



Port Honduras Marine Reserve Community  
Development Plan 2014

Engage . Enable . Empower .

**Prepared for:** Toledo Institute of Development and Environment

**Prepared by:** Jay Coombs, Sazani Associates, Belize

in collaboration with

**Cathryn Alkanaaan, Sazani Associates, UK**

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**sazaniassociates**

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## ACRONYMS

BEST	Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology
BTB	Belize Tourism Board
BTIA	Belize Tourism Industry Association
CCAD	Central American Commission for Environment
CDP	Community Development Plan
GoB	Government of Belize
MAR Fund	Fund for Meso-American Reef System
MCPA	Marine Coastal Protected Areas
PA	Protected Area
PHMR	Port Honduras Marine Reserve
TIDE	Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment
WB	World Bank

## Rationale

The Community Development planning process for the Port Honduras Marine Reserve has been spearheaded by the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE). This has been done in the context of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) intergovernmental financial cooperation agreement funded by the Federal Republic of Germany. This partnership supports the "Conservation of Marine Resources in Central America" project which is to be implemented by the Fund for the Mesoamerican Reef System (the MAR Fund). This project strategy focuses on implementing effective, long-term conservation mechanisms in four areas of the Meso-American Reef System. In Belize the geographical focus is the Port Honduras Marine Reserve (PHMR) as the identified priority Marine-Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs).

TIDE recognizes and is responsive to bordering communities in its management area where they are likely to experience economic and social changes due to the establishment of a protected area. TIDE is fully cognizant that this change could drastically restrict community members' access to and use of natural resources. Essentially, a community's overall interaction with its surrounding environment is unlikely to remain the same after the declaration of a PA. TIDE's goal of establishing a protected area is to ensure adjacent communities and the wider public's sustainable use of natural resources in the region. This is a long-term goal that is highly dependent on support from the very communities that were affected by the declaration of a protected area. TIDE's aim is to assist the communities around the PHMR – a priority Marine Protected area – so they can benefit from the Meso-American Reef System Fund. It understands the critical role the communities have in managing the sustainable use of the resources within the marine reserve. Recognizing that this sustainability cannot be accomplished without a comprehensive, well articulated and accepted development road-map that is informed by the community themselves, TIDE commissioned the development/updating of community development plans for Punta Gorda Town, Monkey River and Punta Negra. It is expected that the process of creating and updating the community action plan for economic development will empower the three (3) communities to:

- Maintain a sense of ownership of the process;
- Remain fully committed to their proposed actions; and
- Strengthen resilience, given the economic, social and environmental challenges that confront these communities.

The plans have also been developed to be closely aligned to Outcome 2: “The participation of civil society in best management practices and the sustainable use of coastal-marine resources have been advanced.” This outcome involves the participation of local communities, associations, organisations and institutions to rehabilitate and conserve key ecosystems inside and outside protected areas that have critical influence on the conservation of the area<sup>1</sup>. Given that these communities recently embarked on community development planning activities, this most recent planning process has been aimed at revising and updating previous attempts to document the development roadmap for Punta Negra, Monkey River and Punta Gorda. The CD is therefore a consolidated strategy which over a 5-year period will incorporate community organization, regulation, business development and technical assistance. These plans have been developed so that they:

1. Complement national development initiatives specific to the southern region of the country;
2. Promote community capacity building so that leaders can effectively advocate for and directly support the implementation of critical activities; and
3. Promote institutional and organizational strengthening to access new and existing resources to advance the activities in the respective plans.

The Community Development Plans (CDP) have been drafted in a participatory manner and is reflective of each community’s unique human and natural resources, assets and strategic positioning within the Port Honduras Marine Reserve.

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<sup>1</sup> Elements of reflection for drawing up a Community Development Plan, MAR Fund Executive Management Technical Team, May 2013

## Community Development Plan Structure

The Community Development (CD) Plan has been developed based on a premise that supports the establishment, functioning and maintenance of foundation structures and systems in the communities that benefit from and participate in the maintenance of the Port Honduras Marine Reserve. These communities are Punta Negra, Monkey River and Punta Gorda. In this context, the CD plan has been developed to respond with immediacy to household basic needs, community economic development, and institutional and systems strengthening. This three-pronged approach is being proposed to reduce the existing vulnerabilities associated with communities being in close proximity to a protected area. The plan is intended to respond to the needs of each community from the perspective of increasing system wide community based resilience. It is also focused on developing and extending community capability to enable them to maintain and sustain local livelihoods. These factors are critically dependent on the nearby protected natural resource base.

The CD Plan takes into account three critical factors. Community development is a response to the need for basic living standards for residents living in and around the three focus communities of the PHMR. The premise of this first critical factor is that community development is only effective in partnership with people who are living in and sustaining their livelihoods in the partner community. This is especially critical for Punta Negra which has been experiencing a drastic population decline. The proposed development actions are intended to address the basic foundations of communal life and the capacities of local governing structures to support basic health, education and human security. All of these are essential to the maintenance of households and families in a community. These proposed actions are positioned within the plans to directly impact on the household unit, acknowledging the urgency to address basic human needs in the community. These elements of the plan are linked to household survival and include: improved primary education, access to potable water and sanitation, and existence of high performing community leadership structures to support the maintenance and upkeep of these basic services.



The second critical factor in the community development plan focuses on the organizational capacity of the communities to establish and sustain economic livelihood within the specified community boundaries. This ability to secure economic opportunities is linked to the first factor, as people are likely to establish and sustain households where they can realistically survive on the available livelihood options. This aspect of the CD Plan is linked to the strengthening of business and regulatory systems and partnerships that would support sustainable economic activities in these communities, especially in areas of fishing and tourism. Notably, the plan takes into consideration proposed business planning activities for each of the communities and identifies how these can be supported through partnerships with organizations and agencies which are lead agencies with mandates to advance the identified economic activities. The economic activities referred to in this plan are focused on: strengthening markets, bringing to greater scale those activities that are currently in existence, and preparing community-based capacities to implement business activities for which they are skilled and ready to implement. These businesses have all been identified from previous studies for TIDE.<sup>2</sup>

The third and most critical factor of the CD plan is an institutional partnership focus. The plan is supportive of strengthening partnership with and coordination among stakeholders to successfully implement identified community development interventions. The community development plan acknowledges that none of the outputs can be implemented solely by the communities with their existing human and technical resources and leadership capacities. It acknowledges, however, that the communities will all need unwavering support to move the plans along in a consistent and deliberate manner. Experience shows that after implementation the communities will require ongoing technical assistance and guidance to ensure that the development actions and systems are institutionalized and enable long-term community engagement, leadership and commitment.

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<sup>2</sup> Recently TIDE commissioned a business feasibility study and a tourism plan for the PHMR. The first document identified business ventures which have growth potential in these communities while the Tourism Plan elaborated on how the visitor experience in the three communities could be further developed and marketed as a unique tourism product in Belize.

## Methodology

These community development plans were developed in a participatory manner and reflect information from two sources. The primary source of literature informing these plans include documentation on proposed development initiatives which community leaders, most specifically from Monkey River and Punta Negra, prepared in previous development planning activities<sup>3</sup>. The proposed development initiatives included activities that leaders perceived would lead to improved livelihood opportunities in their communities. Of the three communities, Monkey River had the most comprehensive plan. The Punta Negra plan was informed primarily by a Business Feasibility Study, although a basic community development plan for the village existed. This plan is not as elaborate as Monkey River's plan, but there has been notable implementation of one of its proposed actions, including upgrading the primary school. The Punta Gorda Development Plan was informed by the draft Municipal Development Plan that is being supported by the World Bank Municipal Development Project. This plan was drafted by a core team and details, in a comprehensive manner, a proposal for long-term integrated urban planning for Punta Gorda Town.

In addition to reviewing the existing literature on draft development activities in each of the three communities, these plans were also informed by two more recently completed documents, both of which assessed the feasibility of economic and livelihood opportunities in the three communities. These two documents are the Feasibility Study of Businesses in Punta Gorda and the Tourism Development Strategy. The community development planning process therefore has been charted in parallel with these two development documents. The CD plan emphasises those community assets which are critical and require strengthening in these localities. It further highlights the barriers to community development which need to be overcome.

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<sup>3</sup> Elements of reflection for drawing up a Community Development Plan, written in May of 2013 by the MAR Fund Executive Management Technical Team

Finally, the development plans document and respond to the needs and desires of the residents. These plans have been compiled based on the articulated needs and desires of community members from all three communities. Through focus group discussions, the community representatives outlined how they envision development in their community, how they would like this development managed, and what priority actions they would like supported and implemented. These developmental preferences and the structure in which they should be pursued have been gleaned through conversations with the formal and informal leaders – men and women of Punta Negra, Monkey River and Punt Gorda.

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# Punta Negra

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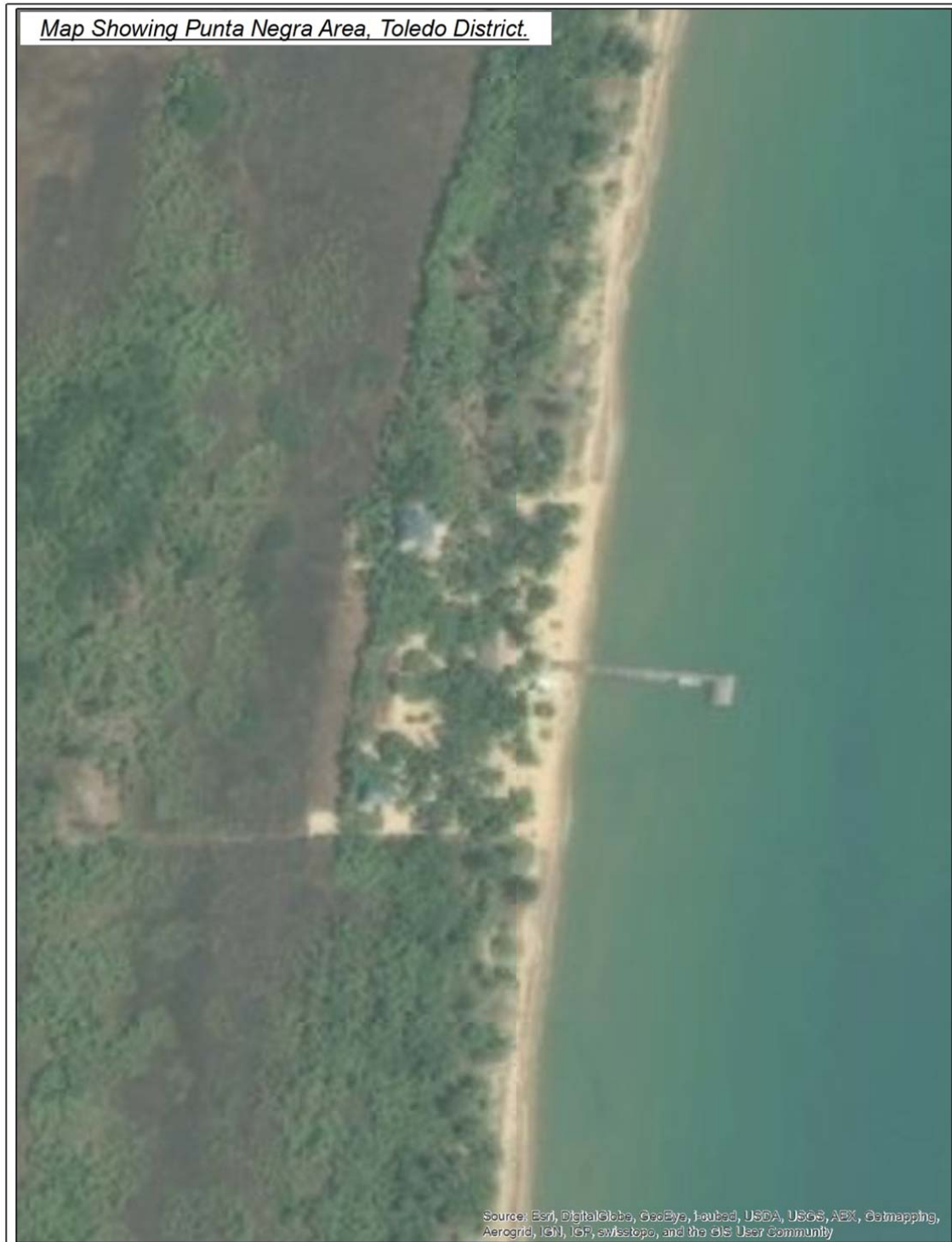
# Punta Negra Village

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## Background

Punta Negra Village is one of the smallest coastal communities in the Toledo District, Belize. The village is far removed from any other towns and large villages and sits on approximately 9-14 miles of pristine natural beach. It is bordered by the Port Honduras Marine Reserve to the east and the Payne's Creek National Park to the west. The village is located approximately 30 minutes south of Monkey River Village and approximately 45 minutes from Punta Gorda Town and is accessible from both of these locations only by boat. Punta Negra shares a similar history to that of Monkey River in terms of its demographic changes and lack of employment in the immediate vicinity of the village. Most of its residents have migrated to other parts of the country to seek livelihood opportunities in order to benefit from reliable sources of income. Some of the remaining residents make a living from doing seasonal work at the nearby Sabal Beach Resort, and others by providing cooking services for tour guides going on fishing trips to the Sapodilla Cayes. However, employment is unpredictable and short-term, and most residents maintain their households by subsisting on fishing, poultry rearing and making food products for local consumption.

## Map of Punta Negra Village



## Demography

The population of Punta Negra is generally stable at around six (6) to eight (8) families, consisting primarily of Creoles and an even smaller Garifuna and Maya population. The population of the village periodically grows to approximately 20 individuals, but there are roughly 30 additional seasonal inhabitants who live in neighboring Punta Gorda Town and surrounding areas. They visit the village periodically to visit with family and engage in seasonal economic activities, mostly related to fishing. Population decline is the biggest obstacle to advancing community development in Punta Negra. The brief development outline for the community states that the current size of the village leaves no existing economies of scale. It further states that the current youth population tends to leave the village to attend high school and that while a few teenagers expressed an interest in returning, they do not believe they will be able to do so due to a lack of sustainable employment opportunities.

## Socio-economic analysis

### Infrastructure and Utilities:

Economy of scale precludes major investments in basic services in Punta Negra. This is evident in the lack of a potable water system as well as the lack of constant electrical supply or a health post that is regularly staffed by a healthcare individual. While the village is not connected to the national electricity grid, some families have solar panels for household lighting and to power household appliances. There are no roads in the village, and internal movement is facilitated by a pattern of footpaths used for moving from one point in the village to another. The main source of water in the community is a vat situated near the primary school building. The vat is in a dilapidated state and could pose a health hazard.<sup>4</sup> In terms of lighting, kerosene lamps fulfil this need in the night since there is no electricity in the village. Recent expansion of cellular service has been useful for communication, and residents have satisfactory connectivity via cell phone service from either of the two major service providers or through use of the longstanding community telephone.

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<sup>4</sup> Enriquez, Glenn. 2013. **Feasibility study for Business Enterprises for Punta Negra, Punta Gorda and Monkey River.**

The community recently received a new building for its primary school. This building was provided by the government of Belize, though the government had previously proposed amalgamating the school with nearby schools in Punta Gorda or with St. Stephen's School in Monkey River due to low numbers. Villagers concede that under normal circumstances, such an amalgamation would be considered practical and cost effective given the size of the school-aged population. However, the hardships and uncertainty that amalgamation would impose on households and students, and the high costs of transportation and food as well as unpredictable weather conditions, would render the community and its students vulnerable. A review of these factors forced the community to lobby the education authorities to keep the primary school within their village. Having the primary school remain in the village is critical since access to primary education is one of the main pull-factors for any family to take up residence in a community. Given Punta Negra's population decline, attracting and keeping families in the community is vital for its survival.

While Punta Negra is not a caye, it is only accessible by boat. Travel time from Punta Gorda takes approximately 45 minutes. The boat transportation is not a regularly scheduled public ferry, and visitors to the village must use chartered transportation since there is no public source of transportation. Other trips to the village are often facilitated by TIDE on patrol boats or during field activities in the area. Notably, travel to Punta Negra is expensive for tourists and residents alike.

**Economy:**

Economic activity within the community is limited. Lack of economic opportunities has been identified as the main reason people leave the community. For those who stay in Punta Negra, income is generated primarily through fishing and small scale tourism services. Residents are occasionally employed by the local resort to cook and provide catering services to tourists, but this is ad hoc and seasonal. Along with the occasional employment stints at the resort, residents may also provide these same hospitality services to TIDE when visiting researchers and tourist groups visit on study abroad or research travel. Outside of these options, residents do not have access to regular job opportunities. There is some reliance on remittances since some households receive financial support from family members living outside of Punta Negra.



**Land Settlement and Use:**

Punta Negra was originally settled on national land. However, the residents claim that they live on privately owned or leased properties<sup>5</sup>. In a recent community development assistance submission to TIDE by Punta Negra, it was documented that a village survey needed to be undertaken. The submission cited that a survey of the village was needed to identify precisely the ownership of buildings, vacant lots and other lots for which no known information is available. This survey exercise is considered critical since land disputes have been frequent in the last four years and a proper survey of all properties may help to settle existing and potential conflicts. Notably, the Sea Breeze Women's Group, which works closely with TIDE to implement development initiatives in the community, was recently granted four acres of land near the northern end of the village for the purpose of promoting entrepreneurship and economic opportunities. The title classification of the land provided to the group needs to be determined, especially since there has been some sale of land in the village.

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<sup>5</sup> Punta Negra, community development plan outline.

**Environmental Factors:**

A critical challenge facing coastal communities, especially small, vulnerable and poor communities such as Punta Negra, Monkey River and also the district town of Punta Gorda, is climate change. It is documented that Belize is vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Its mere geographical location leaves the country exposed to the risk of rising sea levels and increasing frequency and intensity of tropical storms. Its economic dependence on natural resources heightens its vulnerability to rising temperatures and the resulting impacts on agricultural productivity, fisheries ecosystems, and other economic sectors<sup>6</sup>. The three communities' dependence on natural resources for livelihood and survival further accentuate the critical need to incorporate Resilience as a mainstreamed theme in all the development plans. More critically, communities will need to improve their capacities for climate change adaptation or resilience. Richardson (2009) states that the fisheries sector is vulnerable to the effects of climate change, particularly the impacts of warmer sea surface temperatures, ocean acidification, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events. He asserts that warmer sea surface temperatures can lead to coral bleaching and mortality. It is critical to maintain healthy coral reefs because they provide valuable ecological benefits, including the provision of habitat and nutrients for numerous species and the protection of the coastline from the impact of the ocean, decreasing erosion, property damage, and the effects of waves and storms<sup>7</sup>. The declining shoreline and fast moving erosion of beaches in all three communities is evident.

Additionally, and specific to Punta Negra, there is rapid erosion and ongoing rise in tidal garbage build-up, most of which is said to have originated from neighboring communities in Guatemala. Localized interventions and technical training that includes the active participation of the villagers is critical to develop and address adaptation strategies. Given Punta Negra's desire to become a unique tourist destination in Belize, solid waste management needs to be addressed urgently. This would not be just for tourism purposes but as part of the basic sanitation measures for a healthy and safe community. Currently, families are responsible for their own garbage disposal, and many of them do so by throwing waste into the swampy portion of the land or by burning refuse. Human waste is disposed of using pit latrines, although a few homes have flush toilets. There is no clear determination of the impact of raw sewage on underground water sources, but, given the size of the community, this may likely be negligible.

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<sup>6</sup> Richardson, Dr. Robert. 2009. *The Cost of Inaction*, UNDP BELIZE.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Some of the main natural attractions in Punta Negra include approximately 14-20 miles of sandy beach and two ponds that are occasionally used for fly-fishing by visitors, mostly tourists from nearby resorts. Since the attractions of Punta Negra are primarily nature-based, it is imperative that environmental protection and stewardship remains a key component of all community development planning and activities in this village.

### Basic Community Needs:

An assessment of the basic needs of Punta Negra was conducted, and these were informed via literature review of TIDE's documentation of the village as well as through community consultation with the small, mostly female leadership in the community. The resultant priority basic needs are therefore listed below in a sequence which adheres closely to the order of priority at the time of consultation.

1. **Upgrade primary school infrastructure** – The current school-age population of Punta Negra totals eleven (11). The community development outline documents that the community needs a safe school building since the current building housing the school is unsafe and requires urgent upgrading. This is critical since the availability and access to primary school education is important for families. For Punta Negra this is even more critical because, in the absence of primary education facilities in the community, families will likely leave. Primary school education is mandatory for all children ages 5-14. It would be worth exploring funding for an education project that would be supported and endorsed by the Anglican Diocese, the denomination with leadership of the school. While it can be documented that the school facility was recently upgraded with support from the Ministry of Education, sanitation and water facilities for the children still remain inadequate. Further, with very slim resources at the school and a small school population, cleaning and maintenance of the school compound require a similar level of partnership and attention by both community organizations and the public sector (health and education).
2. **Enable access to potable water** – It is unlikely that Punta Negra will receive one of the commonly used rudimentary water systems found in most rural parts of Belize and funded by the Social Investment Fund. These systems are generally implemented in larger communities where populations are steadily increasing and where the economy of scale justifies what is usually a large investment. Despite the community's saline underground water and its extremely small population, Punta Negra could still benefit from new innovations in potable water supply delivery for

small communities as is being piloted by the Ministry of Rural Development with European Union funding, the Belize Red Cross, or non-government entities located in the south, such as Water Missions International and Humana People to People.

- 3. Increase access to reliable and cost effective transportation** – Greater travel between Punta Gorda Town, Placencia and Punta Negra needs to be facilitated for tourism purposes. The high transportation cost is a major deterrent to conducting business in Punta Negra, and it affects the frequency with which people visit the community. The availability of regular but cost effective transportation to and from Punta Negra is a critical aspect to spurn economic activities in the community. An affordable and reliable transportation service could serve to re-connect families and friends and at the same time increase tourist travel to Punta Negra. However, providing scheduled transportation is a costly venture for any single resident or even the community to undertake on its own. Such a venture, nonetheless, could be the basis for a sound partnership between TIDE, Punta Negra, and the private sector with direct linkages to a tourism package.

## Overview of Community Capacity and Challenges

Undeniably, Punta Negra is a naturally endowed coastal community full of opportunities with potential to become an economically viable and unique travel location. To reach this potential for economic viability, Punta Negra has several positive characteristics that could generate the envisioned success its community members opine the village can attain. This success would require that they use existing assets (natural resource, reasonable community cohesion, community history, and determined leadership) to spurn community regeneration. There is great probability that a community can succeed in its efforts to revitalize its economic and social capital if it is supported to use both human and natural resources which it already possesses. The existing assets in Punta Negra, while significant, will be insufficient to drive this process, but these must be fully considered and utilized as part of community development programming. At its core, regeneration is about concerted action to address the challenges and problems faced by the community; it is about widening opportunities, growing the local economy, and improving people's lives<sup>1</sup>.

Based on the business feasibility study recently conducted and supported by TIDE as part of its livelihood support to the PHMR communities, Punta Negra has critical assets that can be categorized under these broad themes and which will play critical roles to drive the regeneration of this community:

1. Punta Negra is a **prime coastal location** – This village has a stretch of natural beach which is over fourteen miles long and located only an hour away from a major district town. The attraction that this beach provides for both local and international visitors is a key marketing point for any potential tourism package that is being considered for the village. This beach itself and opportunities for sport fishing are prime attractions to a potential tourism market. There is the potential to link both as part of a package that could generate interest and visits to Punta Negra.
2. Punta Negra is renowned for its **hospitality and service oriented residents** – The mostly female population of Punta Negra is famous for its food preparation and hospitality services. The women’s use of natural and fresh ingredients for cooking adds value to an enjoyable stay in the community. These cooking skills have also been further strengthened and refined through TIDE sponsored hospitality training.
3. **Trainable, entrepreneurial group** – The community, including the Sea Breeze Women’s Group, indicates ongoing interest in training and further strengthening their hospitality and catering crafts. The most critical aspect of supporting training in this community will require that a certain level of adaptability and innovation embodies the future training approach for this group. This suggested approach must take into consideration onsite training, use of natural products, and the encouragement of innovation, including learning through geographic and cross-cultural exchange.
4. **Capacity to corner market with unique products** – Punta Negra, with its location and its availability and accessibility to natural products, has the potential to corner the southern tourism market. This will only be possible, however, if there is a well structured and responsive marketing plan coupled with strong community organization and management. As part of its tourism package, TIDE, through its Tour Service, will need to consider leading the marketing of Destination Punta Negra.

These positive opportunities could easily be lost if other social and economic challenges in the community are left unchecked. These challenges could negate gains and must be addressed in a collaborative and sustainable manner. While there are strengths in the village, the business feasibility study also identified several weaknesses. These are categorized under broad themes as listed below.

1. **Erosion of trust among community members** – There is a perceived lack of unity and trust among members of the community, including in the Sea Breeze Women’s Group. This lack of trust can damage social capital, a valuable community asset which many agree has added character to village life in Punta Negra. Trust and familial relationships have together provided the necessary societal glue in the past and ensured that the basis of organization, respect and cooperation continued in the community. However, without trust and cooperative work, community development and regeneration will not succeed despite promises of required project interventions. The development planning process must therefore include approaches to re-build and strengthen cooperation and collaboration among community members so that the identified projects for economic development will have a fair chance to succeed.
2. **Poor access by visitors** – Despite its long historical existence in Southern Belize, Punta Negra remains an isolated community. While isolation may be beneficial for the maintenance of its natural resources in a pristine manner, the community cannot continue to be separated from other regional population centers especially if its tourism product must penetrate local and regional markets. In order to overcome its isolation, Punta Negra will need to urgently address the issue of transportation, specifically affordable and regular marine transportation, since the community is only accessible by sea. There is no specific information on the possibility that a road connecting Monkey River with Punta Negra will be built in the near future.
3. **Lack of a coordinated system for application of knowledge** – The village leadership and members of the few community-based organizations have been provided with multiple opportunities for training and capacity building. As one of the communities in the Port Honduras Marine Reserve, TIDE, since its inception, has either directly or indirectly sourced numerous opportunities for training and technical assistance for the residents of Punta Negra. Evident from the 2013 business feasibility study, however, is that the community does not satisfactorily demonstrate overall mastery in the application of the skills taught and learned, including conflict resolution, hygiene (food handling, etc.), and financial management. Yet, these are

some of the basic skills that are necessary to ensure that residents have the ability to lead and implement community development planning and implementation over a five year period. While the lack of application of these requisite skills is considered a weakness at the outset, it is expected that they will be sharpened during the actual implementation of the project interventions since capacity building will be built into these interventions.

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# Monkey River

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# Monkey River Village

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## Background

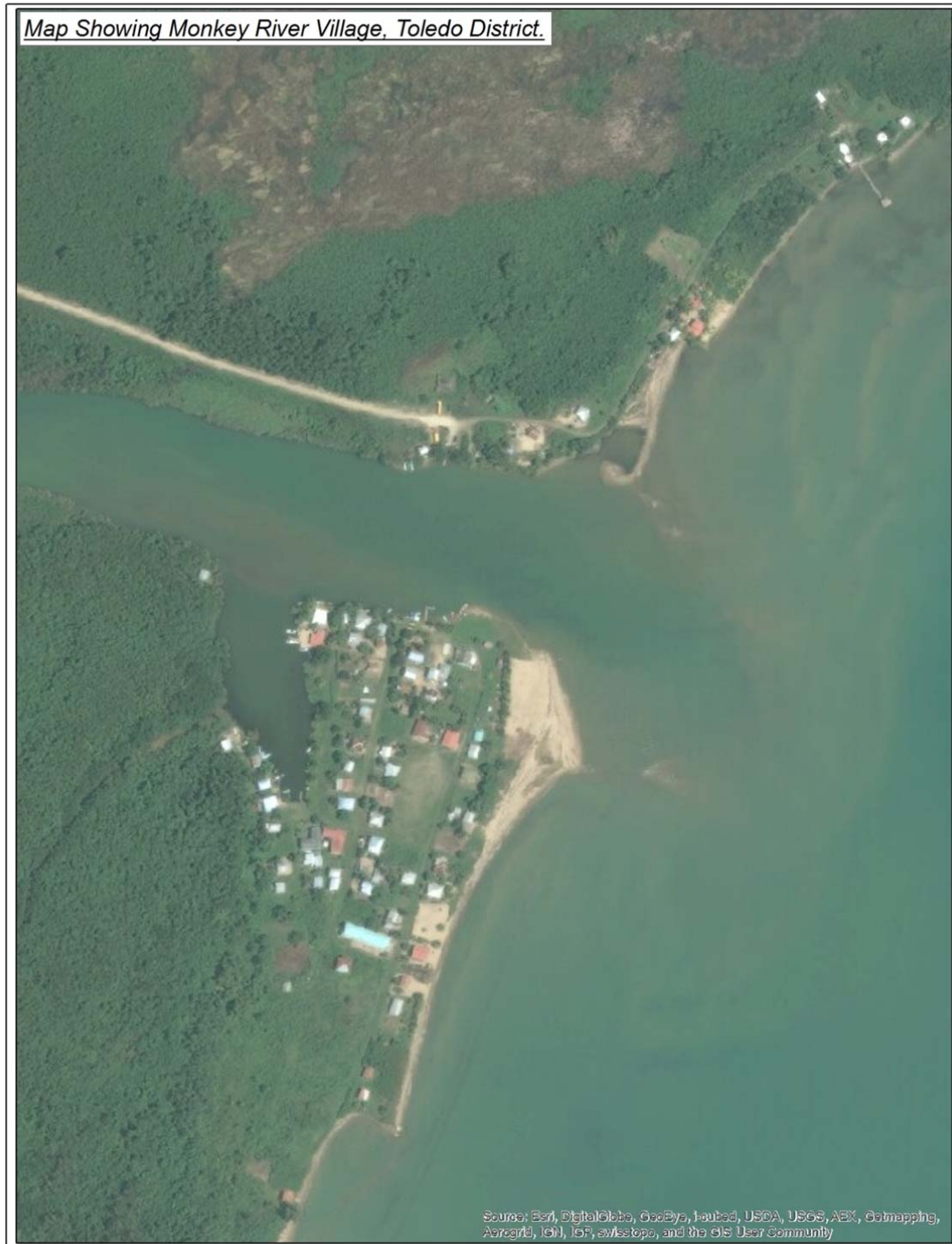
Monkey River Village is the northernmost village in the Toledo District. It is a small Creole village of approximately 200 people and sits on the southern bank of the mouth of the Monkey River, its namesake. Direct access to the village from the southern highway is via a commercial farm road which ends on the north bank of the Monkey River. This road is generally poorly maintained and deteriorates even further during the rainy season. The river and the sea meet right at the entrance of the village, and since there is no bridge to facilitate crossing into the village proper, boats from within the village ferry people in and out of the community. Wide sandy beaches stretch out along the mouth of the river and on the east side of the village. Notably, a broken dock lines the entrance to the community, and the village suffers from severe beach erosion with loss totalling approximately 100 feet in some locations<sup>8</sup>.

In Monkey River, houses are constructed mainly with wood and on stilts, although there are a few concrete houses in the village. Some of the homes in the village were recently affected by a small earthquake that occurred just off the southern coast of Belize in 2009. Other buildings in the community include a police station that is in a state of disrepair and a village center and tour guide association/women's group office, though this is rarely used. There is also a primary school managed by the Anglican Diocese, a church, two shops, two hotels, and two restaurants and bars. A small boardwalk which borders the inlet at the back of the village is where fishermen dock their boats.

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<sup>8</sup> Dujon, Y. et al. 2013. Tourism Development Strategy

## Map of Monkey River Village



## Demography

Monkey River is home to approximately 200 people who make up about 20 families in the village. Approximately, 68 children attend the local primary school in the village, and those who are able to go to high school do so in neighboring Independence Village. The village population consists predominantly of very young children and a large middle age group.

Monkey River is known nationally within the historical context of once being a booming port community for the banana industry. Initially a town in 1891 and boasting a sizeable population then of almost 2500 inhabitants, Monkey River was a bustling community by urban center measures in Belize at the time. The main sources of income for households were directly linked to the banana industry, logging, and export of rice. The decline of the banana industry forced a majority of the population to relocate to other parts of Belize and abroad in search of jobs. The town was officially declassified to a village in 1981, and today many of its residents sustain their livelihood through commercial fishing.

## Socio-Economic Analysis

Monkey River is keen to capitalize on its natural resource base as the main driver of an eco-tourism economy in the village. Villagers are confident about the potential of these resources to greatly improve their standard of living. This is further evidenced by the overall high level of community engagement in tourism and fishing, two of the most lucrative livelihood opportunities from which villagers earn incomes while remaining at home in their village.

Many households in Monkey River earn a living from fishing and by selling their products to a ready market at a local packing company for export. A few of the villagers have also sought to benefit from the tourism industry by investing in local tourist amenities such as homestays, restaurants, and gift shops, to mention a few. Meanwhile, others have chosen to tap into the growing tourism demand in nearby Placencia Village<sup>9</sup>, just 30 minutes north, seeking employment either as direct hires or contracted guides for resorts and hotels. Monkey River tour guides have also gained a reputation for their skills in providing river tours, trips along the famous monkey trail, as well as sport fishing in the southern flats<sup>10</sup>. Tours also include trips to the nearby Snake Cayes for swimming, snorkeling, diving, and beach excursions.

Notably, the tourism and fishing livelihood opportunities in Monkey River are male dominated. The status quo is that many adult females depend on the male heads of households to support the family from the “hard” income earning activities of the fishing and tourism industries. Women tend to be less engaged in either of these industries even as they provide “soft” or ancillary services in the form of cooking, jewelry making, and home-stays. These activities are not done on a large scale and are considered less stable than those services provided by the males.

### Infrastructure and Utilities:

There are no streets in Monkey River Village. Mobility in the community is made possible via grass paths winding in a southerly and westerly direction throughout the village<sup>11</sup>. As mentioned previously, there is in the village one church, two shops, two hotels/guest houses, a couple bars, and a small boardwalk/deck that borders the lagoon.

Since 2000, Monkey River Village has had access to piped water from a village managed rudimentary water system (RWS). The village has a water board with responsibility for managing the RWS. Water used from the RWS is monitored through a meter system, costing a flat rate of \$15 dollars per month for the first 1000 gallons of water and thereafter two cents per gallon<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Placencia is the hub for tourism in the south, and trained Monkey River tour guides and sport fishermen are regularly sought to provide quality tours at the resorts

<sup>10</sup> Enriquez describes that the state of roads in his feasibility study for businesses in the PHMR communities.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Harris, Chris and Sue, 2009. Monkey River Village: A community development plan stage one

Landline telephone service in Monkey River is provided solely through a community phone by Belize Telemedia Limited (BTL). From this phone, villagers can receive and make calls using BTL prepaid phone cards. Cellular phone services, however, are accessible through Smart, and subscribers can generally use their phones in the village and receive reasonable signal.

Although Monkey River Village is scheduled for connection to the Belize Electricity Limited power grid, villagers are not yet able to cover the cost of fuel that would be needed to manage and operate the village diesel generator. Currently, residents rely on the use of personal generators for electricity in their households. Recently, and after ongoing advocacy by the village council to have the village added to BEL's Power Grid, Monkey River is now scheduled to receive electrical power supply through the Banana Support Programme by the European Union for communities within the banana belt.

The lack of a consistent and reliable power supply in many instances results in lost business to the community because visitors do not get the amenities they otherwise would receive if reliable and affordable electric power supply were available.

After several years of lobbying the Government of Belize (GoB) to declare a Special Development Area (SDA) surrounding the village, villagers were finally successful in their efforts in 1991. On October 17, 1991, the Minister of Natural Resources declared an SDA at Monkey River comprising of 6,700 hectares (16,800 acres) that became known as the Monkey River Special Development Area. This area is proposed to be used to attract tourism and private investments aimed at increasing employment opportunities for villagers. The government also allocated an additional 98 acres for village expansion and tourism development (BEST, 1994). In 1993, the SDA was expanded to include Punta Negra, Payne's Creek Wildlife Sanctuary and a portion of Deep River Forest Reserve<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Enriquez, Glenn, 2013. Feasibility Study for Business Enterprises for Punta Negra, Punta Gorda and Monkey River

## Economy:

Residents of Monkey River rely heavily on fishing and tourism for their livelihood, and it is not uncommon to find that many individuals and households engage in both activities. There are at least 20 fisher folks living within the village and who daily fish at sea. On a typical day, most or all of the day's catch is sold to a wholesale operator who pays slightly higher than market prices per pound of fish. The fish are refrigerated and transported via Punta Gorda for export.<sup>14</sup>

Activity in the tourism sector would indicate that there are approximately 15 tour guides in the village. Not all the local tour guides are registered or licensed, but they all participate collectively as an informal tour guide association. Accordingly, the business feasibility study found that many are not registered tour operators sanctioned and licensed by the Belize Tourism Board<sup>15</sup>. These local guides rely heavily on official tour operators or resorts in Placencia who then subcontract tours to them. As mentioned earlier, the guides have invested in tourism related business and each is likely to personally own equipment such as fishing rods and boats with engines, all of which are necessary to conduct tours.

Similar to Punta Negra, this village relies on local or international remittances from relatives who work outside of the village.

## Land Settlement and Use

Residents of Monkey River generally accept that there is a need to protect the environment. Monkey River village adjoins Payne's Creek National Park and lies within the shoreline of the Port Honduras Marine Reserve. Harris (2008)<sup>16</sup> documents that Monkey River has long pressed for the Port Honduras Marine Reserve to be extended northwards and for gill netting to be completely prohibited in the interest not only of key species conservation, but to prevent the loss of other species such as turtles, dolphins, tarpon, bonefish, and permit. Environmental sustainability is still very much linked to livelihood and household subsistence since villagers rely on wildlife and game for food. Community engagement on managed use and access to natural resources remains a priority in this area.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Harris, Chris and Sue, 2009. Monkey River Village: A community development plan stage one

## Environmental Factors:

A primary issue for any community development initiative in Monkey River, especially for the strengthening and expansion of tourism related products and services in the village, will be the reconciliation of land ownership. It is noted that reclamation of eroded beach for, example, will recover land that belongs to private individuals as well as some of the tourist attractions, including parts of the mangrove trail belong to private individuals. A clear plan to delineate public and private property in the village is critical to the success of village planning and development initiatives.

One of the primary natural resources in the village is the Monkey River itself. This river influences many aspects of life in the village, including livelihood options, the presence of wildlife, and access to the wider community. There are commercial activities that impact upon the river too, and these include increased agricultural activity in the watershed compounding further decline in water quality; increased presence of herbicides and pesticides in the river; sand-mining from the river; the presence of aquaculture from shrimp farming; and, more recently, the growing use of large vessels carrying tourists into the village. These activities are said to contribute to the continual erosion of the village's easterly foreshore. Over the past twenty years, this erosion has led to the loss of a street, two rows of houses and two football fields. The rapidity of the erosion has been identified as a key issue that will impact the very existence of Monkey River Village<sup>17</sup>. During consultation with the community, the women articulated that they are concerned that both the speed and increased amount of traffic on the river could be directly causing erosion of the river bank. A brief literature review on river bank erosion shows that unregulated boat activities on the river could in fact have a direct impact on the condition of the river bank. *The River Mouth* (2009, Issue 3) documents that in Australia, for example, "Increases in boat traffic during the summer holiday season puts further strains on the river system." The issue further adds that "Boaties ... are encouraged to take note of the five knot speed limit by keeping boat speed to a minimum. Slower speeds help protect our fragile river banks from further damage".<sup>18</sup> Hence, the concern that the women of Monkey River have may not be unfounded, and further action on regulating boating activities on the river will be needed.

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<sup>17</sup> In 2007 PACT commissioned a study by Galen University to identify the causes and recommend solutions. According to Harris, 2008, the Village Council has now accepted the findings of this report, and the recommendation to dredge the river has been endorsed by the villagers themselves. A project subcommittee was set up, and earlier this year agreement was reached with the Ministry of Works for phase

## Overview of Community Capacity and Challenges

Monkey River Village could be seen as one of the PHMR communities most ready to move ahead with economic activities that could significantly improve the standard of living in the village. There are in existence, as Enriquez (2013) identifies, strengths in Monkey River whereby several assets within the community, if properly harnessed and guided, could have the potential to transform economic activities in the community. Currently, the village is known for its fishing prowess, tourism related skills, as well as a small but developing ecotourism package.

1. **Availability of skilled labor** – The tour guides in Monkey River have been able to adapt and use their traditional fishing abilities to respond to the demand for tourism services in the south. To this end, some traditional fishermen have also secured official tour guide licenses, and this provides them with dual advantages in the industry. The availability of a skilled workforce in the community, therefore, increases the likelihood that its population will seize related job opportunities as they arise.
2. **Availability of basic utilities:** A boost to this village has been the recent availability of basic utilities in the community, including electricity and now cellular phone reception. These utilities will improve the ease with which business is conducted in the village and could greatly enhance connectivity between the village, the rest of the country and beyond. The pipeline plan for electricity in the community will also boost Monkey River’s economic potential, giving rise to the potential development of micro-enterprises.
3. **Basic Investments in tourism and fishing equipment (tools of the trades):** Monkey River residents seem to be preliminarily poised to take advantage of the potential tourism growth in the village. Most have boats, which are a necessary investment to benefit from any aspect of tourism activities in the area. They have also created small related businesses including restaurants and basic bed and breakfast type accommodations. The overarching attitude among residents in Monkey River is that they are ready to work to earn a living, but mostly in the manner that they have always known and have come to prefer. This attitude will require even greater regulatory actions to standardize the provision of a high quality product.

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one of the erosion mitigation plans to be carried out. This involved the staking in of the beach with botans and motor tires. This phase has now been completed.

<sup>18</sup> The River Mouth, Issue 3. 2009. Peelways Center, ISSN 1836-1463 (print)



**4. Established trade and business relationships (Placencia and Independence):**

Monkey River has a ready market for its goods and services in neighboring Placencia and Independence Villages. Placencia is recognized as the primary tourism hub in the south of Belize, and Independence Village has a growing reputation as the commercial center in the mid-south region. Monkey River Residents, especially its tour guides, have been able to establish and maintain tourism services for resorts in Placencia. Furthermore, fishermen have been able to sell all their produce in the nearby wholesale entity at which they are able to get premium prices for their catch.

Notwithstanding these available opportunities in Monkey River, the Village has some weaknesses that preclude residents from taking full advantage of the business and livelihood opportunities that could be made available to them, either by virtue of their location, skills-base or community resources. The success of any proposed community development plan will hinge on Monkey River's ability to overcome these challenges, many of which are inherent in the community and which villagers have been unable to resolve on their own.

Primary among some of these challenges are:

1. **Lack of a community vision and direction** – In the absence of clear leadership and a development plan for the community, Monkey River appears to be active in both the tourism and fishing industries, but very little traction has been gained with which to consolidate contributions to each of these sectors in the south. The lack of vision and direction in Monkey River could be a result of a growing level of individualism which is also voiced by the community members themselves. Key to note in this regard, is that while the community has been aware that economic opportunities from tourism would likely trickle down into the village, individual members have sought to monopolize these opportunities. This has meant that some community members have been able to seize opportunities in this sector while others have not been as successful. Inevitably, this has created a level of resentment in the village. This lack of collaborative visioning has resulted in a lack of cohesion and leadership among stakeholders, both of which are essential elements for the community to grow as a prime tourism destination and for there to be more equitable distribution of income generated from the community's natural resource assets.

2. Growing **discontent about the lack of spread from benefits generated by the tourism sector** – In line with the above challenge, residents are coming to the realization that current tourism activities in the village are generally concentrated and the anticipated benefits are not trickling down to the rest of the community. This perception of concentrated success has several implications for the tourism product in Monkey River. It means that villagers are less likely to work together, especially voluntarily, to improve the physical attributes of the village. This is evident in the apathy displayed toward village clean-up, community enhancement activities, and public facility maintenance. Secondly, besides the upkeep of the community proper, villagers may become less inclined to maintain the environmental sanctity of their immediate surrounds because they are not directly benefiting from the economic opportunities this could be generating from tourism. In as much as villagers may identify with the economic opportunities that tourism can generate for the community, the presence of a top eco-product is now more linked to each household answering the question of “what’s in it for me?” The historical experience with tourism, especially where benefits are seen to be concentrated in certain corners within the village, will likely create further distrust and separation if not quickly turned around. This could lead to a deterioration of the potential growth of any tourism product in the village. The community development plan therefore should be a tool through which to widen the reach and spread of benefits from tourism and other related business development activities.
3. **Insufficient marketing of the tourism product in Monkey River** – Villagers recognize that it is only the well-connected and informed community members who have been able to gain exposure in the tourism industry. The absence of an aggressive marketing strategy for the village tourism product means that many of the residents have made investments with no surety of return and little or no understanding of the market. The tourism product in the village needs to be developed so that all stakeholders have access to and benefit from the economic returns to the village.

In addition, women appear to have limited active roles in the economy of the village even though they are likely to be supportive of the livelihood activities of the males. Women owned or led businesses seem to be on the decline even while the tourism product is apparently growing. A quick inventory of the tourism product in the village showed that Monkey River residents feel that they can earn a living from at least eleven tourism related livelihood options in their village.<sup>19</sup>

Fishing related activities should be promoted as part of the tourism product in the village. Maintaining fishing as part of the tourism product is important to strengthen links between and across livelihood opportunities for all the groups in the community. One critical consideration would be the ready supply of fish and marine products in the village. For this to happen, a fishermen's cold storage facility would need to be considered. This economic activity could have some direct benefits for both women and youth employment opportunities in the village.

4. **Monkey River Village leadership needs strengthening** – The village has several groups; however, some possess only limited spheres of influence. The village council, for example, may not have the capacity to mobilize residents for village-wide action; it may also be viewed as a weak entity with very little community confidence in its leadership capacity. In the absence of a strong and competent village council, an enabling environment that would be supportive of business development and basic needs services provision for entrepreneurs is unlikely to be nurtured in Monkey River. The most critical need for leadership, therefore, would be linked to high quality management of visitors' access to the village, fee collection and distribution, and maintenance of physical infrastructure. These are all linked to tourism regulation and should be part of the village council's monitoring responsibility.

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<sup>19</sup> The nine (9) tourism services identified by Monkey River residents include: homestay, dining, river tour (canoe), fishing, night spotting, snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking, overnight camping, village tour and hair braiding.

## Basic Community Needs – Monkey River

Given the above challenges and the limitations present in the community, some basic but essential interventions have been identified. Implementing these basic strategies is critical to the creation of an enabling environment in Monkey River, which is one of the PHMR communities that is currently best placed and physically ready to reach for the “lower hanging fruits” of economic progress in the village.

- 1. Support the regulation of standard business practices for entrepreneurs in the tourism sector within the village.** Regulation will firstly require that all organizations and individuals directly involved in the tourism and fishing sectors are fully knowledgeable of and compliant with the mandates entrusted to them via the awarding of their respective tourism and fishing licenses. Immediate action will require that all fishermen, guides and operators are licensed and have access to ongoing institutional strengthening activities for their respective organizations; that there is comprehensive coordination and management of a regulated fee management system for tours conducted in the village; and that boat travels along the river is regulated and effectively controlled. As a group, the fishermen association would also require direct assistance for institutional strengthening, cold storage facilities and business management skills.
- 2. Strengthen the village council to create an enabling environment for the conduct of business in the village.** This will involve supporting the council members so that they can meet regularly to plan and implement activities directly related to village affairs including community cleaning, garbage disposal, docking services, boat regulation, fees management, signposting and public facility maintenance. This village council should regularly update the proposed Oversight Committee and engage in periodic and regular audits of financial records as commissioned by the Oversight Committee.
- 3. Review, refine, re-package and aggressively market the tourism package** for Monkey River combined with Punta Negra and Punta Gorda visits. The re-visioning of the tourism package for the PHMR communities will allow for a proper positioning of all involved in the sector. This approach will ensure that along the chain of tourism services in all three communities, each provider has an opportunity to profit from the tourism product as a benefit of the custodianship of the PHMR. The current functioning of the tourism sector in Monkey River points to a system that lacks organization and regulation. While this may be acceptable to those currently

involved, such a system will be unsustainable in the long term as villagers will withdraw from supporting activities and core functions in the village that are otherwise critical for the marketing and enjoyment of the tourism product in this region.

4. **Strengthen the capacity of women and youth to actively participate in community economic development activities** in the village. It is evident that all economic activities in the village directly involve mostly men and women, and youths are not sufficiently engaged in substantive economic activities in the village. The women are likely to be engaged in the custodianship of natural resources like their male counterparts and are similarly knowledgeable of and willing to share about the intricacies of life in their village. This is not to be ignored as part of the tourism product. Women effectively possess the “softer” stories of resilience and community identity to tell, and this will be useful for the re-branding of the tourism product. Women’s participation is critical to tourism and adds a distinct dimension to the visitor’s experience. In this regard, women need to also benefit from training in business and product standards development which is provided to other groups. Indeed, they have been identified as the primary beneficiaries of the on-site tour guide trainees for the mangrove trail in the village.
5. The youth need to be engaged as early as possible in this rural tourism sector. They should also be actively participating in the development of their village. Their engagement can help to secure the tourism product of this region and especially in Monkey River. Many of the fishermen and tour guides are older adults, and while they have comprehensive knowledge of their surrounds and the skills with which to present these to visitors, young people remain a critical group who should also learn these skills and promote sustainability of the product. The community sees the youth as, like the women, having relevant roles at the Welcome Center and as tour guides and representatives in the village associations and organizations.

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# Punta Gorda

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# Punta Gorda Town

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## Background

Punta Gorda, or PG as it is commonly known, is the commercial and administrative urban center of the Toledo District. Roughly 210 miles from Belize City, Punta Gorda is Belize's southernmost town, with a population of 5,350 according to the 2010 Census. Punta Gorda can be considered one of the most ethnically diverse urban centers in the country though its population growth has been a marginal 2% when compared to the other municipalities like Belmopan and San Pedro which had above 8% growth rates during the period 2000-2010. The ethnic composition of Punta Gorda includes Mayan, Garifuna, East Indian, Creole, Mestizo, Mennonite, and newer groups such as Chinese and Taiwanese.

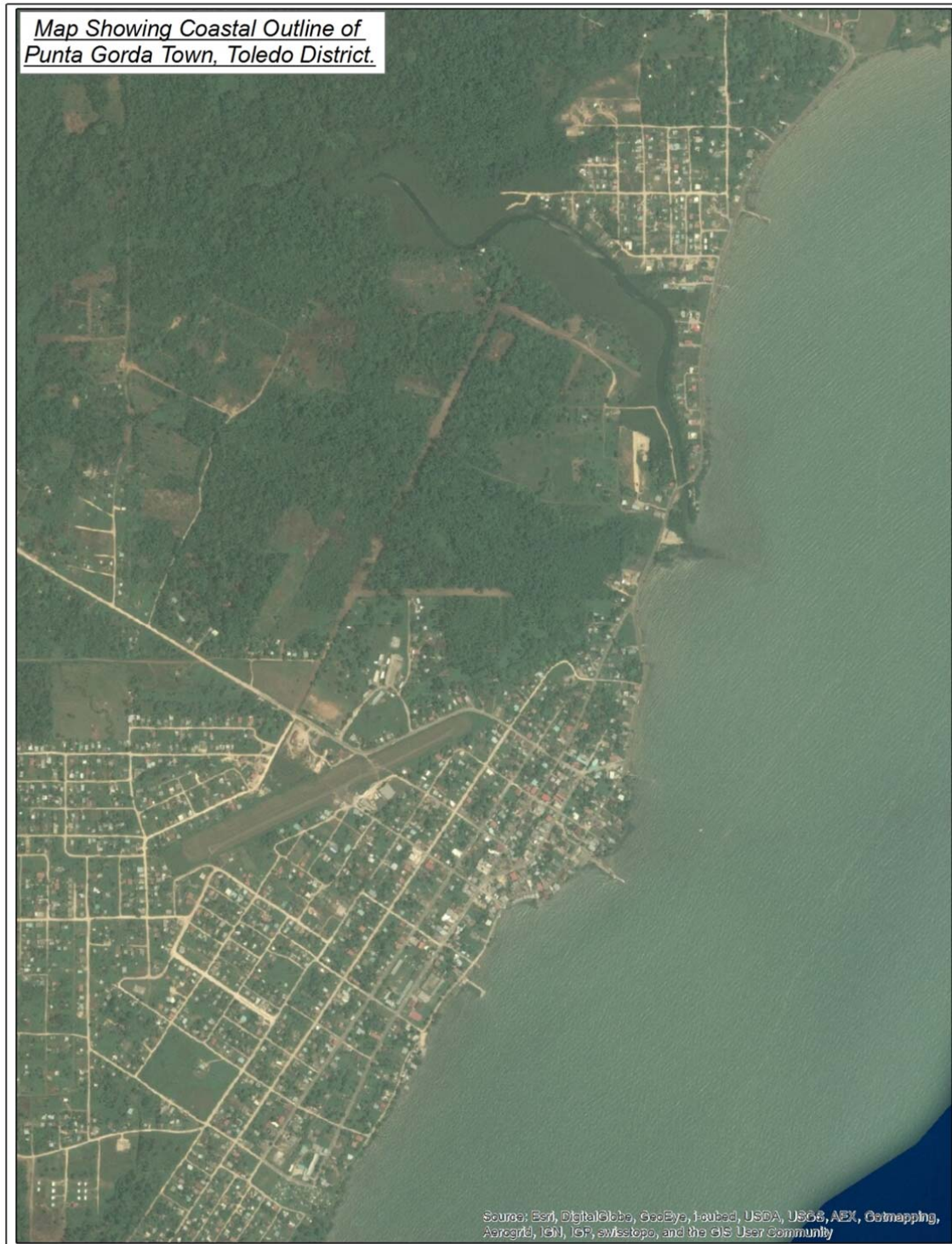
Historically, Punta Gorda was considered geographically and economically isolated from the rest of the country. However, with the upgrade and paving of the Southern Highway, the town has experienced increased connectivity to the rest of the country. No official record exists, but there is a perception of an upward trend in leisure and business travel to the locale. Transportation to the town is greatly facilitated by the relatively new highway and via smaller commuter planes that have had regular flight routes to the town for well over 30 years. Punta Gorda, like all the towns in Belize, is governed by a municipal body which constitutes a mayor and six elected councillors.

PG is bordered by the sea on the east, and this feature offers a scenic entrance to the town. The main road into town follows the shoreline after which it dissects into five main streets, all of which run in parallel form inland. The town is quaint, but there is visible urban planning limitations marked by the lack of signs and the absence of strictly defined zoning areas. Punta Gorda boasts a population of mixed economic background, and though Toledo District, in which the town is located, is consistently ranked poor in the overall poverty ratings for Belize, Punta Gorda Town itself is not considered poor compared to other urban centers in Belize<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> Belize Country Poverty Assessment, 2009

## Map of Punta Gorda Town





## Socio-Economic Analysis

According to the 2009 Country Poverty Assessment (CPA), rural poverty across Belize is generally stark, with the Toledo District having the highest levels at 73% poor and a high indigent rate at 60%. However, the CPA notes that urban poverty is vastly different and in fact, compared to the rest of the country, urban poverty in Punta Gorda is lowest compared to the rest of the country. Corozal Town and Punta Gorda contribute little to national urban poverty<sup>21</sup>.

Punta Gorda has a youthful population, many of whom are between the ages of 10 and 19 years of age. According to municipal records, the total number of households in Punta Gorda is 1358. The Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) documents an average household size in Punta Gorda of approximately 4 persons per household. Further, the PG Municipal Development Plan points out that there is a significant drop in the 20-24 age group, primarily among males. The plan further cites that the reduction in the male population in this group could be an indication that many young males migrate, possibly in search of educational and economic opportunities in other parts of the country or abroad. Notably, the town resident population fluctuates daily, owing to the influx of the rural population who come to the town for school, work and health care as well as to conduct business transactions. At least a thousand people are estimated to commute to PG during the day and return to their villages in the evening and nights<sup>22</sup>.

## Infrastructure and Utilities

The Punta Gorda Municipal Development Plan (PG MDP) Draft of 2013 cites that there is a proposed new municipal boundary which will include an area of 1,788 acres and the subdivisions/neighborhoods of Toledo Hope extension to the west and the Voice of America (VOA) area to the south. PG MDP also documents that the fastest growing area is Toledo Hope extension to the west. The vacant area between the town center and Toledo Hope is a low lying (swampy) area that is part of the watershed for the Joe Taylor Creek. However, the PG MDP states that this area is unsuitable for development since it is a watershed.

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<sup>21</sup> Belize Country Poverty Assessment, 2009

<sup>22</sup> Punta Gorda Municipal Development Plan, DRAFT. November, 2013

Punta Gorda functions as the economic hub for the surrounding villages and is an otherwise well-connected urban center. In his feasibility study for business development in the PHMR region, Enriquez (2013) notes that people from an area of 900 square miles commute daily to PG for work and trade. The town is also the main point of transportation for people visiting the Toledo District and the offshore southern cayes. PG has an airstrip which serves domestic flights provided by Maya Island Air and Tropic Air (flights to Placencia, Dangriga and Belize City). Public transportation is provided mainly by privately owned bus services which offer regular service to points north such as Independence, Dangriga, Belmopan, and Belize City. Water taxis offer daily crossings to neighboring Livingston and Puerto Barrios, Guatemala.

Punta Gorda has six main neighborhoods<sup>23</sup> connected by five main streets that run parallel to each other. Four of these streets are paved. The other streets in the municipality are mostly unpaved and tend to deteriorate greatly during rainy weather. The western and southern sections of the town are prone to flooding during the rainy season. Heavy rainfall affects the streets, often leaving them in very poor conditions. According to a transportation study by Becca (2010), Punta Gorda lags behind other Belizean municipalities in terms of the length and conditions of its road network<sup>24</sup>. Water service for the municipality is provided by Belize Water Services Limited, and some residents have vats or drums to store water. The majority of the residents receive electricity service from Belize Electricity Limited (BEL), and telecommunication services, from both Digicell and Smart cell phone service providers, are available. Landline phone service and payphone services are provided by Belize Telemedia Limited (BTL). However, both Smart and BTL provide Internet services.

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<sup>23</sup> The PG Municipal Development plan cites that the main neighborhoods in Punta Gorda include Central, NiHi / Hollywood, Mercy Rock, Water Supply Area (including the Magoon area), Hopeville and Indianville (Toledo Hope).

<sup>24</sup> Beca International Consultants (Beca), Transportation Management Study Final Report, December 2010, as cited in the PG Municipal Development Project, DRAFT, November, 2013.

## Economy

Punta Gorda Town does not have any one sizable industry that employs the working age population. Instead, the main sources of income for residents is linked to the public service, including teaching, medical and public health work, public administration, and uniformed services. A small group of professionals is also employed by mostly environmental non-governmental organizations (eNGO's) located in the district. The informal trade may likely employ a vast number of the population who are engaged in fishing, agriculture, entrepreneurship, tourism-oriented services, trade-work (mechanic, plumbing, construction etc.), domestic work, and unskilled labor, but there is no official documentation of this figure. It would be expected to be a significant number, however, and it may result in the town administration having a smaller small tax base than it ought to, since those employed in the informal sector are unlikely to pay any taxes. Construction, trade, retail, fledgling mining and other local services account for the main sectors of PG's economy. In addition to these sectors, the local economy is heavily supported by the remittances sent primarily by the Garifuna diaspora<sup>25</sup>. District unemployment stands at 8% at the April 2013 Labor Force Survey, though the rate for the town is not provided.

Tourism, though still in its infancy in this district, is considered to be a growing source of income generation for the town. Many visitors to Punta Gorda seek out its eco-tourism attractions, many of which are linked to marine and terrestrial resources, as well as cultural activities supported by the town's ethnically diverse population. Tourism is also inextricably linked to environmental management and sustainability. Punta Gorda is considered the hub for tourism related activities in the district. Apart from driving local level tourism transactions, Punta Gorda is also the transit point for travel to the rest of Central America, especially Guatemala and Honduras.

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<sup>25</sup> Punta Gorda Municipal Development Plan, DRAFT. November, 2013

## Land Settlement and Use

### Environmental factors

The town is nestled in a district that is ecologically diverse and rich. The Toledo District has terrestrial assets including rainforests, limestone caves and sinkholes, waterfalls, and rich biodiversity, some of which have been placed under protected area status. Terrestrial protected areas include Golden Stream Corridor Reserve, Bladen River Nature Reserve, Deep River Forest Reserve, Agua Caliente Lu Ha Wildlife Sanctuary, Machaca Forest Reserve, and Sarstoon Temash National Park. Being in close proximity to Punta Gorda, the protected areas are critical resources for the protection of the watershed, traditional livelihoods, regional biodiversity, and cultural traditions and practices (medicinal plants, traditional homes) as well as for tourism. Punta Gorda also benefits from being in close proximity to 200 cayes, many of which are important fishing areas and tourism destinations. There are three marine reserves, namely, the Port Honduras Marine Reserve, the Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve, and the Payne's Creek National Park, all of which support livelihood opportunities in Punta Gorda.

As it relates to sanitation and solid waste disposal, collecting and dumping all garbage from the municipality is becoming a large undertaking. Punta Gorda is also experiencing effluent disposal into the sea. Additionally, and at frequent intervals, the waste from regions within Guatemala periodically overwhelms waterways in the region. While Punta Gorda is a small municipality, it generates a significant amount of garbage such that the town needs to urgently institute an improved collection system linked to an updated disposal system. However, the municipal administration is unable to provide any further improvement to garbage collection than currently exists without major capital investment in a substantive solid waste disposal system.

## Basic Needs of Punta Gorda Town

The Punta Gorda Town administration is currently engaged in a comprehensive municipal development planning process, supported by the Government of Belize through the Social Investment Fund and funded by the World Bank. This municipal development plan documents the proposed activities for the long-term growth of PG. In the context of this community development planning within PHMR communities, the suggested improvement plans for Punta Gorda are limited to its capacity to generate and support economic livelihood development within the PHMR. While the overall development needs of Punta Gorda far outweigh what is proposed in this community development plan, the focus remains on how the strategic positioning of this primary urban hub can facilitate other development in and around the PHMR, especially in the communities of Monkey River and Punta Negra. For an overall development plan for Punta Gorda, therefore, PG Municipal Development Plan outlines its 10 Development Strategy Policies.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>The consultations for this community development, in relation to proposed actions for the town, can be found in elements of the PG Municipal Development Plan Policies 1, 3, 4, and 6. These are captioned as follows: Initiatives to support new local businesses and entrepreneurs; Develop programs to celebrate the diverse cultures in Punta Gorda: enhanced tourism development (based on access to wide range of natural habitats & local Garifuna, Mayan, East Indian and other cultures); Establish urban design guidelines, including a layout of streets and plots, building densities and land uses, in a manner that will allow for the efficient provision of infrastructure; set the stage for new commercial investment and create attractive residential neighborhoods that meet the needs and aspirations of the Punta Gorda community; and purchase a compactor garbage truck for the town.

Punta Gorda is viewed as the primary locale that would drive economic activities in Punta Negra and Monkey River. In this plan, Punta Gorda is considered to be the gateway for the mostly tourism-based activities that are believed to be critical to spurn economic development in the other two locations of Punta Negra and Monkey River. In this context, the proposed community development interventions for Punta Gorda are based on this town's potential capacity to serve as the local tourism hub from which eco-tourism and related activities in both Monkey River and Punta Negra communities would emanate. In order to serve as the economic driver, however, there are some critical and basic challenges that this town must overcome. These challenges are mostly related to the positioning of Punta Gorda to lead and enable high quality visitors' experience to Belize's most southern town. Primarily, Punta Gorda needs to improve its physical appeal to visitors and increase the likelihood of extended stay, quite unlike its current position as a transitory point for travelers with onward destinations further inland in Belize and neighboring Honduras, Guatemala and beyond. Some basic and reasonably practical actions to enable a hub potential in PG have been identified as the following:

1. **Enable guided and efficient movement within the town that showcases its attractions.** It is currently difficult for visitors to move decisively and freely around Punta Gorda Town. Starting from the town's entrance along the coastline, there are no signs to indicate currency of location, where critical facilities are located, and the services and experiences that are available in the town. Furthermore, the town's entrance could be significantly improved to enhance its appeal and add value to the visitor's experience. The proposed signage, while useful for residents and visitors, will offer practical and efficient navigation through the town. This should also correspond to the local improvement plan for the town's entrance. Ideally, this plan should focus on the niche attractions and cultural displays that Punta Gorda is aiming to be known for in the tourism Industry.
2. **Improve the town's ability to collect and dispose of its garbage in a sustainable manner.** Punta Gorda Town is still comparably small in relation to many of the other district towns in Belize. However, the garbage collecting capacity of the town administration is currently at its optimal capacity. The current garbage collection system, while reasonably managed, will shortly prove insufficient and inadequate (if not already), given the growing expanse of the town. Further, the town does not have a proper disposal site. A previous feasibility study made available to the Mayor's Office showed that even though there is visibly a need for a

garbage disposal system that would adapt a sanitary landfill mechanism, the garbage generated by the town is still not sufficient to justify such high level of expenditure. Until an appropriate system is put in place, however, a community-based intervention is necessary to clean the town and keep garbage out of visitors' view.

3. **Generate greater number of visits to the PHMR Communities through strong marketing of Punta Gorda Town.** Apart from services to facilitate mobility within the town, Punta Gorda also needs to have a well-established and resourced central tourist information facility that promotes attractions and sites in the nearby villages. A primary function of such a facility would be to actively market the PHMR communities. This facility would also be matched with an online presence whereby Punta Gorda's profile as a tourist destination could be greatly enhanced, including current information, cultural and natural features, and online booking options.
4. **Enhance market access to fish and fish products in Punta Gorda.** This is considered a critical action by local fishermen who live in Punta Gorda and who benefit from the marine protection system that TIDE manages. They opine that Punta Gorda Town does not have a fish processing plant, and the absence of such a facility has direct implications for their ability to access an expanded market space, giving the local consumer freedom to purchase fish in an unrestricted sale period. Currently, the community is only able to purchase fish at non-commercial prices during fishermen arrival times at the town market, and this is primarily limited to the late morning and lunch period. Once this period is past, fishermen are unlikely to sell any more fish, and neither can households nor businesses purchase same.
5. The absence of a fish processing facility for a coastal community is considered an opportunity lost since fish and other marine products are mainstays of diet and cultural practices. Beyond the cultural appeal, however, fishermen anticipate that the presence of a processing plant would also directly influence employment related opportunities in the community. A feasibility and cost-benefit analysis for this investment would need to be conducted to determine how it would impact the lives of fishermen who depend on and support the health of the PH Marine Reserve for their household maintenance.

## PHMR Communities and the Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment (TIDE)

The relationship which the three (3) focus communities share with TIDE is a long standing one. This relationship has and continues to experience challenges, but there remains mutual agreement that the partnership should continue. TIDE has supported residents' participation in several training activities, and they have also benefited from grant funding for community-based projects.

Moving into a new community development planning period, however, will require that TIDE and the communities have clear expectations for the implementation of the plans as well as clarity on responsibility for certain actions and activities. The lack of collective community capacities coupled with a heavy reliance on TIDE to front-load development activities may prove a dis-incentive for these communities to own and commit to actions that will improve the standard of living in all three locales.

During this period of community development intervention planning and implementation, TIDE and the communities will need to explore and revise implementation modalities that will consist of realistic partnership arrangements, solid communication guidelines, mutual transparency, accountability, and strong operational procedures.

Some critical roles for TIDE during the implementation of the community development plan:

1. **Convene** – The community development plan is focused on accountability and productivity. This will require that there are regular meetings and reporting opportunities for those monitoring and implementing projects. TIDE will be expected to plan and convene these reporting and monitoring sessions on a regular basis.
2. **Communicate** – To maintain commitment for project and community-based activities, there will need to be regular and consistent communication on the project activities. TIDE will be expected to develop and effectively disseminate information on related activities, people involved, and achievements made. This is a critical role since communities are expected to be regularly updated on progress, decisions made, and responsibilities of partners.
3. **Implement** – Some elements of this plan will require direct interventions by TIDE, and as such, TIDE will need to directly fund and front-load activities for projects that fall directly within their strategic plan<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> TIDE is currently finalizing its new strategic plan for the period 2014 – 2018.



4. **Partner** – Given that some of the proposed projects within the community development plan are outside of the immediate strategic focus of TIDE, organizations will need to actively seek to build partnerships with those that can advance some of the outstanding and/or complementary community development activities within the PHMR communities. These partnerships would need to be extended to the donor community, the public sector agencies, the private sector, and to other NGO and community-based organizations.

## Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholders	Interest	Influence	Impact
Fishermen	Availability of fish stock and other marine products	High	+/-
Women's groups	Livelihood opportunities	Low	+
Tour guides	Livelihood opportunities	High	+/-
Village and Municipal Councils	Community upkeep, order,	Low - Moderate	+
Community-based organizations, including TIDE	Sustainable development, regulation and community empowerment	High	+
Youth	Employment and Livelihood opportunities	Low	+
Business Community (Tourism)	Growth of Tourism Product	High	+/-

## Community Development Priority 1: Strengthen Local Institutional Capacities to Lead Implementation of Community Development Plans

Strategy	What is it?	How Can it Help Community Development?	Partners	Potential Resources
1. Capacity Development for Community Planning in Punta Gorda, Monkey River and Punta Negra)	Tailored training on development mapping and organization conducted onsite in Punta Negra, Monkey River and Punta Gorda to enable localized planning to respond specifically to each of the communities' needs.	Greater ownership and control by local authorities and communities over the way in which their area develops, making it easier for local leaders to shape the development they want, and giving them greater ability to attract employment and livelihood options.	<p>Monkey River and Punta Negra Village Councils, Punta Gorda Town Council</p> <p>Public Sector: Ministry of Rural Development, Local Government</p> <p>NGO/National/International Development Agencies: Belize Red Cross TIDE COMPACT/GEF PACT OAK Foundation</p>	<p>Ministry of Rural Development</p> <p>NGO/National/International Development Agencies: Belize Red Cross TIDE COMPACT/GEF PACT OAK Foundation</p>
2. Regulation of community-based organizations (Punta Gorda, Monkey River and	Technical Assistance to each of the community organizations to formalize and implement mandates including official incorporation, development of	Build and mobilize local leadership to drive the change that the communities need and to enforce regulations, by-laws and local policies governing business	<p>TIDE</p> <p>Tour Guide Association</p> <p>Tour Operators</p>	<p>TIDE</p> <p>BEST/WB Project</p> <p>BELTRAIDE</p>

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<p>Punta Negra)</p>	<p>terms of references, roles and responsibilities per livelihood sector (e.g. tour guiding, commercial fishing, tour operation, hoteliering and homestays), and licensing</p>	<p>and other activities in each of the communities. Develop and implement standards to strengthen and build tourism and fishing sector in each of the communities</p>	<p>Association Fishermen Association Monkey River and Punta Negra Village Councils, Punta Gorda Town Council</p>	<p>Association for Protected Areas Management Organizations Belize Tourism Board Ministry of Local Government Ministry of Tourism Ministry of Fisheries Co-operative Department</p>
<p><b>3.</b> Technical Coordination and Advisory Support for Local Community Development</p>	<p>This coordination mechanism will comprise of community members and offices that would serve as a local project oversight body, monitoring and facilitating project implementation in each of the PHMR communities. The purpose of this body will be to facilitate transparency, efficiency and ownership of community projects, building greater partnership relations, and reducing dependence on outside organizations to implement projects.</p>	<p>The Local Project monitoring committee will be established, consisting of membership from each of the three communities and with overall responsibility to actively monitor project implementation and to provide guidance to the communities and TIDE.  Will directly support a wide range of projects, including those that support education, health, and skills for environmental custodianship and business development.</p>	<p>TIDE TIDE Advisory Committee Local Project monitoring Committee</p>	<p>Project Supported TIDE BEST/WB Project</p>

## Community Development Priority 2: Urgently Implement Basic Needs Projects for the PHMR Communities

Strategy	What is it?	How Can it Help Community Development?	Partners	Potential Resources
<p><b>4.</b> Institute a program of basic need project implementation specifically:</p> <p><b>4.1.</b> Upgrade Primary School Facility in Punta Negra</p>	<p>Refurbish the primary school in the community so that children and families do not seek educational opportunities outside of the village</p>	<p>A school is the mainstay of any functioning and growing community. The presence of children and their families promote stability and increase the longevity of a community.</p>	<p>Ministry of Education Anglican Mission Social Investment Fund</p>	<p>Social Investment Fund TIDE/PACT</p>
<p><b>4.2.</b> Upgrade potable water supply in Punta Negra</p>	<p>Install a water system in the village that is cost effective and provides safe drinking water to a small rural population.</p>	<p>Water is the basis of life. Access to a consistent and reliable supply of water reduces likelihood of waterborne diseases and adds value to the travelers' experiences in the PHMR villages.</p>	<p>Ministry of Rural Development Punta Negra Village Council UNDP BELIZE</p>	<p>Ministry of Rural Development SIF UNDP BELIZE</p>
<p><b>4.3.</b> Institute a Transportation System to Punta Negra and Monkey River</p>	<p>Institute a reliable transportation system to the village that is linked to the tourism package.</p>	<p>Regular and cost effective transportation is critical to the success of the proposed tourism package. Most importantly it is critical for regular household and community activities and is the primary means to get people to visit the community.</p>	<p>TIDE</p>	<p>TIDE Tours Tour Guide Association World Bank/BEST</p>

**Community Development Priority 3: Institute an Intermediary Implementation Mechanism to support Identified Livelihood, Enabling Activities in each of the communities**

Strategy	What is it?	How Can it Help Community Development?	Partners	Potential Resource
<p><b>5.</b> Strengthen project coordination and management capacities within the lead agency – TIDE</p>	<p>Establish and maintain a Community Development Coordination Unit (CDCU) within TIDE as the lead agency in the implementation of the community development plan</p>	<p>Communities on their own will have access to consistent technical assistance and personnel directly attached to their individual projects; the CDCU is expected to offer day-to-day assistance, management, and mentoring assistance to increase likelihood of success for each project under implementation.</p>	<p>TIDE Advisory Committee Rotary – Toledo Chapter BTIA Punta Gorda Town Council</p>	<p>BEST GEF/COMPACT BSIF BTB</p>
	<p>Realign the role of TIDE Advisory Committee to promote the participation of civil society and support implementation of the Community Development Plans</p>	<p>The Advisory Committee will have more specific advisory responsibilities to inform TIDE’s position on community-based activities.</p>	<p>TIDE Advisory Committee APAMO</p>	<p>TIDE</p>

## Community Development Framework for the Three Impacted Communities of the PHMR: Monkey River, Punta Negra and Punta Gorda

<b>Impact: Household economic insecurity in the three communities impacted by the Port Honduras Marine Reserve Border is reduced.</b>				
<b>Outcome: Strengthened, proactive and purposeful participation of PHMR community organisations in local development</b>				
<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Verifiable Indicators</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>	<b>Potential Partnerships</b>
<p>Output 1: A coordinated capacity building program is implemented for community-based organizations in all three PHMR communities</p>	<p>Capacity building plans developed for priority community-based organizations</p>	<p>Training Plans for: fishers, tour guides, women's group village and town councils</p> <p>Training manuals</p> <p>Trainers' Report</p> <p>Training Evaluation Reports, mobilization plans</p> <p>Certificates Awarded</p> <p>Participants' Attendance list</p>	<p>All the community-based organizations are prepared and willing to participate in the training program</p> <p>Training activities are responsive and meet the needs of the community-based organization</p>	<p>TIDE</p> <p>Punta Negra Village Council</p> <p>Monkey River Council</p> <p>Punta Gorda Village Council</p> <p>PG &amp; MR Tour Guide Associations</p> <p>Women's groups</p> <p>Fishermen Associations</p>
<p>Activities: 1.1. Develop and implement training on village or town council institutional strengthening.</p>	<p>Institutional strengthening training program implemented in each PHMR community</p> <p>Regulation and Governance Training by BTB, BTIA conducted</p>	<p>Report of institutional strengthening needs</p> <p>Records of training sessions</p> <p>Records of training participants</p> <p>Training manual</p>	<p>PHMR Town and Village Councils support the training program and all councillors actively participate</p> <p>PHMR Town Council uses leadership training to build its planning</p>	<p>TIDE</p> <p>Ministry of Rural Development, Belize Tourism Board, Belize Tourism Industry Association, Tour Guides Association, Fishermen Federation,</p>

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<p>1.2 Implement training in Regulation and Governance for Tourism stakeholders operating in each of the three communities</p> <p>1.3 Maintain scholarship program to build male and female youth leadership capacities.</p>	<p>annually up to 2019</p> <p>TIDE Secondary School Scholarship program maintained</p>	<p>Certificates distributed</p> <p>BTB Training reports</p> <p>Participants attendance sheets</p> <p>Evaluation forms</p> <p>At least 45 high school scholarships are awarded and/or facilitated annually by TIDE</p>	<p>capacity for the Belize Municipal Development Project</p> <p>Tourism stakeholders are eager and prepared to improve tourism product development in respective communities</p> <p>Young people in PHMR communities know of and apply for the TIDE scholarships</p>	<p>Toledo Fishermen Association</p> <p>TIDE</p>
<p><b>Outcome: Communities are implementing sustainable projects to reduce pressure on natural resources.</b></p>				
Outputs	Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions	Potential Partnerships
<p>Output 2:</p> <p>Increase stakeholder capacity to implement community development projects as outlined in community development plan</p>	<p>Three (3) projects are implemented in each PHMR community by 2019</p>	<p>Project Implementation reports</p> <p>Records of community meetings</p> <p>Records of community representation on planning bodies</p> <p>Project monitoring and evaluation reports</p>	<p>Communities support and endorse the proposed projects in the community development plan</p>	<p>TIDE, Advisory Committee,</p> <p>Ministry of Rural Development, BTB, BTIA , PG Town Council, PG Tour Guide Association, Punta Negra and Monkey River Village Councils, Monkey River Tour Guide Association</p>
<p>Activity 2.1</p>	<p>15 PHMR leaders</p>	<p>Training Reports</p>	<p>Community members are interested in the</p>	<p>TIDE</p>

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Train PHMR community leaders in project design and implementation	trained	Training manual # of participants Certificates distributed	training topic	APAMO PACT GEF/Small Grants/Compact
Activity 2.2: A community-based monitoring committee is supported by TIDE to plan, develop and partner with other entities to implement basic needs projects.	Monitoring Committee established	Terms of reference for committee Criteria for selection of community representatives Names of representatives from each community Number of meetings held Schedule and reports of meetings and field visits conducted	Communities qualify for basic needs projects for education, water, and sanitation  There exists a cadre of formal and informal leaders who are committed to the work and functions of the committee  The role and composition of the current Advisory Committee is adaptable  Advisory Committee members accept proposals for revisions and composition	TIDE
Output 3: Implement basic needs projects in education, water and sanitation services in rural PHMR communities	Basic needs proposal developed and fully funded	Completed proposals Donor Commitments	Communities are eligible for basic needs projects and are prepared to provide in-kind contributions	TIDE Social Investment Fund GEF/COMPACT PACT BEST/World Bank Project



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				Ministry of Education
Activity 3.1 Develop and implement proposal for potable water system in rural PHMR Communities	Potable water project completed in Punta Negra	Potable water system project reports	Communities receive timely support for development and submission of proposals to respective donor agencies	
Activity 3.2 Develop and implement proposal for sanitation in rural PHMR Communities	Sanitation projects completed in Punta Negra and Monkey River  School rehabilitation project implemented in Punta Negra	Field visit reports by monitoring committee and TIDE  Reports of Ministry of Education  Sanitation project reports		
Activity 3.3 Develop and implement proposal for primary school refurbishment in rural PHMR	Garbage collection and disposal systems implemented in Punta Negra, Monkey River and Punta Gorda			
Activity 3.4 Develop and implement proposal for garbage collection and disposal for PHMR Communities.	# of weekly boat trips between Punta Gorda, Punta Negra and Monkey River.	Water Taxi Schedule		
Activity 3.5 Develop and implement proposal for basic				

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transportation system between PHMR communities				
<b>Outcome: PHMR communities are actively engaged in coordinated and synergistic community development inclusive of a range of stakeholders (communities, authorities, private sector, academia, NGOs, etc.) at the local level.</b>				
<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Verifiable Indicators</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>	<b>Potential Partnerships</b>
Output 4 A Community Development Coordination Unit is established to manage project interventions in PHMR communities.	A project coordination unit staffed  # of partnership agreements signed  MoUs signed with PHMR communities and TIDE Coordination Unit	Terms of Reference for the Coordination Unit  Project Coordinator  Administrative Assistant  Project proposal developed and submitted  Project funding secured  # of projects implemented annually  Monitoring Reports  Partnership agreements with interested entities  Community meetings  Memorandum of Understanding between	The Community Development Coordination Unit is dedicated to the PHMR Communities  Requisite Capacities can be sourced in the District.	TIDE  GEF/Compact  Mar Fund  BEST/World Bank  OAK Foundation  Social Investment Fund
Activity 4.1: Implement livelihood improvement projects identified for PHMR	# of livelihood improvement projects developed and fully	Project Financial Report  Project Monitoring	Projects remain priority for PHMR Communities  Stakeholders support the	

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<p>communities, Including:  Activity 4.1: Develop marketing strategy for tourism product for PHMR communities as one unique destination experience  Activity 4.1: Implement project interventions to enable and enhance viability of tourism products in PHMR Communities.  <b>Monkey River:</b> 4.2.1: Regulate Tourism Activities in Monkey River to include:  4.2.2: Re-instalment of Welcome Center equipped with fee management system;</p>	<p>funded  Marketing Strategy developed  Functional Welcome Center  # of project proposals developed # of proposals funded  Tourism Licenses  # of staff  Mangrove Tour Package  Signs Installed</p>	<p>Reports TIDE Annual Reports Field Monitoring Reports Advisory  Marketing Strategy  Project proposals  Projects Funding  Licenses BTB Reports BTIA reports  Terms of References Payroll Financial Reports  Employees hired  Repair reports Contract</p>	<p>project and are actively engaged in their implementation  TIDE, Tourism Stakeholders maintain a strong and supportive relationship  Funding opportunities for each of the livelihood projects are viable through traditional and non-traditional donor agencies</p>	
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4.2.3: Re-habilitate docking facility	Upgraded dock	# of people employed		
4.2.4: Develop river transportation policy	Policy	# of Boat Captains adhering Signage on bank of river Women's Group Reports		
4.2.5: Develop mangrove tour and train women and youth for site specific tour	# of staff # of tours conducted	Feature Plan		
<b>Punta Gorda:</b> 4.2.6: Install Entrance Feature and Community signage to Punta Gorda Town	Entrance feature plan approved and funded	Hub marketing materials Hub online presence Staff terms of references		
4.2.7: Improve PHMR tourist hub facility in Punta Gorda Town	Functional tourist hub # of employees	Plant Reports Employee payroll		
4.2.8: Install Fish processing plant in Punta Gorda Town	# of fishermen selling to plant	Contract Visitors feedback Financial reports		
<i>Activity 4.Punta Negra:</i> Market hospitality and travel experience in Toledo	Restaurant Building constructed # of meals prepared			

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Install community restaurant Support processing of fruits and products in season for sale	# of products processed	Financial reports		
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**Appendix One:**

**THE PORT HONDURAS MARINE RESERVE**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**February 2014**

## Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Notes		
(1)	<b>Title</b>	The Port Honduras Marine Reserve Advisory Committee (PHMRAC)
(2)	<b>Accountable to</b>	The Port Honduras Marine Reserve Community Development Coordination Unit(CDCU) and Local Project Monitoring Committee
(3)	<b>How is accountability demonstrated?</b>	Advisory Committee to be Chaired by Chair of Community Development Unit Director to be elected by the five PHMR communities and members of the Local Project Monitoring Committee
(4)	<b>Purpose of the Committee</b>	To advise the CDCU on matters of business, critical concerns and PHMR issues as they arise To advise on delegated decisions where appropriate
(5)	<b>Proposed Terms of Reference</b>	<b>Details</b>

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<b>1</b>	To ensure compliance with strategic plan and environmental guidelines
<b>2</b>	To provide professional advice to the CDCU on implementation of actions
<b>3</b>	To recommend to the CDCU any necessary actions to implement new regulations, policies and best practice to marine conservation related to community development
<b>4</b>	To ensure that key national, regional and local issues are brought to the attention of the CDCU and to ensure that a coordinated response is provided to local, regional and national consultations and issues
<b>5</b>	To coordinate responses to media enquiries in consultation with partner agencies
<b>6</b>	To ensure links with regional and national networks are maintained , and, where appropriate, contribute to regional and national events
<b>7</b>	To develop criteria for measuring the performance of the children's services authorities against the single plans in so far as the plan relates to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and families in an authority's area
<b>8</b>	To determine the Agenda for Board meetings
<b>9</b>	To monitor the PHMR Annual Report and Work Programme. The business plan to include: Budget Risk A performance framework, including performance indicators Progress against planned actions
<b>10</b>	To set up, as necessary, standing or time-limited sub-groups with delegated responsibilities, to review the work programme.
<b>11</b>	To oversee the work of community monitoring committees, and ensure that their work plans reflect CDCU priorities
<b>12</b>	To develop local policies and procedures for interagency work to improve marine conservation and community development, within the framework of national guidance



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<b>13</b>		To commission audits to ensure that the agreed policies and practices are being applied consistently
<b>14</b>		To set up task and finish groups when required
<b>15</b>		To ensure that communities and families are consulted and engaged in the development of plans and services
<b>16</b>		To ensure that the committee remains representative, responsive, and effective in advising the CDCU
<b>(6)</b>	<b>Membership</b>	
<b>(7)</b>	<b>Additional Members</b>	
<b>(8)</b>	<b>Chair of the Committee 2014/15</b>	
<b>(9)</b>	<b>Secretary for 2009/10</b>	
<b>(10)</b>	<b>Frequency of Meetings</b>	The committee will meet 6 times a year
<b>(11)</b>	<b>Quorum</b>	Three out of four agencies to be present; however, meetings can proceed in the absence of full quoracy at the Chair's discretion
<b>(12)</b>	<b>Delegated limits</b>	To be determined by the Chair, as necessary
<b>(13)</b>	<b>Decision Making</b>	Made by consensus. A split vote should go to the Chair for final decision

<b>(14)</b>	<b>Papers</b>	Action minutes, agendas and reports
<b>(15)</b>	<b>Agenda and papers</b>	Agenda and papers to be circulated 5 working days before meetings
<b>(16)</b>	<b>Minutes of Meetings</b>	Action minutes to be distributed within 5 working days of the meeting.
<b>(17)</b>	<b>Actions arising</b>	Actions are to be referred to CDCU members/ the relevant organisation/ relevant sub-group within 2 working days
<b>(18)</b>	<b>Confidentiality</b>	The meeting will be held in private
<b>(19)</b>	<b>Regulation and Control</b>	Subject to PHMR review and inspection
<b>(20)</b>	<b>Amendments to Terms of Reference</b>	Only with the approval of the Advisory Committee
<b>(21)</b>	<b>Life Span of Group</b>	Standing group meeting every two months unless circumstances dictate otherwise

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