



Panorama of Actors, Institutional and Organizational Framework, and Potential Financial Resources for the Sustainable Development of Osa and Golfito

By:

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Executive Summary

(Translation and synthesis by Austin Cruz)

Introduction:

This diagnostic analysis is an identification of a wide range of diverse actors throughout the public, private, NGO, and academic sectors working in the Osa and Golfito regions, the main area of interest and study for INOGO. Within these multiple sectors exist many levels of organization and collaboration, from the national and regional levels, to the local and individual actor levels.

Various sources of information such as bibliographies, institutional regulations, reports, investigations, and monographs were consulted for this diagnostic analysis. Additionally, information was gathered by interviews either in person, by phone, or by e-mail from relevant actors in sustainable community development in the Osa and Golfito cantons. Interviewees included actors from NGOs, the governmental sector, financial sector and academia, and provided information on what the institution currently offers the region as well as both their short- and long-term visions for the organization in the region. A list of interviewees, and their respective organizations, is provided in the full report as annexes.

Socio-economic and environmental characteristics of Osa and Golfito

Figure 1. Brunca Region, Costa Rica.



Source: <http://conociendoregionbrunca2012.blogspot.com/>

Both the Osa and Golfito cantons are in the Brunca region, a political-administrative division by the Ministry of Planning that includes six cantons in total: Perez Zeledon, Golfito, Osa, Coto Brus, Buenos Aires, and Corredores. Historically, this region has developed a diverse population through migratory trends which brought indigenous peoples, peasant farmers, and both national and foreign agricultural workers. Moreover, the Brunca region has historically had some of the lowest rankings in indices of human, social, and economic development. In terms of inequality and poverty, around 35% of the Brunca population lives in absolute poverty, where the national average is 20%.

Some of the main economic activities in the region include agricultural and livestock production, and in smaller numbers, tourism activity. Aspects of these activities include 1) an economic concentration in very few agricultural businesses; 2) few sources of good quality employment; and 3) the predominance of agricultural, tourism, and business activity in micro- and small-scale enterprises (MSEs). In terms of competitiveness, the Brunca region can be characterized by five problems: 1) inadequate competitive conditions for business and for attracting private investment; 2) limited local governmental capacity to formulate and implement public policies around the promotion of competitiveness; 3) scarce capacity of private-public and public-public alliances for business organization development and for the promotion of competitiveness; 4)

little technical capacity within businesses, particularly within MSEs, to improve productivity, business intelligence, innovation, and comparative advantages; 5) few options for MSEs to have access to technical and financial help services.

Figure 2: Osa Conservation Area (in orange).



Source: SINAC (<http://www.sinac.go.cr/Paginas/Inicio.aspx>)

Environmentally, the Brunca region contains 60% of the known biodiversity within Costa Rica. Managing this are both the Pacific Friendship Conservation Area (ACLA-P), and the Osa Conservation Area (ACOSA), the latter of which has jurisdiction over the Osa, Golfito, and Corredores cantons, representing 8.6% of national territory and 36.4% of the territory in the Puntarenas province (see Figure 2). ACOSA manages both protected wilderness areas (including Corcovado National Park, Piedras Blancas, Marino Ballena, the National Wildlife Refuge in Golfito, the Golfo Dulce Forest Reserve, the Isla del Caño Biological Reserve, and the Térraba-Sierpe National Wetlands) and indigenous territories, which make up over 40% of the territory they manage. These indigenous territories within ACOSA cover over 24,500 hectares of the managed land, with a total approximate population of 2,800 inhabitants belonging to the Guaymí and Boruca communities. In total, 88% of ACOSA-managed forests are under some form of legal protection.

Public and Private Actors

The identification of actors has primarily focused on those who have as part of their mission or objective the principles of sustainable development, creating and transferring capacities, improving the quality of life of communities in environmentally relevant zones, and improving productive methods for environmental conservation. Private enterprises with interests in corporate social responsibility or strengthening value chains were also included.

Some of the sectors identified were governmental, NGOs, academic, financial, community organization, and the private productive sector such as trade organizations (CONARROZ), large purchasers such as Walmart, and businesses with the Certification of Sustainable Tourism (CST).

Local Institutions with National Scope

Costa Rican Ministries with a large presence in the Osa and Golfito cantons:

- Ministry of Public Education (MEP)
- Ministry of Health (MINSA)
- Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), coordinated regionally by the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC)
- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG)
- Ministry of Economy, Industry, and Business (MEIC)
- Ministry of Planning (MIDEPLAN)

Local Institutions with Regional Scope

- The Costa Rican Institute of tourism (ICT)
- National Forest Finance Fund (FONAFIFO), which implements Payment for Environmental Services (PSA) in the region
- Costa Rican Institute of Fishing and Aquaculture (INCOPESCA), which manages a Marina Area of Responsible Fishing in Golfo Dulce, as well as manages a Multiple Use Marine Area
- Institute of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (IAFA)
- National Emergencies Commission (CNE)
- Institute of Municipal Development and Counsel (IFAM)
- National Institute of Cooperative Development (INFOCOOP), lending technical assistance, promotion service, training, and financing to cooperatives and start-up groups.
- Cooperative Consortium Network of National Ecotourism (COOPRENA R.L)
- National Institute of Learning (INA)

Various opportunities for increasing collaboration between organizations and institutions were identified, and although the collaboration implies great challenges, the benefits outweigh what can be achieved working separately. At the central governmental level, the MEIC could work to better understand the regional and local necessities, the coordination of value chains, and the knowledge of various markets and of proposed policies to create regional industrial development. Additionally, MEIC should recognize the immense value of local biodiversity and its conservation to the local economy, understanding that development plans should contribute to strengthening conservation in the region.

Other actors involved in regional economic development, such as MAG, can and should demonstrate how good management practices of natural resources can improve the performance of livestock activities in the region, which can strengthen both local and regional economies. To further help with natural resource management practices, a natural alliance of ACOSA/SINAC should be facilitated with other institutions and initiatives. Additionally, a large portion of the

tourism to Osa and Golfito is to protected areas; naturally, ICT and SINAC should better coordinate to form broader strategies that can benefit both local populations and the development of ACOSA.

NGOs

The main activities in which NGOs are involved in the region include training and education, environmental policies, social and economic development, research, use of non-extractive resources, financial support, and volunteering. Although many of these organizations in the region have been created and have dedicated their efforts towards conservation issues, the current focus in the region is in social development and financial support. Although the NGO sector within the region coordinates with ACOSA, there are plenty of opportunities to increase coordination and collaboration with other state institutions. As such, NGOs can serve as important middlemen between private businesses, the state, and the community. Various NGOs in the region include:

- Marine Coastal Biodiversity and Climate Change (BIOMARCC)
- Center for Environmental Rights and Natural Resources (CEDARENA)
- Conservation International (CI)
- Osa Conservation
- Costa Rica Por Siempre
- Integral Farmer Foundation (FINCA)
- Corcovado Foundation
- CRUSA Foundation
- KETO Foundation
- MARVIVA Foundation
- Neotropica Foundation
- Omar Dengo Foundation
- National Institute of Biodiversity (INBio)
- Shark Mission
- Peace Corps
- Small Donations Program (United Nations Development Programme)
- PROMAR
- ProNature
- Rainforest Alliance (RA)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Widecast
- Yaguará

Academic Actors

Several public universities in the region are crucial in coordinating and offering their support towards development processes and improving the quality of life for the region's inhabitants. The outcome of this effort is the creation of a strategic development vision in Osa and Golfito, one that incorporates associations between the academic sector and certain private

sector enterprises. One recent example of this crossover collaboration is between the University of Costa Rica and the Neotropica Foundation.

Private Productive Sector Actors

Large organizations in the region such as CONARROZ, CANAPALMA, Walmart, and Palma Tica all have capacity to greatly influence supply chain sustainability. The tourism sector in the region, especially the ICT's Certified Sustainable Tourism, also has a strategic position to influence supply chains and value among its markets. Some of the programs the hospitality sector can implement to benefit communities are: 1) travelers philanthropy program; 2) a best practices and responsible consumption of fish program; 3) expansion of tourism offerings that support small tourism enterprises around local areas, such as an "Osa Trails" program that would incorporate a route around the Golfo Dulce Forest Reserve while also strategically incorporating these small tourism businesses along the way.

Identification of Sources of Financing for Local Development

Although there are various sources of financial services available to stimulate development within the Osa and Golfito cantons, these funds are not necessarily available through the most appropriate financial instruments for the needs of some of the smallest businesses in the most remote parts of the region. An example is the funds from the "Banca de Desarrollo," which are not well suited to the needs and organizational issues of MSEs in Osa and Golfito. Some of the obstacles in the traditional financial market – a need for collateral, lenders, high interest rates etc. – are a result of regulations from the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (SFI). Hence, the easiest way to operationalize financial instruments for the needs of the community is through private funds that are beyond the jurisdiction of the SFI, and by working through second level intermediaries (those working directly with the communities and potential beneficiaries) in the area, such as the work being done by FINCA-EDESA, ADRI, and Coopealianza.

In terms of available funds to communities, the Southern Development Board (JUDESUR) represents the best case of having the most available for the community notwithstanding the challenges of making them accessible. This issue of fund accessibility is due not to regulatory policies, but rather to administrative and organizational problems within JUDESUR; furthermore, the requirements and conditions on the financial support application from JUDESUR place the organizational management capacity on the part of the beneficiaries. One possible solution for the operationalization of these funds is to link second and third level intermediaries – with capacity to both channel financing from JUDESUR and comply with the appropriate legal requirements – to facilitate funding to organizations with less management capacity.

Conclusion

The intent of this diagnostic analysis has been the identification of regional key actors, through which it would be possible to strengthen and create increased collaboration in the

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Osa and Golfito region. The region hosts a diversity of key actors that, in theory, could increase collaboration in order improve the economic and social situations in the region. In terms of its large institutional experience, the State can play a crucial role in helping to overcome key regional challenges in the Osa and Golfito region, primarily by using a model of socio-economic development with participation from communities, protected areas, and biodiversity in general. The private sector, represented by academic institutions and NGOs, plays a crucial role not only in having brought attention to conservation issues in the region, but to issues of social development and financial support. The academic sector itself is pivotal in identifying possibilities and acting as an intermediary between the private and public sectors.