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# Proposal “training and Experience Exchange for Community-Based Ecotourism/Nature Guides”

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Robert Mackler

2000

**Citation:**

*Quintana Roo: Departamento de Humanidades, Universidad de Quintana Roo*

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This five year project aims to conserve critical coastal resources in Mexico by building capacity of NGOs, Universities, communities and other key public and private stakeholders to promote an integrated approach to participatory coastal management and enhanced decision-making. This publication was made possible through support provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Environment and Natural Resources Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade under the terms of Cooperative Agreement No. PCE-A-00-95-0030-05.





***Mission  
Director***

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August 28, 2000

Mr. Robert Mackler  
Departamento de Humanidades  
Universidad de Quintana Roo  
Chetumal, Q. Roo  
(Fax No. 98-32-0765)

Dear Mr. Mackler,

We are pleased to inform you that your proposal “Training and Experience Exchange for Community-Based Ecotourism/Nature Guides” has been approved by our Review Committee for its funding.

Please provide us with the names of all the participants to the workshop in order to conduct standard clearance procedures and to proceed to prepare the corresponding Training Agreement in the amount of \$7,520 U.S. Dlls., for your signature.

Sincerely,

Paul E. White  
Mission Director  
USAID / Mexico

**Title:** TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM/NATURE GUIDES

**Name of Partner Institutions/Countries:** Departamento de Humanidades, Universidad de Quintana Roo(UQROO)/Mexico; Belize Audubon Society(BAS)/Belize. US Cooperating Partner: Wildlife Conservation Society(WCS).

**Region Impacted:** This project will impact on the greater Chetumal Bay ecosystem (including the Manatee Sanctuary protected area), which spans the Mexico/Belize border.

**Summary:** The village and lagoon of Laguna Guerrero are part of both the Chetumal Bay watershed and Manatee Sanctuary protected area. A community group of young adults, both men and women, has recognized the value of ecotourism in both biodiversity conservation and economic development. This group, Guías Naturalistas de Laguna Guerrero (GNLG), has been training, with assistance from the RARE Center and UQROO, to provide ecotourism guiding and other services. This project will provide advanced naturalist and interpretive training for GNLG at Belize's premier ecotourism site, the BAS-managed Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary (CBWS), also known as "the jaguar reserve." The BAS-managed Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary (CTWS), a RAMSAR site, will serve as the training site for integrated conservation/community development activities. CTWS provides an excellent learning opportunity for examining people/park conflicts. As part of the training package, BAS will conduct field trips to other important sites such as the Red Bank Scarlet Macaw Conservation and Tourism Project. The trainees would also, under the guidance of WCS, learn "baseline" observational data gathering, using the Selva Maya monitoring protocols

**Relevance/Sustainability:** This project is very relevant to the sustainability of the region. Economic alternatives to smallholder agriculture are recognized by villagers as necessary for both the economic and environmental stability of the village of Laguna Guerrero. As part of the watershed for Chetumal Bay and as manatee habitat, the conservation of the lagoon ecosystem is vital to the future health of Chetumal Bay. Ecotourism guiding can provide a sound future for a number of villagers as ecotourism continues to develop in the southern part of Quintana Roo.

**Relation to Government:** GNLG is strongly supported in Quintana Roo by the ejido authorities, the state university, and state tourism agencies. BAS works in close cooperation with the Government of Belize as manager of some of Belize's most important protected areas. The cooperation of the Belize Forest Department in the training is anticipated.

**Community Involvement:** As a completely community-based group, GNLG is closely involved with the community and community leaders at every phase of its activities. As construction of their ejido-donated visitors center/restaurant develops, more members of the community, both men and women, will be able to take advantage of the ecotourism economy that GNLG is helping to foster.

**Budget Requested and Counterpart:** This project requires US\$7520 for travel, per diem, and training expenses. Counterpart funding will be approximately \$1500 in coordinators' salaries.

**Key Individuals:** 1) Coordinator, Robert Mackler, Departamento de Humanidades, UQROO: Tel: +52-9-835-0300 x188; Fax: +52-9-832-9656; e-mail: [janerobmackler@yahoo.com](mailto:janerobmackler@yahoo.com)  
2) Co-coordinator, Valdemar Andrade, Protected Areas Coordinator, BAS: Tel: +501-2-35004; Fax: +501-2-34985; e-mail: [base@btl.net](mailto:base@btl.net)  
3) Co-coordinator, Eduardo Galicia, Investigador del Proyecto de Manejo Integrado de Recursos Costeros, UQROO: Tel: +52-9-835-0346; Fax: +52-9-832-9656; e-mail: [galicia@mexico.com](mailto:galicia@mexico.com)  
4) U.S. Cooperating Partner: Bruce Miller, Associate Conservation Zoologist, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS): Tel/Fax: +501-2-2002; e-mail: [galljug@btl.net](mailto:galljug@btl.net)

**Experience:** The team has about 30 combined years of relevant experience.

☒ Coordinator Mackler, full-time Professor at UQROO, served as Protected Areas Planner for BAS 1991-94; developed the first management plans for four of Belize's protected areas; sought and managed UNDP conservation/community development funds.

☒ Co-coordinator Andrade has worked for eight years at the Belize Audubon Society; past positions included Coastal Zone Environmental Educator and Advocacy Coordinator.

☒ Co-coordinator Galicia has worked with Pronatura Península de Yucatán, Amigos de Sian Ka'and the RARE Center (Yucatán).

**Level of Effort Required:** Coordinator Mackler: 10 days. Co-coordinator Andrade: 5 days. Co-coordinator Galicia: 3 days. US Cooperating Partner Miller: 3 days. Community members: 700 hours.

**Technical Expertise Required:** No additional expertise is required beyond that provided by the BAS trainers.

**Budget Required:** Training: \$4500 in training fees to BAS (6 trainees x \$75/day x 10 days). Meals and Accommodations: \$2400 to BAS (6 trainees x \$40/day x 10 days). Travel: \$300 (6 trainees). Per diem for Coordinator: \$320 (4 days @ \$80). Total=\$7520

Counterpart: Salaries of Co-coordinators = \$1500

**Timeline:** The training will be implemented during a two-week period in February, 2001.

**End Result:** GNLG members will return to their village with a much higher level of training in guiding, nature interpretation, tourist management, and implementation of low-impact tourism in a community setting. The village would benefit from increased tourism revenues, and the ecosystem will ultimately benefit from an increase in environmentally-friendly economic ventures.