

Summary of Mid-term Review Results

1. Outline of Project	
Country: Republic of Costa Rica	Project Title: Project for Promoting Participatory Biodiversity
Issue/Sector: Natural Environment Conservation	Type of Assistance: Technical Cooperation Project
Department in charge: Global Environment Dep.	Total Cost (Actual by the time of Mid-term review): 320 million Yen
Cooperation Period: (R/D) April, 2013–March 31, 2018	Partner Country's Implementing Organization: Ministry of Environment and Energy, National System of Conservation Areas
	Related Cooperation: Technical Cooperation Project "Participatory Management Project in National Refugio Barra Del Colorado" (2008.10–2011.10)
<p>1-1 Background of the Project</p> <p>Republic of Costa Rica (hereinafter "Costa Rica") is considered as an important country in terms of biodiversity conservation in Mesoamerican region where is known as "Hot Spot of Biodiversity". Forest coverage ratio, which was 75% of total country in 1940, was decreased to 21% by 1987. Because of this situation, Costa Rica has implemented policies and activities for advanced forest and biodiversity conservation since the latter half of the 1980's. As a result of those efforts, forest area recovered to approximately 52% of total land by 2010.</p> <p>On the other hand, with respect to management system of nature Conservation Areas, a model on the premise of excluding human activities was applied, except for a part of Conservation Areas. Thus, actual management activities focused on controlling illegal activities within and surrounding of Conservation Areas. Due to this, depending on Conservation Area, there was conflict between local residents within and around Conservation Area and governmental agency in charge of administration Conservation Areas. In this situation, based upon the request by the Costa Rican government, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) conducted "Project for Participatory Management of the Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge" for three years from October, 2008. As a result, the project brought outcomes such as establishing basic system of participatory management and project target area of Barra del Colorado National Wildlife Refuge is deemed as a kind of model Conservation Area where participatory management is implemented.</p> <p>Experiences on advanced participatory biodiversity conservation in Costa Rica have been attracting attention internationally; however, those experiences and outcomes are not always organized systematically and examined sufficiently. In the world, especially in order to promote effective biodiversity conservation in Mesoamerican hot spot in central America, it is expected to utilize experiences in Costa Rica effectively as knowledge inside and outside of Costa Rica. In this situation, Ministry of Environment, Energy, and Telecommunication requested this project to the Japanese government based on concept that experiences on biodiversity conservation are to be shared especially in Central America, ultimately leading to international contribution. The project was adopted by the Japanese government in Japanese Fiscal Year 2012.</p> <p>1-2 Project Overview</p> <p>(1) Overall Goal The policy and systems of participatory biodiversity conservation will be strengthened making good use of the knowledge in Costa Rica and Central American countries.</p> <p>(2) Project Purpose The knowledge of participatory biodiversity conservation in Costa Rica will be broadly shared within and outside of the country.</p> <p>(3) Outputs: 1: The participatory management of the biodiversity in Barra del Colorado National Wildlife</p>	

- Refuge will be strengthened and shared with other protected areas.
- 2: Document the knowledge about the participatory biodiversity conservation of Costa Rica, by systematizing the successful experiences.
 - 3: Policies for improving participatory biodiversity conservation will be proposed.
 - 4: Share the knowledge on participatory biodiversity conservation within and out of the country.

(4) Inputs (as of the Mid-term Review)

Japanese side:

- 1) Long-term experts: 3
- 2) Trainees received in Japan: 39
- 3) Equipment: Approx. 15.89million yen
- 4) Local Cost: Approx. 1,263 thousand US dollars

Costa Rican side:

- 1) Assignment of Counterpart: 59
- 2) Project Office: office in National Institute of Biodiversity (INBio) and its facilities
- 3) Local Cost: 99,124.71 US dollars

2. Outline of the Mid-term Review Team

Mid-term Review Team	Job Title	Name	Occupation
	Leader	Ms. Kanako Adachi	Director, Natural Environment Team 2, Forestry and Nature Conservation Group Global Environment Department, JICA
	Biodiversity Conservation	Mr. Motohiro Hasegawa	Senior Advisor, JICA
	Cooperation Planning	Mr. Wataru Honda	Associate Expert Natural Environment Team 2, Forestry and Nature Conservation Group Global Environment Department, JICA
	Evaluation & Analysis	Ms. Mitsue Mishima	Principal Consultant, OPMAC Corporation

Period of Evaluation: 19 October to 4 November, 2015 Type of Evaluation: Mid-term Review

3. Summary of Mid-term Review Results

3-1 Progress of the Project

Inputs from Japanese and Costa Rican sides are implemented generally as planned. Remarkable delay in actual activities in comparison to the plan are observed in drafting zoning guideline and others that is caused mainly by external factors such as unpredicted coordination on the content with Contraloria General de República (General Comptroller of Republic).

(1) Achievement of Outputs

Output 1: The participatory management of the biodiversity in the R.N.V.S.B.C. (Barra del Colorado National Wild Refuge) will be strengthened and shared with other protected areas.

Progress in planned indicators of the Output 1 are evaluated to be positive (support for formulating a model of production activities with environmental considerations by integrated farms, discussions with agriculture cooperatives and enterprises of intensive agricultural production such as rice cultivation to promote production activities with environmental considerations, consulting the issues with land survey and registration, environmental education, participatory monitoring, etc.) However, this output is not well-reflected in relation to Project Purpose and all indicators show progress of activities but do not indicate directly changes in the management capacity. Therefore, it is necessary to redefine the Output 1 and revise indicators entirely.

Output 2: Document the knowledge about the participatory biodiversity conservation of Costa Rica, by systematizing the successful experiences.

The Output 2 is almost achieved in term of indicators on number of planned reports. Reports on Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación (SINAC) experiences of participatory biodiversity conservation in each Conservation Area, SINAC history, eco-tourism, and role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are already prepared and reviewed, and remaining two thematic reports are being drafted. All reports are scheduled to be finalized by 2016. Content of those reports are, however, information collection and organization of experiences. In order to make such information to be “knowledge” systematized in a form to be able to disseminate, it is very important that SINAC conducts cross-analysis on those research outputs as part of capacity development process, and then integrates knowledge from the outputs.

Output 3: Policies for improving participatory biodiversity conservation will be proposed.

4 out of 6 planned policies including revision on the law, participatory policy draft, zoning guideline, and Payment for Environmental Services (PES) monitoring system design are already proposed; however, due to SINAC reorganization, “unit” of “Macro Process of Citizen’s Participation and Governance” was established in July 2015 and this “unit” becomes in charge of activities of participatory approach. To clarify the role of the “unit” in the project, the activities and indicators for the Output 3 are necessary to be redefined.

Output 4: Share the knowledge on participatory biodiversity conservation within and out of the country.

While 10 events were planned, the project conducted 6 seminars and workshops in Costa Rica. Among them, regarding two regional seminars, participants evaluated them positively since approximately more than 80% of questionnaire respondents are satisfied with the seminar. The reports of the Output 2 did not yet reflected mostly on the content of the seminars, thus it is planned that seminars will be held based on the reports after 2016. As for means of sharing knowledge, not only seminars or workshops, but also other several channels such as website and social networks should be considered and utilized.

(2) Prospect for achieving Project Purpose

Project Purpose: The knowledge of participatory biodiversity conservation in Costa Rica will be broadly shared within and outside of the country.

Achievement of Project Purpose cannot be measured at the moment based on the planned indicators. It is planned to be evaluated based on implementation of policies proposed under the Output 3 of the project, however, the activities and indicators for the Output 3 are necessary to be revised; therefore, the indicator for Project Purpose should be reconsidered. Other indicator “100 participants of the events create proposals for the action plans” is not a realistic figure which can be achieved by the end of the project. Therefore, first of all, indicators to measure the achievement of Project Purpose should be set appropriately

(3) Prospect for achieving Overall Goal

Project Purpose: The policy and systems of participatory biodiversity conservation will be strengthened making good use of the knowledge in Costa Rica and Central American countries.

There is no actual result in respect to planned indicators. The indicators for overall goal are to be reviewed and revised.

3-2 Summary of Evaluation Results

(1) Relevance

Relevance is high in terms of environment policy, strategy, development Plan in Cost Rica and Central America at the time of mid-term review. However, the project approach and design should be reviewed and revised in due course. It is necessary to clarify the definition of “knowledge” and “systematization” envisaged by the project for common understanding them among stakeholders, to reorganize the project activities to outputs and to revise the indicators.

(2) Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the project cannot be prospected at this timing because indicators for the outputs and project purpose are not adequate to measure achievement. The effectiveness should be monitored and assessed after the revision of the Project Design Matrix (PDM). As a result of survey at this moment, it should be noted that process itself of collecting and organizing the information on experiences of biodiversity conservation was effective for counterparts and stakeholders in organizations of local residents to enhance their capacity in finding the points of improvement in the future. Moreover, participatory environment monitoring and environmental education seems to be also effective to enhance the consciousness of local residents about wild life conservation.

(3) Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is fair in terms of inputs from both Japanese and Costa Rican sides, which are basically provided as planned (except for the absence of Counterparts (C/Ps) in some positions) and led to the project activities. In process of achievement of the outputs from activities, the efficiency was insufficient because there were some uncertain points in logical relationship between activities and outputs in PDM.

(4) Impact

At this moment, it is difficult to foresee future achievement of the overall goal because revision on indicators is necessary at first. As other impacts, some positive impacts may be expected to emerge, such as strengthening interaction among stakeholders of local level in each Conservation Area towards biodiversity conservation through the work systematizing information of their experiences.

(5) Sustainability

Policy and institutional aspects: “Citizen’s participation and government” is one of priorities in SINAC’s new policy after July in 2015, and under this issue, SINAC addressed implementation, monitoring and evaluation of institutional and national strategy. Thus, policy support is expected as a driving force for project activities.

Organizational aspect: It is expected that the “unit” of Citizen’s Participation and Governance is expected to have a role of consolidating, sharing and disseminating knowledge on participatory biodiversity conservation, which the project aims. On the other hand, it is critical to establish the organization system to strengthen the cooperation work of this “unit” and the regional offices.

Financial aspect: Local operation cost has been allocated by the Costa Rican side. There may be some influence on project activities by governmental budgetary cut hereafter; however, it is possible to continue project activities by funding arrangement partly with related government organizations and others.

Technical aspect: It is expected that skills of counterparts in R.N.V.S.B.C. will be sustained and they transfer their skills on inter-agency coordination and the local people’s mobilization to other areas. The “unit” of Citizen’s Participation and Governance, a main counterpart for the latter half of the project period, does not have accumulated work experiences in this field, thus it is required to support this new “unit” with focus on strengthening their capacity.

3-3 Factors that promoted/inhibited realization of effects

(1) Promoting factors

1) Factors concerning Planning

None

2) Factors concerning Implementation Process

- Process of systematizing the information on SINAC’s experiences in the past involved many stakeholders as participatory approach. This leads to information sharing among

stakeholders of various organizations in the country.

(2) Inhibiting factors

1) Factors concerning Planning

- Unclear definition of “knowledge” and “systematization” envisaged by the project impeded selection and concentration of important project activities and establishment of tangible indicators.
- Uncertain points in logical relationship between the Project Purpose and the Outputs and also inappropriate indicators to measure the achievement impeded the efficiency of project implementation.

2) Factors concerning Implementation Process

- As for zoning, it was required to have a time to examine the necessity for coordinating the content under instruction by Contraloría General de República. This caused delay in drafting the zoning guideline.

3-4 Conclusion

Progress and its positive results on the activities are observed such as a series of activities in R.N.V.S.B.C., systemization of the information on the past experiences in each Conservation Area, and information sharing through international events. To achieve the project purpose of “knowledge sharing and dissemination,” it is required further to enhance the capacity of SINAC as well as to establish the partnership with regional initiatives such as Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD). In order to clarify this direction, readjustment and revision on the PDM is indispensable. Through strengthening the new “unit” of Citizen’s Participation and Governance by the project, it is expected to promote sharing and dissemination of systematized knowledge on participatory biodiversity conservation, which is envisaged by the project, and then to sustain activities for participatory biodiversity conservation in a consolidated manner among SINAC and related people and organizations.

3-5 Recommendations

(1) Revision of PDM and Plan of Operations (PO)

It is necessary to revise as PDM ver. 2.0 proposed by the Mid-term review team, with more specific description of the project purpose and the outputs, establishment of clear verifiable indicators, and reorganization of project activities and so on. Then, it is also required to revise the plan of operation in accordance with PDM ver. 2.0.

(2) Analysis on lessons learned from the experiences of SINAC

With a view to applying lessons learned in past experiences to similar type Conservation Areas in the future, it is recommended to analyse participatory management in R.N.V.S.B.C. as one of model cases and also to conduct detailed analysis throughout all lessons learned from the experience described in reports of SINAC experiences on all Conservation Areas and others.

(3) Strategy for knowledge dissemination: Improvement of information dissemination tools and methods

In order to disseminate more efficiently information and knowledge compiled by the project, it is recommended to utilize several tools strategically depending on target persons and purpose, through such means as SINAC website, an information exchange platform like “Green hub” planned by Fundación para el Desarrollo de la Cordillera Volcánica Central (FUNDECOR), and social network and so on.

(4) Cooperation with regional organizations, secretariat of international treaties and other donors

In terms of sharing information and holding international seminars, it is important to strengthen cooperation with CCAD, the secretariat of international treaty, and other donors implementing similar projects such as Germany and Mexico.

(5) Strengthening project implementation structure

It is recommended to strengthen project implementation structure by assigning “unit” of Citizen’s Participation and Governance as main C/Ps, supplementing the vacancy of C/P post, defining clear objective and role of research coordination committee, and involving continuously project liaison officers in Conservation Areas