

World Bank - Grant Reporting and Monitoring (GRM) Report

Report to Donor

Ref. TF018492
Printed On: 10/23/2022

Reporting Period: 03/14/2017 to 03/31/2022
Report Type: Completion Report
Status: Approved

Assignment: TF018492

Belize REDD+ Readiness Preparation Project

FCPF - Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

Task Team Leader: 00000371036 - Maja Murisic

Approving Manager: 00000226603 - Genevieve Connors

Summary Information	
TF Status	Closed
Recipient Country	Belize
Executed By	Recipient
Managing Unit	9272 - SLCEN
Grant Start Date / End Date	03/14/2017 to 03/31/2022
Original Grant Amount	3,800,000.00
Grant Amount	3,800,000.00
Outstanding Commitments	0.00
Cumulative Disbursements	3,790,996.58 as of 08/19/2022
Disbursed 03/14/2017 to 03/31/2022	3,790,996.58
Donor	TF602001 - MULTIPLE DONORS

This GRM report includes the following sections: Overview, Components, Outcome, Execution, Program (FCPFR), Completion, Disbursements, Procurement Plan, Procurement Actuals.

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OVERVIEW

Overall Assessments

Grant Objectives:

The Grant Objective is to assist Belize in carrying out Readiness Preparation through a participatory and inclusive process in order to strengthen their capacity to participate in future REDD+ carbon payment transactions.

Overall progress from 03/14/2017 to 03/31/2022 with regard to Achieving Grant Objectives:

Comment:

Even though REDD+ Grant in Belize faced some implementation challenges at the beginning of its implementation (that were translated into relatively low disbursement rates and slower than anticipated implementation pace), there has been continuous and significant progress throughout the Grant lifetime. The capacity of key stakeholders significantly increased and all the technical aspects and analyses were successfully completed. As such, the REDD+ Readiness Grant had satisfactory rating at the time of its closing.

Overall progress from 03/14/2017 to 03/31/2022 with regard to Implementation of Grant Financed Activities:

Comment:

All of the planned activities and targeted deliverables of the REDD+ Grant were completed and in a satisfactory manner. In addition, and in order to further scale up the implementation efforts in regard to stakeholder engagement, some new activities were added (e.g. the establishment of the Indigenous People's Desk and Ethno-mapping of 4 villages in southern Belize). Other key achievements across the Grant components include: Development of the REDD+ Strategy; Completion of Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) (inclusive of Safeguards Information System (SIS) and Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)); Completion of Land Tenure Assessment/ Report for Southern Belize; Establishment of Feedback Grievance and Redress Protocol; Development of a National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or Forest Reference Level; Completion of National Land Use Land Use Change Report 2018; Completion of Sentinel 2 imagery maps of Belize; Establishment of National Forest Inventory for Belize based on Permanent Sample Plots (PSP); and Development of a Measurement, Verification and Reporting (MRV) System using tier 1, 2 and 3 data for Belize.

Grant follow-up and structure

Description and context of Grant:

N/A

Expected follow up (if any):

 Follow up Bank project/loan/credit/grant

Even though Belize is not in the FCPF Carbon Fund portfolio, the increased readiness across various aspects (from human resources to the establishment of robust and accurate data that underpin readiness process) form a solid basis for further pursuing investment opportunities in the sector. Likewise, given the highly satisfactory stakeholder engagement process and involvement of the Indigenous Peoples in all aspects of the Grant implementation, any future implementation efforts are expected to build on participatory processes and mechanisms that were developed as part of the REDD+ Grant implementation and, as such, be designed and implemented to achieve greater and more inclusive impact.

End Date of Last Site Visit:

March 29 - April 1, 2021

Restructuring of Grant:

Belize REDD+ Readiness Grant was restructured two times. First restructuring was done in 2020 to allow for a 12-month extension in order to ensure that initial implementation delays are addressed and to allow for a successful completion of some activities (i.e. SESA, land tenure assessment and benefit sharing plan). Second restructuring (3-month extension) was done in

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2021 to address new challenges posed by COVID-19 related restrictions and to allow for a successful completion of the draft Benefit Sharing Mechanism. Both restructurings included only extensions of the closing date of the Grant and no changes in the activities and/or costs.

OUTCOME

Comments on outcome achieved from 03/14/2017 to 03/31/2022 Grant Outcome Indicators

Belize has made significant progress in all four (4) major Components of REDD+ namely, Component 1: Organization Framework, Consultations, and Grievance Redress, Component 2: Prepare the REDD+ Strategy, Component 3: Develop a National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or Forest Reference Level, Component 4: Design Systems for National Forest Monitoring and Safeguards Systems. See table below for more details on the Grant outcomes achieved.

Indicator Name	Baseline	End Target
1a. Multi-stakeholder participatory platform for REDD+ (Yes/No)	No	Yes
1b. National REDD+ Communications Strategy (Yes/No)	No	Yes
1c. National REDD+ Consultation and Participation Plan (Yes/No)	No	Yes
1d. Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (Yes/No)	No	Yes
2a. Determination of carbon rights and preparation of supporting legislation (Yes/No)	No	No* *Belize is currently going through a national process of developing carbon right framework that will be broader than REDD+. Activities achieved under REDD+ Grant will provide significant input to such process.
2b. Development of a benefit sharing mechanism (Yes/No)	No	Yes* *The Benefit Sharing Mechanism (BSM) developed is considered draft and will need to be refined in the next phases.
2c. Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) and Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) (Yes/No)	No	Yes
3. National Forest Reference Emission Level and Forest Reference Level (Yes/No)	No	Yes
4a. National Forest Monitoring System (Yes/No)	No	Yes
4b. Non-carbon Monitoring System (Yes/No)	No	No* * Stakeholder participation in the exploration of co-benefits and non-carbon schemes has been encouraged through training sessions and workshops. The development of information sharing processes on the impact of REDD+ on rural livelihoods,

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		biodiversity conservation, provision of non-carbon ecosystem services, and key governance factors is recommended.
5. Readiness package (Yes/No)	No	Yes

COMPONENTS

Output and Implementation by Component

Key outputs delivered by the Grant (presented by the respective components) include:

Component 1: REDD+ Organization Framework, Consultations, and Grievance Redress

- Establishment of REDD+ Coordination Unit (R+CU) and Project Steering Committee (PSC) as part of the stakeholder engagement platform.
- Establishment and operationalization of Technical Expert Group (TEG) with regular meetings held.
- Conclusion of REDD+ Coordination Unit staffing complete process, consisting of a Project Officer, Indigenous People Coordinator, Communications Specialist and an Environmental and Social Expert.
- Carrying out of a Stakeholder Mapping Exercise, with the Stakeholder Mapping Protocol completed and utilized to guide stakeholder engagements.
- Development of Communications Strategy that guided all communications-related activities and supported stakeholder engagement overall.
- Delivery of Awareness and Communication activities with Protected Areas and Co-Managers on REDD+ to enhance capacity of integrating into planning and development of management plans for Protected Areas which are Forest Reserves.

Component 2: Prepare the REDD+ Strategy

- Completion of the REDD+ Strategy
- Identification of Deforestation/Degradation factors for Belize
- Completion of the SESA (inclusive of the SIS, SIS website, and ESMF)
- Completion of Draft Benefit Sharing Mechanism
- Completion of Ethno-mapping of 4 villages in southern Belize
- Completion of Land Tenure Assessment/ Report for Southern Belize
- Establishment of Feedback Grievance and Redress Protocol established, with the Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) website being launched in January 2020
- Launch of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Protocol by the Government of Belize (GOB).

Component 3: Develop a National Forest Reference Emission Level and/or Forest Reference Level

- Completion of National Land Use Land Use Change Report 2018.
- Completion of Sentinel 2 imagery maps of Belize
- Submission of Belize's FREL (2020) to UNFCCC.

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Component 4: Design Systems for National Forest Monitoring and Safeguards Systems

- Establishment of National Forest Inventory for Belize based on Permanent Sample Plots (PSP)
- Establishment of Destructive Sample Plots (DSP) including for Mangroves
- Development of a MRV System using tier 1, 2 and 3 data for Belize.

Comment on planned and actual Output

As noted above, all planned outputs were completed in a satisfactory manner. Additional information on the outputs status is presented below.

Comment on component implementation progress

Summary of the implementation status for each of the components is as follows:

Component 1 has made significant advancements. The operationalization of an Indigenous Peoples (IP) Desk and the establishment of Technical Expert Group (TEG) proved to be useful mechanisms for facilitating meaningful and effective stakeholders' engagement. The IP Desk was in fact a unique mechanism in the country which was ensuring ongoing feedback and involvement from the key stakeholder for REDD+ in Belize, including for the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) and Benefit Sharing Mechanism (BSM) development which were also successfully completed (though the BSM is considered to be in draft stage at the time of the Grant closing). At the same time and throughout the Grant implementation, the REDD+ Coordination Unit (REDD+ CU) continued to engage in a great deal of outreach and awareness raising with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including through utilizing virtual means of communication (due to COVID-19 related constraints for in-person meetings and development of a range of products, such as videos, presentations, etc.

Component 2 has initially faced delays in particular related to initiation of the SESA, land tenure assessment studies and benefit sharing plan, but their implementation/development has accelerated in the last year of the Grant implementation. The SESA report was finalized after going through the rounds of feedback and revisions. The land tenure study/activities were also finalized while the Benefit Sharing Mechanism (BSM) for which the consultations with stakeholders were particularly challenging is considered to be finalized in draft. Though the COVID-19-related in-person meeting restrictions were in effect in the last 2 years of the Grant implementation, the REDD+ CU was using virtual means, when possible, and conducting smaller groups consultations to adhere to the public health guidelines. The REDD+ Strategy was also developed and went through several stages of refinement/validation.

Planned activities under Component 3 were also successfully completed. Following the completion of the Forest Reference Emissions Level/Forest Reference Level (FREL/FRL) for Belize which was submitted to the UNFCCC for review in January 2020, the Government of Belize (GOB), through the Belize Forest Department (FD) and Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (MSDCCDRM) submitted final review and approval of the FREL/FRL to the UNFCCC in June 2021. The Grant has also supported the development of a Land Use Land Cover Map for Belize using Sentinel 2 maps, supplemented by Rapid Eye Imagery, which will serve as a part of the Quality Control / Quality Control (QC/QA) process.

Under Component 4, the field work carried out supported the National Forest Monitoring System for the Measurement, Verification and Reporting (MRV). It initially progressed at a slower pace than envisioned which resulted in a re-stratification exercise to select additional sampling plots which was added to the existing network in Belize and the development of a comprehensive methodology for the other land use classes. The process of establishing several additional sampling plots (Destructive Sample Plots) to ascertain the emissions factor for different land uses across the country was also carried out. The original aim was to do 4 plots for each class, through the collaboration between REDD+ and FD, there were between 4 to 6 plots sampled for each class.

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Though there have been some delays in completing the mid-term evaluation to the FCPF and submitting annual progress reports, as carried out under Component 5, both quality and timeliness of reporting have seen progress throughout implementation, including through timely submissions of FCPF-related reporting requirements. For example the mid-term evaluation was finalized in December 2019 and subsequent progress reports were submitted on time. Project's financial reporting has seen equal improvements with reports being accurate and submitted on time.

EXECUTION

Bank project related to the grant

Project ID / Name: P152415 - Belize REDD+ Readiness Grant
Project Status: Pipeline
Global Focal Area: Climate change
Product Line: RE - Recipient Executed

Implementing agency and contact details

Agency: Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT), Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development
Contact: Lennox Gladenn, PhD
Address: Belmopan, Belize
Phone: Email: policy.coord@environment.gov.bz
Website:

PROGRAM

Program Specific Questions

1. Describe progress in how the Grant activities are being coordinated with other REDD+-related initiatives, including those funded by Describe progress in how the Grant activities are being coordinated with other REDD+-related initiatives, including those funded by others.

The grant activities have been closely coordinated with other WB projects, Government-led activities on the subject matter, as well as other development partners' initiative (e.g. GiZ) throughout the implementation. Going forward, and noting significant readiness that was built in the context of sustainable forestry management capacity in general and REDD+ in particular, it is expected that the REDD+ Grant outputs will serve as a useful set of inputs for any future investments in the area.

2. Describe any important changes in the technical design or approach related to the Grant activities.

Throughout the implementation, there have been no significant changes in the technical design and approach related to the activities supported by the Grant. Most of the adjustments made were related to the implementation timelines and some aspects of the delivery mechanisms (e.g. greater reliance on virtual means of consultation due to COVID-19 pandemic and related challenges in this regard). Some activities were added too in order to further enhance stakeholder engagement, such as the establishment and operationalization of Indigenous People's (IP) Desk and Ethno-mapping activities.

3. Describe progress in addressing key capacity issues (implementation, technical, financial management, procurement) related to this Grant.

The capacity of key stakeholders was significantly improved throughout the Grant implementation. They included staffing and capacity development of the REDD+ CU, establishment of the mechanism to facilitate stakeholder engagement with indigenous peoples (the IP desk), and continuous capacity building and support related to procurement aspects of the project, among others.

4. Describe progress in addressing social and environmental issues (including safeguards) related to the Grant. Is the SESA conducted in accordance with the Common Approach?

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The Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) was conducted in accordance with the Common Approach (applicable to FCPF). SESA was developed, including through a series of consultations (both in-person and virtual) and despite COVID-19 related challenges and constraints in this regard and validated by all key stakeholders.

5. Is the ESMF prepared in accordance with the Common Approach?

Yes

6. Describe progress in stakeholder consultation, participation, disclosure of information, and the FGRM related to this Grant.

Despite initial challenges, the REDD+CU made good progress with respect to national-level awareness-raising and public education on climate change and the REDD+ process in Belize, including through establishing a permanent coordination mechanism for coordination with Indigenous Peoples.

Given that the REDD+CU has already started to receive grievances and requests for information, it was agreed to develop an interim Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) procedures to be followed during the Readiness Phase. The FGRM was finalized accordingly and became operation during the Grant implementation phase.

Lastly, though the REDD+CU has made good progress in ensuring effective stakeholder consultations, COVID-19 related restrictions and an inability to conduct in-person stakeholder consultations have posed some challenges in this regard. The team was proactively working to overcome them, including by utilizing online platforms for delivering workshops and relying on the established coordination mechanisms with local presence, such as the Indigenous People's Desk.

COMPLETION

Overall Assessments and Lessons Learned

Main lessons learned:

The implementation of REDD+ Grant in Belize generated important lessons that span beyond the REDD+ and are relevant for informing future investments in the forestry sector and guiding overall development practices. They are as follows:

- Importance of targeted and meaningful stakeholder engagement:** REDD+ Grant in Belize supported extensive stakeholder consultations which were to a great extent credited for a successful completion of a range of outputs. The most significant area was the establishment of the IP Desk which ensured continuous, tailored and dedicated means of communication with the Indigenous Peoples of Belize. Though not envisioned at the onset of the Grant implementation, this mechanism demonstrates the importance of institutionalized ways of ensuring effective stakeholder engagement. In the case of Belize, this was the critical measure that overcame the initial challenges with stakeholder participation that was not considered sufficient at the time.
- Emphasis on technical work and solid evidence as no-regrets measures:** The Grant supported activities in Belize led to the completion of various technical documents. Even though there's no immediate follow-up for the next phase of REDD+ in Belize, having a solid evidence base on a variety of issues (from the factors of deforestation to the establishment of the forest emission level) proved to be useful tool for mainstreaming REDD+ related discussions in the ongoing Government programs (including within the Forestry Department but going beyond as well).
- Sufficient capacity as a prerequisite for successful implementation:** The REDD+ Grant in Belize faced accelerated implementation once the capacity constraints were addressed and overcome. That was the case following the full staffing of the REDD+ CU (including the hiring of Environmental and Social Expert that was not initially envisioned), as well as increased capacity of other fiduciary matters, namely procurement and financial management. As such, the experience throughout the Grant implementation showed the importance of investing in the capacity building activities early on and using dedicated and tailored approaches when doing so.
- Flexible and adaptive management to ensure accelerated implementation:** REDD+ Grant in Belize faced several challenges

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related to the stakeholder engagement and COVID-19 restrictions in this regard. That said, the REDD+CU demonstrated that with adjustments in the approach and adaptability in this regard, these challenges can be overcome and in a successful manner. By relying on virtual means of communications and consultations, but at the same time adapting them to the specifics of local context(s), both the SESA and REDD+ Strategy were widely consulted on and validated despite the inability to hold discussions in person.

Overall outcome (and its Sustainability):

Comment:

Even though there is no immediate follow up to the Grant in Belize, the REDD+ Readiness support allowed for the establishment of the main REDD+ institutions and tools needed to move to the next phases including investments and the preparations for the potential results-based payments. That was done through development of safeguard instruments, Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism, Measurement, Reporting and Verification System, and FREL, among others. Even in case of the BSM which is in draft mode, the groundwork done will allow for its prompt finalization in the next phases of the REDD+ in Belize and should the Emission Reduction Program be developed. At the same time, and as a result of the emphasis on the participatory approach, all relevant stakeholders and government agencies integrated the key components brought on by the REDD+ Readiness Phase into their programs and initiatives. Lastly, some staff trained under the REDD+ Grant supported activities have now transitioned to the Forestry Department which will ensure continuity of efforts and that the developed capacity is kept and utilized going forward. Lastly, and as part of the work of the REDD+ Readiness Phase, the GOB has started discussions and work across ministries and departments to secure funding and other resources needed to carry out additional necessary groundwork to secure meaningful follow-up.

Bank Performance:

Comment:

The overall Bank Performance was considered Satisfactory - based on both the quality at entry and Grant supervision. The task teams conducted regular supervision missions, technical reviews and related no-objections to the TORs were provided within reasonable timeframes, flexibility was demonstrated throughout the Grant implementation and there was a general hands-on approach to ensure that capacity of the stakeholders is built and supported. That is particularly true for the environmental and social safeguards aspect of the work which in turn resulted in a successful completion of social and environmental documents under the Grant.

Additional Assessment

Development / strengthening of institutions:

Comment:

The capacity of the Forestry Development, National Climate Change Office and relevant Ministries and agencies to understand and handle REDD+ has increased immensely thanks to the Grant supported activities, including dedicated capacity development support. As a result, the Government of Belize has made commitments to continue to advance REDD+ process and fold it into the related work on sustainable forest management and climate change accordingly.

Mobilization of other resources:

Comment:

Belize was able to leverage some funding (both from domestic sources and other investments) in the REDD+ readiness phase. Going forward, it is expected that both the technical outputs of the Grant and strengthened institutional frameworks/increased capacity will prove to be a useful resource mobilization tool.

Knowledge exchange:

Comment:

The Belize REDD+ team has been a part of various learning events on REDD+ supported by the FCPF. The same is true for the widely shared knowledge on the IP engagement. Lastly, with support from the Grant, Belizean stakeholders also benefited from technical trainings on various subject matter while at the same time sharing their knowledge with other participants in such fora.

Client's policy / program implementation:

Comment:

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As noted above, there is a full ownership of the REDD+ process and related outputs that are now integrated within the respective agencies' and departments' programs. It is also expected that REDD+ will provide direct and significant contribution for the development of the national carbon rights framework.

Efficiency:

Comment:

Outcomes planned at the onset have been largely achieved, in a timely manner. As such, the Grant efficiency is rated satisfactory.

Replicability:

Comment:

At the national level, REDD+ readiness support had the convening power for maintaining the dialog on deforestation and forest degradation and with all relevant stakeholders. By utilizing the existing relationships and mechanisms, Belize is in a good position to build on such experience and ensure effective dialogue going forward.

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Main recommendations to stakeholders:

Based on the achievements and lessons learned from implementation of the Grant (and in particular the stakeholder engagement aspects of it), the following are stakeholder recommendations in this regard:

- Continued capacity building for the relevant Government stakeholders will be crucial for Belize to strengthen its sustainable forest management practices and mobilize further funding in this regard (including for the result-based payments in the context of the REDD+).
- Related capacity building should be broadened to include further awareness raising and consultations with the larger Belizean population. While there was a significant progress made throughout the Grant implementation in this regard, there are still capacity and knowledge gaps that should be bridged. Such approach would also have benefits in terms of the expectations management among various stakeholder groups.
- Belize should continue to utilize mechanisms established by REDD+ Grant (e.g. IP Desk) in the context of REDD+ processes in the country, but also beyond that. Effective and meaningful stakeholder consultations will be critical for any forestry-related investments and REDD+ Grant established a very solid basis to build on.

Main recommendations to Bank Management:

REDD+ Grant in Belize achieved significant outcomes in terms of building the country's readiness and setting up the mechanisms for future implementation. The Bank may want to continue the engagement in this area by possibly supporting the development of the carbon rights framework in Belize - both in terms of the technical inputs and facilitation of the dialogue itself.

DISBURSEMENTS

Disbursements Summary in USD

Date From	Date To	Planned Cumulative	Planned Period	Actual Cumulative	Actual Period
03/27/2017	06/30/2018	0.00	0.00	415,265.33	415,265.33
01/01/2018	06/30/2019	0.00	0.00	996,335.25	581,069.92
07/01/2019	06/30/2020	0.00	0.00	2,284,555.6	1,288,220.35
07/01/2020	06/30/2021	0.00	0.00	2,967,523.75	682,968.15
07/01/2021	03/31/2022	0.00	0.00	3,790,996.58	823,472.83

PROCUREMENT PLAN

None

PROCUREMENT ACTUAL

None