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Transboundary Integrated Conservation and Development Projects in Latin America: Exploring the Complexities of Stakeholder Participation

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Transboundary Integrated Conservation and Development Projects in Latin America: Exploring the Complexities of Stakeholder Participation

By Sheamus Croke

Undergraduate Honors Thesis: Department of International Affairs

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Abstract

Within the past thirty years, nation-states, inter-governmental, and non-governmental organizations have implemented numerous integrated conservation and development projects (abbreviated as ICDPs) across Central and South America. These initiatives have sought to conserve natural environments while simultaneously improving socioeconomic conditions through development. Within these ICDPs, stakeholder participation – defined for the purposes of this paper as the active participation of local and community actors who are directly affected by or can affect project activities – served as a representative element of the successes and complexities of an ICDP. This paper focuses on transboundary ICDPs (projects that are implemented within multiple nation-states), and asks if these ICDPs face more difficulties fostering successful stakeholder participation when compared to similar single nation-state projects. To answer this question, this paper first reviewed the current literature discussing transboundary conservation, ICDPs, and the role of stakeholder participation in projects. The role of stakeholder participation was then evaluated and examined within the terminal evaluations of fifteen different ICDPs, six of which were transboundary and seven of which occurred within a single-nation state. It was found that even though no statistically significant difference exists aggregately between the two types of projects, a clear trend demonstrated that transboundary projects tended to face more difficulties fostering stakeholder participation, on average. Furthermore, two of the questions selected to evaluate participation resulted in significant difference between the project types, and it is discussed that a larger sample size could possibly result in aggregately significant differences.

With the trend displayed in the findings, a qualitative analysis of the terminal evaluations was conducted. This analysis found that a lack of capable preexisting institutions, the effects of political changes, unequal capacities of different governments, a struggle to share information across the project, and the lack of a common project vision represent five overarching challenges that could explain why transboundary projects may disproportionately struggle to foster stakeholder participation. Overall, it is concluded that future transboundary initiatives that intend on successfully involving stakeholders should closely examine and consider the aforementioned challenges before moving forward with a plan that aims to effectively promote conservation, engage stakeholders, and alleviate poverty.

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Introduction

In the past thirty years, documents such as the 1987 Brundtland Report of the UN have brought an increased emphasis to the issue of sustainable development. As part of this emphasis, various initiatives have been taken to conserve the immense biodiversity within ecosystems of Central and South America, while simultaneously attempting to improve the livelihoods of the people living in and around these ecosystems. These initiatives typically materialize into what are known as integrated conservation and development projects, abbreviated as ICDPs. Within the complex initiatives of ICDPs, stakeholder participation has the possibility of playing an important role. Stakeholder participation is defined by the transdisciplinary researcher Mark S. Reed as the process in which stakeholders take an “active role in making decisions that affect them,” in which the term stakeholders refer to actors “who are affected by or can affect decisions” (2008, p. 2418). Furthermore, for the purposes of this paper, stakeholders will refer specifically to actors on the local and community level, as opposed to higher-level stakeholders such as national politicians and project administrators.¹ In other words, these stakeholders can be considered as people who are directly affected by the project, but not necessarily a part of the broad implementation agency, controlling institutions or upper-management. Therefore, from this point on the term stakeholders will refer to the aforementioned local and community actors unless it is otherwise described.

¹ Michael Wells and Thomas McShane refer to these stakeholders as “people whose livelihoods, interests and futures are linked to those of a protected area, as well as institutions with relative interests and jurisdiction such as community-based organizations, local government, national government agencies with local responsibilities, research organizations, schools and churches” (2004, p. 516).

Stakeholder participation holds a very important role in the current era of sustainable development, in which the success and sustainability of integrated conservation and development tend to depend on the involvement and participation of local actors (Zbicz, 2003, p. 22; Brechin et. al, p. 51). Moreover, this participation is primarily important due the concept that it can help solve complex and dynamic environmental problems by promoting “flexible and transparent decision-making that embraces a diversity of knowledges and values” (Reed, 2008, p. 2417). As a result of this, stakeholder participation can serve as a representative element of the successes and complexities of an ICDP. With a better understanding of how stakeholder participation varies within ICDPs, the possibility of improving future projects becomes more hopeful. The terminal evaluations and other project documents analyzed in this paper provide readers with an extensive amount of information about the goals, processes, challenges, and successes of ICDPs, as well as how these projects involved stakeholders. With this information, we can analyze how stakeholder participation differs between transboundary and single nation-state ICDPs, in which transboundary IDCPS are implemented within multiple nation-states. Due to concept the transboundary variable may complicate stakeholder involvement due to barriers such as the lack of overarching preexisting institutions, the information in this paper could provide researchers and implementers alike with a more comprehensive understanding of the difficulties of initiating participation within transboundary projects.

In this paper, I plan on analyzing completed ICDPs to explore how stakeholder participation varies when projects are carried out over a continuous transboundary ecosystem (a single ecosystem that spans across the borders of multiple nation-states). I hypothesize that, within Central and South America, ICDPs focusing on transboundary ecosystems experience

more difficulties with successfully fostering stakeholder participation than ICDPs occurring within a single nation-state, for a variety of reasons. In making this argument, I will first consult the current literature that exists on the subjects of transboundary ICDPs and stakeholder participation, exploring the key trends and gaps within this literature. Second, I will explain the theoretical framework of this topic, and discuss how my methodology of analyzing a set of Global Environmental Facility-funded projects provides a way to explore this theory. Third, I will discuss my analysis of the findings that I have encountered. Finally, I conclude that transboundary ICDPs tend to face more difficulties than single nation-state projects when trying to foster stakeholder participation. Furthermore, a lack of capable preexisting institutions, the effects of political changes, unequal capacities of different governments, a struggle to share information across the project, and the lack of a common project vision represent five overarching challenges that could explain why transboundary projects face this difficulty, representing some key considerations for future project implementers.

Transboundary Conservation, ICDPs and the Role of Stakeholder Participation

In order to adequately address the issue of stakeholder participation within transboundary ICDPs, it is important to consult the current literature surrounding the subject. This literature can be separated into three distinct, yet not mutually exclusive, categories. The first consists of the literature on transboundary conservation initiatives, which discusses different difficulties and benefits these initiatives face. The second category consists of literature that examines the efforts of balancing conservation and development within ICDPs, something that remains a difficult task. The third category involves the issue of stakeholder

participation, and discusses the role of this participation within ICDPs specifically. This literature review will provide a deeper look into each of these topics, and discuss how different aspects within them apply to the questions surrounding stakeholder participation within transboundary ICDPs.

Transboundary Conservation Initiatives

Transboundary conservation is an important and relevant task that includes numerous challenges and benefits. Roughly one third of the world's high-biodiversity ecosystems straddle the borders of multiple nation-states, in which the effective conservation and sustainability of these ecosystems often includes some type of international cooperation, ranging from informal agreements to signed treaties between governments (Vasilijević et. al, 2015, p. 50).

Furthermore, transboundary conservation initiatives primarily appear in the form of protected areas, ranging from strict nature reserves, to national parks, to sustainable resource-use areas (Vasilijević et. al, 2015). This paper will focus on areas that are not exclusively conservation focused, in which the studied ICDPs included both protected areas and the locally inhabited areas that surround them, such as resource-use areas.

Due to the wide variety of transboundary conservation initiatives that occur – whether it be through scale or purpose – and the varied definitions of success, these initiatives cannot be objectively viewed as more or less successful than their nationally conducted counterparts. However, environmental economist Jonah Busch has found that under certain conditions, transboundary protected areas can achieve greater conservation and production objectives (2008). Furthermore, in a thorough article of the International Union for Conservation of

Nature, authors detail numerous benefits specific to transboundary conservation initiatives. They find that transboundary conservation initiatives enable “greater ecological integrity and contribute to the long-term survival of species” by “enhancing connectivity” and “decreasing fragmentation” within an ecosystem, and therefore helping secure the survival of various life forms, especially migratory species (Vasilijević et. al, 2015, p. 3). The authors also noted that if cooperation in a transboundary conservation effort is extensive, it can result in benefits such as a reduction in costs, better law enforcement, and more efficient management (Vasilijević et. al, 2015). Additionally, according to other researchers, transboundary conservation can have beneficial political effects by “cementing and reinforcing confidence between states through the joint management of protected areas” (Hamilton et al. 1996; Brunner 1998 in Fall, 1999, p. 252). These examples reflect the numerous possible benefits of transboundary conservation.

Even though transboundary conservation has some serious advantages, and can be necessary in order to adequately maintain ecosystem services, it is not an easy process. The inherent transnationality of transboundary conservation makes implementing a successful project more difficult for a variety of reasons. The first and most evident reason has to do with the concept of sovereignty of the different nation-states involved within any transboundary conservation effort. More specifically, in some instances countries have preferred to exercise their “right to develop” over conserving biodiversity, resulting in a transboundary ecosystem left vulnerable due to a lack of participation in such efforts among each nation-state involved (Tarlock, 1997). However, it is safe to assume that this lack of country participation is mitigated by the supply of condition-specific funding from NGOs such as the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), which likely provides an increased incentive for international efforts to conserve

biodiversity (at least in Central and South America). Nonetheless, even if governments choose to cooperate over the conservation of a transboundary ecosystem, this does not necessarily lead to successful conservation. One example of this occurrence can arise when the spending and organizational capacities of certain government agencies are overestimated, in which countries involved in the process do not have adequately capable government agencies to successfully continue an ICDP beyond the funding and support provided by the implementing agency (Wells, 2003, p. 72). Within transboundary projects, this issue could cause problems when certain countries involved in the project lack government agencies with adequate capacity. These are some of the main challenges that make transboundary conservation difficult.

Transboundary conservation initiatives that also focus on development (*transboundary ICDPs*) tend to face challenges due to their large-scale and multi-dimensional nature. More specifically, transboundary projects that involve the cooperation of multiple governments, NGOs, funding organizations and local communities must deal with the challenge of how to structure and carry out the project in a way that involves both national and local actors. For example, some authors argue that international cooperation can bring about successful sustainable outcomes through organizations such as the GEF, but that “political commitment at the highest level is necessary to ensure smooth operation of multi-country institutions and on-the-ground implementation” (Uitto and Duda, 2002, p. 376). Furthermore, even though high-level political commitment is necessary, other authors argue that transboundary conservation success also depends heavily on bottom-up approaches. For example, transboundary conservation consultant Dorothy C. Zbicz argues that

IOs and NGOs can communicate, facilitate, educate and equip. But, they cannot impose and force transboundary cooperation, as if sovereign countries were children being instructed to cooperate and play nicely together. The seed of transboundary conservation can be planted, watered, and nurtured, but growth must come from within, from the ground up (2003, p. 35).

Overall, transboundary conservation is a complex and laborious task, but an important one, and in order to analyze stakeholder participation in transboundary ICDPs, recognizing and taking into account the costs and benefits of the transboundary factor is essential. Furthermore, transboundary conservation warrants even more considerations when it is conducted within a project that not only focuses on conservation, but also on development.

Integrated Conservation and Development

As stated in the introduction, this paper focuses on a specific type of sustainable development known as integrated conservation and development. Although a unanimously agreed upon definition for integrated conservation and development projects does not exist, this paper will refer to Fiona Flintan and Ross Hughes' definition of ICDPs as: a biodiversity project with rural development components that tends to address biodiversity conservation objectives through the use of socio-economic investment tools (2001, p. 4). The concept of integrated conservation and development is quite appealing, especially for international organizations and donors who aim to do more than create a protected area. Furthermore, according to numerous authors, ICDPs became popular because they recognized the moral implications and costs that conservation (by the creation of a strict protected area) could have for disadvantaged local people (Hutton, Adams & Murombedzi, 2005).

Although the concept behind ICDPs seems relatively straightforward, there is a

significant amount of discord within the literature on the feasibility of simultaneously achieving conservation and development goals. One group of authors who write on ecosystem services argue that

Nature conservation and conservation management strategies do not necessarily pose a trade-off between the “environment” and “development”. Investments in conservation, restoration and sustainable ecosystem use are increasingly seen as a “win-win situation” which generates substantial ecological, social and economic benefits. (De Groot et al., 2010, p. 260)

Although this is a positive outlook, other authors detail how “win-win” situations are feasible, but not necessarily common. For example, one article describes an “increasing concern that global efforts to maintain biodiversity are in conflict with those to reduce poverty,” in which actions such as the creation of protected areas cause “the foreclosure of future land use options, with potentially significant economic opportunity costs” (Adams et al., 2004, p. 1146). In other words, conservation can come with significant economic costs. Furthermore, another article that discusses the challenges of win-win conservation projects is the 2010 McShane et al. publication: “Hard Choices: Making Trade-Offs Between Biodiversity Conservation and Human Well-Being.” This article focuses on the concept that sustainable development projects such as ICDPs are typically not win-win situations, and that conservation efforts should be viewed more in terms of “trade-offs” and “hard choices” in order to more effectively “orient strategic analysis and communication.” More specifically, this article discusses how viewing projects in such a way “may lead to more resilient and sustainable conservation outcomes” (p. 969). Overall, these three major articles, which are examples of more general theory, provide valuable insight on how the issue of balancing biodiversity conservation and economic development is not simply resolved. Nonetheless, the projects analyzed within this paper

attempted to achieve this balance through a variety of different approaches. It should be noted that even though the success of these different projects at achieving this balance varies significantly, the aim of this paper is not to determine or define this aspect of success. However, in order to analyze the stakeholder participation within these projects more comprehensively, the difficulty of this balance between conservation and development is important to acknowledge.

Stakeholder Participation

Within many sustainable development and conservation initiatives around the world, stakeholder participation has become a key aspect of creating a sustainable and successful project. Furthermore, one could also argue that in many cases, advocating stakeholder participation is an important ethical aspect of development. For example, Brechin, Wilshusen, Fortwangler and West argue that participation is one of the “core principles of justice,” and that it allows the goals of conservation and development to be negotiated in a more fair and ethical way (2002, p. 54). Moreover, there are other authors who argue that conservation efforts are not only more ethical when stakeholder participation is fostered, but that participation can make sustainable development initiatives more effective. For example, in an article that focuses on an anthropological approach to conservation, J. Peter Brosius and Diane Russell argue that “it is necessary to maintain community and participation as central precepts of conservation,” in which this will entail initiatives that are “simultaneously more effective, just, and equitable” (2003 p. 39). Furthermore, other authors comment on the concept that effective stakeholder participation is key to the long-term sustainability of conservation

initiatives. For example, Zbicz argues that “ultimate sustained success depends on the day-to-day involvement and efforts of those on the local level who must do the interacting” (2003, p. 22). Brechin et. al also comment on how fostering community participation promotes sustained effectiveness by arguing that “establishing legitimate processes by constructively working with people will be the most feasible and morally just way to achieve long-term nature protection” (p. 51). All of these authors not only emphasize the importance of stakeholder participation, but also argue that this participation has the capacity to improve the sustainable development projects themselves.²

Within ICDPs specifically, stakeholder participation has arisen as a key aspect of project processes. One interesting occurrence is that even with the varying conclusions on the importance of stakeholder participation, the concept has become quite popular among ICDP proposals within the past three decades. This phenomenon became prevalent in the 1990s when, likely due to a fear of funding rejection, very few project proposals failed to reference stakeholder, community or local participation (or at least the stated goal of it) as a part of their project (Campbell & Vainio-Mattila, 2003, p. 421). However, according to some authors, the popularity of participation is justified. More specifically, the argument has arisen that because ICDPs focus on both the conservation of an ecological system and economic development, the participation of stakeholders is a key aspect of establishing informed and successful project goals (Wells & McShane, 2004). For example, one group of authors argue:

The inclusion of both bottom–up and top–down stages in the proposed process is vital in achieving the hybrid knowledge required to provide a more nuanced understanding

² For more details on the history, costs and benefits of stakeholder participation, see Mark S. Reed’s notable 2008 publication: “Stakeholder participation for environmental management: A literature review.”

of environmental, social and economic system interactions that are required to provide more informed inputs to local sustainable development initiatives (Reed, Fraser & Dougill 2005, p. 416).

This passage describes how the multi-layered complexion of ICDPs makes stakeholder participation increasingly important, in which the bottom-up approach refers to stakeholder participation and input. Applied ecologist Fikret Berkes touches on a similar concept by mentioning that the inherently complex character of environmental problems requires participatory approaches as opposed to top-down management, in which integrated development conservation efforts should strive to have a “nuanced understanding of the nature of people, communities, institutions, and their interrelations at various levels” (2004, p. 628). This argument expands on the idea that stakeholder participation provides a way for more comprehensive information inputs to be incorporated into the decisions of projects such as ICDPs (Reed, 2008, p. 2420).

When discussing the immediate threats that can be reduced by fostering stakeholder participation, different arguments exist. These arguments center on the debate of whether local populations or “external factors” such as expanding market demand or vested interests (e.g. illegal logging) pose a greater threat to biodiversity within ICDP focal areas (Wells, 2003 versus Hughes & Flintan, 2001, p. 9). More specifically, if local populations and their daily practices (such as the possible over-exploitation of resources) do indeed pose a significant threat to biodiversity like Hughes and Flintan mention, then prioritizing local participation is undoubtedly crucial. However, these arguments tend to be rather case-specific, in which the most significant threats to biodiversity can vary greatly.

Whether or not project implementers view stakeholder participation as a priority, the process of successfully fostering participation within ICDPs is neither simple nor standard. Some authors argue that a frequent lack in homogeneity among involved local populations contributes to this difficulty, in which a significant amount of internal division and tension can occur at the lower levels of organization (Wells, 2003; Brechin et. al, 2002). Furthermore, research has shown that within numerous ICDPs of the past, implementers have struggled to learn from the participatory experiences of similar initiatives, and that the different priorities of conservation and development can complicate the implementation of successful participation (Campbell & Vainio-Mattila, 2003, p. 419). On this note, one of the principal issues faced by development projects implementing stakeholder participation is the difficulty of evaluating the participation itself, in which a “good” participatory process can vary significantly depending on the context (Webler & Tuler, 2006 in Reed, 2008, p. 2421). Nonetheless, various authors have attempted to deal with this issue by detailing some important aspects of stakeholder participation. For example, Reed (2008) argues that stakeholder participation should be viewed as a process that considers a variety of different best-practice features (p. 2426).³ Another example can be found in how Brechin et. al attempt to define the parameters of participation

³ More specifically, Reed outlines eight separate features of best-practice participation that he extracted from past literature using a Ground Theory Analysis. These eight features are: 1) Stakeholder participation needs to be underpinned by a philosophy that emphasizes empowerment, equity, trust and learning. 2) Where relevant, stakeholder participation should be considered as early as possible and throughout the process. 3) Relevant stakeholders need to be analyzed and represented systematically. 4) Clear objectives for the participatory process need to be agreed among stakeholders at the outset. 5) Methods should be selected and tailored to the decision-making context, considering the objectives, type of participants and appropriate level of engagement. 6) Highly skilled facilitation is essential. 7) Local and scientific knowledges should be integrated. 8) Participation needs to be institutionalized. (2008).

with the following questions: Who participates? What are their demands and expectations? What capacity do individuals and groups have to participate? Will they participate in all aspects of decision making or in only selected phases? How do participants benefit from involvement? (2002, p. 47). A third method of measuring stakeholder participation was carried out by Lisen Schultz, Andreas Duit and Carl Folk, who constructed various indexes that measured the stakeholder participation in both the decision-making process and implementation process (2010, p. 664). These indexes, along with Reed's features of best-practice participation, and the questions proposed by Brechin et. al, provide a certain way to analyze stakeholder participation. However, this process is not necessarily standard, in which project initiators and evaluators are not always able to effectively consider or implement these methods. Overall, the difficulty of not only implementing, but also measuring stakeholder participation remains challenge in ongoing sustainable development initiatives.

Gaps in the Literature

The complexities and interactions between transboundary conservation efforts, ICDPs, and stakeholder participation has been rather expanded on in current literature. However, there is not a significant amount of literature discussing how stakeholder participation varies between different transboundary ICDPs, or if transboundary ICDPs have dealt with participation challenges that are specific to their transboundary circumstance. One article that touches on these issues is Brosius and Russell's "Conservation from Above: An Anthropological Perspective on Transboundary Protected Areas and Ecoregional Planning," which discusses the importance of stakeholder participation within largescale transboundary projects. Moreover, they advocate

for better social analyses and local control (i.e. stakeholder participation) in order to have better project planning and implementation (2003). Nonetheless, even though this article and others (e.g. Reed, 2008; Schultz, Duit, and Folk 2010) discuss the importance of stakeholder participation, there is less focus on how that participation varies within transboundary initiatives specifically, in which more research could be done to explain how the transboundary variable affects stakeholder participation within ICDPs. Due to this occurrence, the following research has the potential of significantly contributing to the literature that surrounds the complexities of fostering stakeholder participation within transboundary ICDPs.

Theoretical Framework

With the complexities of transboundary ICDPs and stakeholder participation expanded upon, the theoretical layout of this paper can be discussed with adequate context. This paper will use theory from various disciplines in order to address the hypothesis that ICDPs focusing on transboundary ecosystems within Central and South America experience more difficulties with successfully fostering stakeholder participation than ICDPs occurring within a single nation-state, for a variety of reasons. Before testing this hypothesis, three core assumptions must be noted, the first being that one can assess stakeholder participation as more or less successful, in which even though it will not consist of a strict dichotomy, the quality of stakeholder participation must be determined in order to analyze the data. The second main assumption is that different ICDPs can be compared, even though they have inevitable and significant differences. The third major assumption is that the project documents of the various ICDPs selected for this paper serve as accurate representations of the projects, and that the

evaluations were not carried out in an extensively biased way. With these assumptions noted, the theoretical basis of this paper can be more extensively explored.

Throughout the analysis presented in this paper, I search for any possible connections that the transboundary variable of ICDPs may have with fostering stakeholder participation. In this case, stakeholder participation represents the dependent variable and the nature of the project (transboundary or not) represents the independent variable. More specifically, I explore the possibility that transboundary projects face more difficulty fostering successful stakeholder participation, and cite specific qualitative examples that may explain why this occurs. Furthermore, in order to ensure that other variables are not the primary cause of any findings, I tested to see if a correlation existed between the data representing stakeholder participation and the control variables of project cost and project duration. I have reason to believe that my hypothesis is true for a variety of reasons, but primarily due to the literature that exists on the inherent challenges of promoting conservation within transboundary projects. Furthermore, as part of exploring this hypothesis, this paper puts a strong emphasis on the qualitative exploration of possible reasons that the transboundary variable could affect stakeholder participation.

Methodology

Data Selection: The Projects

The core data for this paper consists of the project documents of fifteen different ICDPs selected from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) website, seven of which deal with a transboundary ecosystem, and eight of which occurred within a single nation-state (Fig. 1). Each

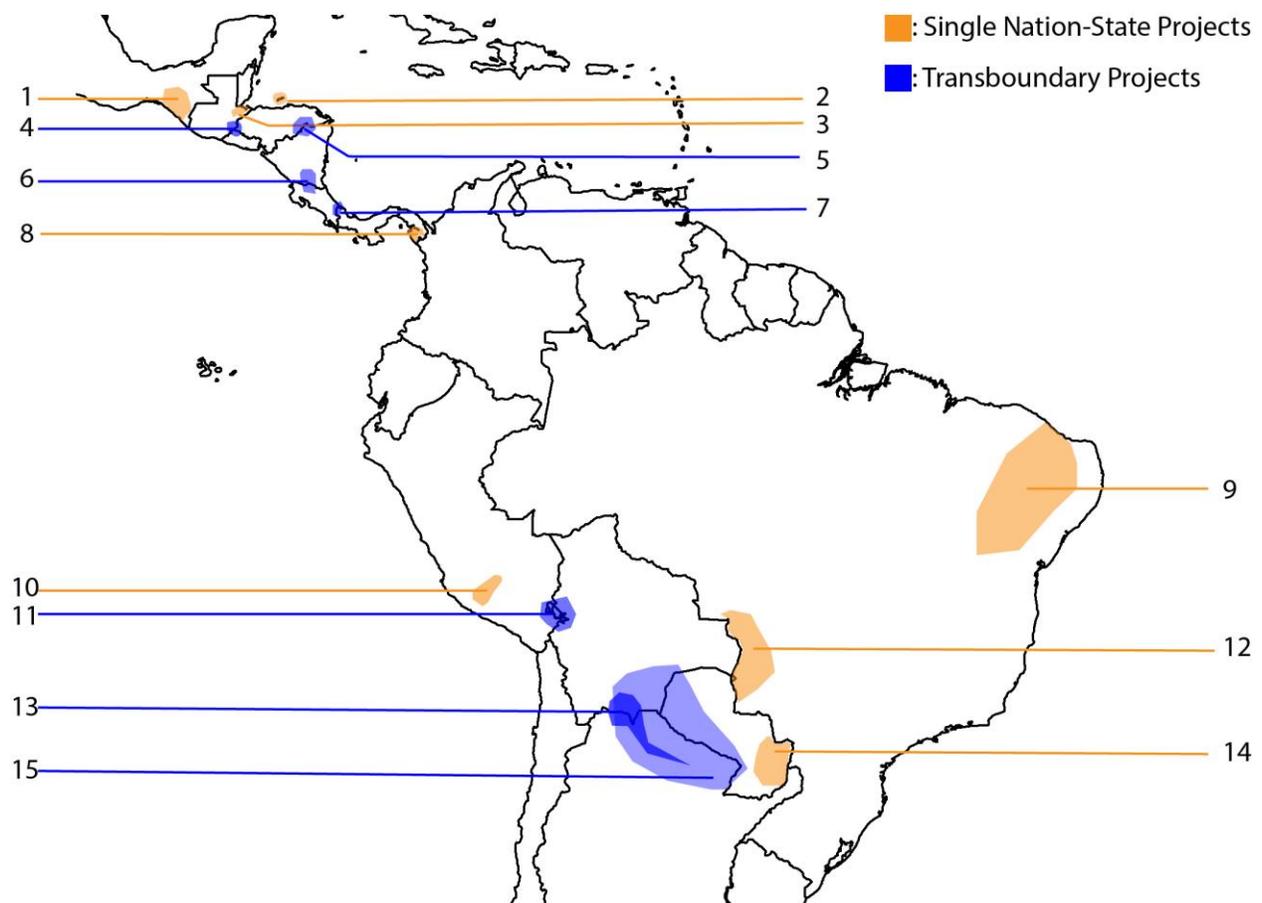
of these projects was selected based the following five criteria. First, the projects must have been an **ICDP**, and had the primary goal of integrating conservation and development. Although many of the selected projects have different specific foci (such as promoting sustainable tourism versus promoting sustainable forest management), they all primarily focused on integrating the two important goals of development and conservation. Second, the projects must have been **completed and evaluated** between 2001 and 2016, in which although many of the projects have ongoing features such as lasting institutions, they have all been considered completed by the GEF. Furthermore, along with being completed, these projects must have a terminal evaluation that can be used to assess stakeholder participation, because without one they could not be adequately analyzed. The third criterion was that the projects must have occurred in **Central or South America**. I selected this criterion for a variety of reasons, the primary one being that the area holds numerous ecosystems that contain rich biodiversity, impoverished communities, and numerous regional commonalities, making it very relevant in terms of the goals of ICDPs. I also selected this criteria because the region contains numerous transboundary ecosystems, as well numerous ecosystems that exist entirely within a single nation-state, making the projects more readily comparable.⁴ The fourth criterion demanded that the projects deal with a **single continuous ecosystem**, as opposed to numerous different ones that are separated by other segments of land or water.⁵ This condition was selected

⁴ Another reason was that I have more specific knowledge about this region, one example being my ability to read some of the project reports that were written in Spanish.

⁵ It should be noted that although some of the projects analyzed exist within larger biomes, each one focuses on an ecosystem that is continually distributed within that biome. Furthermore, this criterion serves as an important aspect of the selection process because the interconnectivity of a single ecosystem is one of the primary incentives for transboundary conservation.

because it represents a key commonality between the projects, in which transboundary ICDPs are almost always created in order to try to manage a single ecosystem more effectively. Furthermore, the challenges that ICDPs face with trying to foster stakeholder participation may differ if they were focusing on multiple ecosystems. Fifth, the projects must have been considered **full-sized** by the GEF, having received at least two million U.S. dollars of funding (GEF, 2017). This criterion was selected for similar reasons as the single ecosystem, in which transboundary projects typically demand a significant amount of capacity and funding, and a relatively similar spending capacity serves as an important similarity when comparing the different projects. Even though the implementing organizations of the projects tend to vary, all the projects were selected from the GEF website, having received a significant portion of their funding from the organization. The decision was partly made due to the GEF's role as a major funder of large-scale ICDPs, and also due to the availability of their project reports and descriptions online.

Using the criteria above, an exhaustive list of transboundary projects was selected along with eight comparable single nation-state projects that share the same criteria. These single nation-state projects were selected with the intention of providing a regionally diverse sample that included projects with similar foci to their transboundary counterparts. Furthermore, these single nation-state projects were chosen specifically for their structure, objectives, and characteristics as opposed to their success, in which the criteria resulted in a relatively exhaustive selection process. The following map displays a list of each of these projects, along with the project title, and an abbreviated name with which they will be referenced.



(Source of blank map: sawyoo.com)

Figure 1. The fifteen projects selected for inclusion in this study.

Key:

1. Mexico- “Mainstreaming the conservation of ecosystem services and biodiversity at the sub-watershed scale in Chiapas, Mexico” (The Chiapas Project)
2. Honduras- “Consolidation of ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation under the environmental management program of the Bay Islands.” (The Bay Islands Project)
3. Guatemala- “Integrated biodiversity protection in the Sarstun-Motagua Region” (The Sarstun-Motagua project)
4. El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras- “Integrated management of the Montecristo Trinational Protected Area project.” (The Montecristo Trinational Project)
5. Honduras, Nicaragua- “Corazón Transboundary Biosphere Reserve project.” (The Corazón Project)
6. Costa Rica, Nicaragua- “Formulation of strategic action programme for the integrated management of the San Juan River Basin and its coastal zone.” (The San Juan River Basin Project)
7. Costa Rica, Panamá- “Integrated ecosystem management in the Binational Sixaola River Basin Project.” (The Sixaola Project)

8. Panamá- “Project BioDarién: conservation of biodiversity in Darién through community sustainable development.” (The BioDarién Project)
9. Brazil- “Caatinga conservation and management project.” (The Caatinga Project)
10. Peru- “Integrated management of the ecosystem in the Cotahuasi River Basin.” (The Cotahuasi Project)
11. Bolivia, Peru- “Conservation of biodiversity in the Lake Titicaca Basin.” (The Lake Titicaca Project)
12. Brazil- “Implementation of integrated watershed management practices for the Pantanal and Upper Paraguay River Basin.” (The Pantanal Project)
13. Argentina, Bolivia- “Implementation of the strategic action programme for the Bermejo River Binational Basin: phase II (Bermejo SAP II).” (The Bermejo Project)
14. Paraguay- “Conservation of biodiversity and sustainable land management in the Atlantic Forest of Eastern Paraguay.” (The Eastern Paraguay Project)
15. Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay- “Sustainable forest management in the transboundary Gran Chaco Americano Ecosystem.” (The Gran Chaco Project)

Note: A brief summary of each project can be found in Appendix A.

Data Extraction: Project Ratings

With this list of projects assembled, the content of each terminal evaluation and relevant project report was analyzed with the intention of measuring stakeholder participation. Taking into consideration the findings and methods of Reed (2008), Brechin et. al (2002), and Schultz, Duit and Folk (2010), I created a list of nine separate questions to ask from each project document, and then assigned a Likert scale rating (a non-comparative and unidimensional rating scale pioneered by Rensis Likert) to each question, assessing each project on a 6-point scale from zero to five (five being the most satisfactory rating). The first question aimed to assess if the project identified the various stakeholders during the planning process. The second question assessed the involvement of stakeholders in the overall planning and goal-setting aspects of the project. The third question asked if the project provided local stakeholders with different opportunities to participate in the project, such as workshops, economic programs

and feedback meetings. Furthermore, the fourth question examined if stakeholders participated in the aforementioned opportunities. The fifth question asked if the project management attempted to integrate local knowledge into project decisions and processes. The sixth question aimed to assess if stakeholders gained direct socioeconomic benefits from participating in the project through incentive programs. The seventh question tried to assess how effectively the project promoted equal gender participation between males and females. The eighth question inquired about the long-term sustainability of the participation programs, in which projects that had long-term participation programs such as institutionalized education received a higher rating. The ninth and final question focused on a comprehensive assessment of stakeholder participation by coding the terminal evaluation's overall assessment of stakeholder participation into a standardized scale.⁶

Data Analysis

With an individual rating given to each question in each project, I then conducted a statistical analysis by question, dividing the data into transboundary and single nation-state projects. This provided the opportunity to assess the different variations in ratings of the two different types of projects, comparing the groups using the median and standard error as representative values. Additionally, I used regression analyses to test for the main effect of project-type on question rating, and for an interaction of project-type and question rating, attempting to see if any significant statistical differences existed between the two types of projects. Along with this regression analysis, I also ran a T-test (a test that analyzes two groups

⁶ See Appendix B for a more detailed list of the questions and how they were asked.

of data to see if a difference in averages exists between the two that is not simply caused by random chance) of the data results from each question to see if any significant difference between project type resulted in any specific question. To supplement this information, I assigned an unweighted participation score to each project by averaging the ratings from all nine questions.⁷ With an averaged participation rating from each project, I could then test if a correlation existed between these participation ratings (of all the different projects) and the control variables of project cost, project duration, and the interaction of cost and duration.⁸ Finally, any connections established from the quantitative analysis were supplemented with specific qualitative information obtained from the project documents and an online interview conducted with the regional coordinator of the Gran Chaco Project, serving as a way to explore the connections in more detail, and to search for connections and contradictions.

Findings and Analysis

Understanding the Projects

Some challenges were faced by all of the ICDPs studied. First, all of these projects dealt with threatened ecosystems. Although the specific threats to biodiversity and ecosystem health varied throughout each project, the vast majority were anthropogenic. Second, all projects

⁷ It is important to note that this method does not infer that any one of the assessment questions holds more importance than the other, primarily because providing a strict numerical weighted average to each question underplays the variation of importance that they may hold within each unique project.

⁸ Although looking into control variables related with human development, capacity, and economic well-being could have produced interesting results, the ability of that data to adequately represent the populations within the specific project area was very difficult.

faced the challenge of devising a way to effectively reduce these anthropogenic threats while simultaneously ensuring that the reduction of these threats did not jeopardize the livelihoods of people living within the ecosystem. Third, these projects shared the common challenge of amalgamating numerous different institutions and various levels of stakeholders in order to adequately address the goals of integrated conservation and development, while also creating new institutions and networks. This process brings a wide variety of specific difficulties, many of which are intensified by the transboundary variable, which will be addressed below.

The specific goal of facilitating and promoting stakeholder participation also varied between the projects. Some projects had an evident and explicit strategy for promoting stakeholder participation as one of the primary aspects of the project, and other projects simply acknowledged its importance. For example, the Cotahuasi Project in Peru had a focus on specific participatory mechanisms as a principle strategy to ensure project success, and received the highest score for stakeholder participation (Gomero & Llosa 2011, p. 31).⁹ Furthermore, the Lake Titicaca Project conducted across Peru and Bolivia lacked a systematic and criteria-based strategy for identifying stakeholders and encouraging their participation, in which the report mentioned an insufficient and inconsistent focus on involving the poorer rural populations of the area (Cuba & Quiroga 2005, p. 51). Unsurprisingly, the Lake Titicaca received the lowest score for stakeholder participation among the selected projects.

Another commonality of these projects is that they had to respond to all of the threats and challenges unique to their specific ecosystem and population. Moreover, even though

⁹ This project also cited this focus on participation as one of the main factors that determined the success of the project, citing how it strengthened capacities, had a positive influence on project decisions, and generated trust among local actors (p. 31).

there were a substantial number of standard practices and procedures for how to implement and execute these projects – such as specific strategies to involve stakeholders – no standard template or plan could account for the complexities unique to each ICDP. Nevertheless, with projects of this size, the predominant organizational structure involved the management of various subprojects that focused on more specific tasks. These subprojects included a wide variety of scales, scopes, and foci, in which they focus on coordinating anything from building erosion barriers, to the creation of a communications network, to the implementation of an ecosystem-health educational program for local children. The success of a large-scale ICDP may depend on how these subprojects are created and managed, as well as how these subprojects deal with the presentation of various challenges. In the list of the fifteen selected projects of this paper, some were more successful than others. This paper will specifically examine how the transboundary factor played into the variety of challenges faced by ICDPs.

Overall, due to the ethical implications and possible benefits of fostering stakeholder participation within an ICDP discussed by researchers such as Brechin et. al (2002), Berkes (2004), and Brosius & Russel (2003), the data taken from these projects represent an integral aspect of these projects. Furthermore, in order to adequately conserve the biodiversity within a transboundary ecosystem, *all* nation-states that share this ecosystem must move towards more sustainable outcomes. Therefore, analyzing stakeholder participation within transboundary ICDPs is an important task.

My findings support the hypothesis that transboundary ICDPs face more difficulties promoting successful and thorough stakeholder participation than single nation-state projects.

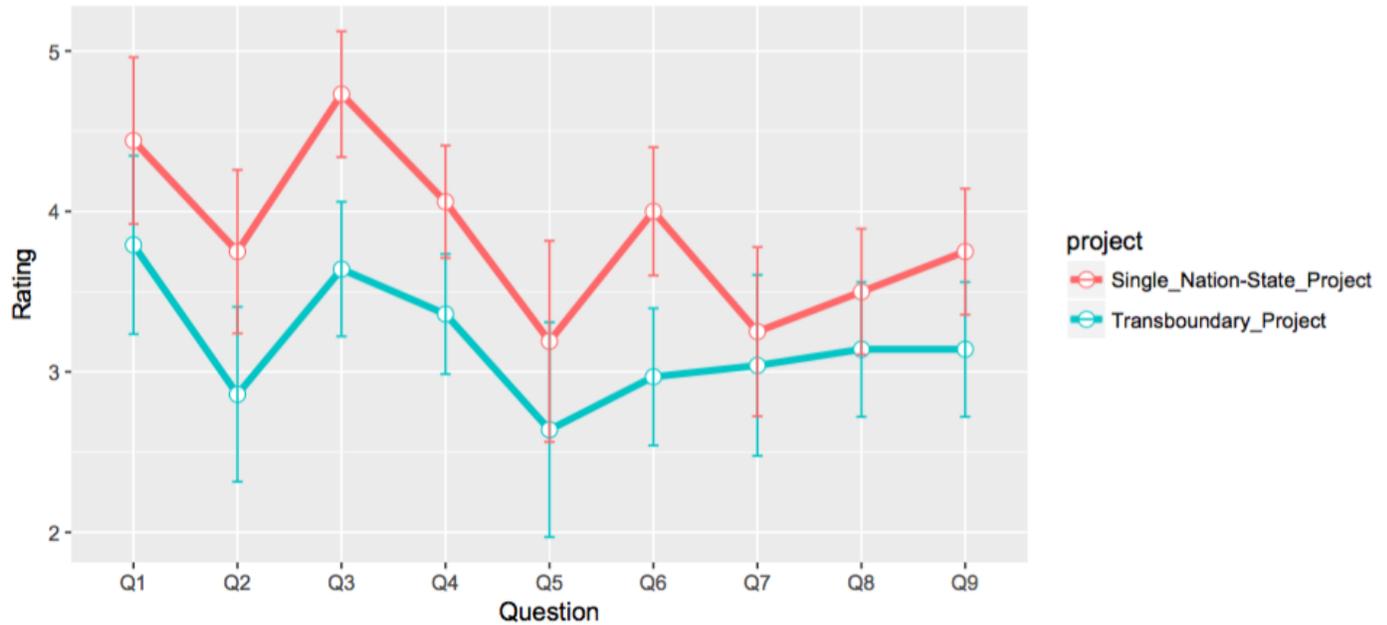


Figure 2. The average rating that each question received based on the data collected. Median values are represented by the dots, and the standard error of each question is represented by a color-coded vertical line. Transboundary projects are color coded in blue, and the single nation-states are coded in orange. A higher score represents more success fostering stakeholder participation.

Key:

- Q1- Have the different stakeholders been clearly identified?
- Q2- Were stakeholders involved in the planning and goal-setting aspects of the project?
- Q3- Were stakeholders provided with opportunities to participate?
- Q4- If provided, were these opportunities taken advantage of by stakeholders?
- Q5- Was local knowledge integrated into the decisions and processes of the project?
- Q6- Did local stakeholders directly benefit in socioeconomic ways from participating?
- Q7- Did stakeholder participation include the equal gender participation?
- Q8- Did stakeholder participation activities/opportunities and include sustainable long-term programs/objectives?
- Q9- What was the terminal evaluation’s assessment of stakeholder participation?

The transboundary projects scored consistently lower for every question (Fig. 2), signifying a lower average rate of success in incorporating local and community level stakeholder participation. However, although a rather clear trend exists between the two different types of projects, a regression analysis was conducted to test for the main effect of

project-type on question rating ($\beta = -.946$, $t = -1.762$, $p = .09$). This implies that when viewing the questions aggregately, no significant statistical difference between transboundary and single nation-state projects exists. Additionally, an interaction of project-type and question rating was examined, but was also not significant ($\beta = .055$, $t = .979$, $p = .329$), indicating that the two project types did not significantly differ, even when analyzed question by question. However, it is important to acknowledge that the data used to determine these outcomes come from a relatively small—albeit exhaustive—sample size, in which if more projects existed, or if more differences were explored between these two types of projects, significant differences could exist. In other words, due to the circumstances of the data, these initial findings should not be discounted simply because of the high p-value. Therefore, this analysis will continue to explore why this trend of difference between transboundary and single-nation state projects exists.

Even though the gap between transboundary and single nation-state projects did not hold statistical significance when viewed aggregately, viewing the data by each question can provide us with a better understanding of the differences that may exist between the two types of projects. For instance, after conducting a T-test on each question, questions three and six demonstrated significant difference, with respective P-values of .022 and .028. This indicates that the transboundary projects particularly struggled with providing participatory opportunities for stakeholders, and with providing participatory incentives that offered socioeconomic benefits. On a different note, questions such as seven and eight displayed less difference between the two types of projects in the T-test, with respective p-values of .395 and .282. A tentative explanation for this occurrence is provided in the discussion. Overall, viewing the questions individually provides increased insight into the differences between the two

project-types. Furthermore, when the data is viewed aggregately, the evident overarching trend merits a more in-depth analysis.

Average Project Scores: Addressing Weak Projects and Control Variables

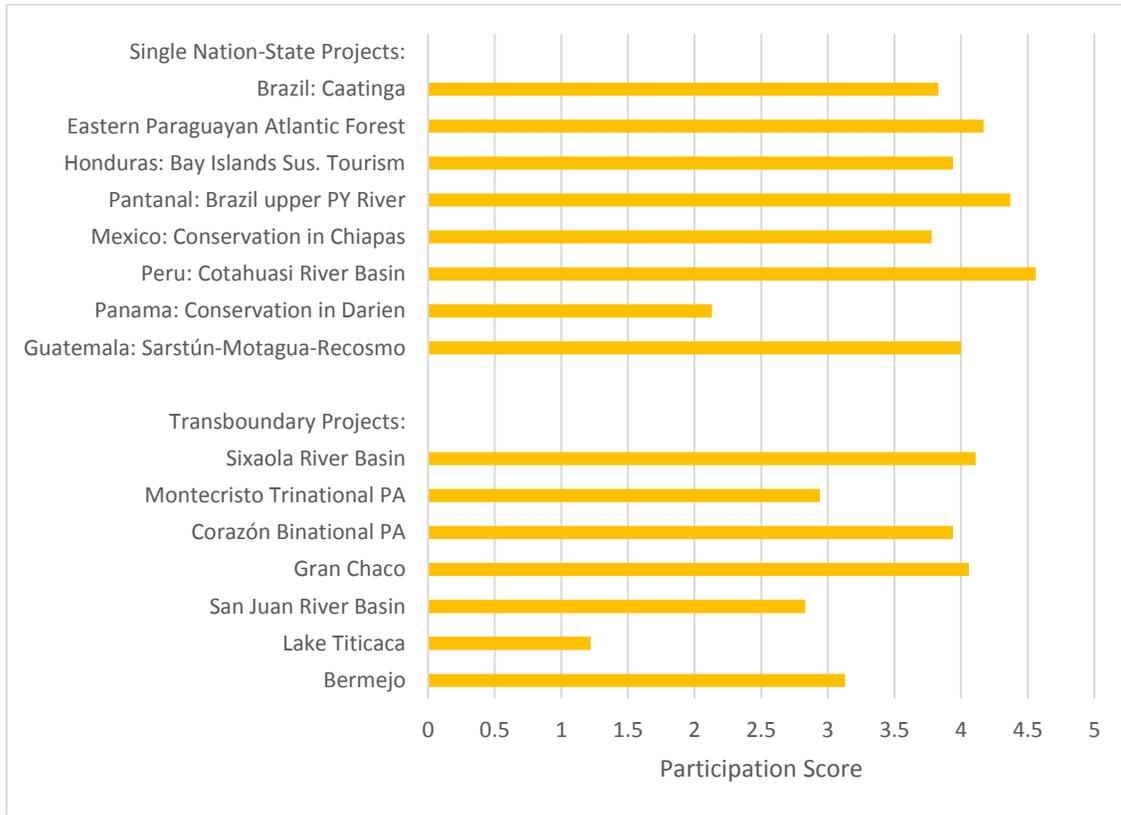


Figure 3. Average participation score per project

Averaging each project’s participation score displayed how the participation varied within each project, and exposed specific projects that had a more significant impact on the variation seen within figure 2. For instance, these average scores reveal the significantly lower score of the Lake Titicaca Project. Even though the Lake Titicaca project does not fall into the standard statistical definition of an outlier (it still lies within the predicted range of the data),

when it is removed from the transboundary data the findings do not considerably change.¹⁰

This represents that even with the elimination of the transboundary project with the lowest participation score, there remains a consistently lower score among said projects (aside from question number eight). The Lake Titicaca project serves as a valuable representation of a project that faced serious difficulties in numerous ways. Moreover, the BioDarién project within Panama also received a rather low participation score, and therefore demonstrates that experiencing difficulties with stakeholder participation is not exclusive to transboundary projects.

Using the average participation scores from each project, a regression analysis that tested the relationship between participation score and each of the control variables (project cost, project duration, and the interaction of cost and duration) was conducted. These regression analyses revealed the possibility of a correlation between stakeholder participation and the specific control variable of project cost, in which a p-value of .0544 represented a nearly statistically significant finding. Perhaps with a larger sample size, this correlation could approach significance, and possibly a future study could reveal a positive relationship between project spending and the success of stakeholder participation. Nevertheless, the overall results of analyzing the control variables did not raise any suspicion that a different variable had a significantly stronger effect on the participation scores of these projects than the transboundary variable.

¹⁰ See Appendix C for a visual representation of the data without the Lake Titicaca project.

Discussion

An in-depth qualitative analysis of the terminal evaluations provides possible direct and indirect explanations of the findings. More specifically, qualitative information shows us that transboundary projects experienced difficulties facilitating stakeholder participation due to: a lack of capable preexisting institutions, the effects of political changes, unequal capacities of different governments, a struggle to share information across the project, and the lack of a common project vision. Each of these explanations is discussed in more detail below.

Furthermore, the following explanations serve as possible reasons that transboundary projects tended to face more difficulty with: providing stakeholder with participatory opportunities (Q3), motivating stakeholders to take advantage of these opportunities (Q4) and providing direct socioeconomic incentives for stakeholders to participate (Q6).

Capable Preexisting Institutions: An Advantage for Single Nation-State Projects

Within the project documents, the presence of pre-existing institutions undoubtedly functioned as one of the most substantial differences between transboundary and single-nation state endeavors when attempting to facilitate stakeholder participation. Due to barriers such as sovereignty and the limitations of regional institutions, projects occurring within single nation-states, under a single government, can be expected to have preexisting institutions with a more coordinated leadership structure. Furthermore, these preexisting institutions played a noteworthy part in the planning and initialization processes of the projects, in which this occurrence could help explain the limited results found in questions one and two (see figure 2).

One example of a single nation-state that succeeded with facilitating stakeholder participation in these processes was the Pantanal Project in Brazil, in which the project reached out to a wide variety of stakeholders prior to implementation, using institutional connections already in place to expedite the process (Santos-Garrido 2005, p. 29). Furthermore, the terminal evaluation mentions that the multi-institutional cooperation and participation played a critical part in the project's success (p. 19). The majority of the other single nation state projects (especially those that succeeded in facilitating stakeholder input and participation) refer to the use of national institutions and organizations during the initializing process to facilitate participation (e.g. East Paraguay Project). However, for transboundary projects, implementers often needed to create new institutions that specifically addressed coordination between the different countries involved, or they needed to rely on preexisting regional institutions that may not have focused on sustainability or conservation. This occurrence demonstrates that within the planning and initialization process, the need for transboundary projects to create or substantially strengthen institutions between the different countries represents a significant challenge. Furthermore, this challenge also complicates the facilitation of local stakeholder participation (such as the provision of opportunities to participate).

One example of transboundary projects struggling with not having adequate preexisting institutions was when they attempted to identify, involve and provide participatory opportunities for stakeholders in the initial phases of the project. More specifically, transboundary projects experienced difficulty with international, and civil society institutions when identifying and involving stakeholders that lived on the border between the countries involved, such as binational indigenous populations. For example, the terminal evaluation of

the Corazón Project within Honduras and Nicaragua noted that project planners overestimated the capacity of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (the international institution they relied on) to create a binational forum and coordinate binational indigenous populations (i.e. civil-society institutions) (Battaglini, Felipe-Jaramillo, Marulanda, & Tuluy 2013, p. 6). This use of an inadequate international institution to establish civil-society resulted in the creation of a forum with “no clear objectives, no operational structure, and without a framework for coordination” with the project’s executing agencies (p. 6).

Furthermore, this project’s terminal evaluation stated that the people selected as leading members of the indigenous forum and coordination groups “often did not represent the interests of indigenous communities in the Project area,” signifying a failure in the identification and involvement of key stakeholders (p. 6). Overall, this created issues because even though the project created the binational indigenous forum to foster participation and “integrate the binational dimension,” it ended up becoming “an inefficient process that lacked leadership, coordination with national priorities, strategic focus, and that did not contribute to overall Project objectives” (p. 6). This serves as a specific example of how the transboundary variable complicated the involvement of stakeholders, in which the lack of an adequate regional institution made it more difficult to inspire participation and coordination among indigenous populations in the area. However, one could also argue that in many cases indigenous populations are difficult to involve in the participatory process, in which the challenge of involving a binational indigenous population may stem from their indigenous identity as opposed to their binational circumstance. Nonetheless, this example serves as an instance where the binational component undoubtedly complicated the situation, especially considering

other single nation-state projects' successes engaging indigenous populations (e.g. Battaglini, Costa, Familiar, Ijjász-Vásquez, Lange & Wetzel 2012, p. 2; Catalina-López, Fuentes & Grünberg, 2004, p. 4).

Single nation-state projects also experienced fewer difficulties with identifying and involving stakeholders through the use in-place state-level institutions to establish civil society institutions. For example, in the Chiapas Project within Mexico, the project took advantage of pre-established institutions called "Watershed Councils," which were originally formulated with the primary goals of improving the quality and supply of water within the basin (Hofstede 2014, p. 7). These water councils provided an existent participatory framework that greatly assisted with the identification of stakeholders, and informed the process of creating participatory opportunities and benefits (p. 7). Along with the other single-nation state projects, the pre-existing institutions within the Chiapas project resulted in a smoother identification and involvement process of stakeholders. Overall, although the thorough identification of stakeholders remained a difficult process in all types of projects, evidence from project evaluations demonstrated that effectively identifying and promoting the participation of stakeholders was complicated in transboundary projects. More specifically, this complication resulted from an absence of preexisting institutions, especially when those stakeholders included populations that straddled the border, such as the those in the Corazón Project.

The creation of transboundary institutions for an ICDP also resulted in challenges when projects attempted to include and incorporate various local and national actors into an international institutional framework (something that single nation-state projects did not necessarily have to deal with). More specifically, the transboundary nature of the projects

tended to complicate the important process of involving both the “bottom-up and top-down” aspects of a project emphasized by Reed, Fraser & Dougill (2005, p. 416). One example of this resides in the difficulties faced by the Montecristo Trinational Project within El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. In this case, the project struggled with institutional incorporation and cohesion on an international level, in which the terminal evaluation stated that “communities, municipalities and NGOs were not, at first, represented in the institutional infrastructure of the project. All activities relied on the national institutional infrastructures combined into the trinational one... this led many respondents to state that the project design was much too ambitious and to some extent unrealistic considering the trinational political context of the project” (Daoust & Green 2012, p. 23). This occurrence demonstrates how the transboundary and regional aspect of a project can directly affect the ability to involve local stakeholders (such as communities) in the initial processes of the project, and also how a lack of incorporative and strong preexisting institutions can result in overly-ambitious and un-participatory outcomes.

Political and Institutional Changes: A Transboundary Challenge

The effects of political and institutional changes within projects’ host countries serve as another possible explanation for the lower involvement of stakeholder participation within the transboundary ICDPs examined in this paper. More specifically, although political and institutional changes tend to directly affect the higher-level actors more than the on-the-ground stakeholders, any significant impact on the former tends to impact the latter. For example, within the binational San Juan River Basin Project, the terminal evaluation noted that

“There were long periods of ‘vacuum time’ (up to one year) for each change of government after presidential elections in both countries. This caused a slow process of involvement of new staff members responsible of the institutions in each country” (Paulet-Iturri 2005, p. 16). To expand on this concept, although political changes may possibly result in positive outcomes, such as the introduction of new laws or officials that put higher emphasis on environmental policy, these changes can also have seriously detrimental effects on project efficiency. More specifically, some terminal evaluations mentioned that the staff turnover caused by these political changes resulted in substantial challenges faced by the institutions and activities within the project (e.g. Bello, Erath, & Flores 2013, p. 6; Cuba & Quiroga 2005, p. 27).

One of the most prominent instances of complications caused by political and institutional changes stemmed from the Honduran political crisis of 2009, which happened to occur at the same time as the three selected projects that took place in Honduras (the Corazón Project, the Montecristo Trinational Project, and the Bay Islands project). This crisis notably affected all of the projects involved, and in the case of the two transboundary projects, the crisis affected how the project functioned as a whole. For example, the Montecristo Trinational Project terminal evaluation cited the crisis as a major barrier to project success that caused intensity and efficiency to decrease across the entire project, with issues such as staff turnover and personal conflicts described as a “main cause of some institutional challenges during the project implementation” (Daoust & Green 2012, p. 25, 29 & 31). Furthermore, the terminal evaluation of Corazón project noted that “strained political relations between Honduras and Nicaragua between 2009 and 2010 had a significant impact on the Project, as diplomatic tensions resulted in major setbacks to all activities with a binational scope” (Battaglini et. al

2013, p. 6). This political crisis also had substantial effects on the Bay Islands project, in which a wide array of project operations faced challenges such as staff turnover and executive delays (Muñoz 2012, p. 5).

One of the ways the projects involved in the 2009 Honduran crisis attempted to mitigate the aforementioned challenges, especially in terms of staff turnover, was pushing for a decentralization of project activities. This process involves the transfer of management of project undertakings from staff to local stakeholders, and hence reducing the impact of political or other upper-level changes; but it tends to be easier in theory than in practice. Although all three projects within Honduras attempted to place an emphasis on decentralization, it had limited success. The two transboundary projects mentioned that a lack of capable multinational institutions led to serious challenges with setting up an adequate decentralization framework (Battaglini et. al 2013 p. 6; Daoust & Green 2012 p. 29). Overall, these specific examples point to the more broadly applicable concept that political changes within a project's host country can have serious implications for the project, and can be detrimental to the involvement of local stakeholder participation. Furthermore, in both of the transboundary projects, the Honduran political crisis affected the entirety of the project, and not just Honduras. If applied to other situations, this concept could signify that transboundary projects have a greater chance of experiencing the negative effects of political changes, simply because the likelihood increases with the number of the countries involved.

Unequal Capacity Leads to an Unequal Project

The unequal institutional and enforcement capacity (the ability of the project management at all levels to carry out tasks and enforce regulations) of different countries involved functions as another possible explanation for how the transboundary variable affected stakeholder participation within this sample of ICDPs. Referring back to a concept brought up by Wells, the inadequate capacity of government institutions within an ICDP can result in an unsuccessful project (2003). On this note, the goal of most transboundary ICDPs involved the establishment of equal progress towards conservation and development across all the different countries involved. However, when these countries had different capacities in terms of stable institutions and enforcement of policy, the process became complicated. Furthermore, this difference in capacity had similar effects on local stakeholder participation as political changes did, in which difficulties faced by upper-level actors within the project inevitably ended up affecting the lower-levels of the project, especially in the beginning stages. For example, the terminal evaluation of the BioDarién Project within Panamá (which had a low participation score) mentioned that the project struggled to involve communities due to a weak institutional capacity in the area; specifically having a limited capacity for law enforcement (Del Mónaco & Volonte 2002, p. 28). On the other side of the spectrum, in projects such as the Caatinga Project within Brazil, institutional capacity was cited as a key part of the project's ability to instill community participation (Battaglini et. al, 2012, p. 21). However, in some of the transboundary projects, an uneven distribution of institutional and enforcement capacity among the different countries had consequences for stakeholder participation, at least for the country with the lower capacity. For example, in the Corazón Project, disparity between the different capacities of each country's implementing institutions resulted in unrepresentative performance

indicators when the project was viewed aggregately. This eventually resulted in the separation of the project into “two simultaneous, parallel operations, with binational objectives to be pursued jointly and with a coordination component” (Battaglini et. al 2013, p. 7). Although this may have helped solved the issues of unequal progress and stakeholder involvement, according to the terminal evaluation it likely resulted in a difference in long-term sustainability between the countries, and therefore an unequally sustainable ecosystem (Battaglini et. al 2013, p. 7).

The Bermejo Project between Argentina and Bolivia serves as another notable example of how unequal capacities can affect stakeholder participation within a project, in which the terminal evaluation cited how differences between the capacities of Argentina and Bolivia had important impacts. More specifically, the terminal evaluation noted that the socioeconomic effects of the project were “dependent on the assumptions regarding institutional and community capacity to sustain certain levels of participation and empowerment. This is extremely uneven across the area of the Basin” (Navajas & Schreider 2011, p. 41). This concept can be directly related to questions four and six, in which the transboundary nature of the project resulted in some areas experiencing less participation in opportunities with socioeconomic benefits. Furthermore, the terminal evaluation also noted that at times Bolivia lacked consideration for the new standards considering community participation, and that this likely created problems in some sub-projects (p. 42). However, unlike the separation that occurred in the Corazón project, the Bermejo Project placed a strong emphasis on continued binational cooperation between the institutions of each country, in which the terminal

evaluation mentioned “progressing at the pace of the slower partner” (p. 17).¹¹ The example of the Bermejo Project clearly represents the challenge of ensuring adequate and equal completion of goals across a transboundary project with countries that have unequal institutional capacities. Furthermore, as it became evident in the Bermejo project, this difference in capacity can also be directly related with the project’s ability to foster stakeholder participation. Overall, these examples demonstrate that the transboundary variable can affect the project’s efficiency, success, and stakeholder participation.

Information Sharing and Collaboration: The Border Barrier

The fourth major way that the transboundary variable affected stakeholder participation within ICDPs was the complications that it caused in terms of the ability to share information and collaborate across a project. Without the sharing of information and collaboration, methods on how to engage local stakeholders effectively in opportunities such as education initiatives may not disseminate throughout the entire project (relating to questions three and four). Within the projects studied, numerous different examples of these complications took place. One of the most prominent examples can again be found within the Bermejo Project, in which the terminal evaluation noted that “with the exception of two binational workshops, there were little opportunities for exchange between stakeholders.

¹¹ Another example of this concept was found in the Gran Chaco Project, in which the regional coordinator Marco Flores mentioned that each country and institution has its own time-scale, which must be respected in order to ensure the progress of any transboundary project (M. Flores, personal communication, February 6, 2017). Overall, the reference of the necessity to progress at the pace of the “slower partner,” serves as a perfect example of how conducting *effective* transboundary conservation can tend to be a slower process.

Lessons sharing between environmental education sub-projects or land use planning sub-projects would have resulted in mutual benefits, and likely would have influenced the results of some initiatives” (Navajas & Schreider 2011, p. 30). This quote expands on the concept that the binational nature of the Bermejo project ended up resulting in a decreased amount of collaboration, in which lessons learned from subprojects such as Argentina’s successful education initiative sometimes failed to extend beyond the country’s national borders. This, in turn, tended to result in less effective stakeholder participation within Bolivia.

A lack of information sharing and collaboration also occurred within the Montecristo Trinational project, in which the terminal evaluation mentions that “although there are now at least 4 institutions at the local level involved in the Plan Trifinio, evidence suggests that no sustained trinational coordination mechanism amongst stakeholders has been established. There is will to do so among many of them, but they have only existed for short period of time and have not yet had the time to organize themselves” (Daoust & Green 2012, p. 34). This statement speaks to the difficulties that transboundary projects face with collaboration, and raises the idea that although many community-level stakeholders may want to collaborate, the process of creating a successful and participatory trinational communication network is a difficult task.

Even transboundary projects with notably successful collaboration and stakeholder participation, such as the Sixaola Project within Costa Rica and Panamá, acknowledge the difficulty of collaboration. More specifically, the Sixaola Project’s terminal evaluation referred to binational coordination processes as “slow and burdensome” (Guillen & Leyson 2013, p. 15). Furthermore, within the majority of single-nation state projects, issues with cross-project

collaboration and information sharing were not typically listed as notable challenges (e.g. the Cotahuasi Project and the Bay Islands Project). The most logical explanations for this occurrence draws on concepts touched on in the literature review, in which the sovereignty of each country and the challenge of coordinating between various levels of institutions serve as some of the primary challenges that transboundary projects must grapple with, and those two factors can result in a decrease in collaboration (Tarlock, 1997; Zbicz, 2003). Overall, the challenge of collaboration and information inherent to transboundary projects has the possibility of affecting stakeholder participation in a variety of ways, and could even directly play into the something such as the ability of projects to integrate local knowledge into implementation. More specifically, instances of successfully integrating something such as a sustainable indigenous agricultural practice may not be shared across the entire project. Whether this direct connection occurred or not, strong reasons exist for inferring that complications with information sharing and collaboration affected, either directly or indirectly, the ability of transboundary projects to foster stakeholder participation.

A Common Project Vision

Something that I encountered within the project documents (and through an online interview with one of the project coordinators) that may also serve as an explanation for the challenges of facilitating stakeholder participation in transboundary ICDPs was the concept of attempting to build on or create a common project vision across the ecosystem. In this sense, a common project vision refers to the cohesive sharing of a set of goals, objectives, strategies and efforts across an entire project. Unsurprisingly, this concept has interesting implications for

transboundary initiatives, in which the presence of this common vision could undoubtedly help these projects overcome transboundary-specific challenges. Furthermore, a strong common project vision among community and local stakeholders has the potential to foster resilient and equal participation across all different areas of the project. However, if a common project vision does not already exist, formulating one proves to be difficult, especially in transboundary projects. For example, in the Montecristo Trinational Project, the terminal evaluation mentioned that the process of “regionalization” was difficult to concretize, and that even though strong regional intentions existed, “political and economic interests were factors in moves towards nationalism” (Daoust & Green 2012, p. 30). Another example of the difficulty of creating a common project vision was found in the Corazón project, in which the terminal evaluation noted that “The binational nature of the Project and the complexities this involved were addressed primarily in terms of avoiding potential conflicts along the borders, i.e. supporting participative mechanisms for indigenous peoples in border areas” (Battaglini et. al 2013, p. 6). Both of these examples, along with others mentioned in the earlier sections of this paper, represent how the upper-level management and coordinators of these projects can struggle to share a common vision when the project straddles different national borders. More specifically, each of these examples mention how the transboundary side of the project tended to be reduced down to national interests and border areas as opposed to the whole ecosystem. These occurrences affect stakeholder participation of transboundary projects because if these projects cannot create a common shared vision, they risk unequal levels of participation throughout.

The challenge of creating a common regional vision can also be related to concepts discussed earlier in the analysis. For example, along the same lines of the effects that political changes can have on a project, the regional coordinator of the Gran Chaco Project, Marco Flores, mentioned the difficulty of considering a regional vision when the political conditions of each country are changing (M. Flores, personal communication, February 6, 2017). On this note, the difficulties of creating of a common project vision can stem from various root causes. One example of a transboundary project that succeeded in sharing a regional vision was the Sixaola project within Costa Rica and Panamá. The terminal evaluation of this project attributed its ability to have strong regional vision to “the good historic relationship between both countries and the stakeholders’ shared desire to achieve social, economic and regional integration, and, also, the will to seek solutions to ordinary problems affecting the people living in the Basin, no matter in what country they are settled” (Guillen & Leyson 2013, p. 29). One could argue that the preexisting positive relationship between Costa Rica and Panamá represents a key aspect of this statement, in which sharing a common goal becomes much easier within countries that share a history of positive interaction. Overall, the concept of sharing a common project vision undoubtedly affects the ability of a project to foster successful stakeholder participation, especially if that project straddles national boundaries.

The Concept of an Ecosystem Identity

One of the final interesting details about how the transboundary variable plays into these ICDPs came to light after my interview with Coordinator Flores, in which he commented on the concept of people within the projects sharing a common ecosystem identity. This

concept of a common ecosystem identity centers on the idea that stakeholders can identify as members of an ecosystem, even if this ecosystem spans across multiple countries. In the case of the Gran Chaco project, Coordinator Flores mentioned that the “Chaqueño” identity shared by many of the local stakeholders such as indigenous populations, poor rural farmers and local leaders, played a significant role in the regional aspect of the project. More specifically, Coordinator Flores mentioned that this sense of a project vision even tends to transcend that of political actors, in which local stakeholders such as indigenous and peasant farmer communities have a deeper understanding of the repercussions that their actions have on the greater ecosystem (M. Flores, personal communication, February 6, 2017). Even though this idea does not directly relate with the challenges that transboundary ICDPs face with facilitating stakeholder participation, it does speak to the necessity of engaging stakeholders in the project itself. Overall, the acknowledgement and deeper understanding of this concept of an ecosystem identity could function as a useful tool for future transboundary project implementers. However, the concept of creating an identity as an implementer could also be very difficult, in which identities cannot necessarily be created or imposed upon a population.

Questions That Lack Direct Connection to the Transboundary Variable

A quick observation of the quantitative data demonstrates that even though a relationship between the transboundary variable and the success of fostering stakeholder participation may exist, some of the questions used to evaluate participation represent a stronger relationship than others. The qualitative analysis above provides some different examples that may serve to explain why questions two, three, four and six display a more direct

connection to the transboundary variable. However, question numbers seven and eight displayed far fewer possible connections to the transboundary variable when analyzed specifically. For example, in terms of question seven, which focused on the equal inclusion of both men and women within the projects, few examples demonstrate a direct connection between this process and the challenges faced by transboundary projects. More specifically, even though the process of including the even participation of gender has numerous ethical and rational benefits, it largely varied in emphasis across different projects, with four projects not even mentioning it. Furthermore, any direct or indirect connections that the process of equal gender inclusion had to the transboundary variable was limited by the minimal amount of information that existed on gender inclusion within the project reports. Nonetheless, within the project reports that included more extensive information on gender inclusion, such as the Corazón binational project, the Gran Chaco project or the Sarstun-Motagua Project within Guatemala, no prominent examples existed of the transboundary variable directly affecting gender participation.

In terms of question eight, which focused on the ability of a project to foster long-lasting and sustainable stakeholder participation within the project and its goals, relatively few examples of connections to the transboundary variable existed. For instance, the most likely effect that the transboundary variable would have on long-term sustainability stems from an unequal adoption of project activities by stakeholders in one of the countries within the project, such as what occurred in the Corazón Project. However, few other examples exist surrounding how the transboundary variable affects the instillation of sustainable long-term participation. With this noted, the importance of fostering long-term participation should not

be understated, in which even though it is not necessarily affected by the transboundary variable, it remains one of the key challenges that all projects must adequately face in order to achieve true sustainability.

Four Challenges Encountered in the Methodology

Another point of discussion arises in terms of the methodology, in which I encountered four challenges within my methods that deserve attention. The first significant challenge resulted because of the differences between the project documents, in which not all terminal evaluations or reports were conducted by the same evaluating organization, in the same way, or with the same depth. This made the comparison between certain projects notably difficult. The second significant challenge arose when project reports contained insufficient information to accurately measure stakeholder participation, which did not necessarily entail that stakeholders did not participate, but rather that this participation was possibly not reported on. The third challenge involved the inability of speaking directly with numerous stakeholders as a way to measure participation; given a lack of time, connections and resources. However, even with said extensive time and resources, the concept that identifying local and community stakeholders is a challenge for the projects themselves speaks to the difficulty of researching these stakeholders. The fourth and final challenge stemmed from the relatively small sample size of the data, in which even though the list of projects was rather exhaustive given the criteria, the ability to extrapolate any definitive conclusions based solely on the quantitative results was limited, especially considering the aforementioned challenges.

Was Stakeholder Participation Truly Key to Conservation?

As it has become evident, promoting stakeholder participation—through outlets such as socioeconomic benefits—brings a variety of challenges, and the question again arises if the effort of involving local populations and communities serves as the most effective way of promoting conservation. More specifically, if the projects had adopted the concept of a strict and exclusive conservation area brought up by Hutton, Adams & Murombedzi (2005), would the protection of ecological systems and biodiversity have been more successful? Even though no definitive answer to this question exists, the projects that had the most successful participation outputs tended to also mention a higher rate of successful conservation practices (e.g. Gomero & Llosa, 2011; Guillen & Leyson 2013). However, the direct ecological benefits of many participatory efforts are difficult to measure, in which the education of more sustainable practices and an increased awareness of biodiversity conservation does not necessarily result in immediate benefits for the ecosystem. Furthermore, with the relatively recent completion of many of the projects that had the most successful participation scores, and the difficulty of measuring all the different aspects of conservation, no overlapping conclusions can be drawn in terms of the direct connection between the success of a project’s participatory involvement and empirical ecological benefits. Perhaps more light could be shed on this issue with an additional study that compared transboundary ICDPs with more strictly conservation-oriented transboundary protected areas. Nonetheless, even if it was not the most efficient way of protecting the environment, we can assume that a higher rate of participation in the sustainable and educatory activities of the projects studied had positive ecological effects.

Is Transboundary Conservation Worth the Challenge?

After recognizing the numerous challenges that transboundary ICDPs tend to face, the question arises of if implementers should even prioritize these projects at all, in which the prospect of separating these projects by country into independently-run entities can become increasingly appealing. For instance, this separation occurred in some form within the Corazón Project, in which challenges of binational coordination resulted in relatively separate projects with a simple cooperation component. However, separation brings costs to the project as well. Referring back to the transboundary literature reminds us that numerous incentives for transboundary conservation exist; such as the increased interconnectivity of the ecosystem and a reduction in project costs (Vasilijević et. al, 2015). Overall, after analyzing the selected projects, implementers should likely consider the different challenges mentioned in this paper, and attempt to assess if the possible costs that come the transboundary variable will outweigh the possible benefits.

Conclusion:

A consultation of the literature surrounding the integration of conservation and development, the promotion of transboundary conservation, and the facilitation of stakeholder participation demonstrates that fostering stakeholder participation within transboundary ICDPs is an important, yet complex process. An extensive look into the process of involving stakeholders within certain ICDPs provided an informative perspective on the challenges these projects faced, and how implementers sought to overcome them. Even though regression analyses between project-type and participation score revealed no significant differences on an aggregate level, certain questions did indicate a significant difference between project types,

with transboundary projects scoring lower than single nation-state projects. Furthermore, the findings from the terminal evaluations displayed a strong overall trend of consistently lower average participation scores among transboundary projects. This trend suggests that the hypothesis of transboundary ICDPs facing more difficulties when attempting to foster stakeholder participation holds merit. Additionally, this lower success rate could be explained qualitatively by a lack of capable preexisting institutions, the effects of political changes, unequal capacities of different governments, a struggle to share information across the project, and the lack of a common project vision. This conclusion was reached by using thoughtful and comprehensive methods that emphasized a thorough and in-depth analysis of transboundary ICDPs within Latin America, in which the findings provide valuable information on a specific niche within the field of sustainable development practice.

The findings of this paper could have important implications for the future of transboundary ICDPs, in which through the process of addressing the specific challenges that transboundary projects face, implementers could more effectively mitigate these problems. Additionally, by acknowledging that challenges such as the inequality of capacity and the effects of political changes are detrimental to fostering participation in a project, future implementers can make sure to recognize the importance of capacity-building and a having stable political atmosphere when they carry out sustainable development, especially on the transboundary level. On this note, future transboundary initiatives that intend on successfully involving stakeholders should closely examine and consider the possible challenges a project may face in terms of institutional limitations, political changes, capacity differences, communication issues and common goals. With an assessment of these challenges, project implementers can move

forward with a plan that aims to effectively promote conservation, engage stakeholders, and improve livelihoods.

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Appendix A: Project Summaries

(taken from GEF Website 3/17/2017)

Bermejo:

“This project catalyzes the implementation of the Strategic Action Program for the Bermejo River Binational Basin. The project will implement specific strategic activities identified in the GEF-financed strategic action program (SAP), that address the principal root causes of soil degradation as set forth in the transboundary diagnostic analysis (TDA) and, in doing so, will provide the necessary institutional, legal, and informational basis to enhance and restore the environmental functioning of the system, and provide protection to endemic species within the five component ecosystems - montane, humid forest, arid Chaco/savannah, sub-humid Chaco, and humid Chaco. These actions, with incremental costs, will complement Basin-scale interventions by the Binational Commission, and the governments of Argentina and Bolivia, financed in part from national and provincial/prefectural sources and by international loan funding, many of which address expected baseline activities. Strengthening of Basin institutions, building of agency and organizational capacity, and integration of environmental concerns into economic development activities on a sustainable basis, and the promotion of the public awareness and participation are key elements of this project.”

Lake Titicaca:

“The project adopts an ecosystem approach and places emphasis on working directly with indigenous peoples and local communities and on establishing clear integration of conservation and development efforts. All of these aspects are given priority in the Convention on Biological Diversity.”

SJRB:

“The Strategic Action Programme formulated under this project will contribute to the conservation of natural ecosystems and to social and economic development in order to satisfy present and future demands minimizing water conflicts. The major components of the SAP formulation include: i) the strengthening of a basin-wide information system that provides the mechanisms for gathering and dissemination of data adequate to the needs of decision-making for the integrated management of the basin; ii) the creation of a well-coordinated bilateral planning process for the SJRB; iii) the implementation of a public participation process; iv) the strengthening of public institutions and private organizations; and v) the formulation and implementation of environmental education activities. Its execution is expected to bring both

local and global benefits, such as conservation of the water cycle, the preservation of major water bodies and of the region's biodiversity, and the protection of extensive carbon sinks."

Gran Chaco:

"To reverse land degradation trends in the Gran Chaco through supporting sustainable land management in the productive landscape. Indicators: • SFM and SLM practices adopted throughout 500,000 hectares in 9 demonstration sites and demonstration effects on 850,000 hectares by PY5, thereby reducing land degradation, conserving biodiversity and increasing carbon sequestration. • The surface areas of biological corridors between Protected Areas located in demonstration sites increase in 280,000 hectares managed under conservation status and leading to improved connectivity. • Improved income of 4,586 producers and their families and an additional potential 4,000 through demonstration effects by PY5 (percentage of increase in income to be estimated in PY1 after completion of baseline studies) • 0.5 tons C/hectare/year of additional carbon sequestered on project demonstration sites as a result of adoption of SFM and SLM practices (incremental amount of sequestration to be confirmed in PY1 after completion of baseline studies)"

Corazón:

"The global objective of the proposed project is to consolidate the management and protection of Nicaragua's and Honduras' proposed Transboundary Biosphere Reserve "Corazón de Corredor Biológico Mesoamericano" (henceforth "Corazón Reserve"), simultaneously strengthening the PA systems as a whole of the two countries. The Corazón Reserve extends in Honduras from the Plátano Biosphere Reserve through the Tawakha Indigenous Reserve and Patuca National Park, to the Bosawas Reserve in Nicaragua and includes adjacent areas of natural habitat in the Mosquitia. In total this is an area of about 50,000 km² (5 million ha) and is the largest single block of unaltered tropical forest north of Colombia – it truly represents the "heart" of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (MBC). The Nicaraguan and Honduran governments are in the process of working with UNESCO on the formal creation of the Reserve."

Sixaola:

"The main objective of this Regional Strategy for the Sustainable Development of the Sixaola River Bi-National Basin (RSDS) is to guarantee a sustainable social and economic development of the Sixaola Basin and to improve the livelihoods of its population. The intended objectives of this GEF operation, in combination with the other measures proposed in the RSDS: a) Conservation and sustainable management of biological diversity, as well as equal distribution of the benefits derived from the management of biodiversity resources. b) Reduction of emissions and an increase in greenhouse gas storage by the land and aquatic ecosystems. c) Conservation and sustainable use of water masses in the binational basin, including reduction in vulnerability and community participation in flood management. d) Elimination of the existing threats to the ecosystem, stemming from the surrounding productive zone. e) Assist the two countries in providing the necessary economic incentives to ensure the sustainable management of the basin's water masses. f) Integrated community development to strengthen the capacity of the local and indigenous communities living in the buffer zones and areas of

influence of the protected areas. g) Capacity building to promote conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity resources incorporating indigenous communities. h) Promotion of public-private partnerships and the participation of the private sector in the preparation of sustainable development plans.”

Montecristo Trinational PA:

“The purpose of the proposed Project is to establish an efficient and operational trinational framework for the integrated and sustainable management of the Montecristo Trinational Protected Area (MTPA), and contribute to the consolidation of the biological corridors that connect it to the MBC within the Trifinio Region of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Jan 18 2006 WPI: The objective of this project is to support the initial implementation of the Integrated management plan of the Montecristo Trinational Protected Area in the Trifinio Region of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras through a trinational institutional framework operating in a participatory, integrated and effective manner as a means to conserve the biodiversity, natural processes and environmental services of local, regional and global importance provided by the MTPA and facilitate its integration into the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. The MTPA will be the first and only trinational protected area in the Americas to be administered in an integrated manner by a single management unit, under a single management plan and budget.”

Peru Cotahuasi:

“The objective of the project is to catalyze the adoption of comprehensive ecosystem management interventions that integrate ecological, economic, and social goals to achieve the conservation and sustainable use of globally significant biodiversity and land and water resources of the Cotahuasi River Basin.”

Guatemala Sartasun-Montagua:

“This project protects a wide array of threatened ecosystems containing globally important biodiversity by launching an integrated program for resources conservation and sustainable use in the Sarstun-Montagua region, focusing on the management of the nine protected areas. Project is based on premise that programs for biological conservation must include the promotion of sustainable economic uses of biological resources by communities living in and around the protected areas.”

Panama Darien:

“The objective of this project is to develop elements which permit consolidation of a new strategy of development in the Darien region and its adjacent areas, based on the application of scientific knowledge and the identification of options for the management of biodiversity which guarantee its sustainable protection and use, in cooperation with local communities.”

Mexico Chiapas:

“Biodiversity conservation is mainstreamed into natural resources management at the sub-watershed level through the integration of ecosystem services considerations in future decision-making in the Sierra-Costa region of Chiapas, Mexico.”

Brazil Pantanal:

“This project catalyzes implementation of a detailed watershed management program for the Pantanal and the Upper Paraguay River Basin. Project activities will enhance and restore the environmental functioning of the system; provide protection to endemic species within the wetland; and implement strategic activities, identified in the World Bank-financed PCBAP program, that address the root causes of degradation. These actions with incremental costs will complement basin-scale interventions by the Government of Brazil, financed in part from national and state sources and by international loan funding, and sub-basin scale activities conducted under the World Bank-UNDP PRODEAGRO program, many of which address expected baseline activities. Strengthening of basin institutions, building of agency and organizational capacity, and integration of environmental concerns into economic development activities on a sustainable basis are the key elements of this project.”

Honduras Bay Islands:

“The resulting project would assist the Government of Honduras to conserve and sustainable manage key coastal/marine ecosystems in the archipelago of the Bay Islands (islands of Utila, Roatan, Guanaja, and over 60 smaller keys). The archipelago includes a complex marine system exceeding 500 km² with barrier and firing corals reef formations juxtaposed with extensive sea grass beds and coastal lagoons. The region is of great biological diversity and the project would complement existing GEF investments in the Mesoamerican Barrier reef and the Belize coastal zone management projects.. Key objectives of the resulting project are: (a) define and implement the sub-regional (Bay Islands-wide) institutional arrangements needed to integrate biodiversity conservation into broader environmental management functions of local and central government agencies; (b) establish the operational basis and capacity for co-management of the system of coastal and marine protected areas spanning the entire archipelago; (c) introduce economic incentives for maintenance and recovery of natural resources under threat; and (d) design and implement financing mechanisms for biodiversity conservation”

Eastern Paraguay Atlantic Forest:

“To assist the government of Paraguay in its efforts to reduce the deforestation rate and associated biodiversity loss within the productive landscape of the Paraguayan Atlantic Forest through development of connectivity within a conservation corridor, improving the protected area system, and strengthening of the policy framework and enforcement mechanisms.”

Brazil Caatinga:

“The objectives of the proposed projects are:(i) contribute to the protection of Caatinga biodiversity, to the reduction in carbon emissions to the atmosphere, and to greater storage of carbon in Caatinga vegetation, through activities that promote and ensure the conservation and sustainable management of the Caatinga Biome; and (ii) improve the socioeconomic situation and quality of life of the population living in these areas, thus promoting integrated, sustainable development in the Caatinga areas. To achieve the objectives, the project would include activities that would incorporate: (i) a statewide approach with regard to Caatinga policy,

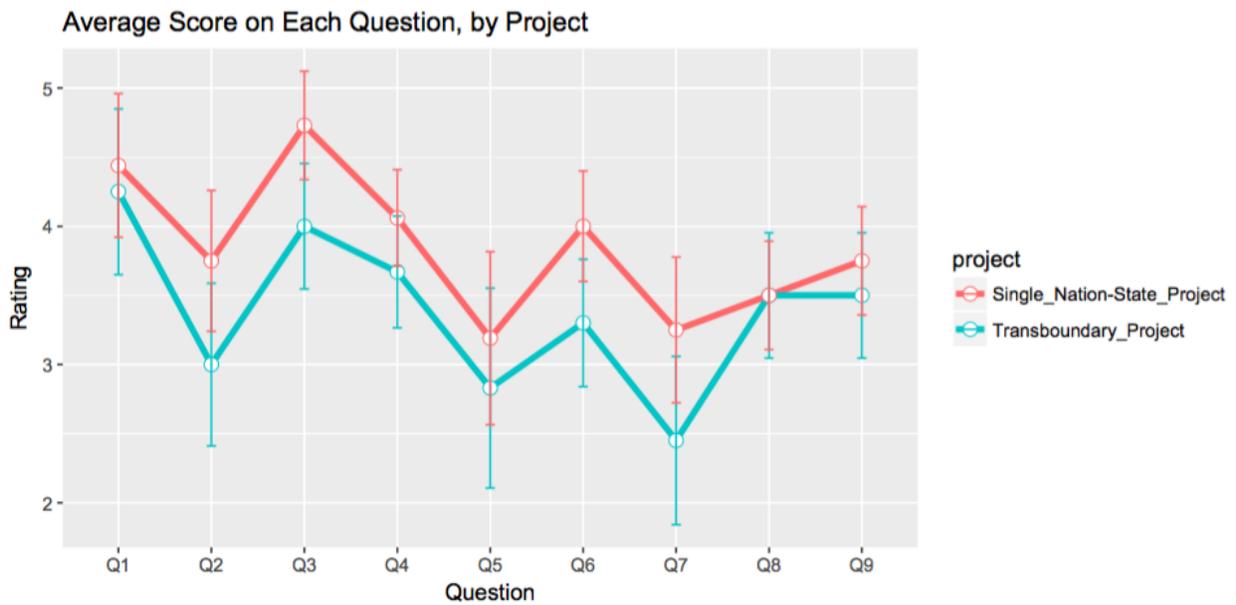
strategy formulation, assessment, and monitoring, such as Caatinga mapping (areas that are in different stages of preservation and degradation in terms of biodiversity), and education and capacity building for biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration activities, and the use of fuel efficient technologies; and (ii) targeted interventions in selected pilot demonstration areas - such as the elimination of fire as a land-clearing tool, and adoption of fuel efficient wood stoves - for preservation and rehabilitation of defined landscape units, which would include investments and activities geared towards local populations and improvements of their livelihood; and (iii) dissemination and public awareness raising.”

Appendix B: The Specific Questions

1. Have the different stakeholders been clearly identified?
 - 0- No specificity of who the stakeholders are
 - 5- All stakeholders are clearly identified, differentiated and defined
2. Were stakeholders involved in the planning and goal-setting aspects of the project?
 - 0- Stakeholders are not involved in planning or goal-setting
 - 5- Stakeholders are involved in all planning and goal-setting processes of project
3. Were stakeholders provided with opportunities to participate (e.g. meetings with voting and feedback; workshops; training sessions; classes; economic programs)
 - 0- No opportunities provided for stakeholders, and no efforts to engage stakeholders
 - 5- All different types of stakeholders were provided with a variety of participatory opportunities
4. If provided, were these opportunities taken advantage of by stakeholders?
 - 0- No stakeholders participated
 - 5- Stakeholders participated at high rates in all the different opportunities presented to them
5. Are there examples of instances when local knowledge was integrated into the decisions and processes of the project?
 - NA- Integrating local knowledge was not mentioned.
 - 0- No examples of local knowledge influencing project
 - 5- Numerous specific examples of local stakeholder knowledge contributing to project and/or project decisions
6. Do local stakeholders directly benefit in socioeconomic ways from participating? (e.g. financial incentive programs)
 - 0- No mention of benefits that stakeholders gained for participating
 - 5- Stakeholders benefited from all instances of participation
7. Does stakeholder participation include the equal participation of gender and promote the participation of women?
 - NA-No mention of gender within the project
 - 0- Gender is mentioned, but there are highly unequal/disproportionate rates of participation
 - 5- Gender is addressed, and there is strong participation from women in the project (Greater than or equal to 50%)
8. Did stakeholder participation activities/opportunities and include sustainable long-term programs/objectives? (e.g. education efforts and successful micro-credit vs. basic financial incentives for short-term participation)

- 0- Stakeholder opportunities only include short-term-focused activities and lack long-term sustainability
 - 5- Stakeholder opportunities are highly focused on long-term sustainability, and will have persisting effects/importance.
9. Does the terminal evaluation provide an assessment of stakeholder participation?
- If evaluation is provided, list it. (They are mostly conducted with a six scale measure from HU (highly unsatisfactory) to HS (highly satisfactory), in which HU would be coded as 0, and HS as 5

Appendix C: Data Without the Lake Titicaca Project



Appendix D: Project Document Analysis and Coding Sheet

0=Highly unsatisfactory

5=Highly satisfactory

Gran Chaco

Evaluation Agency: UNEP/UNDP

- Project Questions:
 - How was a transboundary project decided on? As opposed to an individual approach in each country
 - What is the most difficult part about a transboundary project like this? (if this can be answered briefly)
 - Did the transboundary aspect of this project make it more or less successful in completing the project goals?
- Stakeholder questions: (defining stakeholders as local...)
 - Generally, were the local stakeholders such as the campesinos and indigenous involved in creating and forming the goals of the project? (i.e. community meetings/surveys) Or were the goals already established when subprojects conducted workshops and interacted with these people.
 - In your opinion, do many of the local stakeholders, such as the campesinos, indigenous, and local-level politicians see the project as a regional goal (in that they feel a sense of belonging to the Gran Chaco ecosystem), or do they view the project with more of a national/local sense (in that they relate the purpose of their participation more with the benefits of their community or country, as opposed to the ecosystem)?
 - Are there examples of instances when local (e.g. indigenous) and scientific knowledge was integrated into the decisions and processes of the project?
 - Were stakeholder participation activities and efforts focused on more short-term or long-term goals?
 - Within Central and South America, ICDPs focusing on transboundary ecosystems experience more difficulties with successfully fostering stakeholder participation than ICDPs occurring within a single nation-state for a variety of reasons
- 1) 5 las diferentes comunidades locales fueron bien identificadas
- 2) 5 "En síntesis: hubo una importante participación previa... No impusimos nada y trabajamos en base a la demanda y acuerdos locales." -flores
- 3) 4
- 4) 4 "hemos trabajado ampliamente en capacitación y pertenencia, apropiación"
- 5) 5 "se dio prioridad a algunos temas como: apicultura, beneficiado del algarrobo, plantas medicinales, cosecha de agua, etc."
- 6) 2 (pg. 27 and 28 ratings)
- 7) 3.5 Si incorporaron el género en la participación "la difusión a nivel local tenemos más de 5000 (cinco mil) capacitados(as) con la respectiva inclusión de género." Se falta específicos

- 8) 4 “El proyecto siempre apuntó a la sustentabilidad y trabajamos en esa línea a largo plazo. Sabemos que algunas de las prácticas pueden quedarse a medio camino, pero otras estamos seguras que de aquí a 3, 5 o más años van a continuar”
- 10) 4 el TE mencionó la variedad de participación en los diferentes países del proyecto.
- 32.5 total

Political changes:

“Unequal progress in the three countries has still been subject to political/institutional changes with the unfreezing of project activities in Paraguay taking place only very recently. The duly recognized efforts to strengthen interinstitutional coordination mechanisms are still paired with a substantive degree of uncertainty as described in pertinent elements of the risk assessment section, as for instance the establishment of important baseline elements is still underway towards what should already be the half-time point of the project’s implementation life-cycle.” (20)

Page 47 (political changes cause instability)

See interview

“Each country and institution has its own time-scale, which must be respected in order to ensure the progress of any transboundary project.” (Marco)

Capacity: See interview

Communication/information:

between countries difficult at times: (44); resulted in problems with information sharing

Paraguay Forest:

Evaluation agency: World Bank

Notes: Atlantic forest is massive, exists in a large part of Brazil and some parts of Argentina. The portion in eastern Paraguay serves as an example of a project that exists within a single country even though a transboundary ecosystem.... However, there are individual biomes within the Atlantic forest: this one is the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest, and PY has most of the land area in this Biome. See proposal document for reasons behind starting project.

- 1) 5 (pg 11 proposal doc) all highlighted areas
- 2) 4.5 (page 2)
- 3) 5 ^
- 4) 3.5
- 5) 4, not very specific.
- 6) 4.5
- 7) 3
- 8) 5
- 9) No, but quantities yes
- 10) 3
- 32.5

Bermejo:

Evaluation Agency: UNEP

Notes: Overlaps Chaco Ecosystem; although slightly different focus. Land degradation. Strong institutional focus.

Strategic Action Plan. **Key aspect: lack of an overarching consolidation of efforts** (figure out where to put in paper) (p. 18) Unequal, more difficulty in Bolivia (40-43)

- 1) 5
- 2) 1.5 Unequal across project (e.g. less in Bolivia/more in environmental education initiatives) (p. 30, 41)... Where local planning occurred, resulted in less comprehensive project (less macro success) (45) (pg 48 #137)
- 3) 4 (variety of opportunities, Education programs pg. 40 is example of success, pg. 45 with an example of success, pg. 47 with opportunities (Another example of low private/business sector involvement though)
- 4) 3.5 (page 39, 45)
- 5) 1.5 (page 24, 59)

- 6) 4 Benefited many local efforts, but did not have a strong macro benefit to project
- 7) 0 No mention of Gender
- 8) 2.5, although many concepts of long-term goals such as education, project lacked in follow up and ensuring that programs would be long lasting (i.e. pg. 117)
- 9) No
- 10) 3
- 22.5

Institutional Capacity:

“Several implementing institutions stood out for their technical and institutional capacity and their attachment to the local environment, with a strong commitment to the Bermejo SAP II objectives (Paragraph 85). However, the achievement of the intermediate states is very much dependent on the assumptions regarding institutional and community capacity to sustain certain levels of participation and empowerment. This is extremely uneven across the area of the Basin, with positive examples such as those mentioned before, as well as others such as the “Iruya River Basin Integrated Management” plan, where there was no evidence of this assumption being upheld at either a governmental level or among civil society organizations promoted by the Plan.” (41) In Bolivia, the lack of consideration for the new standards for community participation (which are being regulated for the water projects) may create problems with the execution of some sub-projects. (42)

“While all initiatives stemmed from a binational framework, only a few were executed collectively” (59)

* The Governments of both countries recognized the work of COBINABE in their 2004 Presidential Statements, and in the approval of annual budgetary allocations. During the execution of the Project, there were instances of cooperation between institutions from both countries that developed on their own initiative, and there is talk of “progressing at the pace of the slower partner.” (17)

Legal: Bermejop SAP “did not manage to standardize the legal and regulatory framework of the Basin due to external factors that were out of the program’s scope. There are significant differences between the legal and political frameworks of each country (and even between those of different Argentine provinces), which require different approaches.”

Sustainability, on the binational institutions: “It is important to mention that the infrastructural measures, although effective, are temporary, and do not offer a permanent solution. These useful investments require maintenance plans and support from non-structural measures, such as appropriate agricultural and forestry practices and community awareness and participation.” (15)

Communication/Information Sharing:

“This implied an “opportunity cost,” given that greater institutional involvement would have provided greater opportunities for experience and education. With the exception of two binational workshops, there were little opportunities for exchange between stakeholders. Lessons sharing between environmental education sub-projects or land use planning sub-projects would have resulted in mutual benefits, and likely would have influenced the results of some initiatives.” (30)

Montecristo Trinational P.A.

Implementation Agency: IDB

Evaluation Agency: **Baastel**

Notes: Main goal: creating an effectively run Trinational protected area, and encouraging sustainable practices in buffer zone... Trinational difficulties pg. 30

Other note: Lack of indigenous identification (pg. 23)

1. 3.5 (pg. 18 and 33 on doc, consult proposal doc for more info)
2. 1.5 (pg. 22)
3. 3 (e.g. coffee example pg. 42)
4. 3 Towards the end, see pg. 50
5. 1 (pg. 8 possibly)
6. 4 (pg. 4, 44, 50)
7. 0
8. 4- Long-term

9. No

10. No, but inferred average: 3 or 4 (based on their numerous different assessments).

Political Changes:

Example of transboundary challenge: Honduran crisis, cited as major barrier to project success (25, 31)

“many, if not all interviewees describe staff turnover and personal conflicts as the main cause of some institutional challenges during the project implementation” (pg. 29 on doc)

Tried to get Trinational organization of stakeholders through:

“the project backed the institutionalization of the *Allianza*, a cluster of NGOs from the three countries, the Trinational Mancomunidad (herein referred to as the Manco), regrouping municipalities from the three countries, and the Camera de Turismo Sostenible, trinational sustainable tourism linked institution.” (pg. 30)

Identity

“However, just as regionalization was perhaps starting to concretize, stakeholders note that political and economic interests were factors in moves towards nationalism. Even as implementation activities accelerated in the project last year, data suggests that execution was in fact national rather than Trinational” (pg. 30)

*Shared information/cooperation:

“Although there are now at least 4 institutions at the local level involved in the Plan Trifinio, evidence suggests that no sustained trinational coordination mechanism amongst stakeholders has been established. There is will to do so among many of them, but they have only existed for short period of time and have not yet had the time to organize themselves.” (34)

Resistance to cooperate citing sovereignty

Decentralization (as somewhat of a different strategy than trinational, relatively effective (57)

Note on Transboundary sovereignty issue: “Foreign Affairs Minister of Guatemala wrote an official letter to the Guatemalan representative of the MTPA project to explain that some of the project activities were trespassing the sovereignty limits the country was willing to legally convey to international cooperation. Themes related to water and linked to international borders were not negotiable in the context of projects such as the MTPA and were to stay national competencies. This situation counters efforts made by the CTAP and can work counter to productive trinational coordination.” (32)

Integrated Ecosystem Management of Sixaola River Basin

Evaluation Agency: Inter-American Development Bank

Notes: Evaluation document rather detailed, more specific information about stakeholders than most other project docs

1. 5; document mentions a variety of different types of local stakeholders and stakeholder organizations (pg. 12)
2. 4; (pg. 12 and 17), Numerous examples of training/education workshops, in which local stakeholders were then responsible for implementation. “Shared goals detailed in the Regional Strategy for the Sustainable Development of the Binational Sixaola River Basin (ERDS)”
3. 5; Numerous workshops; at least for organizations and teachers page 42, 44
4. 4.5
5. 4.5; Training workshops involved training of traditional indigenous practices (47, 54)
6. 3; Yes, but some incentive mechanisms never were fulfilled (30, 34, 45)
7. 3; Gender is mentioned, but gender equality is not mentioned or discussed throughout different project aspects (search Gender)
8. Long-term; focused on practices
9. Significant spending on workshops
10. 4; generalizing from pg. 44 on document

Political changes:

Example of project with minimal negative consequences (minimal changes as well)

Political identity:

“In the political sphere, the Project led to new institutional management practice for the Basin and to a change of view -a comprehensive view that necessarily engages Costa Rica and Panama in a shared land management.” (30)

Limited transboundary institution (what effect on participation?)

“The CBCS was created, but its capacity to coordinate interventions in the basin is limited to the working agendas of ANAM-MINAE, the health ministries of both countries and the National Emergency Commission –SINAPROC” (13)

Cooperate/share information:

“Binational coordination processes are slow and burdensome, as is the case of the proceedings for vehicles and goods crossing the border. This is mainly due to the fact that Costa Rica and Panamá’s laws and proceedings are different.” (27)

However, this serves as a good example of cooperation in a project

“The activities under this component strengthened the technical and operational capacities of the institutional and social stakeholders at local, national, and binational level, to achieve an effective and integrated binational cooperation in accord with the vision and shared goals detailed in the Regional Strategy for the Sustainable Development of the Binational Sixaola River Basin (ERDS). (12)

Sustainability/long-term:

Decrease in public investment in one Panamá, but not Costa Rica (36)

Peru Cotahuasi River Basin

Evaluation Agency: UNDP

Note: High focus on participatory element.

1. 5; Yes, pg. 8
2. 4.5; involved in planning processes
3. 5; workshops, meetings and programs
4. 5; high participation rates
5. 5 “recovery of traditional agricultural practices and agrobiodiversity were internalized by the local actors – from producers to community leaders and authorities.”
6. 4.5; Economic incentives on pg. 24-27
7. 3; mentioned far more extensively than other projects, but still a disproportionate rate of participation with men and women (see pg. 45)
8. Benefits were short-term focused, but long term beneficial results root the project (see pg. 8)
9. Extensive spending (see pg 38)
10. 4.5 (pg. 13 and 14)

Guatemala Sarstún-Motagua-Recosmo

Agency: UNDP

1. 4 (see pg. 9, 24)
2. 4 (a few examples, e.g. p 17, 23, 62)
3. 5 (p. 23)
4. 4 (at the beginning, there were more difficulties promoting participation, but participation increased as the project went on; p. 24, 30, 62), also see general report summary
5. 4 (p. 15)
6. 4 (p. 21, 28, 30, 61)
7. 4.5 (31, 68, and others; Gender much more addressed in this report than others; specific measures to include equal participation were detailed)
8. 3 (Iffy in some aspects, p. 22) “Para lograr la sostenibilidad ecológica de largo plazo se requerirá de mayores insumos de capital, educación, y el fortalecimiento de las instituciones del estado.”
9. Pg. 57-59
10. 3 or 4 (see general report)

Political Changes: numerous p. 27... positive legal changes p. 28,

Presence of preexisting institutions: p. 8

Costa Rica and Nicaragua SJRB

Agency: UNEP

Note: This project details how a heavy emphasis on the local and “poor” stakeholders could have diminished success of project (see pg. 2/3)

1. 3: In the terminal evaluation retrospective analysis, not enough stakeholders were identified as important actors in the project (page 16)
2. 2: Little mention of local stakeholders being involved in the planning process (lessons learned pg. 16)
3. 4: Opportunities provided, both incentive based and educational (Page 39 and other in evaluation section word doc)
4. 3: a significant amount of stakeholders were missed in participatory activities (pg. 40-42)
5. 1: Little to no mention of integrating local knowledge into the project
6. 3: Benefits to a few different groups of stakeholders such as farmers and landowners (see pg 45)
7. 4: where gender is mentioned (pg. 42) there was relatively even participation
8. Long term goals, mostly short term benefits (pg. 45)
9. No
10. 2.5

Political/institutional changes:

"There were long periods of 'vacuum time' (up to one year) for each change of government after presidential elections in both countries. This caused a slow process of involvement of new staff members responsible of the institutions in each country." (16 on doc)

Planning:

"Too much effort was put into trying to formulate the SAP and this was in part due to the lack of knowledge of the FMMA requirements and administrative problems concerning the hiring of consultants without the approval of the responsible institutions of both governments." (16)

Cooperation/sharing of info

"The project was originally intended to be completed in December 2003 but was subsequently extended by one year... Some of the reasons offered included OAS regulations about disbursements and the lack of experience of national and bi-national institutions in working together" (11)

Successful cooperation on page 9

"The physical facilities of the project's Technical Unit in both countries were found to be poor. It is true that the project has contributed to having many organizations working together. Nevertheless, the heavy reliance on consultants or other organizations could have resulted in the project coordinators losing intimate familiarity with the variety of activities in the project and becoming simple non-technical facilitators." (15)

Brazil: Upper Paraguay River Basin in Pantanal Region

Note: Transboundary Basin, but ~80% of the upper river basin is in Brazil, this project is approached as a project undertaken only by Brazil. Serves as an example of more decentralization (ideology also part of "Water Resources Management Brazilian Legislation" pg. 14) note on transboundary necessity (21)

"In addition, the set of sub-projects has a strong focus on decision-making based on participatory processes. As with decentralization, the participatory process also constitutes one of the basic principles of the Brazilian Water Resources Management System." 14

1. 5 (see all subprojects, as well as pg 17)
2. 5 (Subprojects were very responsive, so was focus of project)
3. 4.8 (depending on subproject; many opportunities presented)
4. 5 (high participation rates within subproject opportunities)
5. 3.5 (although not specifically mentioned, the sub-projects integrated local practices into their goals)
6. 4 (subprojects involving activities such as fishing and tourism held more immediate benefits)
7. 3 (One subproject successful and dedicated to gender pg. 64, but participation rates for other aspects of project are not disclosed)
8. Long term benefits: yes (pg. 15),
9. 5

Local knowledge:

"Various Sub-projects promoted scientific debate between the community and the teams involved in project development and planning, and scientists developing future research techniques." (19)

Planning

"The activity selection methodology, due to its inclusiveness, highlighted a multitude of critical issues raised by stakeholders in the region, which means that the Project has focused on real problems" (9)

Lago Titicaca Peru/Bolivia

Notes: One of the few notably unsuccessful projects. Serious issues, many stemming from lacking participation. Terminal evaluation mentions a lack of adequate information to evaluate stakeholder participation at times, especially of the very poor. See general sheet:

“Local communities were not involved in the project from its inception; and even their participation during the second phase was very weak. This constitutes a high risk towards the project sustainability, especially considering that they are the main users of the biodiversity that the project is trying to conserve.”

“Some participatory and collaborative management models for biodiversity conservation were implemented but none had an M&E system in place to assure their effectiveness or sustainability.”

1. 1 (stakeholders were identified more in evaluation, but their participation was undervalued in the project (pg. 19)
2. 2 Page 22 and 23 (something that the TE discusses that could have been done better, and how necessary it is pg. 52)
3. 1.5 pg. 49 (the participation of indigenous communities and campesinos was lacking)
4. 1.5 pg. 22 and 49 (similar to above)
5. 1.5 pg. 23 says most of it. Concept that even though this local knowledge existed (big point of TE (19 and 20) it was not well incorporated into the project)
6. 1 Benefits were minimal to local populations, mainly for the reasons above
7. .5 the TE just mentioned the importance of the equal participation of gender, but never discussed it as something that had occurred during the project
8. Short term
9. 1

Communication/cooperation

“A strong need to refine the modalities of communication between indigenous communities and the state agencies responsible for the management of natural resources” (pg. 7, translated)

Why didn't it work there? Connections with transboundary? Main reason: failures with M+E

Yellow 22

Mexico Conservation in Chiapas

Implementing Agency: UNEP

Notes: Most northern Project. Exception to single ecosystem, multiple sub-basins. All page numbers number of pdf doc. Look for part on staff turnover, and how the detrimental effects of this were mitigated by meeting directly with locals

1. 4.5 (stakeholders and their concerns were rather well detailed pg. 11)
2. 3.5 (although stakeholder participation and sense of ownership was high, there is not a lot of information on involving local stakeholders in the planning process)
3. 5 (Numerous opportunities and workshops, pg. 21, 22, 23)
4. 4 (overall high involvement, pg. 23)
5. 3.5 (numerous mentions of “improving” existing knowledge, especially in the sense of ecosystem systems, pg. 31 for example)
6. 4.5 pg. 12, 27, 28
7. 2 (Gender is mentioned but not detailed pg. 47)
8. 3 Some long-term benefits, mostly just short term (pg. 23)
9. no
10. 4

31

Panama- Conservation in Darien

Implementing Agency: UNDP

Notes: Project was done in 1998, relatively little information in the report compared to other projects, partially due to a lack of an effective evaluation/management of the project by project staff.

1. 4 (although the specific communities are not as detailed, the TE discusses and acknowledges numerous different local and indigenous communities (30)
2. 1.5 (Even though a participatory workshop took place to gain input for planning, these recommendations were not put into place. See 45 for details/quotes)
3. 4 (Stakeholders were provided with opportunities such as workshops and microcredit schemes. See 19)
4. 1.5 (Due to unfulfilled commitments, the project faced “mistrust by local communities.” See 30)
5. 1 (similar to the planning aspect, the local communities were not very committed to the project, and there aren’t examples of their integrated knowledge.
6. 3 (for the stakeholders that did participate, the incentives such as microcredit did exist)
7. 0 (Gender is not mentioned in the TE)
8. 1 (long-term sustainability seems unlikely (32)
9. no
10. 1

Brazil: Caatinga

Implementing Agency: World Bank and 3 state organizations

Notes: Brazil Project; Caatinga biome is huge. Page #s are of the pdf

1. 4 (Numerous communities involved, not differentiated but obvious depth and consideration by subprojects pg. 39, 43, etc.)
2. 3 (planning could have been more participatory pg. 14)
3. 5 (wide variety of workshops and programs pg. 5-13 and 37-47 highlighted)
4. 4.5 (high participatory rate, see past pages)
5. 1.5 (although there was high participation, the TE did not mention in detail the incorporation of local knowledge into project)
6. 4.5 (numerous incentive programs, pg. 28)
7. 4 (pg. 11, 18 and 39; gender equality considered in all subprojects. No statistics however)
8. 4 (rather sustainable in terms of incentive programs pg. 27, 48)
9. 4.5 (taken from GEF doc pg. 17 + 18)

Communication:

“Issues with interagency coordination and communication as well as a lack of understanding of the Project by stakeholders created major delays during the first two years of implementation. In Bahia, where high staff turnover and varying degrees of institutional commitment to the Project were recurrent, implementation did not progress as expected.” (6)

Honduras- Bay Islands:

Implementation agencies: IDB and Honduras Gov’t

Notes: Part of Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System, Focused on island ecosystem, with conservation of important species (primarily marine) and an emphasis on sustainable tourism.

1. 4 (stakeholders seem to be clearly identified pg. 34)
2. 4 (Improved as project went on; involved in planning and legislation process pg. 41)
3. 4 (workshops and other activities took place pg. 57)
4. 5 (These opportunities had high rates of attendance and representation pg. 57)
5. 3 (incorporation of sustainable fishing practices pg. 48)
6. 3 (although some programs, not as many direct economic benefits)
7. 0 (Gender not mentioned in TE)
8. 3.5 (significant networking and education)
9. 5 (pg. 31)

communication/information sharing:

“Investments in the Regional Conservation System enabled local capacity building at organizational and institutional levels. Consequentially, new instruments are now available that will help increase the financial sustainability of PAs management, implement conservation activities, conduct municipal capacity- building and enhance communications, awareness, and local residents’ participation in the areas were these activities were carried out” (57)

Corazón Transboundary PA Honduras and Nicaragua:

Implementation agencies: Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARENA) SERNA (Sec. of Environment and Natural Resources); World Bank document

Notes: Creation of PA, but also development aspect with CBNRM. All pg. numbers of pdf. Transboundary notes on pg. 24, 39

Interesting indigenous point on 39 about cosmovision

Pg. 28, 30 question 5

Pg. 30, but also 34 question 8

Pg. 32 gender

1. 4 (A variety of stakeholders identified, such as indigenous communities, pg. 23)
2. 4 (consultation meetings on project design, but relatively unsuccessful in some instances. Page 32 23 bottom)
3. 4 (Numerous subprojects, as well as meetings and other input-gatherings pg. 30-32)
4. 4 (participation rates were high, but still lacking in some areas such as in pg. 24)
5. 4 (same as above, with planning on 28, 30, and 31)
6. 3.8 (some defined opportunities, but less specific short-term gains)
7. 4.2 (high gender information as well as participation, pg. 32 and 40)
8. 3.5 (Sustainable goals, but limited outcomes, especially in Honduras, pg. 30, 34)
9. 4 (insinuation from various ratings throughout)

Planning:

“Indeed, the Binational Forum and the Binational Indigenous Coordination (Muika) were created by CCAD without clear objectives, no operational structure, and without a framework for coordination with MARENA and/or SERNA. Moreover, members of these groups often did not represent the interests of indigenous communities in the Project area.” (6)

Participation:

“expectations were raised that annual operating plans would be prepared during consultative meetings with binational indigenous representation. While this was presented as a participatory mechanism aimed at better integrating the binational dimension, in reality, it became an inefficient process that lacked leadership, coordination with national priorities, strategic focus, and that did not contribute to overall Project objectives” (6,7)

Different capacity institutions in place: (One in each country, Honduras’ struggled)

“One issue that was not identified during preparation, and that the original Project was not equipped to address, was the significant differences in capacities of the two implementing agencies... This creates coordination issues at times, and results in the division of limited funding that is allocated for conservation and natural resource management between multiple agencies” (7)

Example of successful transboundary info sharing: (worked in project)

(Project implementing institution) “was strengthened through internships and workshops that facilitated information sharing on management tools and coordination of national information networks. This in turn strengthened the overall regional (Central American) system.” (15)

Identity:

“The binational nature of the Project and the complexities this involved were addressed primarily in terms of avoiding potential conflicts along the borders, i.e. supporting participative mechanisms for indigenous peoples in border areas” (6)

“The Project contributed in a modest way to the regularization of indigenous lands. In Nicaragua, support was provided for demarcation of indigenous lands and for conflict resolution activities between various stakeholders. In Honduras, the project supported a consultation process on the mechanisms for regularization of ancestral lands. Specifically, the Project financed the preparation of background documentation aimed at informing a debate at the nation’s Congress on land titling reform for indigenous people.” (15) 33 on pdf

political issues:

“However, the political relationship between the two countries, and the need to ensure adequate high level coordination was not sufficiently built into the design. The strained political relations between Honduras and Nicaragua between 2009 and 2010 had a significant impact on the Project, as diplomatic tensions resulted in major setbacks to all activities with a binational scope. CCAD was not able to mitigate the impacts of that political impasse.” (6)