

# MESOAMERICAN REEF FUND

## INTERIM TECHNICAL REPORT

### 1. Title page:

- Project Number: RG-OAK-SEA-2018
- Project name: Increasing the Effectiveness of Sustainable Marine Resources Use and Management in SEA Co-managed Protected Areas
- Grantee: Southern Environmental Association (SEA)
- Author of the Report: Arreini Palacio Morgan
- Address: Main Street, Placencia Village, Stann Creek District, Belize
- Period covered in the report and date of presentation: March-2018 to March 30-2019

### 2. Executive summary:

The proposal aims to strengthen SEA's financial sustainability through the implementation of the Resource Mobilization Plan. The investment at Laughing Bird Caye Gift Shop by the acquisition of items that are sold and the rental of equipment to visitors is being strengthened through this grant. In 2018 the income from the gift shop has increased 36% compared to 2017. The rental equipment have not been acquired but they have been identified. It also aims to improve SEA's visibility within the community through the design, purchase and placement of three signs in strategic points in Placencia Village and three signs within the marine protected areas.

### 3. Objectives:

#### **Objective 1.**

**To improve the financial stability of the Association by opening an additional gift/rental shop at the head office in Placencia resulting in revenues from the protected areas contributing 10% to the annual protected areas budget by January 2019.**

#### **Objective 2.**

**To improve the visibility of the Laughing Bird Gift Shop and the two protected areas by the end of the project, with the purpose of increase gift shop sales and profits.**

### **Objective 3.**

**To improve the resource mobilization for the Association by selecting, through a workshop, an additional resources mobilization strategy to be implemented by January 2019.**

#### **4. Project progress:**

- Indicate if the originally planned methodology still applies or if it has been modified. In case of the latter, explain why and what the changes are.

The originally planned methodology remains unchanged. All activities proceed.

- List the results/advances/products to date by planned activity.

Objective 1. To improve the financial stability of the Association by opening an additional gift/rental shop at the head office in Placencia resulting in revenues from the protected areas contributing 10% to the annual protected areas budget by January 2019.

**Activity 1.** Locate available item online according to the list of items in the Budget Notes

At the beginning of the project items were located via the web (t-shirts, stuffed toys, croakies, bookmarks, keychains, among others) through three quotations and selection process. A down payment was made for the items but were delayed in shipment and it is anticipated that they should be in country on/by May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and once in-house they will be shipped immediately to Laughing Bird Caye. Local items were sourced through local vendors (baskets, jewelry, wooden sculptures, among others). A total of 191 items were inventoried, priced and moved to the store.

In 2018 a total of 912 items were sold compared to 618 items in 2017 which represented an increase in sales of 36% (see Annex 1).

**Activity 2.** Receive and process quotations

The Finance and Administration Department has received quotations for the items and presented to the Executive Director who wanted examples of the layouts, the cost of transportation and the deadline for deliveries. The Finance unit is in the process of clarifying these queries (see Annex 2). COMPARISON TABLE

### **Activity 3. Receive item and inventory**

Locally purchased items (see Annex 1) were received and inventoried at the SEA Headquarters. In March 2019 the Finance Staff were involved in a Business and Inventory Management Capacity Building Opportunity through the Belize Chamber of Commerce and the BELTraide supported by PACT (see Annex 3). As a result, the Finance Staff:

- a. Revised the inventory form and trained the field staff in data collection and inventory management.
- b. Generated a list of the popular items for priority purchasing.

This training strengthened inventory management and facilitated the use of Quick Books for a better control on sales.

### **Activity 4. Transportation to the Laughing Bird Gift Shop**

All items that were received in office, were inventoried, priced and transported to the Laughing Bird Gift Shop and were verified by the Gift Shop Manager.

### **Activity 5. Monitor and verify sales or rental.**

To monitor inventory and verify sales the method used was the development of an inventory master list which compared to the sales of items and updated weekly.

The following activities were used to update the inventory master list:

1. Utilizing the format in the new form developed by the Finance Staff (see Annex 4). As mentioned before with this format the Senior Team is able to track the sales of the gift-shop, generate quarterly reports and make important management decisions regarding inventory eg. Discount sales of less popular items to help their movement from the shop.
2. The Finance and Administration Manager and other members of the Senior Team made random inventory and sales checks on the Gift Shop during the high visitation days.
3. The Executive Director examined and discussed the quarterly Profit and Loss Reports (see Annex 5) generated by the Finance and Admin Manager.

**Objective 2.** To improve the visibility of the Laughing Bird Gift Shop and the two protected areas by the end of the project, with the purpose of increase gift shop sales and profits.

**Activity 1.** Design layout of signs

The Education Assistant in collaboration with the Administrative Assistant drafted the layout for three signs that will be placed in Placencia and three signs, one for each caye (see Annex 6). Three printing and manufacturing quotations were sourced and one selected (see Annex 7).

**Activity 2.** Locate area to place signs along the highway and peninsula

Two areas have been identified and approved by the Placencia Village Council for the placement of signs: one near the airstrip and the other near the point Placencia (municipal pier) (see Annex 8). SEA awaits the letters of confirmation from the Placencia Village Council.

**Activity 3.** Print and Install sign

Following the approval of this report and the signs' layout the signs will be submitted to the printer for printing and assembly.

**Activity 4.** Design layout of package

Package layout was completed by the Education Assistant in collaboration with the Administrative Assistant. The SEA Management Team reviewed the submission, made corrections and the final draft was approved by the Executive Director (see Annex 9). The objective of these packages is to provide information on SEA's Programme areas to stakeholders, donors and partners.

**Activity 5.** Print and assemble packages

Packages were printed at the SEA Office as price quotes for printing proved to be far more than anticipated. In house printing quality is excellent and glossy paper purchased by the team were used to have a good appearance. 50 were printed in the trial phase and 50 more packages were prepared for dissemination. The logos of the donors were added after the packages were printed

50 additional packages were printed on February 11, 2019 and disseminated.

#### **Activity 6.** Disseminate according to visibility plan

Activities for networking and visibility occurred in October and December, 2018 (World Food Day Event, TIDE Conservation Fair, Ocean Hero Presentation, National Service Day Event) and packages were delivered to attendees to socialize SEAs work in the area.

In the first quarter of 2019 the rest of the packages were disseminated to: PACT Grants Programme Officers, BAS, TASA, Cabot Foundation, local hotels, tour operators and interested people that came to the office for information (see Annex 10).

**Objective 3.** To improve the resource mobilization for the Association by selecting, through a workshop, an additional resources mobilization strategy to be implemented by January 2019.

**Activity 1.** Board, Staff and Consultant prioritize the most feasible and cost effective activity

During a staff and board session (see Annex 11) facilitated by consultant Janette Strand, held on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018, following a revision of the Resource Mobilization Plan, a decision was made to develop a plan to implement the activity of kayak rentals, within the Placencia Lagoon and Laughing Bird Caye. The Finance Manager was tasked with drafting an implementation work plan and presenting to the staff and Board of Directors for approval. This Plan will be implemented once the kayaks have been purchased (see Annex 12).

**Activity 2.** Plan the implementation of activity and submit to MAR Fund

A Draft of the Work Plan was presented to the Staff at a session on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 for them to review and. Recommendations from the Rangers included:

- ensuring the durability of the kayaks by requesting advice from local kayak business owners and purchasing the high end Jackson Coosa (Brand Name) kayaks,
- purchasing a pressure washer to maintain the kayaks,
- develop an equipment manual for Field Staff to ensure proper use of kayaks,
- develop a release, responsibility and waiver form for kayak renters,
- source capacity building for the use and maintenance of kayaks is conducted for all staff.

The Finance Manager will consider the suggestions and amend the Work-plan to be submitted to MAR Fund.

### **Activity 3. Conduct activity**

This activity was delayed to June 2019 due to the absence of the Finance and Admin. Manager, the main coordinator of this project activity, from January to April 2019 on both sick and maternity leave.

Her absence was sudden and extended causing delays to the implementation of some project activities and reporting. SEA was unable to replace her in the duration and the present staff was unable to accommodate all her activities.

### **Activity 4. Assess activity's success and replicate**

Scheduled for 2019

## **5. Goals:**

The overall goal of the project is *"To strengthen the financial stability of the Southern Environmental Association through improved stakeholder awareness and the organization's visibility by investing in business mechanisms and supporting the implementation of a resource mobilization plan."*

During this first year of the project SEA has had the opportunity to plan and identify a resource mobilization activity (rentals) that will enhance the financial stability of the organization. SEA has been able to share results and information of our Programmes to different stakeholders. Once the signs are placed this will enhance SEA's visibility and the protected areas thereby improving stakeholder awareness. Finally SEA has been able to ensure the sustainability of the Laughing Bird Gift Shop through this grant and a concept has been presented to PACT for continuity of the gift shop when this project is ended

- Indicate the advance of the project in relation to the original timetable and explain the reason for any delays there may have been.

The project proceeds as per schedule with delays.

- The purchasing of goods for the Laughing Bird Gift Shop was delayed because the shop was stocked with product purchased earlier this year. The SEA Senior Team took the decision to delay the purchasing of more stock until preparations for the tourist season commences in January 2019. In addition, SEA would like to launch a line of t-shirt designs made by the SEA Rangers in time for our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018. These layouts are being finalized and then will be digitized by our vendor Dolphin Productions. T-shirts will be ordered in early December 2018.
- An extended leave of the Finance and Admin Manager caused delays in some project activities (purchasing of t-shirts, completion of the Finance Report, drafting of the work-plan for the rentals among others) and reporting.

## **6. Obstacles:**

- a. Rapid rise in fuel costs: During the time lapse in between the submission of the grant and implementation of activities, the cost of fuel went up by over \$2.00Bz per gallon. This required SEA to fill the financial gaps caused by the increase.
- b. Postponement of project activities that required the lead of the Finance Manager. Without appropriate staff to accommodate the activities, this required SEA to delay the activities.
- c. Delay in the development of the annual audit caused the project financial report to be incomplete and undelivered.

## **7. Links with other organizations:**

During the first period of the project, SEA has had the opportunity to liaise with the Tour Guide Association and the Placencia Belize Tourism Industry Association, both of which provided feedback on the types of items that should be stocked within the Laughing Bird Gift Shop.

SEA also met with the Placencia Village Council to discuss the placement of signs.

Additional links were made with local artisans who had created alternative livelihoods (former fishermen) through the manufacturing of picture frames and shell jewelry and have the desire to conduct sales through the Gift Shop.

## **8. Description of activities for next period:**

### Objective 1

Internationally sourced items and locally bought T-shirts will be purchased in March and November 2019. These will be inventoried, priced, transported to the Gift Shop during the next reporting period and sales will be monitored during the final stages of the grant.

### Objective 2

Signs are to be printed and installed May 2019 and assemble packages are to be disseminated December 2018.

### Objective 3

The selected Resource Mobilization activity (kayak rentals) is to be implemented through an approved work-plan that is being drafted. This work-plan will be presented to MAR Fund in November 2019.

**9. Project development table:**

Project Development Table is attached.

**Please attach graphic materials and publications that illustrate the results and are samples of the project products.**



Project title: Improving the financial stability of the Southern Environmental Association

Objective	Output / Expected Result	Activity	Time Unit																	Performance indicator	Percent Completion	Sources and means of verification	Impact Indicator	Assumptions & risks
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17					
Objective 1: To improve the financial stability of the Association by opening an additional gift/rental shop at the head office in Placencia resulting in revenues from the protected areas contributing 10% to the annual protected areas budget by January 2019.	Fully stocked gift shop and rental for 2018	1. Locate available item online List of items attached to Annex 2. Budge Notes)																		10 web researchs to locate available items	100%	web pages adresses	The annual income of SEA is increased by 7%. This will be measured against 2017 as this is the first in four years that SEA has functioned at full capacity.	1. items are unavailable 2. Items are damaged in transportation 3. Unfavorable weather conditions 4. Increase in fuel prices 5. increase in item price
		2. Receive and process quotations																		3 price quotes for each item	100%	pictures, quotations and technical report		
		3. Receive item and inventory																		Item priced, packaged, tagged and inventoried on the office system and gift shop system	85%	pics and finance report		
		4. Transport to gift shop																		Item landed at the gift shop and displayed on the shelf	85%	technical report and pics, inventory list		
		5. Monitor and Verify sales or rental																		Weekly and monthly reports received and analysed	50%	technical report		
Objective 2: To improve the visibility of the Laughing Bird Gift Shop and the two protected areas by the end of the project, with the purpose of increase gift shop sales and profits	The implementation of a visibility plan developed during the resource mobilization exercise.	1. Design layout of signs																		Consultant to carry out the design contracted	100%	signed contract	Increased visitation to Laughing Bird Caye by 10% and increased orders for purchase of items increased by 10% by end of project	1. unfavorable weather conditions 2. increase in fuel prices
		2. Locate area to place signs along the highway and Peninsula																		Location of sign placement on map	100%	agreement with landowners for placement of signs and map of location		
		3. Print and install signs																		5 Signs placed	0%	pics and technical report		
		4. Design layout of package																		Digital layout of packages approved	100%	pics and technical report		
		5. Print and assemble packages																		200 Packages completed	45%	technical report		
		6. Disseminate according to Visibility Plan																		Packages disseminated via personal visits and postage.	45%	dissemination list		
Objective 3: To improve the resource mobilization for the Association by selecting, through a workshop, an additional resources mobilization strategy to be implemented by January 2019	Implementation of one Resource Mobilization Strategy that leads to the accumulation of \$20,000.00 in unrestricted funding to the Organization in the first year of the Strategy's implementation.	1. Board, Staff and Consultant prioritize the most feasible and cost effective activity																		Activity selected in a participatory manner and through the development of a workshop.	100%	project report	Activity implemented resulting in \$20,000.00 added to the organizational budget by the end of the project	
		2. Plan the implementation of activity and submit to MARFund																		Written workplan completed and disseminated among the Board and Staff	50%	workplan		
		3. Conduct activity																		Activity completed by staff with direction from the Board Member with experience in Resource Mobilization	0%	activity report		
		4. Assess activity's success and replicate																		Board and Staff assess the activity and replicate	0%	assessment report		