



NLA INTERNATIONAL

**INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY
ASSESSMENT OF GENDER RELATED
POLICIES
TO ADVANCE BLUE ECONOMY
DEVELOPMENT IN BELIZE**

7th October 2024

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Project Manager	Gary Hesling gary.hesling@nlai.blue NLA International Ltd
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Summary

The Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management (MBEDRM) is responsible for developing a sustainable Blue Economy for Belize, aiming to drive economic growth and improve livelihoods through the responsible management of ocean resources. To achieve this, an action plan emphasizing sustainable development, environmental protection, and Blue Justice is necessary. Integrating gender perspectives is crucial for ensuring Blue Justice, as women play a key role in advancing sustainable development and environmental protection. In Belize, women contribute significantly to the Blue Economy through multiple roles from fisheries to marine conservation and tourism. However, entrenched gender norms often limit their full potential, affecting sustainability and progress in the Blue Economy. Addressing these gender gaps is essential for advancing gender equality and ensuring the health and sustainability of coastal and marine communities.

In this context, a gender assessment was essential to identify policy gaps, opportunities for gender mainstreaming, and specific capacity-building needs within key Blue Economy institutions in Belize, including the Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management (MBEDRM), the Coastal Zone Management and Authority (CZMAI), and the Belize Fisheries Department. The assessment followed a comprehensive approach, beginning with a literature review to identify key principles and practices relevant to gender and inclusion in Belize's Blue Economy, which informed the design of the assessment tools and data collection instruments. Data was then gathered through individual interviews and surveys with key sectors, analyzed to uncover trends and correlations, and discussed in a workshop to prioritize gender equality issues and resource needs, with the findings incorporated into the final report.

This assessment revealed several key findings: Women are integral across various sectors, including fisheries, mariculture, eco-tourism, and institutional roles, but their significant contributions, often go unrecognized. Their participation is restricted by cultural norms, lack of formal support, childcare responsibilities, and legal and financial barriers. Cultural norms and historical marginalization further constrain women's economic participation, although efforts such as capacity building, awareness campaigns, and policy initiatives have been made to enhance women's leadership and engagement in the Blue Economy.

Major recommendations to enhance gender mainstreaming have also been identified. These include integrating gender perspectives into organizational vision and policies, providing gender-sensitive access to finance, promoting women's independent economic activities, and leveraging existing government programs. Capacity-building efforts were also identified, with a special focus on continuous gender education, gender sensitivity trainings, and the promotion of women's leadership. Encouraging participation in professional associations, improving data collection and monitoring, and addressing women's specific needs through flexible training and employment opportunities were also highlighted as being crucial. Lastly,

developing supportive policy frameworks, ensuring representation in decision-making bodies, and securing funding for gender mainstreaming were identified as essential steps for achieving gender equality and fostering sustainable development in the Blue Economy.

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Glossary

ACE	Adult Continuation Education
BAS	Belize Audubon Society
BEDPS	Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy, and Implementation Plan 2022-2027
BEU	Blue Economy Unit
BFiD	Belize Fisheries Department
BBRRS	Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System
BCCI	Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry
BZD	Belize Dollar
BFiD	Belize Fisheries Department
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCCFP	Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFU	Capture Fisheries Unit
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
CYEN	Caribbean Youth Environment Network
CZMAI	Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute
DFC	Development Finance Corporation
FoH	Fragments of Hope
EAF	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries
SSF	Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (2015)
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GSF	Global Strategic Framework
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HDI	Human Development Index
ILO	International Labor Office
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
ITVET	Institute for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, Intersex
MCCAP	Belize Marine Conservation and Climate Adaptation Project
MBECA	Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation
MBEDRM	Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management
MEP	Belize Maritime Economy Plan
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGC	National Garifuna Council
NWC	National Women's Commission
SACD	Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Southern Environmental Association
SIB	Statistical Institute of Belize

MSME	Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises
TASA	Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association
TIDE	Toledo Institute for Development and Environment
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNIBAM	United Belize Advocacy Movement
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNDP	United National Development Program
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1 Preliminary

1.1 Introduction

The Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management (MBEDRM) – formerly the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation (MBECA) – has a parliamentary mandate to develop a sustainable Blue Economy for Belize. This initiative aims to contribute to the country’s economic growth and create opportunities for improved livelihoods through the responsible use and management of its ocean and aquatic resources. To fulfil this mandate, it is essential to provide policy and strategic guidance, which will be done via an institutional strengthening action plan that reflects sustainable and inclusive development of ocean resources, while ensuring environmental protection, sustained livelihoods, transparency, accountability, and Blue Justice in decision-making frameworks.

Ensuring Blue Justice necessitates to focus on gender and women’s inclusion, integrating gender perspectives into policy frameworks and decision-making processes, and implement gender-sensitive and gender-responsive policies, programs, and projects. A gender assessment is required to identify gaps and limitations in existing policies, pinpoint gender mainstreaming priorities and opportunities, and determine gender-specific capacity-building needs and mechanisms in key Blue Economy entities in Belize.

The approach to gender mainstreaming in the Blue Economy involves two key strategies. The first, mainstreaming, entails integrating gender concerns into all policies, projects, and institutions within the sector, making gender considerations a fundamental part of decision-making and implementation processes. The second, targeting, focuses on specific activities designed to directly empower women and girls within the Blue Economy. These strategies aim to achieve gender equality by addressing systemic barriers and promoting empowerment through both focused initiatives and broader institutional changes.

Therefore, this study aims to conduct a Gender Audit, including a gender gap analysis, by assessing national gender-related policies and those specific to the sectors prioritized for Blue Economy development. The study will identify deficiencies in gender mainstreaming within these policies, uncover opportunities for gender mainstreaming relevant to these sectors, and determine gender-specific capacity-building needs and mechanisms for the Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management, the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI), and the Belize Fisheries Department (BFiD).

A terminology of the terms used throughout this report is provided in Annex 1.

1.2 Background Information

1.2.1 The Gender Situation in Belize

The Government of Belize, as well as civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations have implemented policies and initiatives to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in the economy of Belize. These efforts include programs to support women, entrepreneurs, increase access to education and training, and address discriminatory practices in the workplace. The constitution of Belize guarantees equality for all. It guarantees citizen protection from discrimination based on race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed, or sex. The Belize National Gender Policy (2021–2030) is the framework through which the rights of women “are translated into the achievement of *de jure* and *de facto* gender equality, equity, and women’s empowerment in Belize”. It identifies five priority areas: Health, Education and Skills Training, Wealth, and Employment Creation, Gender Based Violence and Power and Decision-making and Institutional Strengthening. The Labour Act protects the rights of women especially as

it relates to wages, maternity benefits, and discriminatory actions. Article 164 identifies hazardous occupations including activities that children are not to partake in, including work considered hazardous in the Blue Economy sector.

In Belize, annual economic growth, according to the latest Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) data, reached 12.4 percent in 2022, an impressive jump and double what the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had predicted in last year's Article IV Report. This 12.4 percent rate of growth is even more momentous that it comes on the heels of 15.2 percent in 2021. Of course, the growth was not uniform across all subsectors. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (current US\$) in Belize was reported at 6,984 USD in 2022, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources.

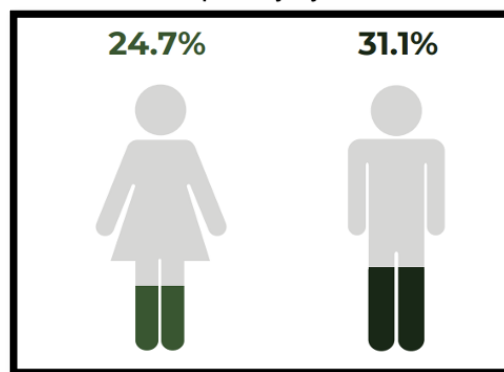
In December 2022, the total public debt stood at \$4,031 million or the equivalent of 64.1 percent of the GDP. "The Government has achieved a large reduction in the public debt (...) from 133% of old GDP to 101% of new GDP (...) to 80% of GDP in 2021, to 64.1% in 2022." The Prime Minister's Budget Speech 2023 provides the specific measures that resulted in this spectacular achievement of reducing the public debt from 133 percent of old GDP to 64.1 percent of new GDP: "the rebasing of national accounts, sizable fiscal consolidation, the debt for marine protection swap, strong GDP growth, expenditure containment including a temporary 10 percent cut to public sector wages and the suspension of wage increments during FY 2021/23, a strong recovery of revenue and a material discount on the debt owed to Venezuela under Petrocaribe" (budget speech for fiscal year 2023/2024). Therefore, the Belize Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy, and Implementation Plan (BEDPS) 2022-2027 sets out an enabling framework for Blue Economy (BE) development in Belize. The five-year policy and strategy and the government commitment has made possible the below:

- The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) loan of \$7 million for Belize to help it sustainably expand its Blue Economy. The program's overall objectives are to increase the earning potential of artisanal fishers and keep fishery exports high while promoting sustainable use of the country's commercial marine resources.
- Belize's tourism industry is reaching new heights, with a projected \$1.4 billion in revenue expected for 2024.¹
- The Belize Blue Bond Loan Agreement, a debt-for-nature swap, to reduce Belize's debt burden and increase its long-term investment in Ocean conservation for 20 years and beyond with a commitment to protect up to 30% of Belize's ocean, in addition to other conservation commitments, beneficial to the country's economy and people.

According to the Statistical Institute of Belize (2022), the total population of Belize in midyear 2022 was projected at 441,471. Disaggregate data by gender indicated equal population of males (220,739) to females (220,732). Moreover, the multidimensional poverty by sex in Belize indicated that the incidence of poverty in male-headed household was 31.1 percent and 24.7 percent in female-headed households (Figure 1).

¹ Belize Tourism Board. "Stellar Statistics." Accessed August 5, 2024. <https://www.belize-tourism-board.org/works/stellar-statistics/>.

Figure 1: Incidence of poverty by sex of household head



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2022

As per the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB), significant strides have been made in terms of the participation by women in Belize's labour force. However, there are still disparities between men and women in terms of types of jobs they hold, with men often dominating higher paying and leadership positions. The Statistical Institute of Belize (2022), labour force indicators illustrate that the unemployment rate for male is 6.7 percent and underemployment rate is 18.4 percent. The female unemployment rate is 13 percent and female underemployment rate is 19.8 percent. The labour force participation rate for men is 76.1 percent and for females is 48.2 percent (Table 1).

Table 1: Main Labour Force Indicators, for Male and Female Population	September 2021
Unemployment Rate Male	6.7%
Underemployment Rate Male	18.4%
Labour Force Participation Rate	76.1%
Unemployment Rate Female	13.0%
Underemployment Rate Female	19.8%
Labour Force Participation Rate Female	48.2%

In 2023 the global gender gap index for Belize was 0.7 index. Even though Belize global gender gap index fluctuated substantially in recent years, it tended to increase through 2008 – 2023 period ending at 0.7 index in 2023.

Over the last decade, Belize made significant progress in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. By ratifying various international treaties on human rights and women's rights, such as the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (1990), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – ICCPR (1996), the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women (1996), and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination - CEDAW (2000)², Belize has advanced in crafting a robust policy framework that promotes the assurance of rights, equality, and women's empowerment across the national, regional, and local levels. Nevertheless, work still needs to be done to achieve gender equality in Belize.

² A list of Key International Commitments Regulatory Framework and Institutional Mechanisms detailing Regulatory Framework and Institutional Mechanisms and their relevance to Gender Mainstreaming in the Blue Economy is provided in Annex 3.

1.2.2 Women and the Blue Economy

The term “Blue Economy” (BE) grew out of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012. It has its roots in the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development and the “Green Economy” concept, both of which were framed in “The Future We Want” (UNCSD 2012).

According to the World Bank, the Blue Economy is the "sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem"; the European Commission defines it as "All economic activities related to oceans, seas and coasts"; while the Centre for the Blue Economy classifies it as a widely used term around the world with three related but distinct meanings- the overall contribution of the oceans to economies, the need to address the environmental and ecological sustainability of the oceans, and the ocean economy as a growth opportunity for both developed and developing countries."

The Blue Economy is seen to promote economic development, particularly in coastal and island communities, while also addressing environmental challenges such as overfishing, marine pollution, and habitat destruction. It emphasizes the importance of balancing economic growth with environmental protection to ensure the long-term health and productivity of the oceans.

Empowering women in the Blue Economy not only promotes gender equality but also contributes to sustainable development and the conservation of marine resources. Women's involvement can lead to more inclusive and effective decision-making processes, as they often have unique perspectives and insights to offer. However, gender norms often prevent women from developing and contributing their full potential in the Blue Economy. These norms jeopardize long-term sustainability objectives since women are key players in coastal and marine communities and provide households' subsistence, particularly in women-headed households. Thus, addressing gender gaps is key for women's development, and that of their families, communities, and the economy, as well as the progress and sustainability of the Blue Economy.

1.2.3 Women and the Blue Economy in Belize and the Caribbean

In Belize, women play crucial roles in the Blue Economy, contributing to fisheries, marine conservation, tourism, research, and development. They often engage in activities such as fishing, processing seafood, managing marine protected areas, and promoting sustainable tourism. Efforts to empower women in the Blue Economy include providing training, access to resources, and leadership opportunities to ensure their meaningful participation and benefit from coastal and marine resources. The prioritization of the Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management is to improve the livelihoods of all Belizeans with a focus on social inclusion in Blue Economy activities. By increasing the employment of women in underdeveloped communities, this arm of the ministry is geared to increase women participation in the economy of Belize. It will also increase inclusivity and empower vulnerable groups and communities to become part of existing and emerging sectors utilizing Belize's marine and ocean resources.

Women in the Caribbean play a significant role in the Blue Economy, given the region's dependence on marine resources and coastal activities for livelihoods, food security, and economic development. Caribbean women participate in various sectors of the Blue Economy, including fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, marine research, and coastal management (UN Women. 2020).

In many Caribbean countries, women are actively engaged in small-scale fisheries, often playing key roles in processing, marketing, and selling fish. However, they are frequently marginalized and face challenges such as limited access to resources, lack of representation in decision-making processes, and gender-based discrimination. Efforts are being made to empower women in the Caribbean Blue Economy, including

through initiatives that promote women's leadership, provide training and capacity building, improve access to finance and technology, and enhance gender equality in policies and regulations (Robert, J. 2015).

In 2019 in Antigua and Barbuda, the Ministry of Social Transformation, Human Resource Development, and the Blue Economy, through its Directorate of Gender Affairs (DoGA) drafted a national sexual harassment policy. In 2020, the DoGA and the Department of Labour engaged in a mass sensitization exercise to inform the public about the draft policy and its objectives. This was done in collaboration with the government information system (GIS). DoGA has also led sensitivity training exercises with government agencies to raise awareness on sexual harassment, and how it upholds and contributed to gender inequality (UN Women, 2020).

Empowering women in the Caribbean Blue Economy is crucial for sustainable development, as women often have valuable knowledge and skills related to marine resource management and conservation. Their participation can contribute to more effective and inclusive decision-making processes, as well as to the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources in the region.

1.3 Methodology

The gender assessment methodology consisted of:

1. Desk review and literature review – A recent literature review was conducted that specifically addressed the issue of gender and inclusion, and identified a set of key principles, lessons and practices that are relevant in Belize's Blue Economy. The literature review informed the tool design and focus of the assessment. During this phase, the consultant reviewed several existing policies related to Blue Economy development at the national level. These included policies related to marine resources management, sustainable fisheries, maritime transportation, coastal zone management, marine tourism, renewable energy, and other relevant sectors.
2. Data collection through interview through individual meetings – Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in Blue Economy sectors. A detailed list of stakeholders consulted is included in Annex 4. The interviews aimed to generate in-depth information about the gender mainstreaming of women in the Blue Economy with major stakeholders in the gender matter in the Blue Economy, at the directory level. This involved identifying gaps, weaknesses, or areas where gender considerations have been overlooked or insufficiently addressed. The length of the interviews varied but were generally between 35 and 45 minutes. The questions and their order varied depending on the institution and the interviewee. As the research proceeded, the interview questions were continually developed based on obtained information. A total of thirty-four (34) stakeholders were contacted and followed up with for interviews via email and phone, of which 4 (four) interviews were conducted as of mid-March 2024. The bank of questions is included in Annex 5.
3. Data Collection through questionnaires – Information and data are also collected through semi-structured questionnaires shared with major stakeholders in the Blue Economy, at the directory, managerial, and officership level. Both qualitative and quantitative information are collected with the questionnaires to further strengthen the information gathered. A total of 62 (sixty-two) questionnaires were delivered via emails, with a total of 20 (twenty) responses received as of the end of June 2024. Follow-up was conducted with stakeholders who did not respond during the initial mailing. The survey is included in Annex 6 and results collected from this survey were represented into graphic figures included in Annex 8.

4. Data analysis – The data gathered through the interviews and questionnaires is organized and digitized using tools such as the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). Then descriptive and inferential statistical tests were conducted to identify correlations and trends. Graphs and tables were produced to summarize the results and interpretations were conducted.
5. Blue Economy Gender Mainstreaming Workshop – A two-hour workshop was organized with key stakeholders to (1) discuss and prioritize key gender equality issues for the MBEDRM, and (2) discuss and agree on resources needed to advance gender equality in the Blue Economy in Belize. Findings from this workshop were incorporated into the final report.
6. Final report – A final report was prepared and submitted after the findings were presented and data validated. The writing followed a strict objective and unbiased interpretation of the findings and results.

1.4 Key Gender and Blue Economy Laws and Policies in Literature

To date, Belize’s Blue Economy approach follows sector-specific policies, plans, and regulations. This approach clearly has not resulted either in optimum economic development or protection of the goods and services provided by marine resources, and there is an urgent need for an integrated and multi-sectoral Blue Economy approach which ensures a sustainable ocean economy (Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan, 2022-2027).

To advance Belize economic growth and sustainable ocean governance, the Ministry of Blue Economy formulated a Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy, and Implementation Plan 2022-2027. The Blue Economy Development Policy & Strategy is consistent with and complementary with national policies and international and regional commitments and agreements, to the extent that they are relevant for Blue Economy development. National policies have varying degrees of alignment with globally promoted Blue Economy principles and are sector-specific in many instances, but there are also some that are multi-sector in nature. The Blue Economy Policy consists of four (4) policy priority areas below:

1. Policy Priority Area 1: Governance Framework for Blue Economy Development
2. Policy Priority Area 2: Incentives for Blue Economy Development
3. Policy Priority Area 3: Capacity Building, Education, and Research
4. Policy Priority Area 4: Resource Mobilization

Furthermore, the Ministry of Blue Economy developed the Belize Maritime Economy Plan (MEP). This plan provides an overview of the existing maritime economy of Belize. It sets out priorities and actions that aim to help Belize demonstrate a clear vision and direction that takes account of national issues, international commitments. Actions support economic growth, livelihoods, and jobs, and reduce losses from natural hazards, extreme weather events and climate change.

The principles of low carbon, resource efficiency and social inclusion have been used to shape the development of the Belize Maritime Economy Plan (MEP). This is compatible with the concept of the ‘Blue Economy, which first emerged at the 2012 Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and recognises the need to maximise the vast economic potential of the ocean while also preserving it for current and future generations. Progress towards a Blue Economy can help achieve a range of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and

Communities), and others such as the gender equity and non-discrimination in access to opportunities as a core value of the Strategic Priorities for Horizon 2030 Vision.³

1.5 Key Implementation Institutions

1.5.1 National Women Commission

The National Women Commission (NWC) of Belize serves as the lead governmental institution in Belize to inform and improve laws, programs and policies for the improvement and advancement of gender equality in Belize. It was established to serve as the national machinery for gender equality, with a mandate to advocate for women's rights, develop gender-responsive policies and programs, and monitor progress on gender equality issues. The NWC also provides oversight to national gender mainstreaming strategies, the implementation of the National Gender Policy, and the National Gender-based Action Plan. Its key role is to coordinate the national government and non-government response to gender issues by enhancing effective response, reducing duplication, ensuring standards are met, and increasing accountability to affected populations.

The NWC's objectives include:

- Promoting women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels.
- Advocating for gender-responsive laws and policies.
- Providing support services for women, including victims of gender-based violence.
- Raising awareness about gender equality and women's rights.
- Building partnerships with other organisations to promote gender equality.

The NWC plays a key role in advancing gender equality in Belize through its various programs and initiatives. It works closely with government agencies, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders to promote gender equality and women's empowerment across different sectors of society.

1.5.2 Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management

The Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management is strategically positioned to align the national efforts in the development of the Blue Economy, and may be guided by international initiatives and frameworks such as the Commonwealth Blue Charter, the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi Targets and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing, all of which are focused on the harnessing of the economic value from the oceans natural resources in a fair and inclusive manner while employing a sustainable approach to ocean protection and economic development.

The MBEDRM is responsible, through its assigned institutions – the BFiD and the CZMAI – for overseeing the sustainable development of the country's Blue Economy. The ministry plays a key role in promoting the sustainable use of marine resources, protecting the marine environment, and supporting the implementation of disaster risk management initiatives.

Some of the key functions of the Ministry of Blue Economy, through the above-mentioned institutions, include:

- Developing policies and strategies to promote sustainable development in Belize's ocean space.

³ A list of key gender and blue economy laws and policies in literature is provided in Annex 2.

- Managing and conserving marine resources, including fisheries and marine biodiversity.
- Promoting sustainable tourism and other economic activities in coastal and marine areas.

The Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management works closely with other government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and international partners to achieve its goals. MBEDRM is mandated to facilitate the development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the Belize Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan (BEDPS) 2022-2027 as well as to coordinate, liaise and communicate with all ministries that are a part of the multisectoral Belize Blue Economy.

MBEDRM seeks to increase the representation of women in leadership positions across traditional and technologically emerging sectors (National Women's Commission and UNDP. 2012). Its mission is: "to increase Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through a thriving Blue Economy Development pathway that is harmonized, innovative and socially just, supported by a robust, science-based management regime of our aquatic resources and apace to improve the livelihood of all Belizeans." (Monsanto, 2022). It is important to note that there is a Blue Economy Unit within the MBEDRM. The Blue Economy Unit is led by the Director of Blue Economy under the MBEDRM. The Blue Economy Unit does not have a specific gender portfolio, but strives to mainstream gender throughout our overall programmatic activities, projects, etc. Nonetheless, this has been identified by the Unit as one of their challenges in gender mainstreaming.

1.5.3 Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute

The functions of the CZMAI are to conduct marine research, maintain a data centre, provide information as required by the Authority, organise training courses, support other agencies involved in coastal zone management, maintain coastal monitoring programs, and assist with preparing and implementing a National Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan. It supports the allocation, sustainable use, and planned development of Belize's coastal resources through increased knowledge and the building of alliances. More specifically, it advises the Minister on all matters related to the coastal zone. This includes policy formulation, assisting in programme and project development, fostering regional and international collaboration, commissioning research and monitoring, assisting in the preparation of development guidelines, reviewing the ICZM Plan, and maintaining the coral reef and coastal water quality monitoring programmes. The Coastal Zone Advisory council is a mechanism used to engage stakeholders in coastal zone development matters.

1.5.4 Belize Fisheries Department

Historically the fisheries sector was regulated through the Fisheries Act of 1977 and was updated in 2020 with the Fisheries Resource Act of 2020 and its subsidiary regulations. The Fisheries Resources Act of 2020 provides improvements to fisheries conservation, management, development, and governance; provisions for declared fisheries areas in marine and inland waters; cooperation and fishing access agreements; provisions governing fishing within the waters of Belize; port measures; scientific research; gear and transshipment; monitoring, control and surveillance; jurisdiction and evidence; sale, release, and forfeiture of retained property; summary administrative proceedings; and regulations for Marine reserves, along the barrier reef, and managed access are important fisheries management tools in Belize (Gomez et. Al, 2021).

The Belize Fisheries Department is the primary government agency created under the Fisheries Resources Act regulating fisheries activities and enforcing fisheries legislation in Belize's territorial sea and Exclusive Economic Zone which repeal the Fisheries Act, Chapter 210 of the laws of Belize Revised Edition 2011. Its primary mandates include overseeing the conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources; managing the registration and licensing processes for fisheries resources; and managing marine reserves; enforcing fisheries legislation. The Department's duties and responsibilities are shared among five main units responsible for conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources, registration and licenses, fisheries

research, education, liaison with fishing cooperatives, management of nine marine reserves, fisheries law enforcement, export, and research permits. Belize Fisheries Council (BFC) is established to guide fisheries commodities extraction strategies and policies.

2 Desktop Review Summary of Gender Analysis by Sector

2.1 Fisheries

The fishing industry in Belize has been an important sector in the country's development, contributing to employment, food security, income generation, and foreign exchange (Gillet, 2003; Grant, 2019; Wade, 2005 and UNCTAD-DOALOS, 2020). The fishing industry is male dominated with higher income as compared to female fishers, with only 2.7% female representation in 2023 (Pinelo, 2023), although it was reported that the number of licensed fisher women is now reaching up to 90 women⁴. Pinelo (2023) has reported women participate in the fishing sector at a low level of the value chain, principally assisting in cleaning and selling fish, and mostly being undeclared. According to Castillo (2022), only a few women in the fisheries sector contribute and benefit from the Social Security scheme in Belize. The social security scheme provides social protection to reduce social and economic risk and vulnerability, and to alleviate extreme poverty and deprivation. Most of the fishers in Belize do not enjoy the benefits of the social security scheme because of the present rigid structure and processes in place. Most licensed women fishers were found to reside in predominantly Afro-descendant communities such as the Stann Creek District (40.3%) and the Belize District (38.8%). The Corozal District, predominantly composed of Mestizos, had the least registered female fishers. However, male fishers primarily resided in Belize City (35%), Corozal (31%), and Stann Creek (22%) with the least residing in the Cayo District (3%) (Pinelo, 2023).

Castillo (2022) reported that both men and women fishers and their spouses, tend to have a primary school education. However, the fishermen are the main income earners and women are the domestic home makers. The fishermen are the ones with access to finance and own assets in the communities. Castillo (2022) claimed both fishermen and fisherwomen have pointed out that high fuel costs, declining fish catch, and climate change impact the fisheries, resulting in decreased income. Women are highly visible in conservation NGOs as leaders, as well as researchers producing much-needed data to inform policy in the blue space. Non-governmental Organisations such as the Belize Audubon Society (BAS), Blue Ventures, Fragments of Hope, Southern Environmental Association (SEA), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and others are presently led by women in the conservation efforts of the Blue Economy space.

The national Fisheries Policy, Strategy & Action Plan is aligned with the overarching national policy agenda of the Government of Belize, the commitments signed under international conventions, and other regional and multilateral agreements. The policy also embraces adaptive management, the ecosystem approach, Climate Change, the Blue Economy and the involvement of women in fisheries. A Women in Fisheries Forum has been organised for several years by the Fisheries Department with the support of several NGOs. The forum allows the women to meet annually and discuss their involvement in the fisheries sector and recommend actions for the improvement its management.

The Belize Country Gender Assessment (2016) indicated potential growth of the fisheries sector within Belize's overall development framework may affect men and women differently – based on current household and population characteristics in terms of employment, income disparities, access to resources, and education and skills development – and the necessity to incorporate gender and other intersecting social

⁴ CRFM, Interview at the directorial level, first stakeholder, 2023

issues into national development frameworks to change the status of vulnerable groups through focused growth strategies.

2.2 Aquaculture and Mariculture

Aquaculture in Belize has been an important generator of revenue and foreign exchange. In Belize, most workers in the shrimp industry are involved in the processing and are women from rural communities where unemployment levels are high, and poverty is greatest. The Aquaculture Development Act of 2020 does not contain elements of gender inclusion, equity, and equality. Furthermore, it appears that there are no gender policies in the shrimp industry that specifically address the control of access to resources, labour, decision making and human rights. Commencing the collection of detailed data, including factors such as sex, age, and ethnic origin, is key. Furthermore, it is important to highlight how socio-economic issues affect women and men in the aquaculture and mariculture industry. In Belize, the cultivation of edible seaweed and the sale of seaweed products has been identified as an alternative or complementary source of income for many fishers. The many opportunities and benefits directly associated with the edible seaweed have stimulated many young women to become entrepreneurs. At the same time, economic opportunities increase as the tourism industry continues to grow in Belize. The Belize Women's Seaweed Farmers Association (BWSFA) is a group of women from Placencia Village (Belize) who have organized themselves to cultivate and market seaweed products as a source of income.

2.3 Blue Carbon

Belize is already considered a carbon sink, and initiatives have commenced looking at the potential for blue carbon marketing, however, there is no formal blue carbon policy in Belize. Investment in mangrove and seagrass ecosystems conservation and management has been highlighted in the country's National Determined Contributions (NDCs) reports. Blue Carbon is one of the financing schemes under consideration as a part of the blended approach to finance the cost of the implementation of targets and activities related to commitments under the Paris Agreement. Belize has committed to protecting an additional 12,000 hectares (ha) of mangroves and restoring 4,000 ha by 2030. As stated before, there are no Blue Carbon policies in Belize that include the gender dimension. It is necessary to commence gathering disaggregated data on sex, age, ethnic origin, etc. in the Blue Carbon initiatives in Belize. It is important to highlight how socio-economic issues may affect women and men in the blue space and blue carbon financing scheme, as it relates to access to resources, information, market access, and participation in decision making. It is necessary to quantify and qualify the inequalities and the impact the blue carbon financing schemes will have on men and women in the different communities in Belize. Furthermore, existing opportunities in the Blue Carbon scheme should be identified to reduce poverty of women and men in the communities.

2.4 Marine Protection and Management

Belize has fourteen marine protected areas with nine marine reserves under the mandate of the Belize Fisheries Department. There are also two Wildlife Sanctuaries, two National Monuments and one National Park under the mandate of the Forest Department. Each marine reserve is guided by its management plan and regulations, which is updated every few years. While the current management plans lack a specified gender dimension, the Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management has taken steps to address this by incorporating gender considerations into its policies and plans, notably by assessing gender considerations and identifying gender-specific capacity building needs and mechanisms for gender mainstreaming within key blue economy institutions within the project "Capacity Building to Advance the Blue Economy Development in Belize".

The staff of the Belize Fisheries Department includes several women acting in the capacity of Assistant Fisheries Officers and Fisheries Officers. These women are involved in the management of marine reserves, research, enforcement, and environmental advocacy. For over two decades, the Fisheries

Administrator was a woman, and she had the technical and administrative capacity to lead the fisheries sector. Several women are also employed at the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI) where they are integral in the hierarchy of the organisation. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management is a woman who has endorsed several initiatives for gender inclusion and equality within Belize's Blue Economy, notably, the Blue Economy Unit, which includes an all-female team and is led by a woman.

A gender and social assessment conducted in 2020 reported women oversaw 8 of the 10 non-governmental organisations (NGO) stakeholders (Southern Environmental Organisation (SEA), Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE), Belize Audubon Society (BAS), Fragments of Hope, Wildlife Conservation Society, The Nature Conservancy, World Wide Fund (WWF), Oceana) that do work in the coastal zone and fisheries sector and have been collaborators with the Government. However, conservation NGOs led by males are the Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association (TASA), the Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation and Development (SACD) and the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE) and Hol Chan Marine Reserve (HCMR).

It is important to identify the needs and interests of men and women in the efforts of marine conservation and protection. It is important to know to what extent women and men have been made aware of the importance of conservation and effective use of marine resources. Furthermore, the present gap analysis indicates that it is necessary to find out how involved men and women are in campaigns to reach conservation targets. In addition, how have they been consulted to ensure their ownership in marine conservation and protection?

2.5 Marine Transport and Shipping

In May 2023, the World Maritime University (WMU) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) partnered on delivering an Introduction to the National Maritime Transport Policy (NMTP) workshop in Belize. The NMTP concept is being promoted by the IMO as a good governance practice to guide planning, decision-making and legislation in the maritime sector and as a key driver for a country's sustainable development. In 2018, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in collaboration with the Belize Port Authority, MBEDRM, CZMAI, and BFiD hosted the “2nd Regional Women in Maritime Association Caribbean (WiMAC) Conference”, which is held annually. It is important to note that since May 2024, Belize has now a locally established Women in Maritime chapter being led by various women in the Maritime sector. The objective of the conference was to increase the performance, participation, and contribution of women in the maritime sector. Its objectives included:

- Promotion of the maritime sector as a viable career option.
- Mentoring of women in the sector.
- Motivating and empowering women in the sector through training and development initiatives.
- Providing a forum for networking, exchange of ideas and initiatives on industry development through the hosting of development platforms, conferences, and seminars.
- Foster a Caribbean research agenda and build a body of knowledge and best practices on the maritime sector.

The annual workshop is consistent with IMO's Women in Maritime programme, which supports the participation of women in both shore-based and sea-going posts, in line with the goals outlined under the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. The mentorship model has been used as a blueprint throughout the IMO-supported regional Women in Maritime Associations.

2.6 Marine Research and Development

To continue benefiting from the ecosystem services provided by Belize's marine ecosystems, it is essential to gather data through rigorous research. The Belize Fisheries Department holds the mandate to issue research permits for marine research in the country. Additionally, within the marine protected areas, essential research and monitoring are conducted to quantify the abundance and diversity of key marine species. Women have been integral in this research, with entities such as CZMAI, BFiD, and Marine Protected Areas co-managers employing female marine biologists and field technicians who actively collect marine data. It is crucial to assess the involvement of both men and women in conducting this research and understand how their findings impact the population of Belize.

2.7 Ocean and Coastal Tourism

Belize's Labour Force Survey Report of 2021 showed that the 'Tourism' sector saw a bump across all districts with nearly nine thousand more workers finding employment in the industry. Additionally, the report included that the bulk, or (36%), of employed women found jobs in 'Services and Sales' which include waitressing, cooking, and other tourism-related work. Tourism remains a gateway for women to find their economic independence. For tourism to be a more important source of development and gender equality, much should be done to better train women, introduce more flexible hours arrangements and promote female entrepreneurship (SIB, 2021).

3 Key Findings and Summary on Gender Situation in Blue Economy through Primary Data

Based on interviews conducted amongst institutional stakeholders in various Blue Economy sectors⁵, the following key findings were identified:

3.1 Roles and Contributions

- **Sectoral Involvement:** Women play crucial roles in the Blue Economy, at the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors, such as in fisheries, mariculture/aquaculture, but also eco-tourism and at the institutional level. Nevertheless, at primary and secondary levels, where they occupy key supporting roles such as processing and logistical support, their significant contributions to household resilience and the overall sectors are often undervalued and not formally recognized.

3.2 Participation Constraints and Barriers to Access

- **Cultural and Structural Barriers:** Women's participation in fishing and other Blue Economy sectors is limited by cultural norms and lack of formal support mechanisms. Many women need to work alongside male counterparts, affecting their independent access to resources and financing.
- **Childcare Responsibilities:** Limited access to childcare prevents many women from participating in meetings, training, and taking on leadership roles.
- **Legal and Documentation Barriers:** Many women lack proper licenses or documentation, in activities such as fishing, which limit their abilities to formally participate into professional activities. This issue is particularly acute in communities near the Guatemalan border, where undocumented status prevents women from obtaining necessary licenses and accessing government support.
- **Financial and Structural Barriers:** Structural barriers such as lack of collateral, formal assets (ownership rights or collateral), and supportive frameworks (utility bills or ownership rights) hinder women's access to credit and financial resources. This limits women's ability to expand or start

⁵ Interviews at the directorial level with Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit (BBFP Unit), Wildlife Conservation Society Belize (WCS), and Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM).

businesses independently and to fully engage and benefit from emerging opportunities within the Blue Economy.

- **Obstacles in Regulation and Promotion:** Women's involvement in emerging sectors like seaweed farming, seaweed products, and ocean-derived jewelry (lionfish, shells) faces issues related to formalization, marketing, and sustainability.

3.3 Overcoming Cultural Norms and Historical Marginalization

- **Norms and Perceptions:** Deep-rooted cultural norms that confine women to homemaking and caretaking roles pose challenges to their economic participation. Addressing these norms is crucial for empowering women and achieving sustainable development.
- **Historical Underrepresentation:** Women were initially significantly underrepresented in some Blue Economy sectors such as fisheries, including in meetings and decision-making processes. Men dominated these spaces, leading to women feeling marginalized and their voices unheard.

3.4 Advancements and Ongoing Efforts in Women's Leadership

- **Progress in Leadership:** Efforts have been made to increase women's participation in various Blue Economy sectors. Initiatives like capacity building, awareness campaigns, and specific policies have aimed to empower women to engage actively in the fisheries sector.
- **Current Efforts:** There have been initiatives to increase women's participation through capacity building, awareness campaigns, and specific policies, leading to a more active participation of women in decision-making forums.

4 Gender Mainstreaming Mechanism and Opportunities

At the policy level the National Women's Commission is the key entity to enhance gender mainstreaming, by coordinating efforts with government, non-government, statutory bodies, and the private sector as it pertains to gender mainstreaming in the Blue Economy. MBEDRM, on its end, can advocate and should champion policy coherence across all relevant government entities to support gender equality and social inclusion. After conducting desktop research and assessing institutional capacities regarding gender-related policies for advancing Blue Economy development in Belize, it can be contented that mainstreaming gender actions within the Blue Economy should focus on the two below mentioned points:

4.1 Institutional Gender Mainstreaming

This means that the National Women's Commission (NWC), Blue Economy Unit (BEU), Belize Fisheries Department (BFiD) and the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI) could address gender inequalities and emphasize the empowerment of women through organisational efforts such as: allocating the necessary budgetary and human resources, improving staff capacity to implement gender responsive budgeting, programming and services, use a gender lens in the design of policies, programs, and projects, and critically assess organisational culture to remove internal obstacles that can impede effective gender mainstreaming.

4.2 Gender equality in the sector

This means that the NWC, BEU, BFiD and CZMAI could continue to examine and address the needs of men, women, and youth in the wider sector. In addition, it should acknowledge the value, capacities, knowledge and contribution of men, women and youth across the fisheries value chain and coastal zone. They could work towards greater inclusion and empowerment of women and youth in the development of policies, programmes, and projects to minimize the perpetuation of inequalities and to ensure equal opportunities and benefits for all.

Furthermore, in Belize's Blue Economy, which encompasses marine resources and activities, there are several key opportunities for gender mainstreaming:

- **Fisheries Management:** Integrating gender perspectives into fisheries management can ensure that policies and practices consider the roles and needs of women and men involved in fishing activities. This can include recognizing and supporting women's contributions to fisheries, as well as addressing gender-specific challenges they may face.
- **Tourism Development:** In the marine and coastal tourism sector, gender mainstreaming can involve promoting equal opportunities for women and men in tourism-related activities, such as diving, boat tours, and hospitality services. This can include training programs, business support, and promoting women's leadership in the sector.
- **Climate Change Adaptation:** Gender mainstreaming in climate change adaptation efforts can ensure that adaptation strategies consider the different vulnerabilities and capacities of women and men. This can include ensuring women's participation in planning and decision-making processes related to climate change adaptation in coastal areas.
- **Capacity Building:** Building the capacity of women and men involved in the Blue Economy to understand and address gender issues can enhance the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming efforts. This can include training programs on gender-sensitive approaches to marine resource management, conservation, and sustainable development.
- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Collecting and analysing sex-disaggregated data on participation and benefits in the Blue Economy can help identify gender disparities and inform gender mainstreaming strategies.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborating with women's organisations, community groups, and other stakeholders can enhance efforts to mainstream gender in the Blue Economy. This can include partnerships to promote women's economic empowerment, access to resources, and participation in decision-making processes.

By mainstreaming gender in Belize's Blue Economy, stakeholders can promote gender equality, enhance the sustainable management of marine resources, and contribute to inclusive and equitable economic development.

5 Recommendations to Improve Capacity for Gender Mainstreaming

Mainstream gender into vision, goals, structure, policies, programs, processes, and actions is crucial for creating an equitable and gender-inclusive environment. Based on surveys and interviews with 24 (twenty-four) stakeholders⁶ across forty-three organizations involved in the Blue Economy, several recommendations to enhance gender mainstreaming capacity have been identified. The data has been summarized into a grid that highlights the effort and investment required for each recommendation. Detailed on each recommendation is provided below the grid.

⁶ See list of stakeholders surveyed in Annex 4.

Initiative	Effort	Investment	Notes
Economics and Finance			
Providing Gender-Sensitive Access to Finance	Medium	High	Requires collaboration with financial institutions and development of tailored products.
Promoting Independent Economic Activity	High	Low	Involves cultural change and policy advocacy to recognize women's contributions accurately.
Utilizing Existing Economic and Financial Programs	Low	Low	Leverages existing government programs for women entrepreneurs.
Promoting and Funding Blue Business Innovation	Medium	High	Utilizes financial instruments to support women-led innovations
Economic Empowerment through Formal Mechanisms	High	High	Requires establishing formal mechanisms for individual empowerment and access to resources.
Education and Awareness			
Continuous Gender Education and Awareness	Medium	Medium	Involves ongoing campaigns and stakeholder engagement.
Educational Programs and Cultural Change	High	High	Significant effort required to change cultural norms and implement educational programs.
Education and Awareness Campaigns in Fisheries	Medium	Low	Targeted education on fishing regulations and licensing.
Validating Women's Roles in Fisheries	Low	Low	Highlights and documents women's contributions to fisheries.
Incremental Change and Persistence	High	Medium	Requires sustained effort and investment in gradual cultural shifts.
Addressing Cultural Norms and Beliefs	High	Medium	Targeted interventions to overcome cultural barriers to women's participation.
Association Engagement			
Encourage Participation in Professional Associations	Low	Low	Promotes women's involvement in associations for resource access and support.
Cooperative and Forum Engagement in Fisheries	Medium	Low	Expands women's participation and representation in fisheries cooperatives and forums.
Capacity Building and Trainings			

Initiative	Effort	Investment	Notes
Capacity Building and Skills Development	High	High	Comprehensive training programs needed to enhance women's skills and leadership roles.
Training through Small Scale Projects	Medium	Medium	Focused training for small-scale projects and local businesses.
Promote Digital Access	Medium	Medium	Facilitates market access through digital access.
Provide Access to Market Opportunities	Medium	Medium	Facilitates market access for traditional and alternative sectors.
Empowerment and Capacity Building in Fisheries	High	High	Involves training and resources to enhance women's roles in fisheries.
Address Women's Specific Needs			
Flexible Training and Employment Opportunities	Low	Low	Provides flexible options to accommodate women's responsibilities.
Customize Meeting Formats	Low	Low	Adjusts meeting formats to improve women's participation.
Provide Supportive Considerations	Low	Low	Includes support such as childcare and transportation.
Address Structural Barriers	High	Medium	Requires comprehensive measures to address systemic barriers.
Data, Monitoring, and Reporting			
Monitor Progress and Impact	Medium	Medium	Implement monitoring systems to track gender mainstreaming efforts.
Disaggregate Data by Sex	Medium	Medium	Collect and analyze data separately for women and men.
Documentation and Reporting	Medium	Medium	Improve documentation of women's achievements and participation.
Policies			
Consultation and Participation with Women	Medium	Medium	Ensures women's perspectives are included in policy development.
Develop Sector-Specific Gender Policies	High	High	Advocates for gender-specific policies in the Blue Economy.

Initiative	Effort	Investment	Notes
Promote Inclusive Policies	High	High	Ensures all policies are gender-inclusive and consider women's specific needs.
Institutional Level Framework and Guidelines			
Supportive Policy Frameworks	High	High	Develops policies that support women's roles across various Blue Economy sectors.
Supportive Frameworks in Fisheries	High	High	Formalizes and supports women's roles in fisheries with appropriate frameworks.
Develop Gender Guidelines	High	High	Establishes guidelines for gender consideration in projects and initiatives.
Institutional Development			
Leadership Development	High	High	Promotes women's leadership roles within Blue Economy organizations.
Organizational Development in Fisheries	Medium	Medium	Supports the formation of committees and representation for women in fisheries.
Engage Stakeholders nation- and region-wide	High	High	Collaborates with stakeholders to align national and regional gender strategies.
Ensure Gender Representation in Committees and Decision-Making	Medium	Medium	Advocates for gender diversity in decision-making bodies.
Promote Inclusive Consultation Practices	Medium	Low	Ensures women are actively invited to consultations.
Ensure Representation in Trainings	Medium	Low	Ensures women are represented in all training programs.
Legal Support and Documentation Assistance	Low	Low	Provides support for legal and documentation needs.
Securing Funding for Gender Mainstreaming at the Institutional Level	High	High	Advocates for financial support dedicated to gender mainstreaming.
Supporting Women in Processing and Cooperatives	Medium	Medium	Develops policies and support for women in processing and cooperatives.

5.1 Economics and Finance

Providing Gender-Sensitive Access to Finance, Product Development, and Finance Support: Recognize and address barriers that prevent women from accessing financial resources. This includes revising lending criteria to accommodate women who may lack traditional forms of collateral or formal credit histories.⁷ Collaborate with financial institutions to design and develop financial products tailored to women in the Blue Economy, such as "minimum value products" that cater to the financial needs and capabilities of women entrepreneurs to ensure that they have access to credit, capital, and other financial resources necessary for business growth. These products should offer favourable terms and conditions that consider the specific challenges women face, such as informal business structures and limited collateral.⁸

Promoting Independent Economic Activity: Within the fisheries industry, taking into consideration the strong cultural influence underlying, encourage and support women to sell their catch under their own names rather than their husbands to ensure accurate representation of women's contributions in fisheries statistics. Explain how this practice skews official statistics, making it appear that men dominate the sector, which hinders efforts to accurately assess women's contributions to the Blue Economy and can affect policy and resource allocation.⁹

Utilizing Existing Economic and Financial Programs: Leverage existing government programs, such as the MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) initiatives, to support women entrepreneurs in the Blue Economy. Government efforts should focus on adapting these programs to meet the specific needs of women-owned businesses and activities like seaweed farming and artisanal production.¹⁰

Promoting and Funding Blue Business Innovation: Use initiatives like the blue bond to promote and fund innovative business ideas within the Blue Economy that involve women.¹¹

Economic empowerment through Formal Mechanisms: It is noted that many women in the fishery sector operate in partnerships or under constraints that limit their autonomy and access to resources like financing and equipment, and that establishing formal mechanisms that empower women economically, such as access to finance and equipment on an individual basis rather than solely through partnerships, can enhance their participation and leadership in fishing activities.¹²

5.2 Education and Awareness

Continuous Gender Education and Awareness: Conduct continuous education and awareness campaigns about gender equality and women's rights within the Blue Economy. Foster understanding among stakeholders about the benefits of diverse participation, gender equality, as well as the importance of women's voices in decision-making processes and the barriers women face, encouraging proactive measures to mitigate these challenges.¹³

⁷ Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit (BBFP Unit), Interview at the directorial level, 2023

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Wildlife Conservation Society Belize (WCS), Interview at the directorial level, 2023

¹⁰ Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit, *Op. Cit.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), Interviews at the directorial level, 2023

Educational Programs and Cultural Change: Focus on raising awareness and changing cultural mindsets regarding gender roles within the Blue Economy. While policies exist at national and sectoral levels, emphasize the importance of cultural change to truly empower women. Foster a cultural shift towards recognizing and respecting women's roles and contributions in Blue Economy, such as in fisheries and aquaculture. Develop educational programs and community outreach initiatives that address and challenge patriarchal attitudes and societal norms that hinder women's full participation and leadership in the Blue Economy.¹⁴

Education and Awareness Campaigns in Fisheries: Conduct targeted education programs to inform women about fishing regulations and the requirement for each individual involved in commercial fishing to possess their own license. Emphasize the legal implications of fishing without a license and the benefits of obtaining one independently.¹⁵

Validating Women's Roles in Fisheries: Challenge the perception that women's roles in fisheries are insignificant or irrelevant. Highlight the diverse contributions women make to the sector, whether directly through fishing or in supporting roles like processing and marketing. Raise awareness about the importance of recognizing and valuing these contributions for sustainable fisheries management.¹⁶

Incremental Change and Persistence: Acknowledge that changing cultural norms is a gradual process requiring sustained effort over time. Implement strategies that incrementally challenge cultural norms and biases that limit women's participation. Invest in programs that engage men and women alike in dialogues about gender equality, emphasizing the benefits of inclusive participation and shared decision-making in economic development. Consistently provide opportunities for women to engage, demonstrating the value and benefits of their involvement over time.¹⁷

Addressing Cultural Norms and Beliefs: While it's noted that some cultural norms may influence women's participation, it is crucial to not only recognize these barriers but actively work to overcome them through targeted interventions. This could include community engagement, awareness campaigns, and demonstrating successful examples of women's contributions to inspire societal change.¹⁸

5.3 Association Engagement

Encourage Participation in Professional Associations: Emphasize the importance of women becoming members of professional associations within the Blue Economy to benefit from collective initiatives such as funding opportunities for equipment, skills development, and market access for their businesses; explain how those associations play a crucial role in accessing resources and support from NGOs or government programs and how to benefit from it.¹⁹

¹⁴ Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, *Op. Cit.*

¹⁵ Wildlife Conservation Society Belize, *Op. Cit.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, *Op. Cit.*

¹⁸ Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit, *Op. Cit.*

¹⁹ Wildlife Conservation Society Belize, *Op. Cit.*

Cooperative and Forum Engagement in Fisheries: Enhance women's participation and representation in cooperatives within the fisheries sector. Continuing and expanding forums like the Women in Fisheries Forum, which provides a platform for women to voice their constraints and ambitions as well as a valuable source of information to identify barriers and develop targeted interventions to overcome them.²⁰

5.4 Capacity Building and Trainings

Capacity Building and Skills Development: Implement targeted capacity-building programs aimed at enhancing women's organizational and management skills within their activities and businesses. This includes providing skills development opportunities and knowledge on how to access resources in order to empower women to take on more active roles in decision-making and entrepreneurial activities within the sector, and advocacy on how to get more involved in professional associations within the Blue Economy.²¹

Training through Small Scale Projects: Implement small scale projects aimed at building the capacities of women in the Blue Economy, focusing on enhancing skills relevant to their small businesses within the sector, such as in leadership, business management, financial literacy, to equip them with marketable skills that align with local economic opportunities within the Blue Economy. This includes training in adaptive management strategies that enable them to navigate challenges like the impact of external shocks such as Covid-19, to enhance their business resilience and enable growth even during disruptions.²²

Provide access to Market Opportunities for traditional and alternative Blue Economy sectors like seaweed farming, jewellery making, as well as home stays within the Blue Economy.²³

Promote Digital and Market Access: Facilitate access to digital platforms and e-commerce solutions that enable women entrepreneurs, like those in lionfish jewellery, to market their products online and expand their customer base beyond local markets.²⁴

Empowerment and Capacity Building in Fisheries: Continue empowering women in the fisheries sector through capacity building initiatives. Provide them with information, skills, and resources necessary to participate actively in decision-making processes within fisheries departments and government ministries. This empowerment should extend to all levels of the value chain, including management positions.²⁵

5.5 Address Women' Specific Needs

Flexible Training and Employment Opportunities: Recognize and accommodate the diverse roles and responsibilities of women, particularly those managing households, by offering training and workshop opportunities that are flexible and locally accessible.²⁶

Customize Meeting Formats: Tailor meeting formats to accommodate women's preferences and needs. For instance, if women feel uncomfortable speaking freely in mixed-gender meetings, provide separate sessions

²⁰ Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit, *Op. Cit.*

²¹ Wildlife Conservation Society Belize, *Op. Cit.*

²² Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit, *Op. Cit.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, *Op. Cit.*

²⁶ Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit, *Op. Cit.*

where they can express themselves more openly and comfortably. This approach acknowledges and respects cultural dynamics that may hinder women's participation.²⁷

Provide Supportive Considerations: Offer considerations that facilitate women's participation in Blue Economy initiatives and identify barriers to women's participation. Besides transportation assistance, consider other forms of support such as childcare services and safe and accessible venues.²⁸ Ensure that cultural or social barriers that may hinder women's participation are addressed.²⁹

Address Structural Barriers: Recognize and address structural barriers that hinder women's participation, such as lack of formal assets in their name (like property or utilities bills), limited organizational capacity compared to men's associations, and difficulties accessing credit and financial resources. Implement measures to rectify these issues, such as facilitating access to microfinance, providing training in financial literacy, and promoting women's ownership of assets.³⁰

5.6 Data, Monitoring, and Reporting

Monitor Progress and Impact: Implement monitoring mechanisms to track the progress of gender mainstreaming efforts in the Blue Economy. Evaluate the impact of interventions aimed at enhancing women's participation, such as increased registration of women as fisherfolk and their active involvement in meetings and presentations. Use these insights to refine strategies and ensure continuous improvement.³¹

Disaggregate Data by Sex: Ensure that data collection within the Blue Economy projects is disaggregated by sex. This involves collecting and analysing data separately for women and men to identify any gender disparities in participation, benefits, or impacts of the projects. This data disaggregation is crucial for targeted interventions and to track progress towards gender equality goals.³²

Documentation and Reporting: Improve quantitative documentation of women's achievements and participation across various sectors of the Blue Economy. Establish metrics to track the progress of women's involvement in leadership positions, business ventures, and community advocacy roles. This data can help validate the qualitative changes observed and inform targeted interventions.³³

5.7 Policies

Consultation and Participation with Women: Emphasize the importance of consulting and involving women directly in the development of policies and laws that impact the Blue Economy to ensure that their perspectives, needs, and challenges are considered and addressed effectively.³⁴

Develop Sector-Specific Gender Policies: Advocate for the development of gender-specific policies within the Blue Economy that address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women. These policies

²⁷ Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, *Op. Cit.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Wildlife Conservation Society Belize, *Op. Cit.*

³⁰ Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit, *Op. Cit.*

³¹ Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, *Op. Cit.*

³² Wildlife Conservation Society Belize, *Op. Cit.*

³³ Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, *Op. Cit.*

³⁴ Wildlife Conservation Society Belize, *Op. Cit.*

should focus on capacity-building initiatives tailored to enhance women's skills and capabilities and ensure that women's roles are valued and integrated throughout the value chain.³⁵

Promote Inclusive Policies: Ensure that all policies related to financing, resource allocation, and economic development within the Blue Economy are inclusive and considerate of gender-specific constraints and needs such as ensuring that women can have utilities and assets in their names, which are often required for accessing financial services.

5.8 Institutional Level Framework and Guidelines

Supportive Policy Frameworks: Develop policies that support women's participation and leadership in traditional as well as non-traditional areas of the Blue Economy, such as cosmetics from seaweed, lionfish jewelry, and seaweed farming.³⁶

Supportive Frameworks in Fisheries: Women's roles in fisheries, including processing, marketing, and financial management, should be formalized and supported by appropriate frameworks. This could include policies that recognize and support their contributions, training programs tailored to women's needs, and supportive infrastructure for marketing and processing activities. This involves as well creating frameworks that ensure equal access to resources, training, and opportunities for women.³⁷

Develop Gender Guidelines: Establish comprehensive guidelines that mandate the consideration of gender in all stages of project development, implementation, and community work. These guidelines should be applicable not only to the ministry but also to its partners, including NGOs. They should outline specific steps and criteria to ensure that both women and men are equally considered and benefited from projects and initiatives.³⁸

5.9 Institutional Development

Leadership Development: Continue promoting and facilitating women's leadership roles within Blue Economy industries and organisations. Support initiatives that enable women to transition from administrative positions like secretaries to influential roles such as presidents, fostering their active participation and decision-making power.³⁹

Organisational Development in Fisheries: Support the development of a national committee for the Women in Fisheries Forum to enhance organization and representation. Facilitate meetings and elections to ensure women's voices are heard and they are actively engaged in policy development and decision-making processes.⁴⁰

Engage Stakeholders nation- and region-wide: Collaborate with, including governmental and non-governmental organizations, to advocate for and implement gender-sensitive policies and initiatives.

³⁵ Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit, *Op. Cit.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Wildlife Conservation Society Belize, *Op. Cit.*

³⁹ Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, *Op. Cit.*

⁴⁰ Wildlife Conservation Society Belize, *Op. Cit.*

Engaging with regional organizations, through CARICOM and Central America, can provide a platform to align national efforts with broader regional strategies for gender equality in the Blue Economy.⁴¹

Ensure Gender Representation in Committees and Decision-Making: Advocate for and enforce policies that mandate gender diversity on committees, advisory boards, and decision-making bodies such as the fisheries advisory board and those involved in the managed access program under the Fisheries management regime. Ensure that processes are not solely based on existing demographics which may exclude women due to historical underrepresentation and perpetuate gender disparities due to existing imbalances in sector participation. Implement measures to actively include women in decision-making bodies, such as those related to fisheries management, ensuring their voices are heard and their perspectives are integrated.⁴²

Promote Inclusive Consultation Practices: While consultations are a policy requirement, there is a clear gender disparity with mainly men participating. Efforts should focus on ensuring that women are actively invited and encouraged to participate in consultative processes.⁴³

Ensure Representation in Trainings: Implement a policy to ensure that women are adequately represented in all training programs related to the Blue Economy. This can be achieved by actively inviting and encouraging women to participate, providing them with necessary support such as childcare services or flexible scheduling, and creating an inclusive training environment that fosters their engagement and learning.⁴⁴

Legal Support and Documentation Assistance: Collaborate with relevant ministries and organizations to assist women who lack legal status or documentation in regularizing their migratory status. Provide support in obtaining necessary documents such as Social Security cards that are required for obtaining a fisher's license.⁴⁵

Securing Funding for Gender Mainstreaming at the Institutional Level: Despite challenges in securing funding, continue advocating for financial support and human resources dedicated to gender mainstreaming initiatives in the Blue Economy. This includes funding for research, data collection, and implementation of gender-responsive policies that support women's active participation in fisheries and related sectors.⁴⁶ When advocating for access to finance, highlight the interconnectedness between broader conservation goals, like the 30x30 initiative, and the critical role of coastal communities, including women, in achieving these objectives. Emphasize how supporting women in Blue Economy, such as in fisheries, aligns with broader conservation and community engagement goals.⁴⁷

Supporting Women in Processing and Cooperatives: Women involved in processing or cooperative activities often lack representation and support. Policies should be developed or revised to ensure that these women have equal access to resources, funding, and decision-making processes within cooperatives. Promote

⁴¹ Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit, *Op. Cit.*

⁴² Wildlife Conservation Society Belize, *Op. Cit.*

⁴³ CRFM, Interview at the directorial level, second stakeholder, 2023

⁴⁴ Wildlife Conservation Society Belize, *Op. Cit.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, *Op. Cit.*

⁴⁷ Wildlife Conservation Society Belize, *Op. Cit.*

inclusive policies within cooperatives that recognize and support the contributions of women, at all stages and sectors of the Blue Economy industries. This may include financial support mechanisms, access to loans, and training in cooperative governance.⁴⁸

5.10 Organizational Level

Based on the survey completed by the twenty (20) respondents involved in Blue Economy at the institutional level, we have obtained further insights pertaining to the organisation in question.

In terms of capacity requirements for training within their organization, just under 80% of the respondents expressed the necessity for gender capacity building through training, particularly in gender-sensitive appraisal and planning (74%) and raising awareness and self-awareness among both women and men (58%).⁴⁹

In terms of best practices that could be incorporated into their own organization, the vast majority identified the importance of educating their organisation's employees on gender bias (79%), implementing a mentorship program (74%) and establishing flexible work options (68%).⁵⁰

Regarding lessons learned from initiatives or projects that respondents recognized as effectively integrating gender considerations, within their organisation, the majority acknowledged those that involved women in traditionally male-dominated areas or roles (80%), those having increased women in leadership roles and decision-making processes (70%) and having provided training addressing women's specific needs (70%).⁵¹

When it comes to management within their own organisation, the vast majority perceived their organization as having a gender-inclusive approach when creating new policies and major decisions (35% strongly agreed and 35% agreed)⁵² and nearly all acknowledged the availability of external assistance to enhance their organization's gender mainstreaming efforts (95%).⁵³

Nevertheless, while eighty per cent of the respondents reported that data related to gender was collected and analyzed within their organization⁵⁴, three quarters reported that their organization does not monitor and evaluate the impact of gender mainstreaming policies and efforts⁵⁵, and that the data is not always disaggregated.⁵⁶

Finally, three-quarters of the respondents reported that their organisation did not have a dedicated person or unit specifically tasked with gender integration.⁵⁷ This was attributed to reasons such as the small size of the unit or organisation not allowing for a dedicated role or because the responsibility was managed by another department (42%), a lack of funding (32%), or a perceived lack of necessity for such a role (26%).

⁴⁸ Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, *Op. Cit.*

⁴⁹ See figure 1, Annex 8

⁵⁰ See figure 2, Annex 8

⁵¹ See figure 3, Annex 8

⁵² See figure 4, Annex 8

⁵³ See figure 5, Annex 8

⁵⁴ See figure 6, Annex 8

⁵⁵ See figure 7, Annex 8

⁵⁶ See figure 8, Annex 8

⁵⁷ See figure 9, Annex 8

However, when stakeholders were asked about challenges in promoting gender equality and inclusiveness within their organisation or field of work, the majority reported encountering no significant issues (70%).⁵⁸ Among those who acknowledged challenges, the barriers identified included the lack of funding to support gender needs (e.g. developing sanitary facilities for women in field roles and funding further education opportunities for women), the lack of internal policies addressing women's needs (e.g. flexible working environment, pay gaps issue), and deficiency in gender knowledge within both the organisations and their respective fields, contributing significantly to the perpetuation of these challenges.

6 Blue Economy Gender Mainstreaming Workshop

As part of the Blue Economy assessment, a workshop was held in July 2024 with key stakeholders within the Blue Economy Unit, Belize Fisheries Department (BFD), and Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI). The workshop aimed to raise awareness of key gender mainstreaming concepts and gender equality issues in Belize focusing on Blue Economy Unit, Fisheries and Coastal Zone Management, as well as discussing and prioritizing key gender equality issues for the MBEDRM and gender budgeting issues for MBEDRM projects; and discussing and agreeing on gaps in knowledge/skills as well as resources needed to advance gender equality in the Blue Economy in Belize. For this, a series of questions was asked to the participating stakeholders, focusing on identifying which key findings from the rapid gender analysis align most closely with the unit's priorities, current efforts being made, areas of interest for further action, and any significant issues not covered in the analysis that are already being addressed.⁵⁹

The takeaways from this exercise were the following:

- **Reinforce M&E Capacity:** Additional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) staff are required to prioritise and carry out the collection and analysis of gender data, as well as to implement the gender strategy within the Coastal Zone and Fisheries Sector. The current M&E officers' responsibilities do not specifically emphasize gender-related tasks.
- **Microfinance Options Including Support for Women-Owned Businesses:** Beltraide and Development Finance Corporation (DFC) provide microloans, with DFC additionally offering loans tailored specifically to support women-owned small businesses.
- **Gender Disparities in Income and Access to Credit in the Fishing Sector:** In the fishing sector, men generally earn higher incomes, largely because they typically own productive assets such as boats and fishing gear, and often hold higher-paying positions within fishing organisations and cooperatives. Consequently, men have greater access to financial credit.
- **Formation of National Women in Fisheries Association:** Recently, a National Women in Fisheries Association was established as part of the Women in Fisheries Forum initiative.
- **Challenges in Social Security Access within the Fisheries Sector:** Both women and men in the fisheries sector face challenges in accessing social security benefits.

⁵⁸ See figure 10, Annex 8

⁵⁹ The list of questions is available in Annex 5.

- **Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities:** The willingness to work should be balanced with the actual capability and capacity of individuals. For instance, during a recent Women in Fisheries forum, it was noted that many participants have family responsibilities that may hinder their ability to join the workforce. As a solution, there was a proposal to create homestays in coastal communities, allowing women to earn income while remaining at home to care for their children.
- **Empowering Women in Cooperatives: Advancing Leadership Roles:** Women participate in cooperatives but typically do not occupy leadership or decision-making roles within these organizations. Their involvement often centres around administrative tasks or food processing, highlighting a significant issue which raise the question of how they can be empowered to attain leadership positions.

The primary insights gained from the workshop were⁶⁰:

- **Consolidation:** There is considerable enthusiasm for advancing gender equality within the MBEDRM teams. Significant discussions have already taken place regarding gender data, identifying gaps in evidence, and addressing capacity requirements. This presents an opportune moment to capitalise on the insights gained from the workshop, sustain the current momentum, and consider establishing a gender working group that spans across all MBEDRM units. This initiative aims to further enhance collaboration and coordination in efforts to promote gender equality within the organisation.
- **Alignment:** Multiple gender equality policies, strategies, action plans, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks are currently in progress across the MBEDRM units. However, these efforts are somewhat fragmented and have not yet been widely communicated. Engaging a cross-unit group will be essential to ensure that priorities are effectively represented in strategies, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, resources are used efficiently, and duplication is minimized.
- **Strengthening:** There is an acknowledgment of gender capacity gaps within the MBEDRM units. These gaps must be resolved to finalise the development of gender policy frameworks and cross-unit strategies, as well as to effectively implement and monitor priority activities in upcoming action plans. It is advisable to implement a gender training program for key MBEDRM staff and to consider allocating dedicated positions with expertise in gender matters.
- **Leverage:** There is a keen interest in gathering insights from other ministries and national governments regarding their strategies for integrating gender into the Blue Economy. It is important to collect and disseminate case studies, tools, and approaches to avoid duplicating efforts and leverage existing knowledge effectively.

7 Conclusion

Mainstreaming gender and other cross-cutting social issues are necessary for national development framework(s) to transform the subject position of vulnerable groups along targeted growth strategies.

⁶⁰ The list of takeaways is available in Annex 7.

Furthermore, it has been recommended to provide additional support to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) engaged in working to disrupt gender inequalities that limit women's access to and participation in all the Blue Economy priority sectors. Establishing core areas of focus at the national level will assist CSOs in addressing identified needs, such as: increasing women's childcare access; developing a more flexible working environment; ending household gender inequality; women's economic empowerment and access to credit; and leadership and enterprise development training.

The institutional capacity assessment of gender-related policies to advance Blue Economy development in Belize highlights, so far, the critical importance of integrating gender considerations into policies and practices to promote sustainable and inclusive growth. The assessment revealed several key findings:

1. **Policy Framework:** Belize is building a gender policy in the Blue Economy through the Fisheries Department, which can serve as a cornerstone to recognize and promote the importance of gender equality in this area. However, it will be important to adapt this policy to the specific needs of each sector of the Blue Economy and of its agents, if and when need be. There is also a need for greater alignment and coherence among existing policies to ensure effective implementation. This includes:
 - i. Improve consultation processes to integrate women's perspectives into policy development.
 - ii. Align policies to address women's unique challenges and opportunities.
 - iii. Ensure inclusive economic policies that support women's access to resources and financial services.
 - iv. Develop inclusive policies supporting women's leadership in both traditional and innovative sectors (e.g., seaweed cosmetics, lionfish jewellery).
 - v. Emphasise direct involvement of women in policy and law development affecting the Blue Economy.
 - vi. Ensure consideration of women's perspectives, needs, and challenges for effective policy implementation.
2. **Gender Action Plan:** the necessity to develop and implement a gender action plan for the Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management Ministry encompassing gender sensitive budgeting and operational procedures for managing projects and providing feedback to ensure mainstreaming. Additionally, there will be a necessity to enhance procedures, which can take the form of grievance clause or mechanism, to ensure clear redress mechanisms.
3. **Capacity Building:** There is a need for capacity-building initiatives to enhance the understanding of gender issues among policymakers, government officials, and stakeholders in the Blue Economy. This includes training programs on gender analysis, mainstreaming, and monitoring and evaluation.
4. **Data and Research:** There is a lack of sex-disaggregated data and research on the gender dimensions of the Blue Economy in Belize. This hinders the development of evidence-based policies and programs that promote gender equality.
5. **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Strengthening partnerships and collaboration among government agencies, civil society organisations, and the private sector is crucial for advancing gender equality in

the Blue Economy. This includes engaging women's organisations and other stakeholders in policy development and implementation processes.

6. **Gender-responsive budgeting:** To effectively implement gender-responsive budgeting, it is crucial to allocate specific budgets that explicitly integrate gender mainstreaming across all sectors, ensuring systematic inclusion of gender considerations in planning and policy development. This approach should strategically embed gender equality principles at every level of decision-making, from budget formulation to policy implementation, to promote inclusive development. By prioritising evidence-based interventions that have proven effective in advancing gender equality, such as targeted policies, laws, and programs, governments can ensure meaningful impact. Moreover, using gender-responsive budgeting as an accountability tool ensures that commitments to gender equality are reflected in tangible budget allocations for policy implementation, program development, and legal reforms, thereby fostering a more equitable and inclusive society.
7. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** There is a need for robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress towards gender equality goals in the Blue Economy. This includes developing gender-sensitive indicators and conducting regular assessments of gender mainstreaming efforts to ensure that gender is properly considered or mainstreamed in projects and activities.

In conclusion, and so far, the institutional capacity assessment underscores the importance of mainstreaming gender considerations into policies and practices to advance Blue Economy development in Belize. By addressing the identified gaps and challenges, Belize can enhance its capacity to promote gender equality, empower women, and achieve sustainable and inclusive growth of the Blue Economy.

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Annexes

Annex 1 Terminology

Empowerment: A process by which individuals gain power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality.

Gender: A context-specific, socially constructed set of expected attributes of girls, women, boys, men and gender-diverse people.

Gender Equality: The equitable access to opportunities and resources for people of all genders, free from discrimination and bias. Gender equality means that individuals of all genders have equal access to knowledge, resources and opportunities, as well as equal rights, status, responsibilities and opportunities and regardless of gender identity and/or expression.

Gender Equity: Gender equity is the process of being fair to people of all gender identities. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often be available to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality.

Gender Inclusive: Gender inclusive refers to practices, policies, language, and environments that are designed to accommodate and include individuals of all gender identities. This inclusivity is intended to ensure that everyone, regardless of their gender identity, are acknowledged, respected, and valued.

Gender Mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned actions, including legislation, policies, or programs, in all areas and at all levels, allowing both women's and men's concerns and experiences to be integrated in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.

Gender Responsive Budgeting: A strategy to achieve equality between women and men by focusing on how public resources are collected and spent.

Sex: A set of biological characteristics associated with being male, female, or intersex, attributed at birth.

Annex 2 Literature

Key Gender and Blue Economy Laws and Policies in Literature

1. Blue Economy Policies, Strategies, and Plans

- Belize Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy & Implementation Plan (2022–2027)
- Belize Environmental and Developmental Sustainable Policy and Implementation Plan
- Belize Maritime Economy Plan
- Belize National Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan
- Blue Bonds Loan Act
- National Adaptation Plan for the coastal zone and fisheries sector (2024-2034)
- Strategy for Reef Resilience in Belize
- The National Fisheries Policy and Action Plan
- The National Mariculture Policy

2. Key Gender Documents

- FAO Policy in Gender Equality (2020-2030)
- FAO Voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication
- Gender Analysis of Belize’s Coastal Zone and Fisheries Sector
- Gender and Diversity Assessment, Promoting Sustainable Growth in the Blue Economy
- Gender Responsive Engagement Strategy & Action Plan for the Fisheries Department and CZMAI
- Green Climate Fund (GDF) Gender policy and gender mainstreaming toolkit
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan
- Marine Conservation and Climate Change Adaptation Project (MCCAP) final Evaluation Report
- National Climate Change Gender Action Plan
- National Fisheries Policy, Strategy and Action Plan
- National Gender Policy and Action Plan, Fisheries Resource Bill of 2020
- WIFF documents

3. International Commitment to Advance Gender Equality

- Beijing Declaration
- International Commitment to Advance Gender Equality
- International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention and Labour Standards
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals

4. Laws and National Policy Framework

- Constitution of Belize
- Development Frameworks (long-term and medium-term development plans)

- Labour Act
- Revised Belize National Gender Policy (2013)
- The Belize National Youth Development Policy (2013)
- The Fisheries Resources Act No. 7 of 2020

Key Legislative and Policy Environment in Belize

- Belize National Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (2016): The Plan lays out strategies to facilitate the improved management of coastal and marine resources. The aim is to attain a sustainable future where healthy ecosystems support, and are supported by, thriving local communities and a vibrant economy.
- Belize National Environmental Policy and Strategy – NEP (2014-2024) and Interim Updated Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (2020-2025): The NEP outlines Belize's overarching environmental goals and strategies. It aims to promote sustainable development, conserve biodiversity, and protect ecosystems while balancing economic and social needs.
- Climate Change and Carbon Market Initiatives Bill, 2023: This bill was to develop, implement, manage, and regulate mechanisms to enhance climate change resilience and low emission development for the sustainable development of Belize; to respect the objectives and principles of the international climate regime ratified in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement; to establish a market in Belize to trade carbon credits.
- Coastal Zone Management Act, CAP 329, Revised Edition 2020 of the Laws of Belize: This Act provides for the improvement of coastal zone management in Belize through the establishment of a Coastal Zone Management Authority and a Coastal Zone Management Institute.
- Coastal Zone Management Authority (Sportfishing) Regulations of 2009: Regulations designed to govern sportfishing activities within coastal zones aiming to ensure sustainable fishing practices, protect marine ecosystems, and manage fishing resources effectively.
- Environmental Protection Act (EPA), revised edition 2000: The EPA provides the legal framework for environmental management in Belize. It regulates activities that may have adverse environmental impacts and establishes procedures for environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and environmental audits.
- Fisheries Resources Act 2020: The Fisheries Act regulates fishing activities in Belizean waters. It includes provisions for sustainable fisheries management, licensing of fishers and fishing vessels, and conservation of marine resources, and includes provisions for the management of the Mariculture Industry and for the declaration and management of Marine reserves. Belize has established several MPAs to protect marine biodiversity and ecosystems. The regulations governing these areas include rules for fishing, tourism, and other activities to ensure sustainable use.
- Forest Act, revised edition 2000: The Forest Act regulates the management and conservation of forest resources in Belize. It establishes guidelines for sustainable forestry practices, including logging and reforestation, and aims to prevent deforestation and forest degradation, and includes regulations for the protection of mangroves.
- Marine Spatial Planning (MSP): Belize is developing MSP frameworks to guide the sustainable use of its marine resources. MSP involves planning the use of marine space to balance economic, social, and environmental objectives.

- National Energy Policy: Belize has a National Energy Policy that sets out the government's vision and strategies for the energy sector. It includes targets for increasing the share of renewable energy in the country's energy mix.
- Port Authority Act, revised edition 2003: The Belize Port Authority Act establishes the Belize Port Authority, which is responsible for regulating ports and harbours in Belize. It sets out the authority's powers and functions related to port operations and safety.
- Protected Areas System Act, 2015: This legislation establishes a system of protected areas in Belize, including national parks, nature reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, natural monuments, forest reserves, marine reserves, archaeological reserves, private protected areas, and protected landscapes or protected seascapes. It provides for the conservation and management of these areas and sets out penalties for illegal activities within them.
- Solid Waste Management Act, revised edition 2000: This legislation addresses the management and disposal of solid waste in Belize. It establishes standards for waste management practices and promotes recycling and waste reduction.
- Wildlife Protection Act revised edition 2000: This legislation protects wildlife species in Belize from hunting, poaching, and other forms of exploitation. It regulates the trade in wildlife and their products and establishes penalties for violations.

Annex 3 Key International Commitments

Regulatory Framework and Institutional Mechanisms

Normative Instruments/Binding Treaties/International Conventions/Policies and Laws	Year	Relevance to Gender Mainstreaming in the Blue Economy
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)	1948	Sets out fundamental human rights that are universally recognized. Belize, as a member of the United Nations, has committed to upholding the principles and values enshrined in the UDHR, including those related to gender equality.
The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1989	Sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health, and cultural rights of children. Belize, as a party to the CRC, is committed to upholding these rights and ensuring that they are protected and promoted for all children in the country, regardless of gender.
Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	1990 (ratif.) 2002 (prot.)	Main reference document for equality between men and women. Through its ratification or accession to it the States are legally bound to adopt all necessary measures, including special temporary measures and laws, for women to fully enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms.
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action	1995	The signatory countries take responsibility for the implementation of the Platform for Action, in which twelve critical areas of concern for the advancement of women are defined.
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action	2000	Belize is committed to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which outlines a comprehensive agenda for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.
United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	2012	The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recognizes the important role of women in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Belize, as a party to the CBD, is committed to integrating gender considerations into its implementation of the convention.
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	2015	Aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls are central to the SDGs, with Goal 5 specifically focusing on gender equality.
Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries	2018	FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines).

Annex 4 List of Stakeholders Consulted

List of stakeholders contacted and consulted, as of June 17th, 2024.

	Stakeholder Type	Organization	Position
1	CSO	Association of Protected Areas Management Organizations (APAMO)	Directory (1)
2	CSO	Belize Audubon Society	Directory (1)
3	Government	Belize Coast Guard	Managerial (1)
4	Government	Belize Fisheries department	Officership (1)
5	CSO	Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future	Directory (1)
6	Government	Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit	Directory (1)
7	Statutory Body	Belize Port Authority	Directory (1)
9	CSO	Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA)	Directory (1)
10	Government	Beltraide	Manager (2)
11	Government	Blue Bonds and Project for Finance Permanence Unit, OPM Minister	Directory (1); Managerial (1)
12	CSO	Building Belizean Livelihoods and Environment (B-BLUE)	Managerial (1)
13	Government	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CFRM)	Directory (2); Officership (2); Managerial (1)
14	Government	Central Bank of Belize	Directory (1)
15	Statutory Body	Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI)	Directory (2); Officership (3)
16	Government	Department of Environment	Directory (1)
17	Government	Fisheries Department	Managerial (1)
33	CSO	Fragments of Hope	Directory (1)
18	CSO	Galen University	Directory (1)
19	CSO	Healthy Reef Initiative	Directory (1)
20	CSO	Hol Chan Marine Reserve	Directory (1); Managerial (1)
21	Government	International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE)	Directory (1)
22	Government	Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise of the GOB	Directory (1); Officership (1)
23	Government	Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management	Directory (1); Officership (4)
25	Government	Ministry of Economic Development	Officership (1)
26	Government	Ministry of Finance, Economic Development & Investment	Officership (2)

28	Government	Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining	Directory (1)
24	Government	Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics and E-Governance	Directory (1)
29	Government	Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Risk Assessment	Officership (1)
30	Government	Ministry of Tourism & Diaspora Relations	Directory (1); Officership (1)
31	Government	National Biodiversity Office	Directory (1); Officership (1)
32	Government	National Climate Change Office	Directory (1)
34	CSO	OCEANA	Directory (1)
35	Government	Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT)	Directory (1)
36	CSO	Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation and Development	Directory (1)
37	CSO	Southern Environmental Association (SEA)	Directory (1)
38	Statutory Body	Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB)	Directory (1)
39	CSO	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Directory (1)
40	CSO	Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE)	Directory (1); Managerial (1); Officership (2)
41	CSO	Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association (TASA)	Directory (1); Officership (1)
42	CSO	University of Belize, Environmental Research Institute	Directory (1); Managerial (2)
43	CSO	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)	Directory (1); Officership (1)
44	CSO	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)	Directory (1); Managerial (1); Officer (1)

*The stakeholders indicated in bold are those who participated in the interview and/or survey. Those not highlighted were contacted and followed up, but who did not respond.

Annex 5 Questions to stakeholders

Questionnaire for Gender mainstreaming in the Blue Economy development in Belize

Respondent Information

Title/Position:	
Institution/Organisation:	

Background

The recently established Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management has as one of its primary mandates, to develop a sustainable Blue Economy (BE) for Belize that will contribute to the country's economic growth/recovery and the creation of opportunities for improved livelihoods through the responsible use and management of its ocean and aquatic resources. To deliver on this mandate, policy and strategic guidance are necessary that are reflective of the sustainable and inclusive development of ocean resources, while ensuring environmental protection, sustained livelihoods, and transparency and accountability in Blue Economy Decision-making Frameworks. To achieve the sustainable development of Belize's blue space within the context of the existing policy framework, an equally assertive approach in institutional strengthening is necessary to ensure policy coherence and Blue Justice in Blue Economy development beyond individual institutional sector-specific mandates.

Purpose of the Questionnaire

To obtain, analyse and interpret perceptions of capacity needs for BE development in the short, medium, and long-term across institutions considered relevant for BE development in Belize, and to define and prioritize actions for gender-sensitive BE capacity development.

Approach and Methodology

The questions will be directed towards stakeholders involved in the management and development of the eight (8) sectors prioritized for BE development in Belize – Aquaculture/Mariculture, Blue Carbon, Renewable Energy, Fisheries, Marine Protection & Management, Maritime Transport & Shipping Services, Ocean & Coastal Tourism, and Marine Research & Development. Stakeholders at governmental, public, private, and civil society levels will be engaged, and include local stakeholder. Whenever possible and in accordance with the interviewee's preference, questions will be asked in person. The questions and their order will vary depending on the institution and the interviewee. While some questions will focus on gender mainstreaming within the organisation, others will address gender mainstreaming in specific Blue Economy industries or fields. Definitions of key terms, such as gender mainstreaming and gender sensitivity, will be provided beforehand when needed.

Bank of Questions:

How many women are working at the management level of your organisation?

How many women are part of the board?

In what department(s) is there the highest, and lowest, concentration of women workers?

How important is it, to you, that our organisation has gender inclusive policies*?

1 Not important at all – 5 Very important

Do you feel your organisation has a gender inclusive* approach when it comes to creating new policies and making major decisions?

Can you provide examples of initiatives or projects within the Blue Economy that have effectively integrated gender considerations?

Some examples include launch of programs to empower or address women needs and matters; involvement of women in areas or works traditionally led by men; increase of women in leadership roles and decision-making processes; training offered to women and addressed to their needs; gender-responsive data collection; promotion of women-led businesses.

What challenges or barriers have you encountered in promoting gender equality and inclusion* in the Blue Economy?

Are there specific projects or areas where gender mainstreaming is particularly challenging?

Are there specific projects or areas where gender mainstreaming has been particularly successful?

Can you share any successful instances where gender mainstreaming led to positive outcomes or impacts in your industry?

Is there any existing gender-specific policies or programs in place in your industry? If so, how effective do you believe they are?

What specific challenges or barriers have you encountered in the promotion of gender mainstreaming within your industry?

What strategies or tools do you think would be beneficial for furthering gender mainstreaming in the Blue Economy sector?

Is data related to gender collected and analysed within your industry? If so, how?

What is your understanding of the organisation's commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming?

Is data related to gender collected and analysed within your organisation? If so, how? If so, is it gender-disaggregated?

Can you provide examples of how gender considerations have been integrated into your organisation's projects or initiatives?

Is there any gender-specific indicators or targets that your organisation is using when monitoring projects?

Does your organisation monitor and evaluate the impact of gender mainstreaming efforts? If so, how?

Are there any opportunities for collaboration with external organisations or experts to enhance your organisation's gender mainstreaming initiatives?

How is the organisation involving and engaging women in its decision-making processes?

Annex 6 Survey to Stakeholders

Gender Responsive Questionnaire

Link to questionnaire: <https://forms.gle/ybko5fi7Q8gX8thL7>

GENDER ASSESSMENT: CAPACITY BUILDING TO ADVANCE THE BLUE ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT IN BELIZE

Background

The Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management aims to build a sustainable Blue Economy for Belize, promoting economic growth, creating opportunities, and ensuring responsible management of ocean resources. Achieving this requires policy and strategic guidance that prioritizes both sustainability and inclusivity, while protecting the environment, sustaining livelihoods, and ensuring transparency in decision-making, within the eight (8) sectors prioritized for Blue Economy development in Belize. These include Aquaculture/Mariculture, Blue Carbon, Renewable Energy, Fisheries, Marine Conservation & Management, Maritime Transport, Ocean & Coastal Tourism, and Marine Research & Development. To this effect, the project "Capacity Building to Advance the Blue Economy Development in Belize" is currently being conducted.

A key task of this project is to define prioritized actions and needs for gender-sensitive Blue Economy capacity development. You were identified as an important interlocutor to contact for gathering information on gender-specific opportunities for gender mainstreaming and capacity building within the Blue Economy sector in Belize. We would deeply appreciate receiving your informed insights, which would help shape our understanding on this matter. By participating in this quick questionnaire, you would also contribute to informed decision-making and ensure your perspective is represented accurately. The questionnaire should not take longer than 5 minutes to be answered.

Definitions

Gender inclusive: gender inclusive refers to practices, policies, language, and environments that are designed to accommodate and include individuals of all gender identities. This inclusivity is intended to ensure that everyone, regardless of their gender identity, are acknowledged, respected, and valued.

Gender equality: the equitable access to opportunities and resources for people of all genders, free from discrimination and bias. Gender equality means that individuals of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men in workplace, such as in gender wage gap, labour force participation, and representation in leadership roles.

Gender mainstreaming: gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned actions, including legislation, policies, or programs, in all areas and at all levels, allowing both women's and men's concerns and experiences to be integrated in the design, implementation,

monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.

Gender-disaggregated: information that is categorized and presented separately for individuals of different genders, typically women and men, to assess and analyse variations, disparities, and trends within a specific sector.

Institution/Organisation:	
Title/Position:	

Part 1. Policy, regulatory and management frameworks

1 Does your organisation have a person or unit specifically tasked with gender integration? (i.e., gender unit, gender specialist, gender focal person)?

Yes ____ No ____

If not, why? _____

2 Indicate the total number of women workers for each department below at your organisation:

Human Resources _____

Administrative _____

Finance/Accounting _____

Production and Operations _____

Research and Development _____

Information Technology _____

Other: Specify department name and number _____

1. Do you feel your organisation has a gender inclusive approach when it comes to creating new policies and making major decisions? (Pick one option)

____ Strongly Agree

____ Agree

____ Disagree

____ Strongly Disagree

2. The current laws and policies regarding the use of Blue Economy resources (You can pick multiple options)

____ are very unclear to me.

____ are very fair.

____ are very clear to me.

____ are very unfair.

____ does not match up with our culture.

____ sanctions are unfair practices and beliefs.

5. Does your organisation monitor and evaluate the impact of gender mainstreaming policies and efforts? If so, how?

Yes ____ No ____

If yes, how? _____

6. Is data related to gender collected and analysed within your organisation? If so, is it gender-disaggregated?

Yes ____ No ____

If yes, what type of data and how it is collected?

Part 2: Gender mainstreaming opportunities

7 Can you indicate which initiatives or projects within your organisation, or the Blue Economy have effectively integrated gender considerations? can pick multiple options.

____ Launch of programs to empower or address women's needs and matters.

____ Involvement of women in areas or works traditionally led by men.

____ Increase of women in leadership roles and decision-making processes.

____ Training offered to women and addressed to their needs.

____ Gender-responsive data collection.

____ Promotion of women-led businesses.

Other (please specify) _____

8 Are there any opportunities for collaboration with external organisations or experts to enhance your organisation's gender mainstreaming?

Yes ____ No ____

If yes, which organisation and opportunity?

Part 3: Gender Specific Barriers, Capacity Building Needs and Mechanisms

9 What types of help or training would you like?

____ Gender in General.

____ Awareness and self-awareness for women and men.

____ Gender roles and needs.

____ Gender-sensitive appraisal and planning.

____ Gender and major global issues.

____ Working with counterparts on gender issues.

____ Strategies for change

Other (please specify) _____

10 What are the best practices in relation to gender that can be incorporated within your organisation? can pick multiple options.

Educate Your Workers on Gender Bias.

Evaluate and Standardize Pay.

Review Your Recruiting Process.

Stand Up to Gender Bias in the Workplace When It Happens.

Offer Flexible Work Options.

Establish Mentoring Programs.

Sponsorship.

Other (please specify) _____

11 What challenges or barriers have you encountered in promoting gender equality and inclusiveness in the organisation?

Please list. _____

12 What strategies or tools do you think would be beneficial for furthering gender mainstreaming within the Blue Economy or the organisation you work for?

Please list. _____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT!

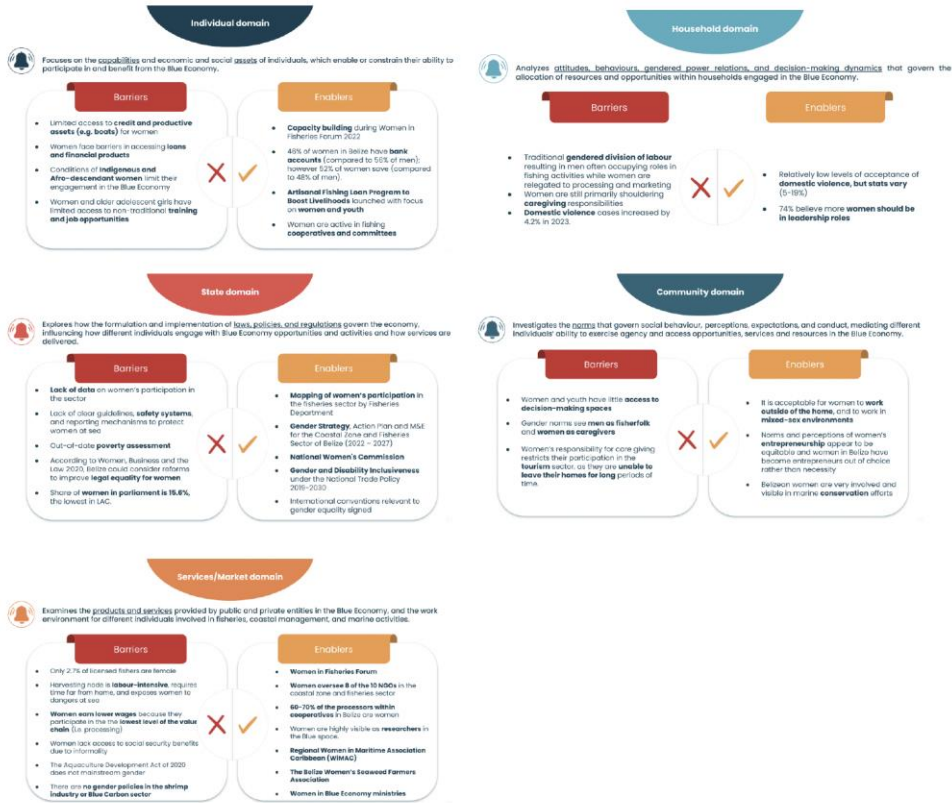
Annex 7 Blue Economy Gender Mainstreaming Workshop

EXERCISE 1

10 minutes

- Which key findings from the rapid gender analysis resonate most with your unit's priorities?
- Which issues are you already working to address?
- Which issues are you interested in tackling more?
- Are there big issues missing from this rapid gender analysis that you are already tackling?
- Note: consider policies, programs and institutions

1



Need additional (M&E) personnel who can prioritise and execute the work of collecting gender data and its analysis, as well as the implementation of the gender strategy (Coastal Zone and Fisheries Sector). Existing M&E officers' mandate is not focused around gender.				
Beltaide and DFC offer microloans. DFC also offers loans specifically for women for their small businesses.				
Within the fishing sector, men were found to have higher income earnings. It is a reality due to factors such as ownership of productive assets such as boats, boat engines, fishing gears and the fact that they held higher earning positions in fishing organizations and cooperatives. Due to these reasons, men were found to have greater access to financial credit.	A National Women in Fisheries Association was recently formed, as an effort under the Women in Fisheries Forum.	For the social security access, it is not just women, men too within the fisheries sector lack access to it.	Willingness to work when compared to actual capability and capacity needs to be considered. As an example, in the recent women in fisheries forum as someone previously mentioned, they have families they need to take care of. As much as some would like to leave home and go into the workforce their nurturing roles pose a barrier. For this reason, we discussed developing homesteads in some coastal communities so women could remain home with their children and also make income.	While women are involved in cooperatives, they don't hold leadership or decision-making roles within these organizations. They are mainly involved in administrative work or food processing. This is an important consideration. The question is, how do we enable them to attain these higher positions?

Key takeaways

1. **There's lots of energy for gender equality work amongst the MBEDRM teams.** There's already been a lot of thinking about gender data, gaps in evidence, and capacity needs. It's a good time to build on the workshop, drive the momentum forward and possibly convene a gender working group across the MBEDRM units.
2. **There are multiple gender equality policy, strategy, action plans and M&E frameworks underway across the MBEDRM units.** These are currently a bit fragmented and haven't yet been well-socialised. It will be important to engage a cross-unit group to ensure priorities are represented in strategies, roles and responsibilities are clear, resource efficiencies are made, and duplication is avoided.
3. **There is a recognition of gender capacity gaps across the MBEDRM units.** These need to be addressed both to finalise the development of any gender policy frameworks and cross-unit strategies, as well as implement and monitor the priority activities in the upcoming action plans. A gender training program for key MBEDRM staff should be considered, along with dedicated headcount with gender expertise.
4. **There is a desire to learn more from other ministries and country governments on their approach to gender mainstreaming in the blue economy.** Case studies, tools and approaches should be collected and shared. There's no need to start from scratch or reinvent the wheel.



Annex 8 Figures

Figure 1 Gender capacity need trainings

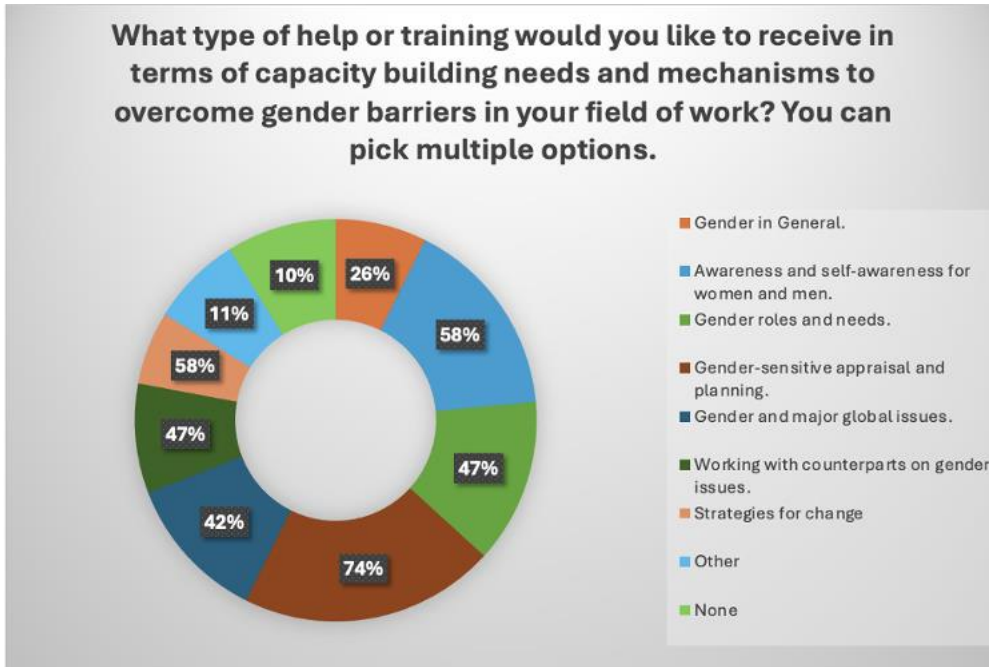


Figure 2 Gender capacity need trainings

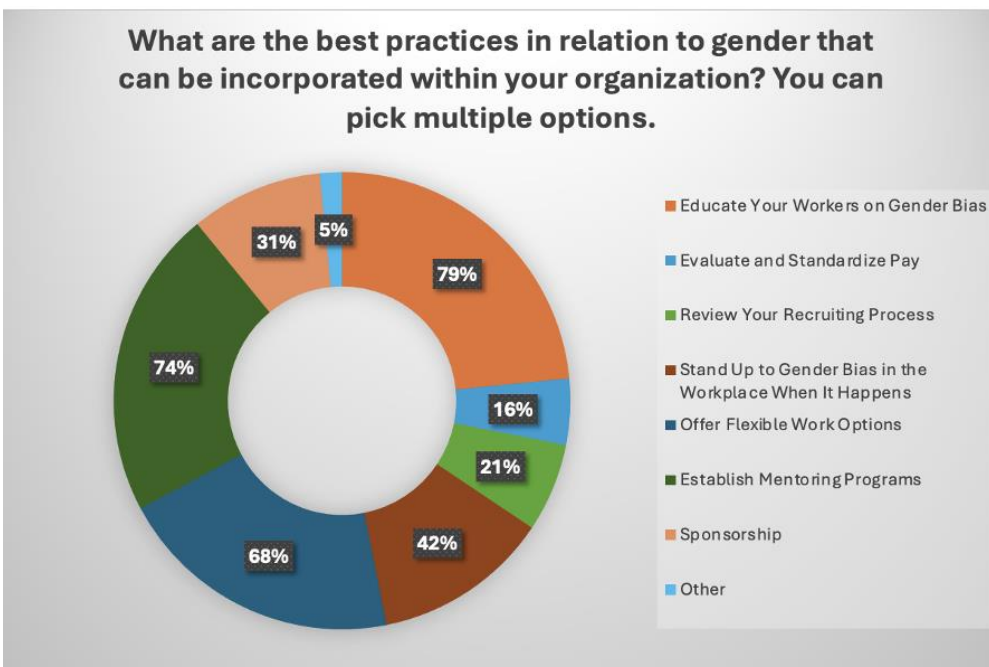


Figure 3 Successful initiatives and projects in gender mainstreaming

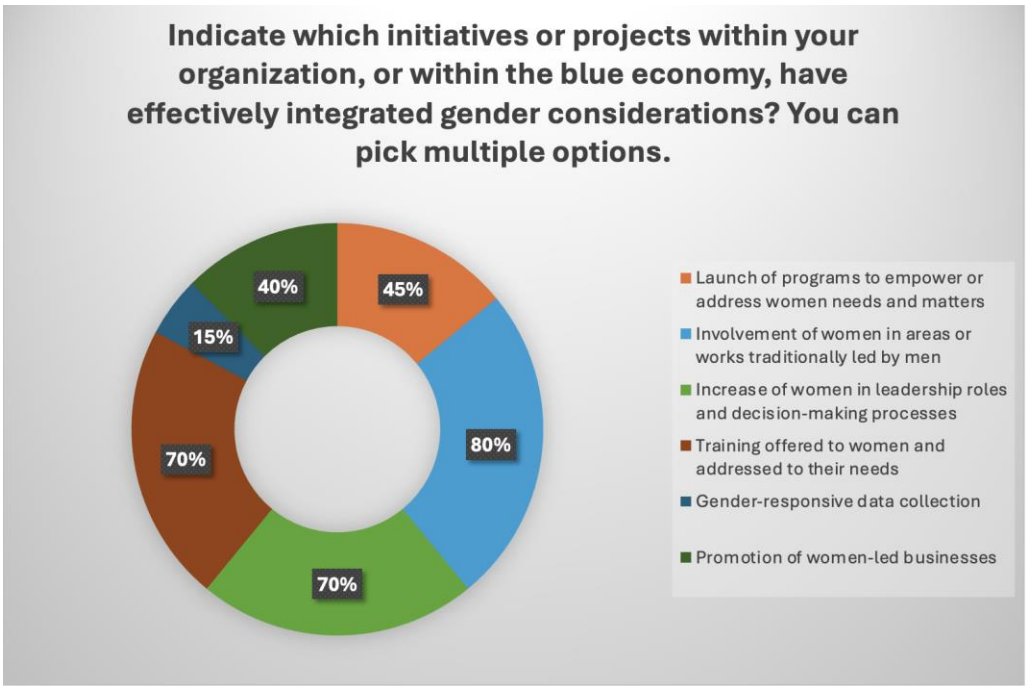


Figure 4 Gender-inclusive approach of organization



Figure 5 Availability of external assistance to enhance organization's gender mainstreaming

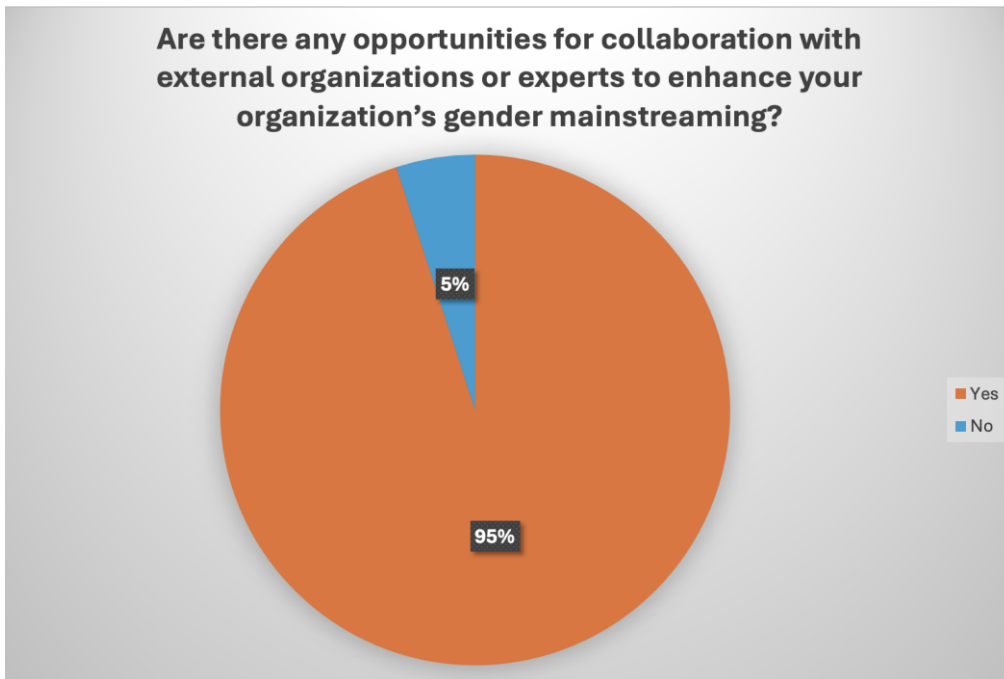


Figure 6 Collection and analysis of data related to gender

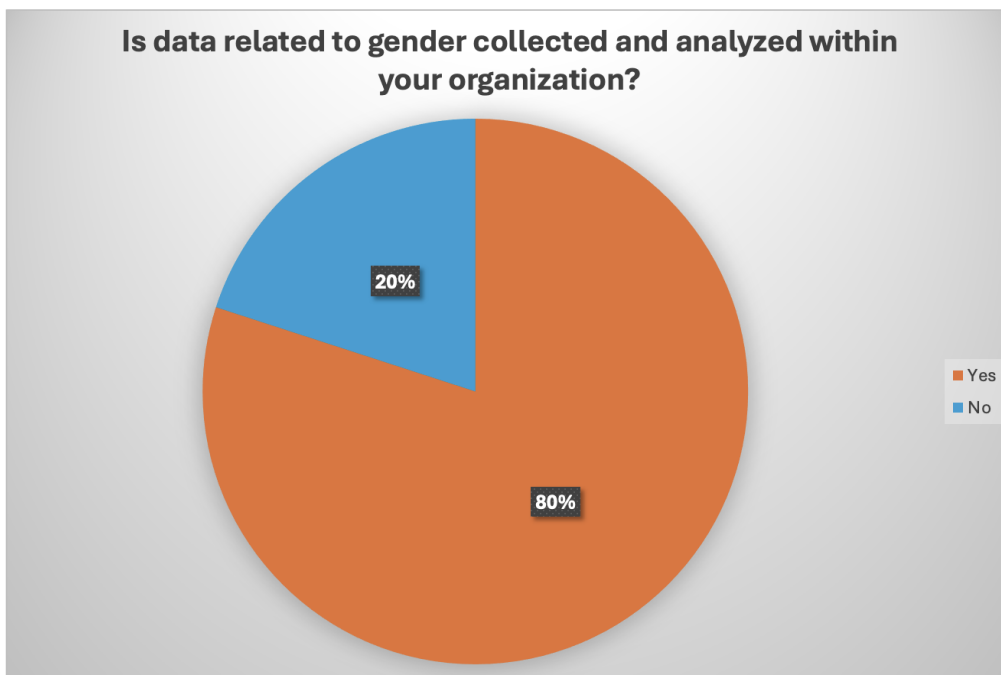


Figure 7 M&E of the impact of gender mainstreaming policies and efforts

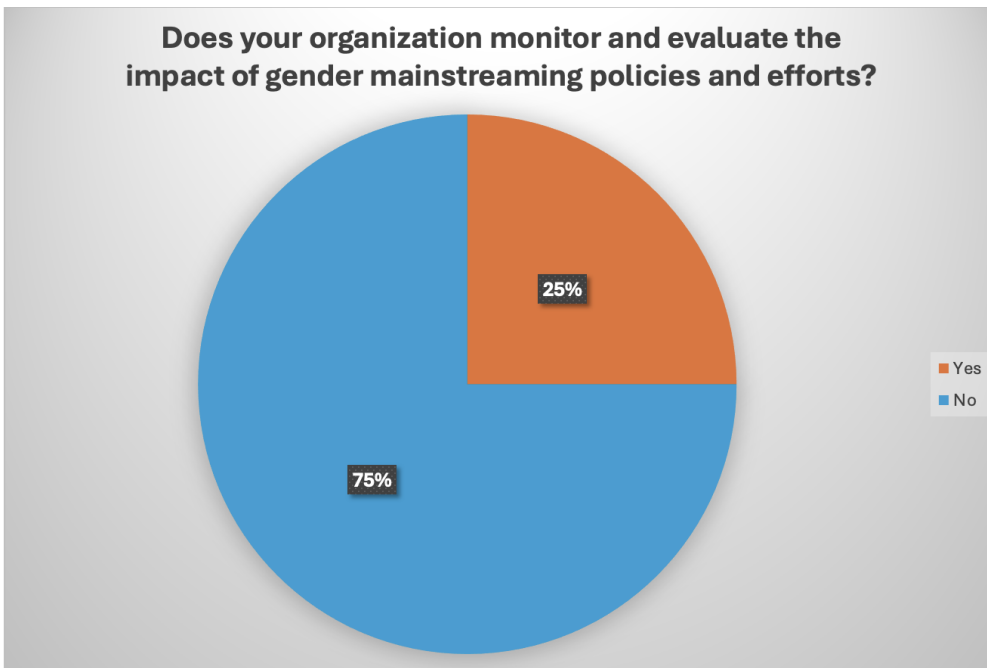


Figure 8 Disaggregation of data based on gender

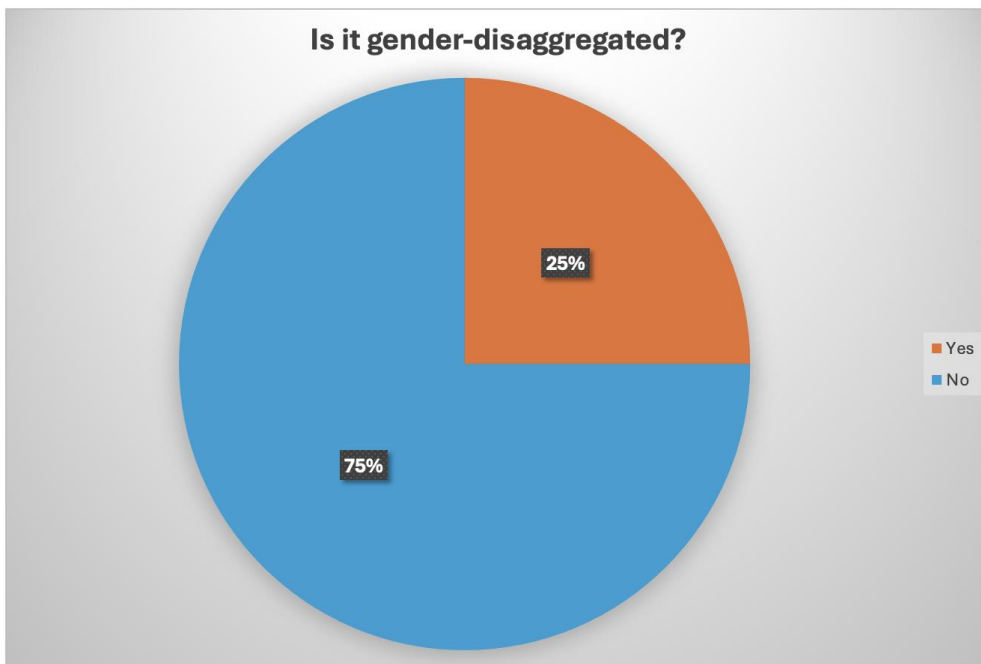
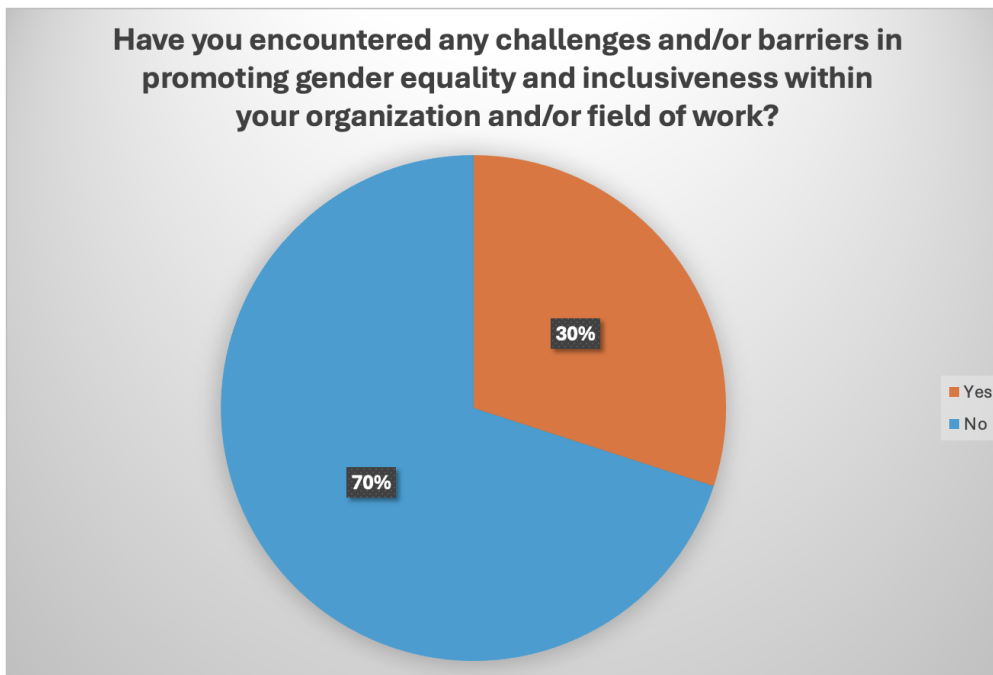


Figure 9 Dedicated Gender Integration Roles in Organizations



Figure 10 Dedicated Gender Integration Roles in Organizations



Gary Hesling

gary.hesling@nlai.blue



Registered office: Unit 1 The Cam Centre, Wilbury Way, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 0TW

Registered in England: 10801372