

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
ESSF	Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
IPP	Indigenous Peoples Plan
IPPF	Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework
LRP	Livelihood Restoration Plan
PAP	Project Affected People
PF	Process Framework
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SIPP	Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1. INTRODUCTION

Honduras is a biodiversity-rich country with rapidly expanding tourism. In 2024, it welcomed over 2.8 million international visitors—65% arriving via cruise ships—making tourism a primary economic driver, contributing 8.2% of national GDP and supporting over 166,000 jobs. However, Honduras ranks low in tourism competitiveness and sustainability. Roatán, its most important tourism destination, sits at the heart of the Mesoamerican Reef and holds significant ecological, cultural, and economic value. The island's coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrasses provide critical ecosystem services, including fisheries support, coastal protection, and tourism-based livelihoods.

Despite this value, Roatán's ecosystems are under pressure from unregulated coastal development, tourism growth, and climate change. Coral bleaching, mangrove loss, untreated wastewater, and unsustainable tourism practices threaten ecosystem resilience and local well-being. Management challenges are exacerbated by weak policy enforcement, fragmented governance, limited local planning, and a lack of financial mechanisms to support conservation and sustainable tourism.

The GEF-8 iCOAST Project aims to drive change in the tourism sector by enforcing policies and enabling a regulatory environment that supports and incentivizes Honduras and municipalities of Roatan and Santos Guardiola, the private sector, and local communities to introduce and benefit from sustainable tourism practices.

The project drives the development of local sustainable supply chains linked to the tourism sector (fisheries, agriculture, alternative products to plastic, and other inputs needed for the tourism sector) and makes it convenient and seamless for tourists to make sustainable choices without having to compromise on quality, costs, and comfort.

Through these interventions, the goal of the iCOAST program in Honduras is to reduce pollution of water, soil, and air associated with high end hotels and other tourism industry players in Roatan and through policy and regulatory changes at a national level. The project aims to reduce GHG emissions and the over-consumption of natural resources, products, and materials, reverse the sector's impact on biodiversity loss, and create equitable livelihoods and jobs for local communities. Additionally, the project also aims to support the sound management of the Parque Nacional Islas de la Bahía, a key marine protected area of the Mesoamerican Reef ecoregion.

The project will directly engage stakeholders across the government, private sector, NGOs, local communities, and academia. It will be implemented at the national level in Honduras, as well as within the jurisdictions of the Roatán and Santos Guardiola municipalities.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is the implementing agency and the Honduran Tourism Institute is the lead executing agency. The total budget for the project is \$6,250,000. Given the risks associated with the project activities, it has been categorized as risk level B.

1.1. Objective of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)

The preparation of this ESMF was required in accordance with the WWF's Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF), through guidance and procedures described in WWF's Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP), in order to identify and manage the environmental and social risks and impacts of the iCoast Honduras project. The ESMF aims to outline the principles, procedures, and mitigation measures for addressing environmental and social impacts associated with the project in accordance with the laws and regulations of Honduras and with the ESSF and SIPP.

Since the precise scope of activities that will be implemented as part of the project will only be determined during the implementation phase, site-specific social and environmental impacts are uncertain at this stage. Thus, the development of site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) is currently not feasible, and an ESMF is necessary to set out procedures for addressing potential adverse social and environmental impacts that may occur during project activities. Site-specific ESMPs will be developed pursuant to the guidance provided by this ESMF during project implementation.

The specific objectives of the ESMF include the following:

- Carry out a preliminary identification of the positive and negative social and environmental impacts and risks associated with the implementation of the Project, including any SEAH risks;
- Outline the legal and regulatory framework that is relevant to the Project implementation;
- Specify appropriate roles and responsibilities of actors and parties involved in the ESMF implementation;
- Propose a set of preliminary recommendations and measures to mitigate any negative impacts and enhance positive impacts;
- Develop a screening and assessment methodology for potential activities, that will allow an environmental/social risk classification and the identification of appropriate safeguards instruments;
- Set out procedures to establish mechanisms to monitor the implementation and efficacy of the proposed mitigation measures; and
- Outline requirements related to disclosure, grievance redress, capacity building activities, and budget required for the implementation of the ESMF.

1.2. ESMF/PF/IPPF Preparation Methodology

The ESMF was prepared by conducting an extensive review of literature and secondary data available through public sources.

The ESMF draws on consultations results, and on the relevant laws and regulations of Honduras and the GEF ESSF and WWF's SIPP. The relevant laws and regulations of Honduras related to safeguards apply to the project since it is implemented within the jurisdiction of Honduras. WWF's SIPP applies since the project is managed by the WWF-GEF agency.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This chapter outlines the objectives of the ICoast Honduras Project, its components, milestones, and major supported activities.

2.1. Project Objectives and Components

Project activities are structured into four components:

Component 1. Policy and Governance – Strengthening national and local regulatory frameworks, including the development of Estrategia Nacional de Turismo, support the implementation of the Plan de Accion Climatica del Turismo en Honduras and other land use planning tools specific to the Bay Islands, and ensuring the coordination of policies, practices, and actions between government institutions in charge of tourism, environment, finance, and social issues.

Component 2. Finance and Investment – Aligning investment and incentive mechanisms with sustainability principles, including reform of tourism incentive laws and supporting ecosystem protection financing.

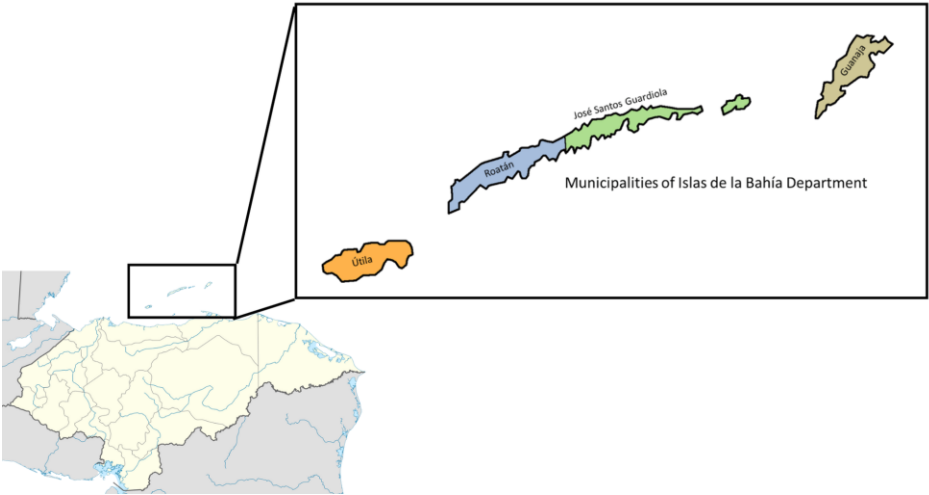
Component 3. Reduce the tourism footprint - By promoting sustainability throughout the tourism value chain, supporting sustainable management systems and certifications, reducing hazardous chemicals, including Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), implementing practices to minimize plastics and food waste in the tourism industry, and facilitating coordination for wastewater treatment, local sourcing, and conducting carrying capacity studies in the Marine Protected Area.

Component 4. Global Learning and Partnerships – Facilitating knowledge sharing, scaling best practices, and contributing to the broader iCOAST platform for sustainable coastal tourism.

2.2. Project Area Profile

The focus area for the iCoast Honduras project includes the national territory for policy, financial, and regulatory efforts and training, policy, and strategic planning in two municipalities - Roatán and José Santos Guardiola - within the Bay Island Department in Honduras. The Bay Island department is located off the Northwest coast of Honduras, in the Caribbean Sea (Figure 1). The project area profile throughout the rest of this section focuses on broad details at the national level but providing more details about the environmental, socioeconomic, and sociocultural conditions of Roatán and José Santos Guardiola municipalities, as it is where the project will work directly with local community members and local institutions.

Figure 1: Map of project area in the Bay Islands of Honduras.



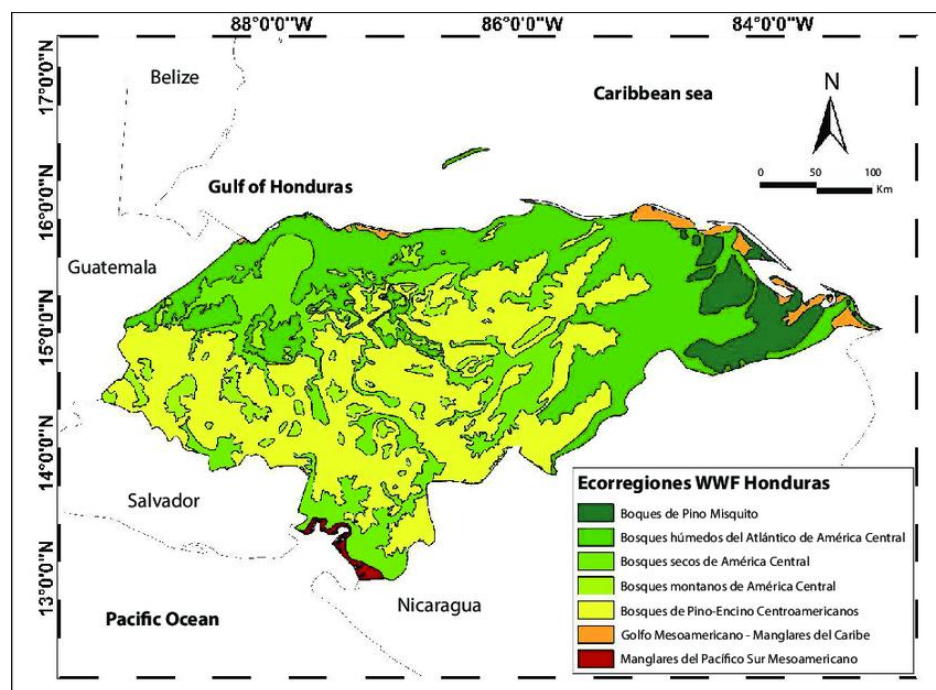
2.2.1. Project Area Environmental Conditions

2.2.1.1. Project Area Ecosystems

The project area includes diverse terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Roatan is considered a Tropical Humid Forest ecosystem, however within the Bay Islands, the landscape also includes mangrove estuaries, coastal lagoons, and mangrove wetlands¹². The project area’s marine ecosystems are dominated by coral reefs, which are part of the larger Mesoamerican Reef, which is the second largest barrier reef in the world and spans across multiple countries³. In addition to the coral reef, the seagrass ecosystem is another important marine ecosystem. The seagrass ecosystem consists of underwater grass that provides food and habitat to diverse marine species while providing oxygen and nutrients in the surrounding ocean⁴.

¹ [Roatan Ecosystems. Roatan Tourism Bureau.](#)
² [Usos de las palmas en Latinoamérica - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate.](#)
³ [Roatan’s Coral Reefs. Coral Reef Alliance.](#)
⁴ [Marine Ecosystems of Roatan, Bay Islands: A treasure to be cherished, 2023. Roatan Marine Park.](#)

Figure 2: Ecoregions of Honduras (Source: WWF).



2.2.1.2. Project Area Flora and Fauna

The project area is home to diverse flora and fauna, including 381 plant species, representing 114 genera, within this area⁵. The area claims four types of mangroves - red, black, white, and mangle button - with the red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*) being the most prominent⁶. Additionally, the project area boasts over 100 species of algae. Key seagrass species in this area include tortoise grass (*Thalassia testudinum*) and manatee pastures (*Syringodium filiforme*).

The terrestrial fauna inhabiting the island is similarly diverse. Approximately 12 mammal species have been identified, including species of bats, agoutis, opossums, and white-tailed deer, and around 36 amphibian species, as well as several species of lizards and snakes⁷. A key feature of Roatan's biodiversity is its bird population, with at least 96 bird species documented, including migratory birds like warblers, tanagers, and vireos, and sea birds such as the magnificent frigatebird, brown pelican, and roseate tern⁸.

The marine fauna in the project area is also important and diverse. Species such as the endangered hawksbill sea turtle and the American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) are found within the area. Additionally, the queen conch (*Strombus gigas*) spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*) is a commercially important gastropod that inhabits the seagrass beds. The

⁵ Flora del Municipio de Roatán, Islas de la Bahía, Honduras Flora of the Municipality of Roatán, Bay Islands, Honduras. 2025. Calix-Garcia et. al.

⁶ Roatan's Fauna and Flora. Roatan Tourism Bureau.

⁷ Roatan's Fauna and Flora. Roatan Tourism Bureau.

⁸ Roatan Wildlife - Birds.

extensive marine biodiversity supports various fish and mollusk populations, with local reports of rare species like giant squid⁹,¹⁰. On the Cordelia Banks remains one of the last healthy patches of Staghorn coral (*Acropora cervicornis*) in the Mesoamerican region.

2.2.1.3. Project Area Climate

The average temperature in Roatan ranges between 25 and 28 C throughout the year, with the warmest months between May to October, and the less warm months from December to February¹¹. The rainy season in Roatan is from September to February, with short, intense rains in the afternoon or evening marking the season¹², but overall it is a sunny location, with an average of 10 hours of sun per day.

The 2025 Germanwatch Climate Risk Index that considers climate events from 1993-2022, identifies Honduras as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change¹³. Honduras is vulnerable to hurricanes, floods, and droughts. The most prominent examples of Honduras' vulnerability to hurricanes are the extensive losses of life, crops, and infrastructure from Hurricanes Mitch, Eta, and Iota.

2.2.1.4. Project Area Soil and Topography

Roatan is a long and narrow island that is a part of the Bay Islands. The island is characterized by mountainous terrain, formed along the Bonacca Ridge with the Bay Islands, parallel to the Motagua/Swan Islands fault zone¹⁴.

Little information about the soils of the project area is available, with references from the early 20th century and plans for digitalizing soil maps in Honduras with no specific information available. As of the latest available information, the soils of Roatan are classified as Jacaleapa soils, which are well-drained, shallow soils formed on non-micaceous schists that occupy a steep terrain¹⁵.

2.2.1.5. Project Area Land and Sea Use

From 2001 to 2024, Roatán lost 1.48 kha of tree cover, approximately 24% of the 2000 tree cover area, and 722 kt of CO₂e emissions¹⁶. This loss of tree cover was primarily due to human settlements, followed by the expansion of agriculture. A study that mapped Landsat data from 1985-2015, showed that urban areas increased by over 200% and 19% of mangroves were converted to urban areas. Tourism development and unplanned urban growth, coupled with insufficient wastewater treatment, have a direct impact on coral health and human health¹⁷. Illegal land use, mangrove destruction, and dock expansion are harming the ecosystems of the project area in the Bay Islands¹⁸.

The project area boasts a wide variety of natural resources, including wetlands, beaches, and marine resources that support fishing. The coral reef is a major attraction for activities like diving. Roatán has established itself as a premier destination for water sports such as diving and snorkeling, as well as land-based activities like mangrove tours and wildlife observation, particularly sloths and monkeys (primarily capuchins).

The Bay Islands and their natural resources have become an area of growing interest. In the West Bay area, tourism has displaced the local community, and while beaches are technically public, the tourism sector is prioritized. Another

⁹ [Roatan's Fauna and Flora. Roatan Tourism Bureau.](#)

¹⁰ [Roatan Wildlife.](#)

¹¹ [Climate in Roatan. Climate Chart.](#)

¹² [Roatan Tourbase. Understanding Roatan's Weather. 2025.](#)

¹³ [Climate risk Index 2025. Germanwatch.](#)

¹⁴ Cox, Randel & Lumsden, David & Gough, Kevin & Lloyd, Roger & Talnagi, Joseph. (2008). Investigation of late Quaternary fault block uplift along the Motagua/Swan Islands fault system: Implications for seismic/tsunami hazard for the Bay of Honduras. *Tectonophysics*. 457. 30-41.

¹⁵ [Los Suelos de Honduras, FAO, 1969.](#)

¹⁶ Tree cover loss: Hansen/UMD/Google/USGS/NASA Administrative boundaries: Global Administrative Areas database (GADM), version 3.6.

¹⁷ <https://coral.org/es/donde-trabajamos/mesoamerican-region/honduras/roatan/>

¹⁸ <https://www.roatanmarinepark.org/post/patrolling-for-reef-health#:~:text=Over%20the%20past%20few%20months,of%20damage%20to%20conservation%20objects,>

observed factor is the gentrification of the area and the continuous sale of land for tourist development. The surge in short-term vacation rentals, such as Airbnb, is also putting pressure on local community access to land and sea.

Tourism is also straining natural resources like coral reefs, where a lack of best practices has led to significant damage. Tourist areas have also been impacted by climate change, including beach erosion in hotel zones. Hotels attempt to replenish the sand, but this damage is often a result of wetland destruction, which negatively affects both tourism and local communities. During the summer, according to the stakeholders interviewed, there is a water scarcity, which poses a risk to the population and limits access to this essential resource for local families and businesses.

In Santos Guardiola, although there are more beaches available for community use, there is growing pressure from tourism and real estate speculation. While still in the early stages of development and less tourist-heavy than Roatán, the effects of tourism are becoming noticeable on the Santos Guardiola side of the island. Regarding other resources, fishermen have reported a decrease in fish availability, noting that they now require more time and must go further out to sea to make a catch.

Various regulations and laws exist across the islands for land use, wetland management, protected natural areas, fishing zones, and seasons. However, interviewees reported a lack of enforcement and limited coordination among institutions (for example, regarding the use of jet skis, fishing, or land use).

2.2.1.6. Decision making in natural resources

In the project area, many stakeholders have livelihoods intertwined with natural resources, from fisherfolk to beachfront hotels. Based on data gathered from interviews and site visits, decision-making regarding natural resources can be divided into a private sector, which includes hotels and service providers, and a public sector, which involves national and local governments working with the community (both residents and the private sector).

Within hotels, decisions are typically made by management and department heads. While there is an openness to hearing from employees, this two-way communication is more common in smaller hotels. The hotel sector generally has a limited environmental awareness, with efforts primarily focused on reducing plastic use and collaborating with the community on recycling. There are also initiatives to encourage tourists to avoid littering on beaches and in public areas. Among service providers, such as tour operators, efforts are made to educate tourists on the care of resources like coral reefs. Nonetheless, there is significant concern about waste generated by the sector, particularly in the diving industry. The use of gear and paper for customer contracts creates substantial waste, and progress toward digitalization has been limited.

On an island-wide level, regulations and laws exist, placing significant responsibility on the municipality for issues like construction and tree felling. However, these laws are often not respected to the detriment of natural resources. The municipality itself faces limitations. Some civil society efforts are underway to work with municipal authorities, but there is a stated desire for the municipality to take on a more prominent role in protecting natural resources. While local boards are consulted, they do not have significant influence on decision-making.

Tourism entrepreneurs hold substantial power in decision-making due to their strong economic position on the island and their involvement in politics, holding senior positions within the municipality.

2.3. Project Area Sociocultural conditions

2.3.1. Project Area Demographics

Honduras has an estimated population in 2025 of 10,039,862 people, of which 51.37% are women and 48.63% are men. Over 55% of Hondurans live in urban areas¹⁹. There is a clear concentration of women in urban areas, where they represent 53.86% of the population. This trend may be an indicator of the migration of young women to cities in search of better employment opportunities, education, or access to health services, which are often scarce in rural areas.

¹⁹ [17th Population Census And 6th Housing Census 2013. Volume 9. Honduras:Population Projections 2013-2050, INE.](#)

According to the results of the 2013 population census, 87.2% of the total population of Honduras was literate and 12.8% was illiterate. Educational achievement varies by gender, as women generally show higher achievement in literacy, secondary, higher education, and university-level education, while men slightly lead in pre-basic and postgraduate education. Among the population aged 5–29, 52% attend school²⁰. Approximately 65.8% of the Honduran population, or about 7.19 million people, actively use the internet. However, over a third (around 34.2%) remains offline, highlighting a persistent digital divide, particularly in rural and marginalized areas²¹.

The project area is the Island of Roatan, located in the Bay Islands Department of Honduras. The Bay Islands Department consists of multiple islands and municipalities. On Roatan Island, there are two municipalities - Roatan and José Santos Guardiola. Based on the 2013 census data, the projected population for the Bay Islands in 2025²² is 84,266 people, with the population in the Roatan municipality (59,236) making up the majority of the population. The municipality of José Santos Guardiola, also on Roatan Island has a population of 13,037. Literacy rates in Roatan are higher than the national average, with 96% of the population being literate. Roatan's population is young, with over 75% of the population under 40 years old.²³

2.3.2. Project Area Socioeconomic Conditions

The ICOAST project area, located in the Bay Islands of Honduras, specifically the municipalities of Roatán and José Santos Guardiola, has diverse economic activities including subsistence-level livelihoods with a rapidly expanding tourism sector. Roatán's economy is dominated by commerce and tourism-related services. The municipality has become a key hub for international cruise ships and marine tourism, generating income but also increasing pressure on coastal ecosystems²⁴. Estimates from 2018 show 14.5% of the workforce is engaged in wholesale and retail trade, 13.5% in accommodation and food services, and 10% in construction. Development of the tourism industry has been a major catalyst for job creation in this area²⁵.

On the island, the municipality of Roatán is primarily driven by tourism, an activity from which other economic sectors, including commerce, fishing, crafts, and construction, are derived. Tourism is a continuous activity, supported by international visitors. Interviews and site visits revealed a significant increase in tourist activity when cruise ships dock, with tours, restaurants, beaches, and other services activating to serve transient visitors.

During the low season, promotional campaigns offering more accessible prices are launched to increase domestic tourism. In contrast, Santos Guardiola is a more rural municipality, characterized by small-scale and subsistence activities such as fishing, agriculture, and livestock farming. Industrial fishing was also noted, and while not conducted directly in the area, it generates local employment in the supply chain (e.g., fuel and indirect labor).

Many residents of Santos Guardiola work in Roatán, requiring employees to commute to the tourist zone. This results in long travel times and often high costs relative to the wages earned. According to the interviews, the Roatán area experiences high staff turnover. The region also sees an influx of non-permanent workers from outside the island who stay for limited periods. In many cases, hotel owners actively seek foreign personnel.

Conversely, Santos Guardiola demonstrates greater reliance on natural resources for food security. Across both municipalities, women and lower-income families face greater barriers in benefiting from the economic development driven by tourism and the natural assets that support this key economic activity.

²⁰ [Educational Statistics Report of Honduras SACE 2020.](#)

²¹ Banco Mundial. *Informe de acceso a internet y brechas digitales en Honduras*, 2024.

²² [17th Population Census And 6th Housing Census 2013. Volume 10 Honduras: Population Projections By Department 2013-2030, INE.](#)

²³ [Tabulated, INE.](#)

²⁴ [Boletín Roatan 2018](#)

²⁵ [Roatán, Bay Island, General Information 2018. INE.](#)

Challenges identified for the economic sector include high staff turnover and mobility issues. Employees commuting from Santos Guardiola to Roatán spend a significant amount of their income and time on transportation. Additionally, tourism-related small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face high operating costs and limited access to financing.

In contrast, Santos Guardiola is a predominantly rural area with a daily migration of residents who commute to Roatán for work in the tourism sector. Subsistence and local fishing, along with other rural activities, are common. The municipality has an incipient tourism industry, which has not reached the scale of mass tourism seen in Roatán.

The construction sector is also a key economic activity in both municipalities, driven by tourism. In general, it is evident that most employment opportunities and entrepreneurial activities are linked to the tourism industry. Other, less common, employment sources include government and civil society organizations, many of which are also connected to tourism.

A significant concern raised during interviews was the lack of information regarding the quality of employment generated by the tourism sector. Key data, such as whether jobs include legal benefits, provide a living wage, offer opportunities for professional growth, or comply with labor hours, remains unknown. Furthermore, information on potential gender gaps or disparities affecting other vulnerable groups is also unavailable.

Tourism business owners prefer to hire local residents but often find that candidates lack specific skills, such as being bilingual, which are necessary to serve tourists. This has led to the migration of some foreigners and mainland Hondurans for tourism-related jobs.

Interviewees also mentioned a trend of local migration to the United States through an employment agency, primarily involving men seeking labor jobs for better wages. According to observations, this has resulted in a significant number of single mothers entering the workforce, taking on both caregiving responsibilities and economic activities to support their families. Subsistence activities include artisanal fishing, crafting, and providing tourist services such as massages and hair braiding, which are performed predominantly by women.

In both municipalities under study, participation in livelihoods reflects both traditional gender roles and transformations driven by tourism and migration. Men are primarily concentrated in artisanal and industrial fishing, construction, tourism-related transport activities, hotel maintenance, and jobs perceived as requiring greater physical strength.

Women, conversely, participate more extensively in local commerce, hospitality, food services, and craft production. However, they face significant limitations in accessing better-remunerated employment due to a lack of childcare services and high transportation costs.

Children and youth are in a particularly vulnerable situation; many adolescents are involved in small family businesses or informal tourism activities. Furthermore, the migration of mostly male personnel to the United States has led to family fragmentation, leaving many women solely responsible for their families. In response to these challenges, community and environmental organizations have begun creating participatory spaces for children and youth through educational, environmental, and cultural activities, aiming to strengthen the social fabric and ensure greater inclusion in local livelihoods.

Labor and Employment

National labor conditions in Honduras are influenced by relatively low unemployment rates (4.9%) but very high informal employment rates (82.6%), with low levels of social protections (30%) and an average of 45 hours of work per week²⁶. Honduran law clearly outlines the rights of workers, including standards for working conditions, however the access to these rights are not consistent across the country with examples of worker rights violations that include

²⁶ [ILO Honduras Country Profile](#)

unhealthy work conditions (i.e. pesticides, repetitive movements with no breaks), union busting, unjust productivity requirements, and denial of legally required health and pension benefits^{27, 28}.

In 2023, the World Bank reported that the labor force participation rate for women aged 15 to 64 reached 51%, marking the second-highest point in history after 52% in 2018. However, in 2020, the same source indicated a significant underrepresentation of women in the labor market, with only 5.5 women working for every 10 men. Despite this disparity, young working women (age 15-24) earned 12% more than men of the same age.²⁹

In 2019, data from the United Nations and CEPALSTAT, as cited in the Basic Guide to Gender Indicators in Honduras, revealed a significant disparity in unemployment rates: 8.1% for women compared to 4.2% for men. This indicates that the unemployment rate for women was nearly double that of men.³⁰ Income disparity is also evident, with women earning a gross national income per capita of \$4,173 USD, significantly less than men's \$6,444 USD. Despite this, the informal labor sector shows a minimal difference in employment rates, with 58.9% of women and 53.5% of men working informally.³¹

A startling statistic from ECLAC's Gender Equality Observatory, highlighted in the same guide, reveals a significant gender disparity: women aged 15 and over perform an average of 30.2 hours of unpaid work per week, while men in the same age group contribute only 7.8 hours.³²

The fishing sector, a vital component of coastal economies and communities, exhibits notable gender disparities throughout its entire value chain. Women primarily engage in post-harvest activities such as processing, packaging, and selling fish, often occupying low-income, informal roles that are undervalued in economic terms.³³ Their participation in upstream stages, such as fishing or resource management, remains limited due to persistent societal norms, restricted access to land and resource rights, and institutional barriers.

Women's influence on business decisions within the fishing value chain is constrained by limited access to credit, technology, and leadership opportunities. Furthermore, social and economic challenges, including gender-based violence and restricted mobility, especially in rural or traditional coastal communities, hinder their full participation and empowerment.³⁴ This division of roles reinforces gender inequalities, reducing women's capacities to benefit from the sector's economic potential and participating effectively in decision-making processes. Addressing these inequalities requires targeted initiatives that enhance women's access to resources, training, and leadership spaces. Legal reforms ensuring property and resource rights, as well as programs to foster women's leadership in fishery organizations, are critical to promoting gender equality and sustainable development within this sector³⁵.

2.3.3. Project Area Human Rights and Governance

2.3.3.1. Project area governance

The governance in the project area is distinct from other parts of Honduras, as there are multiple layers of governance and decision making on the Island. In addition to National, Departmental and Municipal government structures, the Island has additional governance from Zolitur - La Zona Libre Turística de Islas de la Bahía - which is a public entity

²⁷ [Honduras: Report reveals labour abuses faced by 6,500 workers on Fyffes' melon plantations, incl. union-busting, harassment & toxic pesticides exposure](#)

²⁸ [The Struggle for Occupational Health & Safety in Honduras and Central America](#)

²⁹ [Why aren't there more women working in Honduras?](#)

³⁰ [Basic guide to gender indicators: HONDURAS](#)

³¹ [Basic guide to gender indicators: HONDURAS](#)

³² [Basic guide to gender indicators: HONDURAS](#)

³³ [Gender dimensions in the tourism value chain](#)

³⁴ [Gender dimensions in the tourism value chain](#)

³⁵ [Gender dimensions in the tourism value chain](#)

created to decentralize management and reform and support regional and municipal development³⁶. While declared unconstitutional by the Honduran Supreme Court in 2024, governance structures called Zone for Employment and Economic Development exist outside of national law³⁷. In Roatan, one of these zones, Prospera, was established with the support of the former Honduran President Hernández and with the support of the US Government, allowing billionaires to influence politics of both nations, allowing residents of Prospera to work around tax and business laws and obligations of both the US and the government of Honduras. Currently, Prospera, which is now home to startups, investors, and Silicon Valley executives, is suing the Government of Honduras to continue their operations³⁸. Prospera is not expected to impact the iCoast project; however, it is an example of the context of governance in the project area which is strongly influenced by the private sector.

The department of Bay Islands has a congressional representative and a governor, both of which are elected positions. Each municipality has its mayor, deputy mayors, and a board of trustees. In addition, there are government institutions, associations, and organizations that also have contact with the community. There is little to no support from the central government for strengthening local governance. In addition, many government officials are tourism entrepreneurs, which creates conflicts of interest and can facilitate or hinder the environmental measures the project seeks.

2.3.3.2. Land tenure and access to sea

The issue of land tenure in Roatán and Santos Guardiola is complex, largely driven by significant foreign land acquisition for tourism development. While many residents have historically lived on their land using customary tenure, the influx of capital has led to the conversion of prime coastal and accessible properties into commercial holdings. Even with constitutional restrictions on foreign ownership near the coast, buyers often use Honduran corporations to facilitate large-scale land purchases, effectively bypassing these laws. This dynamic creates pressure, making land unaffordable for many long-term inhabitants and fueling a pervasive feeling among locals that they are being pushed out or "squeezed out" of their traditional homes and territories by external investment and large commercial interests.

By law, beaches in Honduras are considered national property for public use, ensuring no private beaches exist and guaranteeing public access to the sea (Article 617 of the Civil Code). This principle is reinforced by Article 107 of the Constitution, which restricts the acquisition of land by non-native Hondurans within 40 kilometers of the coast.

Current construction regulations in Honduras include an environmental categorization table that outlines specific measures and requirements for various building projects. To ensure adherence to these standards, it is mandatory to engage an environmental service provider officially recognized by the government. The registration process for these providers is remarkably affordable, costing only 300 lempiras (approximately \$12 USD). However, a significant challenge lies in the lack of public awareness regarding this requirement and the limited availability of registered service providers. Greater publicity and outreach efforts are crucial to expanding the pool of qualified professionals and improving overall compliance within the construction sector.

Historically, there has been a pervasive issue where construction projects, rather than adhering to environmental regulations, opted to pay fines for damages incurred. This trend was largely driven by two factors: the protracted and often bureaucratic process of obtaining necessary permits, and the prevalence of corruption within the system, a fact acknowledged by government officials. The original fine for environmental damage was a mere 5,000 lempiras (approximately \$200 USD), an amount considered negligible and easily absorbed into project costs, thereby failing to act as a genuine deterrent.

Recognizing this systemic flaw, the Institute of Environmental Conservation (ICS) implemented a pivotal change. They directly linked the area's management plan to a revised regulation that dramatically increased the environmental damage fine to 10 minimum wages, which translates to a substantial 50,000 lempiras (approximately \$2,000 USD). This significant increase in penalties has had a profound impact, leading to a notable suspension of constructions and a shift

³⁶ [Zolitur](#)

³⁷ [Los tecnofeudales buscan la inmortalidad en una isla del Caribe](#)

³⁸ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2025-02-13/honduras-podria-quebrar-por-paraiso-libertario-en-disputa-politica?embedded-checkout=true>

towards greater compliance as developers are now more incentivized to follow environmental protocols rather than face steep financial repercussions.

A pressing environmental concern continues to be the issue of illegal land tenure within the Port Royal Terrestrial National Park, which encompasses parts of Roatán and Santos Guardiola. Despite its status as a protected area, unauthorized occupation and development persist. The local municipalities, which are responsible for upholding land use regulations and protecting natural resources, have unfortunately not taken sufficient action to prevent or rectify these illegal activities. This lack of enforcement undermines conservation efforts and poses a significant threat to the ecological integrity of the National Park. Addressing this challenge requires stronger governmental oversight, robust enforcement mechanisms, and a concerted effort to regularize land ownership and prevent further encroachment into protected natural habitats.

This land tenure conflict is further complicated by the pervasive problem of maritime planning and enforcement, particularly regarding the designated marine zone demarcation in the Bay Islands National Marine Park (PNMIB). The lack of compliance with these zones by tourist guides and the rangers' lack of authority to enforce regulations highlights a governance gap that undermines both conservation and equitable access to marine resources.

The co-management of the protected area involves BICA, Roatán Marine Park (RMP), two other organizations, the National Institute of Forest Conservation and Development, Protected Areas and Wildlife (ICF), various municipalities, and other governmental institutions. However, a recent request from the municipality to suspend the protected area due to its perceived impact on the island's tourism development underscores a complicated landscape of divergent interests. Environmental organizations express hope that the project will directly or indirectly support the execution of established activities within the protected area's management plan, such as conservation efforts and patrolling.

Sea surveillance is conducted through patrols by the Roatán Marine Park, naval forces, and two inspectors from DIGEPESCA (General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture). While DIGEPESCA inspections traditionally focused on industrial fishing, artisanal fishing has recently been incorporated into their scope. Industrial inspections are a joint effort with the ministries of health and labor. However, there has been a notable lack of attention paid to supervision in restaurants, hotels, and supermarkets.

Some hotels maintain connections with environmental organizations, which has proven beneficial for marine infrastructure, facilitating navigation and promoting reef care. Among the various organizations, BICA holds the most significant influence with both the municipality and the community. This is largely due to its composition of local people and its 30-year operational history on the island. BICA maintains four offices, one in each municipality of the Bay Islands department, further solidifying its local presence and impact.

2.3.3.3. Insecurity, presence of crime networks

The region, while not serving as a transit zone for illicit substances, has become known as an area for drug consumption, given the high rates of tourism. This dynamic introduces a complex interplay with the local economy, as drug trafficking activities contribute to a shadow economy through money laundering. This influx of illicit funds, while seemingly offering a form of "development," creates an unsustainable and often dangerous economic environment, distorting legitimate markets and hindering genuine, equitable growth.

Historically, the area experienced a period of significant unrest between 2007 and 2014, marked by the visible presence of armed individuals and a concerning frequency of shootings. This era instilled fear and instability within the community, deterring investment and hindering social cohesion. Fortunately, this overt violence has since subsided, leading to a more peaceful environment, though the underlying issues that fueled such conflict may still require attention.

One significant challenge identified during field research was the issue of insecurity, specifically the threats received by two distinct groups: the sea patrol in the Roatan Marine Park (RMP) protected area and the community activists from Polo's Water.

Staff members of the RMP reported experiencing direct threats from fisherfolk (including Garifuna men) while enforcing the regulations within the protected area. This perspective is corroborated by interviews with Garifuna

women, who expressed complaints about the presence of the sea patrol, perceiving their activities as an intrusion that hinders their traditional fishing practices in what they consider their waters. While Garifuna fisherfolk are principally men, the women interviewed were aware of the issues with the sea patrol. This highlights a potential conflict between conservation efforts and the livelihoods and cultural practices of local communities.

Similarly, the staff of Polo's Water, an organization involved in water treatment initiatives, shared their initial struggles with community acceptance. At the outset of their work, they faced considerable anger and suspicion from community members who believed the organization's primary motive was to exploit them financially. This distrust escalated to the point where some Polo's Water staff members were even threatened with firearms, underscoring the deep-seated skepticism and resistance that can arise when external organizations attempt to introduce new projects or services into communities without sufficient prior engagement and trust-building.

2.3.3.4. Impact of politics on project activities

The socio-political landscape of the island is deeply influenced by the decisions of its elected officials. This often leads to an exacerbation of existing inequalities, as governmental priorities frequently align with the personal interests of those in power. A clear example of this is the current mayor's significant personal investment in the tourism sector, owning both a hotel and a restaurant. This direct financial stake raises concerns that governmental decisions may not primarily serve the common good of the populace, but rather the commercial interests of a select group of business owners and the broader tourism industry. Such a conflict of interest can undermine public trust and divert resources away from critical areas like social welfare, infrastructure, or environmental protection, which might not yield immediate financial returns for the ruling elite.

Furthermore, the highly partisan nature of the island's politics presents a significant challenge to the successful implementation of any community-based projects, especially if they are perceived to be directly managed or initiated by the government. The deep-seated political polarities within the community can lead to accusations of bias or favoritism, regardless of the project's intrinsic merits. This can foster division and hinder collaboration, ultimately undermining the effectiveness and sustainability of development initiatives.

The instability of political appointments further complicates long-term planning and project continuity. The impending departure of the vice mayor, for instance, raises concerns that her successor may not share the same dedication to community interests, particularly in the crucial areas of law and education. This rotational nature of official positions often results in a loss of institutional memory and a lack of consistent commitment to ongoing projects. To mitigate this, a more effective strategy would be to channel development efforts through established, reputable, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These organizations often possess a more stable and dedicated workforce, a deeper understanding of local needs, and a greater capacity for long-term engagement, thereby ensuring project continuity and fostering sustained progress despite changes in official government personnel.

The government has consistently articulated a strong desire to stimulate economic growth in the region, and the strategy is based on leveraging the area's inherent natural beauty and its considerable potential for recreational activities. However, the realization of these economic aspirations is frequently hampered by the pervasive environmental degradation that currently afflicts the coastline. Compounding this challenge is the persistent divergence in priorities and interests between governmental bodies and the various non-governmental organizations operating within the region. While both entities ostensibly strive for the betterment of the area, their distinct approaches, diverse funding mechanisms, and ultimately, their differing overarching goals often result in a fragmented and consequently less effective approach to achieving sustainable development and conservation objectives. This fundamental divergence frequently generates friction and actively impedes the collaborative efforts that are absolutely essential for comprehensively addressing the multifaceted issues confronting both the community and its delicate environment. Without a more unified and coordinated approach, the true potential for sustainable development and environmental stewardship in the region remains largely unrealized.

2.3.3.5. Inequalities in access to security and justice

Several hotels have implemented various equity measures to support their staff and, in some cases, the surrounding community. These measures often include providing access to lodging or meals, which can significantly alleviate financial burdens for employees. However, the extent and nature of these benefits are highly variable.

The specific conditions and quality of the hotel play a crucial role in determining the type and generosity of these equity provisions. For instance, luxury hotels in affluent areas might offer more comprehensive benefits, such as subsidized housing, gourmet meals, and wellness programs, reflecting their higher revenue and capacity to invest in employee welfare. In contrast, budget hotels or those in less prosperous regions might have more limited offerings, focusing on necessities like discounted staff meals or dormitory-style accommodation.

2.3.3.6 Project Area Conflicts

Conflicts in the area are primarily linked to the use and management of community resources (water, land, territorial planning), differences among local communities and actors, and institutional weakness in mediating or enforcing regulations. In several instances, conflict has escalated to personal threats, including death threats, reflecting the intense pressure over access to basic services and natural resources.

As an area with high tourist demand, it generates competing interests that can lead to conflicts. For example, the creation of territorial plans or the protection of a specific area can affect opposing interests regarding land use, urbanization, and tourism development.

Many initiatives in Roatán are initiated by communities rather than by authorities. This was the case with the water and sanitation systems in West End, where the existence of two water boards led to internal community conflicts over resource control. Despite the initial resistance and conflicts, improvements were eventually achieved in treatment plants and monitoring.

Any renewed pressure regarding territorial plans or new zone management could potentially exacerbate existing conflicts. Considering the observations gathered during the field visit, interviews with key stakeholders, and the outcomes from workshops, it is assessed that failure to properly manage the democratization of the project and to include non-preponderant actors in the use of new technologies could create conflict or potentially exacerbate an underlying issue not explicitly mentioned in the interviews: the consistent flow of benefits to the established power group.

2.3.3.7 Governance challenges

Financial institutions currently face a significant challenge in fully integrating sustainability into their core operations and product offerings. A deeper understanding of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors is crucial for developing innovative financial products that not only generate returns but also contribute positively to sustainable development. This requires a shift in internal policies, risk assessment frameworks, and investment strategies.

To effectively engage the private sector, particularly businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and small factories, there's a pressing need for attractive fiscal incentives. These incentives should be designed to offer tangible returns on investment for companies that commit to improving their environmental footprint. This could include tax breaks, subsidies for green technologies, preferential loan rates, or even public recognition programs, all aimed at fostering a culture of corporate environmental responsibility.

At the governmental level, while central institutions often express support for sustainability initiatives, a critical barrier lies in their lack of clear role definition and inter-agency communication. This fragmentation can severely hinder the multidisciplinary approach essential for complex environmental projects, leading to uncoordinated efforts and a diluted commitment from various stakeholders. Establishing clear mandates, fostering regular communication channels, and promoting cross-sectoral collaboration are vital for successful implementation.

Beyond governmental and private sector engagement, a significant challenge is the general lack of public awareness regarding the critical importance of ecosystem health. Organizations frequently highlight this as a foundational issue. Addressing this requires a two-pronged approach: comprehensive public education campaigns to inform and engage citizens, coupled with robust rules and regulations that are consistently enforced. Without both education and effective enforcement, efforts to protect and restore ecosystems will remain insufficient.

A particularly urgent issue is the pervasive problem of maritime planning and enforcement. There is a documented lack of compliance with designated zone demarcation by tourist guides, leading to environmental degradation in sensitive marine areas. Compounding this, rangers who patrol these areas, often belonging to environmental organizations, frequently lack the necessary authority to enforce regulations effectively. This highlights a critical gap in governance and underscores the need for stronger legal frameworks, enhanced enforcement powers for environmental personnel, and better training and accountability for those operating in marine environments.

2.3.4. Project area human rights

In areas with high concentrations of tourism, there are some human rights issues that are common and should be considered as context for the project's implementation. Child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking are of particular concern in tourism destinations. Additionally, human trafficking for sex work, specifically sex tourism, is a major human rights concern in tourism destinations like Roatan. While exploitative working conditions are common in the tourism industry, local experts report that employers in Roatan make big efforts to attract and retain employees due to the competitive landscape to find employees, which makes the conditions better than what is commonly expected according to global trends. However, vulnerable groups such as Indigenous Peoples, disabled people, children, and migrant laborers may be at risk for exploitation.

2.3.4.1. Human rights, access to public spaces, and justice

The current situation in Roatán reveals a trend towards the privatization of beaches, even when the legislation clearly determines that private beaches do not exist, a natural resource that should be accessible to everyone. This privatization is being carried out primarily to satisfy the demands of growing tourism and for the benefit of foreign residents. Beaches, which have traditionally served as spaces for recreation, sustenance, and coexistence for local communities, are fenced off and converted into private properties. This phenomenon results in a drastic reduction of available public beaches. Consequently, the inhabitants of Roatán find themselves with an increasingly limited number of places for recreation, social interaction, and essential activities such as artisanal fishing or simply enjoying their natural environment. The exclusion of the local population from these vital spaces is a clear violation of their right to recreation and access to common goods.

This dynamic generates a significant gap in terms of social justice. While tourists and foreigners can enjoy exclusive beaches and high-level services, the local population, who often depend on these spaces for their subsistence and well-being, is displaced. This not only exacerbates existing inequalities but also undermines the sense of belonging and rootedness of the communities. The limitation of public spaces can also restrict the development of cultural and community activities traditionally carried out on the beach.

2.3.4.2. Children's Rights in the Project Area

Educational infrastructure and curriculum have seen notable improvements. Schools, which were previously in a state of disrepair and offered a limited curriculum, have benefited from significant local investment. The current government has spearheaded these improvements, focusing on renovating physical structures and updating educational programs to better serve the needs of the children. It is important to note, however, that these positive developments have been achieved without support from the central government, highlighting a reliance on local initiatives and resources.

Despite these important efforts to improve healthcare and education, child labor exploitation is a persistent issue in the project area. This problem is particularly insidious because of a collective reluctance within the community to openly discuss it. According to interviews with stakeholders in the project area, the reason for this silence is a widespread fear that acknowledging and addressing child exploitation could negatively impact tourism, a vital economic driver for the island. This creates a challenging environment for intervention, as the issue is often hidden from view, making it difficult to identify victims, prosecute perpetrators, and implement effective protective measures for children. The tension between economic concerns and the fundamental rights and safety of children presents a significant obstacle to human rights in this area.

2.3.4.3. Child Labor

The intersection of poverty, drastic economic inequality, and the informal economy has enabled the proliferation of forced begging and child labor. This challenge is most acutely observed in situations where the profound economic inequalities and instability within the project area or homes of origin, compel families to engage children in the sale of goods and services. Such activities not only pose immediate threats to the children's safety and well-being but also are a barrier to their educational attainment. This challenge is particularly present with the arrival of cruise ships. With the influx of tourists and economic opportunities, the project area experiences a significant drop in school attendance among children who go to sell products to tourists.

2.3.4.4. Access to Healthcare

Access to healthcare remains a significant challenge for the island's population, profoundly impacting residents' well-being. This issue stems from a combination of inadequate infrastructure and a scarcity of human resources. Roads are often in poor condition, hindering access to public hospitals, which themselves are limited in number and capacity. Furthermore, there is a critical shortage of specialists for serious medical cases on the island, forcing residents to seek care elsewhere, a difficult and often costly endeavor. While efforts have been made to mitigate these challenges through the deployment of medical brigades and the establishment of community clinics, these initiatives, though valuable, often represent temporary or partial solutions. The destruction of the main hospital by fire further exacerbated the situation, and while a new facility is currently under construction, the interim period has placed immense strain on existing healthcare provisions.

2.4. IPs and Vulnerable Groups

2.4.1. Overview of Indigenous Peoples Situation

Honduras is home to nine officially recognized, culturally distinct groups: the Ch'orti', Lenca, Miskito, Nahua, Pech, Tawahka, and Tolupán Indigenous Peoples; and the Garifuna and English-speaking Black or Creole peoples of African descent. Indigenous Peoples in Honduras face challenges for legal recognition of their ancestral lands and continuing threats that lands be stolen for private and public development. While it is illegal, the discrimination against Indigenous Peoples persists in Honduran society³⁹.

The Garifuna and English-speaking Black or Creole peoples of African descent are settled mostly along the northern coast (Figure 3) and throughout the Bay Islands. Groups of African descent in Honduras have diverse histories, cultural practices, and languages. These groups include enslaved people who were trafficked to work in mining and haciendas; Garifuna/Garinagu, who are of mixed African and Indigenous Kalinago-Taino Peoples who originated in St. Vincent but were exiled to Honduras in the late eighteenth century; and English or Creole-speaking Black People, who come from both the descendants of enslaved Black People in the Bay Islands and another group who arrived from various Caribbean islands to work on banana plantations in the 20th Century⁴⁰.

The Garinagu/Garifuna Peoples are recognized by the Government of Honduras, but their historical ties to land and sea have not been officially recognized by the government. The Garifuna language and dance have been recognized as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO⁴¹. The English speaking or Creole People, who speak English and Creole, face significant challenges to maintain their livelihood and culture, faced by lack of employment, decline in fish stocks, and the destruction of the coral reefs.

The Lenca Peoples are the largest Indigenous community in Honduras, with communities in remote mountainous zones of the country (Figure 3). The Lenca Peoples in Honduras have not retained their language but continue to maintain strong cultural practices. The Miskito Peoples are located in Southeast Honduras, maintaining their Miskito language. Other groups, such as the Chortis, Tolupanes, Pech, and Tawahkas are small groups located in diverse parts of mainland

³⁹ [Diagnóstico sobre la situación de los derechos humanos de los pueblos indígenas en América Central](#)

⁴⁰ Amaya, Jorge Alberto. [LOS NEGROS INGLESES O CREOLES DE HONDURAS: ETNOHISTORIA, RACISMO, Y DISCURSOS NACIONALISTAS EXCLUYENTES EN HONDURAS](#). *Revista Sociedad y Economía*, núm. 12, junio, 2007, pp. 115-129

⁴¹ [Garifuna in Honduras, Minority Rights Group](#). 2018.

Honduras⁴². While these groups do not have ancestral ties to the Bay Islands, there is a presence of diverse Indigenous Peoples who have migrated to Roatan for economic opportunities.

Figure 3: Map of Indigenous Peoples in Honduras (Source: [RedHonduras](#)).



2.4.1.1. Socioeconomic Conditions of IPs in Project Area

The socioeconomic conditions of the Garinagu population are diverse, but many are precarious. The majority of the Garinagu population resides in the municipality of Santos Guardiola, however members of the community estimate that approximately 80% of both men and women travel to West Bay, Roatan, to work in tourism activities. Many of the jobs revolve around the arrival of cruise ships. An estimated 20% of the adults are engaged in economic activities within their municipality, including managing small businesses, engaging in agricultural production, or non-renumerated care activities. Based on the field research, most non-renumerated care activities are led by women, and the lack of childcare is often a barrier for Garinagu women to engage in their own economic activities. Agricultural production focuses on both production for home consumption and for sale in local markets.

While the research conducted did not encounter evidence of communities living in voluntary isolation, stakeholders highlighted that there are several communities in the project area who live in involuntary isolation due to the lack of access to transportation, lack of infrastructure, and the absence of institutions.

2.4.1.2. Governance and Legal Rights of IPs in Project Area

Governance in the Garinagu community in the project area is influenced by national, municipal, and local governance structures. Members of the community reported that municipal governance is weak. However, the Garifuna community has their own local leadership and governance structure, that is selected through voting in community meetings. While

⁴² [Honduras. Minority Rights Groups. 2018.](#)

this governance structure guides important community decisions and includes both men and women, it is sometimes in conflict with the municipal government.

Honduras officially recognizes the rights of Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples, including the Garifuna, upholding both the Constitution (Arts. 346–350) and ILO Convention 169 (ratified in 1995). This legal framework establishes key protections, such as rights to land, culture, and the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), and is further supported by the National Policy for Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples (SEDIS), which mandates development with cultural respect. Although Roatán itself is primarily non-Indigenous, these safeguards are highly relevant to the iCOAST project because the project will engage with territorial planning that includes Indigenous Peoples and because Garifuna and other Afro-descendants (i.e. English Speaking Black People) are often involved in tourism supply chains and conservation activities, necessitating the application of FPIC for any affected activity and the integration of their traditional knowledge into planning.

While some members of the Garifuna community have received training on human rights, many community members have not received such training and are likely unaware of their rights. Initial field research concluded that there is minimal to no risk that the project will affect the IPLCs access to land, sea, or natural resources. However, members of the Garinagu population expressed their concern that there are already restrictions in place in Roatan Marine Park that prevent their participation in traditional activities, such as fishing and diving.

2.4.1.3. Cultural, physical, intangible, or natural resources in the project area relevant to the Garifuna People

The Garifuna community, rich in cultural heritage and vibrant traditions, is situated in Punta Gorda, a picturesque locale within the municipality of Santos Guardiola. This region is renowned for its pristine, untouched beaches that stretch along the coast, offering breathtaking natural beauty. The primary economic activities that sustain the community and are closely tied to the burgeoning tourism sector include the intricate craft of local handicraft production and the time-honored practice of fishing. These activities not only provide livelihoods but also offer those tourists an authentic glimpse into the Garifuna way of life, fostering a unique cultural exchange.

No specific cultural resources were identified that could be negatively impacted by the planned project activities. Several stakeholders interviewed expressed the view that the Bay Islands area is experiencing a form of cultural erosion. They see this as a missed opportunity to promote local culture as part of the tourism offering, which would also foster a sense of pride among residents.

In Honduras, various sources indicate an imbalance in the distribution of roles and decision-making power in natural resource management. While 7% of the country's territory is recognized as Indigenous land, only about half of these territories have full titles, limiting effective control over resources.⁴³ Less than 10% of resource management decisions in protected areas are made by local communities or indigenous peoples.⁴⁴

2.4.2. IPs in project sites

Based on the 2013 census data, the Bay Islands region has a population of 19,982 people who identify with an ethnic minority. The largest single group was English-speaking blacks, with 9,080 individuals, followed by the Garifuna with 2,232 people⁴⁵. Punta Gorda on Roatan Island is recognized as the first place the Garinagu People arrived after their forced removal from their ancestral territories in St. Vincent⁴⁶ in 1757⁴⁷. Due to their historical ties to the land and sea resources, their connection to the natural resources-related cultural resources, and their spiritual ties to the place and resources, they are considered Indigenous Peoples in the project area.

⁴³Institute of Community Development, Water, and Sanitation (IDAAS), 2020. *Mapping of Indigenous Territories in Honduras*.

⁴⁴FAO, 2022. *Report on Land and Resource Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Honduras*.

⁴⁵[17th National Population Census and 6th Housing Census 2013, Volume 6: Population Groups, INE.](#)

⁴⁶More about the history of the Garinagu Peoples can be found [here](#).

⁴⁷[Being Garifuna Honduras](#)

The Garifuna economy is based mainly on marine and terrestrial resources. A 2011 study showed that agriculture (45.6%), fishing (30.7%), and handicrafts (6.3%) were their main activities. Cassava is the most important crop, used to produce cassava bread, a product that is sold locally and exported. Artisanal fishing is a vital source of income, despite competition from fishing boats. Women are responsible for planting, tending, and harvesting, as well as preparing food and selling products, while men are engaged in preparing the land and fishing, as well as producing and marketing Guifiti, a medicinal drink. Artisanal fishing is a crucial economic activity for the Garifuna people, providing a reliable source of income. While it's a primary occupation for Garifuna men, it faces challenges from competition with larger fishing boats. In 2001, agriculture, forestry, hunting, and fishing represented 25.96% of the Garifuna economically active population, declining to 21.68% by 2013 due to national unemployment, rather than a shift to higher-paying sectors. The informal sector is growing, and international remittances are increasingly vital for the Garifuna population's livelihood due to insufficient employment generation⁴⁸.

Garifuna women are permanently involved in community decision-making and lead movements for territorial reclamation. Their activism, however, makes them target for state persecution, including accusations and imprisonment, as well as threats from organized crime and extractive industries. They also advocate for environmental protection, working with others to address issues like coastal erosion, pollution, and climate change⁴⁹.

Despite their vital contributions, Garifuna women face significant obstacles, including government apathy towards protecting their ecosystems and lives. They also experience perpetual racism, discrimination, and misogyny that devalue their ancestral knowledge because it is not validated by global academic credentials. Additionally, they contend with various forms of "extractivism," including ecological and cultural, as well as migration processes that lead to the emptying of their territories.

2.4.2. Impacts on Indigenous Peoples

A detailed understanding of positive and negative impacts of the project on the Garifuna community and the English-Speaking Black community is not yet fully understood as the activities thus far designed do not have a central focus on interventions with these groups. The project does not have activities that are expected to work with enforcement or fishing delimitation, however if the project plans change, further research and consultations will be necessary. Nonetheless, there is a concern that the focus of the project on high-end hotels may result in further exclusion and increased vulnerability of the population. The vulnerabilities of the population may result in unsustainable project activities, as there is a great deal of turnover in hotels due to the vulnerability of the population who travel long distances to find employment in West Bay.

The rapid expansion of tourism in the Bay Islands department has regrettably led to a significant erosion of cultural heritage and a diminished sense of community among the local population. Stakeholders have voiced concerns that the influx of external influences, driven by the tourism industry, has diluted the distinct cultural identity that once thrived in the region.

While tourism undoubtedly offers economic benefits and opportunities for growth, its unchecked proliferation poses a substantial threat to the preservation of local traditions and customs. There is an external apprehension regarding the potential exploitation of the Garifuna community's rich cultural practices, such as their vibrant dancing traditions. The concern is that these deeply meaningful expressions of identity could be commodified and presented as mere tourist attractions, thereby stripping them of their intrinsic value. This cultural appropriation could lead to a superficial understanding of Garifuna heritage, reducing it to a spectacle rather than respecting its profound historical and spiritual significance. However, Garifunas interviewed expressed a profound interest in developing their territory to receive tourists. The challenge lies in finding a balance where tourism can contribute to economic prosperity without compromising the authenticity and integrity of the local culture and the well-being of its people.

⁴⁸[Comparative Characterization Of The Garifuna Population Group In Honduras According To The Results Obtained In The 2001 And 2013 Population And Housing Censuses, INE](#)

⁴⁹[Contributions from the Garifuna community to the consultation on indigenous women and the development, application, preservation, and transmission of scientific knowledge. OHCHR, 2022.](#)

There are opportunities to work with the IPLCs in the project area, both through strengthening local governance and through specific interventions with IPLCs. It is essential that all work carried out with IPLCs be a collaborative and participatory effort, instead of imposing project plans onto the population. One important area of opportunity is to work with the tour guides from local communities to strengthen their knowledge on biodiversity and conservation. Any work being done in Santos Guardiola by the project should not just work with formal government structures, but also Indigenous Leadership structures to ensure IPLC inclusion.

2.5. Gender

A full study of gender in the project area can be found in the Gender Assessment conducted for this project. In Honduras, women face high rates of violence. Honduras has one of the highest rates of hate crimes and trans feminicides in the world, with 388 violent deaths between 2009 and 2021. The situation is especially worrying for trans women: they have registered more than 120 murders in the last decade, and their life expectancy does not exceed 35 years⁵⁰. In the first half of 2025, Honduras recorded 127 violent deaths of women, including femicides, with firearms causing 63.8% of these deaths. In June 2025 alone, 20 violent deaths were documented. A staggering 95% of femicide cases remain judicially unresolved⁵¹. Beyond homicides, violence is widespread, with 13,034 domestic violence and 15,647 family mistreatment reports received by the National Emergency System 911 from January to April 2025. A 2022 survey revealed that 1 in 2 women over 15 has experienced violence⁵².

A study by Oxfam highlights the undervalued nature of women's work in rural areas, where household chores and agricultural labor are often unpaid. A high percentage of economically inactive individuals in rural areas are women due to their dedication to domestic activities. Remittances from family members abroad are a key source of income for rural women. Women disproportionately bear caregiving responsibilities, especially during crises, and face a "double burden" of productive work and unpaid domestic labor. Cultural and political barriers limit women's participation in political and community roles, with their issues often overlooked⁵³.

Despite legal reforms, rural women still face significant obstacles in accessing land or natural resources. Between 2011 and 2020, only 37.3% of land titles were granted to women. Economic barriers, gender gaps in property ownership, and lack of institutional support limit women's access to land. Access to land is considered the main structural challenge for rural women, influenced by gender inequality, patriarchal norms, and a weak institutional framework. Political and civil society leaders emphasize the need for targeted public policies and institutional reform to secure women's rights to productive resources⁵⁴.

In decision-making processes over natural resources, women's participation and power are limited by patriarchal social norms, discrimination, and lack of inclusion in formal structures. Women are often relegated to household roles, while men or powerful actors make key decisions, leading to an uneven distribution of power. This marginalization of women's voices hinders sustainable resource management and equitable distribution, underscoring the need for women's active inclusion in decision-making for gender equality and sustainable development in Honduras⁵⁵.

3. ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY, REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

This chapter first outlines the laws and regulations of Honduras and the WWF's ESSF and principles and procedures of the SIPP that are applicable to the project, and then discusses gaps between Honduras laws and regulations and the SIPP. For the purposes of the iCOAST Project implementation, the ESSF and SIPP shall prevail in all cases of discrepancies.

3.1 Honduras Policies, Laws, Regulations Guidelines

⁵⁰ [Forced to flee and return to Honduras.](#)

⁵¹ [Centro de Derechos de Mujeres \(CDM\). Violence Monitoring Report, 2025.](#)

⁵² [Encuesta Nacional Especializada Sobre Violencia Contra Las Mujeres y Niñas, INE 2022](#)

⁵³ [Current situation of rural women in Honduras, OXFAM.](#)

⁵⁴ [Current situation of rural women in Honduras, OXFAM.](#)

⁵⁵ [Gender dimensions in the tourism value chain](#)

Honduras has a comprehensive set of laws, regulations, and policies that provide a foundation for implementing environmental and social safeguards. These include the General Environmental Law and the SINEIA Regulation, which establish the national framework for environmental impact assessment and risk management. Sectoral laws, such as the Forestry, Protected Areas and Wildlife Law, the Water Law, and the Fisheries Laws, govern the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources, including forests, marine ecosystems, and biodiversity.

Social safeguard-related provisions are embedded in the Constitution, labor legislation, and international commitments. Notably, Honduras has ratified ILO Convention 169, which recognizes the rights of Indigenous and tribal peoples to land, culture, and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), although a national FPIC law has not yet been enacted. Other laws address land tenure, gender equality, community participation, and cultural heritage protection, though enforcement and scope vary.

Honduras is not a signatory of the Escazú Agreement, which promotes access to environmental information, public participation, and justice in environmental matters. The principles of the Escazú Agreement are highly relevant to the iCOAST project, especially for strengthening transparency, stakeholder engagement, and accountability mechanisms in marine and coastal conservation.

3.1.1. Laws on Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation

Honduras is a biodiversity-rich country, with Roatán at the heart of the Mesoamerican Reef. Tourism is a major economic driver but poses risks to coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, and associated livelihoods through unregulated coastal development, unsustainable tourism practices, and climate change impacts. The iCOAST Project supports national and municipal efforts to strengthen governance, finance, and sustainable value chains in tourism, with a focus on protecting marine and coastal ecosystems and mitigating environmental impacts. The key safeguards implications of these laws are:

- All project-related tourism or infrastructure activities must be screened under SINEIA and comply with BINMP zoning.
- Local ordinances (e.g., plastic bans, wastewater protocols) must be integrated into the tourism supply chain and operations.
- CITES, Ramsar, and CMS obligations guide conservation of coral reefs, mangroves, and key species.
- Coordination with UMA and co-management partners (RMP, BINMP) is essential for on-site implementation and enforcement.
- Even though Escazú is not signed or ratified, its participation and transparency principles should inform community engagement.

Table 1: Laws on Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation				
Level	Law / Agreement	Scope	Authority	Relevance to iCOAST
International	Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) ⁵⁶	Biodiversity strategies, protected areas	SERNA/MIAMBI ENTE, ICF	Framework for SINAPH and local PA management
	Nagoya Protocol ⁵⁷	Access & benefit-sharing	SERNA/MIAMBI ENTE	Sustainable use of genetic/marine resources

⁵⁶ <https://www.cbd.int/>
⁵⁷ <https://www.cbd.int/abs/default.shtml>

Table 1: Laws on Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation				
Level	Law / Agreement	Scope	Authority	Relevance to iCOAST
	Cartagena Protocol ⁵⁸	LMOs/GMOs biosafety	SERNA/MIAMBI ENTE	Regulates GMO use in coastal/marine zones
	Paris Agreement ⁵⁹	Climate mitigation/adaptation	SERNA/MIAMBI ENTE	Align with the tourism climate action plan
	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora CITES ⁶⁰	Trade in endangered species	ICF	Regulates the coral, marine fauna trade
	Ramsar Convention ⁶¹	Wetlands protection	SERNA/ICF	Protection of coastal wetlands/mangroves
	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals CMS (Bonn) ⁶²	Migratory species	ICF	Protection of marine mammals, turtles
	Basel / Stockholm Conventions ⁶³	Hazardous waste & POPs	SERNA	Controls waste and chemicals in the tourism sector
Regional	CCAD (SICA) ⁶⁴	Regional environmental coordination	CCAD/SERNA	Links to regional Mesoamerican Reef strategies
National	General Environmental Law (Decreto 104-93) ⁶⁵	Environmental management, EIA	SERNA	SINEIA compliance for tourism infrastructure
	SINEIA Regulation (Acuerdo Ejecutivo 008-2015) ⁶⁶	EIA categories & process	SERNA/DECA	Screening hotels, ports, wastewater plants

⁵⁸ https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtldsg_no=XXVII-8-a&chapter=27&clang=en

⁵⁹ <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/paris-agreement>

⁶⁰ <https://cites.org/eng/disc/text.php>

⁶¹ <https://www.ramsar.org/>

⁶² <https://whc.unesco.org/en/glossary/220>

⁶³ <https://www.brsmeas.org/Home/tabid/10038/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁶⁴ <https://www.sica.int/ccad/>

⁶⁵ https://www.tsc.gob.hn/web/leyes/Ley_general_del_ambiente.pdf

⁶⁶ https://www.tsc.gob.hn/web/leyes/Reglamento_sistema_nacional_de_evaluacion_impacto_ambiental.pdf

Table 1: Laws on Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation				
Level	Law / Agreement	Scope	Authority	Relevance to iCOAST
Local (Roatán & Santos Guardiola)	Forestry, Protected Areas & Wildlife Law (Decreto 98-2007) ⁶⁷	SINAPH, PA management	ICF	Governance of BINMP & mangrove areas
	Water Law (Decreto 181-2009) ⁶⁸	Water & watershed protection	SERNA	Regulation of water use & wastewater discharge
	Fisheries & Aquaculture Law (Decreto 154-2013) ⁶⁹	Sustainable fisheries	DIGEPESCA/SAG	Sustainable sourcing for tourism value chains
	Bay Islands National Marine Park (BINMP) ⁷⁰	Marine PA zoning & rules	ICF, RMP NGO	Controls in reef/marine areas for tourism, through the Forestry, Protected Areas, and Wildlife Law, the ICF is authorized to sign co-management agreements with non-governmental organizations, municipalities, or local communities to support the administration of protected areas. Roatán Marine Park (RMP) ⁷¹ Is the comanager of the BINMP
	The Municipalities Law of Honduras (Decree No. 134-90)	Local EIA & ordinances	Municipalities	Recognizes the authority of municipalities in environmental matters and empowers them to create technical bodies to manage local environmental affairs, including Plastic bans & waste ordinances
	Compendium of Municipal Competencies in Environmental Matters (2018, AMHON and ICF)			It indicates that the Municipal Environmental Units (UMAs) are the technical bodies supporting municipal corporations in coordinating, planning, implementing, and monitoring environmental

⁶⁷ <https://forestpolicy.org/sites/default/files/pdf/honduras.pdf>

⁶⁸ <https://www.digepesca.sag.gob.hn/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Ley-de-Pesca-y-Acuicultura-Honduras-D-106-15.pdf>

⁶⁹ <https://www.digepesca.sag.gob.hn/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Ley-de-Pesca-y-Acuicultura-Honduras-D-106-15.pdf>

⁷⁰ <https://www.roatanmarinepark.org/binmp>

⁷¹ <https://www.roatanmarinepark.org/>

Table 1: Laws on Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation				
Level	Law / Agreement	Scope	Authority	Relevance to iCOAST
				policies, plans, and programs at the local level. It specifies that the UMAs must articulate their efforts with the Forest Conservation Institute (ICF) and the Secretariat of MiAmbiente within the framework of the National Environmental System (SINAPH).
	Cruise wastewater protocols	Marine pollution prevention	Ports/ Municipalities	Management of cruise tourism discharges

3.1.2. Specific Policies related to project focal area, ie. Protected areas, fishing, wildlife etc.

Given the iCOAST Project's focus on marine and coastal tourism, supply chains, and biodiversity protection, several national and local policies directly related to protected areas, fisheries, and wildlife management are relevant. These policies support the sustainable use of natural resources, regulate tourism activities in sensitive ecosystems, and promote community co-management of marine and terrestrial protected areas. The key safeguards implications of these policies are:

- Project activities in or near protected areas must comply with PA management plans and zoning.
- Fisheries interventions should follow quotas, gear restrictions, and closed seasons.
- Coordination with local NGOs and UMA offices is essential for compliance and enforcement.

Table 2: Specific Policies in the Project Area				
Level	Law / Agreement	Scope	Authority	Relevance to iCOAST
National	Constitution of Honduras.	Recognizes the right of all people to a healthy environment, linking it to quality of life, health, and wellbeing. And Provides the constitutional foundation for environmental laws	Government of Honduras	Marks the obligation of the State to protect the environment and regulate the use of natural resources to ensure sustainability
National	Forestry, Protected Areas & Wildlife Law (Decreto 98-2007)	Establishes SINAPH, PA categories, and species protection	ICF	Framework for BINMP, mangrove conservation, and wildlife protection

Local Islands)	(Bay Islands)	General Fisheries & Aquaculture Law (Decreto 154-2013)	Regulates fishing gear, seasons, quotas	DIGEPESC A/SAG	Ensures sustainable sourcing for tourism-linked fisheries
		Reglamento de Áreas Protegidas	Management norms for SINAPH sites	ICF	Guides tourism in protected areas
		Bay Islands National Marine Park Management Plan	Zoning, permitted uses, reef conservation	ICF, Municipalities, NGOs	Tourism activity controls in reef and seagrass areas
		Roatán Marine Park By-laws Acuerdo No. 047-2024	No-take zones, mooring regulations	RMP NGO	Approved the Plan de Manejo del Parque Nacional Marino Islas de la Bahía for 2023-2035 including diving, snorkeling, and fishing regulations
		Municipal Ordinances on Mangrove Protection	Ban on mangrove clearing in coastal zones	Municipalities	Coastal ecosystem preservation

3.1.3. Laws on Labor and Working Conditions

Honduras' labor framework is grounded in its Constitution, Labor Code, and international agreements, including key ILO Conventions. In the tourism sector, these laws protect workers' rights, regulate working conditions, and address occupational health and safety. These laws are relevant to hotels, tour operators, transport, and supply chains.

Level	Law / Agreement	Scope	Authority	Relevance to iCOAST
International	ILO Conventions 87, 98, 100, 111, 138, 182 ⁷²	Freedom of association, equal pay, non discrimination, and child labor.	Ministry of Labor	Baseline for fair labor practices in tourism supply chains
National	Labor Code. Decreto 189-1959 ⁷³	Contracts, wages, working hours, occupational safety	Ministry of Labor	Applies to all project-supported employment

⁷² <https://www.ilo.org/international-labour-standards/conventions-protocols-and-recommendations>

⁷³ <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC203150/>

	Social Security Law Decreto 140-1959 ⁷⁴	Health, maternity, work injury benefits	IHSS	Ensures worker protection in the tourism and supply chain sectors
Local	Municipal labor ordinances (if applicable)	Local permits	Municipalities	Compliance for community-based tourism operations

3.1.4. Land Acquisition

While the iCOAST Project does not anticipate large-scale land acquisition, small-scale land access or easements may be needed for infrastructure improvements (e.g., waste management, mooring buoys). Honduras regulates land acquisition through national expropriation laws and municipal land-use planning instruments. The key safeguards implications of these laws for the project are to follow municipal zoning to prevent ecosystem impacts and ensure fair and timely compensation if acquisition is unavoidable.

Table 4: Laws on Land Acquisition				
Level	Law / Agreement	Scope	Authority	Relevance to iCOAST
National	Expropriation Law – Decreto 131 (Constitution, Arts. 106–108) ⁷⁵	Public interest land acquisition with compensation	National Congress / Municipalities	Provides legal process if land is needed for public tourism infrastructure
	Urban and Territorial Planning Law	Land-use zoning and planning	Municipalities	Controls location of tourism infrastructure
	Article 107 of the Constitution of the Republic	Land-use zoning and planning	National congress	Prohibits that land located in the coastal zone, extending forty kilometers inland, as well as islands and keys, be acquired or possessed by individuals or companies who are not native-born Hondurans. This legal framework ensures that the coastal strip remains inalienable and imprescriptible, legally preventing the restriction of public access to the coasts.

⁷⁴ <https://glifos.unitec.edu/opac/record/135250?&mode=advanced&query=@field1=encabezamiento@value1=%20LEGISLACION&recnum=462>

⁷⁵ https://www.oas.org/dil/esp/constitucion_de_honduras.pdf

	Honduras Civil Code	Land-use zoning and planning	National	Beaches are classified as national property for public use, whose exclusive domain belongs to the Nation, and their use and enjoyment are guaranteed for all inhabitants
Local	Municipal zoning plans (Roatán, Santos Guardiola)	Setbacks, coastal buffer zones	Municipalities	Restricts tourism development in sensitive areas

3.1.5. Indigenous Peoples

Honduras recognizes the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendant communities, including the Garífuna, under national law and ILO Convention 169. While Roatán is primarily non-Indigenous, Garífuna and other coastal communities may be involved in tourism supply chains and conservation activities. The key safeguards implications for Indigenous Peoples are to apply FPIC for any activity affecting Indigenous or Garífuna communities and to integrate traditional knowledge into conservation and tourism planning.

<i>Table 5: Laws on Indigenous Peoples</i>				
Level	Law / Agreement	Scope	Authority	Relevance to iCOAST
International	ILO Convention 169 Ratified 1995	Rights to land, culture, FPIC	Government of Honduras	Ensures participation and consent in relevant activities
National	Constitution of Honduras Arts. 346–350	Protection of Indigenous lands and cultures	Government of Honduras	Legal basis for engagement
	National Policy for Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples ⁷⁶	Development with cultural respect	SEDIS	Framework for inclusive project design

3.1.6. Gender, Gender-Based Violence, and Sexual Harassment

Gender equality and protection from GBV and sexual harassment are critical for equitable participation in tourism and conservation. Honduras has national frameworks to address these issues, relevant to both community and workplace contexts. The safeguard implications of these laws include:

⁷⁶ <https://www.acnur.org/fileadmin/Documentos/BDL/2017/10900.pdf>

- Implement zero-tolerance GBV/harassment policies in project-supported entities.
- Promote women's leadership in tourism supply chains.
- Provide GBV referral pathways during community engagement, for work in supply chains, in trainings, and in the workplace.

Table 6: Laws on Gender, Gender-Based Violence, and SEAH				
Level	Law / Agreement	Scope	Authority	Relevance to iCOAST
International	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). ⁷⁷	Non-discrimination	Ministry of labor	
	The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará) ⁷⁸			
National	Law on Equality of Opportunities for Women Decreto 34-2000 ⁷⁹	Equal rights, non-discrimination	INAM	Ensures women's equal participation in tourism
	Law Against Domestic Violence Decreto 132-1997 ⁸⁰	Protection from domestic violence	Judiciary, Police	Protects women in project areas
	Penal Code Reforms on Sexual Harassment	Workplace harassment sanctions	Ministry of Labor	Prevents harassment in tourism workplaces

3.1.7. Community Engagement

Honduras has legal provisions for public participation in environmental decision-making, including through the SINEIA EIA process and municipal open council mechanisms. For iCOAST, inclusive and transparent engagement is essential to secure community support for sustainable tourism and conservation. Key safeguards Implications from related laws include:

- Disclose project information in accessible formats and languages.
- Engage stakeholders early in planning.
- Use culturally appropriate methods to reach marginalized groups.

Table 7: Laws on Community Engagement

⁷⁷ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

⁷⁸ <https://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-61.html>

⁷⁹ <https://www.acnur.org/fileadmin/Documentos/BDL/2016/10637.pdf?file=fileadmin/Documentos/BDL/2016/10637>

⁸⁰ https://www.oas.org/dil/esp/Ley_contra_la_violencia_domestica_Honduras.pdf

Level	Law / Agreement	Scope	Authority	Relevance to iCOAST
National	General Environmental Law Art. 5 & SINEIA Regulation	Public participation in EIAs	SERNA/DECA	Stakeholder input in tourism projects
	Municipalities regulation Open Council Mechanisms	Citizen assemblies for local decision-making	Municipalities	Community involvement in tourism zoning
International	ILO Convention No. 169 ⁸¹ ⁸²	Access to information, participation		Transparency in activities for the project for indigenous communities. ILO 169 obliges States to consult Indigenous peoples in good faith and with the objective of obtaining consent whenever measures affect them
	Escazú Agreement principles ⁸³	Access to information, participation, justice	The agreement has not been signed by de Honduras Government	Model for transparent engagement in project activities

3.2 WWF Safeguards Standards and Procedures Applicable to the Project

WWF's safeguards standards require that any potentially adverse environmental and social impacts are identified, and avoided or mitigated. Safeguards policies that are relevant to this project are as follows.

(i) Standard on Environment and Social Risk Management

This standard is applicable because iCoast Honduras intends to support activities that result in a variety of environmental and social impacts. The Project is expected to generate positive social and environmental impacts but faces minor risks to generate potentially adverse social and environmental impacts. Environmentally, while the overall goal of the project is to reduce the negative environmental impacts of tourism, there are risks related to increased waste from the removal of obsolete equipment, rising pressure on fragile ecosystems due to tourism growth, and potential challenges with maintaining imported technologies unsuited to local conditions. Socially, the project may foster collective action and social cohesion but faces risks of corruption, unequal access to benefits, and limited long-term impact if trained personnel leave the project area. Policy changes and shifts in fishing or tourism regulations could also have uneven effects across stakeholder groups, though overall, the project has potential to enhance respect for human rights and sustainable livelihoods if implemented with inclusive and transparent safeguards.

⁸¹ https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.16_Indigenous%20and%20Tribal%20Peoples%20Convention.pdf

⁸² <https://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/es/c/1036913/>

⁸³ <https://www.cepal.org/es/acuerdodeescazu>

Based on these potential risks, the standard is triggered and an ESMF is prepared to set out guidelines and procedures on how to monitor environmental and social impacts, and how to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts.

(ii) Standard on Protection of Natural Habitats

WWF's mission is to protect natural habitats, and it does not undertake any projects that would result in conversion or degradation of critical natural habitats, especially those that are legally protected, officially proposed for protection, or identified as having high conservation value. Overall, the iCoast Honduras project activities will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce pollutants, and improve sustainability of tourism value chains in Honduras.

There are no activities planned that are expected to cause any adverse environmental impacts on human populations or environmentally important areas, however considering the investments to be made by the project in installing new equipment and making hotel renovations, which have the potential to contaminate water and ecosystems, thus the standard is triggered. While the iCOAST Project does not anticipate large-scale land acquisition, small-scale land access or easements may be needed for infrastructure improvements (e.g., waste management, mooring buoys).

(iii) Standard on Restriction of Access and Resettlement

The WWF's Standard seeks to ensure that adverse social or economic impacts on resource-dependent local communities as a result of restrictions on resource access and/or use are avoided or minimized. At this stage of project design, this standard has not been triggered, as the project activities do not contemplate exacerbating restrictions to natural resources in the project area. Nonetheless, the activities and implementation should be monitored to ensure restrictions to natural resources are not promoted at any time.

(iv) Standard on Indigenous Peoples

The WWF's standard requires ensuring that indigenous rights are respected, that IPs do not suffer adverse impacts from projects, and that IPs receive culturally appropriate benefits from conservation. The policy mandates that projects respect IPs' rights, including their rights to FPIC processes and to tenure over traditional territories; that culturally appropriate and equitable benefits (including from traditional ecological knowledge) are negotiated and agreed upon with the IPs' communities in question; and that potential adverse impacts are avoided or adequately addressed through a participatory and consultative approach. While no project activities are expected to directly impact the Indigenous Peoples of the project area, the presence of English-Creole Afrodescendants and Garinagu/Garifuna Peoples in the project area mandate that the standard is triggered and an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework should be implemented for the project.

(v) Standard on Community Health, Safety and Security

This Standard ensures that the health, safety and security of communities are respected and appropriately protected. The Guidance on Labor and Working Conditions requires employers and supervisors to implement all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of workers through the introduction of preventive and protective measures. It also requires that the labor rights of project-employed workers are observed, as indicated in Annex 1: Screening Tool. Project activities should also prevent adverse impact involving quality and supply of water to affected communities; SEAH-related risks to both affected communities as well as project staff; safety of project infrastructure, life and properties; protective mechanisms for the use of hazardous materials; disease prevention procedures; and emergency preparedness and response. The project triggers this standard as there will be work completed that impacts working conditions in hotels, policies that may impact working conditions and community conditions, and SEAH risks have been identified.

(vi) Standard on Pest Management

WWF-funded projects are not allowed to procure or use formulated products that are in World Health Organization (WHO) Classes IA and IB, or formulations of products in Class II, unless there are restrictions that are likely to deny use or access by lay personnel and others without training or proper equipment. The project will follow the recommendations and minimum standards as described in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides and its associated technical guidelines, and procure only pesticides, along with suitable protective and application equipment, that will permit pest management

actions to be carried out with well-defined and minimal risk to health, environment, and livelihoods. The project does not contemplate activities that could impact pest management, thus the Standard is not triggered. In the future, if the project seeks to work with agricultural value chains, this should be monitored and revised.

(vii) Standard on Cultural Resources

This Standard ensures that Cultural Resources are appropriately preserved and their destruction, damage or loss is appropriately avoided. Physical cultural resources (PCR) include archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, and sacred sites including graveyards, burial sites, and sites of unique natural value. Intangible cultural resources include traditional ecological knowledge, performing arts, oral traditions and expressions, traditional craftsmanship and social practices, rituals and events. The impacts on cultural resources resulting from project activities, including mitigating measures, may not contravene either the recipient country's national legislation or its obligations under relevant international environmental treaties and agreements. The project area includes intangible cultural resources, including the language, dance, traditional knowledge, and traditional craftsmanship of the Garinagu Peoples and the cultural heritage of the English-Creole Afrodscendents, which triggers the standard on Cultural Resources.

(viii) Standard on Grievance Mechanisms

Project-affected communities and other interested stakeholders may raise a grievance at any time to the PMU and WWF. The PMU will be responsible for informing project-affected parties about the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism. Contact information of the PMU and WWF will be made publicly available. Relevant details are also provided in the Grievance Redress section of this ESMF.

The WWF Standard on Grievance Mechanisms is not intended to replace project- and country-level dispute resolution and redress mechanisms. This mechanism is designed to: address potential breaches of WWF's policies and procedures in a gender-responsive manner; be independent, transparent, and effective; be survivor-centered and offer protections to those reporting SEAH-related grievances; be accessible to project-affected people; keep complainants abreast of progress of cases brought forward; and maintain records on all cases and issues brought forward for review.

(ix) Standard on Public Consultation and Disclosure

This standard requires meaningful consultation with relevant stakeholders, occurring as early as possible and throughout the project cycle. It requires the Project Team to provide relevant information in a timely manner and in a form and language that are understandable and accessible to diverse stakeholders. This standard also requires that information concerning environmental and social issues relevant to the project is disclosed for at least 30 days prior to implementation, and 45 days if the Indigenous Peoples Standard has been triggered. WWF will disclose safeguards documentation on its Safeguards Resources web page. The final safeguards documents should be published on national websites of the Implementing Agencies and made available locally in specific locations. The project is also required to locally release all final key safeguards documents via hardcopy, translated into the local language and in a culturally appropriate manner, to facilitate awareness by relevant stakeholders that the information is in the public domain for review. More details on culturally appropriate communication can be found in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

(x) Standard on Stakeholder Engagement

This standard ensures that WWF is committed to meaningful, effective and informed stakeholder engagement in the design and implementation of all GEF and GCF projects. WWF's commitment to stakeholder engagement arises from internal standards such as WWF's Project and Program Standards (PPMS), as well as WWF's commitment to international instruments such as United Nations Declaration on Indigenous People (UNDRIP). Stakeholder engagement is an overarching term that encompasses a range of activities and interactions with stakeholders throughout the project cycle and is an essential aspect of good project management. The project has prepared a stakeholder assessment and a Stakeholder Engagement Plan that will be implemented during the project.

(xi) Guidance Note on Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

All over the world, it is estimated that one in three women and girls experience GBV during her lifetime. A recent study conducted by IUCN, in collaboration with USAID as part of Advancing Gender in the Environment (AGENT), states that forms of GBV (ranging from sexual, physical and psychological violence, to trafficking, sexual harassment, sexual coercion and in some cases rape) can be linked to environmental issues.

Many projects implemented by WWF relate to effective management of protected areas and the landscapes in which they are located through support to law enforcement, patrolling and better management and restoration of landscapes by restricting access to natural resources. These activities can potentially give rise to GBV/SEAH risks where government-employed law enforcement officials/rangers/guards supported by the project may misuse the power of their positions by sexually exploiting women in local communities. This is a particular risk if women are collecting water or natural resources in a protected area. As another example, projects that promote alternative livelihoods, particularly ones that improve women's empowerment and decision making, can often lead to changes in power dynamics within communities and increase the risks of GBV/SEAH toward those empowered women.

GBV and SEAH in the implementation of WWF activities in projects and programs is unacceptable and requires timely, proportional, and appropriate action. WWF recognizes that to achieve biodiversity conservation it is vital to promote gender equality and make every effort to ensure that project activities implemented by WWF respect integrity and human rights and mitigate any risk that gives rise to discriminatory and exploitative gender inequalities. WWF does support projects in areas where there is civil war, ethnic conflict, and insurgencies where there are existing GBV/SEAH risks. WWF therefore needs to understand these risks in order to avoid exacerbating local conditions that contribute to GBV/SEAH, which would undermine any conservation outcomes the project may seek to achieve.

Screening for GBV/SEAH risks was completed through field research. The project does not change resource use practices and does not promote practices that pose a greater burden on women. While the project activities are not expected to increase the risk of GBV or SEAH and there is minimal risk that project staff may engage in GBV, due to the context of mass tourism, economic inequalities, and minimal law enforcement, GBV training is relevant to include in project trainings to ensure the project does not contribute to the existing problem.

(xii) Guidance Note on Labor and Working Conditions

As a conservation organization, WWF does not typically fund large infrastructure activities in conservation projects implemented by WWF's GEF Agency and therefore does not directly adversely impact labor and working conditions. However, WWF Agency projects do implement projects in the forestry, agriculture and fisheries sectors, which may have potential unintended adverse impacts. This is mostly seen in financing activities necessary for strengthening protected area management systems, including construction of protected area administrative buildings, watch towers, or accommodations for park guards. The project does not consider large scale employment, and thus the Guidance Note is not triggered. In the case that the project decides to fund construction activities, WWF will ensure that any funding for such activities complies with WWF's Environment and Social Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP) and more specifically international labor and working condition standards such as the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and any relevant local labor standards of the project specific countries.

(xiv) Guidance Note on Ranger Principles

Rangers play a key role in protecting wildlife, managing protected areas, and resolving human-wildlife conflict. Rangers must act within the law and under high ethical standards in order to achieve positive outcomes from both people and nature. WWF only supports legitimate law enforcement activities that are carried out in a way that respects and protects the human rights of local communities and Indigenous Peoples. The project activities do not contemplate working with rangers, thus the Guidance Note is not triggered.

3.3 Gaps between Honduran laws and policies and the WWF's SIPP

An analysis was completed to compare the WWF GEF requirements and Honduras national legal framework (Table x). Gaps were identified, and strategies to fill them were proposed. For the ICOAST, the WWF's ESSF and SIPP provisions shall prevail over Honduras legislation in all cases of discrepancy.

Table 8: Gap Analysis			
Standards	National Legislative Requirements	Gap	Strategy
Standard on Environmental and Social Risk Management.	General Environmental Law (Decree 104-93) and SINEIA Regulation require Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and mitigation measures.	No national law mandates an integrated Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS). Social risks are considered inconsistently.	The project will apply the WWF SIPP as the overarching ESMS framework to ensure consistent treatment of environmental and social risks.
Standard on Protection of Natural Habitats	Forestry, Protected Areas and Wildlife Law (Decree 98-2007) protects biodiversity, marine and forest ecosystems. Co-management and zoning systems are in place.	No major gap; legislation adequately protects key ecosystems	WWF SIPP will be applied in addition to national laws to ensure strict adherence in ecologically sensitive areas
Standard on Restriction of Access and Resettlement	National laws do not explicitly regulate access restrictions; however, co-management and customary uses are sometimes recognized. ILO 169 reinforces rights of Indigenous communities.	National legislation lacks specific provisions for resettlement or economic displacement.	The project will adopt WWF's SIPP which does not allow for involuntary resettlement. Currently the project does not have activities planned that would cause access restriction.
Standard on Indigenous Peoples	Honduras ratified ILO Convention 169 (1995); Constitution (Art. 346) protects Indigenous rights. No national FPIC law yet, but processes exist.	National application of FPIC is uneven and lacks clear legal procedures.	Engagement will be culturally appropriate and documented, especially with Garífuna communities and Creole/English speaking black communities. Work carried out in Santos Guardiola will explicitly work with the Garinagu Peoples.
Standard on Community Health, Safety and Security	General Health Law and occupational safety standards apply, but do not extend to community-level impacts.	WWF standards go beyond national law by including community health and safety risks.	The project will assess and manage community health and safety risks per WWF guidelines.
Standard on Pest Management	Pesticide use is regulated under the Special Law on Hazardous Substances (Decree 267-2013). Lists exist but WHO classification is not adopted.	WHO hazard classifications are not applied. Integrated pest management not fully mandated.	Standard is not triggered
Standard on Cultural Resources	Cultural Heritage Law (Decree 220-97) protects tangible heritage; chance-find procedures are included in EIAs.	Intangible heritage and customary practices are less protected.	The project will incorporate both tangible and intangible cultural heritage safeguards per WWF SIPP.
Principle 9: Grievance Management	No comprehensive legal framework; complaints are usually handled through project or municipal channels.	Lack of formalized grievance redress mechanisms linked to environmental projects.	The project will implement a project-level grievance mechanism, culturally appropriate and accessible, aligned with WWF SIPP.
Standard on Public Consultation and Disclosure	EIA process (SINEIA) requires consultation for Category 3–4 projects. Forestry Law supports community input in management of protected areas.	No standardized procedures for disclosure frequency, language, or format.	WWF SIPP will guide public disclosure and culturally appropriate communication tools.

Table 8: Gap Analysis

Standards	National Legislative Requirements	Gap	Strategy
Standard on Stakeholder Engagement	Municipalities Law and sectoral laws promote participation, and ILO 169 ensures Indigenous involvement.	No national framework for ongoing stakeholder engagement beyond project permitting.	The project will implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan consistent with WWF standards, including for Indigenous and vulnerable groups.

4. ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

4.1 Adverse Environmental Impacts

There are immense environmental challenges in Roatan related to water, energy, and trash management. There is a minor risk that the project could contribute to increased contamination, as removing old equipment (i.e. air conditioners) would increase waste on the island. Since the waste management system is weak, it likely does not have the conditions necessary to increase contamination from deposited equipment. There is a risk that the project will increase tourism and thus pressure on ecosystems and increased pollution due to the success of the project in promoting Roatan as an eco-friendly location.

There is a risk for negative environmental impacts if hotels using new technologies cannot secure replacement parts, and thus must throw out the whole equipment when there is an issue. Additionally technologies that work in other parts of the world may not adapt to the conditions in the project area.

4.2 Environmental Mitigation Measures

Environmental mitigation measures have been designed when potential negative impacts have been identified (Table 9).

<i>Table 9: Anticipated Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures</i>				
Activity or Activities	Related Standard	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsible party
3.1.1 Implement action plans to reduce carbon emissions, chemical use, waste generation, pollution, and climate vulnerability in participating hotels, as developed under Activity 1.3.1.; 3.1.2 Reduce emissions through investments in energy efficiency, identifying opportunities through energy and insulation audits to replace air conditioning, cooling, heating, lighting, and electronic equipment with alternatives containing lower amounts of globally significant chemicals, thereby reducing the carbon footprint.	Standard on Protection of Natural Habitats	Increased contamination from change in equipment without proper waste management to throw away prior equipment.	Assessment of waste disposal options and contractual obligation of investments for responsible waste management.	Project leader, safeguards coordinator
		Increased contamination from implementing new equipment without access to replacement parts	Prior to investments, ensure an analysis or due diligence process to ensure any new equipment will be sustainable and access to new parts is possible.	Project leader, safeguards coordinator
Activity agnostic - Overall project aims to increase ecotourism and promote Roatan as an ecotourism destination.	Standard on Protection of Natural Habitats	Increase in tourism due to promoting Roatan as eco-destination could	Ensure policies and activities promoting tourism adhere to project	Project leader, safeguards coordinator

		lead to more overuse of resources and pollution	recommendations on ecosystem capacity for tourism. Design policies that prevent overexploitation and over-visitation.	
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4.3 Adverse Social Impacts

While the iCoast project has the potential to generate long-term social benefits both nationally and in the local project area, several adverse social impacts were identified that may emerge if risks are not adequately managed during the project.

One of the primary risks relates to weak governance structures and high private sector involvement in governance, which could undermine transparency and equitable distribution of project benefits. Without strong oversight mechanisms, project resources may be captured by more privileged actors or politically connected groups, reducing the participation and benefit of small and medium local enterprises, women, and youth-led initiatives. There are already strong inequalities between actors in the project area, and the project is at risk to further exacerbate these existing inequalities. The use of financial or performance-based selection criteria could favor businesses that already have access to financing, while excluding key businesses that historically do not have access to external investment. Such exclusion also risks deepening existing inequalities and eroding trust among stakeholders if not accompanied by inclusive selection measures.

There is also a risk of limited sustainability of the project due to a loss of trained human capital. Investments in training and capacity building could be undermined if newly skilled workers leave for better-paying opportunities elsewhere, leading to high turnover rates and minimal long-term change within the targeted area. This is particularly relevant in the hospitality sector, where high labor mobility and seasonal employment are common.

Finally, changes in tourism dynamics (i.e. territorial and municipal tourism development plans) and environmental policies (i.e. management of protected areas) could further exacerbate inequalities if significant efforts are not made to include the impacted people. For instance, shifts in fishing seasons or tourism regulations intended to protect ecosystems could inadvertently restrict access to traditional livelihoods, particularly for small-scale fishers and informal workers.

When analyzing the potential impacts of the project within the hotel sector, a distinct gender-based division of labor becomes apparent. Roles that are primarily held by men, such as those in maintenance and electrical departments, are precisely the areas most likely to experience significant changes due to the project's initiatives. This implies that any new responsibilities, advanced training, or technological adaptations related to these specialized fields would predominantly be undertaken by male staff members. For instance, the introduction of energy-efficient systems, smart building technologies, or advanced waste treatment infrastructure would directly impact their daily tasks and require the acquisition of new skills. This could lead to an increased demand for their expertise and potentially a heavier workload as they adapt to the project's requirements.

Conversely, positions related to cleaning, housekeeping, and kitchen duties are predominantly occupied by women. Consequently, any measures implemented by the project pertaining to enhanced waste management protocols, sustainable practices in housekeeping, or improved cooking oil disposal methods would primarily fall under their purview. This distribution of tasks suggests a potential for an adjusted workload for women in service roles as they integrate new waste and resource management practices into their existing responsibilities. For example, new sorting procedures for waste, the implementation of eco-friendly cleaning products, or revised protocols for handling kitchen waste would necessitate additional training and a modification of their established routines. It is therefore critical to acknowledge and address these ingrained gendered roles when planning project interventions. This ensures an equitable distribution of new tasks and responsibilities, mitigating any unintended burdens or disparities that could arise for either

male or female employees. Proactive measures, such as gender-sensitive training programs and workload assessments, would be essential to ensure a fair and just transition for all staff members.

The project anticipates no adverse effects or risks on GBV or SEAH. Instead, it is poised to foster the comprehensive inclusion of women, not merely in participatory roles but crucially in decision-making and leadership capacities. This intentional focus aims to dismantle existing barriers and create pathways for women to influence project outcomes and shape future initiatives. Nonetheless, the project works closely with tourist-oriented hotels which have existing concerns with GBV and SEAH, especially related to foreign visitors and alcohol consumption.

While the project is not specifically focused on GBV, the training platforms from the project have the opportunity to incorporate key concepts such as gender violence and intersectionality, equipping participants with the knowledge and sensitivity needed to prevent and address GBV, and fostering an environment that upholds gender equality for all.

The project, while aiming for positive change, carries potential negative impacts that warrant careful consideration, particularly concerning gender dynamics. One significant concern is the likelihood of an increased workload for men within the electricity and maintenance departments. This issue stems from persistent gender stereotypes that continue to rigidly separate tasks, often assigning physically demanding or technical roles predominantly to men. Without proactive measures, the project could inadvertently reinforce these traditional divisions, leading to an imbalance in labor distribution and potentially contributing to burnout among staff in these areas.

[Lastly, the area of project implementation is prone to climate change effects, including flooding, landslides, among others, which could pose an impact on project activities, should they occur during implementation. Some suggested strategies to approach those potential contextual risks are also included.](#)

4.4 Social Mitigation Measures

Table 10: Anticipated Social Impacts and Mitigation Measures				
Project Activity	Related Standard	Potential impact	Proposed mitigation measures	Responsible party
1.4.2 Develop long-term Sustainable Tourism Plans for Roatán and Santos Guardiola, including a governance framework that defines which institutions will lead and support the implementation process, establishing roles and responsibilities for all relevant actors, as well as mechanisms for accountability, coordination, and stakeholder engagement.	Standard on Indigenous Peoples Standard on Cultural Resources Standard on Public Consultation and Disclosure	Changes in tourism dynamics (i.e. territorial and municipal tourism development plans) and environmental policies (i.e. management of protected areas) could further exacerbate inequalities if significant efforts are not made to include the impacted people.	Include fisherfolk, tourism operators, and IPs into planning and policy design that impacts the use of sea and land-based natural resources.	Project leader, safeguards coordinator
2.2.3 Develop a specialized toolbox of financial instruments for sustainable tourism, accessible to	Gender	Project resources may be captured by more privileged actors or politically connected groups, reducing the participation and benefit of small and medium local	Design participation criteria and project promotional materials to address	Project leader, safeguards coordinator

tourism and accommodation businesses in Honduras; 2.3.2 Provide technical assistance to at least 10 hotels to prepare bankable portfolios and submit applications for accessing financing for sustainable tourism initiatives.		enterprises, women, and youth-led initiatives. Such exclusion also risks deepening existing inequalities and eroding trust among stakeholders.	existing inequalities and to ensure the inclusion of women, IPs, and vulnerable groups.	
3.1.1 Implement action plans to reduce carbon emissions, chemical use, waste generation, pollution, and climate vulnerability in participating hotels, as developed under Activity 1.3.1.; 3.1.2 Reduce emissions through investments in energy efficiency, identifying opportunities through energy and insulation audits to replace air conditioning, cooling, heating, lighting, and electronic equipment with alternatives containing lower amounts of globally significant chemicals, thereby reducing the carbon footprint.	Standard on Community Health, Safety and Security	The introduction of energy-efficient systems, smart building technologies, or advanced waste treatment infrastructure would directly impact the daily workload of hotel maintenance employees, could require the acquisition of new skills, and potential exposure to workplace hazards. This could lead to an increased demand for this expertise and potentially a heavier workload as maintenance staff adapt to the project's requirements.	Prior to investments, complete a workload assessment to ensure that investments in new technology will not increase the work burden on men or women.	Project leader, safeguards coordinator
	Gender	Measures implemented by the project pertaining to enhanced waste management protocols, sustainable practices in housekeeping, or improved cooking oil disposal methods have potential for an adjusted workload for women in service roles as they integrate new waste and resource management practices into their existing responsibilities.	Prior to investments, complete a workload assessment to ensure that investments in new technology will not increase the work burden on women or men.	Project leader, safeguards coordinator
3.3.3 Design and implement a skills certification program for hotel and tourism staff in Roatán, as well as for tourism providers, to support climate-smart, low-carbon, low-chemical, zero-waste, and zero-pollution tourism operations, aligned with MAR SAP strategic actions and harmonized with the topics under Output 1.3.	Standard on Environment and Social Risk Management	Investments in training and capacity building could be undermined if newly skilled workers leave for better-paying opportunities elsewhere, leading to high turnover rates and minimal long-term change within the targeted area.	Engage with high-level leaders (owners, managers) that have lower turnover rates. Work with hotels to design incentives for employee retention for those who participate in capacity building.	Project leader, safeguards coordinator

3.4.2 Update the 2018 Public Use Plan of the Parque Nacional Marino Islas de la Bahía (PNMIB), based on the development of Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) studies and carrying capacity assessments in the most visited tourism hotspots.	Standard on Public Consultation and Disclosure Standard on Restriction of Access and Resettlement (Not triggered)	Through updated planning, the Public Use Plan for PNMIBs intended to protect ecosystems could inadvertently restrict access to traditional livelihoods, particularly for small-scale fishers and informal workers.	Include fisherfolk, tourism operators, and IPs into planning and policy design that impacts the use of sea and land-based natural resources. Conduct official consultations with tourism providers, fisherfolk, and IPs prior to finalizing the plans.	Project leader, safeguards coordinator
Activity Agnostic: Overall project aims to increase ecotourism and promote Roatan as an ecotourism destination.	Guidance Note on GBV/SEAH	Increase in tourism could increase GBV and SEAH	Include trainings on GBV and SEAH in planned trainings Ensure companies receiving investments have policies and protocols to address GBV and SEAH.	Project leader, safeguards coordinator
Contextual risk: the area of implementation is prone to climate change effects, including flooding, landslides, among others,	Standard on Community Health, Safety and Security	These phenomena could have several negative impacts on project activities, potentially putting project workers and other stakeholders at risk.	Some potential measures to manage these contextual risks include: i) postponing any on-the-ground project activities in sites that become affected by the identified phenomena; ii) establishing a protocol for frequent monitoring of local meteorological data; iii) establishing a weather-triggered suspension protocol (or integration to the EE existing Risk Protocol/Health & Safety Plan); iv) developing a specific "Climate	PMU

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			Event" emergency response plan detailing evacuation routes and communication trees; and; and v) managing project implementation adaptively.	
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4.6 Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF)

WWF's Standard on Indigenous People requires that, regardless of whether Project affected IPs are affected adversely or positively, an IPP needs to be prepared with care and with the full and effective participation of affected communities. The requirements include screening to confirm and identify affected IP groups in the project areas, social analysis to improve the understanding of the local context and affected communities; a process of free, prior, and informed consent with the affected IPs' communities in order to fully identify their views and to obtain their broad community support to the project; and development of project-specific measures to avoid adverse impacts and enhance culturally appropriate benefits. Minimum requirements for projects working in areas with IPs are:

- Identification of IP groups through screening;
- Assessment of project impacts;
- Consultations with affected IP communities following FPIC principles and obtain their broad community support;
- Development of sites specific IPs plan (IPP) to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits; and
- In activities with no impact, the requirements could be limited to consultations during implementation to keep local communities informed about project activities and documentation of all consultations held.

Initial field research concluded that the project must further conduct engagement and consultations with Indigenous Peoples representatives in the project area, especially with Black-Creole Afrodescents in Roatan and with the Garinagu Peoples in Santos Guardiola. Once more activity details are planned and the project begins implementation, further engagement is necessary and formal consultations should be organized. Based on these formal consultations and engagement, IP Plans should be developed to deepen the project's understanding of how the project activities may impact IPs in the project area.

4.6.1. Project Impacts on Indigenous Peoples

A detailed understanding of positive and negative impacts of the project on the Garifuna community and the English-Speaking Black community is not yet fully understood as the activities thus far designed do not have a central focus on interventions with these groups. Nonetheless, there is a concern that the focus of the project on high-end hotels may result in the further exclusion and increased vulnerability of the population. The vulnerabilities of the population may result in unsustainable project activities, as there is a great deal of turnover in hotels due to the vulnerability of the population who travels long distances to find employment in West Bay.

The rapid expansion of tourism in the Bay Islands department has regrettably led to a significant erosion of cultural heritage and a diminished sense of community among the local population. Stakeholders have voiced concerns that the influx of external influences, driven by the tourism industry, has diluted the distinct cultural identity that once thrived in the region.

While tourism undoubtedly offers economic benefits and opportunities for growth, its unchecked proliferation poses a substantial threat to the preservation of local traditions and customs. There is an external apprehension regarding the

potential exploitation of the Garifuna community's rich cultural practices, such as their vibrant dancing traditions. The concern is that these deeply meaningful expressions of identity could be commodified and presented as mere tourist attractions, thereby stripping them of their intrinsic value. This cultural appropriation could lead to a superficial understanding of Garifuna heritage, reducing it to a spectacle rather than respecting its profound historical and spiritual significance. However, Garifunas interviewed expressed a profound interest in developing their territory to receive tourists. The challenge lies in finding a balance where tourism can contribute to economic prosperity without compromising the authenticity and integrity of the local culture and the well-being of its people.

There are opportunities to work with the IPLCs in the project area, both through strengthening local governance and through specific interventions with IPLCs. It is essential that all work carried out with IPLCs be a collaborative and participatory effort, instead of imposing project plans onto the population. One important area of opportunity is to work with the tour guides from local communities to strengthen their knowledge on biodiversity and conservation. Any work being done in Santos Guardiola by the project should not just work with formal government structures, but also Indigenous Leadership structures to ensure IPLC inclusion.

4.6.2. Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is an approach for ensuring that the rights of IPs are guaranteed in any decision that may negatively affect their lands, territories or livelihoods. It ensures that they have the right to give or withhold their consent to these activities without fear of reprisal or coercion, in a timeframe suited to their own culture, and with the resources to make informed decisions.

FPIC is composed of four separate components:

- Free—Without coercion, intimidation, manipulation, threat or bribery.
- Prior—indicates that consent has been sought sufficiently in advance, before any project activities have been authorized or commenced, and that the time requirements of the indigenous community's consultation/consensus processes have been respected.
- Informed—Information is provided in a language and form that are easily understood by the community, covering the nature, scope, purpose, duration and locality of the project or activity as well as information about areas that will be affected; economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts, all involved actors, and the procedures that the project or activity may entail.
- Consent—The right of IPs to give or withhold their consent to any decision that will impact their lands, territories, resources, and livelihoods.

The processes of consultation and obtaining FPIC will be applied to all the aspects of the project that may negatively affect the rights of the IPs and ethnic minorities, which in the case of this project include plans for working with fisherfolk and tourism development planning in Santos Guardiola. While the activities are not expected to generate negative impacts on the IPs, they should be involved in the project to ensure so. FPIC will be required on any matters that may negatively affect the customary rights and interests, water areas, lands, resources, territories and traditional livelihoods of the IPs concerned.

Thus, FPIC is integral to the execution of the proposed project, as the project areas include diverse indigenous communities. WWF recognizes the strong cultural and spiritual ties many IP groups have to their lands and territories and is committed to strengthen these ties in all WWF/GEF funded projects. FPIC gives IPs the freedom to determine their own development path to promote conservation sustainably. Since the project has potential risks to exclude IPLCs in territorial planning or influencing policies for tourism development in a region with IPLCs, the project should seek FPIC for its work. The IPs who may be affected by the Project will have a central role in defining the FPIC process, based on their own cultural and governance practices. The consultation process should be launched as early as possible to ensure full, effective and meaningful participation of IPs.

All consultations with IPs should be carried out in good faith with the objective of seeking agreement or consent. Consultation and consent is about IPs' right to meaningfully and effectively participate in decision-making on matters that may affect them. Consultations and information disclosure are integral parts of the FPIC process and any development support planning for IPs to ensure that the priorities, preferences, and needs of the indigenous groups are

taken into consideration adequately. With that objective in view, a strategy for consultation with IPs has been proposed so that all consultations are conducted in a manner to ensure full and effective participation. The approach of full and effective participation is primarily based upon transparent, good faith interactions, so that everyone in the community is empowered to join fully in the decision-making process. It includes providing information in a language and manner the community understands and, in a timeframe, compatible with the community's cultural norms.

The affected IPs will be actively engaged in all stages of the project cycle, including project preparation, and feedback of consultations with the IPs will be reflected in the project design, followed by disclosure. Their participation in project preparation and planning has informed project design and will continue to actively participate in the project execution. Once the IPP or LRP is prepared, it will be translated into local languages (as applicable) and made available to them before implementation, including in formats other than written documents if and when requested by the communities.

The PMU and implementing agency shall ensure adequate flow of funds for consultation and facilitation of planned activities within the IPP. Project brochures and pamphlets with infographics containing basic information such as sub-project location, impact estimates, and mitigation measures proposed, and implementation schedule will be prepared, translated into a language understandable to the IPs, and distributed among them.

The views of IPs communities are to be considered during execution of project activities, while respecting their practices, beliefs and cultural preferences. The outcome of the consultations will be documented into the periodical reports and included in the project's trimester progress reports. The Project Manager with support of the Safeguards Specialist will also ensure that affected persons are involved in the decision-making process.

4.6.2.1. Procedures to seek FPIC

Project interventions and activities adversely affecting the IPs need to follow a process of free, prior, and informed consent, with the affected IPs. This process serves to fully identify their views, to seek their broad community support to the project, and to develop project-specific measures to avoid adverse impacts and enhance culturally appropriate benefits.

Community involvement is a critical component of FPIC, as FPIC is a collective right and therefore a collective process, instead of an individual decision. In practice, FPIC is implemented through a participatory process involving all affected groups that is carried out prior to the finalization of the design or implementation of any project activities, decisions or development plans. FPIC is established through good faith negotiation between the project and affected IPs. A facilitator should support this process, a person who will be available throughout the Project, who speaks the necessary languages and is aware of the project context. This person may or may not be part of the PMU, but should be agreeable to all parties involved.

4.6.3. Disclosures

The final IPPF and any site specific IPPs and LRPs will be disclosed on the website of the executing agency WWF Mesoamerica, IHT and the website of WWF and made available to affected IPs; information dissemination and consultation will continue throughout project execution. Summaries of IPPs and mitigation measures proposed in IPPs will be translated into English and Spanish and paper copies will be made available to the affected persons in the office of relevant local authorities. More details about the disclosure can be found in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

4.6.4. Institutional and monitoring arrangements

The Safeguards Specialist will be responsible for the development and implementation of the IPPF and any IPP, with support from the PMU Project Manager on logistical matters (e.g., conducting field visits, reaching out to IP communities, convening meetings, etc.). The Safeguards Specialist will periodically report on the implementation of the IPPF/IPP to the Project Manager, WWF Mesoamerica, and WWF US. Monitoring and reporting will be undertaken together with reporting on the other ESMF commitments (as indicated in Section 5.4).

4.6.5. Cultural Heritage Mitigation Measure

As part of the IPPF, details about protecting the cultural heritage of the IPLCs through the project are considered. Further consultations are necessary to define effective mitigation measures.

5. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

5.1. Exclusion list

The following is an exclusion list of activities that will not be financed by the iCoast Honduras project. This includes activities that:

1. Lead to land management practices that cause degradation (biological or physical) of the soil and water. Examples include, but are not limited to: the felling of trees in core zones and critical watersheds; activities involving quarrying and mining; commercial logging; or dredge fishing.
2. Negatively affect areas of critical natural habitats or breeding ground of known rare/endangered species.
3. Significantly increase GHG emissions.
4. Use genetically modified organisms or modern biotechnologies or their products.
5. Involve the procurement and/or use of pesticides and other chemicals specified as persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention or within categories IA, IB, or II by the World Health Organization.
6. Develop forest plantations.
7. Result in the loss of biodiversity, alteration of the functioning of ecosystems, and introduction of new invasive alien species.
8. Involve the procurement or use of weapons and munitions or fund military activities.
9. Lead to private land acquisition and/or physical displacement and voluntary or involuntary relocation of people, including non-titled and migrant people.
10. Contribute to exacerbating any inequality or gender gap that may exist.
11. Involve illegal child labor, forced labor, sexual exploitation or other forms of exploitation.
12. Adversely affect indigenous peoples' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (physical and non-physical or intangible) inside and/or outside the project area.
13. Negatively impact areas with cultural, historical or transcendent values for individuals and communities.

5.2. Stakeholders' Role & Responsibilities in the ESMF Implementation

5.2.1. Project Roles and Responsibilities

The institutional arrangement (Figure 4) for project implementation includes WWF as the GEF Agency, the Honduran Tourism Institute as the Lead Executing Agency, and a Project Steering Committee.

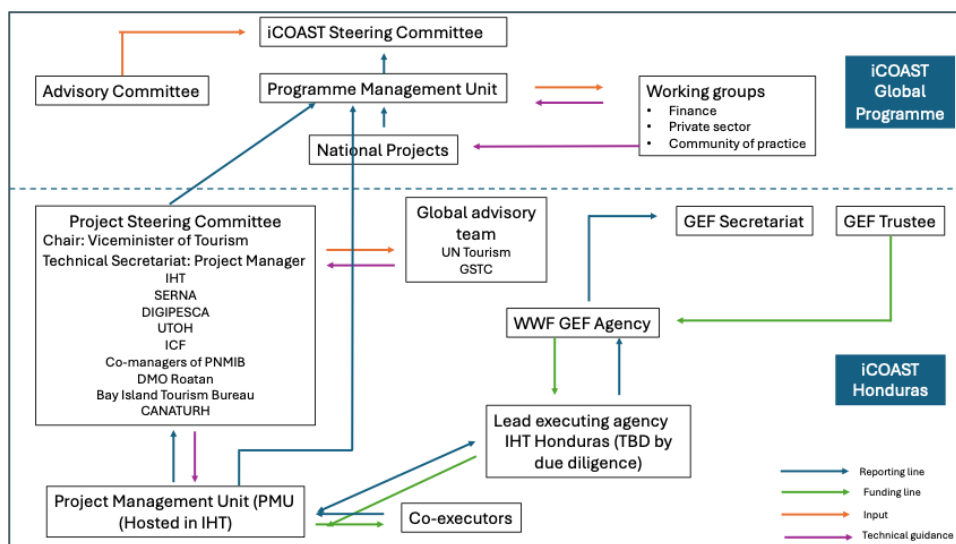


Figure 4. Project Institutional Arrangement

Lead Executing Agency: The proposed lead Executing Agency for the project is the Honduran Tourism Institute (IHT), pending the results of the due diligence process. As the national authority responsible for developing sustainable tourism policies, IHT will assume full technical, financial, and fiduciary responsibility for project execution, including all procurement activities. Implementation will be carried out through a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU), embedded within IHT's organizational structure, which will provide the necessary human and technical resources for project delivery.

Project Management Unit: Implementation will be carried out through a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU), embedded within IHT's organizational structure, which will provide the necessary human and technical resources for project delivery. The project may also engage co-executing partners to achieve specific objectives and targets. Decisions regarding co-execution will be made once project implementation begins and will be guided by the Project Steering Committee (PSC), based on identified needs. The PMU will consist of the following key positions

- **Project Manager:** Responsible for overall project coordination, grant management, and ensuring the project meets its goals and objectives.
- **Gender, Environmental and Social (E&S) and Social Inclusion Specialist:** Responsible for the overall implementation of the ESMF/PF/IPPF and the GAP, monitoring compliance with environmental and social safeguards, managing the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), and providing technical support for environmental and social screenings and ESMP preparation. This specialist will also ensure gender considerations are integrated into all safeguards processes.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist.**
- **Finance and Administration Manager:** Will provide financial and administrative support to the PMU.

Project Steering Committee: The project's governance will include a Project Steering Committee (PSC), serving as the project's highest strategic advisory body, decision-making authority. The PSC will oversee and monitor the technical and financial execution of the project, ensuring compliance with its objectives, activities, and outcomes. It will also be

responsible for approving the annual work plan, budget, project reports, and financial audit reports. Membership of the PSC is recommended to include the same institutions that comprised the Project Development Team (PDT) during project preparation, given their familiarity with the background and their active involvement in the program's design process.

WWF GEF Agency: WWF-GEF Agency is the implementing partner. It will act as the primary communication channel between the project and the GEF Secretariat and will be responsible for receiving GEF funds and transferring them to the lead executing agency. WWF will serve as the GEF Agency, providing comprehensive support and oversight to ensure the achievement of the Project Objective and Results.

Global Coordination: As part of the global iCOAST Program, iCOAST Honduras will operate under the framework and benefit from the alliances and agreements established by the Program's Global Coordination Unit, led by UNDP. The project will receive support, information, and technical assistance from the organizations comprising the Advisory Committee and the Working Groups. The PMU will be responsible for reporting progress and for ensuring coordination of its contributions to global-level activities.

5.2.2. Safeguards Implementation Roles and Responsibilities

Specific arrangements and responsibilities related to the implementation of environmental and social safeguards requirements, as stated in this ESMF are as follows:

Lead executing agency: The Honduran Tourism Institute (IHT), will assume full technical, financial, and fiduciary responsibility for project execution, including leadership in safeguarding. Implementation will be carried out through a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU), embedded within IHT's organizational structure, which will include a person with shared responsibility to lead gender and safeguards for the project.

Project Steering Committee: The Project steering committee will be responsible for conducting an annual discussion and learning session where progress and updates on safeguards are shared, discussed, and adaptations are recommended based on the status of the project.

WWF GEF Agency: The WWF GEF Agency is responsible for overall oversight and monitoring of compliance with safeguards commitments. Additionally, they will support and provide specific recommendations on specific safeguard issues if needed.

PMU: The PMU will be responsible for implementing the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and ensuring regular communication with the Safeguards coordinator. They will support the monitoring of safeguard indicators as needed.

5.3. Safeguards Monitoring

The compliance of Project activities with the ESMF will be thoroughly monitored by various entities at different stages of preparation and implementation.

5.3.1. Monitoring at the project level

At the project level, the M&E lead together with the Safeguards lead will monitor the indicators and progress of implementing the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Gender Action Plan, and the ESMF. They will be supported by the project manager and the WWF GEF Agency Safeguard team or consultants to build capacity for safeguards monitoring.

5.3.2. Monitoring at the field activity level

Field activities will be monitored by PMU team members, project contractors, or collaborating organizations with clear guidelines for monitoring safeguards and safeguard indicators depending on the activity type or stakeholder type. The M&E lead and Safeguards lead will prepare and train other team members and collaborators on monitoring at the field activity level.

5.3.3. Monitoring at the agency level

WWF as the project's implementing agency and the Honduran Tourism Institute as the executing agency are responsible to oversee compliance with the ESMF. In order to facilitate compliance monitoring, the Honduran Tourism Institute will include information on the status of ESMF implementation in the six-monthly Project Progress Reports (PPRs) and the annual Project Implementation Review (PIR) reports. Disbursement of project funds will be contingent upon their full compliance with the safeguards requirements.

5.4. Community Engagement

Community consultation has been an integral part of the iCOAST project design in Honduras and will continue as a participatory, inclusive, and iterative process throughout the project cycle. The engagement process ensures that the voices of national and local stakeholders—particularly those from Roatán and José Santos Guardiola municipalities—are reflected in the project's planning, decision-making, and implementation. Continuous communication will be maintained through in-person consultations, workshops, and digital platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, which are widely used in the project area. Stakeholder engagement will follow WWF and GEF standards for inclusivity, transparency, and responsiveness, ensuring that women, youth, Indigenous Peoples (Garífuna), and other vulnerable or underrepresented groups are meaningfully involved.

5.4.1. Community engagement during Project Preparation

During project preparation, stakeholder engagement was structured across several levels of governance and sectors. Initial coordination began in early 2024 through meetings between WWF Mesoamérica and the Honduran Institute of Tourism (IHT) to co-design the project concept.

From March to September 2025, multiple participatory activities were held:

- Biweekly Project Development Team (PDT) meetings with IHT, SERNA, DIGEPESCA, Roatán Municipality, RMP, BICA, CORAL, and others to refine activities, validate priorities, and ensure institutional alignment.
- Inception Workshop in Roatán (April 8–9, 2025): Brought together government, NGOs, and private sector actors to present the project, validate barriers, and define preliminary activities.
- Field visits to key tourism sites (RECO power plant, Anthony's Key Resort, Eldon's Supermarket) to understand tourism dynamics, sustainability practices, and gaps in local supply chains.
- Meetings with local NGOs (RMP, BICA, CORAL): To identify environmental challenges and consolidate collaboration for the management of the Bay Islands National Marine Park (BINMP).
- National-level workshops (July 2025, Tegucigalpa): Validated the theory of change and strengthened alliances with financial actors (CABEI, Banco Atlántida, Grupo FICOHSA).
- Private sector consultations (July 28–29, 2025, Roatán): Gathered inputs from hotels and suppliers on sustainability practices and barriers to adopting green technologies.
- Validation Workshop (September 18, 2025): Confirmed the theory of change and stakeholder commitments to project implementation.
- This participatory preparation phase ensured that government institutions, NGOs, the private sector, and local communities had the opportunity to shape the project's scope and design.

5.4.2. Community engagement during ESMF/PF Preparation

The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) preparation included focused consultations to assess social and environmental risks, gender dynamics, and potential restrictions of access to natural resources.

In August–September 2025, the safeguards team carried out field visits to Roatán, José Santos Guardiola, and Tegucigalpa to meet with key actors such as municipal authorities, tourism operators, fishermen cooperatives, Garífuna representatives, and local NGOs. These engagements allowed for:

Identifying barriers to participation and inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly women, Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, and small-scale fisherfolk.

Discussing community perceptions of existing conservation measures, including concerns about previous lack of consultation in the creation of the Bay Islands National Marine Park.

Mapping community priorities and risks associated with tourism growth, waste management, and access to marine resources.

Gathering recommendations on communication channels (e.g., bilingual materials in English and Spanish, use of WhatsApp) and culturally appropriate approaches to consultation.

Inputs from these engagements informed the design of the grievance mechanism, gender action plan, and participatory monitoring indicators included in the ESMF.

5.4.3. Community engagement during project implementation

During implementation, community engagement will continue as a structured and adaptive process coordinated by the Project Management Unit (PMU).

Key actions will include:

- Quarterly and annual meetings with community-based organizations, fisher cooperatives, and Garífuna representatives to review progress, address grievances, and ensure continued participation.
- Participatory planning sessions with local communities of Santos Guardiola and Roatán for the development of municipal sustainable tourism strategies.
- Targeted training programs for hotel staff, youth, and women's groups on sustainable tourism, waste reduction, and environmental stewardship—building local ownership and capacity.
- Transparent communication through bilingual materials (English and Spanish) and visual tools, ensuring accessibility for all social groups, including elders and people with disabilities.
- Continuous feedback mechanisms integrated into the grievance redress system to document and respond to community concerns.

Engagement will be aligned with the tourism calendar to avoid peak seasons and maximize participation, providing transportation or childcare support when needed. These efforts will ensure that project benefits are inclusive, equitable, and reflective of community needs and priorities throughout implementation.

5.5. Guidance for SEAH Risk Mitigation

According to the results of the screening provided in Appendix 1 of this ESMF, a detailed plan to address SEAH risks will be developed within the first six months of project start-up, using both information already included in the GAP and updated procedures for SEAH-specific grievances. This will include:

- Inclusion of any identified SEAH-related risk mitigation measures into the project's annual workplan and budget and annual reporting requirements.
 - This will require the participation of the entire PMU in reviewing any identified risks and mitigation measures to ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities and the responsibilities of EEs, project partners, contractors, and any other entities who will receive GCF funding for this project.
- Development of a communication mechanism between the local project partners and the PMU's Gender and SEAH Specialist in order to address in a timely manner any SEAH situation that may arise at the territorial level. This early warning system will be included in the project's security protocol, and will require:
 - Reporting any such grievances or challenges within a defined time period of no less than 5 business days. This shall hold true even if grievances are informally submitted (i.e. not through an official GRM)

- The confidentiality of anyone who has received a complaint or become aware of a SEAH-related situation, including protecting the personal identifiable information of all parties- both the potential victim(s) and potential perpetrators(s).
- Strengthen the capacities of the project's implementing partners on prevention of GBV and SEAH as well as WWF policies and codes of conduct to address SEAH risk. These trainings will be done in partnership by the project's Gender & SEAH and ESS Specialists and should include:
 - Training within the first 3 months of project implementation that have been prepared with oversight and final approval from the WWF GCF AE Safeguards and Gender Leads.
 - Be mandatory for all implementing partner staff who will be involved in the GCF-financed activities.
- Strengthen the landscape technical committees so that they can establish rapid response mechanisms to address issues associated with threats to environmental leaders and gender-based violence. This includes, but is not limited to:
- In cases of such threats, provide them with additional resources to ensure a timely response that is focused on the well-being of anyone who is threatened.
 - Provide the same GBV and SEAH training to these committees that the implementing partners will receive.
- Strengthen the capacities of the entities that participate in the multi-stakeholder bodies that will be strengthened by the project, so that specific prevention and rapid response measures are included to address GBV and SEAH-specific threats, including to social and environmental leaders they may work with.
 - Provide the same GBV and SEAH training to these multi-stakeholder bodies that the implementing partners will receive.

5.6. Communications and Disclosure

All affected communities and relevant stakeholders shall be informed about the ESMF requirements and commitments. The executive summary of the ESMF will be translated into English and Spanish and made available along with the ESMF and SEP on the websites of Honduran Tourism Institute and WWF Mesoamerica, as well as the websites of the WWF GEF Agency. Hard copies of the ESMF will be placed in appropriate public locations and at Honduran Tourism Institute and WWF Mesoamerica. Project Managers and the Safeguards and Gender Specialists at Honduran Tourism Institute and WWF Mesoamerica will be responsible to raise community awareness regarding the requirements of the ESMF, and will also ensure that all external contractors and service providers are fully familiar and comply with the ESMF and other safeguards documents.

During the implementation of the project, activity-specific ESMPs shall be prepared in consultation with affected communities and disclosed to all stakeholders prior to project concept finalization. All draft ESMPs shall be reviewed and approved by Honduran Tourism Institute and WWF Mesoamerica in consultation with the PSC and WWF GEF Agency in advance of their public disclosure. The PMU must also disclose to all affected parties any action plans prepared during project implementation, including gender mainstreaming.

Disclosure should be carried out in a manner that is meaningful and understandable to the affected people. For this purpose, the executive summary of ESMPs or the terms and conditions in environment clearances should be disclosed on Honduran Tourism Institute, WWF Mesoamerica and WWF websites. The disclosure requirements are summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 11: Disclosure framework for ESMF related documents		
Documents to be disclosed	Frequency	Where
Environment and Social Management Framework	Once in the entire project cycle. Must remain on the website and other public locations throughout the project period.	On the website of Honduran Tourism Institute, WWF Mesoamerica, and WWF GEF Agency. Copies should be available at [PMU office], and in local municipal offices in project areas. If

		other community spaces or private sector spaces have concentrated project activities, information about the ESMF should be provided to the staff accordingly.
Environmental and Social Management Plan/s	Once in the entire project cycle for every activity that requires ESMP. Must remain on the website and other disclosure locations throughout the project period.	On the website of Honduran Tourism Institute, WWF Mesoamerica, and WWF GEF Agency. Copies should be available at BFAR, and in local municipal offices in project areas
Safeguards Monthly Progress Report	Monthly	Copies should be available at PMU office, and in local municipal offices in project areas
Minutes of Formal Public Consultation Meetings	Within two weeks of meeting	On the website of Honduran Tourism Institute, WWF Mesoamerica, and WWF. Copies should be available at PMU office and in local municipal offices in project areas
Grievance redress process	Quarterly, throughout the project cycle	On the website of Honduran Tourism Institute and WWF Mesoamerica. Copies should be available at the PMU office.

5.7. Capacity Building and technical assistance

Capacity building activities will be provided as needed by WWF GEF Agency to the Honduran Tourism Institute and WWF Mesoamerica to provide the latter with ESMF and IPPF implementation requirements and good practices. These will focus in particular on issues related to the preparation of IPPs, organization of consultations, operationalization of the GRM, and monitoring of ESMF implementation. The budget for capacity building shall be included in the overall project budget.

5.8. Grievance Mechanisms

The project will have a direct and tangible effect on local communities and individuals residing within or in the vicinity of project sites. There is thus a need for an efficient and effective Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) that collects and responds to stakeholders' inquiries, suggestions, concerns, and complaints. This section will describe the details of the GRM, including details on the process to submit a grievance, how long the PMU will have to respond, and who on the PMU will be responsible for its implementation and reporting.

The GRM will operate based on the following principles:

1. **Fairness:** Grievances are assessed impartially, and handled transparently.
2. **Objectiveness and independence:** The GRM operates independently of all interested parties in order to guarantee fair, objective, and impartial treatment to each case.
3. **Simplicity and accessibility:** Procedures to file grievances and seek action are simple enough that project beneficiaries can easily understand them and in a language that is accessible to everyone within a given community, especially those who are most vulnerable.

4. **Responsiveness and efficiency:** The GRM is designed to be responsive to the needs of all complainants. Accordingly, officials handling grievances must be trained to take effective action upon, and respond quickly to, grievances and suggestions.

5. **Speed and proportionality:** All grievances, simple or complex, are addressed and resolved as quickly as possible. The action taken on the grievance or suggestion is swift, decisive, and constructive.

6. **Participation and inclusiveness:** A wide range of affected people—communities and vulnerable groups—are encouraged to bring grievances and comments to the attention of the project implementers. Special attention is given to ensure that poor people and marginalized groups, including those with special needs, are able to access the GRM.

7. **Accountability and closing the feedback loop:** All grievances are recorded and monitored, and no grievance remains unresolved. Complainants are always notified and get explanations regarding the results of their complaint. An appeal option shall always be available.

Complaints may include, but not be limited to, the following issues:

- (i) Allegations of fraud, malpractices or corruption by staff or other stakeholders as part of any project or activity financed or implemented by the project, including allegations of gender-based violence or sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment;
- (ii) Environmental and/or social damages/harms caused by projects financed or implemented (including those in progress) by the project;
- (iii) Complaints and grievances by permanent or temporary workers engaged in project activities.

Complaints could relate to pollution prevention and resource efficiency; negative impacts on public health, environment or culture; destruction of natural habitats; disproportionate impact on marginalized and vulnerable groups; discrimination or physical or sexual harassment; violation of applicable laws and regulations; destruction of physical and cultural heritage; or any other issues which adversely impact communities or individuals in project areas. The grievance redress mechanism will be implemented in a culturally sensitive manner and facilitate access to vulnerable populations. Special training will be provided by the WWF US Safeguards Team to the ESS Specialists within the first 6 months of project implementation, or before the GRM is finalized, whichever is sooner. This will help to ensure they have the capacity to address SEAH-related grievances in a culturally sensitive and victim-centered way.

Details on the project specific GRM can be found in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. The GRM seeks to complement, rather than substitute, the judicial system and other dispute resolution mechanisms. All complainants may therefore file their grievance in local courts or approach mediators or arbitrators, in accordance with the legislation of Honduras. In addition to the project-specific GRM, a complainant can submit a grievance to the WWF GEF Agency. A grievance can also be filed with the Project Complaints Officer (PCO), a WWF staff member fully independent from the Project Team, who is responsible for the WWF Accountability and Grievance Mechanism and who can be reached at:

Email: SafeguardsComplaint@wwfus.org

Mailing address:

Project Complaints Officer
Safeguards Complaints,
World Wildlife Fund
1250 24th Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

Stakeholder may also submit a complaint online through an independent third-party platform at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/59041/index.html>.

5.9. ESMF Budget

The ESMF implementation costs, including all costs related to compensation to project affected people, will be fully covered from the project budget. It will be the responsibility of the Safeguards Specialist to ensure that sufficient budget is available for all activity-specific mitigation measures that may be required in compliance with the ESMF.

A full time Safeguards Specialist will be employed and 100% of their time will be dedicated to ensuring the ESMF implementation. The project manager will oversee the ESMF implementation.

Budget for capacity building on the ESMF and IPPF implementation, travel costs and workshops and meetings for safeguards monitoring (including travel, workshops and meetings) will be included in the overall monitoring and evaluation budget of the project.

A recommended budget for the ESMF and associated activities is provided in Table 12.

Table 12: Budget needs for project safeguards			
Safeguards activity	Justification	Notes	Suggested Budget (whole project)
Disclosure signs, communications materials, executive summary preparation	Communication must adapt to diverse audiences, not just digital disclosure.	Disclosure should take place with planning funds, prior to project start	\$8000
Consultations with fisherfolk, tourism workers, and Garinagu Peoples	Consultation (travel, materials, prior communication, report)		\$8000
Stakeholder Engagement and consultation training and monitoring visits	Visits to Roatan and Santos Guardiola to provide trainings to stakeholders and monitor safeguard indicators.	These visits will be combined with existing planned and budgeted field visits	Already included
Stakeholder online meeting coordination	Costs should consider time of personnel to coordinate meetings, platform or software costs to host multi-stakeholder meetings	Administrative funds should include licensees for software needed for digital facilitation	Already included
Annual working group meetings to present results, adapt project plans, and revisit safeguards	Meetings are necessary to continue communication and consultation with diverse actors throughout the project.	3 meetings, 25 participants - travel, meeting space, food, lodging for 10 people.	Should be combined with other planned annual meetings to avoid redundancy
Adaptive management safeguards budget	In case of need to increase consultations or if changes in risk level occurs during project implementation		\$25,000 annually, \$75,000 in total
Salary for gender and ESS	This person should be hired as early in the process as possible, to provide guidance for disclosure, remaining consultations	Perhaps consider they start as a consultant and transition to full time once the project launches	Included in overall budget

Table 12: Budget needs for project safeguards			
Safeguards activity	Justification	Notes	Suggested Budget (whole project)
Time from M&E lead for Safeguards monitoring	5% of time dedicated to supporting safeguards monitoring - indicator development, monitoring procedures		Included in overall budget
Communication materials, translation, design and printing for Grievance MEchanisms	Project stakeholders need access to accessible information about the Grievance Mechanism		\$3000
Participation of gender lead in high level strategy, policy, and planning activities	To integrate gender as a cross cutting principle, the gender lead must have a voice in strategy and policy development.	3 meetings per year / 3 years	\$4500
Consultant to design trainings to integrate with project trainings on human rights, safeguards, gender, and SEAH	Specific modules should be developed to address these topics as a part of existing project trainings	6 modules x \$4000/module	\$24,000
Child-care services for key community consultations and activities	Women in local communities are unlikely to participate if they do not have options for childcare	4 events / year, 3 years, \$2000 per event for childcare	\$24,000
Safeguards Due Diligence for investment proposals - identify new or changes in gender risks (gender, environmental)	To identify any changes in safeguards triggered, for example if construction will be completed, or if access to public spaces would be changed.	\$4000 per investment plan for consultant to conduct due diligence	\$40,000 Add to existing budget for technical support and due diligence

ANNEX 1. SAFEGUARD ELIGIBILITY AND IMPACTS SCREENING