

UK funds to help communities in Peten to tackle COVID-19 impact

World news story

The British Ambassador in Guatemala, Nick Whittingham, visited Peten and met with communities and authorities who are receiving assistance to improve governance, reduce poverty and continue preventing COVID-19 infections.



The UK government is providing extra support of more than 500,000 quetzals to a [3-year project aimed at tackling illegal wildlife trade in Guatemala and bordering areas with Mexico](#). The funds will address COVID-19 specific impacts in the area.

The projects will help local authorities financially debilitated by COVID-19 to continue tackling illegal wildlife trade in the area. It will also expand livelihoods investments through support for subsistence agriculture, apiculture, and habitat restoration within five Guatemalan communities, benefitting over 120 households.

Ambassador Whittingham held a meeting with project implementers working in the area and led by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). The Executive Secretary of the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), Abraham Estrada; Environmental Prosecutor, Aura Marina Lopez; and Environmental Judge of Peten, Karla Hernandez, also joined the meeting. They revised implementation to date and next steps.

Later, the Ambassador visited the premises of the Guatemalan Ministry of Health in Santa Elena, Peten. The funds will also allow collaboration with Guatemala's Government to provide personal protective equipment (PPE), COVID-19 medical kits and rapid testing for rural communities/project partners, and undertake outreach to raise awareness about COVID-19 within rural communities.

Finally, the Ambassador travelled to the Community of San Miguel, in the Municipality of San Andres, to see how some of these projects are becoming a reality and to participate as a witness of honour in the signature of a

conservation agreement. This compact will allow villagers to benefit from the fruits of their labour -with aid of capital seed from the fund-, whilst they also commit to continue preserving the environment and tackling illegal wildlife trade.

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