

Internal Ex-Post Evaluation for Technical Cooperation Project

conducted by Mexico Office/ March, 2014

Country Name	Coastal Wetland Conservation in Yucatan Peninsula
United Mexican States	

I. Project Outline

Background	<p>The soil of the land of Yucatan Peninsula is limestone origin and almost completely flat, and has valuable ecosystems. In order to conserve them, the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) has been designated a series of natural protection areas for appropriate management. However, there are many problems which bear threat the environment such as artificial division of wetland ecosystem due to socio-economic development and increasing pressure for natural resource utilization caused by local people as well as tourists. It is, therefore, required urgently to strengthen the environmental conservation system including development of human resources. In this context, the Government of Mexico requested to the Government of Japan a technical cooperation project that aims the conservation and restoration of coastal wetland and its sustainable use. Then, this 5-year project started from the March 2003.</p>										
Objectives of the Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Goal: Conservation of wetland ecosystem of Ria Celestun Biosphere Reserve (RBRC) is improved. Project Purpose: Environmental management activities are carried out properly in RBRC by the leadership of the RBRC office. Logical flow of how the project responses to development issues: Task Forces for i) mangrove restoration, ii) ecotourism, iii) solid waste management, iv) research and monitoring and v) environmental education are established in cooperation with local environmental authorities, research organizations, educational organizations and NGOs. Environmental management activities including continuous efforts of Task Forces are enhanced under the leadership of the RBRC office by preparing and implementing environment management program. Wetland ecosystem of RBRC is conserved. 										
Activities of the project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project site: Ria Celestun Biosphere Reserve (RBRC) Main activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct experimental restoration and revise manual of mangrove restoration based on the experimental results - Support and monitor ecotourism - Monitor solid waste management and clarify necessary measures based on the results of monitoring. - Prepare and disseminate information on wetland conservation - Plan and implement environmental education for the Cultural Conservation Center and schools. Inputs (to carry out above activities) <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Japanese Side</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Mexican Side</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1. Experts: 30 persons</td> <td>1. Staff allocated: 14 persons</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Trainees received: 18 persons</td> <td>2. Land and facilities: project office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Equipment: 22 million yen</td> <td>3. Local cost (items not specified): 30 million pesos</td> </tr> </table> 			Japanese Side	Mexican Side	1. Experts: 30 persons	1. Staff allocated: 14 persons	2. Trainees received: 18 persons	2. Land and facilities: project office	3. Equipment: 22 million yen	3. Local cost (items not specified): 30 million pesos
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Project Period	Original period: March, 2003 to February, 2008 Extended period: March, 2008 to February, 2010	Project Cost	398 million yen								
Implementing Agency	CONANP: National Commission of Natural Protected Areas-The RBRC Office										
Cooperation Agency in Japan	Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Kushiro International Wetland Center										
Related Projects (if any)	Japan's cooperation: Third Country Training Program on Conectivity & Management of Protected areas in the Mesoamerica biological corridor from 2007 - 2012										

II. Result of the Evaluation

1 Relevance

This project has been highly relevant with Mexico's development policy (e.g. environmental sustainability as set in "National

Development Plan 2007-2012” and preservation of ecosystem as set in “National Program of Natural Protected Areas 2007-2012”), development needs “preservation and management of wetlands”, as well as Japan’s ODA policies and “JICA Country Assistance Strategy”, which includes “environmental control and protection” at the time of both ex-ante and ex-post evaluation. Therefore, relevance of this project is high.

2 Effectiveness/Impact

This project has largely achieved the project purpose “Environmental management activities are carried out properly in RBRC under the leadership of the RBRC office” in the field of i) mangrove restoration, ii) ecotourism, iii) solid waste management, iv) research and monitoring and v) environmental education by i) Task Forces activities carried out in Celestun under the new official Advisory Board and interdisciplinary group of mangroves of the Peninsula of Yucatan (GYMPEI) , ii) the workshops on wetland conservation held under the Board and iii) effective conservation activities in the protection areas as well as other areas. More concretely, i) the reforestation activities for mangrove restoration were continuously conducted according to the newly prepared manual, ii) ecotourism activities were carried out by newly established groups, iii) separation and recycling of collected garbage were progressed, despite of the difficulties caused by the change of local governmental actors, iv) a management plan including research and monitoring activities was established and v) 76% of the residents of Celestun City enhanced their concern with environmental issues by participating in environmental education activities. These outputs were achieved by Task Forces under the leadership of the RBRC office. The Task Forces also provide the opportunities of understanding and discussing the progress of the project and contribute to obtain technical and financial support from relevant organizations by the cooperation among members, which used to carry out environmental management activities individually before the project.

As for overall goal “Conservation of wetland ecosystem of RBRC is improved”, it has largely achieved since artificially and naturally restored areas have increased with the above-mentioned outputs/effects generated by Task Forces under the leadership of the RBRC office. In fact, in the southern sub-area of restoration, it was increased approximately by 50 hectare (ha), replicating the techniques used in the project. Other main impacts are i) the project drew greater attention, by the Government of the State of Yucatan, to the investment of the road infrastructure, improvements in services (e.g. drinking water, electricity, etc.) and renovation of the pier at least in the tourist area of the port of Celestun, ii) in the State of Campeche, the Government of the State of Yucatan recognized the importance of tourism and improved public services in the community of island Arena, such as urban improvement, centre of health, sidewalks and lighting. In addition, the government completed the construction of the museum as a tourist attraction on the site in Pedro Infante. Negative Impacts have not been observed.

Therefore, effectiveness/impact of this project is high.

Achievement of project purpose and overall goal

Aim	Indicators	Results
(Overall goal) improvement of conservation of wetland ecosystem in RBRC	Artificially and naturally restored areas are increased. Environmental management activities are continuing after the project completion.	(Ex-post Evaluation) Restored areas have increased. In the southern sub-area of restoration, it was increased approximately by 50 ha. (Ex-post Evaluation) Task Forces are continuously held and another Task Force dealing with canine wildlife control was established. Environmental management activities are continuously conducted according to the management program. The level of activities initiated by the project is maintained at the time of ex-post evaluation.
(Project Purpose) capacity strengthening of the RBRC office in terms of proper conservation of wetland	Task Forces related to wetland conservation continuously are held and are conservation activities properly implemented. Environmental management activities are carried out in RBRC by using the management program.	(Project Completion) Four kinds of Task Forces are active under the framework of the project. (Ex-post Evaluation) The meetings of the five (5) Task Forces established in the framework of the project are held. (Project completion) The environmental management activities, were carried out by using the revised management program, and in accordance with the creation instrument of natural protected area (Decree legal). (Ex-post Evaluation) The revised technical version of the management program is ready, however the process of publication has not been finished, because it needs to be approved by different entities. At the time of ex-post evaluation, the management program is under reviewing by the legal department.

3 Efficiency

While the inputs were appropriate for producing the outputs of the project, both the project period and the project cost were slightly exceeded the plan (ratio against the plan: The former 113%, The latter 140%) because of extension of the period of the project to enhance the sustainability of i) mangrove restoration, ii) solid waste management, iii) environmental education, and iv) monitoring system. Therefore, efficiency of this project is fair.

4 Sustainability

CONANP is the government institution charged to conserve the natural heritage of federal natural protected areas in Mexico. This function is realized by i) cooperating/coordinating with relevant actors, in particular with the communities in the natural protected areas (e.g. local environmental authorities, research organizations, educational organizations, NGOs, etc.), ii) implementing the environmental conservation strategy, iii) improving the quality of lives of local residents and mitigating negative impacts to the ecosystems and its biodiversity. It is well recognized that RBRC personnel continue to work as

permanent employees, including those who were capacitated by the project, while three new technical staff have joined the organization. Therefore, the project has no problem from the view point of the institutional aspect of the implementing agency. Regarding the policy aspect, "The National Development Plan 2013-2018" of the federal government that aims the sustainable use of natural resources is under preparation at the time of the ex-post evaluation. As for the technical aspect, the capacity of the counterparts of the project and the office of the RBRC has been considerably strengthened i) mangrove restoration, ii) ecotourism, iii) solid waste management, iv) research and monitoring and v) environmental education through the project. Regarding the financial aspect, it is possible to continue the activities of the project through the budgetary resources that the RBRC office receives and managed to get the fund from other financial resources of the national or international stakeholders or through different governmental programs, which are i) operational budget, ii) Program of Conservation for Sustainable Development (PROCOCODES) and iii) Temporary Employment Program (PET: Programa de Empleo Temporal), although in the future they may not be considered to be sufficient to cover the enhanced size of the protected natural area. Therefore, at the time of ex-post evaluation, no major problem has been observed in policy background, technical and financial aspects of the implementing agencies, although it will be necessary to find other financial actors that would contribute the RB Celestun conservation. Therefore the sustainability of this project is high.

5 Summary of the Evaluation

The project has achieved the "capacity strengthening of the RBRC office in terms of proper conservation of wetland", the project purpose of proper implementation of environmental management activities mentioned in Effectiveness/Impact under the leadership of the RBRC office. With such activities, the overall goal "the improvement of conservation of wetland ecosystem in RBRC" has been largely achieved.

As for sustainability, there was no particular problem observed in the project because of i) the capable personnel at the RBRC office, ii) recognition of the importance of environmental sustainability to be set in "The National Development Plan 2013-2018", "The National Program of Environment and Natural Resources", as well as "The Program of Natural Protected Areas", iii) strengthened capacity of the RBRC office in terms of mangrove restoration, ecotourism, solid waste management, monitoring and environmental education through the project, and iv) stable finance.

For efficiency, the inputs were appropriate for producing the outputs of the project, although both the project period and the project cost were slightly exceeded the plan.

In the light of above, this project is evaluated to be highly satisfactory.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations to Implementing agency:

The CONANP has been managing the successful outcome of the project. The CONANP should keep these ideal conditions in cooperation with the counterparts (local environmental authorities, research organizations, educational organizations NGOs, and Task Forces) and also disseminate the successful experience of this project to other states of the Mexican Republic and to other countries in the Latin American region.

Lessons learned to JICA

As above mentioned, through the project, the RBRC office promoted to cooperate and coordinate with other relevant organizations and groups, including local environmental authorities, research organizations, educational organizations, NGOs, communities, etc. It should be noted that involvement of the relevant players is one of the keys in order to successfully conduct environmental conservation activities.



Campaign of collection and separation of waste in Celestun in coordination with primary school



Rehabilitation of mangroves through new canal of freshwater