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# CONSERVATION LANDSCAPES PROGRAM – PROGRAM ADVISORY UNIT

## FINAL REPORT



JUNE 2010

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COVER PHOTO: Indigenous Arhuaco and tourists, Ciudad Perdida, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta National Park. Photo by Bruce Byers, ARD.

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADAM	<i>Áreas de Desarrollo Alternativo al Nivel Municipal</i>
ADS	Automated Directives System
APS	Annual Program Statement
ASOCARS	<i>Asociación de Corporaciones Autónomas Regionales y de Desarrollo Sostenible</i>
CA	Cooperative Agreement
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CLP	Conservation Landscapes Program
COTELCO	<i>Asociación Hotelera de Colombia</i>
COTR	Contracting Officer's Technical Representative
CTC	Consultative Technical Committee
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
FUPAD	<i>Fundación Panamericana para el Desarrollo</i>
FPN	<i>Patrimonio Natural – Fondo para la Biodiversidad y Áreas Protegidas</i>
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIDAS	<i>Más Inversión para el Desarrollo Alternativo Sostenible</i>
MSME	Micro-, Small-, and Medium-Enterprise
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NP	National Park
NPU	National Parks Unit
OGT	<i>Organización Gonawindua Tayrona</i>
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PAP	Protected Areas Program
PAU	Program Advisory Unit
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan
PIU	Program Implementation Unit
PLACE	Prosperity, Livelihoods, and Conserving Ecosystems
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
RFA	Request for Applications

RFTOP	Request for Task Order Proposal
RFTOP	Request for Task Order Proposals
SIGA	<i>Sistema de Información y Gestión Ambiental</i> (Environmental Management System)
SINAP	<i>Sistema de Información y Gestión Ambiental</i>
SNSM	Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta
SOW	Statement of Work
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WWF	World Wildlife Fund



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ARD was issued an 18-month task order contract by USAID/Colombia to develop a Program Implementation Unit (PIU) that would work closely with Colombian non-governmental organization, *Patrimonio Natural – Fondo para la Biodiversidad y Áreas Protegidas*, on a program initially called the Protected Areas Program. The program's objective was to “strengthen the institutional capacity and governance of Colombia's protected areas for long-term environmental conservation, community and cultural preservation, and improved livelihoods.” It was to work in the buffer zones and surrounding geographic areas of a limited number of selected national parks to reduce threats to biodiversity by improving economic opportunities for local residents, strengthening institutions and governance, and increasing public participation. During the initial stage of implementation the program was officially renamed the Conservation Landscapes Program to better reflect its objectives and approach to conservation.

The design of the Conservation Landscapes Program involved three elements that significantly influenced its implementation: 1) rapid capacity-building of a Colombian partner organization, 2) a participatory, threats-based, landscape-scale conservation approach, and 3) a contract and a parallel, contemporaneous cooperative agreement. This design was seen by USAID/Colombia as an experiment, for two reasons. First, the rapid capacity-building through a Program Implementation Unit whose contract would be shorter than the life of the program itself, which was to be implemented through a cooperative agreement to a Colombian partner, had not been tested. Second, this program was designed to combine biodiversity conservation objectives with alternative development objectives. The larger context of the program also had a significant influence on the challenges and opportunities encountered, and the eventual successes and failures of the program's experimental design.

The work of the PIU had several components. One major component of the contract was to improve the institutional capacity of the *Fondo Patrimonio Natural* (FPN) so that it could receive, manage, and implement a USAID cooperative agreement. An initial diagnostic assessment showed that although the organization had the administrative and financial structure needed to receive a USAID cooperative agreement, it had not previously administered USAID funds and therefore needed capacity related to USAID rules and requirements. An institutional strengthening strategy was implemented that included consultancies on various technical issues, training workshops, the development of manuals and procedures, and day-to-day advice and accompaniment by PIU staff.

The initial institutional capacity diagnosis found that the long-term financial sustainability of the FPN was a serious concern. To improve it, the PIU supported a number of consultancies to assess various aspects of its finances and to provide strategies, advice, and recommendations, including the development of a strategic plan for financial sustainability, a consultancy on the legal aspects of fundraising for biodiversity conservation in Colombia, and a consultancy on the feasibility of fundraising through hotel chains.

Another major task for the PIU was strengthening the capacity of FPN in the design, planning, and monitoring and evaluation of conservation programs based on USAID's approach to biodiversity conservation, which includes three elements: 1) analysis of threats to biodiversity, 2) participation of local communities and other key stakeholders, and 3) action at the scale of ecological landscapes. In order to do so, the PIU provided technical assistance and accompanied the FPN (and National Parks Unit (NPU) throughout the process of developing the CLP Work Plan and Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP). The work planning process involved a number of steps, including selection of the six focal “conservation landscapes,” each with a core national park; an initial workshop with national-level stakeholders; exploratory site visits to each of the conservation landscapes; regional planning workshops in each landscape; and final Work Plan development. This process of accompanying the FPN, and indirectly the Colombian NPU, was clearly a success. The 2009–2010 Work Plan for the CLP reflects a participatory, threats-based, landscape-scale planning process. It is too early to determine, however, whether the ideas for activities generated in the workshops and reflected in the Work Plan will actually be funded and implemented through the CLP Cooperative Agreement.

In terms of the PMP for the program, the PIU did not fully succeed in building the capacity of the FPN and the NPU to complete a PMP that meets USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) and Biodiversity Earmark requirements, and further work by the FPN and NPU will be necessary to do so.

The parallel-track design of the CLP envisioned a relatively small contract to the PIU for capacity-strengthening, and concurrent award of a much larger cooperative agreement to the FPN. Without a clearly-defined incentive structure built into the design, however, the FPN had no obvious legal requirement or financial incentive to involve the PIU in decision-making once the cooperative agreement was awarded in July, 2009. That award led to a *de facto* change in the role of the PIU, a change that was formally recognized by renaming it the “Program Advisory Unit,” or PAU. The necessity for this shift in roles resulted from the design of the program.

At the same time that the shift in role to a PAU occurred, USAID asked the PAU to implement some direct capacity-building activities with an indigenous organization working in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Conservation Landscape, the *Organización Gnanavindua Tayrona* (OGT). We were asked to strengthen OGT’s capacity to implement their indigenous vision by carrying out activities and projects, and to seek funding for such activities and projects from the USAID CLP and from other donors. In order to do so we conducted a diagnostic assessment of OGT to determine its institutional capacity to administer USAID grant funds. PAU staff also worked with the OGT to use ecological and social information already available to develop their vision of indigenous development. The PAU was also asked to initiate and accompany the process of installing one or more small-scale photovoltaic solar systems in community applications in indigenous communities where the OGT works.

Based on our experience during the program, we draw a number of conclusions, some of which we think are robust and general enough to be called “lessons learned.” The conclusions and “lessons learned” point out a number of challenges and opportunities for USAID and its Colombian partners as they continue to implement the Conservation Landscapes Program, and later to design future programs for supporting biodiversity conservation in Colombia. They lead us to offer a number of recommendations, including the following:

**Recommendation 1:** USAID should carefully consider any future attempts to use a contract to create a Program Implementation Unit that will supposedly have implementation responsibilities for a cooperative agreement within another organization. Such a program design would be viable only if the contracted PIU was embedded within the partner organization for the life of the project (i.e., the contract and cooperative agreement were of the same duration), if the contract and cooperative agreement clearly specified the decision-making role and authority of the PIU, and if the partner organization receiving the CA had appropriate financial and other incentives to accept the role of the contracted PIU.

**Recommendation 2:** If USAID wishes to influence the overall approach used by a partner or implementing organization, such as using a participatory, threats-based, landscape-scale approach to biodiversity conservation, USAID and the partner organization should agree in advance to USAID’s expectations and objectives. USAID should then structure financial and other incentives to bring about the desired changes within relevant implementing organizations.

**Recommendation 3:** USAID should ensure that FPN and NPU receive the technical assistance they need to develop a PMP for the program that complies with USAID’s approach to biodiversity conservation and ADS guidelines.

**Recommendation 4:** Because the CLP involved an untested design (i.e., a short-term contract for the PIU and contemporaneous Cooperative Agreement to the FPN), USAID should conduct a thorough third-party evaluation of the CLP at the end of Year 3 to evaluate: 1) FPN’s capacity to administer the CLP, 2) the success in implementing a threats-based, participatory, landscape-scale model that broadens conservation approaches in Colombia.

**Recommendation 5:** The CLP should take over the dialogue and capacity-building of the OGT begun by the PAU, linking it with the CLP Work Plan for the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (SNSM) Conservation Landscape, and should expect to continue to require time, patience, and flexibility in doing so. In Year 3 of the CLP, USAID should evaluate the capacity of OGT to make proposals and receive and manage funds from USAID and other donors.

**Recommendation 6:** If USAID plans to support the installation of other photovoltaic solar systems in the SNSM, it may want to conduct a simple evaluation of the systems already installed, to better understand the factors that lead to sustainable functioning of these systems, and how they can support the indigenous vision of development in the SNSM, as intended.

# I.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW

## I.1 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Colombia Conservation Landscapes Program (CLP) was designed to “strengthen the institutional capacity and governance of Colombia’s protected areas for long-term environmental conservation, community and cultural preservation, and improved livelihoods.” The major program components were listed as 1) Improved Licit and Sustainable Livelihoods in Buffer Zones; 2) Institutional Strengthening and Governance; and 2) Social Capital and Community Participation. The original title of the program was the “Protected Areas Program,” but soon after start-up the name was officially changed to the “Conservation Landscapes Program” to more accurately reflect its objectives and approach.

ARD was issued an 18-month task order contract by USAID/Colombia to develop a “Program Implementation Unit” (PIU) for the CLP, which would work closely with the Colombian non-governmental organization (NGO), “*Patrimonio Natural – Fondo para la Biodiversidad y Áreas Protegidas*,” hereafter referred to as the Fondo Patrimonio Natural, or FPN. This task order was issued under the Prosperity, Livelihoods, and Conserving Ecosystems (PLACE) Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC). The CLP-PIU was to provide technical assistance to the FPN to improve its long-term institutional capacity, including its internal practices and financial management capability, and its technical capacity to implement a biodiversity conservation program following USAID’s participatory, threats-based, landscape-scale approach. The goal was to enable the FPN to implement a \$9.5 million USAID Cooperative Agreement according to both administrative and technical requirements.

In our technical proposal, which responded to the context of the development challenge and the purpose and objectives given in the Request for Task Order Proposals (RFTOP), ARD proposed to:

- Establish the Protected Areas Program (PAP)-PIU within the FPN;
- Lead a participatory, consensus-building process involving key national-level stakeholders to select a limited number of “clusters” of protected areas, buffer zones, and nearby communities;
- Conduct regional workshops to identify and involve diverse participants from the national-, regional-, and local-level in an alliance-building process that will lead to a final USAID PAP-Cooperative Agreement (CA) Work Plan;
- Use a facilitated, consensus-building dialogue (*conversatorio*) process that involves, motivates, and empowers action among diverse stakeholders;
- Assess institutional capacity needs, build needed capacity, and accompany the FPN in a learning-by-doing process of implementing the PAP-CA in a manner that is fully compliant with USAID regulations; and
- Transition the PIU Staff into the FPN and ensure further “Colombianization” of the program by shifting responsibilities away from expatriate staff and technical specialists to the fullest extent possible.

Based upon this proposal, USAID/Colombia selected ARD to implement this work.

Our contract stated that “The Protected Areas Program project shall comply with the aforementioned soft earmark and with USAID’s Biodiversity Code.” It also stipulated that among other things we would:

- “Build the capacity of the FPN to meet statutory USAID requirements on financial and managerial implementation of activities; and
- Build the independent capacity of the FPN to effectively engage the National Parks Unit (NPU), National System of Protected Areas network group (SINAP), and local stakeholders and partners in protected area buffer zones in order to achieve the objectives of the PAP-CA.”

## 1.2 PROGRAM DESIGN AND CONTEXT

### 1.2.1 Design

The design of the PAP, as the Conservation Landscapes Program was initially called, involved three elements that significantly influenced its implementation: 1) rapid capacity-building of a Colombian partner organization; 2) a participatory, threats-based, landscape-scale conservation approach; and 3) a contract and a parallel, contemporaneous cooperative agreement.

The program design was described on the first page of the Request for Task Order Proposal (RFTOP) SOW: “This [achieving the program objective above] shall be done through the establishment of a Protected Areas Program “Project Implementation Unit” (PAP-PIU or PIU) within the Colombian environmental trust fund called “Fondo de Patrimonio Natural” (hereafter Fondo or FPN). The contractor shall have the responsibility for the creation and direct oversight of the PIU during a base period of 18 months with the potential for a one to two year follow-on modification. Concurrently, USAID/Colombia anticipates awarding a three-year cooperative agreement for up to US\$10 million directly to the FPN to execute activities that will strengthen the institutional capacity and governance of Colombia’s protected areas for long-term environmental conservation, community and cultural preservation, and improved livelihoods. USAID expects that after the base period of the PAP-PIU, the FPN shall assume full responsibility of the PIU in order to continue oversight of implementation of the FPN’s USAID-funded protected area activities (PAP-CA).”

The first element in the design involved rapid capacity-building of a Colombian partner organization, and handing over implementation responsibilities for a USAID cooperative agreement to that partner organization within an 18-month period. This program design contrasted with that of the other large USAID/Colombia projects, *Áreas de Desarrollo Alternativo al Nivel Municipal* (ADAM) and *Más Inversión para el Desarrollo Alternativo Sostenible* (MIDAS), in which—although there are Colombian partner organizations (e.g. Acción Social)—the administrative, financial, and technical responsibility for implementation remained with the contractor, not the partner, through the duration of the program. At our start-up briefing with USAID in December, 2008, the USAID Mission Director, the Director of the Office of Alternative Development, and the Contracting Officer’s Technical Representative (COTR) for the program described the CLP design, with a short-term PIU contract and contemporaneous award of a Cooperative Agreement to the FPN, as an untested model, and requested our periodic feedback on whether it was working. We asked if this program design was based on prior USAID experience from elsewhere in Latin America or the world, and were told that it was not. We were told that “The task of the PIU is to work itself out of a job in one and a half years.” What was new in the PAP-PIU design was that the PIU had been a life-of-project, embedded implementation unit with the partner organization in the other cases they knew about, and in this case it was to build the partner’s capacity rapidly and turn over implementation responsibility during the life of the overall program.

The second element was that the design of the program involved technical assistance and “accompaniment” aimed at developing the capacity within the Colombia—in particular within the FPN, the Colombian National Parks Unit, and the SINAP—to implement biodiversity conservation activities using USAID’s approach to biodiversity conservation—a participatory, threats-based, and landscape-scale approach. The program was to comply with the requirements of the USAID Biodiversity Earmark. USAID wanted to change its approach to biodiversity conservation in Colombia by bringing previously disparate programs together, and contributing to broadening the approach to conservation being used in Colombia toward a type of conservation linked with improved governance and citizen participation, and with a strong emphasis on bringing economic benefits to local communities. In this way, it would be linked with USAID’s Alternative Development activities in Colombia. USAID’s intention in this regard was made quite clear in our contract (p. 6): “The PAP-CA will bring together currently disparate projects under the USAID’s program under one initiative that will establish the long-term context for governability and legal, sustainable economic development in protected but vulnerable communities and geographic areas. The contractor’s efforts to build and staff the PIU and in turn build the capacity of the FPN is key to creating the necessary integration and buy-in to make this program sustainable, cross-cutting, and inclusive.”

Third, the design of the program was a hybrid model, with a task order contract and a parallel cooperative agreement. The stated intention was that the hiring of the key personnel for the contract (Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) and Grants Manager and Procurement Specialist) would be done under agreement with FPN, that the staff

of the PAP-PAU would co-locate in the offices of the FPN, and that a transition of some or all of the contract staff to the FPN for implementation of the cooperative agreement was expected.

### 1.2.2 Context

The context of the CLP had an important influence on the challenges and opportunities encountered and the eventual successes and failures of the program's experimental design. Important elements of this context included:

- Government of Colombia funding for conservation is low, the resources received by the NPU are not sufficient to meet its needs, and its parent ministry (Ministry of the Environment, Housing, and Rural Development) is weak;
- The NPU received support directly from USAID prior to this program, without intermediaries such as the PIU or the FPN;
- FPN's prior experience managing the World Bank "Mosaicos" program led them to assume they had the administrative and technical capacity to implement a USAID cooperative agreement;
- FPN's organizational structure is such that it is not independent of the NPU;
- US-Colombia political relationships and aid programs emphasize trade, economic growth, and anti-narcotics activities, and biodiversity conservation is not a major strategic interest; and
- There is considerable interest from the US Congress, the US State Department, other US government departments and agencies, and US and international NGOs in USAID and other US government programs in Colombia.

It should be emphasized that USAID's design for the Conservation Landscapes Program situated it within the larger strategic context of Plan Colombia and the US Government's strategic objectives in the country. Our contract (p. 4) stated: "As of September 2008, the two USAID/Colombia projects that utilize biodiversity funds will have ended ... the initiatives funded through those earmarks have not been integrally linked with the Alternative Development strategy. As part of the USG's counter-narcotics program in Colombia, the annual biodiversity soft earmarks must be able to combine the alternative development objectives of providing licit and sustainable economic opportunities to vulnerable communities as well as to protect Colombia's rich biodiversity and the institutions required to protect it ... USAID's Protected Areas Program (PAP-PIU and PAP-CA together) seeks to reflect a longer-term approach to using the earmarked funds in a manner that is more representative of an integrated Alternative Development strategy and the stated intention of the annual biodiversity earmark."



**Tree, Tayrona National Park**

Photo Credit: Bruce Byers, ARD.

The RFTOP for the PAP described the development challenge for the program: "Colombia's public and private protected areas are affected by illicit drug production and trafficking, among other threats. The presence of illicit crops and other high-impact activities is directly related to a lack of Government of Colombia and other institutional presence and alternative income opportunities in the buffer zones ... The development problem that this Program seeks to counter is that protected areas in Colombia are still extremely vulnerable to illicit activities, environmental degradation, and relatively uncontrolled and uncoordinated development. As a result, over the last several years, coca production in protected areas has been increased significantly, the cultural integrity of local inhabitants has been



diminished, biodiversity is threatened, governance is weak and enforcement even weaker, and government presence is limited. This project seeks to reverse those trends in targeted clusters.”

### 1.3 LANDMARKS OF IMPLEMENTATION HISTORY

A simple way to review the history of the program is to consider the major “landmarks” of implementation history. These are shown in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Comparison of Proposed and Actual Timeline**

No.	Landmark Activity or Deliverable	Proposed	Actual
1	The PAP contract starts	Nov 2008	Nov 2008
2	COP arrives, start-up begins	Nov 2008	Nov 2008
3	Consultative Technical Committee (CTC) formed		Dec 2008
4	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ARD and FPN signed	Dec 2008	Mar 2009
5	Grants Management and Procurement Specialist hired	Dec 2008	Jan 2009
6	Deputy Chief-of Party hired	Dec 2008	Feb 2009
7	Six conservation landscapes selected		Mar 2009
8	FPN institutional capacity diagnosis completed	Dec 2008	Jan 2009
9	FPN strengthening plan completed	Jan 2008	Mar 2009
10	National-level workshop held		Feb 2009
11	CLP-CA Request for Application released by USAID		Apr 2009
12	CLP Proposal submitted by FPN	Mar 2009	May 2009
13	Regional workshops held in conservation landscapes:		
	El Cocuy		Apr 2009
	Alto Fragua Indi Wasi		Jun 2009
	Catatumbo – Bari		Jun 2009
	Utria		Jul 2009
	Los Katios		Jul 2009
	Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta		Oct 2009
14	Award of CLP-CA	Mar 2009	Jul 2009
15	CLP Year One Work Plan Approved (Sept 2009)	Feb 2009	Sep 2009
16	FPN Financial Sustainability Strategy completed		Feb 2010
17	PMP Target Setting Workshop (Nov 2009)		Nov 2009
18	Draft PMP completed (Dec 2009)		Dec 2009
19	ARD PIU transition to Program Advisory Unit (PAU)		Feb 2010
20	Final PMP approved by USAID (Mar 2010)		Mar 2010
21	Legal framework for FPN fundraising report completed		Apr 2010
22	Fundraising strategy for hotel chains report completed		Apr 2010
23	OGT institutional capacity diagnostic assessment and strengthening plan completed		May 2010
24	OGT vision and priority project “portfolios” completed		May 2010
25	Installation of photovoltaic system in SNSM completed		May 2010

Table 1.1 allows a direct comparison of the proposed and actual timeline of major actions and deliverables, and demonstrates clearly that the actual sequencing and duration of activities and deliverables differed somewhat from that initially proposed. In some cases the difference between the proposed timing and actual timing was significant—for example, we had proposed to complete the CLP Year One Work Plan in February, 2009, but it was not actually approved until September, 2009. In that case, because the Work Plan was developed with a high degree of stakeholder participation (e.g., involving workshops in each of the conservation landscapes selected for program focus) the process simply took much longer than expected.

In all cases in which activities were completed later than proposed, the changes were needed and were approved by USAID. USAID made it clear that following a viable process and maintaining effective working relationships among the project partners was more important than meeting deadlines imagined in advance. We were advised by the COTR in December, 2008, that we should not “sacrifice the process of building good relations with key partners just to meet deadlines.” We conclude that, in large measure, the changes in timing of program activities reflected adaptive management that was necessary, given the challenging context and design of the program. Delays demonstrated the flexibility to learn, change, and adapt as the program evolved.



## 2.0 WHAT WE DID AND HOW WE DID IT – SUMMARY OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

### 2.1 IMPROVING THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF FONDO PATRIMONIO NATURAL

One of the objectives of the CLP-PIU contract was to improve the institutional capacity of the FPN so that it could receive, manage, and implement a USAID cooperative agreement. Our contract stated that: “It is the contractor’s primary responsibility to ensure that, by the end of the 18 month base period, a stand-alone PIU under the Fondo is capable of continuing implementation of the scope of the cooperative agreement between USAID and the FPN. The PAP-PIU shall work with and through the FPN to provide technical assistance, institutional strengthening, and capacity building designed to help the FPN successfully execute its cooperative agreement with USAID...”

Our first step was to assess the institutional capacity of the FPN as related to USAID’s requirements for recipients of funds. Based on this diagnostic assessment, completed in January, 2009, we then developed a strategy for institutional capacity strengthening. Once the CLP-CA was signed in July, 2009, ARD PIU staff provided advice and information to FPN staff, “accompanying” them in the implementation of the CA activities, from the launching of the program to the signing of sub-awards.

#### 2.1.1 Initial Diagnosis and Results

The assessment of FPN’s institutional capacity, conducted by a consultant, considered the organization’s structure, bylaws, finances and accounting, manuals and procedures, and tax payment reports. Information was gathered through direct observation within the FPN office, and interviews with its executive director and management staff. The consultant analyzed the FPN’s strengths and weaknesses with regard to the objectives of the CLP, and identified internal and external factors favorable and unfavorable to achieving those objectives. The principle findings were:

- FPN is a mixed non-profit foundation (that is, it includes both governmental and private, non-governmental entities) whose principal objective is “to serve as a tool in reaching the long term financial sustainability of the SINAP;”
- Organizational structure and leadership are clearly defined in the FPN bylaws;
- The Director of the NPU chairs the FPN Board of Directors;
- FPN funding comes from international donors and the Colombian government;
- FPN is developing new strategies, such as diversifying funding sources, to improve its financial sustainability;
- FPN accounting processes comply with Colombian laws, regulations, and practices for this type of organization;
- Procurement processes used by FPN have the appropriate legal instruments; and
- The organization has the administrative and financial structure needed to receive a USAID cooperative agreement.

## 2.1.2 FPN Institutional Strengthening Strategy and Activities

An institutional capacity strengthening strategy based on the initial diagnosis was then developed and a written strategy document was completed in March, 2009. It focused on improving FPN capacity in seven areas:

1. Rules and regulations governing the implementation of assistance programs financed with US federal resources;
2. Technical capabilities;
3. Financial sustainability;
4. Communications and outreach;
5. Security issues;
6. Preparation for natural disasters; and
7. Compliance with Colombian employment, tax, environmental, and other laws.

Methods for strengthening institutional capacity in these areas included:

- Consultancies on various technical issues;
- Training workshops;
- The development of manuals and procedures; and
- Day-to-day advice and accompaniment, “learning by doing.”

One of the most important components of the institutional strengthening strategy was technical assistance to the FPN in the development of the manuals, procedures, and templates for CLP assistance and procurement awards. Another important component of the strategy was a series of training workshops about rules and regulations governing the implementation of a USAID cooperative agreement, focused on the following themes:

- 22 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 226;
- The Automated Directives System (ADS);
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars;
- Financial Reports and External Audits;
- 22 CFR 216 – Environmental Procedures;
- Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP) and *Sistema de Información y Gestión Ambiental* (SIGA); and
- Security Standards.

Depending on the theme, between two and 20 staff from the FPN, and sometimes staff from the NPU, attended these training workshops.

ARD provided technical assistance, support and advice to improve FPN’s administrative, financial, conservation planning, and monitoring and evaluation capabilities to implement a USAID program both before and after the CLP-CA was signed. After the CLP-CA was signed, support and advice was provided to FPN regarding activities required before an assistance award can be made using USAID funds, such as due diligence, environmental compliance, and monitoring and evaluation activities. A detailed manual for the Due Diligence process (i.e., the Responsibility Determination for the recipient of an assistance award) was developed based on the guidelines and requirements from the USAID’s ADS Chapter 303. Because the FPN had not previously received funding from USAID, the manuals and training needed to be complemented by ongoing, day-to-day advice—in other words, an accompanied “learning by doing” process. In order to ensure this ongoing accompaniment, the PIU Grant

Management and Procurement Specialist was physically located in the FPN Office after the first year Work Plan for the CLP Cooperative Agreement was approved by USAID in September, 2009. He joined FPN staff in meetings with stakeholders and partners; helped coordinate the development, release, and evaluation of Annual Program Statements in four conservation landscapes; assisted with subcontracts to the Colombian NPU; and assisted with due diligence reports and writing of awards documents.

An example of a technical capability in which the FPN required institutional strengthening was in their capacity to develop a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) for the CLP that follows the guidance in the USAID ADS. A summary of support to the FPN in this aspect of technical capability is given in Section 2.2.2.

The initial institutional capacity diagnosis found that the long-term financial sustainability of the FPN was a serious concern. The assessment report concluded that “the financial management of the FPN is one of the most important issues to be solved for the medium term in order to guarantee its sustainability in the future. Currently the FPN is basing its financial sustainability and operation on the following structure: 46% of the resources needed are being funded by the Global Environmental Fund; 36% of the resources needed come from administration costs and overhead charged to the projects; 18% come from other financing activities.”

To improve the FPN’s financial sustainability, the PIU supported a number of consultancies to assess various aspects of its finances and to provide strategies, advice, and recommendations. These include:

- A review and revision of the FPN’s Indirect Cost Rate;
- A consultancy to develop a “Strategic Plan for Financial Sustainability” (John Shores, Feb. 2010);
- A consultancy on “Design and feasibility analysis of a fundraising model through hotel chains” (Angel Balanzó, Apr. 2010); and
- A consultancy on the legal aspects of fundraising for biodiversity conservation in Colombia, in particular with regard to incentives found in tax law (Mario Tovar, Apr. 2010).

Findings of the last three consultancies are discussed in more detail in Section 2.3.

The PIU provided support to the FPN to develop a communication and outreach strategy and a USAID Branding and Marking Plan for the CLP. In addition, the PIU contracted a consultant to prepare a document titled “Communications Strategy for the Financial Sustainability,” to assist the FPN with the communications and outreach aspects of fundraising. A web design company (TKUA Producción Digital Ltda) was hired to design and develop the CLP web page on FPN’s web site.

ARD Colombia and its contractor for security matters held two workshops with FPN staff to inform them about security issues that should be taken into account during the implementation of USAID-funded projects. The PIU also developed a simple guide on preparation for natural disasters for communities participating in the CLP (*“Guía Simplificada para la Organización y Capacitación de Comunidades Beneficiarias del Programa Paisajes de Conservación, Financiado por USAID, sobre temas de Prevención y Atención Ante Desastres Naturales,”* May, 2010).

## **2.2 STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY FOR CONSERVATION PLANNING**

The PIU was responsible for strengthening the capacity of FPN in the design, planning, and monitoring and evaluation of conservation programs based on USAID’s approach to biodiversity conservation. The USAID approach includes three elements: 1) analysis of threats to biodiversity, 2) participation of local communities and other key stakeholders, and 3) action at the scale of ecological landscapes. USAID was interested in building capacity in this conservation approach within the Colombian National Parks Unit, through the FPN and the CLP Cooperative Agreement. Of the three elements of USAID’s approach to biodiversity conservation, the FPN and NPU were most familiar with analyzing threats as a first step in conservation design and planning. The two other elements—a landscape-scale and a participatory approach—both involved a large change in institutional perspective and practice for these organizations. To the extent that we were successful in strengthening the capacity of the FPN

(and indirectly the NPU) regarding USAID’s conservation approach, that success should be reflected in the CLP Work Plan and PMP.

## 2.2.1 Work Plan Development

In ARD’s technical proposal for the PAP-PIU, we proposed to:

- Lead a participatory, consensus-building process involving key national-level stakeholders to select a limited number of “clusters” of protected areas, buffer zones, and nearby communities;
- Conduct regional workshops to identify and involve diverse participants from the national-, regional-, and local-level in an alliance-building process that will lead to a final USAID PAP-CA Work Plan;
- Use a facilitated, consensus-building dialogue (*conversatorio*) process that involves, motivates, and empowers action among diverse stakeholders.

The process that was actually followed was:

- Selection of six focal “conservation landscapes” by the Consultative Technical Committee (CTC);
- A national-level workshop to discuss the program with national-level stakeholders;
- Exploratory site visits to each of the six selected conservation landscapes;
- Regional planning workshops in five of the six selected conservation landscapes;
- Writing, review, and revision of Work Plan drafts;
- Submission of Work Plan 2009—2010 (Sept. 2009); and
- The final regional workshop, in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (SNSM).



Coastal landscape with ecotourism lodge, Tayrona National Park.

### Selection of six focal conservation landscapes:

Discussions began in December, 2008 about the geographic scale at which the program would operate and the geographic areas where it would focus. Although the RFTOP was released under the name “Protected Areas Program” (PAP), our contract described the purpose as: “The creation and strengthening of “buffer zones” and “clusters” of geographic territory that protect Colombia’s biodiversity and indigenous cultures from several threats, including illicit crops ... The communities around the legally protected areas are herein defined as “buffer zones.” “Clusters”... are loosely defined as geographic areas comprised of environmentally protected areas and areas of mandated limited- or no development,

communal lands and indigenous reservations (*resguardos*), and other communities that are geographically linked and/or that impact the first two areas.” This is clearly a landscape-scale approach to biodiversity conservation, and not strictly a “protected areas” approach.

In order to reflect this purpose and the landscape-scale of action more accurately in the program’s name, and to communicate that purpose and scale more clearly to partners and stakeholders, the name of the program was



officially changed to the “Conservation Landscapes Program,” or “Programa Paisajes de Conservación” in Spanish, a change agreed upon by the CTC and approved by USAID.

In January, 2009, the CTC agreed on the following criteria for selecting the six conservation landscapes where the program would work:

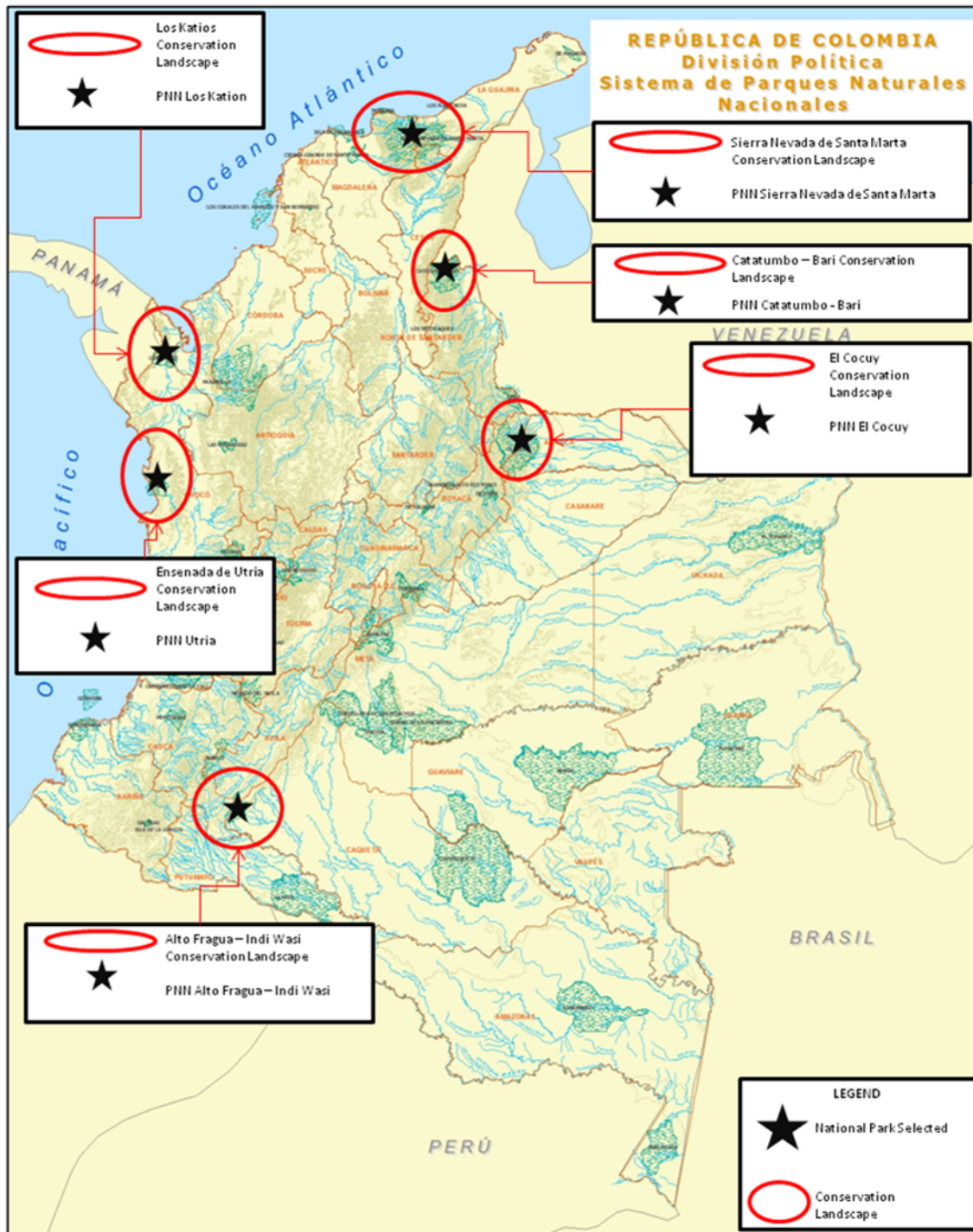
- Areas of strategic interest to both NPU and USAID/Colombia;
- Areas with serious threats to biodiversity;
- Areas with indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities;
- Area affected by, or vulnerable to, illicit crops; and
- Areas with sufficient security to make program activities possible.

Eventually the CTC selected six “conservation landscapes” for program focus—each of which corresponds roughly to USAID’s definition of a “cluster. The six landscapes are shown in the map in Figure 1, each centered on a national park. In some cases, other national parks exist within the conservation landscape. For example, in the SNSM Conservation Landscape the focal park is SNSM, but Tayrona National Park (NP) and Los Flamencos NP are also found in the same landscape. In the Alto Fragua – Indi Wasi Conservation Landscape four other national parks are found.



Sorting the fish catch, Los Katios Conservation Landscape

Figure 1.1: Map of Six Conservation Landscapes of the CLP





**National-Level Workshop:** A National-Level Workshop was held on 18–19 February, 2009, to announce and explain the Conservation Landscapes Program to a range of key stakeholders, and solicit their input at the beginning of program development. Fifty-five individuals representing 25 organizations participated—including the NPU, FPN, USAID, *Acción Social*, *Asociación de Corporaciones Autónomas Regionales y de Desarrollo Sostenible* (ASOCARS), *Fundación Panamericana para el Desarrollo* (FUPAD), the Embassy of the Netherlands, and many conservation organizations such as WWF, TNC, Amazon Conservation Team, Fundación Natura, and Fundación Pro Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Working groups of participants developed lists of specific activities that might be supported by the program in each of the six conservation landscapes. These suggestions were later synthesized by the CTC into an activities matrix that was used to guide Work Plan development and the organization of each of the Regional Workshops.



Photo Credit: Carlos Rivas ARD.

**Biodiversity threats assessment exercise, Los Katios. Conservation Landscape Workshop.**

**Exploratory site visits:** Visits of one or two days to each of the conservation landscapes were made by representatives from each of the organizations involved in the program (FPN, NPU, USAID, and PIU). The administrators of each of the national parks within the landscapes organized the visits and invited representatives of some local stakeholder groups to meetings. The purpose of these visits was to gather information and to identify the local organizations and local leaders to be invited to each regional planning workshop, and develop a workshop methodology for the unique situation of each conservation landscape.

**Regional Workshops:** A facilitated, participatory regional planning workshop was held within each of the six conservation landscapes. The specific mix of participatory activities used at each—such as use of maps, matrices of threats and activities, and prioritization exercises—varied depending on the socio-cultural and ecological context in each case. The CTC and the National Park Administrator from each landscape agreed on the final methodology used. The workshops allowed rich and diverse information to be gathered from the participants about threats to biodiversity and their causes, possible solutions for addressing the threats, and priority activities for local communities, the NPU, and the CLP. The size of these workshops ranged from 43 to 73 participants. The inputs from each regional workshop were summarized in the program activities matrix, although in some cases activities proposed at the regional workshops were not accepted by FPN and NPU, and were not included in the matrix for final work plan development.

#### **Stakeholder Participation in the Los Katios Workshop**

A member of the Los Katios National Park staff thanked the PIU staff for organizing this workshop, explaining that for the staff of the park this was their first opportunity to meet with such a diverse group of local stakeholders—park staff, representatives of regional development corporations, indigenous groups, Afro-Colombian groups, and members of the network of private protected areas within the conservation landscape—to discuss problems and solutions. She noted that the park itself does not have the resources to be able to organize and hold a workshop such as this. She explained that this was quite different from their usual practice of holding a “commission” to investigate and deal with a particular issue administratively. In her view the workshop was “excelente.” Surveys of workshop participants were given at the end of each workshop in every conservation landscape, and all indicated a high level of participant satisfaction with the level of stakeholder participation in the workshops.

**The CLP-CA:** The CLP-CA was signed on 24 July, 2009. Activities to be undertaken by the CLP were listed in the CA under the three components of the Request for Applications (RFA), namely:

Component 1: Improved licit and sustainable livelihoods;

Component 2: Institutional strengthening and governance (NPU and SINAP only, by agreement); and

Component 3: Social capital and community participation.

The CA also indicated that the CLP must meet the requirements of the USAID Biodiversity Earmark. The two key criteria to emphasize for the CLP were that: 1) activities must be identified based on an analysis of threats to



Working group on indigenous issues, Los Katios Conservation Landscape Workshop.

biodiversity, and 2) the program must monitor associated indicators for biodiversity conservation. ARD provided a training session on USAID biodiversity program planning, and monitoring and evaluation, to NPU and FPN staff in July, 2009, which outlined the logical framework that should be used in a threats-based work planning process in order to meet the Biodiversity Earmark CA, 1) habitat conversion, degradation, fragmentation; and 2) overexploitation of particular species of flora and fauna. Specific examples of one or both of these direct threats were identified in each of the regional workshops. Using USAID's logical framework for work planning, the causes of each of these direct threats are to be identified—such causes generally fall into the categories of political or institutional, economic, global (such as climate

change), or other social causes (such as lack of knowledge and information). Activities developed within a work plan based on threats to biodiversity should address the causes of the direct threats.

**Writing the Work Plan:** The CLP-PIU was responsible for writing the draft work plan, which was submitted to FPN for review and comments in September, 2009. FPN's comments were incorporated into a second version, which was shared with the NPU. The NPU had additional comments, and generally objected to proposing any indicators and targets. The FPN submitted a revised version to USAID, which was approved in September, 2009.

### 2.2.2 Performance Monitoring Plan Development

In our proposal to USAID, ARD stated that: “A Performance Monitoring Plan will be developed by the PAP-PIU that will be transferred to the FPN as it continues implementation of the PAP-CA. It will provide indicators and targets for management and accountability. Our M&E activities will be part of a system of adaptive management that will be used to bring planning, monitoring, and performance evaluation into a full cycle within the PAP program. This will allow us to identify successes and lessons that can be disseminated through our communications and outreach strategy, and replicated at larger scales and in other places, thereby scaling up the impact of this program.”

The following steps were actually followed:

- The CLP RFA provided an initial list of illustrative indicators (April 2009);
- Indicators were provided in the approved CA (July 2009);
- Indicators were provided in the CA Work Plan (September 2009);
- An analysis of the CA Work Plan was carried out for PMP development by consultant (October 2009);
- A PMP Indicators and Targets Workshop was held (November 2009);
- A draft PMP was submitted (December 2009);
- Final PMP was developed by FPN and was approved by USAID ( March 2010).

Appendix 1 contains a table in which the changes in indicators can be compared as they evolved over time through these steps of PMP development.

**Illustrative Indicators from CLP Request for Assistance:** Illustrative indicators given in the RFA included:

- Conservation landscapes with improved governance;
- National parks management under sustainable and comprehensive model for conservation;
- Biodiversity threats addressed;
- Families benefitted;
- Communities with strengthened social capital;
- Number of producer associations and micro-, small-, and medium-enterprises (MSMEs) strengthened;
- Strengthened technical capacity of NPU and SINAP members;
- Increase of biodiverse hectares with strengthened protection; and
- Reduction in illicit crops in target areas.

These indicators clearly were only illustrative, and the challenge in preparing the proposal in response to the RFA was to define much more specific and measurable indicators that reflected the threats-based logical framework of USAID's approach to biodiversity conservation.

**Indicators Proposed in CLP Cooperative Agreement:** The CLP-CA, as finally submitted by FPN and approved by USAID in July, 2009, included a tentative proposal for indicators to be monitored for the purposes of evaluating program performance, and targets to be achieved for each. According to the CA, "Three types of indicators are initially proposed: 1) direct biodiversity conservation indicators, 2) program and activity level indicators, and 3) management indicators. Indicators and targets will be finalized and approved by USAID within three months (90 days) of award as part of the development of the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)." A number of the direct biodiversity conservation indicators proposed were not sufficiently focused and/or were too general to be useful as indicators of threats-based biodiversity conservation. Others proposed were not readily measureable. The program and activity level indicators in the CA were identical with the illustrative indicators of the RFA, except that "reduction in illicit crops in target areas" was dropped. The indicators for the CLP-CA clearly needed to be more carefully defined and the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system clearly required more work.

**Work Plan Indicators and Targets:** The CLP 2009–2010 Work Plan, approved by USAID in September, 2009, listed eight "program indicators," with targets set for each in each of the six focal conservation landscapes. These eight indicators were relatively similar to those of the CA itself, and were still vague, largely undefined, and not clearly measurable.

**Technical Assistance to Develop the CLP PMP:** In order to assist FPN and NPU to strengthen the CLP monitoring and evaluation system and finalize the PMP, a consultant with extensive experience developing PMPs according to USAID guidelines was contracted. The consultant analyzed the CLP-CA and Work Plan, and the analysis showed the need to improve the indicator set in the CA and to clarify the contents of the Work Plan. The analysis concluded that the indicators, as given in the Cooperative Agreement and Work Plan, did not meet USAID Automated Directives System guidelines and standards, and would need to be reformulated and incorporated into a credible PMP. In order to do so, a workshop was held in November, 2009, with participation of the FPN, NPU, and PIU. A revised set of indicators and targets was discussed, and results from the workshop used in preparing the draft PMP.

**Draft PMP Prepared by CLP-PIU (December 2009):** Indicators proposed in the draft PMP shifted rather dramatically from the vague list of illustrative indicators that carried through with little change from the RFA through the CA to the Work Plan. New indicators were much more specific and measurable. A few indicators were similar (see Appendix 1)—for example, "Families Benefitted" became "Number of families benefitted from legal and sustainable economic activities by the CLP." Some relatively measureable direct indicators of biodiversity conservation were proposed, such as "Restoration or regeneration of deforested areas in the focal areas of the CLP." Significantly, some measures of improved local participation and governance, such as "Strengthening of participation

of community organizations in actions that mitigate threats to biodiversity,” were proposed. An indicator was listed for strengthening the SINAP system, “Establishment and consolidation of the SINAP around the National Parks.” This draft represented a great improvement from the previous versions of the CLP M&E system. This draft PMP was completed by the PIU and submitted to FPN in December 2009 without a final agreement from the NPU about the indicators and targets, despite their participation in the workshop, however.

**Final PMP Submitted by FPN and Approved by USAID:** Between December, 2009, and March, 2010, the FPN and NPU made substantial changes to the draft PMP, and the final version was submitted to USAID and approved. Significant differences include (see Appendix 1) changes in the indicator for SINAP establishment and consolidation around the national parks, and in the direct biodiversity conservation indicators. Four new indicators were added including “Change in progress in implementation of Strategic Sub-Programs of the National Parks Unit in protected areas aided by the CLP,” “Change in effectiveness of management of the six protected areas of the CLP according to AEMAPPS methodology,” and “Change in the percentage of ecosystems represented in the SINAP as a result of actions aided by the CLP.”

### 2.2.3 Conclusions

Our main achievement in strengthening the capacity of the FPN and NPU in conservation planning was in organizing and leading a participatory process to develop the overall Work Plan for the CLP. That process involved holding workshops with all key stakeholders in each of the six conservation landscapes. Our experience with this process is reported in “*Construyendo Programas de Conservación con Participación Local*,” a summary of the proceedings of the national-level workshop and six regional workshops, which was completed in January, 2010. This process of accompanying the FPN (and NPU) was clearly a success; the 2009–2010 Work Plan for the CLP, approved by USAID in September, 2009, reflects this participatory, threats-based, landscape-scale planning process.

It is too early to determine, however, whether the ideas for activities generated in the workshops and reflected in the Work Plan will actually be funded and implemented through the CLP-CA. An evaluation at the end of the CLP will be needed to demonstrate the extent to which USAID’s participatory approach to conservation has actually been accepted by the NPU and FPN. It is our hope that the experiences of all stakeholders meeting together in the regional workshops gave rise to a new view about the value of local participation, both among staff of the NPU and local communities and organizations. We hope also that in each conservation landscape, new avenues for communication and conflict resolution were opened up through the personal contacts made at the workshops. Undoubtedly, these workshops raised the expectations of local communities and organizations that they would be consulted and truly involved in decisions regarding conservation in and around the national parks in each conservation landscape. It is our hope that these expectations will be met, and that they will continue to demand a voice in conservation of their home landscapes.

In terms of the performance monitoring and evaluation system for the CLP, the PIU (and later the PAU) did not fully succeed, through the leadership, technical assistance, and accompaniment provided during our contract, in building the capacity of the FPN and the NPU to establish a system capable of measuring the success of the CLP. Indicators and targets given in the approved CLP Work Plan and approved PMP differ in some significant respects. To complete a PMP that meets USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) requirements (see <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/203.pdf>), FPN will need to carry out a series of follow up activities and reach a consensus with NPU and the six selected parks on the final indicators, specific targets, and responsibilities for gathering the required information.

## 2.3 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND FUNDRAISING IN FONDO PATRIMONIO NATURAL

### 2.3.1 Financial Sustainability Assessment and Strategy

Patrimonio Natural – Fondo para la Biodiversidad y Areas Protegidas is a non-profit foundation resulting from an initiative of the Colombian NPU. It was established to raise funds for biodiversity conservation and protected areas from international bilateral and multilateral donors—such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Government of the Netherlands, and USAID—and the private sector. The Director of the NPU is the president of



the FPN Board of Directors. FPN has succeeded in raising funds for the NPU, but not necessarily for other SINAP (National System of Protected Areas) members. The SINAP is a national system of protected areas, including national parks and other nationally protected areas, as well as protected areas of regional and local governments, and private protected areas. The “SINAP group” is a network of supporters of the SINAP, and includes the NPU as well as many conservation NGOs, such as the Nature Conservancy (TNC), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Fundación Natura, and the Humboldt Institute.

To support the FPN, the PIU contracted a consultant with international expertise in biodiversity conservation funds and fundraising to conduct a financial sustainability assessment and develop a strategy. The consultant report noted that “it is important to keep in mind that there are really two cost centers in the FPN-SINAP model: 1) supporting the broader financial needs of all of SINAP by participating in the larger economic and financial mechanisms available, and 2) ensuring the institutional survival of FPN itself. While the big money needs to flow partially into the first cost center, FPN operating funds need to flow into the second, in order for FPN to be able to make this contribution to the first.”

The consultant report also noted that although the FPN could probably survive from project to project through administering funds from international donors or the private sector, “its first priority should be core operating funds that would ensure the survival of the institution through the ups and down of individual project cycles in order to fulfill its role to support members of SINAP. Ideally such core (unrestricted) funds would cover the costs of the executive office, general administration, and the research and development sector.” The consultant’s report recommended several fundraising mechanisms, including fundraising from hotel chains.

### **2.3.2 Review of Legal Aspects of Fundraising for Biodiversity Conservation**

The PIU contracted a consulting firm to review the legal aspects of fundraising for biodiversity conservation in Colombia, in particular with regard to incentives found in tax law. The final report of the consultancy (“Analysis of the laws, subsidies and exemptions in Colombian law that provide incentives for contributions, donations, and subsidies directed to the environmental sector,” April 2010) identified a set of financial incentives found in Colombian tax law that could encourage private-sector funding for biodiversity conservation. The report included a thorough analysis of tax allowances, exclusions, reductions, and subsidies in a number of economic sectors, including commercial agriculture, mining, energy, and tourism. The report includes a chapter on legal aspects of fundraising from hotel chains, supporting another consultancy described in Section 2.3.3 below. It analyzed the tax framework governing organizations such as FPN, which are intended to promote activities in the public interest, as well as various scenarios for environmental fundraising from a legal perspective, such as selling “memberships” in protected areas.

### **2.3.3 Strategy for Fundraising from Hotel Chains**

The FPN Financial Sustainability Strategy discussed in Section 2.3.1 above identified fundraising from hotel chains as a potentially viable option. In order to further explore its potential, the PIU contracted a consultant firm to conduct a feasibility assessment and design a strategy for fundraising from hotel chains. The feasibility assessment showed that the hotel sector in Colombia is very sensitive to issues of environmental protection, and some are developing actions already. Hotel chain managers are receptive to the idea of supporting the conservation of biodiversity and natural resources, but the process will take some time to implement. Successful implementation will require that the benefits for all parties involved—the hotel chains, the guests, and the conservation organizations receiving the money—are clearly defined and demonstrated. Funds raised in this way should support local conservation actions in the areas visited by the hotel guests, so that they can understand the value of their contribution to conservation efforts and realize how they themselves benefit through a richer tourism experience.

The report also concludes that “branding” will be critical if this type of fundraising aims to position the FPN and NPU as the leaders and implementers of the conservation activities to be funded. The strategy recommended by the consultant would involve work with the Association of Hotels of Colombia, *Asociación Hotelera de Colombia* (COTELCO), and would begin with a pilot trial in Santa Marta, which if successful could be replicated in other areas.

## 2.4 INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING OF ORGANIZACIÓN GONAWINDUA TAYRONA

In discussions with USAID in December, 2009, about shifting the roles and responsibilities of the ARD PIU, we were asked by USAID to begin providing direct assistance to an indigenous organization working in the SNSM, *Organización Gonawindua Tyrona* (OGT). We were asked to strengthen their capacity to implement their indigenous vision by carrying out activities and projects, and to seek funding for such activities and projects from the USAID CLP and from other donors. In order to do so we conducted a diagnostic assessment of OGT to determine its institutional capacity to administer a USAID Standard Grant (i.e., “funds in advance”). PAU staff also worked with the OGT to use the ecological and social information already available from many years of previous studies, consultancies, and workshops in the SNSM to make decisions about how to move toward their indigenous vision and what priority steps to take to do so.

The PAU planned that our work with the OGT would be “bridging,” and would link the expectations that had already been created in SNSM with eventual CLP-CA work in this area led by the FPN. We did not expect to be able to fully build the capacity of OGT to respond to a Request for Applications (RFA) and receive an award from USAID in time remaining in our contract. However, we expected that OGT would be able to comply with the CLP’s requirements as a sub-grantee through implementation of the institutional strengthening strategy we defined.

### 2.4.1 Initial Diagnostic Assessment and Results

In order to determine the OGT’s capacity to meet USAID financial and administrative requirements for receiving US Government funds, the PAU carried out an initial diagnosis using a methodology similar to that of the FPN institutional capacity assessment conducted early in the contract (see Section 2.1.1). This diagnosis assessed OGT’s organizational structure and management, personnel and other administrative issues, and financial management and accounting. Financial and accounting tests and analysis done as part of the diagnosis focused on the “reasonableness” of OGT’s accounting information, that is, whether listed costs are in line with current market values for similar goods or services.

The results of the assessment were completed and presented to OGT and USAID in May, 2010. The main findings were:

- OGT currently does not have the financial, internal control, administrative, and management procedures to meet requirements for receiving and managing funds from USAID without accompaniment or an outside project management team;
- OGT has the potential and willingness to strengthen its institutional capacity, but does not have the financial resources required to do so; and
- OGT requires training and coaching regarding administrative and financial practices, manuals, and procedures required for an organization like it to manage funds received from USAID.

### 2.4.2 OGT Institutional Strengthening Strategy

Based on the diagnosis described in the previous section, an institutional capacity strengthening strategy was developed in discussions between the OGT and PAU staff. The strategy describes a series of activities, such as technical consultancies, coaching, and developing manuals and procedures, that would strengthen the OGT’s organizational structure and administrative and financial management, and prepare them to be qualified to receive and manage USAID funds. OGT needs to:

- Sort accounting information by cost centers and third parties, and increase the detail of the financial and accounting information in the accounting system;
- Use different financial codes for specific programs and projects funded from different sources or donors;



- Develop an accounting plan of the kind commonly used in Colombia, including an explanation of the operation of every account; and
- Develop guides, manuals, procedures, and accounting methodologies as a general reference in case no specific other systems or guidelines are provided by donors.

The strategy describes activities to be implemented in the short-, medium-, and long-term. Some short-term activities were carried out by the PAU team, working with the administrative and financial directorate of OGT, including:

- Development of a practical guide for accounting and administration, titled “*Guía Práctica de Contabilidad y Administración*,”
- Sorting of OGT financial accounts based on cost centers; and
- Calculation of unpaid OGT tax liabilities.

As an organization, OGT is currently in the process of establishing institutional relationships with other organizations at national- and international-levels. OGT needs stronger organizational capacity for building and maintaining these relationships, fundraising for its initiatives, and managing internal communication.

### **2.4.3 Synthesis of Ecological and Social Information to Develop the Indigenous Vision**

In discussions with USAID held in December, 2009, the PAU was asked to work with the OGT to use the ecological and social information already available from many years of previous studies, consultancies, and workshops in the SNSM to make decisions about how to move toward their indigenous vision and what priority steps to take to do so. This information was described by some as not useful for indigenous decision-making in its present form because it is too complicated, scattered, and diverse. Our original proposal was to review, simplify, and synthesize this information so that it could be easily understood and discussed by indigenous leaders, and then support and facilitate discussions among them. We envisioned that those discussions would lead toward prioritization of, and hopefully consensus about, activities and projects that would help to achieve the indigenous goals for the area during the next five years. We imagined that those activities and project concepts could form the basis for funding proposals to donors, including to the USAID CLP managed by FPN.

A number of factors complicated and slowed down this process, compared to how it was originally envisioned and proposed, including:

- The short amount of time remaining in the CLP-PAU contract;
- Lack of clarity about, and interest in, this work on the part of the OGT;
- Lack of trust in non-indigenous, outside consultants or organizations by the OGT; and
- Lack of access to the ecological and social information said to be available from previous studies, consultancies, and workshops

After numerous meetings with OGT leaders to discuss what USAID had asked the PAU to do, the leaders decided that an indigenous working group would take responsibility for internal discussions to try to define their indigenous vision and develop a portfolio of the highest priority activities or projects that could support it, and for which they might seek funding from donors such as USAID. Members of the indigenous working group reviewed some of the previous documents and reports and concluded that although they have much information about the Sierra Nevada in general, they lacked detailed ecological and social information about most of the 12 major watersheds of the northern part of the SNSM within Resguardo Indígena Kogui-Malayo-Arhuaco, the indigenous territory represented by the OGT. Only the watersheds of the Río Tucurín and Río Santa Clara have been studied in more detail from a cultural and ecological perspective. For the indigenous communities, a watershed is an important geographic scale or area for the management of territory in the traditional way.

After many meetings and brainstorming sessions, indigenous working group participants decided to organize their vision and project ideas under the following topics:

**Recovery of Lands and Consolidation of Indigenous Territory:** Indigenous culture in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, which they call the “Heart of the World,” is based on the land. What they call the “*Ley de Origen*” is centered on this territory. In their view, recovery and consolidation of their traditional lands will strengthen their culture. Although they feel there has been some progress in this regard, they agree that they need support from a technical team of experts in legal, socio-economic, and geographical aspects of land to provide advice and support in acquiring land and consolidating their land rights.

**Food Security:** Many indigenous families living in remote parts of the SNSM are struggling to feed themselves. They have lost many of the traditional crops and species, and are becoming dependent on food provided by the Colombian government and the supplies they buy in towns. Indigenous working group participants recognized the need for assistance to indigenous farmers to increase food production from traditional crops like plantain, corn, beans, and manioc. Indigenous communities are very interested in getting support with projects to re-establish the community networks that allow the exchange of seeds and plant materials that were interrupted by the violence from the 1970s to 1990s.

**Strengthening of Indigenous Government:** Indigenous working group participants identified four kinds of activities that they believed would contribute to the empowerment of the indigenous government:

- **Training of internal authorities:** Working group participants stated that the main traditional authorities, the priests or *Mamas*, are weak, and have not assumed their own responsibilities to their peoples. They expressed a need for support and accompaniment of the OGT from outside, so that new leaders can handle the internal and external issues in the future once they have been trained. In addition, they consider that the four ethnic groups of the SNSM must begin an internal process for training young boys and girls in leadership and management of internal problems.
- **Strengthening the *ezwamas*:** The *ezwamas* are considered traditional sacred places, mainly in the headwaters of the watersheds, where the *Mamas* exert their authority and where they structure the power in order to conserve the original territory. The leaders recognize that the role in the *ezwamas* is weak because the *Mamas* are not enforcing the internal control required by the indigenous society. Working group participants suggested the need for financial support for meetings with the *Mamas* and other authorities that would focus on how they can strengthen control and protection of the *ezwamas* in each of the 12 major watersheds of the northern part of the SNSM within Resguardo Indígena Kogui-Malayo-Arhuaco, the indigenous territory represented by the OGT.
- **Formal Education:** Participants believe that although formal education provided by the government is important, indigenous authorities must have a stronger role in its coordination and supervision. They believe that support is required from outside to develop a strong educational program that would include: ethno-education programs; environmental education; a program for training political leaders (both women and men); and college-level training of indigenous people in law, health, and teaching.
- **Health:** Participants recognize that the indigenous health program of OGT, which uses an intercultural model of health service, is one of the most developed and efficient of all the public services among the indigenous communities in Colombia. They believe that the indigenous health program needs financial support for prevention and education, vaccination, assistance to sick people, a campaign against tuberculosis, and oral health.

The OGT indigenous working group will present the final results of this process facilitated by the PAU in a document with their thoughts about their main needs and priorities and a list of preliminary projects they want to propose for external technical and financial support.

#### 2.4.4 Solar Infrastructure and Institutional Strengthening

In our budget realignment completed in February, 2010, the PAU proposed to initiate and accompany the process of installing one or more small-scale, off-the-grid photovoltaic solar systems in community applications in indigenous communities. The model we proposed to use was that of ADAM Small Infrastructure projects, in which the process of community participation and decision-making regarding the location, use, and beneficiaries of the solar systems is meant to be a vehicle for institutional capacity-building and strengthening. The systems further demonstrate the potential of this technology.

The level and quality of education and health services available to more than 20,000 indigenous inhabitants of the 58 indigenous villages in the area of the Sierra Nevada Santa Marta where OGT works is negatively affected by lack of access to electricity. Indigenous spiritual authorities and many indigenous leaders reject power grids and conventional power plants because they feel that these violate their cultural and spiritual beliefs about the natural world. Many of these same authorities accept small-scale photovoltaic systems because of their apparently low environmental impact, although they may not yet recognize the environmental hazards of materials in batteries and photovoltaic panels. Nine small-scale photovoltaic solar systems have already been installed in this area to provide electricity for vaccine refrigerators, and two systems (in Dumingueka and Kankawarwa villages) also have the capacity to power computers and lighting in classrooms.

The process began with a discussion about possible target communities and their needs with three OGT leaders—the OGT Cabildo Gobernador, the Director of the OGT Health Unit (*Instituto de Prestación de Salud-Gonawindúa*), and the Director of the OGT Education Unit (*Sistema de Educación Etno-educativa*). Based on these discussions, three communities were recommended as the highest priorities. The PAU technical team first made a site visit to Dumingueka and observed that the system installed there is functioning very well three years after installation, mainly because an indigenous leader assumed the responsibility for its operation and maintenance. Site visits were then made to the villages of San Jose, Kankawarwa, and Gotsezhi to discuss needs for photovoltaic electricity with community members. Gotsezhi, a Wiwa village located in the municipality of Santa Marta, had the largest need, and was selected as the location for installing a system.

Meetings were arranged with community members in Gotsezhi by the school teachers and health promoters to discuss their specific needs. Because the health center and school are in separate buildings some distance apart, two separate systems were needed. A potential provider with knowledge of solar design visited Gotsezhi to size the requirements of the systems to the available sunshine in the area and the average temperatures, which would affect the power requirements of the vaccine refrigerator.

Two panels and two batteries were needed to power electric lights and a refrigerator for the conservation of medicine, especially tuberculosis vaccines, at the health center. The indigenous health promoter in Gotsezhi was trained in the use of the health system and will use the health center as a base from which to transport vaccines to other remote communities that may be many hours walk away to vaccinate children and adults there. The population served by the health promoter based in Gotsezhi is about 700 people, 60 percent of whom are indigenous.

A second set of panels and batteries were installed at the school to power 12 donated laptop computers, a printer, and electric lights in the computer classroom, library, and communal house. The school serves about 110 students from Gotsezhi and surrounding communities. OGT leaders believe that indigenous children need to learn to use computer technology in order for some of them to have the possibility of obtaining higher education. Most communities, even of the most conservative of the ethnic groups, the Kogui, are becoming more open to this idea.

Five teachers (who are not indigenous) and the health promoter (indigenous) will be responsible for maintenance and operation of the systems. They were trained by the provider of the solar systems. A computer installation specialist installed a local network to link laptops to a printer, and trained the teachers and the oldest students in how to use and maintain the computers. Training on the care and use of computers to teachers and to the oldest students were provided by the PAP/ARD team. Also, the health promoter, the teachers, and the student leaders were trained on the solar panel systems management and care, and organized in two local committees for their operations. The school and health center buildings of Gotsezhi needed physical improvements such as painting. These physical improvements to the buildings were funded by the PAU.

OGT would like financial and technical support to install photovoltaic systems in all 58 villages in the area in which they work, including the new system installed by the PAU in Gotsezhi; 10 villages now have solar systems. The PAU helped OGT to prepare a generic proposal that could be presented to any donor for five more photovoltaic systems, which they hope to obtain within the next 18 months. This proposal is being submitted by the Cabildo Gobernador to potential donors.



# 3.0 WHAT WE LEARNED – SYNTHESIS OF CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Based on our experience carrying out the activities summarized above during the 19 months of the program, we draw a number of conclusions, presented below. Where we believe they are robust and general enough, we further elaborate them as “lessons learned” that may be relevant in the design of similar programs in the future.

## 3.1 PROGRAM DESIGN

The objective of this program to create a new model to “strengthen the institutional capacity and governance of Colombia’s protected areas for long-term environmental conservation, community and cultural preservation, and improved livelihoods,” through rapid capacity-building of a Colombian foundation was not, in our judgment, successfully achieved. Although the PIU model resulted in some significant achievements, we do not believe that this experimental program design provides a robust model to be replicated in the future by USAID in Colombia, or in other countries with similar contextual factors. This design, combined with the context in which it was tested, proved to have significant built-in challenges and constraints.

### 3.1.1 Rapid Capacity-Building of a Colombian Organization (FPN) to Administer a USAID Cooperative Agreement

**Conclusion:** The parallel-track design of the PAP, renamed the CLP, envisioned a relatively small contract of \$1.5 million (to ARD) for capacity-strengthening of FPN and concurrent award of a CLP-CA of approximately \$9.5 million to the FPN. No incentive structure, either positive or negative, was clearly built into this design to ensure that, once the cooperative agreement was signed, the contractor would have any role in decision-making regarding the CA, which was to be awarded to the FPN. Without such a clearly-defined incentive structure, the FPN had no obvious legal requirement or financial incentive to involve the PIU in decision-making. This was the main reason that, once USAID approved the CLP-CA in July, 2009, the role of the PIU immediately changed from that of “direct oversight” of CLP implementation, as stated in the original RFTOP, to an advisory role that gave true oversight and decision-making responsibility to the FPN. This *de facto* change in roles caused some confusion and even some tension until it was formally recognized in discussions and negotiations between ARD, USAID, and FPN in November, 2009. At that stage it was formally recognized that the role of the contractor was no longer that of a Program Implementation Unit, but rather a “Program Advisory Unit,” or PAU. The necessity for this shift in roles resulted from the design of the program, which probably never could have functioned as originally envisioned in the RFTOP.

**Lesson Learned:** We believe that this conclusion is robust enough, and with enough general applicability, to consider it a “lesson learned”—that is, that a dual-track design involving a contract for capacity-building of an organization so that it can concurrently receive, administer, and implement a cooperative agreement generally is not a viable model. It could perhaps be a viable model if the contracted PIU was embedded within the partner organization for the life of the project (i.e., the contract and cooperative agreement were of the same duration), if the contract and cooperative agreement clearly specified the decision-making role and authority of the PIU, and if the

partner organization receiving the CA had appropriate financial and other incentives to accept the role of the contracted PIU.

**Conclusion:** Capacity to administer a USAID Cooperative Agreement according to financial, administrative, reporting, and other USAID rules and regulations has two dimensions: knowledge and skills, and willingness and acceptance. In terms of knowledge and skills, these can be built through training, manuals, experience, and accompaniment, but probably not as rapidly as imagined in this project design (i.e., within 18 months or less). See Section 3.3 for further discussion of this issue.

### 3.1.2 Strengthening Capacity for Conservation Planning Based on the USAID Approach to Biodiversity Conservation

**Conclusion:** A combination of issues related to both program design and program context resulted in significant challenges to combining the objectives of alternative development and biodiversity conservation, as stated in the RFTOP: “USAID’s Protected Areas Program (PAP-PIU and PAP-CA together) seeks to reflect a longer-term approach to using the earmarked funds in a manner that is more representative of an integrated Alternative Development strategy and the stated intention of the annual biodiversity earmark.” The USAID approach to biodiversity conservation, and the Biodiversity Earmark requirements, includes: 1) analysis of threats to biodiversity, 2) the participation of local communities and other key stakeholders, and 3) action at the scale of ecological

landscapes. These elements of the USAID approach make it relatively straightforward to link biodiversity conservation, improved governance, and enhanced economic opportunities at the local-level. Some elements of the USAID approach were less than familiar to the NPU and FPN, making it difficult for them to plan to integrate the alternative development and biodiversity conservation objectives of the CLP.

We do not conclude, however, that it would not be possible to combine biodiversity conservation and alternative development in other USAID countries or programs, so we do not believe that this can be generalized to a “lesson learned.” It should be possible, in the absence of some of the issues at work in the case of the CLP, for these different objectives to be met in the same program.

Photo Credit: Bruce Byers, ARD.



Páramo landscape.

## 3.2 PROGRAM CONTEXT

**Conclusion:** FPN is a foundation structured to raise money from non-public sources (primarily international multilateral and bilateral donors, but with growing interest in foundations and the private sector) for NPU and the SINAP. It is not really an independent foundation, in that it is structured in such a way that its board of directors is permanently headed by the Director of the NPU. It is our understanding that the NPU does not have the legal mandate to fund implementing partners, NGOs, local or community organizations, or regional or local government conservation efforts, nor to work outside of park boundaries. Given its own needs for funding, which are not sufficiently met by public funds, the NPU undoubtedly has a financial incentive to direct funds passing through FPN to meet its own needs to the extent possible. Given the structural relationship between FPN and NPU, it seems logical that FPN would feel pressure in many cases to provide funds to NPU rather than to other partners.



Such financial pressures and incentives, however, were at odds with the landscape-scale, participatory design of the CLP, which clearly was not designed as a “protected areas” program. The conservation model of the CLP sought to link conservation with alternative development, which demands investments in local and regional government partners, community and indigenous organizations, and NGOs, and also requires and emphasis on improvements in governance and economic opportunities. These actions did not appear to fit comfortably with the NPU’s mandate and mission.

The NPU received support directly from USAID prior to this program, without intermediaries such as the PIU or the FPN, and apparently did not understand the need for the new model USAID wanted to impose. Furthermore, FPN’s prior experience managing the World Bank “Mosaicos” program led them to assume they had the administrative and technical capacity to implement a USAID cooperative agreement. Neither FPN nor NPU seemed to recognize a clear need or value in having a contractor in a capacity-strengthening and technical advisory role.

**Lesson Learned:** We believe that a robust and general “lesson learned” related to the above conclusion is that if USAID is seeking to realize program objectives that fall outside the mission or practices of a single partner organization, it must find other partner organizations, independent of the main partner, whose mission and experience make them capable of incorporating those additional objectives. In this case, some of the objectives of the CLP are outside of the mission and practice of the NPU, and the FPN, given its structural, *de facto* lack of independence from the NPU, cannot be expected to bring the additional objectives into the CLP.

### **3.3 BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO MANAGE A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT**

**Conclusion:** There is a difference between strengthening knowledge and skills needed to meet USAID administrative and financial requirements, and creating the willingness or acceptance to follow those requirements. The design of the program provided some avenues for the former, subject to the constraint that there was too little time for the level of accompaniment that would truly be necessary (such accompaniment would be necessary for the full three-year life of the CLP-CA, in our judgment). The PIU, and later the PAU, was successful to the extent of providing trainings, manuals, and direct day-to-day advice, but less successful to the extent that there was too little time for supervising and accompanying staff to truly build internal institutional capacity. The design of this program gave very few incentives for the latter, and in our judgment we were not successful in building the willingness or acceptance (mainly on the part of NPU) that would, or will, be necessary to reach the objectives of the CLP.

USAID rules and regulations are complex, and real capacity is built through experience, and especially through a “learning by doing process” supervised or accompanied by personnel who already have such experience with USAID. In this program, with the CLP-CA only awarded in July, 2009, the First Year Work Plan only approved in September, 2009, and the first Annual Program Statement (APS) (for the Alto Fragua-Indiwasi conservation landscape) only released in November, 2010, we conclude that there was not enough time for the level and length of supervised and accompanied “learning by doing” within FPN staff that is truly needed to build the necessary capacity. FPN will probably have to hire personnel with prior USAID administrative and financial management experience in order to acquire this capacity ready-made at this point in time.

### **3.4 BUILDING FPN AND UPN CAPACITY FOR PARTICIPATORY, THREATS-BASED, LANDSCAPE-SCALE CONSERVATION DESIGN, PLANNING, AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

**Conclusion:** A participatory, landscape-scale approach to biodiversity conservation was used in the CLP regional planning workshops, and this approach created a high level of interest, enthusiasm, and expectations at the local-level, within each of the conservation landscapes. This approach did not appear to be strongly embraced or supported at the higher levels of the NPU or FPN. We conclude that it will take time for this approach to become widely accepted and used by the Colombian NPU. We believe that our success in using this approach in the CLP regional workshops, and in the development of the Work Plan, reflect a true “success story” in terms of developing a greater awareness and expectation of the need for public participation in conservation in Colombia.

**Conclusion:** The development of the PMP for the CLP proved to be an extremely difficult challenge. Development of the M&E system for biodiversity conservation should begin with a threats-based analysis during the work planning process. Appropriate indicators should measure direct threats themselves, or progress in mitigating their causes through actions such as improving participation, governance, and sustainable economic opportunities. Although direct threats were usually identified in each of the regional workshops, the activities selected to mitigate their causes were often left out or replaced as work planning was rolled up to the program-level, and both activities and indicators became detached from the logical framework of threats-based conservation planning.

**Lesson Learned:** M&E is a difficult challenge in biodiversity conservation programs in general because of the long time frames involved in both biodiversity loss and its recovery. In general, process-oriented indirect indicators of progress toward addressing or eliminating the causes of direct threats to biodiversity must be used, and M&E based on conservation “limiting factors” can be useful. In general, in order to develop an M&E system for biodiversity conservation that meets USAID expectations, an organization will need outside technical assistance, training, and capacity-building.

### 3.5 STRENGTHENING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF FPN

**Conclusion:** FPN has some options available under Colombian law for diversifying its fundraising for biodiversity conservation from the private sector, a promising example of which is fundraising through hotel chains. FPN should develop a funding stream for core operating funds that can ensure the survival of the institution through the ups and down of individual project cycles in order that it can fulfill its role to support members of SINAP.

### 3.6 WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS

**Conclusion:** Indigenous communities in Colombia have been under pressure from the outside world for hundreds of years, including during the period of violence from the 1970s to 1990s, and they hold often well-founded suspicions about dealing with non-indigenous cultures and institutions. Working with indigenous communities and organizations requires allowing time for their internal consultations, patience to build trust and confidence, and flexibility to work within indigenous timeframes. Achieving planned objectives often takes longer than expected. Indigenous people are interested in cooperation and aid from external institutions to support their own agenda, but do not want potential donors to come with outside agendas.

## 4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions just discussed, some of which rise to a level of generality that we believe they could be called “lessons learned,” point out a number of challenges and opportunities for USAID and its Colombian partners as they continue to implement the Conservation Landscapes Program, and later to design future programs for supporting biodiversity conservation in Colombia. These lead us to offer a number of recommendations, which we have limited to those we feel are most significant.

**Recommendation 1:** USAID should carefully consider any future attempts to use a contract to create a unit that will supposedly have implementation responsibilities for a CA within another organization. Such a program design would be viable only if the contracted PIU was embedded within the partner organization for the life of the project (i.e., the contract and cooperative agreement were of the same duration), if the contract and CA clearly specified the decision-making role and authority of the PIU, and if the partner organization receiving the CA had appropriate financial and other incentives to accept the role of the contracted PIU.

**Recommendation 2:** If USAID wishes to influence the overall approach used by a partner or implementing organization, such as using a participatory, threats-based, landscape-scale approach to biodiversity conservation, USAID and the partner organization should agree in advance to USAID’s expectations and objectives. USAID should then structure financial and other incentives to bring about the desired changes within relevant implementing organizations.

**Recommendation 3:** USAID should ensure that FPN and NPU receive the technical assistance they need to develop a PMP for the CLP that complies with USAID’s approach to biodiversity conservation and ADS guidelines. In future programs that include biodiversity conservation objectives, USAID should insist that the implementing organizations receive adequate technical assistance so that they can design a work plan using USAID’s approach to biodiversity conservation, and prepare a PMP that reflects that approach and meets ADS requirements.

**Recommendation 4:** Because the CLP involved an untested design (i.e., a short-term contract for the PIU and contemporaneous Cooperative Agreement to the FPN), USAID should conduct a thorough third-party evaluation of the CLP at the end of Year 3 to evaluate: 1) FPN’s capacity to administer the CLP, 2) the success in implementing a threats-based, participatory, landscape-scale model that broadens conservation approaches in Colombia.

**Recommendation 5:** The CLP should take over the dialogue and capacity-building of the OGT begun by the PAU, linking it with the CLP Work Plan for the SNSM Conservation Landscape, and should expect to continue to require time, patience, and flexibility in doing so. In Year 3 of the CLP, USAID should evaluate the capacity of OGT to make proposals and receive and manage funds from USAID and other donors.

**Recommendation 6:** If USAID plans to support the installation of other photovoltaic solar systems in the SNSM, it may want to conduct a small evaluation of the systems already installed to better understand the factors that lead to sustainable functioning of these systems, and how they can support the indigenous vision of development in the SNSM, as intended.



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# APPENDIX I: EVOLUTION OF RESULTS INDICATORS IN THE CLP

Result Indicators				
Note: Red color indicates change in wording or text added, but similar meaning to previous indicator				
RFA	CA	WP	Draft PMP	PMP
Conservation Landscapes with improved governance	Conservation Landscapes with improved governance	Conservation Landscapes with improved governance		
National Parks Management under sustainable and comprehensive model for conservation	National Parks Management under sustainable and comprehensive model for conservation	National Parks Management under sustainable and comprehensive model for conservation <b>and sustainable use of biodiversity</b>		
Biodiversity threats addressed	Biodiversity threats addressed			
Families benefited	Families benefited	Families benefited	Number of families <b>benefited from legal and sustainable economic activities by the CLP</b>	Number of families <b>benefited from sustainable systems for conservation by the CLP</b>
Communities with strengthened social capital	Communities with strengthened social capital	Communities with strengthened social capital		
Number of producer associations and MSME strengthened	Number of producer associations and MSME strengthened	Number of producer associations and MSME strengthened	<b>Number of productive initiatives of MSME, or producer associations, or community organizations established or strengthened</b>	<b>Number of enterprises, cooperatives, producer associations, or other community organizations supported by the CLP</b>
Strengthened technical capacity of NPU and SINAP members	Strengthened technical capacity of NPU and SINAP members			
Increase of biodiverse hectares with strengthened protection	Increase of biodiverse hectares with strengthened protection	Increase of biodiverse hectares with strengthened protection		
Reduction in illicit crops in target areas				
	Ecosystems			
	Focal species			
	Alliances developed	Alliances developed		
	Total value of projects supported			
	CLP average share of total investment			
	Awards signed			
	Disbursement rate			

Result Indicators				
Note: Red color indicates change in wording or text added, but similar meaning to previous indicator				
RFA	CA	WP	Draft PMP	PMP
		Strengthened technical capacity of NPU and SINAP (improved AEMAPPS management effectiveness index; improved the level of consensus-building around the SINAP action plan and legal framework)		
			New agroforestry or silvo-pastoral productive systems established	Number of hectares in sustainable production
			Number of monitoring processes for biodiversity conservation values implemented in CLP focal areas	Number of new monitoring processes (state and pressures) implemented in the focal areas of the six national parks in the CLP
			Establishment and consolidation of the SINAP around the National Parks	
			Coverage of mechanisms to strengthen the conservation of biodiversity	
			Strengthening of participation of community organizations in actions that mitigate threats to biodiversity	Participation of community organizations in biodiversity conservation actions
			Agreement of communities around the national parks with conservation actions that mitigate threats to biodiversity	
			Restoration or regeneration of deforested areas in the focal areas of the CLP	
			Change in natural cover in focal areas of the CLP	
			Number of hectares in biodiverse ecosystems with improved natural resources management through CLP interventions	Number of hectares of biodiverse ecosystems with improved natural resources management through CLP interventions

Result Indicators				
Note: Red color indicates change in wording or text added, but similar meaning to previous indicator				
RFA	CA	WP	Draft PMP	PMP
			Number of persons who receive training or technical assistance in natural resources management or biodiversity conservation through the CLP	Number of persons who receive training or technical assistance in natural resources management or biodiversity conservation through the CLP
				Change in progress in implementation of strategic sub-programs of the NPU in protected areas aided by the CLP (index of achievement of objectives)
				Change in the effectiveness of management of the six protected areas of the CLP according to the AEMAPPS methodology
				Change in the percentage of ecosystems represented in the SINAP as a result of actions aided by the CLP
				Percentage of effectiveness of spending the budget







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