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# EVALUATION

## PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF USAID/HONDURAS PROPARQUE PROGRAM

JUNE 2016

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COVER PHOTO: Tower and platforms for bird watching in PANACAM, financed by ProParque

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BCSR	Beneficio de Café Santa Rosa
CANATURH	Cámara Nacional de Turismo de Honduras (National Tourist Board)
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CODEL	Local Emergency Committees (Comités de Emergencia Local)
CODEM	Municipal Emergency Committees (Comités de Emergencia Municipal)
COPECO	Permanent Commission for Contingencies (Comisión Permanente de Contingencias)
COPRACAJUL	Cooperativa de Producción Agrícola Cacaoteros de Jutiapa Limitada
DAPs	Department of Protected Areas (Departamento de Areas Protegidas)
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ET	Evaluation Team
FAC	Fundación Amigos del Café
FHIA	Fundación Hondureña de Investigación Agrícola (Honduran Agricultural Research Foundation)
FUNDER	Fundación para el Desarrollo Empresarial Rural
FY	Fiscal Year
GOH	Government of Honduras
HOPEH	Asociación de Hoteles Pequeños de Honduras
HQC	Honduras Quality Coffee
ICF	National Forestry Institute (Instituto de Conservación Forestal)
IHT	Honduras Institute of Tourism (Instituto Hondureño de Turismo)
INAM	National Women's Institute (Instituto Nacional de la Mujer)
INFOP	National Institute of Professional Training (Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional)
IP	Implementing Partners
IR	Intermediate Results
JAA	Water Administrative Council (Junta Administradora de Agua)
NRM	Natural Resource Management
MIRA	Integrated Management of Environmental Resources (Manejo Integrado de Recursos Ambientales)

MOCAPH MSME	Mesa de Organizaciones Co-manejadoras de Áreas Protegidas de Honduras) Micro Small and Medium Enterprises
PA	Protected Area
PANACAM PES	Parque Nacional Cerro Azul Meambar Payment for Ecosystem Services
PUP	Protected Area Public Use Plans
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
REHNAP	Honduran Network of Private Natural Reserves of Honduras (Red Hondureña de Reservas Naturales Privadas de Honduras)
SICCS SINAGER	Sistema Integrado Centroamericano de Sostenibilidad y Calidad (SICCS) National System of Risk Management (Sistema Nacional de Gestión de Riesgos)
SINAPH	National Protected Areas System (Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas de Honduras)
SoW	Statement of Work
SPL	Sustainable Productive Landscape
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UNAH	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras
UMA	Municipal Environmental Unit (Unidad Municipal de Ambiente)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
Zamorano	Pan-American Agricultural School

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation assesses the performance of the USAID ProParque activity (further referred to as ProParque) through early 2106. ProParque is an economic growth and natural resources activity that seeks to realign Honduras' economic and social development trajectory with the sound management of its rich natural resource base. Its main objective is to achieve sustainable economic growth, while focusing on protected areas of Honduras and its communities. ProParque involves simultaneous work on three different areas: biodiversity and natural resource management (NRM), rural enterprise growth, and climate change/natural disaster risk reduction (DRR)<sup>1</sup>.

This external performance evaluation has been completed towards the end of the option period of the USAID ProParque activity. The objectives of this evaluation are to help USAID/Honduras determine which components and activity aspects worked well or did not work well, and why. The findings of this evaluation could be used as input to consolidate results of the activities to contribute to the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for Honduras.

The evaluation also provides pertinent information, data, and findings to the Government of Honduras (GOH) and USAID/Honduras to learn what was accomplished with Development Assistance funds. The evaluation should help USAID/Honduras and the ProParque team see a big picture assessment from a third party perspective, the accomplishments and challenges of ProParque, and provide lessons learned and recommendations for future activities.

The key guiding questions for the evaluation, as established in the original Scope of Work, are as follows:

1. What were the most significant constraints in working with, respectively, the GOH (central and municipal), Protected Area (PA) co-managers, and the private sector? If resolved, what lessons were learned from these processes?
2. What are ProParque's greatest successes in terms of achieving economic growth in communities regarding Protected Areas (PAs), conservation of biodiversity, and adaptation to climate change (or a combination of these three areas)? Which successes are replicable and/or scalable within the CDCS context?
3. What were ProParque's non-successes? What were the main factors that influence these non-successes?
4. Was integration and congruency achieved between the design elements and the concept of working at a landscape level?
5. In what ways has this project's technical approach impacted gender equity issues?

The evaluation team completed its main field level analysis from February 15th to 26th with additional field work carried out by two evaluation team members until March 11th, 2016.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://en.usaid-proparque.org/>, visited April 20, 2016

## KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

The evaluation process concluded with an overall favorable impression of the results achieved by ProParque, finding that there is a strong argument for a second phase of ProParque based on the programming success of the activity. ProParque has made critical progress on a number of fronts, including natural resource management, agricultural commodity value chains, capacity building, decentralization, and tourism, among other areas. In addition, ProParque has been a very well managed initiative, with some very strong administrative features, such as the establishment of a single project team and organizational system for all implementing partners. The ProParque team also effectively handled major challenges, the most significant being the expansion of development assistance to the six departments of the Western region. The activity also benefitted from a strong working relationship between USAID/Honduras staff and the ProParque team. However, the evaluation also showed that ProParque had a slow start-up period and missed completing some sub-components. The findings are summarized below, followed by recommendations from the evaluation team.

Highlights of ProParque's achievements include:

- Strong capacity building focus: ProParque has built capacity in a number of critical areas including: training in the tourism certification process, support to the Local Chambers of Tourism (CANATURH) to improve financial and organizational capacities, assistance to the Asociación de Hoteles Pequeños de Honduras (HOPEH) in improving the organization's visibility and increasing membership, and improving the financial sustainability and administrative capacity of organizations such as the Board of Honduran Protected Areas Co-managers (MOCAPH) and the Honduran Network of Private Natural Reserves of Honduras (REHNAP).
- Successes with assisting cooperatives and microenterprises: ProParque provided strong support to cooperatives under three different transfer modalities: in-kind transfer (such as machinery, electric installation, etc.), technical support (field schools, good agricultural practices), and subventions and grants in several commodity areas, e.g., rambutan (FRUTELA cooperative in Tela), cacao (COPRACAJUL cooperative), coffee (COHORSIL in Siguatepeque), sugarcane, livestock, and wood (Madera Verde). Accomplishments with cooperatives included improvements in production, getting commodities to market, profitability, reduction of wasteful practices, and achieving recognition through such vehicles as organic certification. ProParque also oversaw the implementation of a microenterprise model based on the promotion of clean energy in the form of energy-efficient cook stoves and photovoltaic panels.
- Successes in the tourism sector: The development of the national bird watching strategy, "Aviturismo," which was endorsed and promoted by the President of Honduras, has been one of ProParque's greatest successes. Other gains in the tourism sector were the creation of a National Tourism Portal Web for Honduras and the publication of a basic knowledge and skills manual for tourist guides.
- Effective work with non-governmental organizations and private actors: In general, non-government actors were receptive to ProParque support and readily able to incorporate suggested practices into their operations, and public-private partnerships got off to a strong start. An example of an important achievement of ProParque in the private sector was the strengthening of the organizational capacity of REHNAP.
- Success in building networks. A significant achievement of ProParque was to be a central player in multiple sectors, acting as catalyst and putting together actors that would not have normally worked together otherwise. An example of this can be found in the tourism sector with the festival 'Gracias Convoca' in Gracias in the western region and the bird watching strategy, which has involved the successful collaboration of private and public sector stakeholders.

Areas of shortcomings for ProParque include:

- **Work in PAs of the northern Coast left unfinished:** There were opportunities for ProParque, to establish long-lasting development initiatives that could have served as models for the north coast, with a minimal additional technical support and financial investment from the Activity. ProParque did provide some ongoing technical support and financial investment to strengthen the national network MOCAPH during the Option Period, with good results, which contributed to building a stronger network of PAs. Nevertheless, the north coast co-managers were of the opinion more could have been done by ProParque to consolidate onsite efforts. It must be noted that the change in geographic focus was determined by USAID/Honduras CDCS approval in 2014.
- **Slow programming start:** Not all project components of ProParque developed at the same pace, resulting in an initial period when the project was underperforming in some programming areas. Once the activity was functioning at a higher capacity, beneficiaries such as PA co-managers and members of cooperatives indicated that there was undue pressure placed on them to execute quickly and show immediate results.
- **SICCS certification has not been achieved by most hotels and restaurants initially engaged** in the process due to poor capacity of the targeted entities and the lack of recognition and valorization of the SICCS brand by the customers.
- **Duration of technical support insufficient for meeting the long-term, complex needs of PA co-managers and cooperatives:** Partners stated that excessive time was spent completing institutional diagnostic analysis rather than providing ongoing technical support to address critical problems.
- **Some of the administrative and financial tools** promoted for use by PA co-managers were found to be inappropriate for the scale of their operations versus the co-manager's internal human and financial capacity.
- **Some stakeholders such as ICF stated that ProParque was overly preoccupied with quantifiable results:** This may have resulted in opportunities missed to tackle other types of challenges, such as slower institutional change, that may be difficult to measure but, from a development standpoint, are just as important. It appears to a certain degree, that the project team struggled within the scope of work to satisfy both beneficiaries and USAID's contractual expectations. In addition, some of the original project components, such as the support for forestry in the area of REDD+, never materialized fully and was largely limited to providing support to a
- **National REDD+ sub-committee:** The ProParque team indicated that this has more to do with national level organization related to REDD+ than any shortcoming on ProParque's part.
- **Need for greater coordination with the local actors and donor institutions to avoid duplication and improved coordination:** ProParque's allocation of resources could have been improved to avoid duplication of efforts with other donors and no synergy with USAID's Integrated Management of Environmental Resources (MIRA) program that admittedly had ended a year earlier. It should be noted that the ProParque team has made efforts to coordinate with other USAID activities, such as the local governance activity, NEXOS, in the western region.
- **GOH agencies were not always receptive to introducing changes** that ProParque suggested, such as encouraging more decentralized decision-making. Some GOH stakeholders such as ICF were not satisfied with the authoritarian role played by ProParque in not consulting and coordinating with them.

- **Lack of focus on the forestry sector, agroforestry withstanding, and a minimal contribution to REDD+.** In relation to forestry there were expectations regarding investments in enterprise activity to provide a boost to sustainable forestry practices, which did not gain a strong foothold. USAID and ProParque provided a rationale for the decision to shift away from forestry, which was based on limited programming options in these areas. However, ProParque certainly has never suffered from a lack of programming possibilities; indeed, some stakeholders expressed concern that ProParque has had too many programming components.
- **Inconsistent gender strategy:** While a few gender-focused interventions were successful (e.g., women pursuing their own coffee roasting projects), ProParque could have implemented a more systematic approach to integrating women into project activities, such as through a specific value chain or tourism activity. In addition, it is unclear whether ProParque's gender-related training activity is achieving results.

Table 1 provides a summary of the successes and under-achievements for each of the components and sub-components (Intermediate Results and Sub-Intermediate Results) of ProParque's logical framework. All those results are treated in greater detail in the Evaluation Questions.

TABLE 1. SUCCESSES AND UNDER-ACHIEVEMENTS PER COMPONENT AND SUB-COMPONENT

IR/SUB-IR	MAIN SUCCESSES	UNDER-ACHIEVEMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED
<b>INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2.1 RURAL MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE (MSME) GROWTH INCREASED</b>		
Sub-IR 2.1.1 Rural MSMEs access to inputs, Practices and Technology for market Participation improved	<p><b>Tourism sector:</b> (I) Development of the national bird watching strategy endorsed and promoted by the President of Honduras; (II) Fruitful collaboration with CANATURH around the creation of a cultural festival 'Gracias Convoca'; (III) publication of a basic knowledge and skills manual for tourist guides (IV) Local Chambers of Tourism supported to improve financial and organizational capacities.</p> <p><b>Agroforestry Sector:</b> (I) establishment of forestry systems for coffee and cacao; (II) Improvements in production, getting commodities to market, profitability, reduction of wasteful practices, and achieving recognition through such vehicles as organic certification.</p> <p>Capacity-building focus in a number of critical areas, including (I) training in the tourism certification process, (II) support to the CANATURH to improve financial and organizational capacities, (III) assistance to the HOPEH in improving the organization's visibility and increasing membership;</p>	<p><b>Tourism sector:</b> SICCS norms certification not adapted to rural and small hotels and restaurants; not enough resources spent to promote the SICCS norms towards a larger audience (clients and hostelry professionals).</p> <p><b>Agroforestry Sector:</b> Lack of adequacy and effectiveness of some of the project's investments in beneficiaries' value chains, that resulted in financial losses for the cooperatives, in some cases; Low level of coordination with ICF to design the management plan of agroforestry systems.</p>
Sub-IR 2.1.2 Rural MSMEs' Access to New Markets Opportunities	<p><b>Tourism Sector:</b> Creation of a National Tourism Portal Web for Honduras to improve hotels and restaurants' visibility;</p> <p><b>Agroforestry sector:</b> (I) Increased use of best</p>	

TABLE I. SUCCESSES AND UNDER-ACHIEVEMENTS PER COMPONENT AND SUB-COMPONENT

IR/SUB-IR	MAIN SUCCESSES	UNDER-ACHIEVEMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED
Increased	practices and quality management, as well as embracing certification as a marketing tool with the perspective of giving access to markets with higher standards of quality; (II) acquisition of internationally recognized certifications of quality to access new lucrative markets, receive a better price for products and improve living condition; (III) support provided to cooperatives to obtain exporting certifications or link them with target exporting companies;	
Sub-IR 2.1.3 Barriers to competitiveness of Rural MSMEs Reduced	<b>Agroforestry sector:</b> support to the cooperatives generated positive impacts for the producers and the communities, including increased yields/decreased use of inputs through the financing of investments and the reduction of key bottlenecks; vertical integration of the value chains; in-kind investments that facilitated the recuperation of the value-added created along the value chain, which was previously captured by intermediaries; positive economic externalities for the communities	<b>Agroforestry sector:</b> Disproportionate time spent with cooperatives completing institutional diagnostics rather than providing technical support to address critical problems.
<b>INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2.2: HONDURAN BIODIVERSITY &amp; NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVED</b>		
Sub-IR 2.2.1 More Effective Management of National Protected Areas System	(I) Improvement of the financial sustainability and administrative capacity of organizations such as the Board of Honduran Protected Areas Co-managers (MOCAPH) and the Honduran Network of Private Natural Reserves of Honduras (REHNAP); (II) Elaboration of important documents such as maps including forest coverage and potential threats or regional conservation plans; (III) Effective work with non-governmental organizations and private actors;	(I) Confusion at the beginning about the outcome of the component; (II) Pressure felt to execute tasks extremely quickly to accomplish due dates to deliver expected products; (III) Very short time for developing deliverables/products and in some cases cash flow problems for grantee's; (IV) In the northern region, abrupt disassociation of the program; (V) Some administrative and financial tools insufficient for the scale of their operations and regarding the co-manager's internal human and financial capacity.
Sub-IR 2.2.2 Productive Landscape Conservation Promoted	<b>PES:</b> Effective collaboration between ICF and MiAmbiente to draft the new PES regulation that supports the autonomy and local empowerment of the JAA.	

TABLE I. SUCCESSES AND UNDER-ACHIEVEMENTS PER COMPONENT AND SUB-COMPONENT

IR/SUB-IR	MAIN SUCCESSES	UNDER-ACHIEVEMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED
<b>INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2.3: CAPACITY TO MITIGATE AND ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE STRENGTHENED</b>		
Sub-IR 2.3.1 GOH Climate Change Policy Established and Implemented	(I) Successful integration of climate change concepts into agricultural practices through training of producers on alternatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change.	(I) Efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change have been limited by a lack of institutional capabilities and financial and human resources and general experience in the area of effective adaptation practices especially in relation to more sustainable patterns of economic development. (II) Some of the original project components, such as the support for forestry in the area of REDD+, never fully materialized and was largely limited to providing support to a National REDD+ sub-committee.
Sub-IR 2.3.2 Clean renewable Energy Adopted	(I) Successful design and implementation of a microenterprise model based on the dissemination of clean energy that has brought benefits to all the stakeholders involved: energy companies, micro- entrepreneurs, final users.	(I) Sustainability of the model challenged by the cost of the materials, and the economic constraints facing the final users who require subsidies to cover the basic cost, installation, and maintenance of the products. (II) While most of project trained enterprises are now working on their own, a minority claim to be still requiring assistance securing markets. (III) Training programs for solar panel entrepreneurs should give more consideration to the business side of matters, as well as the legal and managerial aspects of opening a small company.
Sub-IR 2.3.3 Disaster Vulnerability Reduced	(I) Training of CODEMs and CODELs in risk management and disaster reduction that were reproduced successfully in actual situations.	(I) Lack of resources to consistently allow CODEMs and CODELs to implement what was learned during training.
<b>CROSS-CUTTING TOPICS</b>		
Gender	(I) Development of publications such as the Guide for the Prevention of Gender Violence in Temporary Shelters, and systematization of the Experience of Increasing REDD+ Capacities with Gender Focus and Access to Land for Women in Celaque Region; Virtual workshop on Gender and REDD+; Support to outreach activities on gender issues; (II) Positive impact of gender integration in ProParque interventions in the field: CODELs chaired by women, women holding management positions at cooperatives, or women undertaking entrepreneurial initiatives.	Lack of consistently strong gender strategy: heterogeneous pattern of understanding of the issue of gender equality among stakeholders; (I) Lack of implementation of concrete activities to engage women and put concepts into practice, such as with PA co-managers; (II) No systematic attempt to integrate women in, for example, the project's value chains or tourism activities.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a summary of recommendations for USAID/Honduras Mission specific to the ProParque Activity:

1. A second phase of ProParque is recommended for all programming areas. While the evaluation concludes that ProParque has made significant accomplishments in many components, the evaluation also revealed the degree to which further technical assistance is required to ensure more in-depth and long-term development objectives are realized. Modifications to ProParque are suggested however; for instance, USAID should consider refocusing ProParque into several sub-projects that would allow for more focused interventions and better respond to the needs of Honduras. A suggested focus for a separate project would be for the areas of climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Alternatively, the next phase of ProParque could better integrate climate change and DRR considerations into all programming.
2. In a second phase focused support should be provided to programming regions such as the North Coast that were supported during the Base Period but not in the Option Period. In particular, cost-effective and limited interventions targeting project partners such as cooperatives, co-managers of PAs, tourism stakeholders, and micro-entrepreneurs should be reinitiated. The objective would be to allow ProParque and USAID to leave these programming areas on better terms and to assure that stronger and replicable development models are established. USAID/Honduras should work with ProParque and Honduran stakeholders to determine top priorities for reengagement.
3. USAID should consider establishing a post-project monitoring system for all ProParque activities implemented during the Base and Option Periods to assess how these activities evolve (while the second phase of ProParque continues, as seems likely). The objective of monitoring would be to measure sustainability and insure that the investments made in ProParque are resulting in the desired progress and work towards the original stated development objectives. This monitoring process may identify cost-effective and focused follow up activities that USAID could consider to ensure sustainability.
4. As key partners of ProParque, agencies such as MOCAPH and REHNAP should institutionalize their management of Protected Areas (PAs), with a continued focus on the western region of Honduras. Similarly, despite challenges that have arisen in working with ICF, USAID should devise strategies to strengthen ICF's involvement in ProParque activities.
5. Continue to encourage stronger linkages among local tourism stakeholders, for example, PAs, hotel operators, and other tourism stakeholders in destinations such as Copán Ruinas.
6. Work more closely with indigenous groups as strategic partners to strengthen biodiversity conservation efforts and the capacity of these traditionally marginalized people to manage their lands.
7. In the western region in particular, ensure adherence to municipal development plans. ProParque should work to build tighter coordination with local authorities on economic development and environmental management. Strong local development plans will provide structure to the next, expected phase of ProParque, as well as improved synergy with other USAID interventions in the western region. If any local development plans in the western region are lacking, USAID can provide assistance in strengthening the plans.
8. ProParque should continue creating a range of sustainable enterprise development activity. Building on the first phase of the project, sustainable enterprise development should target additional economic

sectors. For example, ProParque can help support coffee farmers and producers, as well as the tourism industry, by helping to develop a network of cafes or restaurants in the western region that can act as sales points. This type of interconnectivity should be sought in farm to non-farm income generating activities.

9. Develop and implement a select number of interventions related to tourism to address the structural challenges faced by the Honduras tourism industry (e.g., the country's poor reputation as a tourist destination). ProParque should work with an array of tourism stakeholders, including donors, to brainstorm ways to increase tourism through effective programs such as Aviturismo. Of importance in this regard will be the Honduras Institute of Tourism (IHT), which will eventually be depended upon to sustain the groundwork of ProParque.

## RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO USAID/HONDURAS OVERSIGHT

1. USAID should ensure that the next phase of ProParque is not overly reliant on performance measurements targets that are too inflexible such as being too focussed on qualitative expectations blinding the ability to see other objectives that are achievable and beneficial.
2. USAID should ensure as short a delay as possible between ProParque's current work and the new phase to ensure better coordination and continuity of activities.
3. Ensure that mid-term and final performance evaluations are standard for complex activities and projects such as ProParque. Although the internal monitoring and evaluation unit of ProParque was proactive and effective, internal evaluation is not a replacement for third-party observations. Mid-term evaluations should be conducted at the appropriate juncture of a project's lifespan and its recommendations acted upon as expeditiously as possible. In addition, for the next phase of ProParque, USAID should consider designating an independent project monitor. For large multi-faceted projects such as ProParque additional oversight is warranted.
4. Consider establishing procedures for projects such as ProParque that are operational during a change in the Country Development Cooperation Strategy. When the CDCS was recently revised, it led to a reorientation of ProParque; however, the mid-stream changes hindered the effectiveness of ProParque.
5. USAID projects must ensure that gender considerations are integrated into all components, starting from the design of the activities, through implementation, and including monitoring and evaluation. ProParque should be more closely monitored to assess the participation of women in terms of their access to project resources, productive activities, leadership and decision-making. For a project the size of ProParque, it should be standard practice to incorporate specialized programming focused on women. For example, ProParque could include an agricultural product value chain focused on assisting female producers.
6. USAID should consider how to proceed from a monitoring and evaluation standpoint in terms of independently verifying quantitative results.

# I. INTRODUCTION

## I.1 EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

As per USAID final evaluation guidelines, the evaluation team proposed employing a mixed-method approach integrating the use of a number of methods at each stage of the evaluation process.<sup>2</sup> The evaluation comprised of the following three phases with each described in greater detail below:

- 1) Desk Phase
- 2) Field Phase
- 3) Synthesis Phase

The evaluation aimed to employ both quantitative and qualitative information gathering techniques so that all findings presented in the final evaluation report, such as recommendations and lessons learned, would be substantiated in facts and observations through various data collection methods. Data was gathered using the technique of triangulation ensuring the validity of data through the cross-verification from two or more information sources. Triangulation provided an opportunity to highlight and contrast different perspectives before drawing on conclusions that will inform the findings of the final report. However, the use of quantitative tools proved difficult due to the difficulty in finding appropriate samples, so the evaluation primarily relied on qualitative results.

### I.1.1 DESK PHASE (PHASE I)

During this first phase, the evaluation team undertook an initial analysis of all core project documents and other relevant reference materials including GOH policies such as the Honduras National Tourism Strategy of 2013, and key USAID documents such as the CDCS for Honduras, along with other essential documentation as it was made available.

The Desk Phase also provided an opportunity to develop other investigative tools to facilitate an understanding of the different components of ProParque and their achievements against the desired results as described in ProParque's Logic Framework. For the Option Period, ProParque's Logic Framework was modified. The evaluation team will refer to the revised Logic Framework as the point of reference for assessing programming results. Prior to field work, the team developed an inception report, detailing planned field work, which was shared with USAID/Honduras. (See attachment). Finally, the evaluation team developed a questionnaire (see Annex II) to be used in discussions with stakeholders.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Mixed\\_Methods\\_Evaluations\\_Technical\\_Note.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Mixed_Methods_Evaluations_Technical_Note.pdf)

### 1.1.2 FIELD PHASE (PHASE 2)

The field work was conducted from February 15 to 26, 2016. Early during the Field Phase the evaluation team tested the assumptions associated with the evaluation methodology to ensure its validity. When necessary, slight modifications were made to the evaluation methodology. This included modifying and usually expanding the list of stakeholders to interview. The field schedule and interview list are included in the Annex. The following tools constituted the main information gathering techniques:

- Document review: ongoing throughout the life of the evaluation but used primarily during the Desk Phase;
- Desk activities such as Internet research: ongoing throughout the life of the evaluation but used primarily during the Desk Phase;
- Key informant interviews: national with a focus on GOH and local level stakeholders as well as project staff (DAI, CARE etc.) and USAID personnel;
- Focus group discussion: of particular importance for ProParque beneficiaries;
- Direct field observation.

Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were the key tools employed during the field phase. As ProParque has been a very large activity that includes collaboration with at a minimum 40 municipalities, 31 CODEMs, 186 CODELs, and over 2,000 enterprises and has been operational in a large number of physical locations such as the ten PAs, the evaluation team strove properly assess all these programming aspects. Both programming periods (Base and Option) were assessed.

In order to review as much ProParque programming, and to consult with as many stakeholders as possible, the evaluation team was divided into two groups with distinct responsibilities.

While the evaluation team endeavored to ensure as strong a sample size of all of ProParque's programming components, the large scale of ProParque programming presents significant challenges in obtaining a sufficient sample size for each component. On February 15, the evaluation team members convened in Tegucigalpa to meet with USAID/Honduras representatives prior to official launch of the evaluation.

### 1.1.3 SYNTHESIS PHASE (PHASE 3)

The end product of the Synthesis Phase is this final evaluation report. This report includes statements and conclusions in response to the evaluation questions, as well as an overall assessment of ProParque. This report also details recommendations that are clustered and prioritized in a way that is both strategic and useful.

The first step in the Synthesis Phase involved detailed analysis of data against the evaluation questions and ProParque's logic framework.

## 1.2 EVALUATION RATIONALE

### 1.2.1 EVALUATION PURPOSE

**Learning to Improve Effectiveness:** This external evaluation has been completed towards the end of the option period of the USAID ProParque activity. The objectives of this evaluation are to help USAID/Honduras determine which components and activity aspects worked well or did not work well, and

why. The findings of this evaluation will be used as input to consolidate results of the activities to contribute to the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for Honduras.

**Accountability to Stakeholders:** The evaluation also provides pertinent information, data, and findings to the GOH and USAID to learn what was accomplished with Development Assistance funds. The evaluation assists USAID/Honduras and the ProParque management team to better understand the initial results and contributions of the activity, and provide lessons learned for future activities.

## 1.2.2 AUDIENCE AND INTENDED USES

The primary audience of the evaluation findings and recommendations is the USAID/Honduras Mission, specifically the Economic Growth Office, the DO2 team and the implementing partner. The Executive Summary and recommendations will be provided to appropriate GOH agencies, as directed by USAID/Honduras. USAID may use the findings to make changes to the environmental activities' design and to share lessons learned with other stakeholders. DAI and its subcontractors will receive input on their strengths and weaknesses in the ProParque activity implementation, and will receive recommendations on the activities that need strengthening. It is expected that the beneficiaries (co-managers, municipalities, GOH, private sector) will have the opportunity to further discuss how the USAID ProParque activity assisted them, or failed to do so, and ways this project, or type of project, could be improved in the future.

## 1.2.3 EVALUATION GUIDANCE QUESTIONS

The questions below analyze the performance of the project, the sustainability of the interventions, client satisfaction, cost effectiveness, relevance and validity of hypotheses and assumptions and gender inclusion. The questions are:

The key guiding questions for the evaluation are as follows:

1. What were the most significant constraints in working with, respectively, the GOH (central and municipal), Protected Area (PA) Co-managers, and private sector? If resolved, what lessons were learned from these processes?
2. What are ProParque's greatest successes in terms of achieving economic growth in communities regarding PAs, conservation of biodiversity, and adaptation to climate change (or a combination of these three areas)? Which successes are replicable and/or scalable within the CDCS context?
3. What were ProParque's non-successes? What were the main factors that influence these non-successes?
4. Was integration and congruency achieved between the design elements and the concept of working at a landscape level?
5. In what ways has this project's technical approach impacted gender equity issues?

The evaluation team completed its main field level analysis from February 15th to 26th with additional field work carried out by two evaluation team members until March 11th of 2016. Table 2 details the approach taken to address each question, including the sub questions and data sources used.

TABLE 2. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INFORMATION AND DATA SOURCES AND GATHERING TECHNIQUES
<p>Evaluation Question #1: What were the most significant constraints in working with, respectively, the GOH (central and municipal), Protected Area (PA) Co-managers, and private sector? If resolved, what lessons were learned from these processes?</p>	<p>What were the particular constraints associated with each program component (i.e., tourism, PA management, DRR etc)?</p> <p>What were the most challenging programming areas and why?</p> <p>Did common challenges/constraints arise across programming areas, if so what were they?</p>	<p>Key informant interviews, questionnaires or surveys, focus group discussions, direct observation, desk</p> <p>Documents (including performance monitoring data, previous evaluation report), statistical data, project staff, stakeholders, expert knowledge, beneficiaries</p>
<p>Evaluation Question # 2:</p> <p>What are ProParque's greatest successes in terms of achieving economic growth in communities regarding PAs, conservation of biodiversity, and adaptation to climate change (or a combination of these three areas)? Which successes are replicable and/or scalable within the CDCS context?</p>	<p>What role did relations and partnership building play in ProParque's successes?</p> <p>Were there specific project management practices that contributed to programming success?</p> <p>What if any governance and/or accountability structures (USAID or GOH) contribute to facilitating success in the Honduran context?</p> <p>How can the successes of ProParque inform future programming priorities for USAID in Honduras?</p> <p>How sustainable are ProParque's programming successes?</p> <p>How does ProParque compare to interventions implemented by other donors in same programming areas?</p>	<p>Key informant interviews, questionnaires or surveys, focus group discussions, direct observation, desk documents (including performance monitoring data, previous evaluation?), statistical data if any, project staff, stakeholders, expert knowledge, beneficiaries</p>



TABLE 2. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INFORMATION AND DATA SOURCES AND GATHERING TECHNIQUES
<p>Evaluation Question # 3:</p> <p>What were ProParque's non-successes? What were the main factors that influence these non-successes?</p>	<p>What can be learned from the difficulties encountered by ProParque to inform future USAID programming in related fields?</p> <p>What could have been done differently to improve ProParque or to avoid some of the challenges that were encountered?</p> <p>Were these factors specific to ProParque or do they have a broad influence?</p>	<p>Key informant interviews, questionnaires or surveys, focus group discussions, direct observation, desk review</p>

TABLE 2. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INFORMATION AND DATA SOURCES AND GATHERING TECHNIQUES
<p>Evaluation Question # 4:</p> <p>Was integration and congruency achieved between the design elements and the concept of working at a landscape level?</p>	<p>How effective has capacity building efforts such as training been in translating into ground level success?</p> <p>How has ProParque's support to the National Protected Areas System (SINAPH) resulted in greater effectiveness and efficiencies in the system?</p> <p>How has the early program focus on assisting the GOH and private sector leaders in reforming national policies, resulted in positive policy, regulatory, and administrative/financial reforms translated into ground level success or not?</p> <p>What have been the specific obstacles in promoting reform? Have there been factors that are beyond the control of the project?</p> <p>To what degree has there been integration or complementariness between the different programming elements?</p>	<p>Key informant interviews, questionnaires or surveys, focus group discussions, direct observation, desk review</p> <p>Documents (including performance monitoring data, previous evaluation report?), statistical data, project staff, stakeholders, expert knowledge, beneficiaries</p>

TABLE 2. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INFORMATION AND DATA SOURCES AND GATHERING TECHNIQUES
<p>Evaluation Question # 5:</p> <p>In which specific way has this project's technical approach impacted gender equity issues?</p>	<p>How have women participated in ProParque and what have been the strengths and weaknesses of their participation?</p> <p>How have women benefited from ProParque?</p> <p>Were there any missed opportunities for enhancing the positive impact on women through ProParque?</p> <p>What has been the value-added of having women participate in ProParque?</p> <p>Were there programming areas where specific constraints were encountered directly related to the participation of women?</p> <p>What does ProParque represent in terms of changing perceptions on the participation of women in similar programs?</p>	<p>Key informant interviews, questionnaires or surveys, focus group discussions, direct observation, desk</p> <p>Documents (including performance monitoring data, previous evaluation report?), statistical data, project staff, stakeholders, expert knowledge, beneficiaries</p>

### I.3 EVALUATION LIMITATIONS

ProParque is a very large activity and has been operational in different physical locations although today its geographic reach is more restricted. The evaluation team visited areas that were the focus of the Base Period and not simply the Option Period as the function of the evaluation is to grasp what has actually occurred with a project in its entirety. Nevertheless, an equal amount of time was spent in the current geographic focus area, the western region of Honduras. Covering such a large physical area was accomplished largely by maintaining a rigorous travel schedule. This made for a tight timeframe to ensure that a proper sample size of ProParque activities were assessed either through in-person interviews or site visits.

The travel required and limited time available prevented, for example, the organization of focus groups exclusively with women beneficiaries. Project beneficiaries were often spread out across an area with difficult

circumstances for local travel and there was no means to compensate potential focus groups participants. To address this limitation, female participants were asked specific questions regarding their participation in the project or the impact ProParque had on them. This approach was emblematic of how the evaluation team attempted to ensure an adequate consultation process with a diversity of ProParque stakeholders.

The most difficult challenge was dealing with the volume of stakeholder and project beneficiaries that had to be consulted and the vast array of information that this would generate. To the greatest degree possible the evaluation tried to be as representative as possible but with a project that reached out to for example, so many stakeholders, this was not really possible. Two members of the Evaluation Team that are based in Honduras continued on after to conduct interviews. As well, there were ongoing discussions with ProParque staff, in particular the project's director. Thus, every effort was made to be as thorough as possible.

## 2. PROPARQUE BACKGROUND

### 2.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

In Honduras, a lack of economic opportunity is considered to be one of the key contributing factors to widespread poverty. As of 2007, two thirds of the country lived below the poverty line with the majority settled in rural areas. Increasingly, one of the most important factors contributing to the lack of economic opportunity has been worsening environmental conditions especially degrading land, water and forest resources that are critical to both agricultural productivity and corresponding secondary economic prospects. The degradation of natural resources impacts highly negatively on the country's food security as Honduras has limited arable land. The need for strong examples of how land can be sustainably managed to produce food and generate income is of critical importance.

Honduras has rich natural resources and biodiversity. It has a healthy number of eco-systems and the country is a part of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, an important bridge for the migration of species especially birds between North and South America. There is a large number of Protected Areas (PA) in the country under both public and private management.

Hurricane Mitch of 1998 had devastating environmental and economic repercussions and brought into focus the need to improve broad-based planning in anticipation of future extreme climatic events and the promotion of improved forms of land management systems. Unfortunately, nearly two decades after Hurricane Mitch, the rural poor continue to live in conditions of high vulnerability to environmental risks without any substantive improvement in their economic opportunities or natural resource management practices that could help control the unwanted impacts of extreme events. The Honduran economy has remained largely dependent on natural resource extraction and processing in such sectors as agriculture, forestry, fisheries and mining while the need for improving natural resource management practices remains as strong as ever. In recent years the tourism sector has also begun to develop and it too is intricately dependent on environment wellbeing as its driving force. It is expected to grow in importance as an economic driver.

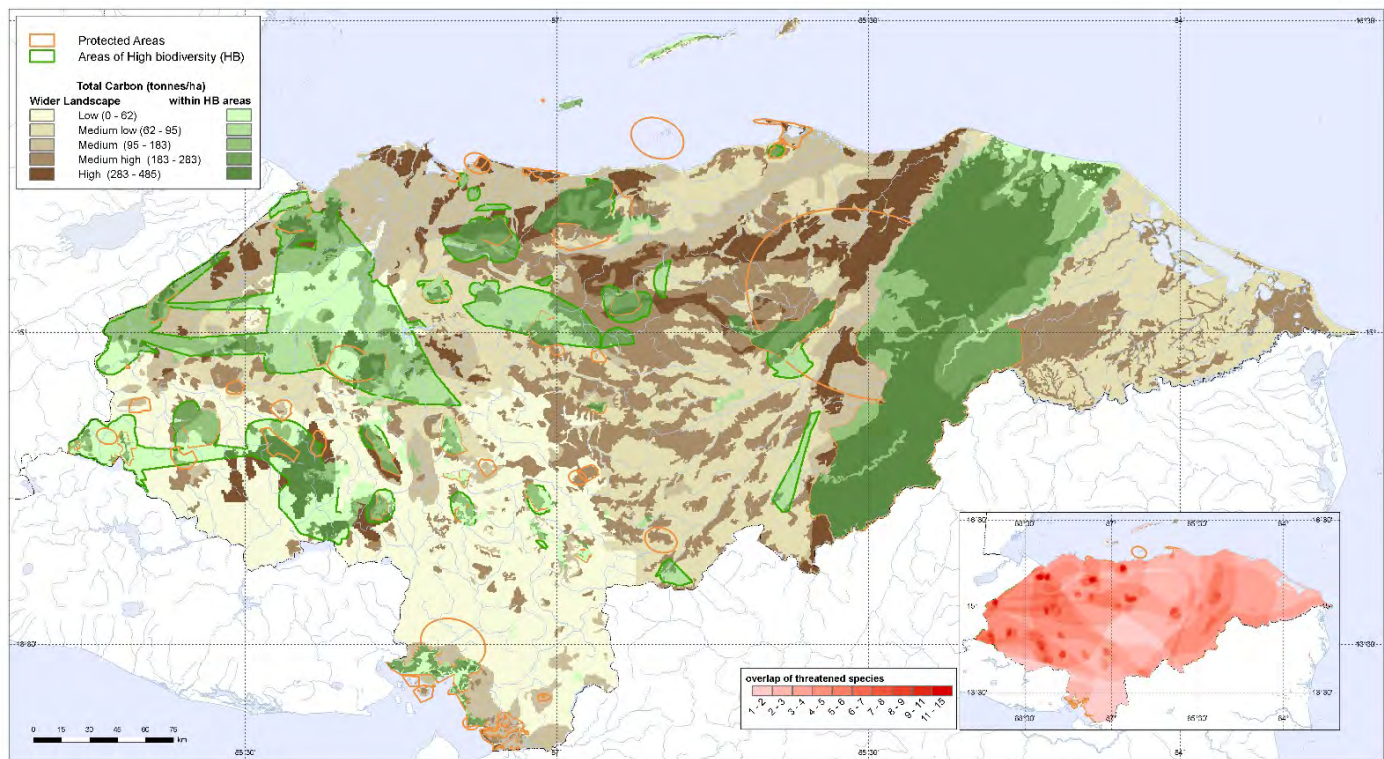
But the tourism industry in Honduras is still too underdeveloped with a considerable number of problems including the country's bad reputation for crime and violence.

One of USAID/Honduras most important responses to these circumstances was MIRA (*Manejo Integrado de Recursos Ambientales*, or Integrated Management of Environmental Resources) Program, a four-year, US \$23 million program that ended in February 2010. MIRA aimed to strengthen local capacity to create and administer

watershed management plans and stimulate policy reform related to the integrated management of natural resources.

Honduras has consistently struggled to establish and maintain legal and institutional capabilities for managing its natural resources, in particular the country's forests and other ecologically sensitive areas. The institutional shortcomings have been due in large part to inadequate financial resources, weak management systems, human resource capabilities, and overall enforcement capacity. Historically there has been a tendency to enforce natural resource management regulations without providing alternatives to the rural poor in the form of employment opportunities. This approach has proven not to be effective in reducing encroachments on sensitive areas and the misuse of natural resources. While the National Protected Areas System of Honduras (SINAPH) has provided Honduras a legal framework for promoting biodiversity conservation, the lack of practical capabilities has undermined the potential of SINAPH and other legislative tools. This has not helped to encourage investment in the conservation of natural resources on either public or private lands. SINAPH currently covers 91 PAs of which 69 have legal status with 22 are at the proposal stage. The SINAPH covers a total land area of 5,056,368.74 ha, of which 61 percent is terrestrial and 39.1 percent marine. The total area of the country is 112,492 K2. As for private PAs there are 29 active and there is no concrete data on how much area is concentrated in private PAs.

**FIGURE 1: PROTECTED AREAS, CARBON DENSITY, AND RANGE OF VULNERABLE SPECIES IN HONDURAS**



Map 8. Total carbon density, protected areas and areas of high biodiversity importance, defined as areas where the greatest numbers of distributions of threatened species (IUCN critically endangered, endangered and vulnerable categories) overlap (see inset), derived from species data provided by IUCN (2008) and NatureServe (2007a, b).

Source: UNEP-WCMC (2009)

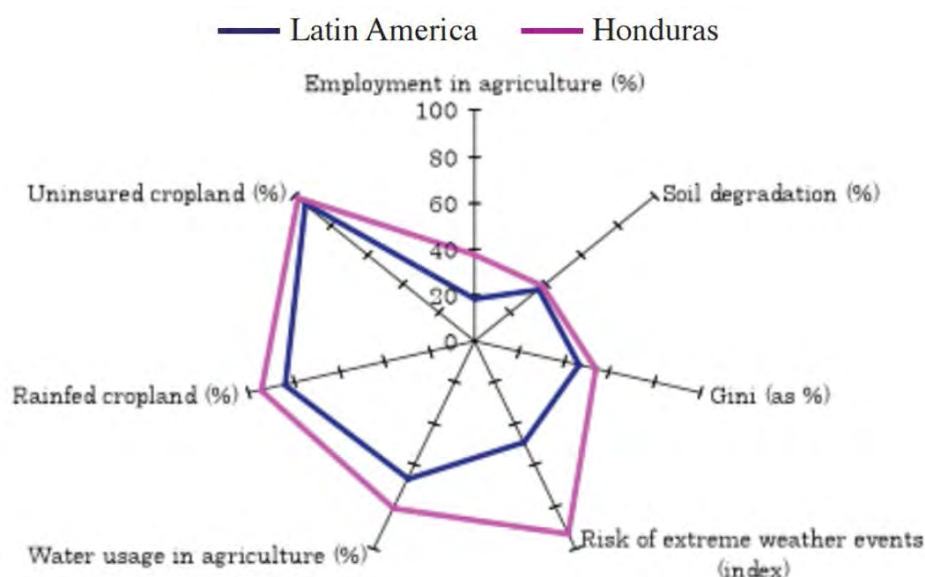
The issue of climate change is complicating matters in Honduras. With a decline in rainfall, increasing temperatures and a growing number of extreme climatic events, Honduras is considered one of the countries most impacted by climate change. Similar to other challenges faced by the country, efforts to mitigate and adapt

to climate change have been limited by a lack of institutional capabilities, financial and human resources and a general lack of knowledge about and experience in undertaking cost effective and practical actions.

At this time the challenges faced by Honduras in protecting biodiversity and managing PAs are being further complicated by climate change. With a decline in rainfall, a slow but incremental increase in average temperature and a growing number of extreme climatic events, Honduras is considered to be one of the countries most impacted by climate change.<sup>3</sup> The already precarious livelihoods of Honduran rural populations for example, are being threatened by climate change as productive systems are being undermined.

A lack of adequate emergency preparations also put at risk the populations most vulnerable to climate change-related threats.

**FIGURE 2. CLIMATE VULNERABILITY SOCIAL FACTORS IN HONDURAS AND LAC**



Employment in agriculture (% of total employment)\*; Rain-fed cropland (% of total cropland)\*; Gini\*; Water usage in agriculture (% of total annual fresh water withdrawals)\*; Uninsured cropland (% of total cultivated land area)\*\*; Soil degradation (% of total land)\*\*\*; Risk of extreme weather events (index; annual average 1997-2006). Source: World Bank (2009)

Efforts by Honduras to mitigate and adapt to climate change have been limited by a lack of institutional capabilities and financial and human resources and general experience in the area of effective adaptation practices especially in relation to more sustainable patterns of economic development. Given current circumstances, it can be expected that more intense and frequent environmental disasters will be occurring, along with a continued degradation in environmental standards. The combination of these forces is a great threat to the stability of rural livelihoods in Honduras.

Upon the completion of MIRA USAID saw a need to continue efforts to support rural Hondurans through value-added agriculture, rural tourism, sustainable forestry/agroforestry, and related services (finance,

<sup>3</sup> <https://germanwatch.org/en/download/8348.pdf>



transportation, traders, suppliers, etc.) while committing to actions in key environmental sectors such as improving PA management, climate change and DDR. While stimulating income opportunities for rural people was a developmental priority, it was understood that the lack of institutional capacity to halt the degradation of Honduras' natural resources was a structural barrier to improving economic opportunities for the rural poor. At the same time a contribution had to be made to efforts to improve Honduras' ability to reduce the risks associated with environmental disasters and climate change. The desire to address these concerns USAID developed ProParque that would become USAID main vehicle for promoting environmental sustainability in Honduras.

## 2.2 BASIC ACTIVITY DATA

TABLE 3. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

CATEGORY	PROJECT DETAILS
Activity Title	USAID ProParque
Contract Number	AID-522-C-11-00004
Activity Date	Base period: September 2011 - September 30, 2014; Option period: October 1, 2014 - September 14, 2016
Activity Funding	Base period \$19,760,868 Option period \$9,754,722
Implementing Organization	Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI)
Contracting Officer's Representative (COR)	Peter Hearne

## 2.3 ACTIVITY BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### 2.3.1 BACKGROUND

In September 2011, the ProParque contract was signed following a full and open process for a base period of three years in the amount of \$19,760,868. The agreement signed with the contractor, Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI), stipulated a three-year base period with an additional two-year Option Period, in the amount of \$9,754,722 that could be exercised based on performance. The purpose of ProParque is to “improve Honduran biodiversity conservation, create jobs for Hondurans, and strengthen national capacity for mitigating and adapting to global climate change.” DAI was expected to manage a consortium of implementing partners including CARE, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the Zamorano Pan-American Agricultural School (Zamorano).

At its inception, ProParque sought to improve the country's economic and social development through improved NRM. ProParque was expected to build on USAID/MIRA drawing on lessons learned, and where necessary, pursuing new approaches. ProParque was designed to be a comprehensive intervention, focused on consolidating the system of PAs while supporting interventions in the areas of

biodiversity and NRM, rural enterprise growth (tourism, forestry, agroforestry), climate change adaptation, and mitigation, DRR, and clean energy development (hydropower, biomass, biofuel). Implementing ProParque on the ground was expected to require extensive stakeholder engagement (stakeholders include

communities, municipalities, co-management groups, and ministries) and constructed to achieve three main Intermediate Results (IR):

- Increasing Rural Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprise Growth (IR 2.1)
- Improving the Conservation of Honduran Biodiversity and Natural Resources (IR 2.2)
- Strengthening Honduran Capacity to Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change (IR 2.3)

ProParque, currently operating in its Option Period, is aligned with and contributes to the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Development Objective (DO) 2: Extreme Poverty Sustainably Reduced for Vulnerable Populations in Western Honduras. It more specifically contributes to Intermediate Result (IR) 2.1 Resilience for Livelihoods Increased and IR 2.2. Incomes Increased. Annex II illustrates the relationship between USAID ProParque's objectives and CDCS objectives.

The unifying theoretical elements of ProParque have been sustainable productive landscapes (SPLs) and PAs. One intention of ProParque has been to support representation and protection of Honduras's biodiversity rich ecosystems within SINAPH. While recognizing the ecological importance of private lands, ProParque has also sought to expand conservation efforts and create market-based economic incentives for conservation. Additionally, ProParque aimed to contribute to protecting the livelihoods of the rural poor populations most at risk of being affected by natural disasters. ProParque's goal by 2015 was to have contributed to a "reformed, restructured, and effective" SINAPH to make it a tool for facilitating "sustainable and equitable economic growth opportunities for communities surrounding PAs," so that these communities would transition into a sustainable market-based economy in which conservation-friendly livelihoods can thrive.

During the base period, ProParque worked at three distinct levels—National, SPL, and PA. Much of ProParque's focus in Year One was at the national level assisting the Government of Honduras (GOH) and private sector leaders in reforming national policies, regulations and strategies that either hindered or promoted tourism and agroforestry value chain development; guiding the National Forestry Institute (ICF) and others national level organizations through policy, regulatory, and administrative/financial reforms necessary for the improvement of the national protected area management system; expected to support a national REDD+ strategy; helping resolve constraints in policies, procedures and mechanism for the development of clean/renewable energy; and working with the Permanent Commission for Contingencies (COPECO) to improve the national capacity to adapt to climate change and strengthen DRR capacity.

ProParque was expected to support the areas surrounding ten targeted parks. Five of the parks were selected for their unique ecological importance and the other five for their high tourism potential. All parks were to be strengthened to improve their conservation effectiveness, while only the tourism parks would receive additional technical assistance and training oriented toward making them "world-class" destinations for international tourists.

Year Three of ProParque was considered to be a highly pro-active period towards achieving Base Period goals. Year Three positioned ProParque to rationalize the Option Period that would be focused on consolidating and scaling up the achievements of the first three years. USAID recognized that ProParque had met its priority developmental goals and contractual targets, and was operating under budget for the Base Period.<sup>4</sup>

Near the conclusion of the Base Period a policy decision was taken by USAID to focus the Mission's DO2 (Poverty Reduction) development assistance in Honduras in the western region of the country. This would be

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<sup>4</sup> See Fiscal Year 2014 Annual Report.

in accordance with the new Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) covering the 2015 to 2019 period. The tightened geographic focus of the CDCS resulted in a number of changes including reducing the focus to two geographic clusters and two parks with some capabilities for additional programming through mechanisms such as supporting national organizations like the Mesa de Organizaciones Co-manejadoras de Áreas Protegidas de Honduras (MOCAPH). In December 2014, USAID presented DAI with a revised Scope of Work (SOW) that was fully agreed to in March of 2015 for the two-year Option Period. The new SOW maintained the original three IRs with new sub-IRs developed and eliminated ones no longer deemed a priority by the Mission. To reflect these changes a revised trimmed down Results Framework was developed for the Option Period (see Annex 1).

In 2016, through the Global Environmental Management Services (GEMS) contract mechanism, the Cadmus Group and Sun Mountain International were asked to undertake the final evaluation of ProParque, with two core objectives. First, to contribute to improving the effectiveness of USAID activity towards the end of the ProParque project's Option Period, and second, to provide pertinent information, data, and findings to the GOH and USAID to learn what was accomplished with Development Assistance funds.

### **2.3.2 PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY ADDRESSED**

Efforts to conserve biodiversity and natural resources in Honduras have been limited by a high prevalence of rural poverty; inadequate government institutional management and enforcement capacity; and inadequate economic, renewable energy, and climate change mitigation opportunities surrounding natural resources.

Rural populations depend on natural resources for energy sources and income through the extraction of goods and services such as plants, animals, and water, or the use of land for agricultural practices. These practices negatively affect the biodiversity of areas of high biological significance.

Conservation depends on the creation of alternative employment opportunities that are not related to resource extraction or invasive land use. Simply enforcing natural resource management regulations without creating alternative employment opportunities has proven to be ineffective in reducing encroachments on and misuse of natural resources. In this regards, the generation of sustainable tourism and forestry/agroforestry income generation opportunities in and around priority protected areas is necessary to strengthen the local economy, improve visitation and financial viability of the parks, and improve the effectiveness of natural resource management efforts.

While SINAPH presents a basis for biodiversity conservation on public lands, poor institutional coordination and capacity to manage parks and enforce regulations has limited its effectiveness. Likewise, inefficient policies and processes have deterred significant investment in conservation actions on private lands.

Finally, increasingly intense and frequent natural disasters related to climate change also threaten the safety and sustainable livelihoods of the Honduran population. Meaningful efforts to adapt to climate change have been limited by the lack of a fully developed national climate change adaptation and/or low-carbon development strategy, as well as a lack of adequate emergency preparations of the populations most vulnerable to climate change-related threats.

## **2.4 BASE PERIOD APPROACH AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Implementing ProParque on the ground required engaging stakeholders at multiple levels—ministries, municipalities, PA co-management groups, and business and civil society leaders—to work together on issues related to economic growth, improved natural resources management (NRM), adaptation to climate change, and reduction in disaster-related risks. The activity's approach hinged around the three IRs: Increasing Rural

Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprise Growth (IR 2.1); Improving the Conservation of Honduran Biodiversity and Natural Resources (IR 2.2); Strengthening Honduran Capacity to Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change (IR 2.3).

Within the construct of these three IRs, the activity team was structured to tackle objectives within the following sub-categories:

- Tourism Sector Development
- Agroforestry and Forestry Sector Development
- Biological and Ecological Integrity
- Protected Area Co-Management (including the management roles of municipalities)
- Institutional Aspects of SINAPH (organization, financial, regulatory, etc.)
- Payment for Ecosystem Services
- REDD+
- Clean/Renewable Energy Development
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation
- Gender

The unifying theoretical elements are sustainable productive landscapes and protected areas. The principal unifying stakeholders are communities, municipalities, co-management groups and ministries.

#### **2.4.1 LEVEL OF INTERVENTION AND GEOGRAPHIC TARGET AREA**

During the base period, ProParque worked at three distinct levels – National, Sustainable Productive Landscape (SPL), and Protected Area.

##### **NATIONAL**

Much of ProParque's focus in Year One was at the national level. This included assisting the GOH and private sector leaders in reforming national policies, regulations and strategies that either hinder or promote tourism and agroforestry value chain development; guiding the National Forestry Institute (ICF) and others through the policy, regulatory, and administrative/financial reforms necessary for the improvement of the national protected area management system; helping drive forward a national REDD+ strategy; helping resolve constraints in policies, procedures and mechanism for the development of clean/renewable energy; and working with the Emergency Permanent Commission (COPECO) and others on improving the national capacity to adapt to climate change and strengthen disaster risk reduction capacity.

## SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPE (SPL)

An SPL can be defined by ecological parameters (such as watersheds and biodiversity corridors) and economic relationships (market linkages in forestry/agroforestry value chains, tourism destinations, and payment for ecosystem services [PES] potential). The parks and their buffer zones are the lynchpin between the two, generating key ecosystem services and direct economic benefits while preserving biodiversity. The activity arrived at a decision to work in four SPLs, each anchored by one or more priority protected areas, namely:

1. North Coast (including Jeannette Kawas National Park, Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge, Pico Bonito National Park, Sandy Bay- West End Marine Park, and the Colibri Esmeralda Habitat Management Area)
2. Central (including Cerro Azul Meámbar National Park and La Tigra National Park)
3. Western (including Celaque National Park)
4. Agalta – Rio Plátano (including Sierra de Agalta National Park and the Rio Plátano Biosphere Reserve)

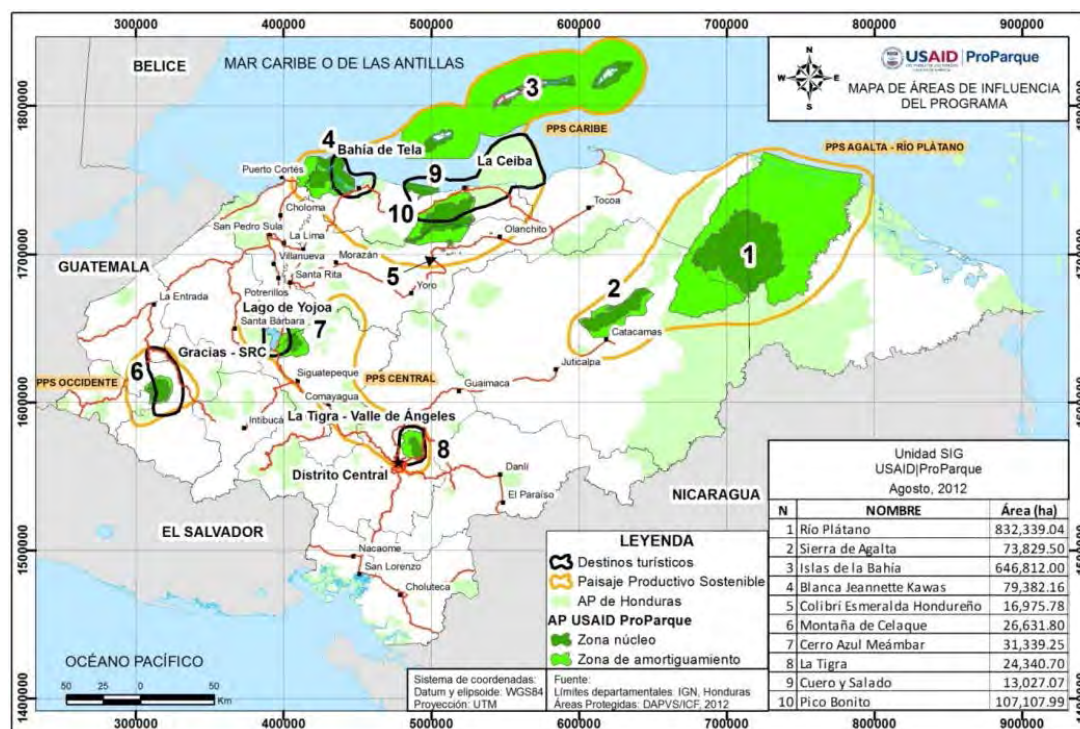
## PROTECTED AREAS

Per the technical design of the project, during the Base Period, ProParque focused on integrating activities in all three technical components around the ten priority Protected Areas and their surrounding municipalities and communities (Figure 3). The tourism and forestry/agroforestry enterprise development work focused on small and medium businesses in the municipalities bordering these parks. Productive landscape conservation, global climate change, renewable energy, and disaster mitigation activities were also geographically based in these same municipalities. All parks needed to improve their conservation effectiveness, while only the tourism parks received additional technical assistance and training oriented toward making them world-class destinations for national and international tourists.

## MUNICIPALITIES

Close collaboration with municipalities and co-management groups is essential to overall project success and fundamental to the specific activities related to the Municipal Environmental Unit (UMAs), Municipal Emergency Committees (CODEMs) and Local Emergency Committees (CODELs). A core set of 32 municipalities and 186 communities were selected for engagement during Year One. It also became evident during Year One that a more effective approach to coordinating with municipalities and local government was needed.

FIGURE 3. PROPARQUE BASE PERIOD MAP



## 2.5 OPTION PERIOD APPROACH AND IMPLEMENTATION

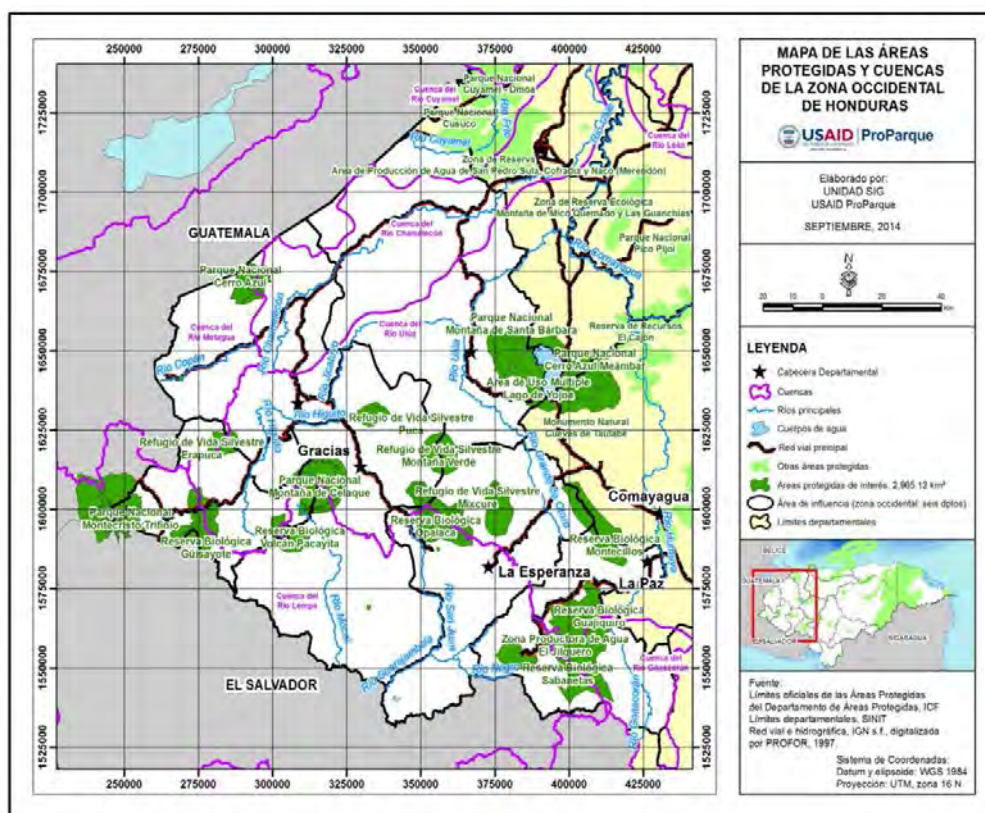
In accordance with the Mission's new CDCS approved on December 2014, USAID provided DAI with a new Scope of Work (SOW) in March, 2015. While the main structure of the new SOW did not vary from that of the original design, maintaining the original three IRs, it did introduce new sub-IRs, eliminating the ones no longer deemed a priority by the Mission, and tightened the geographic focus of the activity.

### 2.5.1 LEVEL OF INTERVENTION AND GEOGRAPHIC TARGET AREA

The original activity design was predicated on working at three levels – a national systemic level; a sustainable productive landscape level; and at a protected area level. For the option period, USAID directed the activity to continue working within the construct of these three levels, however with a substantially tighter focus. The national, systemic level remained constant, however the SPL concept and number of PAs has been narrowed to two geographic clusters and two parks. The two clusters shown on the map in Figure 4 are the Gracias – Santa Rosa de Copán area, centered upon Celaque National Park, and the Lago Yojoa – Santa Bárbara area, anchored by Cerro Azul Meámbar (PANACAM) and Santa Bárbara National Park. Advances made in the Base Period will be scaled up and replicated at a national level by working through key partners such as co-managers table (MOCAPH), Private Reserve Network (REHNAP), and ICF, while work at an SPL and PA level will continue to act as a proving ground for new approaches and innovations.



FIGURE 4. PROPARQUE ACTION AREA FY15/FY16



## 2.5.2 TIMEFRAME AND IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

The end date of the prime contract is September 14, 2016. The total time available for implementation of option period activities is 21 months, from September 2014 to June 2016. The general phasing of activities over this time period is:

- **Programming:** The principal objectives during this phase were to: refine strategies by implementation area (i.e., by IR and Sub-IR); complete any necessary baselines or assessments; finish the design of specific interventions; and get all primary implementation mechanisms in place and operational. This phase was completed in the first quarter of FY 2015.
- **Implementation:** The bulk of the available time will be spent in actual implementation of the activities set forth in the approved work plan.
- **Close Down:** The contractor will present a demobilization plan to USAID on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and manage all administrative and operational logistics to ensure full closure by the proposed date.

## 2.5.3 TECHNICAL APPROACH

The overall strategy for the remaining time is to consolidate the advances made in the base period, especially in the area of more effective protected areas management. This includes expanding and scaling up the use of implementation models that were proven to be successful in the Base Period. Additionally the activity will position partners and beneficiaries for success in the post-activity future through well-thought out transition and exit strategies. The activity is taking an approach that brings the full weight of ProParque's holistic nature

to bear on the ten plus watersheds that have been prioritized for PES mechanisms. The holistic approach means that economic development, biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation are taken as a single priority rather than independent challenges. The goal is closing out the activity with these areas as models of what can be achieved when a holistic approach is used. Noteworthy strategic aspects by component are summarized below.

## COMPONENT ONE

**Tourism:** In many ways, the area-specific or activity-specific strategies do not vary from those in the first three years of the project. In tourism, ProParque is strengthening national level policies, regulations, and programs that create a favorable long term enabling environment for tourism sector growth. This strategy focuses on incorporating national parks and private reserves into SINAPH and National Tourism Institute. It also works on strengthening the capacity of national and local private sector actors in the tourism sector to provide quality, market responsive services and improving the tourism aspects of the national protected areas system. For the remainder of the project, the focus will be on building capacity in local tourism chambers and their members, co-managers, and private reserve owners. From a market perspective, bird-watching is the primary focus, due to its long-term potential for the country.

**Agroforestry:** The strategy for agroforestry work in the remaining life of the activity is to expand and consolidate the successful embedded services model developed in the Base Period. With embedded services, businesses provide services to poor producers as part of their business strategy. The focus continues to be on three value chains with direct positive and negative impacts on the target protected areas of Celaque and PANACAM (coffee, cacao, livestock), but is also expanding to include less prominent but locally important livelihoods (e.g., molasses production). By the end of the activity, the objective is to have a well engrained and widely replicated embedded services model of linking producers to services and markets via brokers.

FIGURE 5. CACAO FARMING, JUTIAPA, ATLANTIDA



## COMPONENT TWO

**Private Reserves:** There is no substantial change in working toward activity goals in the consolidation and expansion of the private reserve network. The additional time provided by the ProParque's extension is allowing for further strengthening of REHNAP's organizational capacity; the addition of a minimum of five new private reserves; and improving business and conservation skills of REHNAP members.

**More Effective Management of National Protected Areas System:** This aspect of ProParque's programming constitutes the greatest strategic shift between the base period and the option period. The activity will transition from working intensively with the GOH and ICF on improving the basic policies, procedures, methods, and tools used for SINAPH co-management, to working more with MOCAPH, REHNAP and other end-users of those tools. The focus is on consolidating and expanding the use of the full suite of PA management strategies and tools via alliances with MOCAPH and REHNAP, thus expanding the system-wide impact. This is accompanied by a new initiative to try to standardize competencies of PA management professionals (i.e., park guards and park administrators), and institute a national training framework. Celaque and PANACAM are the proving grounds and "living laboratories" for ICF, MOCAPH, and the project.

**Productive Landscape Conservation:** This sub-component will be accomplished through PES. The activity, during the latter stages of the Base Period, had identified more than 10 watersheds in the Celaque- Gracias and Lago Yojoa-PANACAM clusters where team advisors felt that favorable conditions exist for local groups to initiate, design, and operate simple water-based PES mechanisms. The activity will continue to

focus intensively on these 10 watersheds with a holistic development model that stresses economically beneficial conservation initiatives combined with pragmatic climate change adaptation. Again, the activity's goal seeks systemic impact through functioning PES mechanisms these areas by the end of activity, with the long term goal that others will use them as models and aid in future replication.

## COMPONENT THREE

**Climate Change Adaptation:** In a major switch, ProParque's scope of work has shifted from climate change mitigation (REDD+) to climate change (CC) adaptation. While the results framework does not have any discrete indicators for climate change adaptation, the activity considers the integration of CC adaptation across all work areas as essential and critical. The strategy for achieving this is ensuring that the ProParque's CC Adaptation Advisor is involved in all activity designs, and in specific CC adaptation programming. Specific programming is structured around four thematic areas. These are: 1) moving forward the most urgent CC adaptation measures as identified in CODEM and CODEL Action Plans; 2) piloting or mainstreaming CC adaptation measures /responses for priority agroforestry value chains; 3) responding to community-level CC Adaptation proposals; and 4) building local understanding and response capacity in co-managers, communities, producer groups, water boards, and local governments through education and knowledge sharing.

**Clean/renewable energy:** the focus for the remaining life of the activity is expanding household level access to clean energy (primarily clean cook stoves), and promoting the use of clean and renewable energy technologies in key value chains. The activity will continue to consolidate the successful microenterprise model developed in the base period, using it as the primary strategic implementation approach.

**Disaster vulnerability reduced:** there is no significant strategic shift in this work area and the activity continues to work in close collaboration with COPECO and local municipalities for implementation purposes. A slight technical shift is the increased emphasis placed on adaptation at a household and producer group level, in concert with the traditional approach of working with CODEMs and CODELs.

### 3. RESULTS

This section summarizes the evaluation team findings for each of the five core evaluation questions.

#### 3.1 EVALUATION QUESTION I

*What were the most significant constraints in working with, respectively, the GOH (central and municipal), Protected Area Co-managers, and private sector? If resolved, what lessons were learned from these processes?*

The response to this question considers not only the constraints encountered by ProParque in collaborating with the GOH, PA Co-managers and the private sector, but also the experiences in terms of building relations and partnerships and the factors influencing both successful and challenging relationships.

The collaboration of GOH with ProParque is a good example of the changing circumstances in which the project took place. The project relied on varying levels of interaction and engagement from different levels of the Honduran government. In general, under ProParque working with the different levels of the GOH has been more challenging than with non-governmental partners such as cooperatives, co-managers or the private sector. Non-government actors were readily able to assimilate and build on the support and partnership provided by ProParque. However, this is not to say that the GOH was a consistent inhibitor of ProParque; instead, a nuanced understanding of the relationships with the GOH has to be articulated.

Based on the information gathered by the evaluation team, difficult challenges faced by the ProParque project team were encountered at the ministerial or central level of government. This is not entirely unexpected as central governments across the developing world most often struggle in facilitating and absorbing the developmental assistance provided by projects like ProParque.

ICF was the key partner for ProParque at a central level but has been challenged by a lack of financial, material and human resources. For the ProParque team there was perception of often having to deal with deep-rooted attitudes within the bureaucracy, including ICF leadership, that were not always conducive to introducing some of the changes that the project needed, such as encouraging more decentralized decision-making. One interviewee noted that tensions at times were high because they perceived that ICF was not consulted on some important decisions and did not receive sufficient credit from ProParque. In this context ProParque was initially seeking a major institutional change in the form of a creation of a national park service, which was not always convenient for the central GOH management. Ultimately this proved to be far from achievable. The merger that occurred during ProParque's Base Period between ICF and SERNA was, in part, aimed towards ProParque affecting significant institutional change. However, from the perspective of ProParque staff, the merger limited the ability of ICF to act independently.

A point should be made about the broader context in which ICF operates, as it has many facets that relate indirectly to ProParque. There are some substantial obstacles faced by ICF and the ProParque activity, none bigger than the issue of widespread, illegal logging in Honduras. Illegal logging impacts on the ability to manage individual PAs whether they are private or public and for the GOH to establish an overall effective governance system for all the 90 PAs in Honduras that are currently on record. There is still a lot of work in Honduras to teach people and assist institutions that environmental laws have to be applied and respected.

Another objective of ProParque was to support ICF with its technical capabilities and decision-making capabilities. ProParque also came with its own objectives and parameters, almost appearing to distance itself from PROCORREDOR, what resulted in not taking advantage of potential synergy. As well, according to ICF



ProParque barely consulted with ICF at the proposal writing stage. At the regional level, the problems that aroused have been seen as a lack of communication and coordination between ProParque and ICF at the central level. For ProParque it was the unwillingness by ICF to work in a more decentralized manner and to encourage independent action and decision-making. According to ICF staff in the northern coast area of the country, decentralization never materialized and duplication of efforts resulted between ICF and ProParque. ICF-La Ceiba mentioned that ProParque organized different meetings and workshops at the same time, causing problems with the agendas of ICF technicians. In addition, ICF complained that ProParque did not give adequate visibility to ICF, for example not inviting the Institute to some public events or not always requesting ICF feedback on technical documents.

A positive governmental attribute that has benefitted ProParque includes the very solid institutional and policy structure that COPECO provided on matters related to DRR and climate change. An issue that ProParque dealt with at all levels of Government was staff turnover disrupting continuity. Although this also occurred within COPECO (two ministers during the lifetime of ProParque), the agency remained strongly supportive over time. An agreement was signed that detailed what ProParque was expected to do with the CODEMs and CODELs.

Some interviewees also pointed out that Government initiatives related to ProParque were not always stagnant. Instead, some stakeholders were open to dynamic change and innovation. ProParque credits the head of the Protected Areas Department (DAPS) of the ICF as one example of such transparency, as she played a valuable role of facilitator in the project. The strategy of working through MOCAPH and REHNAP in coordination with ICF was feasible in good part due to its involvement as the main representative for the GOH, assisting in overcoming a number of institutional roadblocks. Likewise, regarding PES, ProParque effectively collaborated well with ICF and MiAmbiente in the technical working group that was convened to draft the new PES regulation that supports the autonomy and local empowerment of the Junta Administradora de Agua (JAA).

The ET noted ProParque leadership was striving to institute systemic changes in ICF operations. A part of this strategy was to prioritize working through vehicles such as the CODEMs and UMAs, and emphasize its work with a broad range of institutional partners that the project identified including MOCAPH, REHNAP and other government offices. ProParque managers reportedly developed constructive relationships with these partners, including a shared understanding of ProParque project goals.

According to ProParque staff, work in the tourism sector was strengthened by forming a strong alliance between the public and private sector. Key to this alliance was the leadership provided by IHT and the board of CANATURH on projects such as the web portal. The inclusion of the HOPEH, a small but dynamic association of small hotels, provided innovative ideas to develop the tourism offer. Local tourism chambers have been paramount to the coordination of regional activities such as the cultural festival, 'Gracias Convoca.' However, local tourism chambers in Honduras generally lack organizational structure, so the financial and technical assistance provided by ProParque was crucial to their work.

In circumstances where local governments have not had the resources or capabilities to properly support ProParque, stakeholders noted that support would often be found at other governmental levels. This was certainly the case with the bird-watching strategy, which benefited from direct presidential support. It resulted in bringing together stakeholders and obtaining quick turnaround results. Initially lacking capacity, IHT was eventually able to increase its support to ProParque during the Option Period. For example, while IHT had a small role during the first forays into Protected Area Public Use Plans (PUPs) of ProParque, the organization eventually took on a greater leadership role. The national tourism web portal was left in the hands of the

CANATURH, even though the IHT is playing a strong coordination role. The hiring of some ProParque staff by IHT contributed to improved collaboration between the two entities.

Constraints at the municipal level were circumstances shared by all levels of government: a lack of financial and material resources, equipment, trained technical personnel and staff turnover in units such as the UMAs. While those challenges were present, generally speaking municipalities proved to be more open to change and taking action through ProParque.

Lack of capacity for PA co-managers and private sector was also an ongoing challenge for the ProParque project. For instance, IHT complained of the lack of quality private investment in PA (while acknowledging that the legal framework does not always favour this investment). Regarding the issue of PES, there were also differences of opinion across stakeholders, but consensus was often ultimately reached and ProParque was successful in promoting its design of PES, for instance with the JAA of Flores, Intibucá, where the Junta invests up to 35 percent of the money collected to invest in the protection of the watershed and limit deforestation. It bought land to protect the source and its surroundings.

However, many positive examples exist regarding the participation of the private sector, as illustrated in the next question. For instance, PP has been successful in generating alliance between Beneficio de Café Santa Rosa (BCSR) and its allies Honduras Quality Coffee and Fundación Amigos del Café. The key is to get incentives right for the private sector participation and keep them from being overburdened and stalled by central government or excessive administrative oversight.

Implementing partners stated that they generally hold a positive view of ProParque's actions. However, there were some complaints over the difficulty to realistically attain some of the objectives set by the project, especially since time and resources were limited. Partners also mentioned the difficulty to comply with ProParque project demands and the lack of considerations of their own constraints. Achieving better collaboration would require stronger efforts toward a culture change on the project, and that would require continuity of technical assistance and monitoring.

## 3.2 EVALUATION QUESTION 2

***What are ProParque's greatest successes in terms of achieving economic growth in communities around PA, conservation of biodiversity, adaptation to climate change or a combination of these three elements and which ones are replicable and/or scalable within the CDCS context?***

The evaluation team concluded that ProParque has made significant contributions to sustainable economic growth, natural resource management, and biotourism in Honduras. For example, in one of the more recent ProParque progress reports it is noted that 2,270 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) adopted new inputs, technologies, and practices against a Base Period goal of 2,200, including a broad range of entrepreneurial pursuits from the sale and installation of solar panels to organic coffee growers. Verifying the accuracy of this number was beyond the scope of the evaluation team.

The evaluation team also concluded that ProParque was successful on a number of programming levels, presented below. These findings are not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of ProParque's successes, but to provide an illustrative perspective on what ProParque has reported. The evaluation process confirmed that the last year of the Base Period along with the Option Period were the periods when ProParque excelled and accumulated results. These achievements were due in large part to the strong groundwork completed during the early timeframes of the Base Period.

### 3.2.1 CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

ProParque has many components that resulted in potential economic successes for Honduras. This includes the design and implementation of a microenterprise model based on the dissemination of clean energy (e.g., energy-efficient cook stoves and photo-voltaic panels). This model met with success during the Base Period and continued progressing during the Option Period. The clean energy microenterprise model relied on a number of key actors, including **private companies** (SOLARIS, ADEHMA, JAREMAR) that provided training to pre-selected groups of beneficiaries with basic knowledge in electricity. Of this group the most competent trainees were then contracted to install solar panels and/or stoves. In addition, **micro-entrepreneurs** were trained and subsequently encouraged to open their own small companies to install and monitor stoves/panels. The **final users**, that is, the recipients of the stoves/panels, were in most cases subsidized by ProParque or local municipalities.

According to interviewees, this business development model has been effective for an array of stakeholders. For instance, it resulted in a low-cost and competent workforce that was also able to access remote places/markets where costs of installation and maintenance are generally more favorable. Most final users of the products have a generally positive opinion of the new installations, as they reportedly improve living conditions and energy consumption patterns. Approximately 25 percent of the trainees have remained in the program, as most have other full-time occupations. For those remaining in the program, incomes and living conditions have improved (in some cases dramatically). There have also been other secondary benefits related to the development of businesses supplying materials. Further, the College Ramón Rosa in Gracias developed new training capabilities due to its involvement in ProParque. The training modules are now used for the college's regular students. This could provide lasting benefits for the school and the economic sector.

The ET visited a number of cooperatives supported through ProParque and involved in commodity value chains. The commodities include rambutan and mangosteen (FRUTELA in Tela), cacao (Cooperativa de Producción Agrícola Cacaoteros de Jutiapa Limitada - COPRACAJUL), café (Cooperativa Cafetalera Siguatepeque Ltd. - COHORSIL), sugarcane (MAPANCE in Gracias), livestock (UNA – Universidad Nacional de Agricultura in Olancho), and wood (Madera Verde Foundation in Gracias and CORAMEHL in La Ceiba). In each evaluation team visit to these cooperative, the focus was placed on understanding economic impact, how environmental practices were employed, and the strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration among the different actors involved. The cooperatives received support under three different transfer modalities: in-kind transfers (such as machinery, electric installation, plants, etc.), technical support (field schools, good agriculture practices), and subventions and grants for the implementation of specific activities through a system of milestones (referred to as 'hitos' in Honduras). Support to the cooperatives generated positive impacts for the producers, cooperative members and the communities, including:

- *Increased yields/ decreased use of inputs:* through the financing of investments and the reduction of key bottlenecks (see MAPANCE as an example);
- *Improved quality of processes:* with the perspective of giving access to markets with higher standards of quality (FRUTELA, Madera Verde);
- *Vertical integration of the value chains:* In-kind investments that facilitated the recuperation of the value-added created along the value chain, which was previously captured by intermediaries (COPRACAJUL, FRUTELA);
- *Positive economic externalities:* Communities benefitting indirectly from the new investments (COPRACAJUL);



- *Certifications:* For a cooperative, obtaining a certification of quality such as ‘organic coffee’ is a way to improve its production practices, to access new lucrative markets, receive a better price for its products, and improve living conditions (e.g., the Rainforest Certification also stipulates health and education requirements). Certification also ensures that the proceeds go directly to the producers at the origin of the improved practices. COHORSIL has benefitted from this process for coffee, and COPRACAJUL has achieved organic certification of its cacao beans.



Asociacion de Ganaderos Vallecitos, Aldea de Vallecitos, Rio Tinto, Olancho

Further positive impacts of ProParque support to cooperative-led value chains are worth noting. For example, FRUTELA has reached the point of exporting rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum*) and mangosteen (*Garcinia mangostana*) to North America. The limited but focused assistance provided by ProParque allowed FRUTELA to purchase a cold room, electrical transformer installation, and water well pump. Through ProParque, FRUTELA was also certified by the Servicio Nacional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (SENASA), a critical step in legitimizing FRUTELA for exporting purposes. ProParque assistance to FRUTELA demonstrates how targeted assistance can allow beneficiary organizations to make incremental progress given current capacity and long-term organizational objectives.

As another example of positive impacts of ProParque, COPRACAJUL received a grant of \$100,000 to contribute to the construction of mechanical and natural drying apparatus for cacao, a fermentation centre and a weighing station. The assistance also enabled the purchase of materials, equipment and skilled labour. In addition, ProParque resources assisted with the perimeter fence for the storage centre, office building, warehouse, toilets, lampposts, transformer, wiring, and the installation of electrical power. One of the stronger attributes of ProParque was the ability to support actions that had the potential for a broader impact. In the case of COPRACAJUL, the Asociación de Damas Chocولاتeras de Jutiapa (Association of Women’s Chocolate Producers of Jutiapa) received assistance from the World Bank and the Government of Japan to produce

chocolates of high quality using the cocoa of COPRACAJUL. COPRACAJUL is now selling to the Swiss Chocolate Company HALBA, which is its major client.

The effective support to COPRACAJUL and FRUTELA demonstrates a ProParque best practice that was also applied to work with national partners, e.g., el Fundación para el Desarrollo Rural (FUNDER). FUNDER was selected through a competitive process to provide technical assistance to two cooperatives (FRUTELA and COPRACAJUL). FUNDER then pooled ProParque funds with funds from other international donors - Swisscontact and Danida - to provide services for FRUTELA covering the entire value chain associated with rambutan and mangosteen, from agriculture practices to packaging and certification. According to representatives from COPRACAJUL, FUNDER enabled the cooperative to improve and maintain high levels of production and quality.

Similarly, with ProParque assistance, Beneficio de Café Santa Rosa (BCSR), along with its partners, Honduras Quality Coffee (HQC) and Fundación Amigos del Café (FAC), achieved results in several areas, including:

- Linking coffee producers with exporters,
- Providing coffee producers technical assistance to improve production and quality,
- Addressing climate change issues,
- Introducing best agricultural and certification practices,
- Strengthening organizational capacity, and
- Ensuring coffee producers receive a fair price for their product.

In the coffee arena there has also been a strong focus to ensure the successful participation of women, including a dedicated training initiative. In the Celaque PA the BCSR worked with 1,250 – 2,000 small producers, many of whom were reluctant to participate initially, but joined once the project began having success. With ProParque support, BCSR was also able to incorporate solar energy approaches to drying coffee. ProParque and BCSR stakeholders noted, and the evidence supported, that communication was strong between the groups, consistent monitoring provided a solid baseline dataset, and a significant inventory of producers.

According to BCSR representatives, ProParque also increased the use of best practices and quality management, as well as embracing certification as a marketing tool. All farms participating are geo-tagged with the support of ProParque. Members of the Cooperativa de Productores de Café de Camapara also noted that assistance from BCSR/HQC/FAC had a substantial positive impact, with the provision of technical support on administrative matters and environmental management practices. Further, ProParque assistance was timely in that the producers of the Cooperative had been struggling with the impacts of climate change on their crops (e.g., inconsistent rainfall). With Camapara located in the National Park of Mountain of Celaque, the cooperative also created jobs that reduced pressures on the National Park (e.g., reduced natural resource extraction).

In that vein, ProParque has helped promote the legality of wood production by supporting officially registered entities working with legal production and by discouraging deforestation. Illegal logging has historically been a major issue in Honduras, with 2003 estimates of illegal logging making up 30-50 percent of total felling for pine and 75-85 percent for deciduous tree species.<sup>5</sup> Forestry-related corruption is widespread in the country and illegal timber harvesting is largely contributing to deforestation. Fuel wood collection, clearing for cattle pasture, and agriculture also play significant roles in forest loss.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://declaration.forestlegality.org/risk-tool/countries/honduras>

(Project stakeholders often stated that the resources provided by international donors have not yielded commensurate results. Some stakeholders noted that the lack of political will by the GOH to address corruption constitutes a fundamental obstacle to increased foreign donor support).

For instance, illegal logging along the Honduran highways should be limited by simple enforcement and technical collaboration. Indeed, ProParque has contributed to this effort by promoting legal sustainable models, such as the one developed by the Madera Verde Foundation. Specifically, the Madera Verde Foundation works with three cooperatives in the Reserva del Hombre and the Biosphere of Rio Plátano, through an assistance model called ‘GreenBroker,’ which consists of a monitoring system of the value chain and guarantees legal handling of wood.

With the Cooperativa Regional Agroforestal de Maderas Equitativas de Honduras Limitada (CORAMEHL) ProParque was able to achieve synergy with other donors, such as Canadian organizations. ProParque helped build up a wood product cooperative that represents 240 partners (part of 12 smaller cooperatives) and that has national distribution and certification from the Rain Forest Alliance. CORAMEHL also worked with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) to ensure that no illegal wood was involved in its activities. ProParque, together with SOCODEVI (Canadian NGO) and counterpart funding, provided resources for a drying oven, which allowed access to new markets. The Madera Verde Foundation has also benefitted from ProParque support in improving its processes, specifically, establishing a baseline and a diagnostic tool, in turn identifying its bottlenecks, improving processes, and proposing solutions. A very detailed systematization, financed by ProParque, enabled the identification of the main strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration (see chapter 3). Another subvention to MAPANCE led to the improvement of processes of sugarcane transformation, which has led to processes that are more protective of the environment by, for example, providing evaporators that function without wood but with sugarcane by-products. In addition to reducing deforestation, the new model also democratizes the production and facilitates the participation of women.

### 3.2.2 TOURISM

Apart from efforts nearly a decade ago, ProParque has been USAID’s first concerted foray into the tourism sector. ProParque’s focus on tourism has been very comprehensive, seeking to support and strengthen the key actors involved in the sector, starting with national authorities such as the Instituto Hondureño de Turismo (IHT), the Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional (INFOP), local and National Chambers of Tourism (CANATURH), and the private sector (e.g., brokers, guides, hotels and restaurants). This effort has revolved around the concept of promoting ‘destinations’ within Honduras, highlighting the critical elements that make up a tourist site or destination. Seven destinations were promoted during the base period (Gracias, Santa Rosa, Valle de Ángeles, La Ceiba, Tela, Lago Yojoa), though these target destinations were later reduced to three (Lago Yojoa, Gracias and Santa Rosa) during the Option Period to focus on the Western region. This inclusive approach has required strong coordination, and most stakeholders interviewed have praised ProParque’s role, crediting it for playing a strong role in facilitating effective dialogue.

ProParque also provided comprehensive support to tourism through the development of activities including: maps that identify the entire offer of services and tourist options, training of tourist guides, and improvement of local infrastructure (e.g., tourist police, lighting). ProParque activities included additional efforts to improve the country’s overall image and visibility, such as through the web portal, although this is an area still needing a considerable amount of work. Another effort involved improving the training certification process and the publication of a basic knowledge and skills manual for tourist guides. As a result, recognized institutions will be able to use the skills manual to train tourist guides, with the curriculum validated by INFOP. This approach



ensures that a greater number of well-trained guides will enter the tourism industry, including PA- related tourism.



Tower and platforms for bird watching in PANACAM, financed by ProParque

The national web tourism portal *honduras.travel* has come under the direction of the CANATURH, with financial support from IHT providing information on tourist packages. Going forward, the website will be combined with a reservation portal that allows online hotel reservations. *Honduras.travel* is generally recognized as a useful tool as it contributes towards positioning the country's hotels and restaurants in the international tourist market. Some difficulties have occurred with the portal, such as the lack of local people with sufficient writing skills to fill and update high quality content, and the absence of reliable internet connections in remote areas such as Lago Yojoa. As a result, only 25 percent of the hotels have been registered in the portal, and urban and large hotels are more likely to benefit from the online tool than smaller operators. However, it is anticipated that CANATURH's leadership can ensure the portal's development and its extension to reach a larger number of hotels and restaurants.

The **national bird watching strategy, "Aviturismo,"** has been supported by ProParque and endorsed and promoted at the highest level by the U.S. Ambassador and the President of Honduras, both of whom participated in the strategy's initial public launch. This political goodwill allowed the strategy to quickly achieve significant results, such as an increase in year-to-year bird watching tour bookings. The Presidential support ensured that all Honduran government

departments aligned themselves with the strategy. The Evaluation Team identified many achievements of Aviturismo, such as the training of guides, the international promotion of Honduran bird watching, and the promotion of the first book "Honduran Bird watching Guide" by Robert Gallardo.<sup>6</sup> The choice of bird watching as a national priority for tourism seems to correspond to the country's current capacities concerning infrastructure, accommodation, natural resources and security. Bird watching appears to be a good starting point from which to develop capacity and encourage interest in tourism in Honduras.

<sup>6</sup> [http://en.usaid-proparque.org/News/birds\\_guide](http://en.usaid-proparque.org/News/birds_guide)

One of ProParque's roles in Aviturismo has involved concentrating focus on the bird watching tourism strategy across a number of Honduran governmental, non-governmental and private organizations.

Specifically, ProParque has served as a catalyst and as a facilitator between the different organizations involved. As a result, a foundation is now in place with trained guides, books, bird watching towers, and lodges aimed at foreign tourists (who are now coming in slightly greater numbers). A critical aim is to maintain and build this momentum over the next five years or so if Honduras wants to establish itself as a recognized destination for international birdwatchers. To accomplish this, stronger support is required from Honduran authorities for the recently created tour operators and other brokers. IHT should be expected to increase its capacity to take over ProParque's role as a coordinating body and the primary promoter of the bird watching tourism strategy at the international level.

It is important to note that bird watching is, in general, a niche market for higher income tourists. The risk of dealing with guests in a country with a volatile security situation is that international tourists will typically only stay at luxury guesthouses, providing economic gains to a handful of lodge owners. As such, the evaluation team concludes that, to spread the potential economic gains, there is a need to link bird watching to other types of tourism, such as domestic tourism, and to a broader offering of services. Smaller challenges to the bird watching strategy also exist, such as guides' general lack of foreign language capacity.

In terms of general tourism support, local Chambers of Tourism in Honduras have received subsidies via ProParque that helped buttress their historically weak financial and organizational capacities. Subsidized activities have included the purchase of materials, the organization of meetings of the Board of Directors, administrative support (including accounting and tax preparation), and staff training. Members of the local Chambers that were interviewed responded positively to ProParque support. If continued support were to dissipate, destinations such as Lago Yojoa could partially lose the benefits of the support provided by the project.

There have been some additional tourism successes, such as the support that has resulted in the creation of a yearly cultural festival 'Gracias Convoca' that attracts tourists from all over the country. This festival is a good example of fruitful collaboration with the National Chamber of Tourism as a central player.<sup>7</sup> The festival has now completed its third year and should be able to grow independently in the future. Due to its success, another donor has already shown interest in assuming the role as one of the festival's leading supporters.

The **Instituto Hondureño de Turismo (IHT)** has always been a key player in tourism in Honduras. However, ProParque representatives noted that, at times, IHT has lacked strong leadership and administration, diminishing IHT's impact (see question 1 for additional details). Nevertheless, according to stakeholders from IHT and ProParque, the two entities were still able to collaborate on matters such as the design of the national tourism portal, and national and regional marketing events such as ExpoVerano. They also participated as members in working groups related to the national park commercial services concessions regulation. With the new IHT administration, the institute has reportedly improved operations in a number of areas due to vastly improved leadership at the ministerial level. IHT's engagement goes beyond financial support of bird fairs, and their staff has been involved in everything from the certification of hotels through Sistema Integrado Centroamericano de Sostenibilidad y Calidad (SICCS), to being a key convening agent of the national Aviturismo strategy. In terms of continuity, a former ProParque staff member took a position with IHT after being approached by the Ministry of Tourism.

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<sup>7</sup> Other events such as Expoverano and Expovacaciones in Tela or Expo Copán have met similar success. The first edition of the Lago Yojoa feria will take place in April 2016 )

ProParque's collaboration with the **Asociación de Hoteles Pequeños de Honduras (HOPEH)**, has yielded positive results in terms of improving the organization's visibility and increasing its membership. Most of HOPEH's initial proposals to ProParque, regarding the nature of the assistance required, were included in the projects proposed activities and later implemented. Among the most significant achievements to note in relation to HOPEH was (1) the development of a 'Good Practices Manual' for small hotels that HOPEH intends to market internationally (some copies have already been sold in Panama), and (2) the technical support provided to help hotels refinance their debts through the 'Doctor PyME' program. However, with only 60 active members, HOPEH remains a small organization with a limited impact at the national level.

### 3.2.3 SUPPORT TO NATIONAL PARTNERS IN SUPPORT OF PROTECTED AREAS

#### SINAPH AND NATIONAL GOVERNANCE OF PROTECTED AREAS

Based on discussions with stakeholders, the ProParque project, through its support to ICF, has contributed greatly to vitalizing the Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas y Vida Silvestre de Honduras (SINAPH) and PA capacity. For example, ProParque contributed to promote the legality of wood production by supporting officially registered entities working with legal production, and by helping to devise solutions to combat deforestation. ProParque also contributed by promoting legal sustainable models of forest use, such as the one developed by the Madera Verde Foundation. The evaluation team also noted that, according to the Vice-Ministerio, the implementation of ProParque helped create an agreement between MiAmbiente, IHT, and ICF to establish visitor centres for bird watching in several PAs: Celaque (Southern Region), Capiro and Calentura in the Bay of Trujillo, and Amatique in the Golf of Fonseca. Interviewees credit ProParque, in conjunction with national partners MOCAPH and REHNAP, in affecting positive change, such as applying SINAPH to private land and micro-watersheds.

#### MOCAPH

MOCAPH, the national body representing co-managers of PAs, as it assumed a greater role in ProParque over time, has also benefited greatly from the project, such as updating management and administrative capacity. This effort has included strengthening monitoring effectiveness and developing appropriate indicators; specifically, MOCAPH now has established management categories to define, standardize, and grade PAs. (However, the categorization process is on hold as the forestry law must be amended to be consistent with International Union of Conservation of Nature categories.)

ProParque reportedly played in a large role in the institutional strengthening of MOCAPH. For instance, stakeholders reported that ProParque acted as a useful guide and resource tool in the development of management plans for individual PAs. In turn, the PAs were able to develop and update tools such as the strategic plan, fundraising plan, and marketing schemes, as well as strengthen organizational sustainability. MOCAPH representatives stated that these gains were often achieved through participatory workshops; indeed, ICF and MOCAPH participated jointly in training sessions to ensure that the two organizations were effectively working together. MOCAPH representatives added that ProParque provided strong technical assistance and helped drive consistent coordination and communication.

MOCAPH has emerged as an important partner for ProParque and potentially for USAID moving forward. MOCAPH has proven that it is a solid entity that can complement ICF and take on a greater leadership role within the ProParque project as necessary.

#### REHNAP

An important achievement of ProParque in the private sector was to strengthen of the National Network of Private Protected Areas of Honduras (REHNAP). ProParque support to REHNAP has consisted of strengthening organizational capacity, furnishing equipment, and developing a Strategic Plan. In addition, ProParque's support of REHNAP enabled a number of private reserves to develop management plans.

Perhaps one of the most important accomplishments related to REHNAP has been to contribute to its transformation as a viable organisation that can better represent the interests of private reserves that are critical to Honduras' efforts to improve PA management.

ProParque's support in the areas of financial management and administration has helped REHNAP develop a procedures manual, install an accounting system, purchase office equipment, upgrade strategic planning, and update memberships and information materials for distribution. ProParque also assisted in the development of natural resource management plans, including two plans for public consumption. In addition, six private reserves are in the process of certification. REHNAP representatives stated that the certification process has been a frustrating process because the government of Honduras has been limiting certification of private PAs. REHNAP also received support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to categorize private PAs, which served as a baseline for development of management plans.

One individual benefiting from ProParque support for his private PA was very positive about the alliance and the type of support the project had been offering. For his private PA he was able to develop a management plan and then undertake an Ecological Integrity assessment, which determines, in part, how conservation processes are progressing. In the case of this private PA, employment opportunities have been generated for at least eight women in the harvesting and processing of fruit.

As with MOCAPH, ProParque has also helped raise the visibility of REHNAP, which increases the partnership opportunities with USAID and other donors that are interested in improving PA practices in Honduras.

### **3.2.4 SUPPORT TO PROTECTED AREA CO-MANAGERS**

The Evaluation Team met with a series of PA co-managers such as PROLANSATE, FUCSA and FUPNAND along the coast of Honduras. In these conversations the co-managers stated that ProParque made significant contributions to strengthening the institutional capacity of the PAs by providing grants towards the accomplishment of specific products.

The PA co-managers who collaborated with ProParque have been working through a results-oriented approach, which consists of progressive disbursements of the grant based on a set of deliverables. Initially, co-managers found it difficult to comply with the ProParque-established deadlines, mainly because of a lack of internal capacities. However, ProParque helped facilitate the process by instilling flexible timetables and training staff on how to better fulfill their objectives.

Co-managers also stated that the technical and financial assistance provided by ProParque produced in-depth institutional awareness and capacity strengthening. The methodology of disbursements to PAs also gave co-managers a valuable tool to achieve greater credibility and to meet future demands of this type of international donor modus operandi. For instance, this disbursement approach gave co-managers the resources to prepare proposals based on the conservation objectives of each PA.

As a result of ProParque intervention, co-managers reported that they gained a better grasp on their administrative, operational and financial status. They also began to better define their operational plans, organizational structure, and strategies to reduce threats to protected areas. Co-managing organizations now



have tools and manuals to ensure they operate at high quality standards for greater effectiveness vis-à-vis the management of its personal and administrative and accounting procedures.

For instance, with ProParque, PROLANSATE worked on 17 products, including the strategic plan, procedure manuals, and a leverage plan. ProParque assistance was also key to solving PROLANSATE's financial crisis caused by accrued severance payments for employees. ProParque also funded legal costs to reduce the liability facing PROLANSATE, which was an urgent need of the organization. ProParque also strengthened FUCSA's technical and administrative capacity through the development of 18 products similar to those for PROLANSATE, including a strategic plan and procedure manuals, among others. The development of these products encouraged FUCSA to form alliances, e.g., with universities to draft the communication plan. FUCSA also stated that PROPARQUE had a significant impact on artisan fishing since specific fishing areas were identified, the sea front was delimited, and activities were conducted to protect water mirrors.

FUPNAND received assistance from ProParque to delimit the boundaries of the PA and identify threats. To accomplish this, ICF placed boundary markers and identified the landowners, while ProParque supported the land use contracts. This experience was replicated by ProParque in Celaque. These organizations agreed that the project ended activities in the Coast unexpectedly, which hindered adequate follow-up and monitoring to implement the products developed with ProParque.

Aldea Global, a Honduran NGO, co-manages PANACAM. In collaboration with Aldea Global, ProParque financed the construction of two towers for bird watching, which has contributed to an increase the number of visitors and to strengthen the national bird watching strategy. AMITIGRA, co-manager of La Tigra National Park, received a subvention from ProParque to develop the public use plan and design paths and infrastructure improvements. Because of these improvements, the number of visitors increased and Amitigra was also able to increase the cost of the entrance fee for the sustainability of the protected area.

### **3.2.5 SUPPORT AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL**

#### **(UMAs, CODELs, CODEMs AND JUNTAS DE AGUA)**

ProParque has worked with three main partners at the municipal level: water boards, CODEMs/CODELs, and UMAs. According to actors interviewed by the evaluation team, all three of these organizations have benefited to varying degrees from ProParque, as summarized below.

CODEMs/CODELs are the committees responsible for emergency response and prevention campaigns at the municipal level. Committee members received training in risk management and disaster reduction from consultants provided by ProParque, and the members reported that the training was generally informative and useful. CODEMs/CODELs members have since had opportunities to apply their acquired knowledge in actual situations, and have visited communities to complete risk assessments.

However, the lack of resources has not consistently allowed CODEM/CODEL members to implement what was learned during ProParque training. For instance, there is not effective emergency communication system, nor vehicles available to travel to emergency situations. To address these shortcomings, ProParque provided support to the CODELs on matters such as completing baseline studies to understand vulnerability. For instance, the experience in Tela was typical of what was observed along the north coast; that is, training was useful as an informative tool but a lack of material resources prevented the training from broad application. Similarly, in La Ceiba the evaluation team was informed that ProParque's work in communities was significant and that training had been continued at the community level, however, the stumbling block to replication was a

lack of resources. In another example, a training session in La Ceiba involved five CODELs and a CODEM and focused on the Sistema Nacional de Gestión de Riesgos (SINAGER) of COPECO, first aid, evacuation and rescue, shelter management, and gender issues in emergencies. Stakeholders cited the training organizers as having made a concerted effort to ensure women participation by adapting the schedule to their needs. ProParque reports that 31 CODEMs and 186 CODELs were trained and equipped, to varying degrees, to prevent and mitigate disasters. ProParque also promoted a model of central, broad dissemination of information.

In Gracias, ProParque helped 16 water boards obtain legal status, which allows the boards to organize themselves and work in a more efficient manner. (The original plan was to work with seven, but the level of interest was great so the number was increased to 16.) To facilitate this process ProParque covered legal costs, management training, and focused on developing watershed ecosystem services. The water boards requested support to the Association of Municipal Water Boards (AJAM) to obtain legal status and became watershed co-managers. One shortcoming was that, despite the fact that the work was done through a participatory process, the Boards did not receive training in technical issues.

In another area, UMAs were primarily trained during the Base Period. In Tela, ProParque focused on training 22 of the 298 communities in the municipality. The training has proven fruitful, but stakeholders stated that further technical support was needed to effectively disseminate the information learned. In La Ceiba, the UMA received training on the use of hydroelectric power, which has strong potential application in the area, and on how to defend their rights. To date, however, there have been no attempts at developing a hydroelectric project in the area. UMAs also received training on project management and in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) but the two-day training was considered too abbreviated by the participants.

### 3.3 EVALUATION QUESTION 3

***What were ProParque's non-successes? What were the main factors that influence these non- successes?***

As with any large scale development project, ProParque has had its challenges; however, none of the project elements have been significant failures. The project did begin with the goal of establishing a National Park Service in Honduras, which may have been a bit too ambitious. Over time the project settled into having a more realistic understanding of what could be accomplished, and that large-scale systemic changes through the project were untenable for a variety of reasons. ProParque's shortcomings are embedded within programming components that, on the whole, have been successful. There are programming areas such as REDD+ where accomplishments were limited due to unforeseen constraints. Further, the decision, stemming from the new CDCS, to redirect programming primarily to two areas in the western region of Honduras, clearly had repercussions for programming in other parts of the country. In addition, ProParque encountered problems throughout its early stages implementation, which is discussed below.

#### 3.3.1 PROTECTED AREA CO-MANAGERS

As noted earlier in the report, the operational start-up period for ProParque labored due to a variety of administrative and programming-related challenges. With ProParque's slow start, some stakeholders, such as PA co-managers, were kept somewhat in the dark about the project, creating confusion and frustration. As ProParque began to pick up its pace, project partners, as stated in interviews, suddenly felt pressure to execute tasks extremely quickly to accomplish due dates to deliver expected products. Moreover, some stakeholders stated that ProParque could have at times been more of consultative as opposed to insisting on the use of a particular administrative tool or approach.

PA co-managers also told the evaluation team that, perhaps to compensate for ProParque's slow start, they felt undue pressure to produce at a faster pace that did not correspond with their strategic planning and available resources. All of the PA co-managers interviewed agreed that the time for developing ProParque-related deliverables/products was very short. This caused a lot of pressure to complete the products rapidly, which in some cases affected the quality. In addition, in some cases the reimbursement of funds after the completion of products caused cash flow problems. Some PA co-managers also mentioned that the counterpart contribution requirement would have impeded other institutions to work with ProParque. Some interviewees would have preferred frequent follow-up and the ability to implement the products developed under the project, and apply what they learned in the training sessions. Madera Verde, a foundation specialized in the commercialization of legal wood, pointed out, for example, that some of the bottlenecks (dryers, administration) that had been identified in the exploratory phase were never adequately resolved. In the Northern Region, the organizations complained about the abrupt disassociation of ProParque when the project shifted gears towards the western region.

Pursuing quantifiable-related results without proper planning, for example distributing a large number of stoves during a limited period, was seen as a distraction to contributing to real, systemic changes. The ProParque project team stated that it sometime struggled within the scope of work between satisfying both the needs of beneficiaries and USAID expectations regarding performance results. ProParque certainly had success in encouraging institutional change and other quantifiable objectives. However, an over reliance on quantifiable results was shared with the ET frequently enough that USAID/Honduras should take note.

As reported earlier, ProParque had some success in supporting capacity building. However, in some circumstances capacity building did not align well with organizational needs. One co-manager reported that it needed assistance on how it managed its personnel and financial resources, but they were simply not operating on a scale that would justify the use of the administrative tools suggested by ProParque. Other stakeholders noted that ProParque came to them with pre-established training packages that did not fully take their needs and requirements into account. Other organization mentioned that some technical documents did not have appropriate scientific rigor.

### 3.3.2 VALUE CHAIN MANAGEMENT

At a supply level, some recipients of ProParque aid complained about the lack of adequacy and effectiveness of some of the project's investments in beneficiaries' value chains. Deficiencies were noted in for example with the cacao plants of COPRACAJUL and San Bernardo in Omoa in terms of the dimensions of the fermenters and driers that were not suited to the size of the production complex having limited expansion capacity. The mistaken design of the cacao dryers, which were actually designed for coffee rather than cacao production, has resulted in poor production results. The Cooperative San Antonio in Omoa has both solar and fire driers but neither can generate sufficient heat to ensure proper drying. According to the Fundación Hondureña de Investigación Agrícola (FHIA), a cocoa research institution that had been advising ProParque and the Cooperatives from the onset, the driers of some cooperatives were built with construction design deficiencies and at a high price. FHIA informed ProParque in writing of the problems with the cacao plants of COPRACAJUL including the dimensions of the fermenters and driers.

ProParque worked with COHORSIL to produce different coffee beans in the buffer zones of PANACAM. ProParque provided training on best practices and marketing but currently, only 13 farms have obtained Rain Forest certification. COHORSIL noted the process to obtain the certification is long and expensive; some

producers have not been able to participate due to the lack of funding. It was pointed out that ProParque could consider establishing seed capital to finance the certification process.

### 3.3.3 REDD+

Some of the original ProParque project components, such as the support for the forestry sector and most specifically REDD+, never materialized. A national REDD+ committee provided some important technical support on developing pilot carbon. In fairness to ProParque, Honduras' national REDD+ plan was never officially approved; hence, there was never a programming framework that ProParque could refer to.

### 3.3.4 CLEAN ENERGY

The programs distributing solar panels and improved stoves promoted by ProParque have faced some distribution setbacks. The sustainability of the model has been challenged by the cost of the materials, and the economic constraints facing the final users who require subsidies to cover the basic cost, installation, and maintenance of the products. This is not sustainable for many beneficiary households. In Honduras more than 50 percent of the 200,000 installed stoves have been subsidized, whether through public money or an international organization. It was reported to the ET that ProParque had been duplicating subsidies and



Solar panels donated by ProParque to the Colegio Ramon Rosas

installation of stoves with more expensive stoves in an area where other models were already on the market and working. Some stoves were replaced at the request of the beneficiary when they had older less-efficient models.

Although ProParque has systematically sought to promote entrepreneurship in clean energy, it has been met with mixed success. Regarding micro-entrepreneurs, issues were raised on how information on business opportunities for solar panel sales is disseminated. At this stage, micro-entrepreneurs still depend on ProParque to find their clients, and this situation creates an obstacle for the sustainability of the activity.

Participants also noted that the training programs for solar panel entrepreneurs should give more consideration to the business side of matters, as well as the legal and managerial aspects of opening a small company.

### 3.3.5 TOURISM

While programming in the tourism sector has been successful overall, a few challenges were pointed out to the ET. Interviewees noted, for example, that the Sistema Integrado Centroamericano de Sostenibilidad y Calidad (SICCS) certification, endorsed by the GOH to encourage hotels and restaurants to meet minimal Quality standards, has been met with skepticism by most managers and staff members of hotels and restaurants.

In spite of the adaptability of the certification process to different sizes of businesses and its relatively low cost for the implementer, most hotels failed to reach even the first level of certification. The main justification has been insufficient capacity—financial, technical and human resources—, inadequacy of some criteria, for instance for rural businesses, or inadequacy of some of the trainings provided by INFOP, considered as excessively

technical. Also, some managers interviewed do not consider the SICCS as the most appropriate certification tool citing the lack of recognition and valorization of the SICCS brand by their customers. They would rather invest in more straightforward visible tools such as Trip Advisor certification.

Stakeholders said that ProParque did not spend enough time and resources promoting the SICCS norms themselves towards a larger audience, as illustrated by the basic process of attribution of the certificate (by email, without much formalization). Some minor inconveniences were also mentioned, such as the delays in the auditing processes, which led to a very low number of certifications and a lack of coordination from public authorities (this shortcoming are not attributable to ProParque, however).

The connections between ProParque's tourist building capacity efforts and those related to building the capacity of PAs could have been stronger. Further, efforts to connect to other tourist networks, such as those that may be built around Copán Ruinas, were not very prevalent. This type of interconnectivity might be more plausible during a second phase. While there are a variety of reasons for Honduras' currently poor tourism services, some stakeholders said that ProParque should have been doing more to bring more foreign visitors to Honduras. ProParque was not expected to "open the flood gates" of international tourism; however, moving forward USAID/Honduras and the GOH should consider what else can be done, perhaps beyond ProParque, to increase the volume of tourists travelling to Honduras. It should be noted that the promotion of new and existing tourism destinations by ProParque, including the creation of major cultural events such as 'Gracias Convoca', has served to develop national tourism and to support hotels and restaurants' offer.

Successful coordination between donor organizations is always a good development practice and, while ProParque certainly had good synergy with other donors at the activity level, overall there was not sustained coordination with other donors on project components. While there was a year gap between the start up between ProParque it was anticipated that ProParque would build on MIRA, but this never happened. According to ProParque management, many if not most of the MIRA technical staff had dispersed to other projects, and institutional memory was lacking. Some consultation with MIRA managers took place, but ultimately they were two different projects.

EU's PROCORREDOR ended in 2012 but was only operational in the North Coast area. PROCORREDOR overlapped with a lot of programming areas with ProParque although there were different approaches. Representatives from the Adaptation Fund to Climate Change stated that ProParque did duplicate some efforts previously conducted by PROCORREDOR, but with less financial means. Other Stakeholders noted that ProParque should have been more observant and open to seeing how it could have better complemented PROCORREDOR and other development initiatives in general.

### **3.3.6 LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

Stakeholders also expressed concern over missed opportunities to better coordinate and integrate ProParque within local developmental planning strategies, and ensure greater involvement of local governments in ProParque. ProParque management acknowledged that it could have done a better job in this regard. The new narrowed geographic focus for USAID makes considering the local development context even more critical. Stronger connection with other USAID initiatives such as the local governance initiative NEXOS will also be essential. To its credit, the ProParque team has already demonstrated leadership in arranging talks among USAID implementing partners in the western region. Activities in the buffer zones will have to rely on coordination with local planning objectives.



### 3.3.7 THE NEW CDCS

For the North Coast the Option Period was a missed opportunity, as the new CDCS dictated a programming withdrawal. This process left behind a considerable amount of unfulfilled work. There were opportunities for ProParque to establish strong development models through the work started with cooperatives, and in the PAs that could have served as points of references. In some circumstances ProParque's departure left stakeholders wondering what had taken place with a project that, after a slow start, had built up a considerable amount of goodwill. North Coast ProParque partners such as PA co-managers were better off because of ProParque, but they were still far effectively managing their projects or benefitting from the capacity-building under ProParque.

There was also an opportunity to build a stronger network of PAs during the Option Period, where the current focus is on two PAs through the MOCAPH. One of the points made by a few different stakeholders during the field work was that a strong network of PAs would be beneficial to those PAs, as ProParque had originally intended.

### 3.3.8 CLIMATE CHANGE

The evaluation process revealed a number of instances where ProParque made a solid contribution to the climate change adaptation field, especially with regards to the integration of climate change into agricultural practices. For example, the producers of BCSR were very grateful for the climate change-related training they received. In particular, the use of shade and timber yielding trees in agro-forestry systems was cited as a good practice. In addition, COHORSIL was able to train producers in alternatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change. There were also novel approaches in relation to public education, in the form of a Radio Novela with the cooperative of CAMAPARA; this approach will apparently be replicated.

In conversations with stakeholders in all programming zones of the project, it was emphasized repeatedly that climate change was having a devastating impact on Honduras. Rambutan plantations, for example, are being affected by erratic blooms, resulting in falling production. Entire coffee crops can be threatened by drought and high temperatures and the coffee rust situation that is having a devastating impact across Central America. There is also the situation with the Bark Beetles or Gorgojos. Co-managers of PA reported the negative impacts that climate change was having on their PAs and buffer zones. There was some feedback that some of the support being provided by ProParque on climate change was too general and without specific adaptation measures. Integrating climatic considerations into programming, as ProParque has done, is very critical for all development projects, and should be considered standard practice.

Circumstances in Honduras require a broader range of climate-related innovations and building of experiences and expertise. Unfortunately, ProParque did not have the opportunity to remain in the North Coast long enough to incorporate one of the most proven and cost effective CC adaptation practices: the stabilization of vulnerable hillsides, which can generate up to 600 percent greater income than corn or beans. There are hundreds of small plots in denuded, highly impacted, buffer zone hillsides, with established, successful combinations of short, medium and long range harvest crops such as plantains (*Musa paradisiaca*), pineapples (*Ananas comosus*), rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceun*), coconuts (*Cocos nucifera*), mangosteen (*Garcinia mangostana*) and hard wood perimeters such as Mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) and Rosita (*Hyeronima alchomeoides*). The proliferation of these plots are forming a protective band of productive plots, and a barrier to ward off further encroachment and deforestation in PA's. Stakeholders who own these plots are becoming partners in the conservation of watersheds near their properties. This stewardship is significant in a country

without park rangers. The new ProParque phase should emphasize a similar approach to CC adaptation in the West, with application of appropriate crops and agricultural practices in that region.

### 3.4 EVALUATION QUESTION 4

*Was integration and congruency achieved between the design elements and the concept of working at a landscape level?*

ProParque articulated some of its activities around the concept of ‘Productive Sustainable Landscape’ (PSL). This concept, initially promoted by USAID, brings together different geographic and economic elements that interact closely such as a watershed, a protected area and an economic center. As such, it contemplates the integration of three main project components (sustainable economic growth, biodiversity conservation and global climate change mitigation), and encompasses all the products and factors that contribute to the area’s economic activity. It provides a holistic vision that considers together activities that would have otherwise been treated separately. Four landscapes were considered during the Base Period before being narrowed down to just two clusters (Gracias-Santa Rosa and Lago Yojoa-Santa Barbara) during the Option Period.

The concept of PSL was explained to local teams and assimilated rapidly. However, it took some time to the different areas of the project to start working together, and the PSL concept was put aside at the beginning of the Base Period. It has since then been recuperated in order to be scaled up at the national level.

Examples abound of successful integration of economic activities with natural resources conservation. One such example is the *mancomunidad de MAPANCE* that co-manages the Celaque Park. In this case, ProParque worked with 13 communities located in the park. Following the law on National Park those communities were supposed to leave since they were living in the nucleus of the PA, and for that reason didn’t have access to any public services. This situation changed when, under ProParque’s leadership, the delimitation of the core area was modified to exclude the area where the communities were settled, so that communities could start benefiting from economic support. This modification resulted in the development of new value chains (blackberry, passion fruit, carrot), which respect the PA’s natural resources. In addition, the nucleus of the Celaque Park is an important source of water for the surrounding villages and the implementation of a PES will enable to manage the watershed while providing additional financial resources to the park’s vulnerable communities.

Another example is the subsidy to MAPANCE that contributed to improving processes of sugarcane transformation. In that case, not only did the investment increase the economic profitability by using by-products as a main source of energy, it also had a positive impact on deforestation for the same reason.

Another experience that generated a good integration and complementarity between activities is the agreement between Beneficio de Café Santa Rosa with Honduras Quality Coffee and the Foundation Amigos del Café. The strategy integrates technical improvements, and improved market linkages while aiming to secure a better quality of life for coffee producers. PAs also benefited from technical assistance provided resulting in a better maintained and healthier forest with canopies that reduced emissions, slowing down forest degradation and diminishing watershed pollution.

The general impression of the ET is that, even though the idea of promoting economic growth through sustainable, environmentally friendly activities is mostly seen as positive and necessary, more could have been done to integrate the different components around the concept of PSL.



While ProParque achieved positive results with groups of producers in improving value chains management, it is not clear how the income generation activities supported by ProParque contributed to improve the effectiveness of natural resources management. An example in the agroforestry sector is the association of timber with agricultural crops such as coffee and cocoa, as in the case of COPRACAJUL. The purpose is to regulate shade and generate income by harvesting the trees. However, those trees need to be looked after in order to be economically productive and that they will only produce economic benefits over a 20-year period.

While ProParque staff understood the concept of economic development based on PSL, the reality is that it is more difficult to observe its application on the field. Landscape-based development implies that synergies appear in the management and exploitation of natural and human resources with the environment and culture. Although ProParque implemented the three components in the selected PSL, it is not clear to the ET that it was always an integrated effort concluding with integrated results. Some stakeholders mentioned that some activities were not coordinated or overlapped with for example other training provided through other mechanisms. Some beneficiaries did not receive assistance or training on climate change issues for instance and mentioned that not all climate-related training was relevant for their activities. There is also the issue of integrating PSL activity into broader local planning which is ultimately essential to ensure long-term engagement from local authorities and local population.

Regarding tourism developments in PAs, ProParque was not successful in attracting private investment in PAs. This was due to an inadequate legal framework and limited potential of economic profitability. For example, the IHT mentioned that some PAs would never receive enough visitors to make them economically attractive for private investors. However, most parks can be made economically attractive to private investors if the GOH had a defined policy on concessions that would include a guarantee that they would provide the same type of security protection that PANACAM currently enjoys.

Also, co-managers from the Northern Coast believe that the implementation time was too short to consolidate these components, especially considering that the selected landscapes changed from the Base to the Option period and the broad spectrum of proposed activities compared to the capacity of benefitting organizations. As a result, even after ProParque downsized to only two clusters, the co-managers felt that the project had not become more efficient in integrating these components. However, they consider that the Plans of Public Use (PUP) and Conservation Plans were key tools to make decisions that enabled the implementation of practices of renewable energy such as improved stoves and solar panels. Those activities, in addition to providing economic benefits to micro-entrepreneurs and energy companies, reduced pressures on wood resources in PAs, taking the pressure off hillsides, which constitutes the greatest risk of mudslides for the nearby communities.

### 3.5 EVALUATION QUESTION 5

#### *In which specific ways has this project's technical approach impacted gender equity issues?*

ProParque has made extensive efforts to include gender considerations into its programming. The project developed a gender mainstreaming strategy for project activities and hired a gender specialist to promote the strategy internally and externally. Several training sessions were conducted with the co-managers (MOCAPH, RENAPH, CODEL, and CODEM) and other stakeholders to raise awareness on gender issues, including ProParque staff. However, there could have been improvements in how ProParque sought to integrate women in, for example, the project's value chains and tourism activities. Due to the inconsistencies in gender integration, this evaluation finds that ProParque has a mixed record on gender concerns.

ProParque's strengths in gender programming include the development of publications, such as the Guide for the Prevention of Gender Violence in Temporary Shelters, and systematization of the Experience of Increasing REDD+ Capacities with Gender Focus and Access to Land for Women in Celaque Region.

ProParque also developed a virtual workshop on Gender and REDD+, in alliance with GIZ and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (UNAH). Further, ProParque also supported outreach activities on gender issues. Success stories include videos prepared with the National Women's Institute (INAM) and the Gender and Energy Network.

The evaluation team also observed good examples of gender integration in ProParque interventions in the field. For example, the representative of the CODEM in La Ceiba revealed that several CODELs are currently chaired by women, as a direct result of ProParque's intervention. Women hold management positions at CAMAPARA and COPRANICA, two coffee cooperatives. Also, as an indirect result of ProParque, several women are undertaking entrepreneurial initiatives. For example, a women's group in Cruz Alta (BCSR) are pursuing implementation of a coffee roasting project, and the women from COPRACAJUL formed an association and obtained funds from the World Bank and the Japanese cooperation to build a small chocolate production facility. However, these enterprises still face legal barriers before bringing their goods to market.

Other visits by the evaluation team indicated that there was no clear evidence of the implementation of a gender strategy in the field. Concerns reported by stakeholders include:

- The Junta de Agua representatives interviewed in Las Flores claimed they had not received training on gender issues.
- Most of the consulted stakeholders mentioned that women's participation in the water board was inadequate. Some stakeholders also noted that women were included in the water boards simply to comply with ProParque requirements, but that women are not playing a leading role.
- CODEM in Tela did not receive support from ProParque on gender issues.
- The renewable energy micro-entrepreneurs interviewed in Gracias and Solaris stated that women participated in training activities but they could not pursue the opportunity because of time constraints and the lack of partner support. FRUTELA was not successful in promoting women participation neither.
- Women associated with FRUTELA continuously faced significant barriers to becoming entrepreneurs. An Aldea Global representative said that, in the absence of support and direction from ProParque on gender issues, FRUTELA simply applied their own policies and practices, and FUCSA reported little gender equity emphasis from the project.

- In some cases, stakeholders reported that if there were any integration of gender considerations, it was a result of project partners' efforts, such as PA co-managers applying their own gender related policies rather than ProParque's own policy.

The answers provided by stakeholders to questions on gender demonstrated a heterogeneous pattern of understanding of the issue of gender equality and its place and impact on ProParque activities. Other than trainings, ProParque did not demonstrate implementation of concrete activities to engage women and put concepts into practice in all cases. A clear gender strategy was not operational, as there was no systematic attempt to integrate women in, for example, the project's value chains or tourism activities. As mentioned above, effective examples of integration of gender were undertaken by project partners, such as PA co-managers applying their own gender related policies, or other indirect results of PP interventions.

The project Performance Management Plan includes indicators disaggregated by sex as appropriate, to measure male and female participation, access and equity. Examples of these indicators are in Table 4. The achieved results show that the participation of women in the project activities is significantly lower than men's.

While the project did have a gender specialist, due to the magnitude, geographic focus, and nature of ProParque, it would have been helpful to have more than one person to monitor the implementation of specific activities focused on women. Although training is an important tool to sensitize, it is a process that requires close and permanent follow-up. How ProParque's gender related training activity is achieving results is not clear.

The gender specialist was a full-time employee during the base period. For the option period, this responsibility was turned over to a ProParque project officer and the specialist was eventually hired as an external consultant. This change may have diminished the ability to closely monitor and ensure the effective implementation of activities geared towards women.

Training, outreach activities, and technical assistance to strengthen internal capacity contributed to an increase in awareness and built a foundation for gender equality in the participating communities, co-management organizations, and among stakeholders. However, during the field visits, the feedback provided by ProParque stakeholders revealed a consistent need for ProParque to better integrate gender into its activities. For example, there is no evidence of a systematic attempt to integrate women in all programming components, such as the tourism activities or development of a female focused value chain.

TABLE 4. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DISAGGREGATED BY SEX

Indicators - IR 2.1.1 Rural, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise Increased	End of Q8				End of Q12				End of Q16			
	Results				Results				Results			
	M	W	Total	W %	M	W	Total	W %	M	W	Total	W %
New net sales of participating rural MSMEs (US\$ MM)	1.029	441	1.470	30%	4.354	1.866	6.220	30%	5.371	1.718	7.089	24%
# of new employment created in participating rural MSME (FTEs)	1.174	503	1.677	30%	3.227	869	4.096	21%	414	356	770	46%
New MSME Investment ((US\$ MM)	901	301	1.202	25%	2.260	713	2.973	24%	934	1.871	2.805	67%
# of MSMEs that have successfully adopted new inputs, technologies, and practices	1.321	331	1.652	20%	1.787	483	2.270	21%	1.750	404	2.154	19%
# of MSMEs implementing best business management practices	470	118	588	20%	1.040	306	1.346	23%	1.785	381	2.166	18%
# of MSMEs accessing new market opportunities through a broker	668	167	835	20%	1.214	254	1.468	17%	954	226	1.180	19%
# of MSMEs receiving regular market information from a broker	773	75	848	9%	1.212	253	1.465	17%	1.251	254	1.505	17%
# of MSMEs that have been verified to meet market standards for their products	616	155	771	20%	1.247	275	1.522	18%	992	229	1.221	19%
# of MSMEs accessing market-based financing as the result of USG assistance	430	77	507	15%	734	184	918	20%	456	86	542	16%

## 4. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 OVERALL EVALUATION FINDINGS

The evaluation process concluded with an overall favorable impression of the results achieved by ProParque, finding that there is a strong argument for a second phase of ProParque based on the programming success of the activity. ProParque has made critical progress on a number of fronts, including natural resource management, agricultural commodity value chains, capacity building, decentralization, and tourism, among other areas. In addition, ProParque has been a very well managed initiative, with some very strong administrative features, such as the establishment of a single project team and organizational system for all implementing partners. The ProParque team also effectively handled major challenges, the most significant being expansion of development assistance to the six departments of the Western region. The activity also benefitted from a strong working relationship between USAID/Honduras staff and the ProParque team. However, the evaluation also showed that ProParque had a slow start-up period and missed completing some sub-components. The findings are summarized below, followed by recommendations from the evaluation team.

Below is an overall review of key strengths and weaknesses of ProParque. Highlights of ProParque's achievements include:

- **Strong capacity building focus:** ProParque has built capacity in a number of critical areas, including: training in the tourism certification process, support to the Local Chambers of Tourism (CANATURH) to improve financial and organizational capacities, assistance to the Asociación de Hoteles Pequeños de Honduras (HOPEH) in improving the organization's visibility and increasing membership, and improving the financial sustainability and administrative capacity of organizations such as the Board of Honduran Protected Areas Co-managers (MOCAPH) and the Honduran Network of Private Natural Reserves of Honduras (REHNAP).
- **Successes with assisting cooperatives and microenterprises:** ProParque provided strong support to cooperatives under three different transfer modalities: in-kind transfer (such as machinery, electric installation, plants, etc.), technical support (field schools, good agricultural practices), and subventions and grants in several commodity areas, e.g., rambutan (FRUTELA cooperative in Tela), cacao (COPRACAJUL cooperative), coffee (COHORSIL in Siguatepeque), sugarcane, livestock, and wood (Madera Verde). Accomplishments with cooperatives included improvements in production, getting commodities to market, profitability, reduction of wasteful practices, and achieving recognition through such vehicles as organic certification. ProParque also oversaw the implementation of a microenterprise model based on the promotion of clean energy in the form of energy-efficient cook stoves and photovoltaic panels.

**Successes in the tourism sector:** The development of the national bird watching strategy, “Aviturismo,” which was endorsed and promoted by the U.S. Ambassador and the President of Honduras, has been one of ProParque's greatest successes. Other gains in the tourism sector were the creation of a National Tourism Portal Web for Honduras and the publication of a basic knowledge and skills manual for tourist guides.

- **Effective work with non-governmental organizations and private actors:** In general, non-government actors were receptive to ProParque support and readily able to incorporate suggested practices into their operations, and public-private partnerships got off to a strong start. An example of

an important achievement of ProParque in the private sector was the strengthening of the organizational capacity of REHNAP.

- **Success in building networks.** A significant achievement of ProParque was to be a central player in multiple sectors, acting as catalyst and putting together actors that would not have normally worked together otherwise. An example of this can be found in the tourism sector with the festival ‘Gracias Convoca’ in Gracias in the Western region or the bird watching strategy, which has involved the successful collaboration of private and public sector stakeholders.

Areas of shortcomings for ProParque include:

- Work in PAs of the northern Coast left unfinished: There were opportunities for ProParque, to establish long-lasting development initiatives that could have served as models for the north coast, with a minimal additional technical support and financial investment from the Activity. ProParque did provide some ongoing technical support and financial investment to strengthen the national network MOCAPH during the Option Period, with good results, which contributed to building a stronger network of PAs. Nevertheless, the north coast co-managers were of the opinion more could have been done by ProParque to consolidate onsite efforts. It must be noted that the change in geographic focus was determined by USAID/Honduras CDCS approval in 2014.
- Slow programming start: Not all project components of ProParque developed at the same pace, resulting in an initial period when the project was underperforming in some programming areas. Once the activity was functioning at a higher capacity, beneficiaries such as PA co-managers and members of cooperatives indicated that there was undue pressure placed on them to execute quickly and show immediate results.
- SICCS certification has not been achieved by most hotels and restaurants initially engaged in the process due to poor capacity of the targeted entities and the lack of recognition and value of the SICCS brand by the customers.
- Duration of technical support insufficient for meeting the long-term, complex needs of PA co-managers and cooperatives: Partners stated that excessive time was spent completing institutional diagnostic analysis rather than providing ongoing technical support to address critical problems.
- Some of the administrative and financial tools promoted for use by PA co-managers were found to be inappropriate for the scale of their operations versus the co-manager’s internal human and financial capacity.
- Some stakeholders such as ICF stated that ProParque was overly preoccupied with quantifiable results: This may have resulted in opportunities missed to tackle other types of challenges, such as slower institutional change, that may be difficult to measure but, from a development standpoint, are just as important. It appears to a certain degree, that the project team struggled within the scope of work to satisfy both beneficiaries and USAID’s contractual expectations. In addition, some of the original project components, such as the support for forestry in the area of REDD+, never materialized fully and was largely limited to providing support to National REDD+ sub-committee. The ProParque team indicated that this has more to do with national level organization related to REDD+ than any shortcoming on ProParque’s part.

- Need for greater coordination with the local actors and donor institutions to avoid duplication and improved coordination: ProParque's allocation of resources could have been improved to avoid duplication of efforts with other donors and no synergy with USAID's Integrated Management of Environmental Resources (MIRA) program that admittedly had ended a year earlier. It should be noted that the ProParque team has made efforts to coordinate with other USAID activities, such as the local governance activity, NEXOS, in the western region.
- GOH agencies were not always receptive to introducing changes that ProParque suggested, such as encouraging more decentralized decision-making. Some GOH stakeholders such as ICF were not satisfied with the authoritarian role played by ProParque in not consulting and coordinating with them.
- Lack of focus on the forestry sector, agroforestry withstanding, and a minimal contribution to REDD+. In relation to forestry there were expectations regarding investments in enterprise activity to provide a boost to sustainable forestry practices, which did not gain a strong foothold. USAID and ProParque provided a rationale for the decision to shift away from forestry, which was based on limited programming options in these areas. However, ProParque certainly has never suffered from a lack of programming possibilities; indeed, some stakeholders expressed concern that ProParque has had too many programming components
- Inconsistent gender strategy: While a few gender-focused interventions were successful (e.g., women pursuing their own coffee roasting projects), ProParque could have implemented a more systematic approach to integrating women into project activities, such as through a specific value chain or tourism activity. In addition, it is unclear whether ProParque's gender-related training activity is achieving results.

## 4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a summary of recommendations for USAID/Honduras Mission specific to the ProParque Activity:

- 1) **A second phase of ProParque is recommended** for all programming areas. While the evaluation concludes that ProParque has made significant accomplishments in many components, the evaluation also revealed the degree to which further technical assistance is required to ensure more in-depth and long-term development objectives are realized. Modifications to ProParque are suggested however; for instance, USAID should consider refocusing ProParque into several sub-projects that would allow for more focused interventions and better respond to the needs of Honduras. A suggested focus for a separate project would be for the areas of climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Alternatively, the next phase of ProParque could better integrate climate change and DRR considerations into all programming.
- 2) **In a second phase focused support should be provided to programming regions such as the North Coast** that were supported during the Base Period but not in the Option Period. In particular, cost-effective and limited interventions targeting project partners such as cooperatives, co-managers of PAs, tourism stakeholders, and micro-entrepreneurs should be reinitiated. The objective would be to allow ProParque and USAID to leave these programming areas on better terms and to assure that stronger and replicable development models are established. USAID/Honduras should work with ProParque and Honduran stakeholders to determine top priorities for reengagement.



- 3) USAID should consider establishing a **post-project monitoring system for all ProParque activities** implemented during the Base and Option Periods to assess how these activities evolve (while the second phase of ProParque continues, as seems likely). The objective of monitoring would be to measure sustainability and insure that the investments made in ProParque are resulting in the desired progress and work towards the original stated development objectives. This monitoring process may identify cost-effective and focused follow up activities that USAID could consider to ensure sustainability.
- 4) As key partners of ProParque, **agencies such as MOCAPH and REHNAP should institutionalize their management of Protected Areas (PAs)**, with a continued focus on the western region of Honduras. Similarly, despite challenges that have arisen in working with ICF, USAID should devise strategies to strengthen ICF's involvement in ProParque activities.
- 5) **Continue to encourage stronger linkages among local tourism stakeholders**, for example, PAs, hotel operators, and other tourism stakeholders in destinations such as Copán Ruinas.
- 6) Work more closely with **indigenous groups as strategic partners** to strengthen biodiversity conservation efforts and the capacity of these traditionally marginalized people to manage their lands.
- 7) In the western region in particular, **ensure adherence to municipal development plans**. ProParque should work to build tighter coordination with local authorities on economic development and environmental management. Strong local development plans will provide structure to the next, expected phase of ProParque, as well as improved synergy with other USAID interventions in the western region. If any local development plans in the western region are lacking, USAID can provide assistance in strengthening the plans.
- 8) ProParque should continue **creating a range of sustainable enterprise development activity**. Building on the first phase of the project, sustainable enterprise development should target additional economic sectors. For example, ProParque can help support coffee farmers and producers, as well as the tourism industry, by helping to develop a network of cafes or restaurants in the western region that can act as sales points. This type of interconnectivity should be sought in farm to non-farm income generating activities.
- 9) **Develop and implement a select number of interventions related to tourism** to address the structural challenges faced by the Honduras tourism industry (e.g., the country's poor reputation as a tourist destination). ProParque should work with an array of tourism stakeholders, including donors, to brainstorm ways to increase tourism through effective programs such as Aviturismo. Of importance in this regard will be the Honduras Institute of Tourism (IHT), which will eventually be depended upon to sustain the groundwork of ProParque.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO USAID/HONDURAS OVERSIGHT**

- 1) USAID should ensure that the next phase of ProParque is not overly reliant on performance measurements targets that are too inflexible such as being too focused on qualitative expectations blinding the ability to see other objectives that are achievable and beneficial.
- 2) USAID should ensure as short a delay as possible between ProParque's current work and the new phase to ensure better coordination and continuity of activities.

- 3) Ensure that mid-term and final performance evaluations are standard for complex activities and projects such as ProParque. Although the internal monitoring and evaluation unit of ProParque was proactive and effective, internal evaluation is not a replacement for third-party observations. Mid-term evaluations should be conducted at the appropriate juncture of a project's lifespan and its recommendations acted upon as expeditiously as possible. In addition, for the next phase of ProParque, USAID should consider designating an independent project monitor. For large multi-faceted projects such as ProParque additional oversight is warranted.
- 4) Consider establishing procedures for projects such as ProParque that are operational during a change in the Country Development Cooperation Strategy. When the CDCS was recently revised, it led to a reorientation of ProParque; however, the mid-stream changes hindered the effectiveness of ProParque.
- 5) USAID projects must ensure that gender considerations are integrated into all components, starting from the design of the activities, through implementation, and including monitoring and evaluation. ProParque should be more closely monitored to assess the participation of women in terms of their access to project resources, productive activities, leadership and decision-making. For a project the size of ProParque, it should be standard practice to incorporate specialized programming focused on women. For example, ProParque could include an agricultural product value chain focused on assisting female producers.
- 6) USAID should consider how to proceed from a monitoring and evaluation standpoint in terms of independently verifying quantitative results.

## ANNEXES

### ANNEX I: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Three sets of questionnaires were used during the interview process, including one general questionnaire for all stakeholders (Guía de entrevista)

#### GUÍA GENERAL DE ENTREVISTA

El equipo de evaluación está conformado por consultores contratados por The Cadmus Group y Sun Mountain International con vasta experiencia en las diferentes áreas de evaluación ambiental y de desempeño. El equipo conduce esta entrevista con el fin de recolectar información y consideraciones de los actores y grupos de interés y producir un informe de evaluación de desempeño para USAID Honduras.

Las preguntas que no aplican para una organización/grupo focal se quedan en blanco.

<b>Nombre de Organización entrevistada, Asociación o Grupo</b>		
<b>Número de Participantes</b>  (ver nombres en hoja de presencia)	<b>Mujeres:</b>	<b>Hombres:</b>
<b>Fecha y Hora:</b>		
<b>Ubicación:</b>		
<b>Nombre del Entrevistador:</b>		

#### I. DIFICULTADES

Para cada componente del programa, cuáles fueron las dificultades más relevantes de trabajar con:

a) Gobierno de Honduras (central y municipal)	
b) Comanejadores de Areas Protegidas	
c) Sector Privado	
d) Otros socios/organizaciones vinculadas	

<p>¿Cómo el enfoque de trabajo tanto con el sector privado como de gobierno ha contribuido al éxito del proyecto?</p> <p>¿Cómo el trabajo en reformas a políticas y regulaciones a nivel nacional ha tenido efecto en el éxito a nivel de campo?</p> <p>¿Cuáles han sido los obstáculos para promover estas reformas?</p> <p>¿Existieron factores fuera del control del proyecto?</p>	
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## 2. EXITOS

Cuáles fueron los principales éxitos de ProParque en términos de:

a) Crecimiento económico en comunidades alrededor de Áreas Protegidas	
b) Conservación de la biodiversidad	
c) Adaptación al cambio climático	
d) Combinación de los tres elementos	
<p>¿Cuales son las prácticas de gestión que contribuyeron al éxito del programa?</p> <p>¿Cuál rol jugaron los socios y alianzas en esos éxitos?</p>	
¿Qué tan sostenibles son esos éxitos? ¿Qué estrategias se están implementando para la sostenibilidad?	
¿Como se puede comparar los éxitos de ProParque con otros programas similares implementados por otros donantes en las mismas áreas programáticas? ¿cuáles son esos programas?	

<p>¿Cuáles de estas experiencias son replicables y cuáles se podrían extender a la Estrategia de Cooperación de Desarrollo del País (Country Development Cooperation Strategy -CDCS)? Y otros programas de USAID?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lucha contra la violencia</li> <li>• Lucha contra la pobreza y crecimiento económico</li> </ul>	
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### 3. NO EXITOS

<p>¿Cuáles fueron los no-éxitos de ProParque en las misma areas de:</p> <p><b>a) Crecimiento económico en comunidades alrededor de Áreas Protegidas</b></p> <p><b>b) Conservación de la biodiversidad</b></p> <p><b>c) Adaptación al cambio climático</b></p>	
<p>¿Cuáles fueron los factores principales que influenciaron estos no éxitos?</p> <p>¿Fueron esos factores específicos a ProParque o externos?</p>	
<p>¿Qué se podría haber hecho de manera diferente para mejorar ProParque o evitar algunos de los retos que fueron encontrados?</p>	
<p>¿Qué se puede aprender de las dificultades encontradas para futuros programas?</p>	

¿Ocurrieron retos/limitaciones recurrentes entre las áreas de programas y cuáles fueron esas?	
¿Cuáles dificultades fueron resueltas por ProParque?	
¿Cuáles fueron las áreas/regiones con más retos y por qué?	
Si fueron resueltas, ¿qué lecciones se aprendieron del proceso?	

#### 4. INTEGRACION Y CONGRUENCIA

Considerando los Paisaje Productivos Sostenibles (**Sustainable Productive Landscape-SPL**):

- Costa Norte (Incluyendo el Parque Nacional Jeannette Kawas, Refugio de Vida Silvestre Cuero y Salado, Parque Nacional Pico Bonito, Parque Marino Sandy Bay- West End, y el Area de Manejo del Habitat del Colibri Esmeralda)
- Central (incluyendo los Parques Nacionales Cerro Azul Meámbar y La Tigra)
- Occidental (incluyendo el Parque Nacional Celaque)
- Agalta – Rio Plátano (incluyendo el Parque Nacional Sierra de Agalta y la Reserva de Biosfera de Rio Plátano)

¿Qué tan eficiente han sido los esfuerzos de construcción de capacidad a nivel del campo?	
¿Hasta qué punto hubo integración y complementariedad entre los diferentes elementos del programa?	
¿Se logró la integración y la congruencia entre los elementos de diseño y el concepto de trabajo a nivel de paisaje?	
¿Cómo el apoyo de ProParque al SINAPH ha resultado en una mayor eficiencia y efectividad del sistema?	



## 5. GENERO

<p>¿E programa ha tomado en cuenta aspectos de género tales como la <b>división del trabajo, el uso de recursos, el tiempo?</b></p> <p>n cuales aspectos el diseño del</p> <p>¿De qué manera las mujeres han participado en ProParque?</p> <p>¿Cuáles fueron los factores que dificultaron la participación de las mujeres en las actividades del programa?</p>	
<p>¿Al contrario, hubo factores/estrategias que facilitaron la participación de mujeres?</p> <p>¿Se perdieron algunas oportunidades para la inclusión de las mujeres?</p>	
<p>¿En qué aspectos específicos la orientación técnica del proyecto ha impactado la problemática de igualdad de género?</p> <p>¿Cómo las mujeres se han beneficiado del programa?</p>	
<p>¿ Como se han fortalecido las <b>capacidades de las contrapartes</b> en temas de género?</p>	
<p>¿Cuál ha sido el <b>valor añadido</b> de la participación de mujeres en el programa?</p>	
<p>¿Cuáles fueron las áreas donde <b>limitaciones</b> específicas fueron encontradas en relación con la participación de mujeres?</p>	
<p>¿Qué representa Proparque en términos de cambiar las <b>percepciones de las mujeres</b> en tales programas?</p>	

## PREGUNTAS SOBRE TEMAS ESPECIFICOS

Aquí se consideran preguntas adicionales sobre

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**COMENTARIOS/OBSERVACIONES** alrededor de la entrevista (nueva reunión, pasos siguientes, datos de contacto)


## GUÍA DE ENTREVISTA A BENEFICIARIOS

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<b>Número de Participantes</b> (ver nombres en hoja de presencia)	<b>Mujeres:</b>	<b>Hombres:</b>
<b>Fecha y Hora:</b>		
<b>Ubicación:</b>		
<b>Nombre del Entrevistador:</b>		

## I. Preguntas generales

	Opciones de respuestas	Comentario
¿Cuál es su percepción del Programa ProParque?	<input type="checkbox"/> Muy Positiva <input type="checkbox"/> Positiva <input type="checkbox"/> Negativa <input type="checkbox"/> Muy Negativa	
¿Cuáles son las principales actividades que implementó ProParque en crecimiento económico (a), conservación de la biodiversidad (b) y adaptación al cambio climático (c) <b>en su región?</b>		Por area de trabajo a, b, c
¿Exisitieron cambios en su vida/communidad como resultado de las acciones?	<input type="checkbox"/> Muchos <input type="checkbox"/> Algunos <input type="checkbox"/> Pocos <input type="checkbox"/> Ninguno	<b>Misma pregunta para las mujeres solas</b>
¿Cuáles son los principales cambios positivos que han observado en su comunidad como resultado del programa ProParque?		
¿Cuáles son las principales dificultades que tuvo el programa en su comunidad?		
¿Cómo participaron las mujeres y como se beneficiaron del programa?		
¿Si ProParque continuara, qué actividades le gustaría que sigan implementándose?  ¿Cuáles podrían ser las nuevas actividades?		
¿Proparque ha cumplido con lo que había anunciado al principio del programa?	<input type="checkbox"/> Completamente <input type="checkbox"/> En mayor parte <input type="checkbox"/> Solamente una pequeña parte <input type="checkbox"/> No ha cumplido con nada	

## CHECKLIST PARA RESTAURANTES Y HOTELES PARTICIPANTES EN LAS CAPACITACIONES DE PROPARQUE

	Si	No
¿Su restaurante/hotel completó las capacitaciones y ha recibido la certificación SICCS?		
¿Es útil para uds la certificación SICCS?		
¿Esta afiliada a CANATURH?		
¿Recibio la capacitación por Proparque o CANATURH?		
¿Que capacitaciones han recibido?	X	
¿Ha recibido asistencia técnica además de las capacitaciones?		
¿Su restaurante/hotel sigue aplicando las recomendaciones de las capacitaciones?		
¿Han notado un aumento de la ocupacion de su hotel desde que se acabaron las capacitaciones?		
¿Ha mejorado su rentabilidad?		
¿Ha generado empleo?		
¿Ha sido de utilidad la pagina web Honduras Travel?		
¿Ud. utiliza el sistema de reservaciones electronicas de Proparque?		

## ANNEX II: STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

			PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
Nelbin Bustamante	PROLANSATE	Técnico Coordinador de Protección	Tela	2/18/2016
Jose Medina	PROLANSATE	Administrador	Tela	2/18/2016
Ilse Reyes	PROLANSATE	Expresidente junta directiva	Tela	2/18/2016
Axel Vidal	FRUTELA	Encargado de planta	Tela	2/18/2016
Chelsy Cantarero	FRUTELA	Supervisora y control de calidad	Tela	2/18/2016
Amarilis Cantarero	FRUTELA	Encargada de Area	Tela	2/18/2016
Ferdinand Florentino	CANATURH/Tela PROLANSATE	Presidente	Tela	2/18/2016
Manuel Alfaro	FRUTELA	Presidente	Tela	2/18/2016
Jose Luque	CODEM	Coordinador	Tela	2/18/2016
Daubee Oseguera	UMA	Coordinador	Tela	2/18/2016
Selvin Meza	CODEM	Promotor	Tela	2/18/2016
Oscar Rene Lanza Fortin	FUCSA	Coordinador RN	La Ceiba	2/19/2016
Ana Celestina Paz Vasquez	FUCSA	Director Ejecutivo	La Ceiba	2/19/2016
Irma Yolanda Canela Nuñez	FUCSA	Administrador	La Ceiba	2/19/2016
Iris Elquino	ICF-RFA	Coordinadora Regional de AP	La Ceiba	2/19/2016
John Dupuis	CANATURH	Vice Presidente, Junta Directiva	La Ceiba	2/19/2016
Oscar Montes	Unidad Ambiental	Coordinador UMA	La Ceiba	2/19/2016
Geovany Molina	CODEM	Coordinador	La Ceiba	2/19/2016
Jary Chirinos	CODEM	Miembro CODEM	La Ceiba	2/19/2016
Jorge Luis Alemán	Unidad Ambiental	Técnico	La Ceiba	2/19/2016
Fernando Manases Padilla	FUDNANP	Director Ejecutivo	La Ceiba	2/19/2016
Vilma Argueta	UNICAF-BRP	Contadora	La Ceiba	2/19/2016
Abilio Alvave	UNICAF-BRP	Presidente	La Ceiba	2/19/2016
Luis Baharona	COPRACAJUL	Presidente	Jutiapa/Atlántida	2/19/2016

NAME	ORGANIZATION	POSITION	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
Abraham Mejía	COPECO	Sub Comisionado Regional	La Ceiba	12/21/2016
Julio Rixon	CORAMEHL		La Ceiba	12/21/2016
Carmen Alvarado	CORAMEHL		La Ceiba	12/21/2016
Francis Tejada	MAPANCE		Gracias Lempira	2/22/2016
Gustavo Casula	MAPANCE		Gracias Lempira	2/22/2016
Euclio Diaz Torres	Junta Agua Las Flores	Presidente	Municipio Las Flores	2/22/2016
Mario Jehavanytour	Junta Agua Las Flores	Presidente	Municipio Las Flores	2/22/2016
José Alfredo	Junta Agua Crucitas	Presidente	Municipio Las Flores	2/22/2016
José Danillo	Junta Agua Las Flores	Presidente	Municipio Las Flores	2/22/2016
Rudy Sarmiento	Junta Agua Las Flores	Municipalidad	Municipio Las Flores	2/22/2016
Aida Chavez	Fundación Amigos del Café	Gerente de Proyectos	Santa Rosa de Copán	2/22/2016
Rafael Antonio Rivera Garcia	HQC	Técnico Equipo de Certificaciones	Santa Rosa de Copán	2/22/2016
Thania Marizza Aguilar	HQC	Coordinadora de Gestión de Proyectos	Santa Rosa de Copán	2/22/2016
Adalid Canales	HQC	Gerente Certificación de Proyectos	Santa Rosa de Copán	2/22/2016
Carmen Rivera	HQC	Gerente de Proyectos - HQC	Santa Rosa de Copán	2/22/2016
Janny Marlith Torres	Beneficio Santa Rosa	Gerente Administrativo	Santa Rosa de Copán	2/22/2016
Paola Desire Sanchez	Camapara	Gerente General	La Campa/Lempira	2/22/2016
Jose Lorenzo Santos Pascual	Camapara	Gerente Administrativo	La Campa/Lempira	2/22/2016
Medardo Orellano	Camapara	Presidente	La Campa/Lempira	2/22/2016
Jose Claro Díaz Santos	Camapara	Tesorero	La Campa/Lempira	2/22/2016
Mario E. Paz	Camapara	Socio/Productor	La Campa/Lempira	2/22/2016
Marco Antonio Casas	USAID Proparque	Encargado Biodiversidad	Gracias Lempira	2/22/2016
Yesenia Mendez	USAID Proparque	Encargado M&E	Gracias Lempira	2/22/2016
Carlos Sandoval	USAID Proparque	Encargado Agroforestal	Gracias Lempira	2/22/2016
Ariel Acosta	USAID Proparque	Encargado Energia Renovable	Gracias Lempira	2/22/2016



Jarco Espinoza	CANATURH - Hotel Maria Rosa		Gracias Lempira	2/22/2016
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NAME	ORGANIZATION	POSITION	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
Olvin Morales	COHORSIL	Encargado de proyecto	Siguetepeque	2/23/2016
Edis Pacheco	COHORSIL	Productora	Siguetepeque	2/23/2016
Rafael Martinez	COHORSIL	Director Ejecutivo	Siguetepeque	2/23/2016
Sergio Midence	PAG	Coordinador PANACAM	Panacam	2/23/2016
Felipe Reyes	PAG	Aldea Global - Subdirector Ejecutivo	Panacam	2/23/2016
Chet Thomas	PAG	Director Ejecutivo Aldea Global	Panacam	2/23/2016
David Cosec	PAG		Panacam	2/23/2016
Karla Rivera	CANATURH LY		Lago de Yojoa	2/23/2016
Ramón Pineda	CANATURH LY		Lago de Yojoa	2/23/2016
Jaime Muñoz	CANATURH LY		Lago de Yojoa	2/23/2016
Libia Anandy Guzman	CANATURH LY		Lago de Yojoa	2/23/2016
Felipe Reyes	CANATURH LY		Lago de Yojoa	2/23/2016
Candy Alvarado	MOCAPH	Secretaria Ejecutiva	Tegucigalpa	2/24/2016
Ivo Alvarado	MOCAPH	Fiscal de Junta Directiva	Tegucigalpa	2/24/2016
Kevin Rodriguez	AHPER - Red Género y Energia	Director Ejecutivo	Tegucigalpa	2/24/2016
Jenny Moreno	AHPER - Red Género y Energia	Asistente de Dirección	Tegucigalpa	2/24/2016
Alejandra Reyes	ICF	Departamento de Areas Protegidas	Tegucigalpa	2/25/2016
Mirna Remos	ICF	Técnico Forestal	Tegucigalpa	2/25/2016
Ana Rosario Velasquez Acosta	ICF	Técnico en Biología	Tegucigalpa	2/25/2016
Lia Romiz	ICF	Técnico en Turismo	Tegucigalpa	2/25/2016
Ivonne Oviedo	REHNAP	Directora Ejecutiva	Tegucigalpa	2/25/2016

Jorge Luis Murillo	AMITIGRA	Coordinador de Turismo e Investigación Biológica	Tegucigalpa	2/25/2016
Sue Elen Chavez	IHT	Gerente de Mercadeo	Tegucigalpa	2/25/2016
Juan Antonio Mesa	IHT	Jefe de Sostenibilidad Ambiental	Tegucigalpa	2/25/2016

NAME	ORGANIZATION	POSITION	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
Dina Nuñez	HOPEH	Ex-Directora Junta Ejecutiva	Tegucigalpa	2/25/2016
Alvaro Rodriguez	FUNDER	Director	Tegucigalpa	2/25/2016
Angel Mesa	FUNDER		Tegucigalpa	2/25/2016
Lilian Lagos	CANATURH	Directora Ejecutiva	Tegucigalpa	2/26/2016
Andrea Amaya	CANATURH	Información	Tegucigalpa	2/26/2016
Oseas Israel Lopez Ramirez	SOLARIS	Gerente	Tegucigalpa	2/24/2016
Alejandrina Carrasco	USAID Proparque	Program Officer	Tegucigalpa	2/26/2016
Georgina O'Connors	USAID Proparque	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	Tegucigalpa	2/26/2016
Male Ponce	USAID Proparque	Especialista en Género	Tegucigalpa	2/26/2016
Zoila Madrid	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (UNAH)	Catedrática	Tegucigalpa	3/17/2016
Irina Pineda	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (UNAH)	Egresada y tutora	Tegucigalpa	3/17/2016
Dr. Adolfo Martinez	Fundacion Hondurena de Investigacion Agricola (FHIA)	Director Ejecutivo	La Lima, Cortes	3/7/2016
Ing. Danny Gabrie	JAREMAR	Gerente General	San Alejo, Atlantida	3/7/2016
Rudy Padilla	Asociación de Ganaderos de Vallecitos.	Socio	Aldea de Vallecitos, Rio Tinto (Olancho)	3/11/2016
Guillermo Matute Paz	Asociación de Ganaderos de Vallecitos.	Presidente	Aldea de Vallecitos, Rio Tinto (Olancho)	3/11/2016

Marcelino Espiral	Universidad Nacional de Agricultura	Jefe Sección de Bobinos	Catacamas, Olancho	3/10/2016
Harin Joel Mejía	Universidad Nacional de Agricultura	Coordinador/Enlace UNA/PP	Catacamas, Olancho	3/11/2016
Dr. Osman Alejandro García	Universidad Nacional de Agricultura	Docente Escuelas de Campo	Catacamas, Olancho	3/11/2016
Ing. Yadira Molina	Fundación Madera Verde	Gestión de Fondos y Comunicaciones	La Ceiba	2/19/2016

## ANNEX III: FIELDWORK ITINERARY

FECHA:	ACTIVIDAD	LUGAR	OBJETIVO	OBSERVACIONES
15-02-16	Trabajo del equipo evaluador de SMTN,	Tegucigalpa Hotel Honduras Maya	Conocer personalmente el equipo	
			Revisar/ajustar la metodología	
			Diseñar los métodos de consulta a utilizar	
			Revisar ruta de trabajo	
			Revisar aspectos logísticos	
(De 3 pm)				
16-02-16	Continuar con aspectos logísticos	Tegucigalpa	Confirmar entrevistas con organizaciones a visitar Reconfirmar ruta de trabajo	Equipo de SMTN de 8 am a 12 m
	Reunión USAID		Conocer sus expectativas	(a las 3:30 pm)
	Reunión Equipo Coordinador Pro-Parque		Conocer sus expectativas, recibir orientación, despejar dudas.	De 4pm en adelante, en su oficina
17-02-16	Reuniones con Pro-Parque y organizaciones del Estado vinculadas a MiAmbiente		Conocer percepción y grado de vinculación con pro-Parque de: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal de Pro-Parque</li> <li>Vice Ministro de Ambiente y Minas</li> <li>Director y SD de Biodiversidad</li> <li>Directora Fondo de Adaptación</li> </ul>	En el siguiente horario: 07:am  11:am  11:am
	Viaje a Tela Salida 2 pm	Tegucigalpa a Tela	Establecernos este día en Tela, para aprovechar la jornada del 18/02/16.	Dormimos en Telamar
18-02-16	Reunión con PROLANSTATE	Tela	Conocer la efectividad del apoyo recibido por parte de Pro-Parque	09 - 11
	FRUTELA		Conocer los alcances de la asistencia técnica y subvención recibida.	11 – 12:30
	Reuniones con UMA		Conocer percepción sobre PP y efectividad de la capacitación y el equipamiento recibido	13:30 - 15
	CAISESA/Jaremar		Relación con microempresarios de ER/estufas	Pepe hará la entrevista después
	CANATURH		Conocer la efectividad de la capacitación y el equipamiento	

FECHA:	ACTIVIDAD	LUGAR	OBJETIVO	OBSERVACIONES
			recibido	14 - 16
	Viaje a La Ceiba			Dormimos en Hotel La Quinta
19-02-16	Reuniones con:	La Ceiba	Hacer las consultas de evaluación, pero además:	
	FUCSA		Conocer el alcance de la subvención y la asistencia técnica recibida. SAT	De 08 a 10 am
			Conocer grado de coordinación y apoyo	Lo entrevistó equipo #02 de 09 a 10 am
	ICF		Conocer el grado de coordinación, para hacer el mapa de cobertura regional y su relación con las Comanejadoras de AP y efectividad de manejo.	De 10 a 12 m
	RENAPH		Conocer la calidad del fortalecimiento recibido por Pro-Parque y su percepción sobre el proyecto	Lo entrevistará Pepe después
	CANATUR		Conocer su percepción sobre el apoyo recibido	De 12 a 14
	CODEM y UMA		Conocer la efectividad de la capacitación y el equipamiento recibido	De 14 a 16
	FUPNAND		Conocer su percepción sobre subvención	De 16 a 17
20-02-16	SOCODEVI		AST	La entrevistará Pepe después
	UNICAF		Subvención	De 9 am a 10 am
			Conocer el grado de coordinación, para la formación, capacitación, equipamiento y juramentación de CODEM Y CODELES.	De 10 a 11 am
	Visita a la planta procesadora de cacao	Jutiapa, Atlántida	Conocer los alcances de la asistencia técnica y equipamiento recibido	De 12 a 16 pm Regresamos y dormimos en La Ceiba. Hotel Quinta
22-02-16	Reuniones con:	Santa Rosa de Copan		

FECHA:	ACTIVIDAD	LUGAR	OBJETIVO	OBSERVACIONES
08 – 10	Beneficio Santa Rosa, HQC y Fundación Amigos del Café.		Conocer los alcances de la subvención, los avances del proceso de certificación y vulnerabilidad de café al cambio climático.  Estufas mejoradas	
10 – 11	Productores de Café		Conocer su percepción sobre el alcance del convenio BS y PP	
11 – 12	Cámara de turismo de SRC		Conocimiento sobre la subvención	
	Juntas de Agua de Las Flores(II)	Las Flores	Conocer el grado de asistencia técnica y el equipamiento recibido	
		Gracias	Conocer los alcances de las capacitaciones, asistencia técnica, equipamiento y subvención, etc.	
08 – 10 am 10 - 12 am	MABANCE Pro-Parque y microempresarios		Conocer los alcances en desarrollo económico	
13 -14	Beaks and Peaks		Conversatorio con guías turísticos	
14 – 15	Colegio de secundaria Instituto Ramón Rosa		Conocer el grado de avance como centro de formación de energía renovable	
15 – 17	Visita productores de dulce de panela		Conocer los alcances de la asistencia técnica, el apoyo recibido y el emprendimiento de empresarios de microempresas.	
23-02-16	Viaje a Parque Nacional Cerro Azul Meambar (PANACAM)	Lago de Yojoa	Conocer el alcance de la asistencia técnica, equipamiento (torres para avistamiento de aves) y las subvenciones. Sistemas fotovoltaicos y estufas mejoradas.	Dormimos en PANACAM
			Conocer la vinculación de productores con exportadores para la asistencia técnica y mercadeo de café, género y adaptación a cambio climático	12 a 13
	Reunión con dueños de hoteles/ restaurantes y  Cámara de		Conversatorio con propietarios de estos negocios, que recibieron capacitación, apoyo de Pro-Parque y certificación SICCS.	13:30 a 15



FECHA:	ACTIVIDAD	LUGAR	OBJETIVO	OBSERVACIONES
	turismo Lago de Yojoa			
24-02-16	Servicio Forestal de USA	Siguetepeque	Conocer su vínculo con el PP en cuanto a REDD* e interpretación ambiental	Ambos equipos
11	Salida a Tegucigalpa			
12:00 – 14:00	Reunión con Isabel Pérez - ProParque		Ampliar información sobre actividades de turismo	Equipo # 2
14 – 15		Tegucigalpa	Conocer el vínculo y apoyo recibido del Pro-Parque	Equipo #01
15:30 – 16:00	Red Género y Energía		Conocer el vínculo y apoyo recibido del Pro-Parque	Equipo #01
			Conocer su percepción de Pro-Parque, como proveedor de paneles solares	Equipo #02
15-16-17 – 19	Reunión del equipo		Revisar presentación a USAID	Ambos equipos
25-02-16	Reuniones con:			
08 - 16	Reuniones gerenciales con USAID y Pro-Parque	Tegucigalpa	El líder del equipo de evaluación consulta a ejecutivos de USAID y Pro-Parque	Dean Pallen
	Instituto de Conservación Forestal (ICF)	Tegucigalpa	Reunirnos con el Departamento de Áreas Protegidas, para conocer su relación con Pro-Parque	Equipo # 01
10 – 11:30	CANATURH		Conocer el grado de coordinación y vinculación con PP	
13 – 14	RENAPH		Conocer el grado de coordinación y vinculación con PP	
14 – 15	INAMH		Conocer su relación con Pro-Parque en el aspecto de género	
08:30 - 10			Conocer su percepción sobre su relación con Pro-Parque para brindar asistencia técnica a	Equipo # 02

FECHA:	ACTIVIDAD	LUGAR	OBJETIVO	OBSERVACIONES
			cooperativas beneficiadas	
11 – 12	Instituto Hondureño de Turismo		Conocer el grado de coordinación y vinculación con PP	
			Conocer el alcance del apoyo recibido del Pro-Parque	
16 -17:30	Reunión de salida con Pro-Parque		Compartir primeras impresiones de las consultas	Ambos equipos

## SEGUNDA RUTA DE TRABAJO DE CAMPO

FECHA	ACTIVIDAD	LUGAR	OBJETIVO	OBSERVACIONES
07-02-16	CAISESA/Jaremar	San Alejo. Tela	Relación con microempresarios de ER/estufas	José Herrero hará la entrevista
	FHIA	La Lima. Cortés	Conocer los alcances de la coordinación de trabajo conjunto.	
09-02-16 (3:00 pm)	INFOP	Tegucigalpa	Conocer los alcances de la coordinación de trabajo conjunto.	José Herrero y Carlos Ponce harán la entrevista
10-02-16	Universidad Nacional de Agricultura	Catacamas	Conocer percepción sobre PP y efectividad de la capacitación y el uso de la cadena de valor del ganado.	José Herrero y Carlos Ponce harán la entrevista.
11-02-16	Ganadería Parque Nacional Sierra de Agalta	Sierra de Agalta		
12-02-16	Regreso a La Ceiba			

## ANNEX IV: TEAM COMPOSITION

A five-member team was assembled to conduct the ProParque final evaluation.

Team leader Dean Pallen has a broad range of evaluation and technical experience in the environment, climate change, and biodiversity and enterprise development fields. As such, he will be expected to provide guidance and technical support to all team members throughout the evaluation process. He assumes an overall coordination role.

Mr. Jose Herrero, a native of Honduras, is a climate change adaptation specialist with over 30 years of experience in Honduras in NRM and agroforestry, and 20 years' experience implementing, evaluating, monitoring, and coordinating projects carried out by USAID/Honduras and its implementing partners. He will have direct responsibilities for overseeing the evaluation of climate change related activities and will share responsibilities with Mr. Pallen and Mr. Carlos Enrique Ponce Cárcamo for the biodiversity sector.

Mr. Ponce Cárcamo who is also a native of Honduras, will act as the social specialist. He has over thirty years of experience working on community level projects and related experiences. He has also worked extensively on forestry and Agroforestry projects.

Ms. Sofia Villiaba, a native Ecuador, is a former USAID employee where among other responsibilities she supported USAID Monitoring and Evaluation activities in Ecuador. She will act as the Monitoring and Evaluation specialist and will also coordinate team efforts in assessing ProParque's success in addressing the issue of gender. She will also play an important coordinating role on administrative matters.

Mr. Thomas De Brouwer, is a Belgium national and has carried out environmental and social impact assignments for USAID projects. He is also a trained economist and as such will act as the evaluation team's enterprise specialist where he will be able to put his abilities on matters such as data analysis to effective use.

## ANNEX V: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## ANNEX VI: DISCLOSURE OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

[The Evaluation Policy requires that evaluation reports include a signed statement by each evaluation team member regarding any conflicts of interest. A suggested format is provided below.]

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Title</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	
<b>Evaluation Position?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Team member
<b>Evaluation Award Number</b> (contract or other instrument)	
<b>USAID Project(s) Evaluated</b> (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	
<b>I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:</b>  <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i>  1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project. 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.	



I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

<b>Signature</b>	

## ANNEX VII: STATEMENT OF DIFFERENCES

USAID/Honduras agrees with the overall Evaluation Team's (ET) conclusions that the USAID ProParque activity was a very well managed initiative and made critical progress on a number of fronts, including natural resource management, agricultural commodity value chain, capacity building, etc. We recognize the significant volume of work accomplished by the ET in collecting data, reviewing, assessing, and drawing conclusions in a short period of time, with limited resources, on broad and very complex issues. However, our concern is that the wide scope of the evaluation, the extent and comprehensiveness of the ProParque activity, and the limited time the entire ET spent in the field meant that the ET could not further evaluate some of identified issues in depth.

According to USAID policy the implementing partner(s), funder(s), and evaluation team members are to be given the opportunity to write a statement of differences regarding any significant unresolved differences of opinion. Below are the statements of difference received from USAID/Honduras based on an earlier draft version of the evaluation. The ET responded to address USAID/Honduras' comments.

	Location in Report	Evaluation Team comment	USAID/Honduras response	Evaluation Team response
1.	Key Evaluation Findings, page xiii	"SICCS certification has not been achieved by most hotels and restaurants initially engaged in the process due to poor capacity of the targeted entities and the lack of recognition and valorization of the SICCS brand by the customers."	USAID does not believe this statement to be accurate and believes that SICCS has been embraced by the National Tourist Board (CANATURH) and the Honduras Institute of Tourism (IHT). Additionally, SICCS is being financed within the tourism sector. Furthermore, Honduras, through CANATURH and IHT, is leading the implementation of SICCS at the regional level, as evidenced by a SICCS workshop that took place in November 2016 and included representatives from El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Belize, and Nicaragua.	Stakeholders did indicate some challenges with the SICCS certification process, but there certainly were some significant benefits to the Honduran tourism industry, as noted in the report ("ProParque has built capacity in a number of critical areas, including training in the tourism certification process" pg xii).
2.	Key Evaluation Findings, page xiii	"Need for greater coordination with the local actors and donor institutions to avoid duplication and improved coordination: ProParque's allocation of resources could have been improved to avoid	The MIRA activity had finished implementation over a year before ProParque began implementation. Therefore, it was difficult, if not impossible, to create a synergy between the two activities.	Based on the original ProParque project document, there was an expectation that ProParque would build on MIRA; the Evaluation Team maintains that a stronger bridge

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		duplication of efforts with other donors and no synergy with USAID's Integrated Management of Environmental Resources (MIRA) program that admittedly had ended a year earlier.”		between the two programs would have been beneficial.
3.	Evaluation Limitations, page 7	“Nevertheless, an equal amount of time was spent in the current geographic focus area, the western region of Honduras.”	The agenda that was submitted to USAID, showed that three days were spent on the north coast and two days in western Honduras. USAID considers the lack of time spent in the field, and especially in the western part of the country, to be a major limitation of the evaluation.	We agree that more time in the field would have been fruitful, given the expansive scope of the program. However, spending time in the northern part of the country was critical to the evaluation because it was a ProParque programming priority at one point, with numerous activities implemented. In addition, it was important to examine the implications of the USAID decision to move away from the north and focus efforts in the western region.
4.	Results, page 20	“Another objective of ProParque was to support ICF with its technical capabilities and decision-making capabilities. ProParque also came with its own objectives and parameters, almost appearing to distance itself from PROCORREDOR, what resulted in not taking	USAID does not feel this is an accurate statement. In reality, ProParque's scope of work did not include supporting ICF with technical and decision-making capabilities.	Several ICF stakeholders from across the country stated that they needed additional support from ProParque.

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		advantage of potential synergy. As well, according to ICF ProParque barely consulted with ICF at the proposal writing stage.”		
5.	Results, page 21	“In addition, ICF complained that ProParque did not give adequate visibility to ICF, for example not inviting the Institute to some public events or not always requesting ICF feedback on technical documents.”	USAID does not feel this is an accurate assessment. All technical documents were co-branded between USAID and ICF. Furthermore, ICF was a leading partner in public events such as the protected area and watershed forum	See comment above. Clearly ICF and USAID staff had differing perspectives on the relationship between the organizations.
6.	Results, page 33	“At a supply level, some recipients of ProParque aid complained about the lack of adequacy and effectiveness of some of the project’s investments in beneficiaries’ value chains.”	Although it’s possible that some ProParque beneficiaries may have been unhappy with the assistance they received, in general USAID believes the embedded services model to be a success. For example, COPRACAJUL is exporting almost all of its cacao product to Europe with an “A” rating.	As noted in the Key Evaluation Findings (page xii), the Evaluation Team agrees that there were various successes with the services model (e.g., in agroforestry). Nevertheless, some beneficiaries did state that there were some inadequacies, such as a lack of training on climate change issues (Section 3.4, pg 38).
7.	Results, page 33	“Deficiencies were noted in for example with the cacao plants of COPRACAJUL and San Bernardo in Omoa in terms of the dimensions of the fermenters and dryers that were not suited to the size of the production complex having limited expansion capacity. The mistaken	USAID does not consider this statement to be accurate as the design of the dryers was carried out in consultation with FHIA technicians, APROCACAOH personnel and the Mesa de Cacao (Cacao Committee) that is part of the Ministry of Agriculture.	As noted in the report, the Evaluation Team received a range of feedback on the efficacy of the dryers, from positive responses to complaints about the design.

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		design of the cacao dryers, which were actually designed for coffee rather than cacao production, has resulted in poor production results.”		
8.	Results, page 33	“FHIA informed ProParque in writing of the problems with the cacao plants of COPRACAJUL including the dimensions of the fermenters and driers.”	USAID agrees with the evaluation team that a letter was written by Dr. Martinez regarding several aspects of the dryers and fermenters not being up to FHIA standards. However, what is not included as part of the evaluation report is that this letter was read at the Ministry of Agriculture’s Cacao Committee’s meeting and every point in the letter was refuted by both the FHIA technicians and the technical experts that are part of the committee.	See response above. In addition, the Evaluation Team acknowledges that reporting on the Cacao Committee was not included in our report, which may have been an oversight.
9.	Results, page 33	“ProParque provided training on best practices and marketing but currently, only 13 farms have obtained Rain Forest certification.”	The activity not only promoted Rain Forest certification, but also UTZ and 4C certification. In addition to the 13 farms mentioned in the evaluation report, over 1,000 coffee producers obtained either the UTZ or the 4C certification.	As noted in the highlights section (pg xii), the Evaluation Team agrees that there were some significant successes with the certification process.
10.	Results, page 34	“It was reported to the ET that ProParque had been duplicating subsidies and installation of stoves with more expensive stoves in an area where other models were already on the market and working.”	ProParque worked carefully in communities to avoid duplicity of cook stoves. Some stoves were replaced at the request of the beneficiary when they had older, less-efficient models. Therefore, USAID does not believe the evaluation team’s statement to be accurate.	The Evaluation Team acknowledges that a significant number of cook stoves were properly installed, however, some stakeholders did state that there were inefficiencies – and some duplication - with regard to cookstove installation.
11.	Results, page	“In spite of the	USAID does not view the	The Evaluation Team

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	34	adaptability of the certification process to different sizes of businesses and its relatively low cost for the implementer, most hotels failed to reach even the first level of certification.”	SICCS process as a failure. GOH, IHT and CANATURH are all committed to the SICCS process, and have budgeted staff and resources to it. It is very much a viable aspect of the tourism sector strategy.	agrees that the SICCS was not ‘a failure,’ and, as stated in the report, there were various certification successes (pg. xii and xiii). However, our evaluation concluded that some tourist sites did not progress as far as others with the certification process.
12.	Results, page 35	“Representatives from the Adaptation Fund to Climate Change stated that ProParque did duplicate some efforts previously conducted by PROCORREDOR, but with less financial means.”	PROCORREDOR and ProParque were two projects with very different approaches. USAID does not consider it reasonable to compare them.	Some Honduran government representatives did indicate duplication of efforts across projects, which the Evaluation Team acknowledges can be difficult to avoid with large efforts.



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