

SDG 6.5.1 Stakeholder Consultation Report Belize

[January 11, 2024]

Stakeholder Consultation Report

Executive Summary

The National SDG 6 Focal Point and the overall National SDGs Focal Point, the Sustainable Development Unit, convened the SDG 6 Indicators Consultation that held at the Phoenix Business Center in the City of Belmopan on 26 and 27 September 2023. Eighteen participants attended the Consultation Workshop. Attendees were representatives from academia, private sector, government, statutory organizations, and consultants.

The consultation was an in-person workshop with breakout groups. The Facilitator introduced and provided the background information for the IWRM domains. The 2017 and 2020 country scores for each domain and their subcategories were presented. The attendees were asked to evaluate the current status and progress for the domains and subcategories as guidance in answering the current survey. The Facilitator with the support of the Rapporteur attempted to use breakout groups to answer the survey questions. In an effort to be more efficient with the available time, the breakout groups were abandoned and answers to the survey questions were discussed by all attendees. There were robust discussions among the attendees prior to consensus on the scores.

Belize's score increased from 21 in 2020 to 32 for 2023. All domains showed increases in 2023, the greatest increase was in the management instruments which was 33 in 2020 and is now at 48. The financing domain keeps lagging and is the main reason for Belize's slow progress for IWRM implementation. At this rate of progress Belize will not achieve 100% IWRM implementation by 2030. The national target was set conducting "Business as Usual" is a score of 48. Improvements in the Enabling Environment and Financing domains can accelerate Belize progress in IWRM implementation and score of 60 is attainable by 2030. Attainment of the global targets is unlikely.

The completed survey document will be appended to this report by the National Focal Point.

1. **Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 1: 'Enabling Environment'**

Current situation

Water resources management is the responsibility of the Deputy Prime Minister under the Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum, and Mining via the National Hydrological Service. National Water Policy and National Integrated Water Resources Act exist. The National Integrated Water Resources Act calls for the establishment of a Water Authority with membership from private sector, environmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and governmental agencies. The Authority is yet to be established. There is a proposal to replace the Authority with the National Hydrological Service. All the Authority's responsibilities will be transferred to the National Hydrological Service. Some stakeholders questioned the wisdom of the disbandment of the Authority. There is no National Water Plan and no Water Quality Plan. The preparation of these plans requires funding from the national budget. The greatest challenge the Enabling Environment faces is the lack of political will to implement an IWRM mechanism.

Status and Progress

The Water Policy has been updated and is pending approval by the Cabinet. Although the Authority has not been established, the National Hydrological Service is executing some management functions of the National Integrated Water Resources Act. Some progress was made in addressing transboundary issues and improvements in water quality monitoring in prioritized watersheds.

Way Forward

A decision on the establishment of the Authority or the transferring of its responsibilities to the National Hydrological Service, needs to be made to allow for the preparation and execution of the plans. Reactivate the Water Advisory Council.

The stakeholders agreed that there has been some progress in improving the Enabling Environment and opted to increase the score from 20 to 28.

2. Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 2: 'Institutions and Participation'.

Current Situation

Water resources mandates are clearly stated in the National Integrated Water Resources Act. The greatest challenge is the lack of technical and financial capacity to operationalize IWRM. Supporting agencies mandates are included in their legislations. There is no articulated IWRM plan and there is limited capacity to lead the formulation of such plan. There is good cross sectoral coordination among government agencies. Information with the public is limited, however good information sharing exists among government agencies with water resources responsibilities. Routine flood forecasts are provided to emergency management agencies and the public. Groundwater monitoring network established. Increased number of females and Indigenous people involved in water resources monitoring. Mopan River Memorandum of Understanding with Guatemalan and Belizean Non-Government Organizations and a Mexico/Belize Water Commission exist.

Status and Progress

There is room for improved coordination between Government agencies. Increased requests for data and information are provided to the public and supporting agencies. Increase in private sector participation, but they are yet reluctant to provide data.

Way Forward

Increased technical and financial capacities and political will to officially establish the IWRM Agency. Establish a formal water resources communication mechanism. Establish regional water resources offices.

Based on improved private sector participation, improved local public participation in water resources management, increase in number of females involved in water resources monitoring. The stakeholders agreed that the score should increase from 25 in 2020 to 34 in 2023.

3. **Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 3: 'Management Instruments'.**

Current Situation

There were several advances in the Management Instruments domain. Long term surface water monitoring is improved but is not yet adequate on the national level; some watersheds do not have adequate monitoring. Limited water demand monitoring and management is conducted. Groundwater monitoring is in its infancy. Several groundwater studies were completed leading to improved, but limited, knowledge of the aquifer systems. There has been a recent joint assessment of the Rio Hondo-Candelaria transboundary aquifer. There is limited information on transboundary aquifer systems with Guatemala. The Environmental Protection Act provides a robust framework for the control of point sources of pollution of water resources systems. Instruments for the restoration water related ecosystems are implemented on a long-term basis, with good coverage across different ecosystem types but limited across the country. There are no analyses of Environmental Water Requirements.

Status and Progress

Rainfall-runoff models were developed and are now in use in the preparation of flood forecasts. There is water resources focal point that liaise with the BNSS. The New River Watershed Management Plan has been adopted; however, the Belize River Watershed Management Plan's status is unknown.

Way Forward

Implement a framework to address non-point sources of pollution. Automate the rainfall-runoff models for automated issuance of flood advisories to emergency managers and the public. Commence the analyses of Environmental Water Requirements. Establish a platform for data sharing across the three countries. Reactivate the Mexico-Belize transboundary Commission. Engage technical water resources experts in Guatemala to improve access to data and information. Expand the ecosystem restoration scheme to other sensitive areas.

The status of management instruments to support IWRM implementation has made significant advances. Pollution control, aquifer management instruments, and data and information sharing within the country had the greatest progress. Stakeholders agreed that the score for this domain should increase from 33 in 2020 to 48 in 2023.

4. **Conclusions from facilitated discussions on Section 4: 'Financing'.**

Current Situation

Allocations of funding for water resources from the national budget is perennially insufficient and barely covers operation and maintenance costs. No funding for IWRM implementation is provided at neither the national nor sub-national level. Fees for permits and abstraction applications are applied, however this is limited to a few companies that require compliance for their international accreditation. Fees charged are credited to the consolidation account and are not returned for the implementation of IWRM. The non-application of the National Integrated Water Resources Act restricts the application of penalties for violations of the legislation.

Status and Progress

Funding for water resources projects are grants from the Global Water Partnership Caribbean, Green Climate Fund, and International Development Bank.

Way Forward

Increase national budget allocation for recurrent and operational costs, include allotment specifically for IWRM implementation, implement the water abstraction fees nationally, explore becoming a signatory to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe which addresses transboundary management.

Project related financing propels water resources advancements – Green Climate Fund and Inter-American Development Bank among major IFI's. totalling some \$2.3 mil BZD as compared to the National budget of \$150,000 USD. The stakeholders agreed that the score should increase from 7 in 2020 to 18 in 2023.

5. Next steps

Belize is not in a position to achieve the global target for implementation of IWRM. There have been improvements in coordination of policies and plans, and closing of legislative and operational gaps, and reduction in duplication of efforts.

There are approved policies and legislation. There is the need to establish an IWRM Agency for the administration of the existing legislation. In tandem there should be improvement in technical capacity and an interim influx of financing to allow the IWRM Agency to become fully operational and generate self-sustaining revenues.

Since the commencement of the legislation, there is a general lack of political will to establish the IWRM Agency. There needs to be a water resources awareness program where water issues remain current in the national discourse. Water resources education should be mainstreamed into the primary and secondary education systems.

If these recommendations are implemented Belize will be able exceed its 2030 target and possibly achieve a medium-high status.

6. Annexes

- Annex 1: List of Participants
- Annex 2: Agenda
- Annex 3: Facilitator's Comments
- Annex 4: Day 1 Photos
- Annex 5: Day 2Photos

Annex 1: List of participants

Workshop participants

Name	Organisation	Position	Email address
Tennielle Hendy	National Hydrological Service	Principal Hydrologist	principalhydrologist@naturalresources.gov.bz
Darlene Haylock	Sustainable Development Unit	Sustainable Development Officer	so.susdev@environment.gov.bz
Angel Perez	Statistical Institute of Belize		aperez@mail.sib.org.bz
Ismael Correa	Coastal Zone Management Institute	GIS Technician	gistechnician@coastalzonebelize.org
Dr. Pio Saqui	University of Belize- Natural Resources Management	Professor Natural Resources	psaqui@ub.edu.bz
Rudolph Williams	RW Water Solutions	Consultant	Rudolph_williams@hotmail.com
Dennis Gonguez	GSD Weather and Climate Services	Consultant	gsdweatherandclimateservices@gmail.com
Minerva Gonzalez	Forest Department	Forest Officer	gonzalezmi@gobmail.gov.bz
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Denis Maldonado	Sustainable Development Unit	Sustainable Development Officer	susdevofficer@environment.gov.bz
Elsa Cardinez	Ministry of Rural Transformation	Rural Coordinator	Coord.Rural.Dev@labour.gov.bz
Victor Alegria	Sustainable Development Unit	Director	Dir.Susdev@environment.gov.bz
Indera Montero	Department of the Environment	Environmental Officer	info@environment.gov.bz
Edgar Ek	Department of the Environment	Deputy Chief Environment Officer	deputy@environment.gov.bz
Rasheda Garcia	NBIO	Biodiversity Officer	GarciaRA@gobmail.gov.bz
Keisha Rodriguez	Ministry of Natural Resources	Director, Policy and Planning	Policy.dir@naturalresources.gov.bz
Victor Alamina	Fisheries Department	Fisheries Officer	victor.alamina@fisheries.gov.bz
Hugo Rancharan	Belize Water Services	Assistant Operations Manager	hugo.rancharan@bwsl.com.bz

Other stakeholders engaged (not in workshops)

Name	Organization/Position	Email address	Summary of inputs provided
Gregorio Canto	Ministry of Agriculture/Statistician 1	Statsofficer1@agriculture.gov.bz	
Rafael Manzanero	Friends for Conservation/ Executive Director	rmanzanero@fcdbelize.org	

[Please note that this Annex is supplemented by information in Annex E of the SDG 6.5.1 survey, which reflects on the level of engagement from different stakeholder groups.]

Annex 2: Agenda

SDG 6 Indicators Workshop

September 26th and 27th
Phoenix Business Centre
Belmopan

Day 1

- I. 9:00 – 9:30 Welcome and Introduction**
- Welcome and Introduction to the meeting – Sustainable Development Unit
 - Official opening of the meeting – National Focal Point
 - Brief presentation of the participating stakeholders - Sustainable Development Unit
 - Meeting Format – Facilitator
 - SDG 6.5.1 Integrated Water Resource Management,
 - SDG 6.5.2 Transboundary Management,
 - SDG 6.6.1 Change in water-related ecosystems,
 - SDG 6.3.1 Wastewater safely treated,
 - SDG 6.3.2 Ambient Water Quality.
- II. 9:30 – 10:00 Background and overview - SDG 6.5.1- Facilitator**
- Background to SDG 6.5.1
 - The four Dimensions
 - 2017 and 2020 results
 - The Belize results.
 - The need for acceleration
 - Overview of the 2023 survey
- III. 10:00-11:00 Completing SDG 6.5.1 Survey - Facilitator**
- Section 1 'Enabling Environment'
 - Introduction
 - Discussions on sections and questions
 - Section 2 'Institutions and Participation'
 - Introduction
 - Discussions on sections and questions
- IV. 11:00 – 12:00 Breakout Groups Discussions- Facilitator & Rapporteur**
- Groups Reports
 - Consensus on scores
 - Agreement on status and progress narrative
 - Agreement on the Way Forward narrative

- V. 1200 -1:00 Lunch**
- VI. 1:00 – 1:45 Completing SDG 6.5.1 Survey Continued - Facilitator**
- Section 3: 'Management Instruments'
 - Introduction
 - Discussions on sections and questions
 - Section 4: 'Financing'
 - Introduction
 - Discussions on sections and questions
- VII. 1:45 – 2:30 Breakout Groups Discussions –Facilitator& Rapporteur**
- **Groups** Reports
 - Consensus on scores
 - Agreement on status and progress narrative
 - Agreement on the Way Forward narrative
- 2:30 -3:00 Annex B – Facilitator**
- Discussions
 - Setting Targets
 - Consensus on Targets
- VIII. 3:00 – 3:30 Accelerating SDG 6.5.1**
- Discussions on the Way forward
- IX. 3:30 – 4:00 Wrap up of SDG 6.5.1 Survey**

SDG 6 Indicators Workshop

September 26th and 27th
Phoenix Business Centre
Belmopan

Day 2

Reporting on SDG 6 Indicators

- I. 9:00 – 9:30 Welcome and Introduction**
- Meeting Format (SDG 6.5.2) – Facilitator
- II. 9:30 – 9:45 Review of SDG 6.5.2 – Facilitator**
- **Selection of expert Group** (*bring relevant Data*)
 - Review of Reporting Methodology – Group Leader
 - Review of calculations for 6.5.2 Indicator
- III. 9:45 – 10:45 Completion of Report on SDG 6.5.2 Indicator**
- Consensus on scores
 - Agreement on status and progress narrative
- IV. 10:45 – 11:00**
- Reporting on SDG 6.5.2 Indicator scores
 - Completion of Final Questions
 - Agreement on the Way Forward narrative

Reporting on SDG indicator 6.3.1

This Indicator requires relevant data for the completion of the report.

- V. 9:30 – 9:45 Review of SDG 6.3.1 – Facilitator**
- **Selection of expert Group** (*bring relevant Data*)
 - Review of Reporting Methodology – Group Leader
 - Review of calculations for 6.3.1 Indicator
- VI. 9:45 – 10:45 Completion of Report on SDG 6.3.1 Indicator**
- Consensus on scores
 - Agreement on status and progress narrative
 - Agreement on the Way Forward narrative
- VII. 10:45 – 11:00**
- Reporting on SDG 6.3.1 Indicator scores
 - Agreement on the Way Forward narrative

Reporting on SDG indicator 6.3.2

This Indicator requires relevant data for the completion of the report.

- VIII. 9:30 – 9:45 Review of SDG 6.3.2 – Facilitator**
- **Selection of expert Group** (*bring relevant Data*)
 - Review of Reporting Methodology – Group Leader
 - Review of calculations for 6.3.2 Indicator
- IX. 9:45 – 10:45 Completion of Report on SDG 6.3.2 Indicator**
- Consensus on scores
 - Agreement on status and progress narrative
 - Agreement on the Way Forward narrative
- X. 10:45 – 11:00**
- Reporting on SDG 6.3.2 Indicator scores
 - Agreement on the Way Forward narrative

Reporting on SDG indicator 6.6.1

This Indicator requires relevant data for the completion of the report.

- XI. 11:00 12:00 Completion of Report on SDG 6.6.1 Indicator**
- Review of Reporting Methodology
 - Review of calculations for 6.6.1 Indicator (if data Available)
 - Consensus on scores
 - Agreement on status and progress narrative
- X. 1200 -1:00 Lunch**
- XI. 1:00 3:00 Review of SDGs Reports**
- XII. 3:00 - 3:30 Evaluation of Meeting**
- **Format**
 - **Delivery of information**
 - **Possible improvements**
- XIII. 3:30 Closure of Workshop**

Annex 3: Facilitator's Comments

The workshop was originally scheduled to address indicators for SDG 6.5.1 Integrated Water Resource Management. The Sustainable Development Unit requested the indicators for SDG 6.5.2 Transboundary Management, SDG 6.6.1 Change in water-related ecosystems, SDG 6.3.1 Wastewater safely treated, and SDG 6.3.2 Ambient Water Quality be included in the activities. The format of the workshop for Indicator 6.5.1 included breakout sessions to discuss and assign scores and report to the entire group. The format for the remainder of the workshop was changed to parallel expert groups to address the remaining indicators. Indicator 6.5.1 was scheduled to be completed in the first day and the 6.5.2 the following morning.

The Breakout groups assigned to Domain 1 and Domain 2 did not proceed as planned. We then changed to a general discussion among all attendees. The meeting proceeded faster, with the full participation of all participants. At the end of the first day, most of the survey for Indicator 6.5.1 was completed. On the second day Indicator for 6.5.1 was completed and the survey for indicator 6.5.2 commenced and was completed by midday.

The expert groups for the other indicators did not have the relevant data to complete the surveys. The Sustainable Development Unit and the SDG 6 National Focal Point rescheduled the completion of the remaining indicator for another workshop.

Some of the participants were not familiar with SDG 6 and the information required for the completion of the survey. They commented that the time was insufficient to complete all Indicators. The foot notes were very helpful explanations for the survey questions. They were grateful for the opportunity to discuss their responses to the survey questions and to be able to form consensus on the final answers.

This annex should only contain information that is not confidential. If the SDG 6.5.1 Focal Point wishes to add any confidential information, it should be in a separate annex, indicated as such]

Annex 4: Day 1 Photos



Annex 5: Day 2 Photos



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