



What is an Eco-Audit?

The Eco-Audit seeks to communicate and celebrate management success stories, while also drawing attention to critical gaps and the need for greater accountability of decision-makers, non-governmental organizations, researchers and the private sector. The purpose of the entire effort is to catalyze stronger, faster management response and to increase accountability within the public and private sectors, and non-governmental organizations.

The Mesoamerican reef (MAR) provides a diverse array of goods and services to the people of Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Belize. Unfortunately, threats have grown to the region's coral reefs, both in intensity and extent, faster than the growth in efforts to manage these threats. The Healthy Reefs Initiative's (HRI) [2008](#) and [2010](#) Report Cards on the health of the Mesoamerican Reef included specific recommended reef management actions that this 2011 Eco-Audit evaluates. The HRI in collaboration with The World Resources Institute (WRI) and local partners, recently implemented the first-ever Eco-Audit, which evaluates our collective progress toward protecting and sustainably managing the region's coral reefs. This first Eco-Audit will provide the foundation for subsequent assessments, which will be implemented every two years. These biennial reports will occur in alternating years as the HRI Reef Report Cards, providing a cyclic accounting of the reef health and our efforts to improve it.

How Does it Work?

Standardized indicators and grading criteria were developed to understand the collective progress each country is making toward improving its coastal, fisheries and coral reef management. A set of four national workshops were held with HRI partners and key government and private sector stakeholders so they could collectively rank each indicator, and also to contribute data to validate this assessment.

To the best of our knowledge, our approach is unprecedented anywhere in the world. Therefore, we engaged the well-known auditing, financial and management firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers Costa Rica¹ (PwC Costa Rica) to review our methodology and provide feedback on the processes, indicators and quality of the verification documentation presented for each indicator. During the course of developing and implementing this first Eco-Audit, several data gaps have been identified. Data is not available for all indicators for all countries. The results of this Eco-audit will help to guide our effort towards data collection and compilation for future Eco-Audits. Looking to the future, we have included several additional indicators, which have not be assessed in this round, but rather proposed for future audits. These suggestions were meant to solicit partner feedback, and also encourage planning, data collection, and strategizing to prepare for future assessments. HRI and its regional Partners are committed to maintaining the standards of an audit that is unbiased, fact-based and transparent.

The Eco-Audit provides a mechanism for partners in each country to communicate, convene, and collaboratively work on critical issues. Ultimately, this effort seeks to improve the health of the Mesoamerican Reef that sustains our cultural and economic way of life, and also contributes to global ecological and economic wealth.

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¹ The engagement of PwC Costa Rica is not executing the audit process, therefore PwC is not expressing an opinion, asseveration or other assurance form regarding the results of the MAR Eco-Audit, but is revising and giving recommendations on the Eco-audit process, ensuring that it is sufficiently robust, replicable year after year, and consistent in order to be seen as credible for the intended users. The recommendations are on the process and not on which indicators should be included.