



BIOPAMA



## Boosting EcoTourism Belize to Support Sustainable Conservation in the Maya Golden Landscape of Southern Belize

### Type of priority area

Terrestrial Protected Area

Privately Protected Area

Key Landscape for Conservation

### Primary objective

Livelihoods

Governance

Management Effectiveness

### Target groups

Local Communities

Indigenous people

Women

### Main activity focus

Livelihoods/ Alternative Economic Activities

Eco-tourism

Capacity Building

**Duration**  
01.10.2020 – 31.07.2021

**Type of grant & budget**  
Small Technical Grant | 70,779.08 €

**Location**  
Belize, Caribbean

**Protected & Conserved Areas**  
Golden Stream Corridor Preserve

**WDPA ID**  
301941

**BIOPAMA RRIIS Link**  
<https://rriis.biopama.org/pa/301941>

**Key Conservation Landscape**  
Golden Stream Corridor Preserve (GSCP), within the Maya Golden Landscape (MGL)

**Project Lead**  
Ya'axché Conservation Trust

**Description of the project**  
Ya'axché Conservation Trust's social business initiative, EcoTourism Belize (ETB) facilitates sustainable ecotourism to local and international audiences, of which the proceeds are directly reinvested into conservation and community development across southern Belize. This project focuses primarily on boosting natural and cultural ecotourism offerings within Golden Stream Corridor Preserve (GSCP), Ya'axché's private protected area, and the surrounding buffer communities.

Through this project, a new restroom facility will be constructed and the current bunkhouse providing visitor accommodations on the grounds of GSCP's ranger station will be updated and improved through new paint, ceiling fans, bed linens and furnishings, as well as through the addition of a screened veranda. To increase the diversity of available lodging and appeal to a wider audience, two tents will be purchased to provide camping opportunities within GSCP. The visitor grounds will be further improved through the installation of directional signs indicating visitor facilities. Ecotourism offerings which allow visitors to experience GSCP and the intact ecosystems protected by the Preserve will be enhanced through the purchase of kayaks, canoe paddles and binoculars, and GSCP's self-guided nature trails will be demarcated with new signs for ease of visitor use. To provide convenient transportation from guest accommodations to tour sites, a tour van will be purchased.

In addition to the GSCP-based ecotourism activities offered, ETB partners with local indigenous women's groups so that they can share their cuisine, crafts, music and Maya culture with interested visitors. Therefore, this project provides capacity building for these women through workshops focused on hospitality and customer service.





#### Diagnostic Tools Used

- Golden Stream Corridor Preserve Management Plan 2020-2025
- Golden Stream Corridor Preserve Management Plan Annexes 2020-2025
- Golden Stream Corridor Preserve Evaluation Workbook
- Ya'axché Land Title for Golden Stream Corridor Preserve



#### The BIOPAMA AC Objectives Addressed

- ✓ Enhance the management of governance of priority protected areas by addressing existing limitations (strengthening on-site infrastructure/equipment for patrol, poaching control, developing capacity of staff;
- ✓ Support local communities' initiatives aiming to enhance the livelihoods of local people whilst effectively contributing to protected areas management.



#### Priority Need Addressed

Improved protected area management through the bolstering of Ecotourism Belize's (ETB) sustainability and impact through investment in equipment and infrastructure.

Shared local indigenous culture and supported Golden Stream Corridor Preserve (GSCP) buffer communities through innovative ecotourism initiatives.



#### The change the project implementation will bring for the protected areas

The livelihoods of many buffer communities are highly dependent and rely on the land, water and biological diversity found locally. Ecosystem services provided through Ya'axché's ability to safeguard Golden Stream Corridor Preserve (GSCP) include clean water and air, game species, flood control, pollination and non-timber forest products. Through investment in capacity building, infrastructure and equipment, Ecotourism Belize (ETB) will develop consistent and environmentally responsible tourism programs, empowering local indigenous women and communities and leading effective biodiversity conservation of Golden Stream Corridor Preserve (GSCP) and the larger Maya Golden Landscape (MGL). This will allow ETB to emerge post-Covid-19 in a strong position, for the first time, to generate consistent income for Ya'axché's conservation and development initiatives across southern Belize's protected areas.

Through infrastructure investment within GSCP, two zones (Zone 1 for General Use; Zone 2 for Education and Recreation) demarcated in the PCA's management plan will have improved infrastructure and sustainable access for visitors, allowing ETB to reach a larger population of visitors and elevating the visitor experience. Furthermore, through ownership of equipment, ETB's ecotours within GSCP will no longer hinder patrolling or field research, allowing for more effective protected area management.

This project is financed by the European Union and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States through the BIOPAMA Programme. The contents of this material are the sole responsibility of Ya'axché Conservation Trust and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the EU nor of the OACPS.

Photo credits: Sayuri Tzul, Ya'axché Conservation Trust

The project Boosting EcoTourism Belize to Support Sustainable Conservation in the Maya Golden Landscape of Southern Belize is financed by the European Union and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States through the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) Programme.

BIOPAMA assists the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to address their priorities for improved management and governance of biodiversity and natural resources. BIOPAMA provides a variety of tools, services and funding to conservation actors in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. The BIOPAMA grant-making facility is managed by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and supports projects on the ground to strengthen the management and governance of protected and conserved areas, with a total budget of 21 million Euros.

