BELIZE OPEN GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN

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AKNOWLEDGE-MENTS

The accomplishment of this instrument has been possible due to the valuable commitment and active role of several persons and institutions. Special acknowledgement to Belize's Open Government Steering Committee, and to the various stakeholders from civil society, academia, private sector and the government who participated in the different stages of the process.

The project team would also like to thank the international experts and practitioners who contributed their time and knowledge by sharing good practices, resources and insights to strengthen the deliberation and drafting of commitments.

Lastly, we would like to thank all the citizens of Belize who welcomed this initiative, especially in these particular times. The Trust for the Americas and the Organization of American States would like to thank the U.S. Embassy in Belize for providing the resources for developing Belize's first Open Government Action Plan during 2020, in the framework of the project "Transformation to an Open Public Administration in Belize".

OPEN GOVERNMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

The Belize Open Government Steering Committee (OGSC) was established in February 2020. The role of the Steering Committee is to serve as the multi-stakeholder dialogue and decision-making ad-hoc mechanism to advance open government in the country. It is composed of eleven (11) volunteer members, six (6) representatives of government agencies and five representatives (5) from civil society organizations.

ROLES OF THE MEMBERS:

- Nourish and share the principles of open government, including speaking on behalf of the OGSC in media outlets, interviews, and alike.
- Exert active participation in periodic meetings of the Committee.
- Attendance on open government activities set by the project such as workshops, trainings, forums, roundtable dialogues, and alike.
- Follow-up, review and validate the open government action plan.

THROUGH NOVEMBER 2020:

Ms. Deshawn Arzu Torres. *Chairperson, Integrity Commission.*

Mr. Imani Burges. *Crown Counsel, Attorney General's Ministry.*

Mr. Clifford King. *Director of Local Government, Ministry of Finance.*

Mr. Ishmael Quiroz. *Executive Director, Economic Development Council for the Office of the Prime Minister.*

Mr. Michael Singh. *Office of the PM, Advisor on Digital Transformation.*

Mr. Ian Smith. CIO. *Central Information Technology Office (CITO).*

THROUGH NOVEMBER 2020:

Mr. Khalid Belisle. *President, Belize Mayor's Association.*

Mr. Dyon Elliot. *Representative of the Private Sector, Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI).*

Mr. Marvin Mora. Representative of the Unions, President of The National Trade Union Congress of Belize (NTUCB).

Ms. Sharmayne Saunders Chairperson. *The Association of Tertiary Level Institutions of Belize (ATLIB).*

Mr. Paco Smith. Representative of CSOs. *Belize PEACE Movement.*

INTRO-
DUCTION

OPEN GOVERNMENT

Open government aims to provide better public services, generate safer communities, fight corruption, and using new technologies to strengthen governance. The pillars of Open Government are transparency, citizen participation and collaboration. In 2011, eight countries founded the Open Government Partnership (OGP1), an international entity dedicated to promoting open government around the world. Today, 78 countries and 20 cities are part of OGP. These members must develop an Action Plan with specific commitments and have two years to achieve the agreed commitments.

Although Belize is not a member of the OGP, the country is embracing open government since 2018 with the support of the OAS and The Trust for the Americas. The development of this open government action plan is a key milestone towards advancing open government reforms as well as introducing good governance principles and guidelines related to this global agenda.

Open Government also aims to improve access to public information and citizen participation while promoting transparency, participation of and collaboration between all actors, as well as the use of information technology.

The development and adoption of Open Government Action Plans contributes to build trust between governments and citizens worldwide. It allows the promotion of co-created solutions, putting the citizen at the center of policy-making and benefiting from the collective intelligence of society. At the same time, improving access to government information and opening up public data promotes accountability by allowing citizens to monitor government actions.

Thus, the current Action Plan is intended to serve as the instrument to orient the actions of stakeholders in Belize to accomplish seven open government commitments that were co-created since June 2020 by government and non-government actors, in different topics and/or sectors.

ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT IN TIMES OF COVID 19

The year 2020 exposed the world to an extraordinary situation: the COVID19 pandemic. Across the globe, countries struggled to respond to unprecedented challenges, and the need for openness, transparency, inclusion and accountability have rarely been greater.

The Open Government agenda and the design of an action plan during this particular context represent an opportunity for the government, civil society, the private sector and citizens to work and seek solutions to the health and economic crisis together. An Open Response and Open Recovery campaign was installed worldwide by the Open Government Partnership as principles and guidelines seeking to solve the challenges that have arisen, as well as to work together towards creating a 'new normality'.

Therefore, the exercise of developing Belize's Open Government Action Plan sought to contribute to defining priority areas, in which open government could add more value or have a greater impact on COVID-19 related emergency response and/or recovery initiatives.

Open Response

https://www.opengovpartnership.org/stories/open-response-open-recovery/#response

Open Reform

https://www.opengovpartnership.org/stories/open-response-open-recovery/#reform

OGP Guide for Open Gov and Coronavirus

https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/a-guide-to-open-government-and-the-coronavirus/

Open Recovery

https://www.opengovpartnership.org/stories/open-response-open-recovery/#recovery

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT:
PREVIOUS ACTIONS ON OPEN GOVERNMENT IN BELIZE

PROMOTING AN OPEN GOVERNMENT ECOSYSTEM IN BELIZE (2018-2019)

During 2018 and 2019, The Trust for the Americas and the OAS implemented the project **"Promoting an Open Government Ecosystem in Belize"**. Capacity building trainings were carried out for Belizeans from various sectors through seminars, workshops, and roundtable activities. These dedicated trainings enabled the creation of small coalitions of government and civil society, the development of seven hackathon solutions, and the incubation of eight innovative projects through mini-grants. This led to the development of different open government initiatives in Belize. At the same time, the project also achieved the insertion of the country to the regional open government scenario, by joining efforts with seven other countries in the search for open government through the Developing the Caribbean Initiative (DevCa), with the coordination of the Caribbean Open Institute (COI) in Jamaica. DevCa takes place simultaneously in seven Caribbean countries as a leading platform for discussion on how data and digital technology impact national development.

CAPACITY BUILDING SESSIONS AND RESOURCES (2019-2020)

Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) Dialogues 2019

Belize Open Week (BOW) 2019

Central Information Technology Office (CITO) Trainings 2019

Open Government CSOs Trainings 2019

Subgrants Program - Innovative Open Government Projects 2019

DevCa - Developing the Caribbean Hackathon 2020

Co-Creation Webinars 2020

Capacity building sessions and resources (2019-2020)

Finally, as the advancement of democratic governance goes hand in hand with economic development, the project also focused on strengthening the dialogue on how Belize's private sector could harness the economic value of Open Data. Through a series of activities, the Trust, the OAS and the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), collaborated to build bridges between Open Data and business opportunities by launching a dialogue to find answers that guarantee a collaborative approach to unlock the economic potential of Open Data in the country, especially in the Belizean tourism sector.

Final video Phase 1

OPEN DATA HACKATHON 2020

DevCa2020

The Trust, OAS and DevCa-Developing the Caribbean worked with local partners in Belize including BELTRAIDE (The Belize Trade and Investment Development Service), the Statistical Institute of Belize, and the Belize Open Government Steering Committee to stage the Belize 2020 Open Data Hackathon, which took place through Wednesday, July 8th to Friday, July 10th, 2020. DevCA-Belize2020 Hackathon was a fully virtual 48-hours event that encouraged innovators from the public sector, civil society, and civic tech to explore ideas staged under the theme "Open Data: Enabling Tourism Post COVID-19". The DevCA-Belize2020 Hackathon focused on solutions for the utilization of Open Data in tourism to promote destinations, highlight value-added services and improve safety and security (including access to information about epidemiological statistics).

PARTICIPANT STATISTICS

Number of Teams: **4**
Number of Submissions: **4**
Number of Team Members: **12**

RESULTS: HACKATHON AWARDEES

BELIZE TOURISM MARKET INTELLIGENCE DASHBOARD (1STPLACE)

Members: **David Perez, Peter Hudson and Karen Ramirez**

https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiYjQ3YjNiNGYtMjgyYi00ODY4LWJjNGMtMGNkY2U wODhmMjZhIiwidCI6IjNhOGUwYTA1LTA3MGItNDQxMy1iMjdiLTYyM2NlYWNkZjZkYSJ9

Project Description: An interactive web app that delivers fast and intelligent data insights about Belize's Tourism Industry. The Belize Tourism Market Intelligence Dashboard was created using the open data provided, including the accommodations list, tourist attractions and sites, among others, to create an analysis and insight of the data permitting to easily view trends in the tourism industry. The data will be readily available and accessible to tourism board officials, government officials, non-profit organizations, universities, private companies, local operators, entrepreneurs, media, and citizens. This will permit the stakeholders to better interact, understand and further analyze the data. The dashboard solution provides a means to empower the end user and gain insight on tourism information for planning, tracking, modeling, and even forecasting trends in the industry.

JACOB, YOUR VIRTUAL GUIDE (2ND PLACE)

http://virtualguide.intranetsys.net/

Jacob, your virtual guide, is an interactive web application aimed at the tourism industry in Belize, to assist in connecting local tour guides and tourists as well as hotels and tourism facilities. It also includes a wide range of interactive information and booking services such as transportation, restaurants, and accommodations, as well as tours and attractions. The app is developed by a family based in Benque Viejo, Belize, and sourced from truly local information and data.

ACTION PLAN CO-CREATION PROCESS

METHODOLOGY

The co-creation of the open government action plan is a multi-stakeholder process of defining commitments/ objectives for an executable plan. Co-creation works better when there are more actors participating in the process. The more participative, plural, and inclusive, the co-creation process, the more enhanced the end-product should be. Greater participation during the process contributes to the incorporation of all possible angles, ideas, concerns, and needs, by capturing a wider variety of stakeholder's views.

Open government commitments are encouraged to be ambitious, yet realistic. When developing ideas, we suggest thinking about the best possible way to combine installed capacities and resources for the accomplishment of the envisioned results.

The co-creation process of an action plan entails a sustained participatory approach, open to anyone wishing to participate, to identify areas of opportunity to utilize open government in pursuing, among others, new policies, improved government services, innovative transparency efforts, or alike. Due to the quarantine and social distancing measures adopted to address the Covid—19 pandemic, in this opportunity, the development of the action plan was ought to switch from an in person co—creation process accompanied by online resources, to a completely online one.

The action plan development process was divided into 3 phases: **1.** Launching and Drafting; **2.** Public Consultation; and **3.** Review and editing of the final Plan. A dedicated interactive website for the co-creation process containing extensive information and resources was developed.

6 TRAINING SESSIONS ON HOW TO DEVELOP AN OPEN GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN (JANUARY TO FEBRUARY 2020)

5 PUBLIC MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CO-CREATION SESSIONS

170 Participants
11 Commitment proposals submitted
25 Drafting Meetings with proponents
40 Inputs received during the Public Consultation
7 Drafted Commitments open to public consultation
7 Agreed Final Commitments

PHASE 1- DIALOGUE AND DRAFTING

Dialogue and Drafting refers to an active and participatory role of the stakeholders interested in contributing to the development of the action plan. It is the exercise of a cycle of thinking, proposing, reflecting, discussing, and materializing collective ideas in a written fashion, that if done well, it is fulfilled with the successful production of open government commitments.

Six online seminars with international experts were implemented by the project during February and March 2020, to raise awareness and build capacities of actors interested in participating in the development of the action plan in Belize. Between June and November, 5 public sessions were held with the synchronic participation of 170 actors from civil society, government, private sector and academia. These sessions were also broadcasted live on the project Facebook page where the recordings are available.

COMMITMENT DRAFTING

Interested Belizean stakeholders were encouraged to submit their commitment proposal by uploading it to an online form using the project website. Drafted proposals could then be seen by any other interested parties and were extensively shared and discussed during the different public sessions.

Open government commitments have proven to have greater impact when they comply with the SMART rule:

Specific: the objectives must be stated in a detailed and correct way.
Measurable: it should be easily measurable.
Attainable: if they are not realistic, they can lead to failure.
Relevant: must be relevant to the country's agenda.
Timely: it is necessary to mark a limited time for its fulfillment.

At the same time, more than 20 smaller consultation meetings were held between the project team and the proponents of the commitments to provide support and facilitate discussions with key actors on single commitments, strengthen their narrative, collect inputs from specialized actors, and obtain consent from potential stakeholders that are to play a role in the implementation.

As a result, eleven (11) commitment proposals were originally submitted by proponents of different sectors. This was followed by merging some of the proposals that addressed similar issues in deliberations with the proponents. The number of commitments that were finally opened for public consultation was seven (7).

LIST OF PROPOSED COMMITMENTS
BELIZE OPEN GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN

FIRST ROUND OF COMMITMENTS PROPOSALS (AUGUST 6, 2020)

1. Developing a Platform for Dialogue and Voting Parliamentary Bills.
2. Establishing Open Government Education in Belize.
3. Access to Health Services in Rural Communities.
4. Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration and ITCs for Creating Health Services.
5. Improving Transparency with Open Government.
6. Promoting the Use of Official Statistics for Informed Decision-Making through Open Data Channels
7. Ensuring the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the GOB in its Climate Action with a view toward increasing Food Security.

SECOND ROUND OF COMMITMENTS PROPOSALS (AUGUST 24, 2020)

8. Facilitating Open Data in Belize.
9. Implementing an effective method of information availability for public transport, local news, goods and services within Belize.
10. Simplification and automatization of citizen procedures across Belize.

THIRD ROUND OF COMMITMENTS PROPOSALS (SEPTEMBER 30, 2020)

11. Integrated Forest Management Database Development.

FINAL LIST OF COMMITMENTS

1. Establishing Open Government Education in Belize.
2. Open Data Strategy for Decision Making in Belize (Merged).
3. Open Government in Health Services (Merged).
4. Improving Transparency with Open Government: Strengthening Civil Society Participation in Compliance with Anti-Corruption Conventions (Merged).
5. Digitalization of Citizen Procedures to Prevent Corruption and Improve Government's Accountability.
6. Ensuring the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the GOB in its Climate Action/Paris Climate. Agreement Obligations, with a View Toward Increasing Food Security.
7. Integrated Forest Management Database Development.

PHASE 2 - PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public Consultation refers to the opportunity given to any Belizean to review all final drafted commitments and provide inputs on a last occasion with the purpose of enhancing or validating the commitments. This is a wider participatory exercised that is encouraged to be done by engaging an audience that extends beyond the stakeholders that participated in the drafting of the commitments. With support of stakeholders, the consultation is intended to be exercise at all possible districts, organizations, and citizens. It is a way to strengthen the quality and legitimacy of commitments, which will allow for a more robust and effective implementation of the Action Plan.

The public consultation phase of the seven drafted commitments was open with the last public session on October 30, 2020, and extended to November 23, 2020. For a month and a half, Belizeans were given the opportunity to contribute to this process by providing their own thoughts to the commitments. As a result, the process ended with over 40 inputs. The breakdown of the review by each commitment is presented in the next section of this document.

This phase of the co-creation process was accompanied by a robust communication campaign in order to reach the largest number of participants and, thus, strengthen the process with the involvement of different actors in society. **The campaign included:**

- **Share commitments by email to each Belizean individual or entity involved in the matter and/or industry listed in our Ecosystem Master List of over 300 stakeholders;**
- **Encouraging each author of commitments to share their proposal within their own professional network;**
- **A 1-minute animated video to present the action plan development process and the commitments, with a call to action to consult the proposals;**
- **The action plan video was published and boosted on the Facebook page of the project, shared with GOB Press Office, and national media in Belize ;**
- **Sharing the action plan and list of proposals with the GOB Press Office, the BCCI and their emailing list;**
- **Authors of commitments were video-interviewed to present their commitment(s) and to encourage the Belizean public to participate in the public consultation;**
- **The video-interviews were published, boosted, and tagged on the Facebook page of the project:**

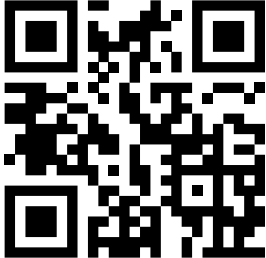| Integrated Forest Management Database Development:	Establishing Open Government Education in Belize:	Digitalization of Citizen Procedures to Prevent Corruption and Improve Government's Accountability:

Also, on November 3rd, a special Public Session was held and broadcasted live it included the presentation of international good practices related to each of the seven Belizean drafted commitments.

International session.

PHASE 3 - EDITING THE FINAL PLAN

Once the public consultation phase was over, the inputs resulted from the revision and comments were taken into consideration during an editing phase. The editing process also included the introduction and background information of open government in Belize as part of this document.

A draft of the final action plan was presented to the OGSC members on a session held on November 30. The shared version of the plan included the narrative of the process for creating the action plan, and the seven final commitments. The purpose of this presentation to the OGSC was intended to obtain feedback and consent to the final version of the document.

A formal launching session of the plan for public presentation was held on the 18 of December of 2020. As follow-up, it is expected that the launch and adoption of the plan will trigger proponets and related actors in Belize to work together towards the implementation of each commitment. Adding the stakeholders' human and financial installed capacities strategically would benefit the chances of success for achieving the goals set forth by each of the commitments.

Launching Session of the
Open Gov Action Plan

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION TO BELIZE'S ACTION PLAN

Gustavo Perez Ara – Senior Research Officer for America of OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) – OGP

Daniel Barragán – Professor, Los Hemisferios University (Ecuador).

Carolina Cornejo – Open Government Director, Argentinean Government

Hernán Charosky – Dialogando BA Coordinator, Buenos Aires City

Daniel Carranza – Co-founder, DataUy (Uruguay)

Celia Urbieta Peña – Open Government Director, Paraguayan Government

Xiomara Natalí Dominguez – Public Policy Coordinator, Reforestamos México

José Antonio García – Senior Program Officer, Open Government Partnership

Carolina Matamoros – Lead Data Analyst for the National Open Data Initiative Digital Government Division

MinTIC – Government of Colombia

Maurice McNaughton – Director, Caribbean Open Institute / UWI

Alari Rammo – Head of Policy of the Network of Estonian Non-Profit Organizations & Civil Society – Point of Contact of Estonia to the OGP

Sarah Bérubé – Open Government Analyst, Government of Canada

Benoit Frenette – Open Government Lead, Government of Canada

Ott Karulin – Point of contact to the OGP, Government of Estonia

Ricardo Valencia Lara – Director of Transparency, INAI (Mexico)

Ana Zuñiga Aponte – Project Manager, Hivos

Virginia Pardo – Director of Digital Citizenship, Government of Uruguay (AGESIC)

Christopher Schultz – Lead on TBS , Government of Canada

Hugo Tarabini – General Director of Infrastructure and Connectivity, Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies of Paraguay

OPEN GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

1. Open Data Strategy for Decision Making in Belize.
2. Establishing Open Government Education in Belize.
3. Open Government in Health Services.
4. Improving transparency with open government: strengthening civil society participation in compliance with anti-corruption conventions.
5. Digitalization of citizen procedures in order to prevent corruption and improve government accountability.
6. Ensuring the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the GOB in its Climate Action/Paris Climate Agreement Obligations, with a View Toward Increasing Food Security.
7. Integrated Forest Management Database Development.

1. OPEN DATA STRATEGY FOR DECISION MAKING IN BELIZE

Commitment start and end date: **January 2021 – December 2021**

Lead implementing agency/actor: **Statistical Institute of Belize.**

COMMITMENT DESCRIPTION

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

Today, data represents a key input for any activity. Open Data ensures the highest standards of active transparency, and facilitates systematic access by anyone who is interested in viewing and using it. But data is also a key input for Economy 4.0. It is notorious to see how the most important companies are digitally based or have been transformed in the digital age thanks to the use of data and the existence of good data governance.

Governments are not exempt and have a large amount of data in their possession, which if used correctly can enhance decision-making, improve public services, transparency and economic development.

The problem with data often lies in its internal governance and management by governments to ensure correct quality, storage, generation, exchange and use.

What is the Commitment?

The overall objective is an increased use of accurate and high-quality information for decision making, particularly public sector decisions affecting policy development and resource allocation.

0. Develop an initial open data strategy under this initiative aimed at 1. identifying and assess the state of available datasets and data related sensitive regulation in Belize; 2. promote openness and data quality; 3. improve open data knowledge sharing to build capacities; 4. Pursue an open data fit for purpose principle; 5. promote greater awareness about the use of open data.

1. Develop an Open Data Portal. For making available data more accessible, open, and visible to users, by putting into practice existing guidelines and best practices pertaining to open data, while maintaining correspondent protections. Using Open Data Charters guidelines and establishing the use of open data standards such as Open Contracting, GTFS, GODAN, etc.

2. Develop the capacity in data analysis for public servants and citizens interested in reusing them. This will also allow the creation of an ecosystem that will be an intensive user of the data published on the portal and generated by the government. These capacities and ecosystem construction can be carried out through online or face-to-face courses and workshops, by generating collaborative work tables and carrying out activities

such as hackathons or public data-based challenges.

3. Establish a public policy for data governance in public administration. Taking into account the recommendations of the OECD for the development of a Public Administration based on data, the recommendations of the OAS for the establishment of a regional metadata profile. In this way, it will be possible to ensure that the data generated by the public administration will have a sustainable life cycle, ensuring its generation, privacy, security, storage, exchange and use. Having a normative and reference framework is crucial for the sustainability of this kind of policies.

How will the Commitment contribute to solving the public problem?

The commitment will establish a repository where all entities of the Government of Belize will be able to publish their data and information so that it is available for reuse by third parties. These third parties will be able to develop innovative solutions for the provision of services and solutions for citizens, boost the 4.0 economy and the incipient GovTech industry.

Generating, storing and making data available without anyone to use it, makes no sense, that is why you have to create a community that demands this data, whether they are public servants or third parties. The publication of data generates transparency, trust, they are also useful for academic research and, as already mentioned, they are a key input for the digital economy.

Last but not least the development of a national data policy would be a key and ambitious input for the establishment of this public policy. For example, the British Government has just released and published its national data policy. Therefore, it would be appropriate to establish and operationalize the regional metadata profile proposed by the OAS, in this way we would first obtain a survey of the main sources of data generated by the public administration, to later optimize its quality, and therefore interoperability would be concrete and solid steps to strengthen the path to a data governance in the digital age.

Why is this Commitment relevant to OGP values?

Above all, this is a relevant commitment in terms of transparency, since the opening of data is a great input for active transparency. On the other hand, it enhances accountability, since the data can be used for decision-making and thus justify many of the measures and decisions taken by the government.

Finally, a participatory instance is proposed, so that interested actors can add their voices and opinions on the opening of data that will be offered based on their interests.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This commitment can be linked to:

SDG11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Milestone activity with a verifiable deliverable

Generate an open data working group for datasets assessment and development of an initial open data strategy document.
Start date: **January** *2021*   End date: *TBD*

Develop an Open Data Portal (Open Source preferably)

Start date: **February** *2021*   End date: *April 2021*

Publish Data Sets form SIB and other Government Areas.

Start date: **February** *2021*   End date: *April 2021*

Initiate and establish a dialogue table of data users within the public administration, to establish guidelines and steps for the exchange, opening and governance of data.
(5 meetings in the year).

Start date: *March 2021*   End date: *December 2021*

Initiate and establish a dialogue table with civil society, entrepreneurs and productive sectors in order to establish what are the priorities demanded in terms of data opening and establish an ecosystem. (4 meetings in the year).

Start date: *April 2021*   End date: *December 2021*

Carry out an assessment on the data, taking as a guide the regional metadata profile, in order to have a situation diagnosis and establish an inventory of public data.

Start date: *July 2021*   End date: *December 2021*

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of responsible person from implementing agency: **Ms. Diana Castillo – Trejo, Deputy Director- General**
Title, Department: **SIB**
Email and Phone: **dtrejo@mail.sib.org.bz**

Other actors involved (State actors involved, CSOs private sector, multilaterals, working groups, etc):
Insight Data System (David Perez)
Donovan Leiva

Ministry of Transport:
– CEO Mrs. Ruth Meighan
– Belize Bus Association: President Mr. Thomas Shaw
– Belize Taxi Federation
– Water Taxi Association

Ministry of Economic Development, Petroleum, Investment, Trade and Commerce:
– CEO Economic Development & Petroleum – Mrs. Yvonne Hyde
– CEO Investment, Trade & Commerce – Mr. Duane Belisle

Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation:
– CEO Mr. Yashin Dujon
– Belize Tourism Board: Director Mrs. Karen Bevans

Ministry of Health:
– CEO Dr. George Gough
– Epidemiology Unit: Epidemiologist Dr. Russel Manzanero

2. ESTABLISHING OPEN GOVERNMENT EDUCATION IN BELIZE

Commitment start and end date: TBD

Lead implementing agency/actor: **University of Belize - Ministry of Education — Attorney General's Ministry - Association of Tertiary Level Institutions in Belize (ATLIB).**

COMMITMENT DESCRIPTION

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

No formal educational open government programs exist in Belize. Lack of formal education signals no development and progress in the area, in neither the near nor long term, resulting in reduced civil participation that erodes democratic governance.

What is the Commitment?

To establish an open government curriculum to be delivered at the tertiary level, as part of the course offerings.

How will the Commitment contribute to solving the public problem?

The absence of formal training concerning open government prevents the country from fully embracing it. The country is not producing experts who can work in this field, nor in open data. Formal college level education could contribute to more robust capacities of human resources in public institutions and citizens throughout the country. Having regular open government course offerings, affords students in different areas of concentration, an opportunity to approach their respective fields, through the lenses of: participatory, collaborative, and more democratic means.

Why is this Commitment relevant to OGP values?

Having the country develop its own experts by providing formal instruction in open government means that the country:

– Will have skilled people that can apply their knowledge towards a more transparent environment.

– Will improve opportunities and capabilities for the public to: participate, inform and influence decisions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Commitment budget considerations:

To fulfill the commitment the course/curricula will be developed in collaboration with global experts and appropriate organizations. The delivery of classes will also incorporate the collaboration of experts from different countries. The course will be offered as part of the standard options involving registering for classes and therefore subject to the normal fees established per university policy.

Likewise, if delivered as a professional development course, the universities and the Ministry of Education will pursue the identification of external funds to provide full or partial scholarships to eligible students (subject to the availability of external funds).

Links to other government programs:

The commitment will seek approval, engagement, acceptance and full endorsement of the Ministry of Education and all tertiary level institutions in Belize, as well as the Ministry of the Public Service.

Links to the National development plan or other sectoral / local plans:

The course will seek the expert participation of Ministries and specialized agencies such as: Tourism, Agriculture, Trade, Environment and others. The goal is to link open government and open data to development, as part of the country's efforts to improve overall SDGs compliance.
Most tertiary institutions in Belize have in their Associate and Bachelor degree curriculum a number of compulsory courses labelled General Education Curriculum (GEC) that the course could relate to.

Links to other relevant plans, such as a National Development:

Plan or an Anti-Corruption Strategy: The course will seek partnership with the Attorney General's Ministry in its anti-corruption follow-up mechanisms, thus seeking to include this commitment as part of the country's efforts to improve overall anti-corruption compliance. This, in turn, will aid in improving open government knowledge on how civil society actors contribute to such efforts, via tertiary level education and active participation in anti-corruption follow-up mechanisms.

Link to the Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 16 - Strengthening institutions:

Milestone activity with a verifiable deliverable

Structuring the course: concept note.

Start date: *January 2021*   End date: *February 2021*

Course/Curricula development.

Start date: *February 2021*   End date:

Advertising

Start date: **-**   End date: **-**

1st Course delivery.

Start date: *Second semester 2021*   End date:

Course evaluation.

Start date: *Second semester 2022*   End date: *December 2021*

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of responsible person from implementing agency: **University of Belize - Ministry of Education – Attorney General's Ministry - Association of Tertiary Level Institutions in Belize (ATLIB)**
Title, Department: **Sharmayne Saunders, Head of the Association of Tertiary Level Institutions in Belize (ATLIB)**
Email and Phone: **sharmayne.saunders@open.uwi.edu   +501 671-0247**

Other actors involved (State actors involved):

Ministry of Education:
– Dr. Carol Babb (Chief Education Officer – Ministry of Education)
– Debbie Domingo (CEO – Ministry of Education)

University of Belize:
– Professor Clement Sankat (President, University of Belize)
– Dr. Mariot Simon (Vice President – University of Belize)
– Dr. Gilroy Middleton, Jr. (Dean, Faculty of Management & Social Sciences – University of Belize)

Attorney General's Ministry:
– Elisa Montalvo (Ag. Solicitor General – Attorney General's Ministry)

ATLIB:
– Dr. Sharmayne Saunders (Chair – ATLIB)
– Ismael, Noble, Ministry of Education, ICT Manager

CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups, etc:
– Sylvia, Cattouse, Galen Univ, Dean in the Department of BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP
– Osmond, Martinez, Galen Univ, Assistant Professor of Economics
 – Cynthia Eve Aird, Galen Univ, Head
– Jillian, Morrison, College of Wooster, OH, USA, PhD Statistics/Data Prof Univ USA

3. OPEN GOVERNMENT IN HEALTH SERVICES

Commitment start and end date: **January 2021 – December 2021**

Lead implementing agency/actor: **Ministry of Health (Juan Pablo Ruiz) and Humana People to People Belize/HPPBZ (Andrea Perez).**

COMMITMENT DESCRIPTION

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

The health system has to deal with major problems, from situations experienced such as the Covid-19 pandemic or dengue, to primary care situations in rural areas, gender violence, among others.
To improve service and optimize resources, data and the possibility of making digital reports is crucial; especially in rural or decentralized areas.

It is essential to have data and information in a digital and user-friendly way for institutions that can work on the health agenda in the communities.

Accountability and evidence-based decision-making will highlight the response of health services and thus be able to further improve care, granting a fundamental right such as health to all those who require it.

What is the Commitment?

The commitment deals with the importance of data in the health system, not only to make better decisions and make diagnoses, but also to be accountable to citizens and optimize the service.

The main objective is to improve care both at the secondary and tertiary levels of care and in rural communities.

As a result, it is expected that the ministry can establish an agenda for the publication of data around indicators co-designed with civil society, so that the ministerial management can be seen not only in the agenda against covid-19, but also in the areas previously mentioned. such as hackathons or public data-based challenges.

How will the Commitment contribute to solving the public problem?

Coordination between the ministry of health and civil society organizations to establish which indicators and data should be open in a reusable format, will be a first step to set the priority of health management in these areas. This will allow openness to targeted work by the government and follow-up by civil society. The publication of the data in reusable formats will allow any citizen, researcher or enthusiast to analyze the data, visualize it, propose solutions and provide tools on how to improve health management. At the same time, the development of reports and reports based on data by the Ministry of Health will allow citizens to understand

the management and what is happening in health, without having the citizen to be a data specialist to use it. It is essential that the data be open with the intention to be reused, and digital tools developed so that all citizens can understand them easier without having to be specialists.

Finally, the formation of a working group between the Ministry of Health and the Civil Society Organizations in order to be able to analyze the actions, render accounts and think about future alternatives together, will be essential to involve other actors in the identification of the problems and solutions to be addressed to solve the public health agenda.

Why is this Commitment relevant to OGP values?

This commitment is relevant to transparency and public accountability since it will publish health information. Also, the work stipulated between the MOH (Ministry of Health) and the Civil Society Organizations will allow to analyze and establish recommendations to the corresponding officials, in light of the data made available publicly and in an open format.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Commitment budget

Digital platform (Public use / Service and information provision)

Estimate BZD: *100,000*

Comments: *Mobile app and desktop version*

Digital platform (MoH and Civil Society use / Data collection)

Estimate BZD: *100,000*

Comments: *Mobile app and desktop version*

Communication/education campaign

Estimate BZD: *10,000*

Comments: *Messages in social media and image ads on TV*

Education materials (public use)

Estimate BZD: *500,000*

Comments: *Salaries of project/implementing team (Does not include health workers salaries)*

Personnel costs (Implementing team)

Estimate BZD: *150,000*

Comments: *Printed materials and videos*

Transport costs (Implementing team)

Estimate BZD: *300,000*

Comments: *–*

Other operation costs (Implementing team)

Estimate BZD: *180,000*

Comments: *Equipment, office rent, internet, etc.*

Monitoring and Evaluation

Estimate BZD: *100,000*

Comments: *Impact evaluation, external financial audit, external end-of-project evaluation*

TOTAL
BZD: *1,440,000*

The implementation of the commitments will seek to leverage collaboration from different actors that can contribute with their expertise and existing capacities to its realization.

Links to other government programs:
– Different COVID-19 and poverty relief programs from the Ministry of Human Development, Social
   Transformation and Poverty Alleviation.
– Education programs from the National Aids Commission (NAC)

Links to the National development plan or other sectoral / local plans:
National Development Framework for Belize | 2010–2030

Pillar I: Democratic governance for effective public administration and sustainable development
1. Rebuild accountability in government and politics
2. Eradicate corruption and improve public service delivery
3. Transform the political culture

Pilar 4: The Bricks and the Mortar – Healthy Citizens and a Healthy Environment
3. Universal Access to Health Care
4. Promote Healthy Lifestyles throughout the life cycle and Establish family and community health
   care programs across the country.
5. Ensure Accountability for the Delivery of Health Services

Links to other relevant plans, such as a National Development:
– Plan or an Anti-Corruption Strategy
– Human Resources for Universal Health Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Link to the Sustainable Development Goals:

Goal 3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS, MALARIA AND NEGLECTED TROPICAL
    DISEASES and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases
3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES through
    PREVENTION and treatment and promote mental health and well-being
3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of SUBSTANCE ABUSE, including narcotic drug abuse
    and harmful use of alcohol
3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH-CARE SERVICES, including
    for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into
    national strategies and programs

Goal 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights

Goal 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for
all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

What would be the list of potential and key proponents for this commitment?

Component 1: *Creation of two digital platforms (Month 1 to 6).*

The first platform is for internal use of MoH and other actors supporting the implementation of healthcare
services and education. Includes a previous participatory assessment to identify internal needs and service
gaps to add to the platform.

The second, is for the use of the general public to access information, request services, provide feedback on
services rendered, get exam results and even online doctor consultations. Includes:

– The implementation of participatory identification of knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards COVID-19,
  health issues, health services and existing government relief programs.
– Review and adaptation of existing educational materials and develop new educational and training materials
  centered on COVID-19, other health related topics and existing relief programs.
– Upload the new and adapted educational and training materials in an open-online repository to facilitate and
  encourage access to project stakeholders and third parties.

Component 2: *Insertion of digital platforms with stakeholders and in 200+ rural and decentralized areas (Month 7 to 12).*

To strengthen the knowledge and capacity of the participating communities to prevent and adequately manage COVID-19 infections and non-communicable diseases as well as to increase their access to relief programmes, the component can implement the following interventions that target women, children, and men in conditions of vulnerability, local leaders, and relevant stakeholders:

– Carry out a participatory identification of knowledge, attitudes, and practices concerning COVID-19 and COVID-19 existing relief programmes.
– Organize meetings to present the project scope, assessment results, and to ensure collaboration with local leaders and stakeholders.

Form support groups* in each community that will receive training on COVID-19-based programming and mentoring during the implementation of sensitization actions. The support groups include will include community members known for their leadership and active participation, including community health workers, school staff, members of village/alcalde councils, participants of other community development projects and staff from civil society organizations.

Implement door-to-door visits by the community support groups to sensitize residents in their villages. Implement a social media campaign at the national level to reinforce the work done by the community support groups.

In future phases/projects*, the MoH and civil society organizations would seek to continue strengthening the knowledge and capacity of the community support groups, so they reach more households and businesses over an extended period. To boost the motivation of the community support members, subsequent projects could also include the provision of monthly stipends, health supplies, more training sessions and in-kind resources.

Component 3: *Communication campaign at the national level (Month 2 to 12).*

Implement a social media campaign and TV paid image ads at the national level to inform about the previous components and reinforce health themes with the education materials created/adapted.

Milestone activity with a verifiable deliverable

Creation of a MOH–Humana–Civil Society data working group.

Start date: *January 2021*   End date: *December 2021*

Design and choose, together with Civil Society, the indicators to work based on the problem raised and the datasets to be opened in a data portal in reusable format.

Start date: *January 2021*   End date: *April 2021*

Publish the datasets that make up the indicators and that were selected in milestone one.

Start date: *March 2021*   End date: *August 2021*

Production of digital reports that contain the indicators selected in milestone one and that allow civil society and citizens to understand and analyze health management in rural communities and in general.

Start date: *July 2021*   End date: *November 2021*

Holding of a dialogue table between the MOH, Civil Society Organizations and Citizens representing different communities, in order to analyze the results of the indicators, accountability of health management and see steps to follow regarding this problem.

Start date: *November 2021*   End date: *December 2021*

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of responsible person from implementing agency: **Juan Pablo Ruiz**

Title, Department: **MOH**

Email and Phone: **jpruiz@health.gov.bz**

Other actors involved (State actors involved CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups, etc):

– Humana People to People Belize: Andrea Perez

– Red Cross: Lily Bowman — Director General

– Southern Emergency Services Belize: Sandra Hrysak — Administrator

– Hillside Health Care International: Lynette Gomez — Supervisor

– Belize Medical College

– Belize Family Life Association: Joan Burkeskeen — Executive Director

– Red Cross Stann Creek: Estella Humphreys

– Red Cross Toledo: Andrea Coc

– Red Cross Corozal: Valentine Gonzalez

– Red Cross Orange Walk: Martin Medina

– Red Cross Belmopan: Glennis Johnson

– Red Cross San Ignacio: Rodel Perera

– Red Cross San Pedro: Eiden Salazar

– University of Belize, Nursing Program — Dean Martin Cuellar

4. IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY WITH OPEN GOVERNMENT: STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN COMPLIANCE WITH ANTI-CORRUPTION CONVENTIONS

Commitment start and end date: **March 2020 – April 2023**

Lead implementing agency/actor: **Belize PEACE Movement**

COMMITMENT DESCRIPTION

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

According to the International Monetary Fund, curbing corruption can yield significant fiscal benefits. Their research suggests that revenues are higher in countries perceived to be less corrupt; the least corrupt governments collect 4 percent of GDP more in taxes than those at the same level of economic development with the highest levels of corruption. If all countries were to reduce corruption, they could gain $1 trillion in lost tax revenues, or 1.25 percent of global GDP. On the other hand, the world Economic Forum estimates that the global cost of corruption is at least $2.6 trillion, or 5 percent of the world's GDP, adding that, according to the World Bank, businesses and individuals pay more than $1 trillion in bribes every year.

Corruption in public life is a major scourge on the sustainable, progressive development of Belize. Its negative impacts are felt across the board (socially, economically, politically, environmentally, etc) and are evidenced in the countless scandals involving unethical actions undertaken with impunity.

What is the Commitment?

The Commitment is to ensure the Strengthening, Execution and Continuance of Anti-corruption Measures with greater participation of civil society, alongside the active promotion and use of Open Data. A combination of collaborative Anti-Corruption, E-Democracy and E-Governance efforts is envisioned to accomplished this goal.

With the support of a multi-stakeholder mechanism (working group), the objective is to ensure the Government of Belize (GOB) is in compliance with the various anti-corruption conventions to which it has committed, namely the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACC).

The expected results include: (1) the GOB's ongoing fulfilment of both its national and international obligations involving anti-corruption, (2) Belize shall be listed, annually on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), (3) elected officials are held accountable, in accordance with CAP 105 of the Laws of Belize (Prevention of Corruption Act) concerning acts of corruption and the accompanying betrayal of the public trust and (4) the ongoing strengthening of anti-corruption legislation.

A suggested objective could be the establishment of a multi-stakeholder mechanism (working group) founded in the principles of participation and collaboration promoted by Open Government, to provide proactive engagement concerning anti-corruption monitoring efforts and thus promoting transparency and accountability across the board.

Concerning UNCAC, the commitment requires the effective use of Article 13 of the Convention, thereby effectively making allowance for contributions to be made to the Convention's Official Review Report via the facility of Monitoring Support.

Regarding the IACC, the commitment will entail utilizing the Rules of Procedures, through which recommendations can be provided to the designated experts in each round of review on measures for the: prevention, detection, investigation and punishment of acts of corruption as well as for the recovery of proceeds derived from such activities.

How will the Commitment contribute to solving the public problem? What is the Commitment?

Successful fulfilment of the commitment will function as a means through which to hold government accountable and to ensure that "Good Governance" practices and principles are instituted, improved and maintained; thereby engendering an environment conducive to the underlying, tenets of: transparency, accountability, consultation and adherence to the rule of law.

Through vigilant monitoring of the GOB's responsibilities under the respective Conventions, and the consequent achievement of the two milestones, it shall provide the required scrutiny of all government officials and legal structures and will thus demonstrate the wherewithal of civil society to affect its rightful role in the governance affairs of the nation.

UNCAC – Implementation will be achieved via successful engagement of the National Self-Assessment process (Phase 1).
If the government is not amenable to our involvement, actions shall be undertaken to conduct a Peer Review and/or prepare a CSO Report which parallels the UNCAC Country Review Report.

Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACC) – Implementation will be achieved via attending and participating in: (1) meetings of the State Party Conference, (2) the meeting held in advance of the Committee of Experts plenary session, (3) participating in the onsite visits of the Mechanism for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (MESICIC) Experts and (4) present Topics of Interest to the Committee of Experts.

The former two are contingent upon being afforded the opportunity to review the State's implementation of the Convention and to participate as observers and thereafter contributing to the Mechanism's Recommendations. This will entail either (1) submitting both documents and proposals on Convention

provisions to be reviewed in a future round, involving the review methodology to be used and on the preparation of the questionnaire or (2) submitting a direct reply to the questionnaire that is prepared for the review.

This shall be buttressed by way of directed and meaningful liaison with: State Parties, Committees of Experts, oversight bodies, legal authorities and other civil society organizations (CSO)s, alongside the effective use of anti-corruption legislation (e.g. Prevention of Corruption Act (POCA), Representation of the People Act (ROPA), the Freedom of Information Act) and mechanisms; all of which are rooted in the model and advent of Open Data, in consort with the International Open Data Charter.

Efforts toward fulfilment of this Commitment will require utilizing resources available through various facilities of the UN namely the UNCAC and those of the OAS including: The Mechanism for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC), the National Hubs, as well as the assurances accepted by the Government of Belize, via its assent to the LIMA Commitment to Democratic Governance Against Corruption agreed at the VIII Summit of the Americas.

Toward solving the problem, the achievement of the milestones will encourage a sustained participatory and nationally driven process concerning anti-corruption reform by: (1) constructively evaluating the performance of national anti-corruption systems, laws and institutions, (2) identifying possible and necessary reforms that need to be addressed, (3) identifying deficiencies and capacity gaps and (4) supporting and contributing to both the UNCAC Review Mechanism and the IACC Treaty; and other instruments adopted by the Government of Belize to prevent and combat corruption, such as the Lima Commitment and the Inter-American Open Data Program to Prevent and Combat Corruption.

Why is this Commitment relevant to OGP values?

The Commitment to "Ensure the Strengthening, Execution and Continuance of Anti-Corruption Measures, alongside the active promotion and use of Open Data." is directly aligned with two anti-corruption conventions signed-onto by the Government of Belize, (namely the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption), as well as the accompanying parameters which guide them.

As such all undergirding parameters articulated in fulfilment of both the UNCAC and IACC serve as the qualifying components, which inform as to the Commitment's applicability to Open Government Partnership values of: transparency, civic participation and accountability.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Commitment budget

To be determined. The implementation of these commitments is subject to a collaborative approach where institutions, organizations, and other social actors engaged, contribute to the achievement of the expected results. It is expected that each actor contributes by gearing their own existing or ongoing efforts and future initiatives towards this commitment.

Links to other government programs – GOB National E-Government Policy (2015 – 2020)

Links to the National development plan or other sectoral / local plans

Links to other relevant plans, such as a National Development
Plan or an Anti-Corruption Strategy – Transparency International (TI) & UNCAC Civil Society Coalition - "Using the UNCAC to Advance Anti-Corruption Efforts: A Guide"; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) – "Rules of Procedure…"

Link to the Sustainable Development Goals – SDG #16 (#16.5 – #16.7)

Milestone activity with a verifiable deliverable

#1 – Belize PEACE Movement to gain admission to the OAS Summits of the Americas' National Anticorruption Hubs (Applied for admission on 19th September 2019 and awaiting response); Reference #: 123149

Start date: ***TBD***
End date: ***Pending; Dependent on the entity's selection process;***
    (Aspired 31st March 2020)

#2 – Determine the status of the UNCAC Country Review (Full Report)

Start date: ***TBD***   End date: ***Aspired First quarter of 2021***

#3 – Belize PEACE Movement to become a partner in the UNCAC National Self-Assessment process, by obtaining membership in the Self-Assessment Committee.

Start date: ***TBD***   End date: ***ASAP***

#4 - Provide input to the UNCAC Official Review Report

Start date: ***Dependent on successful completion of Milestone #3***
End date: ***Dependent on successful completion of Milestone #3***

#5 – Determine Belize's status involving the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption

Start date: ***TBD***   End date: ***Aspired 2021***

#6 - Register the Belize PEACE Movement with the Organization of American States

Start date: ***April 2020***
End date: ***Dependent on the entity's selection process;***
    (Aspired May 2020)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of responsible person from implementing agency: **Paco Smith**
Title, Department: **Good Governance & Anti-Corruption/External Relations Liaison**
Email and Phone: **luvsouljah@gmail.com; +501-631-4355**

Other actors involved (State actors involved):

– Integrity Commission – Ms. Claudet Grinage

– Office of the Ombudsman – Lionel Arzu (Ombudsman)

– Office of the Auditor General – Dorothy Bradley (Auditor General)

– Office of the Contractor General – Omar Mitchell (Contractor General

– Office of the Director of Public Prosecution – Cheryl-Lynn Vidal (Director of Public Prosecution)

– Central Information Technology Office (CITO) Ian Smith (Chief Information Officer)

CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups, etc:

– National Trade Union Congress of Belize (NTUCB) – Marvin Mora (President)

– Belize Network of NGOs (BNN)

– United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Denise E. Antonio (Resident Representative for Belize)

– United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) UNODC Team Headquartered in Vienna, Austria

– Teresita Chavez Rodriguez, Regional Advisor for Central America of Transparency International (TI)

– United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) Civil Society Coalition

– Open Government Steering Committee (OGSC)

– GIG, Belize Global Improved Government/Rountable Philip King

5. DIGITALIZATION OF CITIZEN PROCEDURES IN ORDER TO PREVENT CORRUPTION AND IMPROVE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Commitment start and end date: **TBD**

Lead implementing agency/actor: **TBD** – areas that have ownership of the data and processes selected should be the primary leaders (I.e. Department of Immigration and nationality services; Vital Statistic Units, etc.) ; plus, the Ministry of Youth, Sports & E-Governance

COMMITMENT DESCRIPTION

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

In Belize, citizen procedures through the government's Ministries:

– *Are mostly processed in 6 out of the 200+ villages/towns of the country. As a result, they require approximately 200,000 residents from rural areas to commute for multiple hours and multiple times to get information, carry out the request and pick-up the paperwork. In addition to, demanding multiple visits from urban residents, to government offices.*

– *Have variable requirements, depending on the person and date they are processed by and requirement lists are outdated.*

– *Documentation gets lost during the process since most of the documentation and information within the various Ministries is still paper-based.*

– *It is hard to get the status of the procedure in person, online or via phone.*

– *Take a long time to process and many times, only specific persons can elaborate/approve them.*

– *Consequently, if these people are absent due to sickness and other unforeseen consequences, citizen requests cannot be processed and people are forced to wait a long time for simple procedures.*

– *Incentivize certain citizens to recur to corruption to speed up their procedures. Many times, external processors who get paid, are carrying out scams that cause citizens to lose even more resources.*

– *Costumer service is very deficient.*

Furthermore, the current analog procedures, demand the hiring of personnel and use of other resources that could be avoided with the implementation of digital procedures.

What is the Commitment?

Overall objective:
Simplify and automate of citizen procedures to increase government's transparency and public accountability.

Expected results:
Digitalization of citizen services prioritized by citizens and the State so they can be complete in an online format.

Commitment description:
The commitment aims to identify a number of critical government services and citizen procedures that can be digitalized so people can apply and follow the procedure online. Some of the procedures that have been mentioned to prioritize are: birth certificates; land status application; migratory services.

Why is this Commitment relevant to OGP values?

This commitment is relevant to:

– Transparency because its improving accessibility of information to the public.
– Public accountability because its improving mechanisms to publicly hold government officials
  answerable to their actions.

Milestone activity with a verifiable deliverable

Establish a roundtable / working group among all the stakeholders to work together with the leading agencies to identify 3 to 5 services seen as a priority, and analyze the user experience of each and changes that could be made.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of responsible person from implementing agency: **Andrea Perez**
Title, Department: **Humana People to People Belize**
Email and Phone: **andrea.p@humana-belize.org**

Other actors involved (State actors involved):

– CITO, Ian Smith

CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups, etc:

– Ibrahima Dia, Consultant for Migration Policies for Belize
– Enrique Romero, Executive Director for National Aids Commission
– Joseph Roches
– Joseph Hendrikx UNHCR
– Andrea Perez, Proposal Writer, Humana People to People.

6. ENSURING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE GOB IN ITS CLIMATE ACTION/PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT OBLIGATIONS, WITH A VIEW TOWARD INCREASING FOOD SECURITY

Commitment start and end date: **TBD**

Lead implementing agency/actor:
- **Belize National Climate Change Committee**
- **Ministry of Food, Agriculture & Immigration**
- **Ministry of Natural Resources; Ministry of Sustainable Development & the Environment**

COMMITMENT DESCRIPTION

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

Climate Change, its impacts on the Environment and the resulting socio-economic effects, irrespective of whether or not a nation is a major contributor to Greenhouse Gas emissions, is pervasive. Given the realities associated with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, these factors portend even more substantial implications for Belize's wellbeing, than normal, particularly as it relates to the productive sector namely Agriculture and the significance it embodies to developing a sound Food Security Policy.

What is the Commitment?

The Commitment is to Ensure the Government of Belize (GOB) is effective, efficient and decisive in its Climate Action, regarding the terms and obligations under the Paris Climate Agreement and accompanying elements involving Institutional Arrangements and Greenhouse Gas Inventory Monitoring, Recording and Verification, with particular emphasis on the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) Sector and the respective Key Categories.

This also includes a concerted emphasis on the active promotion, implementation and use of Open Data, thereby working in consort with both national and international partners toward improving the productivity of the Agriculture Sector, culminating in the development of a sound Food Security Policy, with a regional scope.

How will the Commitment contribute to solving the public problem?

Through ensuring Government's compliance with its reporting obligations such as: National Communications (NC), the Biennial Update Report (BUR) National Inventory Reports (NIR) and Greenhouse Gas Inventory Reporting it will enhance Climate Action governance and the government's overall ability to proactively create an environment that is conducive to improving the productivity of the Agriculture Sector, via integrating agriculture into the National Adaptation Plans (NAP-AG) Program, with a view toward developing synergies

that address sustainable development and Food Security.

The expected results include: (1) the GOB's proactive and timely fulfilment of all requisite resolutions to which it has signed, (2) ensuring open dialogue and collaboration are achieved among the principal government departments with purview concerning: Climate Change, Agriculture and the Environment, as well as among and with the relevant stakeholders, (3) create synergies amid the aforementioned that shall be manifest in the development of a sound, robust and comprehensive Food Security policy and strategy that will not only meet Belize's needs, but also improve the nation's capacity to enhance regional food security for the Latin American and Caribbean regions.

Why is this Commitment relevant to OGP values?

In keeping with SDG 13 and its goal to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, this Commitment is in-line with the OGP value of Transparency, in that it shall foster and entail: a greater level of engagement among stakeholders and thus information sharing. With an emphasis on the use of Open Data, it is established that accessibility to quality information shall be improved.

By establishing as a high priority, to proactively engender and foster an atmosphere indicative of proactive engagement and inclusion, at various levels, this Commitment complements the Open Government value regarding Civic Participation.

Via establishing this Commitment on the basis of the Government of Belize's obligations associated with not only Climate Action, and also in keeping with the fundamental principles associated with Good Governance, this Commitment is tailor-made to embrace, enhance and ensure the Open Government value of Public Accountability.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Links to other government programs:**
  Belize's National Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan Agriculture (NAP-AG) Program.
- **Links to the National development plan or other sectoral / local plans:**
  Climate Change, Agriculture & Food Security and Economic Development .
- **Links to other relevant plans, such as a National Development:**
  Horizon 2030, Belize's National Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan
- **Link to the Sustainable Development Goals:**
  SDGs #2, #12, #13, #15, #16 & #17

*Other links include: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2006 Guidelines

Milestone activity with a verifiable deliverable

Ensure sufficient, quality Greenhouse Gas Inventories (Monitoring Verification and Reporting) are conducted

Start date: *TBD*   End date: *TBD*

Ensure all obligations regarding National Communications (NC) are fulfilled

Start date: *TBD*   End date: *TBD*

Ensure all obligations regarding National Inventory Reports (NIR)

Start date: *TBD*   End date: *TBD*

Ensure the timely completion of the Biennial Update Report (BUR)

Start date: *August 2020*   End date: *TBD*

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of responsible person from implementing agency: **TBD**

Lead implementing agency/actor:

- **Belize National Climate Change Committee**
- **Ministry of Food, Agriculture & Immigration**
- **Ministry of Natural Resources; Ministry of Sustainable Development & the Environment**

Other actors involved (State actors involved):

– Ministry of Agriculture

– Forestry Department, REDD+

National Climate Change Office

– Dr. Lennox Gladden (Chief Climate Change Officer – National Climate Change Office)

– Colin Mattis (Deputy Climate Change Officer – National Climate Change Office)

– Kamil Salazar (Climate Change MRV Officer National Climate Change Office)

– Edlmi Grijalva (Technician REDD+ – National Climate Change Office)

– Kareem Reynolds (Technician REDD+ – National Climate Change Office)

Ministry of the Environment

– Percival Cho (CEO – Ministry of Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development)

Ministry of Food & Agriculture

– Edmund Zuniga (CEO, – Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Immigration)

– Andrew Harrison (Chief Agriculture Officer – Agriculture Department)

– Kerry Belisle (Chief Executive Officer – Ministry of Natural Resources)

Ministry of Natural Resources

– Ministry of Natural Resources – Policy Unit – Statistical Institute of Belize

– Diana Castillo-Trejo (Ag. Director General – Statistical Institute of Belize)

Belize National Meteorological Service

– Ronald Gordon

– Michelle Smith – Augustine (Meteorologist/HOD Meteorology Section)

– Shanea Young (Meteorologist/Agro-Met Service)

CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups, etc:

CSOs, private sector, multilaterals, working groups, etc.: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Greenhouse Gas Management Institute (GHGMI), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Inter-American Institute For Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), CARICOM Single Market (CSME), Caribbean Open Institute (COI), Caribbean Development Portal (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Climate Capacity Consortium (CCC), Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD) and Global Open Data for Agriculture Nutrition (GODAN)

– Dr. Carlos Fuller (International & Regional Liaison Officer — Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre
   (CCCCC) and Lead Climate Change Negotiator (Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS))
– Dr. Ulric Trotz — Deputy Executive Director
– Mr. Ansel Dubon — Project Specialist
– Dr. Kenrick Williams — Environment and Social Specialist
– Ms. Carianne Johnson — Gender Specialist
– Dr. Olia Glade (Director, Measurement, Reporting, and Verification
   (MRV) Systems — GHG Management Institute) –
– Brittany Meighan (Fellow, Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS))

7. INTEGRATED FOREST MANAGEMENT DATABASE DEVELOPMENT

Commitment start and end date: **January 2020 to December 2022**

Lead implementing agency/actor: **Ya'axché Conservation Trust**

COMMITMENT DESCRIPTION

What is the public problem that the commitment will address?

Ya'axché Conservation Trust is a community-oriented Belizean NGO, established in 1997 by a consortium of individuals under the name Golden Stream Corridor Preserve (GSCP) to address unsustainable land use. Ya'axché's geographic focus area, the Maya Golden Landscape (MGL), is a mosaic landscape comprising of globally important protected areas, private, state and community lands. It is a key biodiversity area, supporting over 3,000 plant species, 110 mammals, 400 birds, 92 reptiles and amphibians, including 18 endemics and 37 globally threatened species. The Maya Golden Landscape also forms the primary southern biological corridor for Belize, which is the only remaining broadleaf forest link between the Maya Mountains, and the forested coastal plains of southern Belize. Ya'axché manages the 15,000 acres privately owned Golden Stream Corridor Preserve and co-manages the 100,000-acre Bladen Nature Reserve and the 36,000-acre Maya Mountain North Forest Reserve with the Belize Forest Department. Ya'axché utilizes an integrated management approach with two main programs at the core of their operations. The Protected Areas Management (PAM) program, and the Community Outreach & Livelihoods.

The transition to environmentally-conscious farming practices has been well embraced by farmers in the MGL who continue to seek opportunities to improve their practices as a way to mitigate the effects of climate change, by adapting climate-smart agricultural practices to organically increase the production of annual crops for a yearly supply of staples to increase the socio-economic benefits at the local and communal level. Cacao-based agroforestry, Inga-alley cropping and apiculture are sustainable alternative methods put into practice for income generation. Men, women and youth are encouraged to be part of Ya'axché's programmatic support, offering technical capacity building workshops. Strengthening leadership and governance in these communities is a means to conserve our environment.

In its fourth year, the cacao-based agroforestry concession model is starting to be productive. This requires a proper monitoring system to keep records of cacao harvest to be able to quantify the income generated through this farming practice both inside the protected area and in the communities of the MGL. Similarly, Inga-alley demo plots for annual, rotational crops production yields to be recorded. The same applies to apiculture, honey production, which is gaining momentum at the national level. The MGL, as natural as it remains, can be strengthened and be another successful source of income as forests are conserved maintaining undisturbed habitats for honey bees to boost the quality of organic honey. With all these subsistence farming in place, what is needed is data to validate the importance of Agroecology at the landscape level.

What is the Commitment?

The commitment is to develop an integrated forest management database for Ya'axché to manage data collected under the following programs: (i) Community Outreach and Livelihoods, (ii) Protected Areas Management; and (iii) Science (biodiversity research and monitoring.). The management of this data will only be feasible when the database becomes established, tailored to the needs of the organization for information sharing with the Ministry of Agriculture, for example. Data collected will contribute to Ya'axché's Annual Reports and a more robust farmscape and/or state of the park reports for year three of this project. As co-managers of 2 protected areas, and managers of a private protected area, reports are shared with the Forest Department, ensuring we comply with national reporting standards as it relates to the effective management of assessments of our interventions to safeguard forested landscapes under protection status for the buffering communities.

The main goal is to monitor the annual productivity of the farm-scape to contribute to the national food security initiatives, such as climate-smart agricultural practices. This also contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals: 2. Zero Hunger; 13. Climate Action; and 15. Life on Land. Maintaining and managing an agricultural inventory of the MGL can also pave the road for future collaborations such as supporting school feeding program in southern Belize, but this can only be attainable if data is well collected by Ya'axché's extension officers providing the guidance to farmers to supply with crop yield data on a regular basis. The Community Outreach and Livelihoods program has a grassroots approach to working with our buffering communities who depend on fertile lands. Forest governance is at the centre of the initiative, empowering communities to sustainably use lands, having minimal or no effect to their surrounding environment in the MGL.

How will the Commitment contribute to solving the public problem?

There is currently no Agroforestry Policy in place for Belize. There have been efforts since 2018 to develop an Agroforestry Policy at the national level. Ya'axché has been invited to sit at the roundtable consultations to participate in this dialogue to establish the policy. It has not been determined which government Department will house the policy, whether it be with the Forest Department or the Agriculture department. Ya'axché has been able to share its experience through the establishment of the first cacao agroforestry concession in the Maya Mountain North Forest Reserve as a success story, having organized a group to become the beneficiaries of the concession to improve their livelihoods by producing cacao.

Combining this action between the PAM and COL programs at Ya'axché, gave rise to the opportunity to invest in an integrated forest management database to gather the necessary information to corroborate on the success of the integrated management intervention with a community, granting access right to Trio Village into a protected area. The expansion of these initiatives has been possible as Ya'axché, as of 2019, works with 10 buffering communities in the landscape with an aim to instill practices that will conserve and protect the landscape in an optimal state, decreasing deforestation and any further environmental degradation.

This couples with concerted efforts to adapt climate change actions to maintain a landscape productive while continuing to incentivize households and adapt to an ever-changing environment, with current threats becoming more eminent, such as droughts and more frequent forest fires.

The data collected on the targeted approaches of the three programs, will contribute to the national knowledge sharing platform through collaborative efforts protected areas co-managers have with the regulatory agencies. The information provides evidence-based decision-making that comanagers use to lobby to the government for sound management interventions that will contribute to the national policies in protected areas management and community outreach and livelihoods. This commitment, in the longer run, will be able to showcase how working hand in hand with communities creates a positive impact, and how ongoing initiatives can be recognized to further strengthen the Agroforestry Policy to be more community-oriented and finding the balance to continue protecting our forested landscape.

Why is this Commitment relevant to OGP values?

There is a privacy element to collecting information from the public and their willingness to share their information. An approach to contribute to public access to information is by aggregating information and reassuring data-contributors (community members/farmers) about confidentiality. Information collected as part of this commitment is project-driven and shared with regulatory agencies as part of co-management agreements which Ya'axché responds to. There is an aim to improve the quality of information shared through bi-lateral agreements, incorporating transparency where possible. The accessibility of information remains internal for this commitment, though we are in discussions on what kind of information can be made accessible to the public via our website interface. We are still in dialogue, brainstorming, trouble-shooting and deciphering the public access component to increase the visibility of our initiative. Emphasis is placed once again that the integrated forest management database is for Ya'axché, holding am internal management to serve the purposes of Ya'axché to collect information on an annual basis. Through this piloting experience and further expanding into the initiative, other aspects of transparency and public access will be considered.

This commitment is improving Ya'axché's creative, innovative and technical capacities to leverage technology use for the effectiveness of our programs in data collection and management. There is an aspect of capacity building to Ya'axché staff and communities to become part of the initiative to help improve the technical capacities: monitoring and assessing the productive capacities of the farmscapes in the MGL. There will be strengthened collaborations with farmers women's groups who are the beneficiaries of Ya'axché's initiatives under our main programs.

The commitment aims to contribute to the development of the agroforestry policy for Belize; and continue to contribute to Private Protected Areas Policy and the relevant Conservation and Co-management agreements in place, nationwide. Integrating climate-smart practices in a conserved landscape also aims to contribute to policies that govern the Belize National System of Protected Areas. For this to continue being mainstreamed by Ya'axché, it is important to foster community stewardship and their capacities in effective forest governance by continuing to implementing our initiatives under our respective programs, hence inclusion, participation and consultation are important for the success of the integrated forest management initiative.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Links to other government programs**
  REDD+ Program
  National Protected Areas System
- **Links to the National development plan or other sectoral / local plans**
- **Links to other relevant plans, such as a National Development**
  National Biodiversity Research and Monitoring Strategy
  Co-management Agreement
- **Plan or an Anti-Corruption Strategy**
  Reporting to Financial Intelligence Unit as a complying NGO.
- **Link to the Sustainable Development Goals**
  2. Zero Hunger; 13. Climate Action; and 15. Life on Land

Milestone activity with a verifiable deliverable

Development of a functional integrated database

Start date: *July 2020*   End date: *June 2021*

Piloting the database (data management)

Start date: *July 2021*   End date: *June 2022*

Development of farmscape reports

Start date: *July 2022*   End date: *December 2022*

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of responsible person from implementing agency: **Marvin Vasquez**

Title, Department: **Operations Director (Project Manager); Ya'axché Conservation Trust**

Email and Phone: **marvin.vasquez@yaaxche.org**

Other actors involved (State actors involved):

– Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and

– Sustainable Development and Immigration Services and Refugees

– Forest Department: Raul Chun, Forest Officer,

– Agriculture Department: Belarmino Esquivel, Principal Agricultural Office,

– National Diversity Office: Ms Anna Ste Luz

– Department of Environment

– National Climate Change Office: Collin Mattis (on agriculture and national policy)

– CITO

CSOs, private

– Trio Farmers Cacao Growers Limited (CSO)

– Environmental Research Institute–University of Belize (ERI–UB): Dr. Elma Kay, Science Director,

– Indian Creek Maya Arts Women's Groups Avelina Coc (Chairperson)

– MariGold Women's Cooperative — Felicia Coc (Chairperson)

– Isabella Rash (member)

Sector, multilaterals, working groups, etc

– MGL Beekeepers & MGL Farmers – John Rash (Chairperson)

THE WAY FORWARD

This action plan hereby outlined is the result of the hard and committed work of diverse stakeholders from different sectors of Belize. Amid a global crisis due to Covid 19 pandemic, Belizeans – with the support of the OAS/Trust project – were able to reach a consensus on 7 commitments that will help the country advance the open government agenda.

As it has been outlined, the activities implemented for developing this Action Plan were part of a consultation process that took place over 5 months (June–November), with the ultimate goal of producing a final version of the Action Plan by December of 2020. Respecting social distancing during the pandemic, the co-creation process had to be held entirely as an online exercise.

This action plan is the result of ambitious proposals co-created by members of civil society organizations, the private sector, academia and members of the government. This composition of commitments is a guide to the open government priorities that should be implemented in Belize.

The Open Government Steering Committee (OGSC) has the capacity to enable discussions and propose the following steps for this agenda of collective action to enhance and improve public policies and citizen services. These commitments cannot be carried out without an adequate roadmap that pinpoints the implementation strategy for each of them to become a reality. Without a doubt, it is an ambitious plan, but with proper planning led by the government, and accompanied by the entire open government ecosystem, it can become a reality.

Project Facebook Page

RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of the technical support provided through this initiative, the Trust and the OAS Open Government project offers the following recommendations and suggested roadmap to Belizean stakeholders engaged in accomplishing this open government action plan:

POLICIES:

– Post pandemic recovery could benefit from a more participatory approach that integrates all angles of the crisis for further evaluation. The implementation of open government principles could support government efforts to improve the trust of citizens in the recovery processes led by public government institutions.

– Belize could benefit from revamping policies such as on digital government, and work towards the development of new policies such as in open government or open data.

INSTITUTIONS:

– Belize could benefit from a more articulated work amongst its public institutions, especially among those who are directed to implement digital government, innovation, and pursue effectiveness and transparency of government administration.

– Developing inter-agency working groups, and engaging also citizens and other social actors for the deployment or development of new government services commitments proposed in this action plan could benefit the chances of accomplishing the goals set forth by each commitment.

STRATEGIC ASPECTS:

– Adopting the open government action plan would also support the fulfillment of existing State international commitments and conventions in which the government is a signatory.

– Improving citizen participation through open government strengthens democracy, transparency, and accountability, but most importantly, helps in rebuilding citizen trust in government institutions.

– Adopting open government formally enables the access to a pull of international resources of actors willing to support technically and financially country efforts in its pursuit.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION:

– Plans for implementation of commitments and open government worldwide have been mostly backed by international cooperation in their inception. Achieving an action plan is the blueprint for actors in Belize before donors.

IMPLEMENTATION:

– Commitments are initiatives to be fulfilled by engaged actors. Actors own the process and must pursue so at all times. This entails exerting local leadership and allocation of own personnel, efforts, and resources for completion.

– As a source of priority concern, financial resources and needs for accomplishing commitments are to be shared among the engaged actors. This also includes the search for donors to bring additional financial support for implementation. At first, seek to use the established financial capacities of engaged actors; in doing so, bear in mind that working in pursuit of the commitments could and should be explained as part of your organization's mission. Avoid creating separate new organizational missions to accomplish commitments. If it is needed, seek local actors who could align better with the commitments for implementation.

– The commitments will be valuable only as their goals remain valid and high priority to citizens. Avoid making the commitments an institutional cause; help the commitments to remain a people's cause. Commitments must serve citizens and the agendas that benefits them.

SUGGESTED ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTING COMMITMENTS

1. Establish an implementation strategy per commitment. The resulting document per commitment should include all details related to the activities to be taken, the actors engaged, the existing resources among the actors to accomplish the goal, and a timeline.

   a. Identify leadership role/s within the actors to develop the strategy. Establish a due date to finalize the implementation strategy.

   b. Identify, prioritize, and assign tasks to be performed using a collaborative approach. Share established institutional capacities and resources.

   c. Enable a shared document where all actors can bring their inputs to the process.

2. Work in the implementation of the agreed tasks using a collaborative and participatory approach.

3. Communicate progress periodically about the implementation of the tasks. The Trust, OAS Open Government Project enabled an open government ecosystem of nearly 1,500 Belizeans and a dedicated tool to share advances on open government in Belize **(visit https://www.facebook.com OpenGovBelize)**. Use this tool and your institutional communication tools to do so. Open communication and access to information are central to the open government values.

4. Generate exchange knowledge activities or about practices related to the subject of your commitment. Seek to learn from similar experiences worldwide. This could help in accelerating your implementation or avoid errors already experienced by others.

5. Seek to engage a broader audience during implementation. Expand the consultation process to enrich your commitment or add actors that can add value and help in the implementation. Always use a collaborative approach.

6. Present results to the international community as they are achieved. Seek to engage international cooperation actors throughout the implementation and seek their support for implementation.

7. Evaluate results each quarter or every six months and correct actions when needed.

Unless your commitment is aimed at developing a specific product or policy, identify opportunities to expand the scope or intent of your commitment as you implement it. This is aimed at building over the commitment for a possible proposal for the next open government action plan.

ANNEX

COUNTRY PROFILE

Belize is a Caribbean country located on the northeastern coast of Central America. Belize is bordered on the northwest by Mexico, on the east by the Caribbean Sea, and on the south and west by Guatemala. It has an area of 22,970 square kilometers (8,867 sq mi) and a population of 408,487 (2019). Its mainland is about 290 km (180 mi) long and 110 km (68 mi) wide.

Language. English is the official language of Belize while Belizean Creole is the most widely spoken national language, being the native language of over a third of the population. Over half the population is multilingual, with Spanish being the second most common spoken language.

Government. Belize is the only continental Central American country that is a Commonwealth realm, with Queen Elizabeth II as its monarch and head of state, represented by a Governor General. The legislature, also known as the National Assembly, is made up of two chambers. The upper house or Senators and the lower house or House of representatives. Belize became independent from the United Kingdom in 1981. Population. According to the UN in 2020 Belize has 397.628 citizens.

THE TRUST FOR THE AMERICAS

The Trust for the Americas is a non-profit organization affiliated with the Organization of American States (OAS). Established in 1997 to promote public and private partnerships, The Trust has implemented projects in 24 countries and worked with over 1,000 organizations in the region. Our initiatives seek to promote educational and economic opportunities as well as government accountability and transparency.

Our unique alliance with the OAS allows us to have access to decision makers within the region. This foundational partnership is the basis through which we create strong networks across member states and the private sector. Through the evolution of our region, The Trust continues to endure by facing challenges through strategic partnerships that promote cooperation for sustainable results.

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS)

The Organization of American States is the world's oldest regional organization, dating back to the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington, D.C., from October 1889 to April 1890. The Organization was established in order to achieve among its member states —as stipulated in Article 1 of the Charter—" an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence."

Today, the OAS brings together all 35 independent states of the Americas and constitutes the main political, juridical, and social governmental forum in the Hemisphere and uses a four-pronged approach to effectively implement its essential purposes, based on its main pillars: democracy, human rights, security, and development. Within the democracy pillar reside the mandates on open government, digital government, open data and others, to strengthen effective public management in OAS Member States. As such, the Department for Effective Public Management is responsible for providing technical assistance to accomplish this goal.

PROJECT TEAM:

Rodrigo Iriani – Project Manager, The Trust for the Americas
Audrey Robin — Local Coordinator, The Trust for the Americas
Mike Mora — Specialist, Department for Effective Public Management OAS
Maricel Lonati – Open Government Specialist
Juan Vila — Open Government Specialist

US EMBASSY IN BELIZE

The Embassy of the United States of America serves as the focal point for the U.S. Mission and is the primary federal agency leading foreign relations in Belize on behalf of the U.S. Government. In addition to the various sections of the Embassy, there are also other U.S. Government agencies working in Belize.

Collaboration in the project: The U.S. Embassy in Belize funded this project under a grant called Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), aiming at "supporting democracy and governance efforts in Belize", for projects addressing one or more of the following project objectives:

1) To strengthen civil society organizations and civil servants' knowledge and skills to develop policies/ procedures aimed at reducing corruption and impunity or improved accountability. Proposals should be oriented towards enhancing the capacity of civil servants at all levels of government or that of individuals within civil society organizations to effect legislative and legal reforms to reduce impunity, advocate for change and/or improve government transparency.

2) To increase and enhance civil society and government partnerships to improve service delivery and accountability. Proposals should be oriented towards activities by civil society organizations working with national and/or local government, particularly in vulnerable and/or marginalized communities, to improve governance systems. The goal of the U.S. Embassy in Belize, through this grant, is to "support good governance across the region, which is crucial to economic and social development", and support programs that "focus on strengthening the partnership between government and civil society organizations", and "strengthening government through civil society engagement".

BELIZE OPEN GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN

THE TRUST FOR THE AMERICAS

OAS | More rights for more people