



BELIZE 2016 - 2019



GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FOREWORD

Thirty four years ago, we attained independence. Since then we have dreamt of prosperity; but for thirty-four years our efforts have not been sufficient. A long term plan was needed; a beacon to illuminate the pathway to the development we seek. In Horizon 2030 we stated this vision: “a country of peace and tranquillity, where citizens live in harmony with the natural environment and enjoy a high quality of life”. We articulated our aspiration to be an “energetic, resourceful and independent people looking after our own development in a sustainable way”; but this guiding vision was only the first step.

Now we have created an actionable strategy that will propel Belize towards the development we envisioned. Today, I have the honour of presenting Belize’s **Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS), 2016-2019**.

This GSDS ushers in a new era of enlightened development planning for our country. Flowing from the Horizon 2030 vision, this strategic plan now charts the path to a better quality of life for all Belizeans, living now and in the future. It places at the fore sustainable development, reflecting a whole-system approach, and acknowledging increasing prosperity, eradicating poverty, improving social cohesion, caring for our natural resources, and securing peace and justice for all Belizeans as inter-connected goals. In the words of Ban Ki Moon (UN Secretary General), *“Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth... these are one and the same fight. We must connect the dots between climate change, water scarcity, energy shortages, global health, food security and women's empowerment. Solutions to one problem must be solutions for all.”*

The GSDS therefore strives to bring economic, social, and environmental policies into synergistic balance, so that policies work well together to produce optimal outcomes. It supports the country in coping with resource constraints, and helps to increase its resilience in the face of a volatile global economy and a changing global climate. It outlines four critical success factors, subsidiary goals that also provide an organizing framework for the underlying objectives and actions (“Necessary Conditions” or “NCs”, and “Actions”).

The GSDS is truly the substance of Horizon 2030, clearly defining where we want to be by the year 2019. It is a map for our nation, explaining how we can attain prosperity for all our people. However, no amount of development planning will be successful unless we are individually and collectively committed to fulfilling the goals and objectives articulated in those plans.

We are a young, developing nation and, while we must dream big, we must also remain cognizant that we cannot afford to make costly mistakes. So, let us continue to dream of greatness; but let us also plan carefully and move together.

I acknowledge my team of hardworking staff of the Policy and Planning Unit, who with the guidance of a team of consultants, and with support from sister Ministries and Agencies have produced this document.

I humbly commend to you the **Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy, 2016-2019**; an action plan for pursuing our vision.

Thank you.

Hon Erwin Contreras
Minister for Economic Development, Petroleum, Investment, Trade and Commerce

March 2016

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GLOSSARY

<i>ACE</i>	<i>Adult and Continuing Education</i>
<i>AMS</i>	<i>Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol Countries</i>
<i>ASYCUDA</i>	<i>Automated System for Customs Data</i>
<i>BAHA</i>	<i>Belize Agricultural and Health Authority</i>
<i>BCCI</i>	<i>Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry</i>
<i>BELTRAIDE</i>	<i>Belize Trade and Investment Development Service</i>
<i>BESRP</i>	<i>Belize Education Sector Reform Project</i>
<i>BESS</i>	<i>Belize Education Sector Strategy</i>
<i>BFSD</i>	<i>Belize Framework for Sustainable Development</i>
<i>BHIS</i>	<i>Belize Health Information System</i>
<i>BMDC</i>	<i>Belize Marketing and Development Corporation</i>
<i>BOOST</i>	<i>Building Opportunities for Our Social Transformation</i>
<i>BRADS</i>	<i>Belize Rural Area-based Development Strategy</i>
<i>BRDP</i>	<i>Belize Rural Development Program</i>
<i>BSIF</i>	<i>Belize Social Investment Fund</i>
<i>BSWaMA</i>	<i>Belize Solid Waste Management Authority</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Belize Tourism Board</i>
<i>BTIA</i>	<i>Belize Tourist Industry Association</i>
<i>BTL</i>	<i>Belize Telecommunications Limited</i>
<i>BWS</i>	<i>Belize Water Services Limited</i>
<i>CABEI</i>	<i>Central American Bank for Economic Integration</i>
<i>CAPRA</i>	<i>Central American Probabilistic Risk Assessment</i>
<i>CAPS</i>	<i>Community Action for Public Safety</i>
<i>CARICOM</i>	<i>Caribbean Community and Common Market</i>
<i>CARSI</i>	<i>Central American Regional Security Initiative</i>
<i>CBB</i>	<i>Central Bank of Belize</i>
<i>CCCCC</i>	<i>Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre</i>
<i>CCORAL</i>	<i>Caribbean Climate Online Risk and Adaptation Tool</i>
<i>CCRIF</i>	<i>Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility</i>
<i>CCTV</i>	<i>Closed Circuit Television</i>
<i>CDB</i>	<i>Caribbean Development Bank</i>
<i>CEO</i>	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
<i>CFZs</i>	<i>Commercial Free Zones</i>
<i>CJA</i>	<i>Criminal Justice Advisor</i>
<i>CSF</i>	<i>Critical Success Factors</i>
<i>CSME</i>	<i>CARICOM Single Market and Economy</i>
<i>CVQ</i>	<i>Caribbean Vocational Qualification</i>
<i>CZMA</i>	<i>Coastal Zone Management Authority</i>
<i>DFC</i>	<i>Development Finance Corporation</i>
<i>DOE</i>	<i>Department of Environment</i>
<i>DPP</i>	<i>Director of Public Prosecutions</i>
<i>ECE</i>	<i>Early Childhood Education</i>
<i>EDC</i>	<i>Economic Development Council</i>

<i>EPA</i>	<i>Economic Partnership Agreement</i>
<i>ESDC</i>	<i>Economic and Sustainable Development Council</i>
<i>EPZs</i>	<i>Export Processing Zones</i>
<i>EU</i>	<i>European Union</i>
<i>FDI</i>	<i>Foreign Direct Investment</i>
<i>FSAP</i>	<i>Financial Sector Assessment Program</i>
<i>GCCA</i>	<i>Global Climate Change Alliance</i>
<i>GDP</i>	<i>Gross Domestic Product</i>
<i>GOB</i>	<i>Government of Belize</i>
<i>GPRS</i>	<i>Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy</i>
<i>GSDS</i>	<i>Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy</i>
<i>GST</i>	<i>General Sales Tax</i>
<i>HRDS</i>	<i>Human Resource Development Strategy</i>
<i>ICT</i>	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
<i>ICZMP</i>	<i>Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan</i>
<i>IDB</i>	<i>Inter-American Development Bank</i>
<i>IFAD</i>	<i>International Fund for Agricultural Development</i>
<i>ILO</i>	<i>International Labor Organization</i>
<i>IMF</i>	<i>International Monetary Fund</i>
<i>InVEST</i>	<i>Integrated Valuation of Ecosystem Services and Trade-offs</i>
<i>IPSMIS</i>	<i>Interagency Public Safety Management Information System</i>
<i>ITVET</i>	<i>Institute of Technical and Vocational Education and Training</i>
<i>KPIs</i>	<i>Key Performance Indicators</i>
<i>LMIS</i>	<i>Labor Market Information System</i>
<i>MCDA</i>	<i>Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis</i>
<i>MDGs</i>	<i>Millennium Development Goals</i>
<i>M&E</i>	<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>
<i>MED</i>	<i>Ministry of Economic Development</i>
<i>MEDPITC</i>	<i>Ministry of Economic Development, Petroleum, Investment, Trade and Commerce</i>
<i>MESD</i>	<i>Ministry with responsibility for the Environment and Sustainable Development</i>
<i>MHDSTPA</i>	<i>Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation</i>
<i>MITC</i>	<i>Ministry with responsibility for Investment, Trade and Commerce</i>
<i>MNR</i>	<i>Ministry of Natural Resources</i>
<i>MNS</i>	<i>Ministry of National Security</i>
<i>MOA</i>	<i>Ministry of Agriculture</i>
<i>MOAFF</i>	<i>Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</i>
<i>MOE</i>	<i>Ministry of Education</i>
<i>MOF</i>	<i>Ministry of Finance</i>
<i>MOH</i>	<i>Ministry of Health</i>
<i>MOTCA</i>	<i>Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation</i>
<i>MOW</i>	<i>Ministry of Works</i>
<i>MPSEPU</i>	<i>Ministry with responsibility for Public Service, Energy and Public Utilities</i>
<i>Mw</i>	<i>Megawatts</i>
<i>NC</i>	<i>Necessary Conditions</i>
<i>NCCO</i>	<i>National Climate Change Office</i>

<i>NCCPSAP</i>	<i>National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan</i>
<i>NCFC</i>	<i>National Committee for Families and Children</i>
<i>NCRIP</i>	<i>National Climate Resilience Investment Plan</i>
<i>NEAP</i>	<i>National Environmental Action Plan</i>
<i>NEMO</i>	<i>National Emergency Management Organization</i>
<i>NEPS</i>	<i>National Environmental Policy and Strategy</i>
<i>NES</i>	<i>National Export Strategy</i>
<i>NGOs</i>	<i>Non-Governmental Organizations</i>
<i>NHI</i>	<i>National Health Insurance</i>
<i>NICH</i>	<i>National Institute of Culture and History</i>
<i>NIWRA</i>	<i>National Integrated Water Resources Authority</i>
<i>NPA – LBS</i>	<i>National Plan of Action for the Control of Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution in Belize</i>
<i>NPAP&SP</i>	<i>National Protected Areas Policy and System Plan</i>
<i>NQF</i>	<i>National Qualifications Framework</i>
<i>NSC</i>	<i>National Sports Council</i>
<i>NSDS</i>	<i>National Sustainable Development Strategy</i>
<i>NSTMP</i>	<i>National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan</i>
<i>NTMP</i>	<i>National Transportation Master Plan</i>
<i>NTUCB</i>	<i>National Trade Union Congress of Belize</i>
<i>OSG</i>	<i>Office of the Solicitor General</i>
<i>OTEC</i>	<i>Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion</i>
<i>PAs</i>	<i>Protected Areas</i>
<i>PACT</i>	<i>Protected Areas Conservation Trust</i>
<i>PGIA</i>	<i>Phillip Goldson International Airport</i>
<i>PPP</i>	<i>Public-Private Partnership</i>
<i>PUC</i>	<i>Public Utilities Commission</i>
<i>QCFS</i>	<i>Quality Child-Friendly Schools</i>
<i>RESTORE</i>	<i>Re-establish Security through Outreach, Rehabilitation and Education</i>
<i>SAICM</i>	<i>Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management</i>
<i>SDGs</i>	<i>Sustainable Development Goals</i>
<i>SDU</i>	<i>Sustainable Development Unit</i>
<i>SEEA</i>	<i>Strategic Environmental Economic Accounting</i>
<i>SIB</i>	<i>Statistical Institute of Belize</i>
<i>SICA</i>	<i>Central American Integration System</i>
<i>SIDS</i>	<i>Small Island Developing States</i>
<i>SIF</i>	<i>Social Investment Fund</i>
<i>SISB</i>	<i>Single Information System of Beneficiaries</i>
<i>SSB</i>	<i>Social Security Board</i>
<i>SSFR</i>	<i>Secondary School Financing Reform</i>
<i>SWMP</i>	<i>Solid Waste Management Project</i>
<i>UN</i>	<i>United Nations</i>
<i>UNFCCC</i>	<i>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i>
<i>WTO</i>	<i>World Trade Organization</i>
<i>YCT</i>	<i>Youth and Community Transformation</i>

I. Executive Summary

Belize has made significant strides in its development in recent years, yet there is far to go to achieve the vision for the country articulated in *Horizon 2030*. Achieving a higher quality of life for all Belizeans, now and in the future, requires more than economic growth: it requires a whole-system approach to development, as broadly reflected in the emerging Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Increasing prosperity, eradicating poverty, improving social cohesion, caring for our natural resources, and securing peace and justice for all Belizeans are clearly inter-connected goals. The national development strategy to be pursued by Belize must therefore strive to bring economic, social, and environmental policies into a balance that is also synergistic, so that policies work well together to create optimal outcomes. It must also support the country in coping with resource constraints, and help it increase its resilience in the face of a volatile global economy and a changing global climate.

This **Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy** (GSDS) for Belize aims to rise to the challenge of guiding overall development for the nation for the period 2016-2019. It adopts an integrated, systemic approach based on the principles of sustainable development, and on three notable drivers that are common to successful developing countries: a proactive role for the state, tapping into global markets, and innovative social policy.

The GSDS encompasses issues covered by previous medium-term economic development plans; but it incorporates, for the first time, both poverty reduction and long-term sustainable development issues. It builds on previous documents including especially *Horizon 2030: National Development Framework for Belize 2010-2030*. This GSDS is the nation's primary planning document, providing detailed guidance on priorities and on specific actions to be taken during the planning period, including actions that contribute to longer term development objectives beyond 2019. The GSDS also refers to, and should be considered to include, many other sectoral and ministerial planning documents. Where not otherwise specified in the GSDS, these sectoral and ministerial plans are to guide development activity during the planning period insofar as they are consistent with the GSDS's goals and priorities.

At the core of the GSDS is a hierarchical framework of inter-related goals and objectives called the "Belize Framework for Sustainable Development" (BFSD), which is described in detail in Section III. The BFSD provides the structure for the "Program of Action" (Section IV), which in turn describes the actions to be taken in realization of the goals and objectives, which are referred to as "Critical Success Factors" (CSF) and "Necessary Conditions" (NC) for the attainment of the Overall Goal: "To improve the quality of life for all Belizeans, living now and in the future."

The GSDS also includes planning guidance on implementation and institutional arrangements (Section V), resource mobilization including human resources (Sections VI and VII), capacity development (also in Section VII), and monitoring and evaluation of results (Section VIII).

The entirety of this document is the result of extensive stakeholder consultations with government officials as well as external experts, United Nations (UN) development partners, and citizen-based organizations.

The GSDS is viewed as a “living document” and, as such, will be updated or amended as needs arise.

The diligent pursuit of the actions described herein is expected to contribute to the realization of the vision statement articulated in *Horizon 2030*: that Belize as “a country of peace and tranquility, where citizens live in harmony with the natural environment and enjoy a high quality of life, and where the citizens are an energetic, resourceful and independent people, looking after their own development in a sustainable way.”

Relationship of the GSDS to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

At the beginning of the new millennium, world leaders made commitments to strengthen a global partnership to improve the lives of the world’s poor in the course of one generation, from 1990 to 2015. This partnership was consolidated through the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDG agenda included quantitative targets to improve results in poverty reduction efforts, health, education, gender equality, and the protection of the environment through stronger partnerships between developed and developing countries and amongst developing countries, as well as partnerships with the private sector. The MDGs became a platform for galvanizing international efforts to reduce poverty and hunger and advance the agenda of human development in all countries; and Belize was a committed participating country in that process.

In 2014, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) approved a new set of goals. These 17 “Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs) are intended to pick up where the MDGs leave off in 2015. The SDGs embrace all the previous aims of the MDGs, including a similarly quantitative approach. However, just as with the GSDS, the new SDGs have expanded beyond the MDGs and integrate the complete sustainable development agenda for both developing and developed countries.

In late 2013, Belize volunteered to act as a “pilot country” within the UN system, to help demonstrate how national development planning could work in harmony with the emerging “Post-2015 Development Agenda” of the global community of nations. The GSDS, while focused principally on the development vision for Belize as articulated in *Horizon 2030*, is also intended to be in line with this emerging United Nations framework.

Achieving the Goals of the GSDS

At the core of the GSDS is a commitment to achieve a single overriding goal: to improve quality of life for all Belizeans, living now and in the future.

To achieve that goal, GSDS provides a strategic framework, a set of clear policy aims, a considered mix of highlighted and prioritized action areas, and guidance on the necessary institutional arrangements and procedures. Specifically, the GSDS identifies four “Critical Success Factors” (CSFs), subsidiary goals that also provide an organizing framework for the objectives and actions grouped underneath them (under the headings of “Necessary Conditions” or “NCs”, and “Actions”). Each CSF is also linked to a set of measurable targets.

With respect to CSF1, “Optimal National Income and Investment,” Belize will seek to achieve real output growth of 5% annually over a prolonged period. Assuming population growth remains at about 2%, this level of targeted output growth will lead to a sustained improvement in per capita income of approximately 33% over a ten-year period. Belize is not expected to reach the 5% growth target in the short term, but efforts will commence during the GSDS planning period (2016-2019) to raise GDP-measured economic growth to that level.

Under CSF2, “Enhanced Social Cohesion and Resilience,” the general aim will be to build a society in which individuals feel a sense of belonging, a society that is inclusive and that provides opportunity for social mobility. Toward this end, the country will seek to completely eradicate poverty by 2030, and to achieve more equitable income distribution. It will also aim to reduce homicides to under 10 per 100,000 inhabitants annually (as a minimum target), provide universal access to basic and early childhood education, provide universal access to health care, maintain or raise life expectancy beyond the current level of 74 years, and reduce the incidence of morbidity and mortality resulting from a selected set of ailments.

Achievement of CSF3, “Sustained or Improved Health of Natural, Environmental, Historical and Cultural Assets,” is vital to achieving CSF1 and 2; but it also has intrinsic value in and of itself. Belize’s natural assets contribute to a sense of national identity, and their unique characteristics contribute to the profile of Belize in the international community. These assets also have extraordinary economic and social importance. As Belize seeks to grow its economy and provide for the needs and aspirations of its people, the right balance will be maintained between strategies to drive economic growth, and policies that maintain the integrity of its natural environment — and thereby sustain the promise of *future* economic growth.

Attaining CSF 4, “Enhanced Governance and Improved Citizen Security,” will involve reducing wastage, abuse of government resources, and inappropriate procurement; while generally improving public sector management, including budgeting and hiring practices, and accountability mechanisms. The Government of Belize (GOB) will also generally pursue a philosophy of “engaged governance,” meaning institutional arrangements that link citizens more directly to the decision-making process of the state (e.g. through stakeholder consultation), enabling them to influence public policies and programs in a manner that impacts more positively on their social and economic lives. With respect to citizen security, Belizeans desire a future in which “the state is respectful of people’s human rights and citizens and visitors respect the rule of law and feel safe and secure” (Horizon 2030). Actions to address crime and promote the proper administration of justice will be seen as critical elements of this GSDS out of respect for this vision, and also because of the negative impacts that crime and low security have on economic development, social inclusion, and environmental management generally.

Implementation of the GSDS shall be coordinated by the Ministry of Economic Development (MED), in line with its overall planning function. A set of inter-ministerial Technical Committees will support this process and will report upwards to the CEO Caucus, which shall have general oversight on implementation and on policy decision-making. The full implementation strategy, including details of institutional arrangements, is covered in Section V.

The development and maintenance of adequate data is essential to the implementation of the GSDS. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of results at the three GSDS goal levels — the Overall Goal, the four CSFs, and the NCs — shall be managed through a set of inter-ministerial and inter-agency work groups referred to as “Working Tables,” chaired by representatives of the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) and reporting to the Technical Committees. Evidence regarding the level of achievement for each of these three goal levels will be collected by various institutions, including the SIB, the Central Bank of Belize, and various line ministries. This M&E process is described in detail in Section VIII. In relation to the three goal levels, key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets for achievement by 2019 are set out in detail in the Annex to Section VIII.

Summary of Implementation Strategy during First GSDS Planning Period

Arriving at an appropriate and well-prioritized mix of strategies that will be reflected in the work of line ministries and other public sector agencies, and that will best lead to the Overall Goal, is the central programmatic objective of the GSDS. For some ministries, the strategic thrust will entail significant expansion in some of their ongoing activity, or the development of more proactive approaches. In some cases, new actions or outcomes to be pursued are identified; in other cases, needs have been identified for studies, designs, and plans or strategies at the sector, sub-sector, or thematic level to inform future decisions. In some cases, such plans or strategies are already in place; but in nearly all cases, there will be a need to focus on strategies that improve results in the context of limited resources. The cost associated with each strategy will be determined by line ministries as a part of the multi-year budget formulation process. In that way, the cost will be grounded in the reality of the budget and will be aligned with targets for achieving CSFs and NCs.

Budgetary and human resource constraints mean that activity will have to be prioritized within and across various CSFs and NCs, taking into account the targets set for the medium term in Section VIII. Prioritization decisions will be supported by a simplified multi-criteria assessment approach, which is described in Section III, and informed by the context of Belize’s current stage of development. This means that during the first GSDS planning period, priority will be given to building the competitiveness of those elements of the economy that are factor-driven (based on natural resources and lower-skilled labor, “Stage 1 development”), given their dominance in Belize’s economy. However, significant focus will be placed on enhancing the efficiency of the economy in order to drive competitiveness, as the country is currently transitioning toward Stage 2 development (efficiency-driven, with higher wages).

Moreover, much emphasis will be placed on addressing equity and eradicating poverty under conditions of labor surplus. Importantly, given fiscal risks and current resource constraints, there will be great focus on strategies to maintain macro-economic stability and to improve fiscal space to finance development efforts. These strategies will include efforts to better manage for development results, and to improve budgeting and other public financial management, tax reform, and revenue enhancement efforts. Tax reform efforts will incorporate equity considerations as well as the role of the tax system in optimizing the efficiency of the productive sector. There will also be a focus on improving the quality of institutions including public sector co-ordination and governance, while urgent matters such as capacity development will be addressed.

As more resources become available, other priorities will be addressed. Given expenditure restraints that have been exercised since 2006, there will be a strong focus on improving basic infrastructure and addressing longstanding deficiencies, including those related to sewerage and waste disposal. Moreover, efforts will be made to improve access to, and quality of basic education and health.

In more specific terms, during the first GSDS period, the GOB will seek to:

- rationalize land use planning to support sustainable economic activities;
- improve agricultural production and efficiency through sustainable and climate-smart best practices;
- improve linkages between agriculture and tourism;
- improve value-added from agriculture through agro-processing;
- improve value-added from sustainable fisheries management and processing;
- increase tourist arrivals and value-added from tourism, as well as extend tourism's rural/national reach and competitiveness and its "eco-tourism" profile;
- facilitate the development or emergence of other types of employment generating opportunities, including activities related to renewable energy, aquaculture, real estate, medical tourism and information and communication technology (ICT) in order to absorb excess labor supply;
- continue the sustainable management of Belize's coastal zone and protected areas system with the aims of building climate resilience, ensuring water and food security, reducing disaster risk, and preserving Belize's natural and cultural heritage; and
- improve the health and well-being of Belizeans through a variety of social and environmental policies and initiatives.

Further, GOB will seek to increase employment opportunities in Belize City through special programs that are consistent with economic efficiency and strategies to address poverty and social fragmentation. Strong industrial policy will be pursued and much emphasis will be placed on the penetration of export markets and attracting foreign investments that are consistent with the goals of sustainable development.

Importantly, GOB will also pursue actions necessary to enhance the efficiency of the economy in order to drive competitiveness. However, it must be noted that some of the development efforts during the first GSDS planning period could be delayed or reduced by fiscal resource constraints, and there may have to be continued focus on these efforts during the following GSDS planning period.

Nevertheless, ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the economy will continue, and preparations for these will continue or commence during the first GSDS planning period. Such preparations may include the conduct of studies and the preparation of detailed designs and plans with respect to a range of interventions such as increasing private sector access to financing, improving the efficiency of labor markets, improving access to higher education, and enhancing the framework for the development of appropriate and adequate technical and vocational skills. In some cases, these interventions will be launched during the first GSDS planning period subject to the availability of resources.

With respect to social protection, the focus during the first GSDS planning period will be on the consolidation and enhancement of the efficiency of the current social protection framework, and on the monitoring and evaluation of the recent programs which have been launched to improve that framework and address the security situation of the country. Evidence from the monitoring and evaluation of these programs will be used to inform new policy and strategy in the subsequent GSDS planning period.

Further, the GSDS highlights the need to increase sustainable livelihood programs and opportunities, and place greater focus on community-driven development programs, in recognition of the importance of the natural resources to community well-being particularly in coastal and rural areas. It continues to address security as a matter of urgency, and focuses special attention on the social conditions that fuel crime. However, the GSDS balances this with policies to improve the administration of justice and the effectiveness of policing, including through the provision of the resources necessary to improve the effectiveness of security personnel.

With respect to the natural environment, disaster risk and climate change resilience are to be mainstreamed into all relevant development decision-making; but some urgent issues in basic water resource management (such as flood risk and water stress) and coastal erosion are to be specially and specifically addressed. Sustaining terrestrial and marine protected areas that ensure water and food security and disaster risk reduction is also a major thrust of this first GSDS planning period. Moreover, efforts to strengthen sustainable forest management, land use planning, solid waste management, sewage disposal, and reducing land-based and marine pollution will continue.

Within all areas of government, better development outcomes will be pursued through better management. In instances where no new resources are allocated for particular areas, better management will be the essential strategy for achieving better development results. The GSDS therefore places a strong emphasis on the entrenchment of program budgeting and the building of monitoring and evaluation capacity throughout the public sector. This will be buttressed by improved coordination, and by better utilization of human resources (described in Section VII).

The availability of resources to pursue all the actions described in this document, and in other national planning documents, will depend on the success of resource mobilization efforts as outlined in Section VI. That section thus includes a framework to assist in setting priorities in the context of limited resources, supplemental to the Prioritization Framework outlined in Section III. Achieving these outcomes will also require significant capacity development (Section VII) and some institutional reorganization, as described in Section V.

However, the foremost requirement for success is not merely resources; it is the long-term commitment of all Belizean officials, civil servants, and engaged stakeholders to achieving the vision of Horizon 2030, and the goals of this national Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy.

Flagship Actions

Box 1 below identifies a set of “flagship actions,” excerpted and summarized from the full list of actions in the GSDS, to be considered for special priority attention during the initial planning period. These actions, once finalized, will be closely monitored and their progress will be thoroughly communicated to citizens and stakeholders. Such communication will serve to demonstrate progress with respect to the implementation of strategies to achieve the ultimate goal — improving the quality of life of all Belizeans, living now and in the future — and thereby contribute towards galvanizing broad stakeholder commitment. Details on the specific actions are reflected in the main body of the GSDS paper.

The final selection of flagship actions is still subject to review and revision during implementation, using the Prioritization Framework.

Box 1. *Indicative summary of actions initially proposed to be given highest priority during the first GSDS planning period. The actual prioritization will be determined by use of the Prioritization Framework in Section III, working through the process of Technical Committees, CEO Caucus, and/or Cabinet review. The Critical Success Factors (CSF) are enumerated and described in Section II.*

Flagship Actions
CSF 1 - Optimal national income and investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the coordinated implementation of the National Export Strategy (NES) (once approved), the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, the National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan, and other planning documents within wider national planning efforts. The highest priority will be given to efforts to entrench the tourism and agricultural sectors as foundations on which to build a prosperous and sustainable economy, including increased investments in the sustainable management of the resources on which these sectors depend. • Identify enterprises with potential to become more competitive • Enhance efforts to encourage cooperation among firms • Improve the ease of doing business • Develop other development financing instruments – venture capital and export financing • Identify and develop activities that can provide significant employment and earning opportunities to the poor and vulnerable • Build institutional capacity to encourage technological adaptation and innovation while also taking into account climate change resilience considerations • Maintain the existing primary (highway) and secondary road networks in a good state of repair • Enhance and upgrade the road network (according to the National Transportation Master Plan) • Develop a domestic transportation policy • Secure investments in expanding electricity generation capacity, with special emphasis on renewable energy, and develop a low-carbon development strategy • Continue efforts to improve sewage disposal in Placencia and San Pedro and undertake studies for improving sewage disposal in other priority areas • Develop strategies that mitigate the impacts of land based and marine pollution, especially those generated by domestic and industrial activities • Improve linkages between educational programs offered and the needs of the economy
CSF 2 - Enhanced social cohesion and resilience (enhanced equity)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study mechanisms for health care financing • Educate and influence young people to change eating habits for improved nutrition • Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of recently launched social protection initiatives and the social assistance framework in general; and review the social protection framework • Strengthen community-driven approaches for the implementation of livelihood programs • Develop strategies that could simultaneously promote greater labor productivity and better

worker compensation
CSF 3 - Sustained or improved health of natural, environmental, historical, and cultural assets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and implement the National Land Use Policy and Integrated Planning Framework • Complete a Water Master Plan, a National Groundwater and Surface Water Assessment, and a Water Vulnerability Profile, and pay particular attention to situations that need to be urgently addressed including the potential depletion and contamination of water resources. • Implement sustainable forest management, including protected areas management as a tool to ensure watershed protection for water and food security • Continue implementation of the Solid Waste Management Project (SWMP); and develop similar interventions to improve waste disposal within the southern and northern thirds of the country • Continue mainstreaming climate change considerations into national development planning • Implement the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZMP), including the development of a marine spatial plan • Establish the National Protected Areas System and its related Policies and Plans of Action • Implement the National Environmental Policy and Strategy 2014-2024; and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan • Complete and implement other critical policies, plans, and projects, in the area of forests, fisheries, oil spill contingency, land-based and marine pollution, readiness for the Green Climate Fund, sustainable livelihoods, and technology for climate change mitigation and adaptation
CSF 4 - Enhanced governance and citizen security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully implement program budgeting, and seek budget efficiencies and synergies • Continue implementation of other Public Finance Reform initiatives • Strengthen and broaden representation on the Economic Development Council (EDC) • Provide adequate basic equipment and training to law enforcement officials • Deploy closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras to aid with police surveillance
Key implementation actions to be given the highest priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrench program budgeting • Put in place the recommended institutional arrangement to implement the GSDS • Review and reform the tax regime to enhance fiscal space, support economic efficiency and promote fairness • Prepare a Disaster Risk Financing Plan • Increase flexibility in human resource management and allocation • Implement the monitoring and evaluation framework

II. Belize Framework for Sustainable Development

The Belize Framework for Sustainable Development is a set of interrelated goals and objectives that provides the structure for integrated national development planning in both the medium and long term.

The Framework is guided, in an overarching sense, by the long term vision described in *Horizon 2030: The National Development Framework for Belize 2010-2030*. The Horizon 2030 vision is anchored in a broad consensus among national stakeholders and acts as a starting point for national development planning.

The Framework is also designed to be in harmony with the Post-2015 Development Agenda of the United Nations.¹ Further, actions reflected in the strategy are also influenced by several other international commitments to which Belize is a signatory, including CARICOM, SICA and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (the outcome document of the SIDS Forum 2014).

The Belize Framework for Sustainable Development presented in this GSDS builds on three national planning streams:

- The completed and adopted *Horizon 2030* document
- The development of a medium-term “Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy” (GPRS) during early 2014 (including stakeholder consultations)
- The development of a zero draft Concept Note for the development of a “National Sustainable Development Strategy” (NSDS) during mid-2014 (including stakeholder consultations)

The GPRS and the zero draft Concept Note of the development of the NSDS have been merged and the framework presented here is an integration of the goals, objectives, and priorities that were identified by those earlier processes.

Elements of the Framework

The Belize Framework for Sustainable Development consists of three elements in a nested hierarchy:

- A statement of the **Overall Goal**, inspired by the Horizon 2030 vision;
- A set of four **Critical Success Factors (CSF)** for achieving the Overall Goal; and
- A more detailed set of **Necessary Conditions (NC)**, or objectives for actions that is essential to achieving the Critical Success Factors.

¹ Note that the Post-2015 Development Agenda will not be officially finalized until September 2015.

These elements provide the organizing structure for a set of **Actions** to be realized in policy and implementation during the period of this planning document as well as during subsequent planning periods. The GSDS is a medium term instrument for implementing Horizon 2030. It does this, however, through an updated framework that (1) takes into account stakeholder consultations on current sustainable development needs and priorities in Belize; and (2) helps to bring Belize into alignment with the international community by the adaptation of the sustainable development framework of the UN Task Team. This updated framework is fully consistent with the sustainable development tenets of Horizon 2030. The new Belize Framework for Sustainable Development, which details the Overall Goal, Critical Success Factors, and Necessary Conditions, is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Elements of the Belize Framework for Sustainable Development

Overarching Goal: “To improve the quality of life for all Belizeans, living now and in the future.”			
Critical Success Factors (CSF)			
CSF1 Optimal national income and investment	CSF2 Enhanced social cohesion and resilience (enhanced equity)	CSF3 Sustained or improved health of natural, environmental, historical, and cultural assets	CSF4 Enhanced governance and citizen security
Necessary Conditions (NC)			
NC1.1 Penetrate export markets NC1.2 Attract foreign investments NC1.3 Good/effective industrial policy, based on Belize’s strengths NC1.3.1 Improved competitiveness (including small firms and traditional sectors) NC1.3.2 Optimal economic transition NC1.3.3 Access to development finance NC1.3.4 Inclusive growth NC1.3.5 Technological adaptation and innovation (including green technology) NC1.3.6 Appropriate incentives NC1.3.7 Prioritized sectors NC1.4 Efficient markets including labor and financial markets	NC2.1 Adequate access to health care NC2.2 Adequate access to education and lifelong learning for all NC2.3 Optimal social security/insurance NC2.4 Better social assistance (direct social protection) NC2.5 Effective livelihood programs (indirect social protection) NC2.6 Decent wages and work conditions NC2.7 Strong national identity and future vision NC2.8 Social inclusion and equitable growth	NC3.1 Wise stewardship of natural resource assets NC3.1.1 Ecosystems management NC3.1.1a Protected areas management NC3.1.1b Other land areas NC3.1.2 Water resource management NC3.1.3 Disaster risk management and climate change resilience NC3.1.4 Management of historical and cultural areas NC3.1.5 Marine and aquatic resources NC3.2 Rural and urban planning NC3.3 Waste management and pollution control	NC4.1 Improved technical and political governance systems NC4.2 Amelioration of social issues that fuel crime NC4.3 Effective policing NC4.4 Better administration of justice NC4.5 Maintaining the integrity of national borders

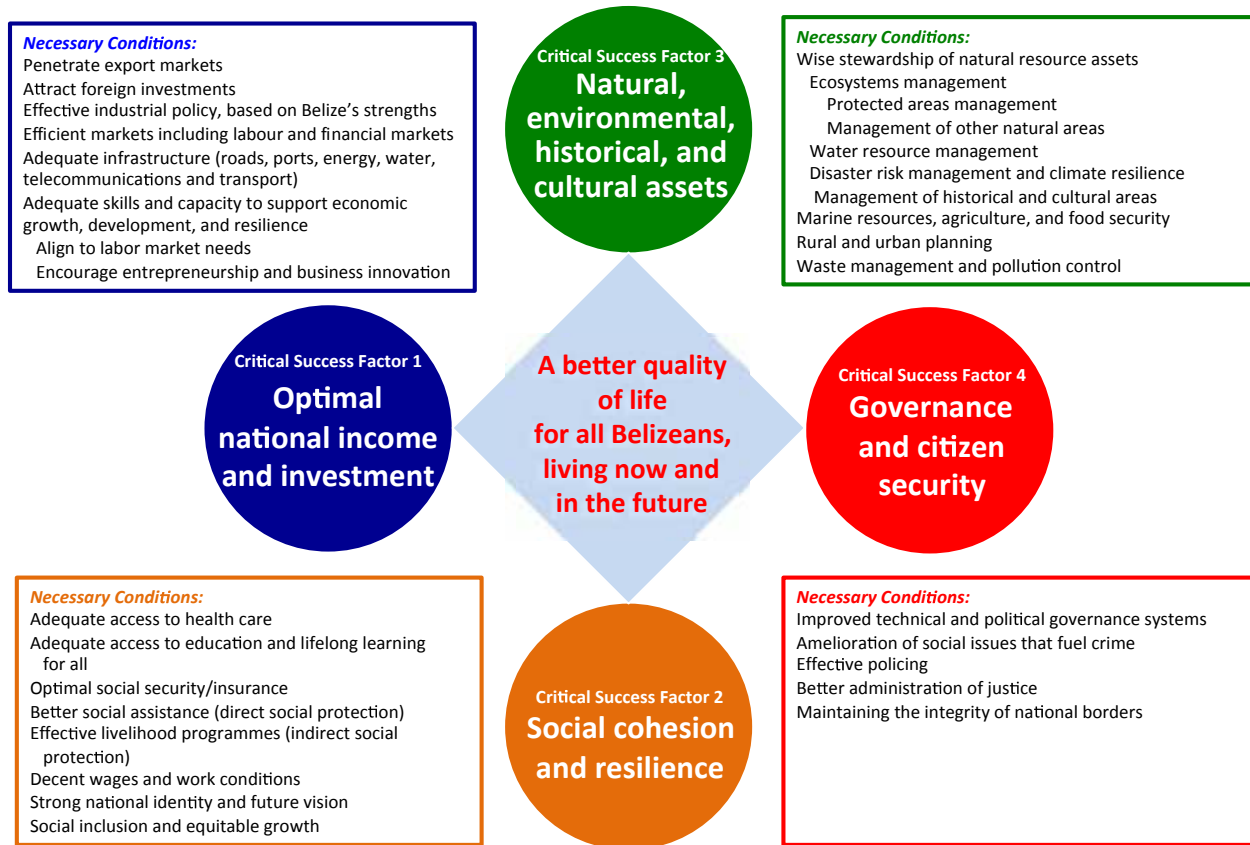
<p>NC1.5 Adequate infrastructure (roads, ports, energy, water, telecommunication and transport)</p> <p>NC1.6 Adequate skills and capacity to support economic growth, development, and resilience</p> <p>NC1.6.1 Align to labor market needs</p> <p>NC1.6.2 Encourage entrepreneurship and business innovation</p>			
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Sustainable development has the objective of creating and maintaining prosperous social, economic and ecological systems. It is this development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Belizeans live and work in social and economic systems that are inextricably linked with the ecological systems within which they are embedded. This means that changes in one domain of the system - social, economic or ecological - inevitably have impacts on the other domains and, therefore, it is not possible to fully understand the dynamics of one domain in isolation from the others. The links among the social, economic and ecological systems are often not adequately reflected in the manner in which we have traditionally analyzed and practiced social and economic management or natural resources management. Separate analysis under each domain can generate powerful insights into how the world works; but these insights are partial, focusing only on components of the system rather than the system as a whole. This understanding calls for inter-disciplinary approaches in policy and research, based on systems thinking.

Thus, in addition to providing an organizing structure for policy and planning, the Belize Sustainable Development Framework:

- ***Provides clarity of definition*** on what sustainable development, from a systems perspective, means for Belize.
- ***Highlights the interconnected nature*** of the four Critical Success Factors. They are dependent upon one another and need to be considered in an integrated and systemic way.
- ***Supports communication*** about integrated sustainable development across ministries and stakeholders.
- ***Can also be used in both public education and in formal education*** to raise awareness about Belize's development aims.

The elements of the Framework are illustrated in Figure 1 on *pg. 12*.



Adapted from the Sustainable Development Framework of the United Nations Task Team 2012

Figure 1: The Belize Framework for Sustainable Development. The four Critical Success Factors are dependent on each other as well as on the Necessary Conditions. The overarching goal ties all the elements together.

III. Prioritization Strategy and Framework

Resources in Belize are limited and may not be sufficient to pursue all the actions described in this document, and in other national planning documents, depending on the success of resource mobilization efforts. Consequently, to strengthen resource allocation and to support the process of sequencing actions, this section describes a general strategy and framework for making prioritization decisions.

The Resource Mobilization section (Section VI) differentiates between “Base Allocations” (continued base spending) and newer “Strategic Allocations.” This Prioritization Strategy and Framework applies principally to Strategic Allocations, but it can also be used for assessing Base Allocations in cases of significant resource scarcity.

The approach builds on the general principle of pursuing an integrated, systemic, and sustainable development approach to national planning. The strategy is to apply (1) a simplified multi-criteria assessment framework in assessing implementation decisions and allocating scarce resources to new strategic initiatives; combined with (2) a general phasing approach to differentiate between classes of action already identified as priority for the current planning period. The framework should be applied by the decision-making body closest to the issue under consideration; and/or by the technical body reviewing a set of issues for high-level decision, as appropriate.

The framework is applicable to the full range of growth and sustainable development issues elaborated in this GSDS: from medium-term, growth-oriented policies to stimulate industry and jobs; to long-term, investment-oriented programs to build human capital and ensure the future health of critical ecosystems. It is intended to support policy-makers in dealing with urgent matters, seeking synergies, avoiding unnecessary trade-offs, and planning the sequencing of larger initiatives in phases (processes that may stretch over a decade or more).

During the first GSDS planning period emphasis will be placed on ensuring that the basic requirements for global competitiveness are significantly strengthened while increasing focus on the ability of the economy to compete based on efficiency and an embrace of a systemic sustainable development approach. As necessary, such focus will continue into the second planning period. Consequently, during the current planning period, general priority will be given to a range of centrally important issues on which the viability of the rest of the GSDS depends. These generally prioritized actions in the first GSDS planning period include actions to:

- Maintain macro-economic stability and improve fiscal space for the financing of other development efforts;
- Develop basic infrastructure such as water, sewerage, waste disposal, and connectivity;
- Improve institutional performance and overall governance, including public service delivery;
- Enhance citizen security;
- Improve access to, and the quality of, education and health care;

- Mainstream climate change and ecosystem management considerations into economic development planning; and
- Set the stage for achieving greater efficiency during the second planning period.

Budgeting and other planning decision processes should generally consider actions related to these general priorities before moving on to other considerations beyond the Base Allocations. These general priorities would significantly inform the Strategic Allocations.

The Prioritization Framework

The GSDS Prioritization Framework considers four critical aspects of policy implementation:

1. **Level of Urgency:** The degree to which an action is required in order to avoid near-term, system-critical disruptions or missed opportunities. Actions deemed urgent receive higher priority.
2. **Level of Impact:** The degree to which an action leads to visible and measurable improvements in quality of life for Belizeans in the medium term. High-impact actions receive higher priority.
3. **Availability of Resources:** The extent to which resources (either internally or externally generated) have already been or can be easily committed to the action. “Resources” includes financial as well as human resources necessary to implement the policy. Actions linked to existing or easily mobilized resources receive higher priority.
4. **Net Systemic Contribution:** The extent to which an action contributes, over time, to the integrated or systemic achievement of the Critical Success Factors. This criterion involves assessing whether the action contributes to multiple CSFs, or whether its implementation comes at a cost (trade-off) to other CSFs. Actions that contribute more highly to multiple CSFs, without trade-offs, receive higher priority. Actions and initiatives designed to be cross-cutting should score highly on this criterion, by design.

Given Belize’s resource constraints and the complexity of the issues involved, this framework is not being presented as a requirement for formal Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) in all cases. The framework will *generally* be used to inform deliberative, qualitative discussion and decision on priorities. More technical MCDA, including quantitative analysis, should only be implemented in those cases where structured, formal, and precise approaches to prioritization are essential (e.g. assessing and sequencing infrastructure investments).

Table 2 on page 15 provides a more detailed description of the framework using a “High, Medium, Low” scoring approach. A more detailed scoring approach, following this general architecture, can (and in some instances should) be developed for individual ministries or project areas.

Table 2: A simplified multi-criteria prioritization framework for implementation of the GSDS. A more detailed and formal scoring system, following this general architecture, should be devised for specific ministries or policy areas in those cases where there are more complex considerations or where there are a large number of items requiring prioritization, and finer distinctions must be made. The framework can also be used as a discussion tool without formal scoring. In all events, use of the framework will bring to light points of consensus and/or disagreement among policy-makers regarding priority considerations, and difficult decisions can be remanded to a higher level (e.g. the Technical Committees, CEO Caucus, or Cabinet) if deemed necessary.

GSDS Prioritization Framework

1. Level of Urgency <i>Degree to which an action is required in order to avoid near-term, system-critical disruptions or missed opportunities</i>	2. Level of Impact <i>Degree to which an action leads to visible and measurable improvements in quality of life in the medium term</i>	3. Availability of Resources <i>Extent to which resources (budgetary or external) have already been, or can be committed to the action</i>	4. Net Systemic Contribution <i>Extent to which an action contributes, over time, to the integrated achievement of the Critical Success Factors</i>
High = Failure to implement the action in the near-term is likely to result in serious damage to the current and future prospects of Belize, as reflected in the Critical Success Factors	High = The action will lead to quick, visible, and measureable improvements in quality of life for Belizeans	High = Funds and human resources are already allocated, can easily be allocated, or can (with high levels of certainty) be mobilized from extra-governmental sources	High = The action contributes to advancing multiple (or even all) Critical Success Factors in the medium and long term
Medium = The action is desirable in the medium term and delay in implementation significantly increases the risk that objectives will not be met in a timely fashion	Medium = The action will have a noticeable and measureable positive effect on quality of life in the medium term, but the effects will be more noticeable in subsequent periods	Medium = Resources are expected to be available for allocation, with lower levels of certainty	Medium = The action contributes to advancing one or two Critical Success Factors, with little to no trade-off required regarding the other CSFs
Low = The action can be postponed at low risk to the current and future prospects of Belize	Low = The positive effects of the action on quality of life will not be felt or be measurable until after the current planning period	Low = Political and economic circumstances make it very difficult to identify and/or allocate resources at this time	Low = The action advances only one Critical Success Factor, at the expense of progress on (or at the cost of damage to) other CSFs

Applying the Framework

In general terms, the framework will be applied in budgeting by first (1) determining the budget allocation available for new Strategic Allocations, and (2) applying the framework (or a more detailed version of it, as described in the notes to Table 2) to set priority rankings in place. The prioritization exercise will be undertaken by the MED for recommendation to the Minister of

Finance. However, consultations with the Technical Committees (see Section V, “Technical Committees”) and with line ministries will help inform priorities. Actions scoring lower in overall ranking would be sequenced for implementation as funding and other necessary resources become available.

From time to time, an action may be deemed a “*Quick Win*”, in the political judgment of the Government of Belize - meaning that it is easy to implement and worth prioritizing, even if it does not appear to score better than other choices in the context of this multi-criteria evaluation.

In other instances, an action may be deemed of *high strategic importance*, in the political judgment of the Government of Belize, and be considered for priority implementation as an exception, though it may not appear to score well in the context of this multi-criteria evaluation or in those cases where evaluation is considered ambiguous or difficult to determine. Such actions should generally be discussed thoroughly by the GOB in concert with an appropriate Advisory Body (see Section V, “Implementation Plan and Institutional Arrangements”) before a determination is made regarding exceptional prioritization.

Examples of Application

The following hypothetical examples can serve as reference points for the application of this framework.

Example 1: A renewable energy installation for which external investment financing has already been identified, or a small-scale aquaculture facility also with external financing, would rate high in all four categories and be sequenced for early implementation.

Example 2: Larger investments to safeguard a water resource from the impacts of climate change would require careful deliberation, informed by scientific and economic analysis, to determine the Level of Urgency and Level of Impact. Such investments would likely rate highly on Net Systemic Contribution. High ratings in all three of these areas should motivate additional efforts to mobilize resources, if these are not currently available, and result in giving higher priority to such mobilization efforts.

Example 3: Specific investments in education that are also strongly tied to improving social conditions, accelerating economic growth, and increasing citizen security over the long term would rate high on both Urgency and Net Systemic Contribution, even though the effects of such investments may not be directly felt during the span of this current GSDS planning period. Actions rating high on Impact would be sequenced ahead of otherwise equally rated investments. New allocations over and above current education budget expenditures might rate Medium and would generally be made as funds became available. Alternatively, investments could be more formally ranked in order of expected Urgency, Impact, and Net Systemic Contribution and sequenced for implementation as funds became available.

IV. Program of Action

Critical Success Factor 1: Optimal National Income and Investment

Overview

As a target, Belize will seek to achieve real output growth of 5% annually over a prolonged period. Assuming population growth remains at about 2%, the targeted output growth will lead to a sustained improvement in per capita income of approximately 33% over a ten-year period. Over the short to medium-term, Belize may not be able to reach the 5% growth target; but efforts will commence during the medium-term planning period (2016-2019) to raise growth to that level.

The principal strategy for achieving this growth rate is to intensify efforts to improve productivity and competitiveness, this requires improving the capacity of workers, using better technology, enhancing organizational (operational) allocation, increasing efficiency, and increasing the scale and scope of operations where needed.

Belize has reasonably good access to export markets, supported by trade and economic development agreements. Further, the country has significant resources that are attractive to export markets. Ongoing efforts to optimize the exports of goods and services and promote sustainable tourism need to be complemented with improved market intelligence and the optimal use of trade and economic development agreements, and the protection of its natural resource base. Moreover, it will be necessary to launch stronger efforts to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as well as to encourage greater investment by domestic entities. Additionally, greater efforts are necessary to remove supply constraints, improve infrastructure, and reduce operational costs (e.g. energy).

To increase resilience, economic development planning needs to include careful risk management that encompasses the development of fiscal reserves and reducing debt to levels that provide more room and flexibility to mitigate the impact of global economic downturns, natural disasters, and climate change-related shifts in long-term weather patterns.

This Critical Success Factor is also inter-dependent with other CSFs, in particular CSF 2, Social Cohesion and Resilience. Alongside efforts to facilitate the generation of increased wealth, the Government of Belize will launch a strong effort to encourage more equitable distribution of income and to reduce poverty. This will necessitate supporting efforts to create more employment opportunities and to improve labor rewards towards levels that are sufficient to lift persons out of poverty. This will in turn contribute to a more socially cohesive society and to a more secure society, alongside many of the other necessary conditions to achieve greater social cohesion as well as better citizen security.

Increasing Belize's production of goods and services for both domestic consumption and export also requires increased efforts to sustain its natural resource endowments for the benefit of our posterity, balanced against meeting the needs of the current generation. The Government of

Belize will pursue a more concerted effort to mainstream efficient “green” technology as well as policy and planning tools to support a long-term “greening” of the economy.

Necessary Condition 1.1: Penetrating Export Markets

Belize will aim, at the minimum, to maintain a positive growth trend over the medium term in the export of its major commodities, while accelerating growth in tourist arrivals and expenditure, as well as in the export of other services and non-traditional agricultural commodities. The target for growth in non-traditional exports and tourism is 3% annually over the medium term, building towards annual export growth of about 5% per annum. Specific opportunities, strategies, and targets with respect to each specific commodity or service will be determined more definitively within various sector plans.



To attain the export growth target GOB will implement several direct strategies that will address the most pressing constraints to export market penetration. These will be complemented by other elements of industrial policy (discussed in a later section) that will indirectly contribute to the growth in exports.

Action 1: Facilitate greater exploitation of market access agreements

The Ministry with responsibility for Investment, Trade and Commerce (MITC) will be responsible for pursuing this action through trade commissions with bilateral partners to oversee trade agreements, among other mechanisms. The Partial Scope Agreements between Guatemala and Belize and those being negotiated with Mexico and El Salvador are expected to provide much opportunity to expand exports to these neighboring countries. Special emphasis will be paid to knowledge sharing with other entities that facilitate or engage in exports, in order to position them to take action to better utilize trade opportunities.

The MITC will continue activities aimed at enhancing the ability of Belize to take advantage of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union; and to lead Belize's efforts as part of CARICOM to negotiate replacement agreements with respect to trade with Canada and the United States of America.

Line ministries will take the lead in preparing the specific programs, projects in line with the EPA Implementation Plan, or documents that will be necessary for accessing relevant financing - subject to the availability of resources - including technical assistance from European Union (EU) sources. They will liaise with the MITC when necessary to coordinate their activities.

Action 2: Enhance market intelligence

The market intelligence function will include the gathering of information on market opportunities; potential for Belizean goods and services; the analysis of market trends; the technical requirements for accessing markets; and likely risks to sustaining market share.

BELTRAIDE will coordinate this function and, in order to achieve maximum efficiency, will conduct as much of the intelligence-gathering as may be appropriate.

BELTRAIDE will develop adequate arrangements with other stakeholders (including the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)) for determining intelligence needs, sharing of information between stakeholders, and disseminating market intelligence. BELTRAIDE will also assess the HR skills and requirements necessary to allow it to effectively carry out this function. The Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation (MOTCA) is expected to continue to pursue its market intelligence function through the Belize Tourism Board, and with the engagement of the Belize Tourist Industry Association.

Action 3: Achieve adequate standards and technical requirements for exports

The Government of Belize will intensify efforts to enable enterprises to meet standards for accessing export markets. Such efforts will include those to improve the capacity of the Belize Bureau of Standards and the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) to provide quality certification to enterprises; perform necessary quality surveillance; or to perform surveys of sanitary and phytosanitary conditions and other quality conditions that are necessary to access export markets. Capacities within the Forestry and Fisheries Departments will also be strengthened to ensure compliance with international agreements on international trade in endangered species.

Quality assurance services will also be required with respect to the sale of goods on the domestic market, as this would contribute to improved health conditions, as well as the creation of a culture of producing quality goods and services — a foundation that is expected to lead to greater export readiness. Consequently, appropriate investments will be undertaken to establish accredited laboratory facilities, subject to economic feasibility. Consideration will also be given to the provision of adequate staffing and availability of necessary skills within these institutions, and to the adequacy of institutional arrangements for the conduct of their activities.

The Government of Belize will also consider upgrading and rationalizing laboratory facilities that are based in various ministries and agencies with respect to the assessment of water quality for drinking, aquaculture, or other production activities.

Appropriate/adequate capacity will be built within BELTRAIDE to allow for the provision, where necessary, of assistance to enterprises to enable them to reach required quality standards. Positioning of this technical assistance function within BELTRAIDE ensures that there is sufficient separation of functions with respect to regulatory and development roles in relation to improving quality standards. BELTRAIDE will assist enterprises, as necessary, to access financing to develop appropriate quality standards, including introducing the consideration of new financing options such as venture capital (with respect to which a fund is to be established and is discussed under NC1.3.3 in relation to access to development finance).

The objectives of this Action are to improve the timeliness with which enterprises can acquire certification and, where necessary, reduce the cost to enterprises for obtaining such certification. It will also maintain surveillance of the necessary conditions for accessing export markets; and entrench a culture of quality production. Where financially feasible and desirable, private sector provision of services related to certification and quality standards will be encouraged. In some cases this option may arise after the organizational hurdles have been crossed.

Action 4: Increased access to export financing

A feasibility study on the establishment of an export financing scheme will be conducted by the Development Finance Corporation (DFC). This will include consideration of appropriate institutional arrangements for the management of such a scheme and the establishment of transparent criteria for accessing the fund. Considerations could include whether to locate the scheme within the operations of the DFC. An amount of USD 20 million is provisionally contemplated for the establishment of the fund by 2016.

Action 5: Improved promotion of exports

BELTRAIDE will continue to lead efforts to facilitate the promotion of the export of Belizean goods and services, and the export promotion role of other institutions will be rationalized. While the promotion of tourism services will continue to be pursued by the BTB, all other promotion activities are to be coordinated or focused within BELTRAIDE in order to improve efficiency. This includes the promotion of the export of agricultural goods, for which the BMDC currently has an official mandate. In line with the market intelligence role, BELTRAIDE will develop the necessary arrangements to collaborate with other stakeholders to identify the products and services to be promoted and appropriate mechanisms for information sharing and targeting. The restructuring of BELTRAIDE into three areas², including one focusing on export promotion, will take account of these considerations.

² Export promotion, investment promotion and small business development

Necessary Condition 1.2: Attracting Foreign Investments

Belize will launch efforts to improve the attractiveness of the jurisdiction to foreign investors by implementing strategies to reduce the cost and ease of doing business; the cost of inputs (including energy, transportation, and telecommunications); and the cost of security associated with crime. These strategies will be accompanied by effective investment promotion and facilitation for which BELTRAIDE will have responsibility.



The investment promotion and facilitation objective is to raise FDI to the levels achieved during the three-year period prior to 2008 (relative to GDP) and thereafter to sustain positive real growth in FDI. BELTRAIDE will monitor and evaluate the achievement of this goal as well as progress towards specific targets or goals that will be set in relation to particular sectors or in relation to specific opportunities.

Some adjustments in the tax incentives currently in place are necessary to ensure that they are consistent with World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements. This will include adjustments to the incentive regime with respect to the operation of Export Processing Zones (EPZs) and Commercial Free Zones (CFZs). The MITC will lead efforts to establish new arrangements to replace the EPZs and the CFZs.

Further, there is the need to avoid tax competition with other jurisdictions, and regional mechanisms by which to do so are essential. Belize will encourage such efforts through CARICOM and participate in regional efforts to adjust the Fiscal Incentives Act which is based on a regional template.

Efforts will continue to steer FDI to the sugar industry, with the aim of achieving 30 to 40 tons per acre in sugarcane cultivation and increase value added production activity. Small farmers will need continued assistance to attain these higher productivity levels necessary for them to maintain a stake in the industry. Further, there are prospects for the continued expansion of the

range of goods produced by the sugar industry in Belize, including expanded generation of electricity, and the production of bio-diesel and refined sugar.

Priority actions in relation to direct efforts to attract foreign investors will include the following:

Action 1: Enhance coordination of investment promotion

BELTRAIDE's investment promotion efforts will include promotion of investments in tourism, agriculture, energy, and infrastructure, among other areas. Strong coordination of investment promotion efforts is expected to yield better results by improving investment facilitation; reducing duplication; exploiting synergies; and improving appropriateness, consistency and transparency with respect to the use of incentives to attract investments. BELTRAIDE will develop the appropriate arrangements for coordination with other stakeholders, including appropriate protocols to be followed by ministries/agencies in dealing with foreign investors. Moreover, BELTRAIDE and the Belize Tourism Board will collaborate to ensure that investment promotion efforts are consistent with the Tourism Master Plan.

Action 2: Clarify areas in which to concentrate investment promotion efforts

BELTRAIDE will finalize the National Export Strategy (NES), within which six priority sectors are identified, in order to increase certainty with regard to the opportunities and strengths that are to be promoted to investors. However, during the GSDS period 2016 to 2019, among the priority sectors identified in the Draft NES, greater focus will be placed on attracting investments in agriculture and agro-processing, tourism and energy. Strategic actions during this period will be aimed at strengthening the sustainability and competitiveness of these sectors as a foundation on which future development efforts will build. Active industrial policy, including investment promotion efforts, will be prioritized in these sectors. During that period, other sectors will be dealt with on a reactive basis – for example, by dealing with investment requests as they occur, based on merit, as opposed to undertaking concerted promotion efforts, and generally through efforts to improve the ease of doing business. The prioritization will be reviewed at the end of the planning period.

Action 3: Mount specific effort to attract investments

In line with other aspects of industrial policy, the Government of Belize, acting through BELTRAIDE, will mount special efforts to attract foreign investment in specific areas. Subject to further analysis as required, these could include investments in aquaculture; the use of *Arundo donax L.* (wild cane) to produce biodiesel or for use as a biomass material for the generation of electricity; electricity generation from other renewable resources; and road and port infrastructure.

Action 4: Review the incentives regime for attracting investments

The MITC, in collaboration with the MED, will lead efforts to review the incentive regime (tax and non-tax incentives) aimed at attracting investments, to take account of the need to minimize the provision of incentives to those who are not taking commensurate risks, balanced against the need to provide appropriate incentives on a timely basis in areas where they could be most effective. Incentives are further discussed under NC1.3, "Good Industry Policy," below.

Necessary Condition 1.3: Effective Industrial Policy, Based on Belize's Strengths

The Government of Belize will, during the current planning period, strengthen and clarify its strategies and policies to develop an appropriate enabling environment for the production of goods and services. Such strategies and policies (“industrial policy”) will be largely directed at encouraging private enterprises to become more productive and competitive.

Besides direct policies and strategies to attract foreign investment and to penetrate export markets as discussed previously, policies to help the country become internationally competitive (or improve its competitiveness) could include measures to:

- Overcome the limitation of small size of enterprises;
- Encourage the emergence of new activity, or strengthen the competitiveness of emerging activity;
- Enhance the competitiveness of established (traditional) major industries including sugar, bananas, and citrus;
- Support the development of priority sectors including agriculture and agro-processing, tourism and energy;
- Incentivize the integration of green technologies and sustainable economy innovations into all aspects of economic development;
- Improve availability of development financing;
- Encourage technological adaptation and innovation;
- Encourage activity with greater potential to simultaneously enhance output growth and contribute to the more equitable distribution of income (promote growth with equity); and
- Generally incentivize business development through the tax regime and other means.

The use of indicators and targets will be expanded to focus policy attention on these areas. Lead stakeholders with respect to specific elements will be required to provide annual reports on the impacts, successes, and failures of major elements of industrial policy in order to create a feedback loop for continuous learning and policy development. The MED will serve as the principal coordinating ministry in formulating and communicating industrial policy and in monitoring its results.

Necessary Condition 1.3.1: Improved Competitiveness (Including among Small Firms and Traditional Sectors)

Action 1: Enhance efforts to encourage cooperation among firms

To overcome the limitations of the relatively small size of many Belizean firms, cooperation will be encouraged with respect to various activities including production, processing, storage, transportation, marketing, purchasing and accounting. The Cooperatives Department of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) will review various cooperation models to be promoted,

including the formation of legal cooperatives and business models for the formation of sectoral or geographic clusters.

The Cooperatives Department will review the experience with respect to the success of cooperatives in order to design more effective cooperation models, especially within priority sectors for development. The Department will also develop arrangements for coordination among stakeholders towards undertaking a more active approach for identifying potential areas of activity (or groups of enterprises) that could benefit from improved cooperation. Stakeholders will include the ministry responsible for local government and rural development, the BMDC, and BELTRAIDE. Once potential areas and enterprises have been identified, the Department of Cooperatives will seek to assist the enterprises involved with the establishment of the necessary institutional arrangements.

Action 2: Continue to enhance the provision of Business Development Support

BELTRAIDE will continue to be at the forefront of efforts to provide business development support to small and medium enterprises. It will continue to work closely with DFC to provide assistance as needed by those enterprises that access DFC financing. Further, where necessary BELTRAIDE will work to prepare enterprises to access venture capital and export financing once those development financing tools are developed. The provision of business development support will assist businesses to improve product standards and to attain product certification. In order to avoid conflicts of interest with respect to their role in regulating standards, the Belize Bureau of Standards and BAHA are not expected to play a direct role in assisting enterprises to improve standards and attain certification.

BELTRAIDE will proactively identify companies that require such support, especially within priority sectors for development. This will be coordinated with efforts by DFC to identify and attract good prospects for the provision of financing support. BELTRAIDE's efforts will also be coordinated with efforts to identify prospects for support under the venture capital and export financing initiatives. Moreover, there will be close coordination with the Cooperatives Department to support efforts to encourage greater cooperation among small and medium enterprises, as noted in Action 1 above.

BELTRAIDE will review the effectiveness with which it has provided business development support and will keep under review its capacity to provide desired levels of support as more active efforts are mounted to identify enterprises with good prospects for business growth. In reviewing its effectiveness, BELTRAIDE will also consider approaches for dealing with mistrust, which may inhibit enterprises and firms from providing sensitive information to institutions or from cooperating with other firms.

Other strategies to overcome the limitations of small size will be embedded within other industrial policy strategies.

Action 3: Continue efforts to improve productivity and viability of the sugar, banana and citrus industries (and other traditional sectors)

With respect to sugar production, efforts to enhance productivity of traditional cane farmers under the Accompanying Measures for Sugar (AMS) will continue. These efforts include the

sugar cane replanting program and the construction of sugar access roads. The success of these measures will be closely monitored by MED with a view to determining the additional steps that may be needed to support the sustainability of the industry. Should the programs be successful in raising yield per acre of sugar cane cultivation from an average of 15 tons per acre to over 30 tons per acre, an additional review will be undertaken to inform measures which will be put in place to ensure that this enhanced productivity is maintained. This may require contemplating incentive or support mechanisms to encourage farmers to maintain high productivity levels; and place high priority on the maintenance of farm roads. Other current policies to enhance the viability of the banana and citrus industry will continue.

Action 4: Engage the private sector in discussing opportunities for expanding traditional agricultural production

MED, in collaboration with the MOA, will coordinate wider efforts to improve the sustainability of the agricultural industry and will hold discussions with private investors regarding opportunities to make expand production more efficient, improve infrastructure (including those necessary for the export of sugar), develop vertical linkages, and improve labor relations.

With respect to relations between farmers and processors, efforts will be made to encourage greater partnerships in the industry. This could include developing better incentives for encouraging sugarcane farmers and industry workers to enhance their productivity.

MED will coordinate efforts to expand the overall sustainability of the citrus industry and will hold discussions with the main processors regarding ways to make expand production more efficient, and to build linkages that may include the production of feed using waste from processing, maximizing the capacity utilization of the plant, and improving industry relations. It would include mechanisms to enhance labor incentives in an effort to improve the contribution of the industry to poverty reduction efforts.

The MOA will spearhead efforts to assist the citrus industry to grapple with disease and pest control, including citrus greening.

Necessary Condition 1.3.2: Optimal Economic Transition: Supporting New and Emerging Activity with Good Prospects

Action 5: Use pilots, demonstrations and research as foundation tools

The Government of Belize will encourage the optimal development of emerging activity and the discovery of new areas in which Belize may develop a competitive advantage, through the use of pilot projects, demonstration projects and research.

BELTRAIDE will consult and coordinate with various stakeholders to build on initiatives in this endeavor. Initiatives that are already underway include business models developed by the ministry responsible for fisheries with respect to tilapia production (aquaculture); and work by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre with respect to the production of cohune oil,

and the use of *Arundo donax L.* (wild cane) to produce bio-fuel or for use as biomass material for the generation of electricity.

The MOA and other ministries will identify areas where the use of pilots, demonstration projects and further research may be useful to unlock potential opportunities. Initiatives that create positive impacts in multiple Critical Success Factors will be prioritized, especially in the provision of support to attract investment.

Action 6: Increase efforts to identify enterprises with potential to become more competitive

The Government of Belize will proactively identify enterprises with potential to become internationally competitive. This will involve more aggressive promotion of the types of support available to enterprises through various institutions such as DFC, BELTRAIDE, and the Cooperatives Department; as well as the agencies that will ultimately be responsible for the management of other development financing initiatives (venture capital and export financing).

As a priority, there will be increased direct outreach to enterprises that may have more immediate potential to export goods and services while simultaneously identifying and engaging other enterprises with medium- to long-term export prospects for strategic purposes.

The lead institution will develop effective criteria or/and procedures for selecting enterprises to be supported. Selection will be based on a demonstration of strong growth potential and/or where market and production research indicate good potential.

Action 7: Improve the ease of doing business

The MITC will undertake and keep under review the ease of doing business in Belize. This includes the processes for registering and starting a business and making investment processes simpler and more predictable. This review will facilitate efforts to improve the investment and business climate.

Necessary Condition 1.3.3: Improving Access to Development Finance

Access to financing for private sector activity is a critical constraint to development. There is a need to address several facets in that regard, ranging from the availability of resources, associated hindrances such as collateral requirements, and the use of an appropriate mix of financing tools. With respect to the latter, many ventures may be too highly leveraged, and many, due to insufficient options or guidance, have pursued loan funding prematurely. Some enterprises that may better benefit from other forms of financing (besides loan financing) are unable to develop to their full potential.

Action 8: Pursue financing to expand the traditional development loan program

DFC will continue efforts to secure financing from multilateral institutions to support its on-lending activity.

DFC will pursue efforts to lower its cost of financing and continue to exercise sound development banking business practices including linking its provision of financing to the accessing of business development support by recipients.

Opportunities for equity participation in DFC by the private sector will be investigated and promoted where feasible; including the development of vehicles for raising equity participation from the Belizean diaspora and from institutional investors.

Equity participation by the business sector may be justified and encouraged on the basis of good corporate citizenship, as well as on the basis of the pursuit of their self-interest, given that their own growth will be impacted by the development of new and emerging enterprises.

Action 9: Develop a secure transaction registry

The MITC will lead efforts to develop a secured transactions registry. The registry will facilitate the use of movable collateral such as inventory, accounts receivable, livestock, crops, equipment, and machinery. This action is intended to facilitate increased access to credit to the private sector and reduced cost of credit by addressing the significant challenge associated with the provision of acceptable collateral to lending institutions.

Action 10: Develop other development financing instruments – venture capital and export financing

A feasibility study will be conducted by the DFC to determine the viability of establishing a venture capital fund or a framework for venture capital financing, and to design the way in which such a fund or framework would operate; including securing financing, managing funds, coordinating the framework, and identifying and selecting enterprises that may best utilize venture capital injections. The study will consider the economic rationale for such a fund, including the extent to which development is impeded by the lack of such options; and the potential for the growth in demand, given the pursuit of an enhanced national industrial policy. Targeting venture financing of “green” technologies or sustainable business operations will have priority.

Subject to the findings of the feasibility study, resources will be allocated to commence or catalyze a Venture Capital Fund. A feasibility study will similarly be conducted with regard to the economic viability of the establishment of a dedicated export financing facility, taking into account similar considerations as for the study with respect to a venture capital fund and considering the cross-fertility between these two instruments.

Necessary Condition 1.3.4: Promoting Inclusive Growth (Growth with Equity)

The Government of Belize will actively pursue several interrelated actions to improve the likelihood that growth will benefit the poor. Generally, the pursuit of more active industrial policy will facilitate the provision of more employment and wealth-generating opportunities for poor and vulnerable persons and communities. Strategies to improve access to development funding, to provide business development support, and to encourage cooperation, among others,

will have a strong focus on enhancing opportunities for the poor and vulnerable to participate in productive activity. Encouraging the location of economic activity (through appropriate incentives and better organization) within the poorest and most vulnerable communities, and facilitating access by the poor and vulnerable in those communities to economic opportunities that may exist outside their communities, will be prioritized. Generally, the approach to promote inclusive growth discussed below under Actions 11 to 13 does not preclude consideration of other investment projects that may not be as inclusive as desired. These projects may be valued for the other ways in which they may contribute to the economy.

Action 11: Identify and develop activities that can provide significant employment and earning opportunities to the poor and the vulnerable population.

MED will coordinate efforts to identify and develop significant interventions that can have impacts on poverty. There will be a particular focus on addressing the needs of distressed areas such as Southside Belize City.

Efforts can build on prior or ongoing initiatives identified as providing potential growth opportunities, including models developed for the farming of tilapia, related ongoing activity to construct a hatchery, and pilot and research activity undertaken by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre with respect to the production of cohune oil, and the use of *Arundo donax L.* (Wild Cane) to produce bio-fuels and as a biomass material for the generation of electricity. Efforts should also be continued to develop and implement a low-carbon development strategy that addresses low-emission and climate-resilient economic growth. (The initiative is currently being undertaken by the Ministry with responsibility for the Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD).

Other potential areas of activity can be pursued including the production of cattle, beef, chicken, pitahaya and papaya. Effective institutional support and appropriate support to organize activities will be provided through BELTRAIDE or under other special purpose arrangements, with the aim that these activities will be market-friendly and contribute significantly to employment generation. BELTRAIDE, MOA, the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, and other agencies that will be involved in supporting business activity and formation, will reflect approaches for inclusive growth within their policies, strategies and interventions.

Given that the greatest opportunities to create significant employment currently appear to be in agriculture, MED, along with the MOA and Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), will devise approaches for making land that is suitable for agriculture available to unemployed persons or groups of persons, especially those residing within communities plagued by poverty or related issues of deviant youth behavior. Strategies related to the use of land and with matching employment opportunities to labor supply, will need to be combined with other - including those to overcome cultural biases, unrealistic perceptions, and logistical hurdles related to location and technical skills; other industrial policy approaches; and strategies to sustain ecosystem services and manage waste material as reflected in this document.

Action 12: Pursue inclusive strategies in the development of the tourism industry

Efforts to develop the tourism industry will continue to encourage inclusive growth of the industry. Methods to achieve inclusive growth include focusing on attracting hotel investments

that do not pursue all-inclusive models, as these provide less opportunity for communities to benefit from tourism development.

BELTRAIDE will closely coordinate its investment promotion efforts with BTB and BTIA. Efforts will continue towards developing the supply capacity of artisans and other suppliers of products and services to visitors, in order to create more income and wealth generating opportunities that benefit the poor and vulnerable.

Action 13: Intensify efforts to raise earnings from employment in order to reduce the prevalence of the working poor

Several of the other areas of industrial policy discussed in this document work in support of this Action; for example, by increasing productivity or lowering the cost of electricity. In addition, better irrigation and drainage will help lift agricultural productivity and hence farm incomes. However productivity increase, facilitated by public sector strategies, may not automatically or efficiently filter to workers. Hence, strategies to encourage the sharing of benefits derived from those productivity increases with workers will be pursued across the economy and in all enterprises.

Consequently, MED, in conjunction with the ministry responsible for labor, will encourage and facilitate dialogue between the private sector and labor towards improving the labor incentives framework. This is expected to simultaneously result in increased productivity in a positive self-reinforcing cycle.

In the longer term, as the economy becomes more productive and fewer persons are required to produce a given level of output, efforts to increase productivity will be complemented with efforts to find new areas of activity that can employ liberated labor as well as absorb new entrants into the labor market.

Necessary Condition 1.3.5: Encouraging Technological Adaptation and Innovation (Including Green Technology)

Action 14: Build institutional capacity to encourage technological adaptation and innovation

The Government of Belize will seek to build the institutional capacity within the Ministry responsible for Science and Technology, and within other appropriate bodies, to assist businesses in applying (imitating) existing technology in order to improve their efficiency, productivity and competitiveness. Technical assistance will be targeted to the priority sectors for development; however, those businesses in other sectors with good prospects for growth will be encouraged. A proactive approach will be taken to identify enterprises that can be assisted either on the basis of individual merit, or sector prioritization. Appropriate transparent targeting and delivery mechanisms will be designed.

Capacity development processes will target the technical skills needed to facilitate government's efforts to encourage innovation and imitation. A review of skills and capacity to deliver such technical assistance will be conducted within the Ministry responsible for Science and

Technology and other line ministries. The focus will be on making enterprises more aware of opportunities to imitate technology, and to assist them in analyzing the benefits that may be derived from the application of improved technology within the local context or within the specific circumstances of the enterprise. Access to technical assistance or financing to help enterprises apply appropriate technology will be facilitated by the Ministry responsible for Science and Technology or other bodies, as appropriate.



Foreign investments, including those made through partnerships with local investors, will also be pursued as a strategy to facilitate technology transfer. The Ministry responsible for Science and Technology and BELTRAIDE will coordinate efforts in that regard. Measures will be built into such strategies to ensure sustainable transfer and retention of knowledge within Belize.

Action 15: Develop an intelligence framework to support technological adaptation and innovation, including “green technology”

An intelligence-gathering and trend-monitoring function will be established with the Ministry responsible for Science and Technology to ensure timely awareness of opportunities to grow through technological imitation and adaptation, especially in the targeted sectors, and with a special focus on mainstreaming “green technology”³.

This new function will gather information on:

- Relevant market trends, including changing needs/wants of customers in key markets;

³ Green technology is defined as technology that is environmentally more benign than other similar technologies and that conserves natural resources. Belize will follow United Nations definitions of green economy and prioritize the application of technologies that result in an economy that is low-carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive.

- Legislative change in foreign markets;
- Supplier developments;
- What competitors in foreign markets are doing;
- Emerging needs/advances around skills sets and business processes;
- Specific new technologies that may be potentially used within targeted sectors (especially “green technology”); and
- Business and consumer behavior.

Action 16: Develop a framework and function for rational assessment of specific applications of technology

The Ministry responsible for Science and Technology will develop a technology assessment framework and review options for the establishment of a technical support function to assist enterprises with assessing technology options. The framework and function will focus on:

- Financial cost/benefit analysis (taking into account impacts on natural resource and ecosystem service valuations where available);
- Impact on the core assets of the company (people, processes, products);
- Adaptation and improvement of the technology for competitive enhancement (including durability, quality, and reliability); and
- Potential impact of the technology on core business considerations such as pricing, positioning, availability, customer support, delivery options, payment and credit terms, warranty cover, upgrades and access to technical support.

Action 17: Conduct a study on the appropriate green technology options that can be used in Belize in the short and long term

The Ministry with responsibility for Science and Technology will conduct a special feasibility or exploratory study to identify green technologies that may be promoted in Belize to the overall benefit of the country. The study will provide a clearer basis for promoting the use of such technologies and will map a general path forward for accelerating the mainstreaming of green technology application in Belize.



Action 18: Actively promote the use of identified appropriate green technologies

Ministries with portfolios of Science and Technology, the Environment and Sustainable Development, Natural Resources and other appropriate line ministries will actively promote green technology application and raise awareness about Belize's existing and continuing efforts to move to a low-carbon energy and development model.

Action 19: Design programs to facilitate and incentivize green technology investment

The Ministry of Finance (MOF) in consultation with relevant ministries will develop options for policies and programs that incentivize investment in green technologies. Such policies and programs should consider financial as well as legal structures that support or hinder the use of green technologies in industry and at the individual level, and make recommendations for appropriate reform.

Action 20: Design disincentives for use of environmentally unfriendly technologies

In concert with Action 19 above, MOF will review options for disincentivizing the application of technologies with high environmental cost and impact, including the use of financial, tax, and other legal structures. Tax disincentives proposed on environmental grounds will be considered within the framework of the overall tax reform process bearing in mind that specific incentives or disincentives may be subject to WTO regulation.

Necessary Condition 1.3.6: Improving the Incentives Regime***Action 21: Review incentive regime – tax and non-tax***

MOF in collaboration with the Ministry with responsibility for Investment, Trade and Commerce will conduct a comprehensive review of the tax incentive regime with the purpose of identifying reform options that will assist enterprises in becoming more competitive. Further, the review will consider the range of non-tax incentives that are currently available or that can be enhanced. These may include incentives related to access to financing, technical assistance and training.

The review should highlight areas where incentives are not necessary and assess the impacts of incentives within the context of unintended negative consequences. It should also review the use of environment-related taxes that can help achieve the integrated goals of sustainable development.

The tax incentive regime will also be reviewed in the context of a wider tax reform agenda, drawing heavily on the IMF's technical advice reflected in the 2013 report, *Belize: Tax Reform for Growth, Fairness and Sustainable Revenue*. Reforms with respect to the incentive regime will take into account ongoing CARICOM initiatives for the harmonized adjustments to the fiscal incentives regime.

Given existing concerns over the need to provide differential tax treatment to encourage various types of activity, emphasis will be placed on minimizing distortions to the efficiency of market mechanisms, and ensuring that the regime is managed effectively. For example, well-targeted

programs to simplify the ease of doing business, and the more active industrial policy, will reduce the perceived need for, or lead to less reliance on, tax incentives.

Necessary Condition 1.3.7: Strategically Prioritize Sectors for Development

Action 22: Finalize and approve the National Export Strategy (NES) and coordinate its implementation, together with the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, within wider national planning efforts.

Sectors and industries prioritized for development include tourism as well as those sectors identified in the NES (subject to the strategy being finalized and approved). The prioritized sectors are:

- Agriculture;
- Agro-processing;
- Audio-visual;
- Culture and entertainment;
- Energy and bio-fuels;
- ICT;
- Marine fisheries and aquaculture;
- Medical tourism;
- Professional services; and
- Tourism.

The development of the tourism industry will be guided by the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan 2030 (NSTMP). Moreover, the NES provides an extensive range of strategies to be used in the development of the other priority sectors. On approval, the NES will guide development planning in those sectors. Furthermore, the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) Implementation Plan approved by Cabinet in January 2014 contains extensive strategies and proposed actions that are intended to be incorporated into the public sector agenda. These three documents are to be considered as accompanying documents that are integral to the GSDS. Subject to other priorities or considerations laid out in the GSDS, relevant public sector agencies will be guided by the above documents in the formation of their annual budgets or the preparation of specific sector plans.

Given that the strategies put forward in these documents align closely with broad national development planning and extend substantially beyond the direct area of responsibility of the ministries that initiated their preparation, the overall coordination of the implementation of these documents will be merged with the coordination of the implementation of the GSDS.

Tourism, agriculture, and agro-processing, all highly dependent on the quality of the country's natural assets, are to be prioritized more highly. They will be considered as foundations of the economy, and extra effort will be applied to enhance their performance and long-term sustainability. In the case of tourism, the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation and the Belize Tourism Board will align their work program to pursue the actions reflected in the NSTMP for

which they have direct responsibility. In its coordination role, the MED will work closely with the MOTCA to address matters that are outside the direct control of the MOTCA. As a complement to the NSTMP, MOTCA will give prioritized attention to Actions 22 through 31 below.

In the case of agriculture, the MOA will develop a comprehensive strategy for increasing agricultural production and productivity, as noted in Action 32 below. The MOA will give prioritized attention to Actions 33 through 45.

Action 23: Provide adequate resources to the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation to allow it to effectively pursue its mandate

Action 24: Allocate adequate resources for the promotion and marketing of Belize as a tourism destination

Action 25: Make strong efforts to develop emerging tourism source markets

Action 26: Increase the level of diversification of the tourism product and engage in proper destination level planning and development

Action 27: Develop a cultural tourism program

Action 28: Facilitate putting in place adequate basic infrastructure

“Basic infrastructure” includes climate resilient roads to key tourism sites and destinations, air and seaports, and water and sanitation services. Special attention will be paid to addressing the adequacy of air access. The MOTCA will consult with the existing management of the international airport to undertake necessary infrastructural upgrades.

This topic is dealt with in detail under Necessary Condition 1.5 below.

Action 29: Review options for raising financing for tourism development in the context of the wider development financing needs of Belize

Special tourism development financing options could include, for example, public-private partnership, the issuance of development bonds, and the formation of trust funds. MOF will review options and propose a way forward.

Action 30: Review options for capacity and skill-building for the development of the tourism industry

Options could include development of a hospitality training school, and consideration of the role of the University of Belize and the ITVETs in fulfilling capacity development needs.

Action 31: Strengthen efforts to raise service standards in the tourism industry

This will include introducing or strengthening standards in relation to the provision of transportation. A strong standards and quality assurance program will be developed, building on existing programs and initiatives and incorporating sustainable tourism / ecotourism guidelines.

Action 32: Strengthen linkages between tourism and other sectors including agriculture, and pursue rural development through tourism

MOTCA will review successful models such as “agro-tourism” and explore their applicability to Belize.

Action 33: Foster inclusive growth in the development of the tourism industry

In pursuing tourism development, special care will be taken to ensure that the sector pursues an inclusive growth pathway. Policies to support this outcome will include the use of active industrial policy approaches discussed previously, such as encouraging cooperation among small service providers and artisans, and will provide business development support including training.

MOTCA will work with communities to help them organize themselves in order to take advantage of tourism opportunities. Market-friendly approaches for communities to benefit more from cruise tourism will be designed. This will be particularly important for the Belize City area.

Efforts will be made to attract investors in hotel plants where the “all inclusive” hotel model will not be pursued, in order to spread the economic benefits of tourism more broadly to surrounding communities.

Action 34: Develop a comprehensive strategy for increasing agricultural production and productivity

The MOA will prepare a strategy designed to maximize agricultural production through optimizing resource use (including land for agriculture and water) in sustainable ways, as well as through increased farm productivity, using a value chain approach. This action should include coordination with the National Agriculture Sector Adaptation Strategy (2015), developed through a GCCA project in collaboration with the CCCCC.

Action 35: Significantly increase drainage and irrigation infrastructure, both on-farm and off-farm, and develop the necessary information tools

This Action builds on the work currently being undertaken to prepare an irrigation master plan and a corresponding investment master plan. The MOA, working in collaboration with the Ministry of Works (MOW), will develop a topographic map for use in planning and drainage and irrigation infrastructure, as well as in facilitating disaster and climate change planning.

Action 36: Improve the maintenance of farm access roads and develop new access roads

Needs in this regard will be ranked according to priority (using the prioritization methodology from Section III) as assessed by the MOA in consultation with other stakeholders including the MOW.

Action 37: Enhance the analysis of the availability and ownership of lands suitable for agriculture, classified by the use for which specific areas are most suitable, given land and soil characteristics

This information will feed into approaches to be contemplated by MED in conjunction with the MOA towards the more effective utilization of agricultural land to address high levels of unemployment and poverty. These approaches could include the development of on-farm and off-farm infrastructure, and investing in vertical operations from farm to market, in order to improve organization and overcome the limitations of small size.

Action 38: Enhance research and extension services capabilities, especially with regard to identifying and supporting livestock production, the cultivation of non-traditional crops, and new agro-processing activity

Crops and agricultural products to be considered include black-eyed peas, soya beans, papayas, pitahaya, and livestock (including beef, cattle and chicken).

With regard to livestock, there is a need to put in place appropriate production systems to significantly increase production capacity to facilitate the export of live cattle to Mexico. Research efforts are to be closely linked with market intelligence efforts that will be led by BELTRAIDE with respect to commodities for exports, and by BMDC with respect to commodities' sale on the domestic market.

Agro-processing will build on ongoing private sector initiatives such as the processing of cheese and chocolate and will be vigilant of new emerging initiatives.

Action 39: Strengthen the agricultural marketing function

The Belize Marketing and Development Corporation (BMDC) will review and strengthen its operations in keeping with its mandate, favoring market-friendly and sustainable approaches.

In relation to marketing, BMDC will play a more active role in seeking ways to help small farmers overcome diseconomies of scale. Approaches could involve greater use of contract farming models; intermediation between farmers, processors and exporters; forging greater linkages with the tourism industry and local retailers; and facilitating export sales of agricultural produce.

Action 40: Improve support systems and infrastructure to achieve greater exports of agricultural commodities

This will include systems for the surveillance of pest and disease conditions, and improved laboratory testing capabilities.

Action 41: Development of infrastructure and enhanced systems to facilitate more efficient agricultural production, processing, and better packaging and handling for export as well as for domestic supply

This should include the development of the human resources, including food scientists and technologists, necessary to use such systems and infrastructure effectively.

Action 42: Encourage and facilitate increased cooperation among farmers and communities with regard to production, land preparation, harvesting, transportation, storage, marketing, on-farm irrigation and drainage, sourcing inputs including labor, among others

This activity may be undertaken in concert with Action 35.

Action 43: Assist farmers, through appropriate mechanisms, to reduce indebtedness and to sustain viability and productivity of farms

Strategies in that regard could include mechanisms to encourage farmers to set aside resources out of proceeds from the sale of produce for subsequent purchase of farm inputs, or for replanting activity in cases where this is required (as is the case with the cultivation of sugar cane).

Action 44: Enhance efforts aimed at reducing risk and achieving greater agricultural resilience to weather-related disasters and climate change

This could include improving farming and land use practices and the development of crop insurance.

Action 45: Establish adequate skills for the development of agriculture.

Action 46: Mount a program to increase attractiveness of agriculture as an employment option

Strategies to accomplish this could include approaches to raise the prestige of agricultural activity alongside attempts to increase earnings in agriculture. These could include the building of agriculture business models, the increased use of technology, the use of pilot projects to demonstrate success, the enhancement of programs to provide assistance with the development of farm lands (e.g. land preparation assistance), the mounting of media and school campaigns, and the design of specific programs to directly target and attract groups of young persons.

Necessary Condition 1.4: More Efficient Markets

The Government of Belize will strive to develop efficient goods and services, labor, and financial markets, and to reform policies that prevent the economy from operating efficiently. The following priority actions will thus be pursued over the medium term.

Action 1: Build adequate capacity to regulate prices

This action may be necessary with respect to essential utilities where it is necessary to compensate for inefficient pricing conditions that may result from the operation of firms under monopoly or oligopoly market structures. The Ministry with responsibility for Public Utilities (MPSEPU) will ensure that effective capacity exists within the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to carry out its mandate.

Action 2: Review the framework for the regulation and development of the utilities sector

MPSEPU will review the status of the PUC to ensure that there is adequate separation between the regulatory role of the PUC and other public sector efforts to promote development and investment with respect to utilities.

Action 3: Study the opportunities for reducing informality

MOF will lead efforts to identify policies that reduce informality in the Belizean economy. The policy review should include:

- Instances of tax discrimination that penalize participation in the formal economic sectors;
- Business registration costs that erode the net benefit of registration;
- Business turnover thresholds for tax purposes that encourage businesses to remain small and informal;
- Labor market regulations that increase the appeal for firms to remain informal; and
- Social Security registration requirements, among others.

Strategies to reduce informality will take account of the results of this review and will be combined with active approaches to help enterprises overcome the limitations of small size, as discussed elsewhere in this document.

Action 4: Develop proposals and encourage dialogue between the public sector, the private sector, and labor representatives with respect to improving labor incentives and labor market flexibility

MED in conjunction with the ministry responsible for labor will design and lead a structured multi-stakeholder dialogue and policy review process with the aim of developing the labor market so that it is less rigid and more efficient. Topics to be covered could include arrangements for sharing profits with workers and other incentives to encourage greater worker productivity that could result in better earnings for both workers and employers.

Action 5: Continue efforts to improve the efficiency and soundness of the financial system

The Central Bank of Belize (CBB) will continue efforts to reduce the level of Non-Performing Loans (NPL) to under 6% over the medium term. The CBB will also continue to implement reforms based on the recommendations of the Financial Sector Assessment Program (FSAP).

Action 6: Improve access to, and reduce the cost of, financing

GOB will take actions to improve access to finance and to reduce the cost of financing, including measures designed to:

- Expand access to credit through the DFC;
- Establish a collateral registry;
- Reduce the cost of financing to DFC;
- Provide venture capital options to entrepreneurs; and
- Increase access to export financing.

These initiatives, which will be led by the DFC, are discussed earlier in the document as elements of industrial policy and are also integral to this Necessary Condition. Increased financing options are also likely to contribute to more efficient pricing by the commercial banking sector.

Action 7: Study the potential to encourage greater utilization of domestic savings for domestic investment.

This activity could be led by the Central Bank of Belize in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance (MOF).

Action 8: Transform and modernize financial infrastructure

The Central Bank of Belize will continue to lead efforts to advance the National Payments System (an inter-bank, real-time payments system), and to establish a National Credit Reporting System. The aim is to improve financial intermediation and the quality of credit risk assessment, contributing to a reduction in the cost of credit.

Action 9: Monitor and build on pilot initiatives to establish micro-insurance

GOB will continue attempts to improve the efficiency and soundness of the insurance sector. In that regard, among other efforts, MOF will closely monitor the success of the ongoing micro-credit pilot initiative as well as the efforts through the IDB, in partnership with the private sector, to establish micro-insurance for farmers.

Necessary Condition 1.5: Adequate Infrastructure (Roads, Ports, Energy, Water, Telecommunications, and Transport)

The Government of Belize, operating through a variety of ministries coordinated by MED, will make concerted efforts to improve economic infrastructure as a fundamental basis on which to expand the production of goods and services. High priority will be given to the integration of environmental quality, resource conservation, and ecosystem health considerations into infrastructure development strategies and programs. Infrastructure development planning will also take into consideration sector development needs (especially tourism and agriculture) as well as social inclusion.

Investment in infrastructure will be increased in the medium term, with an aim to significantly advance progress towards long-term goals such as becoming a net electricity exporter (from a predominantly renewable base) and ensuring universal access to potable water.

Infrastructure requirements with respect to waste management are covered under Critical Success factor 3: Healthy Environment. Investment with respect to transportation – roads, and air and sea ports – will be guided by the National Transportation Master Plan (NTMP), subject to appropriate feasibility studies. The NTMP, on final approval, is the reference document for details on Actions within these areas.

Action 1: Maintain the existing primary (highway) and secondary road networks in a good state of repair

Expenditure will be increased on routine and recurrent road maintenance activity, as well as on undertaking major rehabilitation or upgrade of road networks in order to restore them to good condition and enhance their long-term sustainability. Maintenance of roads deemed critical for accessing tourism sites and for sustaining agricultural activity will be prioritized.



Action 2: Enhance and upgrade the road network based on the recommendations of the NTMP and subject to appropriate feasibility studies

Critical considerations include:

- Reducing the economic cost of road transportation;
- Facilitating trade with the rest of Central America; and
- Improving road safety.

Action 3: Improve design specifications for new road construction and major road upgrades in order to reduce future maintenance costs, increase asset life, and reduce environmental impact, subject to overall economic and cost benefit analyses

The MOW will perform a review of current road design specifications to determine where there are gains to be had, and then design improved specifications.

Action 4: Develop a transportation policy

The ministry responsible for transportation will lead this activity. The new policy will give consideration to the establishment of service standards, the pursuit of desirable environmental standards, and enhanced administration of the licensing of vehicle and drivers.

Action 5: Improve the competitiveness of the sea ports

The ministry responsible for seaports will conduct a policy review aimed at addressing seaport competitiveness issues, including the port ownership structure, management arrangements, the efficiency of labor, and information technology systems to facilitate more efficient port operation; and seamless integration of the port function and the ASYCUDA World Platform.

The review will include strategies to create a new labor culture and improve labor productivity. Pursuit of this review and any resulting reform proposals may require a consultative stakeholder forum that could include participation of labor unions, the private sector, and the government.

Action 6: Improve collaboration with private sector stakeholders to improve management and investment in airport infrastructure

The ministry responsible for civil aviation will lead efforts to put in place adequate institutional arrangements for the management and expansion of airport infrastructure, especially given the current concession arrangement for the management of the Phillip Goldson International Airport (PGIA). This will include making provision for the airport to operate on a 24-hour basis.

Consideration of possibilities to increase the country's capacity to accommodate international flights through facilities other than PGIA will be subject to economic and fiscal viability, consultation with stakeholders as appropriate, as well as reviews of the impact of such expansion on surrounding ecosystems.

Action 7: Secure investments in expanding electricity generation capacity

The Ministry responsible for Energy and Public Utilities (MPSEPU) will continue efforts to attract investment for the installation of an additional 75 Megawatts (Mw) of generation capacity; with a special preference for generation from renewable sources (the tendering process was already underway in 2014). The national aim is to develop Belize into a net electricity exporter instead of importer. Additionally, MPSEPU will continue reviewing prospects and mechanisms for facilitating distributed power generation.

Action 8: Design incentives to encourage household investment in renewable energy

The MPSEPU will also review and assess mechanisms to ease the initial investment burden for household-level investment in renewable energy systems. The review process could include encouraging discussions between private sector suppliers of generation systems, BEL, and financing institutions to jointly develop arrangements for the upfront financing of equipment and installation.

Action 9: Promote and facilitate other potential opportunities for the generation of electricity from renewable sources

The MPSEPU will give consideration to collaborating, in the near term, with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and other stakeholders to pursue investments necessary to undertake pilot projects on alternative renewable energy, including the use of *Arundo donax L.* (wild cane) as a biomass material in the generation of electricity and for the

production of bio-fuel, based on the research done by CCCCC. Subject to the degree of success, MPSEPU will give consideration to scaling up activities over the medium term.

MPSEPU will also closely monitor ongoing CCCCC research on Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) technology for the generation of electricity (with fresh water as a by-product).

Action 10: Improve the environment for investment in telecommunications

The MOF will lead GOB efforts to expeditiously seek to compensate the former owners of the BTL, the major telecommunications provider, with the aim of increasing investor confidence and facilitating more rapid development of telecommunications infrastructure.

Action 11: Improve regulation of the telecommunication sector

The aim of this action is to facilitate increased mobile and IT penetration by encouraging more competitive or efficient pricing as well as investment in increased bandwidth.

Action 12: Continue efforts towards attaining universal access to potable water

Toward attaining universal access to water, efforts will continue through BWS, the Ministry responsible for Rural Development, and under BSIF, to expand access to potable water and to improve its quality. However, addressing the sustainability of water supply is the most pressing challenge to which attention will be turned over the medium term. Actions in that regard are reflected under CSF 3 with respect to NC 3.1.2 – Water Resource Management. It is also critical to improve and increase sewerage infrastructure and land-based and marine pollution issues to which the following Actions refer.

Action 13: Continue efforts to improve sewage disposal in Placencia and San Pedro and undertake studies for improving sewage disposal in other priority areas

In the medium-term planning period, priority attention will be given to improving sewage disposal (collection and treatment) in the Placencia Peninsula and San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, given the economic importance of these two tourism areas. These efforts should serve as models for additional sewage disposal in other areas, especially urban and coastal areas, which will be covered in future medium-term strategies up to 2030.

Action 14: Strengthen the policy framework for land-based and marine pollution management in order to mitigate the impacts on food security and human health and well-being.

The mechanism for how best to undertake this action should be discussed by relevant ministries and a plan of action developed during the initial GSDS planning period.

Belize is home to a unique marine environment with over 60% of our population living in coastal areas and communities both on our mainland and islands. Home to the Western Hemisphere's largest living barrier reef system, the Belize Barrier Reef, the well-being of Belizeans, as a people, and Belize, as a nation, is culturally and intrinsically linked to the health of our marine environment. Belize depends on the marine environment as a source of food security through the fisheries sector and a major economic earner through the tourism sector. Thus, the Government

of Belize and the people place major importance on the protection of the health of our marine environment; especially from the impacts of marine pollution, increased coastal development, and land-based sources of pollution. The need to strengthen the institutional and legislative framework to address and reduce marine pollution and its potential impacts to the health of the Belizean marine environment is prioritized in the National Environmental Policy and Strategy 2014-2024, “Belize: Green, Clean, Resilient, and Strong” and the 2015-2025 National Environmental Action Plan.

During the first phase of the GSDS, the Government of Belize, acting through the Ministry responsible for Environment and the Department of the Environment (DOE) will legislate and implement the Marine Environment Management and Pollution Prevention Bill. This legislation will ensure the proper management and protection of the marine and coastal environment through the prevention, reduction, and control of pollution from potential biological, chemical, and physical environmental impacts resulting from ship generated wastes and land-based sources of marine pollution.

In addition, the DOE will update and implement the national water quality monitoring program. The water quality monitoring program is aimed at addressing and reducing land-based sources of pollution which affect our environment both in inland waters and within the marine environment.

The Government of Belize also commits to updating the National Plan of Action for the Control of Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution in Belize (NPA – LBS).

Necessary Condition 1.6: Adequate Skills and Capacity to Support Economic Growth, Sustainable Development, and Resilience

The Government of Belize, acting through the Ministry of Education (MOE), will continue to implement the Education Sector Strategy 2011-2016 prioritizing specific actions designed to accelerate progress toward universal primary and secondary education, increase rates of successful school completion, prepare people to work in a growing Belizean economy; and build the basis for lifelong learning skills, entrepreneurship, socially desirable values, and a strong sense of national identity.

Action 1: Increase spaces at the pre-primary level

In the medium-term, the MOE will work to increase spaces for Early Childhood Education (ECE) by establishing additional government-owned institutions and encouraging and facilitating the establishment of private and community pre-schools in underserved and low-income areas. Financing will be provided, in part, through the Social Investment Fund and the EU Accompanying Measures for Sugar Protocol Countries.

The MOE will continue to provide support to such institutions through grants and the payment of teachers’ salaries. Given the cost of establishing new centers, the Ministry will also explore alternative modes for delivery of ECE and ACE programs, including the Roving Caregivers model used by the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty

Alleviation (MHDSTPA) to target households with training and assistance in early childhood stimulation (ages zero to three).

The target is to increase enrolment in ECE by 2000 places by the end of the current medium-term planning period.⁴

Action 2: Increase enrolment at the primary level (pursue universal primary education)

To move from current high levels of primary school enrolment to universal enrolment, the MOE will work to identify out-of-school children, particularly those with special needs, and determine the nature and level of assistance that would be required to enroll them.

The MOE will continue to provide support services to facilitate access, including school transportation, feeding programs, and textbooks; along with assistance provided through the BOOST program.

The MOE will complete its school mapping exercise, identify areas where additional spaces are needed, and work towards providing those spaces, subject to the availability of resources and with priority given to areas of greatest need.

Action 3: Increase enrolment at the secondary level

The MOE will continue to provide fee subsidies for needy students and provide assistance through the BOOST program, as well as providing transportation services where necessary to facilitate access.

As with primary enrolment, the need for additional spaces will be determined based on the school-mapping exercise.

Action 4: Reduce drop-out and repetition rates at the primary and secondary education level

The target is to contain the dropout rate and halve the repetition rate at the primary level; and to reduce both dropout and repetition by 50% at the secondary level.

Actions to improve quality are expected to contribute to these objectives, but additional assistance will be provided to secondary schools through the new school financing formula to support student achievement.

Schools will provide additional support services for students at risk of repeating or dropping out.

⁴ This target is based on 5% annual increases projected in the 2014/15 Programme Budget Estimates.

Action 5: Improve efficiency of services

Some gains in access are expected to be realized through efforts to improve efficiency and management, resulting in the better utilization of existing resources or the freeing-up of resources that can then be rechanneled to other areas.

To this end, the MOE will continue to pursue further opportunities to amalgamate institutions that function below capacity.

MOE will also give consideration to the expansion of existing institutions, as opposed to constructing new ones, in those cases where it is deemed a more efficient and effective option.

Necessary but costly support services will be reviewed to ensure the intended objectives are being met and that the expenditure is justified.

The review of the textbook policy will be finalized and a decision taken on the most efficient and effective solution for providing teaching and learning materials.

MOE will also study alternative means through which school feeding and nutrition programs could be resourced. Subject to the availability of resources, MOE will make every effort to expand these programs to other schools.

Action 6: Enhance targeting mechanisms for financial assistance

The Secondary School Financing Reform project, which is addressing the more equitable targeting of government assistance to secondary schools, will continue.

Action 7: Increase enrolment at ITVETs

The MOE will continue activities to promote exposure to TVET through the inclusion of more technical options in the secondary school curriculum. The aim is to produce a standard core curriculum which will include more technical options.

MOE will establish a national framework of qualification equivalencies that will provide options for the alignment of existing education programs and allow multiple pathways to certification. This action will include the development of a National Secondary Certificate to be awarded to secondary school students upon completion of the core curriculum and options including one TVET program.

Opportunities for acquiring this certificate will also be made available to un-enrolled youth and ACE students.

The Ministry of Education will also continue steps currently underway to offer the Caribbean Vocational Qualification through secondary and technical institutions in Belize.

Action 8: Apply ICT in education service delivery

The Ministry of Education with assistance from the CDB, will consider options for the use of ICT in promoting access to education in hard-to-reach villages and settlements and will develop a strategy in this regard.

This action will include reviewing the use of ICT to deliver options for out-of-school children, secondary students, tertiary level programs, and for adult and continuing education.

Action 9: Improve the effectiveness of teachers

The MOE will continue activities to ensure teachers throughout the system have the necessary pedagogical and content training to effectively deliver the curriculum, and that they are appropriately licensed.

Additional assistance on this Action will be provided through programs financed by the EU and the IDB. The former will target teachers in northern Belize; and the latter will provide training for teacher trainers, in-service and pre-service teachers.

This assistance program will also include activities to attract qualified and motivated persons into the teaching profession, especially males at the primary level.

Action 10: Improve the effectiveness of school leaders

Training for school leaders will also continue over the medium-term planning period through the Quality Child Friendly Schools Initiative, the IDB Education Quality Improvement Project, and the certificate programs being offered at various institutions.

The Belize Education Sector Reform Project (BESRP) will seek to equip school management authorities and school leaders with effective management and school improvement skills as part of its work to strengthen the system's regulatory and institutional framework.

Action 11: Improve school governance

The management capacity of the Ministry of Education will be enhanced by investing in its capacity to monitor and evaluate programs in order to improve effectiveness and to inform subsequent strategy. MOF will work with MOE to develop options for resourcing this capacity development.

The education system's regulatory framework will be strengthened, through the actions of the BESRP and MOE, with the drafting of education rules, standards and regulations; development of an appropriate sector-wide monitoring and evaluation system; and improvement of the Ministry's capacity to oversee and support schools and managing authorities in achieving the system's objectives.

Necessary Condition 1.6.1: Align Education and Training to Labor Market Needs

Action 12: Improve linkages between programs offered and the needs of the economy

A first step towards achieving increased relevance of the system is the identification of the skills required to support economic development in the short and long term. In that regard, the Ministry of Education will pursue the development of a Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDS) as part of the Education Sector Reform Project. This will be complemented by an exercise to evaluate and make recommendations with respect to the rationalization and diversification of the secondary curriculum. The HRDS should be completed within the strategy period. Guided by these initiatives, along with the development of a National Qualifications Framework, actions will be taken to address the challenges associated with the provision of skills to match the needs of the economy. These challenges include those related to the efficiency with which skills training can be conducted locally especially with regard to the ITVETs and UB, given issues of economies of scale; and addressing the special training needs of priority sectors such as tourism and agriculture. With respect to tourism training needs, while a feasibility study regarding the establishment of a tourism polytechnic institute is planned, the decision to move forward will be further informed by the assessments that will emanate from the HRDS. Thus, efforts will be made to promote quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of delivery at the ITVETs and the UB (which could include pursuing alternative delivery modes in support of the flexibility in offerings required if the ITVETs are to provide programs based on demand) and adjustments to the programs offered at the UB. Consideration will need to be given to the staffing arrangements and additional resources that will be required

MOF will conduct a review to ensure that funds provided to support tertiary level education are directed to areas considered relevant to the national growth and sustainable development agenda, and that they reflect market considerations.

This review should also consider current subsidies, scholarships, student loans provided through the DFC, and other financing mechanisms to ensure that these are directed to areas of importance to the economy. For example, subsidies may be provided on a “sliding scale,” with greater levels of funding targeted to programs of greater importance.

The review should also consider measures to ensure that Belize receives returns on these investments, e.g. by linking financial support to commitments to work within the country in targeted sectors after graduation for minimum periods of time.

Necessary Condition 1.6.2: Encourage Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation

Action 13: Promote an entrepreneurial culture and inculcate desired social values

The MOE will review and strengthen the core curriculum and its delivery so that education in Belize contributes to inculcating an entrepreneurial culture. This strengthening will include the

addition of practical approaches to motivating students and expose them to business practice, problem solving, and critical thinking.

The MOE will develop and implement new strategies to resource such programs, for example through the use of volunteers and partnerships with the community (as advocated by the Quality Child Friendly School Initiative); and collaboration with the private sector.

Critical Success Factor 2: Enhance Social Cohesion and Resilience

Overview

Belize will seek to create a society that is socially cohesive, a term that refers to the forces that bind individuals at both the community and national level. Belize will be a socially cohesive society; one in which individuals feel a sense of belonging, one that is inclusive and that provides opportunity for social mobility. The aim of this Critical Success Factor is to build trust, goodwill, fellowship and mutual sympathy among all Belizean citizens, resulting in reduced social unrest, lower crime, and enhanced quality of life.

In line with the Horizon 2030 vision and the emerging Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, Belize will seek to eradicate poverty by 2030 and to achieve more equitable income distribution. It will also aim to reduce homicides to under 10 per 100,000 inhabitants annually (as a minimum target), provide universal access to basic and early childhood education, provide universal access to health care, maintain or raise life expectancy beyond the current level of 74 years, and reduce the incidence of morbidity and mortality resulting from a selected set of ailments. (Citizen Security is also addressed under CSF 4.)

Overall, the Government of Belize will develop a more holistic social protection framework that encompasses employment generation, housing, and land reform; in addition to the provision of social assistance and counseling services.

Necessary Condition 2.1: Adequate Access to Health Care

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has prepared a draft ten-year health sector strategic plan that provides an overall framework for improving the delivery of health care, and that incorporates the national vision of universal access to a health care system based on equity, affordability, accessibility, quality, and sustainability. The strategy must also respond to rapidly changing trends including increasing demands for health services, internal migration to urban centers, and a changing health-risk profile. Prioritized aims in the medium term include reducing mortality and morbidity from lifestyle-related illnesses.

Belize's health sector has many strengths, including its internationally-recognized health information system. The medium-term strategy will focus on addressing urgent issues, such as a shortage of health-care professionals. Belize aims to increase the number of registered nurses working in the country (15 registered nurses per 10,000 inhabitants, a median level for the Caribbean region but much less than levels in developed countries) which, along with the number of physicians (currently just one per 1,000), is considered too low. Pursuing a strengthened health care sector will also require careful planning to reduce reliance on external donor funding, reduce high transaction costs, and improve monitoring and evaluation capacity.



Action 1: Study mechanisms for health care financing

The MOF will collaborate with the Ministry of Health to explore new mechanisms to increase financing of the healthcare sector, including automatic salary deductions, or to use existing financing more effectively and efficiently.

MOH will continue to closely monitor and evaluate the provision of health services by private suppliers contracted under the National Health Insurance system (NHI). The aim is to ensure quality of service and to reduce and eventually eliminate corrupt practices (which drain financing).

MOH's strategy will aim to increase the range and quality of public health services, reducing dependence on private sector provision, and controlling NHI costs.

Action 2: Educate and influence young people to change eating habits for improved nutrition

This Action links to the school feeding programs noted earlier. The MOE, the MOH and the MOA will collaborate on the provision of these programs and on the communication activities associated with them. They will look for synergy opportunities such as entrepreneurial business development within targeted communities where poverty and high rates of crime are challenging concerns.

Action 3: Strengthen services to deal with pathologies

The Ministry of Health will prioritize efforts to achieve the following desired outcomes as outlined and detailed in its ten-year strategic plan:

- *Integrate health services based on primary health care for improved health outcomes.* This objective is expected to be achieved by strengthening public/private and civil society partnerships; implementing an integrated health service delivery network approach; providing capacity building and advocacy for production, dissemination and use of

information including systematic documentation and promotion of best practices; formulation of a quality improvement policy; development of M&E framework; and establishing and enforcing an enabling legislative framework;

- *Strengthen organization and management of health services* by decentralizing the management system, conducting an evaluation of the Health Sector Reform Project, developing a policy framework support structure, providing training in system management, and implementing a policy for the development of essential public health functions;
- *Achieve gender equity, cost effectiveness and efficiency in the allocation and use of health resources* by establishing a sustainable health financing mechanism to supplement the Consolidated Fund; implementing performance-based budgeting to allocate resources; rolling out the NHI scheme nation-wide; institutionalizing the National Health Accounts; instituting effective and efficient mechanisms for management, procurement and distribution of pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and equipment; and establishing a drug registry;
- *Strengthen capacity of human resources for health planning to meet present and future health sector needs.* This is expected to be achieved by developing appropriate human resource policies, procedures and guidelines; strengthening the Belize Human Resources for Health Observatory; and by implementing retention and recruitment strategies;
- *Strengthen the Belize Health Information System (BHIS)* in order to support evidence-based planning in the provision and delivery of health care; and
- *Develop an adequate quality improvement/assurance framework to ensure stakeholder accountability.* This is to be achieved by developing protocols and procedures for priority areas for standardized service delivery; the implementation of key facility performance indicators to include M&E tools; establishing quality system structures; and the implementation of M&E mechanisms to ensure application of quality standards.

Necessary Condition 2.2: Adequate Access to Education and Lifelong Learning for All

The specific Actions for NC2.2 are covered in Necessary Condition 1.6 on pg. 44.



Necessary Condition 2.3: Optimal Social Security/Insurance

The objective of NC2.3 is to improve the stability and financial sustainability of the social insurance programs managed by the Social Security Board (SSB), improve targeting, and work towards the inclusion of people in the informal economy within the formal social security programs.



The following priority Actions will be pursued over the medium term, based in part on recommendations contained in the actuarial study “Belize Actuarial Review of the Social Security Scheme” (2009).

Action 1: Commence adjustments to social security contributions to achieve an overall 2% increase over 4 years

Action 2: Gradually transfer resources from central government to the SSB to cover the costs of the non-contributory pension

Action 3: Gradually increase the retirement age from 60 to 62

Beyond the above Action – a recommendation contained in the actuarial study – it may be desirable to give consideration to raising the retirement age to 65 based on the current estimate of life expectancy and other pertinent demographic considerations. The Social Security Board will give consideration to facilitating a study in that regard.

Action 4: Amend regulations to remove incentives for self-employed persons to register at an age close to 50 years, in order to minimize contributions necessary to qualify for pension benefits

Action 5: Place greater emphasis on investments in liquid financial assets that yield satisfactory returns

The MOF will work with SSB to follow up on this action.

Action 6: Develop and review options for extending social security to cover informal workers and more self-employed persons in a sustainable manner

The SSB will review obstacles preventing greater participation in voluntary insurance programs and consider options for encouraging higher levels of participation, including allowing the self-employed to purchase insurance under one or more of the benefit branches based on the assessed cost for each branch. The coverage of temporary (short-term) imported labor will also be reviewed with respect to the minimum contributions that are to be made prior to accessing benefits. The objective of the latter review is to find ways to minimize evasion of contributions and to further improve the business environment.

Action 7: Investigate possibilities for extending the range and level of social security benefits that can be provided

The SSB, in collaboration with the MOF, would review longer-term options for securing the sustainability of social security programs while extending or improving such programs in subsequent planning periods, e.g. to provide partial funding for the NHI and the introduction of unemployment benefits.

Necessary Condition 2.4: Better Social Assistance (Direct Social Protection)

“Social protection” is concerned with preventing, managing, and overcoming situations that adversely affect persons’ well-being. “Social assistance,” the provision of financial and other material support, is a direct form of social protection, and is distinct from indirect forms (such as programs to enhance social infrastructure, livelihood programs to support the income generation capacity of communities, social insurance, and wage policies, among others).

Social protection and assistance programs currently in place include:

- Building Opportunities for Our Social Transformation (BOOST), which confers financial benefits to households or individuals who qualify;
- The Food Pantry program, which allows low-income families to purchase a package of groceries at government-subsidized cost;
- The Community Action for Public Safety (CAPS) Project, a three-year intervention targeted at reducing youth involvement in violent crime; and
- The Youth and Community Transformation (YCT) Project, a five year project (launched in 2013) aiming to reduce the vulnerability of children and youth to crime and gang

membership in the Collet, Lake Independence, Pickstock and Port Loyola divisions of Belize City.

These recently launched social protection and assistance programs are either aspects of, or are complementary to, the RESTORE⁵ Belize Initiative which was launched in 2010 “to improve the quality of life of every citizen through restoring law and order and community building”⁶ with actions focusing on human development, economic development and citizen prosperity; and democratic governance and citizen security. Citizen security is discussed separately under CSF 4.

Other Necessary Conditions are also expected to contribute to the achievement of NC2.4, including e.g. NC1.3 on industrial policy and NC1.6 on skills and entrepreneurship.

Action 1: Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of recently launched social protection initiatives and the social assistance framework in general

The Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation, and Poverty Alleviation (MHDSTPA) will regularly evaluate the social assistance programs to determine their efficiency and effectiveness before decisions are taken on their continuation, expansion or adjustment.

The evaluation should consider the following parameters:

- Extent to which desired outcomes have been attained or are likely to be attained;
- The efficiency of the targeting mechanisms;
- The sufficiency of the program to attain desired results;
- The sustainability of the programs;
- The degree of coordination with other relevant stakeholders; and
- Unintended consequences.

The monitoring and evaluation capacity of MHDSTPA will be enhanced accordingly.

Action 2: Improve coordination among stakeholders with responsibility for managing social protection programs and social policy

MHDSTPA will review and enhance inter-agency and multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms following the implementation framework described later in this document.

The MHDSTPA will continue to house the Single Information System of Beneficiaries (SISB) and will lead efforts for all public providers of social protection services to register participants under the system.

The SISB will also be made available for use by NGOs that provide social assistance.

⁵ Re-establish Security through Outreach, Rehabilitation and Education (RESTORE)

⁶ RESTORE Belize Strategic Plan 2011-2015

Action 3: Review the social protection framework

MHDSTPA will conduct a review of the social protection framework, drawing on other ministries and stakeholder expertise. The review will consider opportunities for engaging in more holistic approaches to social protection that encompass, several facets including social assistance, the provision of counseling and other social services, livelihood programs (including employment generation that would lead to reduced reliance on social assistance), housing, and land reform. Opportunities to improve targeting, build synergies, and increase efficiency in the operation of these facets will be reviewed. The review will also consider the adequacy of mechanisms to sustainably address poverty among children, the youth, and the elderly.

Necessary Condition 2.5: Effective Livelihood Programs

Belize will strengthen efforts to increase the capacity of the poor to provide for their basic necessities themselves. “Livelihood programs” include the provision of vocational and skills training; the organization of income generating activity; business development support, e.g., micro-credit; the provision of social infrastructure; job and apprenticeship placement; and technical support for agriculture and livestock programs, among other programs.



Livelihood programs currently being implemented in Belize include:

- The Social Investment Fund (SIF), incorporated in 1996 as a statutory body with a mandate to equitably and adequately respond to the human development needs of the poor and vulnerable populations in Belize;
- The Belize Rural Development Program (second program) – BRDP II, funded by the EU; and

- The Rural Finance Program, funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI).

Several other government agencies/ministries manage livelihood programs including the Belize Marketing and Development Corporation (BMDC), the Cooperatives Department, and the ministry responsible for rural development.

Actions under this Necessary Condition are intended to build on what has been learned from these investments and to improve the effectiveness of livelihood programs.

Action 1: Evaluate livelihood programs.

The MED will perform an assessment of factors that impact on the effectiveness of livelihood programs in order to determine the adjustments that may be needed to maximize their effectiveness.

The evaluation will seek to determine:

- The impact on enhancing the productive capacity of individuals and communities;
- Economic, environmental and social sustainability of programs;
- Opportunities to build synergies across programs, and
- The ideal focus of programs.

The evaluation process will engage stakeholders and seek to strengthen their own capacity for monitoring and evaluation. On the basis of this evaluation, adjustments will be made where necessary to improve the effectiveness of programs. These adjustments could include the consolidation of programs or change to the management of programs. Actions will be taken to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to monitor and evaluate programs.

Action 2: Strengthen community-driven approaches for the implementation of livelihood programs

The ministry responsible for rural development will conduct a periodic evaluation of the Belize Rural Area-based Development Strategy (BRADS) and closely monitor its results to allow adjustments to be made along the way, and to share lessons learned in order to improve other relevant programs. The approach used under BRADS emphasizes the marrying of the top-down approach to rural development with the bottom-up approach. This recognizes the need to increase the degree to which livelihood projects are community-driven. Limited community involvement has often resulted in the selection of projects that are not suitable or not considered priority by the targeted beneficiaries.

Action 3: Improve the coordination of livelihood programs

The ministry responsible for rural development and local government will develop appropriate protocols and processes for cooperation among stakeholders in the planning and implementation of livelihood programs. The aim is to achieve more efficient use of resources, reduce duplication, and increase opportunities to build synergies.

Action 4: Promote sustainable livelihood programs in ecologically sensitive areas

The ministry responsible for rural development and local government will give special priority to promoting alternative livelihood programs within communities where traditional livelihood activities are not ecologically sustainable, including unsustainable forms of fishing and forestry.

Necessary Condition 2.6: Decent Wages and Work Conditions

NC2.6 builds on work initiated under the auspices of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and approved in 2009 as the Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) for Belize. The DWCP was publicly supported by representatives of the Government of Belize, the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), and the National Trade Union Congress of Belize (NTUCB), together known as the “tripartite partners”. The program remains in effect through 2015 and focuses on three priorities:

- The modernization and harmonization of national labor legislation;
- Strengthening the public employment service and enhancing its linkages with national initiatives for skills development, with a special focus on disadvantaged groups; and
- Institutional strengthening of the tripartite partners.

The development of mechanisms to directly promote productivity and better labor compensation does not currently feature as a priority under the DWCP



Actions under NC2.6 will aim to strengthen the implementation of DWCP and address these perceived gaps.

Action 1: Continue implementation of the DWCP

The tripartite partners will prioritize the establishment of a Labor Market Information System (LMIS), indicating the skills available on the market and the skills being demanded. The LMIS will then be used to support the setting of priorities for building human resource capacity (*see NC1.6 on pg. 44*).

Action 2: Develop strategies that could simultaneously promote greater labor productivity and better worker compensation

Over the medium term, the tripartite partners will give priority to devising strategies that can simultaneously contribute to increasing worker productivity and worker compensation. These could include combining profit sharing arrangements with the payment of salaries and wages in ways that are mutually beneficial to employees and employers. This theme will also be put forward as a priority under subsequent DWCP programs for Belize.

Necessary Condition 2.7: Strong National Identity and Future Vision

The aim of NC2.7 is to foster strong connections and a sense of trust, reciprocity, participation, and mutual respect among the diverse groups of which Belize is comprised. It also aims to build a sense of shared vision for the nation, based on the principles of Horizon 2030 and the Belize Framework for Sustainable Development. Important issues pertaining to rights and inclusion need to be continuously addressed, particularly with regard to indigenous peoples. Belize's diverse cultures will be consistently and strongly promoted as a valuable asset and an important dimension of national identity.

Action 1: Strengthen the management of key organizations working towards the achievement of strong national identity

“Key organizations” include the National Institute of Culture and History, the ministry responsible for culture, the National Sports Council (NSC), and the ministry responsible for sports. These key organizations, working collaboratively, will first evaluate current strategies, plans, and actions to determine their effectiveness in instilling national pride, responsibility, self-confidence, self-discipline and a collective spirit among Belizeans.



Secondly, the key organizations will convene a larger stakeholder process to design new strategies, and to adjust existing plans and actions. Possible strategies to consider include:

- Identifying adjustments in the structure or functions of existing institutions to better address the challenge of diversity;
- Recognizing and fostering the advantages that diversity affords Belize;
- Developing programs to foster stronger connections between diverse groups;
- Telling the story of Belizeans to foster empathy and goodwill;
- Using recreation as an important social institution to promote a sense of belonging, strong values, a sense of responsibility and commitment to country;
- Supporting recreational activity based on strong justification;
- Implementing mechanisms to discourage vandalism; and
- Making strong use of the media and education to promote national identity.

The draft National Cultural Policy, which is largely consistent with the above, will be reviewed and updated as necessary based on the above evaluation.

Action 2: Design strategies to change cultural attitudes that may diminish productivity or create barriers to matching available opportunities for work with those who need work

The ministry responsible for culture (and/or other ministries and agencies as appropriate) will consider the use of pilot projects in the production of goods and services that demonstrate a productive and entrepreneurial attitude. This initiative could for instance include a pilot project

to channel the excess supply of labor in Belize City to agricultural areas where there may be deficient supply.

The design of such projects needs to consider cultural aspects - including attitudes towards agricultural work and stereotyping of some groups - and initiatives to address negative attitudes.

Necessary Condition 2.8: Social Inclusion and Equitable Growth

“Social Inclusion” refers to equality of treatment and opportunity as it relates to gender, culture, regional, income, and age diversity, among others. “Equitable Growth” refers to economic growth whose benefits are shared across that same span of diversity.

Action 1: Embed a strong equity focus within line ministry programs, including a broad definition of social inclusion

Belizean policies and programs across all ministries will be continuously reviewed from a social inclusion perspective to ensure that they address the diverse and widely varying needs of the population.

Implementation of this Action will be supplemented and complemented by strong collaborative partnerships with civil society organizations, the private sector, academic institutions and development partners.

Gender equality will receive special attention. Gender measures and targets with respect to desired development results will be reflected in the operational plans and budgetary proposals of all relevant ministries.

Action 2: Upgrade and sustain national programs aimed at child protection and the elimination of gender-based violence

MHDSTPA, in partnership with the Attorney General’s Ministry, will expand and upgrade legal aid support services to provide free legal advice to victims and alleged perpetrators of crimes. It will also conduct a review of existing psycho-social support mechanisms for victims of gender-based violence and propose improvements as needed.

Action 3: Develop a proposal for increasing the participation of women in politics

MHDSTPA will develop proposals for strategies and programs leading to the increased participation of women in political life and in all levels of political office, including their participation as candidates in national and municipal elections, and their appointment to leadership positions within public and private institutions.

Critical Success Factor 3: Sustained or Improved Health of Natural, Environmental, Historical and Cultural Assets

Overview

Maintaining the health of Belize's natural, environmental, historical, and cultural assets has intrinsic value, in and of itself. These assets contribute to Belizean's sense of identity, and their unique characteristics contribute to the profile of Belize in the international community.

However, these assets also have extraordinary economic and social importance. Tourism and agriculture, acknowledged to be the bedrock of the Belizean economy, are completely dependent for their sustainability on care of the environment and the integrity of Belize's ecosystems. Tourism further depends on the quality of Belize's historical and cultural assets, including archaeological assets. The attractiveness of historical assets is also dependent on the attractiveness and health of their surrounding environment. Ultimately, a healthy environment contributes to the health and quality of life of the Belizean people.

As Belize seeks to grow its economy and provide for the needs and aspirations of its people, it needs to strike the right balance between strategies to drive economic growth and those to preserve the integrity of its environment. Wherever possible, it needs to find sustainable development solutions whereby economic advancement, ecosystem integrity, and social inclusion all work together in systemically synergistic ways.

In the medium and long term, Belize will continue building its capacity to pursue sustainable development, including increasing its ability to manage, assess, monitor, and evaluate key trends and outcomes in the areas of environmental management, urban and rural planning, and waste management.

During this planning period, activities related to disaster risk management and climate change resilience will be mainstreamed, and urgent issues in water resource management will be addressed.

Necessary Condition 3.1: Sustainable Environmental Management

Belize's terrestrial and marine ecosystems are teeming with biodiversity that contribute significantly to the economic development of Belize.⁷ Its resources, some of them unique in the world, are spread across a system of protected areas, reserves, private lands, and national lands. However, Belize's ecosystems are under considerable anthropogenic and natural pressures, and some are being converted or degraded at a rapid pace (e.g. conversion from natural habitats to agricultural land; threats to coral reefs). The already evident adverse effects of climate change also threaten the health of ecosystems while also introducing new dangers and risks for people as well as the economy.

Belize has already established a wide range of forward-looking environmental policies and programs. During the medium and long term, it will continue developing a scientific, pragmatic and integrated approach to environmental management that ensures the sustainability of its irreplaceable natural resources while also finding pathways to achieving sustainable economic development. During this period there will be increasing use of advanced valuation and assessment methodologies; as well as increased coordination among ministries, departments and agencies entrusted with various aspects of environmental management.

Necessary Condition 3.1.1: Ecosystems Management

Maintaining the diversity of life has implications for the health of ecosystems, for securing access to biological resources, and for its social and cultural value — all of which have implications for economic development and the quality of life in general. With respect to ecosystems, a healthy biodiversity provides a number of natural benefits such as the protection of water resources, nutrient storage, pollution breakdown and absorption, better adaptation to climate change, and resilience to natural disaster and unpredictable events, among others. With regard to biological resources, a healthy biodiversity has implications for the supply of food, medicinal resources, wood products, ornamental plants, and diversity in genes and species, among others. The social value of ecosystems includes their tourism and recreational value, as well as their cultural value. The economic cost associated with biodiversity loss can be significant; therefore, it is of high importance for Belize to sustain its biodiversity.

⁷ Belize has a very high level of terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity, including more than 150 species of mammals, 540 species of birds, 151 species of amphibians and reptiles, nearly 600 species of freshwater and marine fishes, high numbers of invertebrates, and 3,408 species of vascular plants.



Necessary Condition 3.1.1a: Protected Areas

Action 1: Continue and strengthen implementation of the National Protected Areas Policy and System Plan

Belize has 103 protected areas (PAs) that cover approximately 28% of the national territory. Management of these areas is covered under National Protected Areas Policy and System Plan (NPAP&SP), developed in 2003 and reaffirmed in 2010⁸. Management responsibility is spread among several ministries including the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (MOAFF), the Ministry of National Resources (MNR), and the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation (MOTCA) (focused on archaeological reserves).

These agencies and their subsidiary departments, as well as other statutory organizations such as the Protected Areas Conservation Trust, will strengthen their work and their inter-agency collaboration to protect and effectively manage these areas.

Special issues and implementation priorities to be addressed during the planning period include:

- Building on successful implementation initiatives such as the co-management agreements between the Government of Belize and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the National Biodiversity Monitoring Program, and the development of new management and valuation tools;
- Strengthening enforcement to reduce haphazard and unplanned coastal development;

⁸ NPAP&SP 2015

- Reducing trans-boundary incursions;
- Ensuring that there are working comprehensive management plans for each PA and that these plans are regularly reviewed for their effectiveness and implementation;
- Highlighting the social and economic benefits of PAs and integrating consideration of these benefits — as well as valuations (as available and appropriate) — into national development planning decisions;
- Prioritizing the integration of alternative, sustainable livelihood programs (as described under NC2.5) into PAs situated adjacent to low-income communities, building on programming funded by the Global Environmental Facility (“Management and Protection of Key Biodiversity Areas”); and
- Implementation of the newly completed National Protected Areas Fee Policy.

Necessary Condition 3.1.1b: Other Land Areas

Action 2: Complete and implement the new land use policy incorporating consideration of ecosystem benefits and economic valuation of ecosystems

A draft “National Land Use Policy and Integrated Framework” was developed in 2011 but has not yet been formally approved.

The Ministry of Natural Resources will review the draft, in collaboration with other ministries (including MEDPITC and MOA), to update and complete it before it is submitted to Cabinet for review.

The revised draft should incorporate recent expanded understanding of ecosystem benefits and the use of new ecosystem valuation tools and methods in land-use policy decisions.

The aim of this policy should be to preserve as much ecosystem integrity as possible outside of Belize’s Protected Areas; while also fostering sustainable economic development in line with prioritizations identified under NC1.3 and especially NC1.3.7 (Prioritized Sectors).

Necessary Condition 3.1.2: Water Resource Management

Water in Belize is governed by the National Integrated Water Resources Act (2010) and responsibility for water management is divided between several ministries and statutory agencies. The Act defines these responsibilities and calls for the establishment of a new National Integrated Water Resources Authority (NIWRA) to coordinate water policy overall. The NIWRA has been launched and is in the process of being established and fully funded.

Action 3: Complete the establishment of the National Integrated Water Resources Authority and strengthen its capacity to implement its mission

Action 4: Complete a Water Master Plan, a National Groundwater and Surface Water Assessment, and a Water Vulnerability Profile

In addition to establishing itself as a licensing agency and coordinating mechanism to control and promote the conservation and proper use of water resources (in consultation with other entities in accordance with national legislation), the NIWRA will at its earliest opportunity prioritize the completion of a comprehensive Water Master Plan for Belize and Water Vulnerability Profile. These should be informed by a national groundwater and surface water assessment to address concerns over rapid depletion of groundwater resources; as well as increasing risk of salt intrusion. Completion of these policy documents will require collaboration with other ministries, agencies, stakeholder groups, and academic experts, as appropriate. Addressing urgent depletion issues in Savannah Province will be given the highest priority.

Action 5: Complete an assessment of water supply and related infrastructure needs

Belize's growing population will place additional demands on already stressed water resources. The NIWRA will perform an assessment of medium to long-term infrastructure needs, taking into account the other assessments it has performed and the vulnerability profile.

Necessary Condition 3.1.3: Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Resilience

Disaster risk management and climate change resilience are integrated in this plan because of their inter-linkages: climate variability and climate change are increasing a wide variety of risks in Belize, from the frequency and intensity of tropical storms and hurricanes to the economic impact of changing precipitation patterns on agriculture.

Disaster planning in general is coordinated by the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) through a committee system⁹ which includes the Office of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.

⁹ NEMO Committees include:

- Education, Information, Communications and Warning;
- Search and Rescue;
- Transport and Evacuation;
- Housing and Shelter;
- Human Resources Management; and
- Relief and Supplies Management.
- Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis;
- Medical Care and Public Health;
- Restoration of Utilities;
- Foreign Assistance;
- Economic and Recovery; and
- Environment.

The National Climate Change Office (NCCO) coordinates the development of policies, programs, projects, studies and assessments related to climate change and building climate resilience.

Action 6: Officially establish the National Climate Change Office and strengthen its capacity to implement its mission.

Key issues to be considered include:

- Improve coordination between relevant ministries and institutions and enable involvement of other stakeholders, international cooperation agencies, universities and research institutes in Belize's response to climate change;
- Coordinate and develop a climate change resource mobilization strategy that undergirds a long term low emission development and climate resilient pathway;
- Provide analytical and corporate support to the Belize National Climate Change Committee;
- Implement a Capacity Building Master Plan; and
- Develop and implement a climate change communication strategy, empowering communities through knowledge on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

Action 7: Review the utility of developing a comprehensive disaster management plan

Currently Belize has a National Hazard Mitigation Policy and a system of separate hazard mitigation and response plans. The NEMO will review the question of whether a comprehensive national plan would increase security and preparedness; or whether there are other more effective options for improving disaster planning and preparedness, such as integrating disaster planning into other development planning initiatives.

Issues to be considered in this review include:

- Options for building institutional and individual capacities to manage risk;
- Empowering and mobilizing communities to manage risk;
- Strengthening Belize's hazard risk reduction information system (drawing, e.g., on Belize's participation in the Central American Probabilistic Risk Assessment (CAPRA) platform); and
- Disaster risk financing status and options.

Pending the results of this review, NEMO will proceed with a planning improvement program, incorporating its committees but also other stakeholders as appropriate.

An assessment (from a disaster management planning perspective) of the increasing risks to Belize from climate change will be an important aspect of this review. Gender equity issues should also receive priority attention in this assessment process.

Action 8: Continue mainstreaming climate change considerations into national development planning

The NCCO will continue to coordinate the implementation of the National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan (NCCPSAP). The NCCO will monitor other planning and policy development processes in Belize; and proactively seek opportunities to propose additions or amendments to those processes, in accordance with the NCCPSAP, in order to address both urgent and longer-term issues related to climate change and climate resilience. NCCO will draw on its own recent climate vulnerability studies as well as other scientific assessments. It will encourage the use of the CCORAL tool by decision makers, to ensure that climate resilience has been considered and integrated into relevant activities to deliver climate resilient development.

Action 9: Implement the National Climate Resilience Investment Plan (NCRIP)

In concert with the above actions, the NCCO in collaboration with the MED and other relevant agencies will move forward on the implementation of the NCRIP (completed in 2013), mainstreaming its provisions into development planning (including implementation of the GSDS), and ensuring that actions to achieve the NCRIP's intended results are appropriately resourced.

Implementation should include proactively seeking opportunities for synergy with other Necessary Conditions in this GSDS, including e.g. the development of adequate infrastructure and the provision of employment opportunities to youth and disadvantaged groups.

Necessary Condition 3.1.4: Management of Historical and Cultural Sites

Preservation and sustainable use of Belize's historical and cultural assets are considered essential both to the achievement of Belize's economic goals and to the strengthening of national identity.



Action 10: Continue sustainable management of historical and cultural sites

The ministries responsible for tourism, culture, and protected areas will continue collaborative efforts to effectively manage the sites for which they are responsible, and will collaborate with MED on any economic development planning that concerns the exploitation of these sites to ensure that these assets are both well-used and well-protected.

Necessary Condition 3.1.5: Marine and Aquatic Resources

Belize's marine and aquatic resources are among its most valuable assets both for tourism and for the provision of fish and other economic benefits. Action to protect, sustain, and sustainably use these resources are of the highest priority.

The Belize Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI), operating under the ministry responsible for fisheries and marine resources, has primary responsibility for monitoring ecosystem health, advising government on appropriate actions, and leading processes to develop appropriate programs.

Action 11: Implement the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZMP), including the development of a marine spatial plan

Upon passage of the ICZMP (drafted 2013), the CZMAI will lead a multi-stakeholder process to harmonize implementation of the Plan with other plans, including the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan and land-based planning documents, leading to the development of a Marine Spatial Plan for Belize.



The InVEST (Integrated Valuation of Ecosystem Services and Trade-offs) modelling tool in the development of the ICZMP shall be looked to as a model of how to use similar tools in other planning contexts in Belize.

Necessary Condition 3.2: Urban and Rural Planning

Effective planning is essential for optimizing economic, social, and environmental outcomes. Urban and rural planning (spatial planning) must also be integrated with land-use planning (allocating land to various uses) and marine spatial planning (because of land-sea impacts).

Action 1: Complete and implement the National Land Use Policy and Integrated Planning Framework

In concert with Action 2 under NC3.1.1b above, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) will update the National Land Use Policy and Framework and commence implementation of the Policy and Framework. Implementation of the National Land Use Policy may require the rationalization of other planning authorities. The MNR will collaborate with the MED on determining what other planning functions need to be integrated into the policy and framework.

Special care will be taken to incorporate elements of the National Climate Resilience Investment Plan and to harmonize land use planning with other priorities and plans (such as the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan) as set out in this GSDS.

Action 2: Continue implementation of the Belize City Master Plan

This Action includes a special focus on the growth of Belize City and its tourism potential.

Action 3: Pursue a polycentric or decentralized development strategy

As part of NC3.2, planning processes should encourage the location of major economic activity in areas other than current urban centers such as Belize City, in order to spread the economic benefits of development and reduce rural depopulation. This approach could take the form of polycentric development (identifying several locations for clustering of economic activities) or simple decentralization (taking advantage of Belize's relatively small size to place activity in the areas of greatest need/opportunity, regardless of clustering). Location planning of this kind should take into account other priorities including preserving ecosystem integrity and ensuring adequate infrastructure, in order to avoid unintended and undesirable consequences.

Necessary Condition 3.3: Waste Management and Pollution Control

Waste management is necessary for the maintenance of human and ecosystem health and has aesthetic benefits.

Belize is in the process of developing a Solid Waste Management Policy and Plan. Waste management issues, inclusive of related environmental monitoring, are the responsibility of the Belize Solid Waste Management Authority (BSWaMA), the Department of the Environment (DOE), the Department of Public Health, the Lands and Surveys Department, the ministry in charge of local government, and municipal and other local government bodies. All of these entities must work together in a coordinated fashion to avoid duplication of effort and exploit potential synergies.



The control of pollution is identified in the National Environmental Policy and Strategy 2014-2024, ‘Belize: Green, Clean, Resilient, and Strong,’ as a priority action for ensuring a healthy environment. While the Belize environment may be considered pristine, concerns related to the pollution of surface and ground water, the marine ecosystem, air quality, waste and chemicals management have increased along with the development of the agriculture, fisheries, and industrial sectors as well as changes in our urban and rural communities. In order to maintain a ‘Clean Belize and a Green Belize’ – ensuring healthy environment, national strategies need to be developed and implemented for the control of air, land, and water pollutants. Actions required to control and reduce pollution will be developed and implemented through the Department of the Environment (DOE). The DOE will lead in coordinating the implementation of pollution control measures at the national level with other regulatory agencies, the public sector, the private sector, relevant stakeholders and the general public.

Note that sewerage was previously addressed under NC1.5 (Adequate Infrastructure).

Action 1: Complete the Solid Waste Management Plan

The Belize Solid Waste Management Authority (BSWaMA) and the Ministry of Natural Resources will complete the Policy and Plan, submit it to Cabinet for review, and prepare for implementation.

The Policy and Plan should include strong incentives and robust systems for recycling and for returning waste streams to the production cycle over the longer term, aiming for a “circular economy”. The Plan should also review opportunities for efficiency improvements through consolidation of service.

Action 2: Continue implementation of the Solid Waste Management Project (SWMP)

This ongoing project, administered by the Belize Solid Waste Management Authority (BSWaMA), serves the Western Corridor (that is, the George Price Highway corridor, which is roughly the central third of the country, including municipalities and villages) and involves the construction of a sanitary landfill and solid waste transfer stations as well as institutional strengthening.

Action 3: Close dump sites including those at Belize City, San Pedro, Caye Caulker, and San Ignacio/Santa Elena

This Action should result from the successful implementation of Action 2 above. BSWaMA should consider the addition of Belmopan City to the Project and the closure of its dump site as well.

Action 4: Develop similar interventions to improve waste disposal within the southern and northern thirds of the country

BSWaMA will review the applicability of the project to other regions for implementation in subsequent strategy periods.

Action 5: Develop a legal framework for the disposal of chemical, electronic, medical, and other types of hazardous waste

The Department of Environment (DOE) will continue efforts to implement the institutional framework recommended for Integrated Chemicals Management submitted to Cabinet for consideration. The framework was developed in consultation with the United Nations Environment Program through its Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) initiative and proposes draft legislation for the enactment of an Integrated Chemicals Management Bill.

Action 6: Subject to the finalization of the National Solid Waste Management Plan, analyze the potential for cost recovery with respect to the delivery of waste management services

BSWaMA and MNR in consultation with MOF will review mechanisms for cost recovery, including changing citizens' attitudes on willingness to pay, but also exploring other options to ensure the financial sustainability of new waste management systems.

Action 7: Improve existing legislation to prevent and reduce pollution within our natural environment and communities.

The Government of Belize acting through the Department of Environment (DOE) will improve existing legislation to address the prevention and control of pollution in Belize. This includes improving coordination among regulatory agencies to control pollution through the monitoring and enforcement of waste management inclusive of hazardous waste, liquid and solid waste, and littering which pollutes our natural environment and communities.

The Department of the Environment (DOE) will work towards the development of an anti-littering policy and prioritize the enforcement of littering offences to ensure greater effectiveness of existing legislation and regulatory agencies.

The DOE will coordinate with other relevant regulatory agencies, and the private and public sectors to develop a national policy and action plan for the promotion of recycling with the aim of reducing pollution and the volume of waste that reaches the landfill for final disposal.

The DOE will develop programs which promote the ‘greening of systems’ to prevent and control pollutants that enter the environment; and reduce the environmental footprint of developments and industries within various sectors in Belize, including tourism and agriculture.

Action 8: Control and Reduction of Air Pollution to Improve Air Quality and Ensure a Healthy Environment and increase health of our citizens

The Government of Belize through the Department of the Environment (DOE) will develop and implement an ambient air quality monitoring program designed to focus on hot spots related to reduction and control of air pollution issues, such as large scale agricultural burning, illicit burning, vehicle emissions, and industrial air pollution. This air quality monitoring program will monitor emission standards in hot spot areas and communities to ensure the health of our air quality and the health of our citizens.

Based on the outcome of the air quality monitoring program the DOE will develop a policy and actions designed to control, reduce and mitigate air pollution to ensure clean air and a healthy environment for our citizens.

Critical Success Factor 4: Enhance Governance and Citizen Security

Overview

Good governance is central to the Horizon 2030 vision and is frequently identified by stakeholders as critical to attaining sustainable economic development in Belize. Horizon 2030 includes a set of goals for democratic governance that are worth repeating in this context:

- Strong “watchdog” groups in the non-government sector hold politicians accountable;
- Persons in public life demonstrate the highest ethical standards;
- Government departments are free of corruption, modernized and focused on providing quality service to the public;
- Party politics is in its proper place so that it is less intrusive and divisive in the daily lives of citizens;
- Critical aspects of the political reform process are completed. Changes result in the effective separation of the legislature and the executive and the removal of ministerial discretion; and
- The society is relatively free from violent crime. The legal and judicial system is credible and capable of solving all kinds of crime and dispensing justice in an equitable and fair manner to all.

Note that the last point relates to public safety and citizen security. All other points are related to technical and political governance systems, as well as the integrity of public officials.



In the medium term, Belize will take firm practical steps that will advance the country towards the above goals. Specifically, the Government of Belize (GOB) will aim to reduce wastage, abuse of government resources, and inappropriate procurement; while generally improving

public sector management including budgeting and hiring practices, and accountability mechanisms.

The GOB will also generally pursue a philosophy of “engaged governance,” meaning institutional arrangements that link citizens more directly to the decision-making process of the state (e.g. through stakeholder consultation), enabling them to influence public policies and programs in a manner that impacts more positively on their social and economic lives.¹⁰

With respect to citizen security, Belizeans desire a future in which “the state is respectful of people’s human rights and citizens and visitors respect the rule of law and feel safe and secure.”¹¹ Actions to address crime and promote the proper administration of justice will be seen as critical elements of this GSDS out of respect for this vision, and also because of the negative impacts that crime and low security have on economic development, social inclusion, and environmental management generally.

Necessary Condition 4.1: Better Technical and Political Governance Systems

Action 1: Fully implement program budgeting, and seek budget efficiencies and synergies

The Government of Belize (GOB), operating through the Ministry of Finance (MOF), will continue implementing the transition from line budgeting to program budgeting.

Under the program budgeting approach, the budget will be closely aligned to desired development results, and the achievement of these results will be closely monitored and evaluated in order to effect timely adjustments to subsequent budgets.



¹⁰ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), 2005.

¹¹ Horizon 2030, p. (ix).

In parallel, all line ministries will strive to eliminate programs that are not necessary or duplicative; improve the efficiency of existing programs; seek synergies with other ministries that can reduce costs; and eliminate waste and abuse.

To pursue this Action, the Government of Belize (GOB) will ensure that MOF has adequate capacity to provide the necessary leadership, guidance, sensitization and training to other ministries. Critical capacities include the necessity to:

- Scrutinize budget submissions;
- Monitor and evaluate the achievement of desired outcomes according to the Belize Framework for Sustainable Development; and
- Guide ministries in the preparation of their own M&E frameworks (including the Actions highlighted in this GSDS);

Action 2: Continue implementation of other Public Finance Reform initiatives

Belize has completed or is currently pursuing over twenty public finance reform programs, with support from a variety of international institutions.

The Government of Belize (GOB), acting through the MOF, will continue working with development partners to identify areas in need of improvement and to undergo relevant reform or capacity development initiatives.

Action 3: Strengthen and broaden the Economic Development Council (EDC)

The EDC, a national advisory body comprised of five members each from the public and private sector (appointed by the Prime Minister), reviews and advises on issues of governance with the aim of furthering the national consensus vision described in Horizon 2030. The EDC will be expanded to better reflect the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (see Section V on implementation), and will update its name to “Economic and Sustainable Development Council”. The Office of the Prime Minister will ensure that the EDC meets regularly and is adequately staffed to serve its core advisory functions.

Necessary Condition 4.2: Amelioration of Social Issues that Fuel Crime

Actions covered under this NC4.2 are tightly coupled to many other Necessary Conditions, including NC2.4 (Better Social Assistance and Social Protection), NC1.3.4 (Inclusive Growth), NC1.6 (Adequate Skills and Capacity), and NC2.8 (Social Inclusion).

Action 1: Improve coordination among stakeholder agencies and keep the RESTORE Belize program under evaluation

MHDSTPA will review the life, parenting, and other skills programs offered through the ministry and the RESTORE Belize program, and adjust them as necessary to achieve the greatest impact. In particular, the most successful activities under RESTORE Belize could be mainstreamed into other programmatic activities within the overall GSDS.

Action 2: Increase access to relevant education and training in high-crime areas

Under this Action, education and training programs highlighted elsewhere in this GSDS will be specially and preferentially targeted to areas such as Southside Belize City. The responsible ministries and agencies will prioritize actions to increase enrolment at the primary and secondary levels, attempting to identify school-aged children who are out of school and determining what kind and level of assistance and programming would be necessary for them to be enrolled.

Action 3: Identify sustainable gainful employment opportunities for at-risk youth

Similarly to Action 2, programs aimed at generating employment will specially target at-risk youth. Sectors where at-risk youth could be cultivated for employment opportunities include infrastructure projects, aquaculture, chicken production, and the cultivation of wild cane (*Arundo donax L.*) for use as biodiesel. These opportunities were discussed in greater detail in NC1.3 (Effective Industrial Policy).

Action 4: Review the potential for conscription as an alternative approach to address youth unemployment

The Ministry of National Security (MNS) will conduct a formal review of conscription (for military or national service) as a possible strategy to reduce idleness stemming from unemployment, build skills and discipline, and to influence values and attitudes. The MNS will confer with the MHDSTPA (regarding potential for both positive and negative consequences) as well as the Attorney General's Ministry (regarding legal implications).

Action 5: Promote positive social values through social communication and education

MHDSTPA, in collaboration with the MOE, will develop communications programming designed to inculcate a strong sense of positive social values as a core element of Belizean identity. This programming will be targeted through mainstream educational channels as well as through media, social media, and other channels designed to reach at-risk youth, families, and communities.

Note that communications programming must go hand in hand with other Actions designed to provide social protection, education, and work opportunities to these same audiences.

Programs could tap into non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, retired persons, and other non-traditional partnerships to help spread positive social messages in ways designed to be effective and meaningful to contemporary young people.

Necessary Condition 4.3: Effective Policing

The Police Department is responsible for deterring and investigating crime against persons and property, maintaining law and order, and promoting the effective prosecution of offenders. This places the Department at the forefront of efforts to ensure citizen security and public safety. The National Security Strategy (2009) recognizes the need for a “properly-resourced, properly trained

and motivated Police Department that, commands respect, and respects the human rights of all citizens”, as a key part of the strategy to reduce violent crime (p. 17).

The Police Department, under the oversight of the Ministry of National Security (MNS), will strive to improve its ability to effectively deter, investigate, and reduce crime, in a highly professional and ethical manner.

Action 1: Provide adequate basic equipment and training to law enforcement officials

The MNS and the Police Department will ensure that all officers have the basic equipment required to conduct effective policing. MNS will continue collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the University of Belize to enhance the training provided through the Police Training Academy.



In addition to core policing skills, relevant officers will be adequately trained in the areas of human rights, the Constitution, and the Laws of Belize, in addition to organizational skills such as leadership and management, capacity-building, and skills necessary to successfully interact with the public.

All officers should participate in continuous professional development programs throughout their careers.

Action 2: Deploy CCTV cameras to aid with police surveillance

The use of cameras will be prioritized in areas where it is difficult to place officers on the street or to maintain a regular police presence. Provision of the cameras and surveillance system by the MNS could be done in partnership with the private sector or civil society.



Action 3: Continue to pursue community policing and promote neighborhood watch programs

The Police Department will continue to view the community as a key partner in crime prevention and reduction and pursue the mainstreaming of community policing.

The Department will also encourage the establishment, strengthening, or sustainability of community groups such as People's Coalitions and neighborhood watch groups.

Necessary Condition 4.4: Better Administration of Justice

The justice system includes the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and the court system, comprising the Supreme, Appellate and Magistrate's Courts, and the Caribbean Court of Justice.

Actions under NC4.4 are intended to:

- Improve the effectiveness of prosecution and increase conviction rates;
- Increase the capacity of prosecutorial staff;
- Address witnesses' reluctance to give evidence and participate in court proceedings;
- Reduce backlogs in the court system, expedite caseloads, and reduce number of persons on remand for long periods;
- Increase efficiency in the justice system;
- Increase access to legal representation to those who cannot afford it; and
- Increase rehabilitation success and reduce the level of recidivism, especially among young offenders.

Action 1: Continue ongoing efforts to strengthen and reform the criminal justice system

This Action includes reviewing and implementing reforms proposed by Criminal Justice Advisor (CJA) through the assistance of the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) and the British High Commission.

The CJA is also expected to assist the Attorney General's Ministry (AGM) with the drafting of a citizen's rights manual, and the development of a youth justice manual for Belize.

The AGM will also facilitate strengthened collaboration and dialogue between the relevant agencies comprising the criminal justice system.

Measures currently being implemented by the Supreme Court to reduce the backlog of cases in the Supreme Court will be sustained and enhanced, including the possibility of engaging temporary justices as required.

***Action 2: Prepare a strategy to ensure adequate capacity for prosecution***

The DPP, in dialogue with institutions such as the Bar Association, University of Belize, University of the West Indies, and Galen University, will design and implement new initiatives to ensure that there is a consistent pool of qualified prosecutors. Solutions to be explored include:

- Succession planning;
- Contract-bound employment for a certain minimum number of years offered in return for sponsored legal education (scholarships);
- Partnerships with international agencies for the provision of expertise on a regular/rotational basis (notwithstanding the issue of time required to gain familiarity with the system); and
- Incentives to seek additional training in relevant law.

Action 3: Continue the provision of incentives to secure legal representation for those on remand due to lack of representation

Incentives to secure legal assistance for those charged with capital offenses, and who are on remand for lack of representation, will continue for the benefit of both the victim(s) and the accused.

Action 4: Study the feasibility of a witness protection program

Further inquiry will be made into the establishment of a witness protection system to address the issue of criminal impunity and the fear of reprisals on the part of persons providing testimony in court cases. Initial steps could include the provision of testimony by video link, the use of measures by which to protect the anonymity of vulnerable witnesses, and the admission of pre-recorded statements in Court and so on.

Establishment of such a system would also require strict accountability and tightened confidentiality within the Police Department and other elements of the justice system.

On a parallel track, the Police Department and the DPP will explore the extent to which increased investments into DNA and forensic analysis could reduce reliance on witnesses for successful prosecution of cases.

Action 5: Increase the use of alternative sentencing

Where possible, and subject to the availability of necessary resources, the justice system will increase the use of alternative sentences as provided for in the Penal System Reform (Alternative Sentencing) Act 2001. Alternative sentences can be used for first time young offenders in place of a jail sentence and increase the possibility for rehabilitation.

The Office of the Solicitor General or the Attorney General's Ministry will assess whether judicial officers require training in determining the suitability of alternative sentencing and, where this is necessary, provide such training.

Necessary Condition 4.5: Maintaining the Integrity of National Borders

Illegal border incursions and unauthorized immigration can erode environmental, social, and economic policy adherence. Persons entering the country unlawfully may not be aware of, or respectful of, the regulatory and cultural practices of Belize.

These Actions are intended to reduce such incursions and the resulting harm to Belize's sustainable development aspirations, including ecosystem degradation (e.g. from illegal logging), environmental damage (e.g. from use of unauthorized pesticides), and the increased pressure on social and economic development programs.

Action 1: Increase border patrols and border control

Security forces including Immigration personnel will increase their presence in areas known to be susceptible to illegal incursion.



Action 2: Encourage and recognize volunteerism to monitor protected areas

Existing volunteer programs by e.g. environmental organizations to maintain watch over protected areas will be encouraged and recognized with appreciation by appropriate government authorities.

Action 3: Begin the formulation of a National Migration Policy

The Ministry with responsibility of Immigration will seek to formulate a National Migration Policy that will guide flows of individuals, property, etc. into and out of Belize with a view to ensuring that such flows contribute to the sustainable development of the country.

V. Implementation Plan and Institutional Arrangements

General Guidance on Implementation of the GSDS

The GSDS is an overarching strategy document that references and includes many other medium- and long-term strategy documents, policies, and plans. It provides guidance on prioritization in the implementation of some aspects of those subsidiary documents, both specifically and generally; and it aims to create systemic efficiencies and synergies among them. Successful implementation will require enhanced levels of cooperation and collaboration among all ministries and statutory agencies, as well as non-governmental stakeholders. Essential to the success of the GSDS are the active communication of key provisions of the GSDS to stakeholders and to the general public, and the generation of a sense of national ambition and enthusiasm to achieve it.

Implementation will also require continuous improvement and enhancement in the capacities and skills of governmental institutions as organizations, as well as the individual civil servants who work within them. Capacities and skills of general importance include planning, budgeting, policy coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and general understanding of sustainable development concepts and practices. Enhancement of these capacities within the MED as well as the MESD will be of special importance and priority. See Section VII (the segments on capacity development) for more on this topic.

The GSDS combines elements of an overarching medium-term development strategy with elements of a long-term plan. Many elements of the GSDS are expected to be completed during the planning period (2016-2019). Other elements are processes that, by necessity, must stretch over several planning cycles, or that are preparing the ground for processes that may not start in earnest until after the current planning cycle. Note that longer-term processes should not necessarily receive lower priority than medium-term or short-term needs. Some longer-term processes, such as those designed to increase resilience in the face of climate change, require urgent action in the near term to ensure that capacities, infrastructure, and systems are in place “in time” over the longer term.

The GSDS aims for synergy among the four Critical Success Factors and seeks to create the conditions for more “win-win” policy solutions, but it does not eliminate the need to assess and occasionally make trade-offs in the short term.

In all cases, implementation should keep in mind the aspirations of Horizon 2030 and the Critical Success Factors of the Belize Sustainable Development Framework. Most of these aspirations require coordinated action across institutional boundaries, as well as the engagement of stakeholders.

Implementation is also dependent on the availability of financial and human resources. When these are insufficient, the Prioritization Strategy (Section III) will provide procedural guidance for determining the sequencing of efforts.

The GSDS should be seen as a “living document,” meaning that its provisions should be responsive to changing situations and new information.

Overview of Institutional Arrangements for the Implementation of the GSDS

The Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet will approve and authorize the GSDS.

The CEO Caucus will be the governance body that reviews the GSDS (including determining whether changes or updates need to be made); reviews monitoring and evaluation reports on implementation; and discusses questions regarding prioritization and implementation that cannot be resolved at the ministerial or Technical Committee level. The CEO Caucus will also ensure consistency between the GSDS and other policy guidance documents such as Horizon 2030, the National Export Strategy (NES), the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) Implementation Plan, the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, the National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan, and the Transportation Master Plan.

The CEO Caucus, with the support of the Technical Committees (*see pg. 84*), will also serve as the deliberative body for reviewing major policy and planning decisions of a cross-cutting nature. The Technical Committees (*see pg. 84*) will review and prepare the basis for these decisions, e.g. with Technical Notes and background data, and recommend them to the CEO Caucus when deemed necessary.

Major policy proposals and plans deemed sufficiently mature will be forwarded by the CEO Caucus with its recommendation to Cabinet for final review and approval.

The Ministry of Economic Development, which has principal national economic planning responsibilities, will also have responsibility for coordinating overall implementation of the GSDS, working in collaboration with the appropriate line ministries, statutory agencies, and other institutions as noted. The adoption of this GSDS will strengthen the overall planning and review function of the MED.

The MED will also have responsibility for overall monitoring and evaluation of the GSDS outcomes (see Section VIII); monitoring progress as reported by the relevant ministries; and for proposing updates or modifications to the provisions of the GSDS to the CEO Caucus.

To support this overall policy coordination function, the MED will maintain a continuously updated catalogue of relevant policies and plans currently in effect in Belize. It will conduct an annual policy review to ensure consistency among them and to ensure that they are harmonized to the Belize Sustainable Development Framework. Policies and plans that are no longer relevant should be explicitly retired, and those in need of updating should be flagged for further development by the relevant ministries or agencies involved.

More detailed policy coordination requiring inter-ministerial and inter-agency collaboration will take place via a system of Technical Committees, described later in this section. (*For an overview of institutional arrangements, see Figure 2 on pg. 87*)

The Sustainable Development Unit

The integration of sustainable development concepts and practices into previous economic development practice is new, not just for Belize, but for the world (Belize is considered a “pilot country” by the United Nations in this regard).

To maintain continuity and to facilitate the transfer of knowledge on sustainable development to the MED and other ministries, the MESD will retain (and if possible strengthen) its Sustainable Development Unit (SDU), but will expand its role to serve as MESD’s internal policy and planning unit. During a transition period, whose length is still to be determined, the SDU will continue serving an information-gathering, dissemination, and capacity support function, helping to enhance understanding of Sustainable Development principles and practices across other ministries. However, in due course most of these inter-ministerial functions will be transferred over to the Ministry of Economic Development (MED).

Belize is involved in a number of funded programs to enhance its capacity for sustainable development. While previously these would all have been focused in the ministry most closely associated with the environment, they should now engage civil servants and stakeholders more broadly, i.e. from several other ministries and sectors, including especially the MED. One of these programs (a three-year capacity development program on ecosystem valuation and assessment funded by the Global Environmental Facility) channels funding and activities through the MESD. The SDU will serve as a coordinating bridge between this program and other agencies of the Belize government that need to familiarize themselves with integrating ecosystem valuation into economic decision making. However, in the future, the MED will become the more natural coordinating hub for such inter-ministerial programming.

Harmonization with International Commitments on Sustainable Development

Belize is a supporter of, or signatory to, a number of high-level international agreements relevant to the integration of sustainable development (understood in the comprehensive way defined by the Belize Framework for Sustainable Development) in national policy and planning. These include, but are not limited to:

- The Post-2015 Development Agenda of the United Nations, including the emerging Sustainable Development Goals (to be finalized in late 2015);
- The Samoa Pathway (Outcome Document of the Small Island Developing States Forum 2014);
- The Central American Integration System (SICA);
- The Convention on Biodiversity (CBD); and
- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) has been responsible for monitoring these. Going forward, the SDU will work closely with the MED and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and

international processes involving inter-ministerial issues — such as Belize’s engagement with the Post-2015 Development Agenda — will shift to MED for central coordination.

Technical Committees

To provide oversight at the level of the Critical Success Factors (CSF), four Technical Committees will be established, equivalent to the four CSFs’. Membership on these Committees will include representatives from all the relevant ministries and statutory bodies. Representation from the ministries will include the head of their respective policy and planning units (where they exist). To ensure systemic integration, in accordance with the principles of the GSDD, membership on these Committees will be somewhat overlapping. The MED will be represented on each of the four Committees, and the Sustainable Development Unit of MESD, during the transition period described above, will attend meetings to help ensure information exchange and systemic harmonization among them. Both formal and informal exchanges of information among Technical Committees will be encouraged.

The secretariat function for each Technical Committee will be managed by the ministry chairing the Committee. Each Committee will be chaired by the CEO for that ministry, in consultation and collaboration with the MED.

The Committees will:

- Coordinate all the related strategies, plans, programs and actions to ensure that progress is made towards stated goals;
- Identify and resolve issues of clarity, priority, goal conflict, resource allocation, etc. as they arise;
- Provide oversight and input to monitoring and evaluation activities (see Section IX);
- Report on progress and recommend matters for the consideration of the CEO Caucus;
- Facilitate the development of an organic working relationship among stakeholders; and
- Guard against duplication of efforts.

The Optimal National Income & Investment Committee

This Technical Committee will provide oversight with respect to efforts to achieve CSF1, Optimal National Income and Investment. It shall be chaired by the CEO with responsibility for Trade and Investment and shall include senior representatives from the following ministries and agencies:

- Ministry of Economic Development, Petroleum, Investment, Trade and Commerce;
- Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development;
- Ministry of Education (Science & Technology), Youth, Sports and Culture;
- Ministry of Finance, Public Service, Energy and Public Utilities;
- Ministry of Works, Transport and National Emergency Management;
- Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation;

- BELTRAIDE;
- Central Bank of Belize;
- Development Finance Corporation; and
- Others as appropriate.

The Social Cohesion and Resilience Committee

This Technical Committee will provide oversight with respect to efforts to achieve CSF2, Enhanced Social Cohesion and Resilience, though it will also take special care to integrate and harmonize its work with the Citizen Security elements of the CSF4. It shall be chaired by the CEO with responsibility for Education, and shall include senior representatives from the following ministries and agencies:

- Ministry of Education;
- Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation;
- Ministry of Health;
- Ministry of Labor, Local Government and Rural Development;
- Ministry of National Security;
- Ministry of Economic Development;
- Ministry of Finance; and
- Others as appropriate.

The Natural, Environmental, Historical, and Cultural Assets Committee

This Technical Committee will provide oversight with respect to efforts to achieve CSF3, Sustained or Improved Health of Natural, Environmental, Historical and Cultural Assets. It shall be chaired by the CEO with responsibility for Environment and Climate Change, and shall include senior representatives from the following ministries and agencies:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development;
- National Climate Change Office;
- Ministry of Natural Resources;
- Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation;
- Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation;
- Ministry of Health;
- Ministry of Labor, Local Government and Rural Development;
- Ministry of Economic Development;
- Ministry of Finance; and
- Others as appropriate.

The Governance and Citizen Security Committee

This Technical Committee will provide oversight with respect to efforts to achieve CSF4, Enhanced Governance and Citizen Security. It shall be chaired by the CEO with responsibility for National Security, and shall include senior representatives from the following ministries and agencies:

- Ministry of National Security (Police Department);
- Ministry of Economic Development;
- Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation;
- Ministry of Education; and
- Attorney General's Ministry.

Ad hoc Committees and Sub-committees of Cabinet

Additional ad hoc committees and sub-committees may be formed as deemed necessary to oversee pursuit of specific Necessary Conditions or address cross-cutting or emerging issues.

Cabinet may also establish its own sub-committees to correspond with the Technical Committees or on an ad hoc basis.

Technical Committee Governance

The MED will develop Terms of Reference for each Technical Committee, for review and approval by the CEO Caucus. The TORs will specify the boundaries of the Committees' authority and include protocols for decision-making, communications, monitoring and evaluation (including frequency of reporting), and for engaging other stakeholders, including representatives of civil society.

Advisory Bodies

In addition, a senior advisory body and periodic national consultations will provide substantive input on the implementation of the GSDS.

The Economic [and Sustainable] Development Council (ESDC)

The EDC is a senior leadership advisory body appointed by the Prime Minister. The EDC is in the process of broadening its mandate and participation, and is likely to change its name to the Economic and Sustainable Development Council. It will provide a forum for sharing and dialogue between the public and private sectors and civil society. Monitoring and evaluation reports with respect to implementation of the GSDS, after being shared with the CEO Caucus, will also be provided to the EDC. The EDC shall in turn provide feedback to the CEO Caucus, copied to the Cabinet. The CEO Caucus shall review the input of the EDC and act on it, through advice to Cabinet or other mechanisms, as it deems appropriate.

National Sustainable Development Stakeholder Consultations

Consultations may be convened by the MED to review progress and provide input to future updates of the GSDS. Such consultations will be inclusive of gatherings of representatives from civil society, academic and research institutions, professional associations, and the private sector which will meet periodically in a facilitated national workshop format. Such consultations will provide input to be considered by the CEO Caucus and Technical Committees.

Public Communication of the GSDS

In order to build buy-in and engagement, the GSDS should be highly profiled in the public communications of the Government of Belize. To this end, the Government Press Office will conduct a review of government public communications with the aim of raising awareness of the GSDS, streamlining public communications, and building consistency of messaging in alignment with Horizon 2030 and the GSDS.

The review will also:

- Analyze financing arrangements for public awareness operations;
- Assess their impact and the extent to which they reach target audiences;
- Monitor the effectiveness of different communications modalities in reaching intended audiences; and
- Build synergy opportunities, increase efficiency; and economies of scale in public awareness efforts through collaboration across functional or ministerial lines.

Drawing from the results of the review, the Government Press Office will design approaches for improving the effectiveness of public awareness efforts in support of the GSDS, including the possibility of a more integrated public awareness function and the institutional requirements that may be necessary in that regard.

Figure 2. Institutional roles in the implementation of the GSDS



VI. Resource Mobilization and Allocation

Implementation of this GSDS implies an increase in government expenditure in the medium term, and a significant increase in capital investment over the medium as well as longer term. This section reviews resource mobilization options after consideration of the current baseline scenario, an “active scenario” that takes the GSDS initiative into account, and resulting prospects for self-financing and external financing of GSDS implementation.

The Resource Envelope for Implementation: Baseline Scenario

This baseline scenario provides a rough projection of what would occur in Belize *without* new strategic efforts to accelerate growth and pursue sustainable development strategies, and assuming no deterioration in global economic performance. The baseline scenario is a starting point for considering options and expectations for financing national growth and sustainable development initiatives going forward.

Real GDP in Belize is currently projected to grow by an average of 2.6% annually between 2016 and 2019, inclusive. This level of GDP growth is not much greater than estimated average population growth of about 2.4% (as of 2012). Consequently GDP per-capita would not be expected to grow quickly under the baseline scenario.

Ongoing efforts to address various expenditure and revenue risks are expected to result in an improvement in the fiscal balance, with the primary surplus on central government operations rising from 1.2% of GDP in 2016 to 2.1% in 2019; while the overall deficit is projected to narrow from 1.8% of GDP to 1.5% over the same period.

Central government debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to fall from 83.58% in 2016 to 81.3% of GDP by 2019. Efforts needed to progress towards reducing debt to 60% benchmark regarded as sustainable.

The Active Scenario

At a minimum, GOB will make the additional fiscal effort necessary to maintain capital expenditure at a minimum of 5.0% of GDP over the medium terms, and maintain non-interest expenditure relative to GDP at the levels attained in 2015, while pursuing a fiscal primary surplus of at least 2.0% of GDP. This level of primary surplus will result in a steady decline in debt towards a maximum long-run target of 60% of GDP. The foregoing will require a fiscal effort of between 1.5% to 2.0% of GDP. However, the pursuit of accelerated output growth will require significantly greater fiscal adjustment efforts, in addition to efforts to put in place appropriate institutions and mechanisms to improve coordination and efficiency. Improved efficiency in the management of expenditure is expected to contribute to improving fiscal space, as are public finance reform and better management.

However, other strategic initiatives will require additional expenditure. An additional fiscal effort to raise government revenue amounting to 4.0% to 5.0% of GDP annually, will allow GOB to achieve a significantly level of capital expenditure (about 7.0% to 8.0% of GDP), keep other non-interest expenditure at its 2015 level relative to GDP , while pursuing a 2.0% primary surplus on central government operations. The additional resources would be allocated towards new strategic priorities while maintaining current levels of public sector operations.

GOB will pursue a gradual course, which will allow time for planning and reform measures to advance. Therefore, annually, the GOB will ideally seek to make an additional fiscal adjustment of 1.5% of GDP over each fiscal year during the period 2016/17 to 2018/19, accumulating to roughly 4.5% by the third year. This adjustment would facilitate capital expenditure levels of at least 7.0% of GDP by 2018, preserve critical spending (especially with respect to social and environmental programmes) and reduce the level of debt as would have occurred under the baseline scenario.

Strategies for improving the fiscal outturn, including those to raise revenue, are discussed below. The specific level of resources that will be required over the medium term to support efforts to significantly accelerate growth towards a target of 5.0% annually for a sustained period of time is not formally estimated in this document, as it would require a complex modelling exercise to produce a credible estimate. However, it is expected that investments required for road infrastructure, the health sector improvement, improving quality and access of education sector, and investing in the sustainability of the tourism industry, among other areas, could be easily absorbed within an additional annual effort progressing towards 4.5% of GDP by the third year and sustained thereafter, subject to setting in place the necessary technical, institutional and human resource capacities.

A lower level of additional fiscal effort (over and above the base scenario) of less than 4.5% can be contemplated should additional financing be attracted from other sources, including the use of public-private partnership approaches. However, such approaches will ultimately require raising the primary surplus to above 2.0% of GDP if the similar debt target is to be reached where debt financing is used.

Allocation of Resources

Growth and sustainable development needs are significant in all areas, as described in this GSDS, and these are interrelated. Actions in one area may have impacts, intended or unintended, in other areas. Achievements across all four critical success factors are important in themselves, but it is their integrated and balanced achievement that will lead to the optimization of the quality of life of all Belizeans living now and in the future.

Moreover, there are ongoing actions, programs and functions being carried out across the public sector and these cannot be stopped abruptly. For a society to be viable, some level of public sector services must be provided across all four critical success factors. The “sunk cost” in providing the framework for the provision of many of these services also implies that it would not be practical to cease or significantly cut back on their provision.

Nonetheless, improvements in the achievement of growth and sustainable development results will require changing the relative emphasis placed on various areas of activity. To some extent, expenditure shifts occur organically in concert with improvements in the budgeting practices; and the introduction of program budgeting is expected to result in the better allocation of resources over time. However, from time to time, more direct efforts to reallocate resources in line with strategic priorities will be necessary.

During the current planning period, this reallocation will be accomplished through the budgeting process and by the separation of allocations into a *base allocation* and a *strategic allocation*.

For budget year 2016/17, all ministries will be allocated a *base allocation* which would be equivalent to the absolute budget, or between 90% and 100% of what was received during the previous year (2015/16). These will be adjusted to reflect considerations related to salary negotiations, other non-discretionary spending, and ongoing capital projects. Adjustments will also be made to reflect areas of operations or specific activities that are to be discontinued or scaled down. The MOF will discuss such adjustments with line ministries. Line ministries will align their base budgets to the priority and sector outcomes, strategies or actions identified in the GSDS, or as otherwise consistent with the pursuit of the critical success factors. This approach would ensure that there are no major disruptions to the work of line ministries, while encouraging them to be more efficient through better management.

Resources that are projected to be available in excess of the base allocation will be available for *strategic allocation*. The quantity of resources available for strategic allocation will depend on the strength of the fiscal adjustment effort, the availability of loan financing and the extent of assistance likely to be received from development partners. The strategic allocation will be guided by the priority considerations (prioritization mechanism) discussed in Section III. Consistent with the adoption of program budgeting, every ministry is expected to indicate the results that it intends to achieve under its base allocation and the strategic allocation. Line ministry budgets are to be linked to the strategies deemed necessary to achieve such results. Such strategies are to be guided by the GSDS or are to be consistent with the strategies therein.

As necessary, budgetary allocations for FY 2017/18 and for 2018/19 will continue along similar lines as with the allocation for FY 2016/17 but will be further informed by the evaluation of the effectiveness of the previous year's activities towards the achievement of development results.

Resource Mobilization Strategy

Four broad approaches will be pursued to mobilize resources to finance growth and sustainable development efforts.

First, concerted efforts will be made to improve the efficiency with which resources are used. This will require improving operational efficiency as well as allocative efficiency and the management of expenditure.

Second, all attempts will be made to significantly enhance the generation of revenue. This strategy is extremely important given Belize's current stage of development and the need for investment in basic infrastructure, education, health services, environmental management, and citizen security, among other priorities as discussed in this GSDS. The greater the revenue generation, the less the nation will be required to prioritize and "ration" resources among inter-connected critical needs.

Third, concerted efforts will be made to create new financing options and seek alternative means of financing development activity, while seeking to reduce the risk profile of the country.

Fourth, GOB will forge better partnerships with the development community and seek to improve donor coordination.

Strategy 1: Expenditure Management

As noted earlier, GOB will continue the roll-out and institutionalization of program budgeting and other efforts to facilitate better management. Close attention will be paid to the transition from the line budgeting to program budgeting in order to achieve pay-offs more rapidly.

Efforts to improve efficiency may result in a ministry identifying existing staff that may not be needed by the ministry to achieve results at the levels achieved in the previous year. In order to effect such adjustments while seeking to avoid hardship and conflicts, a mechanism will be developed to reassign such staff to other areas with greater need for their services. This could be combined with considerations to provide appropriate training. Additionally, over time the adjustment can be effected by realignment of staffing as some persons retire.

In the context of concerted efforts to raise revenue and control expenditure, GOB will also seek to renegotiate the agreement with the Unions in an effort to cap salary increases at an acceptable level annually.

Efforts will continue to improve other public finance and management practices, including procurement, auditing, cash-flow management, and the automation of processes and procedures. This will also include the procurement of public office space, using cost-benefit analysis to determine when it is more efficient and effective to own and/or build instead of renting such space. Procurement processes should also be "greened," where economically feasible, in order to capture the well-established environmental, health, and worker productivity benefits associated with such buildings, products and services.

Strategy 2: Enhancing Revenue Generation

Attempts will be made to increase the revenue collected by central government by ten per cent (10%) annually for fiscal years 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19. The MOF will design programs to achieve this goal, including the following actions:

Action 1: Review and reform the tax regime

This reform initiative should reflect the technical advice contained in the IMF's 2013 report, "Belize: Tax Reform for Growth, Fairness and Sustainable Revenue." Such a reform would be expected to facilitate increased collection of taxes while reducing distortions to the market mechanism and thereby promote greater economic efficiency. Among other aspects, the reform program will be designed to:

- Improve collection of taxes on income by reintroducing the income tax as a more significant tax on income, and revamping the business tax;
- Improve the efficiency of the GST by removing inequities, broadening the base of the tax, and strengthening administration; and
- Reduce revenue lost by revamping the tax incentive framework to remove tax concessions that are not very effective in encouraging economic activity.

The reform program will also include the revision of the incentive structure as described in NC1.3.6, "Improving the Incentives Regime."

The design of the tax reform program will also take into consideration the taxation of the tourism sector and, as necessary, alternatives to the current financing mechanism for tourism promotion activity.

The aim will be to complete the tax reform by the end of the first GSDS period, FY 2018/19. A technical cooperation agreement recently signed with IDB to consider tax and policy options and to determine likely impacts of the introduction of measures will assist with the design of the tax reform program.

Once reforms are implemented, they will be closely monitored and evaluated with respect to their effectiveness in improving economic efficiency or minimizing distortion to the market mechanism; the fairness and equity of the regime; the optimal revenue yields; and the interrelations among these desired outcomes. Hence the system may be adjusted along the way as necessary to improve the achievement of the desired outcomes.

In implementing tax reforms, there are likely to be concerns and/or conflicting views with respect to issues of tax efficiency, support for business activity, the revenue needs of government, the use of tax policy to enhance income equity, and the use of tax policy to enhance the protection of the environment, among other areas. Consequently, the MOF will launch attempts to build national consensus on the tax reforms. This could be done through engaging in dialogue with the Advisory Bodies described above as well as through the use of public communications.

Action 2: Implement other revenue-enhancing measures

This could include:

- Additional measures to improve efficiency in the collection of border taxes (following the example of efficiency gains in revenue collection made under the Customs Modernization Project);

- Increasing cooperation among tax collection agencies in order to improve compliance, e.g. through use of tax compliance certificates as a requirement for clearing goods at the ports;
- Installation and use of internationally proven automated systems for administration of tax collection for improved efficiency. As an example, efficiency can be gained in GST collection at the point of sale by introducing a networked Tax Metering system that will enable automated monitoring, reporting and auditing of GST agents nationwide;
- All ministries will carefully examine their operations to identify opportunities to improve revenue generation. For example, the Department of Transport will closely examine the vehicle licensing regime to identify opportunities for better management and opportunities for increased revenue; and
- Strengthening partnerships with communities and NGOs to engage them in voluntary actions that result in reduced direct government expenditure. These could include efforts to improve environmental surveillance (as also described under NC4.5) or activities within schools that can contribute to promoting strong social values.

Action 3: Allocate windfall oil revenue in ways that could improve economic productivity and resilience

Over the medium-term most of the windfall revenue that accrues to the GOB as a result of the commencement of production from new commercial crude oil fields will be used to finance capital expenditure, to reduce the level of debt, or to build reserves. This will be particularly important given the importance of putting in place basic infrastructure to enhance the efficiency of the economy, and to build economic resilience.

Strategy 3: Improving Financing Options

Action 1: Prepare a Disaster Risk Financing Plan

To improve the predictability of the budget, the MOF will collaborate with the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) to prepare a disaster risk financing plan. Options will be considered for the selection of risk financing instruments on the basis of frequency and severity of disasters. The plan will distinguish between those risks that will be retained; opportunities for risk pooling such as that which occurs under the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF); and those risks that are best transferred.

With respect to risk retention, some risks may be financed out of budgetary savings and appropriate proposals for doing so will be made. These could include specific budgetary allocations and the establishment of reserve funds. In other instances, it may be best to finance retained risks and in those cases access to multilateral resources will remain important. Alternative risk financing instruments from multilateral development banks will also be considered, including the use of contingent loans which may require the country to pursue and sustain agreed macro-economic targets.

Action 2: Prepare a policy on Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and expand their use

PPP approaches will only be considered where they could result in a clear and significant reduction in risks to the public sector, i.e., where the private sector bears a significant portion of

the risk. Projects for consideration are those where there is a clear opportunity to charge prices that are sufficient to recover costs. In cases where cost-recovery is not relatively certain, the risk that government may bear has to be justified by the economic benefit expected. Through assistance by the IDB, GOB will be developing a PPP policy to guide future action in developing PPP funded projects.

Action 3: Reduce credit risk perception

Access to international capital markets and private placement are likely to remain shut or costly over the medium term. However, action will continue aimed at reducing potential creditors' risk perception of Belize, which may facilitate better access to financing including through the international capital markets, should that path be chosen in the future.

Strategies to reduce risk perception could include lowering debt by repurchasing the “New Superbond” at substantial discounts on the market. This can be financed with some of the existing resources set aside from the PetroCaribe Initiative. These resources were obtained at low interest rates and a portion of additional proceeds from the Initiative can be allocated towards the bond repurchase.

Action 4: Review and develop new financing instruments

The feasibility of establishing new instruments for financing public sector activity will be studied during the period of the first GSDS. This could include the floating of development bonds or the establishment of trust funds for specific purposes. Such purposes could include the development of specific infrastructure, capitalizing venture capital funds, equity participation in DFC, and the development of tourism. Features to make such instruments attractive to the Belizean diaspora will be considered.

Strategy 4: Better Partnerships with the Development Community and Donor Coordination

Belize will continue to seek financial and technical assistance support from multilateral and bilateral sources toward implementing the GSDS, through the following actions:

Action 1: Establish a donor coordination mechanism

GOB will work with donors to direct their projects and technical support towards priorities identified in the GSDS or in sector or thematic plans that are consistent with the GSDS. GOB will collaborate with development partners to establish a donor coordination mechanism or forum that will allow for donors and GOB to dialogue on the effectiveness of development assistance.

There is already an informal exchange or “forum” among donors (largely those with a resident presence in Belize) that allows for dialogue between them with respect to the provision of development assistance to Belize. Stronger coordination and leadership by Belize of donor activity will build confidence among donors, reduce duplication of efforts by donors, and enhance opportunities to build synergies among them.

The forum could also facilitate discussion on new modalities for providing assistance, such as through a “Basket Fund” (see next Action).

Action 2: Assess the potential to establish a ‘Basket Fund’.

While project interventions may remain the dominant financing modality over the medium term, Belize will aim towards receiving more support directly through the consolidated budget or through a “Basket Fund”. A “Basket Fund” would involve the placement by donors of development assistance funds into a common pool that can be used to fund interventions in the country that are more directly in line with country priorities and less driven by donors.

The structure and procedures for the fund will be designed by the MOF in consultation with donors. Note that success in convincing donors to contribute to such a fund is dependent on continued public finance reform as described elsewhere in this GSDS.

VII. Human Resource and Capacity Development Strategy

The effective pursuit of development objectives as presented in the Horizon 2030 vision requires a public service that is responsive, flexible, effective, efficient, collaborative, IT-driven and citizen-centered. The aim of the GSDS Human Resource Strategy is to complement the hiring of quality professional staff with measures to improve productivity, including improved management, increased motivational activity, and a strengthened accountability framework within the civil service. Actions to transform the Belize Public Service into a service-oriented entity must be closely tied to public financial management reforms, especially the transition from line budgeting to program budgeting. Alongside other resource considerations, and subject to resource constraints and strategic priorities, budget preparation must now place adequate emphasis on the quantity and mix of skills needed to attain sector objectives. In that way, capacity building will be closely linked to national development planning frameworks which encompass the mechanisms to: (1) link budgeting to Horizon 2030, the GSDS, and other planning documents that are consistent with these; (2) monitor and evaluate performance; and (3) use performance information to improve the effectiveness of sustainable development strategy. Specific priority areas that will be pursued under the rubric of HR strategy are as follows.

1. Increasing flexibility in human resource management and allocation

Improving the quality and productivity of human resources within the civil service will require increasing the flexibility of the use and allocation of staff resources, including increasing the possibility for reassignment within and across ministries, and reorganization of functions to improve efficiency and effectiveness, such as the pooling of human resources. The Ministry of Public Service (MPSEPU) is currently engaged in a process of review and revision of public service job classifications and salaries. In addition, MPSEPU has recently published new Public Service Regulations (October 2014). In concert with and in follow up to these reforms, the following actions will be taken:

- MED will collaborate with the Ministry with responsibility for Public Service to facilitate the greater incorporation of staffing considerations into the annual program budgeting process. In that regard guidance to line ministries, starting with the budget call, will emphasize that adjustment could occur in any direction;
- MPSEPU will develop other mechanisms to encourage line ministries to indicate the appropriate level and mix of skills that they would need in order to achieve the results and targets that they indicate in their annual budget submissions;
- MPSEPU will develop mechanisms for reassigning staff from areas, ministries departments or other public bodies, where they are not needed to areas where they could be better utilized. This action in conjunction with the two previous actions is expected to provide greater incentives to line ministries to “right size” their operations;

- MPSEPU will carry out job audits at appropriate intervals, with the aim of improving the alignment of job assignments with required tasks;
- MPSEPU will prepare proposals for reducing the use of short-term contracts in favor of permanent appointments that are subject to greater hiring rigor and transparency; and
- MPSEPU will closely monitor the implementation of the new Public Service Regulations and the ongoing job classification review to ensure that the results are in line with the strategic objectives of the GSDS; and will continue to make adjustments as necessary to support a modernized and efficient public service that is attractive to high-quality employees.

2. Building capacity for sustainable development

Adequate capacity to pursue sustainable development will be addressed within the wider context of simultaneously putting in place appropriate organizational planning and implementation structures, new budgeting policies and procedures, and inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms as reflected in the GSDS. To ensure the motivation, commitment and active engagement of all stakeholders, it is important that capacity development initiatives be pursued and that these initiatives produce results at the individual, organizational and institutional levels. The following actions will be prioritized over the medium term:

- Fill specific skill gaps in alignment with the strategic priorities. This action will be facilitated by the program budgeting approach. Line ministries will clearly identify and request financing for the specific skills required to pursue targeted results reflected in their budget submissions. Indications of the skill gaps that exist within functional areas of government are discussed in greater detail on page 93 at point 7 and following). The MOF in consultation with the MPSEPU will determine and reflect in the annual budget the specific skills it will need to effectively carry out its sustainable development planning and budgeting function, and to allow the ministry to effectively monitor and evaluate the implementation of the GSDS across the Public Service. These skills include effective leadership, change management, and inter-ministerial coordination. These capacity requirements are also discussed in greater detail below; and
- MPSEPU will use the opportunity of the ongoing job re-classification exercise to assist line ministries in determining what kind of staff capacities and which specific roles are required for the pursuit of development results to which the ministry will contribute. The job classification exercise is expected to result in the better alignment of job remuneration with market conditions.

3. Increasing training allocation and strategic targeting

With respect to training, the following actions will be pursued towards building adequate capacity to pursue sustainable development

- The MPSEPU will also continue to develop its strategy for provision of training to respond to the priority needs of the Public Service. This may include graduate and post-graduate study in specific disciplines where capacity gaps exist. These studies may be pursued within Belize or abroad, together with other training in core skills such as monitoring and evaluation, and policy formulation and planning; and
- Where necessary, in-house training opportunities will be prioritized and presented to complement foundational skills such as project management, monitoring and evaluation, change management, leadership, and report/proposal writing.

4. Skill shortages and retention

MPSEPU will work closely with line ministries that are facing critical skill shortages to address this issue. Moreover, retaining critical skills is just as important as hiring them. The following actions will be pursued to improve staff retention.

- The Ministry of Public Service will design a plan in order to improve staff retention in areas where this issue is prevalent and critical. Where viable, this could involve providing incentives for training, including through the provision of scholarships, in order to secure a greater supply of skills to the public sector than what is immediately required;
- Line ministries will submit to the MPSEPU lists of staff positions that they have been unable to fill after protracted attempts to do so. The MPSEPU, in consultation with the ministry concerned and the Ministry of Education will prepare a plan for obtaining people with such skills. This could involve identifying existing staff with potential to be trained to fill other positions, or who need more appropriate training for their current positions; and
- The MPSEPU, in consultation with the Ministry of Education, shall consider the feasibility for the establishment of a public service training, learning and research center to provide on-the-job training to public sector employees and to serve as a repository of reports, theses and dissertations produced by public servants during the course of their training programs.

5. Linking training to public service commitment

The MPSEPU will conduct a review of the arrangements to retain the beneficiaries of training incentives. Persons trained could be retained on the completion of studies as necessary, or they could be retained to build excess capacity. Those who cannot be absorbed within the public sector in their direct areas of specialization can be allowed to provide their services within other areas of the civil service or to the private sector. Retention of trained persons in other areas of the public sector may be beneficial should their specialized services be subsequently required, as this could be easily facilitated through transfers.

6. Prioritize the retention of institutional knowledge

As part of skills retention, additional attention will be given to retaining adequate levels of institutional knowledge, and ensuring that knowledge accumulated by retiring or departing civil servants is passed on to others. This will be done, where feasible, as follows.

- Ministries will prepare procedural manuals to assist new staff to quickly gain competence. Documented exit and retirement interviews can also support knowledge retention; and
- Ministry of Public Service will prepare a proposal for progressively raising the mandatory retirement age, which currently stands at 55, referencing the report prepared in December 2011 by the IDB on the pension system of Belize.¹² This will reduce the premature loss of competency and experience. The MPSEPU will consult with labor representatives in that regard.

7. The Capacity Development Context

Implementing the GSDS successfully will require a significant focus on capacity development, both generally within the Government of Belize, and certain specific ministries. It will also require matching the right people to the necessary tasks, for example in the operations of the Technical Committees for policy review and coordination, and the Working Tables for monitoring and evaluation.

In general terms, the GSDS requires increases in the ability of the Government of Belize to:

- Master new knowledge, including new policy and planning approaches;
- Adopt a systems approach and understand the linkages among previously separate areas of growth and sustainable development policy;
- Coordinate policy, planning, and implementation more tightly across ministries and subject areas (break out of “silos”); and
- Perform more extensive monitoring and evaluation.

More specifically, the GSDS will require significant capacity development within:

The Ministry of Economic Development to expand its knowledge, ability, and human resources to meet an expanded planning and coordination role. This will likely include a need to increase personnel with planning and policy coordination skills. Consequently, the structure of the Ministry will be reviewed and adjusted to enhance its expected planning, budgeting and coordinating role.

¹² “The Pension System of Belize: Assessment and Policy Options,” Guillermo Larrín and Jorge Rodriguez, December 2011.

The Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) in the Ministry with responsibility for the Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD), to support its role as an information broker and disseminator during the transition period. The SDU may also need reinforced staffing to maintain the link between Belize and various international SD policy processes to which Belize is a committed party.

The Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB), to ensure that it has the human resources necessary to play the role described for it in Section VIII on Monitoring and Evaluation. There will be a need to expand and improve the capacity of the Institute to generate analyses and disseminate data, and to collect and/or catalogue the data generated by other ministries, depending on where data gathering functions are most effectively located. The aim should be for the SIB to develop a true National Statistical System and become a central repository or portal for the information resources of the Government of Belize.

As a special consideration, a number of specific skills and knowledge previously categorized under “Sustainable Development” and housed within environmentally-oriented ministries must now be generally diffused and absorbed into economic and social policy and planning. These skills and knowledge areas include, as illustrative examples, how to incorporate the value of ecosystems in economic development planning; increased understanding of resilience in relation to climate change and other longer-term threats; analyzing the systemic links between social, cultural, environmental, and economic issues; and the mainstreaming of “green technology” and similar concepts into technology and economic development planning generally.

In addition, the general governmental capacity development processes will continue, including the mapping of needed skills and programs to fill gaps within all line ministries and public sector agencies. The existing capacity needs of Belize have not yet been thoroughly mapped and reviewed. However, such mapping and review will be synergized with program budgeting in concert with the ongoing review of job classifications in the Ministry of the Public Service.

Table 3 below identifies specific capacity development needs that are linked to the implementation of the GSDS, as well as some indications of critical capacity development needs within other line-ministries. The specific staffing and training requirement will be determined as part of the annual budgeting process as informed by the relevant organizational reviews. Provisions for skills that are readily available nationally but where numbers employed within government are deemed to be inadequate, are not reflected in Table 3, but will be assessed as part of the normal budgeting and prioritization process. Moreover, in cases where it may not be economical to put in place specific staff capacities, consideration may be given to the utilizing of external consultants.

Table 3. Capacity development needs linked to the implementation of the GSDS. [Note that this table is not yet complete; it should be complemented with additional capacity development reviews.]

Governmental Unit	Capacity Development Needs Linked to the GSDS
All Ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General skills required in the public service including, strategic planning and critical analysis; program budgeting; monitoring and evaluation; project preparation and management; report and proposal writing; leadership; and change management
Attorney General's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD

Ministry	
Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD
Ministries with responsibility for Energy, Science and Technology and Public Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More technically-trained staff, with a focus on key areas of prioritized need such as energy efficiency in the transport and industrial sectors • Clearer organization of regulation of sectors, e.g. fuels (avoid situation where Ministry has jurisdiction but no authority) • Enhanced visibility and understanding of energy as a driver of economic growth • Development of an extension structure to support diffusion and new technologies (including green technologies) • Retraining (or restructuring) of administrative staff to increase technical skills and provide more capacity and value to the Ministry • Greater general understanding of science and technology in The Ministry of Education, and greater formal collaboration
Ministries of Finance and Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy formulation and strategic planning, including integrated economic, social, and ecological development policy; taxation policy, expenditure policy and industrial relations policy • Macroeconomic forecasting, including revenue and expenditure forecasting • Research including that in relation to economic, social and sustainable development policy; financing instruments; development financing; and governance institutions • Coordination of policy and implementation capacities related to change management and leadership • Program budgeting, including recurrent and capital budget formulation, with capacity for reflection on human resource requirements • Monitoring and evaluation, including that with respect to capital projects and the implementation of the GSDS • Project preparation and management • Training capacity with respect to providing leadership in the areas of strategic planning, program budgeting, revenue and expenditure forecasting, monitoring and evaluation, and project preparation and management. • Debt management • Structuring financing instruments including risk financing instruments • Risk management
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Procurement Practices, to train staff in changing procurement across the Ministry & Department to ensure efficient, cost-saving measures and green (environmentally conscious) procurement • Training in Strategic Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) and Ecosystem Valuation Accounting with respect to budget planning and accounting systems as it relates to sustainable development and economic planning and budgeting. • Monitoring and Evaluation with respect to ensuring results based management techniques are incorporated (to track, monitor and evaluate strategic actions and performance indicators) in implementing GSDS to ensure accomplishments are cross-cutting and long-term to effect societal changes towards sustainable development • Change Management and Human Resource Management • Risk Management • Communication – transfer of scientific information and data analysis into policies and actions which are useful in decision-making; and useable,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understandable, and relatable to relevant stakeholders, the public and private sectors, and the general public Public Awareness and Marketing to aid in mainstreaming sustainable development and GSDS actions at the national level Budget Management Strategic Planning Information Communication Technology (ICT) - development and implementation of a centralized coordinated database/information management system for use in developing data sets; facilitating the use of scientific information for policy and decision making in sustainable development; and training personnel in the use and management of the System Agricultural Statistician
MAFFESD - SDU Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge Management and Brokerage IT staff to support knowledge management and diffusion Communication (e.g. keeping ministries and stakeholders informed of relevant developments in SD) Convening (e.g. capacity to organize the Sustainable Development Stakeholder Forum) Facilitation (e.g. of the Sustainable Development Stakeholder Forum, or training events to spread SD knowledge to other departments) Tracking and monitoring of Belize's commitments under international agreements
Ministry of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talent recruitment and retention, especially for critical and rare skills (e.g. health economics)
Ministry of Housing & Urban Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD
Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More human resource capacity needed if any expansion of activities is envisioned
Ministry of Labor, Local Government, and Rural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity to support local governments in engaging with the GSDS and implementing their part of the national strategy
Ministry of National Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD
Ministry of Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior qualified Hydrologists (several sub-specialties) A contour map to min. 1m resolution
Ministry of Public Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training in Monitoring and Evaluation Training on general sustainable development concepts for all senior officers
Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program budgeting and planning Project management and writing
Ministry with responsibility for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding management solutions to create more flexibility in the administration of Public Service Regulations

Investment, Trade and Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other capacity development issues identified for this Ministry are covered in the general human resource strategy
Statistical Institute of Belize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation of inter-agency meetings (chairing the Working Tables) • Additional qualified staff (statisticians, demographers, etc.) to support the Monitoring and Evaluation process of the GSDS • Capacity to gather data into a centralized location

8. General Capacity Development of the Government of Belize

A complete mapping of capacity needs within the Government of Belize has not been completed. However, needs relevant to the achievement of the Belize Framework for Sustainable Development were informally mapped during a national stakeholder workshop in August 2014. Highlighted findings were summarized under two broad categories:

a. Improve the institutional and policy context

This GSDS can be seen as a major step forward for Belize in terms of improving the basis for policy integration and coordination, in substance as well as institutional terms.

b. Increase the level of government commitment to capacity development

Stakeholders identify a strong need for greater public commitment in this area, despite fiscal constraints. Increasing capacity development will strategically help Belize to create a “virtuous cycle”.

Specifically identified needs include:

- Increase public financial commitments to capacity development, as well as to research and development;
- Increase the number of professional training and capacity development opportunities;
- Reduce the shifts in prioritization for capacity development that are caused by shocks and disasters (increase the resilience of capacity development);
- Improve ability at the local level to deliver services;
- Increase capacity to generate data, statistics, and performance indicators;
- Improve monitoring and evaluation skills; and
- Increase the number of public servants with planning skills, as well as their skill level in planning.

9. Capacity Development Strategies

In parallel to beginning the implementation of this GSDS, Belize will pursue a number of strategic actions to improve capacity development generally, and to address the specific needs identified above.

Action 1: Complete a general review of capacity development needs

Continue efforts by the MPSEPU to review job classification and needs throughout the public service. The review should be anchored within program budgeting in order to link capacity needs to the objectives of the GSDS.

Action 2: Invest more in the people who are working for Belize

As part of the budgeting process, increase public investment in capacity development, including setting aside funds for hiring additional staff and training existing staff in new competencies.

Action 3: Mobilize and leverage the support of international agencies

Belize is experienced at mobilizing international partners and resources to support its capacity development. It should expand this activity, targeting key capacity needs. Existing initiatives can be expanded to ensure that previously specialized training opportunities (e.g. in areas of green technology and sustainable development) reach key people in line ministries, so that these skills can be mainstreamed and integrated into normal policy processes.

Action 4: Tap into the academic resources of Belize

Belize will explore more extensive partnerships and initiatives to put its excellent academic resources to work in expanding the skill base of the nation's public servants.

Action 5: Encourage inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral seminars to share skills and experiences

Among Belize's public servants many are highly skilled and knowledgeable on issues related to Growth and Sustainable Development generally, or in specific issue areas. Given that the size of the Government of Belize is small and offices in Belmopan are closely clustered, it is possible to organize a seminar series where skills and knowledge could be shared, both formally (scheduled capacity development events) and informally (lunch "brown bag" events). The SD Unit could initially take on this task.

Action 6: Build on Internet and Communications Technology fluency of Belize

Belize will adopt a clearer strategy of encouraging public servants to make use of online resources for capacity development, e.g. by providing incentives for pursuing online courses outside of working hours.

VIII. Monitoring and Evaluation

Institutional Approach

To support Monitoring and Evaluation, Belize needs to create a comprehensive National Statistical System. The SIB will lead the effort to develop such a system.

The process of developing and maintaining the M&E framework for the GSDS will be supported by inter-ministerial and inter-agency “Working Tables” (small work groups charged with assembling and interpreting M&E data) facilitated by the SIB with support from MED. A set of standing Working Tables will be organized under each of the CSFs, and will report upwards to the Technical Committees, who in turn report to the CEO Caucus. Each Working Table will also contribute to the development of the National Statistical System. In addition, *ad hoc* Working Tables can be formed as needed to review specific issues, and may include representatives from any relevant government agency, non-governmental organization, or academic institution.

Each standing Working Table will be chaired by a representative of the Statistical Institute of Belize. The Vice Chair will be from the Ministry that chairs the relevant Technical Committee to which that Working Table reports. The Working Table itself will be constituted of a small group of experts from relevant ministries and agencies, assembled by the Chair and Vice Chair, who are familiar with the data and can effectively interpret it in ways that are understandable to the non-specialist. The Working Tables will also keep under review the indicator framework discussed below.

In addition to the vertical links up to the Technical Committees and down through respective line ministries, the Working Tables will connect horizontally to, and coordinate with, the M&E subcommittee of the National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC), as well as the Interagency Public Safety Management Information System (IPSMIS) and others as appropriate.

Table 4. Institutional structure of the M&E framework.

CEO Caucus			
Reviews overall progress on the GSDS based on the M&E reports, makes adjustments to the GSDS as necessary.			
Technical Committees			
Oversee the process of the Working Tables, reviews the data, reports to the CEO Caucus, with recommendations.			
CSF1 Optimal national income and investment	CSF2 Enhanced social cohesion and resilience (enhanced equity)	CSF3 Sustained or improved health of natural, environmental, historical, and cultural assets	CSF4 Enhanced governance and citizen security
Working Tables			
Assemble the data for each CSF, interpret the data, and send reports to the respective Technical Committees.			
Working Table 1 Chair: SIB	Working Table 2 Chair: SIB	Working Table 3 Chair: SIB	Working Table 4 Chair: SIB

Vice Chair: Ministry of Investment, Trade & Commerce	Vice Chair: Ministry of Education	Vice Chair: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development	Vice Chair: Attorney General's Ministry
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Indicator Framework

For the monitoring and evaluation of the GSDS, Belize will continuously develop a comprehensive indicator set for monitoring outcomes at the level of the four Critical Success Factors and the associated interrelated Necessary Conditions, based on the initial draft provided in Annex 1 to the GSDS. This indicator framework will be considered a “living document” because, especially during the first planning period, the indicators will be continuously evolving. The indicator set is likely to go through two or three iterations during the first planning period. The reasons for needing to pursue this iterative development approach are:

- The expectation that the deliberative process of the Working Tables and Technical Committees will produce new insights about *what* is measurable — in terms of both data availability and measuring capacity — as well as *which* indicators are the best KPIs for the identified goals and sub-goals;
- The expectation that the finalization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 will also result in a set of guidelines or recommendations regarding standardized international measures for international reporting purposes. Belize’s indicators will need to be harmonized with the resulting UN framework, which is not expected to be operational before 2016;
- The need to allow time for Belize to develop its capacity for monitoring and evaluation activity. Belize is unlikely to be able to meet the full challenge of M&E under the GSDS in the first year or two, and as capacity advances, so will insight and data availability regarding the KPIs. The Working Tables will make recommendations to the Technical Committees regarding the capacities that should be put in place for effective monitoring and evaluation, subject to considerations of cost. This will require the analysis of information and capacity gaps, the cost of filling those gaps, and the types of proxies that can be employed if it may not be economically feasible to directly observe outcomes and impacts. The Working Tables will therefore clarify and make recommendations regarding the roles and responsibilities of ministerial and public sector agencies for primary collection of data; processing and collation of data; the conduct of surveys and assessments; the analysis of data and surveys; the dissemination of data and surveys; and analysis of data and surveys; and collaboration with international organizations and other partners in those regards; and
- The Working Tables will also provide advice to line-ministries and public sector agencies regarding critical gaps in data collection and M&E capacity with respect to lower level goals and actions that are expected to contribute to the achievement of the CSFs and the NCs. The MED in collaboration with the MPSEPU will have lead responsibility for

sensitizing, assisting and guiding line ministries and public sector organizations to develop appropriate M&E frameworks with respect to the NC to which they contribute. This will include developing an indicator framework that encompasses lower level goals and actions that contribute to achieving the NCs. However, the SIB will be required to play a critical role in generation; analyzing and disseminating data where it is deemed best for the department to directly perform or contribute toward these given its mandate, resources and expertise. In that regard, the Working Tables will also make recommendation with respect to the capacities that may be need to be put in place at the SIB to support line ministries with effective monitoring and evaluation.

Learning and Adaptation Based on M&E Feedback

It shall be the responsibility of all parties involved in the M&E process — the Working Tables, the Technical Committees, and the CEO Caucus — to make use of the M&E system for learning and reflection about whether implementation is achieving the desired results, and what types of adaptations might be needed, either in implementation or in policy. Such reflections should especially be highlighted in the reports submitted by the Technical Committees to the CEO Caucus.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of Policy Coordination

In addition to the performance indicators in the M&E framework, a set of performance indicators should also be developed for monitoring and evaluating whether the mechanisms for policy coordination described in the GSDS (including the Technical Committees, the Prioritization Framework, and the M&E framework itself) are working as expected. In addition, these indicators should provide feedback on the implementation of the Human Resource and Capacity Development Strategy. These indicators should be developed and maintained by the Ministry of Economic Development and reported directly to the CEO Caucus, at least annually.

GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
GROUND FLOOR, SIR EDNEY CAIN BUILDING, BELMOPAN CITY

PHONE NO: (501) 822-2526-2527

