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## FACT SHEET

# REGIONAL COASTAL BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

The Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project improves livelihoods and reduces threats to coastal marine ecosystems in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, by opening new economic opportunities based on sustainable management of natural resources.

Along the Central American coast, fishing is a traditional source of income and food. The socio-economic precariousness of coastal communities and the lack of alternative livelihoods translate into strong pressure on marine resources, decreasing the ability of oceans to provide food and incomes. Decreased livelihoods, in turn, are a contributing factor to illegal immigration to the United States.

To address this problem, USAID, in alliance with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and local partners, contributes to biodiversity conservation with activities that benefit current and future generations. Specifically, the project promotes biocommerce, improved governance, landscape management, and communication and social inclusion as strategies to achieve local prosperity in the transboundary coastal ecosystems of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

The project provides biodiversity education to coastal communities and helps increase scientific knowledge on conservation. For example, a training program for youth on mangrove ecosystem management and adaptation to climate variability in El Salvador is helping communities conserve natural resources in the Paz River area of the country. The project also develops business plans for fisheries of snook, snapper, shrimp, lobster, mud clams, and mangrove crabs, as well as mangrove honey production and sustainable eco-tourism. The project is promoting the Maya Caribbean Tourism Route in Motagua in Guatemala by linking service providers with national and private partner organizations that can promote their services at the national and international level. Creating linkages between the buyers and sellers provides the opportunity to identify gaps in services, infrastructure, equipment, financing, and best practices.

Project partner groups began training processes for honey production in coastal marine ecosystems in both El Salvador and Guatemala. Honeybees play an important role in maintaining mangrove biodiversity through the pollination of the mangrove tree species. Honey production in the Paz River will provide an opportunity for local community members to generate income and jobs.

Finally, the project promotes strengthened governance and regulatory frameworks for biodiversity conservation. The project facilitated an agreement with 18 communities on the Caribbean coast of Guatemala to establish a seasonal ban on 12 commercial species and a signed governmental agreement ratified the XIV Calendar for Caribbean fishing restriction periods. Promoting close collaboration between fishing authorities and community members in the three countries is essential to implement effective and sustainable best management fishing practices.

## REGIONAL COASTAL BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

TOTAL INVESTMENT: \$10 million

PERIOD: 2018 - 2022

GEOGRAPHIC AREAS: El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala



### PARTNERS:

- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (Lead)
- GOAL International
- Defensores de la Naturaleza (Guatemala)
- Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Association (ARCAS) (Guatemala)
- Asociación Cuerpos de Conservación Omoa (CCO) (Honduras)
- Agency for the Development of the Mosquitia (MOPAWI) (Honduras)
- Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña (UNES) (El Salvador)

For more information on USAID El Salvador and USAID Central America Regional Programs, please call: (503) 2501-3411; 3344; 3432 or visit [www.usaid.gov/el-salvador](http://www.usaid.gov/el-salvador)