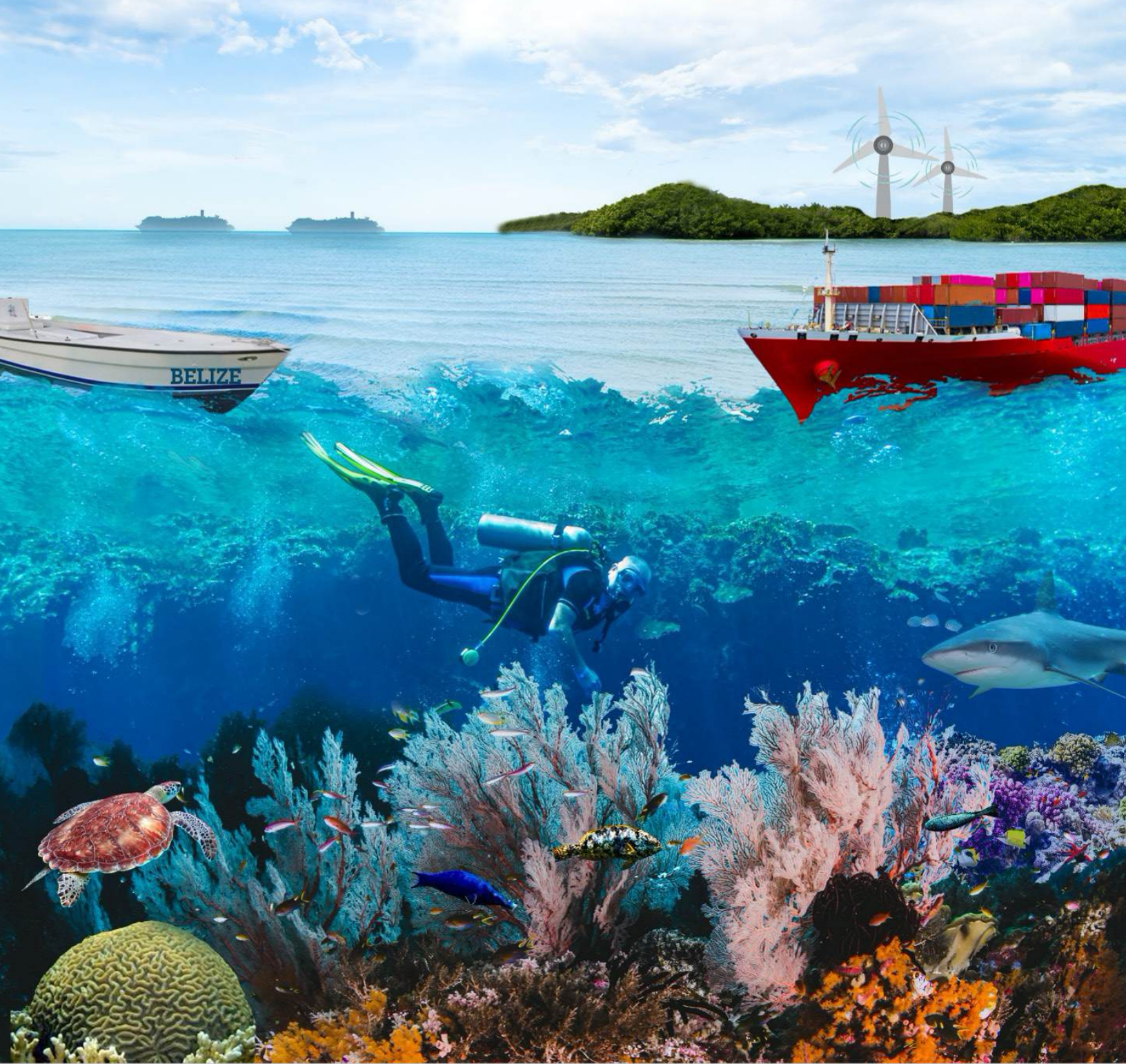




MINISTRY OF BLUE ECONOMY AND CIVIL AVIATION

Belize Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy & Implementation Plan 2022 - 2027



BELIZE BLUE ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT POLICY, STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2022-2027

Adopted on 12 August 2022



Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation with support of the Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association and the Belize Marine Fund

Prepared By:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Disclaimer and Copyright
	Ministerial Foreword
	List of Acronyms
1	Introduction
2	Policy Enabling Framework
2	Belize
3	Legal Context
4	Policy Context
6	Institutional Context
8	Challenges and Barriers to be Addressed by the Policy & Strategy
10	Policy Formulation Process
13	Principles of the Blue Economy Policy, Strategy & Implementation Plan
15	Blue Economy Policy, Strategy & Implementation Plan
15	Vision
15	Mission
16	Policy Priority Areas, Policy Statements, and Rationale
16	Policy Priority Area 1: Governance Framework for Blue Economy Development
17	Policy Priority Area 2: Incentives for Blue Economy Development
18	Policy Priority Area 3: Capacity Building, Education, and Research
19	Policy Priority Area 4: Resource Mobilization
20	Strategic Objectives, Outcomes and Actions
24	Annex 1. Blue Economy Policy & Strategy Implementation Plan (2022-2027)

Disclaimer on behalf of Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association and the Mesoamerican Reef Fund – MAR Fund

This document is the result of work coordinated by Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association and the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation, and does not necessarily represent the ideas or official policies of the Mesoamerican Reef Fund – MAR Fund.



Copyright © 2022 Ministry of Blue Economy

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in reviews and certain non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

Ministerial Statement on behalf of the Government of Belize

Belize, a Small Island Developing State, hidden away on the isthmus, straddling Central America and the Caribbean, is prized as “the Jewel” for our biodiversity, land and sea scapes, and diverse people. A young and small country, with our ocean resources including the Belize Barrier Reef System a World Heritage Site of global importance, playing a vital role in providing cross-sectoral needs and socio-ecological functions for our developing society. Our low population density and advanced conservation efforts provide a rare and exciting opportunity to develop a true “Blue Economy” for Belize, sowing the seeds for the world from which to learn and grow.

The Belize Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan comes at a crucial point in time when the rest of the world seeks leadership and guidance to evolve from the business-as-usual model into a new era of ecosystems-based management and community lead management approaches. Designed to meet multi-sectoral needs and promote a sustainable ocean economy free of blue injustices, this new and innovative Policy is holistic and harmonious. Cognizant that our ocean resources, our coastal zone, mangroves, cayes, coral reefs, our marine environment and marine biodiversity, our seas and barrier reef, is central to Belize’s identity, our way of life, our livelihoods and well-being... our own “sub oceanum floreo”, “under the ocean we flourish”.

The Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation extends its sincere gratitude to all stakeholders across the Government of Belize, Ministries, Departments, Units, Civil Society, Academia, Non-governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisation, Local Authorities and Municipalities, Associations and Cooperatives, and the private sector for providing valuable input for the development of this Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan. Special thanks to our Blue Economy Unit, Fisheries Department and Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute for the participation and contribution in this important process.



Hon. Andre Perez

Minister of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andre Perez". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font. It is positioned below the printed name and title.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BBFPU	Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit, Office of the Prime Minister
BE	Blue Economy
BEC	Blue Economy Cluster
BEDPS	Blue Economy Development Policy & Strategy
Beltraide	Belize Trade and Investment Development Service
BG	Blue Growth
BMEP	Belize Maritime Economy Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CZMAI	Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Green House Gas
HSFA	High Seas Fisheries Act
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
ICZMP	Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan
IMMARBE	International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize
MBECA	Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSP	Marine Spatial Plan
NBS	Nature-Based Solutions
NCCPSAP	National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PACT	Protected Areas Conservation Trust
RMS	Resource Mobilization Strategy
SOBE	Sustainable Ocean Based Economy
TASA	Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USD	United States Dollar

INTRODUCTION

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 **Center 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 concept of the Blue Economy, therefore, recognises and respects the ecological limits which determine the safe operating space for economic activities and the minimum social standards that a fair economic model should address, and is a unique reflection of a country’s economic development needs and its natural and human wealth¹. The Blue Economy is an evolving paradigm with a myriad of definitions, but in which the maintenance of coastal, environmental and ecosystems health, and Nature Based Solutions (NBS) are indispensable requirements to achieve blue growth and a robust ocean economy. Marine and coastal ecosystems are the source of the natural capital needed for the development of a series of blue industries and economic sectors that offer a diversity of services which make up the ocean economy.

A country’s ‘**blue space**’ includes the coastal zone and its associated ecosystems, which in the case of Belize includes mangroves, seagrass, and coral reefs, and extending to the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and on to the area beyond national jurisdiction. In this regard, an effective Blue Economy approach for Belize must consider all influences and interactions across the associated ecosystems and EEZ. It must recognise the need to move away from sectoral management to a more multisectoral approach which includes holistic management of the marine ecosystem. To date, the approach to Belize’s ocean economy has followed sector-specific policies, plans and regulations. This approach has not resulted in optimum economic development or protection of the goods and services provided by Belize’s marine resources. Thus, there is urgent need for an integrated, multi-sectoral Blue Economy approach which will ensure a robust and sustainable ocean economy.

The blue economy, blue growth (BG), and associated activities may offer pathways for a resilient economy if critical barriers and challenges are overcome. The development of blue economy requires a transparent and participatory enabling framework that is sensitive to sectoral mandates, but which ensures effective coordination, integration, and mainstreaming of BE principles in sector level decision-making processes to achieve a sustainable ocean economy free of blue injustices. This Belize Blue Economy Development Policy and Strategy (BEDPS) seeks to provide an enabling framework for BE development while being mindful that blue economy is still ‘unchartered’ territory, evolving, and subject to continuous learning.

¹*The Blue Economy in Practice – Raising Lives and Livelihoods. Blue Economy Pulse. NLA International (2021).*

POLICY ENABLING FRAMEWORK

Belize



Belize is bordered to the **north** by **Mexico** to the **west** and **south** by **Guatemala**, and to the east by the Caribbean Sea.

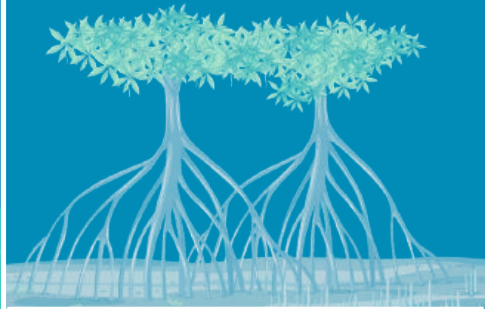
Offshore, and stretching for **220km** (137 miles) is an extensive and outstanding natural reef system; **3 offshore atolls**; and more than **300 cayes**.



In 2019, the **population** was **390,353** and a per capita **GDP** of **USD 4,815.16²**. The country has **6 districts, 9 municipalities**, over 263 villages, with a total land area of **22,700 km.**

Belize's marine biodiversity is globally significant, as evidenced by **7 protected areas** which make up the **Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System**, a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site.

The country's territorial waters cover **23,660 km²** (9,019 square miles) and the coastline extends **280km** (168 miles). The coastline is made up of a series of interconnected ecosystems which includes mangrove forests, river deltas, sea grass beds, estuaries, and coastal lagoons.



The country consists of **68** natural ecosystem types³ with **11** of these represented in the coastal and marine environment. Belize is home to over **118** globally threatened species (**9** critically endangered, **32** endangered and 77 vulnerable) and a further **62** near threatened/of least concern⁴.

²Statistical Institute of Belize (sib.org.bz)

³Meerman, J. C. (2011). *Ecosystems Map of Belize – 2011 edition*: <http://biological-diversity.info>

⁴IUCN (2016). *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2016-2*. <http://www.iucnredlist.org>. Downloaded on 04 September 2016. IUCN/WCMC.

Belize's coastal zone is of critical importance to the development of Belize and hosts several key economic sectors including tourism, marine fisheries, maritime transport, and mariculture. The many mangrove forests along Belize's coastline are highly effective carbon sinks, sequestering large quantities of carbon preventing it from entering the atmosphere. In addition, mangroves are vital in helping coastal communities adapt to climate change impacts, reducing the impact of storms and sea-level rise. They are also productive and biologically rich ecosystems, providing a home, nursery and feeding ground for a wide range of species of fish, birds, insects, reptiles. Belize's barrier reef protects the coastline from storms and erosion, provides jobs for local communities, offers opportunities for recreation, and is an important source of food.

Over the past decades, rapid economic development and population growth have taken place within the coastal zone and inland areas of Belize. These occurrences have led to increasing pressures on coastal and marine resources, with implications to the livelihoods of those that depend upon them. These anthropogenic threats stem from various developmental activities associated with tourism and recreational facilities, population growth and expansion, utility supply, dredging and minerals extraction, land clearance, pollution, waste disposal, fisheries, and aquaculture. These threats are compounded by natural hazards, global warming and sea level rise, and the vulnerability of sensitive ecological systems to climate change⁵. Efforts must be made to ensure that in the sustainable development of Belize's blue space due consideration is given to the needs of other economic sectors that are active in the coastal zone. This also includes the preservation of the broader environmental goods and services provided to Belize and the global community by coastal ecosystems.

Legal Context

There are at least fourteen different Acts and regulations that have been identified as relevant for BE development in Belize. However, there is no Blue Economy Act or other legal framework in place in Belize that is designed and structured to deliver BE development and implementation.

The Fisheries Resources Act 2020 contains provisions for fisheries development and management in Belize's territorial sea and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), fisheries research, mariculture development and regulation, Marine Protected Areas, and enforcement. **The High Seas Fishing Act, 2013** (HSFA 2013) (Revised 2020) addresses another dimension to the regulation and management of fisheries. This Act contains provisions for the regulation and control of fisheries resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction consistent with international conventions and agreements and within the context of Belize flagged vessels. **The Coastal Zone Management Act 2000** (Revised 2020) tasks the CZMAI to provide advice on all matters relating to the development and utilization of the resources of the coastal zone in an orderly and sustainable fashion. This includes advising government on policies regarding the coastal zone as well as the development and implementation of programmes and projects that translate these policies into activities that contribute to the sustainable development of coastal resources.

The Environmental Protection Act 2000 (Revised 2020) outlines provisions for environmental protection, sustainable development, and prevention of environmental pollution. **The Maritime Areas Act 1992** (and as amended in 2019) is (Revised 2020) crucial for the development of BE in Belize, and particularly as relates to the EEZ.

⁵ *State of the Belize Coastal Zone 2003 – 2013. Coastal Zone Management Authority & Institute, 179p*

The Act provides for sovereignty exercisable by Belize consistent with international law in respect of the territorial sea, the airspace over the sea, and the seabed under, that sea, and the subsoil of that seabed. **The National Lands Act 2003** (Revised 2020) outlines the definition of “national lands” which includes the seabed. **The Belize Port Authority Act 2011** provides for a coordinated and integrated system of ports, lighthouses, and port services. It confers duties to regulate and control navigation and approaches to ports, safe and convenient navigation within Belizean waters, and to maintain, improve and regulate the use of ports.

The Fiscal Incentives Act, Cap. 54, Revised Edition 2011 (Revised 2020) provides for the granting of incentives via an approved enterprise order in relation to the enterprises that meet the requirements of the Act. **The Belize Tourism Board Act, Cap. 275** (Revised 2020) provides for the establishment of the Belize Tourism Board, with the primary function to develop all aspects of the tourist industry of Belize and to promote the efficiency of the industry. The Forests (Protection of Mangroves) Regulations 2018 provides for the protection of mangroves from alteration or selective trimming. **The National Protected Areas System Act, 2015** (Revised 2020) is of crucial importance for BE development. It provides for the establishment of a national protected areas system; conservation, management, and sustainable use of protected areas; conservation of ecologically viable areas; maintenance of genetic diversity and the diversity of species and habitats; sustenance of the provision of ecosystem goods and services important for national development; and the strengthening of coordination and collaboration. **The PACT (Amendment) Act, 2017** (Revised 2020) is structured to support the functionality and sustainability of the National Protected Areas System, and the Protected areas Conservation Trust (PACT) is tasked with facilitating financing of the system, including those protected areas located within the blue space.

The Belize National Coast Guard Service Act, Cap 131.01, Revised Edition 2011 (and Amendment of 2016) (Revised 2020) provides for maritime security through-out the country’s blue space and is critical for investment confidence for BE development. **The Registration of Merchant Ship Act of 1989, 1996, 2010** (Revised 2020) establishes the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) as an open shipping Registry, for the registration under the flag of Belize of vessels of any type, class, size, or weight engaged in any kind of trade, service, or international maritime activity, including pleasure vessels. Even though there is a moratorium on oil exploration in the blue space of Belize, **the Petroleum Act, Cap. 225** (Revised 2020) remains relevant as part of the legal framework as a sector with possible potential within a BE context.

Policy Context

The national policy and legislative framework are influenced by other national policies and international conventions and agreements to which Belize is a party. Blue Economy, as an evolving paradigm, must be demonstrated to provide incremental value to the overall national development framework as an engine for achieving blue growth. In this regard, it is necessary that the Belize Blue Economy Development Policy & Strategy be *consistent* with and *complementary* to national policies and international and regional commitments and agreements which are relevant for BE development. It has been found that national policies have varying degrees of alignment with globally promoted BE principles and are sector-specific in many instances, but there are also some that are multi-sector in nature.

A key national policy for BE development is the Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy 2016–2019, which *outlines Necessary Condition 3.1.5: Marine and Aquatic Resources where action to protect, sustain, and sustainably use these resources are of the highest priority with the action to implement the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZMP), including the development of a marine spatial plan.* The National Fisheries Policy, Strategy, and Action plan (2020–2024) was developed in 2019. Policy Priority Area 2, Policy Statement 4– *Development of fisheries value chain and blue economy is critical for Belize’s economic development*⁶ – gives priority to promote blue economy initiatives that are critical for food security, nutrition, livelihoods, and local and national economies. By focusing on developing value chain strategies, producing value added fisheries products, and implementing fisheries diversification programs; the policy outlines the intent of the government to further develop and create the enabling environment for sustainable use of coastal and marine resources. The Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan 2016 proposes a scenario-based zoning scheme for each coastal and marine based activity and is a good baseline for Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and complements other MSP approaches currently used in Belize such as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Development of the blue economy is impacted by the National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan (NCCPSAP), which emphasizes the building of resilience in order to prevent, reduce or adapt to the negative impacts of Climate Change on key sectors, economic activities, society and the environment through policies and strategic processes; and promotes the development of efficient and relevant institutional mechanisms that will enhance the planning and response capacity to Climate Change. Of strategic relevance for the implementation of this BEDPS is the Belize Maritime Economy Plan of 2021⁷ (BMEP), which outlines priority considerations for the key sectors of Belize’s blue space, the principles of which are consistent with global BE approaches and representative of the guiding principles defined for the BEDPS. The BMEP, therefore, is complementary to and instrumental in informing the Implementation Plan of the BEDPS.

There are twenty-seven (27) national policies and twenty-two (22) international conventions and agreements to which Belize is a party, that have been identified as being of relevance to BE development, whether directly or indirectly.



⁶ *Institutional Development and Management Consultants Limited (ID&M) 2019. Fisheries Policy, Strategy & Action Plan (2020–2024). Belize Fisheries Department.*

⁷ *Atkins Consulting (2021). Draft Belize Maritime Economy Plan. Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme. UKAID, 58p*

Institutional Context

The current institutional framework for BE development in Belize is representative of those directly linked to the relevant legal framework described above, those that exist based on parliamentary mandate and associated ministerial portfolios, and those that are representative of civil society, i.e., the non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Those with the most visible presence based on legal mandate as provided for in an existing Act, and relevant for BE development include the Fisheries Department, the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute, the Forest Department, the Department of the Environment, the Belize Port Authority, the Belize Tourism Board, the Protected Areas Conservation Trust, the High Seas Fisheries Unit, IMMARBE, the National Security Council, Beltraide, and the Belize National Coast Guard Service. Though not directly involved in the management of marine resources, and consistent with the Lands Act, the Lands and Survey Department is relevant in the context of seabed leasing, the granting of lease and title to land with presence of mangroves or other critical coastal ecosystems, as well as other permitting functions as it relates to coastal development and infrastructure. As real estate infrastructure (tourism development and residential) is prominent and quickly expanding along Belize's coastline, the role of the Central Building Authority and some municipal authorities in ensuring BE principles are respected in the review and approval processes for coastal infrastructure will become increasingly important.

As an extension of the legal mandate offered under the Fisheries Resources Act and the National Parks Systems Act, several NGOs are directly involved in the management and operations of Marine Protected Areas and associated marine resource protection through Co-Management Agreements. While not necessarily in a co-management agreement, other NGOs are also influential in BE development through research to inform management and policy, co-financing, Blue Bond opportunities, capacity building, education, and outreach. These are primarily international NGOs.

Other key government institutions that are relevant for the multisectoral approach to BE development include the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation (MBECA), the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations, and the Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics and E-Governance. These ministries may not have a specific sector Act or Acts from which their functions and mandate derive but have parliamentary mandate to oversee the implementation of existing Acts and policies relevant for BE development. The MBECA has the important mandate to facilitate the development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the Belize Blue Economy Development policy. In particular, MBECA has the role of coordinating, liaising, and communicating with all ministries that are a part of the multisectoral Belize Blue Economy. MBECA established the multisectoral Blue Economy Cluster (BEC) to guide the development of the BEDPS and has been instrumental in defining the vision, mission, and guiding principles for BE development in the country. The Ministry of Economic Development has a strategic role to play in BE development. As the ministry for overall planning for economic development and resource mobilization, and in considering the myriad of economic sectors active in Belize's blue space, this ministry must ensure national policy coherence, alignment of investment priorities in the BE with priorities of national importance, cross-sector collaboration and coordination, and compliance with Belize's regional and international commitments. This ministry must have a key role in any future governance arrangement to be established for blue economy development in Belize. Also, the newly established Blue Bonds and Finance Permanence Unit (BBFPU) in the Office of the Prime Minister will be critical for resource mobilization to fund Belize's BE development.

The University of Belize and Galen University will be instrumental in responding to the information, research, and training needs that will be required to implement a Blue Economy Policy and Strategy. National academic institutions must lead in ensuring the availability of a competent, innovative, and adaptable maritime work force with the right skills for BE development in the short term, but that will allow for adaptation in the workplace as the BE evolves. The Private Sector Organizations that are representative of established sectors active in the blue space are from a handful of sectors (fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and real estate) but which will gradually increase as emerging sectors begin to actively take their place in BE development. Some of these sectors, for example, maritime transport and ports (including marinas) do not have an organization representing the sector.



Challenges & Barriers to be Adressed by the Policy & Strategy

The blue economy, blue growth, and associated activities will offer pathways for a resilient economy when the critical barriers and challenges are overcome. The development of blue economy requires a transparent and participatory enabling framework that is sensitive to sectoral mandates, but which ensures integration and mainstreaming of BE principles in sector level decision-making processes to avoid blue injustices and achieve a sustainable ocean economy. This policy and strategy seek to address the following challenges and barriers.

A.	Sector-specific approach to coastal and marine resource management and use of the blue space place limitations on effective BE development and implementation.
B.	Regulations under the Fisheries Resources Act must be developed for: the sustainable development of mariculture consistent with the National Mariculture Policy, development of deep-sea fishing in and out of the EEZ, and fisheries value chain development and management.
C.	A transparent framework for market-driven certified sustainable seafood products must be developed in collaboration with the private sector inclusive of standards to be met, traceability, and auditing.
D.	It is necessary to institutionalize the implementation of the National Fisheries Policy, Strategy, and Action Plan and the National Mariculture Policy.
E.	Economic activities in the blue space must be associated with certifiable and traceable standards in all sectors as part of the national BE identity.
F.	Decision-making mechanisms of some institutions in the blue space not integrated with national priorities leading to lack of policy coherence.
G.	Some institutions in the blue space are thematically misplaced in a ministry which makes them institutionally disconnected in structure and function.
H.	The CZMAI has no regulatory authority, and its convening powers are not enough for desired impactful results within a BE context. Its decisions may not be legally binding or easily challenged in court, and it is not institutionally structured to deliver a Blue Economy.
I.	Some existing sectoral regulations are not designed to be effective within the context of Marine Spatial Plans which may require different considerations and standards for each type of use of the blue space within an MSP context, i.e., regulations may not be fit-for-purpose from the perspective of BE development.
J.	The Lands Act contains no specific provision outlining use or leasing of the seabed, or water column or priority of use, while the Mines and Minerals Act, Cap 226 (Revised 2020) does not provide details for mining in the blue space or considerations for how such mining may affect the marine ecosystem. Other Acts such as the Beltrade Act (and others) provide opportunities for BE principles to be better considered as a precondition in permitting and approval processes.
K.	The Port Authority Act contains no specific provision related to conflict of use and shipping channels and other lanes for maritime traffic within an MSP context, even though MSP can contribute significantly to maritime safety. Bathymetric and other hydrographic features may dictate where shipping lanes must be maintained or installed as a matter of national priority, thus having a direct impact on national MSP efforts.

L.	Maritime Administration in the country is disjointed and lacks a coherent and efficient governance framework that is reflective of maritime affairs as a single thematic area.
M.	Current national policy framework needs to be updated to better reflect and incorporate BE principles and to better recognize the blue space as a key economic development area.
N.	There is no National Energy Act (needs to be far more comprehensive than the Electricity Act Cap. 221). Marine Spatial Planning that is proactive in identifying blue spaces for renewable energy development is necessary.
O.	The BTB Act is not designed to consider needs of other sectors or the coastal and marine resources on which tourism depends as part of licensing processes.
P.	Management of protected areas within the blue space is distributed across multiple mandates with inconsistency in policy, approach, and management effectiveness. This lack of an integrated approach and policy coherence is contrary to the principles of BE development and can result in management bottlenecks and inefficiencies to the detriment of BE development. For BE development purposes it is convenient to recategorize where necessary and improve governance and management of marine protected areas.
Q.	Co-management Agreements for protected areas in the blue space must be structured according to BE principles and incorporate accountability mechanisms and sustainable financing plans.
R.	Bioprospecting and biotechnology are key areas for potential BE development, however, there are no national policies to guide these two sectors in support of blue growth.
S.	There is no legislative and institutional framework in place in Belize that is designed and structured to deliver BE development and implementation as an integrated and multi-sector process. BE development may require innovative reforms at the legal, institutional, and organizational levels to ensure coordinated, integrated, and transparent decision-making and management across multiple sectors.
T.	Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) must be embraced as an important tool in delivering BE objectives, while attending to the spatial needs of BE sectors. MSP analyses and allocates the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives through a political process, as a practical way to create and establish a more rational use of marine space and the interactions among its uses, to balance demands for development with the need to protect the environment, and to deliver social and economic outcomes in an open and planned way.
U.	The Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation (MBECA) has parliamentary mandate to develop a sustainable Blue Economy 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. However, this ministry lacks the legal and institutional empowerment and structure to deliver its mandate and achieve the multi-sector approach to BE development. The ministry has no convening power or legal mandate to require other BE sectors to align, adopt and act in accordance with BE principles. In addition to the absence of a Blue Economy Act, the current human capacity of the MBECA is not appropriate (in skill set and number) to deliver the many processes and outcomes that are expected under a BE development scenario. There is a critical need for skilled and experienced personnel, technology, relevant policies and regulations, and strategies to assess and mitigate potential environmental and social costs and blue injustices associated with BE development.

POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS

The first activity in the policy formulation process was the development of an ‘Institutional and Organizational Baseline Assessment for Blue Economy Implementation in Belize’. To ensure that the baseline assessment is fit-for-purpose as a solid baseline against which to substantiate the development of a BE Policy and Strategy and generate recommendations for associated institutional and possible legislative and regulatory changes, a comprehensive literature review and research was conducted, designed to respond to the specific needs of the BEDPS. This review focused on the institutional and organizational arrangements relevant for Blue Economy development. In this regard, this task additionally identified barriers and challenges to policy development, gaps in research, analysis of the legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks, the national and global enabling environment for Blue Economy development, and the associated socio-economic dimension within a Blue Economy Context.



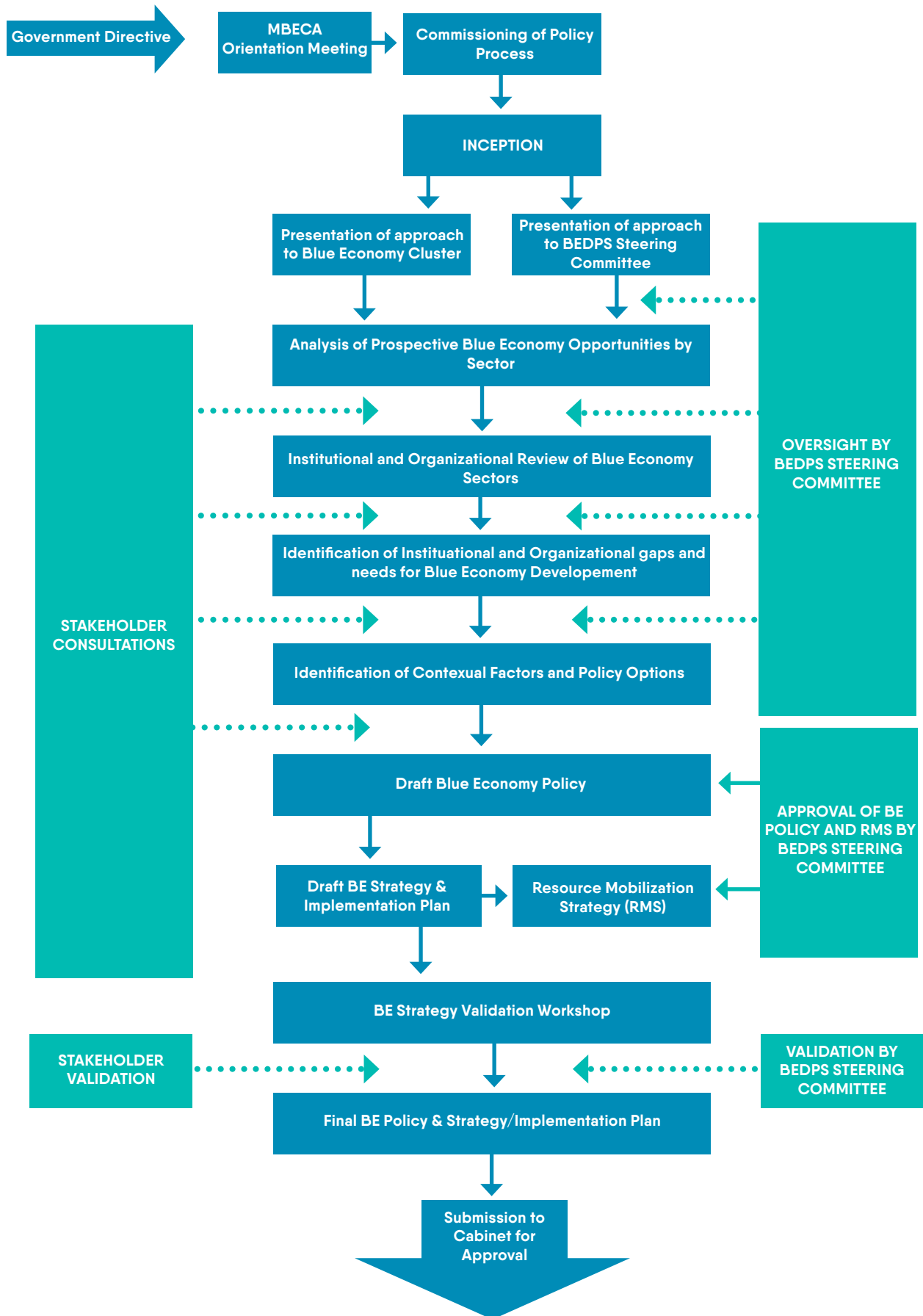
Figure 1 is a summary of the policy and strategy formulation process. The overall policy process was facilitated by the MBECA and MPA co-manager Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association (TASA).

As the ministry tasked with BE development, it is necessary that the BEDPS is structured to adequately empower the MBECA to deliver its mandate of coordinating the multisectoral approach to the implementation of the Belize Blue Economy Policy and Strategy. In this regard, the consultancy conducted a review of legal, personnel and institutional capacity of the Ministry of Blue Economy, inclusive of its networking and coordination mechanisms. To provide clarity on the organizational capacity of the MBECA to deliver its mandate, the information obtained from the literature review and inputs received during consultations and interviews were used to assess the dimensions of the MBECA’s organizational environment.

Building on the Influence vs Interest Matrix developed in the “*Belize Blue Economy – Stocktake & Diagnostic Analysis*” (March 2022), a Blue Economy Stakeholder Mapping exercise was conducted based on influence and impact of a BE policy based on three (3) levels of engagement.

For the stakeholder mapping process, **‘stakeholder’** means an institution or group that has an interest in the development of Belize’s Blue Economy or is likely to be affected by any policy influencing Blue Economy development, with due consideration for the fact that the relationship of each stakeholder to Blue Economy development varies according to circumstances and contexts. Stakeholders were identified and placed in 1 of 3 levels according to their relationship with Blue Economy development:

Figure 1. Blue Economy Development Policy and Strategy Formulation Process



LEVEL 1:

Institutions/organizations that have direct leadership and responsibility for policy formulation, adoption, and implementation; can influence and decide (directly responsible) the outcomes and the manner of how the Blue Economy sector is developed.

LEVEL 2:

Institutions/organizations that are directly impacted by policy, can influence policy content either positively or negatively, and social acceptability; participate in the development of the Blue Economy sector due to associated legal mandates, though not directly responsible, or due to inter-institutional coordination efforts and perceived collaborative benefits.

LEVEL 3:

Institutions/organizations that are directly impacted by policy, can influence policy content either positively or negatively, and social acceptability; participate in the development of the Blue Economy sector due to associated legal mandates, though not directly responsible, or due to inter-institutional coordination efforts and perceived collaborative benefits.

A structured and targeted survey was developed and applied to stakeholders. The survey targeted and solicited specific inputs geared towards answering questions that are crucial to the legal and institutional baseline, but more importantly, to the identification of policy options. Questions in the survey sought to obtain stakeholders' perceptions for BE sector prioritization, Marine Spatial Planning, legislative and institutional mandates, governance framework, questions specific to empowering the MBECA inclusive of legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks, with solicitation for recommendations on inter-institutional mechanisms for policy operationalization and implementation with due consideration of the related legal mandate of multiple government institutions and the perceived role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the private sector. The results of the survey complemented the comprehensive literature review to produce the baseline assessment but also informed policy options and recommendations for policy prioritization.

Based on the results of the targeted survey, stakeholders were approached in one-on-one consultations, to further solicit inputs to either expand or elaborate on responses provided in the survey or provide these stakeholders with an additional opportunity to express themselves verbally, as it is a proven fact that many stakeholders express themselves differently (and sometimes more forthcoming) when given the opportunity to do so verbally. This step was crucial for removing ambiguities which may have been included in the written surveys. Using the information presented in the 'Institutional and Organizational Assessment for Blue Economy Development in Belize', **a Draft Blue Economy Policy & Strategy** was produced. This was reviewed by the BEDPS Steering Committee and the Blue Economy Cluster and was later validated in a National Validation Workshop, after which the final version was produced.

PRINCIPLES OF THE BLUE ECONOMY POLICY, STRATEGY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Principles of the Policy Process:

1	The policy is a set of objectives and associated actions expressed as formal statements or positions.
2	A Blue Economy Policy & Strategy must be coherent with other priority areas of national policy and should thus be coordinated, complementary and not contradictory to other national policies.
3	A Blue Economy Policy & Strategy must be coherent with the country’s international commitments acquired through negotiated and ratified conventions and agreements.
4	The policy formulation process is objective and neutral.
5	The policy formulation process must assess the current policy framework and opportunities for policy change.
6	Those to be affected by the policy must be given the opportunity to participate in agreeing to the principles of the policy and be included in the debate regarding its formulation and in the decision-making process regarding its adoption.

Guiding Principles of the Blue Economy Policy

The Guiding Principles are listed below and illustrated graphically in Figure 2.

1	Good Governance
2	Blue Justice
3	Socially & Economically Beneficial
4	Sustainable & Environmentally Responsible
5	Ecosystem-Based Management
6	Quality & Innovation
7	Education and Public Awareness



Figure 2. Guiding Principles of the Blue Economy Policy & Strategy

SUSTAINABLE & ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE

Supporting smart and sustainable investments, activities and projects relating to our aquatic resources assessed on sound scientific evidence that will adapt our cautious decision-making processes and reflect our core values to restore, protect, conserve and maintain the diversity, productivity, resilience, and overall health of our ecosystems as well as the livelihood and communities dependent upon them.

SOCIALLY & ECONOMICALLY BENEFICIAL

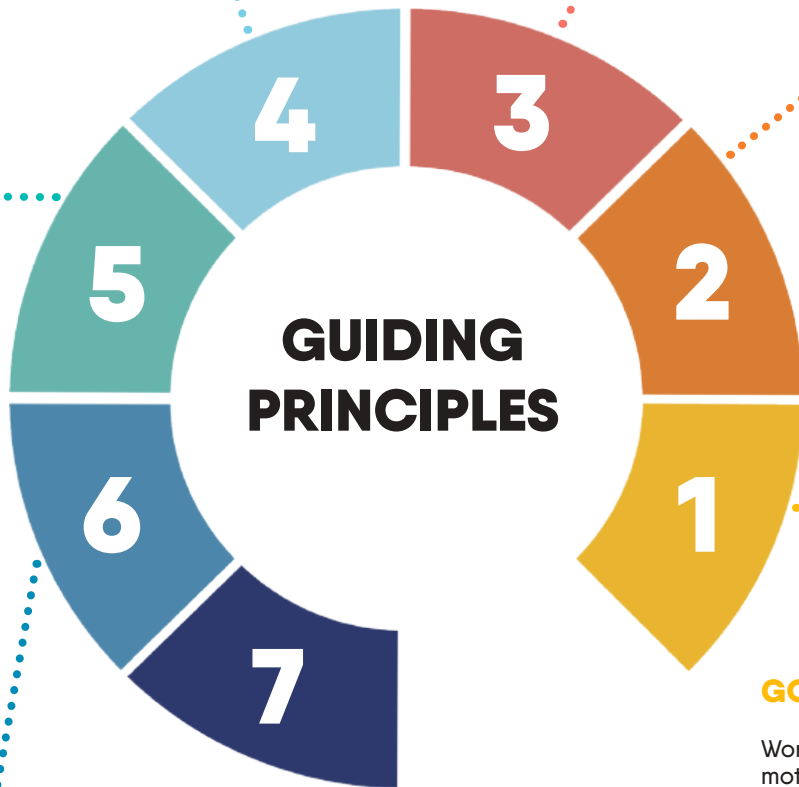
Working towards providing socio-economic benefits to achieve a high standard of quality of life for all Belizeans; by minimizing risks, maximizing shared benefits, and fostering long lasting relationships.

ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

An integrated management approach that works across sectors that impact species and habitats, economic activities, and the sustainability of our resources while allowing for consideration of research and development that helps protect and sustain diverse and productive ecosystems and the services they provide.

BLUE JUSTICE

A people centered blue economy and growth initiative that prioritizes promotion of the interests of ordinary workers, small-scale fishers, and the vulnerable and marginalized communities, with an eye towards power imbalance and equity, to have access participation, and rights within the blue economy; with an aim to close the inequality gap.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

Working towards a system that promotes sound public sector management, ensuring accountability and transparency through responsible decision making and legal framework for development.

QUALITY & INNOVATION

Delivering services of value and efficiency while actively seeking to encourage the development of new ideas, projects and solutions that will have a positive impact on aquatic ecosystems and the livelihood of all Belizeans.

EDUCATION & PUBLIC AWARENESS

Promoting both formal and informal education through communication and data sharing for the development and capacity building of the people encouraging sustainable growth for both current and future generations.

BLUE ECONOMY POLICY, STRATEGY & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

VISION

Belize's Blue Economy, by the year 2030, is productive, sustainable, resilient, and vibrant, contributing substantially to the socio-economic well-being of the country and its people.

MISSION

To increase Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through a thriving Blue Economy Development pathway that is holistic, harmonized, innovative and socially just, supported by a robust, science-based management regime of our aquatic resources and space to improve the livelihood of all Belizeans.



Policy Priority Areas, Policy Statements, and Rationale

The Blue Economy Policy consists of four (4) **Policy Priority Areas** and six (6) **Policy Statements** as outlined below. The successful implementation of the strategies and actions defined under each Policy Priority Area will aim to address the identified challenges and barriers to blue economy development.

Policy Priority Area 1: **Governance Framework for Blue Economy Development**

Policy Statement 1: Legal and policy reforms are necessary to establish a robust framework to enable Blue Economy development.

RATIONALE:

There is no Blue Economy Act or other legal framework in place in Belize that is designed and structured to deliver BE development and implementation. There is a collection of Acts directly associated with the blue space: Fisheries Resources Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Port Authority Act, the Mines and Minerals Act (as relates to coastal and marine dredging), the Forests (Protection of Mangroves) Regulations, and the Belize National Coast Guard Service Act. The High Seas Fishing Act and the Registration of Merchant Ship Act, though relevant for blue economy, are more directly associated to areas beyond national jurisdiction. The national policy and legislative framework are influenced by other national policies and international conventions and agreements to which Belize is a party. Blue Economy, as an evolving paradigm, must be demonstrated to provide incremental value to the overall national development framework and as an engine for achieving blue growth. The current governance framework is not conducive to coherent and effective blue economy development. For example, Maritime Administration in the country is disjointed and lacks a coherent and efficient governance framework that is reflective of maritime affairs as a single thematic area. Similarly, the management of protected areas within the blue space is distributed across multiple Acts, resulting in multiple mandates with inconsistency in policy, approach, and management effectiveness.

Policy Statement 2: Blue Economy development and implementation demand new and restructured institutional arrangements for policy coherence, transparency, effectiveness, and blue growth.

RATIONALE:

There is no institutional framework in place in Belize that is designed and structured to deliver BE development and implementation as an integrated and multi-sector process. BE development may require innovative reforms at the institutional and organizational levels to ensure coordinated, integrated, and transparent decision-making and management across multiple sectors. The CZMAI, which is a primary institution that is positioned in the blue space, has no regulatory authority and its convening powers are not enough for desired impactful results within a BE context. Its decisions may not be legally binding or easily challenged in court, and it is not institutionally structured to deliver a Blue Economy or a Sustainable Ocean Based Economy (SOBE). Some institutions in the blue space are thematically misplaced in a ministry which makes them institutionally disconnected in structure and function, while protected areas in the blue space are distributed across multiple mandates with inconsistency in policy, approach, and management effectiveness. This lack of an integrated approach and

policy coherence is contrary to the principles of BE development and can result in management bottlenecks and inefficiencies to the detriment of BE development. Decision-making frameworks, though prescribed in law, lack accountability mechanisms and commitment to impactful collective decision-making seems discretionary and optional. The absence of adequate institutional mechanisms to facilitate inter-institutional collaboration or an overall coordinating body makes it difficult for institutions to work beyond their immediate mandates.

Policy Priority Area 2: Incentives for Blue Economy Development

Policy Statement 3: Incentive Packages are necessary to enhance the sustainability of established economic sectors in Belize's blue space and to encourage the sustainable development of emerging sectors.

RATIONALE:

Building on the globally increasing market demand for sustainable goods and services can create incentives for good practices and drive new investment opportunities related to sustainably managed coastal and marine resources. Through thoughtful and fit-for-purpose incentive packages, economic activities in the blue space can reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions while safeguarding biodiversity, contribute significantly to food security, and create better jobs and support more equitable economic growth, household income and well-being. Incentive packages must only be used to attract sustainable investments in the blue space and require proper and prior due diligence and analyses. Global economic analyses suggest that every USD \$1 invested in mangrove conservation and restoration generates a benefit of USD \$3; every USD \$1 invested in scaling up global offshore wind production generates a benefit estimated at USD \$2 – USD \$17; and every USD \$1 invested in decarbonising international shipping and reducing emissions to net zero is estimated to generate a return of USD \$2 – USD \$5⁸. Incentive packages cannot be designed as 'one size fits all' and sector needs may have to be considered, while ensuring a consistent set of sustainability criteria is used for all packages for both established and emerging sectors.



⁸ Konar, M. and H. Ding (2020). *A sustainable ocean economy for 2050. Approximating its benefits and costs. High Level Panel for A Sustainable Ocean Economy, 57p*

Policy Priority Area 3: Capacity Building, Education, and Research

Policy Statement 4: Education and capacity development are indispensable for achieving blue growth and a sustainable blue economy.

RATIONALE:

To make meaningful progress in BE development, it is necessary to reduce skills gap between education offer and labour market needs, improve communication and cooperation between education and blue industries, improve the attractiveness and awareness of career opportunities in the blue economy, and improve the overall ocean literacy culture in the country. This will require structural changes in the curriculum at tertiary institutions and the formal introduction of blue economy disciplines at the technician and degree levels. Education and capacity building are two key elements of a BE development framework. In this regard, the University of Belize and Galen University will be instrumental in responding to the research and information needs that will be required to implement a Blue Economy Policy and Strategy. National academic institutions must lead in ensuring the availability of a competent, innovative, gender-sensitive, and adaptable marine and maritime work force with the right skills for BE development in the short term, but that will allow for adaptation in the workplace as the BE evolves. Capacity development for a blue economy requires collaboration and coordination of efforts among the many actors that assist in capacity development to build the skills and networks (nationally and internationally) that are required for effective leadership, policy development, negotiation, stakeholder engagement, and communication.

Policy Statement 5: Targeted and innovative marine research is the basis for informed and viable blue economy development.

RATIONALE:

Belize needs substantial information about its national, coastal, and marine resources to develop the ocean economy, enhance sustainability, and to inform marine spatial planning. Scientific and technological knowledge will play a crucial role in improving both an integrated and evidence-based management of the blue space and the sustainability of blue economic activities in Belize. State-of-the-art scientific knowledge and assessments must be developed to inform sustainable fisheries, tourism, renewable energy, mariculture, the design of maritime and port development, the status of mineral resources in the blue space, blue carbon, and investment. Predictive analytics for sector development, costs and benefits must be pursued to ensure the best policy and investment advice can be produced. Technical data to be produced from marine research will inform feasibility of investments in mangrove conservation, offshore renewable energy, reducing carbon emissions to net zero for ships and other maritime transport operating in Belizean waters, and will be indispensable to develop investible projects for resource mobilization and a comprehensive Resource Mobilization Strategy (RMS).

Policy Priority Area 4: Resource Mobilization

Policy Statement 6: Strategies must be devised and implemented to mobilize investments in support of blue economy development beyond traditional bilateral and multilateral financing.

RATIONALE:

Ocean finance can play a vital role in supporting sustainable development of the ocean economy by directing investments to activities, policies and actions that minimize ocean risks and maximize social and gender equity and environmental sustainability. A healthy ocean that supports a sustainable ocean economy requires adequate financing vehicles that generate, invest, align, and account for financial capital to achieve sustained ocean health and governance. This encompasses local, national, and international level financial instruments that are provided by, and/or accessed by individuals, public and private companies, governments, and other non-governmental/inter-governmental institutions. Financial instruments used to either finance a sustainable ocean economy, or as a basis for generating new financial capital for promoting sustainable ocean resource use include traditional loans and grants, carbon markets, and insurance instruments. In this regard, readily accessible sources such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) should be fully explored and opportunities for replication of opportunities such as the ‘Blue Bonds for Conservation’ model must be given priority.



Strategic Objectives, Outcomes and Actions

Policy Priority Area 1: **Governance Framework for Blue Economy Development**

Policy Statement 1: Legal and policy reforms are necessary to establish a robust framework to enable Blue Economy development.

Strategic Objective 1.1: To establish a robust legal and policy framework to enable Blue Economy development that is responsive to Belize’s needs and consistent with globally accepted principles.

Anticipated Outcome: 1.1.1: Governance framework for Blue Economy development strengthened by enabling legislation that promotes multi-sector and sustainable approaches to economic development in Belize’s blue space while ensuring policy coherence.

Strategic Actions:

1.1.1.1 Develop, adopt, and implement a Blue Economy Act that builds on the Coastal Zone Management Act, and which is expanded in scope, mandate, and accompanying regulations to effectively enable Blue Economy development as a multi-sector process.

1.1.1.2 Coordinate the administration of maritime affairs under a ‘Maritime Administration Authority’ to be tasked with the responsibility for all provisions under the Port Authority Act and the Registration of Merchant Ships Act.

1.1.1.3 Strengthen coordination under the Blue Economy Act or the Fisheries Resources Act, the management of all protected areas that are physically located in the blue space.

1.1.1.4 Develop a Green Carbon-Blue Carbon Investment Policy to attract and expand investment and funding such as blue bonds, debt conversion, conservation trust funds, and public-private partnerships.

1.1.1.5 Pursue and or advocate for the development of other relevant policies for BE development: Bioprospecting, Biotechnology, Maritime, Renewable Energy, Payment for Ecosystems Services, Biodiversity Offsets, etc.

1.1.1.6 Strengthen legislation of other sectors to enhance BE development

1.1.1.7 Adopt and implement the National Mariculture Policy

Policy Statement 2: Blue Economy development and implementation demand new and restructured institutional arrangements for policy coherence, transparency, effectiveness, and blue growth.

Strategic Objective 2.1: To establish functional and effective institutional arrangements for Blue Economy development and implementation.

Anticipated Outcome: 2.1.1: Blue Economy development benefitting from enhanced institutional capacity, effective and accountable inter-institutional collaboration, and inclusive and transparent decision-making processes.

Strategic Actions:

- 2.1.1.1 Structure and equip the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation to effectively lead and deliver the blue economy with a staff complement and resources that meet the requirements of the Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy & Plan.
- 2.1.1.2 Develop and implement a comprehensive National Marine Spatial Plan inclusive of required regulatory instruments and processes that proactively addresses the needs of the sectors in Belize’s blue space through the Coastal Zone Management Authority under the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation.
- 2.1.1.3 Integrate all responsibilities for implementation of the High Seas Fishing Act within the structure of the Ministry of Blue Economy for policy coherence and thematic alignment.
- 2.1.1.4 Strengthen, as a matter of national priority, the institutional capacity for Blue Carbon development as a key instrument of the BE development framework under the lead and coordination of the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation.
- 2.1.1.5 Establish (under the Blue Economy Act) a Blue Economy Commission at the highest policy level to ensure policy coherence between sectors and institutions active in the blue space to be chaired by the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation. Restructuring of the multisectoral Blue Economy Cluster to serve as a technical advisory group including a sub-committee for Blue Economy Investment.

Policy Priority Area 2: Incentives for Blue Economy Development

Policy Statement 3: Incentive Packages are necessary to enhance the sustainability of established economic sectors in Belize’s blue space and to encourage the sustainable development of emerging sectors.

Strategic Objective 3.1: To provide incentives to attract sustainable investments in the blue space in emerging sectors while creating opportunities for the established sectors to improve their sustainable practices.

Anticipated Outcome: 3.1.1: Incentive Packages developed, officially adopted by government, and influencing sustainable investments in Belize’s blue space.

Strategic Actions:

- 3.1.1.1 Develop sustainability criteria for Incentive Packages.
- 3.1.1.2 Feasibility Assessments for multiple types of sustainable Investment Packages grouped by type (regulatory, economic, and voluntary) and by sector (established and emerging).
- 3.1.1.3 Institute (legislate, promote, and make available) applicable Incentive Packages to established sectors and emerging sectors in the blue space.
- 3.1.1.4 Monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of Incentive Packages.

Policy Priority Area 3: Capacity Building, Education, and Research

Policy Statement 4: Education and capacity development are indispensable for achieving blue growth and a sustainable blue economy.

Strategic Objective 4.1: To reduce skills gap between education offer and labour market needs, improve communication and cooperation between education and blue industries, improve the attractiveness and awareness of career opportunities in the blue economy, and improve the overall ocean literacy culture in the country.

Anticipated Outcome: 4.1.1: National academic institutions ensuring the availability of a competent, innovative, and adaptable marine and maritime work force with the right skills for BE development in the short and long term, while building the capacity for effective gender-sensitive leadership, policy development, negotiation, stakeholder engagement, and communication for blue economy.

Strategic Actions:

4.1.1.1 Blue Economy Gender-Sensitive Skills Gap Analysis, Needs Assessment, and Competence Assessments nationally and by BE sector.

4.1.1.2 Formalized and institutionalized skills development and degree programs in Blue Economy disciplines with clearly defined opportunities for men and women.

4.1.1.3 Technical and middle management skills development for BE policies and tools including for the development and management of incentive programs.

4.1.1.4 Institutionalized networking for BE skills and capacity development and Knowledge Management at the regional and international levels.

Policy Statement 5: Targeted and innovative marine research is the basis for informed and viable blue economy development.

Strategic Objective 5.1: To generate the information and data required about Belize’s national, coastal, and marine resources to develop the ocean economy, enhance sustainability, and to inform policy, management, investments, and marine spatial planning.

Anticipated Outcome: 5.1.1: Scientific and technological knowledge improving both an integrated and evidence-based management of the blue space and the sustainability of blue economic activities in Belize.

Strategic Actions:

5.1.1.1 Comprehensive data needs assessment and Integrated National Blue Economy Database to inform BE development.

5.1.1.1.2 Assessment of the potential economic value of Belize’s blue space by sector including an updated economic valuation of the coastal and marine assets.

5.1.1.1.3 Modelling of BE development potential of established economic sectors as compared to emerging sectors, including cost-benefit analyses.

5.1.1.4 Modelling of economic impact of climate change on Belize’s blue space nationally and by sector.

5.1.1.5 Assessment of the carbon sequestration potential of Belize’s blue space (mangroves and seagrass)

5.1.1.6 Offshore solar (thermal and photovoltaic), wind, wave, and ocean thermal energy resource assessments

5.1.1.7 Observational network for fisheries assessment, mangroves, seagrass, coral, and water quality monitoring

5.1.1.8 MSP Feasibility Study nationally and sub-nationally, including the EEZ

5.1.1.9 Framework for academic co-operation and researcher exchanges in blue growth, cost-effective ocean mapping, and conservation efforts

Policy Priority Area 4: Resource Mobilization

Policy Statement 6: Strategies must be devised and implemented to mobilize investments in support of blue economy development beyond traditional bilateral and multilateral financing.

Strategic Objective 6.1: To identify, secure and direct investments to activities, policies and actions that minimize ocean risks and maximize social equity and environmental sustainability in the blue space.

Anticipated Outcome: 6.1.1: Identification and implementation of financing vehicles that generate, invest, align, and account for financial capital to achieve sustained ocean health and governance in Belize’s blue space.

Strategic Actions:

6.1.1.1 Strategy on blue carbon potential to further develop and replicate existing conservation financing opportunities for Belize and to identify and develop green carbon–blue carbon opportunities.

6.1.1.2 Conduct Prospect Research for investible projects in blue carbon.

6.1.1.3 Prepare high quality, investible projects with appropriate deal size and risk–return ratios to match available capital.

6.1.1.4 Expand the use of parametric insurance to protect returns from coastal and marine resources, including parametric hurricane insurance, insurance to mitigate the economic consequences of tourism revenue decline due to sudden natural asset degradation, and livelihood protection as a social benefit through parametric insurance



ANNEX 1. BLUE ECONOMY POLICY & STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (2022–2027)

BLUE ECONOMY POLICY & STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN						
POLICY PRIORITY AREA 1: GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK FOR BLUE ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT						
Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
<p><u>Policy Statement 1:</u></p> <p>Legal and policy reforms are necessary to establish a robust framework to enable Blue Economy development</p>	<p><u>Strategic Objective 1.1:</u></p> <p>To establish a robust legal and policy framework to enable Blue Economy development that is responsive to Belize’s needs and consistent with globally accepted principles.</p> <p><u>Anticipated Outcome 1.1.1:</u></p> <p>Governance framework for Blue Economy development strengthened by enabling legislation that promotes multi-sector and sustainable approaches to economic development in Belize’s blue space while ensuring policy coherence.</p>					
	<p><u>Actions</u></p> <p>1.1.1.1 Develop, adopt, and implement a Blue Economy Act that builds on the Coastal Zone Management Act, and which is expanded in scope, mandate, and accompanying regulations to effectively enable Blue Economy development as a multi-sector process.</p>	\$180,000	<p>Target: 1</p> <p>Metric: # of Blue Economy Act by March 2023</p>	<p>Blue Economy Act published in gazette</p> <p>Consultation Reports</p>	<p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p> <p>Ministry of Economic Development & Investment</p> <p>Blue Bonds and Project for Finance Permanence Unit</p>	<p>Cabinet does not approve the development of the Act or a lack of understanding by stakeholders frustrates support for the Act</p>

Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
	1.1.1.2 Coordinate the administration of maritime affairs under a 'Maritime Administration Authority' to be tasked with the responsibility for all provisions under the Port Authority Act and the Registration of Merchant Ships Act.	\$180,000	<p>Target: 1 Feasibility Assessment; 1 Consolidated Act; 1 Institutional Development Plan for the Maritime Administration Authority</p> <p>Metric: # of strategic documents</p>	<p>Feasibility Assessment Report</p> <p>Maritime Administration Authority Act published in gazette</p> <p>Institutional Development Plan</p> <p>Consultation Reports</p>	<p>Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics and E-Governance</p> <p>Belize Port Authority</p> <p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p> <p>Ministry of Finance/IMMARBE</p>	Cabinet does not approve the development of the coordinated structure or a lack of understanding by stakeholders frustrates support for the process
	1.1.1.3 Strengthen coordination under the Blue Economy Act or the Fisheries Resources Act, the management of all protected areas that are physically located in the blue space.	\$100,000	<p>Target: 1 Green Carbon-Blue Carbon Investment Policy</p> <p>Metric: # of policies</p>	<p>Policy document</p> <p>Cabinet Memorandum of Approval</p> <p>Consultation Reports</p>	<p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p> <p>Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management</p>	Inter-ministerial turf protection avoids necessary coordination of mandate.
	1.1.1.4 Develop a Green Carbon-Blue Carbon Investment Policy to attract and expand investment and funding such as blue bonds, debt conversion, conservation trust funds, and public-private partnerships.	\$150,000	<p>Target: At least 6 (or 1 integrated)</p> <p>Metric: # of BE supporting policies</p>	<p>Policy documents</p> <p>Cabinet Memorandum of Approval</p> <p>Consultation Reports</p>	<p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p> <p>Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management</p> <p>Blue Bonds and Project for Finance Permanence Unit</p>	<p>Poor inter-ministerial coordination</p> <p>Prime Minister's Office does not support this as a policy priority</p>
	1.1.1.5 Pursue and or advocate for the development of other relevant policies for BE development: Bioprospecting, Biotechnology, Maritime, Renewable	\$500,000	<p>Target: Between 1 and 8 legislation amended or S.I.s</p> <p>Metric: # of legislation enhancing BE development</p>	<p>Amendments and or S.I.s published in gazette</p>	<p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p> <p>Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate</p>	<p>Poor inter-ministerial coordination</p> <p>Inter-ministerial turf protection frustrates support for the BE</p>

Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
	Energy, Payment for Ecosystems Services, Biodiversity Offsets, etc.				Change and Disaster Risk Management Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy and Logistics Blue Bonds and Project for Finance Permanence Unit	policy support process
	1.1.1.6 Strengthen legislation of other sectors to enhance BE development	\$200,000	Target: 1 adopted policy Metric: # of Mariculture Policies	Cabinet Memorandum of Approval	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation	Poor inter-ministerial coordination Inter-ministerial turf protection frustrates support for the BE policy support process
	1.1.1.7 Adopt the National Mariculture Policy	\$0.00			Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation	Mariculture Sector does not support the policy Cabinet does not support the policy
Policy Statement 2: Blue Economy development and implementation demand new and restructured institutional arrangements for policy coherence, transparency, effectiveness, and blue growth	Strategic Objective 2.1: To establish functional and effective institutional arrangements for Blue Economy development and implementation. Anticipated Outcome 2.1.1: Blue Economy development benefitting from enhanced institutional capacity, effective and accountable inter-institutional collaboration, and inclusive and transparent decision-making processes.					

Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
	<p>Actions:</p> <p>2.1.1.1 Structure and equip the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil aviation to effectively lead and deliver the blue economy, with a staff complement and resources that meet the requirements of the Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy & Plan.</p>	\$1,600,000	<p>Target: 4 new staff x 5 years</p> <p>Metric: # of BE-competent Staff</p>	<p>Staff Contracts</p> <p>MBECA Payroll</p>	<p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p> <p>Ministry of Finance</p>	<p>Cabinet does not support strengthening of MBECA</p>
	<p>2.1.1.2 Develop and implement a comprehensive National Marine Spatial Plan inclusive of required regulatory instruments and processes that proactively addresses the needs of the sectors in Belize’s blue space.</p>	\$1,500,000	<p>Target: 1 national; 3 sub-national</p> <p>Metric: # of MSPs</p>	<p>MSP documents</p> <p>MSP Maps</p> <p>Cabinet Memoranda of Approval</p> <p>Consultation Reports</p> <p>Statutory Instruments</p>	<p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p> <p>Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management</p> <p>Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy and Logistics</p> <p>Ministry of Tourism & Diaspora Relations</p> <p>Lands & Survey Department</p> <p>Belize Port Authority</p>	<p>Poor inter-ministerial coordination</p> <p>Inter-ministerial turf protection frustrates support for the MSP process</p>
	<p>2.1.1.3 Integrate all responsibilities for implementation of the High Seas Fishing Act within the structure of the Ministry of Blue Economy for policy coherence and thematic alignment.</p>	\$0.00	<p>Target: Thematic and institutional alignment of all fisheries matter in 1 institution</p> <p>Metric: # of consolidated mandates in support of BE development</p>	<p>Blue Economy Act published in gazette</p>	<p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p> <p>Ministry of Finance</p>	<p>Cabinet does not support consolidation.</p>
	<p>2.1.1.4 Strengthen, as a matter of national priority, the institutional capacity for Blue Carbon development as a key instrument of the BE development framework.</p>	\$300,000	<p>Target: 1 Technical Assistance Support; 1 Institutional Development Support</p> <p>Metric: # of specific institutional strengthening support</p>	<p>Blue Carbon and Green Carbon development strategy</p> <p>Institutional guidelines, protocols, and tools for Blue Carbon and Green Carbon development</p>	<p>Blue Bonds and Project for Finance Permanence Unit</p> <p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p> <p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p>	<p>Skills for technical and institutional support can be easily secured.</p>

Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
					Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management	
	2.1.1.5 Establish (under the Blue Economy Act) a Blue Economy Commission at the highest policy level to ensure policy coherence between sectors and institutions active in the blue space and to be co-chaired with the Ministry of Economic Development, a Blue Economy Technical Advisory Group, and a Blue Economy Investment Group, the latter two with public and private representation.	\$120,000	<p>Target: 3 key governance structures for BE development</p> <p>Metric: # of governance structures</p>	Proposal Document on TORs, structure, and operations of the BE development framework Consultation Reports	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation Ministry of Economic Development & Investment	Skills for institutional support can be easily secured. Inter-ministerial coordination proves to be productive

POLICY PRIORITY AREA 2: POLICY PRIORITY AREA 2: INCENTIVES FOR BLUE ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT

Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
<p>Policy Statement 3:</p> <p>Incentive Packages are necessary to enhance the sustainability of established economic sectors in Belize's blue space and to encourage the sustainable development of emerging sectors.</p>	<p>Strategic Objective 3.1:</p> <p>To provide incentives to attract sustainable investments in the blue space in emerging sectors while creating opportunities for the established sectors to improve their sustainable practices.</p> <p>Anticipated Outcome 3.1.1:</p> <p>Incentive Packages developed, officially adopted by government, and influencing sustainable investments in Belize's blue space.</p>					

Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
	<p>Actions:</p> <p>3.1.1.1 Develop sustainability criteria for Incentive Packages.</p>	\$60,000	<p>Target: Sustainability Criteria developed</p> <p>Metric: 1 technical report</p>	<p>Technical document with proposed Sustainability Criteria to be used to inform incentive packages</p> <p>Statutory Instrument</p>	<p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p> <p>Ministry of Economic Development & Investment</p> <p>Beltraide</p>	<p>Cabinet approves criteria within framework of Beltraide Act</p>
	<p>3.1.1.2 Feasibility Assessments for multiple types of sustainable Investment Packages grouped by type (regulatory, economic, and voluntary) and by sector (established and emerging).</p>	\$1,600,000	<p>Target: 8 sectors with feasibility assessments</p> <p>Metric: # of sectors and assessments</p>	<p>Feasibility Assessment Reports for at least the eight priority sectors defined for BE development by the MBECA.</p>	<p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p> <p>Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management</p> <p>Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy and Logistics</p> <p>Ministry of Tourism & Diaspora Relations</p> <p>Lands & Survey Department</p> <p>Belize Port Authority</p>	<p>Technical ministries collaborate with definition of potential sector investments</p> <p>BE and MSP are treated as priority within the national development context</p>
	<p>3.1.1.3 Institute (legislate, promote, and make available) applicable Incentive Packages to established sectors and emerging sectors in the blue space.</p>	\$180,000	<p>Target: at least 8 incentive packages</p> <p>Metric: # of incentive packages for BE development</p>	<p>Incentive Packages institutionalized at Beltraide through S.I.s, Annual Work Plans, and Systematic Reporting</p> <p>Promotional material for BE packages by the MBECA</p>	<p>Beltraide</p> <p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p>	<p>Cabinet approves incentive packages and S.I.</p>
	<p>3.1.1.4 Monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of Incentive Packages.</p>	\$300,000	<p>Target: 1 M&E system developed and implemented x 5 years</p> <p>Metric: # of M&E systems for BE Incentive Packages</p>	<p>Digital/online M&E system functional and accessible for verification</p>	<p>Beltraide</p> <p>Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation</p>	<p>Beltraide prioritizes M&E system and take steps to secure necessary funding.</p>

Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
<p>Policy Statement 4:</p> <p>Education and capacity development are indispensable for achieving blue growth and a sustainable blue economy.</p>	<p>Strategic Objective 4.1:</p> <p>To reduce skills gap between education, offer and labour market needs, improve communication and cooperation between education and blue industries, improve the attractiveness and awareness of career opportunities in the blue economy, and improve the overall ocean literacy culture in the country.</p> <p>Anticipated Outcome 4.1:</p> <p>National academic institutions ensuring the availability of a competent, innovative, and adaptable marine and maritime work force with the right skills for BE development in the short and long term, while building the capacity for effective gender-sensitive leadership, policy development, negotiation, stakeholder engagement, and communication for blue economy.</p>					
	<p>Actions:</p> <p>4.1.1.1 Blue Economy Gender-Sensitive Skills Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment nationally and by BE sector.</p>	\$150,000	<p>Target: 1 Gender Gap Analysis Report</p> <p>Metric: # of gender gap analyses</p>	Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment Report	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation	MBECA can secure the resources and skills necessary.
	<p>4.1.1.2 Formalized and institutionalized skills development and degree programs in Blue Economy disciplines with clearly</p>	\$600,000	<p>Target: 2 institutionalized programs</p>	<p>Curriculum/syllabus documents</p> <p>Evidence of student enrollment</p>	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation	National tertiary institutions embrace BE priority and can

Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
	defined opportunities for men and women.		Metric: # of tertiary institutions with BE skills and degree programs			secure institutional and financial support.
	4.1.1.3 Technical and middle management skills development for BE policies and tools including for the development and management of incentive programs.	\$600,000	Target: 30 persons trained Metric: # of persons trained in Technical and middle management skills development for BE policies and tools	Copy of training manual Evidence of trainee enrollment Training completion report	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation University of Belize Galen University	University of Belize and Galen University can secure necessary support to make effective skills development programs in BE.
	4.1.1.4 Institutionalized networking for BE skills and capacity development and Knowledge Management at the regional and international levels.	\$160,000	Target: 8 exchanges/yr x 5 years Metric: # of networking exchanges	Exchange program documentation Evidence of completed programs by participants	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation University of Belize Galen University	MBECA, University of Belize and Galen University can secure necessary support to make effective skills development programs in BE.
Policy Statement 5: Targeted and innovative marine research is the basis for informed and viable blue economy development.	Strategic Objective 5.1: To generate the information and data required about Belize’s national, coastal, and marine resources to develop the ocean economy, enhance sustainability, and to inform policy, management, investments, and marine spatial planning. Anticipated Outcome 5.1 Scientific and technological knowledge improving both an integrated and evidence-based management of the blue space and the sustainability of blue economic activities in Belize.					

Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
	<p>Actions:</p> <p>5.1.1.1 Comprehensive data needs assessment and Integrated National Blue Economy Database to inform BE development.</p>	\$950,000	<p>Target: BE needs assessment for at least 8 priority sectors + MBECA</p> <p>Metric:</p>	BE Needs Assessment document addressing at least 8 priority sectors	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation
	5.1.1.1.2 Assessment of the potential economic value of Belize's blue space by sector including an updated economic valuation of the coastal and marine assets.	\$800,000	<p>Target: Economic potential in at least 8 economic sectors determined.</p> <p>Metric: # of economic value by sector determined</p>	Economic Value Assessment Reports	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation	Key players in priority sectors collaborate and economic resources secured.
	5.1.1.1.3 Modelling of BE development potential of established economic sectors as compared to emerging sectors, including cost-benefit analyses.	\$800,000	<p>Target: At least 8 modelling assessments</p> <p>Metric: # of priority sectors with BE potential modelled for prioritization of investments</p>	Modelling Assessment Reports	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation	Key players in priority sectors collaborate and economic resources secured.
	5.1.1.4 Modelling of economic impact of climate change on Belize's blue space nationally and by sector.	\$500,000	<p>Target: 1 national, 8 sectoral</p> <p>Metric: # of economic modelling of climate change</p>	Modelling Assessment Reports	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation Sector Ministries	Key players in priority sectors collaborate and economic resources secured.
	5.1.1.5 Assessment of the carbon sequestration potential of Belize's blue space (mangroves and seagrass)	\$300,000	<p>Target: 1 comprehensive Blue Carbon assessment</p> <p>Metric: # of Blue Carbon assessments</p>	Blue Carbon Assessment report	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation Standardized Blue Carbon methodology is agreed

Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
	5.1.1.6 Offshore solar (thermal and photovoltaic), wind, wave, and ocean thermal energy resource assessments	\$1,000,000	Target: At least 4 types of solar assessments Metric: # of solar assessments	Solar Resource Assessment Reports	Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy and Logistics Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation	Sector ministry leads in defining technical scope of assessments Resources are secured for assessments
	5.1.1.7 Observational network for fisheries, mangroves, seagrass, coral, and water quality monitoring	\$700,000	Target: 1 network established with national, regional, and international reach. Metric: # of networks established.	Online visibility and access to observational network.	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation University of Belize Galen University	The CZMAI under the MBECA leads and secure active involvement of academia and all other partners.
	5.1.1.8 MSP Feasibility Study nationally and sub-nationally, including the EEZ	\$400,000	Target: 1 national and 3 sub-national Metric: # of MSP feasibility assessments	MSP Feasibility Reports	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation	The CZMAI under the MBECA leads and ensures fit-for-purpose feasibility assessments.
	5.1.1.9 Framework for academic co-operation and researcher exchanges in blue growth, cost-effective ocean mapping, and conservation efforts	\$200,000	Target: 1 comprehensive framework Metric: # of academic co-operation framework	Framework Agreement Document	University of Belize Galen University	Academic institutions take lead and MBECA provides institutional support.
POLICY PRIORITY AREA 4: RESOURCE MOBILIZATION						
Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
Policy Statement 6: Strategies must be devised and implemented to mobilize investments in support of blue economy development beyond	Policy Statement 6: To identify, secure and direct investments to activities, policies and actions that minimize ocean risks and maximize social equity and					

Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
traditional bilateral and multilateral financing.	environmental sustainability in the blue space. <u>Anticipated Outcome 6.1.1:</u> Identification and implementation of financing vehicles that generate, invest, align, and account for financial capital to achieve sustained ocean health and governance in Belize's blue space.					
	<u>Actions:</u> 6.1.1.1 Strategy on blue carbon potential to further develop and replicate Blue Bond opportunities for Belize and to identify and develop green carbon-blue carbon opportunities.	\$150,000	Target: At least 1 strategy Metric: # strategies	Strategy document	Blue Bonds and Project for Finance Permanence Unit Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation	Current Blue Carbon examples prove to be successful baseline
	6.1.1.2 Conduct Prospect Research for investible projects in blue carbon.	\$200,000	Target: 1 comprehensive research Metric: # of prospect research to support investible BE projects	Prospect Research Report	Blue Bonds and Project for Finance Permanence Unit Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation	Resources are secured for prospect research
	6.1.1.3 Prepare high quality, investible projects with appropriate deal size and risk-return ratios to match available capital.	\$800,000	Target: At least 8 investible projects Metric: # of BE investible projects	Investible Project Documents	Beltraide Blue Bonds and Project for Finance Permanence Unit	Blue Bonds and Project for Finance Permanence Unit leads and secure necessary financing
	6.1.1.4 Expand the use of parametric insurance to protect returns from coastal and marine resources, including parametric hurricane insurance, insurance to mitigate the economic consequences of tourism revenue decline due to sudden natural asset degradation, and livelihood protection	\$600,000	Target: At least 3 parametric insurance feasibility assessments and proposals Metric: # of parametric insurance in support of BE policy	Parametric Insurance feasibility documents Parametric Insurance agreements S.I, for Parametric Insurance	Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation Ministry of Tourism & Diaspora Relations Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy and Logistics	Cabinet supports regulatory framework for Parametric Insurance

Policy Statement	Strategic Objective, Outcome, Actions & Budget (BZD)	Estimated Budget (BZD)	Time-Bound Target & Performance Metric (2022-2027)	Means of Verification	Responsible /Partner Entity or Unit	Assumptions & Risks
	as a social benefit through parametric insurance					
TOTAL BUDGET (BZD)		\$15,880,000				

