



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND
MINISTRY OF INVESTMENT

ANNUAL TECHNICAL REPORT
2021 -2022

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Message from the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment

The Honourable John Briceño

A nation's rate of economic growth and the quality of their development depend on that country's ability to collectively make efficient, sustainable, productive use of its resources, as well as the ability to encourage investments, both domestic and foreign. In this regard, the role of the private sector is fundamentally important both in terms of its contribution to national income and its ability to raise capital, take risks, and drive innovation in its use of resources. The Ministry of Investment along with the various units under this portfolio and the wider purview of the Office of the Prime Minister are committed to contributing to a robust, reform-oriented, business-friendly investment climate that supports the private sector while at the same time creating opportunities toward attaining a society that is fair, safe and inspirational for its citizens.

The Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Investment is tasked with leading the national government's delivery and implementation of the 6 strategic pillars of Plan Belize: (i) Poverty Reduction; (ii) Economic Transformation and Growth; (iii) Trade Deficit Reduction; (iv) Citizen Security; (v) Protection of the Environment and Natural Resources and (vi) Stop Corruption.

This report reflects the strategic, intensive and diligent efforts that have been made in paving the way toward greater public service efficiencies, opening of opportunities for business development, national resilience, good health and the creation of pathways for a better quality of life for all the peoples in this phenomenally precious nation, Belize.

Hon. John Briceño
Prime Minister
Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment

Message from Chief Executive Officer, Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Investment

Mrs. Narda Garcia

Beginning two years ago, in the year 2020, the world saw the most serious economic contraction since the Great Depression of the 1930's, and the globe is additionally dealing with the highest rates of inflation since the 1980's. In Belize, it has been no different and our country is currently also experiencing the sting of these external economic shocks. Related to this, our nation has seen its economy shrink by at least 50% when the most significant contributor to our GDP, the tourism industry, collapsed because of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic when our unemployment rates also rose to high double digits to compound an already dire situation.

In the face of all these challenges, the Ministry of Investment has boldly hit the ground running in driving the necessary enabling environment for private-sector-led growth with a specific focus on attracting and increasing investments, both domestic and via Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), through which to create wealth and jobs for all, and by which to raise the standard of living for all Belizeans. The Office of the Prime Minister, as the overseer of the Ministry of Investment plays a critical role in articulating the executive branch of government's policies and plans for growing Belize. In addition to the vitally important functions surrounding investment, however, several special programmes are championed and managed by this office with wide-ranging socio-economic impact including on national health, education, citizen security, innovative financing, business climate reform, resilient infrastructure and the environment.

Narda Garcia
Chief Executive Officer
Office of the Prime Minister

Executive Summary

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is responsible for a portfolio comprised of diverse sectors including the mandates pertaining to the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment. Each has succeeded in implementing critical functionalities, programmes and initiatives which were planned for the year 2021-2022 as aligned with #planBelize.

The OPM collectively oversees multiple units including the three afore-mentioned portfolios and accompanying departments, various statutory bodies and special projects addressing diverse responsibilities and covering topics ranging from citizen security, health and social matters and youth employment, to finance, economic planning, investment policy formulation, business climate reform, entrepreneurship and innovation. The most recent addition to the myriad of these is the Blue Bond Project for Finance Permanence (PFP) Unit, an example of how innovative approaches to national governance are being emphasized under this administration.

For the purposes of this report, the units specifically covered are:

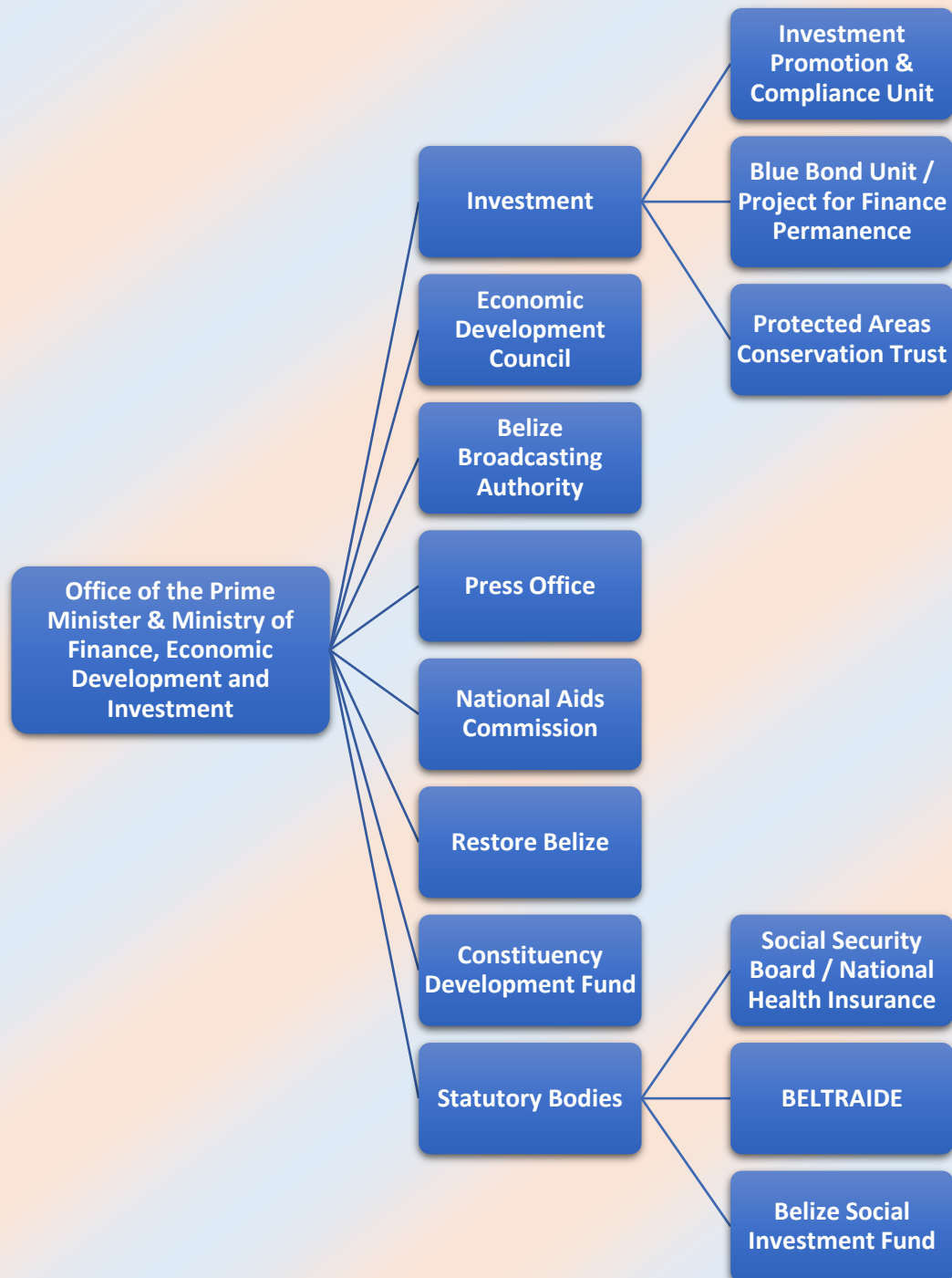
- Restore Belize
- The National Aids Commission
- The Belize Social Investment Fund
- The Economic Development Council
- The Investment Policy and Compliance Unit
- The Belize Trade and Investment Development Service
- The Blue Bonds Unit / Project for Finance Permanence
- Constituency Development Fund

Of note is that these are placed in the Office of the Prime Minister because of the importance and priority given by this administration to the issues managed and addressed within these institutional structures.

Chapter 1 – The Office of the Prime Minister: Portfolio Overview

Functional Structure

The Office of the Prime Minister's portfolio is comprised of the Ministry with responsibility for Finance, Economic Development and Investment. This portfolio is complemented by several special programmes and statutory bodies with investment in natural and human capital, as shown in the functional structure below.



CHAPTER 2 – Office of the Prime Minister, Special Programmes

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), with a specific emphasis on the importance of the citizens and residents of Belize and of its natural resources, retains oversight of several human-centred units and programmes. Without attention to the welfare of its resources, in particular of its human resources, a nation's development and growth would undeniably be stunted. Each of the unique units summarized below, be they – council, programme, commission or statutory body – is supported by the OPM through direct or interagency mechanisms, to enable maximum positive impact on Belize's socio-economic development.

I. Restore Belize



i. Introduction

RESTORE Belize is a unit under the umbrella of the Office of the Prime Minister, with the mission *“to make Belize a safe, vibrant home for residents through inclusive, multi-sectoral and citizen-centred action”*. It operates as both a coordinating and an implementing agency, coordinating with agencies across three pillars: **Human Development, Economic Development and Citizen Prosperity**, and **Democratic Governance and Citizen Security**.

ii. Main Achievements

Traditionally, the organization has implemented programmes aimed at controlling some causes of violence. It has been successful in resource mobilization and at implementing targeted interventions in literacy, building resilience in children through the Metamorphosis Program, assisting with the Gang Truce, piloting Conflict Mediation training for community and for court. It has also utilized creative arts to build competencies and to provide a platform for young people to express themselves through the arts.

Restore Belize has continued implementation of its Citizen Security Policy and Plan programmes as well as Partnership and Institutional Strengthening activities. With the objectives of meeting expanded demand for assistance and services while ensuring sustainability of its operations, Restore Belize has reached out to current and new partners:

- UNICEF enhances its support for the 'I Am Belize' Scholarship, Trauma-informed Practices in Schools (TIPS), and the Early Identification and Intervention System (EIS).
- Number of partnering schools grows to seven (7) as two (2) more high schools, Edward P. Yorke and Gwen Lizarraga High School, join the TIPS programme.
- The reach of the EIS programme expands nationally, with nine (9) new primary schools (1 in Belize District and 8 in the other districts) joining.
- RESTORE Belize contributes to planning and executing the National Children's Parliament, as a member of the Steering Committee.
- Internationally, RESTORE Belize connects with North Carolina A&T State University for the provision of a mental health and personal skills development session for beneficiary schools.
- Active communications take place, with the addition of a Communications and Awareness Officer to staff. Scholarship programme donors are highlighted in a series of social media posts and are introduced to the faces of their beneficiaries.

Programmatic activities and results during the reporting period were:

"I Am Belize Scholarship" Programme (\$76,500) Partners and supporters of this programme are UNICEF, BWSL, Atlantic Bank and Atlantic Insurance	
Activities	Results
Recipients (August 2021 – June 2022)	8 new; 55 total
Completion rate, high school	83% (3 out of 6)
School leavers with a job	50% (3 out of 6)
Student promotions	>80% (36 students)
Inclusion of persons living with disabilities	6 (1 from each district)
Classes and tutoring at office	8 students on average daily
Student access & attitude to online learning survey implemented	In 2021, 26 students had a device, 25 had own internet)
Online learning participation through provision of devices	41 do online classes; 13 assisted (5 PCs, 8 tablets, 6 printers)
Hygiene kits provided	2 times annually

Trauma Informed Practices (TIPS) / Care Programme		
Partners	Activities	Results
UNICEF	Improved programme implementation and impact measurement	Programme design document developed
CSO-Hub Belize; Belize Family Life Association; Belmopan Active Youth; Belize Youth Counselling and Wellness Services; the Behavioural Modification Unit, Ministry of Youth, Sports and E-governance; and GoJOVEN / GO Belize.	Trauma Informed Care Training provided	75 workers from 6 community organizations trained
Gwen Lizarraga and EP Yorke.	Trauma Informed Practices in Schools abridged version of training provided	2

Southern Youth Development in collaboration with Ministry of Health (Southern Regions Mental Health Clinic) and the Department of Youth Services; Belize Family Life Association; and NDACC.	Training Workshops conducted (Supporting the Mental Health of Students)	4
University of Belize and the University of the West Indies.	TIPS Coordinator participates in training for a ("Mitigating the effects of Covid-19"; "Emotional distress in children: Exploring Psychosocial support during the Covid-19 Pandemic".)	2
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University	Training Session held. ("Reset, Recharge, Resilience: Getting Back to Your "Why".)	130 teachers and school leaders participate
Sacred Connection (2 counsellors)	Sessions held to provide mental health and personal skills development sessions to teachers and administrators. ("Growth Mindset; Grief and Loss; Planning and Decision-making for Principals and Administrators".)	3

Early Identification and Intervention System (EIS) Programme, \$150,000		
Partners	Activities	Results
UNICEF (Humanitarian Action for Migrant and Refugee Children in Mexico and Central America, (HAC CAMEX))	Extended and expanded rolling workplan	
Our Lady of the Way R.C School (Belize); St. Matthew's Government School, Armenia Government School, Raymond Sheppard Nazarene Primary School, and St. Margaret Mary R.C School (Cayo); and St. Augustine R.C School, Light of the Valley Baptist School, Holy Angels R.C School, and Independence Primary School (Stann Creek).	Expanded schools in the programme - held sensitization sessions and signed Memorandum of Cooperation with each.	9 new schools in 3 Districts

Buttonwood Bay Nazarene, Queen Street Baptist and Central Assembly of God (Belize District).	Implemented the EIS	3 primary schools
	Established monitoring & evaluation system	Hired M&E Coordinator and Logical Framework was developed.
UNICEF and Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology.	Two-week training was conducted through the Teacher Learning Institute (TLI) online platform. Overview of Literacy Components and Creating my School Brand; Reading A-Z; Phonemic and Phonological Awareness; Phonics, Vocabulary and Fluency; Writing; Developing an IEP for the struggling reader; Differentiated Instruction; and Creating Child-Friendly Classrooms based on COVID-19 regulations.	164 teachers and administrators
	Resources supplied to schools a) to engage students and improve their literacy skills. (N.B continuing schools also received a subscription)	9 (Reading books, classroom resources; 1-year subscription to the Reading A-Z website and learning curriculum resources; Dell laptop; LaserJet printer and box of typing paper)
St. Matthew's, St. Margaret Mary R.C and Independence Primary School	"A whole-school approach" for Integration of the literacy strategies into the learning curriculum of all levels	3 schools
	Video Production of a 40-minute lesson on Differentiated Instruction - a learning resource for all schools (for teachers creating their lessons).	Production company identified.

iii. Lessons Learnt

The success of the “I Am Belize Scholarship” Programme, has created a higher demand, leading to the growth, increased formalization of reporting and expanded support by the donors. Also, the conversion, last year of the training into a virtual programme has had great success with 41 out of 55 students (13 of whom received electronic devices), doing virtual learning with some in-person support.

iv. Future Plans and Priority Areas

The Unit plans to develop a Behavioural Change Communication Strategy (BCCS) including to look at how stakeholders work together, to further the objectives and implement the strategies of the Citizen Security Plan and Policy. The BCCS will also look at the development of positive messages across sectors, that will promote greater ownership as to our respective roles in eliminating the factors that make citizens insecure.

II. National Aids Commission

i. Introduction

The National Aids Commission (NAC) was appointed by Cabinet in February 2000 to coordinate, facilitate and monitor the national response to HIV/AIDS. The Commission also has the shared responsibility for advocacy, resource mobilization, the development of policy and legislation, and the overall monitoring and evaluation of all interventions and efforts.



Through the work of the NAC, Belize will continue to reduce its number of HIV infections, improve the quality of life of people with HIV and their families, significantly reduce discrimination against persons vulnerable to HIV, and effectively coordinate a multi-sectorial response which is human rights based and gender responsive.

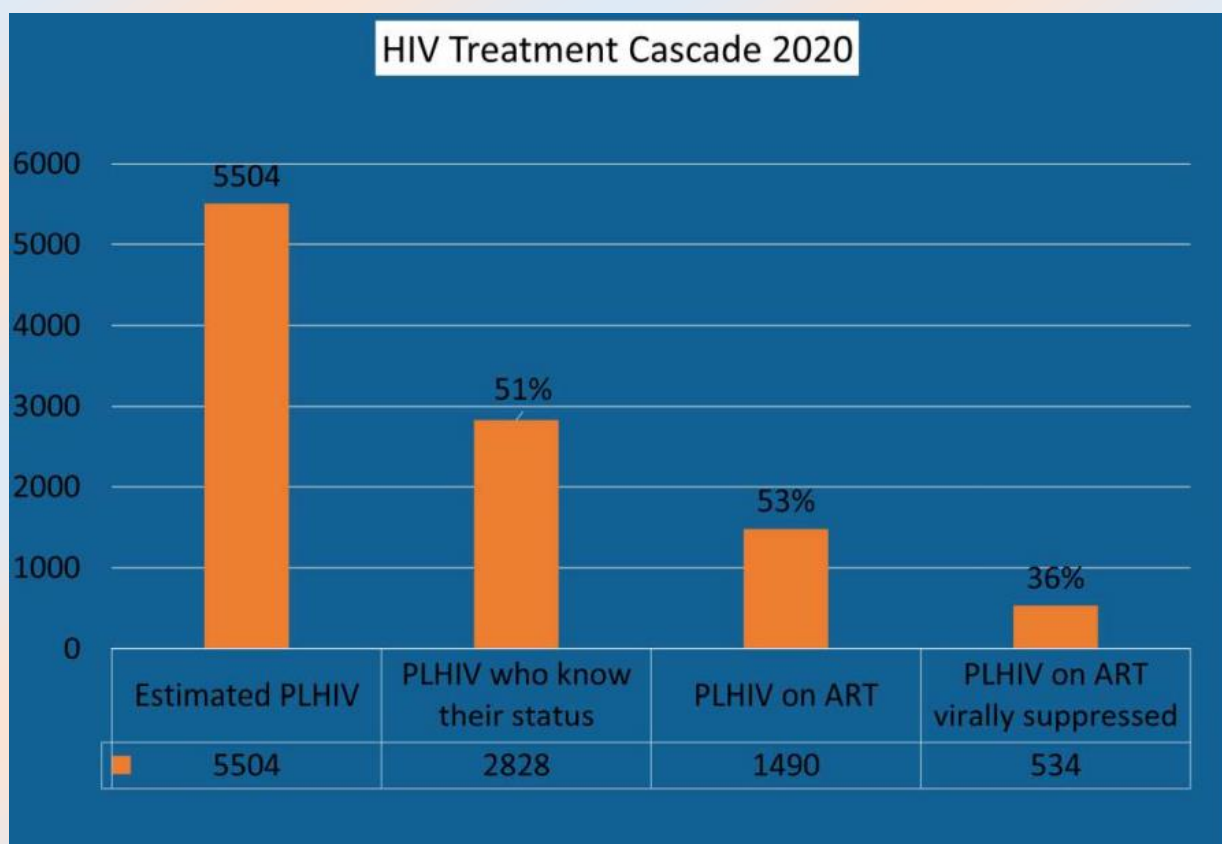
The NAC is a multisectoral agency comprised of 18 members representing various key stakeholders who play an integral role in the fight against HIV & AIDS. The multisectoral and multifaceted approach utilized by Belize is seen as a best practice in the region since it responds directly to the Office of the Prime Minister.

To support the coordination efforts of the NAC, a Secretariat was established. The Secretariat reports to the NAC and is responsible for facilitating the overall coordination, monitoring and evaluation role of the Commission and ensures the effective implementation of the National Strategic Plan.

The HIV Situation in Belize

Belize has a HIV Prevalence of 1.9%; one of the highest in the region. The number of new HIV diagnoses in Belize has stabilized over the past 4 years with a spike in the last year:

221 cases in 2014	Average recorded AIDS-Related deaths is 110
239 cases in 2015	Belize, Cayo and Stann Creek show the highest burden of the disease
225 in 2016	Majority of the new infections occur in the age range of 20-49
223 in 2017	Women test twice as much as men (2W-1M ratio) but men are the ones who test positive twice as much as women do. (2M-1W ratio)
300 in 2018	2 of every 3 new infections would occur in Men who have sex with Men (MSM), while another 20% is as a result of casual heterosexual sex among young persons engaged in multiple sexual relationships. (MOT Study 2017)
254 in 2019	Key Population Groups include MSM and Transgender persons (increase risk)
130 in 2020	Adult men reported having up to 7 partners in their lifetime while adult women reported 2 (ages 15-49)
	Age of sexual debut is 14 in females and 15 in males
	Prevalence is 1.9% among adult population in Belize
	Prevalence for MSM is 13.9%



ii. Main Achievements

Of note, in addition to institutional strengthening and service provision activities, the Global Fund has approved Belize's new funding request (2022-2024) for a total allocation of US \$2,998,947. The programmatic activities and results during the reporting period were:

Activities	Results
Partners: The Global Fund; District Committees Blood Drive, Dr. Otto Rodriguez Polyclinic, San Pedro, May 22 nd Health Sensitization Fair, Ragu's Parking Lot, Punta Gorda, May 28 th Awareness Talk Show, The Pandey Show, San Ignacio, June 1 st Health Fair and Testing Day, San Pedro, June 4 th Health Fair and Testing Day, San Ignacio, June 26 th Sensitization Fair and Testing Day, Dangriga, June 25 th Blood Drive, Dr. Otto Rodriguez Polyclinic, San Pedro, August 28 th Back to School Supplies Drive for Children Affected and Infected with HIV, Orange Walk, September - December Village sensitization outreach - Trio Village, Bella Vista, Bladen Village, Red Bank, September-October District Committees activities, World AIDS Day , December 1 st :- Sensitization Talk Show + Condom Distribution, Cayo District Poem/ Essay Competition, Youths, Dangriga District Awareness Ad + Goodie Bags for Children with HIV, Orange Walk Health Fair, Punta Gorda	Services rendered in all districts.

Testing + Health Fair, Corozal	
Activities	Results
<p>Partners: The Global Fund; National AIDS Commission (NAC); Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW); Technical Steering Committee, inc. UNDP and PAHO</p> <p>Belize Develops National HIV/STI/VH and TB Strategic Plan 2021-2025</p>	<p>The Plan applies a public health approach that considers the local epidemiology and context. It prioritizes high impact interventions for all persons in Belize. It pays specific attention to the key populations, those at increased risk and with the greatest need to prevent HIV/STI/VH and TB, promote health, and to prolong life. The Strategic Plan is people-centred and focuses on ensuring social justice in delivering services in collaboration with those infected and affected. It is designed to promote a long-term, sustainable response.</p>
<p>The National AIDS Commission Country Coordinating Mechanism (NAC CCM), in collaboration with The Caribbean Regional Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS (CRN+) host Public-Private Partnership Forum. The goal of the Forum was to obtain buy-in from participants for the formulation of their own workplace-specific HIV policy.</p>	<p>A virtual Public- Private Partnership Forum held, January 27, 2021. To guide employers in their endeavours to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS in their companies and business environment. informed members of the public and private sector about the country's HIV response, as well as the revised HIV workplace policy. Participants were provided with a policy document and operational manual, which support a framework for action by both employers and employees. The document was created to act as a roadmap to guide businesses and organizations in formulating their HIV workplace policy. Interested businesses and organizations also had the opportunity to receive one-one support from Dr. Pinelo with drafting their workplace policy.</p>
NAC CCM Undergoes Threshold Assessment	<p>The CCM Evolution initiative is a catalytic opportunity launched by the Global Fund to improve CCM performance in four (4) core areas of responsibility:</p> <p>Oversight: Active oversight of existing and emerging Global Fund grants.</p> <p>Engagement: Meaningful, inclusive, and active participation of key stakeholders.</p> <p>Positioning: Working within national structures and existing emerging platforms to increase efficiency of health investments.</p> <p>Operations: Enabling and sustaining health governance and core functions of CCM Secretariat, including the code of conduct.</p>
Threshold Assessment Summary of Results	<p>The CCM has basic structures and operations that allow it to conduct its core functions. The Threshold Assessment was conducted, and it</p>

	<p>allowed identification of important opportunities for improvement in the 4 key areas.</p> <p>Results also showed that the CCM, along with its partners, has made good progress in programme planning and proposals development but that significant technical and financial resources will be required from donors and other partners such as UNDP and PAHO to achieve effective implementation of the national response.</p>
NAC CCM Nominates Ethics Focal Point (EFP)	<p>In March of 2021, the NAC CCM appointed Executive Director of the Belize Family Life Association, Mrs. Joan Burke Skeen, as the EFP for Belize. CCM members were also provided with the Revised Global Fund CCM Core Code of Ethical Conduct Policy and were asked to provide their endorsement of the policy.</p>
NAC in collaboration with CRN+ Provide Support for Advocacy Initiatives	<p>August of 2020 – NAC and CRN+ hosted a virtual workshop with CSO organizations to develop community scorecards for assessing service delivery in health care settings. Members of CSOs developed a scorecard specific to the Belizean context. Participants were provided with training to be able to conduct an assessment using the scorecard.</p> <p>In 2021, CRN+ partnered with the NAC again to assist CSO members in conducting community outreach using the scorecard.</p> <p>Two organizations implementing the scorecards are: Productive Organization for Women in Action (POWA), Dangriga Town, and Empower Yourself Belize Movement (EYBM), Belize City.</p> <p>Data obtained using the scorecards will help to pave the way forward for improved services for key and vulnerable populations.</p> <p>CRN+ is working with the NAC to provide support to CSOs for Advocacy Action Initiatives that will improve adherence to treatment and access to health services.</p>
Global Fund Approves Belize's Funding Request (2022-2024)	<p>GF approves total allocation of US \$2,998,947 for 2022-2024 - will be used to advance the country's response to HIV/AIDS and will be disbursed:</p> <p>New Principal Recipient, National Health Insurance, US \$725,393 (24.1%)</p> <p>Sub Recipients:</p> <p>Ministry of Health, (39%)</p>

	<p>CSO Hub (Go Joven Belize as Coordinator), US \$807,808 (27%)</p> <p>NAC/CCM, \$193,150 (6.4%)</p> <p>Belize Family Life Association, US\$104,524 (3-5%)</p> <p>Grant activities will include:</p> <p>Procurement of Truvada for PrEP</p> <p>Procurement of Rapid Diagnostic Test - HIV 1+2</p> <p>OraQuick HIV Self-Test</p> <p>Procurement of 3 GeneXpert machines to support decentralization of services for TB and VL testing to all treatment sites, including for Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT)</p> <p>Nutritional support for 50 children living with HIV at Hand in Hand Ministries to reduce vulnerability to AIDS.</p> <p>Provision of nutritional support to 100 PLHIV for treatment adherence</p> <p>Incentivize CSOs to deliver contact tracing, reducing LTFU and integrating DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Strategy) into their outreach work.</p>
NAC Hires Oversight Consultant and Officer	Responsibility for monitoring project activities and for the collection and analysis of data assigned.
NAC Formulates Oversight Committee	Oversight Committee is composed to provide critical and important oversight function to the implementation of both the CI 9RM and Global Fund (2022-2024) grant.
NHI to take over as new principal recipient of Global Fund grant	<p>National Health Insurance (NHI) is preparing to take over as the new Principal Recipient for the Global Fund grant.</p> <p>Principal Recipients are responsible for implementing grants, including coordination of other smaller organizations, known as sub-recipients. Principal Recipients take on the financial as well as the programmatic responsibilities of the grant.</p> <p>Principal Recipients disburse funds to other smaller organizations who serve as sub-recipients or even sub-sub-recipients.</p>
<p>Partners: Civil Society Hub Organization (CSO-Hub) Secretariat, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the University of Belize (UB)</p> <p>Weeklong HIV Training hosted.</p>	<p>HIV Rapid Testing and Counselling Training for civil society stakeholders provided. Trainees should be able to identify strategies to support clients in making behaviour changes that will reduce the risk of acquiring or transmitting HIV; demonstrate, through</p>

	practice sessions, the six steps of prevention counselling; prepare the client to take the test and assist him or her to begin to integrate the result emotionally, behaviourally, and socially.
Partners: NAC; Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW); businesses NAC Hosts Pop-up COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic & Health Fair	July 2021 –COVID-19 Pop-up Vaccination Clinic and Mini Health Fair held in front of the NAC, Belize City. Event assists the MoHW to advance the national vaccination campaign by getting persons from key populations vaccinated. Businesses provided incentives to encourage persons to get vaccinated.
Partners: Caribbean Med Lab Foundation Belize prepares implementation of an innovative service delivery model, for full rollout during the new Global Fund grant cycle (2022-2024) - HIV Self Testing. CSO sites that are planning to provide an HIV and/or syphilis rapid testing service:- Baseline survey to determine what quality systems, structures, processes and procedures are in place in each CSO site for HIV and syphilis testing. Provision of training in HIV and syphilis rapid testing including training in the quality standards that should govern testing. HIV and Syphilis screening + confirmatory algorithms that are currently being used. The Caribbean Med Lab Foundation will provide support as follows: Identification of locations at Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and health facilities that provide HIV testing to key populations to participate in the HIV self-testing pilot. Conduct site assessments Selection of suitable persons to be trained to aid persons interested in conducting HIV self-testing and to document outcomes in accordance with the protocol. Support the collection and submission of data from the pilot testing. An initial pilot will be conducted with 50 persons from the key populations following the established protocols. A Saliva Test Kit WHO prequalified for HIVST: OraQuick® HIV Self-Test by OraSure Technologies, USA will be used for the Pilot.	Self-testing is safe and increases testing uptake among people who may not test otherwise. It offers a way to make testing discreet, comfortable, and empowering. Moreover, with appropriate policy, when provided in conjunction with adequate instructions for use and post-test support information, HIV self-testing is highly effective.
Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Hub Undergoes Evaluation	Evaluation performed 'to determine the effectiveness of CSO programming and to

	engage in continuous improvement and learning within programs and across the civil society organizations.' It reviewed the activities that have been implemented for the first year of the program' to help the CSO Hub Coordinator and civil society partners to make decisions on how to effectively engage each other to reach their target populations. The evaluation assessed its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact, and focused on three core areas, namely financial, programmatic and legal assessment, and brought forth several recommendations.
Partners: NAC; Caribbean Regional Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CRN+), Mr. Jason Shepherd; Belize Network of NGOs, Senator Osmany Salas. NAC Hosts CSO Capacity Development Session for Piloting of Social Contracting, BIM, Belize City, September 2021	The Capacity Building Session was a follow up to a previous session on social contracting that was held in May 2021. Both sessions were of importance as the country prepares to develop and pilot a social contracting mechanism during the new Global Fund grant cycle (2022-2024).
Partners: NAC; PAHO; Global Fund Belize to Pilot Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)	Data from Piloting of PrEP among key populations used to inform the roll out of PrEP under the new Global Fund Grant 2022-2024. PrEP is a form of HIV prevention that uses anti-HIV drugs to protect HIV-negative people from acquiring HIV. PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex by about 90%.
Belize's C19RM Funding Request Approved	The Global Fund approved Belize's C19RM Funding Request for a total of USD\$ 720,814. The C19RM Grant was signed on September 22, 2021 and Grant funds were received on October 23, 2021. The Funds will cover:- PPEs including glasses, gloves, gowns, face shields, boot covers, caps for the MoH and for Civil Society; Procurement of Thermo Fisher kits to support Covid 19 Testing; Delivery of psycho-social support to address Mental Health issues (including * substance abuse) experienced as a result of COVID-19 for key and vulnerable population members; Training of CSOs, CCM and MOHW in forecasting and quantification exercises to strengthen group's capacity to prevent and

	address stock outs and resultant resource constraints in supplies required for testing and treating COVID-19 and other disease prevention measures; and Procurement of Gene Xper Machine for Covid, HIV and TB testing.
NAC contracts a National AIDS Spending Assessment (NASA) expert, Daniel Aran, to provide training to a local consultant and technical working group as well as to support in conducting the NASA for the fiscal year 2020-2021	NASA training received - Assessment describes the flow of resources spent in the HIV/AIDS response from their origin to the beneficiary populations. (NASA is a tool within the national monitoring and evaluation framework and is a recommended measurement tool to track HIV spending at country level.)
NAC Revives Communication Around EOB	Stakeholder consultations recommenced in August. Local attorney works on developing an advocacy strategy, to conduct stakeholder consultations, and to assist with the communication process. Information / training sessions held. NAC / EOB Steering Committee, works on updating EOB roadmap and developing implementation strategy on communication and focused stakeholder engagements.
NAC Peer Navigator Program	The main focus during this time of crisis is to ensure clients have their medication, remain adherent and have food. A peer navigator is defined as an HIV champion, friend, sounding board, health educator, and facilitator for health care, guide, coach, advocate, case-finder and community resource. A peer navigator identifies barriers in accessing prevention, care and treatment services and is a connector to health care staff or services who can address barriers. He/she may be an HIV-positive, medication-adherent role model who shares experiences and membership with the populations with which she/he works or may be a suitable officer with the desired skill set.
Drug Resistant Survey (HIV Drug Resistance (HIVDR) emerges when HIV replicates in the presence of antiretroviral drugs. HIVDR affects the ability of a particular drug or combination of drugs to block the replication of the virus. HIVDR negatively impacts the effectiveness of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs, increases the number of AIDS-	As of 2020 there were 3800 people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Belize, among whom 40% (1530) were accessing Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) in 19 sites. Based on the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations, this protocol describes methodological approach

associated deaths and associated morbidity. The surveillance of HIVDR is therefore a key component of the comprehensive and effective HIV response. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that ART and PrEP programmes be accompanied by measures to monitor the quality of ART and PrEP delivery and the surveillance of HIV drug resistance including the surveillance of Pre-treatment HIV drug resistance (PDR) in populations initiating ART and the surveillance of acquired HIV drug resistance (ADR) in populations receiving ART.)	<p>for a nationally representative HIV Drug Resistance (HIVDR) surveillance that is being conducted among ART initiators and PLHIV on ART in Belize in 2021—2022.</p> <p>The findings of the first nationally representative surveys to be carried out in Belize will be used to inform the national ART guidelines and the national action plan to prevent and control HIVDR, guiding the delivery of critical activities aimed to protect the investments and progress made by the ART programme.</p>
NAC CCM & CCM Meetings	The NAC hosted 4 general Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) meetings in 2021, and 2 special CCM Meetings to discuss C19RM Funding.
Reports from the Oversight Officer	<p>March 2021, Chair of the Oversight Committee attended virtual meeting with the Commission of the Status of Women held March 15-26, 2021. The 65th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65)</p> <p>September 2021 onwards, Work sessions were held to define the package of services to be provided to MSM and Trans, to discuss different aspects of the global fund grant.</p> <p>October 2021, The first virtual Oversight Committee Meeting was held. Committee members were introduced to the Oversight Terms of Reference and Oversight Plan, and discussed Quarters 1 and 2 of Global Fund reports that were submitted by sub-recipients. The first official <u>oversight site visit</u> took place at the Belize Family Life Association (BFLA), for the Oversight Chair and NAC Oversight Officer to become oriented with the BFLA services.</p> <p>November 2021, Oversight Officer participated in two-day Capacity Building workshop for CSO implementing partners on: Eliminating Gender-Based Violence in Families and Updated National HIV Guidelines for Continued Adherence for PLHIV. Ms. Ruth Jaramillo and Oversight Officer, Ms. Bernadina Eck assessed BFLA site as a part of the HIV Self-Testing Pilot.</p> <p>Oversight Officer also made an appearance on the Adventist Television Network's Defining Your Health morning show. A Presentation</p>

	<p>was provided about HIV/AIDS in Belize and the roles and responsibilities of the NAC.</p> <p>December 2021, an informal lunch meeting was held to discuss the human rights components within the C19RM and Global Fund grant.</p>
World AIDS Day 2021 in December, commemorated under the theme: "End Inequalities. End AIDS. End Pandemics."	<p>National HIV Testing spearheaded by the MoHW and supported by the NAC and UNDP; Morning Show Appearances, SunUp7 and Love Fm + OYE;</p> <p>Joint video message from Prime Minister and Special Envoy for the Development of Families and Children;</p> <p>'Rock the Ribbon' and 'Belize Goes Red' awareness Initiatives;</p> <p>NAC World AIDS Day Poem/Monologue Competition based on the theme;</p> <p>Re-launch of the NAC HIV Services App with added features and specifications; and</p> <p>Creation of HIV + COVID-19 risk assessment video messages.</p>
NAC Relaunches HIV Service App	<p>On World AIDS Day, the NAC Belize re-launched its HIV Services App with a more user-friendly interface and improved features / specifications. Updates to the app include geo-location for accurate routes to testing sites, real time updates, anonymous monitoring and evaluation for an inclusive and holistic response, in-app contact for convenience and accessibility, risk reduction information, and civil society organization information, including location, website and contact information. The App is available for download on both android and IOS devices.</p>
Global Fund Grant Funds	<p>The principal recipients have been UNDP, the National Aids Commission / CCM, and the new Principal Recipient will be the National Health Insurance of Belize. The respective agencies have provided reports and transitional support from one to the other ensuring most effective and efficient implementation of the programs and their objectives.</p>

iii. Future Plans and Priority Areas



The Way Forward - Achieving a Sustainable AIDS Response

The Government of Belize continues to provide the political will that is needed for increased domestic investments in key population programmes, community-led services and human right programmes in an effort to "leave no one behind."

Ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030 can be achieved if we continue to embed human rights and equity principles in our national response. Four key areas have been identified as critical to the National Response to HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis:

- Maintaining Political Commitment - continue to increase domestic resources and adopt policy and other changes to accelerate sustainable AIDS response results in achieving UNAIDS 95-95-95.
- Effective decision-making and innovative strategies need to be developed so that proper resources are allocated for maximum impact. Our activities and interventions must be done through differentiated care for key populations, women, adolescents, children, and families, if we are to improve efficiency, adherence and retention improving health outcomes, reducing cost, and freeing up human resources to 'treat all' in pursuit of 90-90-90.
- Accelerate quality implementation of fully funded HIV programmes, including human rights and gender programmes that address the dual challenges of HIV and tuberculosis. These programmes should be delivered through strengthened health and community systems, including social contracting.
- Engaging now for long-term sustainability: We must continue to pursue Universal Health Coverage, multisectoral financing of HIV, human rights, social enablers, and health activities and integrate donor financing within government-led fiduciary systems to build the foundation for sustainability.

An investment approach which combines effective and efficient programming packaged with interventions that address barriers to access to care, delivered in partnership with communities, will have the highest impact.

III. Social Investment Fund



i. Introduction

The Belize Social Investment Fund (BSIF) was founded in 1996 with a plan to improve the quality of life of men, women, and children through the execution of infrastructural projects and social programs. The programs are done with a focus to provide opportunities that could potentially lead to Belizeans significantly contributing to the national development of Belize. Since its inception, BSIF has completed over one thousand projects in the areas of education, health, and rural development. The organization works closely with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the CARICOM Development Fund (CDF) to finance these projects either through grants or loans negotiated through the Government of Belize.

The projects undertaken are done with a social development aspect where the needs of the communities are assessed and subsequently serviced to improve the quality of life. A listing of the most prominent projects is detailed below:

ii. Main Achievements

The projects undertaken are done with a social development aspect where the needs of the communities are assessed and subsequently serviced to improve the quality of life. A listing of the most prominent projects is detailed below:

Social Development Projects Fiscal Year 2021-2022			
Project	Inauguration Date	Location	Investment / Category
Climate Resilient Infrastructure Project (CRIP)	August 2021	Country-wide	\$30 million BZD (World Bank)
Scope of Works		Direct Beneficiaries	SDG Alignment
<p>The objective of the Project was to enhance the resilience of road infrastructure against flood risk and impacts of climate change and respond promptly in an eligible crisis or emergency as required. However, because of the Covid 19 pandemic, the Government of Belize, with approval from the World Bank, did a restructuring of the Project and reallocated for emergency expenditures, namely, the BOOST PROGRAM, the Belize Covid-19 Cash Transfer Program, and the agriculture component.</p> <p>The BOOST Program of the Ministry of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous People's Affairs (MHDFIPA) was implemented during the period July 2020 to August 2021, a total of fourteen months. At the end of fourteen months at total of USD 2,299,303.28 representing 81.9 % of the budgeted figure of USD 2,806,524 was</p>		<p>BOOST households paid during the period July 2020 - March 2021 averaged 2,245. For the period April 2021 – August 2021 the number of households paid averaged 2,205.</p> <p>As of September 30, 2021, a total of 21,362 households had been assessed and eligible to collect payments under the BCCAT program through the e-wallet system (MobilePayz).</p> <p>The total amount spent on the BCCAT program is BZ \$19,068,000 out of the EAP approved amount of BZ \$19,404,000, which is equivalent to 98% of the estimated budget.</p>	SDG 1 – No poverty

<p>disbursed to beneficiaries.</p> <p>As per the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) approval, an amount of USD 471,000 (16.7% of the budget) was reallocated to the Ministry of Agriculture component of the CERC. As a result, the new budgeted figure for the BOOST totaled USD 2,335,524.</p>		<p>An estimated total of 13,397 vouchers were approved in the EAP with value of US\$7,047,970.67, of which 12,772 were issued to MOAFSE valued at US\$6,436,805.43, for distribution to farmers. The largest number of vouchers issued was in the Sugarcane sector followed by Grains & Pulses. These two sectors combined accounted for approximately 63% of the total vouchers issued to MOAFSE. Beef Cattle and Vegetables (Drought) combined, represented 27% of the total vouchers issued, while the total of all other categories accounted for the remaining 10%.</p>	
Project	Inauguration Date	Location	Investment / Category
Sarawee Water System	October 2021	Spanish Town, Sarawee Village, Stann Creek District	\$355k BZD (CDB's Basic Needs Trust Fund 9 - BNTF 9)
Scope of Works		Direct Beneficiaries	SDG Alignment
<p>To provide improved water services for the Spanish Town section of Sarawee Village, Stann Creek District. Works included 1) connecting the village to the existing BWS water transmission main running parallel to the highway, 2) installation of the necessary sized distribution mains throughout the village and 3) installation of water meters at all occupied households.</p>		<p>This project improved the lives of the 51 households in Spanish Town as they had previously relied on rainwater after the village's rudimentary water system failed and an alternative ground water source could not be identified. As of July 2019, there were 198 households counted with an estimated 792 persons (435 males and 357 females) in the village. The Spanish Town area alone registered 51 households/204 persons (111 males and 93 females).</p>	<p>SDG 6 - Universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.</p>
Project	Inauguration Date	Location	Investment / Category
St Michael's Roman Catholic Primary School	November 2021	Las Flores, Belmopan, Cayo District	\$1.4 million BZD (CDB's Basic Needs Trust Fund 9 - BNTF 9)
Scope of Works		Direct Beneficiaries	SDG Alignment
The construction of a two-storey reinforced		347 enrolled students, 15 staff	SDG 4 -

concrete building measuring 130'7" long by 46'-0" wide; housing six classrooms, office spaces, four male and female students' bathrooms; four male and female teachers' lavatories, storage spaces, and an access ramp to accommodate users with diverse abilities. Additionally, the funds provided for desks, chairs, and blackboards for the new classrooms. The structure is equipped with a verandah, reinforced concrete floor and roof systems, masonry block walls, galvanized aluminum louvered windows, security grills, and timber doors as well as walkways.		members and the Las Flores community.	Inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all.
Project	Inauguration Date	Location	Investment / Category
Orange Walk Technical High School	February 2022	Stadium Street, Orange Walk Town	BZD\$1.3 million (CDB's BSIF Loan III Project)
Scope of Works		Direct Beneficiaries	SDG Alignment
The construction of a two-storey reinforced concrete building measuring 164-feet long by 49-feet wide complete with eight classrooms, office spaces, four male and female students' bathroom, male and female teachers' lavatories, storage spaces, and an access ramp to accommodate users with disabilities. The structure is also equipped with a verandah, reinforced concrete floor and roof systems, masonry block walls, galvanized aluminum louvered windows, security grilles, and timber doors. Earthworks, site drainage, walkways, installation of electrical, plumbing, water supply, and wastewater systems, in accordance with the regulations of the respective authorities.		Current enrollment stands at 680. The school also will be used for another Ministry of Education Initiative, the Adult and Continuing Education program (ACE) in which the high school dropouts, and other vulnerable populations can attend evening classes in pursuit of their high school diploma. This will be another source of income for the Orange Walk Technical High School to meet its goal of self-sustainability. The high school is a vocational school, giving students the options of pursuing training in Business, Academics / Sciences or Vocational areas.	SDG Goal 6 - Target 4.3 "It is imperative to reduce barriers to skills development and technical and vocational education and training (TVET)."
Project	Inauguration Date	Location	Investment / Category
Santa Martha Preschool Sub-project	March 2022	Santa Martha Village, Orange Walk District	\$588.5k BZD (CDB's Basic Needs Trust Fund 9 - BNTF 9)
Scope of Works		Direct Beneficiaries	SDG Alignment
Construction of a one-storey ferro concrete building (49'-6" long by 43'-8" wide). The building houses an open classroom area, preschoolers'		Recent estimated data shows that there are 286 families living in Santa Martha Village with a count of 692	SDG 6 - Equitable quality

bathroom facilities, teachers' lavatory facilities, storage space, kitchenette, access ramp to accommodate persons with diverse abilities.		residents including 180 school aged children.	education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
Project	Inauguration Date	Location	Investment / Category
Marie Crawford Health Centre (Crooked Tree)	March 2022	Crooked Tree Village, Belize District	\$1 million BZD (CDB's BSIF III Loan Project)
Scope of Works		Direct Beneficiaries	SDG Alignment
The construction of a two-storey ferro-concrete building housing the health centre on the ground floor and two residential areas on the upper floor for an attending nurse and a medical practitioner. The health centre includes a waiting area, triage room, two consultation areas, an asthma bay, a sterilizing room, a staff lounge, separate restroom for male and female patients, separate restrooms for staff, a laundry room, utility room, storage, janitor closet, waste disposal facility and a backup water supply cistern.		According to the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB's) last census in 2010, the population stood at 805 with about 225 households. Today, the Village Council estimates the population at a little over 1,000 persons.	SDG 3- Promotion of healthy lives and well-being at all ages with an aim to improve sustainable development.

BSIF Social Development Projects



BSIF Projects inaugurated during the current fiscal year include:

- Crique Jute Water Supply System
- Louisiana Government School
- San Isidro Primary School
- San Jose/San Pablo Water Supply System
- Crooked Tree Preschool
- Distribution of 260 laptops to five high schools

Projects pending inauguration for 2022 are:

- Libertad/Concepcion Water Supply System
- Caye Caulker Health Centre
- Belmopan Polyclinic

iii. Future Plans and Priority Areas

BSIF has two major upcoming projects that are important to mention, these are the CDF Water Supply Program for rural areas in Belize; the villages included in the scope of works of the project are the Mahogany Heights, San Antonio, Georgeville and Chunox Villages. In addition, BSIF will also be undertaking the implementation of the Climate Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture Project (CRESAP) with funding from the World Bank.

IV. Economic Development Council



i. Introduction

The Economic Development Council (EDC) is the Government of Belize's official mechanism for dialogue between the public and private sectors, providing advice to the Prime Minister and wider government with the objective of contributing to a business climate conducive to innovation and resilient growth. Since its establishment, through its Technical Secretariat, the Public-Private Desk (PPD) in the Office of the Prime Minister, the EDC has set a high standard of **excellence, efficiency, diligence and impartiality** in its mandated execution of critical reform initiatives. These efforts have contributed to productive and impactful working relationship across sectors and with key development partners such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organisation of American States, the Caribbean Development Bank and the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) among others.

The Public-Private Desk

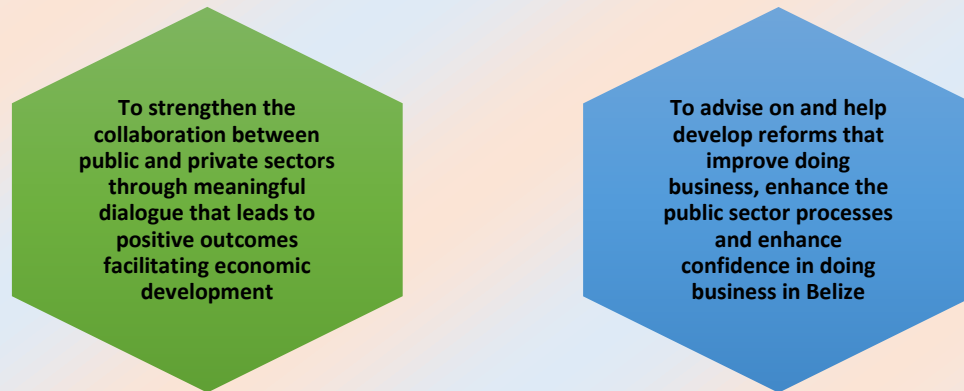
Beyond bridging the divide between the government and private-sector, the Public-Private Desk (PPD) has become particularly adept at ensuring effective communication within the public sector itself with the objective of creating linkages, avoiding duplication of effort and promoting greater efficiency, transparency and automation in the delivery of public services in order to have a positive impact on the ability to conduct legitimate business in Belize. The Public-Private Desk resides within the Office of the Prime Minister where it commands the respect and support of colleagues from across line ministries, statutory bodies, the business community and international development partners because of its proven track record of success in the delivery, through superior project management skills, of reform actions which encompass innovation, process reengineering and data-based decision-making. This small, dynamic team is currently comprised of an Executive Director, a Project Coordinator, a Project Officer and a Communication/Administration Officer.

Mandate of the Economic Development Council

The Economic Development Council (EDC) was formed in 2011 and was legislated in 2017. The purpose of the Economic Development Council as outlined in the Economic Development Council Act No. 38 of 2017 includes the following:

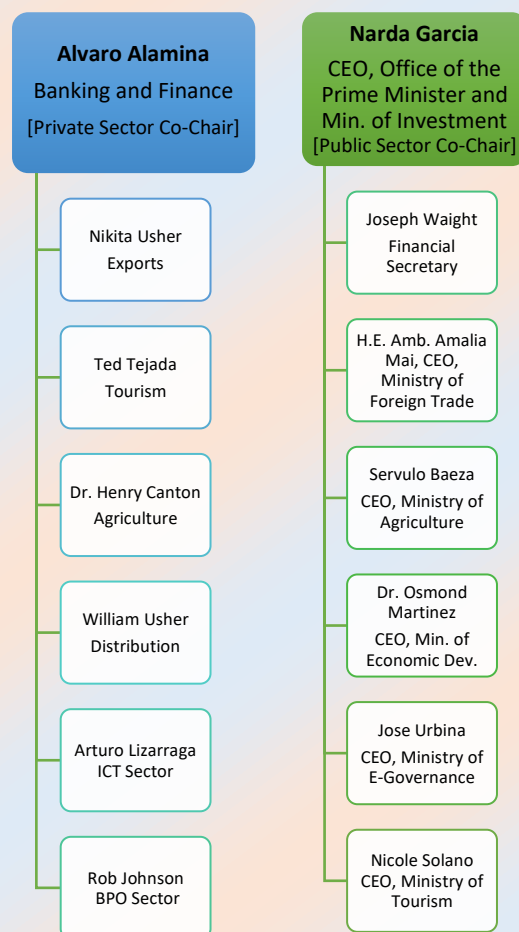
- To serve as the primary forum for Public-Private Sector Dialogue.
- To recommend to the Prime Minister actions and reforms necessary for the improvement of the business climate.
- To facilitate the implementation of approved reforms.
- To promote a better understanding of business climate problems and provide solutions with input from the private sector.

Role of the EDC



EDC Composition (2021 – 2024)

The Council is comprised of fourteen members, including seven senior managers from the public sector and seven representatives from the private sector. The EDC is co-chaired by a representative from the private sector and a counterpart from the public sector ensuring equal representation. The goal of the EDC is to foster sustainable economic development and competitiveness through an enabling investment and business climate.



Mission Statement and Strategic Goals

“Creating opportunities through dialogue, partnership and reform.”

#planBelize outlines specific actions geared at spreading growth nationally and creating opportunities. This now national strategy emphasizes the need to address ease of doing business challenges to promote investment attraction and facilitation. This is where the EDC’s guiding mantra plays a role in steering the work on GOB’s public-private dialogue mechanism as operationalized by the Public-Private Desk in the Office of the Prime Minister.

Strategic Goals

The overarching goal of the EDC is to foster and influence sustainable economic development and competitiveness by encouraging proactive leadership (social, business and citizenry) that is progressive and open to innovation resulting in an enabling investment and business climate. The EDC has 3 strategic goals:



ii. Main Achievements

Reform and Projects Portfolio

Trade License Reform				
Description	Scope	Outputs	Outcomes	Achievements
The Ministry of Local Government, in partnership with the Mayor's Association and the Economic Development Council, has been working on Trade License reform since 2014. Trade License is a fee currently charged by Municipalities to allow businesses to operate within their municipal boundaries. However, the current non-standard and subjective system, combine management and arbitrary increases, have acted as a disincentive to investment and growth in the private sector. Therefore, a standardized system is needed to create predictability, transparency and to enhance and promote good governance.	To administer a transparent and equitable Trade License fee regime using a standard methodology	Trade License Act Amendments Standard Operating Manual for Trade License Capacity Building in Municipalities on new Trade License Regime	Efficient and transparent Trade License Administration Increased number of formal businesses operating within municipalities	Completion of the Annual Rental Value calculation exercise by applying the proposed new standardized methodology
E-Government Reform				
Description	Scope	Outputs	Outcomes	Achievements
eGovernment is the new and ambitious way of utilizing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to bring governments closer to the people through major improvements in the delivery of services. Improvements in public administration could result in providing new opportunities for innovation, business creation, and enterprise development for the private sector. This initiative is being led by the Central Information and Technology Office.	To transform Belize's public administration into an integrated eGovernment system	Digital Signature Legislation, Data Protection Act and Amendments to Electronic Transfer Bill Re-engineering and digitization of public services eGovernment Road Map	Improve government efficiency Improve access to public services Foster productivity and economic growth support open and transparent governance Improve the Ease of Doing Business	Supported the launch of eGovernment Road Map

Lands Reform: 1. Real Estate Legislation; 2. Land Valuation and Stamp Duty				
Description	Scope	Outputs	Outcomes	Achievements
The EDC has been closely following land reforms and continues to press for positive change given the critical importance that efficiency, transparency, cost affordability and equity play in the sustainable functioning of the real estate industry which trades in one of Belize's most important natural assets, lands.	To simplify and to better coordinate the processes and services and thus improve output transactions and increase client satisfaction as it relates to land applications, leases, registration and issuing titles.	Mapping of processes at the Registry Department to better understand the as is scenario, areas that need improvement and the best interventions to better be able to address present and future demands.	<p>A clear procedural path to (i) national lands grant, (ii) cancellation of the lease, (iii) grievances and appeal, (iv) a list of application and issuing of leases and grants published and available online.</p> <p>The Land Tax Act has been strengthened.</p> <p>An explanatory manual about the provisions and procedures for the valuation, levying payment of Land Tax, clarifying the benefits obtained by the timely payment of the tax.</p>	

Building Sector Reform				
Description	Scope	Outputs	Outcomes	Achievements
The Building Sector Reform Project aims to modernize and improve the Building Industry in Belize through the establishment of policies, legislations, codes, and simplified procedures that will contribute to the ease of doing business and sustainable development in Belize. This initiative is being led by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development in partnership with the Economic Development Council.	To make the building industry in Belize safer, flexible, resilient and efficient for continued growth.	Consensus Building and Client Input to Reform Process; Reform of Legal Framework and Enactment of Legislation; Establishment of a Registry for Secured Interests in Movable Assets; Monitoring and Evaluation	Increased credit opportunities for MSME's; Improved Cost of Credit for MSME's; Improved access to credit information; Built capacity for end users and registry staff on collateral registry system	Decentralization of Building Permit administration through the launch of Building Units at each municipality; Launch of Public Awareness Campaign Launch of National Building Codes Assessment Consultancy
Design & Preparation of the Sustainable Development Plan for the Chiquibul – Mountain Pine Ridge – Caracol Complex, BL-T1088 Project				
Description	Scope	Outputs	Outcomes	Achievements
The Government of Belize with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank initiated the implementation of a Technical Cooperation agreement for the design and preparation of the Sustainable Development Plan for the Caracol Region. The overall objective of this project is to design a Sustainable Development Plan for an area of the Maya Mountain Massif which encompasses the Chiquibul National Park, the Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve and the Caracol Archaeological Complex that maintains the long-term contribution of the region to the national economy while balancing land and natural resource use with environmental protection and local livelihoods.	To develop a Sustainable Development Plan and Governance Framework for the development of the Chiquibul-Mountain Pine Ridge-Caracol Region	Sustainable Development Plan for the CMCC Region; Governance Framework for the CMCC Region	Increased number of beneficiaries from the development of the area Strategic sustainable development of economic sectors Increased sustainable business opportunities	Governance Framework for the CMCC Region completed. Sustainable Development Plan for the CMCC Region completed. Regional Stakeholder Engagement Strategy completed.

Leveraging Digital Technology for Improving the Business Climate in Belize “Digitization Project” BL-T1110 Project				
Description	Scope	Outputs	Outcomes	Achievements
The Purpose of this project was to create efficiencies within the Belize Company and Corporate Affairs Registry (BCCR) and the Belize International Corporate Affairs Registry (BICAR) in order to remain competitive by modernizing and merging processes, upgrading the infrastructure and creating the enabling legal framework for a fully functioning E- registry system. It aimed at achieving inclusive governance through a Unified Business Registry.	To fully digitalize the Belize Companies Registry with a consolidated E-registry system for the registration of both domestic and international companies	Conduct and complete scanning of all files at BCCR; Launch an E-Registry system; Implementation of Digital Key Legislation; Implementation of Consolidated Companies Registry Legislation.	Ensure Belize complies with international requirements for business incorporation and monitoring Improve efficiencies in the registries by reducing days for incorporation and offering online services Secure the future of the Companies Registry and offshore sector	A total of 18,720 files were digitized through a process of cleaning, scanning, indexing and validating; 3 kiosks were installed- to support the general public to conduct digital searches and also to fill out electronic forms All Registry staff was trained in the use of DocuWare to better support file management and manipulation Completed System Analysis that is feeding into the development of the Company Registries Online Registry System; This project led the steps toward the Consolidation of the Companies Acts Project and also the ongoing development of an Online Registry System for a merged Company Registry.

				<p>Five (5) electronic laws were developed and enacted, namely the Electronic Transactions Act, the Electronic Evidence Act, the data Protection Act, the Public Sector Data Sharing Act, and the Electronic Funds Transfer Crime Act;</p> <p>The project funded a consultancy titled “E-governance Legislation Public Awareness Campaign: “A Safe and Effective Digital Environment for All” executed by the Ministry of E-governance.</p>
Innovation Platforms for Social & Economic Impact in Belize, BL-T1119 Project				
Description	Scope	Outputs	Outcomes	Achievements
Innovation is a crucial factor for impacting firm level growth and productivity, which in turn contribute to a country’s economic growth. The Economic Development Council with the support from the Inter-American Development Bank has initiated the implementation of a technical cooperation agreement to support the strengthening of the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem. It will also promote the development of social businesses and innovation in the private sector to assist in solving social and economic challenges in Belize.	To strengthen the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem	<p>Social Innovation Challenge</p> <p>Digital Bootcamp</p> <p>Innovation PPP Framework</p> <p>Intraregional Technical Knowledge Transfer Program on Innovation</p>	<p>Number of social businesses</p> <p>Number of businesses engaged in innovative activities</p> <p>Number of individuals with digital skills</p>	<p>Launch of “Change dah Story” social innovation challenge;</p> <p>Launch of Digital Skills Boot Camp;</p> <p>Innovation Road Map developed;</p> <p>Innovation PACT launched at the Belize Investment Summit 2021 with the objective to</p>

				create a culture of innovation in Belize that ultimately increases investment levels in science, technology, and innovation activities that contribute to the transformation towards a more competitive and developed economy.
Capacity building for Public Transport Reform, BL-T1115 Project				
Description	Scope	Outputs	Outcomes	Achievements
This project begins to implement the short-term recommendations stemming from the Comprehensive National Transportation Master Plan ¹ (CNTMP) and specifically aims at developing a reliable and effective public transportation system critical to Belize's economic development. It will address issues of inefficient bus routes, service scheduling and the absence of a ticketing system; low quality of infrastructure and terminal facilities; inadequate bus operators and terminal concession registration and management; and low quality fleets and lack of regulations and standards.	The TC will support the implementation of the short-term transportation reforms needed to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Transport and National Emergency Management and enhance the public transportation industry.	Policy and legal framework Designed; Public Transport Scheduling System Designed; Establishment of a Transport Planning Unit; Study tour and knowledge transfer activities; Public Awareness Campaigns workshop organized	A modernized legal system with adequate regulations, standards and operating procedures; Established Transport Planning Unit with built capacities; An efficient bus line routing and service scheduling; Improved quality of infrastructure and terminal facilities; An established bus ticketing system; Adequate bus operator and	The PPD/EDC was responsible to ensure that Conditions Prior for the first disbursement for the project were met (early 2020). Conditions Prior included the establishment of a Project Management Unit, a Memorandum of Understanding for improved coordination and project support between Ministry of Finance, the Transport Department and the EDC along with the successful

¹ CNTMP: <https://edc.gov.bz/governmentpolicies/projects/cntmp/>

			terminal concessions registration and management; Improved quality of bus fleet.	completion of the procurement process for a Transport Planner and an Administrative and Procurement Assistant.
Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Program				
Description	Scope	Outputs	Outcomes	Achievements
The Government of Belize seeks to build a strong PPP program. with the aim to mobilize private sector capital that supports large-scale investment in infrastructure and other development projects that align with government's policy priorities for public benefit.				<p>Cabinet approval of the National PPP policy with the objectives to i) Meet Belize's Infrastructure Needs; ii) Improve Efficiency, iii) Balance fiscal prudence with fiscal stimulus, iv) Building resilience to the impact of climate change.</p> <p>Cabinet approval of the creation of a PPP Unit.</p> <p>The PPD/EDC has provided project management support throughout the establishment of the PPP Unit including engagement with the IDB for coordinating technical assistance</p>

Committee Membership

The PPD sits on the following nine (9) working groups / committee where a member of the PPD team participates in meetings to advise and channel concerns of the private sector and where guidance can be provided to the private sector on behalf of the Government of Belize.



1. Plan Belize Medium-term Strategy Committee:

The Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) 2016-2020 was the first of a series of medium-term strategies that are to achieve the goals of Horizon 2030, the long-term development framework for Belize and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. The GSDS 2016-2020 expired on March 31st, 2021.

The Government of Belize, through the Ministry with responsibility for economic development as the lead and working in close collaboration with the ministry responsible for sustainable development, has initiated the development of Plan Belize Medium Term Development Strategy PBMTDS 2021-2025. This new strategy will take into consideration the guiding principles of Plan Belize and will aim to achieve the vision, mission and strategic goals presented in Plan Belize. It will also guide and set targets for social, economic, and environmental development over the next 5 years.

In preparing PBMTDS, a core Technical Working Group was established for ensuring that processes were followed, that an effective and efficient methodology was applied to secure buy-in and ownership among all key stakeholders, especially government ministries, departments, and agencies that will have a major role in implementation. The EDC has played a vital role in serving on this Working Group by providing technical reviews and insights.

2. The National Investment Policy and Strategy (NIPS)

NIPS seeks to put in place a national framework that will guide both domestic and foreign investments. In an effort to enable efficient public-private dialogue in the coordination and development of the strategy, the Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (Beltrade) established a multi-institutional Project Steering Committee. The PPD particularly provides technical and policy guidance on Belize's various economic sectors as well as channels the private sector's contributions.

3. Trade Committees

The Trade Technical Team, Trade Negotiating Team and the National Committee for Trade Facilitation were all established to provide support to the Directorate General for Foreign Trade in the coordination, development and implementation of foreign trade policies and trade negotiations. The PPD's role on these committees is to facilitate public-private sector dialogue and co-operation on trade facilitation reforms in general, and specifically in relation to the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement and Partial Scope Agreements implementation.

4. Technical Group for Investment Facilitation

To guide discussions related to i) the implementation of the commitments of Chapter IX of the Belize Guatemala Partial Scope Agreement; ii) to evaluate, at the request of either Party, modifications or additions to Chapter IX, and if appropriate, refer such matters to the Technical Coordinating Group (TCG) for consideration, iii) to consider any other matter related to the implementation and enforcement of Chapter IX or to facilitate the investment promotion between the Parties; iv) to evaluate and recommend to the TCG proposed modifications, amendments or additions to the provisions of Chapter IX; and v) any other tasks which may be assigned by the TCG.

5. National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS)

The NFIS Task forces were established to support the Central Bank of Belize in coordinating and implementing the recommendations in the NFIS. The PPD represents the EDC on two task force: (i) Enabling/Supporting ICT and Financial Infrastructure and (ii) Data collection, analysis and reporting.

6. Virtual Asset and Service Providers Working Group

Established to advance the dialogue through a holistic and efficient approach towards the development of an enabling ecosystem that will allow for the use of Virtual Assets in Belize and the development of a Virtual Asset Industry of high integrity.

7. MSME "Simple" Working Group

To provide support and strategic inputs toward the development of a modernized and simplified legislation essential for improving the business climate for MSMEs operating in Belize under the Consultancy titled "Digital Innovations to Boost Economic Development in Belize".

8. Belize Tourism Innovation Lab Steering Committee

Aims to increase digital technology adoption and digital skills among tourism SMEs in Belize through capacity building and the adoption of digital strategies.

9. Belize Investment Summit Steering Committee

Established to guide investment related projects critical to the economic development of Belize.

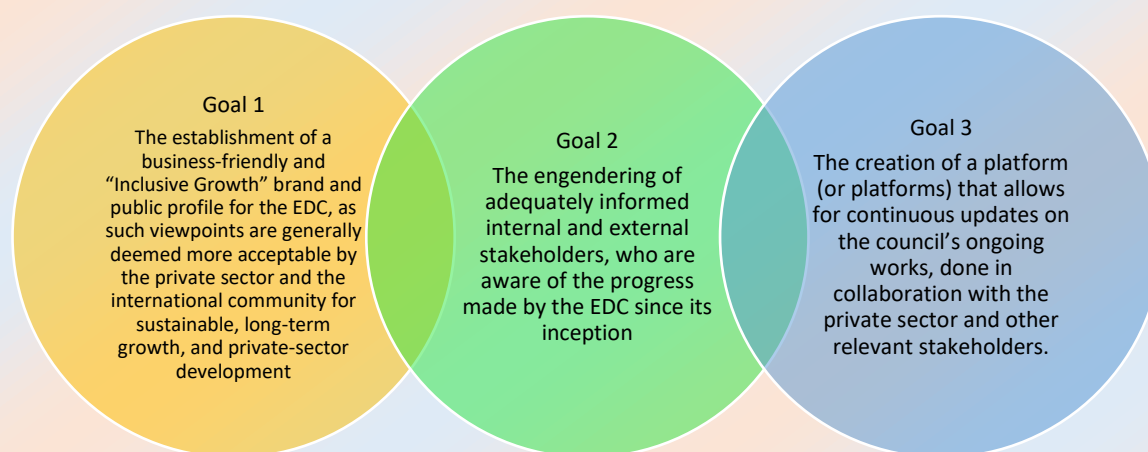
Stakeholder Coordination and Communication Strategy

Stakeholder Coordination

The EDC, through its Secretariat, has focused significant energies toward supporting inter-ministerial communication and private-sector engagement ensuring effective, holistic and timely dialogue amongst relevant stakeholders and will continue to lend this critical function in 2022 and beyond.

Communication Strategy

In 2017, a Communication Strategy and Implementation Plan for the EDC was developed with the purpose to strengthen communications, and by extension, the partnership between the public and private sectors. The EDC's Communication Strategy and Implementation Plan, has three overarching goals:



A Communications Officer position was added to the PPD team with the purpose of executing the EDC's Communication Strategy.

Communications Accomplishments:

- Production of five-part mini-series videos on e-Governance aired on local television and social media.
- Activation of You Reform Belize (YRBz) App on Google Play and Apple Stores
- Creation of EDC's LinkedIn page which highlighted important information from BCCI, Ministry of Health, and Press Office during COVID-19.
- Design and production of meeting tips brochure to be used during COVID-19 virtual meetings.
- Design and production of brochure on how to join a Microsoft Teams Meeting to be used with the introduction and more frequent use of virtual meetings in Belize during COVID-19.
- Activated and updated EDC's website with current information.
- Coordination with public and private sectors and the submission of Doing Business Report.
- Developed SOP for E-Library and Coordinated training of 2nd Cohort of E-Library users.

iii. Lessons Learnt

Challenges	Lessons Learned
Preparing, managing, and reinforcing change within institutions.	Coordination with the key public sector stakeholders to take ownership and drive reform.
Collaboration in sharing of public data from Government Ministries.	Engaging institutions at all levels through multiple platforms of communication.
The absence of a mechanism that supports institutional knowledge and transfer.	Developing a communication strategy that effectively meet the needs of our stakeholders.

iv. Future Plans and Priority Areas

The EDC's Strategic Plan looks at delivering on key priority reforms, aligned with #planBelize commitments vis-à-vis ease of doing business initiatives. Through the ongoing implementation of its strategic plan the EDC has been able to solidify its reform process and identify lessons learnt since its establishment.

The EDC launched its Strategic Plan in 2018 with its overarching goal, *"Progressive, Booming and Safe Belize"* to attain the outcome of 'Fostering sustainable economic development and competitiveness through an enabling investment and business climate'.



The envisioned outputs for the EDC's Strategic Plan are as follows:

- Reduction of the Cost of Doing Business
- Improve Access to Finance
- Simplification of the Regulatory Environment for Doing Business

Indicators are being used to measure the impact of the activities implemented by the EDC in meeting its goals and targets include GDP, crime rate, new industries / value added productions / services and jobs.

The PPD Projects Unit and Support Staff

The Public Private Desk, Secretariat to the Economic Development, by Q3 2022 will be fully staffed with an Executive Director, Project Coordinator, a Project Officer and a Communication and Administration Officer. This dedicated and dynamic team will continue to focus on the strengthening and collaboration between private and public sectors through meaningful dialogue, by facilitating economic development through the oversight of implemented reforms that improves doing business in Belize.

The EDC has over the course of its existence delivered on significant business climate reform accomplishments through continuous dialogue between public and private sectors with the primary aim of steering reforms within the Government of Belize to improve processes, systems and public services impacting the investor and business climates. The EDC's secretariat (the PPD team) will also continue their donor engagement and coordination efforts with agencies such as the IDB for securing grant funds for projects that will have social and economic impact in Belize. In addition, the team also coordinated, supported, and participated in various local and international trainings and seminars that gave exposure to the work of the EDC and enhanced its experience to continue improving Belize's investor and business climate.

The EDC will continue to assist in seeking and identifying international funding opportunities to assist and support reforms and projects aligned with the EDC's mandate. The EDC will continue to strengthen its communications through meaningful and effective dialogue and engagement with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that there is an inclusive and collaborative approach in order to build a sustainable and robust economy, creating opportunities for all in an improved business climate.

The EDC's Work Plan for 2022 - 2023 will focus on the priority action items outlined in its Strategic Plan as well as key recommended items in support of private sector development and GOB delivery of improved services.

V. Investment Policy and Compliance Unit



i. Introduction

The Investment Policy and Compliance Unit (IPCU) was established in 2005 under the Ministry of National Development, Investment and Culture Investment with the mandate to administer key Investment portfolios, namely, Export Processing Zones (EPZ), Gaming, Lotteries (in tandem with the Treasury Department), and Fiscal Incentives (in tandem with Beltraide). The year 2012 saw a restructuring of the IPCU shifting its focus more broadly on Investment policy development and enhancement, compliance for the Fiscal Incentive, Export Processing Zones / Designated Processing Areas, Gaming, and Lotteries incentive programs. The IPCU also focused on project development relevant to improving the investment climate in Belize, technical assessments in all areas under the Ministry's responsibility and other related investment climate policy initiatives. Presently, the Unit has evolved into the Ministry's Investment Policy and Compliance Unit (IPCU), with a much broader focus on policy planning and development, special project and program development and implementation, performance measurement of private proposals to Government, and compliance.

The Key Functions of the IPCU are:

1. To provide Policy guidelines on investment issues
2. To provide oversight on compliance with Investment Incentive Programs (Fiscal Incentives, Export Processing Zones/Designated Processing Areas)
3. To provide Policy guidelines for the Gaming and Lotteries Programs
4. To ensure compliance with Gaming & Lotteries Policy and Revenue expectations from gaming operators
5. To research emerging sectors and investment opportunities and develop respective policy
6. To report on, review and update Investment Incentive Programs
7. To conduct assessments on proposed investments for the programs mentioned above and other larger private investment/projects forwarded to Cabinet.

ii. Main Achievements

A total of 65 site visits were conducted for the Fiscal Period 2021/2022. The site visits had increased in 2021 compared to 2020 but were less than other years due to the continued waves of the pandemic and these increased in 2022 with the loosening of COVID restrictions. Important to note is that one site visit would include visits to more than one location or company.

District	Total Site Visits 2021	Total Site Visits 2022
Belize	16	20
Cayo	3	2
Orange Walk	3	3

Stann Creek	3	4
Corozal	2	3
Toledo	4	2
Total	31	34

Programs Administered by the IPCU for Fiscal Year 2021/2022 were:

Program / Project Title: Designated Processing Area		
Description of Programme	Activities	Results
<p>The DPA program was designed to facilitate investment in value adding enterprises in Belize in the national priority sectors of: Agro-processing, Aquaculture, Data Processing / Information Technology Enabled Services, Manufacturing and Developer of an Industrial or Business Parks to stimulate employment, transfer of technology and economic development. The program is the most liberal of Belize's incentive programs and offers to its beneficiaries many tax incentives. The Investment Policy and Compliance Unit serves as the Secretariat to the Designated Processing Areas Committee (DPAC) and administers procedures to accept and process DPA applications, duty or tax exemption requests and compliance procedures in conjunction with Beltraide in a manner that adheres to the DPA Act and Regulations. To date, there are 42 active DPAs.</p>	DPA Committee Meetings	9
	Completed Assessments with recommendations	3
	Cabinet Paper for Northern Border Entertainment Zone that would include 2 casinos at the Northern Border under the DPA Programme (not approved)	1
	Key Legislative and Policy work included:	6
	1. Review amendments to DPA Regulations to accommodate BPOs in the DPA Program	
	2. Review of DPA Application requirements	
	3. Review and amendment of DPA application form	
	4. Amendments to DPA Report Format	
	5. DPA Act amendments	
	6. Recommendations made to assist BPOs with Central Building Authority issues	
	Review of extension requests:	2
	1. Royal Mayan Farm	
	2. Belize Premium Spirits Limited	
	Review of relocation requests	1
	Review requests for R&D:	1
	1. Tilapia culture for Tex Mar Limited	
	2. Hemp Processing and Storage for Cayo Grain Limited	
	Reviewed submission to legal changes to Operations Contract for Infotel International Limited	1

	Assessment on violation of DPA Regulations of Caribbean Shrimps	1
	Review of DPA Variation application for Belize Premium Spirit	1
	Review of Industrial Roof Space for Belize Aquaculture Limited	1
Program / Project Title: Fiscal Incentives (FI)		
The FI Program is administered by both the IPCU and Beltraide. Currently, there are a total of 34 companies that operate under an FI. This program was designed to facilitate investment in a wide variety of sectors to stimulate employment, foreign exchange generation and investment. The IPCU engages in assessment of applications and compliance activities of the program by the beneficiaries. It prepares cabinet papers or assessments to make a recommendation to Minister or Cabinet for a decision on the approval of an FI application. The compliance activities include background checks of investors, compliance site visits and compliance with the FI Act. Beltraide accepts the FI applications and assists the investor in its preparation. It also releases the duty exemption requests for the goods.	Review and recommendation for new applications: 1. Aruna Resort Limited (Tourism) 2. Caye Chapel Company Limited (Tourism) 3. Obregon Coconut Company Limited (Agriculture) 4. Venezia Del Caribe Limited (Tourism) 5. The Ambergris Grand limited (Tourism) 6. Exotic Caye Beach Resort Limited (Tourism)	6
	Review of applications for renewal and extensions: 1. Safari Limited (Auto Rental/Tourism) 2. Transport and Toursim Promoter Limited (Auto Rental/Tourism) 3. Tropic Air Limite (Trasport/Tourism) 4. Sri Luck Plastics Limited (Manufacturing)	4
	Assessments with recommendations	10
	Site Visits	1
	Program / Project Title: Gaming	
The IPCU ensures compliance with the Gaming Control Act and acts as the secretariat of the Gaming Control Board. It processes applications, conducts background checks on principals, conducts compliance site visits and issues licenses on behalf of the Gaming Control Board. In 2012, the Warner Consulting Group from the United States conducted an evaluation of the gaming and lotteries industry in Belize. Subsequently, the Ministry contracted another consultancy in 2014 to develop the framework for the Gaming and Lotteries Commission. A Gaming and	Approved Gaming Premise Licenses: 1. Princess Entertainment Free Zone Limited 2. Princess Entertainment Belize Limited 3. Princess International San Ignacio Limited 4. Casino Tropicana Company Limited 5. San Pedro Partner’s Limited (Inactive) 6. Sunny City Hotel & Casino Company Limited (Inactive) 7. GMK Sky Limited (New License for 2022)	7

<p>Lotteries Policy Document was prepared including clear operational guidelines, a budget and financial sustainability plan, and direction of a Gaming and Lotteries Commission. It was also recommended to amalgamate the Gaming and Lotteries acts into one legislation and to update these legislations at the same time. The evaluation of the Gaming and Lotteries industries concluded the following: 1) There is a significant loss to revenue due to evasion by licensees and due to inadequate institutional capacity for proper industry oversight. 2) Gaming devices used by the industry do not comply with most international standards. 3) Current regulations are incomplete and are lacking in respect to meaningful enforcement and penalties.</p>	Approved Gaming Online Licenses: 1. MUM Casino Limited (2022-2023)	1
	Approved Gaming Machine Licenses (2022-2023)	306
	Gaming Control Board Meetings	7
	Policy and Legislative Work included: 1. Submission and approval of Cabinet Paper for the establishment of a Gaming and Lotteries Commission for Belize (2021) 2. Budget justification for the operationalization of Gaming and Lotteries Commission 3. Drafting Instructions for the Gaming and Lotteries Act and the amalgamation of the Gaming and Lotteries Act. (Approved by Cabinet and submitted to Attorney General's Ministry for support)	3
Program / Project Title: Gaming		
<p>There are five lottery companies. The IPCU acts as secretariat of the Lotteries Committee. It works hand in hand with the Lotteries Secretary who is not established in the IPCU or the Ministry but at the Belize Tax Service. All lotteries' fees and taxes are collected by Treasury and the Belize Tax Service. The Treasury Department supervises the Government Lottery Draw. The Ministry's CEO is the Chairperson of the Lotteries Committee.</p>	Review of Lottery Taxes collected and Projections	
	Review of license conditions of lottery companies	
	Lotteries Committee Meetings	4
	Status of Licenses: 1. Brad's Gaming Group Limited (National Lottery) Boledo, Sunday Lottery- being reviewed 2. 369 Gaming Company Limited- Pick 3- being reviewed 3. Caribbean Gaming Co. Ltd- Fantasy 5- being reviewed 4. JD Financial Belize Limited- mega Bingo- being reviewed 5. Lucky Dalla Limited- scratch and Win- (under review for period 2021 and approved in 2022) 6. Zodiac Company- New application submission in 2022 by Mr. Alex Gamero- being reviewed.	6
	Policy and Legislative work: 1. Policy Paper on Lotteries Tax 2.	

Program / Project Title: Benefits to Cost Assessments (BCA)		
<p>The Investment Policy and Compliance Units conducts four main types of Benefits to Cost Assessments (BCA):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Routine assessments for all Fiscal Incentive (FI) applications, 3. Routine assessments for all Designated Processing Areas (DPA) applications, 4. Special assessments for private investments larger than \$10 million, and 5. Assessments on revenue loss from one-off requests that are forwarded to the Ministry of Finance via the Ministry of Investment. <p>The objectives of these BCAs are to determine if there will be revenue neutrality or if there will be any net loss to government in tax revenue from these incentivized projects. This information is provided to the Minister and CEO, or the respective boards.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request for a BCA of the Waterloo Cruise Port in Belize City. A request was sent to the company for the submission of necessary information to conduct the BCA. The company responded by sending a Non-disclosure Agreement for GOB to sign. (2021) 2. The BCA for Waterloo Cruise Port remains pending (2022) since GOB has not signed the Non-disclosure Agreement. 	
Program / Project Title: One-off Duty Exemptions		
	<p>Requests for 2021 included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bowen and Bowen (manufacturing) 2. Toledo Agriculture Industries Limited (Agriculture) 3. Ambergris Grand limited (Resort) 4. Sri Luck Plastics Limited (Manufacturing of Plastic bottles) <p>Requests for 2022 included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Belize Metal Works (Manufacturing) 2. Ariston marketing Limited (BPO) 	6

The Investment Policy and Compliance Unit also has the responsibility for oversight and resource mobilization for critical projects that are aimed at improving the investment climate in Belize including,

1. **The Secured Transactions and Collateral Registry:** The objective of this project is to improve access to capital for Micro, Small and Medium-size Enterprises (MSMEs) using movable assets. This reform will facilitate greater financial inclusion and will support an enabling environment for businesses to

formalize and grow. The Ad-hoc Steering Committee met four (4) times in 2019 and is presently finalizing a Draft Framework. No meetings were held in 2020 nor 2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Presently, the matters that are pending include: (1) submit the project concept to IFIs for technical assistance and funding, (2) reconvene the Ad hoc Steering Committee and establish its Legal Team and Technical Sub Committee. The Ministry along with the EDC have prepared a Business Case for the National Financial Inclusion Strategy and are finalizing a Project Concept Note to seek funding from IFIs for this initiative. Meetings have been held in 2021 with the World Bank to get technical assistance and a formal letter was sent to Ms. Lilia Burunciuc, Country Director, Caribbean Country Management Unit.

2. **The Modernization Project to automate major aspects of the daily operations of the IPCU** seeks to automate major aspects of the daily operations of the Unit. The primary objective is to provide access to ministry personnel and stakeholders via a centralized, web-based, cross-platform system accessible anywhere there is network/Internet connectivity. This system aims at improving the management and coordination of all the Incentive Programmes. Phase 1, proposed here, will encompass a core system that will be developed which will tie all the modules together to allow for the sharing of information, centralized storage of data and flexibility in the event of growth or change of functionality. The automation of the existing processes at the IPCU is critical to fulfill its mandate to effect and enforce compliance. Additionally, and most importantly, this system should enhance the efficiency and accuracy in producing reports that will affect timely decision making and effectively assist in the enforcement of overall compliance within the incentive programs it manages.
3. **Belize Industrial Strategy with Green and Blue Industrial Policies:** The objective of this project is to develop an Industrial Policy and Strategy that would support the transition to economic structures that balance environmental sustainability, competitive advantages, and wealth creation to help catalyze development in a sustainable way. In achieving this, Belize would be able to increase economic growth, protect the environment and reduce the poverty rate. Belize can take advantage of the opportunity to forge an Industrial Policy to promote productivity and competitiveness by increasing resource efficiency and growing the economy through industrialization, but in an environmentally sustainable way. A new addition in a Green Industrial Policy for Belize is to include the Blue Economy, because of the importance of its marine resources for its economy. This will allow for the country to implement an Industrial Policy while meeting its commitments under its various international climate change agreements, and the national goals. Several meetings were held with the UN agencies in 2021 and 2022 to obtain technical assistance. An initial request was made through Ms. Birgit Gerstenberg, Resident Coordinator for technical assistance and a formal request was sent by the Prime Minister to Mr. Gerd Muller, Director General, UNIDO.
4. **Stimulating Export Led Economic Growth in the Corozal District:**
The Corozal district has long focused on agricultural production primarily driven by sugarcane farming and service provision to the nearby Mexican market through the Corozal Free Zone, retail and wholesale shopping. In 2019, an analysis was completed in an IDB study to identify specific opportunities for export-led development in Corozal. There are opportunities that have been identified for the Corozal District to jump start its export- led growth and increase its employment rate. The opportunities can be divided into four clusters: Food and Beverage, Light manufacturing, Tourism and Professional Services. The IPCU has been implementing several actions that have been identified to stimulate an export-led growth of the Corozal District's economy to increase employment and economic development. The actions being implemented include:

- i. Incentivizing the local BPO sector to open call centers in Corozal - Ariston Marketing with its main offices located in San Ignacio Town decided to open a branch of their call center in Corozal Town. The IPCU has worked with the BPO company to assist with its establishment and become operational in a short space of time. The IPCU continues to meet with other BPOs in the country to share information and work with them to complete their feasibility study to open a call center in Corozal.
- ii. Identify new emerging economic activity for Corozal and to conduct training to start producing the product identified. The IPCU is developing a training initiative with a vanilla farmer from the Cayo District to train people from Corozal to grow vanilla. The vanilla farmer will be developing a market to sell and export the vanilla.
- iii. Engaging the government in the State of Quintana Roo to partner in several initiatives of mutual interest.
- iv. Ongoing establishment of a Special Border Entertainment and Recreation Zone.
- v. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been collaborating with Mexican counterparts to fast track the Belize Mexico Partial Scope Agreement.

5. Other Investment Related Initiatives

- i. **Drafting of key Policy Papers**
 - a) Establishing a Special Border Entertainment and Recreation Area at the Belize Mexico Border
 - b) Implementation of projects that will positively impact Belize's investment climate
 - c) Economic Recovery Advisory Team (ERAT) growth sectors recommendations for economic growth
 - d) Improving the investment climate and fast-tracking investment through improved public awareness and turnaround time of procedures
 - e) Reduce the turnaround time and improve the processes and regulations of the incentive programs managed by the Ministry of Investment to support investment.
 - f) Approval of the National Investment Policy and Strategy
- ii. **Trade Negotiations with Guatemala** – The Ministry of Investment is appointed lead in investment matters under any trade negotiation. The IPCU represents the Ministry in that regard and has been participating in the negotiations to expand the PSA with Guatemala. Belize and Guatemala agreed to form a Technical Group for Investment Facilitation. The IPCU is the lead for the Belize delegation of the Group.
- iii. Working jointly with the Corozal Free Zone to **develop infrastructure in the free zone and the road leading to its entrance** – Gathered economic information for submission to CABEL to justify funding the development of infrastructure in the Free Zone and its periphery.
- iv. **Assess the Belize to Do Business Indicators** – Gathered information from the Companies Registry, Belize Tax Services, Lands Department, Central Building Authority, Department of the Environment, Immigration Department, Ministry of Public Utilities etc. to determine if the turnaround time identified in the World Bank report improved.
- v. **The Belize Investment Summit** – The IPCU oversaw the Business-to-Business Matchmaking Sessions (at the business meeting rooms) with the intent for stakeholders to become familiar with potential new partners and to begin the process of working together: 38 meetings held at the business meeting rooms in 10 hours (Wednesday 10th November, 2021 3pm to 7pm and

Thursday 11th November, 2021 10am to 4pm); 52 companies, 5 ministries and 3 IFIs participated in meetings; Companies had opportunities to meet with representatives from World Bank, CABEL, and IDB; Several companies made requests to meet with Executives and Senior Representatives of the Ministry of Blue Economy, Ministry of Investment, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Finance, Central Bank of Belize and Ministry of Public Utilities and Logistics; Meetings were established between local producers and major retailers and importers from the Caribbean (MASSY, Hilo and Rainforest Caribbean). These companies made specific requests to meet with producers of specific products such as biodegradable packaging, juices, grain, seaweed, beef, bananas, dairy, other agricultural produce; Companies were matched with interested investors in tourism, manufacturing, and agro-processing; and Meeting held with the Chetumal Chamber of Commerce, Corozal Free Zone and Ministry of Investment and it was agreed to open communication through the Corozal Free Zone to start sharing investment and trade information.

- vi. **Developing Synergies with the Secretaría de Desarrollo Económico de Quintana Roo** – The IPCU organized a visit to Quintana Roo as part of an Investment Exchange Programme which entailed a familiarization tour to an industrial park and agro-processing facilities in the southern part of that Mexican state. Visits took place at the Chetumal Industrial Park, an habanero processing facility for export, and a processing facility of limes for export. The site visits were meant to enhance the Government of Belize’s understanding of the opportunities that may exist for diversifying and scaling up Belize’s agro-productive sector with an eye to growing the nation’s exports and industrial development. The visit to Mexico was followed by a two-day visit to Belize by the Secretaría de Desarrollo Económico de Quintana Roo. The visit in Belize included the Corozal Free Zone (CFZ), Quality Shrimp Belize Limited, the Port of Belize Limited, the Port of Big Creek, and Citrus Products of Belize. Targeted discussions in the tour revolved in the leveraging of Belize’s geography and existing trade agreements for accessing the CARICOM and regional markets by promoting investments in production collaboration between Belize and Southern Quintana Roo. The IPCU has drafted a Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretaría de Desarrollo Económico de Quintana Roo and Ministry of Investment. Another Memorandum of Understanding was drafted between the Chetumal Industrial Park and the Corozal Free Zone.
- vii. **National Environmental Appraisal Committee (NEAC)** - The IPCU has been requested to partake in the NEAC once more. The objective of its participation is to share information with the Committee and to contribute to its assessment of projects providing recommendation from an investment and economic point of view.
- viii. **Trade Negotiations with Guatemala** –The IPCU as the lead for the Belize delegation of the Technical Group for Investment Facilitation drafted a Memorandum of Understanding on investment facilitation to be signed with Guatemala.
- ix. Held a **BPO Sector Stakeholder Meeting** to provide a forum for the BPO sector to discuss market trends, express concerns, detail challenges, get clarification regarding policies, and legal obligations. The intention is to ascertain the trends of the industry and enable future development by encouraging higher tier services which will facilitate employment growth.

VI. BELTRAIDE



i. Introduction

The Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE) is a statutory body of the Government of Belize which falls under the purview of the Ministry of Investment, oversight for which ultimately rests with the Office of the Prime Minister. BELTRAIDE is the country's nationally mandated investment promotion agency with the mission to enhance Belize's prosperity by fostering investor confidence, entrepreneurship, business growth and innovation. BELTRAIDE has as its vision: to enable a dynamic and competitive business environment for Belize's socio-economic development.

The technical units of BELTRAIDE are, the Small Business Development Centre (SBDC), Belize Training and Employment Centre (BTEC), BelizeInvest, and ExportBelize. These units have collectively focused on the implementation of activities and projects that correspond to the objectives of #PlanBelize in the priority elements involving investment attraction and enterprise support. Outlined below are snapshots of each unit's main accomplishments.

ii. Main Achievements

A. Belize Training and Employment Center (BTEC)

The BTEC is focused on providing demand-driven training in consultation with the private sector and based on their specific needs. The range of capacity-building services provided by BTEC is aimed at satisfying the Belize's labour force needs and to increase the marketability of individuals seeking employment. The results of the BTEC's interventions are summarized in the below table:

BTEC Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022	
Activities	Results
Capacity Building Workshops	27
Job Preparedness Trainings	6
Training Agreements	2
Trained Individuals	467
Trained individuals referred to employment opportunities	45

Capacity-building workshop sessions range from 3-6 hours and are targeted to employed persons who are seeking to increase their professional working knowledge. The courses facilitated for **Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022** include:

- Customer Service Excellence
- Professional Etiquette
- Business Elevator Pitch
- Skills for Hotel Management
- Introduction to Graphic Design
- Professional Etiquette
- Goal Setting
- Self-Leadership
- Resume Building and Interview Skills
- Conflict De-escalation

- Resume Building
- Interview Skills
- Personal Development
- Report Writing
- Customer Service Excellence
- Effective Remote Working
- Dare to Lead
- Team building and
- Work Culture Development

Training sessions scheduled for the first quarter of the **Fiscal year 2022 – 2023** include:

- Advanced Customer Care for members of the private sector
- Business Process Outsourcing Job Preparedness Training
- Ready for Work Workshop Series which will promote competitiveness in the workforce
- Basics of Project Management
- Wait Staff Training



Facilitating Capacity Building Workshops



BTEC Facilitating Job Preparedness TrainingBTEC

Another service provided is the Job Preparedness Training which is intended to equip participants with skills that will increase their employability rate. The 3 components of the training programs are soft skills, customer service, and technical industry practices. The trainings for the fiscal year 2021-2022 include, administrative assistance, business process outsourcing, housekeeping, wait staff, and accounts clerk.

In the area of the provision of external capacity-building, BTEC has provided services to the private sector via workshops in partnership with the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), and the Female Entrepreneurship Program. BTEC has also assisted economic development through social partners like the

Women's Department, the Founders Hub, and facilitated entrepreneurship sessions via the academia to youth.

BTEC has signed training agreements with the Hub Resource and Community Centre as well as Our Circle, the agreements range from the provision of soft skills, vocational training, project management, customer service, financial management, computer skills, and leadership.

The Centre's priorities consist in the implementation of nine (9) newly developed capacity-building curriculums, these well-rounded curriculums are inclusive of trainer's handbooks, trainee booklets and PowerPoint presentations. The areas of focus were developed based on market and industry research to better position individuals for employment and labour force marketability. The new Capacity Building Curriculums are Elevator Pitch, Report Writing, Skills for Hotel Management, Graphic Design, Personal Development, Remote Working, Goal Setting, Training Techniques and Project Management.

B. Small Business Development Centre (SBDC Belize)

The Small Business Development Centre (SBDCBelize) model is designed to support the development of Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Belize through business advisory services and business capacity building. The main objective is to increase MSMEs' competitiveness by providing them with these services. Key results emanating from the work carried out by SBDCBelize are the following:

SBDC Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022	
Activities	Results
Business Advisory Service	681.9 Hours
Clients Advised	331
New Clients Receiving Advisory Support	226

SBDC has collaborated on significant socio-economic projects geared towards the improvement of the economic and living conditions of the most vulnerable populations, some of the projects include the Help for Progress MSME Start up Assistance, Magic Zizer Consultancy done in collaboration with Help for Progress and The United Nations Humans Rights Commission (UNHCR); in addition to projects with the Women's Department in Corozal and in Punta Gorda and with the Belize City Council. All these projects at their core include capacity building, business advice, and guidance geared towards the sustainability of new and existing businesses, providing them with the tools necessary for them to thrive.

SBDC has also administered the MSME Enhancement Program (MEP) which will strengthen the competitiveness of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) through the waiver of Customs Import Duty. The core objectives of the program include the promotion of the MSME's by identifying potential clients of the program, strengthening the relationship with municipalities so they serve as referral agents, and assisting the MSME's with their formalization process. It is because of this that the core results of the program have been the following:

MSME Enhancement Program	Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022
Activities	Results
Clients	25
Investment	\$1,156,760
Revenue Foregone	\$173,603
Taxes paid	\$205,267
Jobs retained	642
Jobs created	247



Facilitation of Business Development Training

Projects geared towards the support and development of MSME's are integral components of SBDC's core implementation mandate, below is a listing of the most relevant projects:

MSME Support and Development Projects Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022	
Projects	Description
Innovation Platforms for Social and Economic Impact in Belize	This project is being carried out with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), through its Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF), in partnership with the Government of Belize (GOB). The general objective is to strengthen the entrepreneurial and innovative ecosystem to support the development of innovative and sustainable solutions that have a positive developmental impact.
SBDGlobal Internalization Pilot Program	EXPORTBelize and SBDCBelize have joined the SBDC network to support a client research request to identify potential buyers in the market. To achieve this objective, the countries that are already implementing the SBDC model will offer international trade advice to generate new export companies and increase the number of export opportunities.
Virtual Knowledge Center (VKC)	The VKC was designed and launched in collaboration with the UNDP. The VKC will support e-learning, information sharing, and B2B e-commerce through the Building Resilient MSMEs- Accelerating Digitization project. SBDCBelize business advisors created webinars that will be hosted on the platform and accessible to MSMEs who ordinarily cannot join live sessions.
Female Entrepreneurship Program (Cohort III)	The Female Entrepreneurship Program is designed exclusively for women so they can improve their competencies and strengthen their empowerment and leadership skills. It is a space of collaboration among women where they generate and share knowledge and learn about innovation. They also learn about how to develop and validate their business models in a participative and dynamic manner.
National MSME Strategy and Roadmap for Belize	The MSME's of Belize make up a significant portion of the Belizean businesses, and as such an update to the MSME Policy of 2012 was needed to revise the roadmap. This was done in consultation with various stakeholders from the private sector, academia, and government agencies. It is aligned with the Belize government's goal of boosting employment, businesses, and livelihood.
IDB Lab Eco Micro – COVID-19 Recovery and Resilience through Digitalization of Caribbean FIs and their MSME Clients Program	BELTRAIDE along with its partners Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Lab and DAI Global, has launched the Design Thinking Workshop and Digital Impact Advisory Fund in Belize. The Digital Impact Fund is part of the IDB Lab EcoMicro portfolio focusing on COVID-19 recovery and resilience through digitalizing Caribbean financial institutions and their MSME clients. This project seeks to increase the adoption of digital innovations that promote business and resilience and enhance productivity among financial institutions and their MSME customers.



*Female Entrepreneurship Program
Northern Cohort*

One of the priority projects to be undertaken for the upcoming fiscal year is the Entrepreneurship Fest. The modality of the Entrepreneurship fest is to provide business development services to create profit generating businesses focused on social change, activism, and entrepreneurship. The participants targeted are from various locations. Each activity ends with a pitch competition where winners access seed money to invest. The US Embassy has expressed interest in patterning with BELTRAIDE in this activity.

C. BelizeINVEST

BelizeINVEST continues to promote and administer the existing Fiscal Incentive (FI) and Designated Processing Areas (DPA) Concession Holders that remain under BELTRAIDE. Currently, BELTRAIDE

has thirty- four (34) active FI Concession Holders and forty (40) active DPA Concession Holders that it administrates investment incentives for, including the Customs ASYCUDA System. BelizeINVEST fostered more than one hundred- eleven (111) interests during this fiscal year. The team's annual benchmark goals include leads in the sectors of Tourism, Light Manufacturing, with other priority investment sectors, particularly the Offshore Outsourcing sector. Meanwhile, the unit continues business facilitation for new interest and queries and following up on existing lead generation.

As of April 2022, there have been a total of twelve (12) investment accounts concluded with a total investment of BZD \$455.74 Million, the associated employment opportunity is projected over two thousand, five hundred (2,500) employment positions. The rate of fruition to date is evidently concentrated in the Tourism, Leisure, and Agri-business sectors. Meanwhile, the Unit has one (1) application lodged at the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, and Investment. The higher emphasis lies in the Tourism Sector with a total investment of BZ \$40 Million and employment generation of an additional one hundred (100) new slots.

As part of this government's commitment to investment, it launched the first of its kind Belize Investment Summit. The Belize Investment Summit fostered more than BZD \$642 Million investment opportunities. The investment interest included leads in the sectors of Tourism, Light Manufacturing, Agro-Processing and Logistics with other priority investment sectors, particularly the Offshore Outsourcing sector. The leads results of the 2021 Summit are the following:

Investment Summit 2021 Investment Opportunities	
Investment Sector	Leads in BZD
Tourism	\$21.10 Million
Agribusiness & Agro-Processing	\$126 Million
Fisheries & Aquaculture	\$9.6 Million
Light Manufacturing	\$27.9 Million
Logistics	\$ 408 Million
Offshore Outsourcing	\$ 1.6 Million
NGO's	\$ 0.14 Million
Real Estate	\$ 25.5 Million
Business Service Provider	\$ 22.28 Million



First Belize Investment Summit 2021

The Belize Investment Summit also fostered FDI leads from the USA, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Africa, Europe, Asia, seeking capital to invest in Belize. The breakdown of leads per country was:

Investment Summit 2021	Foreign Direct Investment Opportunities
Country Interest	Leads in BZD
United States of America	\$ 34.95 Million
Trinidad and Tobago	\$0.30 Million
Panama	\$0.30 Million
Canada	\$4 Million
Nigeria	\$ 1,8 Million
Netherlands	\$0.30 Million
Dominican Republic	\$ 1 Million
Guatemala	\$ 3 Million
Barbados	\$ 0.172 Million

In the upcoming fiscal year BelizeINVEST will continue its investment promotion endeavours, a notable effort is the Fiscal Incentive Policy Paper which seeks endorsement from Cabinet to streamline the investment incentive process under the regime. In relation to the National Investment Policy and Strategy (NIPS), it is expected that a Cabinet paper will be tabled outlining the eight (8) pillars of the NIPS inclusive of the requisite resources (endorsement and support from the respective line ministries outlined via the strategy) required to successfully implement the Strategy.

A priority of BelizeINVEST is to launch an assertive investment and trade campaign with the objective to explore potential collaborations and solicit feedback on the trade and investment opportunities promoted in aligning our development efforts with key line Ministries, this activity will be done in collaboration with EXPORTBelize. BelizeINVEST will continue its outreach initiative to various Ministries across the six (6) priority investment sectors to validate and verify statistical

information and investment opportunities for promotion within its presentation materials. Of continued importance for investment is the formalization of the Belize-Guatemala Partial Scope Agreement (PSA) which will provide a framework for investment facilitation and cooperation in both countries. The intent is to increase FDIs' inflows and employment generation.

In terms of its administration, BelizeINVEST will remain administering the two (2) investment programs in accordance with the standing legislations. Currently, BELTRAIDE has thirty (30) active Fiscal Incentive (FI) Concession Holders that are administrated with the Customs ASYCUDA System. BELTRAIDE also has forty (40) active Designated Processing Area (DPA) Concession Holders.

D. EXPORTBelize

EXPORTBelize serves as the unit under BELTRAIDE that focuses on a customized and tailored provision of services to businesses in the areas of export development and export promotion. The unit's vision is to enable a dynamic and competitive export sector that is founded on principles of quality, innovation, and customer orientation. The unit's mission on the other hand is to foster and enabling environment that promotes diversification and competitiveness of the country's export sector.

Throughout the fiscal year of 2021-2022 the unit has engaged in various projects centred around solidifying the Belizean export sector. Some of the most notable projects are described below:

Export Development and Promotion Projects	
Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022	
Projects	Description
Belize Seaweed Mariculture Project	<p>A sustainable seaweed farming training was held in Placencia and the Turneffe area. The project will be restructured to include feasible activities and budget reallocation. Some recommended components include the establishment of a regulatory framework for the commercialization of seaweed farming and production, genetic testing and research on macho variety, the use of the Nutritional Value Analysis for positioning and promotion, and the development of a proposal for Belize's seaweed into high end restaurants.</p> <p>Additionally, a series of business development trainings were conducted for members of the Belize Women Seaweed Farmers Association and counterparts in Placencia. Topics included Entrepreneurship Lab, Business Model, Finance and Marketing. A culinary assessment will be undertaken to analyze the development of seaweed culinary products for export.</p>
Business of Music Accelerator Program	<p>The Program included capacity building for twenty (20) participating musicians along with coaching sessions with regional business coaches. The Artist Development Center was contracted to develop sixty (60) professional sound recordings, sixty (60) video studio performances, sixty (60) published songs, and twenty (20) Pitch videos. In quarter four (4), the Business of Music Program continued with the development of video and audio recordings for the artists.</p>
Female Entrepreneurship Program for Female Cacao Farmers	<p>This Program is designed to improve the competencies and strengthen the economic empowerment and leadership skills of twenty (20) Female Cacao Farmers in the Toledo District. To date nine (9) workshop sessions have been completed under the program.</p> <p>Participants completed a Training Techniques and Pitching Workshop which gave them the opportunity to compete for seed capital by pitching to evaluators under the Women Empowerment Project funded by ICDF Taiwan. EXPORTBelize supported the participants in developing their pitch. Thirteen (13) Participants successfully completed the program and</p>

	received their certification and a business toolkit and package to support the knowledge transfer activities in their community.
Internationalization Program	The Internationalization Pilot Program of the Center for Global Development UTSA is part of the internationalization initiative of the SBDC model, which focuses on assisting clients in the export process. Both Bullridge Company Ltd. and Chemical Specialities of Belize Ltd. were participants. Research was conducted in their target market and potential buyer contacts provided to each company for follow-ups.
Projects Supporting the Cacao Industry	BELTRAIDE is currently supporting implementation of two cacao projects. The first project includes key trainings for industry stakeholders to improve knowledge in agriculture best practices, climate smart agriculture, pest and disease management, farm rehabilitation, productivity improvement amongst others. Under the OAS cacao Project, stakeholder consultations were conducted, and the results of the situational analysis will determine the most appropriate actions to support competitiveness of the industry. One key take-away from stakeholders is the need for better organization of the industry and thus consideration is being given for the support of an institutional framework that contributes to improved organization and collaboration.
Proactive Buyer Lead generation program	Planning and preparation have taken place for the implementation of this program. There are nine (9) companies that have signed up to participate and they have provided information on the products they want to feature. Profiles were designed for each participant and linkages will be made in the CARICOM Market.
Women Empowerment Project	The Covid Relief for Women in Emerging Industries was approved. This project will support Female Musicians and Seaweed Women Farmers and would offer diagnostic and funding for implementation of innovative business models.

An integral part of the work undertaken by EXPORTBelize is the coordination and facilitation of trade missions. The objective of these missions is to connect and finalize export opportunities. Through the units' efforts, Tijule Company Limited an agro-processing facility located in Jamaica, received its first shipment from Citrus Products of Belize Limited which included fifty-nine (59) drums of orange concentrate, ten (10) drums of pineapple concentrate, and one (1) drum of soursop concentrate, this after a trade delegation's visit to Belize. Another significant trade mission was coordinated with Bloom Sustainable Materials, this mission was done to explore opportunities for the export of sargassum. Participants included members of Belize's Sargassum Task Force and other private and public sector interests.



Cacao Production Chain, Cacao Project

Belizean products continue to be featured and highlighted in international trade shows through the work done by EXPORTBelize. As a precursor to the trade shows, the unit assists in coordinating procurement, consolidating products and collateral materials to be showcased, during the trade shows our expert export associates create connections that



Export Ready Products

benefit our Belizean products and open doors for export opportunities. Upcoming trade shows include, the Taipei Food Show, Taiwan Fishery Expo and the Taichung Tea, Wine, Coffee, and Bakery Expo. As a complement to the Trade Missions EXPORTBelize has focused on a Proactive Buyer Lead Generation Program, which aims to feature companies and their products through a well-designed and rounded profile which will be shared with the CARICOM market to create export linkages, nine (9) companies have signed to participate in the program.

Also, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being developed by a local consultant for the European Union (EU) - Alliances for Coconut Industry Development, Expansion & Enhanced Support Project. The Project has been working with BELTRAIDE on components for its MOU with ITC to offer support to Belize's Coconut Industry. The draft MOU provides key aspects that outlines BELTRAIDE's role and contribution

to the sector. This will be completed and submitted to ITC for review before approval of funds for implementation.

Throughout the coming fiscal year EXPORTBelize will continue exploring new avenues to strengthen the Belizean export sector and will diligently work in the continued implementation of viable projects which have been determined as successful. Results in export development and export promotion will continue being at the centre of all efforts undertaken by this unit.

VII. Blue Bond Unit / Project for Finance Permanence

i. Introduction

On November 4th, 2021, the Government of Belize signed the Blue Bonds Loan Agreement (BLA) and the Conservation Funding Agreement (CFA) in collaboration with the Belize Blue Investment Company (BZBIC) and the Nature Conservancy (TNC). The BLA and the CFA are contingent on Eight Primary Conservation Commitments / Targets (Table 1) and an agreed payment schedule to be realized by the Government of Belize by the eighth anniversary of the agreements.



The Office of the Prime Minister has been designated as the Government of Belize's counterpart to deliver on the commitments / targets of the BLA and the CFA. It has been determined that there is the need for a dedicated coordination mechanism at the highest level to ensure delivery as per the agreements given the cross ministerial and multi sectoral nature of the commitments / targets.

ii. Main Achievements

The Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit was established under the OPM In February 2022, to ensure that GoB meets all its commitments outlined within the BLA and CFA. It is also charged with ensuring the necessary interface and coordination between the CFA with the design of a Project for Finance Permanence (PFP) for the Coastal and Marine Areas to support effective management, conservation, and livelihoods security.

The Unit has been staffed by four persons (Director, two technical officers and one Executive Assistant).



The Unit is to follow through for successful implementation of the commitments outlined within the BLA and CFA and to facilitate the necessary interface and coordination with the design of the PFP.

- 1.0 To deliver the conservation commitments/targets as outlined in the CFA.
- 2.0 To establish a coordinated approach for Government agencies to access of the Strategic Government Allocation under the Conservation Fund and deliver on the various commitments and targets.
- 3.0 To provide oversight for the successful delivery of commitments/targets and develop required reports.
- 4.0 To develop the necessary coordination mechanism and support for the design of the PFP.
- 5.1 An operations handbook and compliance calendar outlining GoB policies and procedure for the implementation of the BLA and CFA with all relevant ministries and agencies and external partners.

iii. Future Plans and Priority Areas (Table 1: Conservation Milestones and Timeline)

Milestone Number	Milestone Summary Description	Time after signing the Agreement	% of Ocean in High Protection	% of Ocean in Medium Protection	Total % of Ocean in Biodiversity Protection	Status
1	Expand Biodiversity Protection Zones to 11.57% of the Ocean	6 months	Increased to 11.6%	Remains at the current 8.69%	20.29%	Completed
2	Designate Public Lands within the BBRRS as Mangrove	6 months				Completed
3	Belize initiates MSP process	1 year				Completed
4	Expand Biodiversity Protection Zones to 25% of the Ocean	3 years	Add 4.5% more in total across either Medium and/or High zones		25%	
5	Implementation of ICZMP	4 years				
6	Complete Biodiversity Protection Zones, MSP signed into law and implemented	5 years	Add 5% more in total across either Medium and / or High zones		30%	
7	At least 3 IUCN Green List Applications Submitted	6 years				
8	Approved Management Plans	8 years				

VIII. Constituency Development Fund



i. Introduction

The Cabinet approved the implementation of the Constituency Development Fund in September 2021. The overarching purpose of this program was to make available funds for the 31 Area Representatives to enable them to implement small community projects and assist their communities and residents in several ways. The Program was approved to be administered by the Office of the Prime Minister and has been budgeted in the subsequent budgets

ii. Main Achievements

Allocations are made by electoral division (all 31 divisions – including to those divisions represented by the Opposition) and are based on the number of registered electors using the following formula:

1. \$495,000 per month cumulatively
2. By division:
 - a. < 3,000 registered electors - \$10,000 per month
 - b. = or > 3000 and < 7,000 - \$15,000 per month
 - c. > 7,000 - \$20,000 per month

Allocations for each electoral division and based on this formula are shown below.

Area	Total Electors as at July 2021	Allocation
Freetown	3,851	\$ 15,000
Caribbean Shores	4,417	\$ 15,000
Pickstock	3,995	\$ 15,000
Fort George	1,946	\$ 10,000
Albert	2,870	\$ 10,000
Queen's Square	2,787	\$ 10,000
Mesopotamia	2,288	\$ 10,000
Lake Independence	4,951	\$ 15,000
Collet	3,764	\$ 15,000
Port Loyola	4,707	\$ 15,000
Belize Rural North	4,718	\$ 15,000
Belize Rural Central	7,428	\$ 20,000
Belize Rural South	9,177	\$ 20,000
Corozal Bay	5,721	\$ 15,000
Corozal North	7,121	\$ 20,000
Corozal South East	7,052	\$ 20,000
Corozal South West	5,919	\$ 15,000
Orange Walk Central	6,121	deferred
Orange Walk North	7,896	\$ 20,000
Orange Walk East	7,167	\$ 20,000
Orange Walk South	6,915	\$ 15,000

Cayo North	8,234	\$ 20,000
Cayo Central	8,232	\$ 20,000
Cayo West	6,643	\$ 15,000
Cayo South	7,209	\$ 20,000
Cayo North East	5,764	\$ 15,000
Belmopan	9,213	\$ 20,000
Dangriga	5,665	\$ 15,000
Stann Creek West	10,003	\$ 20,000
Toledo East	7,082	\$ 20,000
Toledo West	7,514	\$ 20,000
TOTAL	186,370	\$ 495,000

iii. Lessons Learnt

The accomplishments to date have been aligned with the eligible uses of the Constituency Development Fund as approved by Cabinet as clear guidelines and financial reporting procedures have been established. Eligible uses of the funds include the following types of community inputs:

1. Small scale infrastructure projects:(ie: fences for schools, community areas, etc)
2. Maintenance/ General Clean Up of Community Areas
3. Community Projects (ie: Parks, internet free libraries etc)
4. Sporting programs, facilities and equipment
5. Cleaning equipment :(tractors, weed eaters, lawnmowers etc)
6. Educational programs
7. Village council assistance: (Water board equipment. ie: Pumps etc)
8. Health Care Centres, medicine, assistance to healthcare community personnel
9. Agricultural assistance to rural communities
10. Youth assistance programs

Operational Guidelines of the Program are:

1. Proposed Projects and Activities along with detailed cost estimates must be submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister for prior written approval and subsequent release of funds.
2. Funds will be released to area representatives every month in the amounts established in the allocation schedule (at Annex I) and will be conditional on providing a full accounting for the previous month's expenditure to obtain the release of the subsequent month's allocation.
3. Accounting should include a report on the expenditure including the purchase of goods and services and any payments made for labour. Expenditure must be supported by receipts.
4. In executing any project, expenditure must comply with all applicable Finance and Stores Orders. (Particularly in obtaining quotations for goods and services) to ensure that the program is receiving the highest value for money. Full records must be maintained as the Program may be subject to Audit.

iv. Future Plans and Priority Areas

The Program was initially approved for the period September 2021 to March 2022 with a monthly allocation of \$495,000 or a total of \$3,465,000 for the seven-month period. The program was subsequently approved for the year 2022 and now forms part of the budgetary allocations of the Office of the Prime Minister. It is envisioned that the program will continue as it takes assistance, to a large extent, to the communities of great need in the country

CHAPTER 3 – Tying it all together for the Future

While the post-pandemic world continues to present challenges and disruption, it also demonstrates opportunities for change and innovation. Belize has, like all other nations, faced the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on people's lives, the effects of political changes in other countries, the disruption of supply chains, the increase of scarcity and of inflation, as well as the increasingly daunting effects of climate change, but with great resilience. The opportunities presented have come in the shape of human interconnectedness, creativity and adaptability to new circumstances, improvements in technology, innovation with survival strategies and invention, automation of processes, business diversification, and outreach for stronger and more resilient partnerships.

The work of the respective diverse units covered in this Report demonstrates just some of the innovative approaches that have been applied within this reporting period by the Government of Belize to find solutions to the challenges and disruptions we face, with a view to improving the lives of all persons living in Belize through economic development programs, without losing sight and focus on enhancing social support mechanisms. Each of the units' reports share their highlight achievements, and more importantly, the pipeline projects and future priorities.

It is important to note that the partnerships forged to help us find and provide solves, have included valuable assistance from both international institutions and national collaborative agencies. The Office of the Prime Minister extends appreciation for the continued and expanded support of the international community for sharing expertise, resources and collaboration on many of its programmes of work.

CONCLUSION

This Summary Report from the Office of the Prime Minister on its special programmes and Ministry of Investment portfolios for the period 2021 - 2022, is a synopsis of the work that has been carried out. The report has covered the legislative, strategic, policy, reform and project activities that have taken place and the respective results. This work contributes to the delivery of #Plan Belize priorities and commitments and provides rich research materials on various new areas of innovation.

Of major importance is the way forward. The National Investment Policy and Strategy (NIPS) and the Micro Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (MSME) Strategy and Policy, together with the Innovation Roadmap, the National Digital Agenda and other strategic plans are critically important tools which together lay out the blueprint for upcoming fiscal periods, all with a focus on growing Belize's economy. Improvement of the "ease of doing business" and other interventions to accelerate investment, international trade and partnerships are also specific thrusts that will continue to be expedited by this Office and the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment.

ABBREVIATIONS

BSIF	Belize Social Investment Fund
BELTRAIDE	The Belize Trade and Investment Development Service
BBPFP	Blue Bond Project for Finance Permanence
BLA	Blue Bond Loan Agreement
BZBIC	Belize Blue Investment Company
CFA	Conservation Funding Agreement
EDC	Economic Development Council
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDI	Gross Domestic Income
GoB	Government of Belize
IPCU	Investment Promotion and Compliance Unit
NAC	National Aids Commission
NHI	National Health Insurance
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
TNC	The Nature Conservancy

ANNEXES

- I. Restore Belize: <https://www.facebook.com/restorebelize>
- II. National AIDS Commission: <https://nacbelize.org/>
- III. Social Investment Fund: <https://sifbelize.org/>
- IV. Economic Development Council: <https://edc.gov.bz/>
- V. Investment Policy and Compliance Unit
- VI. BELTRAIDE: <https://www.beltraide.bz/>
- VII. Blue Bond Unit: <https://m.facebook.com/BBFPUnit/>

