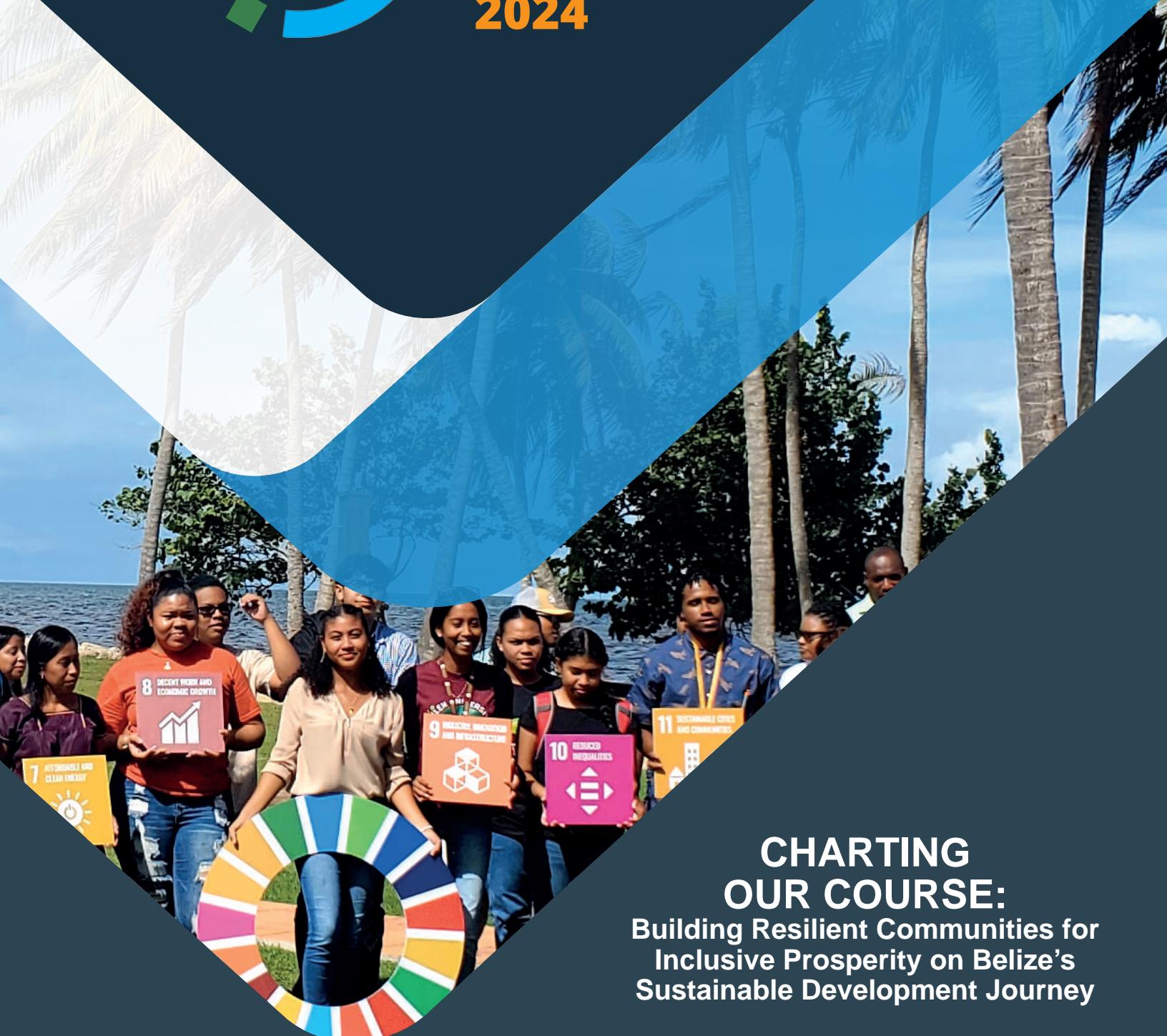




BELIZE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW 2024



**CHARTING
OUR COURSE:**
Building Resilient Communities for
Inclusive Prosperity on Belize's
Sustainable Development Journey





Belize 2024 Voluntary National Review on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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IRC Committee:

- Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change via the Sustainable Development Unit
- Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment
- Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration
- The Statistical Institute of Belize

We thank all participants in the VNR consultations, in particular consulted focal points for indigenous persons, LGBTQAI+, persons with disabilities, civil society, the private sector, international development partners, members of the international diplomatic community, academia, fellow government officials, youth and media. We would like to acknowledge Ishmael Nicholson, first place winner of the 2024 VNR theme competition with: Charting our Course: Building Resilient Communities for Inclusive Prosperity on Belize's Sustainable Development Journey. This theme was also supported by first place art winner Jayden Simpson.

The Government of Belize also recognizes the United Nations in Belize, as they provided key technical support, as well as financial support. These agencies,

funds and programmes are namely: The Office of the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRCO); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Additionally, the Government of Belize thanks international development partners the International Cooperation and Development Fund; as well as the Technical Mission of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

We acknowledge the invaluable support provided to the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change via the Sustainable Development Unit, the 2024 VNR Consultancy Team and the Delegation of the Government of Belize to the 2024 High Level Political Forum (HLPF).

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Opening Statement by the Prime Minister of Belize

It is a privilege to present the 2024 Voluntary National Review (VNR) of Belize on behalf of the people of Belize.

Belize's second VNR reflects the progress Belize has made in our journey towards sustainable development. It celebrates our national actions to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in Belize, in fulfillment of our commitment made in 2015 when, with hope and optimism, we joined the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Since 2015, we have ensured that our national development plans are aligned to the 2030 Agenda, including the current 2022-2026 #plan Belize Medium-term Development Strategy (MTDS).

The 2024 VNR highlights our achievements, identifies areas for improvement, and sets the stage for future action.

We are especially proud of the actions we have taken to integrate sustainable practices across sectors. Our ongoing investment in poverty reduction; food security; and reduced inequalities have steered us towards socio-economic resilience and social inclusivity. The milestones we have attained in the areas of renewable energy; cross-sectoral digitalisation; the promotion of greening technology; and the development of our carbon trading framework, have further supported our aim to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs during the remaining implementation timeframe for Agenda 2030.

However, we have faced challenges along the way that have slowed our pace. Belize's unique vulnerabilities as a small island and low-lying coastal developing state (SIDS) have been exacerbated by exogenous shocks and unforeseen global crises; debt and limited access to development financing; climate change; the COVID-19 pandemic and infrastructural constraints. Therefore, resilience building must continue to be at the heart of our national development agenda.

As the VNR demonstrates, the achievement of the SDGs is a whole of society undertaking. Cross-sectoral collaborations with State and non-State organisations including civil society, academia and private sector have been critical to our achievements. So has been the partnerships developed with other states, international development agencies and international financial institutions in fulfillment of the promised of SDG17.

The Belize 2024 VNR has created an opportunity for national reflection on the progress that has been made towards the achievement of the SDGs. That reflection has inspired us to reinvigorate our efforts to accelerate the achievement of the goals so that no Belizean is left behind.

Belize's commitment to sustainable development has never been more resolute.



**The Honourable
John Antonio Briceño
Prime Minister of Belize**

Message from the Minister of Sustainable Development and Climate Change

I am proud to share the Belize 2024 VNR Report.

In preparing Belize's second VNR, we used a whole-of-society approach. This approach allowed us to prepare a comprehensive report of this nature in a short period of time.

We are committed to continue to nurture the multi-stakeholder partnerships that emerged for each of the 17 SDGs in order to underpin a data driven reporting process in the future.

Despite facing significant challenges like climate change; infrastructural constraints; and unforeseen global crises, our second VNR shows promising strides in aligning our national development with the five pillars of sustainable development: People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace, and Partnership. Our approach is holistic, ensuring that every Belizean is part of this transformative journey.

We are particularly proud of the strides made in integrating sustainable practices across various sectors. Our efforts in scaling up renewable energy; advancing infrastructural developments; and promoting greening technologies, stand as testaments to our dedication. These initiatives not only address environmental sustainability but also enhance our economic resilience and social inclusivity.

The #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 is guiding our actions. It is more than a policy document—it is our commitment to reduce poverty; ensure citizen security; conserve our natural resources; and uphold good governance. This strategy ensures that the goals of sustainable development permeate every aspect of our planning and execution.

Our progress on these fronts has been bolstered by the adoption of digital technologies across government

operations. The introduction of a cross-sectoral digitalisation initiative has significantly strengthened our institutional infrastructure, enabling more efficient service delivery and improved governance.

The challenges of the last few years have taught us the importance of resilience. Our recovery from the pandemic and the rebuilding after Hurricane Lisa have redirected our resources but have also reinforced our resolve to build back better. The principle of 'Leave No One Behind' remains at the heart of our policies, planning, and actions.

As we look forward, our focus remains on strengthening partnerships and fostering collaboration across all sectors. The upcoming thematic reviews of the SDGs at the High-Level Political Forum will be a crucial point for us to share our experiences, challenges, and solutions with the global community.

I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to all stakeholders involved: government officials; international consultant; the dedicated teams within our ministries; and every workshop participant. Your hard work and commitment are the driving forces behind our achievements. The Government of Belize, under the Leadership of Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño continues to reaffirm Belize's unwavering commitment to achieving the SDGs as stated at the SDG Summit 2023, Leaders' Dialogue.

We will continue to reinforce our commitment to work together; to innovate; and to ensure that the path we are on is inclusive and sustainable. Together, we are building a resilient Belize; a Belize that stands as a beacon of sustainable development and shared prosperity.



Hon. Orlando Habet
Minister of Sustainable Development
and Climate Change

Message from the Chief Executive Officer in the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change

On behalf of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change, I have been pleased to be a part of the Belize 2024 VNR Reporting process. We have counted with a multidisciplinary team from the public and private sectors, comprising State and Non-State Actors. We thank the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) for leading the process, and acknowledge the contributions of the Inter-Institutional Review Committee (IRC) members; VNR sub-committee (state and non-state); private sector; NGOs; development partners; VNR consultants and all other stakeholders involved in developing this report and supporting our sustainable development pathway. The IRC is led chaired by The Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change, which serves as the focal point for the 2030 Agenda. As the Coordinator of the IRC, the SDU has executed this role with support and collaboration from the Policy and Planning Units of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, and Investment (MFED&I); the Ministry of Human Development, Families & Indigenous People's Affairs (MHDFIPA); the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration (MFAFT&I); and the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB).

The IRC facilitates the process for timely submission of national reports and oversees the cyclical monitoring of the implementation of recommendations on the core UN human rights treaties. This partnership structure has allowed for a well-rounded approach, incorporating both SDGs and human rights obligations, reinforcing Belize's commitment to fulfilling international responsibilities and enhancing the effectiveness of its national strategies.

The establishment of the VNR Sub-Committee of State and Non-State Actors was instrumental in capturing data and information for analysis and reporting. We are accelerating the implementation of the SDGs for a just transition for all Belizeans. We have approximately five

more years to reach to 2030. Our work continues at a brisk pace and is being aligned to the #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026, which is embedded in the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. It is also aligned to the Horizon 2030: National Development Framework for Belize 2010-2030. These frameworks have been designed to support country-wide cross-sectoral growth with the strategic objectives of poverty reduction; MSME development; citizen security; natural resource conservation/environment protection; and good governance.

Partnership with the international community and diplomatic and counsellor corps is ongoing and we continue to build these relationships. We thank the United Nations for their invaluable partnership, and their technical and financial support during the 2024 VNR. We recognize the commitment, dedication, and partnership of everyone who contributed directly or indirectly and the teamwork displayed by the SDU. We reiterate our gratitude to all stakeholders! The work will continue as we aim to advance on the 17 SDGs, which have been assessed and documented in Belize's 2024 VNR Report.



Dr. Kenrick Williams
Chief Executive Officer
Ministry of Sustainable Development
and Climate Change

Foreword by the UN Resident Coordinator for Belize and El Salvador

It is with great pride that we want to accompany Belize's presentation of the 2024 Voluntary National Review (VNR). As the first Caribbean country to present a VNR in 2017, Belize accepted the challenge to assess its advances towards the Sustainable Development Goals during its implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The VNR process is a crucial mechanism of the 2030 Agenda that allows Belize to take stock of its SDG achievements and identify areas where further efforts are needed. The report includes reviews of progress at both national and district levels. Consistent with the 2030 Agenda, the entire process was country-led and country-driven, ensuring that Belize's unique context, priorities, and challenges were fully represented.

In preparing this VNR, a whole-of-society-approach and inclusive participation was used, bringing together voices from across the spectrum of Belizean society. This included government entities; civil society organisations; the private sector; academia; youth; and other community representatives. Their insights; experiences; and aspirations have been invaluable in shaping this review. This inclusive process underscores Belize's commitment to leaving no one behind, a fundamental principle of the 2030 Agenda.

The 2024 VNR not only documents our progress but also serves as a platform for sharing Belize's experiences with the global community. Through this report, Belize highlights successes, such as advancements in access to healthcare; potable water; electricity; environmental conservation and more recently, healthy economic growth with close to full employment; partnerships for debt reduction and poverty reduction. At the same time, Belize candidly addresses the challenges encountered, including economic disparities; climate vulnerabilities; social inequalities; external shocks and impact on cost of living. By sharing these lessons learned, Belize

contributes to a collective global effort to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs.

A key aspect of the VNR process is the emphasis on improving evidence and data regarding the SDGs. This review has strengthened Belize's national capacities in data collection and analysis, enabling Belize to monitor progress with greater accuracy and detail through the Belize National Statistical Portal on SDGs that reports on SDG targets and indicators. This report assessed 85 of the 169 targets 110 of the 247 SDG indicators of the 2030 Agenda. Enhanced data systems are crucial for informed decision-making and for developing policies that target the most vulnerable in Belize.

As we move ahead, the insights gained from this VNR will guide Belize's efforts to build a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable Belize. The United Nations System remains steadfast in our commitment to accompany Belize on its journey towards achieving the SDGs; the principles of the 2030 Agenda and prosperity for all Belizeans. We continue to implement the UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNMSDCF) 2022-2026 with the UN Country Team, leveraging partnerships at all levels in alignment with the #planBelize Medium-Term Development Strategy (MTDS) 2022-2026.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Belize for its trust and commitment to the SDGs and all stakeholders and partners who contributed to this VNR, including the technical support provided by UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes and direct financial support from UNDP; UNICEF; UNFPA and FAO. Your dedication and collaboration have been instrumental in making this VNR a true reflection of Belize's journey toward sustainable development.



Raul Salazar
UN Resident Coordinator
Belize and El Salvador



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Acronyms



AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Disease
ATLIB	Association of Tertiary Level Institutions in Belize
ATMs	Automated Teller Machines
BEL	Belize Electricity Limited
BNSS	Belize National Statistical System
BSWMA	Belize Solid Waste Management Authority
CARIBCAN	Caribbean-Canada Trade Agreement
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CAEP	Climate Action Enhancement Package
CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPD	Country Programme Document
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCNM	Debt-for-Climate/Nature Mechanism
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EGDU	E-Governance and Digitalisation Unit
EUp	Education Upliftment Project
EOB	Equal Opportunities Bill
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FIES	Food Insecurity Experience Scale
FPIC	Free Prior Informed Consent
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HLPF	High-level Political Forum
ICC	International Cooperation Council
ILO	International Labour Organization
INFF	Integrated National Financial Framework
IRC	Inter-ministerial Review Committee
LEDS	Low Emissions Development Strategy
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Intersex
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies

MFED&I	Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment
MFAFT&I	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration
MHDF&IPA	Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MSDCC	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change
MSME	Micro-, Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises
MTDS	Medium-term Development Strategy
NAFP	National Agroforestry Policy
NBIO	National Biodiversity Office
NCA	National Council for Aging
NCCO	National Climate Change Office
NCDs	Non-communicable Diseases
NCCPSAP	National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan
NDAB	National Digital Agenda for Belize
NDCs	National Determined Contributions
NEET	Not in Employment Education or Training
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NPAS	National Protected Areas System
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NWC	National Women's Commission
PSIP	Public Sector Investment Programme
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDU	Sustainable Development Unit
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
ToR	Terms of Reference
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
UN	United Nations
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar(s)
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Highlights



Belize continues to advance at an accelerated pace to facilitate national development that is based on the principles of sustainable development. The strategic priorities for the Government of Belize are anchored in poverty reduction; economic transformation; trade deficit reduction; citizen security; protection of the environment and natural resources; no corruption and good governance. In compliance with the #planBelize Medium-Term Development Strategy (MTDS) 2022 – 2026, the government has committed to an integrated, systematic approach to nation-building and social protection, through a continuous investment in the national and global achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

The #planBelize Medium-term Development Strategy 2022 – 2026, is the most current strategic guide for national development planning. It is a home-grown national strategy that is embedded in Agenda 2030, reflecting a proactive role of the Government of Belize in the accelerated achievement of the SDGs. #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 complements the long-term goals of national development, including country-wide cross-sectoral growth that is informed by Horizon 2030: The National Development Framework for Belize, 2010 – 2030. The implementation of #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 is driven by the public sector ministries through strategic planning and programming, which align with the achievement of the SDGs and require systematic monitoring and evaluation to track achievement; assess performance; and maintain accountability.

A central element of #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 is its resource mobilisation programme, which has the objective of sufficient budget allocations for the implementation of ministerial plans; commitments; and priorities. The emphasis is on ensuring that the Government of Belize has the required capacities and resources to deliver on its national and global commitments, including the commitments of Belize to the international development agenda. To bridge emergent gaps in resource availability, including the

need for required expertise, #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 also supports international development cooperation and has been used to encourage investment by regional agencies and multilateral organisations. It is within this context that Belize has made notable contributions to the SDGs to accelerate the pace of national achievement. National progress towards the SDGs has occurred in parallel, however, with challenges to SDG achievement. As an illustration, while there was a significant reduction in multi-dimensional poverty between 2021 and 2023, the intensity of poverty in Belize remained relatively unchanged¹. The 2024 Belize VNR has, therefore, created another opportunity for Belize to take stock of its strategies and action plans for contributing to the SDGs, to ensure that the country stays on track to realise its national development targets and international commitments.

EXAMPLES OF PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES



Multidimensional Poverty:

2021: 36.5%

2023: 26.4%

Incidence of Poverty:

39.2% (2021)

38.4% (2023)



Proportion of the population experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity:

Severe food insecurity:

6.1% (2017/19)

6.0% (2019/21)

Moderate or severe food insecurity:

35.7% (2017/19)

45.5% (2019/21)

- National Agriculture and Food Policy 2015-2033

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births:
69 deaths (2017)
31 deaths (2023)

Malaria incidence per 1,000 population: 0.02 cases (2017)

- World Health Organisation global certification of the elimination of malaria (2023)
- Elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and Syphilis in 2023

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Proportion of students completing primary education within the prescribed time:
93.4% (2017)
96.1% (2022)

Participation rate in organised learning one year before official primary entry age:
85.6% (2017)
48.9% (2021)

5 GENDER EQUALITY



Legal frameworks for non-discrimination on the basis of sex:

- Criminal Code Chapter 101, Revised Edition 2020
- Protection against Sexual Harassment Act, Revised Edition 2020
- Belize Married Women's Property Act, Revised Edition 2020
- Revised National Gender Policy 2024 – 2030

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Degree of integrated water resources management implementation:

20% (2018)
32% (2023)

- NIWRA Revised edition 2020
- Belize Environmental Protection Act, Revised Edition 2020
- WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) initiatives





Renewable energy share in the total final energy supply:
30.4% (2017)
36% (2022)

- Belize National Sustainable Energy Policy 2012-2033

Unemployment rate:
9.3% (2017)
4% (2023)

Fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries by 100,000 workers and migrant status:

Migrants:
1,382 workers (2017)
835 workers (2020)

Non-migrants:
367 workers (2017)
214 workers (2020)

- Minimum wage increased to USD \$2.50 per hour in 2023

Passenger and freight volumes by mode of transport:



Air (individuals):
1,644,344 (2018)
1,021,857 (2023)

Air (freight):
1,910,093.25 pounds (2018)
1,098,616.38 pounds (2023)

Facilitation of the national e-governance agenda
• National Digital Agenda (2022-2025) Digital Department Act

Remittance as a proportion of amount remitted:

2.3% (2017)
1.2% (2022)



Financial soundness:
Non-performing loans (Net of Specific Provisions) to Total Gross Loans:
2.4% (2017)
3.5% (2022)

Capital adequacy ratio:
24.2% (2017)
15.1% (2022)

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Proportion of women victims of physical or sexual harassment in the previous 12 months:

Total reported cases:

139 (2020)

144 (2023)

- 250 Affordable homes built for poor women-headed households and the elderly (2023)

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



Installed capacity of power plants generating electricity from renewable energy sources per total population (watts per capita):

187.2 (2018)

182.4 (2022)

- National Environmental Policy and Strategy 2014-2024
- National Environmental Action Plan 2022-2026

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Number of deaths/missing persons/persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people:

117 families (2020)

172,000 persons (2023)

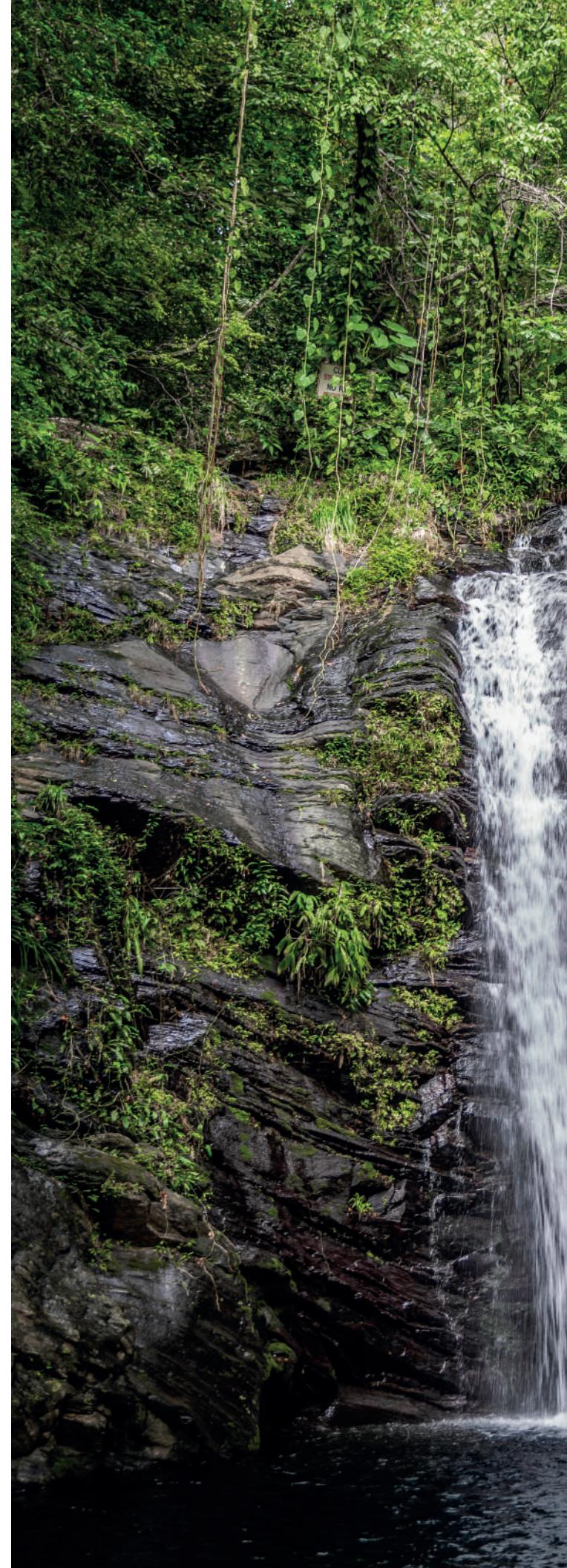
- Updated NDCs 2021
- National Climate Change Policy, Strategy, and Master Plan (2021-2025)

14 LIFE BELOW WATER



Ocean under legal protection:

- Marine/internal waters: 100%
- Total designated marine and protected areas: 20.30%
- Total designated high protection marine and internal areas: 11.65%
- All other marine and protected areas: 8.64%
- Belize Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy, and Implementation Plan 2022-2027 (BEDPS)

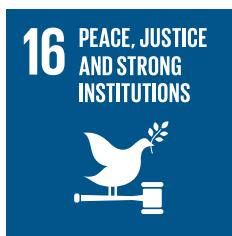




Forest area located within legally established protected areas: 54.46% (2020 – 2024)

Forest area as a percentage of total land area:
59.3% (2020)
58.31% (2023)

National Landscape Restoration Strategy for Belize 2022-2030



Reported cases of intentional homicide per 1,000 population:

Male:
117 (2019)
77 (2023)

Female:
17 (2019)
10 (2023)

- Digital Governance Act 2022
- Freedom of Information Act Revised 2020
- Public Sector Data Sharing Act 2021



Foreign direct investment/Gross domestic product:

1.1% (2017)
4.9% (2022)

Public sector debt to GDP ratio:
78.1% (2017)
71.4% (2022)

- UN Country Program Document for Belize 2022-2026
- National VNR Youth Conference 2024



THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development



The theme of the 2024 Belize Voluntary National Review (VNR) is: **Charting our Course: Building Resilient Communities for Inclusive Prosperity on Belize's Sustainable Development Journey**. It was developed by Ishmael Nicholson, a 20-year-old young man from Stann Creek District in southeast Belize. Ishmael advises that the 2024 Belize VNR theme encapsulates the commitment of Belize to sustainable development and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). As articulated, the VNR theme invites stakeholders to reflect on past achievements, current challenges and future aspirations, to foster dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and collective action. Moving forward, Belize will continue to chart its course towards sustainable development, guided by the principles of resilience, inclusivity and partnership, as it works towards achieving the SDGs and creating a better future for all.

In support of the 2024 Belize VNR theme, the artwork for the 2024 VNR was developed by 16-year-old Jayden Simpson (male).

The VNR theme and artwork were selected from entries received during a national competition for young persons, which was used to engage their views and active involvement in the contribution of Belize to Agenda 2030, including the achievement of the SDGs.

Introduction



1.1 Overview

This report presents the second Voluntary National Review (VNR) that has been conducted by Belize, following its inaugural review in 2017. As the first Caribbean country to have presented a VNR at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2017, Belize has been a pioneer in the region in terms of the knowledge; experience; and networks it gained from its HLPF experience. The 2024 Belize VNR report builds on the insights from the 2017 HLPF relative to the facilitation of Agenda 2030 at the country level, to allow Belize to continue its active contribution towards the achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

The 2024 Belize VNR is the result of an extensive consultative process that engaged stakeholders from throughout Belizean society. It has been used to showcase the milestones that have been achieved in relation to the achievement of the SDGs, to allow Belize to accelerate its contribution during the remaining timeframe for the implementation of Agenda 2030. To ensure that this process yields the intended objectives through the efficient use of available, but limited, resources, the 2024 Belize VNR also addresses the challenges that have impeded national contributions to the SDGs.

1.2 Context

Belize is a small low-lying coastal State that borders the north-eastern coast of Central America and the Caribbean archipelago. As a result of its location, the country is vulnerable to adverse climate events and natural disasters, with emphasis on tropical storms and hurricanes. There are significant implications for the economy, as the main sources of revenue for Belize are agriculture and tourism. Affordable insurance for agriculture is also required to support disaster resilience by small and medium farmers during adverse natural disasters.

The 2022 National Population and Housing Census has shown that Belize has a population of 397,483 and a

gross domestic product (GDP) of USD \$11.322 billion (BZD \$5.661 billion)². As of September 2023, the unemployment rate was 4 percent. The country has had a long-standing merchandise trade deficit that was demonstrated in 2023 by an import bill of USD \$ 1,340.95 million (BZD \$2,681.7 million) and corresponding export revenues of USD \$204.3 million (BZD \$408.6 million). Belize is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy that is based on the British parliament system. The Prime Minister of Belize is the Honourable John Briceño.

During the 2023 Belize SDG Summit, the Honourable Prime Minister of Belize acknowledged that the country has been challenged by its slow progress in implementing the SDGs. While the challenges of the country in this area have been influenced by emergent crises, in particular the COVID-19 pandemic, these challenges are also systemic/ structural. The benchmark for the 2024 Belize VNR is the 2017 VNR Report, which highlighted the commitment of the Government of Belize to Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. At the time of 2017 VNR, the national contribution to the SDGs was guided by the Belize Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy 2016 – 2019 (GSDS), which was supported by a resource mobilisation strategy that was based on revenue generation; expenditure management; improved financing; and better partnerships with the development community. The Ministry of Finance was also responsible for programme budgeting, to support and monitor the performance of key line ministries relative to their contributions to strategic national development, including the national contributions to the SDGs.

Based on an analysis of existent gaps in the economy that challenged effective national contributions to the SDGs, GSDS advocated an integrated systemic approach to the facilitation of Agenda 2030, involving sustainable development; a proactive State; the facilitation of access to global markets; and innovative social policy.

The next steps for implementation further included, *inter alia*:

1. The strengthening of institutional capacity at the level of the Ministry of Economic Development and the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change (MSDCC)³, to coordinate the national SDG agenda, including the integration of the SDGs into the work of key line ministries;
2. A movement away from a public sector-driven approach to SDG contributions by focusing on a more localised approach;
3. Improved inter- and intra- ministerial collaboration; and
4. Improved public sector technical capacities for data analysis

Source: GSDS Gap Analysis, 2020.

As a result of a change of government in 2020, the #planBelize Medium-term Development Strategy (MTDS) 2022 – 2026 was developed to guide the continued facilitation of national-level contributions to the SDGs. The #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 is an action agenda for development that is structured around six strategic priorities:

1. Poverty reduction;
2. Economic transformation;
3. Trade deficit reduction;
4. Citizen security;
5. Protection of the environment and natural resources; and
6. No corruption and good governance.

Source: #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026.

Similar to the GSDS, each strategic priority is linked to the SDGs. The MTDS is also being implemented alongside the Horizon 2030 National Development Framework, 2010 – 2030, the long-term development strategy for Belize.

1.3 New and Emerging Challenges

At the level of the United Nations country machinery, an analysis of country progress towards the achievement of the SDGs was conducted in 2022⁴. The Common Country Analysis (CCA) 2022 Update for Belize noted that Belize was below the regional average in terms of its contributions to the SDGs and ranked below 99 countries globally⁵.

Exhibit A: Key results - CCA 2022 Update for Belize

Status	SDGs
On track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation • SDG 7: Affordable and Clean energy • SDG 13: Climate action
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 4: Quality education • SDG 5: Gender equality • SDG 8: Decent work and Economic growth • SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production • SDG 15: Life on land • SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions • SDG 17: Partnerships for the SDGs
Significant challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 3: Good health and well-being • SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure • SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities
Left furthest behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 1: No poverty • SDG 2: Zero hunger • SDG 10: Reduced inequalities

Source: CCA 2022 Update for Belize

³ The former Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management

⁴ <https://belize.un.org/en/250437-common-country-analysis-2022-update-%E2%80%94-united-nations-belize>

⁵ See Exhibit A

Within the specific context of Belizean society, the 2024 VNR exercise has also highlighted societal challenges that impede national level contributions to the SDGs. Included among the key challenges that exist are, inter alia:

1. Crime and violence, including homicides, gender-based violence; violence against persons; etc.;
2. Food insecurity;
3. Limited resources (financial; human; etc.), including services for underserved social groups;
4. National vulnerability to natural disasters;
5. Persistent trade deficit;
6. Poverty; and
7. The volatility of the international trade market.

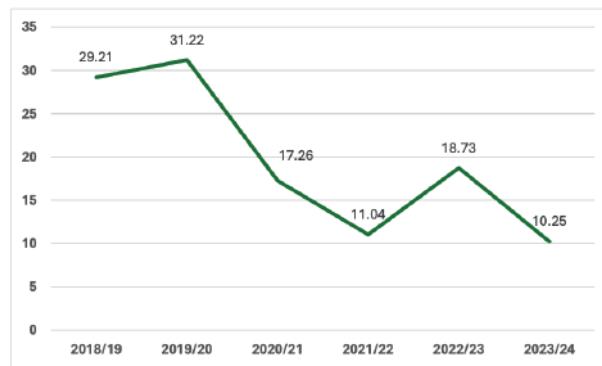
Source: Belize 2024 VNR dataset.

The facilitation of Agenda 2030 at the country level, is a resource intensive exercise. There is need for a core facility with specialised capacities to manage and coordinate the effective integration of the SDGs into the work of all public sector ministries; departments; and agencies (MDAs). These responsibilities do not end at the point of SDG integration, however, as there is an additional need for scheduled follow up; quality assurance; and stakeholder collaboration to ensure that: i) a system for the effective monitoring of SDG integration is in place; and ii) this system is supported by data validation to quality assure the contributions that are being made to the SDGs. The emphasis is on data accuracy; reliability; and completeness. There is a further need for awareness-raising among the general public about the SDGs, to afford all persons the opportunity to contribute towards the SDGs. SDU-MSDCC has been responsible for the management and coordination of these strategic actions. The Unit has been challenged, however, by a lack of institutionalisation, which has had implications for its capacity to fulfill its mandate.

As the key line ministry in which the SDU is located, MSDCC has been responsible for facilitating the SDU work portfolio. This responsibility has involved facilitating resource access for the operationalisation

of Agenda 2030 across the government sector, as well as on a national scale. From a financial resource's perspective, the contribution of MSDCC to Agenda 2030 and the achievement of the SDGs can be captured through the investment of the ministry in the PSIP⁶. The financial allocation from MSDRCC has been used to implement projects that align with several SDGs and has been provided under the Economic Services budget of the PSIP. In line with the MSDRCC thematic portfolio, the financial allocation from the ministry for the PSIP has been issued for projects in the area of environment and natural resources management. As the ministry was responsible for disaster risk management (DRM) until May 2024, the 2023/2024 financial allocation to the PSIP was also used to fund interventions in DRM.

Exhibit B: MSDCC allocation to PSIP as a proportion of economic services



Source: PSIP reports, 2018/19 to 2023/24

Actual expenditure by MSDCC, as a proportion of actual PSIP expenditure on Economic Services, was used to gauge the contribution of the ministry to the SDGs. Between 2018/19 and 2019/20, MSDCC expenditure as a percentage of the PSIP expenditure on economic services was 29.21 percent. In 2019/20, the percentage figure increased to 31.22 percent. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, there was a decline to 17.26 percent in 2020/21 and 11.04 percent in 2021/22. There was evidence of post-pandemic recovery in 2022/23, as MSDCC expenditure on the PSIP rose to 18.73 percent of the total PSIP expenditure on economic services. This was followed by a decline to 10.25 percent in 2023/24, the lowest expenditure by MSDCC on the PSIP over the five-year period 2018/19 – 2023/24, as a proportion of actual PSIP expenditure on economic services.

1.4 Policy and an Enabling Environment

The 2024 VNR exercise has shown that Belize is aware of the above challenges and is committed to their effective resolution. There is an existent political will that has provided support for an inclusive and a strategic approach to sustainable development, including the achievement of the SDGs. This level of political willingness and engagement has been visible in the support that has been provided at the level of Cabinet for the policies; strategies; and legislation that are relevant for the acceleration of national contributions to the SDGs. An example of relevant legislation that has been approved by the Belizean Cabinet is the Revised National Gender Policy 2024-2030⁷. The Government of Belize has engaged in the development and approval of several strategies; policies; action plans; and legislations that have been directly relevant to its ongoing contributions towards SDG achievement. Examples of some of the key strategic documents that have been developed at the level of the Government of Belize are presented in Appendix II. All strategic documents align directly with the #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026.

At the level of the SDU, as the coordinating unit for SDG integration and awareness-raising, the Unit has taken steps towards creating an enabling environment for stakeholders across sectors (individuals and stakeholder organisations) to support national contributions to the SDGs. This process has included reconvening the Inter-Institutional Review Committee (IRC) from the 2017 VNR and establishing the VNR Sub-Committee. Both Committees have been used to quality assure the 2024 VNR exercise. Two important actions in which SDU has also been involved have been key components of the 2024 VNR. They are: i) the 2023 VNR Data Ecosystem Assessment; and ii) the 2024 National VNR Youth Conference.

1.5 2023 Data Ecosystem in Belize Assessment

The 2023 VNR Data Ecosystem Assessment was a joint collaboration between SDU-MSDCC and the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB). Implementation activities commenced in March 2022 and the final assessment report was approved in May 2024.

As its primary objective, the data ecosystem assessment was used to evaluate the status of SDG data availability across public sector MDAs. The rationale for the exercise was the need to explore a set of key questions on data availability; accuracy; and completeness. This process was important for ensuring that the proposed VNR exercise benefitted from high quality, relevant data to gauge the progress that had been made at the country-level relative to SDG contributions. The key questions of the assessment explored the following issues:

1. Data availability and sources;
2. Availability of institutional capacities and infrastructure for data generation and results reporting at the level of each data source, including the compilation of disaggregated data; and
3. Challenges to data generation and the possibility for mitigation.

Source: Adapted from 2023 VNR Data Ecosystem Assessment report

The data ecosystem assessment has been of significance to the 2024 VNR for two main reasons. First, it underscored the need to quality assure the procedural generation of SDG data to ensure reliability. The data that was generated by each stakeholder organisation was used to assess country-level capacities for facilitating Agenda 2030, as well as the capacity for sustainable growth and development at the national level. Second, the VNR is a periodic exercise that will be used to continually assess country-level contributions to the achievement of the SDGs. The data ecosystem assessment has, therefore, established a mechanism for the monitoring; production; and validation of SDG data in future similar exercises in Belize. In the interest of data centralisation and accessibility, the data sources that were identified through the 2023 VNR Data Ecosystem Assessment were used to populate the SIB Belize National Statistical System (BNSS) portal and inform the 2024 VNR.

1.6 2024 VNR National Youth Conference

As 35 percent of the population of Belize is under the age of 18 years⁸, there is scope for the establishment of national policies and strategies to allow the young persons to reach their full potential as the changemakers of tomorrow. The focus would be on meaningful participation by young persons across sectors and at every level of development.

In collaboration with the Belize Department of Youth Services and multilateral development partners from the United Nations system (UNFPA; UNICEF), SDU-MSDCC contributed to the hosting of a National Children and Youth Conference in 2024 to engage young persons from communities across the country in the 2024 VNR. Anchored on the Convention on the rights of the Child (CRC), the goal of the conference was two-fold. Young persons in Belize were given the opportunity to learn about Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, including its evolution from the Millennium Development Goals. They also received support and encouragement to share their views on the importance/relevance of the SDGs from a youth perspective, and identify the areas in which they were best-positioned to contribute towards SDG achievement. During this exercise, the young persons also received guidance to highlight best practices for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, as well as identify their critical role in contributing towards sustainable development in Belize collectively and as individuals for generations to come.

A UPoll survey of young persons during conference preparation indicated that many of them had limited or no knowledge of the SDGs. The VNR National Youth Conference created an opportunity for the young persons to gain new learnings on the global development agenda, and its applicability to the Belize context. Stakeholder agencies that function under the youth portfolio in Belize also viewed the conference as a starting point for future similar engagements with young persons on the SDGs.

Significantly, the conference can be used as a model for the engagement of other stakeholder groups in Belize that are underrepresented in social decision-making processes. The 2024 VNR Youth Conference was an

example of inclusivity that built on the Agenda 2030 principle of leaving no one behind. It was a reflection of the national vision to embrace the priority areas of: young persons (including children); women; persons with disabilities; older persons; members of the LGBTQI community; indigenous persons; and all other underserved social groups.

In addition to the new learnings and networks that the young persons gained, key outcomes of the conference were: i) the development of the VNR theme and artwork, by the young persons; and ii) the establishment of a youth-led action plan on the SDGs and the 2024 VNR. During the conference plenary, the young persons issued a joint statement to underscore their commitment to the SDGs and their intention to advocate for the development of a National Youth Policy.

The young persons indicated that they:

1. Recognise the importance of partnerships;
2. Should be included in VNR processes;
3. Want to create a Belize that is educated, skilled, equal, free from poverty and secure for all;
4. Support a holistic and inclusive approach to curriculum reform for the future job market;
5. Aspire to enjoy peaceful lives with dignity, equality, and justice;
6. Want to protect the country's natural resources for future generations;
7. Commit to meet at regularly scheduled times to finalise the National Youth Policy; monitor their progress in meeting the established targets; and continuous capacity building around the SDGs.

Source: VNR Process Youth Action Plan.

The young persons further emphasised that the VNR Youth Conference served several pivotal purposes, all rooted in the broader CRC and 2030 Agenda. It provided a platform for children and young people to engage actively with the SDGs and provided a platform for amplifying their voices. This conference aimed to ensure that their voices, perspectives, concerns and innovative ideas were incorporated into the national assessment of progress towards achieving these goals.

SDG 1 was a key priority. The children and young people highlighted the need to accelerate the Leave no one Behind (LNOB) agenda to bridge residual inequalities within the social sector, especially for rural, vulnerable and marginalised groups. They underscored disparities in access to quality education, citing factors such as socioeconomic status, geographical location. Young people called for economic diversification, investment in the relevant support structures to enhance their ability to engage meaningfully in improved agricultural technology, upskilling their capacity for economic empowerment and self-sustainability.

SDG 4 was pivotal to the discourse. Children and young people recognised the advances and gains made so far, with specific mention of curriculum reform to ensure alignment with current challenges and emerging trends, including climate change, thereby equipping them with relevant knowledge, skills and competencies for the evolving market. The young people highlighted the need to accelerate the LNOB agenda to bridge residual inequalities within the educational landscape, especially for rural, vulnerable and marginalized groups. They identified disparities in access to quality education, citing factors such as socioeconomic status, geographical location, and infrastructural inadequacies as barriers to equitable learning opportunities. Specific emphasis was placed on appropriate school infrastructure and opportunities for children with disabilities and special needs. A strong call was made for strengthening and expanding vocational training opportunities within the educational system, emphasizing the importance of integrating practical skills development, life skills, and trade education into the curriculum to better prepare young persons for the workforce and foster entrepreneurship.

SDG 3 emerged as another key priority area. Children and young people highlighted the need to enhance the provision of essential health services, with specific mention of proper nutritional practices to mitigate non-communicable diseases, which is a major threat to the well-being of young people. They accepted that social norms create stigma around mental health and sexual reproductive health, which limit their access to skilled and quality healthcare. Expanding access to healthcare

facilities and outreach programs, improving mental health support in rural areas of Belize, and the deployment of relevant human resources and outreach programs were some of the key solutions proffered to ensure that children and young people can live a healthy, productive and meaningful life.

The VNR Children and Youth Conference, the first of its kind in Belize is a clear demonstration of the importance being placed on civic engagement and dialogue, with young people being recognised as both the present and the future, and therefore intrinsic to Belize's national development agenda. This includes the aspiration towards a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous future for all its citizens, in alignment with the 2030 Agenda, the #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 and the CRC.





VNR YOUTH CONFERENCE

VNR REPORTING PROCESS

MEANINGFUL
INCLUSION OF YOUTH
IN THE VNR PROCESS



SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS



UNITED NATIONS
BELIZE



Methodology and Process for VNR Preparation



2.1 Overview

The 2024 VNR exercise was used to assess all 17 SDG goals. At the level of targets and indicators, the VNR focused on those that are contextually relevant to the situation of sustainable growth and development in Belize. Out of an aggregate 169 SDG targets and 247 indicators, the 2024 Belize VNR assessed 85 targets and 110 indicators. This shows that Belize assessed 50.29 percent of the SDG targets and 44.53 percent of the indicators. At the level of the indicators that were assessed, data to facilitate a comparative analysis was available for approximately 33 percent of the indicators and was partially available for 11 percent of the indicators. As there are some indicators that address the same issue, in the interest of minimising repetition, the report narrative has amalgamated the discussion on the issue of focus under the most appropriate SDG target.

The data on the SDGs that were assessed for the 2024 Belize VNR are primarily available on the SIB BNSS portal under each SDG target. Supporting data was accessed through the desk review of relevant documents and the literature, as well as directly from VNR stakeholder organisations.

2.2 Technical Approach

2.2.1 Whole-of-society approach

The Belize 2024 VNR was developed using a whole-of-society approach¹⁰ that was inclusive and participatory, and was supported by utilisation-focused principles; mixed methods; and purposive sampling. A whole-of-society approach 'prioritises public interests over private interests in the public sector.'¹¹ It draws on the principle that the interface between social actors and public officials should be ethical, as it informs the public agenda to benefit all members of society.¹² To facilitate the whole-of-society approach, therefore, the 2024 VNR targeted stakeholder entities from across sectors, including the public, private and third sectors;

parastatal agencies; academia; and multilateral organisations that are active in Belize.

In line with the engagement of State and non-State organisations, including organisations that work at the national and sub-national levels, the whole-of-society approach created an opportunity for all categories of VNR stakeholders in Belize to share their views on SDG achievement, as well as the 2024 VNR exercise. The approach was further used to encourage the ownership of the Belize 2024 VNR by its key stakeholders, which has increased the potential for the uptake of the recommendations; good practices; and lessons learned that have emerged from the exercise.

2.2.2 Inclusive participation

As the operationalisation of Agenda 2030 in Belize involves multiple partnerships across sectors and institutions¹³, it has been important for the 2024 VNR to reflect the diversity of these collaborations. An inclusive participatory approach was used to facilitate this objective, to ensure that the VNR was pragmatic as well as ethical.

Within the VNR context, inclusive participation involves empowering stakeholders from vulnerable and underserved social groups to share their views on the SDGs, as well as contribute towards SDG achievement¹⁴. The approach draws on the rationale that the stakeholders from these groups do not usually have an equal opportunity to participate in decision-making on issues that concern them¹⁵. As the focus is on facilitating the basic right of all VNR stakeholders to participate in the exercise, the 2024 Belize VNR complied with the people-centred directive of Agenda 2030, without compromising the need for a VNR approach that is citizen-centred¹⁶, and has aligned with the LNOB principle of Agenda 2030.

⁹ https://app.sib.org.bz:8443/ords/f?p=134:52:6304070695566::52,RIR:P52_FRAMEWORK,P43_FRAMEWORK_ID:21,21

¹⁰ OECD (2020), OECD Public Integrity Handbook, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ac8ed8e8-en>.

^{11 & 12} ibid

¹³ <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/en/plans/horizon-2030-national-development-framework-belize>

2.2.3 Utilisation-focused principles

Utilisation-focused principles were incorporated into the Belize 2024 VNR to ensure that it was conducted for and by its main stakeholders. As part of the whole-of-society approach, it has been critical for the VNR to reflect the contribution of State and non-State organisations to the SDGs. As utilisation-focused principles increase the likelihood for the uptake of processes and emergent results, they were used to complement the inclusive participatory approach to the 2024 VNR. The aim has been to inform strategic planning and policy development at the country level, to support the national contribution to the SDGs.

2.2.4 Mixed-methods

As an advancement over the 2017 Belize VNR, which was based on a qualitative approach, the 2024 VNR was conducted using mixed methods. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was used to generate the type of data that were needed to provide a detailed overview of the national contribution to the SDGs.

Data generation engaged primary and secondary sources and involved a desk review of relevant documents and the literature, as well as quantitative datasets; key informant interviews; focus group discussions; and an electronic survey. Data analysis also aligned with the type of data that were generated, to produce a qualitative synopsis of SDG contributions under the five pillars of sustainable development, including case studies of achievements and challenges, and a quantitative breakdown of results against the SDG targets and indicators.

2.2.5 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling that was based on a sequential approach was used to structure the 2024 VNR around the main areas of enquiry, with a focus on country-level progress towards SDG achievement. The purposive sampling approach is used to engage stakeholders that are best suited to provide sufficiently detailed and accurate results to the focal questions of the enquiry.¹⁸

Purposive sampling that is based on a sequential approach further allows for additional data generation

at any stage of an enquiry, to support data completeness and accuracy, as well as results reliability. The application of a purposive sampling during the 2024 VNR ensured that data generation responded to data availability and the diversity that existed across stakeholder organisations and documents.

2.3 Scope

The 2024 Belize VNR was conducted from January to June 2024. As the second VNR by the Government of Belize, the 2024 VNR was used to build on the preceding review, the 2017 Belize VNR. The scope of the 2024 VNR focused, therefore, on country-level contributions to the SDGs over the period 2017/ 2018 to 2023/ 2024. In the absence of data on the 2017/2018 baseline, the year 2015 or 2020/2021 was used as a proxy.

2.4 Stakeholder engagement

Seven distinct activities were used to engage VNR stakeholders from State and non-State organisations. These stakeholders included women; men; and young persons from across sectors. Thirty-four (34) of these stakeholders completed an optional electronic survey, and a National Children and Youth Conference was used to engage the young persons in April 2024. With the exception of the electronic survey, which was administered through a virtual platform, the stakeholder consultations were conducted in person or involved a hybrid format. A breakdown of stakeholder engagement is presented in Exhibit 1, and a list of the stakeholder organisations that were engaged during the 2024 VNR exercise is presented in Appendix I.



14 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23216Together_2030__Position_Paper__HLPF_2019.pdf
15 https://www.iisd.org/system/files/publications/economics_participatory_approaches.pdf

16 <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda para.74>

17 Patton, M., 2008. Utilisation-focused Evaluation. Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage publications.

18 Bryman, A., 2012. Social Research Methods. 4th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Exhibit 1: Stakeholder engagement by activity, 2024 VNR¹⁹

Activity	VNR 2024 Stakeholders	
	Women / Young women	Men/ Young men
1. Inaugural VNR Sub-Committee Meeting	27	22
2. National Validation Workshop: The National SDG Ecosystem Report and Development of the VNR Stakeholder Plan	38	31
3. National Stakeholder Consultation Workshop	28	24
4. National Children and Youth Conference	52	44
5. Key informant interviews	4	5
6. Focus group discussions	91	100
7. Electronic survey	34 stakeholders ²⁰	

2.5 Quality assurance

To ensure that the 2024 Belize VNR complied with the quality standards of the Government of Belize and the HLPF on Sustainable Development, two committees were established to facilitate quality reporting and timely report submission. As the Unit that is responsible for encouraging and coordinating the integration of Agenda 2030 into the national frameworks, the SDU established an ad hoc inter-institutional review committee (IRC) to provide strategic guidance for the development and validation of the 2024 VNR report.

The IRC was reconvened for the 2024 VNR and comprises representatives from six VNR stakeholder organisations including the SDU. A VNR Sub-Committee was also established to support the coordination and facilitation of data generation and stakeholder engagement, in close collaboration with the VNR consultants and the IRC. The VNR Sub-Committee comprises 17 representatives from State organisations and 17 representatives from non-State organisations.²¹ By delegating responsibility for quality assurance to the IRC and the VNR Sub-Committee, the Government of Belize demonstrated a commitment to a whole-of-

government approach, as a complement to the whole-of-society approach to the 2024 VNR.

2.6 Limitations

There were two main limitations to the 2024 VNR exercise:

1. the non-response of some stakeholders to requests for consultation; and
2. the unavailability of updated data on the contribution of Belize to the SDGs for some SDG targets.

Stakeholder engagement by focus group discussions, in particular, was lower than anticipated as a result of absenteeism. To mitigate this limitation, the VNR consultancy team conducted in-depth discussions with the stakeholders who were present for the scheduled discussions and conducted an in-depth review of relevant documents and the literature.

The unavailability of updated data on several SDG indicators, including data that would have allowed for a time series analysis, was a challenge to conclusive decision-making on country-level progress towards the SDGs. As a mitigation measure, the VNR exercise was used to analyse the available data and incorporate the use of proxies, where possible. Descriptive examples of good practices and challenges were also used to highlight the realities of the national investment in and contribution to the SDGs.

¹⁹ As individual stakeholders were engaged in more than one VNR activity, the purpose of the table is to provide an overview of stakeholder engagement by activity, as opposed to the number of stakeholders who were consulted during the VNR.

²⁰ Gender disaggregation not available

²¹ The membership of the IRC and the VNR Sub-Committee is outlined in Appendix III.



Progress on Goals and Targets



PEOPLE



3.1 Pillar 1: People

3.1.1 Context

Agenda 2030 has been structured around a people-centred thematic, to ensure that post-millennium growth and development reaches the core of society, each individual, to fuel sustainable transformative inclusive development. In taking up the mantle that is enshrined in Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Government of Belize has underscored its commitment to its peoples for the continued progressive evolution of the Belizean nation.

The SDG People Pillar is designed to facilitate built individual capacities to empower each target beneficiary to actively contribute to decision-making processes that enhance their surroundings, communities and country. While there are constraints and challenges along this development pathway, country-level contributions to the People Pillar give voice to the less heard segments of the population, to ensure that they also have a say in resolving the situational challenges they face.

3.1.2 Progress

3.1.2.1 SDG 1: No Poverty

Target 1A Ensure significant mobilisation of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions

As a contribution to the priority areas of the national medium- and long-term development strategies, which both align with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, the Government of Belize has invested consistently in reduced poverty on a national scale. The government has used the Public Sector Investment Plan (PSIP) to invest strategically in the allocation of financial resources under its Capital II development plan (Cap II)

and Capital III development plan (Cap III). Cap II and Cap III comprise development financing that has been mobilised by the Government of Belize from various sources, primarily from loans; grants; and counterpart funding, to fund public sector interventions in four areas: infrastructure; economic services; social protection and public administration.²²

Within the context of its poverty reduction objective, the financial allocation for social protection under the PSIP was in the range of 15.28 percent to 17.2 percent of the total PSIP budget over the period 2018 to 2023. The corresponding budget for social protection was between USD \$107 million and USD \$134 million (see Exhibit 2).

Social protection can be generally defined as '...the set of public measures that a society provides for its members to protect them against economic and social distress that would be caused by the absence or a substantial reduction of income from work as a result of various contingencies (sickness, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, invalidity, old age, and death of the breadwinner); the provision of health care; and, the provision of benefits for families with children'.²³ As a result, there has been an inextricable link between social protection; poverty reduction; and the PSIP, within the Belizean context. This link is visible in the combined allocation for poverty and social protection within the PSIP, which has been categorised under Social Protection by the Government of Belize (see Exhibit 2).

During 2017 – 2024, the Government of Belize invested in social protection benefits for all persons, including a specific initiative for poor and vulnerable persons (see Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 2: PSIP budget by sector, 2018/19 – 2023/24, USD

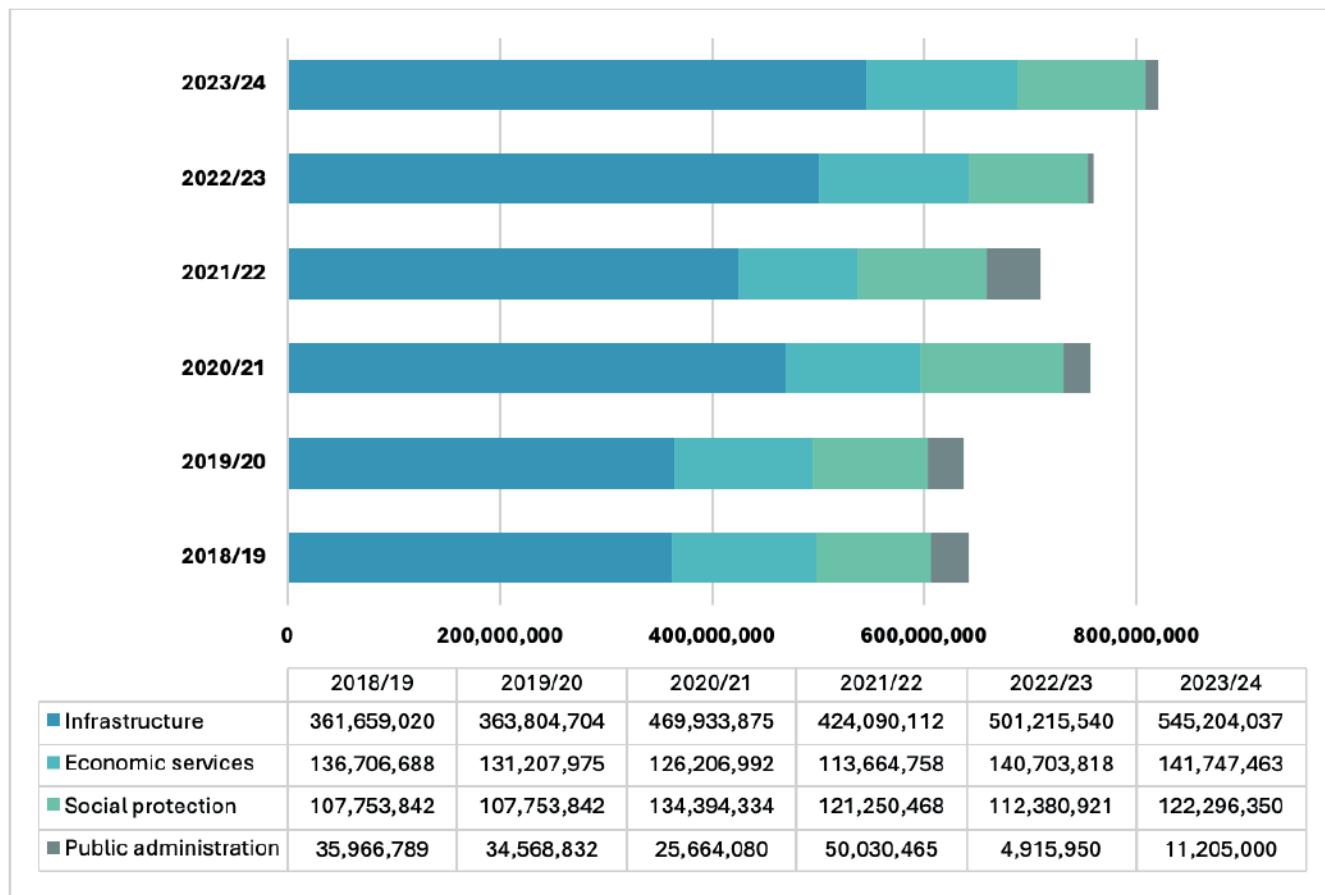


Exhibit 3: Examples of resource mobilisation for social protection, 2017 – 2024

Intervention	Timeframe	Allocation USD \$
1. Economic Empowerment/ Education/ Health-/ Social Protection	Sep 2017 – Dec 2024	\$ 10 million
2. Equal rights to economic resources	Jul 2021 – Dec 2024	\$5.031 million
3. Resilience of the poor and vulnerable & Social Protection	Mar 2022 – Dec 2023	\$1.29 million
4. Social protection	Nov 2022 – Mar 2023	\$0.276 million

Source: Ministry of Economic Development²⁴

23 ILO, 2000. World Labour Report: Income Security and Social Protection in a Changing World. Geneva: ILO.

24 Also available on SIB BNSS portal
https://app.sib.org.bz:8443/ords/f?p=134:43:9408098803679::43:P43_FRAMEWORK_ID,P43_INDICATOR_ID:21,1763#disagdata

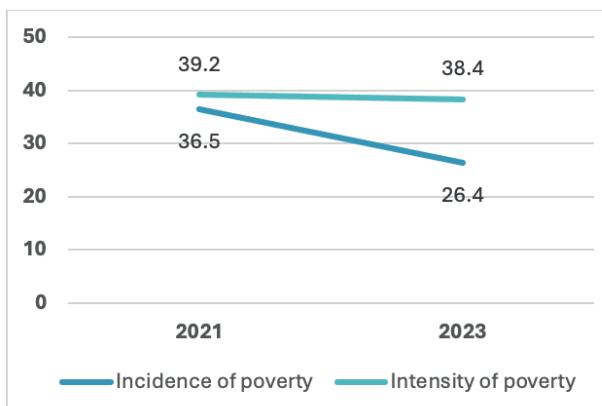
Target 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

As of 2023, Belize experienced a reduction in its multidimensional poverty index (MPI). The MPI provides an overview of the incidence and intensity of poverty, while measuring levels of deprivation across identified dimensions (i.e. factors that contribute towards the situation of poverty at the individual household level). These dimensions include, but are not limited to, health status; level of education; and employment status. To distinguish between the incidence and intensity of poverty, the incidence of poverty refers to the proportion of households that are (or individuals who are) multidimensionally poor within a given population. Conversely, the intensity of poverty refers to average deprivation levels among poor persons.

While the MPI for 2021 was 0.143, it fell to 0.101 in 2023.²⁵ Notable reductions were observed in deprivations related to the level of underemployment; food insecurity; use of unsafe cooking fuels; and unemployment. It is of interest, that while there was a reduction in the incidence of poverty in Belize, from 36.5 percent in 2021 to 26.4 percent in 2023, the intensity of poverty experienced negligible change, in the form of a decline from 39.2 percent in 2021 to 38.4 percent in 2023 (see Exhibit 4).

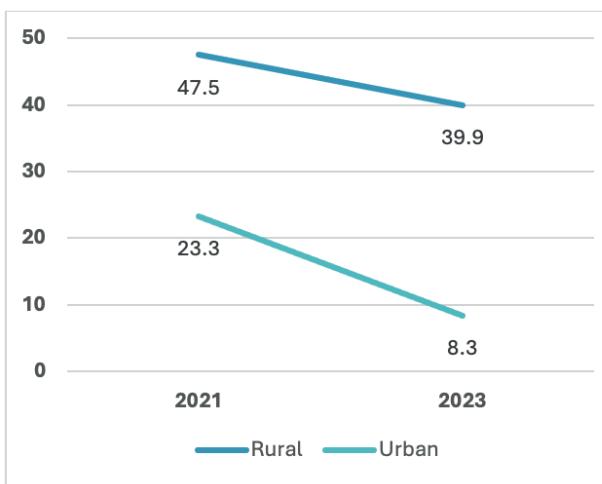
In terms of the rural urban divide, the incidence of poverty was higher in the rural districts of the country, as opposed to the urban districts in 2021 and 2023 (see Exhibit 5). The data shows that there is a huge divide between the urban and rural incidence of multidimensional poverty, as the people who lived in rural areas in 2021 and 2023 were multidimensionally poorer than those who lived in urban areas (47.5 percent compared to 23.3 percent in 2021, and 39.9 percent compared to 8.3 percent in 2023, respectively). The distinction between incidence and intensity is important as it shows that poverty continues to challenge social development in communities across Belize.

Exhibit 4: Incidence vs Intensity of poverty in Belize, 2021 - 2023



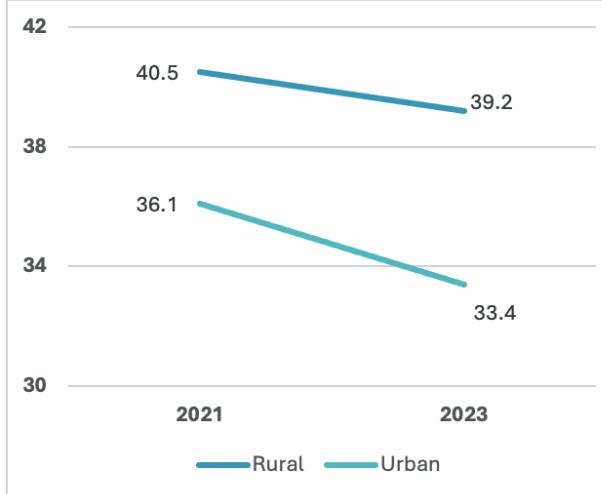
Source: SIB BNSS

Exhibit 5: Rural vs Urban incidence of multidimensional poverty in Belize, 2021 – 2023 (%)



Source: SIB BNSS

Exhibit 6: Rural vs Urban intensity of multidimensional poverty in Belize, 2021 – 2023 (%)



Source: Statistical institute of Belize

Target 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

In support of the implementation of the medium- and long-term national development strategies, as well as the facilitation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,²⁶ Belize has been responsive to the need to ensure social protection for all. From as early as 2016, the Government of Belize has been engaging in multi-lateral collaborations to review and refine its approach to social protection based on the recognition that it is a basic human entitlement. It is within this context that the Government of Belize has committed to developing a National Social Protection Strategy and establishing a supporting social protection floor.

From a vulnerability standpoint, lower income households and persons who are unable to work serve to benefit significantly from social protection. As an effective social protection system would provide access to essential facilities, such as financial support and cost-free or subsidised social services, vulnerable persons would be able to maintain a socially acceptable standard of living. The reference to vulnerable persons, and the concept of individual vulnerability, aligns with the definition of social protection that has been advanced by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).²⁷ As of 2021, however, only a small percentage of persons with disabilities were covered by the social protection system in Belize. (see Exhibit 7).



Exhibit 7: Categories of persons in receipt of social protection benefits, 2021

Category of persons	Proportion in receipt of social protection benefits (%)
1. Older persons (aged 60 years and over) receiving pension	37.5
2. Proportion of population ²⁸ contributing to the pension system	57.7
3. Persons with severe disabilities receiving benefits	10.7
4. Women giving birth covered by maternity benefits	15.4
5. Persons covered in the event of work injury	57.7

Source: International Labour Organisation²⁹

The question that emerges is whether there is a general awareness by persons with disabilities of their eligibility for social protection benefits or whether only a small proportion of persons with disabilities were capable of submitting an application for social protection benefits. In general, the situation merits further exploration to ensure that all eligible persons receive the benefits to which they are entitled.

On February 29, 2024, the Belizean Cabinet also approved changes to the Social Security regulations to ensure that widows and widowers are treated equally during applications for survivor's and death benefits. As a result of these amendments, the spouses of insured individuals will be assessed based on the same eligibility criteria for benefits, irrespective of their gender.

The basic rules on who qualifies as a beneficiary remain unchanged. The beneficiary of an insured woman must be a man with whom she has resided as his wife and the beneficiary of an insured man must be a woman with whom he has lived as husband. Prior to the amendments, however, women had four different ways in which they qualified for a widow's pension (as survivor's benefits), whereas men only had one way in which they could have qualified for a widower's pension. In relation to death benefits, there were four scenarios in which a woman could have qualified for a

²⁶ <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

²⁷ See Target 1.A

²⁸ The working-age population

²⁹ Also available on the SIB BNSS portal https://app.sib.org.bz:8443/ords/f?p=134:43:15293442057142::43,RIR:P43_INDICATOR_ID,P43_FRAMEWORK_ID:1771,21

widow's death benefit, while there was only one qualifying scenario for a man.³⁰ The Cabinet-approved amendments have rectified the imbalance in the criteria that have been used to determine eligibility for both categories of benefits. The changes represent a significant move towards gender equality in Social Security benefits and fair treatment under the law.

Target 1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance

The results of the recent Belize National Population and Housing Survey have shown that some persons in Belize live in households that do not have access to the basic facilities that are required for a socially acceptable standard of living. These facilities include electricity and potable water. In 2018, 289 households across five districts did not have access to a supply of electricity.³¹ By 2021, this figure had increased to 813 households, before falling to 687 households in 2022.³² Based on the results of the 2022 National Population and Housing Survey, 86.5 percent of households had access to electricity from the main supplier of electricity in Belize (Belize Electricity Limited) and 8.2 percent of households had access to electricity from another source. As of 2022, 92.1 percent of households also had access to an improved source of drinking water. This figure reflected an increase from 91.9 percent of households that had access to an improved source of drinking water in 2018.

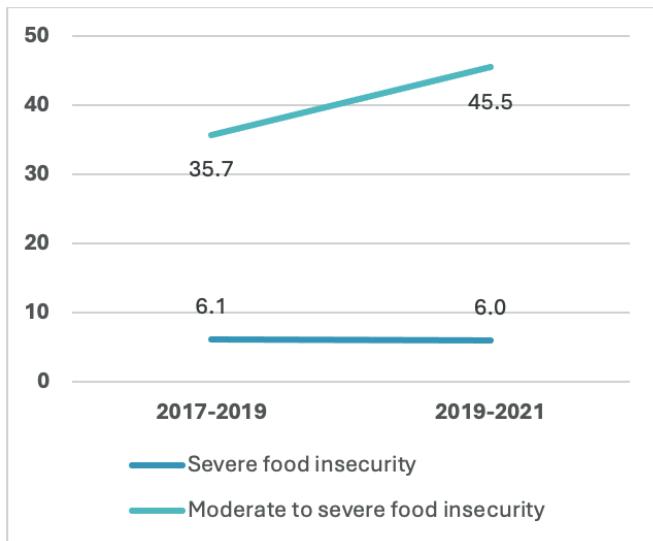
3.1.2.2 SDG 2: Zero Hunger

Target 2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round

Using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) to measure the extent to which basic food needs were met, 6.0 percent of persons in Belize were identified as experiencing severe food insecurity in 2021 (see Exhibit 8). Persons who were documented as experiencing

moderate to severe food insecurity amounted to 45.5 percent of the population in 2021.

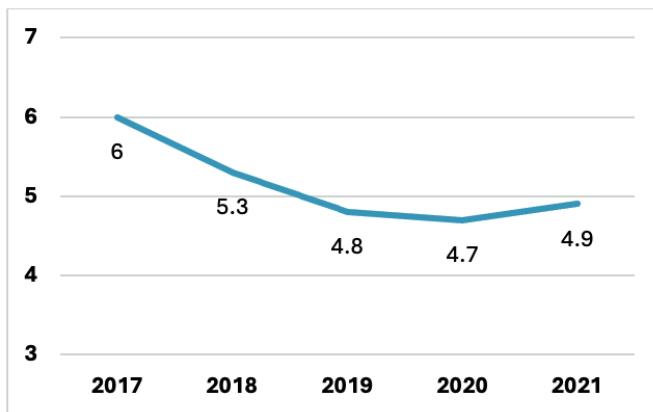
Exhibit 8: Extent of food insecurity, 2017 – 2021



Source: SIB BNSS and FIESS Analysis Report, 2021

There was a steady decline in the prevalence of undernourishment within the population. In 2017, 6 percent of the population was documented as being undernourished. By 2020, this figure had fallen to 4.7 percent. There was a marginal increase in undernourishment among the population in 2021, however, as illustrated by the increase in the prevalence of undernourishment to 4.9 percent (see Exhibit 9).

Exhibit 9: Prevalence of undernourishment, 2017 – 2021 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

³⁰ <https://www.pressoffice.gov.bz/cabinet-brief-89/>

³¹ Data unavailable for Orange Walk district

³² Statistical Institute of Belize, Abstract of Statistics, 2022. Data unavailable for Cayo district in 2022

The situation of food insecurity in Belize can be used to further operationalise the National Agriculture and Food Policy of Belize 2015 – 2030. As the Government of Belize has also committed to developing a Food System Transformation Pathway, the statistics on food insecurity can be used to inform its completion.³³ The National Food System Transformation Pathway was developed through a collaboration between the Government of Belize and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to produce a Food System Profile for Belize. The establishment of the Food System Profile was supported by the European Union and the French Agriculture Research for Development. As it was established to support the sustainable and inclusive transformation of food systems in Belize, it was used to inform the Food System Transformation Pathway.

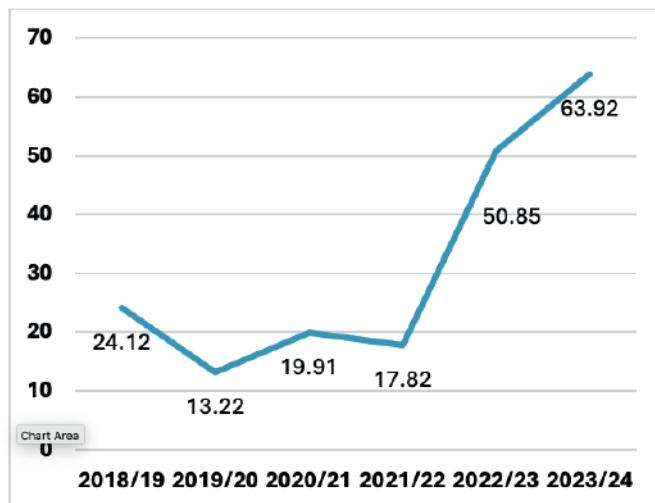
Target 2.A Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries

At the level of the PSIP, the Government of Belize has initiated a similar strategic investment in reduced hunger that complements its investment in poverty reduction. The primary focus has been on building capacities within the agricultural sector to support food security; country-level sufficiency; and economic growth. This approach has involved incorporating new technologies to improve the performance and yield in agriculture. It has also been informed by the need for underserved and/or vulnerable groups (e.g, migrants and refugees and the host communities) to be able to be accounted for in the PSIP budget, to have access to manageable financial resources, including grants and low interest loans.

The financial allocation for agriculture is subsumed under the PSIP budget for economic services. At 16 to 24 percent of the PSIP budget, the financial allocation for economic services accounts for the second highest proportion of the PSIP. During 2018/19 and 2023/24, the financial allocation for economic services was in

the range of USD \$114 million to USD \$141 million (see Exhibit 2). The financial allocation for agriculture ranged from USD \$17 million to USD \$90 million between 2018/19 and 2023/24, and accounted for 13 to 50 percent of the PSIP budget for Economic Services (see Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10: Agriculture as a proportion of Economic Services, PSIP 2018/19 – 2023/24 (%)



Source: PSIP reports, 2018/19 to 2023/24

The decline in the financial allocation for agriculture in 2019/20 and 2021/22 was offset by the consistent increase in the allocated amounts during the other years. Notably, the PSIP allocation for agriculture increased by more than 60 percent between 2021/22 and 2022/23, which coincided with the post-COVID-19 recovery period. There was a similar increase (62 percent) in the proportion of the PSIP budget that was allocated to agriculture in 2018/19 (24.12 percent of the budget for economic services) and in 2023/24 (63.92 percent of the budget for economic services).

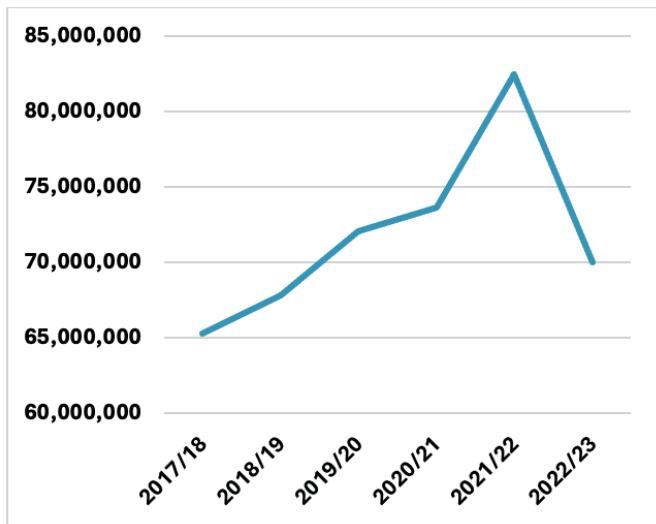
The upward trend in financial allocations for agriculture was reflected in the official flows (financial allocations) by the Government of Belize to agricultural projects during 2018 – 2021, to fund specific interventions to reduce hunger nationally. In 2022, this funding amounted to USD \$62.92 million, for interventions in four thematic areas: the eradication of hunger; food security; improved nutrition; and sustainable agriculture (see Appendix V: Target 2.A).

³³ https://www.unfoodsystemslibrary.org/docs/unfoodsystemslibraries-national-pathways/belize-pathway-19-06-2023.pdf?sfvrsn=f268a8ce_1

3.1.2.3 SDG 3: Good health and well-being

A central element of the #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 has been its emphasis on promoting good health, to create and sustain a healthy population, as a central element for the achievement of the six MTDS strategic objectives. Between 2017/18 and 2021/22, therefore, the annual budget for health increased steadily, to support health sector contributions to strategic national development (see Exhibit 11). In 2021/ 2022, for example, the budget for health increased by 20.8 percent, from approximately USD \$65 million in 2017/18 to USD \$82 million.³⁴

Exhibit 11: Recurrent expenditure for health, 2017/18 – 2022/23 (\$USD)



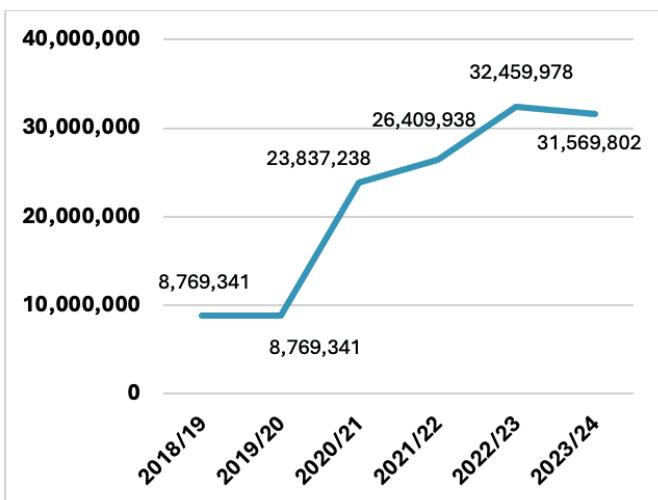
Source: Annual Estimates of Expenditure, Central Bank of Belize

At the level of the PSIP, the financial allocation for health sector projects was provided under the social protection budget from 2018/ 2019 to 2021/2022. As of 2022/2023, the social protection budget has been renamed as the social services budget. The social protection-social services budget aligns directly with the medium- and long-term development strategies for Belize, which prioritise good health and well-being as a fundamental human right within the Belizean context.

Between 2018/ 2019 and 2022/23, there was a steady increase in the financial allocation for health sector projects under the PSIP. The available funding from the PSIP budget for health sector projects during this timeframe ranged from USD \$8.76 million to USD

\$32.45 million and experienced a marginal decline to USD \$31.56 million in 2023/24 (see Exhibit 12). In addition to targeted funding to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, PSIP funding was allocated to address interventions in the areas of maternal and child mortality; respiratory epidemics; and non-communicable diseases, inter alia.

Exhibit 12: PSIP allocation for health, 2018/19 – 2023/24 (\$USD)

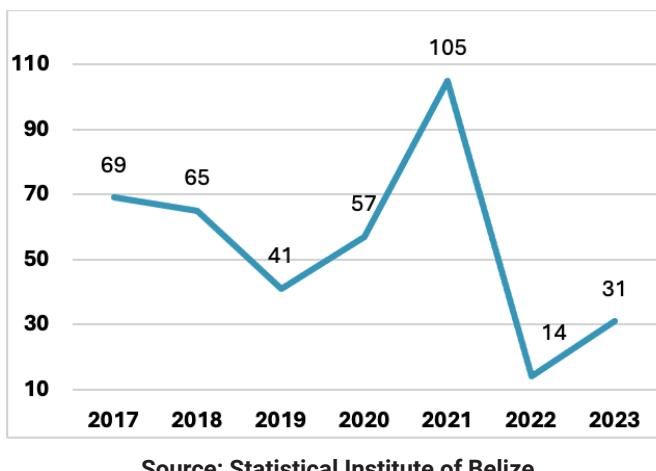


Source: PSIP reports, 2018/19 to 2023/24

Target 3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births

There was significant fluctuation in the maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births in Belize during 2017 – 2023 (see Exhibit 13). Although there was a reduction from 69 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2017 to 41 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019, the maternal mortality ratio increased steadily and peaked at 105 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2021. There was a significant reduction between 2021 and 2022, however, when an unusually low number of deaths were reported in 2022. The maternal mortality ratio fell from 105 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2021 to 14 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2022. As of 2023, the maternal mortality ratio had increased to 31 deaths per 100,000 live births.

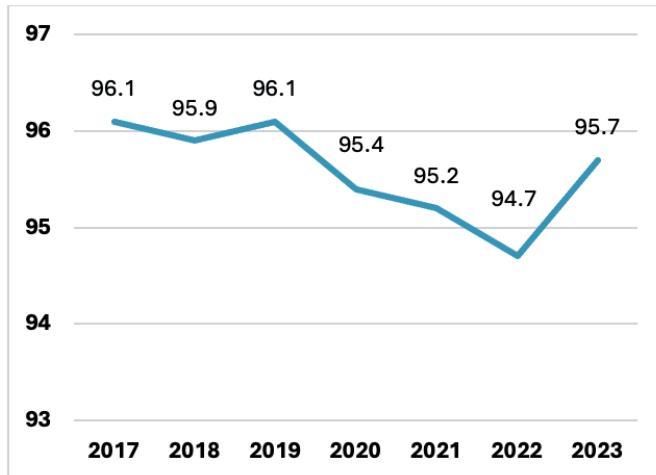
Exhibit 13: Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births, 2017 - 2023



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

While there was an increase in the maternal mortality ratio, it is of importance that a high percentage of births were attended by skilled health personnel between 2017 and 2023 (see Exhibit 14).

Exhibit 14: Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel, 2017- 2023 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

There was a slight decline in the proportion of births that were attended by skilled health personnel between 2017 and 2018, as well as between 2019 and 2022. In spite of the reduction, a high proportion of births were attended by skilled health personnel throughout 2017 – 2023.

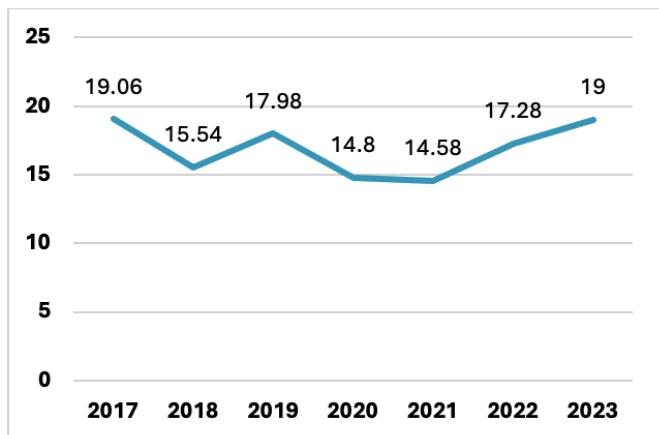
This figure remained relatively constant between 2018 and 2023, within the range of 94.7 and 96.1 percent. There was also an increase in the proportion of births

that were attended by skilled health personnel between 2022 (94.7 percent of births) and 2023 (95.7 percent of births).

Target 3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births

At the level of infant mortality, there have been fluctuations in the under five mortality rate within the range of 14.8 deaths per 1,000 live births to 19 deaths per 1,000 live births. The rate that was documented in 2017 was also documented in 2023, with an allowance of 0.06 deaths per live births. In effect, there was no significant change in the under 5 mortality rate during 2017 – 2023 (see Exhibit 15).

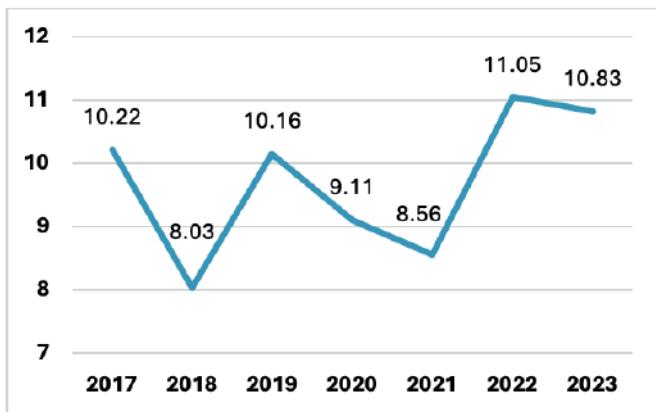
Exhibit 15: Under 5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births, 2017 - 2023



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

There were similar fluctuations in the rate of neonatal mortality, which ranged from 8.03 to 11.05 per 1,000 live births. Similar to the under 5 mortality rate, there was no significant change between 2017 and 2023 (see Exhibit 16).

Exhibit 16: Neonatal mortality rate per 1,000 births, 2017 - 2023

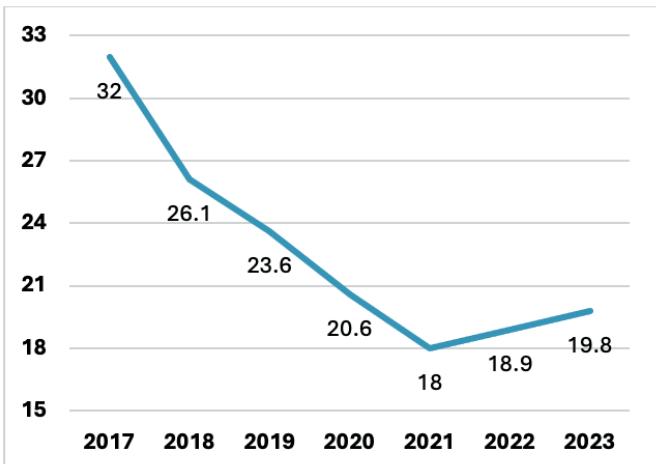


Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

Target 3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases

Further to a marginal increase between 2017 and 2018 (from 0.62 to 0.68 new infections per 1,000 uninfected population), there was a decline in new HIV infections between 2018 and 2021 (from 0.68 to 0.45 new infections per 1,000 uninfected population). This was followed by marginal increases in the range of 0.01 and 0.2 new infections between 2021 and 2023 (see Exhibit 17).

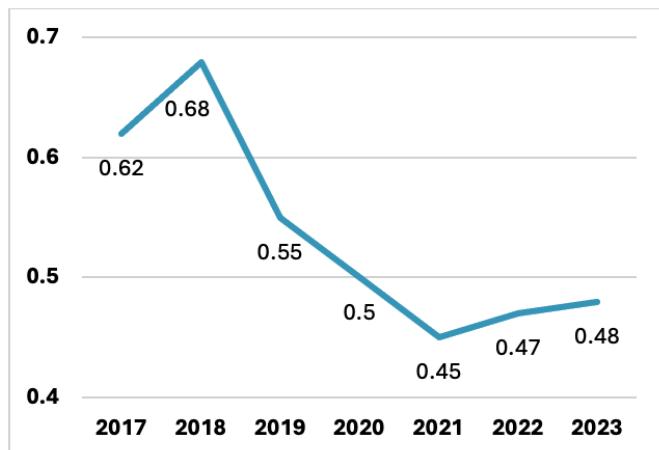
Exhibit 17: Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, 2017 - 2023



Source: Ministry of Health and Wellness

The incidence of tuberculosis declined steadily between 2017 and 2021 (from 32 cases per 100,000 population in 2017 to 18 cases per 100,000 population in 2021), before increasing marginally in 2022 and 2023. As of 2023, there were 19.8 cases of tuberculosis per 100,000 population (see Exhibit 18).

Exhibit 18: Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population, 2017 – 2023 (no. of cases)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

With the exception of 0.02 cases of malaria per 1,000 persons in 2017 and 2018, there have been no cases of malaria in Belize since 2018. As a result of this achievement, Belize was certified malaria-free by the World Health Organisation in June 2023. In September of the same year, Belize was among three Caribbean countries that were recognised by the Pan American Health Organisation for successfully eliminating the mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and syphilis.





Target 3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being

An area of concern for Belize has been the emergence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) that are likely due to mental health issues. One such non-communicable disease is the rate of suicide mortality, which has fluctuated over the period 2017 – 2023 (see Exhibit 19). There has been a consistently higher incidence of suicide among males, within the range of 9.95 to 15.74 suicides per 100,000 population. The corresponding range for women has been 3.09 to 4.38 suicides per 100,000 population.

Certification of Malaria elimination:

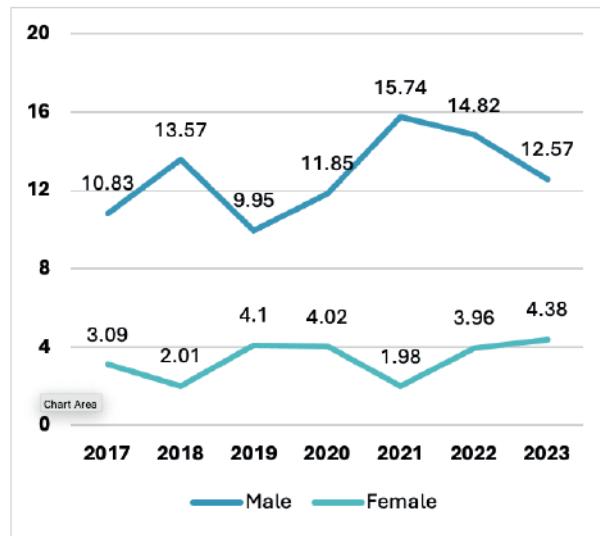
On June 19, 2023, Belize was declared malaria free by the World Health Organisation (WHO). A commemorative certificate of elimination was issued to Belize by WHO to certify that the nation had successfully eliminated the indigenous transmission of all malaria parasites within its borders. A major factor in the country's success in eliminating indigenous malaria was the high level of collaboration with dedicated district and central level staff; the work of a strongly committed community healthcare network; the contribution of malaria volunteer collaborators; and the reliability of the community healthcare workers.

Collaboration across the intervention team allowed for prompt diagnoses and effective treatment, as well as the establishment of a national malaria control programme to reduce breeding sites and strengthen cross-border collaborations with Mexico and Guatemala to stem transmission. A key action that further contributed to successful intervention was the facilitation of public awareness programmes to support the acceptance of malaria prevention and control activities through community education.

Source: Ministry of Health and Wellness, 2024

For both women and men, there was an overall increase in the suicide rate between 2017 and 2023. The rate of occurrence for men increased from 10.83 suicides per 100,000 population in 2017 to 12.57 suicides per 100,000 population in 2023. The corresponding rate of occurrence for women increased from 3.09 suicides per 100,000 population in 2017 to 4.08 suicides per 100,000 population in 2023. Of necessity, the issue to be addressed relative to this phenomenon is the facilitation of access to preventative services (counselling; mental health treatment; etc.) for persons who display tendencies of self-harm, and/ or are known to be involved in stressful situations.

Exhibit 19: Suicide mortality rate per 100,000 population, 2017- 2023 (%)

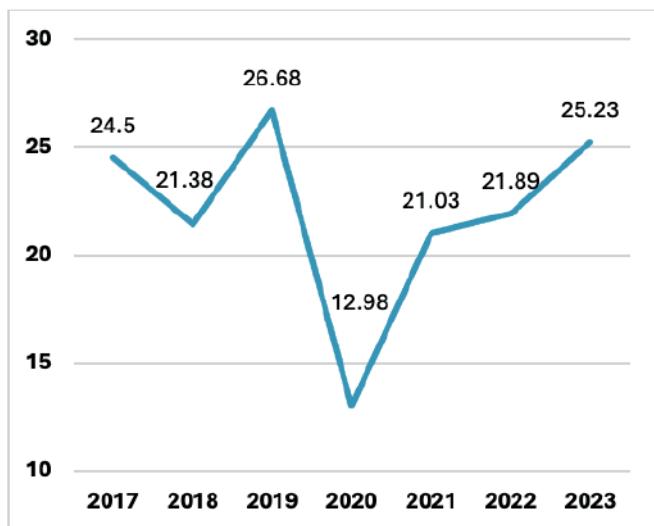


Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

Target 3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents

With the exception of a sharp decline in the rate of death from global traffic accidents in 2020, the mortality rate from road accidents remained within the same range during 2017 – 2023 (see Exhibit 20). Notably, the decline in the death rate coincided with the restrictions on movement as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. At 24.5 deaths per 100,000 population, the death rate from road traffic injuries in 2017 was high. While there was a decline in 2018 and 2020, the death rate increased during the other corresponding years of this timeframe. As of 2023, therefore, the death rate from road traffic injuries was 25.23 deaths per 100,000 population.

Exhibit 20: Death rate from road traffic injuries, 2017 – 2023 (%)

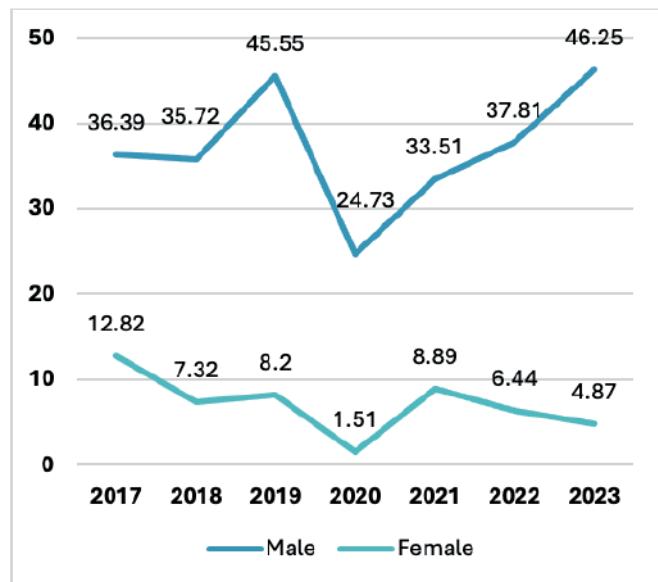


Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

It is of interest that the death rate from road traffic injuries was significantly higher for men (Exhibit 21). The range of the death rate for men during 2017 – 2023 was 24.73 percent to 46.25 percent, in contrast to a range of 1.51 percent to 12.82 percent for women. Moreover, while there was a general decline in the death rate for women between 2017 and 2023 (from 12.82 percent in 2017 to 4.87 percent in 2023), there was a contrasting increase in the death rate for men (from 36.39 percent in 2017 to 46.25 percent in 2023). While some road traffic accidents are unforeseen and, thereby, unpreventable, the issue to consider is the need

for an assessment of the reasons that underlie the road accidents to determine to what extent there can be interventions for prevention. Notably, the road infrastructure in Belize has been subject to constant improvement and includes more road safety features. From as early as the first road safety project in 2013, these features have been incorporated during the road design phase.

Exhibit 21: Death rate from road traffic injuries, by sex, 2017 – 2023 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

Target 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes

The adolescent birth rate is measured as the rate of birth for adolescents within each identified age range per 1,000 women (girls) in that age range. The analysis has shown that there was a general decline in the birth rate within each age range during 2017 – 2023 (Exhibit 22). For girls aged 10 – 14 years, the birth rate declined from 0.99 to 0.63 births per 1,000 girls. The corresponding figures for girls aged 10 – 19 years was a decline from 33.6 to 22.08 births per 1,000 girls/women.

For girls aged 15 – 19 years, the birth rate fell from 68.23 to 44.38 births per 1,000 women. As the highest incidence of births occurred in the age range 15 – 19

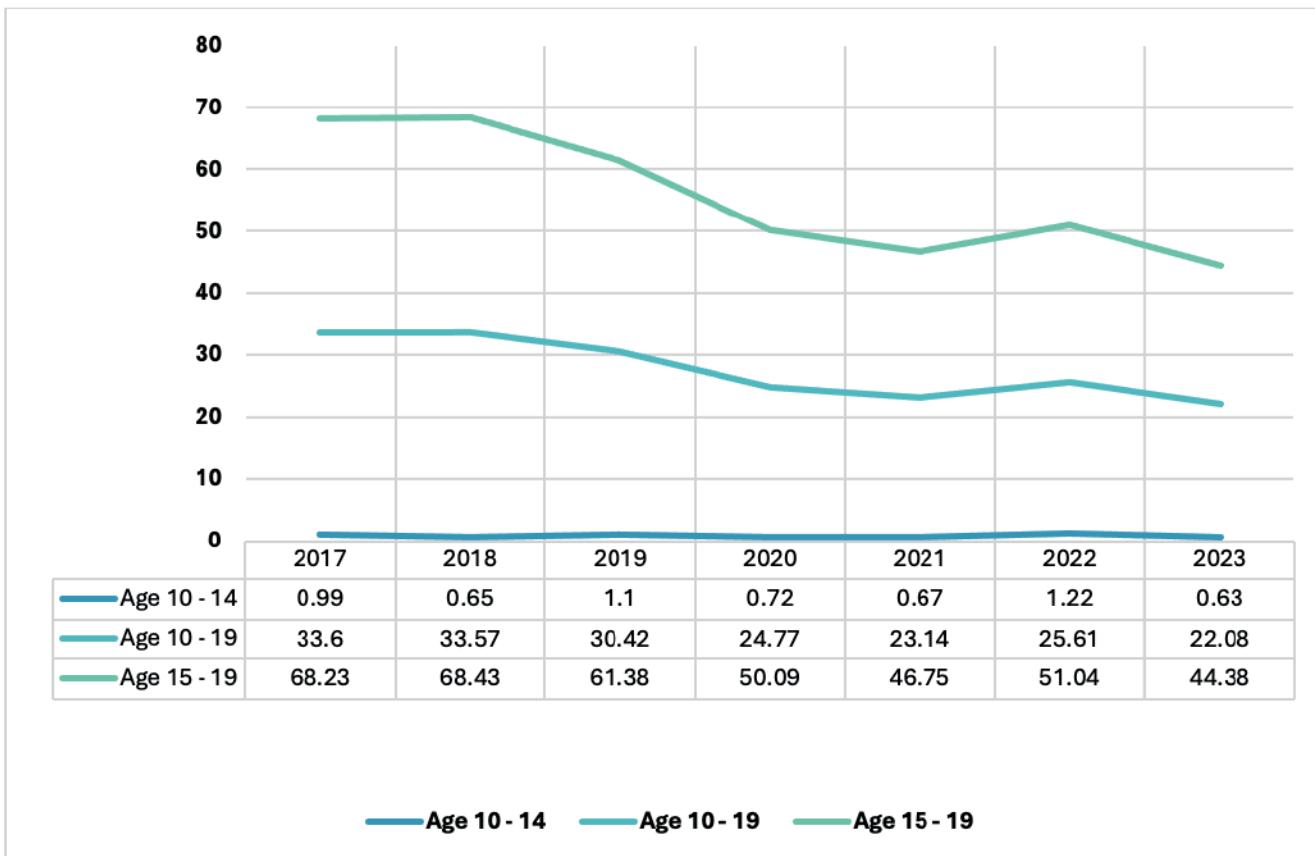
years, there is a need for interventions that target this group of girls (e.g. use of contraceptives; enquiries on the reason for early child birth; etc.). This does not negate, however, the need for interventions that engage girls within the other age ranges to address the issue of early childbirth, including the reduction in the age of autonomous access to health services to below the age of 18 years.

Interventions in this area to date have included initiatives by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), as well as non-governmental organisations that are active in Belize. As an example, UNFPA Belize Country Office has facilitated comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) for young persons in and external to the school setting as part of its Spotlight Initiative.³⁵ CSE is curriculum-based, and involves interactive teaching and learning sessions that are structured around the 'cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality.'³⁶ It is used to equip young persons with the

knowledge and resources they require for informed decision-making in relation to their sexuality; relationships; reproductive health (and health in general); and their individual rights.



Exhibit 22: Adolescent birth rate per 1,000 women, 2017 - 2023



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

3.1.2.4 SDG 4: Quality education

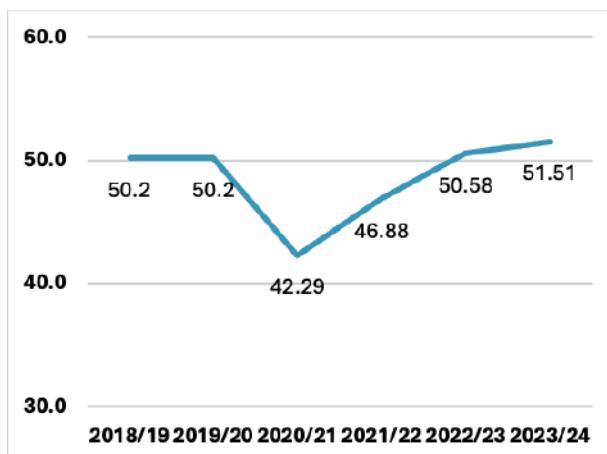
In 2017/18, the Ministry of Education was located under the combined Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture. As of 2023/24, the ministry has been located within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Education, Culture, Science and Technology.

The financial allocations that were made under the Approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure were applicable, therefore, to all MDAs within each combined ministry. Based on this context, there was a gradual decline in the financial allocations to the key line ministry during 2017/18 and 2022/23. The financial allocations that were provided ranged from USD \$111 million to USD \$138 million.

PSIP allocations for education projects were provided under the social protection/ social services budget. The financial allocations ranged from USD \$54.1 million to USD \$62.99 million during 2017/18 to 2023/24, which corresponded to 42.29 to 51.51 percent of the social protection/ social services budget (see Exhibit 23). PSIP projects for the education sector have been informed by the national development agenda of the Government of Belize, which aligns with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. The goal of the #planBelize MTDS 2022 – 2026 has been societal transformation, including through the use of education as a vehicle for increased educational access; upward mobility; built capacities in key technical areas, such as agriculture; infrastructure; and climate change; and the reversal of the brain drain, *inter alia*. Relatedly, the Horizon 2030 National Development Framework, 2010 -2030 has prioritised system strengthening across the education sector, to foster sustainable development through lifelong learning. PSIP funding has been channeled, therefore, towards education projects that support these objectives, including:

- Education sector reform for quality education;
- Improved teacher quality;
- Loans for tertiary-level education;
- Assistance to at-risk students;
- Support for TVET; and
- Support for built capacities in agriculture.

Exhibit 23: PSIP allocation for education as a proportion of PSIP budget for social protection, 2018/19 – 2023/24 (%)



Source: PSIP reports, 2018/19 to 2023/24

Target 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

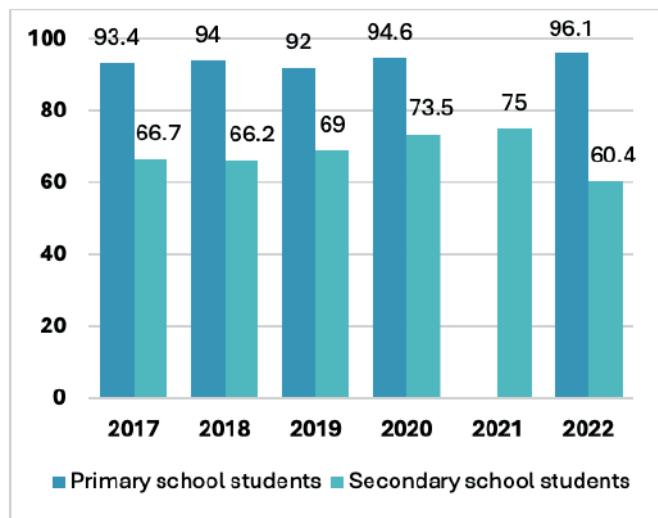
As a follow-up to the focus on universal primary education by the Millennium Development Goals, the SDGs have advocated quality education for students. In the interest of quality educational outcomes and efficient resource use, however, it is important to assess whether students are attending classes and are completing their education within the prescribed timeframe.

Between 2017 and 2020, 92 to 94.6 percent of students had completed their primary school education within the prescribed timeframe (see Exhibit 24). In contrast, the proportion of secondary school students who had completed their education within the allotted timeframe was much lower than at the primary school level. During 2017 – 2022, secondary school students who had completed their education on time were in the range of 60.4 percent to 75 percent (see Exhibit 24). While there was a general increase in the proportion of students who had completed their primary school education (from 93.4 percent in 2017 to 96.1 percent in 2022), the reverse situation occurred at the secondary school level. There was a decline in the proportion of students who completed their secondary school education between 2017 and 2022 (from 66.7% to 60.4%).

35 The Spotlight Initiative is a global initiative for eliminating violence against women and girls. It is discussed further under Target 16.1

36 https://caribbean.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/policy_brief_2023_towards_a_better_future_enacting_policy_and_legislation_to_guarantee_cse.pdf

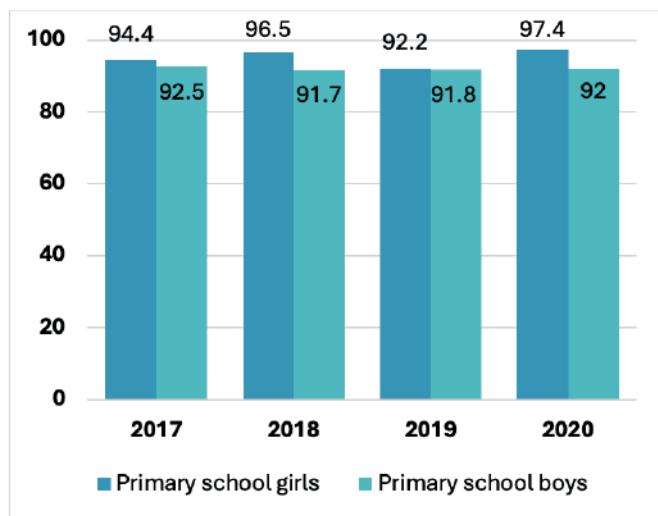
Exhibit 24: Proportion of students who completed their education on time, 2017 - 2022



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

At the primary school level a greater proportion of girls completed their schooling within the designated timeframe (see Exhibit 25). In general, however, the proportion of girls and boys who completed their primary school education on time was relatively high. This was reflected in the range of 94.4 and 97.4 percent for girls during 2017 – 2020, and the range of 91.8 and 92.2 percent for boys.

Exhibit 25: Proportion of primary school students who completed their education on time, 2017 – 2020 (%)

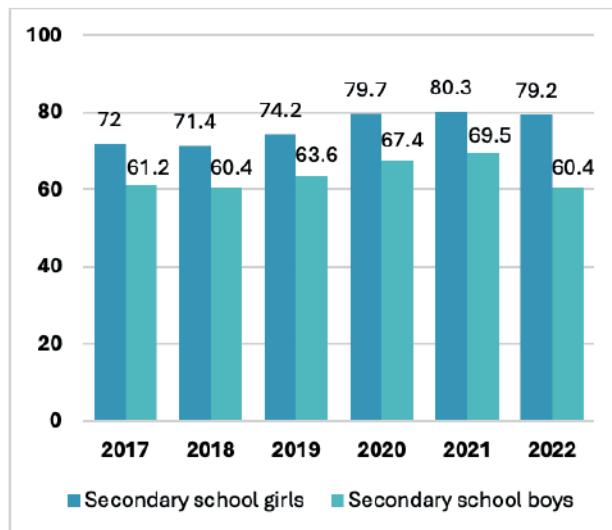


Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

At the secondary school level, the proportion of girls who completed their secondary school studies on time was also higher than the corresponding proportion of

boys who completed secondary school on time (see Exhibit 25). These results have implications for education sector policy, in terms of a visible need for interventions that seek to encourage and/ or support primary and secondary school completion by all students within the designated timeframe. The Belize Education Upliftment Project (EUp) has been used to facilitate this objective by providing Form 1 students with fully paid tuition and fees; uniforms; learning devices; transportation and a healthy meal in targeted schools. EUp was introduced in 2023 as a comprehensive initiative for launching the free education policy of the government and was piloted in schools that are located in at-risk areas.³⁷ The project will also be used to improve the physical infrastructure of the schools and provide required resources.

Exhibit 26: Proportion of secondary school students who completed their studies on time, 2017 – 2022 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

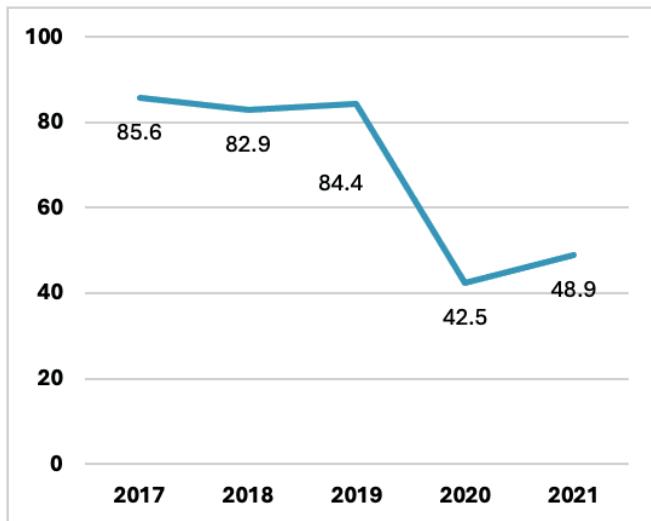
Target 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

At the pre-primary school level, there has been some evidence of the engagement of younger children in early childhood education, which usually occurs one year before the formal entry to primary school. Importantly, pre-primary education also includes students who enrolled in the Infants Year within the primary school setting.

³⁷ At-risk areas, in this context, refer to communities with limited resources; high levels of unemployment; low-income households; etc.

Exhibit 27 has shown that a significant proportion of pre-school children, within the range of 82.9 and 85.6 percent, were engaged in early childhood education sessions between 2017 and 2019. There was a sharp decline in participation in 2020, as the rate of participation fell from a high of 84.4 percent in 2019 to 42.5 percent in 2020. The decline in participation is likely to have been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, given the restrictions on public gatherings. In 2021, a slight increase in participation was visible, as the participation rate for pre-primary school education rose to 48.9 percent.

Exhibit 27: Participation rate in pre-schooling, 2017 – 2021 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

Target 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

Belize has made strides in facilitating student access to educational opportunities at all levels of the education system (primary; secondary; tertiary; etc.). Using the benchmark of '1' as evidence of achieved parity, Exhibit 28 shows that parity was achieved at the level of pre-primary education and secondary education in 2021. There has also been increasing parity at the primary school level and within the context of the rural-urban pre-primary school divide.

Lower evidence of parity has been especially visible at

the level of TVET; the rural-urban secondary and primary education divide; and at the tertiary level. The observed trends merit further investigation. It would be useful, in particular, to determine whether limited parity has been influenced by factors that can be directly addressed by key decision-makers in educational policy and/ or programming. Similarly, there should be equivalent consideration of whether there are factors beyond the remit of policy makers within the education sector that are challenges to the achievement of parity.

Exhibit 28: Parity indices, 2017 - 2021

Level of Education	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Pre-primary (female:male)	1	1	0.9	1	1
Primary (female:male)	1	0.90	0.9	0.9	0.9
Secondary (female:male)	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1
TVET (female:male)	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2
Tertiary (female:male)	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7
Pre-primary (rural: urban)	1	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Primary (rural: urban)	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Secondary (rural:urban)	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

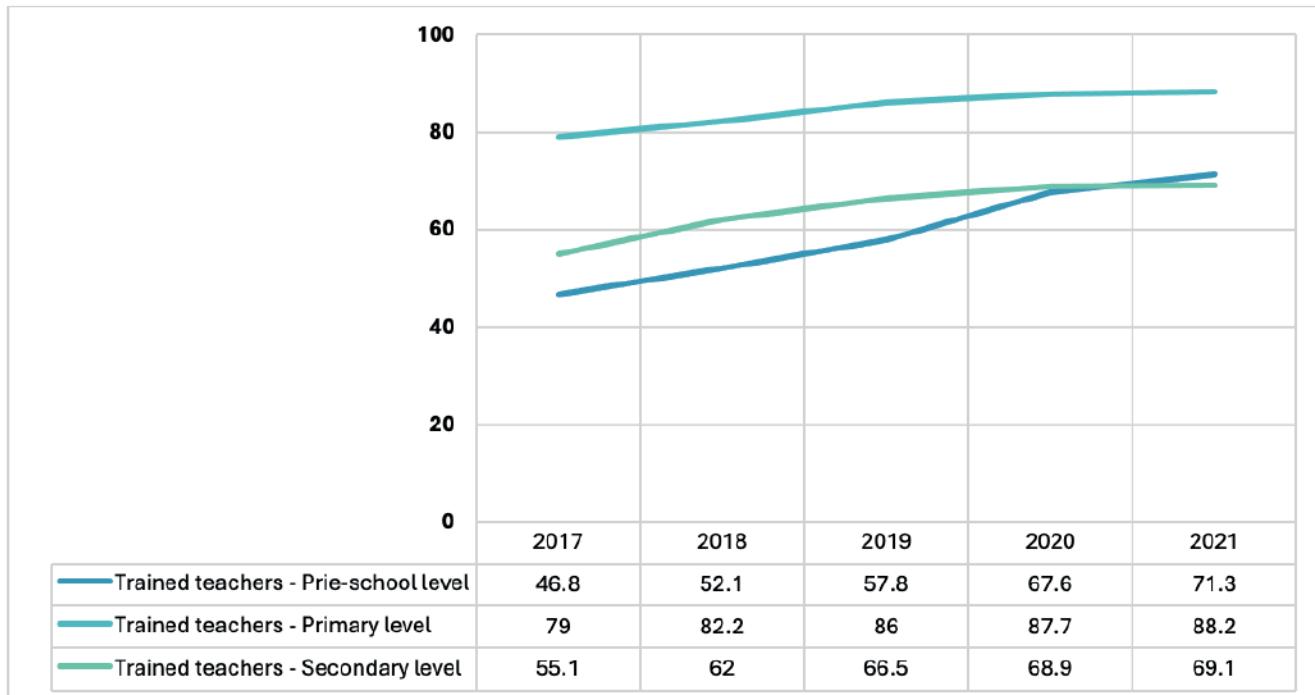
Target 4c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

As an encouraging trend for the enhancement of the education sector across education levels, there is a greater proportion of qualified teachers within the system. Exhibit 29 has shown that for each of the three major levels of education (early childhood/ pre-school; primary; and secondary level education), an increasing number of educators have acquired the minimum qualifications that are required to be in post.

Based on the requirements of the Ministry of Education, these qualifications include a specialisation in a relevant subject area and teachers will be subjected to performance assessments. All teachers are required to meet minimum criteria to qualify for a provisional or full teaching license. Where a provisional license is granted, a teacher must also meet all the requirements to qualify for a full license within five years through in-service or

pre-service training. Teachers who receive a full licence are also required to complete 120 hours of continuous professional development to retain their teaching license. The Association of Tertiary Level Institutions in Belize (ATLIB) has also been contributing to the establishment of a platform for teachers to attain their full licence.

Exhibit 29: Proportion of teachers with minimum required qualifications, 2017 – 2021 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

3.1.2.5 SDG 5: Gender equality

In recognising the importance of gender mainstreaming at the level of policy and programme implementation, the Government of Belize has been proactive in establishing working mechanisms to implement and sustain gender responsive development programming. Belize is a signatory to multiple global agreements that advance the need for gender equality at all levels of society (see Exhibit 30). The Government of Belize has also actively participated in several international development fora that have brought together key decision-makers at the policy level, for high-level discussions; networking; and follow-up support to guide country-specific actions for integrating gender

considerations into cross-sectoral policy and programming.



Exhibit 30: Key international gender and human rights agreements

Examples of international agreements that support gender and human rights

- United Declaration of Human Rights, 1948
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979
- Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women, 1994
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995
- Improvement of the Situation of Women and Girls in Rural Areas, UN Resolution A/RES/74/126, 2019
- Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, 2015

Source: Revised National Gender Policy, 2024-2030

It is significant, therefore, that while the PSIP does not have a specific budget for gender mainstreaming, gender considerations have been consistently integrated into PSIP projects across the core sectors of PSIP focus. As PSIP projects are led by MDAs, the integration of gender considerations at the project level reflects an increased prioritisation of gender mainstreaming across the public sector. Each line Ministry within the public sector also has a designated Gender Focal Point. There is a need for greater capacity, however, to enable the Gender Focal Points to be more effective in ensuring continued gender mainstreaming, as a cross cutting thematic area for government programming. This development is paramount for accelerated contributions by Belize for the achievement of SDG5.

Target 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

Target 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriages and female genital mutilation

There is significant evidence of the advancements made by Belize over the years in relation to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Spotlight Initiative is an important example of the commitment of the country, under the guidance of partner UN Agencies (e.g UNFPA and UNICEF) to ensure that violence against

women and girls is effectively eliminated.³⁸ As an example, Belize has engaged in the ongoing generation of relevant data to inform evidence-based policy and programming to achieve this goal. The most recent available statistics on sexual violence against girls aged 15 years and over show an increased incidence from 65 cases in 2022 to 94 cases in 2023, an increase of approximately 44 percent.

To further support the elimination of violence against women and girls, a roadmap was also developed to end child marriage and early unions. The 2020 Road Map to End Child Marriage and Early Unions in Belize³⁹ was developed by the Government of Belize in collaboration with UNFPA and UNICEF. It draws on the necessity of strategic actions across sectors, to improve outcomes for young persons. Examples of the key sectors that have been earmarked to contribute towards informed and improved decision-making by young persons, in relation to early marriage and unions, include the health; education; child protection; and economic development sectors. Significantly, the expected results from the operationalisation of the road map extend beyond SDG5. The road map has categorically emphasised that if child marriage and early unions are not prevented, Belize is at strong risk of not being able to achieve SDG 1 - 5; 8; 10 and 16.

Target 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

Belize has made significant strides in the area of gender equality through the active integration of gender equality considerations into policies and programmes across the public sector. At the level of the Belizean Parliament, as well as government MDAs, there has been evidence of the increasing appointment of women to decision-making positions. In 2020, for example, 42 percent of managerial positions across sectors were held by women. By 2023, this figure had increased to 53.08 percent.⁴⁰

38 See Target 3.7 and 16.1

39 <https://www.unicef.org/belize/press-releases/belize-launches-road-map-end-child-marriage-and-early-unions>

40 Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

In support of these developments, the Government of Belize established the National Women's Commission (NWC) in 1982, which became an official statutory organisation with a legal mandate in January 2024. NWC is an advisory body that is anchored within the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs (MHDF&IPA). MHDF&IPA also contains a Women and Family Support Department, which includes a Disability Desk to provide targeted support to persons with disabilities. The primary responsibility of the NWC has been to provide strategic advice to the Government of Belize on gender equality and women empowerment issues. Together with the Women and Family Support Department, NWC satisfies the recommendation of CEDAW, for an established gender machinery to support policy development and service delivery.

NWC advocates for improved conditions for women and girls in Belize. It has also been the role of NWC to monitor governmental compliance with the global development agenda on gender and human rights, with emphasis on the situation of women and girls in the country. To better fulfil its mandate, NWC has offices in all six provinces of Belize and has established committees at the national and district levels to address the issue of gender-based violence (GBV).⁴¹

To further support the mainstreaming of gender across the public sector, in the interest of cross-societal mainstreaming, the Government of Belize approved the Revised National Gender Policy, 2024 -2030 in March 2024, as an advancement over the 2013 National Gender Policy. The objective of the Revised National Gender Policy is to foster gender equity and equality, and end discrimination against women and girls in Belize using an integrated multisectoral approach.



Revised National Gender Policy, 2024 - 2030

The overarching goal of the Revised National Gender Policy (NGP), 2024 – 2030 is to 'Achieve gender equity and equality and end discrimination against women and girls in Belize.' NGP (2024 – 2030) is informed by the #planBelize Women's Agenda and Family Plan (2020) and aligns with SDG5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Actions to facilitate NGP (2024 – 2030) will centre on six strategic areas:

1. Education;
2. Health;
3. Wealth and employment creation;
4. Violence producing conditions;
5. Power and decision-making; and
6. Organisational systems strengthening.

The six strategic areas are linked to the commitments of the Government of Belize to global instruments on gender and will be jointly implemented based on a cross-sectoral approach to gender mainstreaming. Within this context, gender mainstreaming is defined as the bringing together of the perceptions; knowledge; contributions; priorities and needs of women and men to enrich development.

**Source: Revised National Gender Policy,
2024 – 2030**

In February 2023, the Government of Belize also endorsed the establishment of a Women Parliamentarians Caucus to function as a bi-partisan joint standing committee of the Belize National Assembly. The establishment of this body sets a strong precedence to ensure that a gender transformative approach is adopted at the highest level. Key issues that have been identified for debate include: gender equality; the increased engagement of women in the legislative process; and the incorporation of a gendered lens into the work of the National Assembly, including the facilitation of sensitisation sessions for the members.

Target 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

As a signatory to the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, Belize submitted a comprehensive report in 2023 on the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. The Montevideo Consensus is a regional framework that centres on priority issues that pertain to the full integration of population dynamics into sustainable development, with equality and respect for human rights. It further advocates for the integration of considerations on the rights, needs, responsibilities, and requirements of girls, boys, adolescents and youth, into development policy and programming.

The year 2024 marks the 30th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development. Belize remains committed to the process of addressing population dynamics in sustainable development.

PROSPERITY



3.2 Pillar 2: Prosperity

3.2.1 Context

The essence of Agenda 2030 has been the facilitation of sustainable and inclusive societal improvement. There has been a specific focus on establishing a conducive environment for social development; economic growth; and infrastructural resilience; *inter alia*. Prosperity emerges from within this setting. The Government of Belize demonstrated its commitment to country-wide socio-economic prosperity through its continuous investment in national resilience and prosperity in the face of the emergent challenges of Hurricane Lisa (2022) and COVID-19 (2019 – 2021).

The response of the government to the need for resource reallocation during the pandemic demonstrated its resolve to ensure that the nation stayed on track to build back better post-pandemic. Belize has used the Prosperity Pillar of Agenda 2030 to ensure that mechanisms are in place to fuel long-term prosperity. This environment is by no means ideal or simplistic, as the Government of Belize and the nation as a whole, needs to respond to: 1) fluctuations in the global economic market; and 2) local contextual circumstances, which both challenge the sustainable development trajectory.

3.2.2 Progress

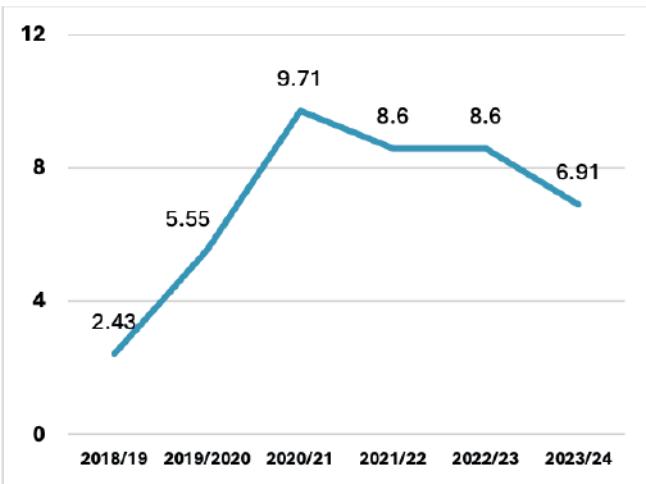
3.2.2.1 SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy

Target 7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services

One of the defining features of a modern prosperous nation is access to a reliable source of energy. In the advent of global warming and climate change, there has been an increasing focus on clean energy that derives from renewable, zero emission sources.⁴² The Government of Belize has invested in the development and maintenance of affordable clean energy within two sub-sectors of the PSIP, infrastructure and economic services. The PSIP budget for infrastructure includes an

allocation for electricity, as the main type of renewable energy that is provided by the government. There is also a financial allocation for energy under the PSIP budget for economic services. From 2018/19 to 2020/21, the combined financial allocation for renewable energy increased steadily and was within the range of USD \$12.139 million to USD 57.89 million. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the financial allocation for renewable energy was constant at USD \$46.404 million during 2020/21 and 2021/22. In 2023/24, there was an increased allocation of USD \$47.499 million. As a proportion of the combined PSIP budget for Infrastructure and Economic services, the financial allocation for electricity and renewable energy ranged from 2.43 percent to 6.91 percent (see Exhibit 31). There was a consistent upward trend between 2018/19 and 2020/21, which was followed by a decline between 2020/21 and 2023/24.

Exhibit 31: PSIP allocation for clean energy as a proportion of PSIP budget for Infrastructure and Economic services, 2018/19 – 2023/24 (%)



Source: Calculated from PSIP data⁴³

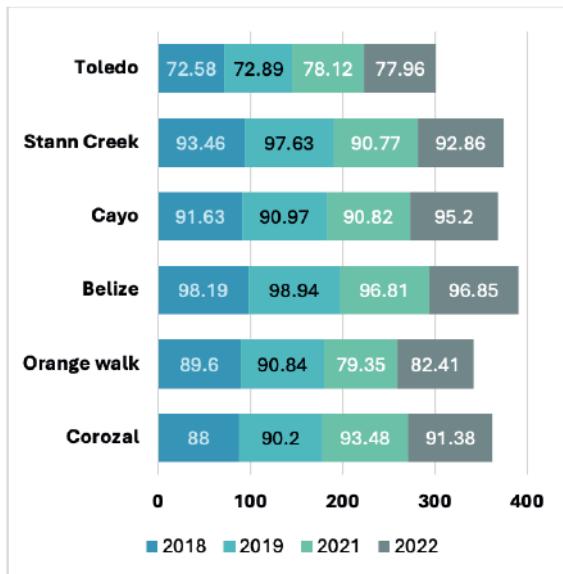
The main electricity provider, Belize Electricity Limited (BEL), provides its services to a significant proportion of the domestic market across all six districts in Belize. Although BEL is the only legal entity that is permitted to distribute and sell electricity in Belize, there have been

⁴² Renewable energy is discussed further under Target 12.a.1 as part of the Planet Pillar.

⁴³ Data extracted from PSIP reports 2018/19 – 2023/24

fluctuations in the proportion of households that access electricity from this provider at the district level (see Exhibit 32).

Exhibit 32: Proportion of households with electricity as main source of lighting, by district, 2018 – 2022 (%)

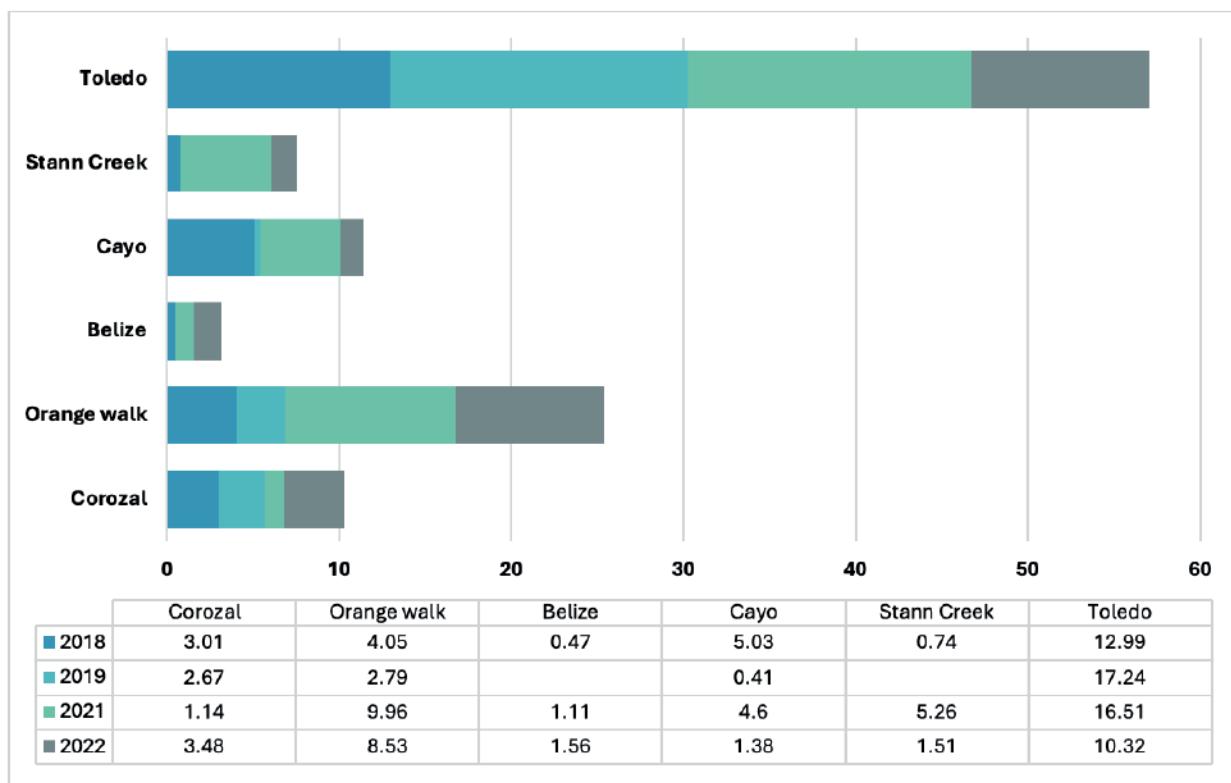


Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

As a large urban area, the Belize district has the highest proportion of households that consume electricity from BEL (approximately 96 to 98 percent of households). Conversely, as the Toledo district is a semi-rural, less populated area, it has the lowest proportion of households that consume electricity from BEL (approximately 72 to 78 percent of households). In communities where a large proportion of households get their electricity from another source, however, (see Exhibit 33), the main electricity supplier (BEL) does not yet provide a reliable supply of electricity to these areas.



Exhibit 33: Proportion of households with electricity from other providers as main source of lighting, by district, 2018 – 2022 (%)



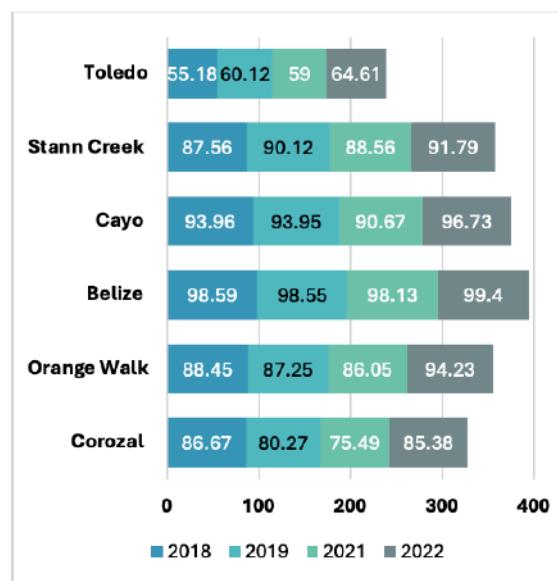
Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

Target 7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix

In keeping with the accessibility of clean sources of energy, there has been a greater reliance on clean cooking fuel by households across all six districts. A higher proportion of households in both urban and rural districts have been using clean fuel (e.g. Cayo district, 96.73 percent in 2022).

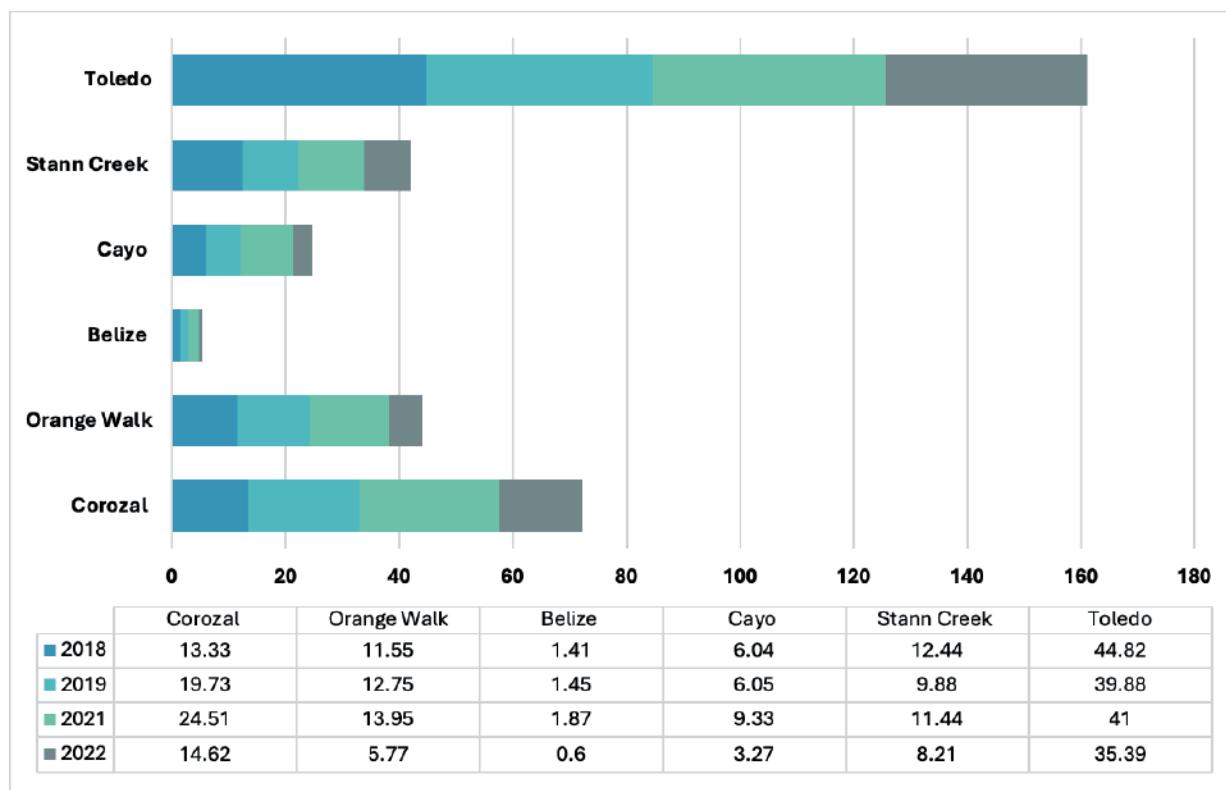
In the Toledo district, however, unclean fuel was still being used in a significant proportion of households (see Exhibit 34 and Exhibit 35). It is likely that this is the result of the semi-rural nature of the district, combined with its lower population, in terms of the convenience of using unclean sources of fuel (wood; charcoal; etc.). Of note, wood-based fuels are considered unclean because of the hazard of smoke to human health. By technical definition, however, wood is a renewable energy source as trees can be replanted.

Exhibit 34: Proportion of households using clean fuel, by district, 2018 – 2022 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

Exhibit 33: Proportion of households with electricity from other providers as main source of lighting, by district, 2018 – 2022 (%)



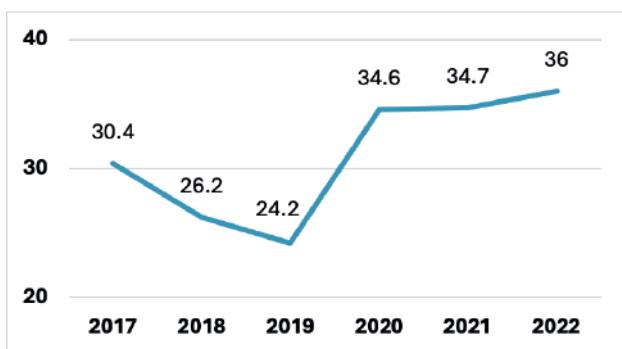
Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

In terms of the energy that derives from renewable sources, a significant proportion of the final energy supply is from a renewable source. During 2017 to 2022, for example, the annual proportion of energy that derived from a renewable source ranged from approximately 24 to 36 percent (see Exhibit 36).

Interestingly, there was a decline in the share of energy from renewable sources prior to and during the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic (2017 – 2019). Conversely, there was an increase in the total energy share from renewable sources during the height of the pandemic (2020) through to 2022. As the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in late 2020 through to early 2021, however, (including within Belize) there is a weak correlation between the supply of renewable energy and the effects of the pandemic. The larger contributors to renewable energy in Belize are the hydropower plants and bagasse co-generation plants. As a result, the national share of renewable energy has greater sensitivity to external climate shocks.

A more logical explanation for the decline in the supply of renewable energy in 2019 would be reduced rainfall in 2018, followed by drought in 2019, which contributed to declining water levels and sugar cane productivity. This situation resulted in reduced electricity output by renewable energy suppliers in Belize, with the implication that an alternative supply of energy had to be sourced through imports, in particular from Mexico. The question that emerges, therefore, is whether locally generated renewable energy in Belize can be reliably sourced for use during times of national; regional; and/or global crisis.

Exhibit 36: Total energy supply from renewable sources. 2017 – 2022 (%)



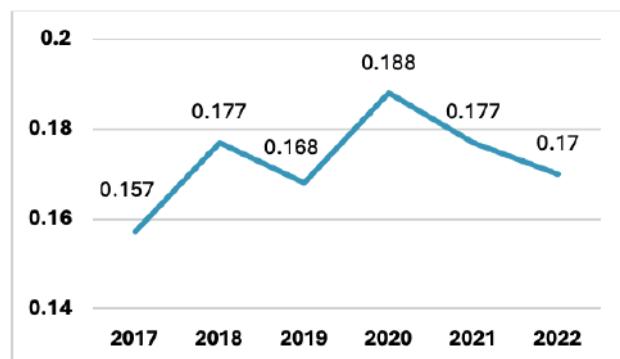
Source: Energy Unit

Target 7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency

As a proxy for determining the level of efficiency that is required by an individual economy to generate its economic output, the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSTATS) has recommended the energy intensity indicator. This indicator provides an estimate of the energy requirements for the production of one unit of economic output. Within the Belizean context, the indicator refers to the total primary energy supply in tons of oil equivalent per thousand USD of the GDP.⁴⁴

Between 2017 and 2022, a fluctuation in the total primary energy supply was visible (see Exhibit 37). While there were greater energy requirements between 2017 and 2018 (from 0.157 to 0.177), as well as between 2019 and 2020 (from 0.168 to 0.188), less energy was required to produce one unit of economic output in 2019 (from 0.177 in 2018 to 0.168 in 2019) and 2022 (from 0.177 in 2021 to 0.17 in 2022).

Exhibit 37: Energy intensity in terms of Total primary energy supply, 2017 – 2022, tons of oil equivalent per 1,000 USD of GDP

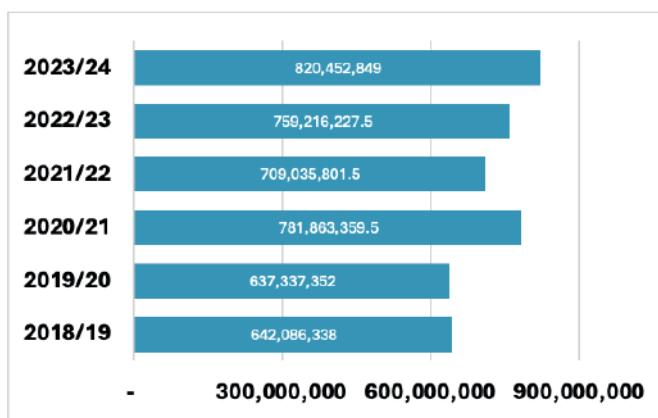


Source: Statistical Institute of Belize; Energy Unit

3.2.2.2 SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

Based on the objective of national growth and development that is sustainable; transformative and inclusive, the facilitation of SDG8: is covered by the entire PSIP budget. An investment in opportunities for decent work and economic growth is dependent on the effectiveness and efficient management of projects that are implemented under all four PSIP sectors/budgets (Infrastructure; Economic services; Social protection; and Public administration). In support of this objective, the PSIP budget has been in the range of USD \$637 million to USD \$820 million over the period 2018/19 and 2023/24 (see Exhibit 38).

Exhibit 38: PSIP budget, 2018/19 – 2023/24 (USD million)



Target 8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries

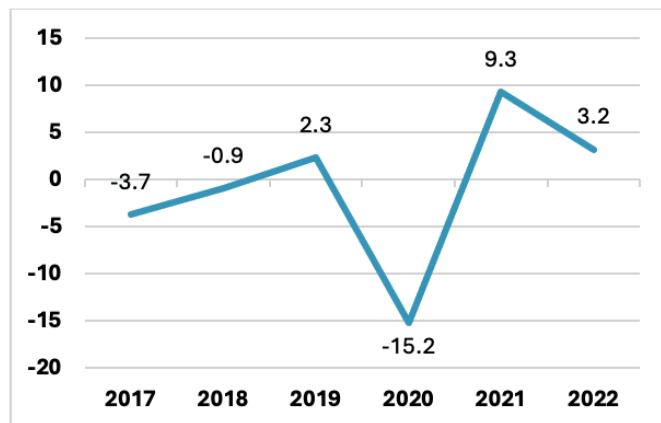
The annual growth rate of the real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is a UNSTATS recommended proxy for average standard of living. Further to its application to the Belizean context (using constant prices), a fluctuation in the living standards of persons who reside in Belize has become apparent.

Between 2017 and 2019 there was a gradual improvement in the living standard, which increased from -3.7 percent in 2017 to a total of 2.3 percent in 2019 (see Exhibit 39). During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the standard of living fell sharply to -15.2 percent in 2020. By 2021, which signified the beginning of the post-COVID recovery period, the standard of living

increased significantly to 9.3 percent, but fell to 3.2 percent during the following year (2022).

The sharp decline in the annual growth rate of real GDP per capita in 2020 is a reflection of the economic contraction that occurred during that year. Similarly, the increase in the rate of real GDP per capita during 2021 was a reflection of the return to near pre- pandemic levels. As a proxy for the standard of living, as long as per capita GDP is above zero, there has been an improvement in the standard of living. The reduction in the rate of real GDP per capita between 2021 and 2022 suggests, however, that apart from economic contraction, there are other factors that contribute to a decline in living standards. In the interest of sustainable socio-economic growth and development, these factors need to be considered during the development of social sector interventions.

Exhibit 39: Annual growth rate of GDP per capita, constant prices, 2017 – 2022 (%)



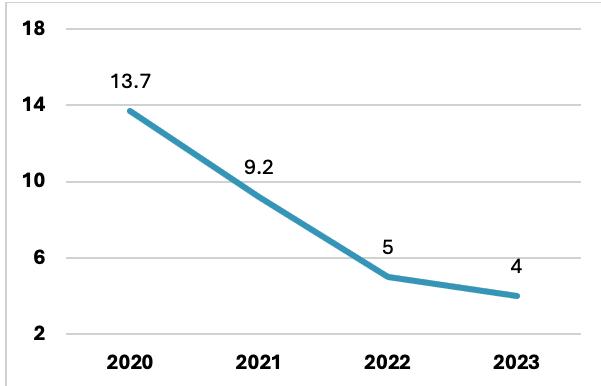
Target 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

The September round of the Belize Labour Force survey has shown that there was a steady decline in the rate of unemployment during 2020 – 2022 (see Exhibit 40). The rate of unemployment fell from 13.7 percent in 2020 to 4 percent in 2023.

⁴⁵ Data extracted from PSIP reports 2018/19 – 2023/24

⁴⁶ Conducted in September annually; also conducted in October 2022 to accommodate the National Census

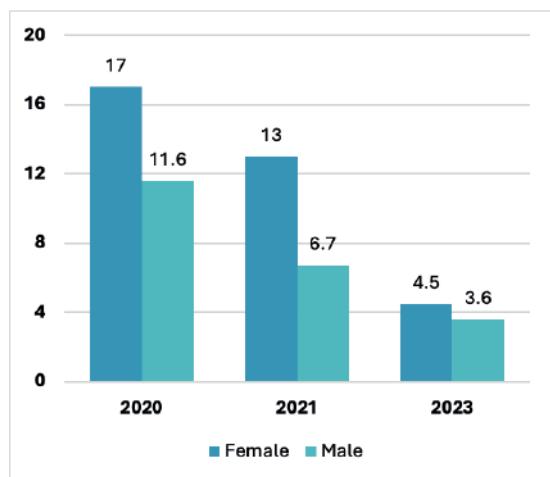
Exhibit 40: Unemployment rates, 2020 – 2023 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, Labour Force survey⁴⁶

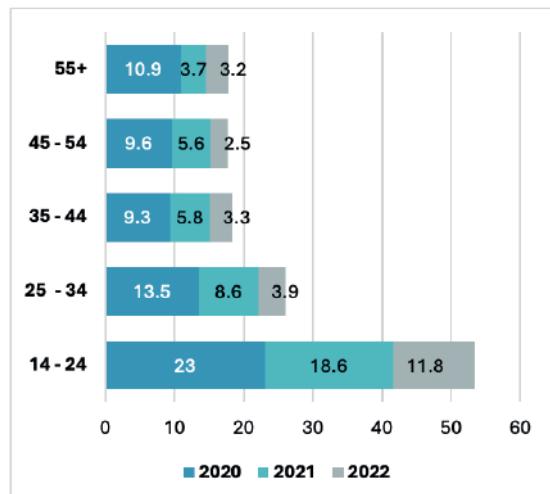
Unemployment was also consistently higher for women (see Exhibit 41), as well as young persons in the age group 14 – 24 years (see Exhibit 42).

Exhibit 41: September unemployment rates by sex, 2020 – 2023 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, Labour Force survey

Exhibit 42: September Unemployment rates, by age, 2020 – 2022 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

For young persons aged 14 – 24 years, in particular, the rate of unemployment between 2020 and 2022 was higher than the rates that were documented for all other age groups (see Exhibit 42). There was, however, a decrease in the rate of unemployment for young persons within this age range in 2022, from 23 percent in 2020 to 11.8 percent in 2022. At 11.8 percent, this rate of unemployment is still high. Similarly, at 23.2 percent, the proportion of young persons aged 14 – 24 years who were not in education; employment or training (NEET) in 2021 was significantly high.⁴⁷ Although the rate fell to 19.8 percent in 2023, there is room for further reduction combined with the engagement of young persons in productive activities.

It is significant that SDG Target 8.5 was developed to generate data on three specific factors: unemployment of men and women in general; unemployment among young persons; and unemployment among persons with disabilities. Of interest, however, the data disaggregation at the level of the national statistical authority has not produced disaggregated data on disabilities relative to the rate of unemployment. The SIB has indicated that this level of disaggregation is not possible with the Labour Force Survey data, as the limited observations of the sample survey data cannot be used to generate reliable statistics on disability. Corresponding datasets on disability have also not been made available from the National Population and Housing Survey.

The issue that emerges is whether sufficient efforts are being made within the Belizean context to fully incorporate the principle of leaving no one behind, with a focus, here, on persons with disabilities. Notably, the Government of Belize has taken initial steps to address the needs of persons with disabilities, for example, by establishing a Disability Desk within MHDF&IPA in 2021. While this is an embryonic step for Government to better understand the situation of persons with disabilities, significant gaps in public service delivery for disabled persons remain. To address this issue, SIB has been collaborating with the Disability Desk within MHDF&IPA to support regular data generation. The maintenance of the finished products will, however,

⁴⁷ Although the NEET indicator pertains to Target 8.6, its has been incorporated into the discourse based on its applicability.

⁴⁸ <https://sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/MigrationandBelize.pdf>

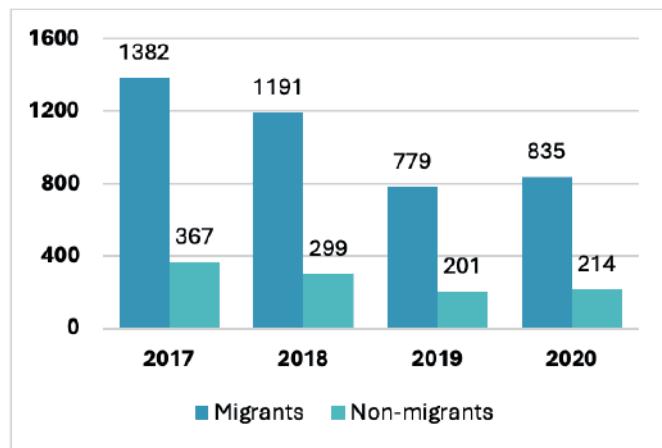
require investment in built capacities and virtual infrastructure.

Target 8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

Belize has been a destination of focus for migrants from neighbouring countries in Central America, in particular Guatemala, who are in search of economic opportunities to support their families.⁴⁸ While there are examples of undocumented migrants who entered the country covertly, there are equivalent examples of migrants who entered the country through legal channels to find work and/ or reunite with their family members. The country has depended significantly on inexpensive migrant labour, in particular, to support operations within the agricultural sector; the tourism industry and the services sector.

There is no legislation in Belize, however, to address discrimination against migrants.⁴⁹ It is also of interest that migrants outnumber non-migrants in the statistics on occupational fatalities and injuries (see Exhibit 43).

Exhibit 43: Fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers, 2017 - 2020



Source: Social Security Board

Between 2017 and 2020, an annual average of 1,317 fatalities or non-fatal occupational injuries per 10,000 workers occurred. During each year of focus, more than 79 percent of the victims of these occupational incidents were migrants. While there was a consistent reduction in the number of incidents between 2017 and

2019, followed by a slight increase in 2020, the high ratio of migrant to non-migrant victims remained constant over the four years. This raises an issue about the quality of employment, i.e. the quantum of occupational accidents and fatalities strongly suggests that the migrants are given work responsibilities that place them at risk. It is also likely that migrant workers are concentrated within industries in which there is a greater probability for fatal or non-fatal injury. There is a further suggestion that the migrants are assigned tasks that Belizeans will not perform and, in consequence, are not covered by industry standard quality assurance procedures. As an encouraging development, the Government of Belize is in the process of developing a five-year Decent Work Country Programme that is based on the principle of leaving no one behind.

Relatedly, the Government of Belize revised the Protection against Sexual Harassment Act in 2020, to address issues of this nature within and external to the workplace environment. This has been an important development with the Belizean context, given the fluctuations in the number of cases of sexual harassment that have been reported over the years. In 2020, for example, a total of 139 cases of physical or sexual harassment had been reported to the authorities.⁵⁰ There were declines in the total number of reported cases in 2021 and 2022 (115 and 112 reported cases, respectively). In 2023, however, the number of cases that had been reported had increased to 144. The revision of the Protection against Sexual Harassment Act has created a legislative mechanism to empower more victims (whether male or female) to report their experiences in anticipation of redress.

Target 8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products

Tourism is a major source of revenue for the Government of Belize and the Belizean economy. From January to December 2023, for example, a total of 490,233 tourists visited archaeological reserves across the country.⁵¹ In support of the efficient management of available resources within the tourism sector, and the effective marketing of tourist attractions to a foreign

⁴⁹ <https://publications.iom.int/books/migration-governance-indicators-profile-2020-belize>

⁵⁰ See Appendix V, Target 11.7.2

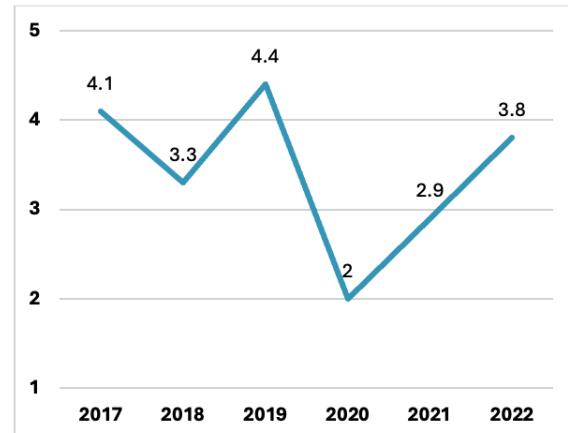
⁵¹ Internal database, Archaeological reserves

clientele, the Government of Belize updated its National Cruise Tourism Policy in 2023, which is aligned to The National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan for Belize.

The National Cruise Tourism Policy is a strategic roadmap to guide key decision-makers and other actors within the tourism sector. By design, it provides guidelines for an effective action plan to ensure that Belize continues to benefit from the tourist trade. Importantly, the National Cruise Tourism Policy includes a monitoring, evaluation and review template, and the results of a strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats analysis to inform the continuous assessment of tourism sector performance, and facilitate formative planning for increased efficiencies. In 2023, the ILO Caribbean Office also conducted a sector and value chain analysis on sustainable tourism in Belize, as well as on dehydrated fruit processing in the Toledo and Stann Creek districts.⁵² The results of the study are of use in facilitating poverty reduction and economic growth through job creation within the tourism sector.

At the level of the accommodation and restaurants sub-sector, there has been some fluctuation in the contribution to national GDP. As a proportion of the GDP, the contribution of the subsector fell from 4.1 percent in 2017 to 3.3 percent in 2018 (see Exhibit 44). Although there was evidence of recovery in 2019, based on an increase in contributions as a proportion of GDP to 4.4 percent, there was a sharp decline to a low of 2 percent of the GDP in 2020. There has been evidence of gradual recovery between 2020 and 2022, in light of an increase in the proportion of the contributions of the sub-sector to GDP. An increase from 2 percent in 2020 to 2.9 percent in 2021 was followed by a subsequent increase to 3.8 percent in 2022.

Exhibit 44: Accommodation and restaurants as a proportion of GDP, 2017 – 2022 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

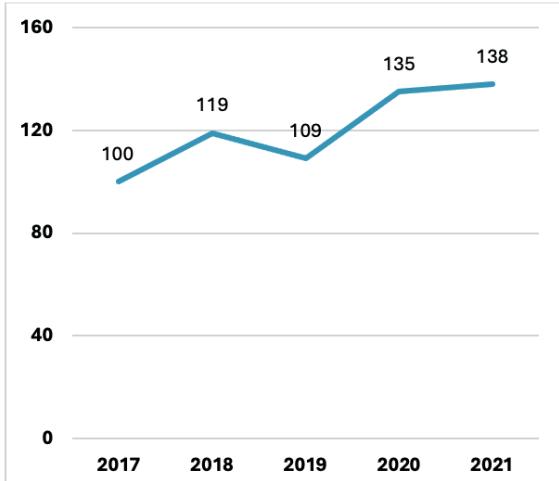
Target 8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all

As Belize continues to invest in the expansion of its main revenue earning sectors, it is appropriate for the banking sector to increase public access to financial institutions and supporting automated teller machines (ATMs). These facilities contribute towards a modern society that is capable of managing an increased cashflow.

Between 2017 and 2021, the number of financial institutions remained fixed at 46 branches. Although an additional branch was introduced into the economy in 2022, there has been greater responsiveness to the financial needs of the population in relation to the introduction of ATMS. Further to an increase in the number of ATMs between 2017 and 2019 (from 100 to 119 ATMS), the total number of ATMS that were available for public use fell to 109 in 2019. As of 2020 and 2021, however, there has been an increase in the number of ATMs from 135 to 138 (see Exhibit 45).

⁵² <https://www.ilo.org/publications/sector-selection-and-value-chain-analysis-belize-sustainable-tourism-and>

Exhibit 45: No. of available ATMs, 2017 - 2021



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all

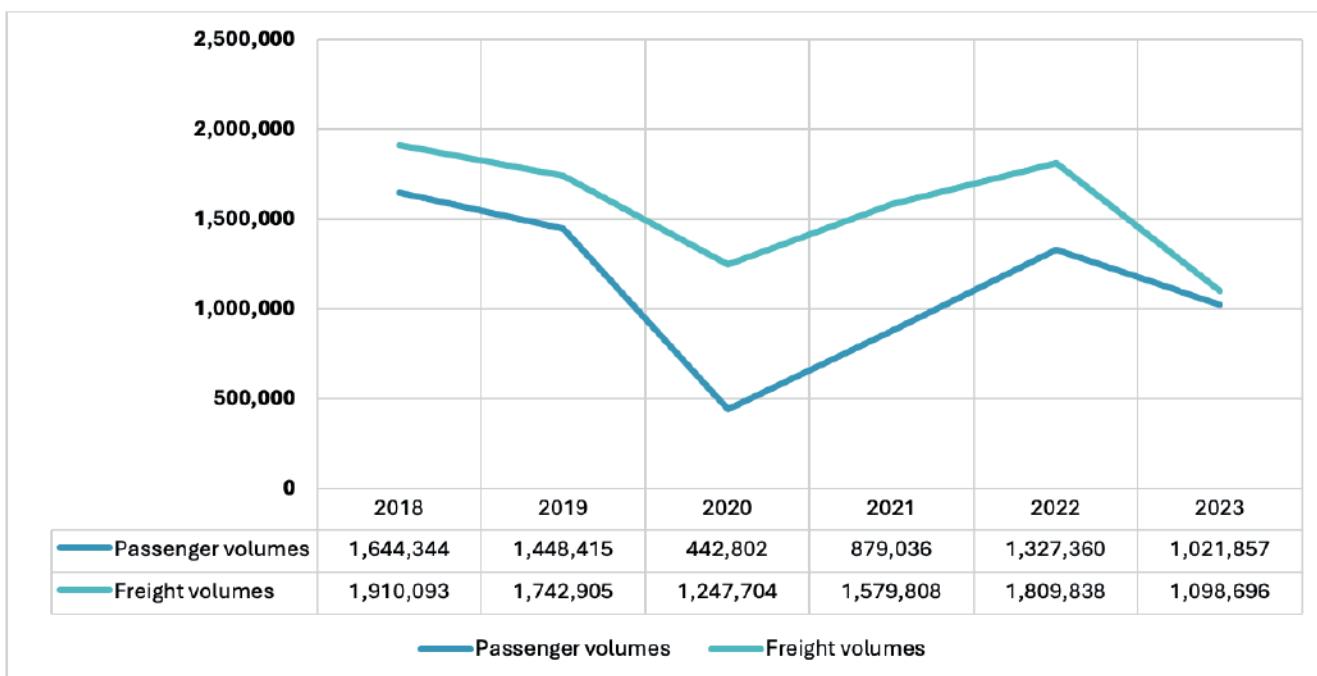
With the exception of 2020 and 2021 passenger volumes, over 1 million passengers per kilometre passed through Belize annually by air between 2018 and 2023.⁵³ The reduced volume of passengers in 2020 resulted, more than likely, from the COVID-19 restrictions on international movement as well public gatherings. In terms of freight volume, over 1 million pounds of freight goods were transported through Belize by air annually during the same timeframe and there was a similar reduction in freight volume in 2020.⁵⁴ The combination of passenger and freight volumes is meant to demonstrate the robust infrastructural development of the economy. It is significant, therefore, that the observed reductions in 2020 was followed by a recovery in passenger and freight volumes in 2021 (see Exhibit 46).



3.2.2.3 SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure

Target 9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic

Exhibit 46: Passenger and freight volumes, 2018 - 2023



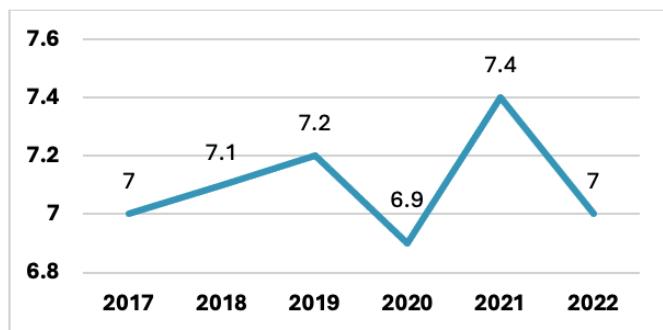
Source: Department of Civil Aviation; Department of Transport; Belize Port Authority

Target 9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries

As a measure of the extent to which Belize has evolved into an industrialised nation that has been able to facilitate economic growth and absorb its human resource capacity, manufacturing value added (MVA) as a proportion of GDP was used to gauge the contribution of manufacturing to country-level socio-economic development. With the exception of a reduction to 6.9 percent in 2020, during the economic contraction that resulted from the COVID-19 restrictions, MVA as a proportion of GDP was within the range of 7 – 7.4 percent of the GDP between 2017 and 2021 (see Exhibit 47).

As a measure of the level of industrialisation that has been attained by the country, the MVA per capita ranged from 0.82 to 1 during the same period. For both indicators, a higher MVA signifies a higher level of industrialisation. It is to be noted, therefore, that main source of revenue for Belize has been tourism and agriculture.

Exhibit 47: MVA as a proportion of GDP, 2018 – 2022, (%)

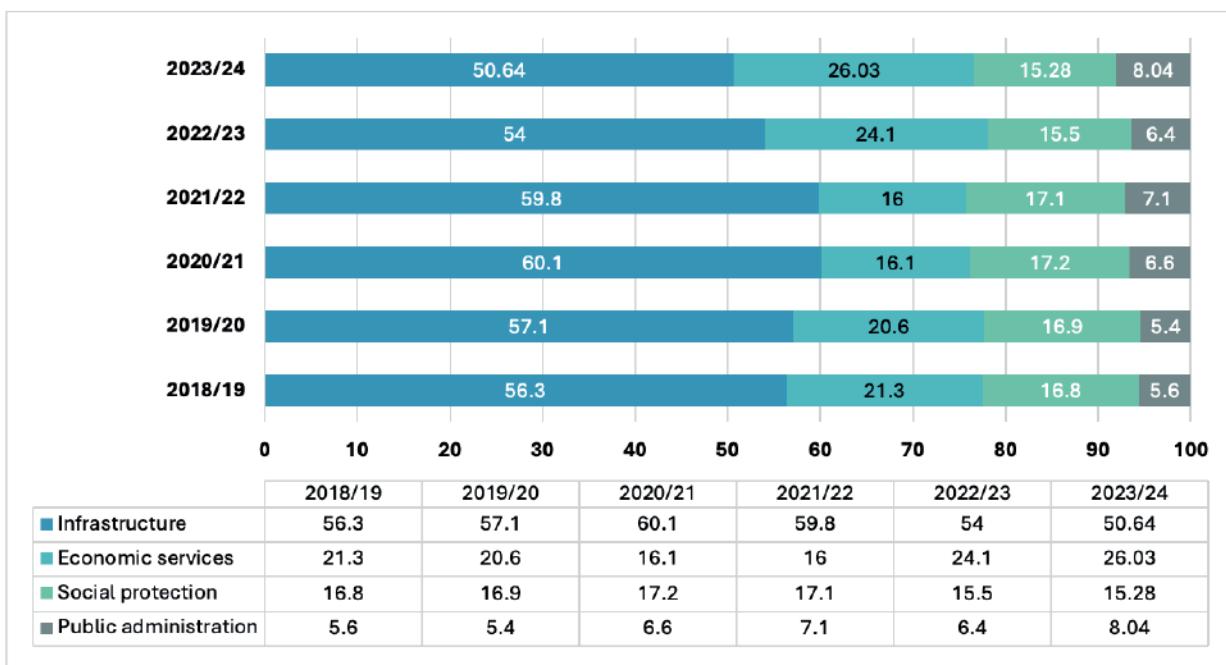


Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

Target 9.A Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small-island developing States

The mainstay of the PSIP has been its infrastructure projects, which have been used to contribute towards the evolution of the Belizean economy based on a mandate of sustainable development. Between 2018/19 and 2023/24, infrastructure projects accounted for more than 50 percent of the PSIP, reaching a high of 60 percent of the PSIP in 2020/21 (see Exhibit 48).

Exhibit 48: PSIP by project type, 2018/19 – 2023/24 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

As the primary sources of funding for the PSIP are loans and grants from external funding agencies, Overseas Development assistance has been used in major part to facilitate PSIP infrastructure projects. The Government of Belize has actively invested in the establishment of built resilience in physical infrastructure. Based on its location within the North America-Caribbean hurricane zone, Belize remains vulnerable to natural hazards during the annual hurricane season. The investment in resilient infrastructure on a national scale is important for ensuring country preparedness and capacity for recovery in response to emergent natural hazards. Of note, the damage to infrastructure that resulted from Hurricane Lisa in 2022 amounted to USD \$12.322 million.⁵⁵ To stem the effects of future similar crises, examples of the contributions made by the Government of Belize to resilient infrastructure include:

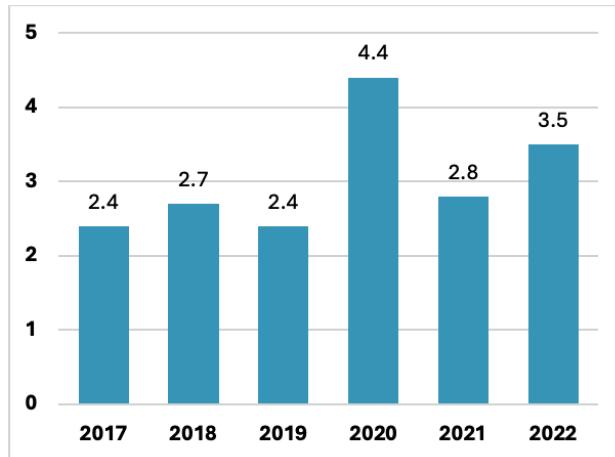
Project	Timeline	Cost
Resilient infrastructure	April 2019 – December 2024	USD \$5,941,000
Resilient infrastructure	September 2023 – September 2025	USD \$13,500,000
Resilient infrastructure	July 21 – September 2023	USD \$52,975,450
Resilient infrastructure	December 21 – September 2023	USD \$2,427,879

3.2.2.4 SDG 10: Reduced inequalities within and among countries

Target 10.5 Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations

Target 10.5 was developed to assess the quality of assets that are available to establish a buoyant economy, comprising efficient asset management; high and/ or anticipated returns on investments etc. The existence of non-performing loans will be used as a proxy to gauge the quality of available assets. Of interest, therefore, the highest proportion of non-performing loans emerged in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic given the economic slowdown. While there was a reduction in the proportion of non-performing loans in 2021, this figure increased again in the subsequent year (Exhibit 49).

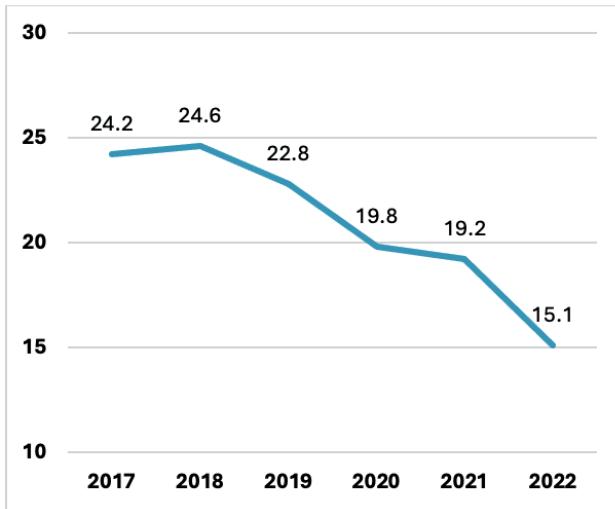
Exhibit 49: Non-performing loans to total gross loans, 2017 - 2022



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

Belize also experienced a low capital adequacy ratio between 2017 and 2022 (see Exhibit 50). Although there was a marginal increase between 2017 and 2018 from 24.2 percent to 24.6 percent, there was a steady decline in the capital adequacy ratio from 2018 to 2022. As the low ratio existed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is conceivable that it was not generated by the effects of the pandemic on the economy. The results of a poverty study by the SIB in 2018 showed that income inequality in Belize was not extreme in that year. Although this was reflected in the Gini Coefficient of 0.49,⁵⁶ this figure had increased by 11 points since 2009.⁵⁷ A financial assessment would be worthwhile, within this context, to identify the drivers of the fluctuations in the capital adequacy ratio.

Exhibit 50: Capital adequacy ratio, 2017 - 2022



Source: Central Bank of Belize

⁵⁶ The Gini Coefficient is a measure of income inequality that ranges from 0 to 1, with 0 signifying no inequality and 1, complete inequality

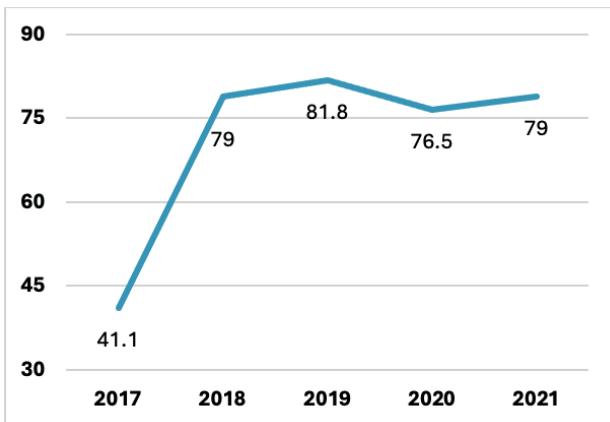
⁵⁷ In 2009, the Gini Coefficient for Belize 0.38.

Target 10.A Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organisation agreements

As Belize has had a persistent merchandise trade deficit,⁵⁸ the country continues to experience a high import to export ratio. Between 2017/18 and 2022/23, import duties ranged from USD \$48.868 million to USD \$65.757 million.⁵⁹ While the Government of Belize, through the #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026, has committed to a strategic approach to trade deficit reduction, the economy continues to be challenged by high external tariffs on imported goods.

As Belize is a signatory to several regional and international bi-lateral trade agreements (e.g. the Caricom Single Market Economy and the Belize Taiwan Partial Scope Agreement), the economy has benefitted on reduced tariffs on its exports. These bilateral agreements have complemented the measures that are being taken by the Government of Belize to reduce its import bill. Between 2017 to 2019, for example, the country benefitted from the reduction and/ or elimination of the tariffs on its international and regional imports (see Exhibit 51). During the economic contraction that was generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the country experienced a reduction in the tariffs lines that were applied to its imports (from 81.8 percent in 2019 to 76.5 percent in 2020). As of 2021, the country had increased access to tariff reductions, in the vicinity of 79 percent.

Exhibit 51: Proportion of tariff lines applied, 2017 – 2021 (%)



Source: Customs and Excise Department

58 The trade deficit will be addressed further under Pillar 5: Partnerships
59 Approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure



3.2.2.5 SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Target 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slummy

One of the major interventions that has emerged from the #planBelize MTDS 2022 – 2026 has been the facilitation of access to affordable housing by eligible persons in Belize. The mission of #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 has been strongly founded on the need to ensure that the basic rights of all Belizeans are met. These rights include access to housing, *inter alia*.

The latest SIB Abstract of Statistics has indicated that there is significant demand for housing loans. Between 2020 and 2022, the Belize Development Finance Corporation approved a total of USD \$15.6 million in housing loans. As there are specific eligibility criteria that would qualify an applicant for a housing loan, such as the need to provide proof of regular employment within a specified income range, it is likely that these loans would not be accessible to persons with lower incomes.

To increase the possibility for home ownership by persons with less financial resources, the Government of Belize established an affordable housing programme that aligns directly with the principles of the #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026. Housing applicants are required to meet at least one of five eligibility criteria:

1. Extreme poverty, vulnerable and no income;
2. Not having their own house or house in extreme dilapidation;
3. Single parent or persons with disability, elderly;
4. Unemployed or underemployed; and
5. Access to property

Source: Ministry of Infrastructure, Development and Housing⁶⁰

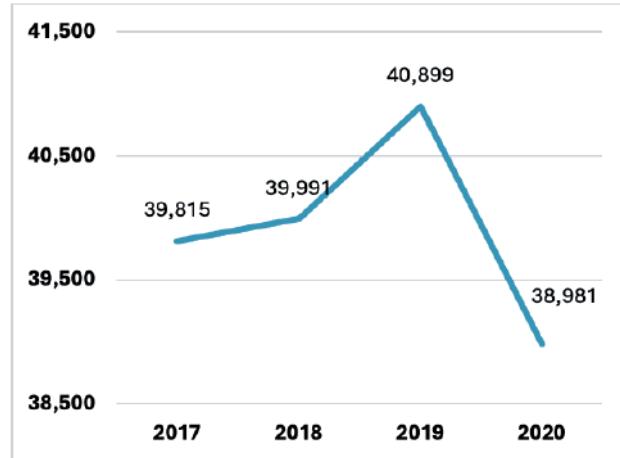
Applicants who meet required criteria are interviewed by a panel comprising representatives of stakeholder agencies within the housing and human development sectors. As of May 2024, approximately 250 affordable houses had been constructed to accommodate poor,

female-headed households, as well as senior citizens.

Target 11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management

The Belize Solid Waste Management Authority (BSWMA) is responsible for the effective disposal of solid waste material throughout the country. To facilitate this process, operational transfer centres are located in six municipalities across the six districts within the country. Between 2017 and 2021, BSWMA disposed of 175,543 tonnes of solid waste. At the annual level, the amount of waste that was disposed increased steadily between 2017 and 2019 before declining in 2021 (see Exhibit 52).

Exhibit 52: Solid waste disposal, 2017 – 2021 (tonnes)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

As there is no individual budget line for solid waste management under the PSIP, projects in this area are categorised and funded under the budget for Environment and Natural Resources Management.

Target 11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

Belize has been investing in the establishment of safe and inclusive environments at the community and national levels to accommodate persons of all abilities. The emphasis has been on creating sustainable recreational spaces for use by all. This is a work in

The emphasis has been on creating sustainable recreational spaces for use by all. This is a work in progress. As an example, in 2021, the Government of Belize had established the following facilities:

- 31 Public buildings
- 570 miles of streets
- 163.18 acres of parks and playgrounds
- 19 Buildings fitted with facilities for persons with disabilities
- 22 Parks fitted with facilities for persons with disabilities

Target 11.7.B By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels

In support of strategic measures taken at the level of Government to improve public spaces and facilities, there have been equivalent actions at the district level to build community preparedness for disasters and crises. The emphasis has been on developing local disaster risk reduction plans that align closely with national plans and strategies, in particular, the Disaster Preparedness and Response Act (Revised Edition 2020). As of 2023, therefore, all six districts had developed at least one Village/ District. City Plan that provides guidance on disaster risk management, including preparedness; risk reduction and resilience.



PLANET



3.3 Pillar 3: Planet

3.3.1 Context

The Government of Belize has complemented its people-centred approach to the implementation of Agenda 2020 with an investment in a replenishable natural ecosystem for the benefit of future generations. There has been a national commitment to the optimal use of natural resources to facilitate the contribution of Belize to the SDGs, without compromising the need for natural resource management. In accordance with the LNOB principle, there has been an equivalent focus on providing the general population with access to potable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, in the interest of facilitating access to basic essentials. As a result of resource constraints, however, government interventions for human development and environmental sustainability have been challenged by limited resource availability.

3.3.2 Progress

3.3.2.1 SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation

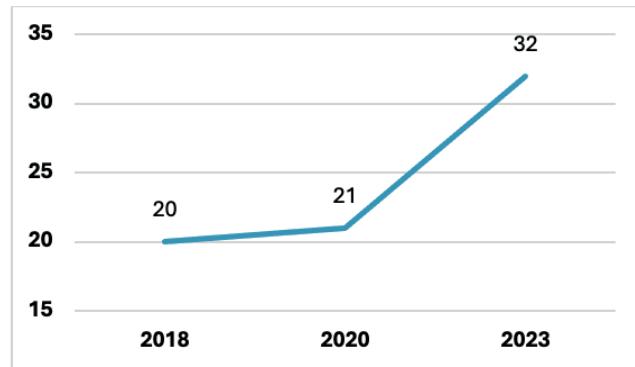
Target 6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally

There is an empirically determined link between poverty levels; health; and access by the general population to potable water and sanitation facilities.⁶¹ Although Belize has access to adequate groundwater reserves to prevent a situation of water shortage, the need to ensure water quality through unpolluted sources remains paramount. It is significant, therefore, that Belize has had the capacity to provide public access to safely managed drinking water. As of 2020, the level of water stress, indicative of freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater sources,⁶² has been low, at 1 percent. The low percentage value indicates that water extraction and availability is not a challenge for economic development and sustainability in Belize. There has also been no change in the water ecosystems

over time (as recorded in 2020) which contributes to the restoration of degraded water ecosystems.⁶³

Between 2018 and 2023, integrated water resources management increased steadily from 20 percent in 2018 to 32 percent in 2023 (see Exhibit 53). At 78.95 percent for the period 2017 to 2020, the national score for assessed ambient water from river and groundwater sources was also of good quality.⁶⁴ Similarly, the normalised score for ambient water from these sources was good at 80 percent during the same timeframe. As a result, an estimated 98 percent of the population had access to good quality drinking water in 2020/2021.⁶⁵

Exhibit 53: Integrated water resources management 2018 – 2023 (%)⁶⁶



Source: Belize Water Services Limited

Conversely, Belize has been challenged by the management of sanitation services, with emphasis on wastewater treatment and WASH facilities (see Exhibit 54). While there was a steady increase in the average daily amount of wastewater that was treated between 2017 and 2019 (from 4.8 to 5.08 thousand cubic metres per day), there was a sharp decline in 2020 (to 4.63 thousand cubic metres per day), followed by a negligible increase in 2021 to (to 4.65 thousand cubic metres per day).

⁶¹ <https://publications.iadb.org/en/water-and-sanitation-belize>

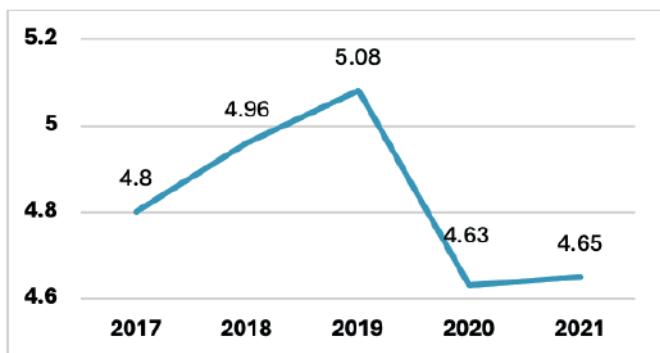
⁶² This indicator is applicable to Target 6.4, but it has been incorporated into the current narrative based on relevance.

⁶³ This result has been extracted from Target 6.6 given its applicability to the current narrative.

⁶⁴ Belize National Hydrological Services

⁶⁵ https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/bz_09916fe331aa1c172e358f69-ca41b55f874253ff6b115e95ce73075e68005c99.pdf

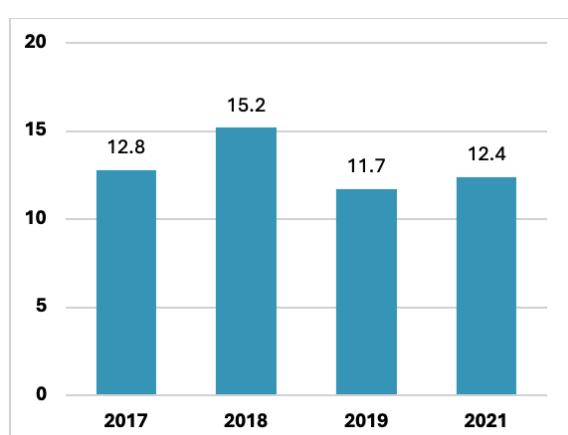
Exhibit 54: Wastewater treated in urban wastewater treatment plants, 2017 – 2023 (cubic metres per day)



Source: Belize Water Services Limited

Notably, the decline in 2020 coincided with the economic downturn of the COVID-19 pandemic. An issue for consideration, however, is that Belize had been assessed as lagging in the achievement of universal access to improved sanitation facilities.⁶⁷ Although this assessment had been conducted in 2013, the updated figures on wastewater treatment have indicated minimal change in capacities in this area. Access by the general population to wastewater collecting and/or treatment facilities has, however, been promising. Between 2017 and 2021, for example, while there was some fluctuation in the proportion of the population that had access to wastewater collecting facilities, there was evidence of increased access by 2021 (see Exhibit 55).⁶⁸

Exhibit 55: Population access to wastewater collecting system, 2017 – 2021 (%)

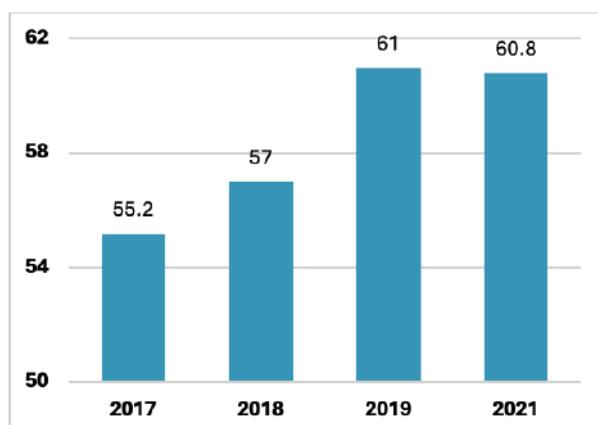


Source: Belize Water Services Limited

While the proportion of the population with access to independent wastewater treatment facilities remained

within the range of 55.2 to 61 percent between 2017 and 2021 (see Figure 56), these figures are relatively high.

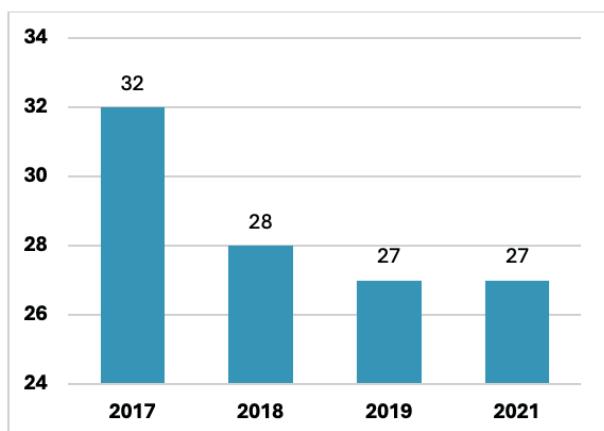
Exhibit 56: Population access to independent wastewater treatment, 2017 – 2021 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

Of concern, however, although the proportion of the population with no access to wastewater treatment facilities is lower than the proportion that has access, the figures are also relatively high (Exhibit 57).

Exhibit 57: Population with no access to wastewater treatment, 2017 – 2021 (%)



Source: Belize Water Services Limited

From a health and safety perspective, including considerations of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, access to WASH is essential within the context of the educational setting in Belize. Inadequate access to WASH at the school level, in particular, has been a challenge for girls in Belize given the necessity of menstrual hygiene management. The results of a 2018 menstrual health management study by UNICEF in Belize⁶⁹ have shown that cultural mores and poverty contribute to unmet

⁶⁶ This result is also applicable to Target 6.5 (By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate)

⁶⁷ <https://publications.iadb.org/en/water-and-sanitation-belize>

⁶⁸ Figures for 2020 were unavailable.

menstrual hygiene needs. This situation was more pronounced in rural areas.

Further, the implications of these unmet needs are likely to include regular absence from school during the menstrual cycle, as well as a higher possibility of drop out because of the challenge in managing menstrual hygiene needs. There is an equivalent challenge, in the installation costs of WASH facilities at the school level, which are significantly high.⁷⁰ As a result, there has been a tendency for repairs to WASH facilities to be conducted on a needs basis only, which contributes towards deficiencies in WASH resources.

Given the importance of WASH for schools, the Government of Belize, through the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health and Wellness, partnered with UNICEF Belize Country Office in 2022 to promote WASH activities in schools across the country, with a focus on hand washing hygiene.⁷¹

In collaboration with the World Health Organisation and the Pan American Health Organisation (WHO/PAHO), the Government of Belize has been piloting the TrackFin tool⁷² to track financing to the WASH sector. TrackFin is a global methodology that has been used to assess and track the availability of WASH resources at the country level to support evidence-based decision-making for the establishment and/ or enhancement of WASH facilities.

Target 6.A By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water – and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies

Based on the ongoing mobilisation of financial resources through bilateral and multilateral agreements, the Government of Belize has continued to invest significantly in the provision of public utilities. With emphasis on water and sanitation, the PSIP has been used to fund targeted initiatives for increased public access to safe water and reliable sanitation and hygiene services across all six districts in Belize. Exhibit

58 provides examples of specific interventions.

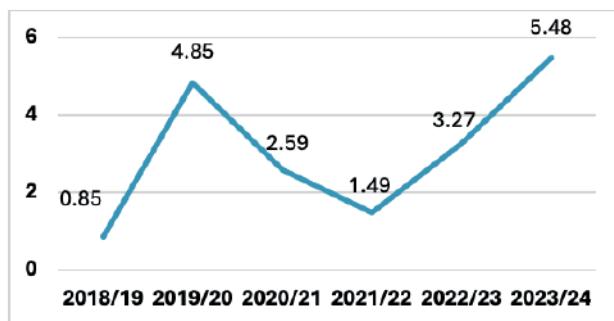
Exhibit 58: Examples of WASH projects

Project	Timeframe	Cost
Safe Drinking Water/ Sanitation and Hygiene, Belize district	February 2019 – December 2023	USD \$8.722 million
Safe Drinking Water, Rural districts	June 2022 – December 2023	USD \$0.8 million
Increased Water Access	May 2023 – May 2027	USD \$6 million
Safe Water, Urban/ Rural districts	December 2022 – December 2024	USD \$0.25 million
Safe Water and Integrated Water Source Management, Rural districts	May 2023 – May 2027	USD \$4.64

Source: Ministry of Economic Development

Water and sanitation projects have been funded under the infrastructure budget of the PSIP, which was re-categorised as Economic infrastructure in 2023. Between 2018/19 and 2023/23, water and sanitation projects received funding in the range of USD \$ 3.09 million to USD \$ 29.890 million under the PSIP. The allocation to water and sanitation projects amounted to 0.85 percent to 5.48 percent of the budget for Infrastructure/ Economic Infrastructure (see Exhibit 59).

Exhibit 59: Water and sanitation as a proportion of Economic infrastructure, 2018/19 – 2023/24 (%)



Source: Calculated from PSIP data⁷³

69 UNICEF, 2018. Formative Assessment of Menstrual Hygiene Management among Adolescent Girls in Primary and Secondary Schools in Belize. Available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fUQVAWdbcLff1h3g0dIAkSKGB4IP8Oik/view>

70 UNICEF/ WHO. Drinking water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools: Global baseline report 2018. Available at: https://data.unicef.org/resources/wash-in-schools/?_gl=1*6osq7*_ga*MTA1MjgzNjEwMS4xNzEwOTkyMDk3*_ga_ZEPV2PX419*MTcxNDk3Ny1Ny44LjEuMTcxNDk3NzcxMS42MC4wLjA

71 <https://www.unicef.org/belize/topics/water-sanitation-and-hygiene>

72 <https://www.sanitationandwaterforall.org/tools-portal/tool/trackfin-tracking-financing-sanitation-hygiene-and-drinking-water>

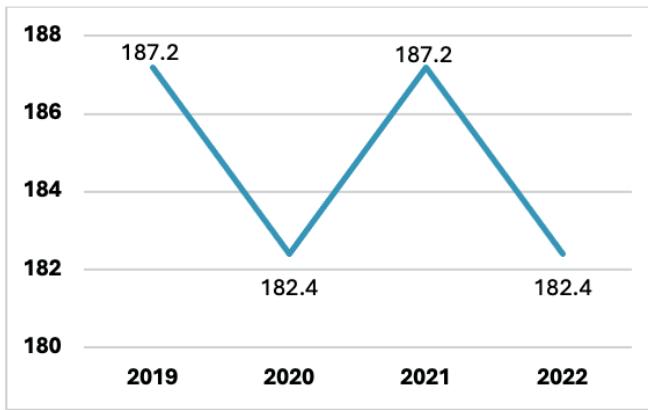
3.3.2.2 SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production

Target 12a Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production

Belize has a growing population. The results of the 2010 and 2022 National Population and Housing Census have shown that the population grew by 23.3 percent between both years (from 322,423 to 397,484 persons). In accordance with the Agenda 2030, Target 12a centres on the identification and maintenance of renewable energy sources to support regular consumption, as well as preserve availability from source by facilitating resource renewal.

There was a visible fluctuation in the capacity of the Belize Electricity Limited to generate electricity from renewable sources, while ensuring that the supply of electricity was proportionate to population needs. During 2019 and 2022, there were declines in the annual wattage per capita in 2020 and 2022. In spite of the fluctuations in the installed capacity of BEL, each recovery restored the annual wattage per capita to the previous value (see Exhibit 60). As a result, the capacity range for renewable energy was 182.4 to 187.2 watts per capita annually.

Exhibit 60: Installed capacity for renewable energy, 2019 – 2022 (watts per capita)



Source: Energy Unit

3.3.2.3 SDG 13: Climate Action

Target 13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

The Government of Belize has continued to invest in the development of resilient infrastructure to stem the effects of natural hazards across Belize. There has also been evidence of action planning at the district level to support community preparedness and recovery capacity relative to emergent natural disasters.⁷⁴

At the level of its climate change interventions, the National Climate Change Office (NCCO) is responsible for coordinating the national; regional; and international response of Belize to climate change through the implementation of the 2014 National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan (NCCPSAP). It is also responsible for leading the development and adaptation of mitigation strategies; policy; and public awareness-raising. NCCO was established in 2015 and its approach to intervention involves establishing a consistent framework across public sector ministries, departments and agencies to mitigate the effects of climate change. The primary responsibility of NCCO is to lead the national and international agenda on climate change in Belize. This portfolio further includes, coordinating the following actions, *inter alia*:

- The mobilisation of climate funds;
- Establishing a consistent framework across MDAs and sectors to mitigate the effects of climate change and build climate resilience;
- Coordinating the external response of Belize to the reporting requirements of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);
- Fulfilling international obligations for nationally-determined contributions (NDCs), national communications and the biennial update report;
- Providing support for clean development mechanism projects and mainstreaming mitigation and adaptation strategies into the national sustainable development agenda; and

- Coordinating the national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory and establishing a GHG Management System.

Source: NCCO⁷⁵

From 2018/19 to 2020/21, PSIP projects in the area of climate change, including disaster risk management, were categorised with projects for environment and natural resources management. The combination of projects was funded under the PSIP Economic Services budget. As of 2021/2022, there has been a specific budget line for projects that can be categorised under the climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation theme. These projects have been implemented at a cost of USD \$0.998 million to USD \$9.639 million. In 2023/24, a specific budget line was also established for disaster risk management response under the PSIP budget for Economic Services. Projects in this area have been implemented at a cost of USD \$0.559 million.⁷⁶ At present, climate change projects have been funded with external sources of funding. By establishing a budget line for this category of projects within the national budget, the Government of Belize would further streamline its responsiveness to the key areas that require intervention across the public sector. This approach will align with the actions that were initiated by the Government of Belize, through the #plan#Belize MTDS, to mobilise climate finance and develop the National Climate Finance Strategy 2021 – 2026.

While there has been evidence of country-level interventions in relation to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the progress that has been made has been underreported.⁷⁷ This has resulted from insufficient funding, i.e. progress reports are initiated when funds are available to develop GHG emission inventories. The Government of Belize is taking steps, to update its inventories for the next Biennial Transparency Report, circa December 2024.

Target 13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

Belize has attained several milestones in relation to the integration of climate change considerations into national policies and strategies, as well as the facilitation of targeted planning to stems the effects of climate change nationally. In 2021, for example, the Government of Belize officially launched the 2020-2050 Belize Low Emissions Development Strategy (LEDS).⁷⁸ LEDS 2020 – 2050 establishes the commitment and long-term ambitions of the country to a low emissions development pathway that extends to 2050. It is informed by the high vulnerability of the country to the adverse effects of climate change, which have taken the form of droughts; floods; increasing coastal erosions and changes in precipitation patterns. The effects of these natural hazards have been increasingly felt on the physical infrastructure and the socio-economic fabric of the country.

In the area of financial resources, the National Climate Finance Strategy of Belize 2021 – 2026⁷⁹ was developed to guide the facilitation of country access to adequate funding for built climate resilience and climate mitigation. It was developed under the Climate Action Enhancement Package (CAEP),⁸⁰ with the objective of providing strategic directions to enable Belize to achieve its priority targets and actions for climate change. The National Climate Finance Strategy of Belize 2021 – 2026 is structured around 12 strategic directions and is closely aligned with the Belize NDCs⁸¹ under the 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement, which were last updated and submitted to UNFCCC in September 2021.

Within the context of climate change, the 2020 Belize National Agroforestry Policy (NAFP) has included among its objectives, the need to address country-level climate change challenges. The Government of Belize has acknowledged that climate change affects livelihoods by contributing to the degradation of natural resources. As a result, in addition to a focus on formulating relevant policies and legislation, NAFP was designed to support advocacy for an improvement in the environment; a decrease in GHG emissions; and built climate change resilience within the agricultural sector.

⁷⁵ Adapted from <https://sustainabledevelopment.gov.bz/national-climate-change-office/>

⁷⁶ PSIP report 2023/24

⁷⁷ The most recent data on the contribution of Belize to reduced greenhouse gas emissions is dated 2017, which is the baseline for the 2024 VNR.

⁷⁸ <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Belize%20LEDS.pdf>

In support of its strategic objectives and policies for addressing climate change, the Government of Belize has established several technical advisory committees to guide its national level response. These committees include:

- Belize National Climate Change Committee;
- Belize National Spatial Data Infrastructure Technical Committee;
- Fourth National Communication Steering Committee;
- Green Climate Fund Board;
- Marine Conservation and Climate Adaptation Project Technical Advisory Committee;
- REDD+ Readiness Project Steering Committee.

Source: NCCO⁸²

3.3.2.4 SDG 14: Life below water

Target 14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism

The Belize Fisheries Department is located within the Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management and has four primary responsibilities: i) managing the health and productivity of aquatic resources; ii) the collection and analysis of fisheries data and the provision of sound technical advice; iii) developing strategic policies and international collaboration; and iv) enforcing fisheries laws in the waters of Belize.⁸³ At the level of the PSIP, projects in the area of Fishing and Aquaculture are funded under the budget for Environment and Natural Resources Management.⁸⁴

In line with its core responsibilities, the contribution of the Fishing and Aquaculture industry to GDP ranged from 0.4 to 0.5 percent during 2017 – 2021 (see Exhibit 61). While there was an increase in the contribution of the industry to GDP in 2019, at 0.5 percent, this contribution was negligible. There was a constant contribution of 0.5 percent by the Fishing and

⁸² <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/bl215411.pdf>

⁸³ CAEP is an international partnership that was launched in 2019 to provide tailored country-level support for enhanced National Determined Contributions following fast-track implementation <https://enhancement.ndcpartnership.org/>

⁸⁴ NDCs provide an outline and official communication by countries on their national plans for reducing GHG emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs>

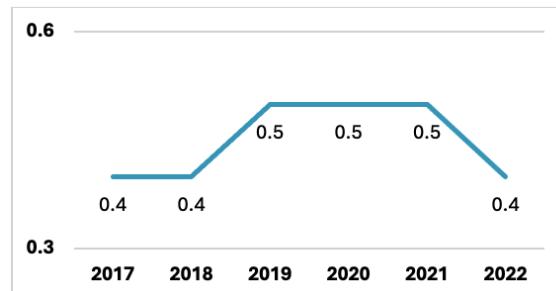
⁸² <https://climatechange.gov.bz/committees/>

⁸³ <https://fisheries.gov.bz/>

⁸⁴ This budget is also used to fund projects in the areas of solid waste management and forestry.

Aquaculture industry to GDP from 2019 to 2021. This was followed by a decline to 0.4 percent in 2022, which reflected a return to the levels of 2018 and 2019.

Exhibit 61: Contribution of Fisheries to GDP, 2017 - 2022 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

During 2017 – 2022, the area in which the department has made a significant contribution to the national economy and, by extension, SDG achievement, has been in aquatic management and conservation. The Fisheries Department has led the establishment and maintenance of a healthy and renewable aquatic ecosystem to support the sustainability of the national aquatic resources into the long-term. As extended benefits, this intervention has allowed for the preservation of marine life to support the livelihoods of local entrepreneurs within the fisheries and tourism sectors. An overview of the proportion of Belizean ocean that is under legal protection is presented in Exhibit 62.

Exhibit 62: Proportion of Belizean ocean under legal protection

Description	Unit	Territorial sea	Exclusive economic zone	Total ocean
Marine and internal waters	km ²	18951.44	14,755.55	33,706.99
	%	56.22	43.6	100
Total designated Marine Protected Area (MPA)	km ²	5914.88	926.54	6,841.42
	%	36.10	46.37	20.30
Total designated High Protected Marine Protected Area (MPA)	km ²	3,001.03	926.56	3,927.59
	%	15.84	6.28	11.65
Total designated all other Marine Protected Area (MPA)	km ²	2,913.86	0	2,913.86
	%	15.38	0	8.64

Source: Belize Fisheries Department

As a direct contribution to the achievement of SDG 14, the Belize Fisheries Department has established measurable ocean conservation commitments for Belize in five areas: i) sustainable fishing practices; ii) marine protected areas; iii) habitat conservation; iv) blue economy/ocean governance; and v) public awareness and education. The commitments for each area, as well as the emergent impacts are outlined in Exhibit 63.

Exhibit 63: Measurable ocean conservation commitments for Belize

Area of intervention	Commitment	Impact
	species (lobster, conch and finfish) by 2030, based on scientifically determined sustainable catch levels	overfishing and allowing fish populations to recover
2. Marine protected areas	Increase the area of ocean designated as MPAs to 30% by 2030, from the current 2024 baseline of 20.3%	Aligns with SDG 14.5 (Protect marine and coastal ecosystems) by providing crucial sanctuaries for marine life and allowing for habitat restoration
3. Habitat conservation	Achieve a net designation of 100% hectares of Public Lands within the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System as Mangrove Forest Reserves by 2022 (Completed) Increase the area of Coral Reef under protection to 20% by 2035, from the current baseline of 7%	Contributes to SDG 14.2 (Sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems) by protecting vital nursery habitats for fish, promoting coastal resilience and ecosystem services
4. Blue economy/ Ocean governance	Collaborate with stakeholders to develop and implement comprehensive Blue Economy governance and institutional frameworks by 2025 Revised Coastal Zone Management Act and Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan by 2025 Completion of a legally enforceable marine spatial plan (Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan) by 2026	Supports SDG 14.c (strengthen legal framework) by offering a viable method for enforcing ocean conservation and sustainable utilisation of the marine space and resources
5. Public awareness and education	Sensitize 100,000 citizens on ocean conservation and climate adaption issues by 2030	Supports SDG 14.7 (Awareness raising) by fostering a culture of ocean stewardship and responsible behaviour amongst Belizeans

Source: Belize Fisheries Department

To support the implementation of its conservation commitments, the Government of Belize also entered into a bond agreement with the Nature Conservancy/ Credit Suisse in the amount of USD \$364 million (Belize Blue Bonds). Belize has committed to financing marine conservation initiatives over the 20-year period of the bond, establishing an independent Conservation Fund managed by Belize Blue Investment Company (BBIC). The Conservation Fund received a US\$23.5 million deposit from the proceeds of the Blue Loan, with an additional US\$4.2 million annual contribution until 2041. The loan agreement became effective in January 2022 and is scheduled to mature in January 2040. Support for the work of the Fishing and Aquaculture industry, through the Fisheries Department, has also been provided through the PSIP. Projects in this area are categorised and funded under the budget for Environment and Natural Resources Management.

There has been low to very high implementation of international instruments for combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. As an example, there has been low implementation of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) agreement on Port State Measures to prevent; deter; and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. In contrast, there has been very high implementation of the FAO agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by fishing vessels on the high seas. In relation to the proportion of fish stocks that have been within biologically sustainable levels, the key commercially harvested species (e.g. shark and stone crab) have been 100 percent biologically sustainable between 2018 and 2023.

Belize Blue Bonds has helped the Government of Belize to make good progress in reducing the debt balance of the country while increasing national investment in ocean conservation.



Belize Blue Bonds: Key Successes

Debt reduction:

- Debt to GDP ratio by 25%
- National debt by 12%

Sovereign debt discount:

- Restructured the USD \$553 thousand
- Superbond by a 45% discount
- Debt service reduction:
- USD \$200 million reduction over 20 years

Long-term sustainable financing:

- Generated USD \$180 million in marine conservation over 20 years

Conservation and blue economy development:

- Up to 30% of Belize's total ocean space to be determined from the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan process

Source: Belize Blue Bonds Report

The agreement aligns directly with several national priorities. An alignment is visible with three priorities of the #planBelize MTDS 2022 – 2026 (poverty reduction; economic transformation and growth; and protection of the environment and natural resources). There is an alignment with the nationally determined contributions (NDCs), in relation to the mobilisation of financial

resources for blue NDCs. The specific focus is mangrove restoration and conservation; and seagrass management and conservation. Belize Blue bonds are also linked to the following SDGs: 14; 13; 12; 11; 7; 6; and 2. Blue Bonds Agreement programming also has the capacity to directly influence one or more of the following SDGs: 1; 2; 3; 8; 17.

In addition to the successes that have been accomplished, the Government of Belize has achieved significant milestones that are articulated within the Blue Bonds agreement. Belize has expanded its biodiversity protection zones to 20.5% of the country's total ocean space. Public lands within the Belize Barrier Reefs Reserves System have been designated as Mangrove Reserves. Belize has also initiated its marine spatial planning to deliver the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan 2026. As a result of the record of success that has been achieved under the Blue Bonds agreement, there is considerable scope for Belize to initiate accelerated contributions towards the SDGs in the remaining implementation period for Agenda 2030.

3.3.2.5 SDG 15: Life on land

Target 15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements



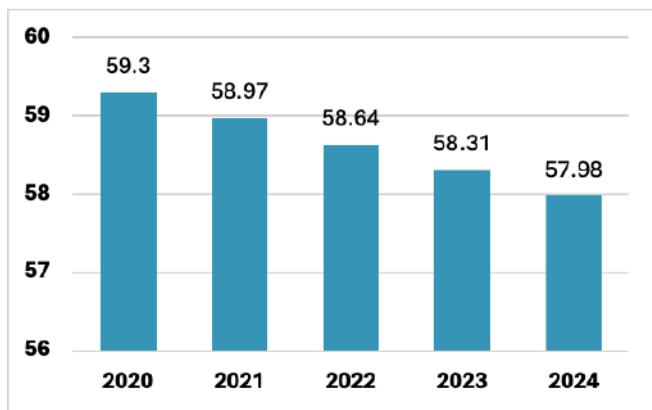
The management and protection of forested areas in Belize is spearheaded by the National Biodiversity Office (NBIO), which was established in 2021. As its primary responsibilities, NBIO coordinates the administration and management of protected areas across the country, and leads the conservation of biodiversity resources. NBIO is also responsible for coordinating and implementing the strategic plans; policies; and commitments of the Government of Belize in relation to biodiversity, as established under the Convention on Biological Diversity.⁸⁵

NBIO is key in providing support for the conservation of biodiversity in Belize. One of the primary tools for doing this is through the establishment and effective management of protected areas to protect key

ecosystems, including the species therein, as well as the goods and services these ecosystems provide. NBIO is also responsible for the key area of targeted resource mobilisation at the system level, for the implementation of national protected areas and biodiversity targets based on national strategies and international commitments.

The preservation of forest biodiversity has positive implications for the maintenance of the natural ecosystem, given the effects of good air quality; the creation of a habitat for wildlife; etc. At approximately 57 to 59 percent during 2020 – 2024, Belizean forests have represented a significant proportion of the total land area. Although there were marginal reductions in these percentages from 2022 to 2024 (see Exhibit 64), the ongoing assessment of the cause of reduction is required to prevent future degradation of forest area. Notably, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2020 has identified land use change and deforestation as the main drivers of biodiversity loss. Deforestation occurs mainly during agricultural expansion. Climate change is one of the highest rating pressures, as well as the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources.

Exhibit 64: Forest area as a percentage of total land area, 2020 – 2024 (%)



Source: Forest Department

Forest restoration and sustainable use is primarily managed by the Forest Department. The Forest Department is directly responsible for the management of Forest Reserves where sustainable logging operations are permitted through long-term forest

licenses. This department also regulates the extraction of timber and non-timber forest produce, within and outside of forest reserves, through the Forests Act Chapter 213 (Revised Edition 2020) and the Wildlife Protection Act Chapter 220 (Revised Edition 2020).

In general, 56% of the forested area in Belize represents land that is under natural or planted tree stands of at least 5 meters. Yet, the total area of humid primary forest in Belize decreased by 11% between 2002 and 2021 because of urban expansion, as well as land use that has been associated with an expanding agricultural sector.

To mitigate the loss of forested areas, the Government of Belize registered for the Bonn Challenge in 2021⁸⁶ by pledging to restore 130,000 hectares of forest (approximately 5.66 percent of deforested areas) by 2030. In order to fulfil its commitment to the Challenge, the government launched a National Landscape Restoration Strategy for Belize in 2022. The Strategy has established the strategic actions that are required to allow Belize to meet its commitment and has identified 383 thousand hectares of land where restorative work will be conducted.

In addition to the updating and signing of co-management agreements, another major action in the area of biodiversity and protected areas management includes the updating of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to align with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Support for the updating and costing of the 2016-2020 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan are to be noted, along with the identification of finance solutions to mobilise resources for the implementation of biodiversity targets. Some examples of finance solutions that have been established include the:

- Establishment of NBIO as a coordinating mechanism for the implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
- Development of a business planning framework for protected areas
- Development of the Biodiversity Impact Investment

- Tracking tool; and
- Establishment of the Debt- for-Nature swap financial mechanism.

Source: National Biodiversity Office

Target 15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

Belize has established a record for the sustainable management of its forests to minimise the possibility of deforestation and forest degradation. From 2017 to 2024, for example, the forest area net change rate was almost constant at -0.55 percent between 2017 and 2019 and -0.56 percent between 2020 and 2024.⁸⁹ Similarly, the above ground biomass stock in forest remained unchanged between 2020 and 2024 at 246.25 tonnes per hectare.⁹⁰ The proportion of forest area that was located within legally established protected areas also remained the same between 2020 and 2024 at 54.46 percent.⁹¹ Between 2017 and 2020, 197.12 thousand hectares of forest area were under independently verified forest management certification schemes.⁹² In 2021, this figure fell to 101.81 thousand hectares and remained unchanged in 2022.⁹³

The Government of Belize has taken steps to develop sustainable forest management plans to manage its forested and large corridor areas through concessionary agreements. This is being enabled through the Forests Act Chapter 213 (Revised Edition 2020). While this approach is supported by the Belize National Protected Area Systems Act (Revised Edition 2020), a revision to the Act has been developed for submission to Cabinet.⁹⁴ The sustainable management of forested areas is also being informed by the Protected Areas Conservation Trust Amendment Bill (2024).⁹⁵

For several years, the Government of Belize has been forming partnerships with non-governmental organisations/private agencies that are active in the area of forest conservation and management to

develop; pilot; and implement sustainable forest management plans. The first informal co-management agreement was established in 1984. As of 2023, NBIO has been supporting this objective by establishing clear frameworks for improved management and reporting, to strengthen the targeted partnerships. An effective approach to partnership-strengthening involves the updating and signing of co-management agreements that clearly outlines the envisioned roles and responsibilities of the Government of Belize and the partners non-governmental organisations/private agencies. As of March 2023, therefore, 16 out of a targeted 36 agreements were signed between the Government of Belize and partner organisations to be managed through a Co-Management Framework for protected areas under the National Protected Areas System (NPAS).⁹⁶ The co-management arrangement will further be used to strengthen the governance; management; effectiveness and financial stability of NPAS to support afforestation and reforestation.

Target 15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction and strategies and accounts

As a result of the uncertainties of climate change and climate variability, Belize faces an intensification of pre-existing environmental conditions that contribute towards wider social and economic effects. In the effort at mitigation, the Government of Belize, through the Department of the Environment, has established an objective to invest in a transition to sustainable development pathways. This approach is important for the regeneration of the terrestrial ecosystems across the country as over 60 percent of Belizean land surface is under forest cover. As a result of natural and anthropogenic hazards, Belize continues to be at risk to a decrease in forest cover and wetlands.

The transition to a sustainable development pathway s process will involve the continued operationalisation of several transition/ intervention pathways that will allow Belize to effectively address the impacts of existing environmental challenges to human health; communi-

86 <https://forest.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Wildlife-Protection-Act-Chapter-220.pdf>

87 <https://forest.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Forests-Act-cap-213s.pdf>

88 The Bonn Challenge was launched by the Government of Germany in 2011, in collaboration with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). As its main objective, the Challenge aimed to contribute to the restoration of degraded and deforested landscapes by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030. (<https://www.bonnchallenge.org/about>)

91 Statistical Institute of Belize

92-95 ibid

96 https://sustainabledevelopment.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/NPAS-Act-Final-Draft-for-review_March-2024-2.pdf

97 <https://sustainabledevelopment.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Protected-Areas-Conservaton-Trust-Amendment-2024-Final-23-4-2024.pdf>

98 <https://www.pressoffice.gov.bz/gob-continues-signing-of-protected-areas-co-management-agreements-with-conservation-partners/>

ecosystems; and the national economy. With the support of the Department of Environment, the main transition pathways that are being facilitated include:

- **Good governance**, involving increased accountability and transparency to generate data for evidence-based decision-making and the evaluation of environmental changes
 - This approach is important for environmental governance, to guide the use of natural resources and country-level adaptive capacity to natural adversities
- **Social equity**, allowing for the just inclusion of all of Belizean society in development plans and policies that have bearing on their well-being
 - Key elements of this process would entail the full implementation of the Free Prior Informed Consent Protocol, to engage indigenous communities, and the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (the ESCAZU agreement), which also supports the transition towards good governance, as well as shared economic prosperity
- **Shared economic prosperity**, by facilitating sustainable economic growth that generates employment opportunities to address ongoing socio-economic challenges (e.g. unemployment; poverty; the brain drain; etc.)
- **Sustainable lifestyles through a change in values and behaviours**, including, but not limited to the incorporation of the environment into the education curriculum to promote environmental awareness and support innovative responses and transformational change in relation to combined environmental, social and economic issues
- **Innovation and technology**, by incentivising industries to contribute towards a circular economy
 - The benefits of this approach include, *inter alia*, decreased waste production; increased energy efficiency (including through renewable energy); elimination of the impact of the impact of wastewater on aquatic system; improved water treatment systems; as well as increased potential for business development; innovation and job creation
- **Sustainable agriculture and food systems**, based on the active promotion and facilitation of organic farming given the benefits for improve ecosystems, with a focus on improved soil and animal health; agricultural approaches and products; enhanced agroforestry; etc.
- **Knowledge co-creation**, through the establishment of partnerships across sectors, as well as with neighbouring countries that share similar environmental resources and face similar natural hazards
 - The rational for this approach is linked to the potential it creates for a reserve of relevant data to inform evidence-based decision-making at the national level
- **Built resilience to climate change, natural hazards**, by enhancing the early-warning systems; disaster management capacity and ecosystem-based adaptation systems
- **Protection and enhancement of natural capital**, by implementing existing regulations to safeguard the long-term protection of national ecosystems and services, including through the incorporation of national capital into national accounts; policy-making; etc.

Source: Belize Environment Outlook, 2024

Belize has made significant progress in facilitating these pathways in key areas of environmental management (e.g. through the establishment of the LEDS strategy; the updating of the NDCs; the development of NPAS). There continues to be a strong interest by the Government of Belize in facilitating the cross-sectoral collaborations that are required to regenerate and sustain Belize's vast environmental ecosystem.

3.4 Pillar 4: Peace

3.4.1 Context

There have been significant developments at the national level that signify the commitment of the Government of Belize and its peoples to the establishment of a peaceable environment that is based on accountability; transparency and respect. These ideals align directly with the #planBelize MTDS 2022 – 2026, which advocates citizen security; no corruption; and good governance among its strategic objectives. They also accord with the core values of the Horizon 2030 long-term national development strategy which envisions a nation that is built on respect; transparency and accountability; fairness and equity, *inter alia*.

Belize continues to be challenged, however, by a sub-culture that involves pre-meditated violence; gender-based violence and gun-running. There have also been incidents of human trafficking and money laundering. This scenario raises a question of whether Belize, in its gravitation towards sustainable development, has been successful in facilitating an inclusive society that leaves no one behind.

3.4.2 Progress

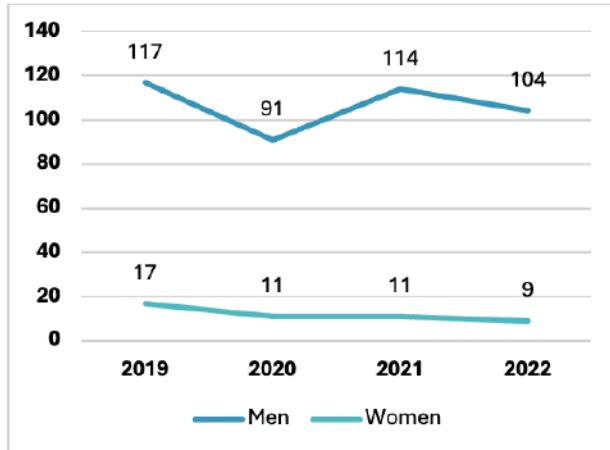
3.4.2.1 SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong institutions

Target 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

The results of the 2016 UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) for Belize indicated that the majority of survey respondents were experiencing a high level of life satisfaction. Ninety-six percent of the survey respondents who had an overall satisfaction with their lives were women. Similarly, 95 percent of men expressed an overall level of life satisfaction. Women and men who were very happy or somewhat happy each accounted for 94 percent of the survey sample. It is interesting, therefore, that a relatively large

number of men were victims of intentional homicide during 2017-2022 (see Exhibit 65).

Exhibit 65: No. of victims of intentional homicide per 1,000 population, 2019 – 2022



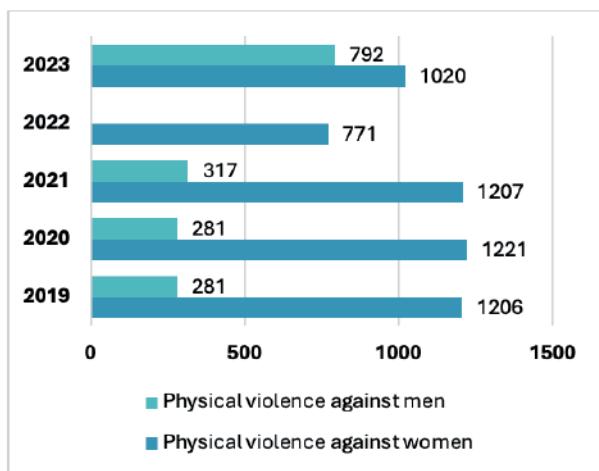
Source: Belize Crime Observatory

While there was a decrease in the number of men who were victims, between 2019 and 2020, (from 117 to 91 victims per 1,000 population), as well as between 2021 and 2022 (from 114 to 104 victims per 100,000 population), there was an increase between 2020 and 2021 (from 91 to 114 victims per 1,000 population). As these figures are relatively high and reflect pre-meditated violence, as well as the loss of life, they are cause for concern. This logic also applies to the corresponding figures for the women who were victims of intentional homicide. Even though these figures are considerably lower than those that were reported for men and declined between 2019 and 2022 (from 17 to 9 women victims per 1,000 population), the reason for the demise of the victims is significant, insofar as it is counterproductive to the effective contribution of Belize to SDG 16.

In the area of physical violence against persons, as well as sexual violence, there were more women victims than men victims for both types of violence (see Exhibits 66 and 67). Reports of physical violence against women (see Exhibit 66) reflected an increase in

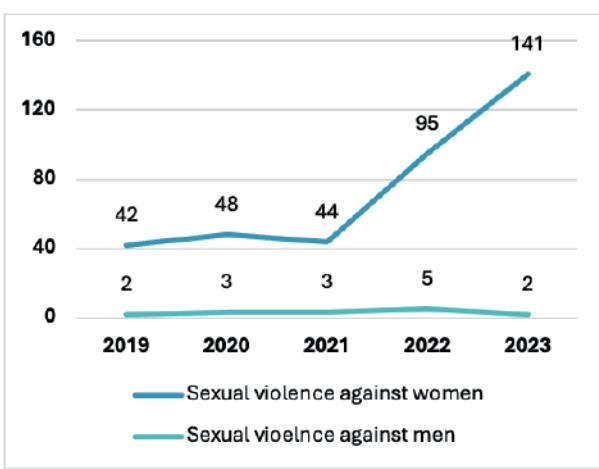
the number of women victims between 2019 and 2020 (by 1.2 percent), followed by a reduced number of victims in 2021 (by 1.1 percent), before increasing again in 2022 (by a high of 36 percent) and 2023 (by a similar high aggregate of 24 percent). The number of men victims of violence remained unchanged between 2019 and 2020 (281 victims) in each year before increasing by 11 percent in 2021 (317 men victims). Although the figure for 2022 was unavailable for analysis, there was a significant increase in the number of men victims of violence between 2021 and 2023 (by 59.9 percent, from 317 to 792).

Exhibit 66: Population subject to physical violence, 2019 – 2023, (No. of cases)



Source: Belize Crime Observatory

Exhibit 67: Population subject to sexual violence, 2019 – 2023, (No. of cases)



Source: Belize Crime Observatory

In general, reports of sexual violence against men were negligible, ranging from two to five cases (see Exhibit 67). While there was an increase in the number of men victims of sexual violence between 2019 and 2020 (by one case), this number remained unchanged between 2020 and 2021 (three cases of sexual violence against men). There was a further increase by two cases of violence against men between 2021 and 2022. In contrast, there was an increase in the number of cases of sexual violence against women by 70 percent between 2019 and 2023 (from 42 to 141 cases). The increase was gradual and fluctuated over the timeframe of focus, as reflected by an increase between 2019 and 2020 by 12.5 percent (from 42 to 48 cases), a decline by eight percent between 2020 and 2021 (from 48 to 44 cases), and increases in 2022 and 2023 by 53.6 and 32.6 percent respectively (95 cases in 2022 and 141 cases in 2023).

The priority areas of focus for the #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 include citizen security, with an acknowledgement that gender disparity is one of the factors that contributes towards incidents of violence in the country. While women and men in Belize are both victims of physical and sexual violence, the cases of violence against women have been significantly higher. What has been highlighted, therefore, is a wider societal issue in Belize in which women are the primary victims of gender-based violence (GBV).⁹⁷ In 2020, an increase in physical and sexual violence against women in Belize coincided with the economic downturn that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. The documented violence was a manifestation of the shadow pandemic that emerged globally as increased gender-based violence against women during the COVID-19 lockdown.⁹⁸

In its response to GBV, the Government of Belize has instigated a series of policies and strategic actions to prevent violence against persons in general and GBV in particular. GBV is a subset of interpersonal violence that is contrary to the achievement of SDG16. As an example, the revision of the 2013 National Gender Policy in 2024 has been a major development for Belize. It is accompanied by a new GBV Action Plan and a Behaviour Change Communication Strategy.

Exhibit 68: Expected outcomes of the Revised National Gender Policy

Revised National Gender Policy, 2024 – 2030
Expected Outcomes
Priority thematic area: Gender-based violence Goal: Strengthen and expand measures to ensure the safety and security of victims/ survivors of gender-based violence
Expected Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Outcome 1: Reduced incidence of all forms of gender-based violence (sexual violence; commercial sexual exploitation; human trafficking; domestic/ family violenceOutcome 2: Increased access to gender-sensitive, trauma-informed, and victim/survivor-centred care and support services for victims/survivors of all forms of gender-based violenceOutcome 3: Increased access to justice for survivors of gender-based violence

Source: Revised National Gender Policy 2024 -2030, p.18

The main objective of the Revised National Gender Policy 2024 – 2030 is the achievement of gender equality and equity, and the end of discrimination against women and girls in Belize. Although the Revised National Gender Policy was developed in alignment with SDG5: Gender Equality, it is also of relevance to the contributions of Belize to SDG16. The Revised National Gender Policy has built on the 2013 Gender Policy to address existing gaps in GBV prevention and facilitate three expected outcomes (see Exhibit 68).

To support the achievement of expected results under Priority Thematic Area 4, the Revised National Gender Policy has empowered the National Women's Commission (NWC), an institutional arm of the Government of Belize⁹⁹, to facilitate two development pathways. The first development pathway involves cross-sectoral collaboration with the public; private; and third sectors, as well as with international development agencies. The focus will be on contributing to gender equity and equality, in alignment with the expected outcomes and goal of Priority Thematic Area 4. The second development pathway has entailed empowering NWC to support the prevention of GBV through communication; advocacy; awareness-raising; and capacity-building, *inter alia*, allowing for the establishment and strengthening of stakeholder organisations.

At the level of legislation, the revision of the Belize Criminal Code in 2020 supported the cluster of actions that were being implemented under the Revised National Gender Policy. Marital rape, for example, became punishable in like manner as rape offences under the Revised Criminal Code. The National Sex Offenders Database was also established under the Revised Criminal Code¹⁰⁰ as a deterrent to repeat offences and as a protective measure for the general public.

Revisions to legislative Acts pertaining to the provision of evidence (The Evidence (Amendment) Act, 2017; the Indictable Procedure (Amendment) Act, 2022; and Electronic Evidence Act, 2021) have supported increased access to justice for victims of GBV, as they allow for electronic engagement, as opposed to in-person court appearances. The Evidence (Amendment) Act 2017 and the Indictable Procedure (Amendment) Act, 2022 also include a gender equity protocol to guide the engagement of judicial officers during court proceedings.

The Domestic Violence in Belize Motion, 2022¹⁰¹ has also enforced a zero-tolerance approach by the authorities in Belize to episodes of domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Motion¹⁰² has recognised domestic violence as a national priority that violates fundamental human rights. It has further underscored the need for additional resources for an effective response to domestic violence through a multisectoral approach. This approach will allow for awareness-raising on domestic violence, as well as the strengthening of safeguarding mechanisms and intervention facilities (e.g. the establishment of well-equipped safehouses with a welcoming environment for victims and the facilitation of professional counselling services).

In 2020, a consortium of United Nations Agencies that are active in Belize (UNDP; UNFPA; and UNICEF) launched the Spotlight Initiative, which is a global high-impact initiative of the United Nations to end violence against women and girls. The programme has been used to successfully engage government ministries; departments; and agencies in discussions with civil society organisations using transformative

103 <https://www.nationalassembly.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Act-No.-1-of-2024-National-Women's-Commission-Act-2024.pdf>

104 Elements of the Revised Criminal Code that pertain to commercial sexual exploitation; trafficking; and the protection of Children are discussed under other SDG targets

105 <https://www.nationalassembly.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Domestic-Violence-in-Belize-Motion-2022.pdf>

106 Although a Revised Domestic Violence Act was introduced in 2020, the changes to the Act are minimal as they pertain to a change in the commencement date from 2007 to 2008

spaces. These spaces are used to facilitate collaboration; coordination and strategy formation between government and civil society, to identify priority areas for intervention in relation to family violence, including GBV. The groups that have been identified for priority intervention include groups that face multiple intersecting forms of societal discrimination (i.e. discrimination that is based on multiple social categories, such as race; ethnicity; social identity; social class; etc.).¹⁰³ A major achievement of the Spotlight Initiative in Belize was the launch of a Joint Sexual Violence Response Programme in 2022, to address sexual abuse, including GBV within the Belizean security forces.

The #planBelize Women's Agenda 2020 includes a seven-point agenda to support the meaningful engagement and empowerment of women in Belize. Action point #7 of the agenda has placed emphasis on strengthening and expanding measures to ensure the safety and security of women and girls. The specific actions that will be initiated to facilitate this objective include, the establishment of a zero-tolerance position on violence against women; financial support for emergency shelters and transitional homes; and the implementation of laws on domestic violence and sexual violence, as well protocols for the protection of women and children, *inter alia*.

It is of interest that Action point #7 also advocates mandatory counselling for the perpetrators of domestic violence and violence against women. By design, this approach addresses the need for preventative action, to stem the possibility of repeat episodes of GBV by perpetrators of violence. The focus on mandatory counselling is an advancement over a reactionary approach, which is limited to interventions that are designed to address the trauma experienced by the victims of GBV.

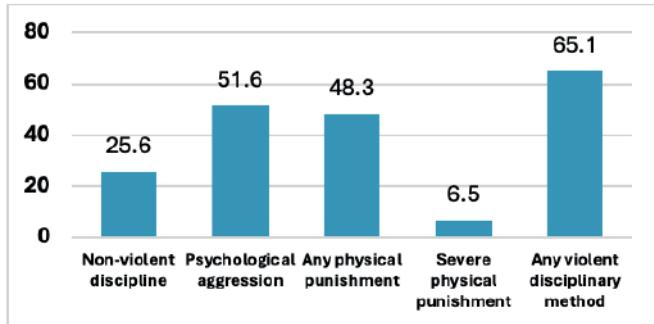
Although the Government of Belize has invested heavily in strategic actions to prevent GBV and address its emergent effects, GBV continues to challenge the contribution of the country to SDG16. There was a high level of physical and sexual violence against women in particular, during the post COVID-19 recovery phase. By

implication, the progress that has been made by Belize towards the achievement of SDG16 does not negate the importance of continued interventions for the reduction of GBV, with a view towards prevention.

Target 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

Based on the results of the latest Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)¹⁰⁴ for Belize (MICS5, 2015), which used the benchmark of the month that preceded the survey, 65.1 percent of children aged 1 – 14 years in Belize had been subjected to violent forms of discipline (see Exhibit 69). Of this aggregate, the proportion of boys who had been disciplined in this manner was higher than girls who had received the same form of discipline, 66.9 percent of boys vs 63.2 percent of girls (see Exhibit 70). The data further indicated that there was a general tendency in Belize towards the use of physical punishment and psychological aggression to discipline children. While 48.3 percent of children had received any form of physical punishment, 51.6 percent of children had been subjected to psychological aggression (see Exhibit 69).

Exhibit 69: Main forms of child discipline, 2015



Source: Belize Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2015

The percentage of boys who had been subjected to either one of these disciplinary methods was also higher than the percentage of girls who had been subjected to these disciplinary methods (see Exhibit 70). While 52.3 of boys had been disciplined based on methods that were psychologically aggressive, 51 percent of girls had been disciplined through these methods. A total of 51.2 percent of boys had also received any form of physical punishment, in contrast to 45.1 percent of girls who had been subject to physical

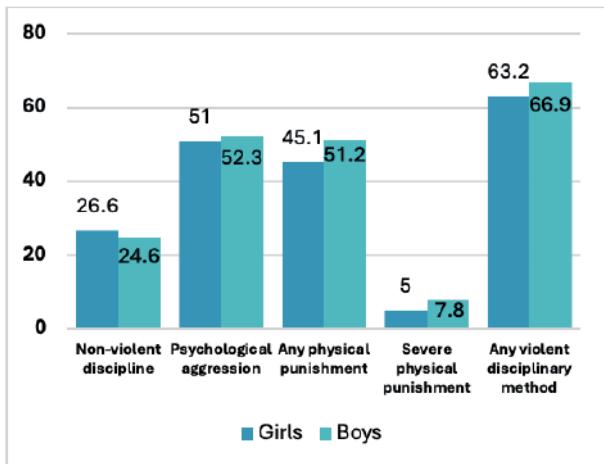
¹⁰³ Gopaldas, A., 2013. Intersectionality 101. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 32((1_suppl)), 90-94. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.12.044>

¹⁰⁴ MICS is facilitated globally (in 118 countries) by UNICEF in collaboration with country governments to generate data on key indicators on the well-being of children and women to inform policy development for an improvement in their lives. Belize conducts the MICS every five years.

punishment, in contrast to 5 percent of girls (see Exhibit 70).

At 25.6 percent, the proportion of children who had been disciplined through non-violent methods only, was approximately 50 percent lower than the proportion of children who had been subject to physical or psychologically aggressive forms of discipline. Of concern, however, 6.5 percent of children had received severe physical punishment, (see Exhibit 69) with boys accounting for the majority of this aggregate; 7.8 percent of boys experienced severe physical punishment, in contrast to 5 percent of girls (see Exhibit 70).

Exhibit 70: Forms of child discipline, by gender, 2015



Source: Belize Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2015

An updated overview and disaggregation of the main forms of child discipline in Belize will be provided by the results of the next iteration of MICS (MICS7, 2024). An important emergent issue for consideration from MICS5, however, is the attitude of the general population of Belize to child discipline. Approximately 25 percent of the respondents to the survey module on child discipline¹⁰⁵ believed that physical punishment was necessary to bring up; raise; or educate a child properly. While 26 percent of women held this view, 24.5 percent of men supported the use of physical disciplinary methods on children.

The attitude towards the use of physical discipline reflects the social mores that sanction the use of violence. They do not necessarily reflect, however, the motivation for or nature of the violence. To facilitate a strategic approach to the prevention of violence against

children, the Government of Belize has established relevant policies and action plans to address the situation (e.g. the existence of physical abuse; child labour; exploitation; etc.) The strategic actions taken by the Government of Belize have been informed by the Multidimensional Poverty Index,¹⁰⁶ which is established by the Statistical Institute of Belize using data from the Labour Force Survey and the National Population and Housing Census.

The Government of Belize established the National Children's Agenda 2017 – 2030 to create a conducive environment for raising children in Belize, to allow them to reach their full potential. In 2022, the Government of Belize, through the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government, launched the Belize National Child Labour Policy and Strategy 2022 – 2025. The primary goal of the National Child Labour Policy and Strategy is to 'reduce the incidence of child labour in Belize and take significant steps to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2025.'¹⁰⁷ In support of Agenda 2030, the implementation of the National Child Labour Policy and Strategy has been aligned to SDG16 and SDG8.

To facilitate the implementation, as well as the monitoring of the contributions of Belize to the SDGs, the National Child Labour Policy and Strategy is supported by an action matrix, in the form of a performance measurement matrix, which articulates the expected results and target indicators for achievement. The inclusion of an action matrix has been important for measuring the extent to which Belize is actively addressing the situation of child labour within the country. This approach has been useful for assessing the contribution of Belize to the SDGs. It is equally important, however, to ensure that systemic measures, with emphasis on resources, are in place to facilitate results monitoring.

As there is a link between human trafficking and sexual exploitation,¹⁰⁸ the 2020 Revision of the Belize Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act has been a significant step by the Government of Belize to address both issues. In support of increased legislation for the prevention of human trafficking, including

trafficking and sexual exploitation of children, a training session on Anti-trafficking in Persons was used to engage members of the Senate and the House of Representatives in January 2024.¹⁰⁹ The training was facilitated by the International Organisation for Migration to sensitise parliamentarians on the definition and situation of human trafficking in Belize. There was a specific focus on gaps in legislation within the country on human trafficking, and the anticipated role of legislators in addressing these gaps.

Target 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

To complement the exploration of reported cases of violence, as extracted from reports that were made by the general public, a proxy for the assessment of Target 16.3 has been the extent to which the rule of law has applied to public sector service delivery. The Office of the Ombudsman in Belize was established in 1999 under the legal mandate of the Ombudsman Act to support this objective.

Further to the revision of the Ombudsman Act in 2020, the Office of the Ombudsman provides neutral, third-party services for the investigation of public sector service complaints. These complaints can pertain to any aspect of public sector services, including at the level of management; administration; and service delivery. The Ombudsman is further responsible for issuing targeted recommendations for complaint resolution, and is allowed, by law, to approach the National Assembly for recourse in the event of the non-implementation of recommended steps.

Belize has recognised the importance of the role of the Ombudsman in facilitating good governance across the public sector based on fairness; social justice; transparency; and accountability. To illustrate, after being vacant for one year, following the end of the tenure of the previous Ombudsman, the incumbent was appointed to office in December 2022 for a three-year term. As of the first six months of appointment (January – June 2023), the Office of the Ombudsman was investigating 87 public sector service

complaints.¹¹⁰ As of June 2023, 36 of these cases were designated as closed after resulting in a solution. Thirty-two (32) of the remaining cases were being actively investigated and the remaining 19 cases were pending further review or details.¹¹¹

During the 45th Session of Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations, the Government of Belize also announced that it would be establishing a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) in compliance with the UN Paris Principles and Accreditation (Paris principles).¹¹² The process will involve collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It will further support the transition of the Office of the Ombudsman into the NHRI, including an amendment of the mandate of the Ombudsman to ensure that it complies with the Paris principles. The expected outcome of the overall process is the continued, increased and effective promotion; protection; and monitoring of human rights in Belize.¹¹³

In light of the national adherence to the rule of law, it is of concern that a relatively high proportion of individuals were placed on remand within the Belizean prisons system during 2018 – 2023. This figure has ranged from 32 to 38 percent of the overall prison population (see Exhibit 71). Although there is a likely rationale for the detainment, the persons on remand are also legally entitled to a fair trial under the Belizean legal system, to determine conviction (including length of imprisonment) or acquittal. The existence of unsentenced person on remand within the prison system has suggested that there is a systemic backlog of cases that needs to be addressed. Notably, in spite of the fluctuation in the proportion of unsentenced persons on remand, the range of unsentenced persons on remand as a percentage of the prison population has remained almost constant for over six years.

¹¹⁰ https://www.cdfbelize.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/bz_sesexpl_roleong_en-1.pdf

¹¹¹ <https://www.nationalassembly.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Press-Release-Womens-Parliamentary-Caucus-Human-Trafficking-Training-29.1.24.pdf>

¹¹² <https://www.pressoffice.gov.bz/office-of-the-ombudsman-mid-year-report/>

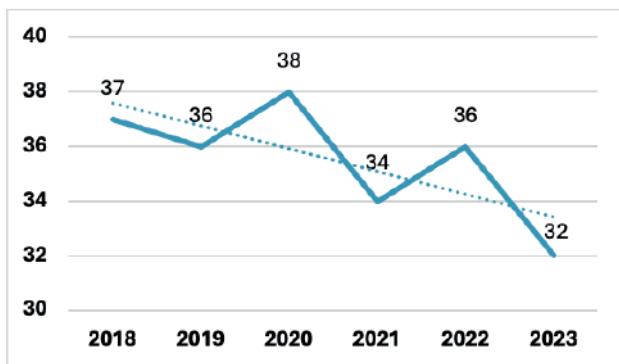
¹¹³ *Ibid*

¹¹⁴ <https://www.pressoffice.gov.bz/office-of-the-ombudsman-mid-year-report/>

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹¹⁶ <https://www.webtv.un.org/en/asset/k16/k167vcxs7>

Exhibit 71: Proportion of unsentenced persons on remand within the prison system, 2018 – 2023 (%)

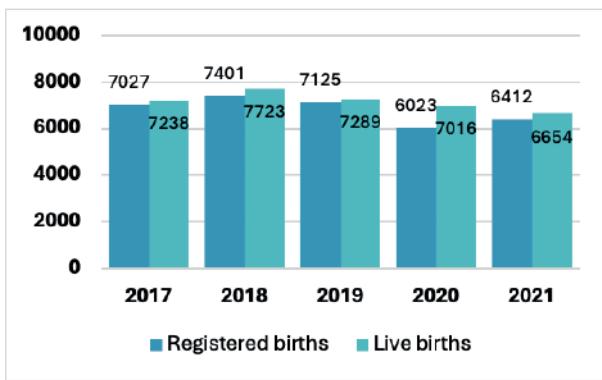


Source: Belize Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2015

Target 16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

To facilitate the right of all Belizeans to a national identity from birth, the responsibilities of the Vital Statistics Unit of the Attorney General's Office include maintaining a registry of all births. The work of the Vital Statistics Unit is covered by the Belize Registration of Births and Deaths Act (Revised Edition 2020). Over the period 2017 – 2021, there was a visible fluctuation in the registration of births. While there was an increase in registration between 2017 and 2018, the number of registered births declined in 2019 and 2020 before increasing again in 2021. Of greater importance, the registration of births for each year during 2017 – 2021 was lower than the live births that were documented for the same period (see Exhibit 72). This implies that some births were not documented.

Exhibit 72: Birth registration vs live births, 2017 – 2021 (No. of cases)



Source: Vital Statistics Unit

In 2023, the Vital Statistics Unit partnered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and HUMANA People to People to conduct a mobile birth registration clinic in one district of Belize.¹¹⁴ As the focus of the exercise was on reducing statelessness and facilitating access to civil registry services, the clinic registered births by asylum seekers; refugees and Indigenous persons in Belize. The exercise also disclosed the main reasons why some births had not been registered. There were two main reasons: 1) home births were not automatically followed by registration at the local office of the Vital Statistics Unit and; 2) in the absence of a proof of birth from the hospital where the child was born, it is not usually possible to register a birth in Belize (this document is not issued when the hospital fees are unpaid). As the mobile registration service was well-utilised by residents of the focus district and created greater flexibility for the registration of births, an emergent question is whether there is need to re-visit the standard approach to birth registration in the country.



Target 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

Based on the provisions of the Revised Belize Freedom of Information Act (2020), members of the public are entitled to obtain access to documents produced by government ministries or prescribed authorities. These documents are open for general public access or are available for purchase by members of the public. While the Freedom of Information Act provides an overview of the process that has been established to facilitate general public access to documents, information on the specific steps that should be followed are available from the entities that are responsible for producing each document. Examples of the steps that are likely include: mode of request for access (e.g. through an in-person or web-based application); timeframe for application and delivery of documents (e.g. application two weeks in advance of required date followed by electronic delivery); payment requirements (e.g. documents are provided free of charge or have a processing cost); etc.

In 2021, the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) launched an initiative to gather feedback from users of national statistics to determine the extent of satisfaction with the products received and the service that was provided. The SIB Customer Satisfaction Survey has since been administered annually to allow SIB to enhance the quality of its products and services. While there has been an indication that other government ministries are exploring a similar initiative (e.g. the Ministry of Public Utilities; Logistics; Energy and e-Governance), the launch of ministry-specific customer satisfaction surveys across the public sector is a work in progress.

Target 16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

The Horizon 2030 National Development Framework 2010 – 2030 was built on the necessity of facilitating sustainable development. By also committing to the ‘complete transformation of a nation,’¹¹⁵ the Government of Belize underscored its commitment to Agenda

2030 and the SDGs within the #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026. To operationalise this goal, the indicator framework for each strategic priority of the #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 was used to align the six strategic priorities with the SDGs. The LNOB principle of Agenda 2030 has also been fully integrated into the Belize sustainable development landscape, with emphasis on the needs of underserved groups within Belizean society. As a result of inadequate public funding, however, the social protection programmes for underserved social groups have not yet reached the planning stage.

Given the need for social interventions to address gaps in public sector service delivery, vulnerable/ marginalised groups within the Belizean context can be identified as groups that have not been typically engaged during key decision-making processes, as well as groups that have limited access to social and economic resources to maintain a socially acceptable standard of living. At the generalised, macro level, these groups comprise persons from lower income households who are defined as being poor. From a micro-analytical perspective, however, there are other segments of Belizean society that can be categorised as being vulnerable/ marginalised not specifically on the basis of having access to limited resources, but more as a result of the discrimination they face, with emphasis on their perception of ‘lived experiences’ of discrimination. These groups include but are not limited to: older persons (persons aged 60 years and above); persons with disabilities; indigenous persons; persons from the LGBTQI community; and persons with HIV/AIDS.¹¹⁶

Older persons

Stakeholder consultations with older persons in Belize have provided some insights into their contextual situation based on their own views. Older persons have opined that as the members of their community are living longer, they need to have access to the resources that they require to maintain an acceptable quality of life. Their emphasis was on a healthy active lifestyle and access to affordable and adequate health for older persons, especially for secondary and tertiary level care. They further identified key challenges that are

faced by the members of their community, including domestic violence against older persons; and difficulty in accessing social security pension benefits.

Police reports on violence against older persons have shown that older persons have been subject to common assault; threats; sexual assault; and other forms of violence. At the level of financial security, with a focus on non-contributory pension payments, the challenges faced by older persons include, *inter alia*, men who have no history of social security contributions are eligible for payments two years later than women;¹¹⁷ there has been pressure from the Social Security Board framework to reduce the number of non-contributory pension recipients as the social security fund is unable to sustain large payouts to non-contributors.¹¹⁸ As geriatric homes are not prevalent in Belizean society, older persons are also aging within their homes. The challenges they face, therefore, have possible implications for their communities.

The National Council for Aging (NCA) was established by the Belizean Cabinet in 2003 to 'ensure the promotion; implementation; monitoring and evaluation of the National Policy for Older Persons'.¹¹⁹ A total of 12 organisations are represented on the NCA Executive Committee, which comprises public sector ministries; international development agencies; faith-based organisations; and an older person representative. NCA works to ensure that older persons continue to be actively involved in society, within an environment that allows them to stand up for their rights; maintain their independence; dignity and integrity, and enjoy a good quality of life.

To better support the implementation of key activities for the empowerment of older persons, NCA developed a strategic plan for the period 2023 – 2030 and is contributing to draft legislation for older persons. The strategic plan aligns with national and international development frameworks and the draft legislation will be informed by public consultations with older persons throughout Belize. Included among the activities that will also be used to document and improve the situation of older persons in Belize is the development of an aging scorecard. The scorecard will include statistics

that report on the challenges of older persons in the country. As a key aspect of this activity, NCA will engage older persons during data generation and as advocates for the national community of older persons. NCA will also support monitoring; evaluation and learning throughout the activity to allow for reliable data and efficient human resource capacity.

Persons with disabilities

Consultations with persons with disabilities in Belize have highlighted an expressed need for increased citizen education on the definition of a disability. The rationale for this request has been the experience by some disabled persons (in particular persons with speech limitations) of being wrongfully categorised as mentally unstable. There have also been reports of abuse by persons who believe the authorities will not prioritise reports from persons with disabilities; limited mobility options through public sector services for persons with physical challenges; and limited financial support for persons with disabilities, in the form of disability benefits, to enable them to access required treatment and other services.

As the public sector ministry that has oversight of persons with disabilities, the Belize Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs (MHDF&IPA), through its Disabilities Desk, has been working on establishing a national disability registry. This facility will be established on an electronic platform to maintain a record of persons with disabilities throughout the country. The Disabilities Desk has advised that a centralised record for the members of this social group is important for efficient public service delivery.¹²⁰ As a result, the registry will be used to collate tailored information on individual locations and specific needs.

The Statistical Institute of Belize has also engaged in initial discussions with the Disabilities Desk and persons with disabilities in Belize to explore the development of tools for data generation; uploading; and storage for the proposed registry. On Thursday May 30, 2024, the first reading of the Belize Disability Bill was presented to the House of Representatives (Parliament) to support increased rights for persons with disabilities

in the country. A network of disability-serving organisations is also collaborating with the Disabilities Desk to establish a National Disabilities Commission. The Commission will be used as a facility to empower persons with disabilities to allow them to share their views and concerns; and develop their skills and be fully integrated into Belizean society. With the support of the Republic of China (Taiwan), the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry also launched an open call in 2021, for applications from persons with disabilities for an entrepreneurial grant to 'minimise the exclusion of persons with disabilities.'¹²¹

Indigenous persons

The 2022 National Population and Housing Census has indicated that the indigenous peoples of Belize, comprise 15.1 percent of the population, distributed among Maya Ketchi (6.6 percent); Maya Mopan (4 percent); Maya Yucatec (0.5 percent); and Garifuna (percent). In 2017, a review of the situation of indigenous communities in Belize found that they faced four main challenges: poverty; marginalisation; inequality; and a lack of recognition of their rights, with emphasis on territorial rights and rights to land and natural resources. A major driver of the socio-economic conditions of the indigenous communities was identified as limited education among indigenous persons. This situation was influenced by the difference between the language of instruction within the formal school system (English) and the spoken languages of the indigenous communities (Yucatec Maya; Ketchi Maya; Mopan Maya; Garifuna and Creole). The implications of the difference in language were limited educational access and a tendency for school withdrawal.

Belize has not signed and ratified the 1989 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (Convention 169), which recognises and guarantees the rights of indigenous (and tribal) peoples. Within the Belizean context, these rights include the freedom to practice traditional forms of community governance and the entitlement to communal ancestral land which the government respects and supports. In the absence of land rights, the exploitation of communal ancestral land for natural resources has occurred, in some cases.

The Government of Belize has taken steps to address the situation of indigenous communities by mandating MHDF&IPA to manage all matters that are related to indigenous persons and appointing a Commissioner of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs to spearhead this process. As one of its main activities, MHDF&IPA has oversight of the implementation of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) Consent Order (April 2015). Based on the CCJ Consent Order, the Government of Belize is obligated to recognise and protect the land rights of the Mayan peoples in consultation with their communities. To further facilitate the opportunity for respectful open dialogue, the Maya of Southern Belize Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) Protocol was approved by the Belizean Cabinet in 2022.

While similar consultations are required based on the Customary Land Tenure Policy and the 2018 December Agreement, both documents are still being refined to ensure agreement by all parties. The process of refinement is being supported by community level consultations among representatives of the MHDF&IPA and the Mayan communities to sensitise community members about their rights; the FPIC; and proposed projects planned with the communities. This process is ongoing and has also included a facility, the government Dispute Resolution Framework, for community members to express their concerns about the consultation process. An inter-departmental committee has also been established by MHDF&IPA to address complaints that are filed under the Dispute Resolution Framework and ensure governmental compliance with the CCJ Order.

LGBTQI community

Based on the association with sexual orientation, matters pertaining to the rights of the members of the LGBTQI¹²⁴ community have been of a sensitive nature within Belizean society. In general, persons who identify as members of the LGBTQI community in Belize have faced social stigmatisation.

Consultations with stakeholders from the LGBTQI community in Belize have highlighted a perception among community members that Belizean legislation does not address their needs. There was an

acknowledgement by the LGBTQI community that the laws of Belize include a general recognition of their human rights. There was also concern that the provisions of national laws would facilitate inconsistent treatment for persons in same-sex relationships. This view was based on the observation that national laws did not specifically recognise these types of relationships. As a result, the laws of Belize were perceived as not being applicable to all citizens, for example, during applications for social benefits; access to services; redress; etc.

The Constitution of Belize specifies that Belize is committed to the human rights of all citizens.¹²⁵ This commitment manifests within the framework of national legislation that pertains to all citizens. Article 16 (2) of the Constitution of Belize specifies, in particular, that 'no persons shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person or authority.' In addition to the commitment to Agenda 2030, including the LNOB principle, Belize has also ratified other international agreements on human rights. Included among these international agreements is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,¹²⁶ and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,¹²⁷ which both advocate non-discriminatory economic rights. Within the context of the provisions that have been made by law to prohibit discrimination, and the perception by the LGBTQI community of the scope for inconsistent service, there is room for further discussions on these issues at the national level.

Persons with HIV/AIDS

Stigma and discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS continue to be a challenge in Belize. Included among the challenges faced by persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS is discrimination in the workplace, along with unfair dismissal. In the interest of anti discrimination, in relation to persons who have been diagnosed with HIV/ AIDS, the Government of Belize has taken several steps to ensure that persons within this social group are treated fairly.

The Belize National HIV/ STI/ VH and TB Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 was developed to build on the

achievements of previous strategic plans, and facilitate a multisectoral response to the risk factors and vulnerabilities for HIV/ STI/ VH and TB. It was developed by the Government of Belize through the National AIDS Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as development partners who are active in the Belizean context. One of the core elements of the HIV/ STI/ VH and TB Strategic Plan is a people-centred approach to service delivery. The National AIDS Commission was established by the Belizean Cabinet in 2020 to facilitate this approach by monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the national response to HIV/AIDS.

To further reduce the existing stigma against persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, the Government of Belize also repealed sections 46A (1), 73A (1), (2) and (3) of the Criminal Code Cap 101 (Revised Edition 2020) in July 2023. These sections of the Belize Criminal Code had criminalised the non-disclosure, exposure and transmission of HIV. By repealing the cited sections, discrimination in employment on the basis of HIV status became punishable by law. Section 42(1)(i) of the Belize Labour Act Chapter 297 (Revised Edition 2020) has also prohibited the dismissal of an employee on the basis of HIV status, as this action will be defined as being unfair.

3.5 Pillar 5: Partnerships

3.5.1 Context

Belize continues to invest in global and domestic partnerships to establish the resource base that will support accelerated national progress towards its development objectives. The Government of Belize has actively pursued partnerships with bilateral partners; multilateral development agencies and the domestic private sector, to facilitate the level of collaboration that is required for robust and sustainable socio-economic development.

Efforts at collaboration have also engaged the public sector and quasi-governmental agencies to nurture sustainable partnerships involving the replenishment of scarce resources, supported by the sharing of knowledge and expertise, and interministerial networking, to facilitate an evolving whole-of-government approach for the creation of policy synergies. The emphasis on development cooperation and partnerships at the intra-governmental and statutory levels does not belie the importance of cross-sectoral collaborations in country. There is, instead, a recognition that the resource requirements for sustainable development through improved country-specific service delivery is contingent on systemic strengthening at the level of government and national decision-making and the mobilisation of financial reserves. While Belize has made significant contributions towards the achievement of SDG17 under each of its five categories of focus (finance; technology; capacity-building; trade; and systemic issues), there have been emergent, as well as inherent challenges to the anticipated level of success.

3.5.2 Progress

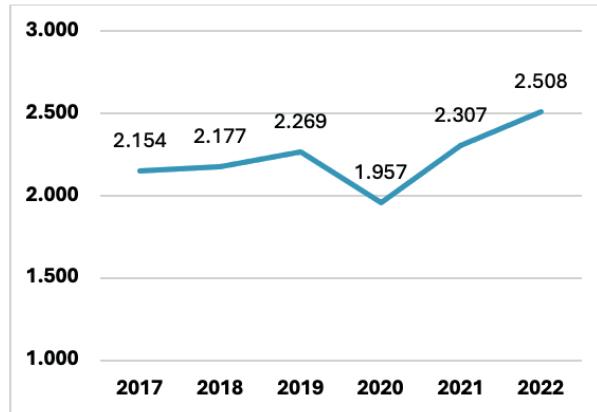
3.5.2.1 SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Target 17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilisation, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection

Finance

There was a steady increase in the gross domestic product (GDP) between 2017 and 2020 (see Exhibit 73). While there was a 13.7 percent decline in GDP in 2020 (from USD \$2.269 billion in 2019 to USD \$1.957 million in 2020), there was an overall increase in GDP between 2017 (USD \$2.154 billion) and 2022 (USD \$2.508 billion). At the level of the total recurrent revenue, although there was a sharp decline by 20 percent in 2020 (from USD \$571 million in 2019 to USD \$452 million in 2020), there was a consistent increase between 2021 and 2023 (from USD \$546 million in 2021 to USD \$709 million in 2023).

Exhibit 73: Gross domestic product, 2017 – 2022 (USD billion)

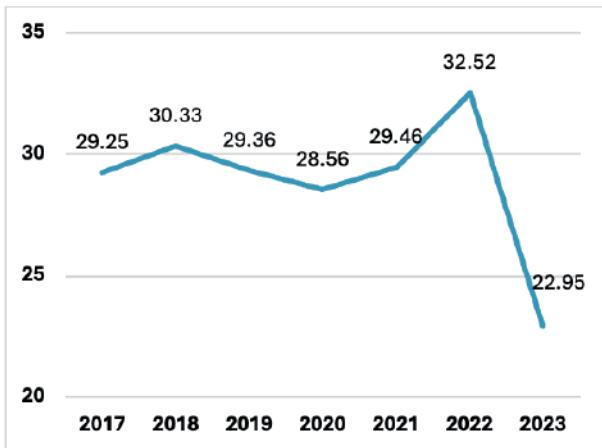


Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, 2017 - 2023¹²⁸

There was greater fluctuation, however, in the ratio of the total recurrent expenditure to GDP (see Exhibit 74). Further to a consistent decline in 2019 and 2020 (29.36 percent and 28.56 percent of GDP, respectively), total recurrent revenue as a proportion of GDP increased in 2021 and 2022 (29.46 and 32.52 percent of GDP, respectively), signifying gradual economic recovery post-pandemic. Although a sharp decline in the ratio of total recurrent revenue to GDP occurred in 2023, therefore (22.95 percent of GDP), the reported amount is an estimate that will be subject to revision.



Exhibit 74: Total recurrent revenue as a percentage of GDP, 2017 – 2023 (%)

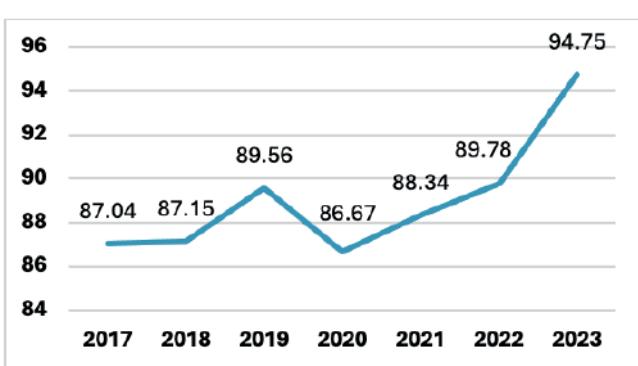


Source: Calculated from Approved Estimates of Expenditure, Government of Belize, 2017 – 2024

During the Leaders' Dialogue of the 2023 SDG Summit,¹²⁹ the Honourable Prime Minister of Belize observed that the national contribution to the SDGs was not at the expected level. In support of accelerated SDG contributions, he took steps to mobilise global financial aid by highlighting the vulnerability of small-island developing states (SIDS) and reiterating the necessity of targeted international development assistance.

Belize has also actively engaged in resource mobilisation at the national level through its taxation system. Similar to the increase in the GDP during 2017-2023, there was an increase in the proportion of the domestic budget that was funded by taxes during the same period (see Exhibit 75). The exception was 2020/2021, when the COVID-19 pandemic led to a global economic downturn that resulted in significant losses in government revenue. In 2017, taxes accounted for 87.04 percent of GDP, but fell from 89.56 percent in 2019 to 86.67 percent in 2020. By 2023, taxes accounted for 94.75 percent of GDP.

Exhibit 75: Taxes as a percentage of the domestic budget, 2017 – 2023 (%)



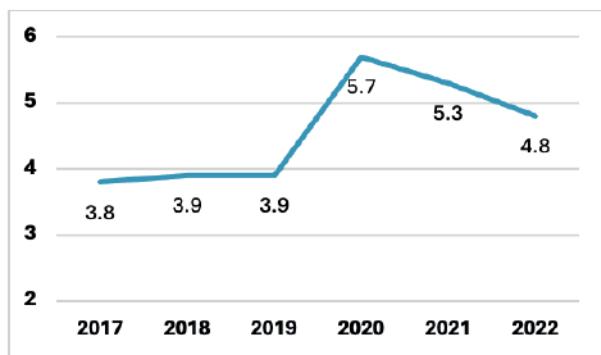
Source: Calculated from Approved Estimates of Expenditure, Government of Belize, 2017 – 2024

Target 17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources

To mitigate the limitations of its scarce domestic resources, the Government of Belize continues to explore partnerships to diversify its available funding. In 2023, Belize applied to the World Bank to be eligible for financing under the International Development Association (IDA). IDA is an arm of the World Bank that provides grants and concessionary financing to low-income countries at low interest rates to: i) boost economic growth; ii) reduce inequalities; and iii) improve standards of living.

The application to the IDA by the Government of Belize was approved on February 14, 2024 and as of July 1, 2024, Belize will be eligible for highly concessional resources with zero or very low interest rates. The schedule for repayment will also extend over 30 to 40 years. At the level of Government, preliminary discussions are in progress on the programming of annual country allocations in the vicinity of SDR. Subject to further eligibility, Belize will be able to access other IDA windows. Belize has also been benefitting from international remittance payments, as an additional source of financial resources. The volume of remittances as a percentage of GDP increased marginally between 2017 and 2022, from 3.8 to 4.8 percent (see Exhibit 76). Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, international remittances accounted for 5.7 percent of the GDP in 2020.

Exhibit 76: Volume of remittances as a proportion of GDP, 2017 – 2022 (%)



Source: Central Bank of Belize

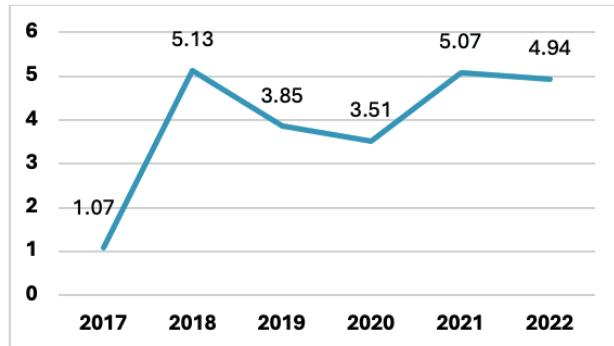
As part of its ongoing efforts to mobilise financial resources, Belize collaborated with the Country Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2021 to develop an SDG Investor Map. The SDG Investor Map for Belize is accessible through a virtual platform¹³² and highlights 16 investment opportunities across nine sectors. These opportunities align with the SDGs and are available to local and international investors. They provide market insights for viable investments that are designed to be profitable to the investor, while benefitting the Belizean society in relation to service delivery and the facilitation of country-level contributions to the SDGs. As an example, the SDG Investor Map has encouraged potential investors to support the establishment of an Electric Vehicle Public Bus System in collaboration with the Government of Belize, which will be responsible for the operational costs. As the investment opportunity will contribute to a reduced carbon footprint, it aligns directly with the Prosperity and Planet Pillars, and will contribute directly towards four SDGs (7; 9; 11; and 13).

To further increase the potential for foreign direct investment (FDI), the Belizean Cabinet approved legislation in February 2024 that will provide benefits and exemptions to Finance Belize Limited to promote Belize as a premier financial services centre, while marketing its own products and services.¹³³ Finance Belize Limited is a non-profit entity that is limited by guarantee without share capital. It was established under the Belize Companies Act to promote Belize as a destination of choice for highly reputable financial services.

In January 2024, Belize also hosted a technical workshop to support the implementation of an Integrated National Financial Framework (INFF),¹³⁴ a planning and delivery tool that is used to increase investment; manage risks; and achieve sustainable priorities. The tool was introduced through the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as part of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.¹³⁵ As the INFF supports the mobilisation of development financing from international and national sources (including the public and private sectors), it has the capacity to strengthen governmental financing policies by increasing cross-sectoral collaboration and aligning scarce financial resources with national development priorities.

Net FDI during 2017-2022 was responsive to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on economic activities in Belize. A significant increase in FDI inflows between 2017 and 2018¹³⁶ was countered by declining inflows in 2021 and 2020. By 2021, FDI inflows to Belize had recovered and had exceeded pre-COVID-19 levels. There were consistent fluctuations, however, in the ratio of net FDI inflows to GDP (see Exhibit 77).

Exhibit 77: Net FDI as a percentage of GDP, 2017 – 2022 (%)



Source: Central Bank of Belize

In 2022, therefore, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) supported the strengthening of national FDI reserves by approving a US \$8 million loan to improve FDI (and trade) performance in Belize. The aim has been to build the internal capacities of investment promotion agencies within the country, as FDI to Belize has been below the levels of neighbouring countries with similar economies (e.g. Guatemala; Honduras and Mexico). Belize also ranks among the five SIDS within the

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that have the lowest FDI within the region.¹³⁷

Target 17.4 Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress

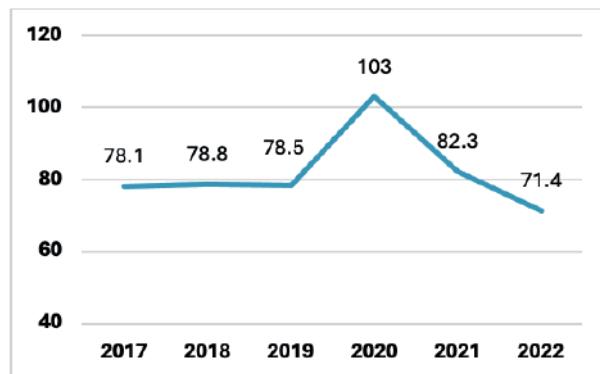
Belize is highly vulnerable to exogenous shocks, including the effects of natural disasters and climate change; fluctuations in the global market for commodities and energy products; and exchange rate volatility.¹³⁸ The responsiveness of the Government of Belize to these unforeseen emergent events over the years has contributed to fiscal imbalance that has been driven by low public sector investment and a high public sector wage bill; the need for interest payments on debt servicing; and the rising costs of goods and services.¹³⁹ The country has a 15-year history of high sovereign debt, and the Government of Belize exchanged the external commercial debt for a single bond during four debt restructuring episodes.¹⁴⁰ At face value, the bonds were worth between 30 and 43 percent of the GDP.

In 2020-2021, the Government of Belize was compelled to initiate the fourth debt restructuring episode to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, including the increasing level of public debt. At 103 percent in 2020, the ratio of public debt to GDP rose significantly from 78.5 percent in 2019, reflecting an increase of almost 25 percent (see Exhibit 78). The increase in public expenditure resulted from actions taken by the government to absorb the loss of income across sectors during the pandemic and address the healthcare needs of the population.

Although the level of public debt remains high, Belize has been experiencing rapid economic recovery post-pandemic. By 2022, in particular, the ratio of public debt to GDP was below pre-pandemic levels. Belize has supplemented its typical approach to debt repayment (acquisition of bonds; debt service negotiations; etc.) with an innovative approach to debt servicing, the

Debt-for-Climate/ Nature Mechanism (DCNM).

Exhibit 78: Public debt as a percentage of GDP, 2017 - 2022 (%)



Source: Central Bank of Belize

A partnership between Belize and the Commonwealth Secretariat was used to facilitate the DCNM.¹⁴¹ The partnership was established to enable the Government of Belize to access the expertise that has been required to address country-level gaps in knowledge and capacity to design and implement the DCNM. This mechanism is a debt exchange instrument that applies a discount to existing debt, to allow the resultant savings to be used for an alternative purpose that is agreed upon by the recipient country and the entity to which the debt is owed.

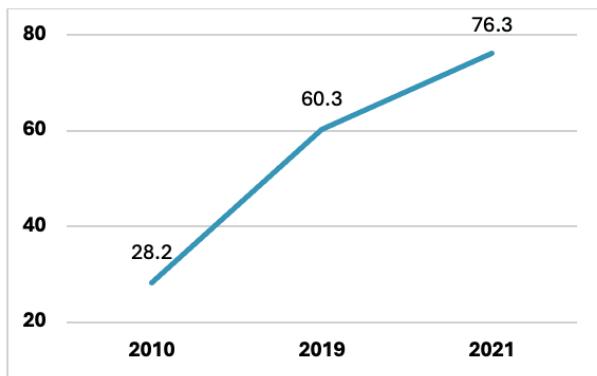
The decision to invest in climate/ nature was informed by the implementation of a Debt-for-Nature mechanism in 2001 by the incumbent government. As the DCNM has benefitted from new knowledge and capacities, it is an improvement over the previous debt servicing instrument. The DCNM also supports contributions by Belize to several SDGs, including SDG1; SDG8; SDG9; SDG13; SDG15; and SDG17.

Target 17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology

Technology

The proportion of households with access to the internet increased from 60.3 percent in 2019 to 76.3 percent in 2021 (see Exhibit 79). This differential is significant as it is an indication of the evolution of Belizean society towards increased access to digital technology. This was also inferred from the results of the 2010 National Census, which indicated that 13.6 percent of households had access to the internet. The 2010 National Census further showed that only 28.2 percent of users had accessed the internet during the preceding three months.

Exhibit 79: Proportion of users with access to the internet, 2010 – 2021 (%)



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

At the level of government, Belize has also invested in the enhancement of public sector service delivery through the establishment of the e-Governance and Digitalisation Unit (EGDU),¹⁴² which was endorsed by Cabinet in October 2021. The mission of EGDU involves implementing the National Digital Agenda for Belize (NDAB) 2022-2025,¹⁴³ to build societal trust in government services through digital solutions, with emphasis on service delivery that is reliable; inclusive; safe and efficient. To inform the strengthening of national e-governance policy, NDAB included a recommendation for a combination of legal and policy frameworks to support the establishment and operationalisation of EGDU.¹⁴⁴ In the interest of empowering EGDU to lead national digital transformation across sectors, NDAB further emphasised the importance of a Digital Law.

Relatedly, the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) for Belize (2022-2025) has prioritised the need to

address social vulnerabilities, inequalities and citizen security.¹⁴⁵ This priority aligns with the SDGs to ensure that the Government of Belize is able to meet the basic needs of all segments of the population. It is significant that the CPD has equally prioritised support for the digital architecture at the governmental level, in the form of digital solutions for enhanced service delivery. Based on the multilateral partnership between UNDP and the Government of Belize, the Belize Digital Government Act was enacted in 2022 to inform the establishment of EGDU.

The e-Governance and Digitalisation Unit (EGDU) was established by Digital Government Act, 2022 as a separate department under the management of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and e-Governance. It has since been relocated to the Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics and e-Governance. The Unit is led by a Director of e-Governance and Digitalisation and has a total staff of eight public officers.

EGDU is the nexus for e-government implementation and digital transformation in Belize, including the provision of leadership for the implementation of the National Digital Agenda for Belize (NDAB), 2022-2025. The work of the Unit is structured around five activities:

1. Delivering online public services
2. Building digital capacity in public sector
3. Improving the policy and legal environment;
4. Developing infrastructure and shared services;
5. Fostering a digital society

As its primary approach to the digitalisation of the public sector, EGDU explores how it can best support data-driven policies, including supporting government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), to generate real-time data, where required. As an initial measure to facilitate this process, EGDU conducted an assessment of information communication technology (ICT) gaps within the public sector. To ensure that the public sector has access to the ICT skills that are required to support digitalised service delivery, the assessment was used

to identify the areas in which capacity building would be required. The assessment was further used to emphasise that digital transformation within the public sector is the responsibility of all departments and not only the ICT Division

NDAB 2022-2025 has underscored the commitment of the Government of Belize to digitalisation and e-services, as well as the creation of an enabling ecosystem to develop a digital society. It is a strategic plan and working framework for use by Government in addressing key challenges to efficient public sector service delivery. These challenges include working in silos; insufficient digital infrastructure; and inadequate training and guidance in digital innovation and new technologies. Using interministerial partnerships as its point of entry, NDAB supports the modernisation of public administration as a core requirement for the creation of a digital Belize.

Further to the establishment of the Digital Government Act, the UNDP Belize Country Office funded a 12-month intervention, 'Strengthening the governance structure for the implementation of digital services and the digital agenda,' to develop a Digital Law Action Plan. The project involves a partnership between EGDU; the Economic Development Council; and UNDP, and has been used to guide the implementation of the Digital Government Act. EGDU has led the implementation of several initiatives in partnership with regional organisations; multilateral agencies; and/or government ministries, departments and agencies in Belize, to support the modernisation of public sector service delivery. Examples of these initiatives are provided in Exhibit 80.

Exhibit 80: Examples of e-Governance Initiatives

Initiative	Description	Partners
1. Digital Inclusion Programme	Design and implementation of a programme to increase access to ICT knowledge and skills within marginalised communities	Taiwan International Cooperation and Development Fund UNDP
2. e-Services Portal	An online hub for digital government services and information exchange between government agencies	InterAmerican Development Bank
3. Government Integrated Cashiering System	Updated official cashiering system based on a web-based, user-friendly platform	Ministry of Finance, Treasury Department
4. Online Permits and Applications System	The centralised online management of permits, as regulated by the Environmental Protection Act (Revised 2009)	Department of Environment
5. Public Service Leave Management System	An online platform for the submission and approval of staff applications for leave of absence	Ministry of Public Service, Constitutional Reform and Religious Affairs

Source: <https://digitalagenda.gov.bz/initiatives/>

Target 17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation

Capacity-building

Built capacities for ongoing national contributions to the SDGs continues to be an area of need and focus at the level of MDAs. Belize has been proactive in establishing partnerships to enhance the knowledge and skills sets that are available in-country to support socio-economic growth and development. As capacity-building is central to the achievement of the SDGs, given the need for the strategic tailoring of goals and targets to suit individual country contexts, it is significant that capacity-building across sectors, including at the institutional level, has been prioritised

by the Belize medium and long-term development strategies. Exhibit 81 provides examples of North-South partnerships that have been established by the Government of Belize to support country resilience through increased national capacities for socio-economic development.

Exhibit 81: Examples of North-South Partnerships

Opportunity	Description
1. Building a resilient Belize through Universal, Adaptive and Sustainable Social Protection	External partners: UNICEF/ World Food Programme; International Labour Organisation Project description: Strengthen the capacity of national partners in their ability to design and implement social protection programmes Cost: USD \$990,400
2. Building capacity of sugar cane farmers in Northern Belize	External partner: Green Climate Fund Project description: Capacity-building for enhanced crop diversity and farming methods to mitigate climate risks and enhance adaptive capacity among sugar cane farmers Cost: USD \$ 39 million (BZD \$78 million)
3. Expansion and Upgrading of the Belize National Statistical System to support the SDGs	External partner: Korea International Cooperation Agency Project description: Strengthening of national infrastructure and institutional capacity for data and statistical management Cost: USD \$3.4 million
4. Skills for the future programme	External partner: InterAmerican Development Bank Project description: Capacity-building to close the skills gap to prepare tomorrow's workforce for the fourth industrial revolution Cost: USD \$20 million (BZD \$40 million)
5. Resilient Rural Belize Programme	External partner: IFAD and GCF Project description: building resilience to CC in rural areas through strengthening producers' organizations. Promoting the adoption of CSA practices through financing and extension and rehabilitating rural roads to a climate resilient standard. Cost: USD 20 million

Source: Multiple sources

Target 17.11 Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020

Trade

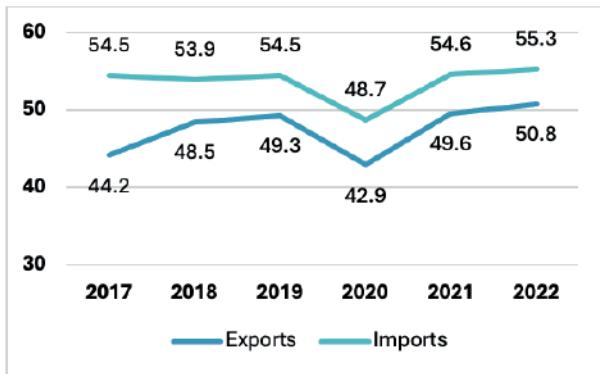
The 2017 World Trade Organisation (WTO) review for Belize¹⁴⁶ identified key regional and international trade agreements in which the country has engaged. These agreements remain in force and include:

- A partial scope agreement with Guatemala;
- Bilateral trade agreements with five Latin American countries (Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Dominican Republic and Venezuela, involving non-reciprocal duty-free treatment on goods;
- The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the CARICOM Single Market Economy, involving the removal of restrictions on the free movement of goods, services, persons and capital within a single, enlarged economic space and the Right of Establishment;
- The Central American Integration System, which supports economic development across Central America;
- The European Partnership Agreement, which facilitates quota-free and duty-free access to the European Union;
- The Caribbean Basin Initiative, which provides preferential access to the United States of America and;
- The Caribbean-Canada Trade Agreement (CARIB-CAN), which provides preferential non-reciprocal access to the Canadian market.

Belize is also involved in negotiations for trade agreements with other countries, including partial scope agreements with Mexico and El Salvador.¹⁴⁷

The 2020 Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) Gap Analysis for Belize noted, however, that the country has had a long-term trade deficit. Using constant 2014 prices for the period 2017 – 2022, the growth rate of exports has been 4.3 percent per year and 2.3 percent for imports (see Exhibit 82).

Exhibit 82: Contribution of Exports and Imports to GDP, 2017 - 2022 (%)



Source: Multiple sources

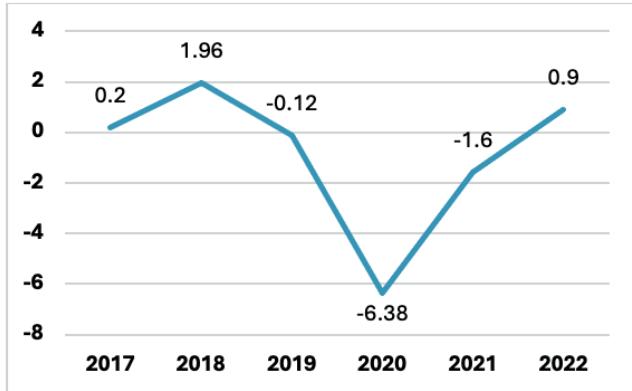
As these figures indicate that imports to Belize have been in excess of exports, they have highlighted an ongoing negative trade balance, the major implication of which has been increasing public debt. In the effort at mitigation, the #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 Action Agenda includes 35 trade deficit reduction initiatives. To improve the competitiveness of local industries, Belize also took steps to facilitate the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). While the objective of the TFA has been to increase the level of efficiency at border points, with emphasis on the clearance of goods, it was not developed for application to imports only. The WTO has estimated that the full implementation of the TFA has the potential to reduce trade costs, increase the level of annual exports; and diversify exported goods.

Target 17.13 Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence

Systemic Issues

In response to the challenges of high public debt and a persistent trade deficit, Belize has continued to invest in greater macroeconomic stability, as a contribution towards sustainable national development. The Macro Poverty Outlook for Belize¹⁴⁸ has highlighted the volatility of the Belizean economy to multiple exogenous shocks given its heavy dependence on tourism revenue and its high reliance on energy imports. Between 2019 and 2022, for example, Belize experienced a negative primary fiscal balance, which fell to a low of -6.38 in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. (see Exhibit 83).

Exhibit 83: Primary fiscal balance, 2017 – 2022 (%)



Source: Central Bank of Belize

The economy also remains vulnerable to the effects of climate change and natural disasters, including tropical storms and hurricanes. In 2022, for example, Hurricane Lisa caused extensive damage to physical infrastructure; utilities; and the physical landscape of Belize, and affected the livelihoods of 172,000 persons across the country¹⁴⁹. In the interest of mitigation, it was necessary for the Government of Belize to redirect national resources to stem the effects of the hurricane, as well as coordinate emergency assistance and recovery efforts in partnership with the international community.¹⁵⁰

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Lisa, Belize has been experiencing gradual macro-economic recovery. Although public debt is still high, there was a notable decline in the ratio of public debt to GDP in 2021 and 2022 (from a high of 103 percent in 2020 to 71.4 percent in 2022).¹⁵¹ The Government of Belize has also partnered with local firms and multilateral agencies to introduce innovative measures and incentives to restore investor confidence in the Belizean economy.¹⁵²

While unemployment; inequality; and poverty are still of concern to sustainable national development, including country-level contributions to the SDGs, the Government of Belize has continued to forge bilateral partnerships to create increased economic opportunities at the national and sub-national levels. The emphasis is on facilitating a 'trickle down effect' through the replenishment of financial resources; the creation of opportunities for FDI; capacity-building;

re-skilling; etc. In 2022, for example, Belize established new bilateral partnerships with four countries in Africa (Kenya); Eastern Europe (the Republic of Moldova); South Asia (Nepal); and the Middle East (the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).¹⁵³ Included among the expected benefits of the new partnerships is access to new markets for Belizean products.

A bilateral partnership between Belize, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Investment (MFAFT&I) and the Republic of China, (Taiwan), through the International Cooperation and Development Fund, is generating financial resources in the amount of USD \$ 1.2 million (BZD \$2.4 million).¹⁵⁴ A total of 44 new projects for the empowerment and financial inclusion of women in communities throughout Belize were funded through this partnership over the period 2021-2023. As the projects involved technical-vocational reskilling; entrepreneurial training; and the provision of seed funding, their anticipated benefits included increased labour market participation by women and a contribution to macro-economic stability.

Target 17.14 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Belize saw the need to replenish scarce financial reserves in-country, to allow the economy and its peoples to thrive during the unforeseen disruption to livelihoods. Financial resource availability is a critical component of sustainable development that needs to be reinforced by the targeted strengthening of systems and institutions. By establishing the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) in 2012, the Government of Belize responded to this requirement.

The SDU has been charged with the responsibility for integrating Agenda 2030 into all national frameworks. It has instigated critical actions in these areas, including but not limited to: contributing to the development of the #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 to ensure alignment with Agenda 2030; the facilitation of the 2024 VNR using a whole-of-society approach; continuous strategic interface with SIB, to support the generation;

management, and dissemination of official statistics on the SDGs; and preparatory work for developing a national communications strategy to raise public awareness on Agenda 2030. The emphasis has been on incorporating the SDGs into policy-making; cross-sectoral collaborations; programme planning and implementation; and the effective monitoring and assessment of national contributions towards SDG achievement. The SDU also functions as the national focal point for the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and it is the Secretary of the #planBelize MTDS Secretariat.

A major impediment to the SDU in the execution of its responsibilities, however, has been its non-institutionalisation. The SDU is located within the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change (MSDCC) and comprises a core staff of three officers (Director, SDU; Senior Sustainable Development Officer; Sustainable Development Officer). To facilitate the operations of the SDU, MSDCC has provided dedicated office space, however, meeting and conference facilities are only accessible upon request and subject to availability. While SDU team members are remunerated through the government accounting system, there is no dedicated recurrent budget line for SDU programming in the Approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Belizean government. Project funding to facilitate the work of the SDU has derived from external donor agencies.

There is also no Cabinet-approved legislative mandate to guide the work of the SDU, which has had implications for the work of the Unit. Although the SDU is responsible for monitoring national contributions to the SDGs, this exercise has not been conducted regularly because of the human resource limitations of the Unit, in terms of staff availability and speciality. The implications for SDG monitoring have been reflected in the limited uploading of data to the Belize National Statistical System (BNSS) Portal by national SDG custodians.

As there have been limited updates to the BNSS Portal on national contributions to the SDGs, a cohesive and coordinated approach to evidence-based policy-making

is difficult. There is an awareness, however, the level of MDAs, however, of the need for systematic results monitoring and reporting that aligns with the strategic objectives of #planBelize MTDS 2022-2026 and by extension, the national contribution towards SDG achievement. Specifically, there have been requests for applications for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) officers to address gaps in capacity for programmatic monitoring; results reporting; and impact assessment within key line ministries. Requests for applications have been issued, for example, by the Ministry of Economic Development; the Ministry of Health and Wellness; the National AIDS Commission; and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre. A proposal for the restructuring and institutionalisation of the SDU also includes provisions for the establishment of an M&E facility to support the management of development results, including results monitoring and reporting on national contributions to the SDGs.

Target 17.16 Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries

The Government of Belize has continued to establish multi-stakeholder partnerships to facilitate the implementation of its national development plans, including its commitment to the SDGs. While these partnerships have engaged stakeholder organisations at the regional and international levels, they have equally engaged country-level stakeholder entities across sectors.

Similar to the operationalisation of the e-governance facility, interministerial partnerships have been used to strengthen capacities within the public sector to enhance the level of service delivery. The initiatives that have been evolving from this process have the added potential to support increased efficiencies through greater transparency during service delivery, as well as the accountability and transparency of government services. They have further benefitted from

knowledge-sharing through the e-governance facility, which has been used to enhance the level of public sector service delivery.

Target 17.17 Encourage and promote effective public; public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies for partnership

To further support the management and streamlining of existing partnerships across the public and private sectors, in particular, a draft public-private partnership (PPP) policy was approved by Cabinet in October 2021. The PPP supports the establishment of a PPP Unit for the mobilisation of private sector capital in Belize for large-scale infrastructural projects, as well as other development projects that align with the PSIP.

From 2018/2019 to 2023/2024, PSIP funding derived from three sources, loans; grants; and counterpart funds. The main funding agency was the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), which provided financial resources that ranged from 21.7 to 29.1 percent of the PSIP budget. Based on funding that ranged from 9.2 to 20.3 percent of the PSIP budget, the agencies that provided the second highest amount of funding (secondary funding agencies) included the Government of Belize; the Government of Venezuela/ Petro Caribe; the OPEC Fund for International Development; and the InterAmerican Development Bank (IaDB).

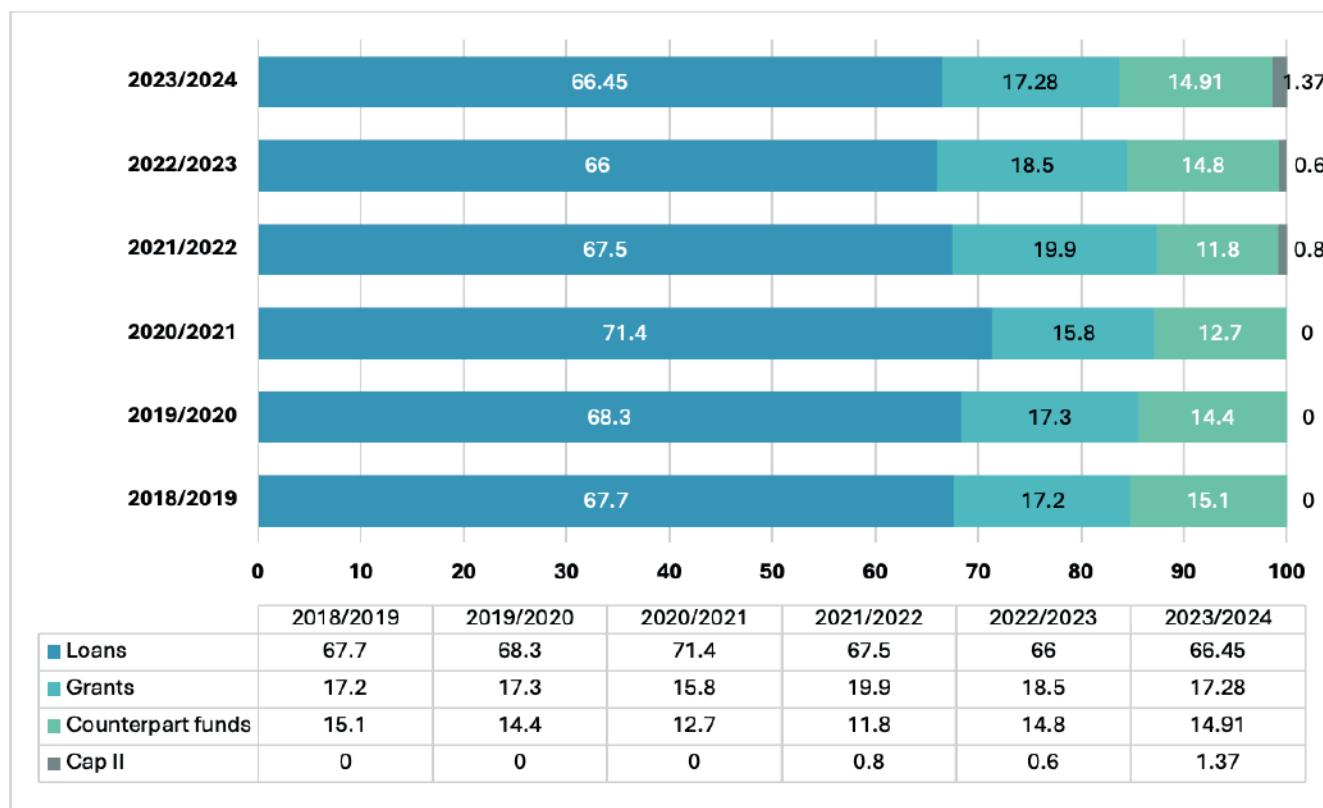
Loans accounted for the major proportion of the PSIP budget (See Exhibit 84), ranging from 66 to 71.4 of the total budget; followed by grants (17.2 to 19.9 percent of the PSIP budget) and counterpart funds (11.8 to 15.1 percent of the PSIP budget). The lowest amount of funding derived from the Capital II Fund of the Government of Belize (up to 1.37 percent of the PSIP budget). While there was a steady increase in funding from loans between 2018/19 and 2020/21 (from 67.7 to 71.4 percent of the PSIP budget), reduced funding was available from this source from 2021/22 to 2023/24 (from 67.5 to 66.45 percent of the PSIP budget). There was a marginal increase in funding from loans, however, between 2022/23 and 2023/24 (from 66 to 66.45 percent of the PSIP budget).

At 50.64 to 60.1 percent, the majority of the PSIP budget was earmarked for infrastructure works (see Exhibit 85), followed by economic services (16 to 26.03 percent of the PSIP budget); and social protection (15.28 to 17.2 percent of the PSIP budget). The lowest proportion of the PSIP budget was reserved for initiatives in the area of public administration (5.4 to 8.04 percent of the PSIP budget).

As a complement to the PPP, Belize officially inaugurated the International Cooperation Council (ICC) in September 2023. The ICC is chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and provides a forum for Government ministries to engage in substantive discussions aimed at optimising the use of foreign aid. This approach has

been used to align international partnerships with Belize's #planBelize Medium-Term Development Strategy 2022-2026, and identify areas of synergy for mutual benefit. The focus of the ICC is on enhancing inter-ministerial collaboration for development cooperation, to pave the way for broader engagement with international partners in the future. The ICC is positioned to play a crucial role in advancing Belize's development agenda and ensuring that international assistance continues to benefit the nation effectively.

Exhibit 84: PSIP budget by funding type, 2018/19 – 2023/24 (%)



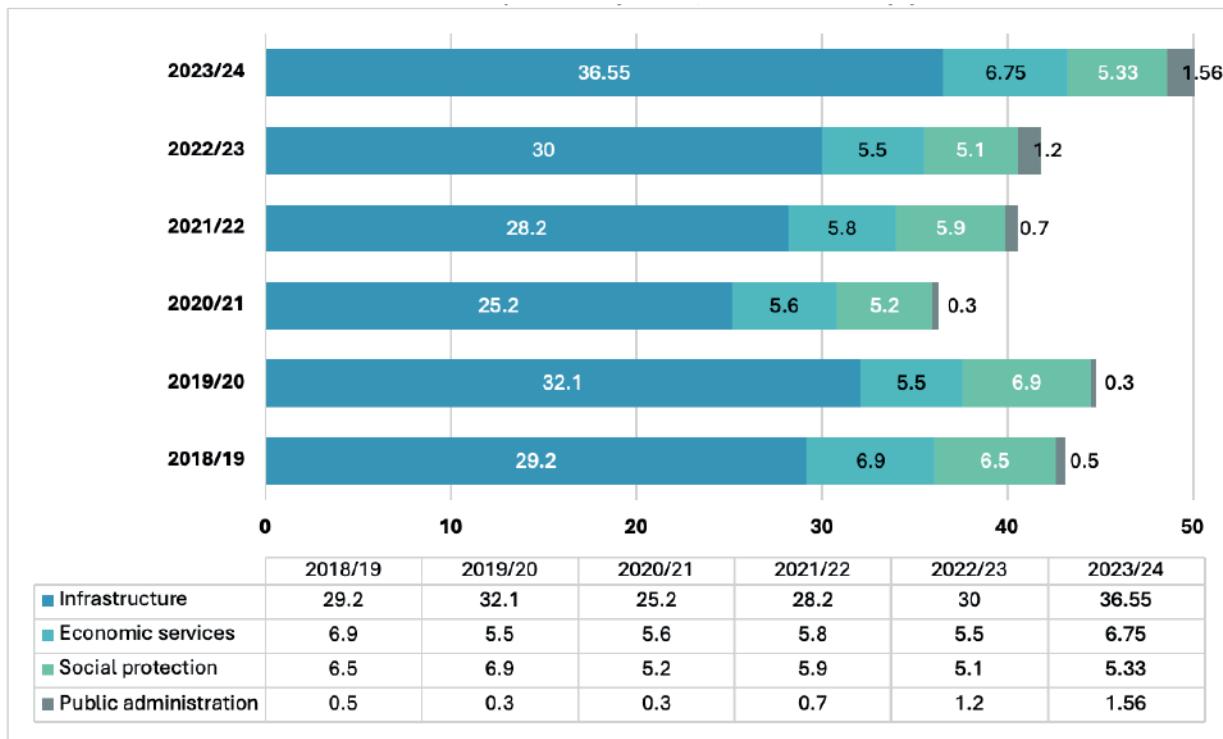
Source: PSIP reports, 2018/19 to 2023/24

Exhibit 85: PSIP Budget by Sector, 2018/19 – 2023/24 (%)



Source: PSIP reports, 2018/19 to 2023/24

Exhibit 86: PSIP Expenditure by Sector, 2018/19 – 2023/24 (%)



Source: PSIP reports, 2018/19 to 2023/24

At the level of expenditure (see Exhibit 86), most of the PSIP budget was spent on infrastructure (25.2 to 36.55 percent of the total PSIP budget), followed by economic services (5.5 to 6.9 percent of the PSIP budget); social protection (5.1 to 6.9 percent of the PSIP budget); and public administration (0.3 to 1.56 percent of the PSIP budget).

Of interest, the expenditure on public administration was low over all six years. The expenditure on economic services and social protection was also low in comparison to the expenditure on infrastructure protection during this timeframe. Given their importance to the SDGs in terms of cross-sectoral applicability (e.g. public administration projects have the potential to enhance public sector service delivery across sectors and ministries), there is a question of whether non-infrastructural interventions have been adequately prioritised by the Government of Belize.

Target 17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts

As the authority on national statistics for evidence-based decision-making and results-based management, the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) has been central to the actions taken by the Government of Belize to align national development with an investment in SDG achievement. Following the establishment of the institute by an Act of Parliament,¹⁵⁵ the work of the SIB has been guided by international standards that have been tailored to the Belizean context. Specifically, the Statistical Institute of Belize Act, 2006 mandates SIB to comply with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.¹⁵⁶

The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) was also developed to ensure that statistical production in Belize is led by a reliable national statistical system. In line with Agenda 2030, the primary

objective of the NSDS has been to guide Belize towards the generation of reliable statistical information, to monitor and accurately report on its contribution to the SDGs. To support this objective, SIB established the BNSS Portal, an online platform that serves as a centralised source of country-level data on the contribution of Belize to the SDG targets. The BNSS Portal has been designed to document progress against SDG indicators that are relevant to the Belizean context, and involves collaboration between SIB and the national data custodians for each indicator.

To further guide the role of the SIB in documenting national contributions to the SDGs, a National Population and Housing Census is conducted at scheduled intervals, in accordance with national requirements and international standards for statistical quality. The Population and Housing Census is conducted every 10 years and the latest census was conducted in 2022.

In line with SDG reporting requirements, the census questionnaires for 2010 and 2022 were used to generate data on: age; ethnicity; disability; income; gender; geographic location; and migration; *inter alia*. The census data further indicated that out of a target 100 percent birth registrations, as required by SDG reporting, Belize had achieved 90.5 percent birth registrations in 2010. At 31.5 percent, the majority of births had been registered at the hospital; followed by the Vital Statistics Unit (28.7 percent) and the Magistrate Court (23.2 percent). The 2010 National Population and Housing Census Report did not, however, provide any statistics on disability; income, and migratory status,¹⁵⁷ which are indicators of interest for the SDGs.

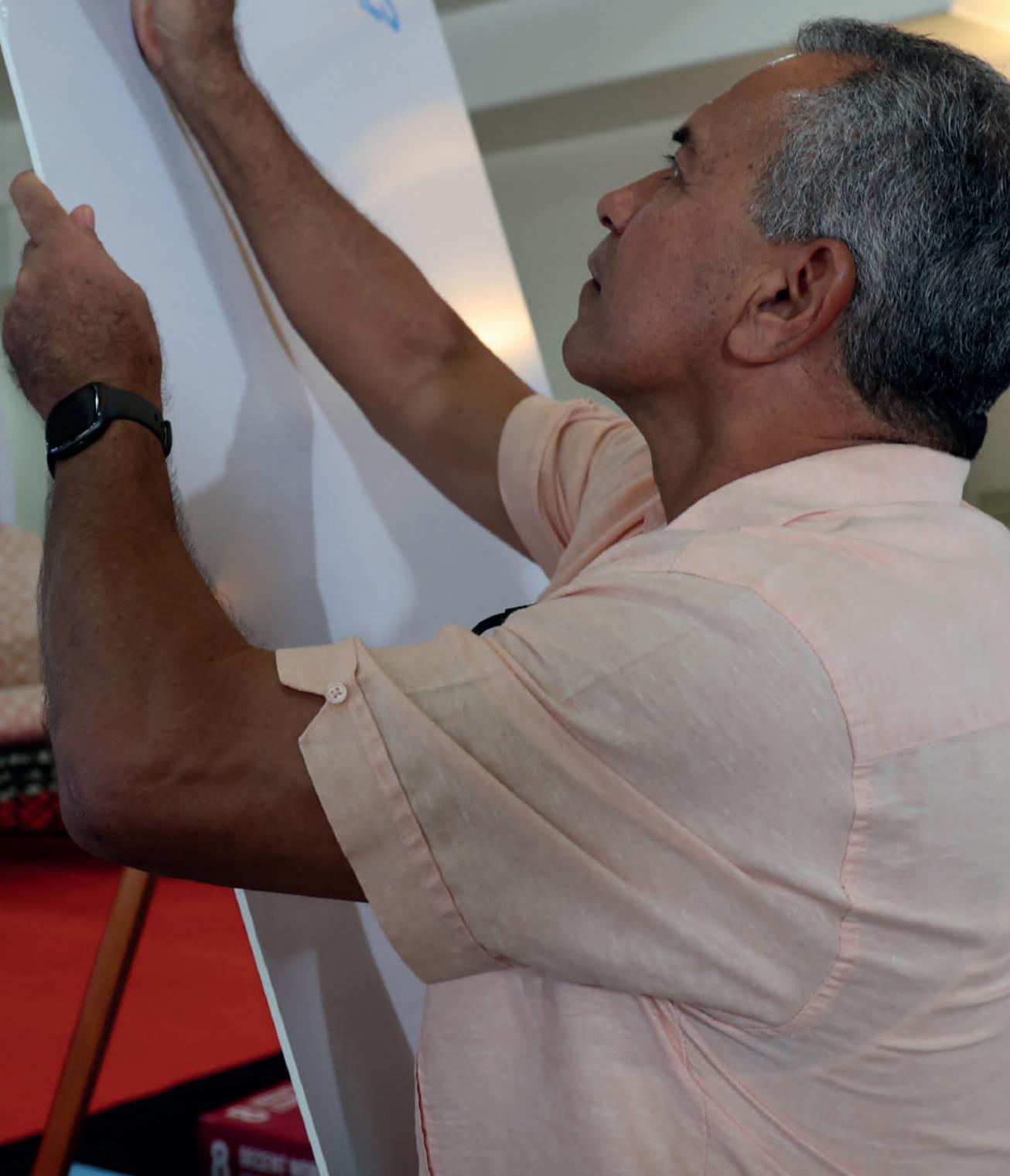
Although the data records are likely to be available from the SIB upon request, the omission of data on disability from the census report should be highlighted. The data are reflective of the situation of a segment of the population that has usually been underrepresented in social decision-making processes. Significantly, SIB has acknowledged that the facilitation of the NSDS is an evolving process that involves partnerships with the Government of Belize; member organisations of the

BNSS; and other development agencies, as required. SIB took preliminary steps to use stakeholder partnerships to enhance its function, by engaging data producers and users within the BNSS in a series of consultations for the launch of the NSDS in May 2023. In addition to the support that would be provided for BNSS strengthening, these partnerships are requisite for ensuring that no entity is left behind during national statistical generation and reporting.

RENEWING OUR COMMITMENT TO THE
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1

UN



Means of Implementation



In facilitating Agenda 2030 across sectors and stakeholder groups, Belize has made significant contributions towards the achievement of the 17 SDGs. Although there have been unforeseen emergent challenges that have been beyond the remit of governmental intervention, the Government of Belize has provided strong support for societal recovery in their aftermath. Similarly, there are areas in which State agencies have had greater control in facilitating calculated strategic interventions. As a result of resource limitations, however, with emphasis on human and financial resources, the required interventions (i.e. courses of action) were not initiated.

Belize is committed to the continued facilitation of Agenda 2030 on a national scale. The country is also well-positioned to initiate accelerated contributions towards the achievement of the SDGs. To facilitate this objective, Belize will invest in the six transitions investment pathways that are key to this process. The six transitions (food systems; energy access and affordability; digital connectivity; education; jobs and protection; and climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution) align directly with the priorities of the #planBelize MTDS 2022 -2026. Belize is strongly supported by the political will that is required to achieve its goal of accelerated SDG contributions. There are, however, resource constraints that are challenging its capacity to facilitate the required process.

A constant element across public sector MDAs has been the capacity for data generation. What has been lacking is the adequacy of resources for the effective and efficient coordination of monitoring; reporting; and learning on SDG data generation, as a contribution towards SDG achievement. As discussed in the introductory section of the VNR report, the SDU is inadequately empowered to fulfil its primary responsibility of integrating the SDGs into the public sector work portfolio across key line ministries, government departments and agencies. There has also been an insufficient quantum of financial resources to

support this process, as well as the engagement of stakeholders using a whole-of-society approach. The process of monitoring progress towards SDG achievement has also been challenged by the lack of a monitoring and evaluation framework for the #planBelize MTDS.

The means of implementation that have emerged from the 2024 Belize VNR are informed by the capacities and the gaps that exist at the level of the Belize public sector, as highlighted by this exercise. They take the form of strategic or operational actions that can be used to accelerate national contributions towards the SDGs during the remaining implementation period for Agenda 2030. They are further supported by an Action Plan Mapping Visual,¹⁵⁸ which is linked to the commitments that were made by Belize at the 2023 SDG Summit.

Recommendation 1: Establish and resource an empowered SDG coordinating facility by institutionalising SDU-MSDCC

Priority: High

Time Implication: September/October 2024

Resource Implication: Medium - High

Closing criteria:

- Formalisation of the SDU mandate for SDG integration through the implementation of the Unit's strategy and action plan.
- Establishment of a budget line in the amount of USD \$500,000 (BZD \$ 1 million) to cover the recurrent costs of the SDU (e.g. by establishing a budget line within the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change).
- Sourcing of specialist staff for SDG monitoring and reporting to strengthen the existing cohort of staff members within the Unit. Staff should include at minimum:

- a Data Analyst;
- an Economist;
- a Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist;
- a Project Manager/Coordinator;
- a Sociologist.
- Establishment of quality assurance team with oversight of SDG contributions and the Principles of Sustainable Development, with emphasis on progress aligned to the six transitions, Future VNRs, Summit of the Future, etc.
- Continued facilitation of targeted SDG integration and awareness-raising.

Recommendation 2 Coordinate the VNR Process and facilitate the implementation of other frameworks in alignment with the Principles of Sustainable Development , to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the SDGs by 2030

Priority: High

Time Implication: Continuous

Resource Implication: High

Closing criteria:

Facilitate high level meetings with key line ministries to:

- Engage the support of senior government officials in the identification/ delegation/ streamlining of human resources for:
 - the implementation of each transition, the SDGs, the MTDS;
 - the provision of support to SDU-MSDCC and SIB for the monitoring of SDG contributions and the maintenance of the BNSS Portal – SDG Dashboard.
- Appoint focal points within each key line ministry to facilitate close collaboration with SDU-MSDCC and SIB as SDG data custodians.
- Regular scheduled monitoring by SDU to:
 - ensure timely data uploading to BNSS Portal;
 - identify and troubleshoot challenges to SDG contributions;
 - prepare and disseminate yearly progress updates.

Recommendation 3 Establishment of a National Reporting Mechanism co-chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and MSDCC to quality assure the monitoring, assessment, integration, and reporting on the SDGs, other international frameworks, and IRC approved priorities.

Priority: High

Time Implication: September/ October 2024

Resource Implication: Medium

Closing criteria:

- High-level meeting between Office of the Honourable Prime Minister; MSDCC; and Foreign Affairs to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the mechanism.
- Submission of Concept Note to Cabinet for approval of reporting mechanism, followed by official establishment and convening upon Cabinet approval.
- Regular scheduled meetings to:
 - ensure the coordination of SDGs, other international frameworks, and IRC approved priorities contributions remains on track
 - strategically troubleshoot emergent issues
 - guide regular reporting on SDG contributions
 - adhere to established guidelines per individual reports

Recommendation 4 Champion resource mobilization for Sustainable Development initiatives in Belize

Priority: High

Time Implication: Continuous

Resource Implication: Medium

Closing criteria:

- High level meeting with key donor agencies, facilitated by Office of the Honourable Prime Minister, the Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change (SDU) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss role and responsibilities of the Council, followed by official establishment and convening
- Inclusion of the SDU in the PSIP processes to integrate and support the mobilisation funding

Recommendation 5 Development of a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework to systematically track contributions towards the SDGs and formalise the VNR exercise

Priority: High

Time Implication: September/October 2024

Resource Implication: Medium

Closing criteria:

- Internal meeting between MSDCC-SDU; the Quality Assurance/M&E team; and the IRC to discuss and agree on priority actions for establishing the (M&E) framework
- Development of an action plan to facilitate the process
 - schedule of reporting and submission deadlines
 - workplan and budget development
- Establishment and implementation of an M&E framework and supporting facility to track national contributions to the SDGs, assess progress, institutionalise scheduled VNRs, and facilitate learning for increased efficiency and built capacities

DEVELOPMENT



Conclusion and Next Steps



Belize has made progress in facilitating Agenda 2030 and contributing to the SDGs. There have been notable successes in several areas, as well as structural; systemic; and emergent challenges that have impeded its progress. Based on the commitment of the Government of Belize to the international sustainable development agenda, with emphasis in this context on the SDGs, Belize has the capacity and high-level backing to operationalise and achieve its goal of accelerated SDG contributions.

The 2024 Belize VNR exercise has been a success. It has identified: i) areas of national strengths; ii) examples of significant achievements and progress; and iii) drawn attention to issues that need to be addressed during the remaining period of Agenda 2030 in the interest of increased efficiency. The next steps for Belize have been articulated within the Means and Implementation section of the VNR report. They are summarised below for the purpose of emphasis and are accompanied by lessons learned, that can be used to initiate the next stage of strategic planning.

Next steps

- SDU institutionalisation:** Establish and resource an empowered SDG coordinating facility by institutionalising SDU-MSDCC;
- Accelerated progress:** Facilitate the implementation of the six transitions to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the SDGs by 2030;
- Quality assurance:** Establishment of a National Reporting Mechanism chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and MSDCC to quality assure monitoring, assessment and reporting on the SDGs;
- Funding mobilisation:** Streamline and champion the mobilisation of donor funding from international and domestic sources for PSIP implementation;

- Monitoring, evaluation and learning:** Development of a monitoring and evaluation facility to systematically track; evaluation and facilitate learning in relation to national contributions towards the SDGs and formalise the VNR process/

Lessons learned

- Internal institutional capacities for data generation on the SDGs are better supported by the centralisation of SDG data at the level of SIB-BNSS.
- The lack of an official mandate and budget line is a significant challenge to the process of coordinating the integration of the SDGs into public sector work processes.
- As the VNR is an important milestone for assessing country-level contributions to the SDGs, it requires adequate planning and allocation of resources (time; human; financial; etc.) to ensure procedural efficiency and successful outcome.



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Appendix I: 2024 VNR Participating Stakeholder Organisations

State Organisations

State Organisation	Sub-Ministry/ Department/ Division/ Unit
Attorney General's Ministry	
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Food and Nutrition Security Commission
Ministry of Blue Economy and Disaster Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belize Fisheries Department National Emergency Management Organisation
Ministry of Economic Development, Petroleum, Investment, Trade and Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Financing Unit Ministry of Investment Policy and Planning Unit
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Education, Culture, Science and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directorate for Foreign Trade Foreign Affairs Ministry of Education Policy, Planning and Project Management Unit
Ministry of Health and Wellness	
Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belize Crime Observatory
Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Desk, Women and Family Support Department National Women's Commission Policy and Planning Unit
Ministry of Infrastructure Development. and Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Infrastructure
Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mining Unit National Hydrological Service
Ministry of Public Service, Constitutional and Political Reform and Religious Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Governance Unit
Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics and e-Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belize Electric Company Limited Belize Water Service Limited e-Governance and Digitalisation Unit The Belize Energy Unit Department of Labour
Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Local Government Department of Rural Transformation
Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belize Solid Waste Management Authority Department of the Environment Forest Department National Biodiversity Office National Climate Change Office National Meteorological Service Sustainable Development Unit
Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations	
Ministry of Youth, Sports and Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Transport Department of Youth Services Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit

State Organisation	Sub-Ministry/ Department/ Division/ Unit
Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, Investment, Civil Aviation and Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and Planning Unit
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment, Policy and Compliance Unit

Non-State Organisations

Statutory Authorities		
Belize Agricultural Health Authority	Belize Tourism Board	Central Bank of Belize
Development Finance Corporation	Office of the Ombudsman	Statistical Institute of Belize <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Director General Data Dissemination
Protected Areas Conservation Trust	Social Security Board	
Academia/ Civil Society Organisations / Non-governmental Organisations		
Association of Protected Areas Management Organisations	Association of Tertiary Level Institutions of Belize	Belize Association of Planners
Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Belize Family Life Association	Belize Livestock Producer Association
Belize Network of NGOs	Empower Yourself Belize Movement	Galen University
HelpAge Belize	Human Rights Commission of Belize	Intercultural Indigenous Language Institute
Julian Cho Society	Kidney Association of Belize	National Council on Aging
National Food and Nutrition Security Council	National Garifuna Council	National Trade Union Congress
Oceana Belize	Productive Organisation for Women in Action	Promoting Empowerment Through Awareness for Lesbian/Bisexual Women
Rotary Club of Belize	Stann Creek Ecumenical Junior College	The Inspiration Centre
The Nature Conservancy	United Belize Advocacy Movement	
International Development Agencies/ Private Sector Firms		
Bowen and Bowen Limited	Food and Agriculture Organisation	Fortis Belize Limited
Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme	International Organisation for Migration	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator	Pan American Health Organisation/ World Health Organisation	Taiwan International Cooperation and Development Fund
UN Women	United Nations Development Programme	United Nations Children's Fund
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	United Nations Population Fund	World Food Programme

Appendix II: Examples of Key Strategies, Policies and Plans by SDG

SDGs		Strategic documents
SDG1	No poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Children's Agenda 2017-2030
SDG2	Zero hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Agriculture and Food Policy of Belize 2015 – 2030 • School Feeding Programme Menu and Protocols
SDG3	Good health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belize Health Sector Strategic Plan 2014 – 2024 • Belize National Mental Health Policy 2023 – 2028 • Belize Ministry of Health and Wellness Operational Plan • National HIV/ STI/ VH and TB Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025
SDG4	Quality education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Education Sector Plan 2021 – 2025
SDG5	Gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Gender Policy 2024 – 2030 • Criminal Code Chapter 101, Revised Edition 2020 • Protection against Sexual Harassment Act, Revised Edition • Belize Married Women's Property Act, Revised Edition 2020
SDG6	Clean water and sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Integrated Water Resources Act , Chapter 222
SDG7	Affordable and clean energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belize National Sustainable Energy Policy 2012 – 2033
SDG8	Decent work and economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Child Labour Policy and Strategy 2022 – 2025
SDG9	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Digital Agenda 2022 – 2025 • Digital Department Act
SDG10	Reduced inequalities within and among countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Gender Policy 2024 – 2030 • Criminal Code Chapter 101, Revised Edition 2020 • Protection against Sexual Harassment Act, Revised Edition • Belize Married Women's Property Act, Revised Edition 2020 • Belize Labour Act Chapter 297 Revised Edition 2020
SDG11	Sustainable cities and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Cultural Policy 2016 – 2026
SDG12	Responsible consumption and production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Environmental Policy and Strategy, 2014 – 2024 • National Environmental Action Plan 2022 – 2026
SDG13	Climate Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Master Plan, 2011 – 2025 • Belize Updated Nationally Determined Contribution 2021
SDG14	Life below water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belize Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan 2022 – 2027
SDG15	Life on land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Landscape Restoration Strategy for Belize, 2022 – 2030
SDG16	Peace, justice and strong institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of Information Act, Revised 2020 • Public Sector Data Sharing Act, 2021 • Free Prior Informed Consent Protocol, 2022
SDG17	Partnerships for the goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Governance Act, 2022 • National Digital Agenda 2022 – 2025 • UN Country Programme Document for Belize 2022 – 2026 • National Trade Policy 2019 -2030 • Green Climate Fund Strategic Framework Country Programme 2022 - 2026

Appendix III: Inter-Institutional Review Committee and VNR Sub-Committee Members

SDG	VNR Sub-Committee		Inter-Institutional Review Committee
	Responsible State Organisation	Responsible Non-State Organisation	
1.	Ministry of Human Development	Social Security Board	Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs, Policy and Planning Unit (MHDFIPA - PPU)
2.	Ministry of Agriculture	Belize Livestock Producer Association	Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, Investment, Civil Aviation and Immigration, Policy and Planning Unit (MFEDI&CA - PPU)
3.	Ministry of Health	Belize Family Life Association (BFLA)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Education, Culture, Science and Technology, Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Foreign Affairs (MFAFTECST – Foreign Affairs)
4.	Ministry of Education	Association of Tertiary Level Institutions of Belize (ATLIB)	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Sustainable Development Unit (MSDCC - SDU)
5.	National Women's Commission	Productive Organisation for Women in Action (POWA)	Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB)
6.	National Hydrological Services	Belize Water Services (BWS)	
7.	Energy Unit	Belize Electric Company Limited (BECOL)	
8.	Ministry of Economic Development	National Trade Union Congress (NATUC)	
9.	Ministry of Infrastructure	Belize Association of Planners	
10.	Labour Department	United Belize Advocacy Movement (UNIBAM)	
11.	Local Government/ Rural Development	Rotary Club of Belize	
12.	Department of Environment	Bowen and Bowen Limited	
13.	National Climate Change Office	The Nature Conservancy	
14.	Blue Economy	Oceana Belize	
15.	Forest Department/ National Biodiversity Office	Association of Protected Areas Management Organisations (APAMO)	
16.	Public Service, Good Governance Unit	Office of the Ombudsman	
17.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)	

Appendix IV: List of Documents Reviewed

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Appendix V: VNR Database by SDG Pillars, Targets and Indicators

Pillar 1: People

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	Year					Source
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Target 1A Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions								
1.A.1	Total official development assistance grants from all donors that focus on poverty reduction as a share of the recipient country's gross national income							
	- Economic Empowerment- Education- Health- and Social Protection (Sep 2017 – Dec 2024)	10 million	..	..	..	..	..	..
	- Equal rights to economic resources (Jul 2021 – Dec 2024)	USD	..	..	..	5.031 million	..	Ministry of Economic Development
	- Resilience of the poor and vulnerable & Social Protection (Mar 2022 – Dec 2023)		..	..	..	..	1.29 million	..
	- Social protection (Nov 2022 – Mar 2023)		..	..	..	..	0.276 million	..
Target 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions								
1.2.2	Proportion of men women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions							
	- Incidence of Poverty (national)	%	..	..	..	..	36.5	..
	- Intensity of Poverty (national)	%	..	..	..	..	39.2	..
	- Multidimensional Poverty Index (national)	MPI	..	..	..	..	0.143	..
	- Incidence of Poverty (urban)	%	..	..	..	..	23.3	..
	- Intensity of Poverty (urban)	%	..	..	..	..	36.1	..
	- Multidimensional Poverty Index (urban)	MPI	..	..	..	..	0.084	..
	- Incidence of Poverty(rural)	%	..	..	..	..	47.5	..
	- Intensity of Poverty(rural)	%	..	..	..	..	40.5	..
							39.2	..

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	Year				Source
			2017	2018	2019	2020	
Target 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable							
1.3.1	Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable	%	..	..	..	..	37.5
	- Proportion of older persons receiving pension	%	..	..	..	..	..
	- Proportion of population contributing to the pension system	%	..	..	..	..	57.7
	- Proportion of persons with severe disabilities receiving benefits	%	..	..	..	..	10.7
	- Persons receiving unemployment support	%	..	..	..	..	..
	- Proportion of women giving birth covered by maternity benefits	%	..	..	..	..	15.4
	- Persons covered in the event of work injury	%	..	..	..	..	57.7
	- Proportion of children covered by social protection benefits (0 – 15 years)	%	..	..	..	..	3.1
	- Proportion of children covered by social protection benefits (0 – 18 years)	%	..	..	..	..	3.1
	- Proportion of the poor covered by social protection systems	%	..	..	..	..	3.3
1.3.1	- Proportion of vulnerable persons covered by floors/systems	%	..	..	..	..	3.1
	- Proportion of the population protected in at least one area of social protection	%	..	..	..	..	32

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Source
Target 1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters										
1.5.1 Direct economic loss attributed to disasters in relation to global GDP										
1.5.2 No. of deaths/ missing persons/ persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people										
	- Hurricane Eta and Iota (Public utilities)	USD	..	..	..	..	1.750 million	..	..	National Emergency Management Organisation
	- Hurricane Eta and Iota (Infrastructure)	USD	..	..	..	..	20 billion	..	..	National Emergency Management Organisation
	- Hurricane Lisa (Public utilities)	USD	..	..	..	..	3,264 million	..	..	National Emergency Management Organisation
	- Hurricane Lisa (Infrastructure)	USD	..	..	..	..	12,32 million	..	..	National Emergency Management Organisation
	Target 2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round									
2.1.1	Prevalence of undernourishment	%	6	5.3	4.8	4.7	4.9	..	..	Statistical Institute of Belize
2.1.2 Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)										
	- Proportion of the population experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity	%	..	..	..	..	45.5	..	45.5	- Food and Agricultural Organisation
	- Proportion of the population experiencing severe food insecurity	%	..	..	..	..	5.9	..	18	- Caribbean Food Security and Livelihoods Survey
Target 2.A Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries										
Total official flows (official development assistance plus other official flows) to the agriculture sector										
	- Extension Services/ Rural Infrastructure/ Climate Smart Agriculture (Nov 2018 – Mar 2027)	USD	..	21,822,400	..	..	..	..	..	Ministry of Economic Development
	- Food Security/ Capacity Building/ Market Access and Trade (Mar 2020 – Mar 2024)	USD	..	..	..	..	2,500,000	..	..

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	Year				Source
			2017	2018	2019	2020	
	- Sustainable Agriculture and Extension Services (Capacity building) (Nov 2018 – Dec 2023)		..	315,942	..	..	..
	- Food Security and Capacity Building (Sep 2019 – Dec 2023)		..	..	233,933	..	..
	- Food Security Improved Nutrition and Eradicate Hunger (Aug 2021 – Aug 2023)	USD	..	..	..	209,801	..
	- Eradicate Hunger (Oct 2020 – July 2023) – Rural districts		..	..	..	330,000	..
	- Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture (Jun 2022 – Jun 2027)		..	..	..	..	Ministry of Economic Development
	- Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture (Mar 2021 – Jun 2023)		..	..	..	45,000	..
	- Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture (Mar 2022 – Mar 2024)	USD	..	..	..	100,000	..
	- Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture (Mar 2022 – Mar 2024)		..	..	..	370,000	..
2.A.2	- Food Security (Nov 2022 – Nov 2024)		..	..	..	200,000	..
	- Food Security (Nov 2022 – Nov 2024)	USD	..	..	..	250,000	..
	- Food Security and Improved Nutrition (Oct 2022 – Apr 2024) – Rural districts		..	..	..	3,000,000	..
	- Food Security and Improved Nutrition (Feb 2023 – Feb 2028)	USD	..	..	..	15,800,000	..
	- Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Eradicate Hunger (Mar 2023 – Dec 2023)		..	..	..	60,000	

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	Year				Source			
			2017	2018	2019	2020				
Target 3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births										
3.1.1	Maternal mortality ratio (direct obstetric mortality per 100,000 live births)	per 100,000 live births	69	65	41	57	105	14	31	Ministry of Health and Wellness
3.1.2	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	%	96.1	95.9	96.1	95.4	95.2	94.7	95.7	Ministry of Health and Wellness
Target 3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births										
Under 5 mortality rate										
3.2.1	- Country		19.06	15.54	17.98	14.8	14.58	17.28	19	Ministry of Health
	- Female	per 1,000 live births	15.98	13.79	13.03	11.72	13.08	15.32	17.68	
	- Male		22.05	17.27	22.57	18.02	16.1	18.57	20.31	
Neo-natal mortality rate (per 1,000 births)										
3.2.2	- Country	Per 1,000 births	10.22	8.03	10.16	9.11	8.56	11.05	10.83	Ministry of Health
	- Female		7.85	7.03	7.21	5.86	6.84	9.43	9.79	
	- Male		12.52	9.02	12.78	12.5	10.33	12.02	11.87	
Target 3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases										
Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, by sex, age and key populations										
3.3.1	- Country	per 1,000 uninfected population	0.62	0.68	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.47	0.48	Ministry of Health
	- Female		0.54	0.46	0.45	0.46	0.41	0.62	0.41	
	- Male		0.71	0.92	0.65	0.54	0.48	0.62	0.55	
Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population										
3.3.2	- Country	per 100,000 population	32	26.1	23.6	20.6	18	18.9	19.8	Ministry of Health
	- Female		27.2	19.4	15.4	14.6	11.4	9.4	9.3	
	- Male		36.9	33.1	31.9	26.8	24.9	28.6	30.7	
3.3.3	Malaria incidence cases per 1000 person cases per year	Per 1,000 person cases	0.02	0.02	0	0	0	0	0	Ministry of Health
Target 3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being										
Suicide mortality rate										
3.4.1	- Female	%	3.09	2.01	4.1	4.02	1.98	3.96	4.38	Ministry of Health and Wellness
	- Male		10.83	13.57	9.95	11.85	15.74	14.82	12.57	

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	Year				Source
			2017	2018	2019	2020	
Target 3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents							
3.6.1	Death rate due to road traffic injuries						
	- Country	%	24.5	21.38	26.68	12.98	21.03
	- Female	%	12.82	7.32	8.2	1.51	8.89
	- Male	%	36.39	35.72	45.55	24.73	33.51
3.7.2	Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group						
	- Age 10-19	per 1,000 women in that age group	33.6	33.57	30.42	24.77	23.14
	- Age 10-14		0.99	0.65	1.1	0.72	0.67
	- Age 15-19		68.23	68.43	61.38	50.09	46.75
Target 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes							
Target 4C By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states							
Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications by education level							
4.C.1	- Trained Teachers Preschool - Total	%	46.8	52.1	57.8	67.6	71.3
	- Trained Teachers Preschool - Urban	%	36.4	41.2	51	60.7	59.7
	- Trained Teachers Preschool - Rural	%	57.9	64.1	64.6	74.7	82.4
	- Trained Teachers Primary - Total	%	79	82.2	86	87.7	88.2
	- Trained Teachers Primary - Urban	%	80.3	83.1	88.9	90.8	92.1
	- Trained Teachers Primary - Rural	%	78	81.5	83.8	85.6	85.3
	- Trained Teachers Secondary - Total	%	55.1	62	66.5	68.9	69.1
	- Trained Teachers Secondary - Urban	%	58.3	63.7	69.2	72.6	72.6
	- Trained Teachers Secondary - Rural	%	47.3	57.9	60.2	60.1	61
Target 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes							
Completion of education within the prescribed time (primary education/lower secondary education/upper secondary education)							
4.1.2	Proportion of primary school students who complete their primary education within the prescribed time (8 years)						
	- Female	%	94.4	96.5	92.2	97.4	..

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	2017	2018	2019	Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	Source
Target 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life											
5.5.1	Proportion of managerial positions held by women (e.g. Head of Department; Deputy Head of Department; Head of Unit)	...	...	...	42	42	...	...	53.08	53.08	Statistical Institute of Belize
Pillar 2: Prosperity											
SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	2017	2018	2019	Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	Source
Target 7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services											
Proportion of households with access to electricity (from BEI)											
7.1.1	- Belize	%	..	98.19	98.94	..	96.81	95.7	..	..
	- Cayo	%	..	91.63	90.97	..	90.82	86.4	..	..
	- Corozal	%	..	88	90.2	..	93.48	84.9	..	..	Statistical Institute of Belize
	- Orange Walk	%	..	89.6	90.94	..	79.35	83.8	..	..
	- Stann Creek	%	..	93.46	97.63	..	90.77	89	..	..
	- Toledo	%	..	72.58	72.89	..	78.12	60.9	..	..
	- Country	%	..	..	..	..	..	86.5	..	..
Proportion of households with access to electricity (from another source)											
7.1.1	- Belize	%	..	0.47	..	..	1.11	2.8	..	..
	- Cayo	%	..	5.03	0.41	..	4.6	7.4	..	..
	- Corozal	%	..	3.01	2.67	..	1.14	7.3	..	..	Statistical Institute of Belize
	- Orange Walk	%	..	4.05	2.79	..	9.96	10	..	..
	- Stann Creek	%	..	0.74	..	..	5.26	6.4	..	..
	- Toledo	%	..	12.99	17.24	..	16.51	27.8	..	..
	- Country	%	..	..	..	..	..	8.2	..	..
Proportion of households by main cooking fuel used											
Clean fuel (Gas - Butane/Biogas and Electricity)											
7.1.2	- Belize	%	..	98.59	99.55	..	98.13	98.3	..	..
	- Cayo	%	..	93.96	93.95	..	90.67	92.2	..	..

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	Year				Source		
			2017	2018	2019	2020			
7.1.2	- Corozal	%	..	86.67	80.27	..	75.49	82.4	..
	- Orange Walk	%	..	88.45	87.25	..	86.05	92.7	..
	- Stann Creek	%	..	87.56	90.12	..	88.56	90.5	..
	- Toledo	%	..	55.18	60.12	..	59	47.2	..
	- Country	%	..	..	..	..	..	88.5	..
	Unclean fuel (Gas - Wood/ Charcoal and Kerosene								
	- Belize	%	..	1.41	1.45	..	1.87	1.5	..
	- Cayo	%	..	6.04	6.05	..	9.33	7.1	..
	- Corozal	%	..	13.33	19.73	..	24.51	17.5	..
	- Orange Walk	%	..	11.55	12.75	..	13.95	7.2	..
	- Stann Creek	%	..	12.44	9.88	..	11.44	9.4	..
	- Toledo	%	..	44.82	39.88	..	41	52.8	..
	- Country	%	..	..	..	..	..	11.3	..
Target 7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix									
7.2.1	Renewable energy share in in total final energy supply (Annual calculation)	%	30.4	26.2	24.2	34.6	36	..	Energy Unit
Target 7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency									
7.3.1	Total primary energy supply	Tons of oil equivalent per thousand US dollars of GDP	0.157	0.177	0.168	0.188	0.177	0.17	..
Target 8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries									
8.1.1	Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita								Statistical Institute of Belize
8.1.1	- Constant prices	%	..	..	2.3	-15.2	..	9.3	3.2
Target 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value									
8.5.2	Unemployment rate (Total)	%	..	..	..	13.7	9.2	5	4

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	Year				Source
			2017	2018	2019	2020	
Unemployment rate by age range							
- Age Range 14 - 24 (Both)	%	23	11.8
- Age Range 25 - 34 (Both)	%	13.5	8.6	3.9
- Age Range 35 - 44 (Both)	%	9.3	5.8	3.3
- Age Range 45 - 54 (Both)	%	9.6	5.6	2.5
- Age Range 55+ (Both)	%	10.9	3.7	3.2
Unemployment rate by age and sex (Female)							
- Age Range 14 - 24 (Female)	%	30.4	25.2	..
- Age Range 25 - 34 (Female)	%	15.3	13.5	..
- Age Range 35 - 44 (Female)	%	12.3	8.2	..
- Age Range 45 - 54 (Female)	%	11.8	8.8	..
- Age Range 55+ (Female)	%	12.4	5	..
- Total female	%	17	13	..
Unemployment rate by age and sex (Male)							
- Age Range 14 - 24 (Male)	%	18.5	14.5	..
- Age Range 25 - 34 (Male)	%	12.1	4.5	..
- Age Range 35 - 44 (Male)	%	7.2	4.1	..
- Age Range 45 - 54 (Male)	%	8	3.5	..
- Age Range 55+ (Male)	%	10.1	5.1	..
- Total male	%	11.6	6.7	4

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Source
Target 8.6 By 2030, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training										
8.6.1	Proportion of youth (aged 15 – 24 years) not in employment, education or training	%	..	..	..	..	23.2	19.8	..	Statistical Institute of Belize
Target 8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment										
8.8.1	Fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100000 workers by sex and migrant status									
	- Country	Count	1749	1490	980	1049	..	..	..
	- Migrants	Count	1382	1191	779	835	..	..	..	Social Security Board
	- Non-migrants	Count	367	299	201	214	..	..	..
	- Total (female)	Count	207	187	120	136	..	..	..
	- Migrants (female)	Count	173	153	101	114	..	..	..	Social Security Board
	- Non-migrants (female)	Count	34	34	19	22	..	..	..
	- Total male	Count	1542	1303	860	913	..	..	..
	- Migrants (male)	Count	1209	1038	678	721	..	..	..	Social Security Board
	- Non-migrants (male)	Count	333	265	182	192	..	..	..
Target 8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products										
8.9.1	Accommodation and Restaurants as a proportion of GDP	%	4.3	4.6	3.9	4.9	2.3	3	..	Statistical Institute of Belize
Target 8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all										
Number of commercial bank branches and ATMs per 100000 adults										
8.10.1	Commercial bank branches	Count	46	46	46	46	47	..	..	Central Bank of Belize
	ATMs	Count	100	119	109	135	138	..	..
Target 9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all										
Passenger and freight volumes by mode of transport										
9.1.2	Air (Individuals)	No. of Persons	1,644,344	1,448,415	442,802	879,036	1,327,360	1,021,857	- Department of Civil Aviation	
	Air (Freight)	Pounds	1,910,093.25	1,742,905.54	1,247,704.67	1,579,808	1,809,838.17	1,098,616.38	- Department of Transport - Belize Port Authority	

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Source
Target 9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries										
Target 9.A Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries and small island developing States 18										
9.2.1	- Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP	%	7	7.1	7.2	6.9	7.4	7	..	Statistical Institute of Belize
	- Manufacturing value added per capita	%	0.85	0.83	0.83	0.82	0.74	1	..	Statistical Institute of Belize
Target 9.C Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020										
Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services – Internet Connection										
9.C.1	Countrywide									
	- Fixed/landline internet connection	%	..	..	..	..	..	64.74	..	Statistical Institute of Belize
Target 10.5 Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations										
Financial Soundness Indicators										
10.5.1	Non-Performing Loans (Net of Specific	%	2.4	2.7	2.4	4.4	2.8	3.5	..	

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	2017	2018	2019	2020	Year	2021	2022	2023	Source
	Provisions) to Total Gross Loans										
	Capital adequacy ratio (Regulatory Capital to Risk Weighted Assets)	%	24.2	24.6	22.8	19.8		19.2	15.1	..	Central Bank of Belize
Target 10.A Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organisation agreements											
10.A.1	Proportion of tariff lines applied to imports from least developed countries and developing countries with zero-tariff	%	41.1	79	81.8	76.5		79	..	..	Customs and Excise Department
Target 10.C By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent											
10.C.1	Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted	%	2.3	3	2	1.6		1.3	1.2	..	Central Bank of Belize
Target 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums											
11.1.1	Housing loans approved by Development Finance Corporation	USD	..	..	..	1.850		8.150	5.600	..	Statistical Institute of Belize (Abstract of Statistics)
Target 11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations											
11.5.2	Direct disaster economic loss in relation to global GDP, damage to critical infrastructure and number of disruptions of basic services, attributed to disasters										
	- Hurricane Eta and Iota (Public utilities)	USD million	..	..	..	..		..	1.750	..	
	- Hurricane Eta and Iota (Infrastructure)	USD million	..	..	..	..		20	..	..	National Emergency Management Organisation
	- Hurricane Lisa (Public utilities)	USD million	..	..	..	..		..	3.264	..	
	- Hurricane Lisa (Infrastructure)	USD million	..	..	..	..		..	12.322	..	
Target 11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management											
11.6.1	Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in controlled facilities out	tonnes	39,815	39,991	40,899	38,981		..	..	..	Belize Solid Waste Management Authority

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	Year				Source
			2017	2018	2019	2020	
	of total municipal waste generated by cities						
Target 11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities							
11.7.1	Public Buildings	Buildings	..	..	..	..
	Streets	Miles	..	..	..	..
	Parks and Playgrounds	Acres	..	..	..	..
	Buildings fitted for persons with disabilities	Buildings	..	..	..	163.18	Ministry of Natural Resources
	Parks fitted for persons with disabilities	Parks	..	..	..	19	..
					22	..	..
11.7.2	Total reported cases of physical or sexual harassment by sex/age/disability status and place of occurrence in the previous 12 months	Count	..	..	..	139	Belize Crime Observatory
						115	144
Target 11.B By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels							
Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies							
11.B.1	- Belize (City Emergency Management Organisation Plan)	Count	..	..	..	..	1
	- Cayo (Village Plan)	Count	..	..	..	..	10
	- Corozal (District Plan)	Count	..	..	..	..	1
	- Orange Walk (District Plan)	Count	..	..	..	..	1
	- Stann Creek (Village Plan)	Count	..	..	..	..	1
	- Toledo (Village Plan)	%	..	60	..	..	..

Pillar 3: Planet

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	2015	2018	2019	Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	Source																																																																																				
Target 6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all																																																																																															
Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services																																																																																															
Proportion of population using improved drinking water services																																																																																															
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Proportion of population using a) safely managed sanitation services and b) a hand washing facility with soap and water																																																																																															
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- Belize	%	91.5	96.8	..																																																																																				
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Target 6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally																																																																																															
Proportion of domestic and industrial waste water flows safely treated																																																																																															
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SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	Year				Source
			2015	2018	2019	2020	
	- Population with independent wastewater treatment (e.g. septic tanks)	%	55.2	57	61	..	60.8
	- Population not connected to wastewater treatment	%	32	28	27	..	27
	Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality						..
6.3.2	- National Score, Assessed water bodies River(10) and Ground-water(9)	%	78.95	78.95	78.95	..	..
	- Normalized Score, Assessed water bodies River(10) and Ground-water(9)	%	80	80	80	..	..
Target 6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity							
6.4.2	Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources	%	..	..	..	1	..
					
Target 6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate							
6.5.1	Degree of integrated water resources management	%	..	20	..	21	32
					
6.5.2	Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation	%	..	..	..	25	0
					
Target 6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes							
6.6.1	Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time	..	..	..	..	0	..
					
Target 6.A By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies							
6.A.1	Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan						

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	Year				Source
			2015	2018	2019	2020	
	- Safe Drinking Water/ Sanitation and Hygiene (for the period Feb 2019 – Jun 2023; Belize district)	USD	..	..	\$8.722 million	..	..
	- Safe drinking Water (for the period Jun 2022 – Dec 2023; Rural districts)	USD	..	..	..	..	Ministry of Economic Development
	- Sanitation and Hygiene (for the period Jun 2022 – Jun 2024; Belize district)	USD	..	..	..	..	\$0.8 million ..
	- Safe Water (for the period Dec 2022 – Dec 2024; Urban/Rural districts)	USD	..	..	..	..	\$0.25 million ..
	- Increased water access (for the period May 2023 – May 2027)	USD	..	..	..	..	\$6 million ..
	- Safe Water and Integrated Water Source Management (for the period May 2023 – May 2027; Rural districts)	USD	..	..	..	..	\$4.64 million ..
	Target 12.4 By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment						
	Hazardous Waste generated per capita and proportion of hazardous waste treated by type of treatment						
12.4.2	- Chemical reagent	..	18.97	14.48	..	..	..
	- Osmole pole wrap	tonnes	..	..	10.74	..	..
	- Asbestos	12.56	-	26.99	1.03	..	..
	Target 12a Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production						
	Installed renewable energy-generating capacity in developing countries (in watts per capita) (Re 7.b.1)						
12.A.1	- The installed capacity of power plants that generate electricity from renewable energy sources divided by the	watts per capita	..	187.2	187.2	182.4	Energy Unit ..

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	Year				Source
			2015	2018	2019	2020	
Target 13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning							
13.2.2	Total greenhouse gas emissions per year	Gg CO ₂ eq	-5260.066	..	..	-5826.792	National Climate Change Office
Target 14.4 By 2020, effectively end harvesting and overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing practices and implement science-based management plans in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics							
Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels							
14.4.1	Key commercially harvested species include: Caribbean spiny lobster; Queen conch; Stone crab; Sea cucumber; Shark; Fin fish	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Fisheries Department
Target 14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information							
Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas							
14.5.1	Belize has designated 20.3% of its total ocean space as MPAs. Within the Territorial Sea, 36.10% is under MPA protection and 46.37% within the EEZ is designated as an MPA. Prior to 2022, MPA calculations considered only the Territorial Sea and excluded the EEZ	%	..	..	..	3	20.3
14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognising that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organisation fisheries subsidies negotiation							
Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing:							
14.6.1	- The 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA)						Fisheries Department
							Fisheries Department

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	Year					Source
			2015	2018	2019	2020	2021	
	Implementation of Applicable instruments to combat IUU fishing. Band 1 (Degree >0 - 0.2: Very low implementation); Band 2 (Degree 0.2 - <0.4: Low implementation); Band 3 (Degree 0.4 - <0.6: Medium implementation); Band 4 (Degree 0.6 - <0.8: High implementation); Band 5 (Degree 0.8 - 1: Very High implementation)	Band category-National	..	..	..	..	..	Fisheries Department
	- The FAO Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (Compliance Agreement)							Fisheries Department
	Implementation of Applicable instruments to combat IUU fishing. Band 1 (Degree >0 - 0.2: Very low implementation); Band 2 (Degree 0.2 - <0.4: Low implementation); Band 3 (Degree 0.4 - <0.6: Medium implementation); Band 4 (Degree 0.6 - <0.8: High implementation); Band 5 (Degree 0.8 - 1: Very High implementation)	Band category-National	..	..	..	..	..	Fisheries Department
	- The FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance (VG-FSP)							Fisheries Department
	Implementation of Applicable instruments to combat IUU fishing. Band 1 (Degree >0 - 0.2: Very low implementation); Band 2 (Degree 0.2 - <0.4: Low implementation); Band 3 (Degree 0.4 - <0.6: Medium implementation); Band 4 (Degree 0.6 - <0.8: High implementation); Band 5 (Degree 0.8 - 1: Very High implementation)	Band category-National	..	..	..	..	..	Fisheries Department
	- The FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Flag State Performance (VG-FSP)							Fisheries Department

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	2015	2018	2019	Year	2021	2022	2023	Source
SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	2017	2018	2019	Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Pillar 4: Peace, justice and strong institutions										
16.1.1	Target 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere									
	Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex	Total Count	..	..	134	102	125	113	87	Belize Crime Observatory
	- Female	Count	..	..	17	11	11	9	10	Belize Crime Observatory
	- Male	Count	..	..	117	91	114	104	77	Belize Crime Observatory
	Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence and/or (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months									
	- Physical violence	Total Count	..	..	1487	1509	1524	1705	1812	Belize Crime Observatory
	- Sexual violence	Total Count	..	..	44	51	47	100	143	Belize Crime Observatory
	Physical violence - Female	Count	..	..	1206	1221	1207	959	1020	Belize Crime Observatory
	Physical violence - Male	Count	..	..	281	288	317	746	792	Belize Crime Observatory
	Sexual violence - Female	Count	..	..	42	48	44	95	141	Belize Crime Observatory
16.1.3	Sexual violence - Male	Count	..	..	2	3	3	5	2	Belize Crime Observatory
	Target 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all									
16.3.2	Unsentenced persons on remand as a proportion of overall prison population	%	..	37	36	38	34	36	32	Belize Crime Observatory

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Source
Target 16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration										
16.9.1	Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	Total Count	7027	7401	7125	6023	6412	..	..	Vital Statistics Unit
- Belize	Count	2008	2000	2044	1537	1455	..	..	..	Vital Statistics Unit
- Cayo	Count	1799	2061	1979	1557	1755	..	..	..	Vital Statistics Unit
- Corozal	Count	300	321	308	279	251	..	..	..	Vital Statistics Unit
- Orange Walk	Count	1518	1594	1394	1231	1474	..	..	..	Vital Statistics Unit
- Stann Creek	Count	1004	1089	1042	999	1165	..	..	..	Vital Statistics Unit
- Toledo	Count	398	336	358	420	312	..	..	..	Vital Statistics Unit
Pillar 5: Partnerships for the goals										
SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Source
Target 17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection										
17.1.1	Total government [recurrent] revenue as a proportion of GDP	%	25.06	26.31	25.17	23.14	23.68	25.59	..	Ministry of Finance, Approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure; Statistical Institute of Belize
- GDP at constant prices	USD billion	\$2.153	\$2.176	\$2.268	\$1.957	\$2.306	\$2.508	..	..	Statistical Institute of Belize
17.1.2	Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes	%	87.04	87.15	89.56	86.67	88.34	89.78	94.75	Ministry of Finance, Approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure
Target 17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources										
17.3.1	Foreign direct investment, official development assistance and South-South cooperation as a proportion of gross national income	%	1.1	5.1	3.8	3.5	5	4.5	..	Central Bank of Belize
- Net FDI/GDP	%	1.05	5.13	3.85	3.51	5.07	4.94	..	..	Central Bank of Belize

SDG ID	Indicator	Unit	Year					Source
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
17.3.2	Volume of remittances (USD) as a proportion of total GDP	%	3.8	3.9	3.9	5.7	5.3	4.8
Target 17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology								
17.8.1	Proportion of individuals using the Internet	%	..	..	60.3	..	76.3	..
Target 17.13 Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence								
Macroeconomic Dashboard								
17.13.1	- External debt/ GDP	%	55.4	56	55.4	71	55.2	48.2
	- Domestic debt/ GDP	%	22.6	22.8	23.1	32.1	27.1	23.2
	- Public debt/ GDP	%	78.1	78.8	78.5	103	82.3	71.4
	- Gross international reserves ³⁹	USD million	\$312.96	\$295.62	\$277.87	\$348.07	\$424.05	\$482.45
								..

Appendix VI: Action Plan Mapping Visual: The 6 Transitions in Belize

Engine Room Actions	Food systems	Energy access and affordability	Digital connectivity	Education	Jobs and social protection	Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution
Help drive shifts across Policy and Regulatory Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Agriculture and Food Policy Food System Pathway Belize Blue Economy Development Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan 2022 – 2027 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belize National Sustainable Energy Policy 2012 – 2033 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Digital Agenda to modernize governance (2025) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special Education Policy, implement Early Childhood Development Investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Protection Strategy Social Protection Floor and accompanying institutional mechanisms National Strategy for Advancing Statistical Development National Blue Economy Policy Land Restoration Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Energy Policy National Land Use Policy Comprehensive Industrial Strategy that integrates green and blue industrial policies Low carbon resilient development pathway Climate change adaptation and mitigation National Blue Economy Policy
Identify Pipelines of Bankable and Market-Ready Projects and Initiatives					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult remedial initiatives, skills training and upskilling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Risk Management Plan supplemented by disaster-specific strategies for hurricanes, floods and droughts
Convening and Building Partnerships for a Deal Room to Finance Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPP International development partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPP International development partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPP International development partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Feeding programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Feeding program with rotational employment Affordable Housing programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Risk Management Plan supplemented by disaster-specific strategies for hurricanes, floods and droughts International development partnerships

Engine Room Actions	Food systems	Energy access and affordability	Digital connectivity	Education	Jobs and social protection	Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution
Capacity-Building at Scale to Ensure Longevity of the Transitions					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutionalisation of SDU-MSDCC to facilitate the recommendations of the Belize 2024 VNR 	

Appendix VIII: Examples of Key Partnerships

Partnerships	Year signed/ Operational
Public sector	
1. Belize and Taiwan Sign MOU on Bilateral Cooperation 2021-2025	2021
2. Belize signs MOU with WWF and TNC strengthening the Blue Bonds initiative - Project Finance initiative for Permanence (PFP) by 2025	2021
3. National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Global Network Secretariat and Government of Belize sign MOU to increase Climate Change Adaptation efforts	2024
4. The Government of Belize signs an MOU with Microsoft to meet the government's National Digital Transformation Goals	2017
5. Ministry of Economic Development Signs MOU with Canada-CARICOM Expert Deployment Mechanism	2022
6. MoU signed between Ministry of Fisheries, Forestry, the Environment and Sustainable Development (MFFESD) and the Coalition for Sustainable Fisheries to control the use of gill nets in Belize's maritime waters	2020
7. GOB and Resilient Rural Belize Sign MOU to build overall resilience of smallholder farmers to climate change by adopting climate resilient practices, increase and diversify production; and facilitate their access to commercial market chains for the off-take of their surplus production	2021
8. Belize Signs Technical Cooperation MOU with Singapore's Civil Aviation Authority to build Aviation Leaders Programme in Public Policy	2023
9. Peace Corps Belize signs MOU with Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Transport to collaborate on a national priority area of youth development in Belize	2023
10. National Hydrological Service Signs MOU for Water Research Cooperation for cooperation on research on Belize's water resources, sector and management	2021
11. Belize and El Salvador sign memorandum for technical cooperation in the area of security	2017
12. Belize, United Kingdom sign MOU on the Ocean Country Partnership Programme on marine sustainability on the Ocean Country Partnership Programme	2023
13. Belize and Barbados to sign MoU deepening Blue Economy Cooperation on Deepening Blue Economy Cooperation	2023
14. Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics & E-Governance Hands Over Solar Photovoltaic System to the University of Belize to formalize full ownership and operation of the 480 kilowatts 'peak' (KWP) Solar Photovoltaic (PV) System to the university	2023
15. Government of Belize, UNICEF and SIB Sign MOU for MICS7	2023
16. The Government of the United Mexican States, through the Federal Consumer Protection Agency (PROFECO), and the Government of Belize through the Belize Bureau of Standards renewed their Memorandum of Understanding	2022
17. Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise, the International Regional Organisation for Health in Agriculture (OIRSA), the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA), the University of Belize, the Banana Growers Association, and	2023

Partnerships	Year signed/ Operational
the Republic of China (Taiwan) International Cooperation and Development Fund signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to combat the threat posed by Fusarium wilt Tropical Race 4 (Foc TR4) on banana and plantain crops and other diseases in Belize	
18. Agreement between the IDB and the Government of Belize (GOB) launches the second phase of the Education Quality Improvement Program (EQIP II), with special focus on innovation in Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education, and that will expand the learning of scientific, digital and problem-solving skills	2020
19. Government of Belize, Taiwan, and IDB Form Agreement to Boost Jobs and Recovery	2022
20. Governments of Belize and Taiwan Sign Technical Cooperation Framework Agreement which will serve to establish further cooperation programmes between Belize and Taiwan in areas such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, technology, education, climate change, youth and women, health, tourism and other areas of mutual consent	2023
21. The Government of Belize signed two agreements with the Government of the Republic of Korea: the Framework Agreement for Grant-Aid and the Agreement Concerning Loans from the Korean Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF). The signing of the Framework Agreement for Grant-Aid will supports the establishment of a Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) office in Belize. The second agreement, concerning loans from the EDCF, formalizes Belize's official eligibility for financial support from this Fund.	2024
22. The Government of Belize approved a Joint Design Document (JDD) which will form the basis for a compact between the GOB and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). Through this initiative, the GOB and the MCC will provide grants in the amount of BZ\$250 million (US \$125 million) for the Education Project and the Electricity Sector in Belize. The implementation of this project will see the USA become the largest bilateral partner in Belize.	2024
23. Belize-IAEA technical cooperation agreement includes technical support through trainings, procurement, expert advice, etc. in Health, Agriculture, Nuclear & Radiation Safety, Water & Environment, Energy	2019-2023
24. Belize-IAEA Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean (ARCAL) .ARCAL is an Agreement between most IAEA Member States in the Latin America and the Caribbean region for technical and economic cooperation to promote the use of nuclear science and technology, prioritizing the region's most pressing problems. Belize agreed to extend agreement for a period of 5 more years effective 2020.	2020
25. Belize signed a US\$45 million development loan agreement with the Saudi Fund for Development for the construction of a tertiary hospital in Belmopan. In addition, GOB signed a US\$77 million loan agreement with the SFD, for the construction of a 60MW Solar Energy Plant in Belize.	2023

Partnerships	Year signed/ Operational
26. Belize signed an MOU between Italy's Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security and Belize's MSDCC. The objective of the MOU is to strengthen international cooperation for sustainable development. It includes the promotion of renewable and efficient energy; support resilient infrastructure and foster innovation; encourage sustainable consumption and production patterns; promote sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources; sustainably manage forests and combat desertification; enhance international support for capacity building in developing countries.	2022
27. Belize's MSDCC, the IOM and the EU collaborated on a US\$2.3 million project entitled "Building Climate Change Resilience and Social Integration of Displaced People in Settlements of Western Belize." The project aimed to support displaced persons in migrant settlements to become productive members of their host communities and participate in furthering their common resilience, economic growth and sustainable development, thereby preventing further displacement.	2022
28. Belize and the EU signed a financing agreements of 12.6 million euros for bilateral cooperation programmes for the period 2021 - 2027. The overall objective is to reduce inequality and enhance sustainable management of the southern and western regions of Belize. The two specific objectives are (1) promoting inclusive development, with particular regard to women, youth and indigenous people, based on a green growth model and a territorial approach (shared responsibilities across levels of government) and (2) increasing border management, security and trade facilitation capacities at land and maritime borders.	2024
29. The Governments of Belize and Mexico launched three new projects under the 10 th Meeting of the Joint Commission for Technical and Scientific Cooperation between the Governments of Belize and Mexico for the period 2023 to 2025. The three projects include two in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise; and one with the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB)	2023
30. Belize and Cuba signed a cultural agreement which includes exchange of artists and artistic groups; sharing of exhibitions, cultural heritage materials and promotional content in visual arts and participation in festival events; workshops related to cinema and audio-visual media.	2023
31. Belize-Cuba Medical Brigade bilateral agreement The renewal of the agreement extends the presence of Cuban Medical Brigade in Belize that not only benefits Belizeans nationwide but strengthens and develops the health system in Belize. The Belizean health sector has benefited significantly over the years from this cooperation that started in 1999.	2020
32. The MFAFT&I, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise, and the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) launched the 'Sembrando Vida - Belize' project. The "Sembrando Vida" program aims to improve the quality of life of the rural population and minimize environmental degradation. The project will provide employment generation and economic stability to beneficiaries, which is expected to cover 2,000 agricultural producers who will receive direct economic, technical and in-kind support without intermediaries.	2023

Partnerships	Year signed/ Operational
33. The GOB currently has a Bilateral Cooperation Programme with the Government of Peru which seeks to transfer best practices, strengthen capacities, and share experiences in the areas of tourism, gastronomy, and archaeology.	2022- 2024
34. The Office of the Prime Minister, the Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and the Government of Belize signed a Loan and Grant Agreement with the International Cooperation and Development Fund of Taiwan (Taiwan ICDF) to co-finance with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) on a parallel basis, a project to support the sustainability of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with a focus on women and green financing.	2023
35. The Government of Belize signed a US\$8.5-million agreement with the Central American Corporation of Air Navigation Services (COCESNA) in Madrid, Spain for the acquisition of a new aviation primary radar and the upgrading of its air traffic control center.	2023
36. The Ministry of Health and Wellness in collaboration with the Chi Mei Medical Center in Tainan Taiwan collaborated in partnership to strengthen nursing education and opportunities for specialization in nursing.	2023
37. Belize benefits from the EU-Central America Cooperation Facility (EUreCA) regional cooperation programme. This is a EU - GIZ funded programme for 60 months. It supports bi-regional partnership between the EU and CA countries in line with the principles and objectives of the EU-CA Association Agreement, focusing on common political priorities, including green and blue recovery, digitalization, gender equality and the fight against inequalities.	2022
38. UNDP -Global Environmental Facility Small Grants - GEF 6. Integrated management of Production Landscapes to deliver Multiple Global Environmental Benefits. The objective was to mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable land/water management into production landscapes in Belize. The programme will run from 2023 to 2028.	2023
39. UNDP -GEF Islands Programme. Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Solutions in Small Island Developing States. The Objective is to support SIDS to enter a safe chemical development pathway by strengthening their ability to control the flow of chemicals, products, and materials into their territories and to unlock resources for long-term management of chemicals and wastes including Integrated chemicals and wastes management in SIDS. The executing agency is the Department of the Environment. The duration of the project is 5 years (2021 - 2026).	2021
40. UNDP- Global Environmental Facility Small Grants - GEF 6. Enhancing Jaguar corridors and strongholds through improved management and threat reduction. The Objective was to secure jaguar corridors and strengthen the management of jaguar conservation units through reduction of current and emerging threats, development of a sustainable wildlife economy and enhanced regional cooperation. The Forestry Department is the executing agency.	2022

Partnerships	Year signed/ Operational
<p>41. Belize explores an integrated approach to improve financing for sustainable development: Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF)</p> <p>Provides a framework for financing national sustainable development priorities and the SDGs at the country level. UNDP is leading Belize's process. MOF is set to be lead ministry. Received ministerial direction (Ministers Courtenay, Habet, Coye) to explore the feasibility of a climate focused INFF option for Belize. Jointly with the UNDP, a high-level INFF Technical Workshop took place from 25 -27 January 2024. A report of the workshop was sent by the UNRCO office to MFA, MED, MOF and MSDCC. The following steps are: submission of a Cabinet Paper on a proposed INFF Steering Committee.</p>	2024
<p>42. Belize-UK project: Bringing a GBC survivor-centered approach to the Women and Family Support Department's Gender Programme, with particular focus on intersectionality.</p> <p>The project was carried out over a three-month period from January to March 2024 with a final validation session held on March 26, 2024. This initiative is aligned with the objectives of the National Gender Policy, the National Gender Based Violence Action Plan, the Strategic Plan (2022 to 2027) of the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs and the Operational Plan of the Women and Family Support Department.</p>	2024
<p>43. Humanitarian aid from the Federative Republic of Brazil</p> <p>Belize has benefitted from humanitarian aid from Brazil with the donation of Paediatric 10 Valent Pneumococcal conjugate vaccines (PCV -10) to the Ministry of Health and Wellness of Belize who integrated these vaccines into Belize's national vaccination schedule.</p>	2020
<p>44. BPH Foundation - Resilient Reefs Initiative</p> <p>RRI is a global project partnering across four World Heritage reef sites. The objective of the RRI is to bring together local communities, reef managers and resilience experts to build local capacity and develop new solutions under a Resilience Strategy for combating the effects of climate change and other local threats. In 2021, the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute in collaboration with the Fisheries Department and Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) launched the Resilient Reefs Initiative (RRI) in Belize. Duration 5 years (April 2021 - March 2025). Currently undergoing implementation of the strategy</p>	2021
<p>45. UNICEF, ILO and WFP Joint Programme: SDG Building a Resilient Belize through universal, adaptive and sustainable social protection</p> <p>-To coordinate, integrate and strengthen Belize's current social protection system policy framework and institutional capacities) to ensure resiliency and shock responsiveness.</p> <p>-Duration 1st January 2022 to 30th December 2024. By 2024, strengthen the resilience of vulnerable and poor groups; and strengthen local economic development and livelihoods in targeted municipalities.</p>	2022
<p>46. World Food Program</p> <p>Social Protection System strengthening in Belize (in the context of food security)</p>	2023

Partnerships	Year signed/ Operational
<p>To distribute cash to poor and vulnerable Belizeans who have been assessed as being eligible to receive benefits through the government social protection platform in order to cover their needs.</p> <p>Duration- 12 December 2023 to 12 December 2024.</p>	
<p>47. The United States Government – through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugee and Migration (PRM) – funded the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Belize's expansion and operations for "Migrant Hubs" in three locations, strengthening the hubs in providing information and services to migrants for safe and orderly migration.</p> <p>IOM signed Implementation Agreements to partner with The Child Development Foundation of Belmopan, Belize Red Cross in San Ignacio, and Humana People to People in Bella Vista to operate the Migrant Hubs in their communities to provide critical services and information</p>	2021
<p>48. India Project: Strengthening of the Maternal and Child Health Services in CARICOM Member States to support the attainment, maintenance and sustainability of the elimination of Mother-to-Child transmission (EMTCT) Plus of HIV, syphilis and Hepatitis B. Jan 2022-2024</p> <p>Strengthening the MCH services to successfully implement the key primary prevention and treatment services to support the sustainability of the EMTCT Plus strategy. It is anticipated that the project will also contribute to improved outcomes for antenatal care such as the provision of quality services for women and children, which by extension support the reduction of maternal and child mortality. Focal point Dr. Beer MOHW.</p>	2022
<p>49. Green Climate Fund: Building Climate Resilience in Sugarcane Industry</p> <p>The Belize sugar industry received a grant funding of USD 25 million for the project "Building Adaptive Capacity of Sugarcane Farmers in Northern Belize". The project will have a sustainable impact on the livelihoods of 5,000 farmers in northern Belize. The CCCCC is the executing agency.</p>	2024
<p>50. Taiwan: "Enhancing the Economic Empowerment of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in the COVID-19 Post-Pandemic Era: Technical Assistance for Women Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Financial Inclusion" to support women led MSMEs and strengthen national MSME support systems. Duration 2021-2023</p>	2021
<p>51. INFO-Segura Security Project through UNDP "Evidence-Based Information Management for Citizen Security in Central America and the Dominican Republic" This initiative is a part of the Evidence-based Information Management for Citizen Security in Central America and the Dominican Republic Project" (also known as the InfoSegura Project), the first regional strategic partnership of the United Nations Development Programme and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which has been central to enhancing the capacities at key institutions ensuring the security of Belize's citizens over the past decade.</p>	2023
<p>52. Modernization of Health Care structure</p> <p>Korea-CABEI Single Donor Trust Fund technical cooperation grant to guide the modernization of healthcare infrastructure in Belize.</p>	2021

Partnerships		Year signed/ Operational
Private Sector		
53.	Ministry of the Public Service, Constitutional and Political Reform Sign memorandum of understanding with the Love Foundation on Good Governance Curriculum	2021
54.	Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (MoECST) signed individual memoranda of understanding with the Football Federation of Belize and the Belize Basketball Federation to support student-athletes by providing education stipends to assist with living and tuition expenses	2022
Academia		
55.	A joint Declaration of Intent has been signed between the UN and the four (4) universities in Belize, formalising a collaborative partnership aimed at addressing pressing development challenges through evidence-based policies, data, research and innovation	2024
56.	Chile Scholarships for Belizeans The Government of Chile has advised of the launch of the Masters' Scholarship Programme 2024. The Programme offers scholarships to pursue studies for Masters' Degrees at Universities in Chile over the period 1 March 2024 to 30 September 2024 inclusive. The subject areas offered are extensive and include Sciences, Arts, Engineering, Linguistics, Mathematics, Literature, Nutrition, Psychology, Social Work, Philosophy, History and Sociology.	2024
57.	Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) Fully funded short courses and training in India or online	Ongoing-year round
58.	Cuba-Belize Scholarship Programme The Government of the Republic of Cuba, within the framework of the Cuba-CARICOM Agreement signed in December 2017, awards scholarships to Belizeans to study in Cuba to earn a degree in medicine/nursing	Ongoing-year round
59.	The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise (MAFSE) in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) organised a comprehensive training session aimed at enhancing coconut collective marketing strategies in Belize.	2024
60.	UK- Belize Chevening scholarships Chevening is the UK government's international scholarships programme. Funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and partner organisations, we offer awards to study in the UK for one year on a fully funded master's degree course.	Ongoing-year round

