considered one of the groups that responded the best. The resources were used to full advantage and the investment was clearly justified.”

—Yendry Suárez, member of the Quercus Community Network, interview, June 7, 2007)

The field trips and focus group meetings made it possible to become acquainted with the potential stakeholders in the different areas of PILA and its buffer zones. However, before determining who to work with, it was important to determine the places and issues to work on,¹⁹ and—depending on the above conclusions—to identify the most suitable partners. In this way, “efforts and processes were prioritized based on the strategies established in the Conservation Area Plan and on available resources.” It was also important to coordinate efforts and seek agreements between TNC in Panama and Costa Rica, and to estimate the complementary funding requirements.

According to Felipe Carazo, no complaints were received from those institutions that were visited during the reconnaissance trips but were not selected to carry out joint work. This was because false expectations were not created; the objectives and strategies were clearly explained at the appropriate time. Later, mechanisms were sought to carry out the specific actions as cost-effectively as possible in accordance with the structure of selected partners, their nature—local organization, regional or national NGO, or government agency—and their administrative restrictions.

The Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE) was the first partner in Costa Rica’s Pacific region, since there were no local non-governmental and community institutions with sufficient capacity to undertake joint conservation actions. Thus, it was decided that the partner to start with would be this government agency, which would jointly support the process of building and/or strengthening local partners—that is, strengthening existing communities in the buffer zone to create organizations and networks among them. In this and other cases, strengthening community organizations and formatting networks were among the priorities established for management of PILA.

“The easiest thing” would have been to give economic resources to strong, already-existing national organizations, but PiP took the risk of promoting the formation of community organizations. The national organizations were not given all of the responsibility and resources because according to Felipe Carazo:

“I don’t think it is effective in the long run for a partner to show up to work on a site only in connection with a project because once the project ends, it leaves the site. The priority should be to develop a lasting, long-term vision by institutions from the area. These are the site’s partners, not TNC. They may be a community, an NGO, or a government agency—these are the groups who need to be present, because the others leave.”

In the case of MINAE in Costa Rica, responsibilities were gradually delegated for community organizations like La Amistad Producers Association (ASOPROLA)²⁰ to take charge of some activities, such as the organization and implementation of workshops, in place of MINAE. The goal was to reduce dependence on MINAE and generate capacity for organizations to administer, implement, monitor, and account for the use of resources.

Another important aspect considered in the selection of partners was whether the organizations had staff with leadership and motivation, in addition to the specific technical strengths to carry out the activities. It was important to not give in to implementation pressures and end up distributing all of the financial resources among those having the greatest capacity for implementation. The agreements established with these organizations provided them with larger amounts and greater administrative demands, but a certain amount of resources was set aside for allocation to local organizations whose members lived in the different regions.

A key element of working with partners was to maintain a humble attitude, which made it possible to recognize organizational achievements as well as actions carried out by third parties, and to generate conditions in which the organizations' strengths and weaknesses could be openly recognized. It is also fundamental to establish mechanisms for both parties to be accountable to each other. If this "is done in a framework of relations of trust and transparency, it is well received," notes Felipe Carazo. The three key words are: patience, transparency and trust.

The strengthening of partners in the PILA can be divided into two types. The first type is direct or structured strengthening through training on organizational topics related to specific areas of the organization. This was carried out in the ANAI Association and the National Biodiversity Institute (INBio), for example, following guidance provided by the Institutional Self-Assessment tool. At the beginning of PiP, there were not many resources, especially human ones, to develop strengthening activities with other organizations in the PILA. However, the TNC

office in Costa Rica now has one person in charge of institutional strengthening, who has worked with various organizations. The scheme of work has consisted of TNC staff designing the strengthening process and of another outside person later being hired to implement it.

Second, indirect or practical strengthening allows learning-by-doing by involving the organizations in the development of concrete activities. For example, the fact that the local organizations had managed small contracts gradually exposed them to being accountable, thus strengthening their capacities. This has been accomplished by strictly monitoring work plans, but showing a certain flexibility to allow for learning and adaptation. According to Felipe Carazo, it has been a "support process with a very fine line between meddling and supporting them to help them with their doubts on financial matters, and to ensure that their reporting is working. This is capacity strengthening without generating dependence." In this way, the same organizations have gradually come to know their capacities, their ability to improve, and their potential to strengthen other local organizations.

In PILA, a combination of both direct and indirect strengthening processes is ideal. Direct strengthening processes have been and are essential in certain areas such as fundraising and financial sustainability. Organizations have been encouraged to seek out and knock on the doors of agencies with the potential to grant resources. However, practical instruction on this matter is important. It is currently estimated that indirect strengthening is necessary to support enforcement and formalization of the organizations and community networks that have been created in PILA.

aged to reduce its operating costs from an annual average of 30% to 15%, as a result of institutional strengthening focusing on: the design and implementation of a technical and financial planning exercise for the short term (1 year), medium term (5 years) and long term (10 years); the implementation of different fundraising strategies; and training in the development of Conservation Plans, land protection and other conservation instruments and environmental incentives. Appropriate administrative, financial, and technical monitoring activities were also adopted, and staff capacity was increased for project design, proposal development, and different techniques and standards applied to land and water protection.

2.2. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER BY INDIVIDUAL PARTNERS

In 1995, a goal²¹ was added to PiP that consisted of using PiP site-based activities to influence conservation at other sites in the region's most imperiled ecosystems. The central purpose of this goal was to capitalize on the experiences and lessons learned from the different areas where work was done, including organizational strengthening, and to disseminate these lessons through publications and venues for knowledge exchange and training. With the acquired capacities, TNC and partners whose institutional capacity showed a significant degree of growth would be able to extend their experiences to

other organizations for the explicit purpose of supporting and/or implementing conservation activities (Brandon et al., 1998).

Within the framework of this goal, and with economic and technical support from PiP or autonomously, some partners in Latin America and the Caribbean supported the evolution of other organizations, especially in situations where it was necessary to group together a larger number of organizations and to promote mechanisms for consensus among different stakeholders, and at different levels (Brandon et al., 1998). Likewise, some partners modified their approach, going from the direct implementation of actions in the field to the facilitation of processes which other organizations are responsible for implementing. Several PiP partners gradually became regional experts in training, participatory conservation, and strategic planning, sharing

their experiences with others or performing work through other organizations.

These processes contributed to strengthening the sector of organizations involved in conservation and sustainable use of protected areas. These processes also allowed TNC to expand its network of partner organizations with which to carry out joint actions, thus gradually modifying the initial strategy of one partner per site.

A successful example worth mentioning²² took place in Paraguay with the Moisés Bertoni Foundation (FMB) created in 1988. In 1992, FMB assumed protection of the Mbaracayu Natural Reserve after acquiring this territory which had been in private hands. From that year until 1996, PiP supported FMB in different activities aimed at effective management of the Reserve, as well as in its institutional

case 2

*FUNDICCEP, an organization that strengthens others in La Amistad International Park, Panama*²³

FUNDICCEP, originally called the Foundation for the Integral Development of the Cerro Punta District, is a Panamanian organization whose objective is to promote the sustainable development of the communities located in the buffer zone of La Amistad Biosphere Reserve in Panama. It was created in a process prior to PiP that was supported by Conservation International within the framework of a project known as AMISCONDE, which began in 1994.

At the beginning of PiP work in the region, it was proposed that a subagreement be reached with FUNDICCEP for implementation of conservation and sustainable use actions in its area of influence. However, based on a joint evaluation, it was determined that the organization was not prepared to assume the administrative demands of a subagreement, and also that the necessary bonds of trust did not yet exist between the parties. Therefore, FUNDICCEP received PiP support for its strengthening, especially for training members and improving its administrative and accounting structure. Based on a self-assessment process, FUNDICCEP was able to recognize its weaknesses and PiP took the necessary corresponding actions to support FUNDICCEP strengthening.

By implementing specific contracts to carry out project activities, FUNDICCEP gradually improved its technical and operational capacities so that its work began to be guided by clearly defined purposes and specific goals with definite deadlines. Likewise, the organization learned to assume the requirements involved in managing financial resources from international sources such as USAID. Since FUNDICCEP was considered a partner of the site—that is, as an institution with a sense of long-term ownership and continuity—the work involved in strengthening it was justified. This process not only contributed to overcoming the organization's weaknesses, but it established a relationship of trust and transparency, both of which are key elements of a successful partnership.

Thanks to its strengthened institutional capacity, FUNDICCEP is now equipped to promote the formation and strengthening of several organizations belonging to the Alliance Network for the Environmental Development of the Highlands (ADATA), which operates in Panama's Pacific region. Fourteen environmental and development organizations located in the Chiriquí highlands belong to ADATA. FUNDICCEP has led in the strengthening of organizations making up ADATA. On a local level, FUNDICCEP implements technical assistance programs for grassroots organizations on sustainable agroproduction models, formal and non-formal environmental

strengthening. FMB became a regional leader in different areas, including fundraising from various sources. This leadership was expanded in different areas and allowed FMB to support the creation and strengthening of other conservation organizations in the country, such as the Foundation for the Sustainable Development of the Chaco, which in turn became a PiP partner starting in 1998. The FMB also provided support to Aché indigenous groups, which hold exploitation rights to the Reserve's resources. The FMB created the International Center for Training in Management of Environmental NGOs (CICOAM) as a center to support institutional strengthening of environmental organizations in functional areas such as the establishment of boards of directors and financial management, among other aspects of organizational development. TNC later supported CICOAM so that it could serve to guide the strengthening of local service

providers, who in turn would contribute to sharing lessons about the strengthening process with other organizations.

In Costa Rica, the National Biodiversity Institute (INBio) had the opportunity, based on its participation in a PiP activity, to translate scientific knowledge into training materials suitable for use with communities located in Costa Rica's Pacific zone, in La Amistad International Park. In this way, INBio was able to transfer knowledge and contribute to the strengthening of a number of local organizations, such as those belonging to the Quercus Community Network, in areas such as biological monitoring, fire control, and scientific research on biodiversity, among others. The possibility of translating scientific material into simple, easy-to-understand formats was also an institutional strengthening process for INBio.

education, and institutional strengthening, among other topics. ADATA regularly holds meetings for coordinating, exchanging experiences, strengthening, and program evaluating, and those who attend ADATA meetings participate on equal terms. The representatives who attend ADATA's meetings commit themselves to disseminate the results in their respective institutions.

FUNDICCEP has assumed the role of continually updating information on results of these meetings by generating news bulletins that are widely disseminated. FUNDICCEP has carried out its support of other institutions, in its role as a second-level organization, with the aim of "each group growing so that it doesn't depend on us." One way of achieving this has been to promote projects that generate economic resources for the producers belonging to the organizations. FUNDICCEP has involved organizations in the activities so that they assume responsibilities; it has guided and advised them, but they have had the freedom and the space to make their own decisions.

FUNDICCEP is aware that it will need to reconsider the scope of its work as the process of strengthening organizations continues to be successful and these organizations become empowered. Accordingly, changes in its structure and statutes have already been proposed, beginning with its name. Although it continues to be FUNDICCEP, its full name is now Foundation for Integral Community Development and Ecosystem Conservation in

Panama, which allows it to have greater geographic and thematic coverage. These changes also seek to move away from the specific activities the grassroots organizations are already capable of carrying out, and for FUNDICCEP and strengthened organizations to not compete with each other over resources. Work with the grassroots organizations that are sufficiently strengthened consists of monitoring and advising, while those in which weaknesses have been detected will continue to be strengthened. FUNDICCEP has learned that it is not possible to take the same approach with all organizations, but rather that it is necessary to make adjustments after understanding the organization's characteristics, idiosyncrasies, and level of development.

Finally, FUNDICCEP recognizes the need to continue strengthening its relationship with international organizations like TNC, but without becoming dependent, especially since it realizes that these organizations are dynamic and can change policies and agendas, which would influence the type of support they give. In response to this, and recognizing that financial resources are limited, FUNDICCEP proposes to establish partnerships with international and other organizations so that together they can request resources from additional sources. FUNDICCEP knows its capacity for joint work, has negotiating power, has earned respect on a national level, and does not need to wait for others to manage its resources.

“Personally, this has been one of the projects that has most motivated me in my 15 years at the Institute, one that has most educated me and increased my awareness in community work — it has been very motivating. At INBio we are very enthused with the process that we have generated, and we will of course continue to do all we can to can to sustain it. We have started this process and we are not going to give up on it. That is why we are partners with TNC, because we have the capacity to continue the process as far as we are able and we are committed to what we are doing.”

—Vilma Obando, INBio. Interview, June 5, 2007

This situation in which PiP partners supported strengthening other organizations to develop and implement natural resource conservation and sustainable use actions has not been the case in all countries and with all partners. In some cases, organizations did not have the strength or sense of direction to help others move forward, the institutional framework did not allow it, or they preferred to maintain a profile dedicated to one site and objective in particular. In other cases, partner work was extended to an even larger scale where they promoted and/or participated in the coordination of not only civil society organizations, but also public and private ones, as will be seen in the next chapter.

“Thank you because you helped us to grow, and enabled us to help other organizations under ours to grow as well. That has allowed us to have many more zealous eyes watching over the tremendous potential the valuable La Amistad International Park has not only for Panama and Costa Rica, but for the whole world.”

— Gladys Rodríguez, Fundavisap, June 5, 2007

2.3. SUPPORT FOR INTERINSTITUTIONAL WORK AND COALITION BUILDING

Particularly after the second phase of the Parks in Peril project began in 2002, TNC recognized that in addition to the importance of giving continuity to support for conservation actions in specific sites, investments were needed at a larger scale including different sites, landscapes, ecosystems, and even countries. On this scale, previously strengthened partners would serve as a platform to promote natural resource conservation and sustainable use beyond individual areas to favor larger-scale, site-level actions, as well as the effective management of new protected areas and protected area systems.

This approach, which is centered on building and strengthening multi-organizational groups —called a “coalition” in this publication— that works toward natural resource conservation and sustainable use, grew out of the recognition that conservation programs require establishment of agreements among local, regional, and national governmental organizations and civil society, community, and private organizations. To work at larger scales requires coordinated participation of a variety of organizations which together offer several features: a solid scientific foundation, the integration of different perspectives, effective public policies, a good capacity for law enforcement, the commitment to establish complementary and cumulative efforts, permanent initiatives in the area of education, and active public participation (Flores et al., 2005).

This coalition approach has become the necessary way of working toward achievement of the goal TNC has set for 2015, which raised expectations in terms of speed, effectiveness, and the number of conservation areas which should be supported in the future.²⁴ To meet this goal, in the next ten years, it will be necessary to approximately double the conservation results achieved in the last 50 years. This will require implementation of strategies which help to expand the scale and impact of the interventions.

Building coalitions for conservation has also been considered an appropriate mechanism to facilitate the implementation of the Program of Work on Protected Areas, established in 2004 during the Seventh Conference of the Parties (COP7) to the

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Program determined the objectives, goals, and time frames for each of the signing countries to support the establishment and maintenance of complete national and regional protected areas which are effectively administered and financed, and ecologically representative (Flores et al., 2005).

As a result, in addition to continuing to work at the site-level, PiP initiated the development of strategies known as Multi-Site Strategies, which were developed throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. These strategies were designed to promote actions that would address conservation-related issues operating at a higher level than the site. Since this approach aimed at a larger scale of intervention, it required the establishment and management of interinstitutional relations, not only with the original partner organizations but also with the government agencies with authority over conservation and sustainable use, and with private and civil society organizations. These relations would lead to the establishment of coalitions to apply innovative and far-reaching methodologies and tools. The strategies would strengthen the mechanisms for the local partners to transfer their learning to other sites and organizations.

The new approach also included support for the creation and strengthening of international partnerships with the capacity to: (i) maximize biodiversity conservation in high-priority ecoregions; (ii) address complex threats having an impact on several sites within national, regional, and international landscapes; (iii) mobilize financial resources; and (iv) strengthen the capacity of networks of organizations created to share experiences and best practices. The element of cohesion among the organizations was not only geographic—that is, related to the conservation of an area or landscape—but also thematic, such as conservation on private lands.

For TNC, the establishment of national and international coalitions has made it possible to achieve different objectives: the collaborative and participatory implementation of various management activities in protected areas; the capacity to influence political agendas; the exchange and generation of scientific information; the mobilization of public

and private financing; and the generation of lessons learned (Hardy, 2005b).

PiP has supported the development of tools which facilitate strengthening these coalitions. In addition to the tools in the Resources for Success series,²⁵ a new publication was produced entitled Protected Area Conservation Coalitions: A Guide for Evaluation and Strengthening. This publication contains a practical, accessible, and easy-to-use methodology to define actions aimed at strengthening conservation coalitions. The publication also provides a tool to periodically evaluate coalition effectiveness in the management of protected areas and, based on the results, to strengthen their capacities. This tool was based on the Institutional Self-Assessment carried out by the individual organizations, but the indicators were adapted to coalition²⁶ conditions based on the previous self-assessment experience and the results of interviews with members of the coalitions which cooperated in the process of adapting the tool. The tool allows each coalition to include additional indicators tailored to its own characteristics and purposes in addition to the main indicators. It is recommended that this tool be applied to help coalitions establish and clarify their priorities, correct their weaknesses, improve their work plans, increase the mobilization of funds, and optimize their monitoring and evaluation capacity, among other benefits (Flores et al., 2005).

Finally, in some cases strengthening individual partner organizations was continued primarily with the objective of them becoming catalysts and promoters of larger-scale processes integrated with other organizations.

2.3.1. Cases of interinstitutional work in Latin America and the Caribbean

Of the interinstitutional coalition-level actions to which PiP contributed in some way, the following cases are worth noting because of their complexity, the number of people involved, and aspects of their implementation.

National Implementation Support Partnership (NISP)

One of TNC's strategic priorities supported by PiP consisted of facilitating Latin American and Caribbean countries' implementation of the commitments contained in the Program of Work on Protected Areas established at the Seventh Conference of the Parties (COP7) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). For that purpose, different national and international institutions signed agreements to establish coalitions for conservation. The main justification for promoting these agreements was the conviction that it would be very hard to make and sustain long-term progress toward the conservation of the protected area systems if organizations were not willing to work in coalitions.

Agreements for civil society support to national governments (National Implementation Support Partnerships or NISPs) have been signed between governments in different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and national and international NGOs such as TNC, Conservation International (CI), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). Through these agreements, each country establishes common actions related to its national system of protected areas, to be implemented by the coalition of organizations. The agreements have become a significant political tool to bring about an important rapprochement among national and international NGOs, and among these organizations and government agencies. These partnerships have also facilitated increased fundraising from the current donors, as well as new agencies interested in collaborating. The NISPs have facilitated the exchange of information on the different organization agendas and work plans, established consensus around the management of protected area systems, and promoted coordinated interinstitutional work.

The NISPs have also made it possible to improve the strengths of local NGOs and government agencies in protected area planning, based on the use of scientific knowledge-based methods and standards.

"The NISP agreements have achieved the greatest increase in the number of associations in the history of TNC."

(Flores et al., 2005: 5)

The NISPs have mainly organized themselves around the implementation of three of the activities suggested by the Program of Work:

1. Completing national-level gap analyses of the protected areas.
2. Assessing training and capacity-building requirements and needs for protected area management.
3. Establishing and implementing financing plans to achieve the two previous objectives and the sustainability of the country's protected areas.

While individual NISPs are adjusted to the specific needs of each country, the three above-mentioned activities are common to all of them. The details and expected outcomes are mainly coordinated with governmental and non-governmental agencies responsible for managing the protected area system. In this way, the activities are integrated into planning for the system.

By way of an example, one of the Multi-Site Strategies which PiP supported on a regional level consisted of establishing NISPs in the Caribbean countries, particularly in Bahamas, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). These negotiations took between six months and two years to complete. NISP Committees were established in each country with participation by all organizations which signed the agreement and other key government agencies. These Committees meet between two and four times per year to present the progress made on the activities carried out

Members of the CFA
TNC, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Conservation International (CI), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), World Conservation Union (IUCN), German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), German Development Bank (KfW), Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (FUNBIO), National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), Tropical Forest Conservation Act Secretariat – USAID, UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC), Conservation Data Center (CDC), and the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Environmental Funds (RedLAC).
The work of the CFA has been supported by a group of member organizations including the World Bank, the National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR), SANet (Sustainable Alternatives Network), and the Global Environment Fund (GEF). Chemonics also participates as an observer.

In 2002, the Conservation Finance Alliance (CFA) was created with support from TNC and other organizations and is comprised of a multidisciplinary group of international conservation organizations and donors with extensive experience in financial sustainability. The CFA was created to promote coordination of actions and to catalyze existing funding for biodiversity conservation from public and private sources, and thus to support the effective implementation of global conservation commitments.²⁸ The main element of cohesion for this voluntary partnership is the priority the organizations give to conservation financing. The main activities it carries out are:

- **Informing strategic agencies and persuading them to commit their support.** This purpose is achieved through Strategic Communication, which develops and disseminates materials on the importance of financing mechanisms for conservation and how to apply them. The web page also facilitates the dissemination of relevant information on financing mechanisms.
- **Training and technical assistance.** The CFA develops and refines training tools such as the *Conservation Finance Guide* (<http://guide.conser->

vationfinance.org/) and jointly offers specific training and technical assistance.

- **Mobilization of financial resources.** The CFA records financing supply and demand, correlating demand to implementation capacity, and considers the possibility of establishing seed capital funds to support new financing mechanisms.

The CFA has working groups for discussion of specific topics, such as the development of business plans and the creation of trust funds. These working groups meet voluntarily as the need arises to discuss particular issues, including reporting on progress made by each organization on the different issues.

Against this backdrop, the project entitled “PiP-CFA: Financial Sustainability of National Systems of Protected Areas” was initiated in 2004 with PiP support. The project includes a partnership at the level of the protected area systems of four countries: Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, and Jamaica, and is implemented with support from several CFA members. This project has made it possible for these four countries to advance in the area of financing, including the analysis of financing gaps, the design of financing plans, and the implementation of specific financing instruments. The project includes five main components:

- 1 Activities in protected area systems.** Support, through national-level partnerships and working groups, for the design and implementation of national sustainable financing strategies in protected area systems.
- 2 Site-level activities in protected areas.** Development, in pilot sites, of plans and financing mechanisms at the protected area level and adapted to local conditions and needs. The PiP sites selected as pilot areas serve as platforms to promote conservation at the level of the protected area system.
- 3 Capacity-building activities.** Support for capacity building and strengthening at different levels and according to the national partners’ needs. Some of the topics covered and refined during implementation include: the selection

and management of financing mechanisms, financial analyses, and the application of the *Conservation Finance Guide*, among others.

4 Learning and exchange activities. Documentation of best practices resulting from the above-mentioned components, and their dissemination to other countries in the region and the world. With support from UNESCO, this component included implementing virtual training modules, as well as using virtual pages for the exchange of experiences among learning networks.

5 Supervision of the CFA strategy and multi-region exchange. The purpose of this cross-cutting component is to ensure planning and management for effective implementation, collaboration, and exchange among the four countries.

Some limitations that had to be overcome in the project were changes in participating country political and economic environments, high staff turnover in government agencies, delays in decision-making processes, fiscal restrictions, and the reorientation of priorities for conservation financing. The partnership among the countries helped to minimize these limitations by promoting work around the agreements—NISPs—signed by the key stakeholders in each country. These agreements enhance the continuity of the actions.

Finally, in the framework of this project, CFA established a governmental coalition for learning and for generating a concrete final product. This product, the result of work in thematic groups and through meetings or “learning stops,” is entitled Financial Plans and Business Principles for Protected Areas and National Systems of Protected Areas: Guidelines, Methods, and Early Lessons and gathers together guidelines for the planning and implementation of site and system-level financing mechanisms. The members of this coalition are representatives of the following organizations:²⁹ Peru’s National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA), Ecuador’s National System of Protected Areas (SNAP), Costa Rica’s National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC) of the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), Jamaica’s National Environment

and Planning Agency (NEPA), as well as a TNC representative in each of the participating countries and one from the TNC office in the United States.

Latin American and Caribbean Network of Environmental Funds (RedLAC)³⁰

The Latin American and Caribbean Network of Environmental Funds (RedLAC) was formally established in 1999 as a coalition for learning and exchange. Today it is made up of 21 environmental funds from 14 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and attracts resources to finance natural resource conservation and sustainable use actions. RedLAC’s mission is to promote the interrelationship and strengthening of Latin American and Caribbean environmental funds through a continuous learning system for natural heritage conservation and the sustainable development of the region.

Environmental Funds included in RedLAC

Belize: Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT).

Bolivia: Foundation for the Development of the National System of Protected Areas (FUNDESNA) and the Foundation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Environment (PUMA).

Brazil: National Environment Fund (FNMA) and Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (FUNBIO).

Colombia: Fund for Environmental Action and Childhood (FPAA).

Ecuador: Ecuador National Environmental Fund.

El Salvador: Fund of the Initiative for the Americas (FIAES).

Guatemala: Conservation Trust of Guatemala (FCG), National Fund for Nature Conservation. (FONACON) and Foguama.

Haiti: Haitian Environmental Foundation (FHE).

Honduras: Honduran Foundation for Environment and Development (VIDA).

Jamaica: The Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ).

Mexico: Mexican Nature Conservation Fund (FMCN).

Panama: Fundación NATURA.

Peru: Americas Fund of Peru (FONDAM) and National Fund for Natural Areas Protected by the State (PROFONANPE).

Suriname: Suriname Conservation Foundation.

Others: UNDP – Small Grants Programme and the Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund).

RedLAC is made up of an assembly of executive directors of member funds who define RedLAC's strategic actions. A mobile secretariat is responsible for promoting operation of the network. At the moment, the Peruvian fund PROFONANPE is hosting the secretariat. Like other coalitions, RedLAC has no formal structure or legal capacity, but its existence has been supported by the importance members have attributed to the issue of conservation financing.

The RedLAC Network has received collaboration from various private institutions such as TNC for development of interinstitutional strengthening programs during the stages of development, design, and operation of the Network. PiP has also relied on RedLAC as a technical advisor for actions in selected sites, including the development of training modules on financial topics.

Latin American Alliance of Private Reserves Networks

The civil society initiative to organize itself in networks began in 1991 with the Colombian Network of Civil Society Nature Reserves (RESNATUR), which became the leading organization for promoting regional integration processes. The Inter-American Private Lands Conservation Congresses—organized by institutions working in this field, including TNC—provided the opportunity to create a “network of networks” across Latin America. At the VI Inter-American Private Conservation Congress held in 2004 in Santiago de Chile, the networks created an organizational strengthening strategy, including the opportunity to share experiences across the region. Congress participants decided to form the Latin American Alliance of Private Reserves Networks, which met formally for the first time the following year and again in Venezuela to define a strategic plan for the five-year period 2005–2010. The main aim of the Alliance is to facilitate cooperation, coordination, analysis, and the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and natural conservation processes carried out through private conservation initiatives in Latin America. The Alliance has five strategies through which it concentrates its efforts: organizational strengthening, communication, financing, positioning of the issue of private lands conservation, and coordination and integration.

Members of the Latin American Alliance of Private Reserves Networks

Argentina: Habitat Foundation Natural Reserve Network (Red Hábitat de Reservas Naturales)
Belize: Association of Private Protected Areas
Bolivia: Prometa and the Private Conservation Forum
Brazil: National Confederation of Private Natural Heritage Reserves of Brazil
Colombia: Colombian Network Association of Natural Reserves of the Civil Society (RESNATUR) and Fundación Natura
Chile: National Network of Private Protected Areas
Costa Rica: Costa Rican Network of Natural Private Reserves
Ecuador: National Corporation of Private Forests
El Salvador: National Network of Private Protected Areas of El Salvador (RENAPES)
Guatemala: Association of Guatemalan Private Natural Reserves
Honduras: Honduran Network of Private Natural Reserves (REHNAP)
Mexico: National Association of Natural Private Reserves (ARENA)
Nicaragua: Foundation for the Development of Private Natural Reserves
Panama: Panamanian Natural Private Reserves Network Association (Asociación Panameña Red de Reservas Naturales Privadas)
Paraguay: Paraguayan Private Conservation Network
Peru: Private and Communal Conservation Network of Peru
Venezuela: Private Reserves Network of Venezuela (Aprinatura)
Regional: Association of Natural Reserves Networks of Mesoamerica

When the Alliance was constituted as a voluntary network through the signing of the “Declaration of Faith,” it consisted of around 1,600 individuals or organizations, which altogether own two million hectares of lands. The Alliance is composed of one representative from each of the participating countries’ national networks. Each of these national networks has committed itself to disseminating information on the Alliance to other local networks. The Alliance seeks to work on issues of common interest that require the construction of legal, administrative, and technical instruments. Examples of issues addressed by the Alliance include: land tenure; common definitions of private lands conservation concepts; territorial zoning; documentation

case 3

Institutional strengthening of partners and TNC in Central America and the Caribbean³¹

Within the framework of PiP, several multi-site strategies were developed that have contributed to the institutional strengthening of and work with partner organizations in the Mesoamerican and Caribbean region (MACR). These strategies were jointly developed in accordance with previous experience and TNC guidelines on working with and strengthening partners. This experience now constitutes an excellent example of the initiatives that TNC can carry out in the future to select partners and coalitions for conservation, and ensure that these partners and coalitions are managed systematically and effectively.

The strategies were aimed at achieving two interrelated purposes: on the one hand, to strengthen the capacity of local organizations and critical stakeholders for conservation of protected areas in the MACR and, on the other hand, to strengthen the internal capacity of TNC staff to more effectively manage their work with TNC's partners. In each country, a team of specialists supported putting the strategies into effect. This team was responsible for directly training the organizations or for coordinating activities carried out by external consultants. Partner needs were detected based on the results of institutional assessments, risk assessments, evaluations of PiP activities, and open discussions among PiP coordinators and the partners.³² The development of the strategies has also contributed to improving TNC's interaction with partners, attending more consistently to partner needs and, overall, optimizing its ways of working with others.

These strategies were financed over the last two years of PiP, as the continuation of similar strategies implemented in previous years of the program. Some of the main activities carried out in this final phase were the following:

- *Development of a database on partners and service providers.* The database was created in 2006 as a management tool to monitor both partner organizations and the coalitions established with TNC support. The database includes four main sections: 1) partners and/or service providers (contact information, results of the assessment of institutional strengthening, results of risk assessment, etc.); 2) projects involving partners; 3) legal agreements, projects, and information on financing; and 4) intervention sites and ecoregions. The information to be fed into the database is being gathered in the period from July to December 2007 with the participation of one to three people in each country trained for this purpose. These people are responsible for gathering the information and updating the database three times per year. The database makes it possible to analyze partner relations and partner connections to the priority ecoregions and serves as a tool to measure progress toward TNC's 2015 goal. In general, TNC will be able to measure the investment made in its work with others and the concrete conservation results this investment has produced. The database can also be linked to other technical databases managed by the institution.

of experiences; conservation incentives; educational processes; legal recognition; and the integration of private protected areas with national, regional, and local areas, and private areas themselves. Meetings, sponsored by a variety of national or regional projects, have been held in different countries to position private lands conservation issues in the region as well as in proposals for legal frameworks for private conservation that are applicable to all countries.

In recent years, PiP has been the main source of funds for private lands conservation in Latin America, including support for site-level actions as well as regional-level actions coordinated through the Alliance. While the Alliance still has a way to go to consolidate itself, it has been useful insofar as it has allowed national networks to keep in contact and exchange

experiences. One notable outcome of the Alliance has been the creation of the Mesoamerican Network of Private Natural Reserves, a subgroup of the Latin American Alliance. Its activity and level of commitment have been reflected in its meetings, the development of a website and, primarily, the joint development of a proposed Regional Policy for Private Lands Conservation to be presented to the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) for approval by its Council of Ministers, which is composed of the Ministers of Environment of each country in the region. Its approval would constitute significant progress toward the formalization and legalization of conservation processes in the Latin American context.

- *Development of a course and guide on basic factors for partnerships in Central America.* The purpose of the course was to develop the basic factors³³ to establish and launch partnerships and to share these factors with TNC staff so that –for the first time– all of the partners’ operations would be based on a platform of common knowledge. The course design and accompanying guide made it possible to document essential components gathered from TNC’s experience with partners.³⁴ Other tools and guides designed in Central America were distributed during the course. One of these tools was created to facilitate dialogue among partners to enable them to identify and resolve conflicts. Attendees at the course workshops (107 people corresponding to 64% of TNC’s staff in the region³⁵) recommended that the course be adapted so that it can also be offered to partners in the region and potentially in other regions, as well. The workshops also generated a forum for discussion of lessons learned and recommendations for the future. Some of these lessons are presented in the next chapter.

- *Development of a tool for monitoring partner performance.* Since TNC primarily implements its conservation actions through its partners, it is essential to monitor and evaluate partnerships to identify needed improvements and make progress towards conservation. The periodic application of this tool by TNC and its partners also contributes to building trust and continuous learning, as well as to designing action plans to improve their relations. The tool, which is implemented through different sequential steps, is designed around three assessment matrices related to: 1) evaluation of

the conditions of relationships with partners; 2) identification of areas which facilitate or hinder relationships between partners; and 3) an action plan to strengthen relationships.

- *Holding Conservation Training Week for partners in the Caribbean.* This training event for partners in the Caribbean countries has been held annually since 2005, going back to the experience with the Latin America-wide Conservation Training Weeks held from 1991 to 2001.³⁶ The event was organized to allow participants to receive training on topics related to both organizational development and technical elements of conservation. Organizational strengthening needs were identified through Institutional Self-Assessments and experts were hired to design courses to address these needs. The events also provided an opportunity for partners to share their experiences and lessons learned and to establish work-related contacts. The current challenge is to obtain funding to ensure continuity of these events, so as to strengthen existing and future partner organizations in the region.

From experience with these strategies, PiP staff and partners themselves have learned that institutional capacity building is a dynamic process which is continually evolving and in which organizations learn, assimilate, and apply new knowledge at their own pace. Furthermore, strengthening processes must be adjusted to enable organizations to respond effectively to changes in global and national conservation agendas.

Several of the above-mentioned coalitions have as one of their main functions the exchange of knowledge and experiences among members, as well as with a wider audience. The use of these coalitions to share lessons learned, information, and capacity-building experiences contributes to the objectives of the Program of Work on Protected Areas of the Convention on Biological Diversity. In particular, the coalitions have contributed to the objectives related to the need to build capacity for the planning, establishment and management of protected areas (Objective 3.2), and to develop, apply and transfer appropriate technologies for protected areas (Objective 3.3), through the implementation of capacity-building programs and broad initiatives to develop knowledge and abilities at the individual, community and institutional levels, and to raise the professional level (SCBD, 2004).

3. Lessons learned and recommendations

The evolution of TNC's work with partners has generated lessons learned and reflections which have guided TNC actions in this field. These lessons have been drawn from both TNC and partner staff, who have shared their experiences and recommendations. Some of the lessons and suggestions presented below were collected at the "Fourth Annual Workshop on Best Practices and Challenges for Parks in Peril Site Consolidation" held in Monterrey, Mexico in March 2007, attended by Parks in Peril staff members from the 12 most recent PiP-supported sites,³⁷ as well as by representatives from the national and local organizations with which TNC has worked jointly in those sites. Lessons were gathered from a study of TNC's relations with partners in Central America which was conducted through the Regional Environmental Program for Central America (PROARCA) and PiP (Sáenz and Arias, 2006). Additional lessons were taken from TNC documents, including those prepared by staff responsible for organizational strengthening strategies in the Mesoamerica and Caribbean regions. Preparation of this publication also involved interviews with current and former TNC staff working on institutional strengthening, as well as with representatives of non-governmental, community, and government organizations.

This chapter is organized as follows: The first part contains a series of sections showing lessons learned and recommendations gleaned from TNC's work through the PiP program. These tables are divided into lessons related to: 1) selection of partners; 2) institutional strengthening of individual organizations; 3) joint work by partners on natural resource conservation and sustainable use; 4) work carried out with the organizations according to their nature and characteristics; and 5) work in building and launching coalitions for conservation. The chapter concludes with the voices of the local partners, that is, the second section incorporates lessons and recommendations, which emerged during the interviews and workshops held with national and local organizations regarding selection of, and work with, local, national, and international partners.

3.1. LESSONS LEARNED BY TNC

3.1.1. Lessons on selecting to work with individual partners³⁸

"In sum, the ideal way to choose partners³⁹ is to take a reading of the situation and to first choose what and where, and later, with whom, keeping in mind who the site partner is and what its existing capacities are. If the process begins by identifying 'with whom,' one ends up adapting to the others' agenda without having a joint and comprehensive approach."

— Felipe Carazo, June 7, 2007

At the beginning of PiP, the choice of strategic partners was small because the conservation NGO movement was relatively new in Latin America and the Caribbean and a wide range of strong organizations did not exist. Generally, there was no systematic analysis of selection criteria; work was begun with those organizations with which a previous relationship existed with TNC and/or organizations with a solid and positive reputation in the selected regions. Over the years, criteria began to be applied more formally in some countries. The lessons learned from all these experiences are:

- Partners should be selected based on a specific need associated with a natural resources conservation and/or sustainable use objective; these actions will be more effectively achieved if addressed through the joint and coordinated work of various stakeholders.
- The diversity of selected partners, in terms of their capacities and roles, will depend on the proposed objectives to be achieved.
- At the beginning of work with the partner, it

is desirable to carry out an institutional evaluation to determine the partner organization's mission, vision, previous experience and reputation, and its technical, financial, organizational, and human capacity to implement the project or specific action. The Institutional Self-Assessment tool facilitates this process and measuring the success of the work subsequently undertaken.

- Objectives among parties do not have to be the same, but they should be compatible and complementary so that each partner generates added value to the partnership.
- The selection process mentioned in Table 1, based on the stages for establishing partner relations, has proven effective because it establishes orderly steps for selection. However, every situation is unique, and persons in charge should have enough discretion and flexibility to make adjustments in the process. For example, in some cases, partners for PiP activities were selected for historical reasons: the organizations were partners of TNC before PiP began and there was no reason to change them.
- The selection process should not be the exclusive responsibility of a single person in the organization, but rather, should be consultative: other staff members should participate to allow different visions and perspectives to complement each other.
- The selection process is facilitated by personal empathy and affinity among staff conducting the process. In Latin American and Caribbean countries, it is common for circles of conservation-minded people to be small, meaning that partner organization members already know each other, sharing ties of friendship. This facilitates establishment of agreements and—although friendship is not enough—collegiality provides the conditions for partners to openly recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and to share joint interests.
- Objective criteria should be complemented by personal judgment—and instinct—to identify who would be most favorable to work with.

- In the event that several NGOs have the potential to be partners, it is recommended that an analysis be made of each organization's respective thematic and/or geographic niches of specialization, and that these areas of emphasis be respected.⁴⁰

3.1.2. *Lessons on institutional strengthening of individual partners⁴¹*

- Supporting partner organizations in their institutional development—institutional strengthening—has proven to be a valuable tool to help build national and local organizations to sustain progress in natural resource conservation and sustainable use, as well as disseminate lessons learned to others.
- The strengthening process should begin by carrying out a systematic diagnostic exercise with partners to determine their strengths, weaknesses, and main institutional development needs.
- Partner organizations should not immediately be given a significant flow of economic resources for conservation purposes unless consideration has also been given to the need, if required, to invest in their basic institutional capacities. When institutional weaknesses are detected, it is recommended that these weaknesses not be ignored when establishing the partnership. In such cases, a way to address institutional weaknesses should be found at the same time as conservation actions are carried out.
- Institutional strengthening will not be effective if the tools to be used are perceived as bureaucratic requirements and not as success factors in the implementation of natural resource conservation and sustainable use activities.
- The strengthening process should be a voluntary one. Sometimes, the main obstacle to making satisfactory progress is that the organization's managerial or technical staff are not willing to recognize their weaknesses—to feel exposed—and to commit themselves

to improving. This situation may be more common in organizations which have existed for several years, and which have established routines and practices over time that make it difficult to think of making changes. Recently created organizations and those facing management staff turnover tend to be more willing to improve their institutional process.

- To carry out strengthening processes as well as implement other joint actions, it is necessary to be familiar with and sensitive to partner culture, idiosyncrasies, and history. This sensitivity can help ensure the appropriation and implementation of the strengthening tools by the organization.
- In preparing a strengthening plan, it is essential to estimate the staff's true time availability so that the strengthening goals are designed to be realistic.
- It is not recommended that the same format be used to strengthen all organizations, much less that the supporting institution (TNC, in this case) should assume that its own institutional plan and procedures are models for partners to follow. It is recommended that organizations not be approached with the assumption that all of the formulas to achieve institutional strengthening are already known. Sometimes these formulas can be developed using known tools and best practices, but they must be adapted to the particular circumstances and based on collaborative work and learning.
- To help adjust the assistance provided to meet the needs of the organizations, it is beneficial to identify a network of local consultants to facilitate the identified strengthening actions. It may also be advisable to establish partnerships with other local organizations that are well suited to support the institutional strengthening. In this way, the role of managing the strengthening process is not exclusively assumed by a single organization (TNC, in this case). This reduces the risk of potential dependence and also helps to consolidate local-level institutional networks. It is impor-

tant to maintain an updated list of local consultants, sharing it widely to achieve the above aim.

- The whole staff of the partner organization should be informed about the purposes of strengthening training. Although participation of upper management and the board of directors is critical for the proposed changes to be sustained over time, staff members at other hierarchical levels should at least be familiar with the process and results.
- In strengthening processes, it is important for the boards of directors to have a mechanism for constant communication with the organization's mid-level and technical managers. Ownership and commitment by different groups of the process is facilitated by participatory and consultative decision-making.
- When the strengthening process involves the board of directors as well as managerial and technical staff, the facilitator of the process should take each party's different interests and perspectives into account to make it easier to reach agreements on the changes to be made and the roles each party should play.
- Although the process should involve the whole staff, it is recommended that an effort be made to identify those people in the organization who have a special interest in and ability to put the institutional development processes into effect.
- Maintaining the acquired capacities depends not only on individual interests in ongoing learning, but also on an organizational climate that stimulates the application and enhancement of these capacities.
- Often, the dissemination of training tools is not enough. For example, it is not sufficient to learn how to develop a financing plan at a training workshop; it is necessary for the organization to seek specific opportunities to implement the plan and either generate its own funds or obtain them from external cooperation.

- It is not realistic, given the global context, to expect Latin American organizations to become completely independent of external resources to meet their conservation objectives. Therefore, fundraising and financial sustainability are topics that a majority of organizations have over and over again considered a priority in a capacity-building package.
- Capacity building requires follow-up, consistency, and frequent monitoring of progress.⁴²
- A decision regarding the appropriate time to suspend actions aimed at strengthening a partner's administrative capabilities should be based on the observation of progress with regard to the basic factors needed for its operation. The time to suspend organizational strengthening activities is when the services offered no longer generate added value. Some of these basic factors needed are: financial and accounting tools which contribute to orderly resource management and to the identification of future financial needs; proven fundraising capacity (access to potential sources); a board of directors involved in developing the organization's activities and seeking financial resources; and institutional will to keep technical and administrative capacities up to date, among others.⁴³ Also, having strategic plans, by definition, forces the institution to plan for the future and to develop actions aimed at making the organization sustainable. Notwithstanding the above, within the normal evolution of an organization, new training needs will likely appear over time. These needs should be addressed in the first instance by the organization itself.
- The design of specific actions should be carried out jointly by the parties involved, according to roles and responsibilities that the partnership will establish.
- It is advisable to negotiate the possible uses of available financial resources from the beginning, determining which budget items and activities can be financed and what accountability mechanisms the parties have.
- Consistency is one key element of an alliance. The organization should do what it committed itself to do; if this is not possible, the organization should explain the reasons for not meeting the commitment and propose alternatives.
- It is important for the partnership to establish an equitable relationship where mutual learning takes place. However, it should be recognized that there are inherent differences or asymmetrical aspects between partners due to their characteristics, nature, and level of experience. The aim cannot be for the partners to be equals. Once differences are accepted, the objective should be to find common ground in strategic areas (which may be geographic and/or thematic) and to build a collective working agenda based on these areas.
- The behavior of both the technical and administrative staffs of the organizations seeking a partnership should show that all members of the partnership are part of a joint conservation effort, even if one of the parties also acts as the donor.
- It is important to keep in mind that local and national organizations may question the motives of international organizations like TNC for intervening in specific sites in the Latin American region. This is understandable and —under certain circumstances— justified. The important thing is to answer these questions as clearly, consistently, and transparently as possible.
- To achieve certain conservation objectives, one partner's political capital, local knowledge,

3.1.3. Lessons on the implementation of joint actions for the conservation and sustainable use of protected areas with individual partners⁴⁴

- It is recommended that each partner's priorities, expectations, needs, goals, abilities, and financial resources be clearly and transparently defined in a written agreement during the design of the specific actions to be implemented jointly.

credibility, and capacity for implementation are as important as the financial, technical, and scientific resources another partner has to offer. Accepting that each organization has a comparative advantage in a particular area generates an interdependent relationship, without which it is impossible to achieve the conservation objectives.⁴⁵

- When partnerships between two organizations fail or there are complications, it is important to recognize that—beyond the immediate effect of the loss of economic resources—there are other, no-less-important effects related to the loss of reputation, the inability to meet the proposed objectives, and even the partner’s reduced possibilities of receiving further support from its donors.
- It is valid for the terms of a partnership to recognize and specify that one partner is stronger than another; this does not mean that the relationship cannot be horizontal or that there is an imbalance in power relations. When partners have different strengths, the fact that one helps another in a specific area does not mean that the “horizontality” is lost but, rather, that a service is being offered in exchange for something else. In other areas, the relationship may work the other way around.
- Leadership in a partner institution often makes all the difference to the work that can be accomplished. If leaders are controlling or seek to play a dominant role, it will be more difficult to achieve the expected results than if leaders are open and encouraging.
- It is recommended that partner relations not depend on a single person but, rather, that communication and decision-making be shared with other members of the staff and the managerial group. This collegiality reduces the risk of the relationship ending or altering in undesirable ways when the person in charge changes.
- Partner relations are built daily and should be based on trust, respect, and candor. Should occasional differences arise, the possibility of dealing with differences openly and trans-

parently facilitates future work. It is recommended that the terms of the partnership include the creation of pre-established conflict-resolution channels or mechanisms to address differences that may arise.

- When one party to a partnership spins information, communicating only what the other partner wants to hear, this weakens the possibility of achieving the desired results. Therefore, it is important to promote an open relationship that makes it possible to report on both the positive and negative results achieved, as well as to air disagreements and recognize agreements.
- It is important to give due credit to each and every partner and to not take the limelight when the work is actually the result of a collective partnership. Not giving credit and the desire to receive more prominent recognition are among the elements that can generate division and bad feelings among partners.
- It is recommended that a policy of requiring counterpart funding from partners be maintained even if these funds are from other international donor organizations. Ideally, partner funding sources should be local or they should at least contribute to covering part of the costs. It is essential to obtain government funding since this demonstrates commitment by the agencies that are, in most cases, ultimately responsible for managing the protected areas (understood as providers of public goods and services).
- It is important to have a timely and ongoing communication system that facilitates sharing updated information among the partners. This system should be managed by the organization’s technical and administrative areas in a consistent manner and should consider the following elements:
- Formal and periodic mechanisms for reporting on changes in the organization that affect its work with other partners, as well as structured administrative requirements for partnerships involving the transfer and management of financial resources.

- Mechanisms for evaluating shared objectives, work processes, implementation of activities, and achievement of specific objectives.
- Internal administrative management systems should be designed for such tasks as financial management, human resources, and planning processes that facilitate work with partners. For example, administrative systems should be appropriate and suited to each country's context and partner's level of strengthening. Also, job descriptions should specify duties that facilitate the organization's interinstitutional work with partners.
- It is advisable to have one person in charge of all elements of the partnership relationship, including partner organization values, culture, and programs. This person should have the capacity to detect opportunities and risks in a timely fashion, and should promote forms of action and risk mitigation.
- It is recommended that the means of measuring partner performance be clearly established and that there be periodic monitoring of progress on joint work. TNC has developed several tools for this measurement and assessment.

3.1.4. Lessons on strengthening and working with individual partners according to their nature and characteristics⁴⁶

In working with partners, it is important to recognize differences in terms of organization nature, capacity, and objectives. Some partners require specific considerations due to their nature.

A common way of characterizing the most appropriate roles the different organizations can play is the following: The communities are partners of the site because they will always be there and they are the direct decision-makers regarding the use of natural resources. Government institutions are key local partners to be able to frame the site and actions within policies and legal regulations; in most cases, they also have responsibility and legal authority over management of sites or protected areas. Both national and international organizations are institu-

tional partners with which partnerships can be established to develop concrete strategies for application in protected areas over a defined period of time.

When the partners are local communities:

- Planning processes with communities are more sustainable if they take into consideration community knowledge and practical experience of the situation in which interventions are planned. If planning is carried out in this way, communities will be more willing to participate in implementing actions and the time prior to implementation will likely be reduced.
- Generally, these community organizations have had less administrative and operational training than other types of partners. Therefore, when deciding on the specific actions to carry out, it is important to establish, through a participatory diagnostic study, what the communities want and also what they are capable of doing.
- There are greater risks of generating financial dependence with community partners. Therefore, their strengthening should emphasize building capacity to generate financial resources, as well as to raise resources from other sources. Likewise, efforts should always be made for communities to be co-responsible for the actions they carry out.
- Capacity building with local organizations should be a careful and respectful process. The communities should not be underestimated; the training process and delegation of responsibilities should be based on recognition not only of organizational needs but also of their innate and existing capacities.
- Administrative and financial matters have generally been the areas of institutional development with the most difficulty for communities. Therefore, if administrative and financial need are determined, it is recommended that these areas be emphasized during the strengthening processes.

- It is important to recognize the possible operational and logistical limitations to working with community groups. For example, deficient communication and transportation systems may limit access to the regions where these communities are located.
- In establishing partnerships with communities—especially if they are indigenous or traditional—it is important to consider the cultural elements that can become barriers to—indeed opportunities for—joint work. Their perception of the environment, protected areas, and natural resources often cannot be completely adjusted to the vision of other partners; therefore, open communication is essential to find common ground for dialogue.
- It should be assumed that working with community organizations will mean more time and possibly additional costs. These costs must be covered to enable these organizations to learn how to do work independently because the sustainability of conservation activities in inhabited protected areas depends on their active participation.
- It is recommended that a balance be found between the trust placed in organizational capacity to assume primary responsibility for actions, and the need to pursue rigorous compliance with the agreed terms through monitoring schemes. This combination is critical to ensure that adequate results are obtained, to guarantee transparency, and increase credibility among the parties.
- The ultimate purpose of working with local communities as partners should be to empower them.

When the partners are governments:

- Government agencies are not optional partners. They exist, hold authority, and should be considered obligatory.
- In the processes of planning, implementation, and evaluation of actions in protected areas, different levels of government involvement are

always required because these public agencies support the legitimacy of actions undertaken.

- In addition to being the starting point for support of public protected areas management, government entities should continue to be well-informed about what is happening and, if possible, should participate actively in implementation of natural resource conservation and sustainable use actions.
- Government entities with authority over protected areas are the key stakeholders in the search for political and legal conditions to facilitate natural resource conservation and sustainable use in protected areas.
- Government partners are, have been, and will continue to be essential to achieve actions associated with the political agenda promoted by TNC, such as the expansion and establishment of protected areas.
- It is more effective to establish partnerships within agendas established by these government entities or to consider such partnerships a priority, than to arrive with a pre-conceived agenda.
- Particularly with this type of partner, it is recommended that initiatives have a counterpart contribution for both financing and technical assistance.
- It is recommended that coordination mechanisms be established with government agencies from different sectors, in addition to those agencies having direct authority over management of the protected areas, to integrate environmental actions in these areas within wider development strategies.
- In strengthening processes with public organizations, it is important for the tools and procedures to be adapted to their structures. For example, several of the indicators included in the Institutional Self-Assessment tool are not completely applicable to all government agencies due to differences in agency financial structures, as well as the limitations govern-

ments face in terms of their capacity to generate their own resources.

- The fact that some government agency officials have landed jobs for political reasons rather than for technical capacity affects the type of relations possible. Likewise, high levels of turnover in agencies can affect the continuity of commitments agreed to earlier in partnerships. The scarcity, instability, or restrictions of available resources faced by many public agencies in Latin America can prevent these officials from reaching conservation agreements in a significant and consistent manner, even when the political will to do so exists. Finally, inefficient bureaucracies can limit the facility and agility with which decisions affecting established partnerships are made and implemented. Partners must learn how to work within the framework of these limitations by seeking to mitigate them or dealing with them in the best way possible.
- With respect to changes of government, it is recommended that efforts be made to maintain previous contacts with candidates for public office, as well as with new public officials, to inform them about the benefits of the joint work previously carried out

3.1.5. Lessons for working in coalition building and development⁴⁷

The lessons learned that have been gathered from work in coalition building and development are contained in the following section. Some of the previously given recommendations referring to selection of, strengthening of, and work with individual partners also apply to work with coalitions.

“Coalitions work when the time is right, when goals and decision-making processes have been clearly defined and, of course, when the essential prior conditions for collaboration exist.”

(Flores et al., 2005: 23)

- The necessary conditions for successful partnerships are collaboration, trust, transparency, specificity, and adaptability.
- It is recommended that the link between the coalition’s objective and the desired impact or goal be clearly explained. Objectives, goals, and impacts —as well as the means of monitoring— should be discussed and negotiated among the participants.
- Coalitions should be based on recognition of a common purpose, interdependence between participants, and the conviction that collective work will be more effective in achieving the desired impact than individual action.
- The coalition’s purpose should be established first, and not the other way around: establishing a coalition and then identifying the purpose. The purpose also determines the duration of the coalition and the commitment expected of the parties.
- The common purpose should be made as simple as possible. However, simplicity of the goals should be complemented by efforts to overcome the complex issues and challenges that can be involved in achieving institutional will in particular contexts.
- The more specific, clear, and pertinent the established goals are, the more possible it will be to measure progress.
- Concerted definition of the roles, functions, capacities, responsibilities, and duration of the coalition, as well as mechanisms for decision-making and dispute resolution, will allow each organization to assume its commitments with full knowledge of and responsibility for what that involves.
- Depending on the coalition’s specific objective, it is recommended that an evaluation be made of the advisability to start the partnership with a few stakeholders that have a clearly-identified shared focus and homologous technical strengths. In these situations, the group can consider adding new stakeholders once it is strengthened.

- The characteristics of a successful coalition are, among others, the following:
 - One institution assumes leadership for promoting both collaboration and coordination processes within the coalition. However, this leadership should be exercised by facilitation and not exclusive decision-making.
 - The leadership may be assigned and periodically rotated to avoid generating competition and resentment, and the dependence on a single person or institution. This latter aspect is important, especially considering the high staff turnover that may occur in some organizations, particularly governmental ones. Coalitions should seek to reduce their vulnerability to changes in staff in the participating organizations.
 - Relations do not revolve around individual projects but, rather, around the processes and goals that are established.
 - Furthermore, successful coalitions:
 - Make progress within conditions of the existing political and regulatory environment
 - Maintain a firm connection to the political, social, and institutional realities of the area where they are intervening.
 - Reduce the dynamics of exclusion, generating appropriate incentives for all groups to be considered for participation on equal terms.
 - Promote the strengthening of the smallest organizations in the coalition through the appropriate transfer of abilities and responsibilities.
 - Do not ignore points of conflict; they openly recognize and address conflict through agreed-upon dispute resolution schemes.
 - Maintain an appropriate balance in the number of participants, including those needed to achieve the proposed goal, but without increasing the level of complexity or difficulty of coordination.
 - Have dissemination mechanisms to create increased awareness and support beyond the group of participants.
 - Accept changes and adapt to them by modifying the agenda, fostering new integrations, and altering their structure and working dynamics, if necessary.
 - Attend to the needs of participants and achieve tangible results in a reasonable period of time.
 - Have a variety of technical strengths, enabling them to tackle complex problems related to the effective management of protected areas or protected area systems (it is also feasible for them to contract for specific tasks for which they lack the necessary competencies).
 - Have monitoring and assessment schemes which provide timely and truthful information on achievement of the objectives, making it possible to adopt the necessary corrective measures to improve their performance, if necessary.

“A partnership should be a relationship based on the criteria of equality and ground rules agreed upon by all, which should be democratic and horizontal regardless of the volume or quality of the individual contributions of each of the parties. This relationship is implemented by applying key values such as trust, respect, transparency, and equity.”

— Michelle Libby

3.2. LESSONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE LOCAL PARTNERS⁴⁸

While this publication is written from the perspective and experience of TNC and the Parks in Peril Program, it is considered important to present lessons and recommendations offered by the local

partners that have worked with TNC. These lessons were gathered at the workshop held by PiP in Monterrey, Mexico in 2007, as well as from personal telephone and electronic interviews conducted exclusively for this publication.

“We NGOs are very used to competing and sometimes it is the donors who lead us to compete. However, this time, the experience was very good, and it was good because there was a central core, a magnet that kept us all in balance – and that magnet was TNC. It was the driving force that made it possible for the projects to take place. They smoothed out over time - I cannot deny that there were small frictions in the beginning – but TNC was the driving force that made those frictions disappear so that we could work in harmony.”

– Maritza Jáen

“The Limon Watershed Foundation works at the local and regional level. TNC has the additional possibility of operating on national and international levels. I think it was the clarity of our positions that enabled us to complement our work very well, managing to make more progress towards the conservation of the site than if we had tried to do it separately.”

– Sofia Stein

On the selection of partners:

- Local organizations should be selective about the support they receive from international organizations to ensure that this support responds to a definite plan for the region. To accomplish this, it is necessary to have negotiation capacity, technical and administrative strength, and clarity regarding the general objectives that are proposed.

- Often, it is the responsibility of local organizations to promote synergies between financing agencies and the work that organizations carry out, as well as with their different partners.

On working with partners:

- Sometimes, it is necessary for organizations (whether national or international) to implement interventions to meet the conservation goals of the protected areas. The challenge consists in framing these separate organizational actions within a common agenda. This is accomplished by developing joint work plans or incorporating the actions into plans that have been previously designed and approved by the competent authorities.
- Each organization has an agenda, and this should be openly discussed with other partners with which the organization will be working jointly, thus avoiding hidden or unclear agendas and intentions.
- A partnership is a learning process for members to adapt to the other institutions.
- The ground rules for work—including administrative management of resources and time— should be clear from the beginning. The principle of shared responsibilities should apply to every partnership.
- Once the duration of a partnership is established, it is recommended that the organization receiving the resources begin planning for other sources of future funding.
- When there are changes in the institutions' technical and/or administrative staff, the appropriate transition arrangements should be made to avoid unnecessary delays in implementation of activities and transfer of funds. Provisions for continuity should include an orientation regarding the most effective way of working with the partner organizations.
- Many tools exist to institutionalize a partnership so that members do not depend exclusively on agreements based on personal trust.

These tools include conventions, agreements, and letters or memoranda of understanding, among others. However, this formalization can be the result of personal contact that allows parties to feel comfortable working together.

- Partnerships do not mean that organizations have to lose their political and financial autonomy and independence, even if one partner grants economic resources to the other institution(s).
- Mechanisms for interinstitutional work and coordination should promote a self-critical stance during presentation of results. In this way, the meetings will not only include analysis of progress and successes, but also difficulties from which organizations can learn.
- It is recommended that these same mechanisms provide opportunities for new local organizations to join the partnership. Even if they have less of a track record, they can contribute new ideas. These organizations can be assigned small activities and responsibilities which can enable them to gradually acquire capacity and experience under the supervision of organizations with more experience.
- Organizations which grant economic resources to other organizations should seek to maintain horizontal relations, avoiding a hierarchical “donor-recipient” structure. This does not mean that those providing resources cannot require clear policies, transparency, and the fulfillment of commitments by the receiving parties, but the receiving institutions in turn should be able to require the same of the granting institutions.
- If an agreement is reached in a coalition of organizations for some partners to allocate resources to others, it is important that this distribution be communicated openly. A lack of communication about financial matters can generate distrust.
- When there is a flow of economic resources, it is recommended that consideration be given to the limitations some local organizations may have in terms of the geographic distance at

which they conduct their activities and potential difficulties with communication, financial, and equipment services. Organizations which grant resources should have a certain degree of flexibility with respect to local organizations and projects so that adjustments can be made in response to the unforeseen circumstances which accompany fieldwork.

- The achievements of each of the organizations making up the partnership should be publicly recognized.
- The credit each organization wants to publicly take at end of the joint work should be previously and transparently negotiated, to avoid the undesired dominance of some partners or the possibility of achievements going unrecognized.
- It is indispensable to recognize the authority and competence of national and local organizations, especially if they are government agencies. Even if they have institutional limitations, these government agencies have legal authority over protected areas, and all actions must have a legal framework to support them. While NGOs may have certain autonomy to decide where to allocate their economic resources, it is important to inform the appropriate authorities for the purpose of gaining their approval and establishing synergies with other actions that are being implemented. For example, in the case of Cockpit Country in Jamaica, the first work PiP set out to accomplish was not successful because the initial approach was made to the NGOs and not to the Department of Forestry which is responsible for managing this forest reserve. The work was later possible when TNC’s actions were structured around the National Forest Plan developed by the Department of Forestry and approved by the country’s Parliament.
- International NGOs and other organizations should have sufficient information on institutional and political realities, as well as on the legal framework that regulates the way government agencies operate, so that support mechanisms can be established within these schemes.

4. Other cases in Latin America and the Caribbean

The following are examples of strengthening experiences with organizations and of the establishment of coalitions across Latin America and the Caribbean. The examples emphasize the evolution of work begun with individual partners involved in the management of protected areas selected by PiP. The list of the main partners PiP worked with in the selected sites is found in the annex to this publication.

4.1. PARTNERS IN GRENADA AND SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Located north of Venezuela in the Eastern Caribbean, the Grenadines are a chain of islands possessing abundant marine life. Coral reefs border the islands and extend out to grassy sea beds, pristine sandy beaches, and mangrove communities. The marine habitats in this chain support ecological biodiversity and are economically valuable to the islands of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, and the Caribbean in general (see www.parksinperil.org for details).

To contribute to the conservation of this biodiversity, PiP began its work in the Grenadines in 2002, guided by an ecoregional approach focused on creating a system of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to be composed of priority areas in these countries. The Tobago Cays National Park and the Sandy Island Oyster Bed Marine Protected Area were chosen as the locations to begin the site consolidation and conservation process. The first step of this work was to identify the appropriate institutions for joint work and, based on this, to initiate a process of building relations and partnerships based on an understanding of a shared vision of conservation, working framework, and limitations.

During the first few years, to promote working relations between government agencies, local organizations and NGOs—and to evaluate their capacities—PiP supported a series of initiatives to implement on-site activities. With the government agencies,

the process of forming partnerships focused on working with the technical staff of the forestry and fisheries agencies, gradually moving toward department heads, permanent secretaries, and ministers.

The process of forming partnerships took longer than initially expected for three reasons. First, TNC was an unknown entity in the region before 2002 and had no physical presence on the ground. Second, since this was a new region for TNC, its staff had no local knowledge or experience. Third, there was a sense of distrust toward foreign NGOs and the institutional stakeholders lacked experience working with these “outside” organizations. It took longer than expected to establish new partnerships and build trust. TNC is a large U.S.-based organization which was perceived as an institution with a rigid conservation agenda. Therefore, TNC’s initial efforts to acquire partners in the region were perceived as extra work rather than an opportunity to collaborate. Local institutions in the region were cautious; it took time for TNC to understand the best way to provide assistance and for the organizations to become aware of the benefits to be obtained from this assistance. Also, local government agencies lacked experience in implementing projects involving joint interinstitutional work. Coordination and communication between government agencies, and among NGOs and the government, were not substantial. The above-mentioned situation became a challenge for working on planning and coordinated management of protected areas because these areas fall under multiple jurisdictions, none of which exercised clear leadership.

During the PiP project in the Grenadines, it also became evident that existing institutional capacity to carry out conservation work in the region was low, especially in the NGO sector. The local NGOs were small and lacked the necessary managerial capacity to effectively fulfill their missions. Even the government agencies had a management approach needing improvement, making it necessary to carry out institutional strengthening activities. Thus, PiP offered assistance for capacity building at the

same time as it carried out preliminary conservation activities (i.e., baseline inventories, coral reef resiliency studies, and marine and land mapping with geographic information systems). In addition, one of the policy actions promoted by TNC consisted of establishing protected area committees in each of the countries, with the aim of bringing together the agencies responsible for management of protected areas. These committees eventually evolved into the National Implementation Support Partnership (NISP) committees for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada. The addition of NGOs to these committees was part of their evolution.

To determine training needs of the NGOs and government agencies, TNC met independently with each of the groups and organizations. Based on an initial round of meetings, it was clear that conservation of the Grenadines would depend on the cooperation of various organizations. Accordingly, the objectives of PiP in the Grenadines focused on building conservation coalitions instead of forming partnerships with only one or two organizations. TNC staff collaborated with the Sustainable Grenadines Project of the University of the West Indies to conduct institutional assessments, and provide training and technical support for local NGOs. TNC offered both regional and local training opportunities for appropriate government agencies.

Beginning in 2004, when TNC joined the international commitment to support countries in implementation of the Program of Work on Protected Areas of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the emphasis of this work in the region became the implementation of the activities suggested by the Program. In 2005, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with each of the governments and other key partners to aid in implementation of these processes carried out on a national level. The partners in this new phase are found in the following tables.

In 2006, during the Eighth Conference of the Parties (CoP8) to the CBD, Grenada announced its commitment to increase protected area coverage from 10% to 25% by 2020, thus protecting more natural land and marine resources. The ecological gap analysis conducted for its national system of protected areas showed that it was feasible to reach these levels of protection. Grenada's announcement encouraged the Bahamas to join in forming the nucleus of what has come to be known as the "Caribbean Challenge." The idea behind this initiative is for the international donor community to support the growth of coverage of protected habitats through substantial funding commitments. The purpose is to channel funding to establish trust funds for protected areas so that these trust funds can generate a constant flow of income for each participating country and, consequently, for the agencies

Grenada		
<i>Protected Area Scale</i>	<i>National Scale</i>	<i>Regional Scale</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carriacou Environmental Committee & Fisheries Division (Sandy Island Oyster Bed MPA) • YWF-KIDO Foundation (High North National Park, turtle monitoring and environmental education) • St. George's University & Fisheries Division (Moliniere MPA) • Ocean Spirits (Levera National Park, turtle monitoring and environmental education) • People in Action (community work) 	<p>National Implementation Support Partnership (NISP) with the following signing agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries • Ministry of Finance & Planning (including the Sustainable Development Council) • Ministry of Health, Social Security, the Environment and Ecclesiastical Relations • Ministries of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Legal Affairs, and Carriacou & Petite Martinique Affairs • RARE • St. George's University <p>In 2005, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed among these agencies.</p>	<p>Memorandum of Understanding with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

Source: Seybert, 2006.

and organizations associated with protected areas. Establishment of trust funds will also require formation of an independent oversight authority to ensure that the funds have positive impacts on the covered protected areas. This authority will be made up of the partner organizations. In November 2006, Grenada negotiated adoption of the Caribbean Challenge with the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The initiative was accepted in principle by the OECS; the task of assisting member countries with adoption of the declaration at the national level was assigned to the Secretariat

In addition, the Caribbean Challenge was presented for the first time to officials from the government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Challenge was well received. The ecological gap analysis of the protected areas completed that year gave the country the necessary information to define its conservation objectives and support its proposed increase in the levels of protection. In principle, PiP seeks to ensure that the areas are not only legally-declared but also effectively managed. In this case, the human and financial resources to ensure this management are scarce. Therefore, government agencies of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines requested TNC support to carry out a “Financial Sustainability Assessment with Recommendations for the System of Protected Areas” to determine the cost of the proposed increase in protected area coverage. The draft document of this assessment was completed in June 2007, and it is currently being reviewed by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Tourism. In addition, the country

is developing a Master Plan for the System of Protected Areas, which will incorporate the results of the ecological gap analysis, the financial sustainability recommendations, and recommendations on management effectiveness and capacity.

4.2. AMIGOS DE SIAN KA'AN, ONE OF THE FIRST PARTNERS IN MEXICO⁴⁹

Strengthening of individual partners: Friends of Sian Ka'an

The Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve is one of the most extensive protected areas in Mexico. The Reserve contains an assembly of ecosystems with extensions of lowland tropical forests, wetlands (marshes, flooded savannahs, and mangrove forests), as well as coastal and marine habitats such as lagoons, bays, and coral reefs. Owing to this unique assemblage of ecosystems, Sian Ka'an was recognized as a World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO.

PiP intensively supported management actions in the Reserve during the period between 1991 and 1998. Part of the initial resources were directed to the organization Friends of Sian Ka'an (Amigos de Sian Ka'an, ASK), which was selected as a partner because of its characteristics, objectives in common with those of TNC, and its program—a solid vision of conservation—as well as its strong leadership. ASK is one of the leading NGOs in Mexico and one of the most outstanding examples from the PiP program.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		
Protected Area Scale	National Scale	Regional Scale
None	<p>National Implementation Support Partnership (NISP) with the following signing agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries • Ministry of Health and the Environment • Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports • University of the West Indies, Program of the Center for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) <p>In 2005, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed among these agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

Source: Seybert, 2006.

TNC began its program in Mexico with PiP funds and ASK was the first organization TNC worked with in that country. At that time, ASK was a small organization, founded in 1986 in the city of Cancún for the purpose of working toward conservation of the Reserve. ASK focused attention on development of specific crocodile protection projects and conservation of crocodile natural habitat. In the first years of joint work, both institutions achieved parallel learning, since this was one of TNC's first experiences with international operations. This joint work was an opportunity for ASK to strengthen capacity within its scope of action. TNC has been one of the most important partners in ASK's history, though the interaction between them and the intensity of their work have not been constant over the years. Likewise, TNC would have found it more difficult to begin work in Mexico without ASK, whose knowledge of the local reality, together with its experience and proximity to the inhabitants of the area, facilitated TNC's efforts in the area. According to Daniel Ramos of TNC's Mexico Program, this was a win-win situation for both organizations.

At the end of the first phase of PiP support, ASK and TNC determined that ASK's organizational capacity was too fragile to deal with the challenges ASK set for itself, and that the organization depended excessively on PiP resources and the director's personal leadership. This diagnosis justified actions taken to strengthen the partner organization's operational and institutional management capacities. The years of joint work demonstrated that it was possible to carry out effective conservation actions through PiP initiatives while, at the same time, strengthening the institution to provide continuity for implementation of actions. In the beginning, "the crocodiles were looked after, but not the organizations that were caring for them" noted Daniel Ramos. In 1999, there was a change in ASK's executive management, which provided a broader vision of conservation. In the following years, TNC learned that in the area of organizational strengthening it was necessary to work on creating internal capacities, to have a close relationship with executive management, and to develop the capacities of the management board. Within this new dynamic, the management of ASK recognized the importance of maintaining constant relations and communications with the ASK Management Board.

Based on its increased institutional capacity, ASK decided to initiate a Private Lands Conservation Program. It was proposed that a strategic piece of land be purchased inside the Sian Ka'an Reserve for the dual purpose of conserving the place and its area of influence, and of showing how a private property could be managed inside a natural protected area. Initially, the proposal that the organization incorporate this area of private lands conservation into its activities was not well received by all of the organization's council members. To solve this situation within the framework of PiP, meetings were supported to allow the council to reach agreement on ASK's new responsibilities and accept the inclusion of new areas of focus. ASK and TNC worked together for the first time in this process of strengthening a management board. For this purpose, they used planning exercises jointly agreed upon by ASK's operational and managerial staff. TNC then included its own institutional development specialists in the working team to have the capacity to directly support its partner. During the following years, the team guided implementation of several strengthening activities built on the results of applying the Institutional Self-Assessment tool. Implementation of the strengthening process was led by the executive director, with support from the board of directors and participation of technical and administrative staff. Documents were also produced on the monitoring of organizational progress in the different areas addressed.

One of the areas especially supported was capacity building for fundraising. This support was accompanied by conducting a feasibility study that estimated fundraising possibilities in the country and the United States. TNC staff also dedicated time to supporting a capital campaign that was carried out with financing from other sources, including TNC's Maine Chapter, which maintains a working relationship with ASK.

During this time, ASK also began to support different actions related to public policies, such as design of the decree for creation of new reserves on Mexico's Caribbean coast, expansion of the Sian Ka'an Reserve, and adoption by authorities of recommendations for protection of the Reserve's forests and marine reefs, among other actions.

ASK has built a team of competent professionals, who have positioned the organization as an authority in landscape-scale zoning, ecoregional planning, and coastal ecosystem management in the State of Quintana Roo. ASK's team has worked with state and federal authorities, local civil groups, and research institutions to address the Reserve's priority needs, such as the threat of unplanned tourism. ASK has used several threat analysis tools, a monitoring plan, and information on land tenure, which have been important for conservation and protection of the area, even when human and economic resources were scarce. The production of high-quality scientific information has enabled ASK and its beneficiaries to make better adaptive-management decisions.

ASK's experience in different areas such as political and administrative management has benefited other protected areas in Mexico. ASK has shared its experiences through the production of information materials and exchange with other conservation professionals in Mexico and Latin America. In particular, ASK is a regional authority for training organizations in the management of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as tools to plan and monitor work; ASK has offered courses on the use of spatial analysis to study land-tenure issues.

TNC's work with ASK has generated learning that were replicated with other organizations. At the local level, ASK has worked to build the capacities of different communities in the State of Quintana Roo; ASK has succeeded in strengthening different community groups in the region. The partnership between TNC and ASK also led to a partnership with a larger number of organizations. These organizations have also worked on new issues and have expanded geographically to other areas (Hardy, 2005).

Finally, PiP funding for 2007 included an additional donation to strengthen the basic capacities of some of TNC's Mexican strategic partners with the strength to give continuity to conservation processes currently underway. In the case of ASK, support is being provided for development of a Strategic and Financial Plan. This is the first organization in Mexico that PiP has supported in a long-term strategic planning exercise (2007-2010),⁵⁰ which also includes a fundraising component.⁵¹ ASK's Manage-

ment Board and current director have participated actively in the process, which has resulted in the reorganization of ASK's action plan into three main programs (Land Conservation, Fresh Water Conservation, and Marine Conservation) and the establishment of a financial projection for future years, among other things.

National and international-level interinstitutional agreements and ASK's participation

Amigos de Sian Ka'an has participated as a consultant in the development of a National Implementation Support Program (NISP⁵²). This NISP was signed in February 2004 by the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), TNC, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and Conservation International (CI), for the purpose of coordinating implementation of the commitments contained in the Program of Work on Protected Areas.

The aim of NISP is to ensure a solid partnership among the Mexican Federal Government—through its agencies CONANP, the National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO), the National Institute of Ecology (INE), and the Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection (PROFEPA), TNC, other international NGOs, and local NGOs to guide conservation efforts in a unified direction, beginning with the three activities suggested by the Program of Work. Working with this group of partners offers numerous advantages, such as establishment of new and better relations to carry out joint activities and the opportunity to have access to experts to improve analysis of information gathered. This partnership will also make it possible to attract increased financial support from donor agencies, strengthen local and national institutional planning capacities based on scientific methods and standards, and increase the level of involvement of local NGOs in decision-making processes related to national-level biodiversity conservation.

The NISP's main local partner is Pronatura Chiapas. However, in recognition of its regional experience, ASK has participated in the NISP's workshops related to Protected Area Management Capacities

and it is expected to be one of the key partners in the implementation of the NISP's agreements in the Yucatan Peninsula.

Finally, ASK participated as an expert in the development of the Selva Maya, Zoque, and Olmeca Ecoregional Plan, which determined priority and strategic sites to support long-term biodiversity conservation in this area. The process, initiated in 2003, involved various states of the Mexican Republic, as well as Guatemala, Belize, and Honduras. This effort was possible due to a coalition of NGOs, including ASK. For many organizations like ASK, this was the first time they had participated in a partnership involving such extensive participation by partner organizations and countries. Technical knowledge, species information, and geographic and satellite information on the area was shared, among other similar information. In 2006, the final results were presented of the work accomplished with TNC assistance, and the support and direct work of many public and private organizations and civil society. This successful example demonstrates that TNC's 2015 Goal, which seeks to preserve a quantifiable amount of the major habitat types on the planet, can be addressed through large-scale coalitions.

4.3. PRONATURALEZA, A VALUABLE EXAMPLE IN CENTRAL SELVA, PERU⁵³

Strengthening of an individual NGO

The Peruvian Foundation for Nature Conservation, known since 1995 as ProNaturaleza, is a non-profit organization created in 1984. ProNaturaleza's objective is to contribute to the conservation of Peru's natural heritage, especially biodiversity. According to the National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA), over the last two decades, ProNaturaleza has supported management of thirteen of Peru's natural protected areas and their buffer zones, including the Yanachaga Chemillén, Manu, Cerros de Amotape and Bahuaja Sonene National Parks, the Manglares de Tumbes National Sanctuary, and the Pacaya Samiria, Paracas, and Lomas de Lachay National Reserves. ProNaturaleza partnered with Parks in Peril to carry out natural resource conservation and sustainable use actions, not only in Yanachaga Chemillén National Park—the specific sce-

nario presented here—but also in Bahuaja-Sonene National Park (formerly Pampas del Heath National Sanctuary in 1990), Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve, and Paracas National Reserve.

ProNaturaleza and TNC began their support of Yanachaga-Chemillén National Park, which is located in Oxapampa-Pasco and is part of the Central Selva region, in 1986 within the framework of a USAID grant prior to PiP. Since then, and for several years, TNC and ProNaturaleza provided most of the Park's technical and financial assistance. In 1991, ProNaturaleza signed an agreement with the National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA) for the provision of cooperation in management and conservation of the Park and for it to be TNC's partner for the implementation of PiP (Brandon et al., 1998). During the first stage of the project, between 1991 and 1997, PiP supplied funds for various components of management of Yanachaga-Chemillén National Park, including development of a management plan. Resources were also contributed to strengthen ProNaturaleza's institutional capacity, including assistance provided for creation of its board of directors, including representatives from the private sector.

In the next phase of PiP, beginning in 2003, the area of intervention was expanded by incorporating the San Matías-San Carlos Protection Forest and the Yanesha Communal Reserve, in addition to the Yanachaga-Chemillén National Park and its buffer zone. At that time, although ProNaturaleza was already an organization with important strengths, managing resources from other funding sources, it was deemed necessary to complement these strengths and to invest in different training processes, especially during the initial years. It was also considered important for the organization—as well as TNC—to learn how to handle procedures required by USAID as PiP's principal donor. The training processes aimed at ProNaturaleza and staff from INRENA—the entity responsible for the protected areas—consisted primarily of training to understand and apply the methodological tools developed by TNC, such as Conservation Area Planning (CAP) and the Site Consolidation Scorecard, as well tools to build administrative and financial capacities.

According to Benjamín Kroll, Director of ProNaturaleza's Central Selva Program, some noteworthy aspects of the strengthening process are: the search for financial mechanisms to ensure sustainability of conservation actions, the generation of processes integrated into local agendas, and the dissemination of management tools for conservation. This strengthening process also meant that ProNaturaleza had to consider the need to establish new goals and strategic objectives. For example, based on the results of the CAP for the proposed Central Selva Biosphere Reserve (now called the Oxapampa Asháninka Yánesha Biosphere Reserve), the organization reoriented its institutional aims for its Central Selva Program, identifying new strategic objectives. From then on, any additional effort or project would be added to the long-term conservation plan developed with tools provided by PiP. ProNaturaleza and PiP have simultaneously managed other projects that have grown out of or been nurtured by this one, and which have complemented its actions. According to Benjamín Kroll, the added value of PiP consisted of supporting the organization and giving it the relative freedom and flexibility to build a long-term vision. ProNaturaleza now has a regional environmental agenda, to which all of its efforts must contribute.

A partner NGO as a driving force for grassroots organizations and interinstitutional processes

ProNaturaleza's strengthening gave it additional technical and administrative tools to work with local and grassroots organizations. Its increased capacity and years of experience have enabled ProNaturaleza to transmit and form other capacities at the local level, including municipalities of the Province of Oxapampa and different local organizations. ProNaturaleza has sought opportunities to disseminate its learning into different areas such as sustainable production, which it has shared with producer organizations in the region. Some of these organizations are already spontaneously promoting the application of what they have learned.

At the level of strengthening other local organizations, ProNaturaleza supported consolidation and official State of Mexico recognition of the Association for the Management of the Yanesha Communal Reserve (AMARCY), which represents the ten

native communities adjacent to the Yanesha Communal Reserve. Through a contract with INRENA, this indigenous organization has maintained co-administration of the Reserve and is receiving support from ProNaturaleza for development of a Master Plan. According to Benjamín Kroll, the support given to AMARCY has been increasingly less paternalistic because it has consisted of offering information, training, guidance, and a small fund so that they themselves can assume management and negotiation responsibilities. A fundamental aspect of the approach with this organization was implementation of joint planning exercises, in which all had the opportunity to express their opinion, to vote, and carry out actions.

Moreover, using the tools offered by PiP, ProNaturaleza was able to build and begin implementing an environmental agenda for the region. This has generated an enabling environment for working with coalitions made up of multi-institutional teams. Often, these teams have not been created as purposely planned coalitions but, rather, have been organizations that have joined the initiatives promoted by ProNaturaleza. This has created a positive synergy —not without its difficulties— that promotes compatibilities between common agendas. For example, the Yanachaga-Chemillén National Park Master Plan (2005-2009) was updated through a participatory process involving different private civil society and public stakeholders, thus making it possible to gather the local population's perceptions of protected area. Other processes fostered by ProNaturaleza that have promoted formation of interinstitutional coalitions around specific topics have been:

- The establishment of the Sho'llet Forest Municipal Conservation Area in 2004 comprised of two municipalities (the Provincial Municipality of Oxapampa and the District Municipality of Villa Rica). This initiative was joined by other local NGOs and the regional government
- The Biodiversity Health Monitoring Plan for the Province of Oxapampa, which applied the CAP methodology promoted by TNC. The monitoring is carried out by the Conservation Data Center of the National Agrarian University "La Molina" in cooperation with ProNaturaleza

raleza and various institutions with a presence in Oxapampa.

- The creation in November 2005 of the Regional Roundtable for Forest Dialogue and Consensus–Pasco (MRDCF-P), with the aim of its being an ongoing discussion forum to identify pressures and threats affecting forests and the forest industry, discuss the causes, and develop strategies to improve the management of forests in the Pasco region, particularly in the Province of Oxapampa.
- The Ecological and Economic Zoning Project (ZEE) of the Province of Oxapampa, which is now being implemented and which has been included as an institutional strengthening project to support territorial planning of the Pasco Region. This project, which receives financial support from the Peruvian government, has developed the biological and social bases to establish this basic zoning tool. The ZEE is also an important input contributing to the proposal for the Oxapampa-Ashaninka-Yanesha Biosphere Reserve (RBOAY).

In each of these processes, ProNaturaleza staff were able to share their knowledge and lessons learned. The management tools adopted with PiP support have been disseminated and applied to both local and extra-regional contexts. However, a process of “delegation” or “de-Pronaturalizing” has now begun to allow ProNaturaleza to delegate responsibilities, reduce the leading role it plays, and, thereby, get local stakeholders to accept the main conservation aims and commitments.

Adaptation to change

TNC has gradually been adapting itself to a new institutional stage in the region, in which on-site work and work with individual organizations will no longer be as intense and the emphasis will be placed more on large strategies with a regional and national impact. This adaptation has been made based on the consideration that ProNaturaleza has the capacity to assume the role of the main promoter of conservation for the region and also that this role has been increasingly delegated to organizations that have joined the environmental agenda. Currently, the aim

is to make conservation and sustainable use initiatives in Central Selva part of an ongoing process that transcends specific projects or organizations.

From the beginning of PiP, TNC did not play a very dominant role because its partner was an organization with deep roots in the site. Though it maintained a low profile, TNC never lost ties to the site since its involvement helped ensure that the tools and strategies developed were adapted to local realities. Gradual reduction in the support ProNaturaleza received from PiP forced ProNaturaleza to seek out other sources of financing in due time. In addition, having relatively scarce resources forced it to plan their use well, which has been a lesson in institutional planning and fundraising.

National-level interinstitutional agreements and the example of Central Selva

In February 2004, eleven local public and private organizations signed an interinstitutional agreement (Memorandum of Understanding, MoU) for support of the national protected areas of Peru. This agreement was presented at the COP7 of the CBD. The MoU is currently signed by twenty-one organizations including national non-governmental institutions (such as ProNaturaleza), government agencies, such as INRENA and the National Fund for Natural Areas Protected by the State (PROFONANPE), and international non-governmental organizations including TNC. The objective of the MoU is to join forces for implementation of the Program of Work on Protected Areas within the framework of Peru's national strategies, the SINANPE Master Plan, and standards and recommendations issued by the CBD. The MoU has already been formalized in a work plan for the years 2007–2009, based on the emphasis placed on the need for greater short and medium-term financial support to meet all commitments. In developing the plan, each organization included its activities for the next two years, indicating how these will contribute to meeting CBD commitments, and, as far as possible, an estimate was made of the funds each organization would allocate to them.

TNC is the focal point and facilitator for the group. Currently, one of the most important issues being worked on under the leadership of INRENA,

and which is part of the activities suggested by the Program of Work, is establishment of long-term financial sustainability mechanisms for the National System of Protected Areas. One of the mechanisms considered is that of obtaining funds from regional governments. According to Jaime Fernández-Baca, of the TNC office in Peru, the Oxapampa experience has served as a model to take similar actions at the system level. For example, the fact that the Oxapampa Regional Government has granted funding for creation of a network of municipal conservation areas and a provincial-level environmental education program, among other actions, has indicated that it is possible to obtain funding from mining taxes and royalties, for natural heritage conservation activities and natural resource zoning.

4.4. DEFENSORES DE LA NATURALEZA, PARTNER IN THE CONSERVATION OF THE MOTAGUA-POLOCHIC SYSTEM, GUATEMALA⁵⁴

Defensores de la Naturaleza as an individual PiP partner

In 1990, the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala legally created the Sierra de las Minas Biosphere Reserve and designated the NGO Defensores de la Naturaleza (Defensores), founded in 1983, as the Reserve's management authority in co-administration with the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP). This was the first case in Latin American and the Caribbean in which a government delegated management of a private area to an NGO. With this delegation, Defensores became responsible for implementation of the Reserve's programs under the supervision of the Reserve's Board of Directors, composed of local authorities and organizations democratically chosen as stipulated in the master plans and annual operating plans approved by CONAP.

TNC supported Defensores' work beginning in 1991 when the Sierra de las Minas Reserve was included as one of the parks in peril. After this reserve was selected as a priority (due to its importance in environmental terms, which also coincided with national government priorities), the choice of Defensores as the main partner for work in the region was an obvious one, considering its experi-

ence and prestige, not only in the region but also in the country. Subsequently, Defensores also became the partner for implementation of actions in the whole Motagua Polochic system. Its 440,000 hectares encompass 19 municipalities in five departments, and include the Sierra de las Minas Reserve and the Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge.⁵⁵

"The delegation of authority to Defensores de la Naturaleza was both legal and practicable since Defensores was an already well-respected but small conservation group widely recognized as the main proponent and promoter of the reserve initiative. Significantly, although Defensores had not yet developed the implementation capacity legally required to manage the reserve by 1990, the credibility of its board led the government to entrust Defensores with this responsibility"

(Secaira et al., 2000).

The assistance PiP provided Defensores during the initial years was essential for the first phase of the Reserve's management and consolidation; one of its most important components was strengthening Defensores' institutional capacity as the Reserve administrator. The strengthening process responded to identification of the organization's short and long-term needs, which were written up in an annual work plan. The support focused on providing the protected area with the basic elements of protection, including support to combat threats and, in particular, fire control, the implementation of patrolling activities, and the purchase of lands in the Reserve for conservation.

In addition, in the area of institutional and administrative development, support was provided for creation of an institutional development department, preparation of an institutional strategic plan, formulation of strategies to more actively involve the board of directors, and assistance in developing financing plans for fundraising. The fundraising component

included creation of a trust fund and development of strategies for financial self-sustainability, such as the manufacture and sale of promotional products, fundraising campaigns with the institutional members, and ecotourism programs,⁵⁶ among others. The strengthening of fundraising capabilities was a crucial element since Defensores did not receive a direct budget allocation from the government to manage the Reserve, and therefore was left with the responsibility for raising funds in both Guatemala and abroad.⁵⁷ In addition, to avoid creating levels of financial dependence and to promote fundraising, Defensores' staff members were informed about the duration of the PiP program and its offer of resources. New institutional development components were added to each of the action plans developed. These components included incorporation of accounting and financial computer programs, strengthening of the geographic information system, and carrying out external audits to establish accounting procedures and define indirect fees.

All of the above gradually strengthened the organization to the point that USAID considered Defensores eligible to receive resources directly, without need for an intermediary. PiP also supported the administrative and technical strengthening of the institution to enable it to include some of its properties in the Forestry Incentives Program (PINFOR), and subsequently monitor them. As a result of this, 15,927 hectares were enrolled in the Program, thus ensuring a flow of income of approximately US\$200,000 per year until 2013. This financing mechanism gives Defensores the financial freedom to run its activities like the large organization that it is, with responsibilities for 5% of the country's territory and nearly 100 employees, as well as a reputation to maintain. Defensores has a financing plan with different sources of funding besides PINFOR, including the European Union, the Government of Holland, and the MacArthur and Moore Foundations, among others, sources that are being used now and will be in the future. Altogether, Defensores has twelve funding sources, none of them covering more than 25% of its budget.

Defensores de la Naturaleza, promoter of and participant in interinstitutional processes

Some PiP partners have deemed it necessary to transfer their knowledge and responsibility to other local stakeholders over time to make their conservation initiatives more sustainable. Defensores de la Naturaleza has succeeded in returning part of the responsibility for long-term protection to local communities. As a result, a number of municipalities now cover management costs of the Sierra de las Minas protected area, and local management committees have been created. The message that PiP has tried to convey is that it is critical to promote participation of local institutions so that protected areas have a long-term future. Defensores has supported smaller NGOs in implementation of conservation actions in the region, thus managing to meet part of their training needs. One of Defensores' most outstanding qualities is the diversity of its human resources, representing multiple disciplines, ethnic groups, and geographic origins, which has facilitated work both in the field and at an institutional level. Also, their situation as a private landowner helped to lend legitimacy to their interest in conservation based on actions carried out by private landowners and local communities. At the level of NGOs, some of them, such as Fundaeco, adapted the methodologies developed by Defensores for their own strengthening and established joint work processes.⁵⁸

From its beginnings, Defensores was responsible for promoting interinstitutional coordination processes with local and central government agencies. These processes included the exchange of information and the development of joint work plans. Defensores has consolidated its leadership in protected areas and has influenced the agendas of local stakeholders, communities, non-governmental and governmental organizations, and private companies, among others. As a result, Defensores represents environmental NGOs in the CONAP Council and on the Board of Directors of the National Forest Institute (INAB), and also maintains important contacts with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the National Congress.

Through this influence, Defensores has also promoted and/or participated in different instances of interinstitutional coordination. Defensores has guided the work of the Board of Directors of Sierra de las Minas and the Advisory Council for Bocas del Polochic, as well as the creation of the Development Group for the semiarid region of the Motagua Valley,⁹⁹ which together provide the necessary institutional mechanisms to continue conservation efforts in the Motagua Polochic system. Defensores also represents conservation NGOs on the Development Committee for Private Lands Conservation in Guatemala. In addition, Defensores has been part of the Mesoamerican Alliance for the Conservation of Pine-Oak Forests. At the level of Latin America, Defensores has also played an important role in the Regional Alliance for Conservation Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean (ARCA) and is an active member of the Trinational Alliance for the Conservation of the Gulf of Honduras (TRIGOH).

In summary, over the years of partnership with Defensores, TNC has witnessed the evolution of an organization that is now the country's leading organization in biodiversity conservation and natural resource sustainable use processes. This evolution has been the result of many internal and external factors that have shaped Defensores, some of which PiP had the opportunity to facilitate. In the same way, TNC, as its partner, was strengthened by this evolution and learned from local experience and direct work in protected areas.

5. Conclusions

TNC works with and through its local, national, and international partners because, based on experience, it has found this to be the most effective way to fulfill its mission in a sustainable manner. No institution is capable of achieving conservation goals by independently addressing all of the issues. Conservation is a complex task requiring the joint work of different organizations which provide different levels of knowledge, political capital, and connections to other organizations and communities, in addition to enormous human and financial resources.

TNC seeks to promote and support biodiversity conservation processes in representative protected areas in different parts of the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean. Consistent with the above, during design of the Parks in Peril (PiP) Program, it was clear that the local context—both social and institutional—played an important role in meeting that objective. Therefore, PiP was designed to strengthen local capacity to administer selected protected areas in this region which is considered to be one of the most important strategies for biodiversity conservation. Local capacity was represented by a wide range of partners—governmental, non-governmental, and community-based—which PiP strengthened, supported, and/or accompanied in carrying out natural resource conservation and sustainable use actions. In turn, the partners offered their knowledge of the context and needs at local and national levels, contributed their expertise and complementary capacities, provided different types of resources, and lent their credibility and institutional capital, which made it possible to gain access to other organizations and undertake concrete actions for conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity in the selected sites. In summary, synergies were established that made it possible to achieve important results in seventeen years of working in the region.

The process of strengthening local capacity and the type of partnerships involved gradually varied over time due to institutional changes in both TNC and

its partners, and based on lessons learned. At the beginning of PiP, TNC concentrated on strengthening the technical and administrative capacities of its individual, primarily non-governmental, partners in each of the sites chosen, considering that many of these organizations were just being created; therefore, these partners needed to build their capacities. The combination of technical and administrative tools, together with the allocation of economic resources, allowed TNC to begin on-site work with the support of local and national partners, thus seeking to ensure that the joint efforts made would be sustained in the long term.

One of the most important lessons and recommendations based on this work in developing partners is that it is necessary to establish written agreements from the beginning, clearly describing the joint work—whether it is to strengthen one of the parties and/or carry out conservation actions—and reaching agreement on the policies and procedures to be followed in administration of resources and implementation of activities. Building partnerships should be an effort involving collaborative work and learning that gathers the contributions of all of the parties, openly recognizing the added value each can contribute toward achievement of common objectives. The use of staff from the specific region of intervention has been another important success factor in the management of partnerships, given staff knowledge of local and national circumstances and needs. Some key values to maintain effective partnerships are clarity, collaboration, commitment, respect, equity, transparency, and trust.

Over the years, the approach of having one partner per site became inadequate; it was necessary for PiP to make changes that would make it possible to promote and generate impacts on multiple scales, including functional landscapes, countries, and regions.⁶⁰ Building coalitions with multiple partners united by a common objective made possible this expansion of scale. Sometimes the focal point for these coalitions has been geographic, seeking the

conservation of a region made up of several protected areas, or these protected areas may even be located in different regions or countries. In other cases, the focal point has been thematic, as with the integration of multiple organizations interested in private lands conservation or conservation financing mechanisms. Some of the original partners were affected by this need to change, which reduced the intensity of the actions aimed at strengthening them, sometimes abruptly or with limited information being provided. Other partners already had the strength to not only belong and contribute to—and even lead—the coalitions that were formed, but to also become the driving forces behind capacity-building processes for other local organizations.

This new approach that seeks to address conservation on a larger scale has been justified in terms of speed, effectiveness, and quantity because the approach will enable TNC to meet its ambitious 2015 goal, which requires working with others to ensure the effective conservation of places that represent at least 10% of every major habitat type on Earth. Another of TNC's intentions is to continue to support application of the Program of Work on Protected Areas established in the framework of the CBD. This demands a global approach to strengthen interinstitutional efforts and coalitions, with governments as priority partners, and where organizations share and learn from the actions and experiences of other organizations. Through coalitions and networks of organizations, it will be possible to carry out some of the activities suggested by the Program of Work, specifically the strengthening of the institutional capacity to establish intersectoral collaboration for administration of protected areas at regional, national, and local levels. Furthermore, the generation of coalitions will contribute to the suggested activity to create a highly participatory process, involving indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders, as part of site-based planning in accordance with the ecosystem approach, and use relevant ecological and socio-economic data required to develop effective planning processes. This activity will facilitate meeting one of the objectives (objective 1.4) of the Program of Work, which is to substantially improve site-based protected area planning and management.

Having these goals and aims as a horizon to guide future work, TNC should continue working 1) with the partnerships and partners it has and which TNC has established as priorities, 2) on building new partnerships for conservation involving local, national, and international NGOs, community organizations, government agencies, educational and research centers, private organizations, and bilateral and multilateral agencies, among others, and 3) on achieving the participation of partnerships and coalitions established by others and which support common conservation objectives.

To achieve this, the need to build capacities of some partner organizations in specific areas, both technical and organizational, cannot be disregarded. TNC should promote the use of existing networks of organizations and service providers that will be capable of supporting the strengthening processes deemed necessary, but which TNC cannot assume directly. While the need to support the strengthening of some organizations cannot be ignored, it is important to implement or promote this assistance without assuming paternalistic roles. This is accomplished by clarifying the terms and conditions of partnerships and making use of third parties with local experience and knowledge. TNC should continue to cultivate its existing partnerships—reaping what it and others have sown—and to establish new ones which specialize in different areas related to natural resource conservation and sustainable use in protected areas. TNC will also need to identify partners in other sectors besides conservation to create synergies to benefit protected areas.

TNC also needs to strengthen its capacities to be more systematic, strategic, and efficient in its internal capacity to build and manage future partnerships (TNC, 2007a). It will be essential to work with specialists in organizational strengthening and partnerships to establish concrete goals for existing and future coalitions, to carry out a review of the agreements established, and to compare them to the needs for joint conservation work. Technical staff should also be trained in the management of partnerships and coalitions—on different scales, ranging from those created for one site to those that address wider areas—following the stages designed to ensure a more rigorous process of partner selection, negotiation, start-up, and monitoring of progress and

results. Important progress has been made in some regions of Latin America, but these efforts should be consolidated and extended to other regions to institutionalize them within TNC. The challenge involved in meeting TNC's ambitious goals requires that it review different factors to build the necessary institutional capacity —both internal and external— to maintain conservation efforts. The selection of partners, partnerships, and working agreements that are effective, coherent, and replicable should also receive greater dedication.

We hope that the experience, technical and human capacity, and lessons learned which have been harvested from the Parks in Peril Program will contribute to the internal strengthening of TNC and its partners and that these lessons will be shared with other organizations interested in establishing partnerships for conservation.

Endnotes

- 1 The other criteria were: biological significance, socioeconomic and cultural value, and level of threat (Brandon et al., 1998).
- 2 In the Spanish version of this publication, the terms *aliados* and *alianzas* have mainly been used in place of *socios* and *sociedades*, which were the terms commonly used by TNC in prior years. Both translate to *partners* and *partnerships*. These terms are used in response to the recommendation made by members of the TCN staff in the Mesoamerica and Caribbean region, who conceptually analyzed the matter. *Aliados* and *alianzas* are the most precise terms to indicate a working relationship where the possibility of participating is shared equally, regardless of the parties' contribution.
- 3 These organizations had authority over or interest in an individual protected area or in a functional landscape comprised of several areas. In both cases, this was the smallest unit of scale for PiP work, known as a *site*.
- 4 The capacity building process involves not only learning from someone outside the institution who already knows the answers but also developing new knowledge and practices (Lockwood et al., 2006).
- 5 For further information on each of these areas, see: www.parksinperil.org.
- 6 The eight Institutional Self-Assessment (ISA) indicators are: Strategic Vision and Planning, Leadership, Administration of the Organization, Human Resources, Development of Financial Resources, Financial Administration, External Relations and Programmatic Capacity. The critical steps to applying the ISA are: clarify the objectives of the assessment, determine the participants, determine how much information will be gathered, conduct the assessment, determine priorities for improvement, and develop an Action Plan describing the specific steps to achieve the objectives leading to improvement.
- 7 According to Ulfelder (2002) some of the foremost competencies of a conservation leader are: integrity, innovation, excellence, patience, commitment to the people and the future, composure (ability to remain calm under pressure, management of stress), handling of ambiguities (dealing effectively with changes, managing risk and uncertainty calmly), results-based motivation, interpersonal understanding (relates well to all kinds of people, knows how to listen, shares credit), good judgment of others' talents, capacity to work with people's strengths and weaknesses, quick learner, perseverance, and political understanding of the environment.
- 8 For example, MOPAWI and Vivamos Mejor, in Honduras and Guatemala respectively, did not initially have clearly established environmental components.
- 9 See more information at <http://conserveonline.org/docs/2000/11/GoH%28S%29.pdf>
- 10 See more information at www.parksinperil.org/espanol/quehacemos/metodos/pca.html.
- 11 See more information at: TNC. 2007c. *Measuring Success: The Parks in Peril Site Consolidation Scorecard Manual*. Innovations for Conservation Series, Parks in Peril Program. Arlington, VA, USA: The Nature Conservancy.
- 12 The survey TNC conducted in March 2003 to obtain information on the needs and expectations of its international partners, in which 88% of the participants were partners from Latin America and the Caribbean, confirmed that the priority training needs of these partners were the following: financial (evaluation of results and financial sustainability), technical (use of information techniques, marketing the organization, establishment of small enterprises), organizational (resource management, donor communications and management), support and dissemination (documenting and disseminating best practices, support and assistance to other organizations), political (development of bilateral and multilateral agreements, formation of coalitions), leadership (performance evaluation, conflict management) (TNC, 2003).
- 13 Interview of Polly Morrison, May 1, 2007.
- 14 According to the Parks in Peril Site Consolidation Scorecard, a self-sufficiency plan should analyze an organization's fixed operating costs for a 5-year period and should compare them with the expected funding sources for operations during the same period. An action plan should also be included for the

implementation and monitoring of specific income-generation strategies.

services, the development of ecotourism and community-based rural tourism, the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices, and the establishment of altitudinal corridors, among others.

- 15 The complete list of TNC's main partners that worked with Parks in Peril is found in the Annex to this publication. The partners involved in the sites for which records have been kept on this indicator are: Programme for Belize (PFB), Friends of Nature Foundation (FAN), Protection of the Environment Tarija (PROMETA), Bolivian Conservation Association (TROPICO), Society for Wildlife Research and Environmental Education (SPVS), Fundación Natura (Colombia), Pro-Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Foundation, Neotropical Foundation, Association of Organizations in the Talamanca Caribe Biological Corridor (CBTC), Fundación Natura (Ecuador), Conservation Data Center, Arcoiris Ecological Foundation, Mosquitia Pawisa Agency for the Development of the Honduras Mosquitia (MOPAWI), Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCDDT), Natural History Institute (IHN), Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development of the State of Sonora (IMADES) (later the Commission of Ecology and Sustainable Development of the State of Sonora – CEDES), Pronatura Península de Yucatán, A.C., ISLA (which was later replaced by GEA, Niparajá and IMADES on Cortez Island in Mexico), Niparajá, GEA, Friends of Sian Ka'an, National Association for the Conservation of Nature (ANCON), Moisés Bertoni Foundation, Foundation for the Sustainable Development of the Chaco (DesdelChaco), Peruvian Foundation for Nature Conservation (ProNaturaleza), Integrated Fund Pro Nature (PRONATURA), Moscoso Puello Foundation, Inc. Progressio (which was later replaced by the Moscoso Puello Foundation).
- 16 First year score: this reflects the results from the first year of PiP activities in each of the sites. Last year score: this reflect the average results from the last year of PiP activities in the sites, taking into account that not all PiP activities began and ended in the same years in each of the sites. For the final PiP report, each partner was asked to estimate the value of the indicator for the year 2007 even if the final year of activities took place in previous years.
- 17 Interview by email, July 23, 2007.
- 18 Document prepared based on an interview with Felipe Carazo, June 7, 2007.
- 19 In the case of La Amistad International Park, several lines of work were determined, including the promotion of schemes for payment of environmental
- 20 Asoprola: La Amistad Association of Producers (organization of rural producers living in the Bio-lley District, Canton of Buenos Aires, Province of Puntarenas), which was founded in 1997 to jointly develop alternatives to conventional coffee growing.
- 21 The other goals of PiP are to: 1) build an on-site logistic capacity to manage parks in the hemisphere's most imperiled ecosystems; 2) develop the analytic and strategic capacity necessary for long-term management of these areas; 3) create long-term financial mechanisms to sustain the local management of these areas; 4) integrate PiP conservation project areas into the economic lives of local society.
- 22 Other examples are illustrated in detail throughout the publication and particularly in chapter 4.
- 23 Source: Interviews conducted with Jorge Pitty, FUNDICCEP representative, February 2006 and March 2007.
- 24 The goal established in December 2003 establishes that by 2015 TNC *will work with others* to ensure the effective conservation of places that represent at least 10% of every major habitat type on Earth (*italics added by the author*).
- 25 See Table 2, "Most threatened parks in the hemisphere."
- 26 The nine categories of indicators included in this assessment tool are: Vision and strategic planning, Structure, Leadership, Participation, Performance and impact, External communication, Financial management, Human resource management, and Evaluation and feedback.
- 27 For more information, see <http://conservationfinance.org/>.
- 28 For example, support is provided through the Conservation Finance Alliance for the countries' achievement of the activities suggested by the Program of Work on Protected Areas, related to the establishment and application of "country-level sustainable financing plans that support national systems of protected areas" (SCBD, 2004).
- 29 United in a network of professionals with experience in conservation planning and financing.

- 30 For more information, see: www.redlac.org/spanish/default.asp
- 31 This case consists of a summary of documents and final reports prepared for Parks in Peril by Michelle Libby, July 2007.
- 32 Some of the partners that received training were: ANAI Association (Costa Rica), National Association for the Conservation of Nature (ANCON, Panama), Panamanian Center for Research and Social Action (CEASPA, Panama), Center for Environmental Law and the Promotion of Development (CEDAPRODE, Nicaragua), Defensores de la Naturaleza (Guatemala), National Biodiversity Institute (INBio, Costa Rica), National Society for Business and Rural Development (SONDEAR, Panama), and Vivamos Mejor (“Let’s Live Better”) Association (Guatemala).
- 33 Some of those elements included the clarification of the definition of the concept of partners and the use of legal agreements for the establishment of joint actions; familiarization with the framework of the Partnership Approach developed by TNC (TNC, 2007b); and understanding of the fundamental values associated with the effective establishment of partnerships.
- 34 The course design also incorporated elements from the study that was carried out on TNC’s relationship with its partners in Central America through the Regional Environmental Program for Central America (PROARCA) and PiP (Sáenz and Arias, 2006).
- 35 In August 2007, the course will be taught in the TNC office in Mexico and funds will be raised to offer the course in English for the staff working in TNC’s office in the United States.
- 36 In 2005 a Conservation Training Week was also held in Central America.
- 37 The twelve sites are: Amboró-Carrasco National Parks in Bolivia, Friendship International Park in Costa Rica and Panama, Condor Biosphere Reserve in Ecuador, Motagua Polochic System and Atitlán Volcanoes in Guatemala, Cockpit Country in Jamaica, the protected areas in the chain of islands in the Grenadines, Cuatro Ciénegas National Wildlife Refuge in Mexico, the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve in Nicaragua, Chagres National Park in Panama, and Central Selva and the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve in Peru.
- 38 Sources: Brandon *et al.*, 1998; FOS, 2004; Flores *et al.*, 2005; Sáenz and Arias, 2006; PiP Workshop, 2007; Interviews with: Paige McLeod (April 26, 2007), Polly Morrison (May 1, 2007), Jorge Cardona (May 2, 2007), Felipe Carazo (June 7, 2007), Bruce Moffat (June 15, 2007), Richard Devine (July 17, 2007), Paul Hardy (July 19, 2007), Brad Northrup (July 25, 2007), Michelle Libby (July 27, 2007).
- 39 Both the word *socio* and *aliado* in the original Spanish version of this publication were translated as *partner* in English.
- 40 This recommendation was the result of a maturing process the institution went through, which consisted of learning that it was not necessary to have only one exclusive partner per site, but that it was possible —and, moreover, advantageous— to diversify the universe of collaborators for effective work.
- 41 Sources: Brandon *et al.*, 1998; FOS, 2004; Flores *et al.*, 2005; Sáenz and Arias, 2006; PiP Workshop, 2007; Interviews with: Paige McLeod (April 26, 2007), Polly Morrison (May 1, 2007), Jorge Cardona (May 2, 2007), Felipe Carazo (June 7, 2007), Bruce Moffat (June 15, 2007), Richard Devine (July 17, 2007), Paul Hardy (July 19, 2007), Brad Northrup (July 25, 2007), Michelle Libby (July 27, 2007).
- 42 TNC’s office for the Mesoamerica and Caribbean region is working to institutionalize a procedure that will make it obligatory for priority partners to apply the institutional self-assessment tool every two years. This will allow for identification of support needs and progress in the areas of intervention.
- 43 Other basic elements are presented in chapter 2.1.3 of this publication. Each of these elements should incorporate a monitoring system including the corresponding indicators.
- 44 Sources: Brandon *et al.*, 1998; FOS, 2004; Flores *et al.*, 2005; Sáenz and Arias, 2006; PiP Workshop, 2007; TNC, 2007a; Interviews with: Paige McLeod (April 26, 2007), Polly Morrison (May 1, 2007), Jorge Cardona (May 2, 2007), Felipe Carazo (June 7, 2007), Bruce Moffat (June 15, 2007), Andreas Lehnhoff (July 13, 2007), Richard Devine (July 17, 2007), Paul Hardy (July 19, 2007), Brad Northrup (July 25, 2007), Michelle Libby (July 27, 2007).
- 45 The partnership between the NGO Vivamos Mejor and TNC-Guatemala serves as an example of a relationship involving a process of mutual learning. The first organization incorporated the area of environmental issues in its institutional work, which was

- originally focused on other development issues such as health and housing; TNC learned important lessons for the integration of development issues in its conservation agenda.
- 46 Sources: Brandon *et al.*, 1998; FOS, 2004; Flores *et al.*, 2005; Sáenz and Arias, 2006; PiP Workshop, 2007; Interviews with: Paige McLeod (April 26, 2007), Polly Morrison (May 1, 2007), Jorge Cardona (May 2, 2007), Felipe Carazo (June 7, 2007), Bruce Moffat (June 15, 2007), Andreas Lehnhoff (July 13, 2007), Richard Devine (July 17, 2007), Paul Hardy (July 19, 2007), Brad Northrup (July 25, 2007), Michelle Libby (July 27, 2007).
 - 47 Sources: Brandon *et al.*, 1998; Margoluis *et al.*, 2000; Flores *et al.*, 2005; Hardy, 2005a; Sáenz and Arias, 2006; PiP Workshop, 2007; Interviews with: Andreas Lehnhoff (July 13, 2007), Richard Devine (July 17, 2007), Paul Hardy (July 19, 2007).
 - 48 Sources: Proceedings of the “Fourth Annual Workshop on Best Practices and Challenges for Parks in Peril Site Consolidation,” Mexico, March 2007; telephone and/or electronic interviews with: Mateo Espinosa (Cofan Survival Fund, Ecuador, May 29, 2007), Vilma Obando (INBio, Costa Rica, June 5, 2007), Gladis Rodríguez (Fundavisap, Panama, June 5, 2007), Yendry Suárez (Quercus Network, Costa Rica, June 7, 2007), Maritza Jaén and Lourdes Contreras (SONDEAR, Panama, June 12, 2007), Sofia Stein (Limon Watershed Foundation, Costa Rica, June 22, 2007), Owen Evelyn (Department of Forestry, Jamaica, June 22, 2007), Luis Sánchez A. (SINAC/MINAE, Costa Rica, June 29, 2007), Miguel Angel Cruz and Arturo Lerma (Pronatura Noreste A.C, Mexico, July 23, 2007).
 - 49 Sources: www.amigosdesiankaan.org; Hardy, 2005a; FOS, 2004; TNC, 2001a; Interview with Daniel Ramos (March 2007).
 - 50 Occasional planning exercises have been carried out with PiP funds for organizations from northern Mexico, such as Niparaja and IMADES, but this will be the first long-term exercise.
 - 51 Besides ASK, this strengthening process also supported: Pronatura Península de Yucatán, in the creation of new areas of conservation work and capacity building for its board of directors; Pronatura Nor-este, in operating its Management Board; Pronatura Asociación Civil (ProNatura AC), in the consolidation of its working group in Veracruz; and Pronatura Chiapas, in the creation of operational capacities in its group of project coordinators
 - 52 For information on NISPs, see chapter 2.3.1 of this publication.
 - 53 Sources: Interview with Benjamín Kroll and Jaime Fernández-Baca, April 2007; Kroll, 2007; www.pronaturaleza.org; Brandon *et al.*, 1998.
 - 54 Sources: Brandon *et al.*, 1998, Secaira *et al.*, 2000. Interviews with: Jorge Cardona (May 2, 2007), María Elena Molina (June 30, 2007).
 - 55 The administration of the Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge, adjacent to the Sierra de las Minas Biosphere Reserve, was delegated to Defensores in 1996. In addition to administering these protected areas, Defensores is currently responsible for managing the Sierra de Lacandón National Park and the Naciones Unidas National Park.
 - 56 The ecotourism program is now primarily aimed at specialized tourism, such as birdwatching and scientific research at the following field stations: Selemín in Bocas del Polochic and La Cabaña in Sierra de las Minas.
 - 57 An element showing evolution of this: the human and financial resources CONAP contributed to the Reserve between 1990 and 1998 ranged between 2-4% of the total budget for the Reserve (Secaira *et al.*, 2000).
 - 58 Source: Bruce Moffat, interview, June 15, 2007.
 - 59 The Development Group has 25 members representing municipalities, the tourism sector, private landowners, the Ministry of Education, the Directorate for Cultural Heritage, Defensores de la Naturaleza and other local stakeholders. These stakeholders were involved in developing conservation strategies for the region based on Conservation Area Planning methodology; it is hoped that they will continue to develop policies, projects, and fund-raising tactics for implementation of these strategies.
 - 60 This was not a homogenous linear process applied to all intervention sites, but it is the general trend.

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Annex: List of Parks in Peril sites

The following is a list of Parks in Peril's principle partner organization at its 45 consolidation sites. The program also worked with a large number of additional governmental and non-governmental institutions both focusing on specific aspects of the conservation effort at these sites, as well as in the implementation of its national and international strategies throughout the region.

Belize

RÍO BRAVO CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT AREA

Acres/Years: 260,000/ 1993-1996

NGO Partner: Programme for Belize (Pfb)

Bolivia

AMBORÓ NATIONAL PARK/ CARRASCO NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 3,117,014/ 1991-1994 (Amboró National Park), 2001-2007 (both parks)

NGO Partners: Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza (FAN), Centro Integrado para la Defensa de la Ecología (CIDEDER)

Government Partner: SERNA

EDUARDO AVAROJA NATIONAL FAUNA AND FLORA RESERVE

Acres/Years: 400,000/ 1999-2002

NGO Partner: Asociación Boliviana para la Conservación (TROPICO)

Government Partner: SERNAP

NOEL KEMPFF MERCADO NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 3,762,912/ 1991-1994

NGO Partner: Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza (FAN)

Government Partners: Servicio Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (SERNAP), Dirección General de Biodiversidad (DGB)

TARIQUÍA NATIONAL FAUNA AND FLORA RESERVE

Acres/Years: 609,762/ 1995-1999

NGO Partner: Protección del Medio Ambiente Tarija (PROMETA)

Government Partners: SERNAP, DGB

Brazil

GUARAQUEÇABA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREA

Acres/Years: 774,000/ 1998-2002

NGO Partner: Sociedade de Pesquisa em Vida Selvagem (SPVS)

Government Partner: Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis (IBAMA)

Colombia

CAHUINARÍ NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 1,420,250/ 1992-2000

NGO Partner: Fundación Natura

Government Partner: INDERENA known today as Unidad Administrativa Especial del Sistema de Parques Nacionales Naturales (UAESPNN)

CHINGAZA NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 173,824/ 1992-2000

NGO Partner: Fundación Natura

Government Partner: INDERENA known today as UAESPNN

LA PAYA NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 1,042,340/ 1992-1996

NGO Partner: Fundación Natura

Government Partner: INDERENA known today as UAESPNN

SIERRA NEVADA DE SANTA MARTA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Acres/Years: 946,010/ 1992-1998

NGO Partner: Fundación Pro-Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta

Government Partner: INDERENA known today as UAESPNN

Costa Rica

CORCOVADO NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 103,216/ 1991-1994

NGO Partner: Fundación Neotropical

Government Partner: Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación de Costa Rica del Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía (SINAC/MINAE)

TALAMANCA- CARIBBEAN BIOLOGICAL CORRIDOR

Acres/Years: 90,155/ 1995-2000

NGO Partners: Asociación de Organizaciones del Corredor Biológico Talamanca Caribe, Asociación ANAI

Government Partner: SINAC/MINAE

Cost Rica and Panama

LA AMISTAD INTERNATIONAL PARK/BOCAS DEL TORO

Acres/Years: 2,499,640/ 2002-2007

NGO Partners: Instituto Nacional para la Biodiversidad (INBio, Costa Rica), Asociación ANAI (Costa Rica), Fundación Cuencas de Limón (FCL, Costa Rica), Red Quercus (Costa Rica), Sociedad Mastozoológica de Panamá (SOMASPA, Panama), Asociación Nacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (ANCON, Panama), Fundación Vida, Salud, Ambiente y Paz (FUNDAVISAP, Panama), Alianza para el Desarrollo Ambiental de Tierras Altas (ADATA, Panama), Fundación para el Desarrollo Integral del Corregimiento de Cerro Punta (FUNDICCEP, Panama), Red Indígena de Turismo (Costa Rica and Panama)

Government Partners: SINAC/MINAE (Costa Rica), Autoridad Nacional del Ambiente (ANAM, Panama)

Dominica

MORNE TROIS PITONS NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 16,994/ 1992-1996

NGO Partner: Dominica Conservation Association (DCA)

Government Partner: Ministerio de Agricultura y Medio Ambiente, División de Silvicultura y Vida Silvestre

Dominican Republic

DEL ESTE NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 103,740/ 1993-1999

NGO Partners: Fondo Integrado Pro Natura (PRO-NATURA), Ecoparque, Fundación Progressio, Fundación MAMMA, Sociedad Ecológica Romanense

Government Partner: Secretaria de Estado de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARENA)

JARAGUA NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 339,378/ 1991-1995

NGO Partners: Fondo Integrado Pro Natura (PRO-NATURA), Sociedad Ecológica Oviedo (SOEDO), Grupo Jaragua

Government Partners: Dirección Nacional de Parques, today known as SEMARENA

MADRE DE LAS AGUAS CONSERVATION AREA

Acres/Years: 103,740/ 1996-2001

NGO Partners: Fundación Moscoso Puello (FMP), Fundación Progressio

Government Partners: Dirección Nacional de Parques, today known as Subsecretaria de Áreas Protegidas y Biodiversidad (SEMARENA)

Ecuador

CONDOR BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Acres/Years: 4,694,628/ 2001-2007

NGO Partners: Fundación Antisana, Fundación Eco-Ciencia, Fundación Rumicocha, Fondo de Agua para Quito (FONAG), Fundación Sobrevivencia Cofán (FSC)

Government Partner: Ministerio del Ambiente

MACHALILLA NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 135,860/ 1992-1997

NGO Partners: Fundación Natura, Conservation Data Center

Government Partners: Instituto Ecuatoriano Forestal y de Áreas Naturales y Vida Silvestre (INEFAN), Ministerio del Ambiente

PODOCARPUS NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 361,312/ 1992-1998

NGO Partners: Fundación Natura, Fundación Ecológica Arcoiris

Government Partners: Instituto Ecuadorense Forestal y de Áreas Naturales (INEFAN), Ministerio del Ambiente

Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines

GRENADINES

Acres/Years: 14,951/ 2002-2007

NGO Partners: Carriacou Environmental Committee, Fundación YWF-KIDO, University of West Indies

Government Partners: Fisheries Division of Grenada, Forestry Division of Grenada, Fisheries Division of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Fisheries Division of St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Guatemala

ATITLÁN VOLCANOES

Acres/Years: 31,537/ 2001-2006

NGO Partners: Asociación Vivamos Mejor, Asociación de Reservas Naturales Privadas de Guatemala (ARNPG), Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (UVG)

Government Partners: CONAP

MOTAGUA-POLOCHIC SYSTEM

Acres/Years: 432,853/ 1991-2000 (Sierra de las Minas Biosphere Reserve and Bocas del Polochic Wildlife Refuge), 2001-2007 (entire system including Motagua Valley)

NGO Partners: Fundación Defensores de la Naturaleza, Zootropic

Government Partners: Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (CONAP)

Honduras

RÍO PLÁTANO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Acres/Years: 2,013,050/ 1998-2002

NGO Partner: Agencia para el Desarrollo de la Mosquitia (MOPAWI)

Government Partner: Administración Forestal del Estado-Corporación Hondureña de Desarrollo Forestal (AFE-COHDEFOR)

Jamaica

BLUE AND JOHN CROW MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 196,775/ 1998-2002

NGO Partner: Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust (JCdT)

Government Partners: Forestry Department, Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA), now known as National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA)

COCKPIT COUNTRY

Acres/Years: 71,242/ 2001-2007

NGO Partners: South Trelawney Environmental Agency (STEA), Windsor Research Institute

Government Partner: Forestry Department

Mexico

AJOS-BAVISPE NATIONAL FOREST & WILDLIFE REFUGE

Acres/Years: 456,567/ 1998-2002

NGO Partner: Instituto del Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable del Estado de Sonora (IMADES)

Government Partners: Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP), Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT)

CUATROCIEGAS NATIONAL WILDLIFE RESERVE

Acres/Years: 208,147/ 2001-2007

NGO Partner: Pronatura Noreste, A.C.

Government Partners: CONANP, SEMARNAT

CALAKMUL BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Acres/Years: 1,786,533/ 1993-2001

NGO Partner: Pronatura Península de Yucatán

Government Partner: CONANP

EL OCOTE BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Acres/Years: 278,962/ 1992-1998

NGO Partner: Instituto de Historia Natural (IHN)

Government Partners: Instituto Nacional de Ecología (INE), CONANP

EL PINACATE/GRAN DESIERTO DEL ALTAR BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Acres/Years: 1,962,553/ 1994-1999

NGO Partners: Centro Ecológico de Sonora (CES), IMADES

Government Partner: CONANP

EL TRIUNFO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Acres/Years: 731,557/ 1991-1997

NGO Partner: IHN

Government Partners: INE, CONANP

LA ENCRUCIJADA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Acres/Years: 357,824/ 1992-2000

NGO Partner: IHN

Government Partner: CONANP

LORETO BAY NATIONAL PARK/ ESPÍRITU SANTO FAUNA AND FLORA RESERVE

Acres/Years: 534,705/ 1998-2002

NGO Partners: IMADES, Niparajá, Grupo Ecológico Antares (GEA), Conservación del Territorio Insular Mejicano A.C. (ISLA)

Government Partner: CONANP

RÍA CELESTÚN & RÍA LAGARTOS BIOSPHERE RESERVES

Acres/Years: 264,216/ 1991-1997

NGO Partners: Pronatura Península de Yucatán, A.C., Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados del Estado de Yucatán (CINVESTAV)

Government Partner: SEMARNAT

SIAN KA'AN BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Acres/Years: 1,610,914/ 1992-1998

NGO Partner: Amigos de Sian Ka'an

Government Partner: INE

Nicaragua

BOSAWAS BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Acres/Years: 1,832,305/ 2001-2007

NGO Partners: Centro de Derecho Ambiental y Promoción para el Desarrollo (CEDAPRODE), Saint Louis Zoo

Government Partners: Ministerio del Ambiente y los Recursos Naturales (MARENA), Secretaría Técnica de Bosawas (SETAB)

Panama

DARIÉN BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Acres/Years: 1,570,130/ 1991-1997

NGO Partner: Asociación Nacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (ANCON)

PANAMA CANAL WATERSHED/ CHAGRES NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 370,500/ 1993-1995 (PCW); 2002-2007 (Chagres)

NGO Partners: ANCON, Sociedad Nacional para el Desarrollo de Empresas y Áreas Rurales (SON-DEAR), Centro de Estudios y Acción Social Panameño (CEASPA)

Government Partner: Autoridad Nacional del Ambiente (ANAM)

Paraguay

DEFENSORES DEL CHACO NATIONAL PARK (DEFENDERS OF THE CHACO NATIONAL PARK)

Acres/Years: 1,926,600/ 1998-2002

NGO Partners: Fundación Moisés Bertoni, Fundación para el Desarrollo Sustentable del Chaco (DesdelChaco)

Government Partners: Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería, Secretaría del Ambiente (SEAM)

MBARACAYÚ NATURE RESERVE

Acres/Years: 159,082/ 1992-1994

NGO Partner: Fundación Moisés Bertoni

Government Partner: SEAM, Dirección General de Conservación de la Biodiversidad

Peru

BAHUAJA-SONENE NATIONAL PARK

Acres/Years: 550,000/ 1991-1999

NGO Partner: Fundación Peruana para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (ProNaturaleza)

Government Partner: Instituto Nacional de Recursos Naturales (INRENA)

CENTRAL SELVA BIOSPHERE RESERVE (YANACHAGA- CHEMILLÉN NATIONAL PARK, SAN MATÍAS-SAN CARLOS PROTECTION FOREST, AND YANESHA COMMUNAL RESERVE)

Acres/Years: 747,331/ 1992-1996 (Yanachaga- Chemillén National Park), 2002-2007 (entire biosphere reserve)

NGO Partner: ProNaturaleza

Government Partner: INRENA

PACAYA-SAMIRIA NATIONAL RESERVE

Acres/Years: 5,137,600/ 2001-2007

NGO Partners: ProNaturaleza, Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental (SPDA), Centro de Datos para la Conservación (CDC)

Government Partner: INRENA

PARACAS NATIONAL RESERVE

Acres/Years: 335,000/ 1999-2002

NGO Partner: ProNaturaleza

Government Partner: INRENA



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