



ADAPTATION FUND

AFB/PPRC.37/Inf.47
April 7-8, 2026

Adaptation Fund Board
Project and Programme Review Committee
Thirty-seventh meeting
Bonn, Germany

LOCALLY-LED ADAPTATION SINGLE COUNTRY PROPOSAL FOR BELIZE



ADAPTATION FUND

ADAPTATION FUND BOARD SECRETARIAT TECHNICAL REVIEW OF PROJECT/PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

PROJECT/PROGRAMME CATEGORY: LLA Single country concept note

Country/Region: Belize
Project Title: Strengthening Community-Led Ecosystem Restoration through Locally Led Adaptation in Coastal Belize
Thematic Focal Area: Ocean Management, Blue Economy and Ecosystem-Based Adaptation
Entity: Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT)
Executing Entities: Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future
AF Project ID: AF00000490
IE Project ID: **Requested Financing from Adaptation Fund (US Dollars):** 5,000,000
Reviewer and contact person: Anjeeta Barnwal **Co-reviewer(s):** Alyssa Gomes
IE Contact Person:

Technical Summary: The project “Strengthening Community-Led Ecosystem Restoration through Locally Led Adaptation in Coastal Belize” aims to enhance the adaptive capacity and climate resilience of Belize’s coastal communities through locally led adaptation initiatives, inclusive of approaches that restore and sustainably manage coastal ecosystems, while diversifying nature-based livelihoods that directly respond to locally identified climate risks. This will be done through the four components below:

Component 1: Ecosystem Resilience and Restoration; Coastal Protection (USD 1,500,000);

Component 2: Sustainable Livelihood Diversification (USD 1,500,000);

Component 3: Capacity Building for Locally Led Ecosystem-Based Adaptation (USD 696,295);

Component 4: Community Governance, Knowledge Sharing and Learning for Scaling (USD 475,000)

Requested financing overview:
Project/Programme Execution Cost: USD 437,000
Total Project/Programme Cost: USD 4,608,295
Implementing Fee: USD 391,705
Financing Requested: USD 5,000,000

A request for a project formulation grant (PFG) of USD 150,000 is included

	<p>The first technical review raised several issues, such as enhancing the LLA rationale and describing the approach for devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level, enhancing the sustainability and cost-effectiveness justification and issues pertaining to compliance with the Fund's ESP and GP, as is discussed in the number of Clarification Requests (CRs) and Corrective Action Requests (CARs) raised in the review.</p> <p>The second technical finds that some of the issues raised in the first review especially related to some compliance requirements are addressed. However, the project design still needs to be improved on several aspects such as the logical flow and link of the project components, articulation of activities to achieve project outputs and outcomes, specificity of interventions, integration of LLA principles within project components including integration of indigenous knowledge, risk assessments and overall low targeted benefits raising the issue of cost-effectiveness, as is discussed in the CRs and CARs raised in the review.</p>
Date:	February 17, 2026

Review Criteria	Questions	Comments 1 st Review [January 5, 2026]	Comments 2 nd Review [February 11, 2026]
Country Eligibility	1. Is the country party to the Kyoto Protocol and/or the Paris Agreement?	Yes.	-
	2. Is the country a developing country particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change?	Yes (Pages 3-10). The proposal identifies clear climate risks affecting coastal and marine ecosystems and vulnerable communities and proposes ecosystem restoration, livelihood diversification, governance strengthening, and learning activities.	-
Project Eligibility	1. Has the designated government authority for the Adaptation Fund endorsed the project/programme?	Yes. As per the Endorsement letter dated 11 December 2025	-
	2. Does the length of the proposal amount to no more than fifty (50) pages for the Concept note project document, including its annexes?	Yes.	-

	<p>3. Does the project / programme support concrete adaptation actions to assist the country and/or the local actors in addressing adaptive capacity to the adverse effects of climate change and build in climate resilience?</p>	<p>Not cleared.</p> <p>The proposal presents a strong climate rationale (SLR, SST, storms, coral bleaching, mangrove loss). Activities are framed as EbA and climate-resilient livelihoods, which is appropriate. The proposal includes clear linkages to biodiversity protection and ecosystem health and alignment with national coastal and marine strategies. What is also strong in the proposal is the recognition that livelihoods dependent on coastal and marine resources are climate vulnerable and the intent to diversify income sources. However, several activities are still described at a programmatic or aspirational level, with limited specificity on how they reduce climate risk, as opposed to supporting conservation or livelihoods more broadly.</p> <p>CR1: Please strengthen the climate adaptation justification by clearly explaining, for each major activity or group of activities: Include explanation of how these actions reduce climate-related risks, such as storm surge impacts, coastal erosion, flooding, or livelihood sensitivity to climate shocks. Articulate whether the intervention is intended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • buffer physical impacts (e.g. wave attenuation, erosion reduction), 	<p>CR1: Not Cleared</p> <p>While the revised proposal outlines the potential benefits of EbA measures such as mangrove, seagrass, dune, and wetland restoration, the description remains generic and does not fully respond to Belize's specific climate vulnerabilities. To strengthen the articulation of climate-risk reduction, the proposal should indicate where these interventions will be targeted across the coastal regions shown in Figure 1 and if any initial locations have been identified. Also, briefly mention how reducing these risks will enhance the resilience of the key sectors identified in Table 2.</p> <p>While the proposal notes the intent to enable adaptive decision-making within livelihood interventions under Component 2, the activity titled <i>“Ongoing monitoring of livelihood performance under climate variability”</i> remains focused solely on monitoring livelihood performance. It is recommended that this activity be revised to also support a governance mechanism that enables communities to adjust livelihood management practices in response to changing climate risks, rather than limiting the function to monitoring alone.</p> <p>CR2: Not cleared. The proposal outlines indicative screening criteria for selecting ecosystem-based solutions and livelihoods to avoid</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhance ecosystem recovery after climate shocks, or • stabilize ecosystem services under changing climate conditions. <p>Related to livelihood activities, include a clear explanation of how these activities enable adaptive decision-making in response to climate risks (for example, changing management practices as conditions evolve). Describe how governance strengthening leads to measurable adaptation outcomes, rather than general institutional improvement.</p> <p>The proposal includes ecosystem restoration and climate-resilient livelihood activities intended to enhance resilience. The proposal does not explicitly describe how potential maladaptation risks will be identified and avoided, particularly for livelihood activities and ecosystem interventions in areas affected by long-term climate change such as sea-level rise.</p> <p>CR2: Please clarify how the project will screen for and avoid potential maladaptation, including how long-term climate projections will inform activity selection.</p> <p>The proposal includes a Theory of Change linking ecosystem restoration, livelihoods,</p>	<p>maladaptation; however, it doesn't include several important elements, including assessment of cross-sectoral impacts and early, inclusive community engagement to avoid disproportionate effects on different groups. Given the range of factors that could lead to maladaptation in this context, it is recommended that, in addition to the criteria already identified, the project consider incorporating an innovative, data-informed and community-validated screening tool that could support the identification of effective adaptation options both for this project and for future initiatives. Reference to existing tools to avoid maladaptation will be useful.</p> <p>CR3: Not cleared.</p> <p>The revised Theory of Change is not consistent with the project component activities described in the proposal. Please make it consistent. Also, the Project / Programme Components and Financing table doesn't include activities.</p> <p>While assumptions and risks have been added in the TOC diagram and described, the causal pathway is not clear in the diagram. Please follow a simple layout starting from Key vulnerabilities/problems, barriers, proposed activities, outputs, outcomes, AF result areas, goals and impact. Please articulate the risks and assumptions cutting across Activities and impacts i.e. two vertical</p>

governance strengthening, and learning to improved climate resilience.

The Theory of Change does not yet clearly articulate: key assumptions and risks underlying the causal pathways; or how learning and governance improvements are expected to influence decision-making and adaptive responses over time.

CR3: Please refine the Theory of Change to make explicit the key assumptions and risks underpinning the proposed causal pathways; and clarify how learning and governance improvements are expected to lead to adaptive adjustments during implementation.

The proposal references the Belize Blue Bonds and the Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future as part of the broader national financing landscape and as mechanisms that may support scaling and sustainability. It is not yet sufficiently clear whether Blue Bond related financing is part of the project, expected to co-finance project activities, or assumed for long-term delivery of results. This creates ambiguity in relation to the Adaptation Fund’s full cost of adaptation requirement.

boxes cutting across these rows showing how these risks and assumptions cut across different stages of the pathway.

CR4: Cleared (Page 16-17). The proposal clarifies that AF resources will deliver all outputs and there is no co-financing in the project.

CAR1: Not cleared.

The logical sequencing and internal coherence of the components require strengthening.

The current structure presents ecosystem restoration and livelihood interventions (Components 1 and 2) before establishing the necessary governance, institutional, and participatory planning systems. It is unclear why governance strengthening, institutional arrangements, and decision-making tools are not positioned as foundational elements to guide the identification and prioritization of ecosystem restoration and livelihood solutions.

Please:

- Reassess and clearly justify the sequencing of components to demonstrate a coherent theory of change.
- Clarify how governance strengthening, participatory planning, and decision-making

CR4: Please clarify whether Blue Bond or Belize Fund resources are directly financing any project activities; and confirm that all project outputs and outcomes can be fully delivered with Adaptation Fund resources alone, with any Blue Bond- related financing being complementary and not required for achieving adaptation objectives.

The component descriptions remain insufficiently substantiated at concept note stage. In particular:

- components are described largely at a strategic or aspirational level, without clearly articulated outputs and associated activities;
- the logical link between activities, outputs, and intended adaptation outcomes is not consistently demonstrated; and
- it is not always clear what will be delivered, by whom, and within which component, making it difficult to assess feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and adaptation relevance.

As presented, the lack of specificity limits the ability to assess whether the proposed components translate into concrete adaptation actions rather

tools inform the identification and design of restoration and livelihood interventions.

- Ensure that knowledge management, technical capacity strengthening, and monitoring systems are logically embedded and sequenced to support implementation and adaptive management.
- Clearly define outputs under each component. Outputs must be explicitly stated and logically linked to activities and intended outcomes.

See additional comments for consideration on each component:

Component 1 - Enhanced Ecosystem Resilience and Restoration

- Clearly describe how communities, including Indigenous Peoples and local stakeholders, will participate in identifying restoration priorities, locations, and adaptation measures.
- Explain how traditional knowledge, local practices, and community-defined priorities will be integrated alongside scientific climate projections.
- Specify which local governance structures, committees, or community

than broad programmatic intentions.

CAR1: Please revise the project component descriptions to:

- clearly define the **outputs** under each component;
- specify the **key activities** that will deliver those outputs; and
- demonstrate a clear and logical linkage between activities, outputs, and the project's adaptation objectives.

This clarification should be provided at a level of detail appropriate to concept note stage, with further technical elaboration to be undertaken at full proposal stage.

CR5: Please clarify if a Project Formulation Grant (PFG) is needed. The proposal would benefit from a PFG considering the need for in-depth stakeholder consultations. Template: [Request for Project Formulation Grant \(PFG\)](#)

bodies will be involved in decision-making and how these align with locally led adaptation principles.

- Which institutions and community-level bodies will be responsible for selecting, approving, and overseeing restoration interventions.
- How accountability, transparency, and inclusive participation will be ensured in these structures.

Component 2: Diversified Climate-Resilient Livelihoods

The proposal currently indicates that 150 individuals will receive mentoring and 30 individuals will receive direct financial support. Given the allocation of approximately USD 1.5 million, this appears to represent a limited number of direct beneficiaries.

- Clearly state the total number of direct and indirect beneficiaries under this component.
- Justify the cost-effectiveness of the intervention in relation to the number of beneficiaries.
- Clarify whether additional beneficiaries will be reached beyond the 150 mentored and 30 funded individuals.
- Define the vulnerability criteria that will guide beneficiary selection, explain how the project will ensure that the most climate-vulnerable groups

			<p>(including women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and marginalized households) are prioritized and describe how vulnerability assessments will inform the selection of livelihood activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sub-grant mechanism is currently described in a general manner and lacks operational clarity. Provide a detailed design of the livelihood financing facility, including eligibility criteria, selection process, governance arrangements, disbursement procedures, and oversight mechanisms. - Clarify how funds will be managed, by whom, and under what accountability framework. - The focus on developing entrepreneurs is appropriate but describe how business development support will continue beyond initial grant provision. - Clarify whether/if platforms such as e-market systems, certification schemes, producer cooperatives, or partnerships with business associations will be established to strengthen market access and long-term viability. <p>CR5: Not cleared. There is a totaling error of the PFG activities which adds</p>
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			up to 148,000.
	<p>4. Does the project/programme enable devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level? Does it give local institutions and communities more direct access to finance and decision-making power over how adaptation actions are defined, prioritized, designed, implemented; how progress is monitored and how success is evaluated.</p>	<p>Not cleared.</p> <p>While the intent to apply locally led adaptation is clearly stated, the proposal does not yet explain how the principles of locally led adaptation will be operationalized in practice. In particular, the proposal does not clearly describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how decision-making authority will be devolved to local institutions and communities at different stages of the project (design, prioritization, approval, implementation, monitoring, and learning); • how communities and local institutions will exercise meaningful control over resources, including budgeting, allocation, and reprogramming; • how inclusion, accountability, transparency, and learning will be embedded in project governance and implementation arrangements; and • how the project will ensure that local priorities meaningfully shape adaptation actions rather than communities primarily validating externally defined interventions. <p>As presented, locally led adaptation is articulated at the</p>	<p>CAR 2: Not cleared</p> <p>In component 3 and 4, the proposal has indicated that LLA principles will be operationalized. However, in the descriptions of component 1 and 2, these principles are not integrated. For example, there is no mention of participatory planning and decision-making processes in identifying and implementing ecosystem restoration solutions and resilient livelihoods.</p> <p>A paragraph has been added regarding accountability and transparency, and training and capacity building of local community groups for use and management of sub-grants for enterprises. However, this refers to the management of sub-grants for enterprises only. The comment in the first round was regarding accountability and transparency for the overall project at all levels which is not addressed.</p> <p>The proposal also states that <i>direct access to finance will be enabled through an on-granting mechanism that places financial decision making and control at the community level within a clear financial framework.</i> However, this is not reflected in the diagram provided in the proposal for the fund flow, which looks very top-down from national government to the trust fund to the communities.</p>

level of principle and intent, but **the operational mechanisms remain unclear**, limiting the ability to assess whether the project genuinely applies an LLA approach.

CAR2: Please revise the proposal to clearly explain how the project will operationalize the principles of locally led adaptation, including:

1. which local institutions or community bodies hold decision-making authority at each stage of the project cycle;
2. how financial decision-making and control are exercised at the local level;
3. how accountability, transparency, and grievance mechanisms function from the perspective of local stakeholders; and
4. Learning and feedback will enable adaptation decisions to be adjusted over time based on local experience.

The proposal uses strong language on community leadership, empowerment, and participation; refers to direct access to finance through on-granting; recognizes Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, and marginalized groups; and frames governance as occurring at the “lowest appropriate level.” However, across Sections A, C, J,

Please include the following in the proposal:

1. Please integrate LLA principles in description of the components and their activities.
2. Revise the on-granting cost-effectiveness diagram as it shows the flow of sub-grants only for enterprises. Provide a more comprehensive diagram showing fund flow, role of different actors, decision making by local actors and accountability and transparency mechanisms for the entire project **covering both component 1 (ecosystems) and component 2 (livelihood) interventions**. Please update the description of the diagram accordingly and embed these in the respective components.

CR6: Not cleared. This can be addressed through revisions to be done in response to CAR 2.

CR7: Not cleared. There is some articulation on pages 22 and 32 regarding working within existing local governance structures for project implementation and decision making. However, there remains concerns that engagement of local communities in decision making at all levels is not sufficiently described in the components 1 and 2 which has been mentioned in the comments above.

and K, the proposal does not clearly demonstrate who decides what gets funded and who controls financial flows. In particular:

- community adaptation committees are mentioned, but it is unclear whether they decide, recommend, or validate activities;
- the decision boundary between community bodies and the Belize Fund / PACT, as fiduciary manager, is not specified;
- “direct financing to local actors” is asserted, but there is no clarity on whether communities can approve budgets, reallocate funds, or phase activities; and
- the on-granting mechanism is described as accessible but not clearly devolved.

As presented, the governance arrangements could still function as a consultative model rather than a locally led one.

CR6: Please clearly describe, at a level appropriate to concept note stage:

- which actors have authority to prioritize, approve, and reject adaptation actions and budgets;
- how financial decision-making authority is devolved beyond consultation; and
- how the on-granting architecture ensures

		<p>meaningful local control, including clarity on approval, rejection, and appeal processes.</p> <p>The proposal refers to the establishment of community-level committees to support locally led adaptation and implementation. The proposal does not clarify how these committees relate to existing local governance structures, such as Village Councils, Alcalde systems, or established co-management bodies. There is a risk of creating parallel, project-specific governance structures rather than strengthening existing ones.</p> <p>CR7: Please clarify how proposed community governance arrangements will be embedded within, aligned with, or accountable to existing local governance systems, and how the project will avoid creating parallel decision-making structures.</p>	
	5. Does the project / programme provide	The proposal commits to delivering economic, social, and environmental benefits to vulnerable	CR8: Not cleared

	<p>economic, social and environmental benefits, particularly to vulnerable communities, including gender considerations, while avoiding or mitigating negative impacts, in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy of the Fund?</p> <p>Does the project/programme address structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, people with disabilities, people who are displaced, Indigenous Peoples and marginalized ethnic groups?</p>	<p>communities, recognizes women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable groups, and demonstrates awareness of the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy. The proposal does not yet clearly explain how structural inequalities faced by these groups will be addressed through governance arrangements, decision-making authority, access to finance, and benefit-sharing mechanisms, nor how potential negative impacts will be mitigated in practice.</p> <p>CR8: Please clarify how the project will address structural inequalities faced by women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how these groups will be represented in governance and decision-making structures; • how equitable access to adaptation finance and benefits will be ensured; and • how risks and potential negative impacts will be identified and mitigated in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy. 	<p>The approach has been described under <i>Targeting Vulnerable Groups and Addressing Structural Inequality</i> to include women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups to address structural inequality.</p> <p>However, please address the last comment and indicate how risk and potential negative impacts will be identified and mitigated during planning and implementation stages.</p>
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	<p>6. Is the project / programme cost effective?</p>	<p>Not cleared.</p> <p>The proposal provides a reasonable rationale for its overall scope and approach, linking climate risks in coastal and marine systems to ecosystem restoration, livelihood diversification, and strengthened local governance. The use of an on-granting mechanism through an existing national fund is justified as a way to reach local actors efficiently and at scale. While the overall logic is sound, the proposal does not clearly explain why this particular mix of interventions and delivery mechanisms represents the most cost-effective way to achieve the intended adaptation outcomes, as compared to other possible approaches or scales of intervention.</p> <p>The proposal does not present a comparison of alternative adaptation approaches or delivery options to demonstrate why the selected approach represents a cost-effective use of Adaptation Fund resources.</p> <p>The proposal emphasizes sustainability through alignment with national systems, existing institutions, and longer-term financing mechanisms. It suggests that embedding adaptation actions within established governance and financing structures will enhance</p>	<p>CR9: Cleared (Page 19). A brief description is provided regarding alternative measures.</p> <p>CR10: Not cleared. Please refer to the comments regarding sustainability in the review sheet. Once it is addressed, this part of CR10 comment will be addressed.</p> <p>Regarding overall cost-effectiveness, the project's intended benefits to communities and ecosystem is quite limited for a project of \$5 million grant from AF which is scarce. It targets only 100 hectares of ecosystem improvement and only 30 enterprises with no indication of how many vulnerable communities and households will benefit from the project. Further, there are no specific interventions which can enable scaling up and replication of solutions in other areas of Belize. For example, there aren't any policy or financing mechanisms proposed that can support such interventions during or after the project period.</p>
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durability and reduce future costs. Cost-effectiveness is not yet clearly demonstrated from a sustainability perspective. In particular:

- the proposal does not explain how costs will decrease, benefits will be maintained, or efficiencies will be realized over time once Adaptation Fund support ends; and
- references to future financing mechanisms blur the distinction between sustainability achieved through project design versus sustainability dependent on additional funding.

CR9: Please include a brief qualitative discussion of alternative adaptation approaches or delivery mechanisms that were considered and explain why the selected approach was chosen as the most cost-effective option to achieve the project's adaptation objectives. This discussion may remain high-level and is not expected to include quantitative cost-benefit analysis at concept note stage.

CR10: Please clarify how the selected scope and delivery approach represents a cost-effective way to achieve the

		<p>project's adaptation objectives; and how cost-effectiveness is enhanced over time through sustainability of outcomes (for example, through reduced future costs, durable benefits, or efficiencies gained from institutional embedding), independent of future external financing.</p>	
	<p>7. Is the project / programme consistent with national, sub-national or local sustainable development strategies, national, sub-national or local development plans, poverty reduction strategies, national communications and adaptation programs of action and other relevant instruments?</p>	<p>Cleared (Pages 18-19).</p> <p>The proposal explicitly identifies and describes alignment with all core national and sectoral instruments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belize's Multisectoral National Adaptation Plan (NAP), with clear articulation of how the programme contributes to specific NAP priorities (coastal resilience, community-based governance, livelihood diversification, and local capacity-building). • Belize's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) under the Paris Agreement, including explicit references to ecosystem-based adaptation, mangrove restoration, coastal resilience, and locally led 	-

		<p>community adaptation targets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan (NCCPSAP), including decentralization, gender equity, Indigenous inclusion, and integration of traditional knowledge. • Coastal Zone and Fisheries Sector NAP (2026–2030), with a clear explanation of how the programme operationalizes this plan through community-led EbA actions. • Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with explicit reference to SDGs 1, 5, 8, 13, 14, and 15. • Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZMP) and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). • National Development Framework for Belize (2010–2030) and Horizon 2030. • Sub-national and local development priorities in climate-vulnerable districts (Corozal, Belize, Stann Creek, Toledo). • Complementarity with Blue Bond / Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) frameworks, framed as 	
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		<p>enabling broader policy coherence.</p> <p>This goes well beyond a generic alignment narrative and demonstrates a high degree of policy coherence</p>	
	<p>8. Does the project / programme meet the relevant national technical standards, where applicable, in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy of the Fund? Does the project provide support to local actors and build their capacities to comply with the standards?</p>	<p>Not cleared.</p> <p>The proposal demonstrates clear awareness of national regulatory and technical frameworks and commits to compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy of the Adaptation Fund. It references adherence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national environmental regulations and permitting processes; • coastal and marine management frameworks governing ecosystem restoration and conservation activities; and • safeguard screening and approval processes managed through established national institutions. <p>The proposal also emphasizes capacity building of local actors, suggesting that implementation will be aligned with national standards and overseen by competent authorities. While the proposal commits to compliance, it does not yet clearly identify the specific</p>	<p>CR11: Cleared (Pages 13-15).</p> <p>The updated proposal now clearly identifies the key national technical standards applicable across all programme components and presents them in a structured table. Oversight authorities are appropriately mapped to regulatory requirement, and the proposal outlines practical compliance mechanisms, including environmental and social screening, permitting pathways, licensing processes, and fiduciary verification procedures, demonstrating how national systems will be applied during implementation. The proposal also clarified that detailed technical procedures, engineering designs, and site-specific specifications will be developed during full proposal preparation, which is appropriate at the concept stage. The revised version includes measures to build the capacity of local actors and grantees to understand, apply, and comply with these standards.</p>

		<p>national technical standards that will apply to project-supported activities, nor explain how compliance will be ensured in practice. At concept note stage, detailed technical specifications are not required; however, identification of the key applicable standards and compliance pathway is expected.</p> <p>CR11: Please clarify, at a level appropriate to concept note stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • which key national technical standards and regulations are applicable to the proposed activities (for example, sector-specific environmental regulations, water quality standards, or other relevant technical requirements); • how compliance with these standards will be ensured during implementation, including institutional roles; and • how local actors will be supported and capacitated to apply and comply with these standards. <p>Detailed technical procedures may be further elaborated at full proposal stage.</p>	
	<p>9. Is there duplication of project / programme with other funding sources? Does the project enhance</p>	<p>Not cleared.</p> <p>The proposal identifies several relevant national and sectoral</p>	<p>CR12: Not cleared. The new table with complementary projects provided looks fine and is appreciated. However, please elaborate how the</p>

	<p>collaboration across sectors and enhance efficiencies and good practice?</p>	<p>initiatives and frames the project as complementary, emphasizing cross-sector collaboration and efficiency. The proposal does not yet provide a comprehensive and structured overview of potentially overlapping projects or programmes, nor does it clearly demonstrate, in a systematic manner, how duplication is avoided and complementarities and lessons learned are incorporated into project design.</p> <p>CR12: Please identify the key ongoing or planned projects and programmes in Belize that may overlap thematically or geographically with the proposed project (including major national, bilateral, or multilateral initiatives);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • briefly describe areas of potential overlap and how duplication will be avoided; and • explain how complementarities, synergies, and lessons learned from earlier or ongoing initiatives (including challenges encountered) have informed the project design. <p>To improve clarity, please present this information in a summary table (e.g. project name, donor, focus area, geographic scope, relationship to the proposed project).</p>	<p>institutions engaged in these projects will be involved during the project planning and implementation through project committees, advisory groups, etc. Also, please add how these projects will be leveraged for knowledge, data and tools to inform implementation of this project.</p>
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	<p>10. Does the project / programme have a learning and knowledge management component to capture and feedback lessons, in particular managing traditional and/or indigenous knowledge, where relevant? Does it contribute to building and institutionalizing local capabilities?</p>	<p>Not cleared.</p> <p>The proposal includes a learning and knowledge management component focused on documentation, dissemination, and peer learning. It is not yet clear how learning will be used to adjust project activities or approaches during implementation, rather than solely for reporting or dissemination.</p> <p>CR13: Please clarify how learning processes will support adaptive management, including whether and how lessons learned will lead to adjustments in activities, approaches, or resource allocation.</p> <p>The proposal describes documentation and dissemination of traditional and Indigenous knowledge in national and local languages and through local governance structures. However, the proposal does not clearly articulate community agency, consent, and rights over how traditional and Indigenous knowledge is documented, used, or shared beyond general participation or free, prior, and informed consent references.</p> <p>CR14: Please clarify how community agency and consent will be ensured in the documentation and sharing of traditional and Indigenous knowledge, including whether communities can approve</p>	<p>CR13: Not cleared. The revised learning and knowledge management framework and objectives provided is useful. However, it reads more conceptual due to lack of clear strategies to operationalize this ambitious framework. Please include concrete steps and institutional mechanisms to be set up in the project learning and knowledge management framework. This can include partnership with relevant government agencies, academic and research institutions, civil society organizations working closely with local communities and having knowledge of indigenous practices, and other actors who can play a critical role in ensuring knowledge is effectively captured, disseminated, integrated in project activities and institutionalized for long term benefits. There is a mention of creating a digital knowledge sharing platform in the proposal which is innovative. Please briefly describe where this platform will be hosted, how it will be sustained beyond the project, what will be the outreach strategy and who will benefit communities, local and national governments and other stakeholders including CSOs and private sector.</p> <p>CR14: Not cleared. This has been addressed in page 29 under section G. Please refer to the comment above to mention specific strategies to operationalize this.</p>
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		or restrict external use of such knowledge.	
	<p>11. Has a consultative process taken place, and has it involved and encouraged all key stakeholders, and vulnerable groups, to meaningfully participate in and lead adaptation decisions? Did the consultative process consider and address gender-based, economic and other inequalities in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy of the Fund?</p>	<p>Not cleared.</p> <p>The proposal explains that, due to the use of fully unidentified sub-projects, formal community-level consultations have not yet been undertaken at concept note stage, as specific locations and partners will be identified later. It commits to comprehensive, participatory consultations at national, sub-national, and community levels during full proposal development, guided by Environmental and Social and Gender Policies aligned with those of the Fund. The proposal also states that consultations at this stage were conducted with relevant umbrella bodies from government and non-government actors, primarily to identify synergies and complementarity with existing initiatives</p> <p>While the rationale for deferring community-wide consultations is explained, the proposal does not yet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly describe which umbrella bodies were consulted, nor their relationship to the specific communities, women, youth, 	<p>CR15, CAR3: Partially cleared.</p> <p>An Initial Consultation Report is now included in Annex 4 which describes the scope of consultations, identifies the umbrella bodies consulted at concept note stage, outlines their mandates and representativeness in relation to the targeted communities, women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples, and summarizes the key inputs that informed the design of this Adaptation Fund concept. However, this doesn't include a description of how these consultations informed the project design to focus on ecosystem-based restoration and diversified livelihood activities. Please include the following to strengthen this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include a paragraph on how the consultations informed the project's focus on ecosystem-based restoration and diversified resilient livelihoods. Briefly mention if the consultations also led to identification of opportunities for this project to meet national and local goals. <p>CAR 4: Partially cleared.</p>

		<p>and Indigenous Peoples expected to benefit;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate how inputs from these consultations (or from prior engagement under the existing programme) informed the design of this Adaptation Fund concept; or • provide an initial gender assessment or summarize existing gender-related information that informed the concept design, despite the programme being built on an established baseline where such information is likely available. <p>As presented, the information meets only the minimum threshold for demonstrating early engagement at concept note stage.</p> <p>CR15: Please identify the umbrella bodies consulted at concept note stage and briefly explain how they legitimately represent or work with the targeted communities and vulnerable group. Secondly, summarize any key inputs, concerns, lessons learned, or priorities from prior engagement or baseline programme experience that directly informed the design of this Adaptation Fund concept (distinct from broader programme discussions).</p>	<p>Preliminary Gender Assessment is provided in Annex 5 drawing on available baseline data and prior programme experience, and explains how gender-based and other social inequalities were considered in shaping the proposed activities.</p> <p>In the gender assessment document, under the section “Gender Informed Programme Design”, please also include how the gender aspects will inform the knowledge and learning activities to ensure that gender specific issues, opportunities and best practices identified in the project will be effectively documented and shared for adaptive management of this project and to inform future interventions.</p>
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		<p>More detailed consultations and analysis may be undertaken through project preparation funding and at full proposal stage.</p> <p>CAR3: Include the above information in an initial consultation report.</p> <p>CAR4: Include an initial gender assessment appropriate to concept note stage, drawing on available data or prior analysis, explaining how gender-based and other inequalities were considered in shaping the proposed activities.</p> <p>Gender Guidance Document for Implementing Entities on Compliance with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy (Updated in 2022)</p>	
	<p>12. Is the requested financing justified on the basis of full cost of adaptation reasoning?</p>	<p>Not cleared.</p> <p>The proposal provides a strong climate vulnerability context for Belize and clearly articulates how Adaptation Fund resources would finance ecosystem restoration, nature-based livelihoods, governance strengthening, and capacity building for locally led adaptation. It explains that these interventions represent incremental adaptation costs that would not be possible under current conditions and describes a counterfactual scenario in which communities would remain highly exposed to</p>	<p>CR16: Cleared. Pages 16-17.</p> <p>The proposal has clarified that all the project activities will be solely financed by AF and no co-financing or parallel financing will be used.</p> <p>Given that there are several relevant baseline and parallel projects in the country relevant to component 1, the fully developed proposal should present financing to scale up project's intended benefits to larger area and beneficiaries by leveraging their funds to add more ecosystem-restoration and strengthen policies and plans. It</p>

climate risks in the absence of Adaptation Fund support.

The proposal also situates the project within Belize's broader climate finance and conservation landscape, including references to the Blue Bond and Project Finance for Permanence frameworks, which are presented as part of a long-term sustainability and policy alignment context. However, the proposal does not yet explicitly clarify the boundary between Adaptation Fund financing and Blue Bond-related or other complementary financing. In particular, it is not sufficiently clear that:

- **all proposed outputs and outcomes can be fully delivered using Adaptation Fund resources alone,** independent of other programmes or financing channels; and
- activities that could be perceived as livelihood development or ecosystem management are clearly framed as **incremental adaptation actions**, rather than continuation or expansion of existing efforts.

In addition, while the proposal references broader national efforts and existing programmes, it does not clearly distinguish which

will also ensure that this project doesn't operate in isolation

		<p>elements are baseline, which are complementary, and which are financed exclusively by the Adaptation Fund.</p> <p>CR16: Please explicitly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - confirm that all project outputs and outcomes can be achieved using Adaptation Fund financing alone, regardless of the availability or success of Blue Bond–related or other external financing mechanisms; - distinguish between (i) baseline activities, (ii) complementary initiatives linked to Blue Bond or other frameworks, and (iii) the incremental adaptation activities financed exclusively by the Adaptation Fund; and - strengthen the justification of ecosystem restoration and livelihood activities by explaining their specific incremental contribution to climate adaptation objectives, independent of broader conservation or finance initiatives. <p>This clarification may remain high-level and narrative at concept note stage.</p>	
	13. Is the project / program aligned with AF's results	Partially cleared (Annex 1).	CAR5: Not cleared.

	<p>framework?</p>	<p>CAR5: The alignment table presents alignment with Fund outcomes 2 – 7. However please ensure that the table follows the Adaptation Fund template for alignment with the Fund’s Strategic Results Framework. Template and guidance is available here: Results Framework Alignment Table (Amended in November 2025)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sum of all outcome indicators should be the sum of all project components, not including the IE fees and EE cost. - In Objective 2, the Project Objective Indicator is not aligned with the AF Outcome Indicator. The project indicator refers to %increase in income, whereas the AF outcome indicator is for %of households with increased income. Please revise accordingly. The Objective 4 indicator is not consistent with the project component description. It refers to development of subnational plans. However, it isn’t mentioned in the relevant component and activities. Given this, the linkage with AF Outcomes 3 and 7 and their corresponding indicators is not evident. - Lastly, move the table from the Annex to the main text under Part III A.
	<p>14. Has the sustainability of the project/programme outcomes been taken into account when designing the project?</p>	<p>Not cleared.</p> <p>The proposal emphasizes sustainability through alignment with</p>	<p>CR17 and CR18: The revised proposal has partially addressed this comment. It is still high level and conceptual with limited description of</p>

	<p>Does the project/programme support long-term development of local governance processes, and improve the capacity of local institutions to ensure that communities can effectively implement adaptation actions over the long term?</p>	<p>national systems and financing mechanisms. It is not yet clear how local governance and decision-making arrangements supported by the project will be sustained beyond the project period, independent of future external financing.</p> <p>CR17: Please clarify how local governance capacities and decision-making processes supported by the project are expected to continue beyond project completion.</p> <p>The proposal does not yet clearly explain the specific arrangements through which adaptation benefits will be sustained after project completion, nor how replication and scaling would occur in practice. In particular, the proposal does not sufficiently describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how economic sustainability of community-level activities will be ensured beyond project support; • how maintenance of any infrastructure, ecosystem restoration outcomes, or installations will be financed and managed over time; • how governance arrangements and institutional capacities strengthened by the project will continue to function after project closure; and 	<p>how sustainability of benefits and governance structures will be ensured.</p> <p>Please address the following additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the CACs would remain functional after the project has ended? Will the CACs have any role beyond the project? If yes, what role they will have? Or, will they be dissolved and their knowledge and skills will be integrated in Village Councils and Alclade systems? • It is quite unlikely that all the solutions will self-maintain naturally. External pressures on natural resources such as land use changes and climate extremes may affect their sustainability. Consider developing an approach for future maintenance of the ecosystem-based solutions and develop strategies to mobilize more resources in the future e.g. through public funds, private sector interested in ecotourism, etc. • The project proposes to provide grants- most likely as seed capital- for the enterprises. With
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how knowledge generated will be maintained, updated, and applied beyond the project period. <p>While future financing mechanisms are referenced, the proposal does not clearly distinguish sustainability arrangements that are internal to the project design from those dependent on external or future funding.</p> <p>CR18: Please clarify, at a level appropriate to concept note stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how adaptation benefits achieved under the project will be sustained after project completion; • the arrangements for maintaining physical, ecological, and institutional outcomes developed by the project; • how economic, social, environmental, institutional, and financial sustainability are addressed within the project design; and • how the project enables replication and scaling of adaptation actions with other funds, without relying on uncertain future financing. 	<p>these grants, it is unlikely that the enterprises will operate for long period unless they are supported to raise more funds by linking them with other financial institutions like local banks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Any small-scale physical assets or installations will be integrated into existing community or institutional management responsibilities, ensuring maintenance through established local structures-</i>This is fine. However, some resources could be set aside for future maintenance. • <i>Knowledge generated through participatory monitoring, learning exchanges, and documentation will be retained within communities and applied through ongoing decision-making processes rather than treated as project outputs alone. This ensures that learning continues to inform adaptation actions and local planning after project completion-</i> It is quite generic and doesn't provide a specific strategy
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			<p>to continue this process. The project can consider institutionalizing this within an existing government agency or external credible institution in the country or the focus region to maintain, link with others and curate knowledge beyond the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For replication and scaling up, the project should consider innovative financing mechanisms for the on-granting process. Currently, it is designed to disburse all the resources without any strategy to use it to raise more funds. • The project can also explore developing pipeline of ecosystem restoration initiative to make it more sustainable.
	<p>15. Does the project / programme provide an overview of environmental and social impacts / risks identified, in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy of the Fund?</p>	<p>Not cleared.</p> <p>The proposal does not yet fully demonstrate compliance with the Adaptation Fund's Environmental and Social Policy requirements in a verifiable manner, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal refers extensively to the Implementing Entity's 	<p>Not cleared.</p> <p>The project is classified under category B and it looks appropriate given that most of the specific ESP risks identified in the project are low to moderate.</p> <p>Regarding the risk identification and management in line with Adaptation Fund ESP requirements, the updated</p>

		<p>Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework and Environmental and Social Management Framework. However, it does not explicitly state whether the project is classified as Category A, B, or C under the Adaptation Fund Environmental and Social Policy. Referencing IE systems alone is not sufficient; AF categorization must be explicit and aligned with AF definitions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The narrative framing repeatedly characterizes the unidentified sub-project approach as “not a risk but an adaptive innovation” and emphasizes “high environmental and social returns,” “positive outcomes,” and “co-benefits” within the risk identification section. Under the Adaptation Fund ESP, risk screening should be based on identified or anticipated environmental and social risks and adverse impacts, rather than perceived or expected positive impacts. Several entries in the risk table include benefit-oriented 	<p>proposal has described direct, indirect, cumulative and transboundary risks and have listed a few mitigation measures.</p> <p>The proposal has removed and relocated references to positive impacts, co-benefits, or expected outcomes from the risk screening and risk categorization narrative to more appropriate sections of the proposal. However, the proposal has not addressed other comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The table is not correctly filled. All the risks identified has been incorrectly marked as “No further assessment required”. This needs to be unchecked for all the risks identified as low/moderate or high. The “no further assessment required” column is for those potential risks which are tagged as no-risk. This column should only be selected for principles where no risk is identified i.e. for the public health risk as assessed by the IE. As the project includes USPs, all subprojects will need to be screened against the AF ESP principles. The description of risks is

		<p>or outcome-based statements (for example, references to indirect health benefits, resilience strengthening, or positive livelihood outcomes), which obscures the distinction between risk identification and benefit articulation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As presented, this blending of risks and positive impacts weakens the analytical basis for risk categorization, mitigation planning, and ESP compliance verification. <p>Positive impacts and co-benefits are relevant and valuable, but should be reflected in the project rationale, results framework, and adaptation benefits sections, not within the environmental and social risk screening itself.</p> <p>CAR6: Please revise the environmental and social risk screening section to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> explicitly state the Adaptation Fund ESP category (A, B, or C) assigned to the project and confirm alignment with AF ESP definitions; confirm that the risk screening explicitly considers direct, indirect, cumulative, and transboundary impacts; ensure that the 	<p>quite generic without any specific details and evidence. Please refer to AF's ESP guidance document to provide a sounder risk assessment of each principles and mitigation measures. The description of mitigation measures is quite low to none in case of some risks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of the climate risk needs to be reconsidered. It is categorized as low despite climate risk assessments showing Belize as a highly vulnerable country. While some diversified livelihoods supported in the project may face low risk, ecosystem-restoration solutions and some livelihood activities may face moderate to high risks. <p>CAR 6: Not cleared</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please revise the risk table as suggested above to correct the tagging for the column "no further assessment required". Please provide more context specific description of risks, impacts and subsequent mitigation measures for

		<p>screening and checklist focus exclusively on identified or anticipated environmental and social risks and adverse impacts, in line with the Adaptation Fund Environmental and Social Policy;</p> <p>4. remove or relocate references to positive impacts, co-benefits, or expected outcomes from the risk screening and risk categorization narrative to more appropriate sections of the proposal; and</p> <p>5. maintain clear, substantiated justification for assigned risk levels and corresponding mitigation measures for each relevant Environmental and Social Policy principle.</p> <p>This clarification is requested at a level appropriate to concept note stage; detailed sub-project screening procedures may be further elaborated at full proposal stage.</p> <p>Guidance document for Environment and Social Policy (English, French and Spanish)</p> <p>Guidance Document for</p>	<p>all the risks in line with AF's ESP guidance document. Guidance document for Environment and Social Policy (English, French and Spanish). If feasible, please categorize the potential impact of each risk also as low-medium-high.</p>

		Project/Programme with Unidentified Sub-Projects	
Resource Availability	1. Is the requested project / programme funding within the size for LLA single country grants?	Yes.	-
	2. Is the Implementing Entity Management Fee at or below 8.5% per cent of the total project/programme budget before the fee?	Yes. The IE fee is at 8.5%.	Will be rechecked until technical clearance.
	3. Are the Project/Programme Execution Costs at or below 9.5% per cent of the total project/programme budget (including the fee)?	Yes. The EE cost is at 9.5%	Will be rechecked until technical clearance.
Eligibility of IE	1. Is the project/programme submitted through an eligible Implementing Entity that has been accredited by the Board?	Yes. PACT is "Accredited" Accreditation Expiration Date: 11 April 2030	-



ADAPTATION FUND

REQUEST FOR PROJECT/PROGRAMME FUNDING FROM THE ADAPTATION FUND

The annexed form should be completed and transmitted to the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat by email or fax.

Please type in the responses using the template provided. The instructions attached to the form provide guidance to filling out the template.

Please note that a project/programme must be fully prepared (i.e., fully appraised for feasibility) when the request is submitted. The final project/programme document resulting from the appraisal process should be attached to this request for funding.

Complete documentation should be sent to the email: submissions@adaptation-fund.org



ADAPTATION FUND

LOCALLY-LED ADAPTATION PROJECT/PROGRAMME PROPOSAL FOR SINGLE COUNTRY

PART I: PROJECT/PROGRAMME INFORMATION

Title of Project/Programme: Strengthening Community-Led Ecosystem Restoration through Locally Led Adaptation in Coastal Belize

Country: Belize

Thematic Focal Area: Ocean Management, Blue Economy and Ecosystem-Based Adaptation

Type of Implementing Entity: National Implementing Entity

Implementing Entity: Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT)

Executing Entities: Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future

Amount of Financing Requested: \$5,000,000 (in U.S Dollars Equivalent)

Letter of Endorsement (LOE) signed: Yes No

NOTE: The LOE should be signed by the Designated Authority (DA). The signatory DA must be on file with the Adaptation Fund. To find the DA currently on file check this page: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/apply-funding/designated-authorities>

Stage of Submission:

- This proposal has been submitted before including at a different stage (pre-concept, concept, fully- developed proposal)
- This is the first submission ever of the proposal at any stage

In case of a resubmission, please indicate the last submission date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Please note that fully-developed proposal documents should not exceed 100 pages for the main document, and 100 pages for the annexes.

Project / Programme Background and Context:

Belize, a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) located in Central America, is widely recognized for its rich biodiversity, vibrant marine ecosystems, and cultural heritage. Its low-lying coastal communities depend heavily on the health of these ecosystems for their livelihoods, food security, and protection from natural hazards. However, Belize is increasingly on the frontlines of climate change. Rising sea surface temperatures, sea level rise, coastal erosion, ocean acidification, and ecosystem degradation are placing both livelihoods and ecosystems at significant risk. Currently, the projected sea level rise by the end of the century is expected to be up to 103.9cm. This rise poses significant risks to coastal communities, critical infrastructure and ecosystems, especially mangroves and coral reefs, which serve as natural barriers against storm surges. Erosion and saltwater intrusion into freshwater supplies will become more prominent as sea levels rise, threatening both agricultural productivity and human settlements (GOB, 2024a, as cited in NDC 3.0, 2025). These impacts are particularly acute for vulnerable groups such as fisherfolk, women, and youth, who rely on natural resources for their daily survival yet are often excluded from formal climate planning processes.

Belize has experienced significant changes in its temperature since 1960, with a 0.45°C rise in mean annual air temperatures (Climate Change Knowledge Portal, 2021b). As a result, the country experienced 67 more hot days per year and 21 fewer cold days per year from 1960 to 2003. Additionally, average sea surface temperatures rose by approximately 1.25°C from 2004 to 2024 (NOAA Coral Reef Watch, 2024). A slight decrease in precipitation since 1960 has also been observed, with mean annual rainfall declining approximately 37.2 mm per year every 10 years (Climate Change Knowledge Portal, 2021b). This decline aligns with several drought periods observed from 1990 to 2020 (Singh, 2022). Nevertheless, hurricanes and tropical storms remain a major concern for Belize each year. The most recent to make landfall was Tropical Storm Sara on November 17, 2024, which brought intense rain and forceful winds that led to flash flooding in certain parts of the country (NOAA National Hurricane Center, 2024).

This puts Belize at high risk of experiencing the negative impacts of climate change, including climate-related natural disasters (International Monetary Fund, 2016). The nation's flat, low-lying terrain, extensive coastline, and over 1,060 small islands exacerbate its susceptibility to sea level rise and the destructive effects of tropical storms and hurricanes (National Climate Change Office, 2021). Belize has and continues to face climate hazards that pose serious threats to its environmental integrity and socio-economic development. Table 1 outlines the observed impacts of climate change on ecosystems and biodiversity in Belize which are expected to worsen as the climate continues to change.

Table 1: Current and projected climate change impacts on ecosystems in Belize

Climate Hazard	Climate Change Impact	Description
 <p>Rising sea surface temperatures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sargassum influx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sargassum is a brown seaweed that flourishes in warm waters (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2023). Rising sea surface temperatures combined with increased nutrient loads provide optimal conditions for sargassum to grow and spread.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coral bleaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coral reefs are particularly vulnerable: an IPCC special report anticipates with high confidence that a decline in coral reef health by 70%–90% will occur with 1.5°C of warming (IPCC, 2018). Furthermore, the IPCC (2018) states with very high confidence that an increase of 2°C will result in the loss of nearly all coral reefs, with health declines greater than 99%. As a response to thermal stress from high sea temperatures, corals expel a type of algae that gives them their colour (IPCC, 2022; NOAA, 2024). This process is called coral bleaching because the coral turns white. Between 1995 and 2021, Belize saw six mass bleaching events (Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management, 2021). Once a coral bleaches, it is more vulnerable to diseases (e.g., stony coral tissue loss disease, which has infected more than 20 different Caribbean coral species [UNEP, 2020]) and eventually causes die-off. With reductions in coral habitats, associated coral-dependent biodiversity is expected to decline.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coral disease outbreaks 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity loss 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift in marine species distributions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As sea temperatures rise, marine species that prefer to live in cooler temperatures will migrate further north or deeper into the sea in search of favourable temperatures (IPCC, 2022).
 <p>Sea level rise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saltwater intrusion into coastal aquifers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As sea levels rise, saltwater from the sea can infiltrate freshwater aquifers near the coast. It is projected that 0.22% of freshwater open aquifers will become more saline in the next 25 years, compromising drinking water. Furthermore, this is projected to result in a loss of between 0.87% and 2.6% of all freshwater open aquifers in the next century (Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, 2021).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal erosion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal ecosystems are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise, including “submergence, coastal flooding, and coastal erosion” (IPCC, 2014, p. 17). Waves gradually wear down coastlines. Rising sea levels can increase the strength of waves, thus increasing their power to erode (U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit, 2021).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal inundation and beach loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rising sea levels will cause more frequent flooding of coastal areas, which may lead to temporary or permanent inundation. Approximately 600 km² of land along Belize’s coast is expected to be submerged with a sea level rise of 0.5 m (Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, 2021), which can reduce foraging and nesting habitat for shorebirds and other coastal biodiversity.
 <p>Ocean acidification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declines in the health of coral reefs and other marine life with exoskeletons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warm, acidic water can weaken coral, shellfish, and other marine life with exoskeletons (hard outer shells) (Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, 2021). This impacts their health and ability to respond to and recover from other stressors, such as disease and predators and can result in the loss of coral reef ecosystems.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity loss 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heat stress on flora and fauna 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As temperatures rise, plant and animal species are more likely to experience heat stress. This may cause them to migrate to a cooler place, altering species abundance in a certain area (IPCC, 2022).

 <p>Increasing air temperature</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Altered species migration patterns • Shift in species distributions • Biodiversity of loss 	<p>Certain migratory species may also change their patterns in accordance with temperature changes. Moreover, extreme heat may threaten their survival.</p>
 <p>Increased frequency and intensity of hurricanes and tropical storms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal erosion • Destruction of mangroves • Biodiversity loss • Physical damage to coral reefs • Destruction of inland forests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hurricanes and tropical storms bring strong waves and high tides that can rapidly and severely erode coastlines (U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit, 2021). This can result in the loss of beaches. • Strong winds from hurricanes and tropical cyclones can break branches and uproot mangroves, which can lead to their death (Herrera-Silveira et al., 2022). Hurricanes and tropical cyclones can also flood mangrove ecosystems, changing the hydrology of the ecosystem, such as through the alteration of water flow channels. • The strong waves formed by hurricanes and tropical storms can break apart or crush coral reefs, disrupting coral reef ecosystems (Caribbean Coral Reef Institute, n.d.). • Hurricanes and tropical storms that make landfall can destroy forests inland, adding tinder and increasing the risk and severity of wildfires. From 2010 to 2012, over 330 km² of forest cover in Belize experienced combined hurricane and wildfire damage (Cherrington et al., 2012).
 <p>Changing precipitation patterns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent flooding • Longer dry seasons • Changes in species distributions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increased rainfall intensity in Belize will continue to cause more flooding across the country (Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, 2021). • As mean annual rainfall decreases, the country will experience longer dry seasons (Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, 2021). As a result, species may migrate to different environments with adequate rainfall to meet their needs. Declining precipitation and increased air temperatures may also increase aridity and negatively impact humid or wet ecosystems
 <p>Flooding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil and coastal erosion • Saltwater intrusion into coastal aquifers • Habitat damage or destruction • Wildlife displacement • Biodiversity loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floods can wash away soil, rocks, and sand, which may result in the loss of beaches and the deterioration of riverbanks and agricultural land (Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, 2021). • Coastal flooding can cause saltwater to enter coastal aquifers, contaminating freshwater sources (Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, 2021). • Flooding can damage or destroy habitats, displace wildlife, and, in some cases, drown wildlife that cannot get to higher ground (MacGowan, 2019).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress on flora and fauna 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During prolonged periods of drought, a lack of water and fodder can weaken or cause the death of plants and animals, impacting the ability of ecosystems to function (National Integrated Drought

 <p>Drought</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water scarcity • Biodiversity loss • Shift in species distributions 	<p>Information System, 2024). Animals may also migrate to areas with more water availability to meet their needs (IPCC, 2022).</p>
 <p>Wildfires</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption and destruction of forest ecosystems • Biodiversity loss • Shift in species distributions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildfires can burn through vast areas of land, disrupting and, in some cases, destroying forest ecosystems (Forest Department, n.d.). This can lead to a decline in biodiversity and change species distributions in an area.

Climate change impacts in Belize are most acutely felt in the coastal zone, where the convergence of human activity and fragile ecosystems amplifies environmental and economic risks. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2022) highlights those small coastal nations like Belize face compound risks where ecosystem degradation, such as mangrove loss and coral bleaching, directly undermines natural coastal defenses. Consequently, the resilience of Belize’s coastal and marine ecosystems is central not only to climate adaptation but also to the country’s long-term socio-economic stability and food security.

Belize’s coastal and marine ecosystems, including mangrove forests, seagrass beds, and the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, provide vital services such as storm protection, carbon sequestration, and fish nurseries. These ecosystems form the backbone of the country’s natural capital and blue economy. Nevertheless, they are rapidly degrading. Belize lost over 5% of its mangrove cover between 1980 and 2017, with even higher loss rates in unprotected areas (World Resources Institute, 2020; Belize Blue Carbon Study, 2023). Coral bleaching and mass die-offs, driven by rising sea temperatures and pollution, have impacted over 40% of coral cover since 1998 (UNESCO, 2016). These changes weaken nature’s protective functions and increase the vulnerability of coastal settlements to climate-related hazards such as storm surge and erosion.

The nation’s economy is heavily dependent on nature-based sectors, including tourism and fisheries, which together account for over 45% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (World Bank, 2021). The *Coastal Capital* study estimates that mangroves and coral reefs contribute US\$174–249 million per year to Belize’s economy (WRI, 2008). Yet these sectors are increasingly at risk: rising sea levels could lead to the loss of over 73% of beachfront tourism properties in some areas (CaribSave, 2012). Compared by GDP contribution, Belize is the only country in the Caribbean where both fisheries and tourism represent a high percentage of GDP. This points to the unique value and productivity of Belize’s coastal and marine resources and ecosystems. Hurricanes such as Earl (2016) caused economic damage equal to 11% of GDP (Berkeley Climate Displacement Report, 2020). Belize is among the most vulnerable globally to natural disasters and climate-related shocks, incurring annual losses equivalent to 4% of GDP due to weather-related events (GOB, 2015b, as cited in NDC 3.0, 2025). Belize is ranked 8th of 167 countries in vulnerability to climate change risks in the World Bank’s global Vulnerability Index (World Bank, 2024) and considered Central America’s country most vulnerable to sea level rise impacts (Singh, 2022). Without climate-resilient alternatives and proactive risk reduction, such shocks will continue to drive poverty and inequality.

With a population of approximately 441,387 (as of March 29, 2025), roughly 45% of Belize’s population live within 5 kilometers of the coast, making coastal vulnerability a major national concern (World Bank, 2021). Key municipalities include Corozal Town, Copper Bank, Sarteneja, Chunox, Belize City, San Pedro,

Caye Caulker, Gales Point, Mullins River, Dangriga, Hopkins, Sittee River, Riversdale, Maya Beach, Seine Beight, Independence Placencia, Monkey River, Punta Negra, Punta Gorda, Barranco and Cattle Landing. Many of these communities rely heavily on marine resources for their livelihoods, particularly through small-scale fisheries and tourism. This dependency is compounded by structural vulnerabilities such as poverty, limited access to finance, and weak infrastructure. Women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples, particularly the Garifuna and Maya, are disproportionately affected. Despite their vulnerability, these groups have limited access to formal adaptation support. Many depend on informal economies and natural resource use, which increases their exposure to climate risks (IISD, 2025). Table 2 demonstrates the specific impacts that climate change can have on persons with livelihoods dependent on the environment in Belize.

Table 2: Climate impacts on key livelihood sectors

Livelihood Sector	Climate Hazard	Climate Impact
 <p>Agriculture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drought • Changing precipitation patterns • Increasing air temperatures • Flooding • Wildfires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warmer temperatures, a lack of precipitation, and prolonged periods of drought have drastically altered planting seasons, leading to decreased agricultural productivity and reduced crop yields. • Economic and food security concerns have been raised, especially among subsistence farmers who rely on their crops to feed their households. • Farmers feel compelled to invest more time and money in experimenting with drought-resistant crops to adapt. • Flooding washes away topsoil, leading to reduced soil fertility. • Flooding and wildfires can damage agricultural infrastructure and have resulted in crops and livestock losses. • Farmers must bear the costs of repairing or replacing agricultural buildings, equipment, crops and livestock.
 <p>Fisheries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising sea temperatures • Tropical storms and hurricanes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased sea temperatures and biodiversity loss occurring because of tropical storms and hurricanes have led to a decline in fish stocks. • Fisherfolk have had to invest more time and money to travel further out to sea to catch fish. Extended time away from family has, in some cases, changed household responsibilities due to the absence of family members. • Stronger waves from tropical storms and hurricanes damage fishing equipment. • Fisherfolk are forced to invest more money into repairing or replacing their boats, engines, and fishing gear.
 <p>Tourism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising sea temperatures • Ocean acidification • Increasing air temperatures • Sea level rise • Tropical storms and hurricanes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising sea temperatures and ocean acidification are causing coral bleaching and die-off, decreasing the appeal of coral reefs to tourists. • Sargassum influx decreases the attractiveness of beaches. • Sea level rise and tropical storms and hurricanes are eroding coastlines, resulting in the loss of beaches. • Extreme heat has decreased the overall comfort and enjoyment of outdoor activities, resulting in fewer tourists. • This has collectively led to less income for the tourism sector and a need to invest time and money in maintenance activities, such as clearing sargassum or restoring techniques.

Sources: Information was derived from the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management, 2021 and community consultations.

The coastal zone supports key economic sectors including tourism, marine fisheries, mariculture and maritime transport. The long barrier reef insulates the coastline from much of the impact of storms and erosion and supports a thriving fishery that employs local communities, while mangrove forests serve as nurseries and feeding grounds for myriad fish, avian and insect populations. The Integrated Coastal and Ocean Management Act (ICOM) defines the coastal zone as “the area bounded by the shoreline up to the mean high-water mark on its landward side and by the outer limit of the territorial sea on its sea ward, including all coastal waters”. A zone of influence extending a few km inland has been added to the coastal zone concept, to reflect the ecosystems and economic activity closely tied to the coast.

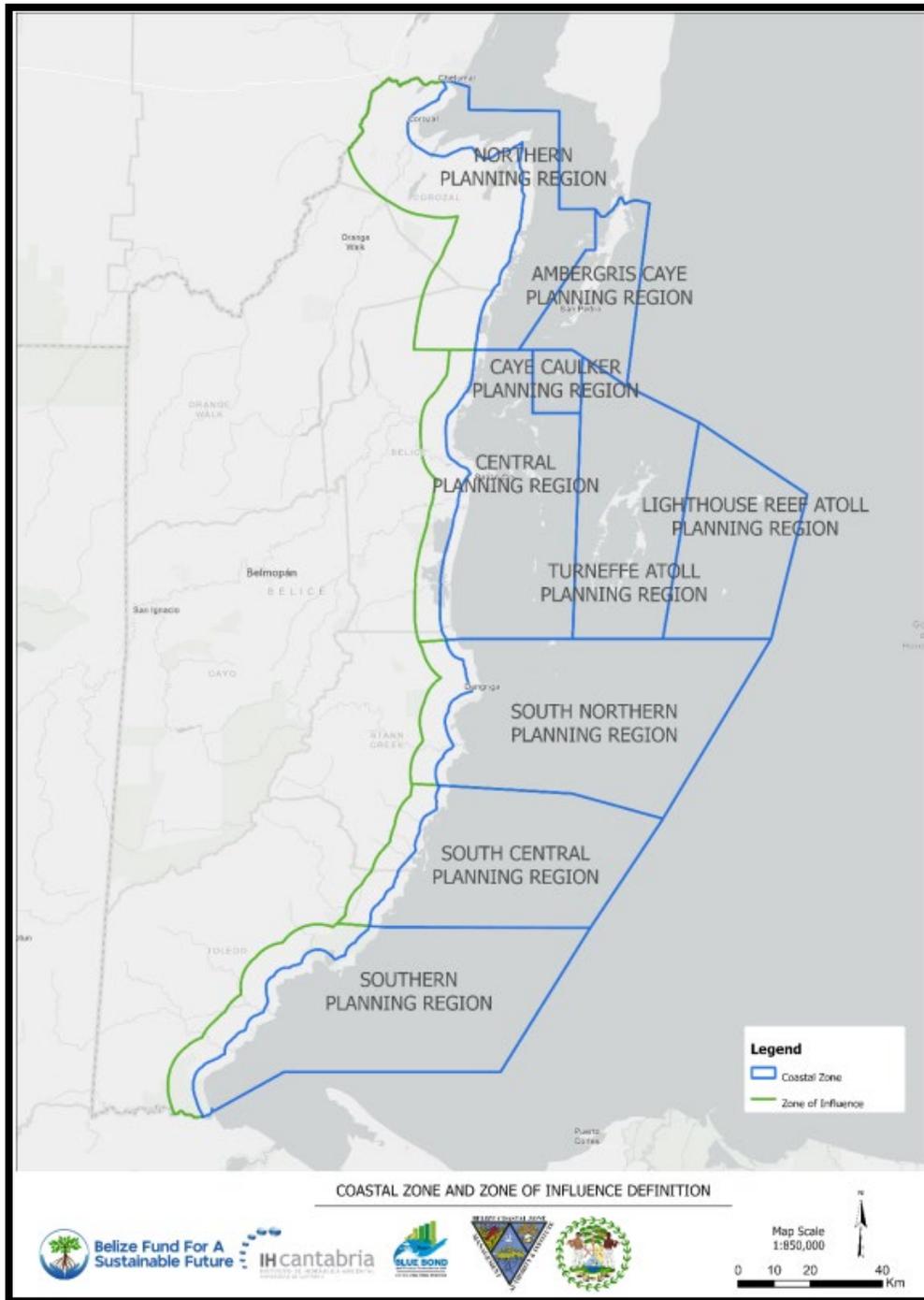


Figure 1 Delimitation of Coastal Zone (blue) and Zone of Influence (green) as proposed in Draft Updated CZM Act (2025)

Source: Draft ICZM Plan (CZMAI, 2025)

Belize's coastal zone, while ecologically and economically vital, faces mounting pressure from climate change and human activities that threaten its long-term sustainability. Coastal ecosystems such as mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs are increasingly stressed by coastal development, unsustainable fishing, and pollution, which undermine their capacity to provide protective and livelihood-supporting services (World Resources Institute, 2020). As these pressures grow, the role of local communities in managing and conserving coastal resources has become even more critical to maintaining ecosystem resilience and sustaining the socio-economic fabric of Belize's coastal regions.

Marginalized communities possess rich local knowledge and have a long history, spanning over two decades, of recognized community-led marine and coastal stewardship, including efforts to restore and sustainably manage coastal and marine resources. Despite notable successes, these efforts remain under-resourced and unevenly distributed. Most have not been explicitly designed or financed as climate adaptation measures. Moreover, many vulnerable coastal communities still lack access to technical support, sustainable finance, or inclusion in national planning processes. Without strategic investment to scale up these proven approaches, particularly in areas of highest exposure, the resilience of Belize's coasts will continue to erode.

Despite its limited global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, Belize remains committed to climate action. The country has a long-standing history of environmental stewardship and international cooperation, underscored by its ratification of the Paris Agreement in 2016 and active participation in the High Ambition Coalition (NDC 3.0, 2025, p.8). Despite Belize's commitment to mainstream climate change into national development, implementation remains under-resourced and overly centralized. There is an urgent need for decentralized, locally led adaptation that empowers communities to craft solutions tailored to their specific risks and priorities. At present, there is a critical gap in institutional capacity, technical support, and financial mechanisms necessary to scale up these community-led approaches.

This programme will leverage the existing Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future, an operational, nationally anchored, conservation trust fund with an on-granting mechanism, to scale up locally led ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA). This initiative will ensure actions protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use, and manage natural ecosystems to strengthen the resilience and increase adaptation of communities and ecosystems to the impacts of climate change. It will provide targeted finance, technical support, and capacity-building to community organizations and co-management entities, focusing on enhancing resilience and restoration of priority ecosystems, nature-based livelihoods, inclusive governance, and adaptive learning. The programme's design aligns with national strategies, including Belize's National Adaptation Plan (NAP), NDC 3.0, Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZMP), National Adaptation Plan for the Coastal and Fisheries Sector (2026-2030) and the emerging Marine Spatial Plan under the Blue Bonds agreement.

Project / Programme Objectives:

The overarching objective is to enhance the adaptive capacity and climate resilience of Belize's coastal communities through locally led adaptation initiatives, inclusive of approaches that restore and sustainably manage coastal ecosystems, while diversifying nature-based livelihoods that directly respond to locally identified climate risks. This will be achieved via four (4) interlinked project components:

1. Enhanced Ecosystem Resilience and Restoration
2. Strengthened Capacity for Locally Led Ecosystem- Based Adaptation
3. Diversified Climate- Resilient Livelihoods
4. Strengthened Community Governance, Knowledge Sharing and Learning Mechanisms to Enable Program Scaling

This project aims to provide direct finance and capacity support to community groups and civil society organizations (CSOs) to design and implement locally led adaptation project, ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) actions across coastal Belize. Through Component One, Enhanced Ecosystem Resilience and Restoration, the project will support local actors to restore and sustainably manage key coastal and marine ecosystems that serve as natural buffers against storm surge, coastal erosion, and sea-level rise (SLR). Through sub-grants, communities and CSOs will be able to implement site-specific EbA initiatives that align with both traditional ecological knowledge and scientific practices.

Component Two, Strengthened Capacity for Locally Led Ecosystem- Based Adaptation, will enhance the technical and

organizational capacities of local stakeholders including fisherfolk, youth, women's groups and community-based organizations (CBOs), to design, implement, and monitor EbA, risk reduction and participatory governance. Some activities may include training, participatory risk mapping, climate awareness campaigns, and community-led planning processes with emphasis on inclusive engagement and the empowerment of marginalized groups.

Component Three, Diversified Climate- Resilient Livelihoods, through small grants and technical assistance, this component will enable the development and scaling of nature-based, climate-resilient livelihood options for vulnerable coastal populations. Priority will be given to enterprises that strengthen ecosystem stewardship, such as sustainable aquaculture, ecotourism, mangrove honey, and seaweed farming. This not only enhances economic resilience but reduces pressure on degraded ecosystems.

Component Four, Strengthened Community Governance and Knowledge Sharing & Learning for Scaling will institutionalize inclusive and equitable governance mechanisms at the community level, such as adaptation committees. It will also support the integration of traditional ecological knowledge and local priorities into subnational planning, zoning and resilience strategies. It will also generate, synthesize and disseminate knowledge and evidence from supported local initiatives. It will include participatory M&E, documentation of scalable models, and learning events to influence policy, funding and future programming. A digital knowledge sharing platform will be developed to enhance access, replication and scalability.

The objectives of this programme are strategically aligned with the Adaptation Fund Strategic Results, specifically Outcomes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. The initiative contributes to Outcome 4 by restoring coastal ecosystems to mitigate climate-related risks such as erosion and storm surges, thereby improving physical resilience. Outcome 5 is addressed through capacity building of local stakeholders, equipping them to design and implement ecosystem-based adaptation strategies. The diversification of sustainable and climate-resilient livelihoods under Outcome 6 enhances economic empowerment for communities while strengthening their adaptive capacity. Establishing inclusive and community-driven governance frameworks supports Outcome 2 and 3, ensuring access to resources, services and equitable involvement in decision-making processes. Lastly, a strong focus on Learning and Knowledge Management (LKM) and scaling promotes Outcome 7, facilitating ongoing improvement and replication of effective practices. Collectively, these objectives operationalize a locally focused, inclusive approach for transformative adaptation in Belize.

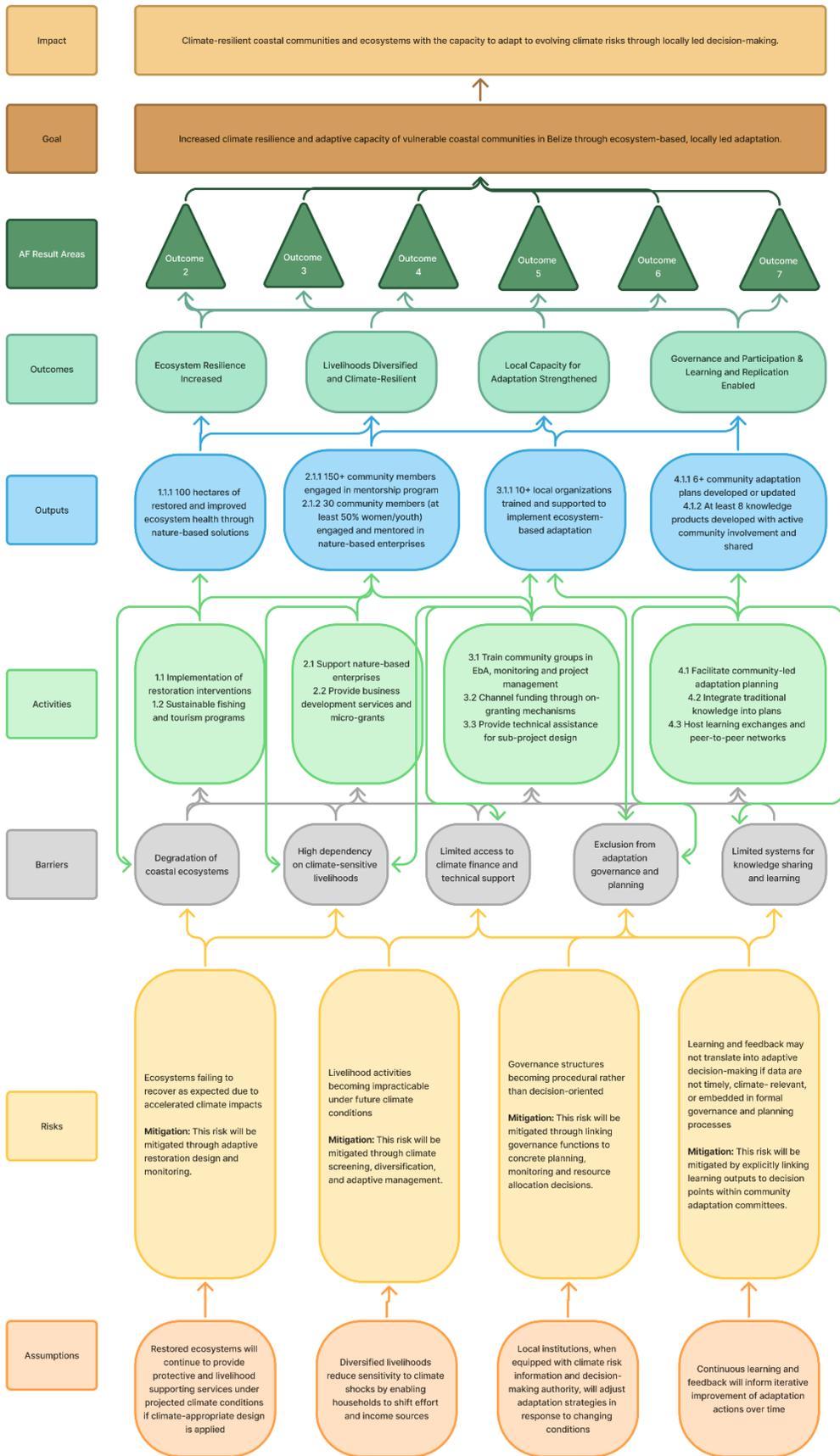


Figure 2 Theory of Change

The programme's Theory of Change is grounded on the premise that climate resilience is achieved not only through discrete adaptation actions, but through the capacity of communities and institutions to continuously learn, decide and adapt in response to evolving climate risks. Coastal communities in Belize face increasing exposure to climate hazards including storm surge, flooding, erosion, SLR, and ecosystem degradation, which undermine livelihoods, food security and ecosystem services. These risks are compounded by limited access to climate finance, fragmented governance, and insufficient integration of local knowledge into climate decision-making. The programme assumes that when local actors are empowered with direct access to finance, climate-relevant knowledge and decision-making authority, they can design and implement adaptation actions that are better aligned with their specific risk contexts and more responsive to long-term climate change. Based on this premise, the programme integrates four mutually reinforcing components: ecosystems-based adaptation, climate resilience livelihood diversification, strengthened community governance and learning-driven adaptive management.

Ecosystems restoration and management interventions enhance climate resilience by restoring mangroves, seagrass beds, dunes and coastal wetlands that function as natural buffers against storm surge, coastal erosion, and flooding. These ecosystems also stabilize critical ecosystem services under conditions of rising sea levels, increasing temperatures and changing salinity regimes. Restoration activities are designed using appropriate climate approaches that support post-shock recovery and long-term ecosystem adaptability, rather than reinforcing historical baselines that may no longer be viable. Climate-resilient livelihood diversification reduces household sensitivity to climate shocks by enabling communities to shift away from climate vulnerable income sources and toward flexible, nature-based enterprises that can adapt to changing environmental conditions. By supporting livelihoods that allow for adjustments in timing, and location as climate conditions evolve, the programme strengthens adaptive decision making at the household and community levels while reducing pressure on degraded ecosystems. Community governance provides the institutional foundation for effective adaptation by devolving decision-making to the lowest appropriate level. Community adaptation committees and local governance strengthening is therefore not an end, but a mechanism through which communities can translate information into concrete adaptation decisions.

Learning and governance improvements are central to the programme's adaptive logic ensuring participatory monitoring, learning exchange, and community governance generate locally relevant climate information, ecosystem performance data and livelihood outcomes. These insights will be used by community adaptation committees and implementing partners to adjust intervention designs, reallocate resources, and revise management practices in response to observed climate impacts and emerging risks. This creates a continuous feedback loop whereby adaptation actions are not fixed at project outset but refined over time, ensuring that decisions remain aligned with evolving climate realities. Governance structures therefore function as adaptive decision platforms enabling sustained climate resilience beyond the project lifecycle.

The Theory of Change assumes that continuous learning will inform adaptive decision-making, that restored ecosystems can provide protective services under future climate conditions, and that diversified livelihoods enhance flexibility and resilience. Key risks include the possibility that learning does not translate into decision-making, that ecosystem recovery is slower than anticipated under accelerating climate change, or that livelihood investments become maladaptive if climate conditions shift beyond projected thresholds. These risks are mitigated through structured maladaptation screening, use of long-term climate projections, participatory monitoring, and adaptive management mechanisms that allow interventions to be modified or discontinued as needed. Through the integration of ecosystem-based adaptation, livelihood diversification, governance strengthening, and learning-driven decision-making, the programme enables communities and institutions to anticipate, absorb, recover from, and adapt to climate impacts over time, resulting in reduced vulnerability and sustained climate resilience.

Project / Programme Components and Financing¹:

Fill in the table presenting the relationships among project components, activities, expected concrete outputs, and the corresponding budgets. If necessary, please refer to the attached instructions for a detailed description of each term.

Project/Programme Components	Expected Concrete Outputs	Expected Outcomes	Amount (US\$)
Ecosystem Resilience and Restoration; Coastal Protection	1.1.1 100 hectares of restored and improved ecosystem health through nature-based solutions.	1.1 Increased ecosystem resilience in response to climate change and variability-induced stress.	\$1,500,000
Sustainable Livelihood Diversification	2.1.1 150+ community members engaged in mentorship program 2.1.2 30 community members (at least 50% women/youth) engaged and mentored in nature-based enterprises	2.1 Diversified and climate-resilient livelihood strategies adopted by target communities.	\$1,500,000
Capacity Building for Locally Led Ecosystem-Based Adaptation	3.1.1 10+ local organizations trained and supported to implement ecosystem-based adaptation	3.1 Increased capacity of local actors in adaptation planning, monitoring and resource management.	\$696,295
Community Governance, Knowledge Sharing and Learning for Scaling	4.1.1 6+ community adaptation plans developed or updated 4.1.2 At least 8 knowledge products developed with active community involvement and shared	4.1 Strengthened local and subnational governance systems that enable inclusive, climate-resilient planning and decision-making, and long-term sustainability of adaptation interventions. 4.2 Communities and institutions have increased access to and application of locally generated adaptation knowledge, enabling replication, scaling and integration of effective community-led	\$475,000

¹ IE and EE fees calculator: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/ie-and-ee-fees-calculator/>

		practices into broader climate-resilient efforts.	
5. Project/Programme Execution cost			\$437,000
6. Total Project/Programme Cost			\$4,608,295
7. Project/Programme Cycle Management Fee charged by the Implementing Entity (if applicable)			\$391,705
Amount of Financing Requested			\$5,000,000

Projected Calendar:

Indicate the dates of the following milestones for the proposed project/programme

Milestones	Expected Dates
Start of Project/Programme Implementation	Q3 2027
Mid-term Review (if planned)	Q4 2029
Project/Programme Closing	Q4 2031
Terminal Evaluation	Q2 2032

PART II: PROJECT / PROGRAMME JUSTIFICATION

- A. Describe the project / programme components, particularly focusing on the concrete adaptation activities of the project, and how these activities contribute to climate resilience. For the case of a programme, show how the combination of individual projects will contribute to the overall increase in resilience. Specify how the project/programme enables devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level and gives local institutions and communities more direct access to finance and decision-making power over how adaptation actions are defined, prioritized, designed, implemented; how progress is monitored and how success is evaluated.**

Belize’s coastal communities are increasingly exposed to the impacts of climate change, including rising levels, stronger storms, saline intrusion, and ecosystem degradation that threatens both livelihoods and infrastructure. There are several underlying drivers that negatively impact community vulnerability and, hence, their adaptive capacity. The capacities of local community to cope with the impacts of climate change either increase or decrease in proportion to the availability of physical, financial and social assets that can help to reduce their vulnerability (Jang et al., 2025). In response, the proposed Locally Led Adaptation programme seeks to build long-term climate resilience by directly empowering community-based organizations, Indigenous groups, and local governance bodies to design, implement, monitor and sustain climate adaptation solutions aligned with their specific contexts. Structured around five interconnected components, the programme combines community-driven ecosystem restoration, capacity strengthening, livelihood diversification, inclusive governance and knowledge sharing into a coherent on-granting mechanism. Each component aligns with and reinforces national climate strategies and ongoing investments delivering long-term resilience outcomes.

The foundation of this programme rests reducing exposure of coastal communities to climate hazards and stabilize ecosystem services under changing climate conditions through ecosystems-based adaptation. Activities under **Component One, Enhanced Ecosystem Resilience and Restoration**, are designed as climate adaptation measures that

address both acute climate shocks and long terms climate stressors affecting Belize’s coastal systems. Mangroves, seagrass beds, dunes and coastal wetland restoration will function as natural buffers that attenuate wave energy, mitigate storm surge, lower coastal erosion, and saline intrusion impacts during extreme weather events. These ecosystems also stabilize sediments and shorelines, reducing flood exposure to adjacent settlements and critical livelihood assets. Additionally, restored ecosystems enhance post-shock recovery by accelerating natural regeneration following hurricanes, floods and heat stress events. Healthy mangrove and seagrass systems recover more rapidly after disturbance, reducing the duration and severity of ecosystem restoration. The programme incorporates specific measures to identify and avoid maladaptation risks, particularly in areas affected by long-term climate change. The maladaptation screening criteria will include exposure to projected SLR and permanent inundation; sensitivity of proposed ecosystems or livelihoods to temperature and salinity changes; risk of locking communities into climate-vulnerable assets or practices; and potential for increased pressure on ecosystems under future climate stress. In addition, long-term climate projections will inform both the selection and design of sub-projects. Data sources such as national climate risk assessments, SLR projections, coastal erosion mapping and sectoral climate impact studies will be used to guide site selection and activity typology.

These efforts will also enhance biodiversity and support fisheries and tourism-based livelihoods. These efforts are central to Belize’s National Designated Contributions (NDC) 3.0, which prioritizes ecosystem-based adaptation, and directly support Outcomes 4 and 5 of the Adaptation Fund’s Strategic Results Framework. In the longer term, ecosystem restoration stabilizes essential ecosystem services which include fish nursery habitat, coastal protection, and water quality under ever changing conditions of sea-level rise, increasing ocean temperatures and changing salinity regimes. By restoring ecosystems using climate adaptive interventions are aligned with projected climate trajectories rather historical baselines. This component complements the PACT’s current project titled “*Enhancing the Resilience of Belize’s Coastal Communities to Climate Change Impacts*” (2024–2027), which focuses on early warning systems and institutional capacity. By building on these efforts at the community level, this programme extends resilience from policy into practice.

- Key Activities: Climate risk screening and site selection for ecosystem-based adaptation interventions informed by long-term climate projections.
- Community-led restoration and management of mangroves, seagrass beds, dunes and coastal wetlands using climate appropriate design.
- Participatory monitoring of ecosystem condition and protective function.

To reduce livelihood sensitivity to climate variability and shocks by enabling adaptive decision-making and diversification of income sources, **Component Two, Diversified Climate-Resilient Livelihoods**, will provide technical and financial support for the development of diversified, climate-resilient, and nature-based livelihoods that build income security while reducing the pressure on ecosystems whilst also enhancing adaptive decision-making capacity. By diversifying livelihoods toward climate-resilient, nature-based enterprises such as seaweed farming, sustainable aquaculture, mangrove honey production, and eco-tourism, the programme reduces household dependence on climate-sensitive resources that are increasingly vulnerable to coral bleaching, stock decline, and extreme weather conditions. These livelihood models will enable communities to adjust management practices as climate conditions evolve, including modifying harvesting cycles, relocating production sites away from erosion prone zones and shifting effort between complementary activities during climate shocks. This flexibility strengthens household resilience to climate variability while reducing pressure on degraded ecosystems, thereby avoiding maladaptive over-exploitation during periods of stress. Interventions that risk reinforcing exposure such as restoration in areas projected to be permanently inundated or livelihood investments dependent on declining ecosystem conditions will be excluded or redesigned. Livelihood activities will be screened to ensure they do not incentivize maladaptive practices, such as increased pressure on vulnerable habitats or investments that cannot be sustained under future climate scenarios. The activities will be selected based on their flexibility and robustness under changing climate conditions, favoring enterprises that can adapt management practices, scale operations or shift production in response to climate variability. Component two reflects both Belize’s growing blue economy vision and the priorities in its NDC 3.0 for livelihood adaptation in coastal zones. These new income streams will integrate lessons from the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund and MCCAP, which have piloted community business models that link conservation with economic opportunity.

Key Activities:

- Climate screening and selection of nature-based, climate-resilient livelihood activities.
- Technical assistance and small grants to support adoption of diversified livelihoods.
- Ongoing monitoring of livelihood performance under climate variability.

Building on this foundation, **Component Three, Strengthened Capacity Building for Locally Led Ecosystem- Based Adaptation**, will enhance the adaptive capacity of local actors to anticipate, plan and respond to climate risks through locally led and inclusive adaptation processes. Through participatory risk mapping, inclusive governance training, community climate action plans, the project will strengthen the capabilities of fisherfolk cooperatives, youth groups, women’s associations, and village leaders. These actions operationalize the National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan’s (NCCPSAP) strategic emphasis on devolved adaptation governance and locally embedded capability. This capacity-building approach ensures that adaptation solutions are locally informed, socially inclusive and sustainable, supporting institutional capacity building and ownership and awareness. The programme will also draw from ongoing capacity initiatives under the World Bank-supported *Marine Conservation and Climate Adaptation Project (MCCAP)* by reinforcing EbA principles already introduced in community marine reserves and coastal zones.

Key Activities:

- Training and technical support for community-based organizations and local actors on climate risk assessment, ecosystem-based adaptation planning, safeguards, and participatory monitoring.
- Support for community-led identification, design and management of adaptation sub-projects.
- Facilitation of inclusive planning processes that integrate local and Indigenous knowledge.

Recognizing that climate adaptation is as much about governance as it is about ecosystems and livelihoods, **Component 4, Strengthened Community Governance, Knowledge Integration and Learning for Scaling**, will enable continuous, learning-driven adaptation by ensuring that decisions and interventions are iteratively adjusted in response to observed climate impacts and emerging risks. The component will institutionalize inclusive local governance through village climate adaptation committees, and traditional ecological knowledge platforms ensuring the representation from women, youth, Indigenous knowledge holders, and other marginalized voices. These structures ensure adaptation priorities are locally defined, gender-responsive, and rooted in customary practice. Community adaptation committees and participatory planning processes will enable local actors to:

- Integrate climate risk information into ecosystem restoration and livelihood decisions
- Prioritize interventions based on exposure to flooding, erosion and storm surge
- Monitor climate impacts and ecosystem performance over time
- Adjust adaptation strategies through participatory learning mechanisms

These governance structures directly enhance adaptive capacity by improving anticipatory planning, risk- informed decision-making and local ownership of climate responses which will result in more durable and context appropriate adaptation outcomes and supports the enabling environment while directly addressing gaps in community representation identified in the National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Master Plan (NCCPSMP) and its advances to decentralize climate decision-making. It also provides a critical link to the existing Coastal Resilience Project, whose community assessments will feed directly into governance planning at the local level. To ensure that learning is scaled nationally and regionally, this component also focuses on participatory monitoring, knowledge sharing and adaptive learning. Through digital knowledge platforms, community exchanges, developing toolkits and videos and learning documentation, the programme creates a horizontal learning network across Belize’s coastline. These mechanisms will not only strengthen collective learning but will also influence national policy through the documentation of grassroots innovation and success stories. Lessons generated here will be synthesized to inform national policy, feeding into processes led by the National Climate Change Office and supported by Belize’s engagement in regional learning platforms under the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC).

Key Activities:

- Establishment or strengthening of community adaptation committees and local governance structures.
- Implementation of participatory, learning exchanges, and reflection processes.
- Use of learning outputs to adjust intervention designs, resource allocation and management practices during implementation.

This programme is not duplicative but rather integrative and catalytic along with its adaptive management framework, participatory monitoring systems, and technical oversight ensuring continuous reassessment of climate risks and allowing

interventions to be modified or phased out if maladaptive trends are identified. Collectively, these components translate locally led ecosystem restoration, livelihood diversification, governance strengthening, and learning into concrete adaptation actions that reduce climate risk, enhance adaptive capacity and enable sustained resilience under current and future climatic conditions. The programme complements Belize's Adaptation Fund project on coastal resilience by extending implementation capacity to the community level; it supports the goals of MCCAP and the National Biodiversity Strategy by reinforcing ecosystem services and local stewardship; it activates the community adaptation actions envisioned in the Coastal Zone Management Plan; and it advances the climate resilience objectives enshrined in Belize's NDC 3.0 and NCCPSMP. Additionally, the programme advances Belize's Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy & Implementation Plan (2022-2027) by restoring degraded coastal ecosystems and strengthening community resilience to climate change actions that directly support sustainable livelihoods in fisheries and tourism, two key pillars of the blue economy. In doing so, it demonstrates how strategic alignment, and local leadership can together deliver meaningful, sustainable, and equitable adaptation outcomes for Belize.

B. Describe how the project / programme provides economic, social and environmental benefits, with particular reference to the most vulnerable communities, and vulnerable groups within communities, including gender considerations. Describe how the project / programme will avoid or mitigate negative impacts, in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund. In particular, specify how the project/programme is addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, people with disabilities, people who are displaced, Indigenous Peoples and marginalized ethnic groups.

The programme will deliver significant and sustained economic, social and environmental benefits for Belize's coastal communities, especially those vulnerable to climate change. The LLA programme prioritizes direct engagement of traditionally marginalized groups including women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and displaced populations, in both the design and implementation of community-led adaptation actions.

Economic Benefits

At the economic level, the programme supports the diversification of climate-resilient, nature-based livelihoods that provide alternative income sources to resource-dependent populations, such as fisherfolk and small-scale coastal producers. Activities such as sustainable seaweed farming, mangrove honey production, community-led ecotourism, aquaculture, and nature-based handicrafts will create income and employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth. Training, business development support, and market linkages will ensure these ventures are viable and scalable. By enhancing economic self-reliance, the programme reduces dependence on degraded natural resources, enhances financial resilience to climate shocks, and contributes to long-term poverty reduction in coastal zones.

Social Benefits

Socially, the programme strengthens community cohesion, participation, and leadership by institutionalizing inclusive and representative governance structures. Community adaptation committees and traditional knowledge boards will ensure active involvement of vulnerable groups in decision-making processes. Specific efforts will be made to include women-headed households, youth organizations, Indigenous leaders, and persons with disabilities. This inclusive governance approach enhances social capital and ensures that adaptation benefits are equitably distributed and locally relevant. Additionally, the programme promotes local education, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and climate awareness, empowering communities to anticipate and manage long-term risks. Risks and potential negative impacts will be identified and mitigated in compliance with AF's Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy.

Environmental Benefits

Environmentally, the programme contributes to the restoration and conservation of critical coastal ecosystems, including mangroves, seagrass beds, and coastal dunes. These ecosystems provide essential services such as shoreline stabilization, biodiversity support, carbon sequestration, and natural barriers against storm surge and sea-level rise. Restoration activities led by local communities will improve ecosystem health while reinforcing community stewardship. By promoting nature-based solutions (NbS), the programme not only addresses climate hazards but also contributes to Belize's biodiversity goals under its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and NDC 3.0. All sub-projects will undergo environmental

and social screening including gender and vulnerability analysis prior to approval.

Targeting Vulnerable Groups and Addressing Structural Inequality

The LLA programme is explicitly designed to address structural inequalities that limit the participation and benefits of marginalized groups, women, youth, and persons with disabilities by embedding inclusion, equity, and safeguards into governance, financing and implementation arrangements. Vulnerability assessments and participatory planning processes will be gender-responsive and disability-inclusive. Representation in decision-making is ensured through the committees which will be embedded within existing local governance systems and required to include balanced representation. Where relevant, the Indigenous governance systems will serve as the primary decision-making authority, ensuring respect for customary institutions and cultural norms. Participation requirements are applied not only to consultation but to decision-making authority, including prioritization, approval and adaptive adjustment of activities and budgets. Equitable access to adaptation finance and benefits is operationalized through the on-granting mechanism. Sub-grant eligibility criteria are designed to proactively include women-led, youth-led, Indigenous-led and disability inclusive organizations with targeted outreach with simplified application and capacity support to reduce barriers to access financing. Grants and capacity-building opportunities will be targeted to underrepresented populations through affirmative action criteria, such as quotas or earmarked funding windows for women, Indigenous communities, and youth-led initiatives. In line with the AF Gender Policy, all sub-projects will be screened to ensure gender mainstreaming, including gender-disaggregated data collection, empowerment indicators, and gender-sensitive monitoring frameworks. For Indigenous communities, the programme will uphold the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and respect customary governance systems where relevant (more information can be found in Annex 5). For displaced and migrant populations, the programme will collaborate with humanitarian and social protection services to ensure their adaptation needs are considered. Youth and children will be engaged not only as beneficiaries but as agents of change, through school-based climate education, youth-led green enterprises, and participation in community planning. People with disabilities will be involved through tailored outreach, inclusive training sessions, and accessible decision-making processes.

Environmental and Social Risk Management

The programme will fully comply with the Adaptation Fund's Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) by undertaking a comprehensive Environmental and Social Risk Assessment (ESRA) during the full proposal stage. A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be established at the project level utilizing the Belize Fund's GRM (Annex 3) as a guide to ensure transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. All sub-projects will undergo risk screening and management planning, including environmental impact mitigation, community consultation, and compliance monitoring. Given the nature of community-driven, small-scale interventions, the overall environmental and social risk is expected to be low to moderate. However, mitigation measures such as sustainable harvesting guidelines, buffer zones, and safeguards training will be implemented to prevent unintended harm. A Gender Policy and Management Framework will guide the programme's commitment to equity and non-discrimination and learning reviews built into the participatory monitoring system.

C. Describe or provide an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of the proposed project / programme, focusing on the implementation and execution arrangements, in particular the mechanism which will provide more direct access to finance.

The Locally Led Adaptation Programme is designed to deliver high-impact, community-driven adaptation outcomes in a cost-effective manner by minimizing overhead costs, leveraging existing institutional frameworks, and directing the majority of funds toward local implementation. The selected mix of ecosystem-based adaptation, climate-resilient livelihood diversification, and locally led governance delivered through an on-granting mechanism was after consideration of alternative approaches and delivery models. These alternatives included: (i) centralized, infrastructure-focused coastal protection measures; (ii) nationally implemented adaptation programmes delivered through line ministries or external contractors; and (iii) standalone livelihood or ecosystem projects implemented without integrated governance and learning mechanisms. While each alternative could deliver partial benefits, they were considered as less cost effective for achieving sustained adaptation outcomes in Belize's highly diverse and geographically dispersed coastal communities. Large scale engineered solutions were considered less cost-effective due to high capital and maintenance costs, limited flexibility under accelerating sea-level rise and risk of maladaptation. Centralized delivery models are assessed as less efficient in reaching small and vulnerable communities at scale and less effective in responding to locally differentiated climate risks. Similarly, single sector interventions are assessed as less durable because they do not sufficiently address governance and decision-

making capacity required for long term adaptation.

The selected approach is cost effective as it combines nature-based solutions with livelihood diversification and locally led governance, generating multiple benefits from the same investments. Ecosystems restoration reduces exposure to climate hazards while supporting fisheries and tourism livelihoods, lowering the need for repeated or parallel investments. Livelihood diversification reduces sensitivity to climate shocks while reinforcing ecosystem stewardship, reducing future degradation and associated costs. Its cost-effectiveness is anchored in three core strategies: (1) a decentralized on-granting mechanism that prioritizes local execution, (2) leveraging existing partnerships and data, and (3) enabling co-benefits through integrated ecosystem and livelihood approaches. A key feature of the programme's cost-efficiency is its on-granting model, which allows community-based organizations (CBOs), Indigenous groups, and local governance structures to receive direct financial resources to design, implement, and monitor their own adaptation projects. This approach reduces costly intermediary processes, expedites fund disbursement, and ensures that resources are targeted where they are needed most, on the ground, to those directly affected by climate change. Cost effectiveness over time is achieved through the project's design rather than reliance on future external financing. By embedding decision-making authority, financial management experience, and adaptive learning within existing local governance systems, the project reduces long term dependence on external support. Over time, costs are expected to decrease as communities apply learning, reuse tools and manage adaptation actions more efficiently, while benefits are maintained through strengthened local institutions and ecosystem functions. Ecosystem-based measures continue to deliver protective services without recurring capital costs, and locally led implementation reduces long term transaction and delivery costs, ensuring durable outcomes independent of additional funding.

Why is this approach cost effective?

- *Avoids high cost, inflexible infrastructure investments*
- *Delivers multiple adaptation benefits from integrated ecosystem livelihood actions*
- *Reduces transaction and delivery costs through local on granting*
- *Sustains benefits through local ownership and adaptive management rather than continued external financing*

Cost-Effective On-Granting Mechanism for Community-Led Climate Resilience in Belize

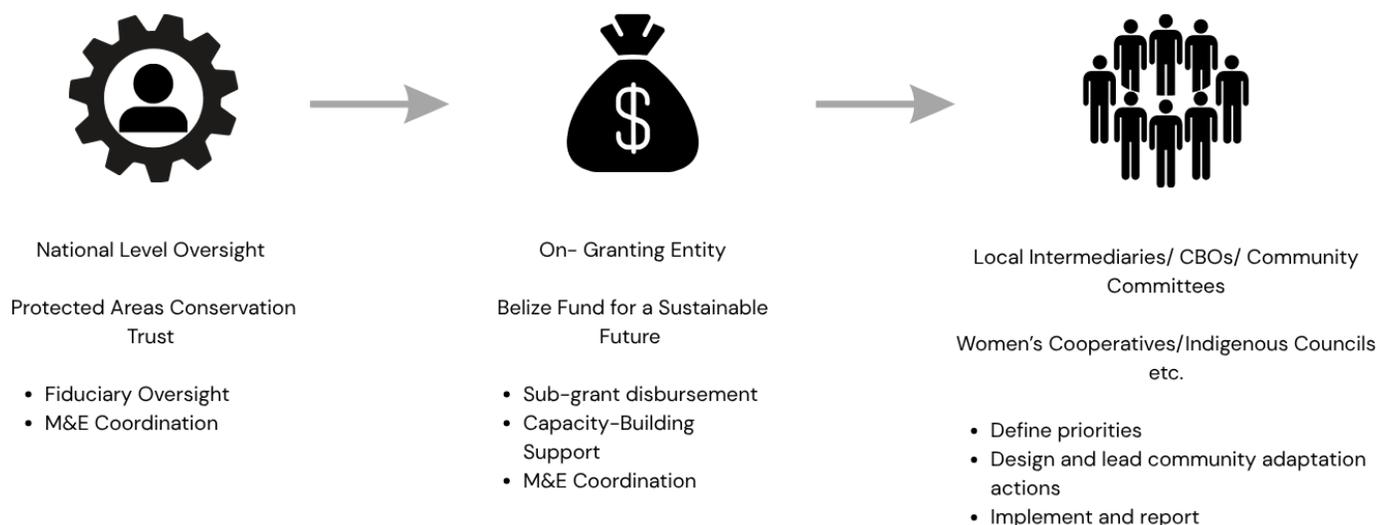


Figure 3: Cost-Effective Diagram for the On-Granting Mechanism for Community-Led Climate Resilience in Belize

Furthermore, the programme leverages existing data, technical knowledge, and governance structures developed under Belize’s current and past adaptation and conservation investments. This includes the project “*Enhancing the Resilience of Belize’s Coastal Communities to Climate Change Impacts*” (2024–2027), the Marine Conservation and Climate Adaptation Project (MCCAP), the Belize Blue Bonds and the Coastal Zone Management Plan. Building on these foundations reduces redundancy, shortens planning cycles, and increases efficiency in resource use. Cost-effectiveness is also enhanced by the programme’s integrated design, which blends ecosystem restoration, livelihood development, and governance strengthening into a single, mutually reinforcing approach. For example, mangrove restoration activities under Component 1 also support mangrove-based honey enterprises under Component 3 and co-management training under Component 2 that multiplies benefits from a single investment. This multi-benefit design not only improves the return on adaptation finance but also increases sustainability and long-term impact.

Importantly, the programme will implement scalable, small-to-medium size sub-projects that match the capacities and needs of local institutions. This ensures that resources are neither under- nor over-allocated and allows lessons from early grants to inform more effective design of subsequent rounds. An adaptive learning approach built into the monitoring system will further ensure that resources are reallocated where they generate the greatest impact. To maintain cost transparency and accountability, a standardized sub-grant management and financial reporting system will be established at the national level. Community adaptation committees and sub-project grantees will be trained in basic financial management and results-based budgeting. This will improve efficiency while also building local institutional capacity. By devolving resources, reducing transaction costs, utilizing existing frameworks, and maximizing co-benefits, the proposed programme represents a highly cost-effective model for equitable and sustainable climate adaptation in Belize.

Table 3: Operationalizing Locally Led Adaptation

Project Stage	Community Adaptation Committees & Local Institutions	Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future	Protected Areas Conservation Trust
Climate Risk Identification and Priority Setting	Identify local climate risks, vulnerable ecosystem and prioritize adaptation needs based on community knowledge and climate information.	Support in identifying the priorities.	Ensure alignment with AF RBMF
Sub-Project Proposal Development	Design sub-project proposal, define objectives, activities, geographic focus and indicative budgets aligned with local priorities.	Provides guidance on eligibility and submission requirements.	Provides guidance on AF alignment and safeguards requirements.
Sub-Project Approval	Formally approve sub-project proposals and budgets at community level before submission.	Reviews for fiduciary, technical and safeguards compliance only and do not redefine priorities or activities.	Verifies compliance with AF policies and does not override community approved priorities.
Sub-Project Budget Allocation	Approve allocation of funds across activities, inputs, and timelines within approved sub-grant ceilings.	Confirms financial eligibility and reporting compliance.	Provides fiduciary oversight and risk assurance.
Disbursement of Funds	Receive funds directly through community-based organizations or local implementing partners.	Executes disbursement to approved community entities in line with approved budgets.	Oversees fiduciary integrity and compliance.
Implementation of Adaptation Activities	Implement approved activities and manage day-to-day execution.	Monitors financial reporting and compliance.	Provides technical backstopping and oversight as needed.
Adaptive Management & Activity Adjustment	Propose and approve adjustments to activities, phasing, and budget allocations within approved limits based on learning and climate conditions.	Verifies compliance of proposed adjustments and does not re-prioritize.	Ensures adjustments remain compliant with AF safeguards and objectives.
Monitoring, Learning & Feedback	Generate local monitoring data, participate in learning exchanges and interpret results for decision making.	Aggregates learning and reporting inputs.	Synthesizes learning for reporting and knowledge sharing.
Grievance Redress (GRM)	Receive and address grievances at community level ensuring transparency and inclusion.	Become escalation point if grievance is unresolved.	Final escalation points and compliance assurance if required.
Accountability & Transparency	Disclose decisions, budgets, progress and results to community members.	Ensures systems are in place for financial transparency.	Ensures compliance with ESP and Gender Policy.

The project operationalizes locally led adaptation by devolving substantive decision-making authority to community-level institutions at each stage of the project cycle, while retaining fiduciary, safeguards, and compliance oversight at the accredited entity level. The community adaptation committees will be comprised of representatives from community-based organizations, women, youth, indigenous leaders and other marginalized groups and will hold authority to identify local climate risks, prioritization needs and design sub-projects. Importantly, these committees will not function as standalone or project-specific bodies but will be embedded within and accountable to existing local governance systems including village councils and legally recognized co-management bodies. Where such structures exist, the committees will operate as adaptation sub-committees with decisions recorded through established mechanisms. This approach will allow for strengthening of legitimacy, continuity, and sustainability of local adaptation governance. Direct access to finance will be

enabled through an on-granting mechanism that places financial decision making and control at the community level within a clear financial framework. Sub-projects will be developed by the communities and approved by the committees and their parent governance institutions prior to submission. Funds will be disbursed directly to community-based organizations serving as sub-grant recipients and implementing entities. Communities will retain the flexibility to reallocate resources within approved sub-grant ceilings, adjust phase implementation in response to climate events, ecosystem response and learning outcomes which are subject to fiduciary checks. The Belize Fund acts solely as the Executing Entity responsible for fund disbursement and financial reporting systems, while PACT provides fiduciary oversight, safeguards assurance and technical support without exercising control over local adaptation priorities or reallocating funds between communities. The committees will be downwardly accountable to their communities through public disclosure of funding decisions, budgets, progress, and results. A locally accessible GRM will operate the community level, allowing concerns related to inclusion, fund use, environmental or social impacts or decision-making processes to be addressed at the committee level with escalation pathways to the Belize Fund and PACT if needed. Participatory monitoring and learning exchanges will generate timely and relevant climate ecosystem and livelihood data that will be reviewed by the committees and used to adjust intervention design, reallocate resources, revise management practices or remove activities that risk becoming maladaptive. The governance structures therefore act as adaptive decision platforms, ensuring adaptation actions are iteratively refined during implementation ensuring alignment with climate realities.

D. Describe how the project / programme is consistent with national, sub-national and local sustainable development strategies, including, where appropriate, national adaptation plan (NAP), national, sub-national or local development plans, poverty reduction strategies, national communications, or national adaptation programs of action, or other relevant instruments, where they exist.

The proposed programme was developed for strategic alignment with Belize's national and sub-national, and local development and climate resilience strategies, ensuring its relevance, sustainability and potential for long-term integration into public policy and planning. Actions are directly linked to empowering communities to implement adaptation solutions grounded in nature-based approaches and inclusive governance; the programme operationalizes core national priorities related to climate action, biodiversity, poverty reduction and local development. The programme directly supports the development of Belize's Multisectoral National Adaptation Plan (NAP), which emphasizes ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), the protection of coastal communities, and the mainstreaming of climate resilience into sectoral and spatial planning. More specifically, it contributes to NAP's strategic priorities for: Enhancing resilience of vulnerable coastal communities; Strengthening community-based adaptation governance; Diversifying livelihoods to reduce socio-economic vulnerability; and building local capacity and knowledge for climate risk management. The programme is also directly aligned with Belize's Updated Nationally Determine Contribution (NDC 3.0) under the Paris Agreement. The NDC identifies EbA and sustainable livelihoods as key adaptation priorities and includes specific targets for mangrove restoration, coastal zone resilience, and locally led community adaptation. It also directly advances these targets through its restoration, governance, and livelihood components and supports Belize's overall goal of achieving climate-resilient development by 2050. The NCCPSAP outlines Belize's long-term vision for adaptive capacity and resilience and highlights the importance of: Decentralized and participatory decision-making; Gender equity and Indigenous inclusion in climate responses; Strengthening local institutions and integrating traditional knowledge; and Mainstreaming adaptation into development at all levels. The programme concurrently aligns with the Coastal Zone and Fisheries sector NAP (2026-2030) and contributes to the outcome of healthy and climate-resilient coastal ecosystems, fulfilling the NAP's call for empowered communities with the capacity to undertake and sustain EbA actions through economic sustainability and reduced vulnerability of coastal communities. The inclusivity and participatory governance vision of the NAP is actualized in the programme, prioritizing the establishment of monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems to assess adaptation progress and inform policy and practice. The Coast and Fisheries NAP provides the strategic policy and institutional framework for climate adaptation in the coastal and fisheries sector and the LLA programme translates those frameworks into practical, community-led adaptation actions. The programme also contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1- No Poverty, 5- Gender Equality, 8-Decent Work and Economic Growth, 13- Climate Action, 14- Life Below Water and 15- Life on Land.

At the sub-national and local levels, the programme directly supports the conservation and sustainable use targets embedded in the Belize Blue Bond agreement, which commits the country to expand and effectively manage marine protected areas, strengthen marine spatial planning, and safeguard critical coastal ecosystems. The complementation of the programme to Belize's Horizon 2030 is by fostering an integrated approach to climate-resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and marine biodiversity protection. The restoration and protection of coastal ecosystems not only serve environmental objectives but also bolster sustainable tourism, fisheries and community well-being, of which are key drivers in Belize's

vision for a thriving blue economy. Integrated monitoring and knowledge-sharing platforms ensures that adaptation measures are both equitable and sustainable, positioning Belize to meet and exceed its climate and blue economy targets by 2030 and beyond. The programme also complements strategies under the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZMP), that aims to sustainably manage Belize’s coastal and marine ecosystems through participatory and science-based approaches. By working directly with communities located in coastal and marine zones, the programme supports implementation of this plan while filling a critical gap in community execution capacity. The programme aligns with local government plans that emphasize community participation, disaster risk reduction, and ecosystem conservation especially in climate-vulnerable districts such as Corozal, Belize, Stann Creek, and Toledo. The LLA program also supports goals outlined in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2016-2020, through its support for ecosystem restoration and community-led conservation as well as the National Development Framework for Belize 2010-2030 through its support for economic resilience, generating resources for long term development. The locally led adaptation directly supports the Resilient Bold Belize- Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) initiative, which secures long-term financing for the effective management of Belize’s marine and coastal ecosystems while also delivering socio-economic benefits to communities. Through its actions, the programme ensures that adaptation measures contribute to conservation outcomes and community well-being, thereby reinforcing Belize’s pathway toward a resilient blue economy.

E. Describe how the project / programme meets relevant national technical standards, where applicable, such as standards for environmental assessment, building codes, etc., and complies with the Environmental and Social Policy of the Adaptation fund. Also describe, as needed, how the project/programme will provide support to local actors and build their capacities to comply with standards.

The proposed Locally Led Adaptation programme is designed to operate in full compliance with Belize’s national environmental, coastal, and marine regulatory frameworks while fully complying with the Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund. At this stage, the key applicable standards and compliance mechanisms are identified in Table 4, with detailed technical procedures to be further elaborated during full proposal development. The table also identifies measures to build the capacity of local actors and grantees to uphold these standards throughout project design and implementation.

Table 4: Alignment Table & Compliance Pathway- Relevant National Technical Standards

Programme Component	Project Area	Relevant National Technical Standards	Relevant AF ESP Principles	Oversight Authority	Compliance Mechanism	Local Capacity Support Provided
Ecosystem Resilience and Restoration; Coastal Protection	Environmental Screening and Permitting Coastal and Marine Ecosystem Restoration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forestry & Mangrove Regulations (Forests Act) 2. EIA Regulations under the Environmental Protection Act (CAP 328) 3. Coastal Zone Management Plan 4. Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy & Implementation (BEDPS, 2022-2027) 5. National Adaptation Plan for the Coastal Zone and Fisheries Sector 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conservation of Biological Diversity 2. Pollution Prevention & Resource Efficiency 3. Protection of Natural Habitats 	<p>Department of Environment</p> <p>Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute</p>	<p>Environmental and social screening of all sub-projects and determining if permit or EIA requirements are needed prior to approval.</p> <p>Review and approval of restoration activities and compliance with coastal zoning, shoreline protection and restoration guidance.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training on environmental restoration and monitoring techniques and climate-resilient resource management. 2. Restoration planning support from national experts 3. Simplified permitting guidance for communities
Capacity Building for Locally Led Ecosystem-Based Adaptation	Social safeguards and inclusion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan 2. Coastal community planning regulations 3. Nationally Determined Contributions 3.0 4. National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Human Rights 2. Public Participation 3. Climate Change 4. Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment 5. Indigenous Peoples 	<p>Belize Fund and PACT</p> <p>Ministry of Constitution and Religious Affairs, Indigenous Affairs, and Transportation</p>	<p>Application of safeguards screening, FPIC (where applicable) and GRM inclusive of monitoring social impacts.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tailored training for women, youth, and Indigenous leaders 2. Accessible learning materials 3. Facilitation of community-led risk assessments 4. Capacity building for local leaders, fisherfolk and tourism stakeholders to implement and sustain adaptation practices
Sustainable Livelihood Diversification	Fisheries and Aquaculture related Livelihood Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fisheries Resources Act and Aquaculture 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Human Rights 2. Gender Equality and Women’s 	Fisheries Department	Licensing and approval of fisheries or	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical support to communities to understand and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations 2. Local Business Licensing 3. Public Health and Sanitation Standards 4. National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan for Belize 2030 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowerment 3. Protection of Natural Habitats 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity 		<p>aquaculture related activities and ensuring monitoring of compliance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comply with EIA processes and building code requirements 2. Technical assistance to ensure the integration of climate adaptation measures into tourism product development and site management. 3. Workshop to access and maintain sustainability certifications that enhance market competitiveness. 4. Workshops on standards compliance
<p>Community Governance, Knowledge Sharing and Learning for Scaling</p>	<p>Financial management and fiduciary compliance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Government Act 2. Village Council Regulations 3. National Cultural Heritage Guidelines 4. National M&E Frameworks 5. Environmental Compliance Reporting Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indigenous Peoples 2. Physical and Cultural Heritage 3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 	<p>Belize Fund and PACT</p>	<p>Verification of financial systems, reporting, and audits prior to and during disbursement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance training for community groups. 2. Legal support for FPIC and inclusive planning 3. Documentation of traditional ecological knowledge 4. Training on community-based M&E and local indicators 5. Use of participatory feedback tools 6. Establishment of peer-to-peer learning platforms

Recognizing that locally led adaptation requires practical capacity to apply technical standards, the project integrates targeted capacity support for community-based organizations and local implementing partners. By strengthening local capacity to comply with national standards, the project ensures that adaptation actions are environmentally sound, socially responsible, and consistent with national regulatory requirements, while avoiding undue technical or administrative burdens on local actors. Detailed engineering designs, site-specific restoration protocols and sector-specific technical specifications will be developed and submitted for approval during the full proposal development stage in accordance with the identified national standards and AF’s requirements.

F. Describe if there is duplication of project / programme with other funding sources, if any. Describe how the project/programme will ensure coordination of different initiatives, sub-projects and small grants towards a common goal, enhance collaboration across sectors and outline how activities avoid duplication and enhance efficiency and good practice.

The proposed programme has been designed to complement, rather than duplicate, existing national, bilateral and multilateral initiatives in Belize. While several programmes address ecosystem conservation, coastal planning, or livelihoods, gaps remain in locally led decision-making, devolved financial control, and adaptive management at community level. The programme addresses those gaps by embedding adaptation actions within existing governance and regulatory systems and applying lessons learned from past initiatives inclusive of sustainability, maladaptation risks, and institutional ownership.

Initiative/Project	Lead	Focus and Scope	Proposed Programme Overlap	Duplication Avoidance & Lessons Learned Application
Belize Blue Bonds/ Project Finance for Permanence	Government of Belize	National ocean conservation financing & policy - National (coastal and marine)	National-level context for conservation financing	No direct activity overlap. AF programme does not depend on Blue Bond proceeds; Blue Bonds provide policy context. Lessons on sustaining finance and aligning with national systems inform long-term sustainability narrative without duplicating financing.
Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Plan	Coastal Zone Management Authority & Institute	Coastal planning, zoning and risk management - National coastal zone	Ecosystem management and alignment with coastal priorities	The LLA activities are aligned with ICZM principles. Duplication is avoided by using ICZM spatial planning to inform site selection and avoid interventions in areas already covered by ICZM action plans.
Marine Conservation and Climate Adaptation Project (MCCAP)	World Bank / Government of Belize	Reef and coastal ecosystem resilience - Barrier reef and adjacent coastal areas	Ecosystem based adaptation and livelihood overlap	The LLA focuses on locally led adaptation and governance whilst MCCAP targeted infrastructure & reef resilience, whereas the LLA targets community governance and climate-informed livelihoods. Integrated planning avoids

				duplicating technical interventions.
Resilient Reefs Initiative (RRI)	CZMAI/ Partners	Reef health & community resilience - Selected reef/coastal sites	Ecosystems resilience activities	RRI informs ecosystem monitoring and community engagement approaches whilst the LLA builds on these lessons but funds locally prioritized adaptation actions, not broad reef health programs.
GEF Small Grants Programme	UNDP/GEF	Small community grants for environment and resilience - National	Small-scale ecosystem and livelihood activities	Avoided by aligning the LLA on-granting eligibility criteria and focus on climate adaptation actions rather than general environmental grants. Lesson on community capacity building informs the LLA implementation support.
Belize Marine Fund	Mesoamerican Reef Fund	Marine protected areas support - National marine protected areas	Marine protection and co-management	The LLA complements co-management support by emphasizing climate adaptation outcomes and locally led decisions ensuring coordination avoids funding similar co-management functions.

Although several national and partner initiatives operate in overlapping thematic areas (coastal ecosystems, marine conservation, climate resilience, and community support), the proposed LLA adaptation programme is distinct in scope, scale, and financing logic. National frameworks (e.g., Belize Blue Bonds, ICZM) and large projects (MCCAP, RRI) set strategic conservation and resilience priorities or implement sectoral actions. The LLA programme does not replicate those but aligns with them, using their existing spatial plans, policy signals, and lessons to inform site selection, risk screening, and adaptation logic. The programme is designed to be locally led, prioritizing devolved governance, community decision-making, and adaptive learning. Most overlapping initiatives do not devolve financial decision-making to the same degree nor focus on empowering community institutions as the main authority, which reduces the risk of direct duplication. AF’s financing is allocated specifically for incremental adaptation costs, climate-risk-informed ecosystem restoration, locally prioritized livelihood diversification, and governance strengthening, rather than general conservation, development, or baseline environmental management. Clear eligibility criteria and exclusion rules in the on-granting mechanism will prevent funding activities already financed by other donors. Complementarities and lessons learned from existing programmes have directly influenced concept design. Institutional engagement with the Ministry of Blue Economy, BFSF, and the NDA ensures coordination across planning, oversight, and finance channels, further reducing the chance of overlapping geographically or thematically with existing work.

G. If applicable, describe the learning and knowledge management component to capture and disseminate lessons learned and how this contributes to building and institutionalizing local capabilities. Provide details on managing traditional and/or indigenous knowledge, where relevant.

A central pillar of the programme is the development of a structured and inclusive Learning and Knowledge Management (LKM) system to capture, synthesize, and disseminate lessons emerging from locally led adaptation actions across Belize. The component will ensure valuable lessons are not only documented but actively utilized to strengthen adaptive implementation, inform national policy, and build institutional and community capabilities for sustained resilience.

The LKM system will operate through three main interlinked functions:

1. Systematic Learning & Adaptive Management- Using participatory monitoring and feedback mechanisms, community-based organizations, implementing partners, and national agencies will jointly identify what works, why, and under what conditions. Rapid learning cycles and quarterly learning sprints will feed real-time insights into project management to guide course corrections and enhance efficiency (NAP Global Network & IISD, 2024).
2. Knowledge Dissemination & Uptake- The programme will generate short practice briefs and digital learning products to be shared via policy dialogues and national learning events. This will inform national planning and provide replicable models for future funding pipelines (World Bank, 2022).
3. Institutional Capacity Building- The LKM framework will formalize learning loops between communities, academia, and government. Partnerships will help embed community data, lessons and traditional knowledge into curricula, technical guidelines, and national monitoring frameworks. This institutional linkage ensures long-term sustainability and continuous learning beyond the project life cycle (Adaptation Fund, 2024).

The programme will respect and safeguard Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge (TIK) through Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) protocols, **if necessary**, community-led documentation, and benefit-sharing agreements. Overall, the LKM component will strengthen Belize's ability to learn from local practice, transform evidence into policy and sustain a culture of adaptive, inclusive, and climate-informed decision-making across institutions and communities.

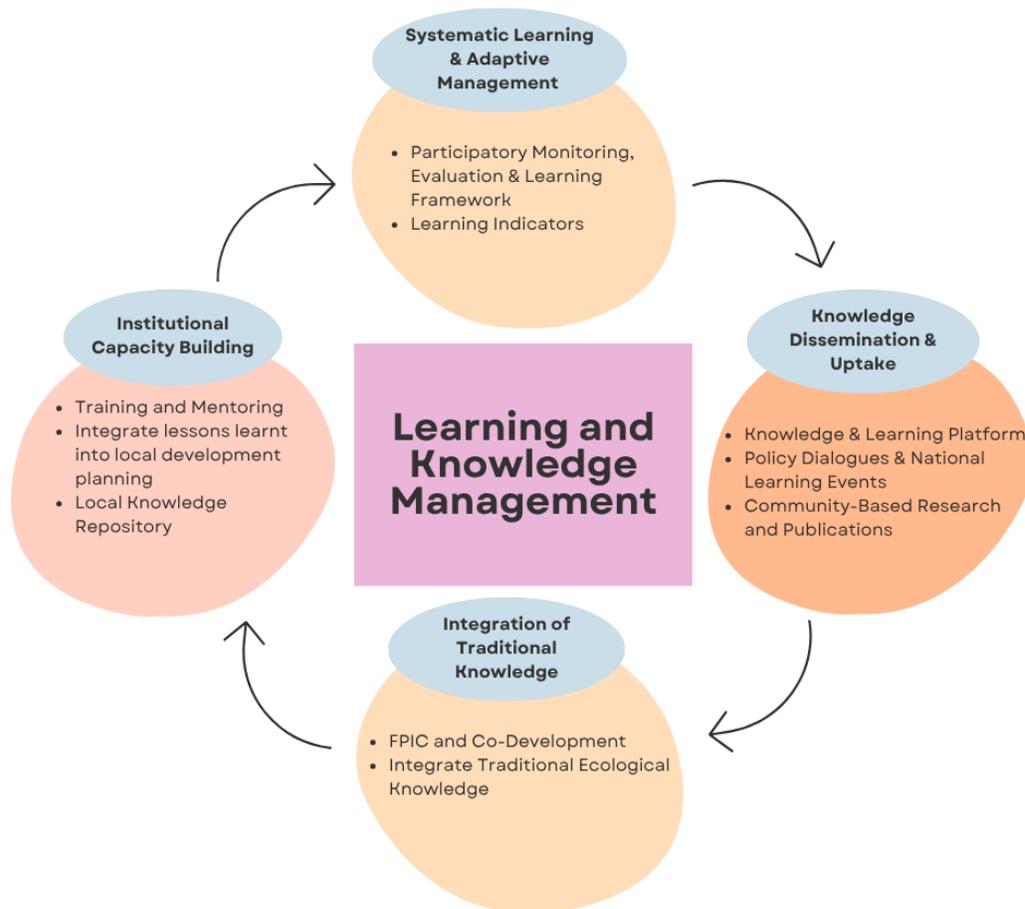


Figure 4: Learning and Knowledge Management

Learning and knowledge management under the programme are designed as core mechanisms for adaptive management. Participatory monitoring, reflection sessions and peer learning exchanges generate locally relevant information on climate impacts, ecosystem performance and livelihood outcomes. These learning outputs will be reviewed at defined points during implementation by the committees and implementing partners and will be used to inform concrete management decisions, including adjustments to activity design, implementation approaches, and resource allocation within approved sub-grant ceilings. If information derived during learning indicates that activities underperforming, no longer appropriate under evolving climate conditions, or risk becoming maladaptive, committees will be empowered to modify, phase or completely remove such activities. The programme recognizes traditional and Indigenous knowledge as the intellectual, cultural and collective property of the communities that hold it. Documentation and sharing of such knowledge are community led and rights based, governed by FPIC (where relevant) and community-defined protocols. Communities retain the authority to approve, limit, or prohibit the external use of their knowledge, inclusive decisions on whether knowledge may be shared beyond the community and the audiences with whom it may be disseminated with. No traditional or Indigenous knowledge will be documented or shared without explicit community approval. Oversight of knowledge documentation and use is exercised through existing local governance systems, including village councils and co-management bodies which serve as custodians of community consent and accountability. Where communities agree to share knowledge externally, sharing will occur only under terms defined by the community, with safeguards to prevent misappropriation, loss of control, or unintended cultural or social harm. Communities may revise or withdraw consent over time, ensuring that knowledge governance remains adaptive and responsive to community priorities. This learning approach allows the strengthening of adaptive capacity and informs project adjustments while fully respecting community agency, consent and rights over traditional knowledge, ensuring alignment with the AF ESP and gender policy.

H. Describe the consultative process, including the list of stakeholders consulted, undertaken during project preparation, with particular reference to vulnerable groups, including gender considerations, in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund. Provide details on how the consultative process considered and addressed gender-based, economic and other inequalities and encouraged vulnerable and marginalized individuals to meaningfully participate in and lead adaptation decisions.

Given the programme encompasses fully unidentified sub-projects (USPs) within a fixed framework, a formal community stakeholder consultation process has not yet been undertaken at the concept note stage. This is because the specific geographic locations, communities and local implementing partners will only be identified during the full proposal development stage through a structured and inclusive selection and consultative process. During the full proposal development stage, the programme will conduct comprehensive, participatory consultations at national, sub-national and community levels to ensure that all relevant stakeholders, particularly women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalized populations, are meaningfully engaged. These consultations will be guided by the Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) and Gender Policy of the PACT, which is aligned to that of the Fund, ensuring gender-based, economic and other inequalities are actively addressed. The process will encourage vulnerable and marginalized individuals to not only participate but also take leadership roles in adaptation planning and decision-making. The application of culturally appropriate, gender-responsive and accessible methods will be utilized to capture diverse perspectives. The programme will ensure the prior informed consent of affected communities before sub-projects are approved. This approach reassures that consultations are context-specific and directly relevant to the communities and ecosystems where interventions will take place, thereby increasing ownership, effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

Early consultations undertaken at concept note stage focused on national and sectoral umbrella bodies with established mandates and ongoing engagement with coastal communities to inform overall project design and ensure complementarity with existing initiatives. These consultations provided inputs on governance gaps, maladaptation risks, and inclusion challenges, directly shaping the programme's locally led decision-making framework, adaptive management approach, and emphasis on equitable access to adaptation finance. An initial gender assessment drawing on national data and programme experience informed the integration of gender and social inclusion considerations into governance, livelihoods, and learning components. Community-level consultations, site-specific analysis, and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent processes will be undertaken during full proposal development once specific locations and partners are identified. Further details are provided in Annex 4: Initial Consultation Report.

I. Provide justification for funding requested, focusing on the full cost of adaptation reasoning.

Belize is among the most climate-vulnerable countries in the Caribbean and Central American region, facing increasing risks from sea level rise, changing weather patterns, more frequent and intense storms, flooding, rising sea surface temperatures, ocean acidification, coral bleaching, droughts, and wildfires. The country's vulnerability is compounded by its high dependence on natural resources and the ecosystem services they provide for coastal protection, food security, and livelihoods. Climate adaptation is therefore a central pillar of Belize's climate action efforts to ensure resilience, climate-proofing, and the sustainable use and management of natural resources. Belize's Fourth National Communication (2022) identifies key barriers to effective adaptation, including limited human and financial resources, insufficient coordination among stakeholders, and gaps in climate awareness and technical capacity.

All proposed project outputs and outcomes can be fully achieved using Adaptation Fund resources alone, independent of the availability, timing, or success of Blue Bond related or other external financing mechanisms. References to national financing initiatives, including the Belize Blue Bond and Project Finance for Permanence frameworks, are included solely to demonstrate policy alignment and institutional coherence and do not constitute co-financing, parallel financing, or prerequisites for the delivery of project results. Baseline conditions in targeted coastal communities are characterized by high exposure to climate hazards, ecosystem degradation, livelihood insecurity, and limited capacity to implement climate-risk-informed adaptation actions. Existing programmes

primarily support conservation objectives, routine management, or general livelihood activities and do not cover the incremental costs required to reduce climate risks, avoid maladaptation, or enable locally led adaptive decision-making under changing climate conditions.

Adaptation Fund resources will finance the full cost of incremental adaptation by enabling vulnerable coastal communities to design and implement locally led actions that would not be possible under current conditions or through existing funding channels. These include climate-risk-informed restoration and sustainable management of degraded coastal ecosystems, such as mangroves, seagrasses, dunes, and coastal wetlands, that play a critical role in buffering storm surge, reducing coastal erosion, enhancing ecosystem recovery following extreme events, and supporting biodiversity. By strengthening these natural defenses, coastal households will experience reduced exposure to flooding and property loss, particularly during the hurricane season from June to November. Ecosystem restoration will also improve water quality and fish nursery habitats, directly supporting small-scale fisherfolk whose livelihoods depend on healthy marine and coastal ecosystems.

Livelihood interventions supported by the project are not designed as general income-generation measures, but as adaptation interventions that reduce sensitivity to climate shocks and increase adaptive flexibility. Adaptation Fund financing will support the diversification of nature-based, climate-resilient livelihoods, reducing dependence on overexploited resources while strengthening household resilience to climate variability. Engagement of community members, particularly women and youth, in restoration and livelihood activities will provide employment, skills development, and long-term stewardship roles that reinforce sustainability of adaptation outcomes.

In addition, the project will invest in strengthening the institutional capacity of local actors, including women, youth, and Indigenous groups, to access climate finance, lead planning and decision-making processes, and monitor adaptation results. Adaptation Fund resources will support capacity building, leadership development, governance training, participatory planning processes, and community-led monitoring systems. Through participatory monitoring and digital knowledge platforms, locally led innovations can be shared and replicated across communities, reducing trial-and-error costs and strengthening collective adaptive capacity over time. This governance and learning investment ensures that adaptation actions are not static but can be adjusted in response to evolving climate risks.

In the absence of Adaptation Fund support, coastal communities would continue to operate with limited technical and financial capacity to respond to climate impacts, remain dependent on increasingly stressed natural resources, face heightened exposure to storm surge and erosion without effective nature-based buffers, and have minimal representation, particularly women and youth, in adaptation planning and decision-making processes. By financing the full cost of locally led, climate-risk-informed adaptation, the Adaptation Fund enables communities to protect lives and livelihoods while actively driving their own long-term climate resilience, independent of uncertain future financing.

- J. Describe how the sustainability of the project/programme outcomes has been taken into account when designing the project / programme. In particular, describe how the project/programme supports long-term development of local governance processes, and improves the capacity of local institutions (including through simpler access modalities), and how it can ensure that communities effectively implement adaptation actions, facilitate and manage adaptation initiatives over the long term without being dependent on project-based donor funding.**

Sustainability beyond project completion

The programme is designed to ensure that local governance capacities, adaptation benefits, and decision-making processes continue beyond completion independent of future external financing. Sustainability will be achieved primarily through institutional embedding, local ownership, and adaptive management mechanisms that are integrated into existing governance systems rather than created as project-specific arrangements. Community Adaptation Committees (CACs) will operate as adaptation functions embedded within Village Councils, Alcalde systems, and recognized co-management bodies, ensuring that decision-making authority, planning processes, and accountability mechanisms remain active after project closure without requiring continued project funding.

Adaptation benefits generated by the project will be sustained through the nature of the interventions themselves.

Ecosystem-based adaptation measures will be designed to be self-maintaining once established, continuing to provide coastal protection, ecosystem services, and climate resilience without recurring capital investment. Community-led management arrangements and existing co-management mandates will support ongoing stewardship of restored ecosystems. Climate-resilient livelihood activities supported by the project will be selected based on their capacity to generate ongoing income and adaptive flexibility, enabling households and community groups to sustain economic benefits beyond the project period without reliance on grants. Any small-scale physical assets or installations will be integrated into existing community or institutional management responsibilities, ensuring maintenance through established local structures.

Institutional and social sustainability will be reinforced through the strengthening of governance capacities and learning systems that persist beyond the project lifecycle. Decision-making processes, safeguards awareness, financial management experience, and adaptive learning will be embedded within local institutions and applied through routine governance meetings and management practices. Knowledge generated through participatory monitoring, learning exchanges, and documentation will be retained within communities and applied through ongoing decision-making processes rather than treated as project outputs alone. This ensures that learning continues to inform adaptation actions and local planning after project completion.

Replication and scaling of adaptation actions will be enabled through institutional learning, demonstrated practices, and alignment with national frameworks, rather than dependence on uncertain future financing. By strengthening local governance systems, building transferable skills, and documenting locally led adaptation approaches, the programme creates conditions under which adaptation actions can be replicated by other communities or supported by other funding sources if available. However, achievement and maintenance of the project's adaptation outcomes do not depend on future financing mechanisms, and all proposed benefits are fully realizable and durable through the programme's design.

K. Provide an overview of the environmental and social impacts and risks identified as being relevant to the project / programme.

In accordance with the Adaptation Fund Environmental and Social Policy (ESP), the proposed programme has been screened to identify potential environmental and social risks and adverse impacts, including direct, indirect, cumulative, and transboundary impacts, at a level appropriate to concept note stage. Risk screening is based on the nature of proposed activities, delivery mechanisms, and implementation context, rather than on anticipated benefits or positive outcomes. Based on the screening conducted, the programme is classified as Category B under the Adaptation Fund Environmental and Social Policy. Category B is appropriate for projects that may have limited, site-specific, and reversible environmental and social risks, which can be effectively mitigated through standard measures and good practice. The programme does not involve activities associated with significant, irreversible, or transboundary adverse impacts, nor does it include large-scale infrastructure or involuntary resettlement. Category B classification reflects the programme's focus on small-scale, community-led ecosystem restoration, livelihood diversification, and governance strengthening activities, implemented within existing regulatory frameworks and oversight mechanisms.

The environmental and social risk screening explicitly considers:

- Direct impacts, such as localized disturbance during ecosystem restoration activities
- Indirect impacts, including changes in resource access or livelihood practices
- Cumulative impacts, particularly where multiple small-scale interventions may occur within the same coastal or marine system over time
- Transboundary impacts, which are assessed as negligible given the localized and non-extractive nature of proposed activities.

Consistent with Adaptation Fund ESP requirements, the screening focuses exclusively on potential risks and adverse impacts, including but not limited to:

- risks of temporary environmental disturbance during restoration activities
- risks of exclusion or elite capture in community-level decision-making
- risks related to land tenure, customary resource use, or access rights

- risks associated with maladaptation if activities are not aligned with long-term climate projections; and
- risks related to documentation and sharing of traditional and Indigenous knowledge without appropriate consent

Positive impacts, co-benefits, and expected adaptation outcomes are addressed separately in the project rationale, Theory of Change, and results framework, and are not used as substitutes for risk identification or justification of risk categorization.

Identified risks will be managed through proportionate mitigation measures consistent with Category B requirements, including:

- application of environmental and social screening at sub-project level
- compliance with national permitting and regulatory processes
- inclusive and transparent local governance arrangements
- Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for Indigenous Peoples where applicable
- locally accessible grievance redress mechanisms
- adaptive management mechanisms that allow activities to be adjusted or discontinued if risks emerge during implementation

Detailed sub-project-level screening tools, mitigation measures, and monitoring arrangements will be further elaborated at full proposal stage, in line with Adaptation Fund ESP requirements.

The project may involve site-specific, reversible environmental and social risks that can be effectively managed through standard mitigation measures. This screening considers potential direct, indirect, cumulative and transboundary environmental and social risks, in accordance with the AF's ESP.

Checklist of environmental and social principles	No further assessment required for compliance	Potential impacts and risks – further assessment and management required for compliance
<i>Compliance with the Law</i>	X	Low Risk Potential risk of non-compliance with permitting or regulatory requirements for small-scale, community-led activities if processes are clearly understood or followed.
<i>Access and Equity</i>	X	Moderate Risk Risk of that certain groups may face barriers to accessing decision-making processes or programme benefits due to social, economic, or institutional factors.
<i>Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups</i>	X	Moderate Risk Risk that marginalized and vulnerable groups may be inadequately represented in decision-making or may receive disproportionately fewer benefits if inclusion mechanism are not effectively implemented.
<i>Human Rights</i>	X	Low Risk Low risk of adverse human rights, given the community-led nature of activities, however risks may arise if consent, transparency, or grievance mechanisms are not consistently applied.

<i>Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment</i>	X	Moderate Risk Risks of unequal participation or benefit-sharing for women due to existing gender norms, power imbalances, or time constraints affecting participation.
<i>Core Labour Rights</i>	X	Low Risk Low risks of violations of core labour rights, risks could arise if informal labour arrangement are not monitored during implementation.
<i>Indigenous Peoples</i>	X	Moderate Risk Risks that project activities may unintentionally affect Indigenous cultural practices, governance norms, or control over traditional knowledge if not guided by community-defined protocols.
<i>Involuntary Resettlement</i>	X	Low Risk The programme does not involve land acquisition or physical displacement; however, there is a low risk of temporary access restrictions during site-specific activities.
<i>Protection of Natural Habitats</i>	X	Moderate Risk Risk of temporary disturbance to natural habitats during ecosystem restoration or livelihood activities, including inadvertent impacts on critical or sensitive habitats.
<i>Conservation of Biological Diversity</i>	X	Moderate Risk Risk of adverse impacts on biodiversity if restoration or livelihood activities are not appropriately sited or designed for local ecological conditions.
<i>Climate Change</i>	X	Low Risk Low risk of adverse climate impacts, however, there is a risk of maladaptation if activities are not aligned with long-term projections.
<i>Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency</i>	X	Low Risk Risk of small-scale waste generation of inefficient resource use associated with livelihood processing activities.
<i>Public Health</i>	X	No Risk No significant public health risks anticipated from proposed activities at concept note stage.
<i>Physical and Cultural Heritage</i>	X	Moderate Risk Risks that sub-project activities may be located near physical or cultural heritage sites, potentially affecting culturally significant areas if not properly identified.

<i>Land and Soil Conservation</i>	X	<p style="text-align: center;">Moderate Risk</p> <p>Risk that certain livelihood activities may negatively affect land or soil quality if not designed and managed using sustainable practices.</p>
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Identified risks will be managed through proportionate mitigation measures consistent with Category B requirements, including sub-project environmental and social screening, compliance with national regulatory processes, inclusive governance arrangements, FPIC for Indigenous Peoples where applicable, locally accessible grievance redress mechanisms, and adaptive management approaches. Detailed mitigation measures and monitoring procedures will be elaborated at full proposal stage.

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PART IV: ENDORSEMENT BY GOVERNMENT AND CERTIFICATION BY THE IMPLEMENTING ENTITY

A. Record of endorsement on behalf of the government²

Provide the name and position of the government official and indicate date of endorsement. If this is a regional project/programme, list the endorsing officials all the participating countries. The endorsement letter(s) should be attached as an annex to the project/programme proposal. Please attach the endorsement letter(s) with this template; add as many participating governments if a regional project/programme:

Mr. Carlos Pol Chief Executive Officer Ministry of Finance, Investment, Economic Transformation, Civil Aviation & E-Governance	Date: (Month, day, year)
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B. Implementing Entity certification

Provide the name and signature of the Implementing Entity Coordinator and the date of signature. Provide also the project/programme contact person's name, telephone number and email address.

I certify that this proposal has been prepared in accordance with guidelines provided by the Adaptation Fund Board, and prevailing National Development and Adaptation Plans (National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan and Belize's Nationally Determined Contributions 3.0 to the UNFCCC) and subject to the approval by the Adaptation Fund Board, <u>commit to implementing the project/programme in compliance with the Environmental and Social Policy and the Gender Policy of the Adaptation Fund</u> and on the understanding that the Implementing Entity will be fully (legally and financially) responsible for the implementation of this project/programme.

² Each Party shall designate and communicate to the secretariat the authority that will endorse on behalf of the national government the projects and programmes proposed by the implementing entities.

<p><i>Mr. Abil Castañeda</i> <i>Executive Director</i> <i>Protected Areas Conservation Trust</i></p> <p>Implementing Entity Coordinator</p>	
<p>Date: <i>(Month, Day, Year)</i></p>	<p>Tel. and email:</p> <p>(501) 822-3637 ed@pactbelize.org</p>
<p>Project Contact Person: Mr. Eli Romero Climate Finance Manager</p>	
<p>Tel. And Email: (501) 822-3637 cfmanager@pactbelize.org</p>	

Annex 1

Annex 1: Alignment of Proposed Project Objectives/Outcomes with Adaptation Fund results Framework

Project Objective(s) ³	Project Objective Indicator(s)	Adaptation Fund Outcome	Adaptation Fund Outcome Indicator	Grant Amount (USD)
Objective 1: Ecosystem Resilience and Restoration	Hectares of degraded coastlines restored in response to climate change and variability-induced stress	Outcome 4: Increased adaptive capacity within relevant development sector services and infrastructure	4.1 Responsiveness of development sector services to evolving needs from changing and variable climate	\$1,500,000
		Outcome 5: Increased ecosystem resilience in response to climate change and variability-induced stress	5 Ecosystem services and natural resource assets maintained or improved under climate change and variability-induced stress	
Objective 2: Sustainable Livelihood Diversification	Number of nature-based enterprises established and percentage increase in household income	Outcome 6: Diversified and strengthened livelihoods and sources of income for vulnerable people in targeted areas	6.1 Percentage of households and communities having more secure access to livelihoods	\$1,500,000
			6.2 Percentage of targeted population with sustained climate-resilient alternative livelihoods	
Objective 3: Capacity Building for Locally Led Ecosystem-Based Adaptation	Number of training and grantees supported on ecosystem-based adaptation planning, monitoring and resource management	Outcome 2: Strengthened institutional capacity to reduce risks associated with climate-induced and socio-economic and environmental losses	2.1 Capacity of staff to respond to and mitigate impacts of climate-related events from targeted institutions increased	\$696,295
Objective 4: Community Governance, Knowledge Integration and Learning for Scaling	Number of subnational plans developed that enable inclusive, climate-resilient planning, decision-making and long-term sustainability of adaptation interventions	Outcome 3: Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level	3.1 Percentage of targeted population aware of predicted adverse impacts of climate change, and of appropriate responses	\$475,000

³ The AF utilized OECD/DAC terminology for its results framework. Project proponents may use different terminology but the overall principle should still apply

			3.2 Percentage of targeted population applying appropriate adaptation responses	
		Outcome 7: Improved policies and regulations that promote and enforce resilience measures	7 Climate change priorities are integrated into national development strategy	
	Number of knowledge products on the application of locally generated adaptation and numbers of exchange events.	Outcome 3: Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level	3.2 Percentage of targeted population applying appropriate adaptation responses	
Total outcome level grant amount				\$4,171,295
Project Outcome(s)	Project Outcome Indicator(s)	Adaptation Fund Output	Adaptation Fund Output Indicator	Grant Amount (USD)
<u>Outcome 1: Restoration of degraded ecosystems and coastlines</u>	Hectares of degraded ecosystems and coastline restored	Output 4: Vulnerable development sector services and infrastructure assets strengthened in response to climate change impacts, including variability	4.1.1 No. and type of development sector services modified to respond to new conditions resulting from climate variability and change (by sector and scale)	<u>\$1,500,000</u>
		Output 5: Vulnerable ecosystem services and natural resource assets strengthened in response to climate change impacts, including variability	5.1 No. of natural resource assets created, maintained or improved to withstand conditions resulting from climate variability and change (by type and scale)	
<u>Outcome 2: Engage community members in nature-based enterprises</u>	Number of community members (at least 50% women/youth) engaged in nature-based enterprises	Output 6: Targeted individual and community livelihood strategies strengthened in relation to climate change impacts, including variability	6.1.1 No. and type of adaptation assets (tangible and intangible) created or strengthened in support of individual or community livelihood strategies	<u>\$1,500,000</u>
			6.1.2 Type of income sources for households generated under climate change scenario	

<u>Outcome 3: Develop and implement training program on ecosystem-based adaptation</u>	Number of local organizations trained and supported to implement ecosystem-based adaptation	Output 2.1: Strengthened capacity of national and sub-national centers and networks to respond rapidly to extreme weather events	2.1.1 No. of staff trained to respond to, and mitigate impacts of, climate-related events (by gender)	<u>\$696,295</u>
			2.1.2 No. of targeted institutions with increased capacity to minimize exposure to climate variability risks (by type, sector and scale)	
<u>Outcome 4: Develop and implement participation and governance program</u>	Number of community adaptation plans developed or updated	Output 3.1: Targeted population groups participating in adaptation and risk reduction awareness activities	3.1.1 No. of news outlets in the local press and media that have covered the topic	<u>\$475,000</u>
			Output 7: Improved integration of climate-resilience strategies into country development	
		7.2. No. of targeted development strategies with incorporated climate change priorities enforced		
	Number of knowledge products produced and shared	Output 3.2: Strengthened capacity of national and subnational stakeholders and entities to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning	3.2.1 No. of technical committees/associations formed to ensure transfer of knowledge	
			3.2.2 No. of tools and guidelines developed (thematic, sectoral, institutional) and shared with relevant stakeholders.	
		Total output level grant amount		

Implementation Arrangements:

Project Governance

The Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT), the National Implementing Entity (NIE), will serve as the Fiduciary Manager for the programme, holding overall responsibility for compliance with the Adaptation Fund's fiduciary standards, financial management and reporting. PACT will ensure that all financial flows, procurement, and disbursements meet national and international requirements.

The Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future, the Executing Entity (EE), will serve as the on-granting mechanism for the programme, utilizing its established Grants Award Program to manage the competitive and transparent allocation of funds to eligible sub-projects. The Belize Fund will:

- Issue Calls for Proposals aligned with the programme's fixed framework and Adaptation Fund objectives.
- Receive and review submissions from potential implementing partners, ensuring technical, environmental, and social compliance.
- Apply the Belize Fund's M&E Framework to monitor performance, in alignment with national reporting obligations and Adaptation Fund results framework.

Project Steering Committee (PSC)

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) will consist of members drawn from a cross-section of stakeholders from the priority areas of the components that will be established. The Implementing Entities will establish a PSC to provide oversight and technical guidance for the implementation of the project. The PSC will be chaired by the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Solid Waste Management (MSDCCSWM). Members of the PSC will be nominated by their respective ministries and/or organizations and appointed by the MSDCCDRM. Members are appointed for the entire duration of the project. The proposed composition of the PSC is as follows:

- CEO or a designated representative in the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Solid Waste Management
- CEO or a designated representative from the Ministry of Blue Economy and Marine Conservation
- CEO or designated representative in the Ministry of Economic Transformation and Designated Authority to the AF
- Chief Climate Change Officer or a designated representative of the National Climate Change Office
- Executive Director or designated representative of PACT
- Executive Director or designated representative of the Belize Fund

The role of the PSC is among others (1) approving annual work plans of the components and reviewing key project periodical reports; (2) reviewing and approving the contractual agreements, including work plans, budgets, and payment schedules, with a particular emphasis on leveraging synergies and avoiding duplication; (3) reviewing any deviations and considering amendments to work plans and contractual agreement; and (4) final review and approval of funding proposal granted under the project.

Annex 3

Grievance Mechanism

The Belize Fund will ensure that each Recipient Organization has an internal grievance redress mechanism that is in alignment with the Belize Fund's Grievance Procedure (GP). It is Belize Fund's intention to ensure that the grievances are accessible, collaborative, expeditious, and effective in resolving concerns through dialogue, joint-factfinding, negotiation, and problem solving. In addition, the Belize Fund will ensure that the Recipient Organization has a redress mechanism as a part of their grievance procedures to solve any grievance related to a project financed by the Belize Fund. The grievance and redress mechanism must provide an accessible channel for the submission of complaints and feedback.

The recipient's organization should adopt the following core principles of the Belize Fund in their GP:

1. **Fairness:** Grievances will be treated confidentially, assessed impartially, and handled transparently.
2. **Objectiveness and Independence:** The GP will operate independently of all interested parties to guarantee fair, objective and impartial treatment of each case.
3. **Simplicity and Accessibility:** Procedures to file grievances and seek action will be made simple enough so that project beneficiaries can easily understand them.
4. **Responsiveness and Efficiency:** The GP will be designed to be responsive to the needs of all complaints, with effective action and quick responses to grievances and suggestions.
5. **Speed and Proportionality:** All grievances will be addressed and resolved as quickly as possible. The action taken on the grievance or suggestion is expected to be swift, decisive and constructive.
6. **Participatory and Socially Inclusive:** All project-affected people- fishers, community members, members of vulnerable groups, project implementers, civil society, and the media- are encouraged to bring grievances and comments to the attention of project authorities.

In projects funded by the Belize Fund, it's understood that when stakeholders present a grievance, they generally expect to receive one or more of the following:

1. Acknowledgement of their problem.
2. An honest response to questions about project activities.
3. An apology.
4. Compensation.
5. Modification of the conduct that caused the grievance.
6. Some fair remedy.

Each Recipient Organization shall be responsible for informing project-affected parties about the grievance procedures. Affected parties that are unsatisfied with the decision of the Recipient Organization, shall have the option to submit such grievance through the Belize's Funds website, Contact Us/Grievance mechanism.



ADAPTATION FUND

Letter of Endorsement by Government



GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE

Ministry of Finance, Investment, **Economic Transformation**,
Civil Aviation & E-Governance

*P.O. Box 42
Ground Floor, Sir Edney Cain Building
Belmopan City
Belize, Central America*

*Tel: (501) 880-2526
(501) 880-2527
Email: econdev@met.gov.bz*

11 December 2025

Ref: IA/AF/1/25 (27)

To: The Adaptation Fund Board
c/o Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat
Email: Secretariat@Adaptation-Fund.org
Fax: 202 522 3240/5

**Subject: Endorsement for Strengthening Community-Led Ecosystem Restoration through
Locally Led Adaptation in Coastal Belize**

In my capacity as designated authority for the Adaptation Fund in Belize, I confirm that the above national grant proposal is in accordance with the government's national priorities in implementing adaptation activities to reduce adverse impacts of, and risks, posed by climate change in Belize.

Accordingly, I am pleased to endorse the above grant proposal with support from the Adaptation Fund. If approved, the project will be implemented by the Protected Area Conservation Trust (PACT) as the National Implementing Entity (NIE) to the Adaptation Fund and Executed by the Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future.

Sincerely,



Mr. Carlos Pol
Chief Executive Officer
Ministry of Economic Transformation & Designated Authority of Belize to the Adaptation Fund

C: Hon. Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Solid Waste Management
Dr. Hon. Osmond Martinez, Minister of State, Ministry of Economic Transformation
Ms. Milagro Matus, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Solid Waste Management
Ms. Beverly Wade, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Blue Economy & Marine Conservation
Mr. Abil Castañeda, Executive Director, Protected Areas Conservation Trust
Mr. Eli Romero, Project Development Officer, Protected Areas Conservation Trust
Dr. Leandra Cho-Ricketts, Executive Director, Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future
Ms. Saliha Dobardzic, Programming and Innovation Unit Lead, Green Climate Fund
Ms. Neranda Maurice, Country Dialogue Specialist, Green Climate Fund
Mr. Leroy Martinez, Acting Director, Climate Finance Officer, Ministry of Economic Transformation
Mr. Jason Middleton, Senior Project Officer, Climate Finance Unit, Ministry of Economic Transformation
Ms. Hunter Hales, Project Development Officer, Climate Finance Unit, Ministry of Economic Transformation
Ms. Yuribeth Sarceño, Information & Capacity Building Officer, Ministry of Economic Transformation



Revised PFG Submission Form¹ (additions in red)

Project Formulation Grant (PFG)

Submission Date: January 27, 2026

Adaptation Fund Project ID:

Country/ies: Belize

Title of Project/Programme: Strengthening Community-Led Ecosystem Restoration through Locally Led Adaptation in Coastal Belize

Type of IE (NIE/RIE/MIE): National Implementing Entity

Implementing Entity: Protected Areas Conservation Trust

Executing Entity/ies: Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future

A. Project Preparation Timeframe

Start date of PFG	May 1, 2026
Completion date of PFG	April 30, 2027

B. Proposed Project Preparation Activities (\$)

List of Proposed Project Preparation Activities	Output of the PFG Activities	US\$ Amount	Budget note²
1 Community-level consultations and site selection (inclusive of FPIC where relevant)	1.1 Validated selection of participating communities, documented community priorities and FPIC records where Indigenous Peoples are involved.	\$20,000	1.1.1 Facilitation & consultation specialists: \$10,000 1.1.2 Travel & accommodation for outreach in coastal areas: \$4,500 1.1.3 Community workshops (venues, materials, facilitation): \$5,500
2 Climate risk, vulnerability and maladaptation assessments	2.1 Site-specific climate risk profiles and	\$25,000	2.1.1 Climate risk & vulnerability experts: \$15,000

¹ As presented in AFB/PPRC.33/40 Annex 1.

² The proposal should include a detailed budget with budget notes indicating the break-down of costs at the activity level. It should also include a budget on the Implementing Entity management fee use.

		maladaptation screening criteria		2.1.2 Data acquisition, GIS and climate projections: \$6,000 2.1.3 Community validation workshops: \$4,000
3	Environmental & Social Policy compliance and safeguards tools	3.1 ESP screening tools, risk categorization and mitigation measures	\$17,000	3.1.1 ESP specialist & safeguards consultant: \$10,000 3.1.2 Development of screening tools & templates: \$4,000 3.1.3 GRM refinement & safeguards training: \$3,000
4	Gender assessment and Gender Action Plan	4.1 Comprehensive gender analysis and Gender Action Plan	\$17,000	4.1.1 Gender specialist/consultant: \$9,000 4.1.2 Gender-responsive consultations & focus groups: \$5,000 4.1.3 Preparation of Gender Action Plan & indicators: \$3,000
5	Technical feasibility studies and costing	5.1 Feasibility designs and costed options for ecosystems and livelihoods	\$24,500	5.1.1 Ecosystem restoration technical experts: \$13,500 5.1.2 Livelihood feasibility & market analysis: \$8,000 5.1.3 Costing, technical validation and design refinement: \$3,000
6	Governance, learning and M&E framework development	6.1 Finalized LLA governance model and adaptive M&E framework	\$12,000	6.1.1 Governance specialist support: \$6,500 6.1.2 Development of learning and adaptive management framework: \$3,500 6.1.3 Indicator design and results framework refinement: \$2,000

7	Full project proposal development	7.1 AF-compliant full proposal	\$25,000	7.1.1 Lead proposal development, consultant/firm: \$20,000 7.1.2 Validation workshop for draft proposal with stakeholders: \$5,000
8	Management Fee	8.1 Fiduciary and financial management oversight	\$7,500	8.1.1 PACT fiduciary and financial management oversight: \$7,500
Total Project Formulation Grant			\$150,000	

Please describe below each of the PFG activities and provide justifications for their need and for the amount of funding required:

1. Community-level consultations and site selection: \$20,000
 - This activity will support participatory consultations and site selection in targeted coastal communities once specific locations and partners have been identified. Given the use of a fully unidentified sub-project approach, these consultations are essential to ensure that adaptation priorities, intervention design, and implementation arrangement are locally defined and aligned with community needs. Engagement will be conducted through existing governance structures and will include FPIC processes where Indigenous Peoples are involved. The requested budget covers facilitation by consultation specialist, travel and accommodation for geographically dispersed coastal communities and documentation and validation of consultation outcomes. The amount is justified by the scale and geographic dispersion of coastal communities and the need for inclusive, high-quality participatory processes.
2. Climate risk, vulnerability and maladaptation assessments: \$25,000
 - This activity will generate site-specific climate risk and vulnerability profiles to inform the selection and design of adaptation interventions. Assessments will consider long-term climate projections, including sea-level rise, storm surge, coastal erosion, ecosystem degradation, and climate variability affecting livelihoods. A specific focus will be placed on identifying and screening for maladaptation risks to ensure that proposed ecosystem restoration and livelihood activities remain effective under future climate conditions. The budget supports engagement of climate risk and vulnerability experts, acquisition and analysis of climate and spatial data, and community-level validation workshops. This level of investment is required to ensure that the full proposal is grounded in robust, forward-looking climate analysis.
3. Environmental & Social Policy compliance and safeguards tools: \$17,000
 - This activity will ensure full compliance with the Adaptation Fund Environmental and Social Policy for a Category B project with unidentified sub-projects. It includes development of sub-project screening tools, risk categorization procedures, mitigation measures, and monitoring arrangements covering environmental, social, gender, and Indigenous Peoples considerations. The activity will also strengthen grievance redress mechanisms to ensure accessibility at community level. The requested funding covers specialized safeguards expertise, development of screening templates and guidance materials, and training for implementing partners and community representatives. The amount is justified by the need to establish a robust, AF-compliant safeguards framework prior to full proposal submission.
4. Gender assessment and Gender Action Plan: \$17,000

- This activity will finance a comprehensive gender assessment to identify gender-differentiated climate vulnerabilities, barriers to participation, access to resources, and decision-making power among women, men, youth, and Indigenous Peoples in targeted communities. Findings will inform the design of adaptation interventions, governance arrangements, budget allocations, and monitoring indicators. A Gender Action Plan aligned with the Adaptation Fund Gender Policy will be developed as a core output. The budget supports engagement of a gender specialist, gender-responsive consultations and focus groups, and preparation of a Gender Action Plan with actionable measures and indicators. The amount is appropriate to ensure meaningful gender analysis and integration at full proposal stage, rather than superficial compliance.
- 5. Technical feasibility studies and costing: \$24,500
 - This activity will support technical feasibility assessments and detailed costing of proposed ecosystem restoration and climate-resilient livelihood interventions. Studies will assess ecological suitability, technical requirements, sustainability considerations, and cost-effectiveness of options such as mangrove and seagrass restoration, dune stabilization, and nature-based livelihood diversification. The requested funding covers engagement of technical experts, livelihood feasibility and market assessments, and development of costed implementation options. This level of investment is required to ensure that the full proposal presents technically sound, feasible, and cost-effective adaptation interventions.
- 6. Governance, learning and M&E framework development: \$12,000
 - This activity will finalize governance arrangements and adaptive management systems to operationalize locally led adaptation. It includes refinement of community-level decision-making processes, development of learning and feedback mechanisms that inform adaptive adjustments, and design of a results framework and indicators aligned with Adaptation Fund requirements. The budget supports governance and locally led adaptation specialists, development of adaptive learning frameworks, and refinement of indicators and monitoring arrangements. The amount is justified by the need to translate concept-level governance commitments into operational systems for the full proposal.
- 7. Full project proposal development: \$25,000
 - A lead consultant or firm will be hired to consolidate all assessments, stakeholder inputs, and technical studies into the AF's full project proposal template. The proposal must be comprehensive, aligned with AF's technical standards and include annexes. The allocation reflects the workload for high-quality drafting, editing and facilitation of a validation workshop.
- 8. Management Fee: \$7,500
 - PACT's Climate Finance Unit will provide fiduciary oversight, financial reporting and administrative support required to coordinate the execution of PFG activities. The 5% fee complies with AF norms and ensures adequate institutional support for transparent and accountable management of the grant.

For LLA Projects only:

If requesting additional funding for LLA projects to enable devolving decision making to the local level, please specify the activities that would directly serve to enable devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level and enable local actors to make informed decisions on how adaptation actions are defined, prioritized, designed, and implemented:

Please provide justifications for their need and for the amount of additional funding required:

C. Implementing Entity

This request has been prepared in accordance with the Adaptation Fund Board's procedures and meets the Adaptation Fund's criteria for project identification and formulation

Implementing Entity Coordinator, IE Name	Signature	Date (Month, day, year)	Project Contact Person	Telephone	Email Address
Mr. Abil Castañeda		27/1/26	Mr. Eli Romero	(501) 822 3637	cfmanager@pactbelize.org

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS FRAMEWORK

MARCH 2023



**Belize Fund For A
Sustainable Future**

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS FRAMEWORK

This is version 1.0 of the Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (“ESSF”) for the Belize Fund For A Sustainable Future (“Belize Fund”).

This version of the ESSF was formally approved by the Board on 02.03.2023.

The ESSF will be reviewed yearly by the Board for relevancy and to be aligned with current best practices.

The next review of the ESSF is due for completion by 01/04/2024.



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ABBREVIATIONS

BFSF	Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future
BNN	Belize Network of NGOs
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESRM	Environmental and Social Risk Management
ESRMP	Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan
ESS	Environmental & Social Safeguards
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
IP	Indigenous Peoples
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LESIA	Limited Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
MBECA	Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation
PACT	Protected Areas Conservation Trust
PCR	Physical Cultural Resources
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SES	Stakeholder Engagement Strategy
SPAW	Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
WB	World Bank
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

DEFINITIONS

Applicant

- An individual or group who has submitted a Proposal to the Belize Fund in respect of a Project

Critical Habitats

- Natural or modified habitats that have a high biodiversity including the following:
 - Habitats important to critically endangered and footprint-impacted species;
 - Habitats of significant importance to endemic and/or restricted-range species and subspecies;
 - Habitats of significant importance to globally significant concentrations; of migratory species and/or congregator species; and
 - Regionally significant and/or highly threatened or unique ecosystems.
- Critical habitats can include areas that are not being protected or managed, and they may be outside legally protected and designated areas. Habitats may be considered critical if their ecosystem functions or species rely on or provide connectivity with other critical habitats, including legally protected critical habitat areas

Degradation

- Modification of a critical or other natural habitat that substantially reduces the habitat's ability to maintain viable populations of its native species and environmental functions

Due Diligence

- Process of investigating potential investments to confirm all facts including reviewing environmental and social safeguards, audits, assessments, and compliance before consideration of funding or entering into a co-financing agreement with another funder.

Environmental and Social Impact Assessment

- An instrument to identify and assess the potential environmental and social impacts of a proposed project, evaluate alternatives, and design appropriate mitigation, management, and monitoring measures.

DEFINITIONS

Environmental and Social Assessment Framework

- An instrument that examines the risks and impacts when a project consists of a program and/or series of subprojects, and the risks and impacts cannot be determined until the program or subproject details have been identified. The ESAF sets out the principles, rules, guidelines and procedures to assess the environmental and social risks and impacts.

Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan

- An instrument that details (a) the measures to be taken during the implementation and operation of a project to eliminate or offset adverse environmental and social impacts, or to reduce them to acceptable levels; and (b) the actions needed to implement these measures.

Environmental & Social Safeguards

- Policies, standards and operational procedures designed to first identify and then try to avoid, mitigate and minimize adverse environmental and social impacts that may arise in the implementation of development projects.

Free, Prior, and Informed Consent

- Builds on and expands the process of meaningful consultation

Gender Action Plan

- A set of concerted and articulated actions to close the gap between women and men with regard to roles, responsibilities, activities, and access to and control over resources and decision-making opportunities related to projects approved by the Belize Fund.

Grantee

- An individual or group who has successfully submitted a Proposal in respect of a Project to the Belize Fund and has received or shall receive funding for that Project.

DEFINITIONS

Grievance Redress Mechanism

- A set of arrangements that enable local communities, employees, and other affected stakeholders to raise grievances with the Belize Fund and seek redress when they perceive a negative impact arising from the Belize Fund and the project implementer's activities.

Involuntary resettlement

- Physical displacement and/or economic displacement caused by the Belize Fund and/or a Project because of land acquisition and/or restrictions on land use where affected persons or communities do not have the right to refuse physical and/or economic displacement.

Indigenous Peoples

- For purposes of this ESSF, peoples considered to be indigenous to a particular geographical area have close attachment to ancestral and traditional or customary territories and the natural resources in them; customary social and political institutions; economic systems oriented to subsistence production; an indigenous language, often different from the predominant language; and self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group.

Modified Habitats

- Habitats whose primary ecological functions have been significantly altered by human activities and whose original species composition, richness, and abundance have been reduced, with evidence of colonisation by non-native species of flora and fauna.

Natural Habitats

- Land and water areas where (i) the ecosystems' biological communities are formed largely by native plant and animal species, and (ii) human activity has not essentially modified the area's primary ecological functions. Important natural habitats are forests, mangroves, coastal wetlands, estuaries, sea grass beds, coral reefs, freshwater lakes, rivers, and grasslands

DEFINITIONS

No net loss of biodiversity

- The point at which impacts on biodiversity by a Project are balanced by measures taken to avoid and minimize the Project's impacts, to undertake on-site restoration and to offset significant residual impacts, if any, on an appropriate geographic scale

Physical Cultural Resources

- Movable or immovable objects, sites, structures, groups of structures, and natural features and landscapes that have archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, religious, aesthetic, or other cultural significance

Pollution

- Hazardous and non-hazardous chemical pollutants in the solid, liquid, or gaseous phases, including other components such as pests, pathogens, thermal discharge to water, greenhouse gas emissions, nuisance odour, noise, vibration, radiation, electromagnetic energy, and the creation of potential visual impacts (including light)

Project

- A conservation intervention or program that supports the mission of the Belize Fund

Proposal

- A completed application submitted by an Applicant/Grantee to the Belize Fund in respect of a Project

Risk Screening Checklist

- It is a questionnaire that inquires about the environmental and social risks and impacts of an activity through a series of questions related to the ESSs.



DEFINITIONS

Stakeholder

- An individual or group that has an interest in the outcome of a Belize Fund-financed activity or is likely to be affected by it, such as local communities, Indigenous Peoples, civil society organizations, and private sector entities, comprising women, men, girls, and boys

Stakeholder Analysis

- Seeks to identify people, organisations, or groups who may be positively or negatively impacted by the project. It also seeks to identify those who might affect or influence the ability of the project to achieve its objectives or impede the outcomes of the project.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Process of sharing information and knowledge, seeking to understand and respond to the concerns of others, and building relationships based on collaboration. Stakeholder engagement is an ongoing process that builds a positive relationship between the project and its stakeholders.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

- Describe the timing and methods of engagement with stakeholders throughout the life cycle of the project, distinguishing between project-affected parties and other interested parties. The SEP will also describe the range and timing of information to be communicated to project-affected parties and other interested parties, as well as the type of information to be sought from them.

Suitable Mitigation Measures

- The point at which impacts on biodiversity by a Project are balanced by measures taken to avoid and minimize the Project's impacts, to undertake on-site restoration and to offset significant residual impacts, if any, on an appropriate geographic scale.

ABOUT THE BELIZE FUND FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future (Belize Fund) is a non-profit company incorporated on March 8th, 2022, and registered in the State of Delaware in the United States of America with 501(c)(3) status. It is fully Belizean-operated, with founding members from the government through the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation (MBECA), NGOs through the Belize Network of NGOs (BNN), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

The Belize Fund seeks to undertake charitable and scientific activities that provide funding and other forms of support for conservation and climate change adaptation and mitigation activities in Belize. The Belize Fund provides grant funding to organizations and individuals implementing conservation Projects and programs, but it does not directly undertake the implementation of conservation activities on the ground. Activities supported by the Belize Fund are identified and prioritized by relevant stakeholders including the Government of Belize, that align with the achievement of the conservation commitments of Belize under the Blue Bond Loan Agreement^[1].

Vision of the Belize Fund

Financing in perpetuity for a vibrant and resilient blue economy in Belize.

Mission of the Belize Fund

To create a transparent and inclusive financing mechanism that is successfully mobilizing investments for the conservation and responsible development of Belize's marine and coastal resources.

[1] The Blue Bond in Belize will enable the country to reduce its debt burden and generate an estimated US\$180M for marine conservation, in support of Belize's commitment to protect 30% of its ocean, strengthen governance frameworks for domestic and high sea fisheries, and establish a regulatory framework for coastal blue carbon Projects. The \$553 million debt swap will provide money to protect the world's second-largest coral reef and reduced the country's debt level by more than 10% of GDP.

To deliver the above vision and mission, the Belize Fund's initial focus is on the following Blue Bond Thematic Areas:

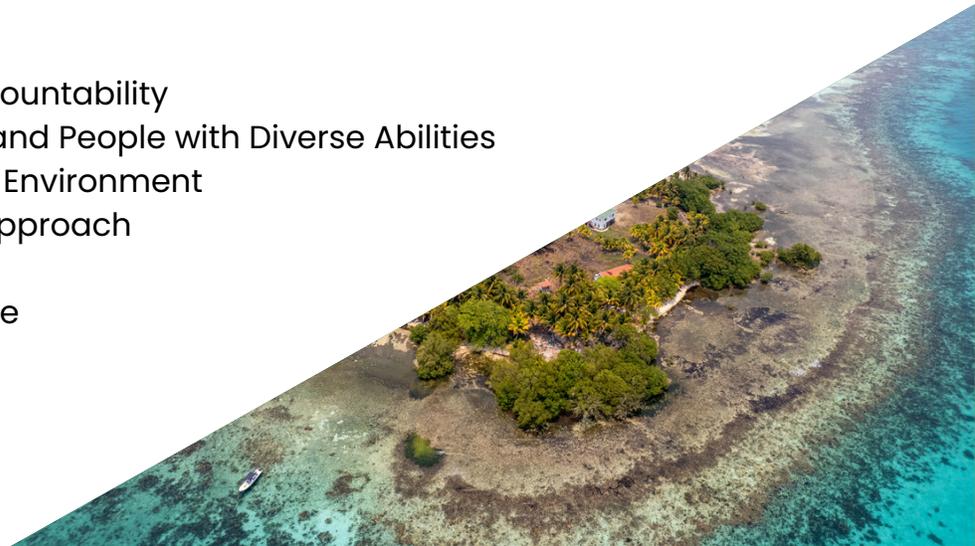
- **Protection for Biodiversity** - to achieve effective protection for marine biodiversity that ensures full protection and prevents depletion or loss of biodiversity;
- **Sustainable Fisheries** - to support fisheries management programs and initiatives that promote sustainable fishing and help rebuild depleted stocks;
- **Climate Resilience** - building and strengthening the resilience of our ocean ecosystems to adapt to and survive climate change impacts on our coastal and marine resources and
- **Blue Business Innovation** - incubating and supporting the growth of the Blue Economy in Belize through innovative and sustainable Blue Businesses

PURPOSE AND CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE ESSF

The Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF) of the Belize Fund seeks to prevent, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts that affect the environment and society, while promoting the conservation of biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services. The ESSF is also intended to uphold human rights, gender equality, and ensure conservation Projects deliver better outcomes for communities and nature.

The ESSF of the Belize Fund is guided by the following core principles which will apply to the administration, operation and programming of all projects supported by the Belize Fund:

- Good Governance and Accountability
- Respect for Human Rights and People with Diverse Abilities
- Respect for Nature and the Environment
- A Gender Equality-Based Approach
- Equitable Participation
- Sustainability and Resilience



SCOPE OF APPLICATION OF THE ESSF

This current approved version of the ESSF applies to all Projects supported by the Belize Fund. Its validity date is March 1st, 2023, which reflects the effective commencement date for the use of ESSF in the Belize Fund operational and programming activities. It is expected that the Belize Fund ESSF will be periodically reviewed and technically improved over time based on use and experience, resulting in future adapted versions.

The Belize Fund will only support Projects that are consistent with its Vision, Mission, and Blue Bond Thematic Areas. All Projects supported by the Belize Fund are expected to meet the requirements of the Belize Fund Environmental and Social Policy and associated Environmental and Social Safeguards as the key elements of this ESSF. Where the Belize Fund is jointly funding a Project with other funding agencies, the Belize Fund will cooperate with such agencies to agree on a common approach to be applied by the Applicant/Grantee for the assessment and management of environmental and social risks and impacts of the Project. A common approach will be acceptable to the Belize Fund, provided that such an approach will enable the Project to achieve objectives materially consistent with the Environmental and Social Safeguards outlined in this ESSF.



STRUCTURE OF THE ESSF

This ESSF consists of three key components: the Belize Fund Environmental and Social Policy, the ESSF's Core Principles and the Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS). The ESSF policy framework sets out the mandatory requirements that the Belize Fund must follow regarding Projects it supports through grant funding.

There are ten Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS). Each ESS has a defined purpose, objectives, and requirements for compliance by Applicants/Grantees. The ESSs set out the requirements for Grantees relating to the identification and assessment of environmental and social risks and impacts associated with Projects supported or partially supported by the Belize Fund through grant funding. Where a certain ESS may also apply directly to the Belize Fund and/or additionally to the Applicant/Grantee and the Belize Fund, this has been indicated, as is the case with ESS1: Environmental and Social Risk Management, ESS5: Labour and Working Conditions, and ESS8: Accountability and Grievance Procedures. The implementation of the Belize Fund's ESSF requires the operationalization and execution of several sequential process steps and related activities that are aligned with the Belize Fund's project cycle (see Figure 1).

The Belize Fund Environmental and Social Policy and the Environmental and Social Safeguards are based primarily on the principles governing the eight Performance Standards of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) for the identification, management, and monitoring of environmental and social risks, and are complemented by other best practices approach in this regard by other multilateral and NGOs such as the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), among others.

BELIZE FUND ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL POLICY

Purpose

This Environmental and Social Policy sets out the mandatory requirements that the Belize Fund must follow regarding Projects it supports through grant funding.

Objectives

To ensure Projects supported by the Belize Fund are environmentally and socially sustainable and that Applicants/Grantees have the capacity to assess and manage the social and environmental risks and impacts associated with these Projects. To assist with this responsibility, the Belize Fund has developed ESSs designed to prevent, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts that affect the environment and society, while promoting the conservation of biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services.

Requirements for Compliance

This Policy requires that the Belize Fund:

1. Undertake its own due diligence in the review and appraisal of proposed Projects in terms of the nature and potential significance of the environmental and social risks and impacts related to the Project. The environmental and social risks and impacts which the Belize Fund will consider in its due diligence are strictly Project-related and include the following:
 - o Environmental risks and impacts, including those related to community safety, climate change, any material threat to the protection, conservation, maintenance, and restoration of natural habitats and biodiversity, and those related to ecosystem services and the use of living natural resources, such as fisheries and forests.

- Social risks and impacts, including threats to human security through the escalation of personal or communal conflict, crime or violence, risks that Project impacts fall disproportionately on individuals or groups who, because of their particular circumstances, may be disadvantaged or vulnerable, gender equality, any prejudice or discrimination toward individuals or groups in providing access to Project benefits, particularly in the case of those who may be disadvantaged or vulnerable, negative economic and social impacts relating to the involuntary taking of land or restrictions on land use, risks or impacts associated with land and natural resource tenure and use, including (as relevant) potential Project impacts on local land use patterns and tenurial arrangements, land access and availability, food security and land values, and any corresponding risks related to conflict or contestation over land and natural resources, impacts on the health, safety and well-being of workers and Project-affected communities, and risks to physical cultural heritage.
2. Implements environmental and social risk management policies and practices, inclusive of Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) and consequent Project risk categorization to facilitate Project-specific risk management responses.
 3. As part of the Project proposal to be submitted to the Belize Fund, requests of Applicants/Grantees the preparation of an Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan (ESRMP) which sets out the material measures and actions required for the Project to comply with the ESSs over a specified timeframe.
 4. If during the implementation of an approved Project there is need for Project restructuring (level of components, activities and/or outputs), the Belize Fund shall require the Applicant/Grantee to revise the ESRMP accordingly.



5. Requires Applicant/Grantee to implement the measures and actions identified in the ESRMP diligently, in accordance with the timeframes specified in the ESRMP, and the Belize Fund will review the status of implementation of the ESRMP as part of its monitoring and reporting.
6. Require the Applicants/Grantees publicly disclose enough information on potential risks of their Project to the environment and wider society to allow for broad stakeholder consultation and participation, especially in the Project intervention area.
7. Makes publicly accessible the environmental and social risks information of all Projects approved for funding.
8. Requires the Applicant/Grantee to engage with stakeholders, including communities, groups, or individuals affected by proposed Projects, and with other interested parties, through information disclosure, consultation, and informed participation in a manner proportionate to the risks to and impacts on affected communities. The Belize Fund will have the right to participate in consultation activities to understand the concerns of affected people, and how such concerns will be addressed by the Applicant/Grantee in the Project design and possible mitigation measures.
9. Monitors the environmental and social performance of the Project in accordance with the requirements of the legal agreement between the Belize Fund and the Applicant/Grantee, including the ESRMP, and will review any revision of the ESRMP including changes resulting from adjustments in the design of a Project or Project circumstances.
10. Requires the Applicant/Grantee to provide a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), process, or procedure to receive and facilitate resolution of concerns and grievances of Project-affected parties arising in connection with the Project, about the Applicant/Grantee's environmental and social performance. The GRM will be designed to be proportionate to the risks and impacts of the Project.
11. Receives complaints from affected parties regarding a Belize Fund-financed Project, independent of whether said complaint has been submitted to the GRM of the Applicant/Grantee.

12. Oversee compliance by Applicants/Grantees with the following ten (10) Environmental and Social Safeguards:

- a. ESS1: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT
- b. ESS2: CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, NATURAL HABITATS, AND LIVING NATURAL RESOURCES
- c. ESS3: POLLUTION PREVENTION
- d. ESS4: LAND ACQUISITION AND INVOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT
- e. ESS5: LABOUR AND WORKING CONDITIONS
- f. ESS6: PHYSICAL CULTURAL RESOURCES
- g. ESS7: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION DISCLOSURE
- h. ESS8: ACCOUNTABILITY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES
- i. ESS9: GENDER MAINSTREAMING
- j. ESS10: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

13. Ensures that Applicants/Grantees prepare and implement Projects that meet the requirements of the ESSs within the earliest possible timeframe.



PROCESS FOR REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISKS AND IMPACTS

All proposals submitted to the Belize Fund will be reviewed based on the organization's ESSF and inclusive of the ESSs. Sequential actions include undergoing a preliminary environmental and social screening process to determine risks and impacts and risk-based project categories and undertaking required environmental and social assessments to determine ESSF compliance.

Throughout the project-cycle, the assessment and management of environmental and social risks and impacts of approved projects is carried out collaboratively and systematically with the Belize Fund and the Applicant/Grantees.

- Both the Belize Fund and the Applicant/Grantee have a shared responsibility to assess and manage the environmental and social aspects of the projects financed either partially or totally by the Belize Fund to enhance sustainability and avoid, reduce, and mitigate adverse environmental and social risks and impacts.
- Applicants will first screen project activities and assign risk categories consistent with the Belize Fund ESSF. The project categories based on risks are Category A, Category B and Category C.

The Belize Fund will review the environmental and social screening results, determine the accuracy of risk categories and validate risk categories in line with the Belize Fund ESSs. If there are inconsistencies, the Belize Fund will require the Applicant/Grantees to reflect the appropriate category.

All proposals received via the Belize Fund's grant programs, and any additional future funding channels, will follow the process listed below.

1. Belize Fund Call for Proposals:

- Call for proposals includes clear information on the ESSF, inclusive of environmental and social requirements and tools.

2. Proposal Development by Applicant:

- Applicant or potential grantee should develop proposal, ensuring activities and sub-activities, are not included in the Exclusion List of the ESSF.
- Carry out preliminary due diligence of proposed Project which includes the screening of the environmental and social risks and impacts of the Projects.
- Implement stakeholder engagement and information disclosure actions.
- Conduct required assessments, particularly for Project proposals with significant environmental and social risks.
- Identify environmental and social measures necessary to satisfy the requirements of the ESSF triggered by the Project.

3. Belize Fund Evaluates Proposal:

- Conduct environmental and social review and due diligence of the Project proposals.
- Review risk-based categorization of the proposal and assign definitive risk category.
- Exclude any proposed Project that is classified as Category A (High Risk). High-Risk projects will not be funded.
- Approve assessments, including site-specific assessments, as required.
- Request additional environmental and social studies as needed based on risk category and the scope of projects. Specific studies may be a condition for approval of the Project or can be included in the environmental and social requirements of the applicant/grantee to be completed within the project's implementation timeframe.

4. Review and Approval by Belize Fund:

- The Belize Fund submits the proposed project to its Technical Review Committee and the Board for review.
- The Belize Fund Board approves the project with specific environmental and social requirements to be completed by the Applicant.
- The Belize Fund Board does not recommend approval of the proposed project.

5. Grant Agreement:

- The Belize Fund prepares grant agreements integrating environmental and social requirements or measures submitted, specifying any to be completed by the Grantee during project implementation. These requirement/measures are included in the ESRMP for all projects.

6. Project Implementation and Monitoring:

- Implement Project in accordance with environmental and social requirements stipulated in Grant Agreement.
- Grantees conduct monitoring of their environmental and social performance as part of project monitoring.
- Report to stakeholders and disclose information based on environmental and social management measures.
- Report to the Belize Fund as required per reporting schedule, including tracking the performance of environmental and social management measures.
- The Belize Fund monitors the fulfilment of the environmental and social requirements and measures and any additional measures that are required.

7. Project Performance Measurement, Evaluation and Closing:

The Belize Fund and Grantee jointly track and measure overall Project performance and specifically assess the environmental and social risk management performance of the project. Engage in the documenting of lessons learnt based on Project implementation monitoring activities. Finally, the Belize Fund provides an environmental and social performance scorecard as part of the performance measurement framework which should eventually feed into intervention evaluation actions.



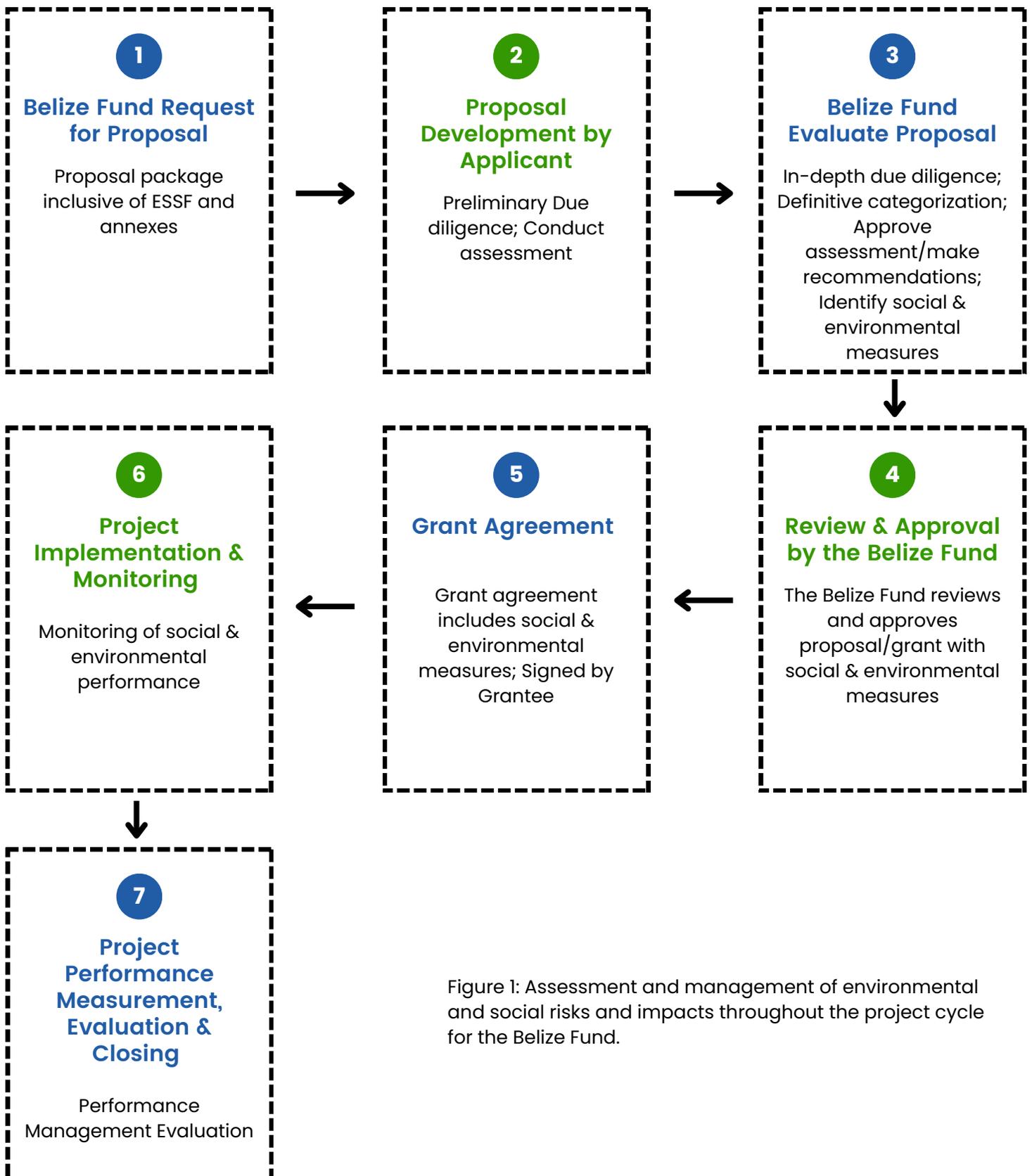


Figure 1: Assessment and management of environmental and social risks and impacts throughout the project cycle for the Belize Fund.

BELIZE FUND'S EXCLUSION LIST

The Belize Fund shall not consider Proposals that are to be used directly or indirectly for any of the following:

1. Activities relating to the extraction or depletion of non-renewable natural resources (including minerals and oil /gas);
2. Activities related to unsustainable extraction of renewable natural resources, including the extraction of timber, marine species, and protected species.
3. Activities relating to the excavation of and removal of marine sediments (dredging).
4. The resettlement of people or the removal or alteration of any physical cultural property or significantly damage physical cultural resources.
5. Debts and provisions for existing losses or debts;
6. Projects relating to political campaigns and/or political propaganda;
7. Operating costs and capital expenditure costs that do not directly contribute to or ensure the achievement of the Strategic Objectives; and
8. Any other use not consistent with the vision, mission and goals of the Belize Fund.



BELIZE FUND'S ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS (ESS)

ESS1: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT

Purpose

ESS1 sets out the Applicant/Grantee's responsibilities for identifying, assessing, managing, and monitoring environmental and social risks and impacts associated with each stage of a Project financed or partially financed by the Belize Fund, consistent with the requirements of the overall ESSF.

Objectives

- a. To identify, evaluate and manage the environmental and social risks, and impacts of the Project in a manner consistent with the ESSF.
- b. To adopt a mitigation hierarchy approach to managing environmental and social risks (including to avoid, minimize, reduce, mitigate and offset).
- c. To adopt differentiated measures so that adverse impacts do not fall disproportionately on the disadvantaged or vulnerable.

Requirements for Compliance

This ESS1 safeguard can be read as an “umbrella” operational safeguard of the Belize Fund’s ESSF that establishes the importance of integrated environmental and social risk management for project design and implementation. As such, this ESS1 safeguard provides guidance as to how environmental and social risk management will be applied in the programming and day-to-day operations of the Belize Fund-supported projects.

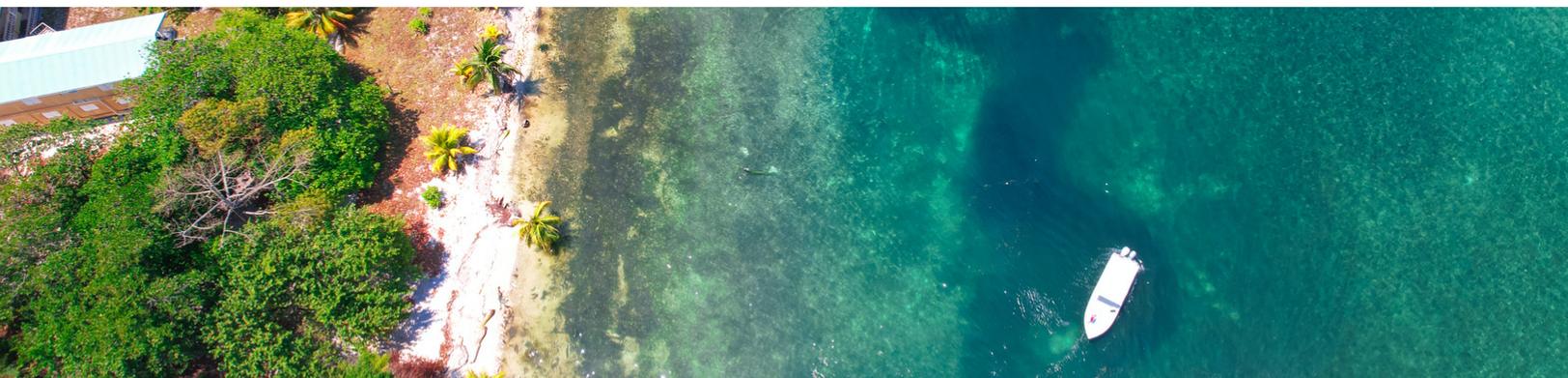
The Belize Fund shall work alongside Applicants/Grantees to ensure the accurate identification, and adequate and appropriate management of environmental and social risks associated with potential Projects by implementing environmental and social risk assessment and management processes for each Project that:

- a. Identifies the potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with each Proposal with an appropriate level of detail; and
- b. Determines appropriate responses to those environmental and social risks identified.

Description and Explanation of the ESSF in Operation

The Belize Fund's ESSF is primarily constituted of a risk screening process including risk-based categorization, the ESIA and the ESRMP. An ESIA is the primary tool to be used to inform decision-making with respect to assessing and addressing major environmental and social risks and may be needed based on the findings of the risk-based assessments in the preliminary screening exercise. An ESRMP is required to provide the measures needed during the implementation of a project to eliminate, offset, or reduce adverse environmental and social impacts.

When the Applicant has completed or partially completed the environmental and social risk assessment prior to the Belize Fund's involvement in a Project, this assessment will be subject to the Belize Fund's review to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Belize Fund ESSF's guiding principles and ESSs. If appropriate, the Applicant is required to conduct additional work, including public consultation and disclosure. The Belize Fund may provide resources for the additional work required, to be defined on a case-by-case basis.



1. Preliminary Risk and Impact Identification and Screening by Project Applicants

For each submitted Project Proposal, the Applicant will be required to conduct a preliminary environmental and social risk and impact screening review and analysis as part of that Proposal to help the Belize Fund determine which environmental and social impacts might be caused by the Project and the way in which those environmental and social risks and impacts would be addressed. This screening exercise is intended to:

- a. Identify the type and extent of environmental and social risks involved in implementing the proposed intervention;
- b. Determine the extent and type of environmental and social assessment required of the proposed Project so that appropriate studies are undertaken proportional to potential risks and to direct, indirect, cumulative, and associated impacts; and
- c. Identify appropriate actions that will have to be undertaken to mitigate environmental and social risks.

This preliminary screening review must be conducted, by the applicant/grantee, at the earliest stage of the Project Proposal preparation process or as soon as sufficient information is made available for this purpose. Applicants should consult with the Belize Fund as early as possible, so the overall environmental and social assessment is designed from the outset to meet the requirements of all the Belize Fund's ESSF guiding principles and ESSs.

Specific features of a Project may require the Applicant to utilise specialised methods and tools for undertaking the preliminary screening and other assessment components. The Applicant will take measures to ensure that when individuals or entities are engaged to carry out any assessments on their behalf, possible conflict of interest situations are avoided.

The precise identification of the Project's geographical setting at the screening stage greatly enhances the quality of the screening decision and helps focus the assessments on important environmental issues. While this phase is the primary responsibility of the Applicant, technical personnel from the Belize Fund will remain available to provide guidance and advice. The standardized form used by the Applicant for screening their Project Proposals shall include questions in this regard (**see Annex 1**).

2. Identified Risk and Impact Verification and Analysis by the Belize Fund

Following submission of the proposal, risk screening checklist, and relevant assessments and plans (Component 1 above) by the Applicant, the Belize Fund team shall review in-depth the information and data provided and request additional information from the Applicant where there are gaps that prevent the Belize Fund team from completing its analysis.

The Belize Fund recognizes that proposed Projects may have different types and levels of information and data available regarding possible environmental and social risks and impacts at the time the preliminary analysis is undertaken. In such circumstances, the Belize Fund team will assess the environmental and social risks and impacts of the proposed Project based on the information that is available, together with an assessment of:

- a. the risks and impacts inherent to the type of Project and the specific context in which the proposed Project will be developed and implemented and
- b. the capacity and commitment of the Applicant to develop and implement the Project in accordance with the ESSs. Whenever it may be deemed necessary, the Belize Fund will request that the Applicant provides additional information or data, to determine the identified environmental and social risks being associated to the Project more precisely and to reflectively characterize the social and environmental settings concerned. This will be required to accurately classify the Proposed Project's eventual risk and impact profile.

The Belize Fund technical reviewers will compare the Project Proposal and the accompanying completed preliminary screening review and analysis checklist results against its non-negotiable Exclusion List.

If a proposed project is identified in the Exclusion List, the Belize Fund will end the approval process. If non-essential activities or sub-activities of the Project are included in the Exclusion List, the Belize Fund has the discretion to:

- End approval process;
- Continue with approval process excluding those activities or sub-activities;
- Return the proposal to the applicant/proponent to remove the non-essential activities or sub-activities that are on the Exclusion List.

At this juncture, the Applicant will be notified of the status of the proposed project and will subsequently have to decide whether they intend to redesign the intervention by removing activities or sub-activities that place the Project on the Belize Fund Exclusion List and then resubmit the redesigned Project to the Belize Fund for a separate re-evaluation.

The Belize Fund requires all measures for principles, standards, and safeguards to align to and in compliance with applicable laws, regulations and/or international agreements to manage identified environmental and social risks and impacts.

3. Risk-based Categorization

The main output of the second phase review by the Belize Fund is the categorization of the proposed Project in terms of possible environmental and social risks and impacts:

- Category A: Potential Projects that are likely to have significant adverse environmental and/or social impacts that are sensitive, diverse, or unprecedented. Category A Projects require approval by the Belize Fund Board, based on the recommendations of the Belize Fund Team before safeguards procedures can continue beyond this step.
 - These shall require a full ESIA.
- Category B: Potential Projects that are likely to have potential adverse environmental and/or social impacts, but whose impacts are less significant than Category A and can be properly addressed and/or mitigated.
 - These shall require a partial ESIA that focuses on one or very few selected and clearly delineated issues identified.
- Category C: Potential Projects that are likely to have minimal or no adverse environmental and/or social impacts.
 - These shall not require an ESIA.

Assigned risk categories and ratings will be proportional to the nature, scale, and location of the activity (following the fit-for-purpose approach). Annex 2 provides a typological framework that further explains the various risk categories and associated category assignment criteria for potential projects.

The assigned risk categorization for the proposed Project as determined by the Belize Fund shall be communicated to the Applicant. The Applicant may work with the Belize Fund team to provide supporting documentation and baseline data to validate (or otherwise) the assigned risk categorization. Proposals that are determined by the Belize Fund team to be unsuitable to receive funding by the Belize Fund due to falling within the Exclusion List after completing in-depth due diligence, will not require categorization.

The responsibility for the appropriate categorization is shared by the Belize Fund and the Applicant. In the process of Project risk classification, the Applicant and the Belize Fund will collaboratively determine the type and scope of the required assessment, as well as the need to incorporate special assessment tools to determine compliance with the Belize Fund's ESSF guiding principles and ESSs. For instance, this would confirm if the proposed Project is deemed to have sector, regional or policy-related implications, may affect indigenous communities or involve involuntary resettlement of Project affected persons. For the avoidance of doubt, a proposed Project may be moved to a different category if further information becomes available during the application process.

4. ESIA

For each Proposal received, the Belize Fund shall act in accordance with the guidelines herein.

The breadth, depth and type of analysis undertaken to complete an ESIA shall depend on the nature and scale of the Proposal and the potential environmental and social risks and impacts that could result. The ESIA shall be appropriate to each Proposal.

Conducting ESIA helps to ensure that the Belize Fund-funded Projects are environmentally and socially sound and sustainable. They consider all relevant direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental and social risks and impacts of the project identified in the preliminary risk screening exercise. The scope of ESIA will be based on the nature and scale of the proposed Project with the level of detail appropriate to its potential risks and impacts. An ESIA shall be used by the Belize Fund as a key part of the process to determine whether a Proposal is accepted and as a tool to assess whether the Project, if funded, is monitored in accordance with its initial risk assessment.

An Applicant's Project Proposal may be rejected by the Belize Fund on the grounds that the Applicant is not able to adequately work with the Belize Fund to complete an ESIA with the level of detail required. An ESIA (including Limited ESIA) will not be carried out by the consultants who are involved in the Project's design unless the Applicant can demonstrate that no conflict of interest exists, and that such consultants include qualified environmental and social specialists.

The Belize Fund will develop an internal database system to capture key information relating to ESIA's undertaken. In terms of the Project approval process, the Belize Fund can grant the proposed project "Readiness Status" in terms of environmental and social risks if:

- Completed ESIA or the LESIA are in compliance with ESS and approved by the Belize Fund
- It satisfies ESS5: Labour and Working Conditions
- It satisfies ESS7: A Stakeholder Engagement Plan is developed (**Annex 3**)
- It satisfies ESS9: A Gender Action Plan is developed as needed (**Annex 4**)
- Any specific action or measure derived from the risk screening and/or due diligence process.
- The triggered ESS, the environmental and social risks, and mitigation measures and requirements of the project shall be articulated in the Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan (**Annex 3**).

5. ESRMP Implementation and Compliance Monitoring

Grantees are responsible for Project monitoring and reporting to the Belize Fund. Grantees will conduct monitoring of their Project's compliance with the Belize Fund ESSF using approved ESRMPs. In turn, the Belize Fund will correspondingly monitor the environmental and social performance of the project.

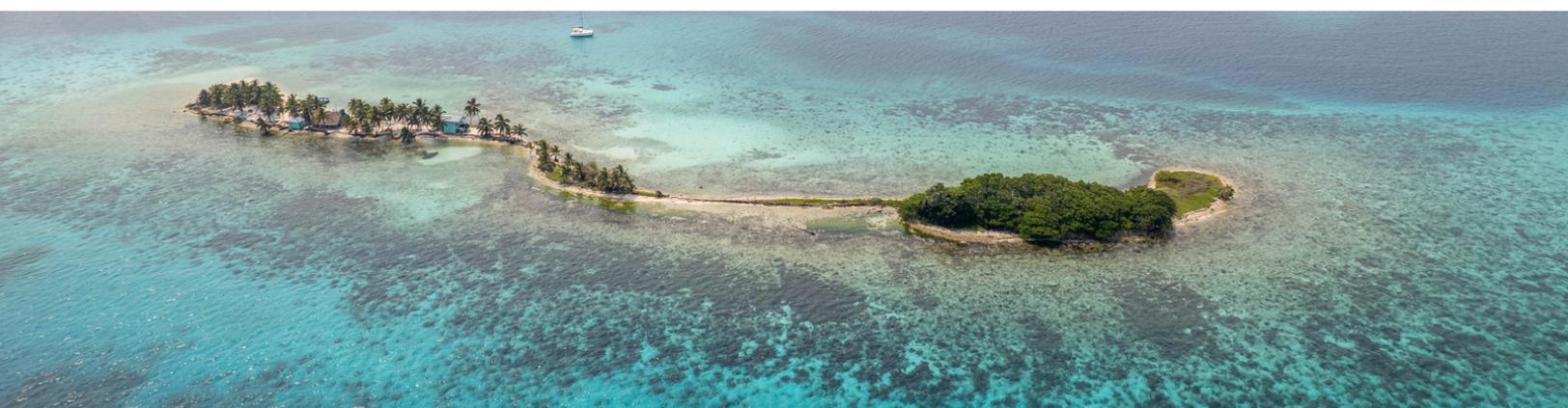
The monitoring will include tracking compliance with guiding principles, the ESSs, and identified risk and impact mitigation measures detailed in the ESRMPs. Grantees will be required to carefully document monitoring results and effectively maintain records (hard copy and electronic) for accountability and continuous improvement/organizational learning purposes including technical reviews leading to possible revisions of ESSF provisions and compliance terms and conditions.

In turn, the Belize Fund will review the monitoring and reporting information and data submitted from Grantees and will conduct its due diligence processes aimed at monitoring, tracking and measuring Grantees' compliance with the ESSF and ESRMPs. While the ESSF's reporting requirements are mainly for Grantees and since information disclosure is a key pillar of the Belize Fund's operational model, the project highlights and case studies will be shared with stakeholders and the public and so, must be clear, accurate and timely. Reports from individual Projects will also feed into the Belize Fund's reporting framework (program and budget reports and annual report) and should also inform future concept development and project design. Overall, the Belize Fund and Applicants/Grantees must ensure that adequate technical and management capacities (knowledge and technical skills) are available (sourced internally or externally) to undertake the design and implementation of all ESSF components and associated activities. This includes having access to the requisite human resources, training, and budgets necessary to achieve these ends.

ESS2: CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, NATURAL HABITATS, AND LIVING NATURAL RESOURCES

Purpose

ESS2 recognizes that protecting and conserving biodiversity and sustainably managing living natural resources are fundamental to sustainable development. It recognizes the importance of maintaining the core ecological functions of habitats, including forests, and the biodiversity they support. Biodiversity often underpins ecosystem services. Impacts on biodiversity can therefore often adversely affect the delivery of ecosystem services. Ecosystem services are the benefits that people, including businesses, derive from ecosystems.



Ecosystem services are organized into four types: (i) provisioning services, which are the products people obtain from ecosystems; (ii) regulating services, which are the benefits people obtain from the regulation of ecosystem processes; (iii) cultural services, which are the nonmaterial benefits people obtain from ecosystems; and (iv) supporting services, which are the natural processes that maintain the other services.

Objectives

- a. To protect and conserve biodiversity and natural habitats.
- b. To apply the mitigation hierarchy and the precautionary approach in the design and implementation of Projects that could have an impact on biodiversity.
- c. To promote the sustainable management of living natural resources.

Requirements for Compliance

ESS2 reflects the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to conserve biological diversity and promote the sustainable management and use of natural resources, and the Cartagena Convention^[2] and its Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) Protocol. It also aligns with the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna and the World Heritage Convention.

To protect the environment, and in accordance with international agreements, the Belize Fund endorses and applies the precautionary approach for its grants, Projects, and programs. Thus, where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

[2] The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) or Cartagena Convention is a regional legal agreement for the protection of the Caribbean Sea.

The requirements of this ESS are applied to all Projects that potentially affect biodiversity or habitats, either positively or negatively, directly, or indirectly, or that depend upon biodiversity for their success. This ESS also applies to Projects that involve primary production and/or harvesting of living natural resources.

The ESS2 applies to Projects that:

1. Are in areas providing ecosystem services upon which potentially affected stakeholders are dependent for survival, sustenance, livelihood, or primary income, or which are used for sustaining the Project; and
2. Involve the extraction of renewable natural resources as a main purpose (e.g., agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and aquaculture).
3. Are in modified, natural, and critical habitats.
4. Present relevant threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, especially focusing on habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, invasive alien species, overexploitation, hydrological changes, nutrient loading, and pollution.
5. Potentially impact on or are dependent on ecosystem services over which the Applicant/Grantee has direct management control or significant influence; or
6. Include the production of living natural resources (e.g., agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, forestry).

The Belize Fund will not fund any Project activities in critical habitats unless the Applicant/Grantee can demonstrate that:

1. No other viable alternatives for development of the Project on modified or natural habitats that are not critical; The Project does not lead to measurable adverse impacts on those biodiversity values for which the critical habitat was designated, and on the ecological processes supporting those biodiversity values.
2. The Project does not lead to a net reduction in the global and/or national/regional population of any Critically Endangered or Endangered species over a reasonable period; and
3. A robust, appropriately designed, and long-term biodiversity monitoring and evaluation program is integrated into the grantee's management program.

In circumstances where a proposed Project is located within a legally protected area or an internationally recognized area, the Applicant/Grantee will:

1. Demonstrate that the proposed development in such areas is legally permitted.
2. Act in a manner consistent with any government-recognized management plans for such areas.
3. Consult protected area sponsors and managers, relevant stakeholders on the proposed Project, as appropriate; and
4. Implement additional programs, as appropriate, to promote and enhance the conservation aims and effective management of the area.

In general compliance with this ESS, the Belize Fund aims to support projects that:

1. Protect biodiversity and restore species and their habitats.
2. Strengthen local communities' ability to conserve the natural resources they depend on.
3. Transform markets and policies to reduce the impact of the production and consumption of commodities; and
4. Mobilize stakeholders to support conservation, promoting more efficient use of resources and energy and the maximum reduction of pollution.

'Suitable mitigation measures' should be designed to achieve no net loss of biodiversity (defined as: the point at which impacts on biodiversity by a Project are balanced by measures taken to avoid and minimize the Project's impacts, to undertake on-site restoration and to offset significant residual impacts, if any, on an appropriate geographic scale) where it is feasible to do so. Appropriate actions include:

1. Avoiding impacts on biodiversity through the identification and protection of set asides^[3];
2. Implementing measures to minimize habitat fragmentation, such as biological corridors;

[3] Set asides are land areas within the Project site, or areas over which the Grantee has management control, that are excluded from development and are targeted for the implementation of conservation enhancement measures.

3. Restoring habitats during operations and/or after operations; and
4. Implementing biodiversity offsets^[4].

The Belize Fund shall not support Projects that introduce any potentially invasive alien species and/or Projects that enhance the competitiveness of such species in comparison with indigenous species and/or lead to an at-scale (defined with reference to the Project and Project area) net reduction in the population of any Critically Endangered or Endangered Species (as those terms are used in the [IUCN Red List](#)) over a reasonable period of time.

The Applicant/Grantee will not intentionally introduce any new alien species (not currently established in the country or region of the Project) unless this is carried out in accordance with the existing regulatory framework for such introduction. Notwithstanding the above, the Applicant/Grantee will not deliberately introduce any alien species with a high risk of invasive behaviour regardless of whether such introductions are permitted under the existing regulatory framework. All introductions of alien species will be subject to a risk assessment (as part of the Applicant/Grantee's environmental and social risks and impacts identification process) to determine the potential for invasive behaviour. The Applicant/Grantee will implement measures to avoid the potential for accidental or unintended introductions including the transportation of substrates and vectors (such as soil, ballast, and plant materials) that may harbour alien species.

The Applicant/Grantee will manage biodiversity and living natural resources in a sustainable manner, through the application of good management practices and available technologies. Where such primary production practices are codified in standards that are globally, regionally, or nationally recognized, the Applicant/Grantee and the Belize Fund will agree on the standards to be applied.

[4] Measurable conservation outcome resulting from actions designed to compensate for significant residual biodiversity loss arising from Project development after appropriate prevention and mitigation measures have been taken. Offsets can, for example, deliver biodiversity benefits (e.g. reforestation) through a transaction, where offset sellers (e.g. a conservation NGO) sell offsets to developers (e.g. a mining company) who seek to compensate the residual biodiversity loss resulting from a development activity (e.g. mining). The term also encompasses wetlands and species.

For Projects involving small-scale producers, the Applicant/Grantee will require producers to operate in a sustainable manner and to gradually improve their practices where such opportunities exist.

To further strengthen compliance with this ESS, the Belize Fund shall incorporate an analysis of the following issues into the grant award decision-making process:

- a. Require Applicants/Grantees to provide adequate baseline data to allow an assessment of the status of the critical biodiversity and habitat of a proposed Project;
- b. Require Applicants/Grantees to identify any changes anticipated to the habitat and/or biodiversity of a proposed Project area, and how likely those changes are, and how they would respond to those changes;
- c. Require Applicants/Grantees to identify a robust, long-term, and appropriately designed monitoring and evaluation program in respect of the Project; and
- d. In respect of any production or development, require Applicants/Grantees to ensure that any proposed Project is consistent with any good practice, laws and/or management plan in place for a proposed Project area.

ESS3: POLLUTION PREVENTION

Purpose

ESS3 recognises that economic activity often generates pollution to air, water, and land, and consumes finite resources that may threaten people, ecosystem services and the environment at the local, regional, and global levels. The current and projected atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases (GHG) threatens the welfare of current and future generations. At the same time, more efficient and effective resource use, pollution prevention and GHG emission avoidance, and mitigation technologies and practices have become more accessible and achievable.



Objectives

- a. To promote the sustainable use of resources.
- b. To avoid or minimize adverse impacts on human health and the environment by avoiding or minimizing pollution from Project activities.
- c. To avoid or minimize Project-related emissions of short and long-lived climate pollutants.
- d. To avoid or minimize the generation of hazardous and non-hazardous waste.
- e. To minimize and manage the risks and impacts associated with pesticide use.

Requirements for Compliance

For the purposes of this Standard, pollution is defined broadly as: hazardous and non-hazardous chemical pollutants in the solid, liquid, or gaseous phases, including other components such as pests, pathogens, thermal discharge to water, greenhouse gas emissions, nuisance odours, noise, vibration, radiation, electromagnetic energy, and the creation of potential visual impacts (including light).

To avoid or minimize adverse impacts on human health and the environment from pollution, the Belize Fund shall promote the sustainable use of resources, including energy and water, and reduce, where feasible, pollution associated with its day-to-day operations. The Belize Fund shall require the same of Applicants/Grantees and their Projects.

The Belize Fund shall, and requires that Grantees shall, consider and, where appropriate, implement technically and financially feasible options to reduce pollution associated throughout the lifecycle of a Project. The Belize Fund shall and requires that Applicants/Grantees shall, avoid the release of pollutants or, when avoidance is not feasible, minimize and/or control the intensity and mass flow of their release throughout the lifecycle of a Project.

The Belize Fund shall, and requires that Applicants/Grantees shall, avoid the generation of hazardous and non-hazardous waste. Where waste generation cannot be avoided, the Applicant/Grantee shall reduce the generation of waste and recover and reuse waste in a manner that is safe for human health and the environment. Where waste cannot be recovered or reused, the Applicant/Grantee will treat, destroy, or dispose of it in an environmentally friendly manner that includes the appropriate control of emissions and residues resulting from the handling and processing of the waste material. Projects with significant waste production must have a Waste Management Plan that articulates all actions to ensure the safe management of waste from generation to disposal, including safe handling and storage. This includes projects involving the construction, renovation or decommissioning of infrastructure. Waste Management Plan can be included in the ESRMP, as appropriate.

When waste disposal is being conducted by third parties, the Applicant/ Grantee shall use contractors that are licensed and operate to professional standards. These requirements shall be included in any grant agreements signed with a Grantee in respect of the Project in a form substantively like the above.

In cases where Applicant/Grantee must control pests, they shall use cultural, biological, and genetic practices for pest control – unless it is determined that doing so will impact biodiversity negatively. If the use of biocides is the only feasible option, environmental and health risks associated with pesticide use must be minimized and managed.

ESS4: LAND ACQUISITION AND INVOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT

Purpose

ESS4 recognizes that land acquisition and restrictions on land use can have adverse impacts on communities, individuals, and the environment. Project-related land acquisition or restrictions on land use may cause physical displacement (relocation, loss of residential land or loss of shelter), and economic displacement (loss of land, assets, or access to assets, leading to loss of income sources or other means of livelihood).

Objectives

- a. To avoid involuntary resettlement or, when unavoidable, minimize involuntary resettlement by exploring Project design alternatives.
- b. To avoid forced eviction.
- c. To mitigate unavoidable adverse social and economic impacts from land acquisition or restrictions on land.

Requirements for Compliance

Involuntary resettlement, for the purposes of this Standard, shall refer both to physical displacement and to economic displacement caused by a Belize Fund-funded project because of land acquisition and/or restrictions on land use where affected persons or communities do not have the right to refuse physical and/or economic displacement.

Unless properly managed, involuntary resettlement may result in long-term hardship and impoverishment for the Affected Communities and persons, as well as environmental damage and adverse socio-economic impacts in areas to which they have been displaced.

For these reasons, the Belize Fund will ensure that:

1. Adverse social or economic impacts on resource-dependent local communities resulting from conservation-related restrictions on resource access and/or use directly associated with a Project are avoided or minimized; and
2. Resolution of conflicts between conservation objectives and local livelihoods is sought primarily through voluntary agreements, including benefits commensurate with any losses incurred.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Belize Fund shall not be acquiring and/or directly involved with the use and/or management of any land other than office premises. For this reason, this Standard shall apply most specifically to Applicants/Grantees.

The Belize Fund shall promote the thorough assessment of viable alternative Project designs by Applicants/Grantees where involuntary settlement is deemed by the Applicant to be a possibility.

Where avoidance of involuntary settlement is not possible, active engagement with affected communities and free, prior, and informed consent shall be undertaken by the Applicant/Grantee, and it is expected that any displaced persons shall be assisted in improving or at least restoring their livelihoods and standards of living relative to pre-displacement (paid for by the Applicant/Grantee and in no part paid for by the Belize Fund). The Applicant/Grantee must provide to the Belize Fund a document that outlines the participatory process and how they will liaise with appropriate third parties in respect of resettlement, if relevant.

Questions related to the above shall be included in the Project Proposal and analysis undertaken in the ESIA. These requirements shall also be included in any grant agreements signed with an Applicant/ Grantee in respect of the Project in a form substantively like the above.

ESS5: LABOUR AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Purpose

ESS5 recognizes the importance of sound worker-management relationships and the enhancement of the benefits of a Project by treating workers in the Project fairly and providing safe and healthy working conditions. Any economic activities and labour roles associated with conservation should always go alongside the protection of the fundamental^[5] rights of workers. For the avoidance of doubt, the guidelines in this Standard shall not replace or supersede any labour laws in operation in the country of Belize.

[5] As guided by the ILO Conventions listed below:

ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize

ILO Convention 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining

ILO Convention 29 on Forced Labor

ILO Convention 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labor

ILO Convention 138 on Minimum Age (of Employment)

ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

ILO Convention 100 on Equal Remuneration

ILO Convention 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 32.1

Objectives

- a. To promote safety and health at work
- b. To promote the fair treatment, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity of Project workers
- c. To protect Project workers, including vulnerable workers such as women, persons with disabilities, contracted workers, and community workers
- d. To prevent the use of all forms of forced labour and child labour
- e. To provide Project workers with accessible means to raise workplace concerns.

Requirements for Compliance

The Belize Fund shall:

- a. Promote the fair treatment, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity of its workers;
- b. Promote compliance with national employment and labour laws of Belize, including recognizing workers' rights to form and to join worker's organizations of their choosing without interference and to bargain collectively OR (where the national law substantially restricts workers' organizations or is silent on this matter), the Belize Fund shall not (i) restrict workers from developing alternative mechanisms to express their grievances and protect their rights regarding working conditions and terms of employment and (ii) seek to influence or control these mechanisms][6];
- c. Protect workers and take reasonable steps to prevent accidents, injury and disease arising from, associated with, or occurring in the course of work;
- d. Provide training to its employees where required;
- e. Promote safe and healthy working conditions;
- f. Avoid the use of forced labour and child labour;
- g. Promote emergency prevention; and
- h. Request that each Grantee and their sub-contractors adhere to the conditions in a)–g) inclusive of this Standard.

[6] Belize Labour Act, Chapter 297, Revised Edition 2000. Laws of Belize. The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) or Cartagena Convention is a regional legal agreement for the protection of the Caribbean Sea.

Compliance with this Standard shall be managed through the ESIA process. Additionally, these requirements shall be included in any grant agreements signed with an Applicant/Grantee in respect of the Project in a form substantively like the above.

The Applicant/Grantee will inform its workers of the grievance mechanism at the time of recruitment and make it easily accessible to them. The mechanism should involve an appropriate level of management and address concerns promptly, using an understandable and transparent process that provides timely feedback to those concerned, without any retribution. The mechanism should not impede access to other judicial or administrative remedies that might be available under the law or through existing arbitration procedures, or substitute for grievance mechanisms provided through collective agreements.

As it pertains to Occupational Health and Safety, the Applicant/Grantee will provide a mechanism for workers to raise workplace concerns. The Applicant/Grantee will provide a safe and healthy work environment, considering inherent risks in its sector and specific classes of hazards in the Applicant/Grantee's work areas, including physical, chemical, biological, and radiological hazards, and specific threats to women. The Applicant/Grantee will take steps to prevent accidents, injury, and disease arising from, associated with, or occurring in the course of work by minimizing, as far as reasonably practicable, the causes of hazards. In a manner consistent with good international industry practice.



Box 1: Emergency Preparedness and Response

Where the Project involves specifically identified physical elements, aspects and facilities that are likely to generate impacts, the Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan will establish and maintain an emergency preparedness and response system so that the Applicant/Grantee, in collaboration with appropriate and relevant third parties, will be prepared to respond to accidental and emergency situations associated with the Project in a manner appropriate to prevent and mitigate any harm to people and/or the environment. This preparation will include the identification of areas where accidents and emergency situations may occur, communities and individuals that may be impacted, response procedures, provision of equipment and resources, designation of responsibilities, communication, and periodic training to ensure an effective response. The emergency preparedness and response activities will be periodically reviewed and revised, as necessary, to reflect changing conditions.

ESS6: PHYSICAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Purpose

ESS6 recognizes that physical cultural heritage provides continuity in tangible forms between the past, present, and future. This Standard is consistent with the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and standards set by the Convention on Biological Diversity for the use of Cultural Assets. This ESS6 ensures that Physical Cultural Resources (PCR) are appropriately preserved, and their destruction or damage is appropriately avoided.

Objectives

- a. To protect physical cultural heritage from the adverse impacts of Project activities and support its preservation.
- b. To address physical cultural heritage as an integral aspect of sustainable development.
- c. To promote meaningful consultation with stakeholders regarding physical cultural heritage.
- d. To promote the equitable sharing of benefits from the use of physical cultural heritage.

Requirements for Compliance

For the purposes of this Standard, physical cultural resources are defined as movable or immovable objects, sites, structures, groups of structures that have archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, religious, aesthetic, or other cultural significance.

As outlined in the social risk screening process in the Environmental and Social Policy of the Belize Fund, all efforts must be made to ensure that the impact on physical cultural resources resulting from Project activities shall not contravene either Belize's national legislation or its obligations under relevant international environmental treaties and agreements. In this regard the Belize Fund will work with Applicants/Grantees to suitably assess the potential impacts of a Project in this regard. The Applicant/Grantee will consider potential Project impacts to cultural heritage and will apply the provisions of this Safeguard. The requirements of this Safeguard apply to PCR regardless of whether it has been legally protected or previously disturbed. The environmental and social risks and impacts identification process should determine whether the proposed location of a Project is in areas where PCR are expected to be found.

The implementation of the actions necessary to comply with this Standard shall be managed through the ESIA process, and the process therein shall identify whether the proposed location of a Project is in a(n) area(s) where physical cultural resources are expected to be found, and how the activities associated with a Project might impact on those same resources.

For any Project that is applicable, the Belize Fund shall request that the Applicant/Grantee works with all relevant stakeholders – including local communities and those agencies entrusted with the protection of physical cultural resources – in documenting the presence and significance of PCR and assessing the nature and extent of potential impacts on these resources. If the local communities are satisfied that the Project will not have significant damage on PCR, the Applicant/Grantee shall assess the nature and extent of potential impacts on these resources, and design and implement mitigation plans. The Applicant/Grantee will retain competent professionals to assist in this process and will follow the stakeholder engagement strategy outlined in ESS7 below.

ESS7: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION DISCLOSURE

Purpose

This ESS recognizes the importance of open and transparent engagement with stakeholders. Overall, stakeholder engagement, information disclosure and public participation are key elements of the environmental and social performance of projects approved by the Belize Fund. Effective stakeholder engagement can improve the environmental and social sustainability of a Project, enhance Project acceptance, and make a significant contribution to successful Project design and implementation.

Objectives

- a. To establish a systematic approach to stakeholder engagement.
- b. To assess the level of stakeholder interest and support for the Project.
- c. To promote and provide means for effective and inclusive engagement with Project-affected parties throughout the Project life cycle on issues that could potentially affect them.
- d. To ensure that appropriate Project information on environmental and social risks and impacts is disclosed to stakeholders in a timely, understandable, accessible, and appropriate manner and format.

Requirements for Compliance

The Belize Fund shall:

- a. Require its Applicants/Grantees to conduct stakeholder engagement proportionate to the nature and scale of the Project in both its planning phase and throughout that Project life cycle;
- b. Where appropriate, itself conducts stakeholder engagement directly to support its mission and;
- c. Operate in an accountable and transparent manner and ensure stakeholder participation while always facilitating reasonable public access to pertinent information related to the Belize Fund-financed Projects and their implementation.

Applicants/Grantees shall be required to establish a systematic approach to stakeholder engagement that shall help them identify stakeholders and build and maintain constructive relationships with them throughout the entire Project's duration.

In a Proposal, each Applicant shall disclose a description of the stakeholders consulted to date, a summary of the feedback received to date and a brief explanation of how this feedback was taken (or not) into account.

Each Applicant shall be required to confirm that they are willing to develop and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (SES) in the Project planning phase and throughout that Project life cycle proportionate to the nature and scale of the Project and its potential risks and impacts. This SES might include the following information:

- a. Stakeholder identification and analysis;
- b. Plan for how stakeholder engagement will take place;
- c. Description of how suitable disclosure of information to stakeholders shall be organized;
- d. Outline of the consultation process with stakeholders; addressing and responding to grievances; and
- e. Explanation of the reporting stakeholders shall receive.

The Applicant/Grantee shall maintain and disclose as part of the environmental and social assessment, a documented record of stakeholder engagement, including a description of the stakeholders consulted, a summary of the feedback received and a brief explanation of how the feedback was considered, or the reasons why it was not.

The Applicant/Grantee shall identify the different stakeholders, both Project-affected parties and other interested parties.

The Applicant/Grantee shall identify those Project-affected parties (individuals or groups) who, because of their circumstances, may be disadvantaged or vulnerable. Based on this identification, the Applicant/Grantee will further identify individuals or groups who may have different concerns and priorities about Project impacts, mitigation mechanisms and benefits, and who may require different, or separate, forms of engagement. An adequate level of detail will be included in the stakeholder identification and analysis to determine the level of communication that is appropriate for the Project.

Depending on the potential significance of environmental and social risks and impacts, the Applicant/Grantee may be required to retain independent third-party specialists to assist in the stakeholder identification and analysis to support a comprehensive analysis and the design of an inclusive engagement process.

In consultation with the Belize Fund, the Applicant/Grantee shall develop and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) (Annex 4) proportionate to the nature and scale of the Project and its potential risks and impacts. A draft of the SEP will be disclosed as early as possible, and the Applicant/Grantee will seek the views of stakeholders on the SEP, including on the identification of stakeholders and the proposals for future engagement. If significant changes are made to the SEP, the Applicant/Grantee will disclose the updated SEP.

The SEP shall describe the timing and methods of engagement with stakeholders throughout the life cycle of the Project as agreed between the Belize Fund and the Applicant/Grantee, distinguishing between Project-affected parties and other interested parties. The SEP will also describe the range and timing of information to be communicated to Project-affected parties and other interested parties, as well as the type of information to be sought from them.

The SEP shall be designed to consider the main characteristics and interests of the stakeholders, and the different levels of engagement and consultation that will be appropriate for different stakeholders. The SEP will set out how communication with stakeholders will be handled throughout Project preparation and implementation. It will also determine a detailed timeline for implementation, as well as a budget to cover all the required resources.

The Applicant/Grantee shall disclose Project information to allow stakeholders to understand the risks and impacts of the Project and potential opportunities.

The Applicant/Grantee shall provide stakeholders with information on:

- The purpose, nature, and scale of the Project;
- The duration of proposed Project activities;
- Potential risks and impacts of the Project on local communities, and the proposals for mitigating these;
- The proposed stakeholder engagement process highlighting the ways in which stakeholders can participate;
- The time and venue of any proposed public consultation meetings, and the process by which meetings will be notified, summarized, and reported;
- The process and means by which grievances can be raised and will be addressed and;
- Any additional data collection instruments, Project plans, frameworks and assessments that will complement the ESSF compliance undertaking.

Stakeholders must have opportunities to express their opinions about the proposed project in a manner that is free from fear of reprisals, negative consequences in their potential participation in the project activities, and any other retaliatory action. Stakeholder views, opinions, and concerns shall be considered in the final design of the proposed project.

The information will be disclosed in the primary languages of Project-affected parties, if necessary, and in a manner that is accessible and culturally appropriate. Additionally, Applicants/Grantees and the Belize Fund must meet required or obligatory information disclosure timeframes that have been agreed to by all partners and stakeholders.

ESS8: ACCOUNTABILITY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Purpose

The Belize Fund grievance procedure is designed to enable individuals or groups to direct grievances to the Belize Fund regarding concerns that they may have about Projects funded or partially funded by the Belize Fund and on the environmental and social performance of the Belize Fund. The Belize Fund will have a functional Grievance Procedure (GP) that receives these grievances, addresses relayed concerns, and facilitates resolution of the grievances. This GP and associated procedures ensure that grievances are dealt with appropriately in a fair, transparent, and standardized manner. It is an important tool to encourage good co-operation with stakeholders and all other third parties to maximize the likelihood of the Belize Fund being able to achieve its mission. This grievance procedure applies only to the Belize Fund and not to the Applicants/Grantees.

Objectives

To provide a mechanism, process, or procedure to receive and facilitate resolution of concerns and grievances of Project-affected parties arising in connection with the Project, about the Applicant/Grantee environmental and social performance.

Requirements for Compliance

The Belize Fund shall implement a grievance procedure that is formally approved by its Board and designed to address concerns promptly and effectively in a transparent manner that is culturally appropriate and readily accessible. The Belize Fund will inform the stakeholders about the grievance process and will make publicly available a record documenting the responses to all grievances received unless the grievance may endanger the well-being of any parties. The mechanism will also allow for anonymous complaints to be raised and addressed.

For the avoidance of doubt, the grievance procedure shall not prevent access to any judicial or administrative remedies available in Belize.

The Belize Fund shall encourage Applicants/Grantees to implement their own grievance procedures. The scope, scale and type of grievance mechanism required will be proportionate to the nature and scale of the potential risks and impacts of the Project.

The grievance procedure shall:

- a. Be made publicly available through its website, office space and any other official communication channel;
- b. Be based on international best practice standards for conservation trust funds;
- c. Provide a transparent, timely and consistent process for submission, review, and resolution, and explain that process
- d. Provide different ways in which users can submit their grievances, which may include submissions in person, by phone, text message, mail, e-mail or via a website
- e. Permit grievances to be submitted anonymously
- f. Require the Belize Fund to maintain a log for recording grievances
- g. Publicly advertise procedures, setting out the length of time users can expect to wait for acknowledgement, response, and resolution of their grievances
- h. Transparency about the grievance procedure, governing structure, and decision-makers; and
- i. An appeals process (including a Board Appointed Tribunal) to which unsatisfied grievances may be referred when resolution of grievance has not been achieved.

ESS9: GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Purpose

ESS9 recognizes the need to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of both men and women, increased well-being for both women and men, and recognizes the importance of both men and women being equally involved in the planning and management of the environment and its natural resources at all levels. It outlines the requirements to mainstream gender equality and equity into the Belize Fund-supported project activities.

Objectives

- a. To identify the potential adverse impacts and risks of gender-based exclusion or gender-based violence that can occur in a Project and to adopt the necessary measures to prevent, avoid or mitigate them.
- b. To engage women and men of all ages as stakeholders in the design, development and implementation of strategies and activities to be financed.
- c. Ensure the equal access of women and men to Project resources and benefits.

Requirements for Compliance

The Belize Fund shall require Applicants/Grantees to consider the equality and equity of men and women in all aspects of the Project activities, Project design and implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation, to promote and achieve gender equality and equity.

The Belize Fund shall require Applicants/Grantees to ensure that suitable organizational arrangements are made for gender mainstreaming in Project activities.

The Belize Fund shall require Applicants/Grantees to conduct a Gender Analysis as part of the ESIA process to identify inequalities as well as opportunities for gender mainstreaming in Project activities.

The Belize Fund shall require Applicants/Grantees to develop a Gender Action Plan (Annex 5) for each Project based on the results of the Gender Analysis, the details of which shall be in accordance with the scope and objectives of the Project, but which must include specific gender mainstreaming considerations and actions, as well as gender-sensitive performance indicators disaggregated by sex.

Applicants/Grantees are required to ensure gender-sensitive performance indicators disaggregated by gender are also included in the Project's results framework for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

The Belize Fund shall ensure that gender equality and equity are mainstreamed in its operations and its Projects through designing, implementing, and monitoring of operations and Projects in such a way that both women and men: a) receive culturally compatible social and economic benefits; b) do not suffer adverse effects during the development process; and c) receive full respect for their dignity and human rights.

The Belize Fund as well as Applicants/Grantees shall ensure that women have unfettered access to the Belize Fund and the Applicants/Grantees grievance procedures.

ESS9 applies to all projects (approved or to be approved) by the Belize Fund regardless of the funding programme/window. The applicability of certain requirements will be determined through due diligence and the use of the Environmental and Social Risks Screening Checklist.

ESS10: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Purpose

ESS 10 recognizes the need to ensure that Projects supported by the Belize Fund enhance opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to participate in, and benefit from, the Project in ways that do not threaten their unique cultural identities and well-being. ESS10 also recognizes the need for the approach to engaging Indigenous Peoples in Belize to be coherent and consistent for purposes of efficiency and effectiveness, and as such, the Belize Fund embraces substantial elements of the Indigenous Peoples Policy of the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT), which currently has probably the most comprehensive environmental and social safeguards framework for environmental Projects in Belize, based on global best practice.



Objectives

- a. To ensure that the Belize Fund-supported projects foster full respect for human rights, dignity, and aspirations.
- b. Identity, culture, and natural resource-based livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples are preserved and respected.
- c. To avoid adverse impacts of Projects on Indigenous Peoples or when avoidance is not possible, to minimize and/or mitigate such impacts.
- d. To promote sustainable development benefits and opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in a manner that is accessible, culturally appropriate, and inclusive.
- e. To obtain the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) of affected Indigenous Peoples for Project design and implementation.
- f. To recognize, respect and preserve the culture, knowledge, and practices of Indigenous Peoples.

Requirements for Compliance

- a. This ESS identifies Indigenous Peoples in specific geographic areas by the presence, in varying degrees, of:
 - b. Close attachment to ancestral and traditional or customary territories and the natural resources in them.
 - c. Customary social and political institutions.
 - d. Economic systems oriented to subsistence production.
 - e. An indigenous language, often different from the predominant language.
 - f. Self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group.

The Belize Fund will require that Applicants/Grantees:

Screen early for the presence of Indigenous Peoples in the Project area as part of the ESIA process, who are identified through the definitions above.

Undertake free, prior, and informed consultations with affected Indigenous Peoples to solicit informed participation in designing, implementing, and monitoring measures to (a) ensure a positive engagement in the Project (b) avoid adverse impacts, or when avoidance is not feasible, minimize, mitigate, or compensate for such effects; and (c) tailor benefits in a culturally appropriate way.

Undertake the environmental and social assessment, with involvement of Indigenous Peoples, to assess potential impacts and risks when a Project may have adverse impacts. Identify measures to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate adverse impacts.

Provide socioeconomic benefits in ways that are culturally appropriate, and gender and generationally inclusive. Full consideration should be given to options preferred by the affected Indigenous Peoples for provision of benefits and mitigation measures.

Make provisions in plans, where appropriate, to support activities to establish legal recognition of customary or traditional land tenure systems and collective rights used by Project affected Indigenous Peoples.

Where restriction of access of Indigenous Peoples to parks and protected areas is not avoidable, ensure that the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities participate in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of management plans for such parks and protected areas and share equitably in benefits from the parks and protected areas.

Refrain from undertaking commercial development of cultural resources or knowledge of Indigenous Peoples for the Belize Fund-supported Projects without obtaining their prior agreement to such development.

For those Projects where the environmental and social assessment identifies adverse effects on Indigenous Peoples, require that the Project develop a plan or a framework that (a) specifies measures to ensure that affected Indigenous Peoples receive culturally appropriate benefits and (b) identifies measures to avoid, minimize, mitigate or compensate for any adverse effects, (c) includes measures for continued consultation during Project implementation, grievance procedures, and monitoring and evaluation arrangements, and (d) specifies a budget for implementing the planned measures. Such plans should draw on indigenous knowledge and be developed in consultation with affected Indigenous Peoples.

Disclose documentation of the consultation process and the required Indigenous Peoples plan or framework, in a timely manner, before appraisal formally begins, in a place and accessible to key stakeholders including Project affected groups and NGOs in a form and language understandable to them.

Monitor the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples plan or framework.

Annexes

ANNEX 1: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISK SCREENING CHECKLIST

Refer to Environmental and Social Risk Screening Checklist – See Excel File “Belize Fund Social and Environmental Risk Screening Checklist List.”

ANNEX 2: PROJECT RISK CATEGORIZATION GUIDELINES

Project Risk Categorization Guidelines		
Category A	Category B	Category C
Projects located in or near sensitive and valuable ecosystems	Minor construction activities and maintenance of installations	Policy and strategy formulation
Projects located in or near areas with archaeological or historical sites or existing cultural and social institutions	Invasive field studies and surveys	Environmental and sustainable development analysis
Projects located in or near densely populated areas	Energy and Industry Installations	Monitoring and evaluation
Where resettlement may be required		Desk studies, workshops, meetings
Where there may be pollution impacts	Small and medium scale aquaculture and artisanal and industrial fisheries	Scientific research and non-invasive field studies and surveys
In regions where there are conflicts in natural resource allocation		Remote sensing and geospatial analysis
On lands or waters containing valuable resources (fisheries, minerals, medicinal plants, etc)	Climate adaptation Projects and ecosystem restoration	Capacity development, communication, and outreach
		Training programs

ANNEX 3: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

What is the Overall Project Risk Categorization?							
No.	Environmental and Social Standards	Triggered (Yes/No)	Summary (describe main issue and how it will be addressed)				Response Required for ESS
ESS1	ESS1: Environmental and Social Risk Management						
ESS2	Conservation and Sustainable Management of Biodiversity, Natural Habitats and Living Natural Resources						
ESS3	Pollution Prevention						
ESS4	Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement						
ESS5	Labor and Working Conditions						
ESS6	Physical Cultural Resources						
ESS7	Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure						
ESS8	Accountability and Grievance Procedures						
ESS9	Gender Mainstreaming						
ESS10	Indigenous Peoples						
Additional ...							
ESS/Risk No.	Identified Risks	Mitigation Measures/Actions	Responsible Person	Training Required	Completed by When	Means of Verification	Cost (if any)
Insert ESS#/risk ...							
New risk identified							

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Belize Fund is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the ESMF and specific social and environmental management plans/measures, including the parameters to be measured.

Monitoring Activity	Purpose	Frequency	Expected Action	Roles and Responsibilities	Cost (if any)
Track progress of ESMP implementation					
Development of specific assessments					
Development of specific management plans					
<i>Insert as needed</i>					

ANNEX 4: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Stakeholder engagement refers to a process of sharing information and knowledge, seeking to understand and respond to the concerns of others, and building relationships based on collaboration. Stakeholder engagement is an on-going process that builds a positive relationship between the project and its stakeholders.

This form provides an indicative structure for a Stakeholder Engagement Plan. The purpose of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is to demonstrate stakeholders' participation and involvement in the project and activities. This document can be a stand-alone plan or embedded into a wider management plan.

Introduction

- Background
- Project Description
- Purpose of SEP

Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

- Stakeholder Mapping and Identification
- Stakeholder Analysis
- Stakeholder Engagement Conducted Up to Date

Stakeholder Engagement

- Objectives of SECP
- Principles of Engagement
- Strategies for Engagement
- Planned Engagement Schedule

Communication with Stakeholders

- Describe how you will communicate with the stakeholders, what kind of media you will be using, and what kind of messages you want to communicate.

Information Disclosure

Engagement is central to the management of risks and impacts on those affected by the implementation of the project. The disclosure of information is equally relevant to good governance and good business. Include here the information to be disclosed and the manner of disclosure.

Grievance Mechanism

The Grievance Mechanism (GM) is a procedure that provides a clear and transparent framework for addressing grievances related to the planning and implementation process for the project and forms part of the SEP.

Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting

Monitoring and evaluation of stakeholder engagement is a process of periodically collecting information on the implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan and to understand current progress of implementation. In this process, monitoring and evaluation targets for the SEP are set and indicators are identified. By monitoring the SEP, the project team can continuously improve practices and implementation in the future, ensure transparency and accountability as it relates to the implementation process. Evaluation is conducted monthly and annually. The results of the evaluation will provide information for decision-making, revising engagement activities, improving initiatives for project operation, and also for deciding on future action.

The reporting of stakeholder engagement activities will be undertaken throughout the life of the project to help facilitate continuous improvement of the engagement process. The reporting on SEP will include monthly reports, consultants or staff reports, annual reports, meeting minutes, workshop reports, website and social media reports, media articles and reporting, and other reporting tools.

ANNEX 5: GENDER ACTION PLAN

Gender Action Plan explains the gender-related risks, challenges, and opportunities of the grant/project and the actions to manage them and seize their opportunities.

Conservation International (2019) defines gender as a social construct that refers to the relative roles between and among the sexes. It encompasses the economic, political, and socio-cultural attributes, constraints, and opportunities associated with being male or female.

The GAP can vary in length and format, but should include the four main components highlighted in the GEF's Gender Equality Guidelines, namely: a) Background linking the GAP to the gender analysis; b) Strategies and activities responding to the gaps and opportunities identified in the analysis; c) Monitoring and Evaluation – how project will track gender impact, and; d) Resources dedicated to these activities.

Introduction

- Introduction

Gender Analysis

- Gender analysis is the analytical process used to identify, understand, and describe:
- Do those key stakeholders consulted include individuals or groups with a gender perspective (e.g., ministries of women, nongovernment organizations focused on promoting gender equality, women's rights, or the empowerment of women)?
- Is there a balanced gender representation among key stakeholders?
- Is there at least one stakeholder that has the skills, expertise, and capability to integrate gender? Reference FAO.

A Gender Analysis:

- determine the relevance of gender dimensions to the activity's success and sustainability;
- identify gender-differentiated impacts and risks (e.g., as part of the environmental and social safeguard analysis), and identify factors that limit or facilitate equal participation of women and men in the program/project;
- identify any specific gender differences, including women's and men's different roles, needs, priorities, capacities and vulnerabilities relevant to the activity;
- identify any gender gaps (e.g., access to and control over natural resources, access to benefits and services, and participation and decision-making) that the activity could address to support program/project results and sustainability.

Issues/Gaps	Summary/Analysis	Comments
Practices and participation: peoples' behaviors and actions in life and how they vary by gender and social group		
Access to, and control of, resources: one's ability to use financial and other resources or assets.		
Knowledge, <u>beliefs</u> and perceptions: social norms of, and about, women, men, girls and boys		
Legal rights and status: how men and women are regarded and treated by the customary and formal legal codes and judicial systems.		
Power: the capacity to control resources and to make autonomous and independent decisions free of coercion.		
Impact: How might the project impact men and women of different ages and status?		

Gender Actions

Action	Summary/Description	Comments
List action		

ANNEX 6: LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The ESIA is an instrument to identify and assess the environmental and social impacts of a proposed grant/project, evaluate alternatives and design appropriate mitigation, management, and monitoring measures[1]. A Limited ESIA is to identify and evaluate the potential impacts (beneficial and adverse) of the proposed project. It should not be as comprehensive as an EIA.

The content of this document presents an indicative outline for a limited ESIA and its suggested content is aligned to the environmental legislation of Belize (Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations and its Amendments).

Executive Summary

- Summarizes significant findings and recommended actions

Introduction

- Background
- Scope
- Objective

Legal and Institutional Framework

- National Framework
- International Framework

Belize Fund Requirements

- Satisfaction of Belize Fund ESS
- Identification of gaps

Description of Grant/Project

- Description of the type and extent of Project activities, including duration, implementation schedule and sequencing, and proposed financial and human resources.
- Location, geographic, environmental, social, and temporal context
- Description of relevant sociocultural, institutional, historical, legal, and political contexts.

Description of Environment and Identification of Anticipated Impact

- Describes relevant physical, biological, and socioeconomic conditions.
- Description of existing physical cultural resources in the Project area, if any.
- Relevant environmental and social risks and impacts of the project, inclusive of those identified by ESS1-10.

Environmental Management Plan

- Includes mitigation measures implemented in accordance with the monitoring plan.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Describe issues when comparing various alternatives, inclusive of no-action.
- Makes recommendation for improved monitoring.

ANNEX 7: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The ESIA is an instrument to identify and assess the environmental and social impacts of a proposed grant/project, evaluate alternatives and design appropriate mitigation, management, and monitoring measures[1]. It shall include the development of suitable mitigation measures articulated in an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) which is a separate document. An ESMP is a result of an ESIA.

The content of this document presents an indicative outline for an ESIA, following the World Bank ESSF (2019) and its suggested content is aligned to the environmental legislation of Belize (Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations and its Amendments).

ESIAs shall be conducted in line with the requirements of the national legislation. The EIA Regulations define an EIA as “the studies needed in identifying, predicting, evaluating, mitigating and managing the environmental, and key social and economic impacts of development projects, undertakings, programmes, policies or activities, the report of which is presented in a written document called the Environmental Impact Assessment Report”.

Executive Summary

- Summarizes significant findings and recommended actions

Introduction

- Background
- Scope

Legal and Institutional Framework

- National Framework including Environmental Protection Act and Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations
- International Framework

Belize Fund Requirements

- Satisfaction of Belize Fund ESS
- Identification of gaps

Description of Grant/Project

- Description of the type and extent of Project activities, including duration, implementation schedule and sequencing, and proposed financial and human resources.
- Location, geographic, environmental, social, and temporal context
- Potential offsite investments that may be required (e.g., dedicated pipelines, access roads, power supply, water supply, housing, and raw material and product storage facilities)
- Project's primary suppliers.
- Description of relevant sociocultural, institutional, historical, legal, and political context.

Environmental and Social Baseline Data

- Baseline data that is relevant to decisions about project location, design, operation, or mitigation measures
- Describes relevant physical, biological, and socioeconomic conditions, including any changes anticipated before the project commences.
- Description of existing physical cultural resources in the Project area, if any.

Significant Environmental and Social Impacts and Effects

- Relevant environmental and social risks and impacts of the project.
- Identify and summarize anticipated adverse environmental and social impacts.

Mitigation Measures

- Identifies mitigation measures and significant residual negative impacts that cannot be mitigated and, to the extent possible, assesses the acceptability of those residual negative impacts.
- Identify and summarize mitigation measures with respect to each of the impacts identified above.
- Identifies differentiated measures so that adverse impacts do not fall disproportionately on the disadvantaged or vulnerable.
- Assesses the feasibility of mitigating the environmental and social impacts.

Analysis of Alternatives

- Systematically compares feasible alternatives to the proposed project site, technology, design, and operation—including the “without project” situation—in terms of their potential environmental and social impacts.
- Assesses the alternatives’ feasibility of mitigating the environmental and social impacts; the capital and recurrent costs of alternative mitigation measures, and their suitability under local conditions; and the institutional, training, and monitoring requirements for the alternative mitigation measures.

Mitigation Plan

Monitoring Plan

- Identify the monitoring measures to be used during the implementation phase and definitions of any thresholds that will signal the need for corrective actions.

Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Strategy

- Describe the processes to engage with the affected stakeholders and achieve their full participation in the ESIA process.
- See Stakeholder Engagement Plan Tool

Key Environmental and Social Measure

- Key environmental and social measures/actions and the timeframe for the grant/project to meet the requirements of the ESSs.

ANNEX 8: GRIEVANCE MECHANISM (GM) PROCEDURES

Refer to Belize Fund “Grievance Mechanism (GM) Procedures”.

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MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM FOR THE BLUE BONDS PROGRAM

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I. Introduction

This Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System is designed to guide the Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future (Belize Fund) to track the implementation of funded projects and its programmatic work. There will be an ongoing process to monitor and evaluate projects, learn how to improve documentation of results and impact, and inform stakeholders and the general public about relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the Belize Fund.

Subsequently, this system provides guidance required for monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of projects funded through the Blue Bonds Loan Agreement¹, via the grant agreement with the Belize Blue Investment Company (BIC). It will also provide guidance for the Belize Fund to develop and implement monitoring systems, track progress, and to produce relevant reports.

The Belize Fund views monitoring and evaluation as a participatory process which enables capacity building, understanding, and applies lessons learned from project experiences. All while ensuring that there is technical soundness and financial accountability.

For monitoring to lead towards desired results, it should be consistent and timely. It requires planning and coordination by all project participants. In conclusion, monitoring and evaluation is expected to help projects measure the progress made towards targets and intended goals, achieve sustainability, allow for replicability, and provide opportunities to communicate lessons learned.

¹ Conservation Funding Agreement. 2021. Belize Blue Investment Company, LLC.

1.1 Purpose

The M&E system is developed for various reasons and is expected to meet demands at multiple levels of the organization. This system was developed to guide funding efforts under the Blue Bonds Program and help achieve long-term results using an established baseline and tracking process. A straightforward M&E system is required to generate information necessary for monitoring, improving performance, learning, control, and strategic development and growth.

Likewise, the M&E system is aligned and guided with global conservation best practice standards². In addition, the framework encourages the use of existing information to avoid duplicating efforts from other monitoring and evaluation tools.

This system is developed in alignment with the Conservation Finance Alliance best practice standards:

- **Standard 1:** Programs/Projects to include monitoring and evaluation indicators that support evidence-based reporting of conservation, sustainable development, or climate action impacts.
- **Standard 6:** Support grantees by providing clear reporting templates, frameworks, and information on M&E performance.
- **Standard 7:** Establish indicators and measures in the grant agreement.
- **Standard 8:** Mobilize staff, and often the grantee itself to monitor grantees' progress.

In principle, M&E best practices should result in providing clear and useful information to inform continuous improvement and decision making.

1.2 Program Summary

Under the Blue Bonds program, there are two funding programs: Government Strategic Allocation (GSA) and Grants Award Program (GAP).

- GSA is open to the Government of Belize and the funding structure is to support the government and its relevant agencies to achieve the conservation commitments¹.
- GAP is open to the Belizean public and must fall under the purview of the Belize Fund's eligibility criteria and be directly linked to thematic areas.

The Belize Fund's Grants Manual for the Blue Bonds Program elaborates how projects should directly link to the Thematic Areas (TA). These Thematic Areas are:

TA 1: Protection for Biodiversity – aim to achieve effective **protection for biodiversity** focused on strategies and interventions that ensure **full protection** and **prevent depletion** or **loss of biodiversity**. Linked to Outcome 2: Increased **protection and effective management of coastal and marine areas** – See figure 1: Theory of Change.

TA 2: Sustainable Fisheries – aim to **support fisheries management** programs and initiatives that promote sustainable fishing and **help rebuild depleted stocks**. Linked to Outcome 1: **Reduced pressures** on Belize's coastal and marine resources – See figure 1.

² Conservation Finance Alliance. 2020. Practice standards for Conservation Trust Funds.

TA 3: Climate Resilience – aim to build and strengthen the **resilience of our ocean ecosystems** to ensure greater ability to adapt and survive the impacts of climate change on our coastal and marine resources. Linked to Outcome 4: **Resilient coastal and marine ecosystems** – See figure 1.

TA 4: Blue Business Innovation – aim to incubate and **support the growth of the Blue Economy** in Belize through innovative and **sustainable Blue Businesses**. Linked to Outcome 3: **Secured livelihoods and increased economic benefits** – See figure 1.

The Blue Bonds program also aligns with national and international plans and strategies such as the Global Biodiversity Framework³, Sustainable Development Goals⁴, Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan⁵ and Belize Mid-term Development Strategy Action Plan 2022- 2026⁶, and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action plan⁷. By directly aligning with targets such as those set forth, the Blue Bonds Program reinforces Belize's commitment to reducing pressures on coastal and marine resources, increasing protection and effective management of marine areas, securing livelihoods, and fostering resilient ecosystems. The alignment of the Blue Bonds program objectives with national and international plans and strategies, as outlined in Annex I, ensures that the program contributes significantly to Belize's efforts in achieving its national targets for environmental protection and sustainable development. In addition, the alignments will be used as references to support the evaluation process in identifying contributions towards national and international targets.

1.3 Monitoring & Evaluation Approach

The Belize Fund will monitor and evaluate the performance of its grants (both individually and in aggregate at the portfolio level) and the overall performance of the Blue Bonds Program. The Belize Fund is expected to build its reputation and be more likely to attract additional funding streams and act as a model conservation trust fund.

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) approach builds on the collective results/outcomes of the theory of change (See figure 1). The M&E system emphasizes an approach to improve scope and impact within the Belize Fund's programs. Therefore, M&E is not a tick-box exercise as it feeds into the Belize Fund's Annual Impact Report which reflects the work achieved at the end of each programmatic year. Below are some key considerations on what the M&E approach focuses on:

- Progress tracked quantitatively using indicators.
- Data collected and validated on indicators through regular monitoring.
- The recipients and the Belize Fund are aware of the requirements for monitoring and reporting on established indicators.

³ Conservation on Biological Diversity. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Section H, 2030 Targets (W/guidance notes). <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/>.

⁴ United Nations, The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. An opportunity for Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/G.2681-P/Rev.3), Santiago, 2018.

⁵ Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI). 2016. Belize Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan. CZMAI, Belize City.

⁶ Plan Belize. Medium-Term Development Strategy. Transforming Belize to a more inclusive and sustainable country through education, innovation, investment, and good governance. 2022 – 2026.

⁷ National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2020). Belize National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, Belize Forest Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment and Sustainable Development.

Each approved project should be contributing to at least one (1) outcome from the program’s Theory of Change and linked to and including indicators at the Blue Bonds Program level (See Section 2: Monitoring Framework), to measure performance. All indicators should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound).

It is vital for the Belize Fund to aggregate its indicators from across projects to allow meaningful monitoring, evaluation, and reporting under the program. With each approved project, there will be a diverse contribution to **cross-cutting indicators**.

The cross-cutting indicators are data and information that will be gathered and consolidated based on the project reports submitted to the Belize Fund. The metrics presented in the table below are relevant across multiple aspects or components of the Blue Bonds program. These indicators provide a comprehensive view of program performance and impact by assessing various dimensions simultaneously. These indicators are helpful in assessing the program by providing: (i) a holistic assessment, (ii) efficiency and effectiveness, (iii) impact measurement, (iv) identifying interconnections, and (v) communication and reporting. Therefore, this will facilitate informed decision-making, improve accountability, and enhance the overall management and success of the program.

Table I: Cross-cutting Indicators

Cross-cutting Indicators	Disaggregated
Number of	... persons hired (Gender and Age) ... persons trained ... persons benefitting from projects
Funds	... disbursed ... leveraged ... generated ... invested
Area	... patrolled ... protected ... restored ... with improved management (*Management Effectiveness Score)
Number of	... grants/projects awarded
Number of	... patrols ... infractions reported ... arrests
Number of	... grants awarded ... stakeholders engaged ... communities engaged ... species protected ... protected areas supported ... management plans ... critically/endangered species protected ... blue businesses supported ... community members with improved livelihoods ... commercial species with improved management

Implementation Process:

During each grant cycle the Belize Fund expects to have successful project recipients. Through these recipients the Belize Fund will be collecting information via their respective projects towards aligned indicators illustrated in the Blue Bonds program results matrix (Annex 2). The Belize Fund will guide data collection in consolidating secondary information and local knowledge through project documents and engagement of stakeholders. Literature review, project report reviews along with review of the means of verification, key informant reviews, and in-person field visits will be the modalities. The steps to follow are outlined below:

Step 1: Mapping the indicators

Each recipient would have developed their project level-logical framework, with the format presented in Annex 3 template. These project level indicators should be aligned with the Belize Fund Blue Bonds program outcomes. This would have been discussed, reviewed, and accepted during the project development stage with the Belize Fund.

Step 2: Develop a project monitoring and evaluation plan

Thereafter, upon acceptance of the project logical framework, a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (M&E) plan (Annex 4) is jointly developed with the recipient. This is a collaborative effort between the Belize Fund and awarded recipient to develop such tool for monitoring of timeframes, project progress, project updates, roles & responsibilities, and submission dates of reports (i.e., progress reports). The objective of the M&E plan will help track and assess performance of interventions regarding indicators and different implementation timeframes throughout the project lifecycle. Therefore, it will help with:

- What data will be collected;
- How data will be tracked;
- When collected data will be analyzed to ascertain project progress in relation indicators;
- When and how information will be disseminated;
- Roles and responsibilities of implementors.

Step 3: Routine data collection

The data is to be collected by the Belize Fund and fed into the Belize Fund's M&E database. Based on the M&E plan, the reporting schedule would include either monthly or quarterly dates when the recipient is to provide updates via the monitoring and tracking tool. The tracking tool serves as the main tool along with the means of verification, which provides secondary information for the Belize Fund to feed data into its M&E database. The monitoring and tracking tool are updated jointly by the Belize Fund and project recipient and will serve as updated reports to be utilized for analysis on project performance. Thereafter, based on the project performance, with regards to the activities and indicators, monitoring visits would be scheduled to discuss the grant's results and areas of improvements.

Step 4: Monitoring visits

After the M&E plan is finalized with the project recipient, the Belize Fund would follow the agreed monitoring schedule to conduct monitoring visits to gather data and information on project progress. These monitoring visits include site visits and/or check-in visits (virtual and/or in-person).

Note that the Belize Fund M&E team and project recipient(s) would propose a schedule for the recipient to upload and provide the supporting documents/ means of verifications (MOVs) prior to monitoring

visits. The MOVs provide data and information on project progress and implementation, and therefore provide the context to model the visits and discussion prior to scheduling on the ground visits. In having the MOVs on-hand, the monitoring visit serves as a validation session to review and discuss the MOVs. The monitoring visits also serve the purpose of identifying and addressing challenges and delays. These visits can include discussions related to financial matters but would be spearheaded by the Belize Fund's financial team.

Each site visit will result in a visit/monitoring report that outlines the main observations and findings during the visit. The reports are completed with a view to assess and guide the Belize Fund to provide feedback and implement mitigation measures, where required.

Step 5: Data analysis

The data will be analyzed to allow the Belize Fund to make programmatic adjustments as necessary with a view towards improving the overall implementation and results of the program. The Blue Bonds program indicators will be measured against established baselines and targets, and where baselines do not exist, it will be derived from project design documents. The Belize Fund staff will collect this information from each project recipient at minimum quarterly intervals to review project implementation and to focus on indicator progress. The information provided in project performance reports will be summarized in nominal, number, and percentage figures to reflect results.

Step 6: Data dissemination

Each project will be evaluated, and findings shared to inform decision-making and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of program implementation. The results of the analysis will be disseminated to all relevant stakeholders and shared with implementers through a systematic feedback mechanism including meetings and workshops. Reports and infographics will be generated to share the information collected by the program. Data and information will also be disseminated at the community level via community discussions and the Belize Fund's media pages. Lastly, information will be shared at national and international level via presentations, reports, stakeholder meetings and discussions.

Knowledge Management

One of the most important components of the M&E system is the use of analyzed data for decision making and program implementation through increased efficiency and effectiveness. Collected data and information that is compiled after data analysis must be circulated to entities at the implementation level and to other key stakeholders for the design of appropriate interventions for future implementation. Every effort must be made to ensure that data dissemination and use is an integral part of the M&E system for all stakeholders.

The data gathered and information generated from the Blue Bonds program will be used to:

1. Highlight successful strategies or program activities or components for replication, scale-up, etc.;
2. Determine whether program targets are being reached;
3. Determine whether program resources are being used effectively;
4. Identify weaknesses in the program that need improvement or phase-out; and
5. Inform planning, resource distribution, reprogramming activities, identification of resources, and the establishment of timelines throughout implementation.

I.4 Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (TOC) describes how an intervention will deliver the planned results. The TOC sketches the sequence of causes and effects, beginning with the Fund's interventions and ending with an intended outcome. It gives a common framework for understanding the aim to be accomplished through the Blue Bonds Program and how this will be achieved⁸.

Furthermore, the TOC maps the Belize Fund's vision for the Blue Bonds program work and reach. Through the TOC, stakeholders can better guide themselves to align with the Belize Fund's targets and by extension help to support internal and external planning and evaluation of projects to deliver effective and efficient results.

The desired state reflects the change in the condition of Belize's coastal and marine environment that the Belize Fund expects to achieve through its funding. The TOC is built on the principle that by building resilient marine and coastal ecosystems, this will support local livelihoods, the blue economy and improve our natural heritage. The TOC highlights the interconnection and benefits between the natural world and human systems.

Drivers of change are defined as (i) direct - those that provide negative physical impacts, or (ii) indirect - those that do not provide direct impact but still lead to negative results.

Through development of the TOC, both direct and indirect drivers or threats were identified:

- **Direct:** sewage and agricultural run-off (nutrient pollution); overfishing; illegal, unregulated & unreported fishing (IUU) fishing; habitat destruction; unsustainable tourism; unsustainable coastal development and land reclamation.
- **Indirect:** insufficient enforcement; incomplete and inadequate policy and legislative framework.

Brief explanation on the **Theory of Change** outcomes:

Outcome 1: Reduced pressures on Belize's coastal and marine resources

Due to lack of financial and human resources to implement and manage existing marine protection and ensure sustainable use, Belize's coastal and marine resources face intense pressure from overfishing and unsustainable coastal development. Therefore, the outcome focuses on programs and strategies to reduce pressures through more sustainable use.

Outcome 2: Increased protection and effective management of coastal and marine areas

The ocean contains unique biodiversity, provides valuable food resources and is a major sink for anthropogenic carbon. In contrast to marine protected areas, the outcome focuses on Belize's entire ocean (Exclusive Economic Zone and Territorial Seas). In essence, a substantial increase in ocean protection could have triple benefits, by protecting biodiversity, boosting the yield of fisheries, and securing marine carbon stocks that are at risk from human activities.

Marine protected areas offer one of the best options to maintain Belize's ocean health. Ecological benefits come from protecting species, habitats, and ecosystem functions with these benefits translating to

⁸Conservation International, 2013. Constructing theories of change models for Ecosystem-based Adaptation projects: a guidance document. Conservation International. Arlington, VA.

economic opportunities and livelihoods of stakeholders. This leads to more marine life, higher productivity, and functional food webs.

Outcome 3: Secured livelihoods and increased economic benefits

The outcome focuses on enabling coastal communities to overcome uncertainties in practical and sustainable ways. Many Belizean communities have become disillusioned with and are unempowered to participate in decisions regarding the resources they depend on. Therefore, the Belize Fund's approach will begin to help the coastal communities and members, especially women, to develop an empowered approach.

Outcome 4: Resilient coastal and marine ecosystems

Part of the Belize Fund's mission is to help secure healthy and resilient coastal and marine ecosystems that provide essential resources to the country. The outcome focuses on management and restoration programs to build resiliency against natural events. With rising populations and growing urbanization there is the potential for significant loss and damage to coastal habitats. Therefore, the focus is to have coastal resiliency, to better adapt to climate change and other human induced threats.

THEORY OF CHANGE

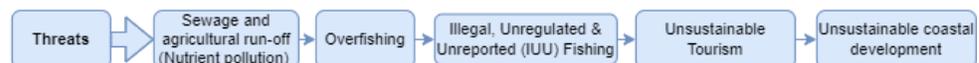
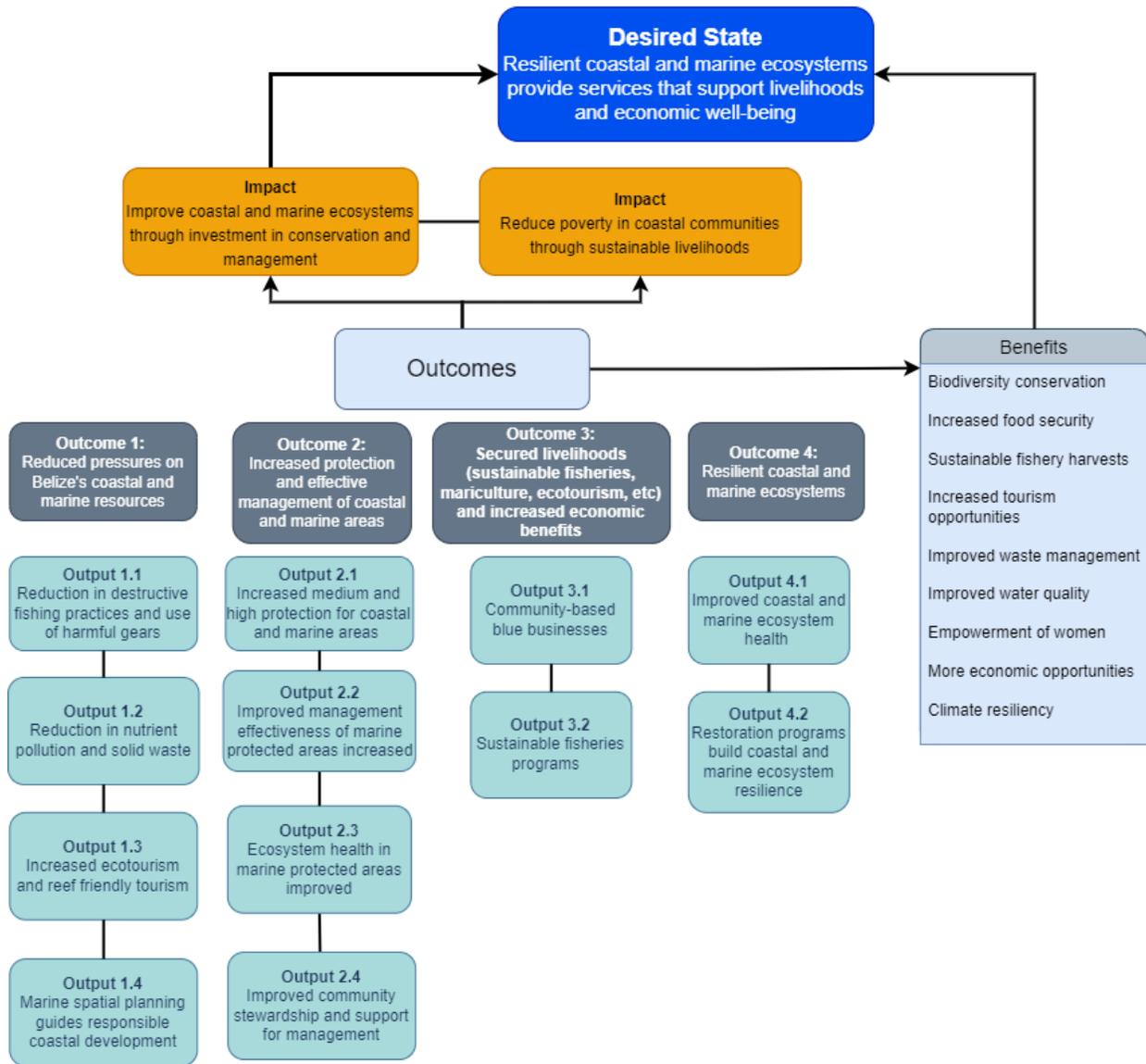


Figure 1: Illustrated is the theory of change, which describes how the Belize Fund expects to fund projects under the Blue Bonds program and the expected outcomes and impacts.

2. Monitoring Framework

The Monitoring Framework is an objective-oriented methodology used for project planning to help strengthen project design, implementation, and evaluation. It will serve as a communication tool amongst stakeholders and serve as the foundation for project monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring framework builds upon the Blue Loan Agreement and the legally binding Conservation Commitments contained within Exhibit A of the Conservation Funding Agreement. The monitoring framework will help the Belize Fund and stakeholders to:

- Organize thinking.
- Relate activities to expected results/outcomes.
- Set performance indicators.
- Allocate responsibilities.
- Communicate information on the project.

To help identify the process of monitoring and reporting, Figure 2 below (Credit: Senior Program Manager, Global TNC, Leah Carriere) presents the overall structure. The reporting structure for the Blue Bonds program involves a coordinated flow of information from the Government of Belize (GOB) to both the Belize Fund and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Initially, the GOB provides detailed reports on its conservation commitments, outlining progress, challenges, and actions taken to fulfill obligations. Subsequently, the Belize Fund consolidates this information into annual impact reports, offering a comprehensive overview of conservation efforts supported by the program, including contributions from government initiatives and grants awarded. Within the grants program, grantees receiving funding through both government allocation and competitive awards must submit project reports detailing implementation activities, outcomes achieved, and financial expenditures. These reports serve various purposes, including monitoring progress, ensuring accountability, informing decision-making, and facilitating learning and improvement. The TNC then aggregates the information from these reports to assess the overall effectiveness of conservation efforts, while also developing an annual impact report based on the data received. This comprehensive report synthesizes information on conservation outcomes, lessons learned, and recommendations for future actions, providing valuable insights for stakeholders and guiding strategic decision-making processes to maximize positive impacts on Belize's biodiversity and ecosystems. Through this collaborative reporting framework, stakeholders work together to achieve shared conservation goals and promote sustainable development.

Belize Blue Bonds Monitoring and Reporting Structure

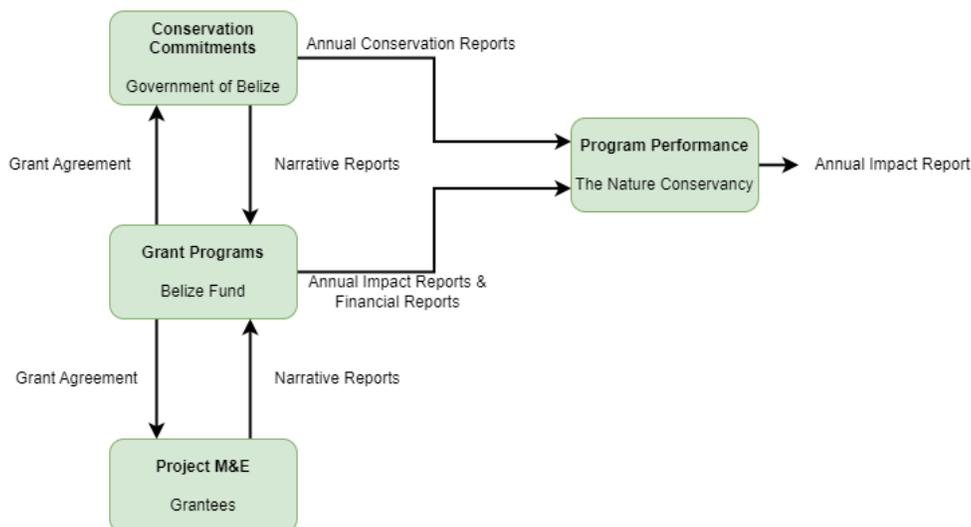


Figure 2: illustrates the monitoring and reporting structure between the Belize Fund, Government of Belize and The Nature Conservancy.

2.1 Government Strategic Allocation Monitoring Framework

The Conservation Funding Agreement¹ (CFA) specifically outlines conservation commitments, as detailed in Exhibit A. These commitments, incorporating Clause 1 & 2, represent the conservation milestones outlined in annex 5: conservation commitments results matrix, which Belize must meet within an 8-year period. However, the CFA extends over a 20-year (ending 2042) duration to allow continued monitoring and sustainability in implementing the conservation commitments. Included in the CFA are seven General Conservation Undertakings that are separate from the milestones and non-binding. However, Belize is expected in good faith to uphold and comply in meeting the undertakings. The undertakings include aquaculture, fisheries, blue carbon, managed access program evaluation, environmental impact assessment regulations, meeting minimum world heritage sites standards, and watershed management.

These commitments aim to support marine conservation, blue economy, and improve the management of Belize's ocean and coastal areas. Notably, these initiatives are to be spearheaded by the Government of Belize through the Blue Bonds and Finance for Permanence Unit (BBFP).

As such, within Annex 5 the table was designed to facilitate the tracking, monitoring, and evaluation of progress towards the milestones. Furthermore, the milestones as represented by Key Performance Indicators (KPI) have been incorporated within the Blue Bonds program Monitoring Framework (reference Figure 1) outcomes/outputs. It is imperative that the BBFP utilizes this information for comprehensive monitoring and reporting purposes, ensuring alignment with the overarching conservation objectives. Additionally, while these commitments align with the Government Strategic Allocation program, the Grants Award Program is expected to contribute towards the achievement of each commitment.

2.2 Blue Bonds Program Monitoring Framework

The Blue Bonds Program results matrix is a management tool to improve the design and implementation of GAP project interventions. This results matrix (Annex 2) was developed for the Blue Bonds Program and also incorporates the conservation commitments. The information gathered from project M&E activities will be essential for effective management, planning initiatives and evaluation of the activities funded by the Belize Fund. Therefore, the impact of the Belize Fund can also be evaluated via the program outcomes. Using the results matrix, the Belize Fund will be able to determine the fidelity of program implementation; monitor program change; help explain the program to interested individuals, potential funding sources, and the general public. This tool will help to provide clear, strategic, and logical thinking in project design. It shows a vertical arrangement of the outcome statements to allow readers to follow from one level of success to the next. The Logframe also reflects the TOC, which describes what positive changes the Belize Fund's programs should be contributing (See Figure 1).

Stakeholders can familiarize themselves with the complete monitoring framework to develop their projects to aid in monitoring and evaluation of funded projects. The results matrix allows project teams to work through decisions when synthesizing a project, producing their own matrix that outlines the implementation strategy as well as the desired outcomes for M&E purposes.

Table 2: list of the program framework outputs/ outcomes and their respective indicators.

Outcome/ Outputs	Indicators
Outcome 1: Reduced pressures on Belize's coastal and marine resources.	1.1 Number of positive interventions implemented
Output 1.1: Reduction in destructive fishing practices and use of harmful gears	1.1.1 Number of fishers using sustainable fishing practices
Output 1.2: Reduction in nutrient pollution and marine plastic pollution	1.2.1 Number of improved water quality and waste management systems implemented
	1.2.2 Number of plastic waste reduction programs implemented
Output 1.3: Increased ecotourism and reef friendly tourism	1.3.1 Number of tourism businesses implementing reef friendly or eco practices
Output 1.4: Marine spatial planning guides responsible coastal development	1.4.1 BSOP is legislated and implemented
Outcome 2: Increased protection and effective management of coastal and marine areas	2.1 Number of hectares of coastal and marine areas under protection
Output 2.1: Increased medium and high protection for coastal and marine areas	2.1.1 Number of hectares of increased medium and high protection areas

Outcome/ Outputs	Indicators
Output 2.2: Improved management effectiveness of marine protected areas increased	2.2.1 Number of MPAs with increased management effectiveness ⁹
	2.2.2 Number of Green Listing applications submitted
Output 2.3: Ecosystem health in marine protected areas improved	2.3.1 Number of sites with improved ecosystem health
Output 2.4: Improved community stewardship and support for management	2.4.1 Number of stakeholders engaged in MPA management
	2.4.2 Number of stakeholders engaged in outreach and training programs
Outcome 3: Secured Livelihoods and increased economic benefits	3.1 Number of persons earning income from improved livelihoods in the blue space
Output 3.1: Community-based blue businesses	3.1.1 Number of persons benefiting from blue business projects
Output 3.2: Sustainable fisheries programs	3.2.1 Number of persons benefiting from sustainable fisheries projects
Outcome 4: Resilient coastal and marine ecosystems	4.1 Number of hectares of healthy/resilient coastal and marine ecosystems
Output 4.1: Improved coastal and marine ecosystem health	4.1.1 Number of sites with improved ecosystem health
	4.1.2 Number of MPAs with increased management effectiveness
Output 4.2: Restoration programs build coastal and marine ecosystem resilience	4.2.1 Number of hectares of restored coastal and marine ecosystems
	4.2.2 Number of coastal communities engaged in restoration programs

⁹ A cross-cutting indicator with indicator 4.1.2. As such is referred in Outcome 2 & 4 as the means of verification contributes to both outcomes.

Each indicator of the Blue Bonds Program M&E Framework has an indicator reference sheet to provide guidance on how the indicator should be measured.

I.1 Number of positive interventions implemented

Description	The outcome indicator is a summation of output indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4, each of which contributes to the number of positive interventions financed through the GAP. Intervention is defined as whether there is a confirmed contribution to the output indicators. For example, “number of plastic waste reduction programs implemented” is calculated as a ‘positive intervention’ for the outcome indicator if during or at the conclusion of the project it is confirmed that the project implemented a plastic waste reduction program. As such, each output indicator is used to evaluate the number of positive interventions implemented. The indicator is also objectively measured using the percentage of projects completed with an evaluation score above 70%.
Data Source	Grant Impact Report and Evaluation reports
Suggested Methodology	Periodic site visits, stakeholder feedback, and photographic evidence will be used to verify and document interventions. A central database will manage the collected data, enabling analysis and reporting to track progress and improve future project planning and implementation.
Disaggregated by	Number of projects with evaluation score of 70% or above

I.1.1 Number of fishers using sustainable fishing practices

Description	This indicator measures the quantity of fishers who adopt environmentally responsible and ecologically sound fishing techniques and equipment in their operations. This indicator assesses the extent to which fishing communities prioritize sustainability in their practices, focusing on gear that minimizes bycatch, reduces habitat damage, and supports the long-term health of marine ecosystems. Sustainable fishing gears may include selective methods that target specific species, use escape devices for non-target species, or avoid damaging sensitive
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habitats. By quantifying the number of fishers embracing sustainable gear, the metric provides insights into the industry's commitment to responsible fishing practices, contributing to the conservation of marine biodiversity and the maintenance of resilient and productive fisheries. This indicator assists in evaluating the impact of sustainable fishing initiatives, promoting environmentally friendly fishing practices, and ensuring the long-term viability of global fisheries.

Data Source	Survey reports
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data will involve combination of questionnaires distributed to focus groups, fishers' interviews, collaboration with fishing communities, and engagement with fisheries management organizations. A desk review of reports will also help validate and provide collated information. Data and information will also be validated via field visits and discussions.
Disaggregated by	Types of fishing gears and number of fishers (age & gender)

1.2.1 Number of improved water quality and waste management systems implemented

Description	The indicator measures the implementation and effectiveness of projects aimed at enhancing water quality and waste management systems. This includes the number of initiatives such as the installation of water filtration systems, wastewater treatment systems, and introduction of sustainable water management practices aimed at reducing pollution and improving the quality of water bodies in project areas. Additionally, it encompasses the number of projects involving the establishment or upgrading of waste collection, segregation, recycling, and disposal systems to manage plastics, hazardous and non-hazardous waste effectively. The indicator also measures quantitative improvements in water quality parameters (e.g., reduced contamination levels, improved pH balance) and waste management metrics (e.g., increased recycling rates, reduced landfill use) as a result of these interventions.
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Data Source	Inspection/ Assessment reports
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data will involve surveys, site inspection and monitoring visits.
Disaggregated by	Water quality parameters, type of water quality and waste management systems, and location,

I.2.2 Number of plastic waste programs implemented

Description	<p>This indicator measures the total number of plastic waste programs implemented as a result of initiatives funded by the Belize Fund. It specifically tracks the establishment and execution of projects aimed at decreasing plastic waste in marine and coastal environments. These programs include beach clean-ups, waste management improvements, recycling initiatives, and public awareness campaigns focused on reducing plastic waste from coastal and marine environments. This indicator monitors the success of local recycling programs by tracking the number of programs established and their capacity to divert plastic waste from landfills to recycling facilities. The programs may involve setting up new recycling centers, enhancing existing facilities, or initiating community-based recycling efforts. Public awareness campaigns are another critical aspect, with the indicator capturing the number of educational initiatives launched to inform the community about the importance of reducing, reusing, and recycling plastics. Overall, this indicator provides a comprehensive overview of the Belize Fund's efforts to implement programs that address plastic pollution, promote environmental stewardship, and encourage sustainable practices within the coastal and marine communities.</p>
Data Source	Project reports
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data will involve surveys, site inspection and monitoring visits.
Disaggregated by	Number of programs (Beach clean-ups, recycling programs, public awareness programs)

I.3.1 Number of tourism businesses implementing reef friendly or eco practices

Description	<p>This indicator measures the quantity of businesses and entities within the tourism industry that actively adopt and adhere to recognized best practices for sustainable and responsible tourism. This indicator assesses the commitment of tourism operators to environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and culturally sensitive practices, encompassing aspects such as plastic pollution management, energy efficiency, community engagement, and conservation efforts. By quantifying the instances of tourism operators implementing best practices, the metric measures the industry's dedication to minimizing its ecological footprint, supporting local communities, and preserving cultural heritage. Monitoring this indicator is crucial for evaluating the broader impact of tourism on destinations, promoting sustainable tourism models, and contributing to global efforts aimed at balancing tourism growth with environmental and social considerations.</p>
Data Source	Monitoring / Technical reports
Suggested Methodology	<p>Collecting data and information will involve a multi-faceted approach that integrates information from diverse sources. This will require interventions and collaboration with tourism associations and networks; stakeholder surveys, analysis of sustainability reports; review of certification programs, and accessing global or regional databases. Data and information will also be validated via discussions.</p>
Disaggregated by	Number of registered businesses; Number of best practice methods

I.4.1 BSOP is legislated and implemented

Description	<p>This indicator measures legislation and implementation of the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan (BSOP). The plan is expected to be completed by 2026. Thereafter, once completed the plan should outline how developments along Belize's coastal and marine areas should be compliant with said plan. The indicator will then be revised/update to</p>
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	reflect linkage with the BSOP to provide meaningful contribution to Belize marine conservation efforts.
Data Source	Approved & Legislated Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data and information will involve a comprehensive approach from various sources. It will require collaboration with local authorities; review of building codes and regulations; certification programs and standards; surveys; community engagement and analysis of ECPs & EIAs. The data and information will also be validated via field visits and discussions with the implementing entity and regulatory bodies.
Disaggregated by	Number of approved EIAs

2.1 Number of hectares of coastal and marine areas under protection

Description	This indicator measures the total extent of coastal and marine ecosystems designated as protected areas within a specific jurisdiction. This indicator reflects the commitment of the Governments of Belize and conservation authorities to safeguard critical habitats, biodiversity, and ecological processes in coastal and marine environments. The metric quantifies the spatial coverage of protected zones, including marine reserves, marine parks, and other conservation designations, emphasizing the importance of preserving these areas from detrimental human activities such as overfishing, habitat degradation, and pollution.
Data Source	Approved and gazetted Statutory Instrument & Geodatabase
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data and information will involve a comprehensive approach that integrates information from various sources, including government agencies, conservation organizations, and spatial databases. A review of the metadata and final approved maps will help validate and provide information. Data and information will also be collected via field visits and discussions.
Disaggregated by	Number of hectares; Number of protected areas, and approved maps

2.1.1 Number of hectares of increased medium and high protection areas

Description	This indicator measures the total land area designated and subject to conservation management practices aimed at preserving and enhancing biodiversity. This indicator reflects the commitment of authorities to safeguard ecosystems by implementing varying degrees of protection, ranging from medium to high levels, to mitigate the impacts of human activities such as habitat destruction, deforestation, overexploitation, and pollution. The metric quantifies the spatial coverage of areas where varying levels of conservation measures are applied, including wildlife reserves, national parks, and other protected zones.
Data Source	Approved and gazetted Statutory Instrument & Geodatabase
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data and information will involve a systematic approach that integrates information from various sources, including governmental agencies, conservation organizations, and spatial databases. A review of the metadata and approved & gazetted SI will help validate and provide information. Data and information will also be validated via field visits and discussions.
Disaggregated by	Approved and gazetted Statutory Instrument; Number of hectares of medium and high protection areas; Number of protected areas, and approved maps

2.2.1 Number of MPAs with increased management effectiveness

Description	This indicator measures the management effectiveness of marine protected areas, where efforts to enhance conservation outcomes and sustainable resource management have been successfully implemented. This crucial indicator assesses the commitment of authorities and conservation organizations to continually improve the efficacy of management practices within MPAs. The metric quantifies instances where strategies such as strengthened enforcement, enhanced monitoring, community engagement, and adaptive management have been successfully employed to bolster the protection of marine
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	ecosystems and biodiversity. Monitoring this indicator is essential for evaluating the success of conservation efforts, ensuring the resilience of marine ecosystems, and contributing to global initiatives focused on effective MPA management to mitigate the escalating threats facing marine environments.
Data Source	Management Effectiveness Scorecard
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data and information will involve collaboration with MPA authorities and organizations, and review of MPA management plans. A review of the ME report will help validate and provide information. Data and information will also be validated via field visits and discussions.
Disaggregated by	Management Effectiveness score and Number of protected areas

2.2.2 Number of green listing applications submitted

Description	This indicator measures the number of marine protected areas applications submitted to IUCN for consideration under Green Listing. The IUCN Green List is a global campaign for successful nature conservation. Therefore, it measures the quantity of designated marine conservation zones that have achieved exemplary status by meeting stringent criteria for effective management, biodiversity conservation, and sustainability. These green-listed MPAs are recognized for their success in implementing best practices, robust conservation measures, and adaptive management strategies. The metric reflects the commitment of authorities and stakeholders to not only establish protected areas but also to ensure their ecological integrity and positive impact on marine biodiversity.
Data Source	IUCN green listing application
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data and information will involve collaboration with conservation certification organizations (such as IUCN); review of the green listing criteria and assessment and information from various sources. A review of the IUCN acceptance will help validate and provide information. Data and information will also be validated via discussions.

Disaggregated by	Number of protected areas application submitted to be green listed and green listing score
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2.3.1 Number of sites with improved ecosystem health

Description	This indicator measures the number of sites with improved ecosystem health. The indicator can help identify if protected areas are being effectively managed, with the assumption that the protected area should be providing long-term solutions and impacts. Therefore, it measures the quantity of designated marine conservation zones where biodiversity, including the variety and abundance of species and ecosystems, has been effectively preserved or enhanced. This critical indicator reflects the commitment of authorities, conservation organizations, and stakeholders to sustain or improve the ecological health of protected areas. It encompasses successful strategies such as habitat protection, sustainable fisheries management, and effective enforcement to ensure the resilience and diversity of marine ecosystems.
Data Source	Annual biodiversity monitoring reports & Healthy reef report cards
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data and information will involve a systematic and thorough approach. It will be collected through review of biodiversity monitoring programs. A review of the biodiversity monitoring reports will help validate the data and provide information. Data and information will also be validated via field visits and discussions.
Disaggregated by	Number of sites by region and Number of ecosystem targets improved

2.4.1 Number of stakeholders engaged in MPA management

Description	This indicator measures the total number of stakeholders who are actively involved in the management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).
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For example, stakeholders engaged are those that are included within project activities rather than stakeholders that only partake in outreach activities. This refers to the participation, involvement, and contribution of various individuals, groups, or organizations in decision-making processes, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of activities related to the MPA. Engaged stakeholders can include persons that belong to local communities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), research institutions, private sector entities, and other relevant actors.

Data Source	Monitoring/ Annual Reports and attendance records
Suggested Methodology	To collect data on this indicator there needs to be a clear definition of stakeholders and categorizing their types of engagement. Use surveys, attendance logs, and participation records to track involvement in decision-making, planning, and implementation activities. Regularly update and analyze this data to ensure comprehensive measurement and reporting of stakeholder engagement.
Disaggregated by	Number of stakeholders participating (age and gender), Number of Locations

2.4.2 Number of stakeholders engaged in outreach and training programs

Description	This indicator measures the count of individuals or groups who actively participate in educational, awareness, and capacity-building activities organized by the project. These stakeholders may include local community members, government officials, NGO representatives, business owners, educators, students, and other relevant parties. Engagement in these programs involves attending workshops, seminars, training sessions, informational meetings, and other outreach events designed to enhance knowledge, skills, and awareness regarding environmental and social issues. Tracking this indicator is crucial for measuring the reach and impact of outreach efforts, ensuring diverse
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	stakeholder participation, and fostering informed and empowered communities.
Data Source	Monitoring/ Annual Reports and attendance records
Suggested Methodology	To collect data on this indicator, attendance records and reports need to be maintained to ensure an accurate count of participants. Observations and field notes are recorded during programs to capture qualitative data on stakeholder engagement. Follow-up interviews or focus group discussions are conducted with a sample of participants to gain deeper insights into their experiences and the impact of the training programs.
Disaggregated by	Number of participants (age and gender), Number of Locations

3.1 Number of persons benefitting from sustainable livelihoods in the blue space

Description	This indicator measures the number of individuals earning income from livelihoods in the blue space that have been improved within a specified context or program attributable to the GSA or GAP. This metric reflects the effectiveness of initiatives, interventions, or economic activities aimed at improving the economic well-being of individuals. The income may result from various sources, including employment opportunities, entrepreneurship ventures, skills training programs, or other socio-economic interventions. This indicator is essential for assessing the success of livelihood improvement efforts, economic development projects, or income-generating activities, providing valuable insights into the tangible benefits and economic empowerment experienced by individuals or communities as a result of specific interventions.
Data Source	Survey / Monitoring reports
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data and information will involve a targeted approach to assess individuals' financial streams and income sources. This includes baseline surveys; income tracking and financial records; payroll and employment records; community key informant interviews, and cross-

	verification with other indicators. Data will also be validated via field visits and discussions.
Disaggregated by	Number of job opportunities; number of persons earning income and percentage increase in income (???)

3.1.1 Number of persons benefiting from blue business projects

Description	This indicator measures the numerous benefits to local community members from blue business projects, contributing to sustainable development and improved livelihoods. These projects create employment opportunities in sectors such as sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, marine tourism, and marine conservation. This employment can be full-time, part-time, or seasonal, providing much-needed income stability for community members. Secondly, blue business projects stimulate local economies through increased business activities and investments, encouraging the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises and promoting economic resilience. Additionally, these projects often include training and capacity-building programs, which enhance the skills and knowledge of local workers, making them more competitive in the job market. By promoting sustainable practices, these projects help preserve marine ecosystems, ensuring that local communities can continue to rely on these resources for food, income, and cultural activities.
Data Source	Survey / Monitoring reports
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data and information involves surveys and questionnaires; employee surveys; collaboration with industry associations, and analysis of secondary data. A review of employment contracts will validate and provide additional information. Data and information will also be validated via field visits and discussions.
Disaggregated by	Number of employment opportunities and number of persons (age and gender)

3.2.1 Number of persons benefiting from sustainable fisheries projects

Description	<p>Sustainable fisheries projects offer a range of benefits to local community members, contributing to both economic stability and environmental conservation. These types of projects create employment opportunities by providing jobs in fishing and distribution, which ensures a steady income for local fishers and their families. Sustainable fisheries often implement practices that improve fish stock management, leading to healthier fish populations and more reliable catches, which directly benefits fishers by increasing their yields and income over time. Sustainable practices help preserve marine ecosystems, ensuring that future generations can also rely on these resources for their livelihoods. Moreover, sustainable fisheries projects often include training and capacity-building programs that educate fishers on best practices, new technologies, and compliance with environmental regulations. This not only enhances their skills and knowledge but also increases their competitiveness and resilience in the face of market fluctuations and environmental changes. Community members also benefit from improved food security, as sustainably managed fisheries contribute to a more stable and abundant supply of fish, which is a vital protein source. By promoting eco-friendly fishing methods, these projects help reduce the impact on non-target species and habitats, preserving biodiversity and the overall health of marine ecosystems.</p>
Data Source	Survey / Monitoring reports
Suggested Methodology	<p>Conduct surveys to track the number of individuals directly or indirectly benefiting from sustainable projects. Utilize questionnaires, interviews, or focus group discussions to gather data on beneficiaries' perceptions of project impacts and improvements in socio-economic conditions, livelihood opportunities, access to resources, or quality of life. Combine quantitative data from surveys with qualitative insights from interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the beneficiaries' experiences and the extent of project benefits.</p>

Disaggregated by	Number of persons (Age and gender), number of locations
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4.1 Number of hectares of healthy/ resilient coastal and marine ecosystems

Description	This indicator measures the total expanse of coastal and marine areas that exhibit robust ecological vitality, characterized by thriving biodiversity, resilient ecosystems, and sustainable management practices. This metric serves as a key indicator of the overall health and integrity of coastal and marine environments, encompassing a range of habitats such as coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, and open ocean ecosystems. It considers factors such as water quality, habitat diversity, and the absence of pollutants or human-induced stressors. This indicator provides crucial insights into the effectiveness of conservation and management efforts, reflecting the extent of preserved or restored ecosystems that contribute to climate resilience, support fisheries, and offer essential ecosystem services for coastal communities and biodiversity conservation.
Data Source	Habitat mapping and assessment report and HRI report
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data and information will involve a comprehensive approach that combines field assessments, remote sensing technologies, and ecological monitoring. This involves GIS mapping; field surveys and monitoring; habitat assessments; ecosystem services assessment; community involvement and citizen science; biodiversity inventories, and data validation and cross-verification. Data and information will also be validated via field visits and discussions.
Disaggregated by	Number of hectares of marine and coastal ecosystems

4.1.1 Number of sites with improved ecosystem health

Description	This indicator measures the health of specific geographic locations where positive ecological trends and improvements in environmental
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conditions have been observed over a defined period. This metric serves as a key indicator of successful conservation and management efforts, reflecting an enhancement in biodiversity, habitat quality, and overall ecosystem resilience. The assessment of increased ecosystem health considers various factors, including improvements in water quality, habitat restoration, reduced pollution, and effective conservation measures. This indicator provides valuable insights into the success of interventions aimed at fostering sustainable ecological conditions and contributes to the broader goals of biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and the promotion of healthy ecosystems.

Data Source	Habitat mapping and assessment report and HRI report
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data and information will involve baseline assessments; ecological monitoring programs; GIS mapping; WQM monitoring; habitat restoration; stakeholder interviews; expert consultations and survey; comparative analysis, and data-validation and cross verification. A review of the final RHI report will validate and provide additional information.
Disaggregated by	Number of sites; Ecosystems health score

4.1.2 Number of MPAs with increased management effectiveness

Description	This indicator measures the management effectiveness of marine protected areas, where efforts to enhance conservation outcomes and sustainable resource management have been successfully implemented. This crucial indicator assesses the commitment of authorities and conservation organizations to continually improve the efficacy of management practices within MPAs. The metric quantifies instances where strategies such as strengthened enforcement, enhanced monitoring, community engagement, and adaptive management have been successfully employed to bolster the protection of marine ecosystems and biodiversity. Monitoring this indicator is essential for evaluating the success of conservation efforts, ensuring the resilience of
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	marine ecosystems, and contributing to global initiatives focused on effective MPA management to mitigate the escalating threats facing marine environments.
Data Source	Management Effectiveness Scorecard
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data and information will involve collaboration with MPA authorities and organizations, and review of MPA management plans. A review of the ME report will help validate and provide information. Data and information will also be validated via field visits and discussions.
Disaggregated by	Management Effectiveness scores and Number of protected areas

4.2.1 Number of hectares of restored coastal and marine ecosystems

Description	This indicator measures the total area of previously degraded or damaged coastal and marine ecosystems that have undergone active restoration efforts and have been successfully rehabilitated to a healthier and more resilient state. This indicator reflects the scale of restoration initiatives, including projects focused on mangroves, coral reefs, seagrasses, and other critical marine habitats. The restoration process typically involves activities such as replanting, habitat enhancement, removal of invasive species, and mitigation of pollution, aiming to improve biodiversity, ecosystem services, and overall ecological functionality. Monitoring this metric provides valuable insights into the extent of successful habitat restoration, contributing to the conservation of marine biodiversity, sustainable fisheries, and the overall health of coastal ecosystems. The importance of carefully selecting locations that will provide the largest return on investment, not only for the probability and magnitude of restoration success, but also for ecosystem service outcomes, must be highlighted, implemented, and tracked.
Data Source	Spatial reports and geodatabase
Suggested Methodology	Collecting data and information will involve baseline assessments; GIS mapping; restoration project records; community engagement and

citizen science, and data validation and cross-verification. A review of the metadata and spatial maps will validate and provide information. Data and information will also be validated via discussions.

Disaggregated by Number of coastal ecosystems

4.2.2 Number of coastal communities engaged in restoration programs

Description This indicator measures the quantity of communities residing along coastlines actively participating in and contributing to habitat restoration initiatives. This involves stakeholder communities involved in project activities rather than just outreach. This indicator reflects the level of community involvement in efforts to rehabilitate and enhance the health of coastal ecosystems. Coastal communities are directly engaged in restoration programs through activities such as mangrove replanting, beach clean-ups, sustainable fishing practices, and the adoption of environmentally friendly behaviors. Monitoring this metric provides insights into the extent of community awareness, collaboration, and empowerment in the context of coastal conservation, emphasizing the importance of community-led initiatives in achieving sustainable coastal and marine ecosystem management.

Data Source Monitoring reports

Suggested Methodology Collecting data and information will involve collaboration with local leaders; review of community-led initiatives; community surveys and interviews; participatory mapping; analysis of community reports; government census data, and community workshops and focus groups. Data and information will also be validated via field visits and discussions.

Disaggregated by Number of individuals engaged (age and gender), Number of restoration plans and Number of activities implemented

3. Project Monitoring and Missions

Monitoring is the process of verifying the actual situation in relation to the planned situation and starts once proposals have been approved by the Board of Directors and funded. Monitoring includes a set process of continuous search or systematic collection of data and information for efficiency and effectiveness. Depending on the outcome of monitoring, actions may be required to adapt implementation.

Stakeholders are required to implement monitoring activities for project purposes, whereas the Belize Fund oversees and monitors both at the project and program level.

At the project level these factors are monitored:

- I. **Input:** the timely availability of inputs, e.g., personnel, equipment, funds, expenditures, and timely, proper execution of activities and using planned indicators.
- II. **Activities:** action taken/work performed to transform inputs into outputs.
- III. **Output:** delivery and quality of the outputs (direct results), using indicators as presented in the logical framework within the document.
- IV. **Outcome:** the extent to which the specific objective has been achieved, using indicators as presented in the logical framework, e.g., response of target beneficiaries to project outputs.
- V. **Impact:** is a fundamental and sustained change in conditions (positive and negative long-term effects) after project implementation. Impact is linked to the development objective. Therefore, the social, economic, and environmental impacts should be described in terms relevant to the development objective, using indicators (qualitative or quantitative) as presented in the logical framework, and defined in impact assessment reports as made available.

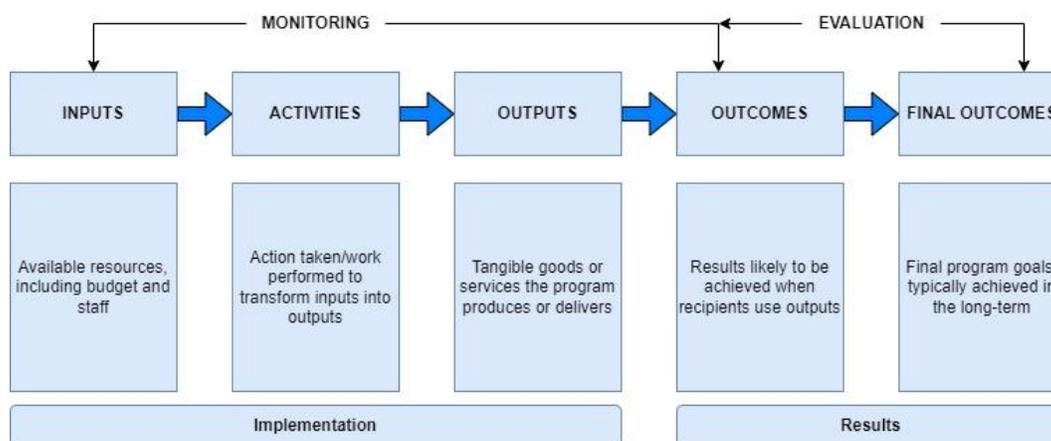


Figure 3: The results chain¹⁰ of a project.

The basic monitoring system consists of:

- I. Identifying objects and indicators to be examined pertaining to input, including expenditures, output, outcome, and impact.
- II. The methods/means of verification and frequency of data collecting concerning the indicators.
- III. The processing and analysis of data and information.
- IV. Defining preventative/corrective actions.

¹⁰ International Labour Organization. Basic Principles of monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

Each approved Belize Fund project should include a project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan with appropriate indicators. The plan should indicate how information will be collected (i.e., logical framework - indicators) and roles and responsibilities. To conduct monitoring and evaluation, projects should identify and include specific indicators that contribute to the Blue Bonds Program Theory of Change. Each plan is drafted by the implementing entity and kept internally for the Belize Fund grants team to keep track of project implementation, measure progress and results.

Indicators

Indicators are the basis used to measure progress and results. While numerous indicators can be included, each project should limit the number of indicators to have a reasonable and viable M&E Plan.

Indicators should:

- Measure the expected results of project objectives and activities.
- Be based on accessible data (baselines).
- Quantitative (numbers or percentages).
- Qualitative (easily described in words).
- Time-specific (deadlines).
- Independent of the objective and not a repetition.
- All indicators should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound).

Information on each set of indicators should be presented at the project development phase. Where baseline data is not available, the collection and development method should be included in the proposal as a preliminary activity or as part of the planning process/ planning grant.

Internal & External Monitoring

Monitoring enables us to adjust and mitigate against unexpected delays or events that affect the delivery of results and outputs. This can be done via project reviews, benchmarking, post-project evaluations and project audits. The findings from monitoring provide a basis for action and enable us to report objectively and promptly to higher levels of administration.

Internal monitoring will involve all entities in project implementation, e.g., executing, and collaborative agencies are expected to have an internal monitoring system in place. The system should ensure successful implementation of projects including adjustments of the workplan or yearly plan of operation implemented according to corrective actions. The project logical framework and the workplan will provide the basis for monitoring activities. Internal monitoring should involve (i) follow up commitments; (ii) progress and proper execution of work; (iii) time – to anticipate and monitor conditions which may cause delays; (iv) quality – delivery and quality of outputs; (v) human resources – qualified personnel, anticipation of turnover rates, and working conditions and (vi) risks – assessing the probability of uncertainties.

External monitoring is to be undertaken by the Belize Fund grants team. An important aspect of monitoring is that the data and information collected must be provided in a format to be adequately analyzed and registered by the Belize Fund. The Belize Fund will also rely on information required through its “Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework” (ESSF)¹¹, Logical Framework, Project workplan and

¹¹ Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF). 2023. Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future.

associated reporting tools to carry out its own project management, monitoring, and evaluation responsibilities.

Mission Visits

Periodic project review missions are part of the Belize Fund’s monitoring function and an important element in the process of interacting with executing entities and institutions involved to gain deeper and direct insight into the progress of projects.

The project review will use the logical framework, associated workplans and most current progress report as the main references. The aim of the project review is to assess progress according to the work schedule and provide recommendations to make necessary changes in actions to support project success. The need and frequency of missions will depend on organizational capacity, project type, duration, and available budget. Nonetheless, all projects will require project reviews.

There is expected to be financial review missions included as part of the M&E missions, as deemed necessary in extraordinary situations, or as needed.

Site visits provide sources of information for project monitoring and can occur at the project development, planning, implementation, monitoring and closing phases. Site visits allow observation on actual project implementation and to confirm the information submitted. Also, it provides the opportunity to discuss the project and understand aspects and perspectives which fall outside technical reporting. The person responsible should identify the indicators and issues that will be assessed and verified during the visits. Where possible, a site visit should be made after the first quartile of project implementation to adjust, as needed.

Real-Time Project Monitoring

The Real-Time Monitoring (RTM) process is implemented throughout the project's execution, utilizing field visits and interviews to comprehensively monitor and document progress. This approach ensures that data and information are immediately available, enabling timely interventions and informing future actions. Rapid feedback is integrated into field visits, facilitating quick responses to emerging issues.

RTM is conducted at various stages of implementation to maintain up-to-date monitoring. Project status reports are generated using an M&E tracking tool, offering real-time updates on critical project data. Monitoring projects in real-time occurs on a quarterly basis, aligned with the project's start date, and involves assessing the number of completed, delayed, in-progress, and pending activities to gauge project performance per reporting period. Percentage benchmarks are applied to these metrics through calculations, providing a clear assessment of progress against predefined targets. This comprehensive approach to RTM ensures transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making throughout the project lifecycle.

Rankings¹²:

I.	Passing Mark	–	> 75% ¹³
II.	Requires moderate attention	–	60% - 75%
III.	Critical, requires high attention	–	< 60%

¹² Marzano, RJ. 2000. Transforming grading. Association for supervision and curriculum development.

¹³ The passing mark is a combination of activities in progress and completed.

Essentially, the benchmarks are calculated using the project workplan to determine the level of activity level-based implementation, and whether the Belize Fund's intervention is required. However, due to the nature of some projects, the percentages may not be fully applicable (i.e., recurrent activities across reporting periods) as such it is at the discretion of the Belize Fund to determine the project's performance. The main purpose of grading is i) to give feedback on project progress and achievements; ii) to provide guidance about future work, and iii) to provide guidance for planning. Note that activities that are reported as not for the reporting period should not be included within the calculation of project performance. The calculation should use "completed", "delayed", "in progress" and "not yet implemented" statuses. The M&E tracking tool is modified to detect the status updates and provide the project performance.

In addition, the budget performance should be gathered to compare actual vs budgeted costs to determine budget performance. The budget performance at each quarter will help determine whether the stakeholder is progressing towards meeting an 80% budget expenditure as is required at the end of each project implementation period, at which point a narrative report (includes technical & financial report) is due to the Belize Fund. Meeting the 80% threshold is the minimum budget expenditure that stakeholders must meet to receive their respective disbursement, else the Belize Fund and stakeholder must meet for a mutual arrangement.

The evaluation process for projects involves considering both project and budget performance to determine which projects warrant attention. Not all projects with moderate or critical rankings may necessitate immediate action, and this determination is left to the discretion of the Belize Fund. Interviews play a crucial role in this assessment, allowing officers to gather insights into various aspects of project performance. For instance, a project might exhibit low budget performance but excel in project execution, or vice versa. Consequently, the justification for prioritizing or addressing specific projects should be supported by thorough analysis and recommendations on the best course of action moving forward. This ensures that decisions are well-informed and aligned with project objectives and organizational goals.

4. Project/Program Evaluation

Project Evaluation

The purpose of an evaluation report (Annex 6) is to guide further implementation of evaluated projects or formulation of future projects. The evaluation will look beyond the principal element of the project, on the validity of the design, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation report should ensure that lessons learned, both positive and negative, are made available.

Evaluation is a tool that should be applied to every project but not at every stage of the project cycle. Mid-term evaluations can be carried out in circumstances when there are large, complex projects to re-examine the validity of the original project design. This is determined at the discretion of the Belize Fund.

The projects are scored using the number of output indicators completed based on the approved logical framework. The calculation for such a score is: **number of indicators completed/ number of approved indicators = percentage completed (%)** (e.g., 9 indicators completed/ 10 approved indicators = 90%). The indicators will be analyzed to determine the real-time percentage completed which will be taken into account in the final project evaluation. Each indicator must present baseline scores and end targets to have a comparative analysis.

Based on the executing entities' overall evaluation score, the project will be ranked. The overall evaluation score is based on the criteria utilizing best practice standards from the "GEF Guidelines for conducting terminal Evaluations of Full-Size Projects 2023"¹⁴. The rankings¹⁵ are based on benchmarks as follows:

- I. Did not meet standards – 65% and less

This indicates that there were significant shortcomings in meeting the project objectives and deliverables as outlined in the approved project. These projects did not meet the basic requirements and standards expected and need substantial improvement to achieve project goals.

- II. Needs Improvements – between 66% and 74%

While these projects made some progress, they fall short of meeting the established standards. Improvements will be needed to ensure project outcomes and deliverables are aligned more closely with intended objectives.

- III. Meets standards – between 75% and 84%

These projects generally meet the expected standards and objectives outlined in the approved project. The project performed adequately and achieved a satisfactory level of success, with room for some improvement.

- IV. Exceeds standards – between 85% and 94%

These projects performed well above the expected standards, demonstrating effective implementation and significant progress towards achieving project goals. These projects are considered successful and delivered results beyond basic requirements.

- V. Outstanding expectations – 95% and above

¹⁴ "[GEF Guidelines for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of Full-Size Projects-2023](#)".

¹⁵ Otus. Standards-based grading scales, calculations, and conversions. Percentage method.

Projects in this ranking exceed expectations and are considered exemplary in their performance. These projects are considered highly successful, achieving or surpassing their goals and delivering outstanding results. They may serve as models of best practices for similar projects.

This should be a participatory evaluation approach, where all entities involved in the project at different levels should be part of the conversation. All projects will be evaluated externally through a systematic process of data collection using an evaluation report template to present findings, conclusions, recommendations, and impact. As key findings and reviews of assessments are completed, this will inform a more systematic collection method to standardize effective approaches that will help inform our collective knowledge and design of projects to increase the success and impact of interventions and actions.

Program Evaluation

The Belize Fund M&E staff should devote some time acquiring materials and reviewing them to select the most relevant documentation to conduct its own internal evaluation and provide recommendations for improvements. The evaluation approach should be a systematic and an objective assessment of on-going or completed projects or programs, their design, implementation, and results. The aim is to determine the relevance, fulfillment of objectives, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Program evaluations require analysis of documentation prior to the contracting of an external evaluation team which is to be informed by the Belize Fund's internal evaluation.

One of the initial steps is to revisit the outcomes selected for evaluation. This is done to verify that outcomes are still relevant and to reidentify outputs, projects, programs, and partner interventions that may have contributed to the outcomes. This information should be readily available from regular monitoring reports and from the M&E plans prepared.

Deciding why and when to conduct an evaluation is a process that should begin early in the programing cycle. An evaluation is expected to contribute to learning and a change in the type of projects or strategic partnerships. Evaluations are carried out either during the project cycle (mid-term evaluation) or at the end of the project or program (ex-post evaluation, final evaluation, or impact evaluation), prior to closure of grant agreement.

An emphasis on results places an emphasis on the involvement of partners and stakeholders in the evaluation exercise. Likewise, stakeholders that may be affected by an evaluation should be involved, even if not involved in the program. Stakeholders might be involved through a stakeholder meeting to discuss the initial findings of the evaluation team. The level to which different partners and stakeholders are involved at different steps in the process will vary. Some need only be informed of the process, while it would be important for others to be involved in a decision-making capacity.

At minimum, the scope of an evaluation should include these categories of analysis:

- **Outcome status:** whether or not the outcome has been achieved and, if not, whether there has been progress made toward its achievement.
- **Underlying factors:** an analysis of the underlying factors beyond the Belize Fund's control that can influence the outcome.
- **Belize Fund's contribution:** whether or not the Belize Fund outputs, and other interventions can be credibly linked to achievement of the outcome, including the outputs, programs, and projects. In addition, the achievements would be linked to the strategic alignments and

contribution via respective indicators to national and local plans/policies to evaluate progress towards Belize's global commitments.

- **Partnership strategies:** whether the Belize Fund's partnership strategies have been appropriate and effective.

In addition to the four categories of analysis that should be within the scope of the evaluation, the evaluation might also address:

- Identification of methodologies to approach key development issues of human development.
- National capacities developed through the Belize Fund's funding assistance.
- Level of participation of stakeholders in the achievement of the outcome.
- Identification of direct and indirect beneficiaries and their perceptions of how they have benefited.
- Implementation and/or management issues if they are suspected of being problematic, including the timeliness of outputs, the degree of stakeholder and partner involvement in the completion of the outputs, and how processes were managed/carried out.

The evaluation process does not end with the submission and acceptance of the evaluation report. Rather, the findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned need to be internalized and acted upon. Therefore, the final step in managing and conducting any evaluation is to follow up on the evaluation report and implementation of change.

Budgeting

Budgeting for an evaluation depends on the complexity of the project or outcome to be evaluated and the purpose of the exercise. For projects, resources to conduct a mid-term evaluation and end of project evaluation can be allocated from the monitoring and evaluation component of the project budget. Similarly, outcome evaluations can draw on the respective monitoring and evaluation allocations for the projects and programs that contribute to outcomes.

5. Learning and Knowledge Sharing

Learning is for improvement, adaptation, and communication. Learning ensures that interventions seek the most appropriate results in the most effective way.

Knowledge is content and context specific information capable of bringing change or more effective actions at a wider level that can contribute to new learning and knowledge.

Guiding principles:

- A balanced emphasis on learning processes and accountability. Activities should focus on results to improve project impact while also building learning processes.
- Capacity to learn and adapt. Learning from empirical evidence of past performance is critical, with efforts to focus on best practices, create institutionalized learning events, provide group learning opportunities, and support information-sharing and communication structures as important ways of fostering a result-based learning culture.

Lessons from monitoring and evaluation help refine assumptions and inform decisions on how an approach should be adopted to deliver planned results. Adjustments are also made considering changing circumstances, especially in responses to crisis and shock, as well as regular monitoring.

Lessons learned can reveal “good practices” that suggest how and why different strategies work in different situations and valuable information that needs to be documented. Results from projects will be disseminated within and beyond the scope of project implementation through existing information sharing networks and platforms. In addition, the executing entity may be asked to participate to share common characteristics, as appropriate.

Knowledge sharing should be conducted with the recipients, stakeholders and communities using knowledge networks such as national or stakeholder forums. The appropriate platforms for knowledge sharing will be determined by the Belize Fund. Such events should also focus on achievements, partnership building opportunities and resource mobilization. This would be in the form of evaluative feedback about what works or does not work under certain conditions.

Learning and knowledge sharing should be an on-going practice throughout project implementation and should involve such actions as those listed in **Box I**.

Box I: checklist for learning and knowledge sharing
Record and share lessons learned
Keep an open mind
Plan evaluations strategically
Involve stakeholders strategically
Provide real-time information
Link knowledge to users
Apply what has been learned
Monitor how new knowledge is applied

6. Annexes

Annex 1: [Annex 1 - Alignment to national policies.docx](#)

Annex 2: [Annex 2 - Monitoring Framework for the Blue Bonds Program.docx](#)

Annex 3: [Annex 3 - Logical Framework template.docx](#)

Annex 4: [Annex 4 - Project M&E Plan.docx](#)

Annex 5: [Annex 5 - Conservation Commitments.docx](#)

Annex 6: [Annex 6 - Evaluation Report](#)



GRANTS MANUAL FOR THE BLUE BONDS PROGRAM



**Belize Fund For A
Sustainable Future**

GRANTS MANUAL FOR THE BLUE BONDS PROGRAM

This is version 1.0 of the Grants Manual for the Blue Bonds Program (“Grants Manual”) for the Belize Fund For A Sustainable Future (“Belize Fund”).

This version of the Grants Manual was formally approved by the Board on 22.06.2023.

The Grants Manual will be reviewed yearly by the Board for relevancy and to be aligned with current best practices.

The next review of the Grants Manual is due for completion by 22/06/2024.



**Belize Fund For A
Sustainable Future**



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GRANTS AWARD MANUAL

I. OVERVIEW

The Grants Award Manual serves as the primary guide to safeguard grant funds and ensure funds are used for the specified purposes.

The objective of this manual is to make clear and explicit the grantmaking process, and the tools, and mechanisms for awarding and implementing a grant to achieve the overall mission and vision of the Belize Fund. It also provides for the effective awarding of grants, including the monitoring and control of an Award, performance, payments, reporting and completion. Throughout the grant award and implementation phases, it is important that open communication is maintained with the Recipient Organization.

2. GRANTS AWARD PROGRAM

The Grants Award Program targets non-government applicants to apply for funding. However, government entities can also apply as a junior co-applicant¹. Non-government applicants include non-governmental organizations (NGO), community-based organizations (CBO), Civil Society Organizations (CSO), Academia, local associations, and private entities.

2.1 Eligibility Criteria

The Eligibility Criteria defines and identifies the entities that are eligible to receive funding under the GAP, the Geographic Scope targeted, and the Thematic Area.

2.1.1 Non-Government Entities

The following organizational categories are eligible to apply for GAP funding, if they meet the following requirements, (i) are a registered non-governmental entity in Belize; (ii) have existed and operated in Belize for a minimum of one (1) year prior to submission of the application and (iii) can demonstrate successful project and financial management:

- a) Universities, colleges, and high schools (including statutory body);
- b) NGOs, CSOs, CBOs.
- c) Private Organizations - Micro Small Medium Enterprise (MSME)².
- d) Local community associations, cooperatives, and other community bodies; and
- e) Other appropriate local entities working toward the Vision and Mission of the Belize Fund For A Sustainable Future (Belize Fund)

Entities that meet most of the requirements but have not existed and operated in Belize for a minimum of one (1) year, nor have strong project management and fiduciary management experience, can apply through an intermediary

¹Junior Co-applicant: Is an entity that is involved in the grant application and is responsible for implementing and executing not more than 40% of the proposed activities. A Junior Co-applicant does not have fiduciary management of the grant but plays a key role in achieving the expected results and goals of a project.

²Private sector applicants must qualify as a MSME, defined in the Belize MSME Policy and Strategy Report (Seepersaud, M., 2012), and should demonstrate environmental responsibility. Applications should be focused on projects with a conservation approach that generate positive impacts to ecosystems and livelihoods.



2.1.2 Government

Public sector entities of the Government are eligible to apply for GAP funding provided that:

1. Funding is not for an activity covered by the GSA; and
2. The Government entity is a junior co-applicant with a non-government entity.

2.1.3 Intermediaries

Potential entities that do not have the capacity to engage in a legal contract, directly receive the funds, or simply lack the capacity to implement a Belize Fund project due to not having a formal organizational structure and capacity, including a bank account and/or qualified personnel, are still invited to apply through an intermediary. The Belize Fund shall still engage these entities and, if necessary, assist with identifying larger and eligible non-government entities who are willing to serve as an intermediary by receiving the funds on behalf of the actual entity.

Intermediaries must meet the required eligibility criteria for non-government entities listed above. Intermediaries will be responsible for:

- a. Overseeing grant implementation
- b. Coordinating, and submitting reports on behalf of the principal recipient organization
- c. Ensuring that the implementing entity undertakes the activities described in the Award agreement.
- d. Providing administrative infrastructure for grant implementation
- e. Conducting procurement processes on behalf of the entity that does not have the capacity
- f. Providing fiduciary and financial management
- g. Assisting with grant execution
- h. Providing human resources, where necessary
- i. Conducting compliance oversight

For projects managed through an intermediary, in consideration of the administrative oversight provided, the applicant can allocate up to 15% of the total budget towards administrative support costs³, including those of the intermediary entity.

2.1.4 Geographic Scope

The Belize Fund may fund projects in any part of Belize (coastal, marine, and terrestrial) if there is a direct link to and impact on the Belize Fund's Thematic Areas (listed below).

Transboundary projects are also permitted provided that the above condition is also met.

³Applicant and Intermediary may decide on how to allocate the 15% of administrative cost.



In an effort to achieve greater impacts from grant projects, the Belize Fund will support projects that are within and in proximity to areas including:

- a. Marine Reserves
- b. Spawning Aggregation sites
- c. Islands and Cayes
- d. Coastal and Marine Environments (including coral reefs, seagrasses, mangroves, and wetlands)

2.1.5 Belize Fund Thematic Areas

The Belize Fund's Thematic Areas (TA) are broadly defined and are intended to help support and contribute towards achieving the conservation commitments under the Conservation Finance Agreement (CFA) of the Blue Bond. All projects must be designed to contribute towards at least one Thematic Area. There is no maximum number of Thematic Areas that a project may target.

The four Thematic Areas are as follows:

TA1: Protection for Biodiversity

Thematic Area (1) One aims to achieve effective protection for marine biodiversity focused on strategies and interventions that ensure full protection and prevents depletion or loss of biodiversity. Such protection includes marine protected areas, especially no-take zones, and the effective management of these. It also includes protection for species of conservation concern and ecosystems crucial for maintaining the health of coastal and marine ecosystems.

TA2: Sustainable Fisheries

Thematic Area (2) Two aims to support fisheries management programs and initiatives that promote sustainable fishing and help rebuild depleted stocks. The focus is on ensuring fisheries are sustainable from harvesting through to the consumer's plate, and that fishing communities are safeguarded by building capacity and leadership. It also considers the sustainable development of new fisheries and value chains to diversify the fisheries commodity base and products.

TA3: Climate Resilience

Thematic Area (3) Three aims to build and strengthen the resilience of our coastal and marine ecosystems to ensure a greater ability to adapt to and survive the impacts of climate change. This includes building the resilience of communities and their livelihoods by providing secure and green jobs, resilient value chains, safety and protection, and economic security to combat climate change. It also includes improving the first line of defense by building the resilience of the natural environment so that it continues to provide goods and services and maintain critical functions, which support coastal livelihoods and our national economy.

TA4: Blue Business Innovation

Thematic Area (4) Four aims to incubate and support the growth of the Blue Economy in Belize through innovative and sustainable Blue Businesses. Belize depends heavily on its coastal and marine ecosystems for livelihoods and there is a crucial need to invest in fisheries, aquaculture, coastal tourism, renewable energy, maritime transport, among others, so that these are developed sustainably and help to boost the country's economy, while ensuring our resources remain healthy.



2.2 Grant Award Categories and Project Duration

There are three (3) award categories for the Grants Award Program:

1. Small Grants - Awards up to BZ\$50,000 NOT exceeding one year.
2. Medium Grants- Awards over BZ\$50,000 but less than BZ\$150,000.00 NOT exceeding two years.
3. Large Grants - Awards over BZ\$150,000.00 not exceeding BZ\$1,000,000.00 with a timeframe of two to three years.

A recipient organization shall only implement one (1) Belize Fund project at a time under the GAP. Concurrent projects will not be supported.

2.3 GAP Co-financing

Co-financing is support provided by two or more organizations for the successful completion of a project, counted as a part of the total project budget. This co-financing includes both cash and/or in-kind commitments such as staff time, existing equipment, existing infrastructure, and donations. Applicants must provide verification of this co-financing through supporting documentation, letters of support and/or letter of commitment, etc.

Co-financing under the GAP is required based on the size or category of an award.

1. There is no co-financing requirement for small grants of up to BZD \$50,000.00
2. Medium grants between BZ\$50,000.00 to BZ\$150,000.00 require that 10-25% of the total project cost be co-financed by the applicant or collaborating partners.
3. Large grants above BZ\$150,000.00 require that between 25-50% of the total project cost be co-financed by the applicant and/or collaborating partners.

Private sector applicants will be required to provide a 1:1 co-financing. Co-financing can be in the form of cash or in-kind (combined).

2.4 Use of Funds

What can the Belize Fund funding be used for?

The Belize Fund shall only consider Proposals that are aligned with and that directly help to achieve any of the Belize Fund's Thematic Areas: Protection for Biodiversity, Sustainable Fisheries, Climate Resilience and Blue Business Innovation; and aligned with the mission and vision of the Belize Fund.

The Belize Fund shall consider operating costs that directly contribute to the achievement of the TAs such as equipment, supplies, staff, and other operating expenses that will build the capacity necessary to implement project activities.





The Belize Fund For A Sustainable Future does not have specific budget limits for each category, but is guided by the following criteria:

Salaries:

- a. 100% of staff salaries can be covered by the Belize Fund, for new positions that are fully and exclusively involved in the implementation of the Belize Fund's project activities.
- b. Up to 60% of staff salaries can be covered by the Belize Fund, provided that they are directly involved in the implementation of the Belize Fund project activities.
- c. Up to 20% of administrative staff salaries, such as Executive Director, Finance personnel, drivers, accountants, and HR etc, can be covered by the Belize Fund in support of project activities.
- d. Up to 10% of the overall project budget can be considered towards general administrative costs⁴.

What can the funding not be used for? (Non-eligible activities)

The Belize Fund shall not be able to consider Proposals that are to be used directly or indirectly for any of the following:

- Activities relating to the extraction or depletion of non-renewable natural resources including mining, fuel extraction or minerals and oil /gas exploration.
- Activities related to unsustainable extraction of renewable natural resources, including the extraction of timber, marine species, and protected species.
- Activities relating to the excavation of and removal of marine sediments (dredging).
- The resettlement of people or the removal or alteration of any physical cultural property.
- Debts and provisions for existing losses or debts.
- Projects relating to political campaigns and / or political propaganda.
- Operating costs and capital expenditure costs that do not directly contribute to or ensure the achievement of the TAs;
- Activities that upon review and appraisal have a high potential for negative environmental and social impacts; and
- Any other use not consistent with the vision, mission, and goals of the Belize Fund.

⁴Administrative costs are goods and services incurred by the recipient organization that are not directly linked or tied to the achievement of an activity. These include, but are not limited to, rent, utilities, stationaries and office supplies, cleaning services, courier and post office expenses, software expenses, and bank charges.



2.5 GAP Application, Review and Selection Process

This section outlines the process of applying, reviewing, and selecting proposals for funding. Applications must satisfy all the requirements. The Belize Fund grants team shall provide support to applicants in the preparation of their applications.

Determining the scope and considerations for funding allocations across the four Thematic Areas

The Belize Fund is guided by the Board of Directors who will determine the scope and funding allocations across the four (4) Thematic Areas led by the overall strategic plan and direction of the Belize Fund. The Executive Director shall inform the Board of Directors of the total annual grant amount available and recommendations on thematic areas for funding, for a decision on the amounts to be allocated for across the GAP annually.

Call for Proposals

The Belize Fund adopts an open, inclusive, and transparent call for proposals process. The Call for Proposals is scheduled to open in the month of August of every year, for two months, with a deadline of October for the submission of applications.

The Call for Proposals shall be widely distributed and published (website, NGO networks, morning shows, newspapers, etc.) in order to reach a broad audience including rural and remote communities.

A Call for Proposals shall at the minimum include the following information:

1. Summary
2. Targeted Thematic Areas with required indicators.
3. Eligibility Criteria.
4. Award Categories.
5. Deadline for submission.
6. Belize Fund contact information.
7. List of required documents.
8. Application forms.

The Belize Fund shall consider holding orientation sessions with stakeholders, specifically on the application process and / or provide technical support to potential applicants if deemed appropriate and reasonable.

The Belize Fund shall share relevant information about the call on the Belize Fund's webpage. Applicants will have the opportunity to submit questions via the Belize Fund's webpage (send us a message option) during and after the Call closes. The Belize Fund shall post weekly updates answering and sharing the list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on its webpage.



Concept Paper

The Belize Fund's Call for Proposals is a two-step process whereby applicants will prepare a concept paper prior to developing a full proposal.

The submission of a Concept Paper (Annex 1) is the first step of the application process. The Belize Fund shall accept concepts during the first two weeks of a Call for Proposals. The Belize Fund concept paper template shall be made available on the website and upon request. The purpose of the concept paper is to: (i) ensure that the proposals are directly aligned with the Belize Fund's Thematic Areas, (ii) assist the proponent organization to determine if the proposed project merits funding and (iii) provide recommendations on how the proposed project can be strengthened. At this stage, there is no need to include details, but rather just introduce the overall rationale of the project, how it will be carried out and the expected outcomes. The concept paper template (Annex 1) should not exceed four (4) pages and should include:

1. Organizational Background
2. Project Summary
3. Goal and Objectives
4. Project Outcomes, Outputs and Activities
5. Relevance to Thematic Areas
6. Budget Summary

The Belize Fund Team shall review the concept paper, conduct an eligibility test on the proponent organization, and provide feedback to the proponent organization, three weeks after the opening of the Call for Proposal. At this stage the Belize Fund Team shall evaluate and determine if a planning grant to further develop a full proposal is required.

Planning Grant

Planning Grants of up to BZ\$10,000.00 can be approved once a project concept has been reviewed and selected. Applications under the planning grant (Annex 3) shall be accepted or recommended by the Belize Fund during the first four (4) weeks of the opening of the Call for Proposal. A planning grant shall have an expected duration of three (3) months to provide financial support to assist with the development of a full proposal and associated costs. This approval needs to be properly documented and dated. The idea of the planning grant is to assist the recipient organization to develop a full project proposal, in particular for small, less experienced organizations that lack grant writing capacity.

A planning grant may also be used to (i) organize stakeholder workshops or meetings to design the proposal in a participatory manner; (ii) provide technical assistance to elaborate and develop the concept into a full proposal, undertake studies or develop strategies; (iii) undertake baseline assessments; and (iv) develop a business plan or conduct a feasibility study for the development of a proposal.





An Award Letter⁵ (Annex 2) will be prepared and shared with the recipient organization for the management and implementation of the planning grant funds. The proposed payment schedule for this type of grant is at the discretion of the Belize Fund, however full disbursement of funds is available. The Planning Grant will only require one final report.

Proposals developed with the support of a planning grant are not expected to follow the CfPs deadlines and will be treated on a case-by-case basis, with a timeframe not exceeding four (4) months. A special TRC review will be held and, if recommended, the proposals will be submitted for review and approval at the next Belize Fund Board of Directors meeting.

Screening Process for Proposals

Upon acceptance of a Concept Paper the proponent organization will be invited to prepare and submit a full proposal. The Screening Process shall be the first review of the submitted full proposal. This process is conducted using the GAP Screening Checklist – (Annex 4) and ensures that proposals meet the Belize Fund Eligibility Criteria.

Each project shall have a completed Screening Checklist outlining the comments, pending documents, and status of the submitted proposal. An electronic folder will be created to store all the relevant documentation that accompanies the proposal. During the screening process due diligence will be conducted to ensure that proposals comply with the Belize Fund Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF) to prevent, minimize, and mitigate adverse environmental and social risks that can affect the implementation of projects.

A formal notification shall be provided to the applicant informing them of the application status. If the application is ineligible or does not pass screening, the reason for this along with a list of pending required documents, if any, will be communicated to the applying entity.

The Screening Process of full proposals should be completed within two (2) weeks of the CfP application window closing. Applications with missing/pending documents will not be accepted.

A summary of all applications and their status, whether ineligible, does not pass screening or recommended for review, will be prepared electronically, and stored for future reference.

Applications that are eligible for funding shall be compiled by the Belize Fund and presented to the Technical Review Committee for further review and scoring, followed by submission to the Board of Directors for final review and approval.

Technical Review Committee - See Section 5

Refer to Section 5 of the manual.

Belize Fund Board of Directors Review and Approval

The Belize Fund will compile and sort, in descending order, all proposals scored by the TRC and prepare a summary sheet for the Board of Directors. The summary sheet for each proposal will be prepared and shall include the project title, applicant, a brief description of the project, amount requested, and the TRC average score along with the summary of recommendations and conditions.

⁵An Award Letter is a simplified version of the Award Agreement for the management and implementation of a Planning Grant.



The Board of Directors will be provided with an electronic folder that includes the following:

1. Compiled and sorted list of proposals.
2. Proposal's average score, and TRC recommendations and conditions, if any.
3. Proposal and supporting documentation.
4. Applicant's recorded presentation, if provided.

At the Board Meeting, the Program Manager will provide a brief synopsis of each proposal. The Board of Directors shall approve proposals following the voting procedures of the Belize Fund Bylaws.

A final summary of approved proposals will be presented to the Board of Directors detailing the amount of funds committed and ensuring that the amount approved does not exceed the available GAP budget allocation. A final summary of approved proposals will be presented to the Board of Directors detailing the amount of funds committed and ensuring that the amount approved does not exceed the available GAP budget allocation.

Communicating results to Applicants

A formal written communication shall be sent to all applicants, awarded or not, about the decision taken by the Board of Directors.

The formal written communication should include, if any, the conditions, and recommendations from the Board of Directors. The Belize Fund will engage the recipient organization regarding next steps.

In addition, the Belize Fund shall publish all awarded projects via its social platforms, including the Belize Fund website, and national newspapers. This should include a list of all the recipient organizations, project title, thematic area, total funds awarded, implementation period, target geographic scope.

Signing of Award Agreement between the Belize Fund and Recipient Organization

The Belize Fund will liaise with the Recipient Organization to initiate the drafting of the Award Agreement. The Belize Fund will also ensure that the Recipient Organization understands its obligations included in the Award Agreement. Such obligations include the procurement rules, communication guidelines, conformity to the environmental and social safeguards, compliance with financial safeguards, disbursement schedules, other grant conditions and reporting requirements. The Belize Fund will dialog with the Recipient Organization and provide the terms and conditions including the duties and responsibilities of both parties.

The flowchart and table below list the activities and responsibilities for the Application, Review and Selection of Proposals.





Figure 1: GAP application and selection process.

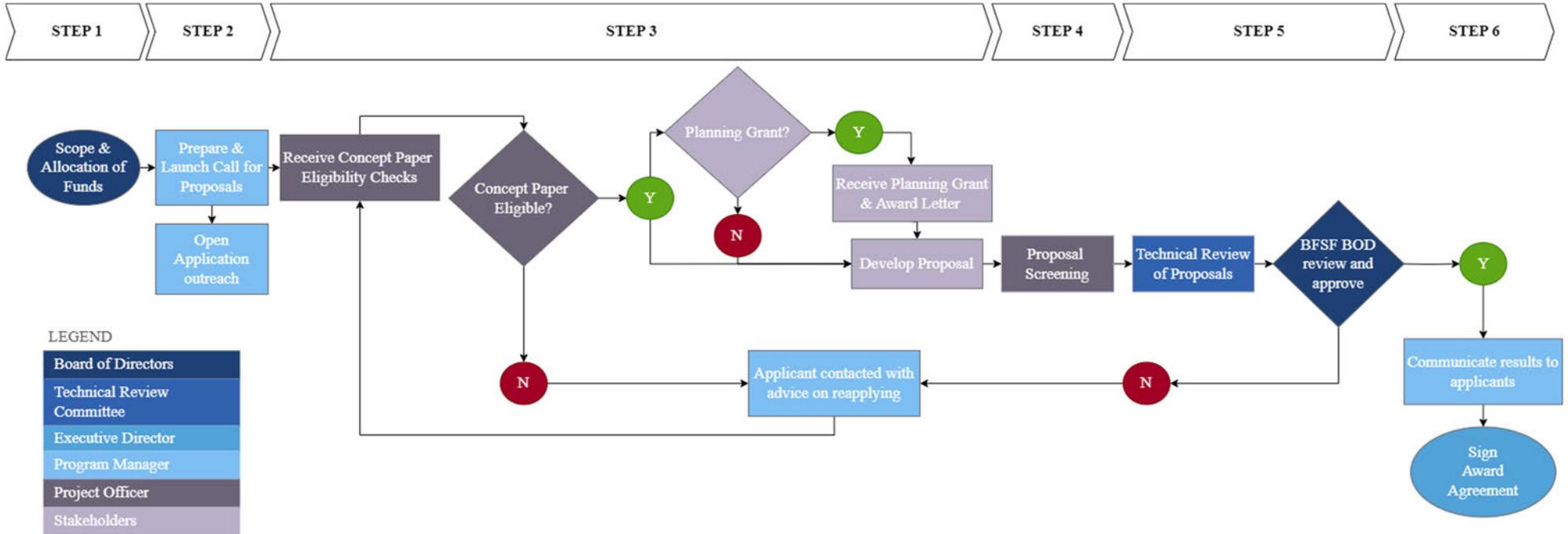




Table 1. Estimated timeframe and activities for GAP application and selection.

Step	Activity	Responsible	Approval	Consulted	Timeline
1	Determining the scope and considerations for funding allocations across the four Thematic Areas.	Executive Director	Board of Directors	Program Manager, Project Officer, and Monitoring Officer	June of each year
2	Preparing the Call for Proposals	Program Manager	Executive Director	Project Officer and Monitoring Officer	July of each year
	Issuing the Call for Proposals	Program Manager	Executive Director	-	August to October
3	Submission of concept papers	Project Officer	Program Manager	Executive Director	14 days from start of the CfP
	Compiling and screening of concept papers received and planning grant applications (if required)	Project Officer	Program Manager	Administrative Assistant	21 days from start of CfP
	Proposal Submission	Project Officer	Program Manager	Executive Director	75 days from the start of CfP
4	Screening of proposals	Project Officer	Program Manager	Executive Director	14 days from CfP Deadline
5	Technical Review of the proposals	Technical Review Committee	-	-	45 days from CfP Deadline
	Proposal Approval	Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Executive Director	75 days from CfP Deadline
6	Formal Communication of Board of Directors Decision	Program Manager	-	-	80 days from CfP Deadline
	Award Agreement signature	Program Manager	Board Chairperson	Executive Director	90 days from CfP Deadline





3. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

A Strategic Partnership is described as a collaboration between the Belize Fund and other non-government entities with shared values working towards a common goal and/or outcome contributing to the achievement of the conservation commitments under the Blue Bond Agreement and aligned with the Belize Fund's Strategic Plan. The complexity of impacts and interests involved in conservation often requires the input and cooperation of multiple partners, as well as knowledge and expertise across several sectors, especially related to marine and coastal areas.

The Belize Fund will explore the following areas to fund for potential strategic partnerships:

1. Training/capacity building
2. Communication/outreach
3. Research/ Technology
4. Stakeholder engagement
5. Any other area identified by the Board as priority based on the Strategic Plan

In special cases, grant funds may be provided for a strategic partnership to assist in the achievement of the conservation commitments under the Conservation Funding Agreement through any of the four TAs. These strategic partnerships should also align with and support achievement of the Belize Fund's strategic plan. The partnership can also support Belize's national marine/coastal development frameworks and National priorities. These initiatives include the scaling up and replication of tested approaches and tools in multiple locations, broader adoption of success and lessons learned, and leverage resources for strategic opportunities at the local and national levels. A strategic partnership can also focus on thematic and technical initiatives that assist the achievement of national goals, improve, or sustain the health of the marine environment, biodiversity, and ecosystems.

Strategic Partnerships are considered a special funding opportunity under the Grants Award Program, and therefore a portion of the GAP funds will be allocated for this. A Strategic Partnerships will not require a call for proposals and will be defined through a discussion between the Belize Fund and identified partner(s). Under the Strategic Partnership, the partnering entity must meet the eligibility criteria.

To establish a strategic partnership, the Belize Fund will identify and establish the scope, purpose, and goal. A scouting exercise will be conducted to identify potential partners. Once a potential partner(s) is identified, the Belize Fund will engage in inviting the partner(s) to discuss potential areas of collaboration and develop the activities to be undertaken. The Strategic Partnership will elaborate on the potential roles of each partner and layout the indicative timelines for these actions.

Once there's mutual understanding of the partnership and agreement to proceed, the Belize Fund's Board of Directors will conduct a final review to approve the strategic partnership. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other agreement will be established outlining the goal, objectives, outcomes, and timeframe of the partnership. It will also detail the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved.



There is not a specific limit or ceiling for the Belize Fund’s funding amounts to a Strategic Partnership, but the amount to be committed must not exceed the approved allocated funding for the year. Multi-year funding is allowed (up to three years).

Table 2. Outlines the activities required to formally establish a partnership(s).

Steps	Activity
1	Develop the scope, goal, and purpose of a partnership
2	Identify potential partnership organization(s)
3	Conduct Organizational Assessment
4	Engage and establish a partnership
6	Present to the BFSF Board of Directors for approval
7	Sign MOU
8	Implement agreed activities
9	Evaluate the Partnership results and impact

4. GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC ALLOCATION

The Government Strategic Allocation (GSA) program directly supports the Government of Belize to meet the conservation commitments, made under the Conservation Funding Agreement. The GSA application must be aligned with the Conservation Commitment Milestones as detailed below. Only the Blue Bonds and Finance Permanence Unit (BBFP) can apply on behalf of the Government of Belize. The GSA will be annual but multi-year projects are permitted.

4.1 Government of Belize (GOB) Conservation Commitments

The conservation commitments under the Conservation Funding Agreement are defined as specific milestones and general conservation undertakings, and are the criteria used to determine GSA approvals. These are listed below:

Table 3. Government 8 milestones and additional conservation Commitments under the BBLA.

Milestones	Actions
1	Expand Biodiversity Protection Zones to 11.57% of the Ocean
2	Designate Public Lands within the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System (BBRRS) as Mangrove Reserves
3	Belize initiates Marine Spatial Plan process
4	Expand Biodiversity Protection Zones to 25% of the Ocean
5	Implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZMP)
6	Complete Biodiversity Protection Zones, MSP signed into law and implemented
7	At least 3 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Green List Applications Submitted
8	Approved Management Plans for Biodiversity Protection Zones
General Conservation Undertakings:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquaculture • Fisheries • Develop Blue Carbon Regulatory Framework • Managed Access Program Evaluation • Revisions of Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations • World Heritage Sites • Watershed Management 	



4.2 GSA Application, Review and Approval Process

The GSA Application Process is a separate process under the Belize Fund Grants program. No 'Call for Proposals' is required and no 'eligibility' screening by the Belize Fund is required. The screening of applications, submitted by the governmental entities, is conducted internally by the Blue Bonds & Finance Permanence Unit (BBFP) and approved by the CEO Committee for the Blue Bond Agreement. A GSA proposal is then prepared and submitted to the Belize Fund by the BBFP.

Open GSA Application

The GSA application shall be submitted via a single coordinating government through the BBFP, in the Office of the Prime Minister.

The GSA application should be submitted by the end of the first week of January of the corresponding year.

Review and Approval of Proposal Template

The GSA application must be completed using the agreed upon templates and clearly show how funds will be used to directly support the Government in implementing and achieving the Conservation Commitments and related marine conservation efforts. The final template must be approved by the Belize Fund and may be revised as necessary.

Confirm receipt of application

The Belize Fund shall confirm receipt of the application and review it to ensure that all the required supporting documents were provided. In the event of pending documents, a list outlining these documents shall be sent to the BBFP one week following the submission of the proposal to the Belize Fund.

Any application that is submitted after the deadline is considered late, and the Belize Fund shall determine whether to consider it for funding in that year or defer it to the following year.

Screening of Proposal

The Screening Process ensures that the submitted application meets the requirements. This process is guided by the GSA Screening Checklist – (Annex 5) – and ensures that the application adheres to the following:

1. Submitted by the BBFP within the agreed submission dates.
2. Utilizes the agreed templates.
3. Clearly identifies how the funds will directly support the Government in achieving the Conservation Commitments.
4. Ensures that the goals, objectives, outcomes, and results are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (S.M.A.R.T).
5. Complies with the Belize Fund's Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF).
6. Includes an accurate, realistic, and well detailed budget.





7. Ensures that the GOB does not reduce Government's annual conservation expenditure as a direct result of grant funds received.
8. The timeframe is suitable for the implementation schedule and activities.
9. Meets the accepted timeframe of 2-3 years.
10. Outlines an internal mechanism for managing funds provided by the Belize Fund.

***Technical Review of Proposal- See Section 5
Kindly refer to Section 5 of the manual.
Approval of Proposal***

The Belize Fund shall prepare a summary sheet for the GSA proposal and shall include the project title, a brief description of the project, amount requested, and the TRC average score along with the summary of recommendations and conditions.

The Board of Directors will be provided with an electronic folder that includes the following:

1. Proposal and supporting documentation.
2. TRC's average score and recommendations.

At the Board Meeting, the Program Manager will provide a brief synopsis of the proposal. The Board of Directors will approve the proposal following the voting procedures of the Belize Fund's Bylaws.

Communicating Results

Written communication will be sent to the BBFP of the decision taken by the Board of Directors along with any conditions or recommendations. The Belize Fund will liaise with the BBFP to clearly outline the disbursement dates and the terms and conditions of the Award Agreement.

Funding Agreement signature

The Belize Fund will liaise with the Recipient BBFP to initiate the drafting of the Funding Agreement. The Belize Fund will also ensure that the BBFP understands its obligations included in the Funding Agreement. Such obligations include the procurement rules, communication guidelines, conformity to the environmental and social safeguards, compliance with financial safeguards, disbursement schedules, and reporting requirements. The Belize Fund will dialog with BBFP and provide the terms and conditions including the duties and responsibilities of both parties.

The flowchart and table below list the activities and responsibilities for the submission, review, and approval of the GSA application.



Figure 2: GSA application review and approval process

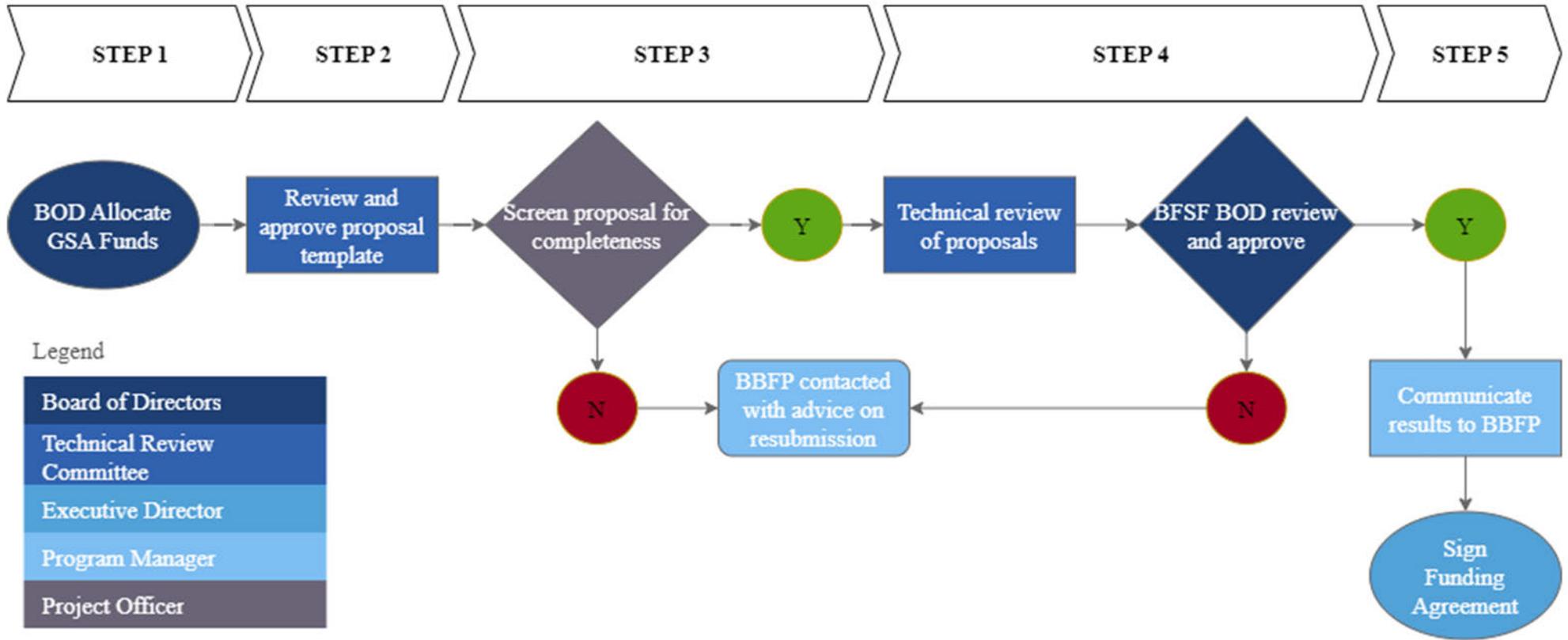




Table 4. GSA Application review and approval process.

No.	Activity	Responsible	Approval	Consulted	Timeline
1	GSA Funding allocated	Executive Director	Board of Directors	Program Manager, Project Officer, and Monitoring Officer	September
2	Review and Approve Proposal Template, in liaison with BBFP	Program Manager	Executive Director	Project Officer	September
	Confirm receipt of application	Program Manager	-	-	First Week of January
3	Screening of Proposal	Project Officer	Program Manager	Executive Director	14 days after submission
4	Technical Review of Proposal	Technical Review Committee	-	-	45 days after Submission
	Approval of Proposal	Board of Directors	-	-	75 days after Submission
5	Communicating Results	Program Manager	-	-	80 days after Submission
	Funding Agreement signature	Program Manager	Board of Directors	Executive Director	90 days after Submission





4.3 Non-Government Partnership

Only the BBFP can apply under the GSA, but partnerships with a non-government partner for specific activities is permitted. The BBFP must outline the role, budget, and activities of co-partners as part of the application information.

4.4 Financial Requirements

In order to receive the GSA funding, the Government of Belize is required to establish and manage one single bank account to track and report funds disbursed under the GSA. The BBFP is responsible for developing an internal mechanism to disburse and track the grant funds to respective government agencies. The BBFP shall hold fiduciary responsibility of the funds granted and must report on the use of funds to the Belize Fund.

The management and reporting of the GSA funds must comply with the Belize Fund's financial reporting and procurement requirements. Financial reports must be submitted using the formats provided by the Belize Fund. Additionally, the Belize Fund may request the support from third party firms to assist with the financial review of the project's finances.

5. TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Belize Fund For A Sustainable Future (Belize Fund) Technical Review Committee (TRC) serves as a technical body in the Project Proposal Review Process and is tasked with reviewing, scoring and recommending project proposals, based on the Belize Fund's guidelines, to the Belize Fund's Board of Directors.

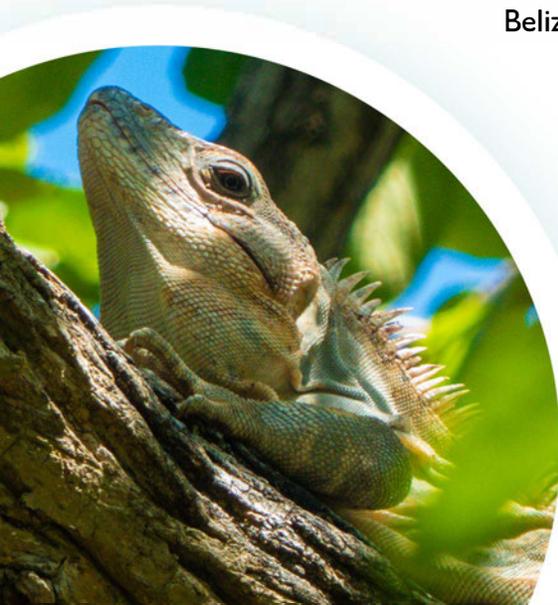
The TRC members are appointed by the Chairperson of the Belize Fund's Board of Directors, in consultation with the Belize Fund's Executive Director. All members should have demonstrated expertise in at least one of the Belize Fund Thematic Areas. All TRC members must acknowledge that while reviewing proposals, he/she may encounter confidential and proprietary information regarding Belize Fund and proponent entities.

The TRC member must adhere to the Conflict-of-Interest Policy and Disclosure Form (Annex 6). This is to ensure that the review process is objective, transparent and avoids even the slightest appearance of impropriety or self-dealing.

TRC members must also adhere to the Confidentiality and Disclosure Note (Annex 7), where he/she will accept that, during and after his/her engagement with the Belize Fund he/she shall:

TRC members must accept that, during and after his/her engagement with the Belize Fund, he/she shall:

- I. Safeguard all confidential and proprietary information and not reveal or disclose it to anyone unless requested or explicitly permitted by the Belize Fund to do so.
 - a. If TRC member requires additional expert opinion for a proposal, he/she must obtain approval from the Belize Fund to proceed with sharing. The request must detail the section wherein an opinion is required and identify a recommended person for review. The Belize Fund will screen the recommended expert to ensure there is no conflict of interest. If the request is approved, an extract from the proposal can be shared.





2. Not make use of any of such confidential and proprietary information for his/her own purpose or for the benefit of anyone other than for the Belize Fund or Belize Fund's related parties.
3. An electronic file shall be shared with each TRC member detailing each proposal and supporting documentation to be reviewed. TRC members will have temporary access to the specified folder. Upon completion of the proposal review, the shared folder will be closed and any documents (and all copies thereof) constituting or relating to such confidential and proprietary information should be returned to the Belize Fund.
 - a. TRC members may request to keep files for their personal record with permission from the Belize Fund.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Technical Review Committee is annexed to this manual (Annex 7). In general, the TRC members should serve for a period of three years with the possibility for renewal.

The TRC shall meet at minimum, once per every call for proposals and on an as-needs basis to review, score and recommend proposals. The Belize Fund's Executive Director shall preside over the meeting in the first two (2) years of its establishment with the purpose of guiding the discussions and facilitating the process of consensus building in the deliberations. After the two (2) year timeframe a chairperson will be selected from among its members.

The Technical Review Committee is comprised of experts who will review proposals submitted under the Grants Award Program (GAP) and the Government Strategic Allocation (GSA) and make recommendations for strengthening and improving the proposals. They will also submit recommendations for funding proposed projects to the Belize Fund's Board of Directors within forty-five (45) days of the application window closing date for each respective funding window.

The TRC will review both the GAP and GSA proposals, and provide a summary of recommendations, and conditions if any, to the Belize Fund's Board of Directors.

The TRC Score Sheet – (GAP – Annex 8 and GSA – Annex 9) shall use a weighted averaging approach to score proposals. The score sheet shall include alignment to a Thematic Area/Milestone, impact, and compliance with the Environmental and Social Safeguards of Belize Fund. The TRC details its recommendations and conditions, if any, and score proposals using the approved score sheet.

Applicants are required to submit a ten (10) minute recorded presentation for the GAP and twenty (20) minute presentation for the GSA to the Belize Fund Technical Review Committee. A presentation format, outlining the key points to be included in the presentation, will be provided to the Applicant. At the request of the TRC, applicants may also be invited to briefly address any questions or clarifications directly.





6. GRANT PROJECT NUMBERING SYSTEM

Numbering and naming the Belize Fund’s grant projects consistently and in a predictable way will distinguish the Belize Fund grants from one another. All approved projects must be numbered in accordance with the procedures outlined below. Changes to any element of the project document number coding structure shall be made only with the approval of the Belize Fund’s Executive Director. The structure and coding are

Funding Organization	BFSF
Award Type (source of funds)	GAP / GSA
Thematic Areas/Milestone (most dominant is selected)	TAI / M01
Year the project was approved	2022
Project number (Incremental Sequence Number)	01

The project number e.g., BFSF/GAP/TAI/2022/01 or BFSF/GSA/M01/2022/01

7. BELIZE FUND DATABASE (GRANT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE)

The Belize Fund shall use Grants Management Software that will help automate the entire lifecycle of a project. All approved projects must be entered into the Grants Management Software. The Grants Management Software shall help streamline grant operations, manage risks, enhance reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and improve the impact and outcomes of the Belize Fund’s grants program.

The selected software should also assist in keeping records up to date and should include financial monitoring and reporting, tracking of disbursements and amounts to be disbursed. Any change in grant activities, including Award Agreement, Amendments, Completion, or Termination of a grant should be reflected in the software in due time.

8. AWARD AGREEMENT

The Belize Fund is accountable for all contractual relations with grant recipients through a legal contractual instrument. The Belize Fund concludes its grant award cycle with a signed legal contract document outlining the key milestones, general provisions, and obligations of each party. The Belize Fund has developed its Award Agreement (AA) template, referred to as Funding Agreement for the GSA, to manage the approved grants and is detailed below.





8.1 Award Agreement

The terms of agreement between the Belize Fund and the grant recipient are captured in the Award Agreement (AA) template, (Annex 11), which will form the basis of the contract between the two entities. The AA is a binding legal agreement between the Belize Fund and the recipient organization.

The AA sets out all important understandings and obligations related to the financing provided by the Belize Fund, including rights and duties of both parties, grant amount, disbursement conditions, the agreed indicators for grant monitoring, communication guidelines, intellectual property, dispute resolution and procedures for amending and terminating the contract. The approved proposal will be incorporated as an Annex to the AA along with the reporting templates. The agreement shall also include or annex the required procurement policies for goods and services, financial record keeping, and any required Environmental and Social Safeguards and Financial Safeguards.

The AA legal text, as well as the clauses, should not be changed. It is recommended that a realistic duration for the project and payment schedule is agreed with the recipient organization to avoid the need for an Amendment to Award Agreement (AAA) in future. Each disbursement needs to have a payment date “Date/Month/Year” format and aligned with the proposal implementation schedule. The submission of progress and financial reports is allowed a grace period of up to fifteen days, for delays in reporting by the recipient organization, but the activities should remain largely on schedule. Any delays in project activities should be formally communicated to the Belize Fund in a timely manner so that resolution of the issues causing the delay could be addressed.

Award Agreements shall not be awarded retroactively or on a post-facto basis. The Award Agreement only covers costs incurred after the date on which the agreement is signed. However, in certain special circumstances and with proper substantiated reasons, clear explanation, and agreement from both parties, expenditures incurred before the signature date of AA shall be eligible.

The payment schedule usually consists of several disbursements – unless otherwise specified by the Belize Fund.

The amounts and schedules may differ, contingent upon the nature and length of project activities and recipient organization, on an annual basis for multi-year projects. In the case of small grants, the first disbursement should not exceed 50% of the total grant amount. For medium to large grants and the GSA, disbursements are based on annual implementation budgets. The payment schedule for awardees with low implementation capacity may be lowered to mitigate risks associated with underspending. Small projects under BZ\$50,000 and for one year may also be reduced to two payments.





The recipient organization should have a bank account exclusively for the receipt of the funds provided by the Belize Fund in respect of the project. If a specific bank account for the management of the Belize Fund funds cannot be provided, such reasons should be clearly explained and detailed. If the justification is acceptable to the Belize Fund, an alternative temporary solution shall be agreed for the disbursement of funds.

8.2 Intermediary Award Agreement

The Intermediary Award Agreement shall be used when an applicant does not meet one (1) of the eligibility criteria but the initiative/proposal merits funding. The Intermediary Award Agreement is established and a trusted non-government entity with proven legal and financial capacity to serve as an intermediary will be identified by the Belize Fund or recommended by the ineligible entity, subject to the Belize Fund approval. The Intermediary entity will receive the funds on behalf of the ineligible entity.

The Intermediary approach is an arrangement that can range from the Intermediary Entity being simply a conduit for receiving the funds on behalf of the actual recipient organization, or as an implementor of the project and providing capacity building activities to the actual recipient organization.

8.3 Amendment to an Award Agreement

This section describes the procedures for an Amendment to the Award Agreement. An Amendment to an Award Agreement (AAA) must occur once there is a change to the agreed terms and conditions of the signed agreement. The Recipient Organization must submit a formal letter of request to make an Amendment. The letter must provide justification for such a request.

The request for an amendment will be reviewed and assessed by the Belize Fund, and a formal letter responding to the request will be provided along with the AAA (if necessary). The new terms and conditions will be provided to the recipient organization. Supporting documents⁶ are to be included with the request for an Amendment.

The AAA can include but is not limited to:

1. Any change in the budget categories that exceeds 10% of the approved budget.
2. Any change in the scope or the objectives of the project.
3. Other conditions that may be specified in the clauses of the agreement.

It is essential that all relevant factors that lead to an amendment are clearly documented and communicated.

⁶The required supporting document depends on the type of amendment and the specific case. It will be decided on a case-by-case basis if additional supporting documentation is needed during the review.





8.4 Requests for Reprogramming, Reallocation, No-Objection, and Extension

Request for Reprogramming

A request for reprogramming is required when there is a change in the scope of an approved project. A reprogramming may be considered as a result of unexpected and justifiable changes in the approved project outcomes, outputs, and/or activities. A request for reprogramming will require an AAA which must be agreed in writing.

A letter of request accompanied by justification should be immediately sent to the Belize Fund for such change. Should it be approved, the Belize Fund will provide a formal letter approving the reprogramming request. A letter or email of exchange between both parties for a reprogramming of approved activities will suffice.

Request for Budget Reallocation

A request for budget reallocation is required when there is a change that alters an approved budget category by more than 10%. A 10% budget tolerance indicates that funds can be reallocated to other approved budget categories without formal approval. Any reallocation of funds exceeding 10% of any budget category, will require approval from the Belize Fund. The recipient organization will be required to submit a request accompanied by justification supporting the request.

The 10% Administrative budget category, or 15% for intermediaries, should not be reallocated and should be used to help cover the regular costs of running the recipient organization

Request for No-Objection

A request for no-objection is required in the event that the Recipient Organization deems it necessary to hire family members or relatives of the recipient organization's staff to provide any goods and services. The recipient organization must provide proper justification for such request.

The Recipient Organization will also have to comply with the Belize Fund's Procurement Policies and request no-objection where necessary.

Request for No-Cost Time-Extension

A request for No-Cost Time-Extension is required when there is a need for additional time to complete the approved outputs/activities of a project. A No-Cost Time-Extension may be considered as a result of unexpected and justifiable delays in project implementation schedule, created by, but not limited to protracted illness, loss of human resources, loss of leveraged funds, and force majeure. The No-Cost Time-Extension does not change or modify the approved outcomes/outputs/activities of a project but provides additional time for their completion. The Belize Fund may approve No-Cost Time-Extension where such extensions are properly justifiable.

A project can be extended beyond the expiry date with proper and reasonable justification whilst ensuring that the goal(s) and objective(s) remain relevant and achievable. The recipient organization shall submit such request prior to the project end date as stipulated in the Award Agreement. A formal letter approving the request will be provided by the Belize Fund to the recipient organization. There is no limit to no-cost extensions once it is justifiable.





8.5 Termination of an Award

The Belize Fund shall make all efforts to solve challenges and issues with recipient organizations as they occur and avoid the termination of the Award. This includes withholding payments of funds until, in the judgement of the Belize Fund, the situation has been corrected.

In such cases whereas an Award needs to be legally terminated, the following steps are recommended:

1. A comprehensive review of the project activity status be conducted.
2. A comprehensive review of all project's finances be conducted.
3. The case should be clearly documented and must include written correspondence with the recipient organization following the clauses of the Award Agreement.
4. An official termination of the Award should be prepared and signed by the Belize Fund's Executive Director following the clauses of the Award Agreement.
5. Upon termination, the Belize Fund should ensure that all relevant documents are properly filed, the Grants Management Software updated, remaining funds and equipment procured with project funds are returned as per the Award Agreement.

For projects that are dormant and have exceeded the Award Agreement end date and it's determined that completion of the project is not expected in the next two to three months, a termination notification letter should be issued to the respective recipient organization.

9. M&E FRAMEWORK AND REPORTING

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan aims to support and track the progress and success of projects in achieving their objectives by providing the necessary information and tools for monitoring. It is expected that this plan will assist in facilitating the adaptive decision-making process and will also provide information on the performance of the project and overall performance and impact of the programs.

9.1 Program Level

The Belize Fund will develop a program level M&E plan to track the progress and impact towards achievement of its strategic plan and to oversee the implementation of projects. This M&E plan will serve as a key supporting document for the implementation of this Grants Manual.

The program level M&E plan will provide for:

1. Supervision of projects' progress by registering, reviewing progress reports, visit reports, and working with the Recipient Organization.
2. Ensuring that project funds are being used as budgeted.
3. Verifying that project resources and activities are producing expected results through site visits.
4. Ensure that the Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan (ESRMP), Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), and the Financial Risk Management Plan (FRMP) are being implemented.
5. Spearheading the implementation of an internal end of project evaluation.





The purpose of the program level M&E Plan is to:

1. To ensure accountability against the objectives set.
2. To measure progress and outcomes (both positive and negative)
3. To form a baseline by which to measure overall impact.
4. To inform what's next and where there is need for improvement.
5. To be able to share achievements that enthuse and inspire.
6. To ensure that all the relevant Environmental and Social Safeguards are being monitored.
7. To evaluate the Project's impact in achieving the Conservation Commitments, Strategic Objectives and the Belize Fund's mission and vision.

The approach the Belize Fund will utilize is results oriented, integrating an M&E plan that combines both the narrative and financial benchmarks for each project. The M&E plan is developed as a basic tool that builds on the Logical Framework, and the Evaluation and Indicators sections of the Application Form. It establishes the monitoring of activities and indicators. The plan will be used to monitor and assess the level of accomplishments of the targeted indicators throughout project implementation for both GSA and GAP projects.

The Belize Fund shall develop and annex to the proposal template a complete list of programmatic metrics which will be adopted by the projects and aggregated at the program level. All metrics used in the M&E plan should be **S.M.A.R.T.**: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

Below are some examples of metrics to be used in the M&E plan but will be contingent based on the project scope and objectives. Note that some of the following data would be measured by the recipient organization and some would be data measured by the Belize Fund in aggregate.

1. Number (#) of persons (disaggregated by gender):
 - a) trained
 - b) benefiting from BFSF Funds
2. Area (Km²)
 - a) patrolled
 - b) protected
 - c) with improved management.
 - d) with avoided impacts.
3. Funds (\$)
 - a) leveraged
 - b) generated
 - c) invested
4. Number (#) of
 - a) species protected
 - b) protected areas supported
 - c) critically/endangered species monitored
 - d) revenue generation initiatives supported
 - e) biodiversity products
 - f) community members with improved livelihoods
 - g) number of commercial species with improved management
5. Percentage (%)
 - a) of projects led by women
 - b) youths involved in the project
 - c) of women hired



9.2 Project Level

Monitoring is defined as a continuing function that aims primarily to provide early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of results to the management and main stakeholders of the project.

Evaluation is a selective exercise that attempts to assess progress, systematically and objectively, towards the achievement of an outcome. The Evaluation of a project should not be a one-time event, but an exercise involving assessments of differing scope and depth carried out at several intervals in response to the evolving needs for evaluative knowledge and learning during the effort to achieve an outcome. All evaluations, including project evaluations that assess relevance, performance, and other criteria, need to be linked to outcomes as opposed to only implementation or immediate outputs.

Each approved Belize Fund project should include an M&E plan with appropriate indicators. The plan should indicate how information will be collected and who will be responsible for it. Adequate baseline data should be presented and S.M.A.R.T indicators selected as the tools used to measure and/or assess the progress and results of a project. The expected results as described in the projects must be linked to the expected results of the Belize Fund and contribute to the program indicators.

A project level M&E plan, included in the proposal template, will be developed for each project and should consider the following.

1. Goals and objectives of the plan.
2. Matrix of M&E indicators and expected results.
3. A proposed timetable of all M&E activities
4. A mid-term internal evaluation
5. Final project evaluation

The Recipient Organization will be responsible for conducting internal monitoring activities for their project. The Monitoring Report should contribute to the progress reports that are submitted by the Recipient Organization.

Project Financial and Narrative Progress Report and Monitoring

The progress reports should include information about changes in the indicators established for project monitoring. The progress reports are the responsibility of the Recipient Organization and should be submitted based on the terms agreed in the Award Agreement and M&E Plan. The disbursement of funds will be made upon acceptance and approval of the Narrative (Annex 11) and Financial (Annex 12) reports, and after confirming that the expenditures reported exceed 80% of previously disbursed funds, as included in the Award Agreement. The progress of project implementation will be documented and reported using standard project progress reports, monitoring reports, the final project report, and lessons learned report templates.





Each recipient organization shall report based on the progress being made in achieving the project targets as indicated in the M&E plan (Annex 13) annexed to the Award Agreement. The progress report should be submitted by the dates indicated in the Award Agreement.

The Report should contain the following:

1. Means of verification (pictures, patrol reports, monitoring reports etc.) to justify the deliverables completed during the reporting period, based on the approved work plan.
2. Summary of the progress.
3. Completed activities.
4. Pending activities.
5. Challenges.
6. Lessons learnt.
7. Recommendations.

The review and approval process for the report should not exceed two weeks after submission by the Recipient Organization. Once the narrative and financial reports are approved and reported expenditures exceed 80% of grant funds disbursed, the Belize Fund will inform the Recipient Organization and proceed with processing the subsequent disbursement, where applicable.

Financial Monitoring should include all costs associated with the management and implementation of the project to achieve the overall goal. This should also include community contributions, proposing organization contributions, and other co-financing sources. The funds should be spent according to the approved budget and in accordance with the Belize Fund's Award Agreement

All relevant, financial records should be maintained and made available to the Belize Fund upon request. Note that these financial documents may be audited independently, or by a third-party, and may become public information.

Monitoring & Evaluation may continue after a project is completed/closed.

The Belize Fund may, in some cases decide to continue to monitor after project completion or closure. If monitoring beyond the closure of the project will be required, the Belize Fund must formally inform the Recipient Organization, outlining the indicators that will be monitored and expected timeframe of such monitoring.





Final Narrative Report

A final Narrative Report is due within fourteen (14) days of the end of the award. The final Narrative Report shall summarize the overall accomplishments. The Final Narrative Report at minimum shall include the following:

1. Name of the Project and Agreement Number.
2. Summary of project completion.
3. Completed activities.
4. Pending activities.
5. Project implementation challenges.
6. Achievement of project Indicators and metrics.
7. Gender disaggregated data.
8. Key results achieved.
9. Lessons learnt.
10. Recommendations.

Financial Reporting

The initial revision of the financial report should be completed by the Belize Fund. In order to provide the recipient organization enough time to prepare, review, finalize and submit accurate reports in accordance with the Award Agreement. Once the financial report documents are reviewed internally and verified by the Belize Fund, the report may be sent to a third-party firm for revision and approval. The third-party firm must ensure that all expenditures were within the approved budget, workplan and disbursement schedule. Risks associated with national and international laws will also be revised.

The following documents shall be submitted to the Belize Fund as per the Award Agreement financial reporting schedule:

1. Completed the Belize Fund's Financial Report Form
2. Total Project Cost
3. Amount received under the signed agreement
4. Amount received from other sources
5. Organization's total contribution
6. Letter from the proponent organization indicating the total administrative expenses.
7. Detailed Expense Sheet
8. Receipts/invoice/vouchers
9. Contracts
10. Monthly bank statements and/or cancelled cheques.
11. Bank reconciliations
12. Income statement
13. Annual audits and/or financial statements
14. Other supporting documentation

In addition, the report must ensure that it adheres to the following:

1. It is in conformity with the Belize Fund Procurement policy.
2. It is in alignment to the Belize Fund budget category limits.





All expenditures made by the recipient organization must be fully accounted for before any future disbursements or project closure.

A letter from the recipient organization, confirming total Administrative Costs, will suffice as supporting documentation for the administrative cost category. The Belize Fund may request full or partial submission of all supporting documentation under the administrative category, if the Belize Fund is not satisfied with the quality of reporting provided.

9.3 Site Visits

Site visits will take place as may be required, during the project implementation phase, to observe the actual execution of the project and to confirm the Recipient Organization's progress reports. During the site visits the Belize Fund Staff should observe and address:

1. How well the project is meeting its stated general objectives.
2. How well the project is implementing its activities as presented in the project implementation plan.
3. How well the risk mitigation measures are performing.
4. How well the Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan (ESRMP) is being implemented.
5. How well the project is compliant with Financial Safeguards.
6. How well the project is progressing towards achieving its Mid and End Targets.

It is recommended that at a minimum, one (1) site visit be conducted, either annually or during the lifetime of a project, depending on the nature and time frame of the project and the level of capacity of the Recipient Organization.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

The Belize Fund must ensure that projects supported are environmentally and socially sustainable and financially compliant, and that proper risk management tools are in place to assess, manage, and mitigate the social, environmental and financial risks and their impacts.

Each project will be required to comply with the Belize Fund's Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (Belize Fund ESSF)⁷ and shall do so by completing and submitting, along with the proposal, an Environmental and Social Risk Screening Checklist (Annex 14) and an Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan (ESRMP) (Annex 15). The Environmental and Social Risk Screening checklist shall ensure that each project complies with the ESSF using an Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan (ESRMP) and an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (if required) (Annex 16). In addition, mitigation measures must be developed to reduce and mitigate, or where possible eliminate, risks. These should include both internal factors and external factors.

⁷The Belize Fund ESSF seeks to prevent, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts that affect the environment and society, while promoting the conservation of biodiversity and the provision of ecosystems services.





The Belize Fund will also require that each proposal include a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) (Annex 17). The purpose of the plan is to demonstrate the involvement and participation of stakeholders, before, during and after the project implementation. If the applicant already has a SEP, the Belize Fund will review to ensure conformity to the Belize Fund ESSF requirements.

Finally, each applicant will be screened for financial risk using the Financial Risk Screening Tool (Annex 18) for which a Financial Risk Management Plan (Annex 18) will be developed and implemented to ensure that all financial safeguards are implemented to avoid violation of laws and legal requirements related to anti-money laundering, anti-corruption, anti-terrorism, etc.

11. COMPLETION / CLOSURE OF GRANTS

Project Completion - a project is considered completed once all the approved activities are implemented and completed but the reporting and end of project evaluation are still pending approval.

Project Closure - a project is considered closed once the Recipient Organization has successfully completed the project and has received an approval letter, from the Belize Fund, for the final technical and financial report, including approval of the Final Project Evaluation (Annex 19).

A grant can only be closed, once all required reports have been submitted, reviewed, and approved. The Belize Fund Program Manager will ensure all deliverables are completed, all final reports are reviewed and approved, and the total grant amount has been reconciled. Reconciliation includes verification that all funds disbursed are accounted for, the final payment has been issued, and any unspent funds were returned to the Belize Fund. The Belize Fund will formally notify the Recipient Organization about the approval of final reports and successful closure of the project.

The Grants Management Software will be updated and will be used to present a description of the overall impact of the individual project. The project impact will be generated and consolidated into the Belize Fund's impact report.

A project will complete its activities and reach the end of the life cycle in the following manner:

1. The Recipient Organization will notify the Program Manager that all project activities were completed/concluded satisfactory.
2. The Recipient Organization will undertake its own end-of-project evaluation in order to prepare the final report. The Belize Fund Staff can assist in this process.
3. The Recipient Organization will prepare a final report covering the project's objectives achieved, expected and actual results, and a detailed final financial report.
4. The Belize Fund staff will assist with the initial review of the final reports and engage with the Recipient Organization to address initial queries and gaps.
5. The Program Manager will do a final review and approval of the final reports.
6. The Project Officer will prepare a final summary of the results of the project and register the conclusion of the project in the Grants Management Software.



The project file including the Award Agreement, progress reports, and other related documents and information shall be stored for records and audit purposes.

12. GRIEVANCES

The Belize Fund will ensure that each Recipient Organization has an internal grievance redress mechanism that is in alignment with Belize Fund's grievance mechanism. It is Belize Fund's intention to ensure that the grievances are accessible, collaborative, expeditious, and effective in resolving concerns through dialogue, joint fact-finding, negotiation, and problem solving. In addition, the Belize Fund will ensure that the Recipient Organization has a redress mechanism as a part of their grievance procedures to solve any grievance related to a Belize Fund-funded project. The grievance and redress mechanism must provide an accessible channel for submission of complaints and feedback.

The recipient's organization should adopt the following the Belize Fund core principles in their GP:

1. **Fairness:** Grievances will be treated confidentially, assessed impartially, and handled transparently.
2. **Objectiveness and independence:** The GP will operate independently of all interested parties to guarantee fair, objective, and impartial treatment of each case.
3. **Simplicity and accessibility:** Procedures to file grievances and seek action will be made simple enough that project beneficiaries can easily understand them.
4. **Responsiveness and efficiency:** The GP will be designed to be responsive to the needs of all complainants, with effective action and quick responses to grievances and suggestions.
5. **Speed and proportionality:** All grievances will be addressed and resolved as quickly as possible. The action taken on the grievance or suggestion is expected to be swift, decisive, and constructive.
6. **Participatory and socially inclusive:** All project-affected persons - fishers, community members, members of vulnerable groups, project implementers, civil society, and the media - are encouraged to bring grievances and comments to the attention of project authorities.





In projects funded by the Belize Fund, it's understood that when stakeholders present a grievance, they generally expect to receive one or more of the following:

1. Acknowledgment of their problem.
2. An honest response to questions about project activities.
3. An apology.
4. Compensation.
5. Modification of the conduct that caused the grievance.
6. Some fair remedy.

Each Recipient Organization shall be responsible for informing project affected parties about the grievance procedures. Affected parties that are unsatisfied with the decision of the Recipient Organization, shall have the option to submit such grievance through the Belize Fund's website, Contact Us/Grievance Mechanism. The following steps in the table below will be made available on the Belize Fund's website to guide the affected parties through the filing of a grievance and the process involved, including feedback on the grievance report from the Belize Fund.

Activity	Responsible	Timeline (Calendar days)
Submission of Grievance Form by affected party	Affected Party	-
Review of Grievance Form for completeness	Administrative Assistant	Within 5 days of receipt of the Grievance
Notification of receipt of the submission	Administrative Assistant	Within 10 days of receipt of the Grievance
Complete review of Grievance Form	Executive Director	Within 30 days of receipt of the Grievance
Meeting with affected party (optional)	Executive Director	Within 30 days of receipt of the Grievance
Notification of the decision	Project Manager	Within 35 days of receipt of the Grievance

13. APPEALS

An appeal is the opportunity granted to an applicant to contest a decision made by the Belize Fund.

The Belize Fund shall consider having an Awards Appeal Process mechanism in place, details of which shall be made publicly available. Note: This process would be supported through online submissions. Template and process need to be developed.





14.ANNEX

Annex 01 - Concept Paper

Annex 02 - Award Letter

Annex 03 - Planning Grant Application Form

Annex 04 - GAP Screening Checklist

Annex 05 - GSA Screening Checklist

Annex 06 - TRC Conflict of Interest Policy and Disclosure Form

Annex 07 - TRC Terms of Reference

Annex 08 - GAP TRC Scoresheet

Annex 09 - GSA TRC Scoresheet

Annex 10 - Award/Funding Agreement (AA/FA)

Annex 11 - Narrative Report

Annex 12 - Financial Report

Annex 13 - M&E Plan

Annex 14 - Belize Fund Environmental and Social Risk Screening Checklist

Annex 15 - Belize Fund Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan

Annex 16 - Belize Fund Environmental and Social Impact Assessment

Annex 17 - Belize Fund Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Plan

Annex 18 - Financial Risk Screening Tool & Management Plan

Annex 19 - Final Project Evaluation





**Belize Fund For A
Sustainable Future**

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Initial Consultation Report

Strengthening Community-Led Ecosystem Restoration through Locally Led Adaptation in Coastal Belize

I. Partners

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II. Purpose and Scope of Consultations

This report summarizes the stakeholder engagement undertaken during the concept note stage for the proposed Adaptation Fund project. Given the use of a fully unidentified sub-project approach, community-wide consultations at specific locations have not yet been conducted. In line with Adaptation Fund guidance, early engagement at this stage focused on national and sectoral umbrella bodies with established mandates, technical oversight, and ongoing engagement with coastal communities.

The purpose of consultations at concept note stage was to:

- inform overall project design and scope
- identify gaps and lessons learned from existing adaptation, conservation, and livelihood initiatives
- ensure complementarity and avoid duplication with ongoing programmes
- assess feasibility of a locally led adaptation delivery model

More detailed consultations at community level, including site-specific engagement, participatory planning, and social and gender analysis (preliminary gender assessment can be found in Annex 5), will be undertaken during full proposal development.

III. Stakeholders

Consultations were undertaken with the following umbrella bodies, selected based on their representative roles, regulatory mandates, or long-standing engagement with coastal communities and vulnerable groups:

- **Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future**

Consulted in its role as a national conservation trust fund with extensive experience administering grants to community-based organizations, including women, youth, and Indigenous-led groups. The Belize Fund provided input on on-granting mechanisms, fiduciary considerations, and lessons learned in reaching local actors at scale.

- **Ministry of Blue Economy and Marine Conservation**

Consulted as the national authority responsible for coastal planning, risk management, and implementation of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Framework. The Ministry has a routine engagement with coastal communities, co-management bodies, and local governments and provided guidance on climate risks, spatial considerations, and alignment with national coastal policies. Also consulted due to its regulatory and extension mandate with small-scale fisherfolk, aquaculture groups, and coastal livelihood actors, including women and youth.

- **Ministry of Economic Transformation**

Consulted in its role as Belize's National Designated Authority to the Adaptation Fund, responsible for ensuring alignment of proposed interventions with national development priorities, climate policy objectives, and coordination across government institutions. The Ministry provided input on strategic fit, complementarity with national climate finance initiatives, and consistency with Belize's broader climate adaptation and development agenda. These bodies were consulted because they either directly represent community interests through formal structures, work closely with legally recognized local governance systems, or administer programmes that support community-level adaptation, conservation, and livelihoods.

IV. Key Inputs

Inputs from consultations and from prior engagement under existing programmes directly informed the design of the Adaptation Fund concept in the following ways:

- **Locally led decision-making:**

Stakeholders emphasized that previous initiatives often limited communities to consultative or implementation roles. This informed the project's design to devolve substantive decision-making authority and financial control to community-level institutions embedded within existing governance systems.

- **Need for adaptive management:**

Lessons from prior programmes highlighted that fixed activity designs struggled to remain effective under changing climate conditions. This informed the inclusion of learning-driven adaptive management, linking participatory monitoring directly to decision-making and resource reallocation.

- **Maladaptation risks:**

Stakeholders cited examples of livelihood or restoration activities that became ineffective due to climate variability. This informed the integration of maladaptation screening, climate-risk-informed activity selection, and flexibility to adjust or discontinue actions.

- **Inclusion of women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples:**

Consultations confirmed that these groups often participate in activities but lack influence over planning and financing decisions. This informed explicit requirements for representation, leadership development, and equitable access to adaptation finance.

These inputs shaped the programme's core architecture, including governance arrangements, on-granting mechanisms, and learning systems, rather than merely refining individual activities.

V. Next Steps

During full proposal development, the project will undertake:

- Community-level consultations in selected sites
- Participatory vulnerability and needs assessments
- Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes where Indigenous Peoples are involved
- Detailed social and gender analyses to inform final activity design.

These processes will ensure that final project design reflects community priorities, safeguards compliance, and locally defined adaptation pathways.

Preliminary Gender Assessment

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Introduction

The Gender Assessment has been prepared at concept note stage to inform the design of a Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) programme focused on ecosystem restoration, climate-resilient livelihoods, and strengthened community governance in coastal Belize. The assessment draws on existing national data, policy frameworks, and prior gender analyses to identify gender-differentiated climate vulnerabilities, structural inequalities, and barriers to participation that are relevant to ecosystem-based adaptation and locally led decision-making. It draws on national data and prior programme experience.

Women and youth in Belize's coastal communities play critical roles in fisheries value chains, ecosystem stewardship, household resource management, and informal economies. However, they often face structural barriers to participation in decision-making, access to finance, land and resource tenure, and climate information. Climate impacts, such as storms, flooding, ecosystem degradation, and livelihood losses, disproportionately affect women through increased care burdens, income insecurity, and reduced access to natural resources. Youth face high unemployment and limited opportunities to engage in climate-resilient livelihoods, while Indigenous women and youth experience compounded barriers linked to geographic isolation and marginalization.

This assessment is intended to:

- Identify key gender and social inclusion considerations relevant to the programme's scope
- Highlight risks of exclusion or inequitable benefit distribution
- Explain how gender considerations have informed the programme's design at concept note stage

A comprehensive, site-specific gender analysis and Gender Action Plan will be undertaken during full proposal development once specific communities and sub-projects are identified.

Policy and Institutional Context for Gender and Climate Action in Belize

Belize has established a strong policy foundation for gender equality and gender-responsive climate action. The National Gender Policy (2024–2030) aims to achieve gender equity and eliminate discrimination against women and girls, with priority areas including economic empowerment, access to resources, participation in decision-making, and institutional strengthening. Importantly, the policy identifies women's access to land, livelihoods, and housing as persistent gaps, particularly in rural, coastal, and Indigenous communities.

The National Climate Change Gender Action Plan (NCCGAP) 2022–2027 provides a framework for integrating gender into climate adaptation and mitigation across sectors, emphasizing equitable access to benefits, inclusive decision-making, and the recognition of intersectionality (National Climate Change Office, 2022). The NCCGAP explicitly promotes ecosystem-based adaptation and community-led approaches as opportunities to advance both resilience and gender equality.

Previous gender-based climate resilience analyses in Belize have shown that women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately dependent on climate-sensitive natural resources and informal livelihoods, while facing structural barriers to finance, land tenure, and leadership roles (CANARI, 2021). These findings are directly relevant to locally led ecosystem-based adaptation initiatives.

Gender, Poverty and Coastal Livelihood Vulnerability

Climate vulnerability in Belize is closely linked to poverty, livelihood dependence on natural resources, and geographic exposure. While multidimensional poverty has declined in recent years, it remains concentrated in certain districts and among Indigenous populations, female-headed households, households with children, and households with elderly members (Statistical Institute of Belize, 2024).

Women in coastal communities are often engaged in informal or small-scale livelihood activities related to fisheries processing, tourism services, handicrafts, and household-based enterprises. These activities are highly sensitive to climate impacts such as coral bleaching, sargassum influx, storm damage, and ecosystem degradation. Limited access to formal credit, land ownership, and insurance constrains women's ability to invest in adaptation measures or recover from climate shocks.

Youth face high unemployment and limited access to technical training, particularly in climate-resilient and green sectors. Indigenous women and youth experience compounded vulnerabilities due to historical marginalization, customary land tenure practices that often exclude women, and weaker access to state services and finance.

Gendered Access to Resources, Land, and Finance

Although Belize's legal framework provides for equal land and property rights, gender disparities persist in practice, particularly within Indigenous and rural coastal communities. Customary norms often result in land being inherited or controlled by men, limiting women's ability to access collateral for financing or participate in formal adaptation programmes (CANARI, 2021). The lack of sex-disaggregated land ownership data further obscures these inequalities.

Access to finance remains a critical barrier. Women entrepreneurs are more likely to rely on credit unions or informal lenders due to limited collateral and awareness of available financial products. This places women at greater financial risk and restricts their capacity to invest in climate-resilient livelihoods or ecosystem stewardship activities.

These dynamics are highly relevant to an LLA programme that relies on on-granting mechanisms, as they underscore the need for deliberate design features to ensure equitable access to adaptation finance for women, youth, and Indigenous-led organizations.

Gender and Decision-Making in Locally Led Adaptation

Decision-making power is a central determinant of whether adaptation actions are truly locally led and gender responsive. While women and youth play critical roles in ecosystem stewardship and household adaptation strategies, they are often underrepresented in formal governance structures, including co-management bodies and community committees (Government of Belize, 2024).

Patriarchal norms, caregiving responsibilities, and limited access to leadership opportunities constrain women's participation in decision-making. Youth are frequently viewed as beneficiaries rather than decision-makers, despite their importance for long-term adaptation and innovation.

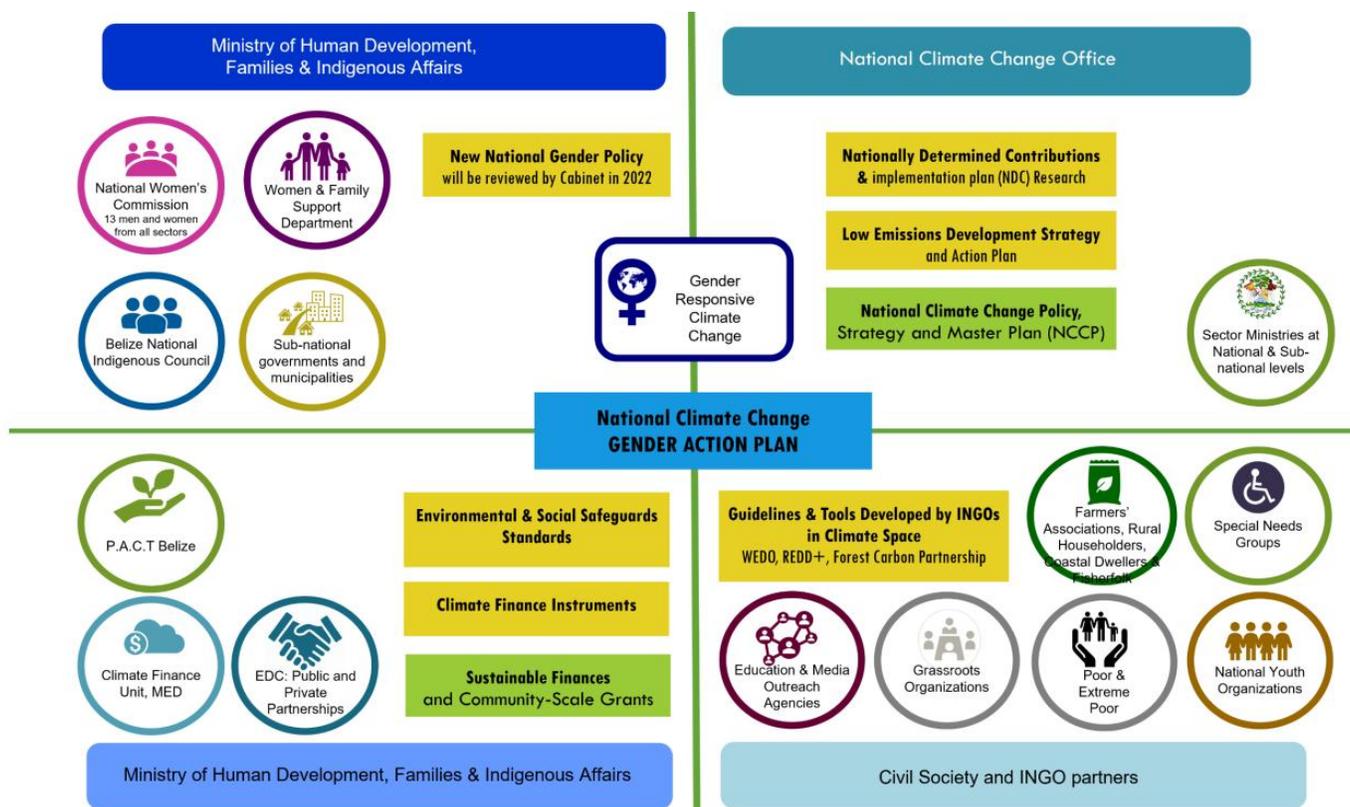
Without explicit measures to address these dynamics, locally led adaptation initiatives risk reproducing consultative rather than devolved governance models. This assessment therefore emphasizes the importance of representation, decision authority, and accountability, not merely participation.

Implications for Ecosystem-Based Adaptation and Livelihood Interventions

Ecosystem-based adaptation activities can generate significant benefits for women and marginalized groups by reducing exposure to climate hazards and supporting fisheries and tourism livelihoods. However, these benefits are not automatic. If gender roles, access to resources, and decision-making power are not addressed, women and youth may be excluded from:

- Selection of restoration sites and livelihood activities
- Access to training, grants, and technical support
- Leadership roles in community governance and monitoring

Similarly, climate-resilient livelihood diversification can either reduce or reinforce inequality, depending on whether women and marginalized groups can access start-up capital, markets, and skills. The NCCGAP provides a useful guide on the ecosystem of actors who can be incorporated into projects like these to ensure more inclusive climate action (*Figure 1*).



Source: National Climate Change Gender Action Plan 2022-2027

Gender Informed Programme Design

The gender assessment has informed the programme design in the following ways:

- **Inclusive governance:**
 - Community adaptation committees and governance structures are designed to require representation of women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples, with decision-making authority over prioritization, budgeting, and adaptive adjustments.

- **Equitable access to finance:**
 - The on-granting mechanism is designed to lower barriers for women, youth, and Indigenous-led organizations through targeted outreach, capacity support, and simplified procedures.
- **Gender-responsive livelihoods:**
 - Livelihood activities prioritize flexible, nature-based enterprises that align with women's roles, time constraints, and skills, while providing opportunities for youth engagement.
- **Safeguards and risk management:**
 - Gender-based risks, including exclusion and elite capture, are addressed through safeguards screening, participatory monitoring, and accessible grievance redress mechanisms.

Next Steps

At full proposal development stage, the programme will undertake:

- Site-specific, intersectional gender analysis
- Gender-responsive vulnerability and capacity assessments
- Development of a Gender Action Plan (GAP)
- Gender-responsive budgeting and indicators
- Monitoring systems that track differentiated outcomes

Conclusion

The Gender Assessment demonstrates that gender equality and social inclusion are integral to effective locally led adaptation in coastal Belize. Addressing structural inequalities related to access to resources, finance, and decision-making strengthens the effectiveness, equity, and sustainability of ecosystem-based adaptation and livelihood interventions. By embedding gender considerations at concept note stage, the programme establishes a strong foundation for inclusive, community-driven climate resilience.

References

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