

## Submission Form

At its 35th session (UNESCO Paris, 2011), the World Heritage Committee (Decision 35COM12D.7) “requested the World Heritage Centre, with the support of the Advisory Bodies, **to develop, for further consideration the proposal** contained in Document WHC-11/35.COM/12D [...] and to further **explore ways of recognising and rewarding best practice through a one-off initiative** at the closing event of the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention (November 2012, Japan)...”.

States Parties to the World Heritage Convention are invited to participate in this initiative by proposing World Heritage properties in their country that they regard as an example of successful management and sustainable development.

In order to be eligible the site has to apply with the following criteria:

- The suggested site must be a property inscribed on the World Heritage List;
- Successful management and sustainable development has to be clearly demonstrated;
- Best practices are considered those that are tried, tested and applied in different situations and in a wider context;
- An overall good performance on all headings mentioned in the submission form, with an exemplary performance in at least one of the areas;
- An outstanding example of innovative management in dealing with one or more management challenges / issues that could offer lessons to other sites.

Each State Party may propose a maximum of two properties, preferably relating to one cultural and one natural site.

This form contains 9 topics for demonstrating best management practice – it is not necessary to comply with all of them but it would be appreciated if you could provide a comprehensive response to as many topics as possible. In your responses to the question, please provide all facts and figures to substantiate the answers, and describe the before and after situation of implementing the best practice intervention. The objective is to illustrate clearly why the example can qualify as a best practice and can be used as a source of inspiration for other World Heritage properties.

The topics are based on questions dealt with in the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

**Recognizing and rewarding best practice in management of World Heritage properties**

State Party: Honduras

Title proposed World Heritage property: Reserva del Hombre y Biosfera del Río Plátano

Brief description of the property: Located on the watershed of the Río Plátano, the reserve is one of the few remains of tropical rainforest in Central America and has abundant and varied plant and wildlife. In its mountainous landscape sloping down to the Caribbean coast, over 2,000 indigenous people have preserved their traditional way of life.

**Please answer the questions below demonstrating the successful management and sustainable development of the World Heritage property and why it is an example of a best practice.**

	<b>Topics for demonstrating best management practice:</b>	<b>Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practice in relation to the topic:</b>
1.	<p><b>Conservation:</b></p> <p><i>What innovative management practices or strategies are being applied in order to ensure the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property (e.g. better resource management, restoration and rehabilitation, addressing various man-made or natural threats and challenges, etc.)?</i></p>	<p>Coordination meetings and surveillance tours are conducted in conjunction with community leaders, military and Environment Prosecutor, with the purpose of trying to diminish as much as possible illegal logging and other illegal activities pointed out in the forestry law, within the RHBRP. Based on the proposed plan of action to solve problems in strategic points of the RHBRP, the National Forest Conservation and Development of Protected Areas and Wildlife (ICF) through the Forest Region, coordinates activities with the various institutions responsible of ensuring the protection of the Reservoir, this is why control operations have been made to halt illegal trade of flora and fauna, overburden documentation or illegal use of forest products, and the eviction of families within the core zone of the Reservoir. It also promotes the legal use of forest resources with communities and groups in Agroforestry, with the implementation of forest management plans, operational plans and implementation of the chain of custody process for broadleaf forest utilization especially with mahogany.</p> <p>There were 10 operational control of illegal trafficking of flora and fauna, in areas known as Cerro Colindres, the Ceibita, La Llorona and Mangos. As a result of this joint operations <b>46.2 acres</b> of forest were documented, product of <b>10 sites</b> visited and evaluated, <b>18.47 m3</b> of round wood and <b>680.06 m3</b> sawn wood. <b>9</b> people were caught by illegal logging and two (2) persons were cited for illegal logging, and two (2) chainsaws were confiscated. In the community of La Llorona a Spider Monkey (<i>Ateles geoffroyi</i>) was seized &amp; transferred by prosecutors to Catacamas to be sent to the zoo in Tegucigalpa M.D. C.</p>

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2.	<p><b>Local People:</b></p> <p><i>What exemplary practices are you using in order to effectively address the needs of local stakeholders within the management system for the property, and enable their full and active participation?</i></p>	<p>An Interinstitutional Law Group (GJI) has been formed, it is a team of legal support to the process of regularization of land tenure in the RHBRP and their catchment areas implemented by ICF through PROTEP Project.</p> <p>The GJI is formed by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One legal representative from the Direction of Legal Services of the INA</li> <li>2. One legal representative from the General Direction of Property Regularization of the IP</li> <li>3. One representative from de Information Center and Forest Heritage of ICF</li> </ol> <p>The Attorney for Ethnic Division of Indigenous Affairs of the INA recently joined.</p> <p>The GJI made an analysis, in which the <b>legal responsibilities of ICF to titrate these peoples to their ancestral lands located in the RHBRP comes from:</b></p> <p>The Constitution of the Republic, the ILO 169 Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, law for the Modernization and Development of Agricultural Sector property Act and its Regulations (effective from 05.11.07), forestry Law and its General Regulation, the legal opinion issued by the General Attorney of the Republic No. PGR-DNC-043-2009, the safeguards included in the Titles of freehold property granted by the INA to COHDEFOR in 1996 and 1997.</p> <p>It has identified the process to be followed for certification in favor of indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands located within the RHBRP, this consists of:</p> <p>The ICF must proceed to dismember the property title that was awarded by the INA on those areas or premises of the RHBRP constituting the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples, transferring property rights over these areas in favor to the later over these areas.</p> <p>This constitutes a <b>TRADITION OF DOMAIN</b>, which is defined as a mode of acquiring ownership of things consisting in the delivery that the owner makes of them to another, having in one hand, the ability and intent to transfer the domain, and secondly, the ability and intent to purchase. To be worth the tradition involving transfer requires a degree of dominance, as the sale, exchange, donation and so on. (Art. 697 and 702 of the Civil Code).</p>

<b>Topics for demonstrating best management practice:</b>	<b>Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practice in relation to the topic:</b>
<p><b>3. Legal framework:</b></p> <p><i>What special measures have you taken to ensure that the legal framework for the World Heritage site is effective in maintaining the OUV of the property?</i></p>	<p>In the Rio Platano Biosphere Forest Region, 13 forest management plans are currently taking place. 12 agroforestry cooperatives have an equal number of hardwood forest plans, out of these 12 cooperatives, 9 are directly within the Reservoir area.</p> <p>A private farmer group has a forest management plan for 94 acres of pine. The total area amounts to 107,767.02 hectares of broadleaf forest and pine forest managed accordingly to sustainability criteria and indicators. During 2011, nine (9) Cooperatives made use of the forest, eleven (11) Commercial Licenses were awarded, with which they managed to extract a volume of <b>734.07 m</b> of mahogany, applying the process of chain of custody for lumber broadleaf forest.</p> <p>Taking into consideration the general public, 194 non-commercial use licenses were granted in order to improve farm buildings of the settlers of the area. The approximate volume license is five (5) cubic meters.</p> <p>Also within these non-commercial licenses there's 520 pine posts and 1.015 wood posts for a total of 3.070 posts.</p> <p>Under the leadership of SERNA, ICF, PARN, FEMA, Security and Defense Secretariat, under instructions from the President of the Republic and covered in Executive Decree PCM-010-2011, from September 1st to September 3rd 2011, the evacuation of all the settlers in the heart of the Rio Platano Biosphere, on Musing, the municipality of Iriona, Columbus was successfully completed. The activities were implemented in coordination with the Ad Hoc Technical Committee, achieving very positive results and above all a deterrent message to people who have been committing crimes in the area. It is important to note that ICF has provided technical and financial aspects for the implementation of this action taking into account the support of the project PROTEP.</p> <p>As a result of the operation of the implementation of eviction, capture and destruction of property orders issued by a competent judge the eviction of 17 families (73 people) and more than 600 animals, especially cattle was succeeded. The executor judge and the authorities responsible for executing the arrest warrants, eviction and destruction of property, along with members of national police and army, captured 4 persons (family heads) who had a warrant for theft and / or aggravated damages. These persons were moved from the area by helicopter and vehicles, and were brought to the order of the competent court in Trujillo, Colon, who dictated their arrest in the town jail.</p> <p>In January 2012 the Official Gazette published the Legislative Decree 02-2012, containing the ratification of the amendment to section 102 of the Constitution that allows the extradition of Hondurans.</p> <p>Article 102 of the Constitution states that no Honduran may be expatriated, but with the detailed reform Hondurans might now be handed over to foreign authorities if there are links to businesses with drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism. For this it is necessary to have signed the extradition treaty with the country that makes claim.</p>

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<p><b>4. Boundaries:</b></p> <p><i>What innovative ways of dealing with the boundaries of the property, including for management of the buffer zone do you have in place, to effectively to manage the site and protect its OUV?</i></p>	<p>In March 2011, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment through an official letter informing UNESCO that the nomination dossier of the Biosphere Reservoir in 1982, states that the area which includes the World Heritage site has a 350,000 hectares core area.</p> <p>In 1997, the boundaries of the Reservoir were expended and a new zoning, core zone, buffer zone and cultural zone were outlined, by Decree-Law no. 170-97, also changing its amplitud surface to a total of 833.000 hectares. This creates confusion as to the discrepancy between the limits of the Reservoir recognized by the State of Honduras and those recognized by the World Heritage Committee therefore technical and financial support was formally requested to the World Heritage Centre regarding the RHBRP.</p> <p>For this purpose the project "<b>Resource Recovery of the exceptional World Heritage Site Man Reservoir and Rio Platano Biosphere, to set the zoning and implement actions for rehabilitation of degraded or threatened areas by illegal logging</b>" to access the emergency funds from the State of Honduras, the project aims to revalue the attributes of the Man and Biosphere Reservoir Rio Platano as World Heritage site, redefining the boundaries of World Heritage Site, according to management principles and national protection, considering the current zoning of the protected area and rehabilitate and protect areas vulnerable to degradation of forest resources.</p>
<p><b>5. Sustainable finance:</b></p> <p><i>What effective strategies have you developed and implemented to assure adequate and sustainable financial resources for implementing the management measures required to maintain the site's OUV?</i></p>	<p>The State of Honduras through the Executive Power by Executive Decree PCM-010-2011, the President of the Republic in Council of Ministers, declared the Biosphere Reservoir in the Rio Platano as an area of Special Interest, and should be incorporated as a priority area for protection in the different state policies, strategies and action lines in the integrated management of protected areas, an Ad-hoc Technical Committee was created and should be permanently coordinated by the Secretariat Natural Resources and environment (SERNA) and the Institute of Forest Conservation, Wildlife and Protected Areas (ICF), to protect it, which is the operative body of the various action plans to run in that area.</p> <p>In order to inform the international community and the cooperation agencies about the actions that the State of Honduras has done regarding the RHBRP, the Secretariat of Natural Resources and Environment (SERNA), through the Direction of External Cooperation and Resources Mobilization, sent to the international community on the month of April 2011 an official letter sending the Executive Decree PCM-010-2011, in order to motivate the international cooperation to prioritize within their programs and projects actions to improve the sustainable management of the RHBRP.</p>

<b>Topics for demonstrating best management practice:</b>	<b>Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practice in relation to the topic:</b>
<p><b>6. Staffing training and development:</b></p> <p><i>What approaches and strategies have you developed and implemented to assure that the human resources are adequate to manage the World Heritage property?</i></p>	<p>In March 2011, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment sent to UNESCO, the Project "<b>Resource Recovery of the exceptional World Heritage Site Man Reservoir and Rio Platano Biosphere, to set the zoning and implement actions for rehabilitation of degraded or threatened areas by illegal logging</b>" to access the emergency funds from the State of Honduras, the project aims to revalue the attributes of the Man and Biosphere Reservoir Rio Platano as World Heritage site.</p> <p>This project has as objectives the strengthening of the Forest Rangers through the local offices of ICF, training the staff of the Public Ministry, Armed Forces, agroforestry groups and the Forest Conservation Institute (ICF), and also the Strengthening of the Biodiversity Direction (DiBio) of SERNA with equipment.</p>
<p><b>7. Sustainable development:</b></p> <p><i>What are the effective mechanisms in place to ensure that resource use permitted in and around the World Heritage site is sustainable and does not impact negatively on OUV?</i></p>	<p>As a strategy for monitoring, protection and restoration of natural resources, a military installation around the perimeter of the core area has been identified, to ensure that there are no new encroachments or damage to the environment, based on its role in the new Unit specializing in Ecosystems and Environment created this year with 2,000 environmental troops, dependent on the Secretary of State for National Defense.</p> <p>The State of Honduras through the Executive Power by Executive Decree PCM-010-2011, the President of the Republic in Council of Ministers, declared the Biosphere Reservoir in the Rio Platano as an area of Special Interest, and should be incorporated as a priority area for protection in the different state policies, strategies and action lines in the integrated management of protected areas, an Ad-hoc Technical Committee was created and should be permanently coordinated by the Secretariat Natural Resources and environment (SERNA) and the Institute of Forest Conservation, Wildlife and Protected Areas (ICF), to protect it, which is the operative body of the various action plans to run in that area.</p>

	<b>Topics for demonstrating best management practice:</b>	<b>Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practice in relation to the topic:</b>
<b>8.</b>	<p><b>Education and interpretation programmes:</b></p> <p><i>How do the education, interpretation and awareness programmes you have developed and implemented significantly enhance the understanding of OUV of the site among stakeholders?</i></p>	<p>Currently there are many actions that the State through the Rio Platano Biosphere Region in conjunction with other institutions, organizations and / or projects undertake to try to control and reduce illegal logging in the RHBRP, starting with environmental education campaigns in schools and colleges, which are aimed at the protection and conservation of resources present within the Reservoir, likewise the development of tree nurseries, which contribute to reforest and to nurture this environmental awareness, technical assistance to farmers trying to implementing silvopastoral systems, this achieves that the livestock is developed in an environmentally sustainable, socially acceptable and economically viable way.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Tourism and interpretation:</b></p> <p><i>What innovative plans have you designed and successfully implemented to ensure that visitor management does not negatively impact on the maintenance of the property's OUV?</i></p>	<p>Currently there are no plans to ensure that the visitor management does not negatively impact on the maintenance of the property.</p> <p>The National Institute for Tourism (IHT), has a long term plan that will contemplate the effective tourism management of the Biosphere.</p>

**Additional comments:**

The Man Reservoir and Rio Platano Biosphere (RHBRP) is one of the most important protected areas in the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor and the biggest and most important in the Republic of Honduras, it was created in 1980, by Decree No. 977-80 and it was extended in the year 1997, by Decree No.170-97.

The Reservoir is home to major coastal marine areas and a variety of biodiversity-rich habitats including extensive mangrove forests, pine and Tique forest association in savannah, wetlands, lagoons, coral reefs and cays, home of the greatest biodiversity of the Reservoir, it also houses a cultural diversity such as Garifuna, Miskito, Pech and Tawahkas, this is why in 1982 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) awarded to the Reservoir the category of Natural Site heritage of Humanity.

**Brief description/ summary of the best practice, including a statement on how it can be useful for other sites (max.600 words)**

As you can see the Government of Honduras has made many steps to reach an appropriate and sustainable development of the RHBRP.

For example, through Executive Decree PCM-010-2011, the President decreed the RHBRP as an area of special interest and importance, thus giving the foot so that the competent institutions prioritize projects and activities in the reserve.

**Finally, please provide us, if possible, with up to ten images of the concerned World Heritage property that can be used free of rights in UNESCO publications (commercial and/or non-commercial), and on the UNESCO website. Please provide the name of the photographer and the caption along with the images (he/she will be credited for any use of the images).**



Aerial view of the RHBRP



Eviction of the families living in the Core Zone of the RHBRP



Eviction of the families living in the Core Zone of the RHBRP



Members of the institutions prior the eviction of the families living in the Core Zone of the RHBRP



Members of the armed forces during the evitction