



**Belize Fund For A
Sustainable Future**

Improving Stewardship and Sustainable Livelihoods SCCF-Resilient Bold Belize

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

GEF/GCF Agency: WWF US

Lead Executing Agency: Conservation Trust Fund

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Executive Summary

The Improving Stewardship and Sustainable Livelihoods in Belize Project will be managed by a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU) housed within the selected Conservation Trust Fund. This project will be implemented in close coordination with Belize's Blue and Green Islands Integrated Program Child Project, which is being delivered by the Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit as part of the country's broader Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) initiative. This GEF-SCCF project contributes to SCCF Targets 1, 3, 4, and 5 by delivering transformational adaptation benefits to approximately 10,646 people in climate-vulnerable coastal communities, including 3,434 artisanal fishers. Through a gender-responsive approach, the project promotes equitable participation of women and youth in climate adaptation planning, sustainable livelihood development, and leadership training.

Recognizing that stakeholder engagement is critical to the success of the project, this Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) outlines the framework and strategies for inclusive, transparent, and continuous engagement of all relevant actors. The stakeholder engagement plan ensures that stakeholders are meaningfully involved in all phases of the project from design and implementation to monitoring and evaluation.

The project adopts a multi-level, inclusive approach to engagement that involves:

- National government entities and technical ministries, who provide policy guidance and play leading roles in implementation and scaling.
- Protected area managers and local NGOs, who support grassroots implementation and community engagement.
- Private sector actors and donors, who contribute to sustainable finance and co-investment opportunities.
- Local communities, especially fisherfolk and their families, who are both beneficiaries and key partners in resilience-building efforts.

Special emphasis is placed on engaging marginalized groups, particularly women, youth, and rural fishers through tailored outreach, inclusive consultation methods, and support mechanisms to facilitate participation.

To ensure accountability and equity in engagement, the stakeholder engagement plan includes provisions for accessible conflict resolution and grievance redress mechanisms. These systems are designed to allow community members, particularly those from marginalized groups, to raise concerns and resolve disputes safely and without fear of reprisal.

The project also prioritizes feedback loops, incorporating mechanisms to document and respond to stakeholder input. This supports a culture of learning and adaptation, where community voices shape ongoing activities, implementation timelines, and outcome tracking.

Additionally, the stakeholder engagement plan outlines a strategy for knowledge sharing and inclusive communication, including the use of gender-inclusive language, the development of locally relevant knowledge products, and regular updates to stakeholders. Peer exchanges, regional learning events, and community storytelling will further support transparency, visibility, and long-term relationship building.

The plan complies with national legal requirements in Belize and aligns with the WWF Standard on Stakeholder Engagement. It documents engagement conducted to date and sets forth a roadmap for inclusive, responsive engagement throughout the project.

1. Introduction

Belize's coastal communities and fisheries sector are on the frontlines of climate change. Increasing sea temperatures, stronger storms, and shifting marine ecosystems threaten the livelihoods of thousands of Belizeans, most notably small-scale fishers, women, and youth living in vulnerable coastal areas.

This WWF GEF SCCF project “**Improving Stewardship and Sustainable Livelihoods**” responds directly to these challenges by aiming to strengthen the climate resilience of Belize's fisheries sector and coastal livelihoods through an integrated and gender-responsive approach. The project is designed to meet urgent adaptation needs, while laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability and equity within Belize's broader marine conservation landscape.

This project is a strategic component of Resilient Bold Belize (RBB), the country's ambitious Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) initiative. The PFP, led by the Government of Belize's Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit (BBFPU) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), is a landmark public-private partnership that seeks to transform marine and coastal conservation through long-term, sustained financing and systemic reform.

The GEF-SCCF project specifically contributes to two of the five pillars of the PFP:

- 1) **Fisheries Management:** by improving the adaptive capacity and governance of fisher associations, and
- 2) **Livelihoods and Stewardship:** by promoting climate-resilient livelihoods, education, and leadership among coastal community members.

It will be delivered in close coordination with a complementary GEF Blue and Green Islands Integrated Program (BGI IP) Child Project, implemented by the WWF GEF Agency and executed by the BBFPU. Together, these initiatives will catalyze progress across all five pillars of the PFP.

The SCCF project will be executed by Belize's designated Conservation Trust Fund, which also serves as the fiduciary agent for the larger PFP mechanism. Funding will be administered through a transition fund, with resources specifically allocated to a defined scope of work aligned with the project's targets and outcomes.

By aligning with national policy priorities, climate strategies, and locally grounded conservation efforts, this project offers a powerful opportunity to deliver lasting, equitable climate resilience for Belize's coastal communities and fisheries sector.

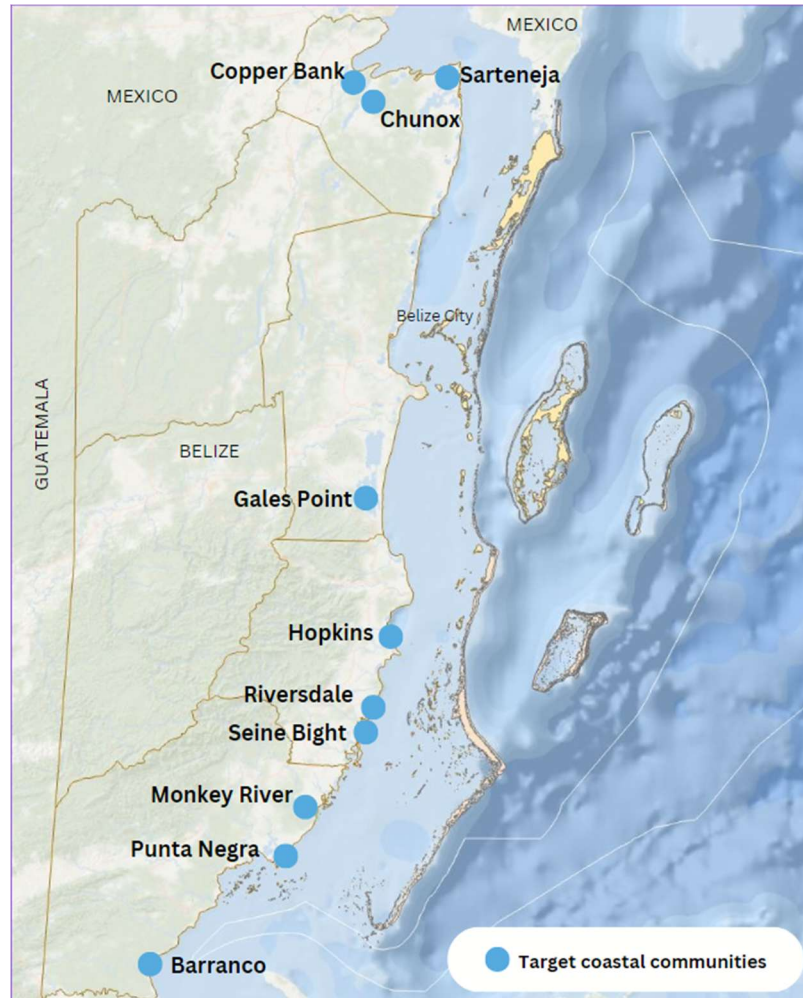


FIGURE 1: MAP OF TARGETED FISHING-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

1.1 PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND COMPONENTS

The project objective is to strengthen the resilience of fisherfolk and fishing communities most vulnerable to climate change on Belize's Coast.

The project has three components.

- **Component 1: Strengthened adaptive capacity of fisher associations to promote more productive climate change resilient fisheries.**

Under Outcome 1.1, the project will support the re-establishment and strengthening of fisher associations through activities such as updating legal registration documents, providing training in organizational management, and launching membership drives to increase fisher participation, particularly among women. Additionally, associations will receive support to access and manage grant funding for livelihood diversification. Under Outcome 1.2, the project will increase transparency and confidence in national fisheries management strategies leading to increased adoption of climate-smart fishing practices by fisher associations. This will be achieved through meetings and dedicated fisher association liaisons for climate smart catch data sharing, training in climate-smart and fishing safety measures, and training and equipping fishing associations to collect and report digital catch data via a logbook application.

- **Component 2: Improved resilient climate smart livelihoods.**

Under Component 2.1, the project will support increased climate resilient opportunities for livelihood diversification. This will be achieved through trainings to improve climate smart businesses and financial management in the targeted communities, in partnership with local NGO partners, as well as funding of existing successful youth engagement programs outside of fishing that provide entry points to potential employment, and by providing educational scholarship funds for fisher association families to attend vocational training and continued education.

- **Component 3: Knowledge Management, Coordination and Communications.**

Under Component 3.1, the project will strengthen coordination, knowledge sharing and communication between fisher associations. This will be achieved through implementing a gender responsive project communications strategy and plan, capturing project lessons and disseminating through knowledge management products, peer-to-peer exchanges for associations at national and/or regional events, and exchange trips for fisher association members to other countries for sustainable fishing learning opportunities.

2. Regulations and Requirements

Government of Belize Policies and Regulations on Stakeholder Engagement

Belize Fisheries Policy - The Belize Fisheries Policy serves as a guiding framework for the management and sustainable use of fisheries resources in Belize. Its main objectives typically include:

- *Conservation*: Ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of marine and freshwater fisheries resources to maintain healthy ecosystems and biodiversity;
- *Sustainable Development*: Promoting the sustainable development of the fisheries sector, balancing economic growth with environmental conservation and social equity;
- *Governance*: Strengthen fisheries' governance through effective laws, regulations, and management measures, as well as enhance enforcement mechanisms;
- *Stakeholder Engagement*: Encouraging the participation of stakeholders, including fishers, communities, NGOs, and government agencies, in fisheries management and decision-making processes.
- *Research and Monitoring*: Supporting scientific research and monitoring programs to assess the status of fisheries resources, understand ecosystem dynamics, and inform management decisions.
- *Capacity Building*: Building institutional capacity and providing training and education opportunities for fisheries managers, fishers, and other stakeholders to improve their understanding of sustainable fisheries practices.

Overall, the Belize Fisheries Policy aims to ensure the long-term viability of fisheries resources while promoting the socio-economic well-being of communities dependent on these resources.

WWF Standard on Stakeholder Engagement

The WWF GEF Agency requires all GEF projects comply with [GEF and WWF standards on Stakeholder Engagement](#), specifically the WWF [Standard on Stakeholder Engagement](#) and the associated [Procedures for Implementation of the Standard on Stakeholder Engagement](#). Stakeholder engagement is an overarching term that encompasses a range of activities and interactions with stakeholders throughout the project cycle and is an essential aspect of good project management.

The WWF Standard on Stakeholder Engagement requires the Executing Agency to engage stakeholders throughout the life of the project; communicate significant changes to project stakeholders and consult on potential risks and impacts; establish a grievance redress mechanism and register and respond to

grievances throughout project execution, and; disseminate information in a way that is relevant, transparent, objective, meaningful, easily accessible. The Standard on Stakeholder Engagement promotes an inclusive process to support the development of strong, constructive and responsive relationships that help to identify and manage risks, and which encourage positive outcomes for stakeholders and project activities.

3. Project Stakeholders

This section of the Stakeholder Engagement plan lists the key stakeholder groups who will be informed about and engaged in the project.

- **High Level Government Entities**

The following government agencies and departments are involved in policy alignment, governance and technical support:

Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit (BBFPU): This unit was established within the Office of the Prime Minister in January 2022. The BBFPU is charged with ensuring that the Government of Belize meets its commitments outlined in the Blue Loan Agreement (BLA) and Conservation Funding Agreement (CFA) and the design of the Project Finance Permanence (PFP) known as Resilient Bold Belize (RBB), to further assist Belize in meeting and sustaining its Nationally Determined Contributions and conservation goals. The BBFPU coordinates across all relevant government ministries and agencies and is the point of contact for the Government of Belize on all enquiries related to the Blue Bond and PFP programs, and the improved management for Belize's ocean space.

Ministry of Blue Economy and Marine Conservation (MBEMC): The Ministry of Blue Economy aims to increase Belize's gross domestic product through a thriving Blue Economy development pathway that is harmonized, innovative and socially just, supported by a robust, science-based management regime of our aquatic resources and spaces to improve the livelihood of all Belizeans.

- **Technical Level Government Entities**

Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (MoECST) of Belize is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all Belizeans are given an opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for their own personal development and for full and active participation in the development of the nation. They are particularly instrumental in supporting targeted interventions, including scholarship opportunities and vocational training programs.

Fisheries Department (FiD): The FiD's mission is to provide the country and people of Belize with the best possible management of its aquatic and fisheries resources to optimize the present and future benefits through efficient and sustainable management.

Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE) is a statutory body which functions as a national economic development agency and operates within the portfolio of the Ministry of Economic Development, Petroleum, Investment, Trade and Commerce. Their Belize Training and Employment Center Unit provides training to improve employability. The Small Business Development Center deploys business and advising to MSMEs throughout Belize.

Protected Area Managers: Belize's protected areas are either managed by government departments or in collaboration with another organization (CBO or NGO) through a co-management agreement. Both are actively engaged in managing protected areas that form a part of the project, and provide technical input, are engaged during consultation processes and will also be implementing partners. Many of these managers also work in education and outreach as well as community environmental stewardship with their stakeholder communities.

- **NGOs and Community Based Organizations:**

Belize Audubon Society (BAS): is an NGO which manages seven protected areas including the Half Moon Caye Natural Monument, Blue Hole Natural Monument. They have pioneered the Reef Protectors Program which empowers youths as champions of marine conservation. Launched in 2013, the Reef Protectors Program works with youth from the fishing communities of Chunox, Copper Bank, and Sarteneja in northern Belize. The program aims to create an environment where young people from fishing families are inspired to value and protect the marine environment. BAS actively engaged with the students both in the classroom through various workshops (focused on marine ecosystems, video making, plastic pollution, climate change, stewardship) and within their communities and protected areas. Through hands-on learning and strong community engagement, Reef Protectors empower youth to become passionate advocates for marine conservation and stewards of Belize's natural resources.

Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation and Development (SACD): operates in Northern Belize and co-manages the Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary and Bacalar Chico National Park. SACD's education and outreach activities promote good stewardship of the natural resources of Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary (CBWS) within stakeholder communities. SACD places a strong emphasis on educating and training youth, the next generation of CBWS resource users and future community leaders. Efforts are concentrated on engaging schools in key stakeholder communities: Sarteneja, Chunox, Copper Bank, Corozal Town, and Consejo. Through hands-on activities and unique learning experiences, youth develop a meaningful connection to nature and gain a deeper appreciation for the value of CBWS.

Toledo Institute for Development and Environment: operates in southern Belize and co-manages the Paynes Creek National Park, Port Honduras Marine Reserve, Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve as well as TIDE Protected Area Private Lands. TIDE's pioneered several programs to empower local residents to be better environmental stewards. These include the Freshwater Cup which integrates football with environmental education; community researcher program, which train the next generation of Belizean conservationists by training them in skills such as SCUBA diving (PADI Open Water Diver), GPS use and basic GIS analysis, emergency first response, basic environment science, including basic coral reef ecology, land-sea interconnectivity, and the impact of human activities and scientific monitoring and assessment.

Southern Environmental Association: operates in southern Belize and co-manages the Laughing Bird Caye National Park and the Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve. SEA has strengthened its youth engagement through its community researchers and marine ambassador program. Youth from the stakeholder communities are taught about the Mesoamerican Reef, marine protected areas and management, key conservation species, coral and reef fish ecology and identification and SEA's Science and Monitoring Program.

Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association: is the co-manager for the Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve. TASA engages with licensed users of TAMR, including fishers from Belize City, Chunox, Copper Bank, and other coastal communities, helping promote responsible fishing practices, gear management, and catch data monitoring. TASA's education and outreach efforts also focused on marine conservation awareness, compliance, and sustainable livelihoods. TASA has explored and supported alternative income opportunities linked to Turneffe's ecosystems, like eco-tourism, lionfish jewelry production, and youth internships.

Hol Chan Trust: manages the Hol Chan Marine Reserve, which incorporates the southernmost marine and coastal areas of Ambergris Caye including the barrier reef, seagrass beds and the mangrove islands of Boca Chica and Cangrejo Shoals. A zoning scheme was developed in order to ensure sustainable use and guarantee its conservation. Hol Chan is divided into four zones which include no-take areas and zones that regulate and promote sustainable fishing practices.

Fragments of Hope (FOH): Fragments of Hope is a not-for-profit community-based organization registered in 2013 in Placencia Village, Belize. Focusing primarily on the challenge of coral reef restoration and advocacy for the sustainable management of associated habitats, FoH has trained over 50 local residents, including women and youth, to become certified coral restoration practitioners. These trainings not only offer hands-on skills but also create paid work opportunities directly tied to ecosystem restoration.

- **International NGOs and other Environmental NGOs**

Other key local and international environmental non-government organizations operating in Belize also provide capacity building, community engagement and could be potential partners. These NGOs include:

Blue Ventures: Blue Ventures is an international marine conservation NGO with a permanent presence in Belize since 2010, focused on supporting small-scale fishers and coastal communities in conserving and rebuilding marine ecosystems. They have collaborated with several fisher associations throughout Belize and government agencies to establish management systems, build monitoring capacity, and support local data-driven decisions.

Oceana Belize: OCEANA is an international organization which has been working in ocean conservation. In Belize, they have led campaigns to ban gill nets, single use plastics, bottom trawling and offshore oil exploration. Much of its work is to advocate science-based fishery management and restore the world's oceans.

MARFUND: is a regional private fund which provides regional funding and coordination among representatives from conservation funds in each country of the Mesoamerican reef region (Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico) for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of the Mesoamerican Reef.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC): is a global environmental nonprofit working to protect critical ecosystems while supporting sustainable livelihoods. TNC has been instrumental in marine conservation, coastal resilience, and sustainable financing initiatives in the country, partnering with government, NGOs, and coastal communities to deliver science-driven, community-empowered solutions. TNC has worked with local communities to test and scale nature-based livelihood alternatives, such as seaweed farming and sustainable aquaculture, contributing directly to income diversification beyond fishing.

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS): WCS is an NGO that has been working in Belize since 1981. They continue to provide technical and scientific support in the area of marine conservation including collaborating with government and other partners working in the Glovers Reef Marine Reserve Area. WCS continues to provide support in areas such as the managed access program, spawning aggregation monitoring, fisheries catch data collection, long term atoll monitoring, monitoring of replenishment zones, data collection using spatial monitoring and reporting tool, etc. WCS continues to actively promote the empowerment and visibility of women in Belize's fisheries sector.

Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute (Belize Manatee Conservation) is a non-profit organization that focuses on preservation of the environment through rescue, rehabilitation, and release of wildlife, environmental education, research and environmental education. It is through CMA Research Institute that data is provided to the Belize government for selection of protected areas, no-wake zones, laws and regulations for increased protection of wildlife and their habitats. Their success in rescuing wildlife, restoring habitats, and engaging coastal communities demonstrates effective, place-based stewardship.

Crocodile Research Coalition (CRC): Crocodile Research Coalition is a non-profit organization that was established in January 2016 for the preservation of crocodiles and their habitats and sustainability of biodiversity in the Central American and Caribbean regions. CRC's work takes the approach of community-centered conservation by building local capacity, scientific engagement, and mutual respect between people and wildlife.

MAR Alliance: MAR Alliance has been operating in Belize for the past twenty-four years and uses a multi-pronged approach to big fish conservation as it integrates fisheries-dependent and independent research, tourism, outreach and education, capacity building, and policy support. Its research includes areas of large fish, turtles, fisheries, and the tourism sector in Belize. MarAlliance recruits and trains local fishers to participate in scientific surveys, including satellite tagging of sharks and rays, thereby helping local fishers to become active conservation leaders.

- **Local Community Groups**

Community Groups: These were engaged and provided input during the consultation process and will be integrated into project implementation, as they are targeted as beneficiaries

Village Councils: Coastal communities (Sarteneja, Copper Bank, Chunox, Gales Point, Hopkins, Seine Bight, Punta Negra, Barranco, Monkey River).

Fisherfolk and their families: Fisherfolk, families of fisherfolk, people working in tourism, and households who depend on ocean resources for food security are key stakeholders in local communities who are likely to be impacted by the project.

Local Fishing Associations: These include the members of the fishing associations within the respective communities (new, re-established, or existing).

- **Other**

Special Interest Groups: Will be engaged and provide input during implementation and may take on roles as sub-executing partners.

Belize Federation of Fishers: a local NGO representing interests of commercial fishers in Belize.

Belize Flats Fishery Association (BFFA): is a non-profit organization of professional flats fishing guides and stakeholders dedicated to work for a sustainable fishery through wise management practices and healthy habitats.

Academia: This includes the University of Belize and Galen University, amongst others which often work directly with fisher associations and coastal communities to collect climate and fisheries data alongside fishers and integrate local ecological knowledge with scientific assessments of marine ecosystems which can produce data that directly informs adaptive fisheries governance and community planning.

4. Previous stakeholder engagement activities

This section describes all the stakeholder engagement activities that have taken place thus far in preparation for this project. A summary of stakeholder engagement already undertaken can be found in Appendix 2.

4.1. RELEVANT PAST STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

WWF Mesoamerica has been working in the project area prior to the conceptualization and design of this GEF project. Some key activities include:

- From 2007 to 2009, WWF undertook consultations focusing on identification of opportunities for communities related to tourism, fisheries, and benefits of coastal protection. These activities were funded by the Climate development knowledge Network (CDKN). As part of this process, a participatory planning exercise was undertaken in Placencia in 2020 to collectively define a

conservation and sustainable development vision for the peninsula. This was when the aim of protecting Placencia Lagoon was first identified by local stakeholders.

- From 2012 to 2015, WWF, in partnership with SEA and Friends of Placencia Lagoon, conducted six consultations with the communities along the Placencia Lagoon (Placencia, Seine Bight, Maya Beach and Independence). The objectives of these consultations were to conduct a rapid assessment and draft a management plan for the Placencia Lagoon.
- From 2007 to 2022, WWF worked with the Belize Shrimp Growers Association to address the negative impact of their operations on Placencia Lagoon, implementing better management practices that reduced pollution and protected mangroves while supporting their business profitability.
- From 2018 to 2023, WWF in partnership with SEA and University of Belize, led the Smart Coasts Project funded by BMUV IKI, which focused on conducting a series of climate change related consultations to look at ecosystem-based adaptations to reduce community vulnerability. During this period, there were at least 5 different consultations with the communities of Dangriga, Riversdale, Placencia, Seine Bight, and Independence. These consultations led to the identification and validation of different adaptation options by the communities, as well as the building of capacity, including mangrove restoration training for the community to participate in mangrove restoration activities. These sessions also resulted in the submission of the concept note for the designation of Placencia Lagoon to BAF. The development of climate scenarios and identification of adaptation options done via the Smart Coasts project determined that mangrove protection and restoration was critical for reducing climate vulnerability in the area

4.2. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT DURING PROJECT DESIGN

During project design, WWF engaged with stakeholders by:

- In November 2021, the Prime Minister of Belize signed an MOU with WWF and TNC officially signaling the launch of the development of a PFP. This led to the commencement of the design phase, which would develop a shared vision for the PFP, a conservation plan, financial model, agreement on the institutional arrangements and governance, as well as define the closing conditions.
- In June 2022, WWF in partnership with the Blue Bond Finance Permanence Unit (BBFPU, situated within the Office of the Prime Minister) formed a multistakeholder Conservation Planning Working Group (CPWG). The CPWG membership includes representatives from over twenty organizations (government, local and international NGOs, protected area co-managers, private sector representatives for the fisheries and tourism sectors, and scientific advisors and its key functions are to:
 - identify key stakeholder groups for engagement and outreach;
 - develop the vision, goals and objectives for Belize's PFP Conservation Plan;
 - provide guidance on the prioritization of the geographic areas and the definition of the PFP's thematic scope;
 - Assist with the identification of supporting science and data for the development of the PFP Conservation Plan;
 - Identify priority policy and programmatic areas for development and support under the PFP.
- Since its inception, the CPWG has met regularly (monthly to bi-monthly) to collaborate on the development of the conservation plan. Drawing from its membership, it has also formed working groups for the five thematic pillars which form the conservation plan. The thematic working groups often meet quarterly to develop the thematic pillars.

- WWF has commissioned several studies to support the development of thematic pillars. In January 2023, a blended finance assessment was done and, as a result, fishers from several target communities co-designed an artisanal fisher loan product which is being piloted as a possible intervention under the livelihood thematic pillar of the PFP. This engagement included fishers from the communities of Sarteneja, Copper Bank, Chunox, Dangriga, Hopkins, Riversdale and Seine Bight who fish in the Area 8 of the Managed Access Program. This pilot was based on the communities stated need for improved access to the financial sector to support fisheries activities.
- Between 2022 and 2025, WWF led a series of stakeholder consultations across Belize, described as the Climate Crowd Assessment. The Climate Crowd is a bottom-up community-driven approach that began with 172 interviews, personal observations and stories in various communities along the coast of Belize. The interviews included at least 35% women respondents and reached people from ages 18 to 70. Working with communities and local NGOs, WWF collected data on climate impacts to these communities and then analyzed the data. The data gathered including opinions, thoughts, and community member testimony was cited in the project document and influenced the project design.
- In June 2024, WWF conducted a socioeconomic study in four of the prioritized coastal communities (two from the south and two from the north of Belize) to determine the status of fishers and their households and to identify the needs of fishers. The study found that less than 50% of respondents had a second source of income apart from fishing to help sustain their families. While fishing is important to the coastal communities, most of the respondents suggested that they would be open to other economic opportunities outside of fishing as the main income earner for their households.
- WWF has engaged with Fishers and Fisher Associations as well as various NGOs and Government agencies (e.g. Wildlife Conservation Society, Belize Audubon Society, Fisheries Department, Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute) working in the target communities to create awareness on project initiatives, proposals being developed, as well as synergies and opportunities for collaboration to maximize community benefits and avoid duplication of efforts.
- During the field research, the WWF team and researchers engaged with community members and institutional stakeholders, providing brief descriptions of project objectives and planned activities prior to engaging in consultations (see below)
- The WWF team conducted a rapid assessment of existing conservation youth engagement programs through key informant interviews with several NGOs working with coastal communities across Belize. The assessment sought to identify existing programs, skill and knowledge development offered through the respective programs, beneficiary communities, as well as identify gaps and new opportunities for youth engagement in conservation which could increase their employability opportunities after leaving school.
- More in-depth consultations were held between May and August 2024 with NGOs active in youth education/awareness and community livelihood diversification in the coastal communities (Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation and Development, Belize Audubon Society, Turneffe Atoll Sustainability Association and Toledo Institute for Development and Environment) to identify strategies that have been successful in achieving behavior change and opportunities for replicating and scaling up. Consultations were held with youths from target coastal fishing communities in both the north and south of Belize to identify the opportunities available to youths to participate in MPA activities and to benefit from scholarships or trainings. It also investigated the opportunities available to youths in these communities, the barriers and challenges to accessing education beyond primary school, and the job opportunities available.

- Additional consultations were held in southern Belize (Punta Gorda) in December, 2024 with fishers, women in fisheries and vulnerable fishers to fill a knowledge gap in this area, with discussions on fisher livelihoods, the southern fishery, climate change impacts, past and present fisher associations and lessons learnt.
- Consultations were held with fisher association stakeholders (fisher association experts (J. Maas, N. Requena, C. Sho) and association leaders) in December 2024 to gather different perspectives on the roles of fisher associations, why past fisher associations may have failed, and recommendations for strategies that will strengthen fisher associations in the future
- Stakeholders from the PFP working group were in attendance at meetings in Sarteneja during the validation process for the Vulnerability and Livelihood Assessment for the Coastal Zone and Fisheries Sector of Belize: Sarteneja and Chunox Villages, to improve input into the SCCF CEO Endorsement Request from the Government-led assessment, with feedback from northern fishers on the impacts of climate change on their fishing practices and livelihoods.
- As part of the GEF RBB project, where this SCCF project is nested, field research was conducted from February 26 to March 21, 2024, by a team of four researchers, 3 from Belize and 1 from Mexico. With the support of partner organizations, each target community (8) was visited and, for each one, a focus group was conducted on the first day of the visit in the community and surveys with community members on the second. For more detailed information, please consult the GEF RBB project's SEP.

A complete review of the stakeholder engagement conducted during the project development can be found in Annex 2.

5. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The purpose of this Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is to ensure appropriate and consistent involvement of project stakeholders in every stage of the project implementation, supporting effective communication and working relationships. The Project Management Unit (PMU) will ensure that the views and inputs of stakeholders are taken into consideration throughout project implementation. The SEP is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Stakeholder Type	Name	Frequency	Engagement During Project Implementation
Government of Belize	High level government actors	Annually	Introduction of the project, presentation of the work plan, understanding of main concerns/

	Technical government actors	Quarterly	additional aspects to be considered by the implementation team
	Protected area managers	Quarterly or more often as necessary	Engagement will be done through in person and virtual meetings, workshops, email, and phone calls.
	Local authorities (Village councils)		
Local Community Groups	Fisherfolk, families of fisherfolk, local fishing associations, other local community groups including people working in tourism, and households who depend on ocean resources for food security are key stakeholders.	Quarterly during first year, annual thereafter During management plan revision, at least three meetings with stakeholders.	Make contact with new partners that have not had prior engagement - PMU and partner institutions, present the project concept and work plan. Listen to and document concerns. This could take place through in-person meetings or online meetings.
Community Based Organizations	Community Groups Village Councils: Coastal communities (Sarteneja, Copper Bank, Chunox, Gales Point, Hopkins, Seine Bight, Punta Negra, Barranco, Monkey River)	Quarterly	Will be engaged and provide technical input during consultation process and may take on role as implementing partners. Private landowners will be engaged in mangrove restoration activities contributing to the community level reforestation efforts.
NGOs	NGO protected area co-managers	Annually or more frequently during key planning moments	NGOs will be engaged through email, phone calls, and meetings to provide technical input during consultation process and may take on role as implementing partners to provide capacity building, community engagement
	Environmental NGOs		
	Other NGOs		

Local Fishing Associations	1. National Women in Fishing Association 2. Sarteneja Fishermen Association 3. Chunox Fishermen Association 4. Copper Bank Fishermen Association 5. Sarteneja Beach Trap Pesca Tour Association 6. Wabafu Fishermen Association 7. Blue Water Riversdale Fishermen Association 8. Hopkins Fishermen Association 9. Barranco Fishermen Association	Quarterly meetings	Engage association members on getting resources to conduct quarterly meetings. Introduction of the project and engage association members on the registration/reregistration process. Four associations will require engagement for establishing their MoU/AoA, vision, and objectives. Engage associations through technical assistance on how to maintain good standing. Engage and enable association with the capacity to manage and strengthen themselves within the community.
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Additional Considerations for Stakeholder Engagement:

In what follows, this SEP presents a series of identified potential constraints to equitable or otherwise effective stakeholder engagement. Consequently, it suggests some additional steps that should be considered during stakeholder engagement to ensure that the views of the most vulnerable populations are considered and their participation ensured and facilitated

1. Time availability could constrain the participation of key stakeholders who must leave other activities to participate in the project's activities and events.

Staff from government agencies that can be part of the implementation of the project have high work demands in their functions. Likewise, many community stakeholders also work and have many responsibilities which sometimes make it challenging to participate in project activities. Ensure that all meetings/workshops are planned and managed efficiently, with a clear agenda and specific objectives/deliverables and considering the needs and time constraints of the participants.

Useful Measures to consider:

- Advance planning, e.g. one-month advance notice.
- Efficient use of time according to the context.
- Government staff should ensure flexibility in schedules to ensure adaptability to meet with community stakeholder groups at times and locations mutually convenient to all parties.
- Summaries of the meetings, including agreements arising from consultations/meetings will be available and hosted in a mutually agreed centralized location.

2. Technical communication in meetings and work groups could make it harder to understand technical issues and complex concepts, thus making it more difficult for some participants to express ideas.

Encourage the use of simple, clear and inclusive language as well as graphics for communication during training, meetings, and information dissemination mechanisms. Complement group meetings with one-on-one meetings. Ensure that facilitators and trainers have the capacity to integrate the views of all participants.

Other useful measures could include:

- Promote participation to ensure that the concept was understood.
- Meetings should be hosted in the language the community is most comfortable with. This includes simplification of technical language into simple, colloquial language.
- Have local interpreters or translators (if necessary), to ensure understanding in the different local languages.
- Multilingual and Visual Communication: Ensure that all materials (e.g., training manuals, meeting agendas, and governance documents) are available in multiple languages (English/Spanish) spoken in the community. Use visuals, diagrams, and infographics to make the materials more accessible to fishers with varying literacy levels.
- Cultural Adaptation: Adapt educational materials to fit the cultural context and specific needs of the community, using locally relevant examples and images to facilitate understanding.
- Graphic, visual and audiovisual materials should be encouraged to ensure that communication is maximized regardless of literacy levels and native language(s).
- Facilitators and trainers who have been previously instructed and have a good understanding of the concepts to ensure their transmission in other indigenous/local languages.
- Promote the participation and encourage the intervention of women and young people in decision-making spaces.
- Promote safe spaces for women, consider care spaces for the children and elderly persons in their care, as well as the logistics and budget necessary to ensure their participation.
- Using strong ideas during meetings always helps reinforce concepts.

3. Lack of Conflict Resolution Avenues within Fisher Associations

A lack of clear and trusted avenues for resolving internal conflicts can undermine trust, participation, and cohesion within fisher associations, especially for women, youth, and other marginalized members who may already face barriers to speaking up. To address this

- Project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM): the project will support and contribute to the development and implementation of the inclusive, transparent, and culturally appropriate project-level GRM that will be developed in the context of the GEF RBB project.
- Other applicable GRMs: to ensure that all members, particularly marginalized groups, have an avenue to raise concerns without fear of retribution, there are multiple GRMs available to communities at all times, including WWF US, the future CTF's and the GEF Commissioner.

4. Gender-inclusive communication

To promote equitable engagement and visibility for all genders, especially women, girls, and other underrepresented groups, the project will apply deliberate communication practices that support gender-responsive stakeholder engagement. This includes:

- Implementing the project's gender indicators and actions determined in the gender action plan as part of the implementation of positive actions to facilitate gender-balanced participation.

Use gender-inclusive language in all project documents and communications (to be included in the project's communication and knowledge strategies). Record and follow up on sex- and age-disaggregated information on participation in meetings and workshops.
5. Gender-inclusive Participation
To ensure meaningful and equitable participation of women and girls in stakeholder engagement processes, particularly those from fishing communities and other vulnerable groups, the project will implement deliberate measures grounded in the Gender Assessment and Action Plan. These include: • Carrying out activities with indicative percentage participation of women's as per project's gender assessment and action plan • Monitoring participation gaps for specific action after each meeting or workshop. • Promoting safe spaces for women, consider care spaces for the children and elderly in their care, as well as the logistics and budget necessary to ensure their participation. • Community Education Training: Embed training that promotes non-violent masculinities, gender equality, and the positive impacts of women's economic empowerment in other trainings being held to build capacity with fisher associations. Engage men and boys as allies in addressing GBV and emphasize the benefits of shared economic prosperity for both men and women.
6. Cultural and Political Differences
It is important to identify the different cultural groups and take into account socio-cultural patterns. It is important to consider meetings and activities to be culturally relevant (e.g., use inclusive, colloquial language) as well as politically neutral (e.g., do not allow the expression of political agendas or statements). At the beginning of an activity or meeting, it is crucial to establish ground rules (e.g., respect for different points of view, political neutrality, participation in an orderly manner, promoting the participation of several people, not focusing meetings on the opinion of a single group of people). Other useful measures: • Promote prior cultural awareness of the PMU team, facilitators or other people who participate in the meetings. High cultural diversity is positive and enriches participatory processes. • Conduct an induction on social, environmental and gender safeguards, as well as cross-cutting policies. • Promote inclusive logistics options considering cultural needs and differences. • The basic rules of coexistence must be built collectively by the people who participate in the meeting, thus ensuring their appropriation and compliance. • During the development of all meetings, all the applicable Grievance Redress Mechanisms must be socialized, with special emphasis placed on the GEF RBB's project-level GRM.
7. Limited Access to Resources and Information
Many coastal communities, particularly those with lower income or limited educational backgrounds, may have restricted access to information or resources needed to participate effectively in project activities. This includes lack of digital access for online meetings, limited literacy levels, or insufficient awareness of climate-smart practices and available financial opportunities. • Host in-person meetings at community hubs as a means of community-based engagement to share information and updates. • Hire local facilitators to ensure that in-person meetings are carried out with inclusivity, in a way that ensures that stakeholders truly understand the information being conveyed.

• Use local radio stations to share information within communities, printed materials can be distributed at a household level or posted in popular areas where the community congregate • Consider SMS campaigns where internet access is limited. • Use vehicles equipped with PA system/loudspeakers to socialize meeting notices throughout communities.
8. Power Imbalances and Decision-Making
Power dynamics within fisher associations or among local leaders might result in the marginalization of the most vulnerable groups, such as small-scale fishers or new members of the community. Established leaders or influential stakeholders may dominate the conversations, leaving others with less influence over decisions that affect their livelihoods. • To ensure that the most vulnerable have a voice, it is important to involve local stakeholders in the project design and decision-making process from the beginning. • Establishing mechanisms to ensure that leadership within fisher associations includes representatives from marginalized groups and that decision-making processes are transparent and inclusive are also good steps to take.
9. Geographic and Logistical Barriers
Some communities might be geographically isolated, making it difficult for members to attend meetings, training, or consultations. • To ensure that economic constraints do not exclude vulnerable populations from participation, stipends, subsidies, or transportation support for participants attending training, workshops, etc. should be provided

6. Resources and Responsibilities

The WWF GEF Project Agency, WWF US, is responsible for oversight. The Improving Stewardship and Sustainable Livelihoods in Belize Project will be managed by a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU) housed within the selected Conservation Trust Fund. This project will be implemented in close coordination with Belize's Blue and Green Islands Integrated Program Child Project, which is being delivered by the Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit as part of the country's broader Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) initiative.

The Project will consist of the following staff positions to fully support the SCCF Project: Project Manager, Business/Bioeconomy Expert, Stakeholder Engagement Expert, Safeguards and Gender Specialist. The following staff members will also sit within the PMU and is co-financed by the PFP: Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Management Officer, and Finance Assistant.

The main responsibility of the Stakeholder Engagement Expert is to lead and track the implementation of the Project's Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). In addition, they will:

- Propose and implement the mechanisms, methodologies and tools necessary to ensure the recommendations of rightsholders, stakeholders and beneficiaries are integrated into the Project implementation;
- Identify and explain enabling factors and barriers that are affecting the stakeholder engagement process, and make recommendations for strengthening the enabling factors and removing the barriers; use an adaptive management approach to adjust the SEP as needed as new stakeholders are identified or changes occur in the way stakeholders need to be engaged;

- Assess knowledge and capacity needs of Project staff and partners on stakeholder engagement, and conduct capacity building/training as needed over the life of the Project to support implementation of the SEP;
- Review annual work plans and budgets and provide recommendations to ensure that the necessary stakeholder consultations are carried out;
- Provide clear and transparent project related information to project-affected people, such as local communities, sub-grantee and other key stakeholders;
- Develop strategies for ensuring that best practices in stakeholder engagement are (a) identified and (b) become institutionalized.

In turn, the Safeguards and Gender Specialist will:

- Support the Stakeholder Engagement Expert in the implementation of the SEP;
- Collaborate with the Safeguards Officer working on the GEF RBB project;
- Lead and track implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GAP), under the supervision of the Project Manager;
- Review annual work plans and budgets and provide recommendations to ensure that project activities support gender mainstreaming
- Provide overall oversight during the implementation of the project activities and advise the PMU in addressing any gender-related issues
- Work with the Project Manager to design methodologies and implementation plans for the execution of gender-sensitive activities in close collaboration with technical specialists;
- Provide inputs on the status of project activities to support Results Framework and Work Plan Tracking for the WWF-GEF Project at the end of each project year;
- Provide inputs to the development of project workplans and participate in project management meetings and annual reflection workshops to inform adaptive management of the project;

Staff to support implementation include: seven fisher association managers and a fisheries liaison officer.

7. Grievance Redress Mechanisms

Under the RBB GEF-8 project, three GRMs will be available to those impacted by it: one is at the project-level, while the other two correspond to the implementing agency (WWF-US) and the donor (GEF). ***To avoid creating redundant structures, the same three mechanisms apply to this SCCF RBB project.*** As with the RBB GEF 8 project, complaints should be resolved at the lowest possible level unless the nature of the complaint precludes it to be practical, time-efficient, and cost-effective.

The PMU will be responsible for informing project-affected parties about all of those grievance mechanisms. Contact information of the staff member responsible for the project-level grievance mechanism in the PMU will be made publicly available.

1) GEF RBB GRM

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The GEF RBB's project-level GRM seeks to complement, rather than substitute, the judicial system and other dispute resolution mechanisms. All complainants may therefore file their grievance in local courts or approach mediators or arbitrators, in accordance with the legislation of Belize. The grievance redress mechanism will be implemented in a culturally sensitive way and facilitate access to vulnerable populations.

The GEF RBB GRM will be administered by the Safeguards and Gender Officer of the PMU sitting in the BBFP Unit. The channels for grievance filing and contact information, among other final details, will be determined within the first 6 months of project implementation. For a full description of the principles guiding the development of the GEF RBB's project-level GRM, please consult that project's ESMF (accessible [here](#)).

2) WWF GEF Agency Grievance Mechanism

In addition to the project-specific GRM, project-affected communities and other interested stakeholders may raise a grievance at any time to the WWF GEF Agency. Contact information of the WWF GEF Agency will be made publicly available.

A grievance can be filed with the Project Complaints Officer (PCO), a WWF staff member fully independent from the WWF GEF Agency, who is responsible for the WWF Accountability and Grievance Mechanism and who can be reached at:

Email: SafeguardsComplaint@wwfus.org.

Mailing address:

Project Complaints Officer Safeguards Complaints,
World Wildlife Fund
1250 24th Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

Complaints may be submitted in the Affected Party's native language and should include the following information:

- Complainant's name and contact information;
- If not filed directly by the complainant, proof that those representing the affected people have authority to do so;
- The specific project or program of concern;
- The harm that is or may be resulting from the project;
- The relevant Environmental and Social Safeguards policy or provision (if known);
- Any other relevant information or documents;
- Any actions taken so far to resolve the problem, including contacting WWF;
- Proposed solutions; and
- Whether confidentiality is requested (stating reasons).

The PCO will respond within 10 business days of receipt, and claims will be filed and included in project monitoring.

Stakeholders may also submit a complaint online or over the phone through an independent third-party platform at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/59041/index.html>.

3) GEF Conflict Resolution Commissioner

In addition to the country-level, and WWF GEF Agency GRMs, a person concerned about a GEF-financed project or operation may submit a complaint to the GEF Resolution Commissioner, who plays a facilitation role and reports directly to the GEF CEO. The Commissioner can be reached at:

E-mail: plallas@thegef.org

Mailing Address:

Mr. Peter Lallas
Global Environment Facility
The World Bank Group, MSN N8-800

1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433-002

Complaints submitted to the Commissioner should be in writing and can be in any language. The complaints should provide at least a general description of the nature of the concerns, the type of harm that may result, and (where relevant) the GEF-funded projects or program at issue

4) Conservation Trust Fund

Although it is unclear at this time which CTF will execute the SCCF project and the general PFP, it is likely that this entity will either have or develop its own institutional GRM. In that event, said mechanism should be considered as an additional resource to the SCCF project as the fourth available GRM.

8. Monitoring and Reporting

Progress against the Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be monitored and reported on throughout implementation.

The following comprises the monitoring and reporting activities to be undertaken with respect to stakeholder engagement by the PMU:

- The SEP will be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary at an annual Reflection Workshop. The review will ensure that the list of project stakeholders and methods of engagement remain appropriate.
- Activities related to stakeholder engagement will be documented and reported by the PMU every 6 months in a Project Progress Report (as part of regular reporting). The project Results Framework and Annual Work Plan and Budget will track beneficiaries of the project and activities related to the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.
- Stakeholder Engagement activities and progress will be monitored through the following indicators:
 - GEF Core Indicator 1: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment
 - Indicator SEP 2: Number of fisher associations established/re-established as legal associations with the Government of Belize.
 - Indicator SEP 3: Number of direct beneficiaries with strengthened livelihoods and sources of income – the number of fishers in Belize and participating in project activities, including diversified and strengthened livelihoods
 - Indicator SEP 4: Number of youths benefiting from the project. Youths are defined as being 15 to 24 years of age engaged in commercial fishing.
 - Indicator SEP 5: number of elderly benefiting from the project. Elderly are defined as being 60 years of age or older.
 - Indicator SEP 6: Number of fishers associations that have adopted at least one climate smart fishing practices
 - Indicator SEP 7: Number of people trained or made aware of climate change impacts and appropriate adaptation responses
 - Indicator SEP 8: Number of people trained or made aware of climate change impacts and appropriate adaptation responses
 - Indicator SEP 9: Number of community members who perceive (via survey) that there are additional and viable climate-resilient opportunities for livelihood diversification and report strengthened access to these.
 - Indicator SEP 10: Number of youth who directly benefit from project led increased climate awareness, skills and leadership training in target communities

Stakeholder Engagement will be evaluated by independent consultants recruited for the project midterm and the terminal evaluations.

The WWF GEF Agency will undertake annual supervision missions to ensure compliance, and report on progress against the Stakeholder Engagement Plan annually to the GEF through Project Implementation Reports.

Appendix 1: Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder Type	Stakeholder Name	Interest/Involvement in the Project	Project Effect on Stakeholder / Stakeholder Influence on the Project
Government of Belize	High level government actors:	The role of high-level government bodies is to sit on decision making committees and to provide high level input and guidance for project design and implementation.	Positive effect The project will help the country achieve its commitments to the 2030 agenda and strengthen its resilience to climate change. High influence on the project High level government actors are central to the project in the design and implementation
	Technical government actors	Provide technical input into the design of the project and implementation.	Positive effect The technical government actors are essential for the fulfillment of the objectives of Resilient Bold Belize as it relates to the fisheries management and livelihood and stewardship pillars. High influence on the project Implement site level activities, outreach and promote stewardship activities.
	Government protected area managers	Are engaged during consultation process and will also be implementing partners	Positive effect Supports livelihoods and economic resilience, as well as improved fisheries management activities. Medium influence on the project As implementing partners and authorities in charge of the PA they will have a medium influence on the project.
Local Community Groups	Community Groups	Consultation participants and beneficiaries	Positive Effect: local buy in critical for success, information dissemination. High Influence on the project
	Fishing Associations	Fishery resource users and governance actors	Positive effect: Key to implementing sustainable fisheries High influence on the project.
	Fisherfolk, families of fisherfolk, people working in tourism, and households who depend on ocean resources for food security are key stakeholders in local communities who are likely to be impacted by the project.	Project Affected People	Potentially Negative impact The project could affect negative the fisherfolk since they are dependent on fishing for livelihoods and sometimes food security. Not only the fisherfolk are impacted but their families as well. High impact on the project As users of the sea ecosystems and it resources the IP will have an impact on the project since their commitment to the protection of the sea, and compliance with rules from users is indispensable for the project success.

Community Based Organizations	CBOs	Are engaged in ecological monitoring and community capacity building for restoration and scientific monitoring, community science integration	Neutral or Positive Impact The project could affect them positively because if the outcomes of the projects are met, there will be increased resilience for community members. Medium influence on the project. Community based organizations have close communication capabilities with communities, have built bridges of trust and have strengths in communicating the positive effects of the project. Those features allow for better consensus and acceptance with communities and resource users
NGOs	NGO protected area co-managers	Actively engaged in managing protected areas, active in community and youth engagement as well as livelihood programs.	Positive effect The project will strengthen the capacities and regulations of the PA, and it could also positively affect its financing. High influence on the project
	Environmental NGOs	Policy advocacy, capacity building, livelihoods	Positive effect, low influence on the project (non-implementers), high influence on the project for project implementing NGOs
	Other NGOs		Positive effect, , moderate influence on the project for project implementing NGOs
Special Interest Groups	Belize Federation of Fishers	Artisanal and commercial fisher representation and advocacy	Positive effect: Voices fisher needs and supports compliance Medium influence on the project.
	Belize Flats Fishery Association	Guides, sports fishers and	Positive effect: supports sustainable practices and habitat protection Medium influence on the project
Academia	Universities	Training, research, youth and community education	Positive effect: Can support science, education, and monitoring. Medium influence on the project
International NGOs	MarFund	Regional conservation funding and coordination	Positive effect: Supports sustainable financing and regional learning Moderate influence on the project

Appendix 2: Systematic Documentation of Stakeholder Consultations

Date	Description of Consultation	Venue	Objective of the Consultation	Summary of Meeting Outcomes	Participants
Feb. 23, 2024	Focus Group Focus Group with 5 activities, 1) presentation of BAF & GEF projects 2) risk identification 3) use of time 4) activities by gender 5) gender perceptions and gender violence, Organized by Humana with people involved in fishing and tourism activities	Helpage Building, Hopkins Village	Presentations on both BAF and RBB projects. Identification of risks, identification of use of time between genders, gender perceptions and gender violence, livelihood intervention support desired by the community,	Participants were mainly utilizing the following areas: SWCMR and Glover Reef. No activities relating to the Placencia Lagoon. Main concerns around lack of enforcement in all areas citing: tourism (no monitoring of eat and catch tours, illegal fisheries (including use of gill nets), fishing in no take zones especially by Guatemalans and Hondurans, no monitoring of catch sizes, etc. Would like to see a reduction in the number of fishing licenses issued for the fishing zones which they are currently using under the managed access program. Believe that the northern fishers along with the Guatemalans and Hondurans contribute to most illegal and unsustainable fishing practices. Would like support in terms of small business grants, and training opportunities.	Participants ranged in ages from 20s – 60s, were mainly Garifuna (8 persons). Included fishers, women entrepreneurs, retired persons, and persons working in the tourism sector. 11 persons signed register (7 women, 4 men). More men participated in the discussions, but chose not to indicate their participation through signing the registration sheet. Of the 11 participants, 8 identified as Garifuna, 2 as other

				Would like to be able to apply for boat and fishing licenses within their community instead of going to Belize City.	
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February 26th, 2024	Focus group Riversdale Focus Group with 2 activities, 1) presentation of BAF & GEF projects 2) risk identification, Organized by Humana with people involved in fishing	Lost Reef Resort, Riversdale	Presentations on both BAF and RBB projects. Identification of risks, identification of use of time between genders, gender perceptions and gender violence, livelihood intervention support desired by the community, DFC Artisanal fisher loan program	Participants were mainly utilizing the following areas: SWCMR and Glover Reef. Not many activities relating to the Placencia Lagoon, however its designation as a PA is supported. Main concerns around lack of enforcement. Would like support in terms of small business grants, and training opportunities. Would like to have access to fishing grants instead of loans.	This session was poorly attended with only 4 persons present. Of the 4 persons, 2 left before the end of the meeting. Many of the residents who previously committed to participating went fishing. Participants included: 1 woman, 3 men
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Feb. 28, 2024	Focus Group Focus Group with 5 activities, 1) presentation of BAF & GEF projects 2) risk identification 3) use of time 4) activities by gender 5) gender perceptions and gender violence, Organized by Humana with people involved in fishing and tourism activities	Ritchies Restaurant, Seine Bight Village	Presentations on both BAF and RBB projects. Identification of risks, identification of use of time between genders, gender perceptions and gender violence, livelihood intervention support desired by the community,	Participants were mainly utilizing the following areas: SWCMR and Glover Reef. Not many activities relating to the Placencia Lagoon, however its designation as a PA is supported. Main concerns around lack of enforcement in all areas citing: tourism (no monitoring of eat and catch tours, illegal fisheries (including use of gill nets), fishing in no take zones, no monitoring of catch sizes, etc. Would like to see a reduction in the number of fishing licenses issued for the fishing zones which they are currently using under the managed access program. Believe that the northern fishers along with the Guatemalans and Hondurans contribute to most illegal and unsustainable fishing practices. Also indicated that special licenses are sold between fishers and not properly issued by the Fisheries department. Would like support in terms of small business grants, training opportunities and additional support to develop the tourism product offering within the community.	This session was attended by Seine Bight residents only, mainly Garifuna. Cited frustration with constant meetings and resulting inaction for low participation from community. Cited that there should have been more inputs from the local business community. Participants ages ranged from 34 to 76 yrs. 5 participants: 2 women, 3 men. 4 persons identified as Garifuna, 1 as Creole.
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March 11, 2024	Focus Group Focus Group with 5 activities, 1) presentation & GEF project 2) risk identification 3) use of time 4) activities by gender 5) gender perceptions and gender violence, Organized by SEA with people involved in fishing and tourism activities	Local restaurant in Monkey River	Presentations on RBB projects. Identification of risks, identification of use of time between genders, gender perceptions and gender violence, livelihood intervention support desired by the community,	Locals concerned about lack of enforcement Participants indicated that they would like the area to become a protected area, and for fees to be collected. They cited that while the Monkey River tour is the most popular tour originating from Placencia, no fees are paid towards the community, and the village council does not have the resources for basic upkeep. Concerns about extraction of materials and diversion of water upstream which continues to have dire effects on the community contributing to environmental degradation.	The session was attended by Monkey River residents, they cited frustration with erosion caused by agriculture around the community, lack of opportunities for tourism. The meeting had participation of 8 people. (6 males, 2 females), involved in fishing and/or tourism activities. All the participants identified themselves as Creole.
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March 12, 2024	Focus Group Focus Group with 5 activities, 1) presentation of GEF project 2) risk identification 3) use of time 4) activities by gender 5) gender perceptions and gender violence, Organized by Earthempower with people involved in fishing activities.	Barranco Village	Presentations on RBB projects. Identification of risks, identification of use of time between genders, gender perceptions and gender violence, livelihood intervention support desired by the community,	Participants indicated that most of the men in the village leave to find employment, leaving behind women, children and elders. Fishing is largely subsistence. The community is facing serious erosion issues. Limited economic prospects. They used to get some community tourism tours, however the community tour guide recently passed away. There is no one remaining to continue such activities.	5 participants: 2 women, 3 men ranging in ages from 33 to 60 years old. 3 participants identified as Garifuna, 1 as creole and the last as other.
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March 13, 2024	Household Surveys	Gales Point		Team was unable to secure a focus group meeting with community members, as the consultation date conflicted with another community meeting already being held. Only household surveys were completed in this community.	
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March 15, 2024	Focus Group Meeting Focus Group with 5 activities, 1) presentation of GEF project 2) risk identification 3) use of time 4) activities by gender 5) gender perceptions and gender violence, Organized by SACD with people involved in fishing and tourism activities	SACD Conference Room, Sarteneja Village	Presentations on RBB projects. Identification of risks, identification of use of time between genders, gender perceptions and gender violence, livelihood intervention support desired by the community,	Community participation in this activity was limited, as many fishers were out of the village, and the focus group competed with other activities that were occurring at the same time which resulting in low turnout and participation. The participants are worried that more restrictions for MPAs could affect the income of their households.	Participants included: 3 females
	Informal focus group meeting with some fishermen	Fisherman house (Mr. Cesar), Sarteneja Village		The new road improvements have the potential to improve the community economy. Are interested in tourism, however believe that Sarteneja needs more development to become a tourism destination (eg improved standards for hotels and restaurants). They expressed that they are tired of participating in this kind of activity because nothing gets done. (they trust SACD) They would like to have workshops to support women entrepreneurship in something they can do in their homes or nearby. They think agriculture could be an option or restaurants.	Participants included: 2 men and 1 woman

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March 18, 2024	Focus group meeting Focus Group with 4 activities, 1) presentation of GEF project 2) risk identification 3) activities by gender 4) gender perceptions and gender violence, Organized by SACD with people involved in fishing and tourism activities	Chunox Fishermen Association Office, Chunox Village	Presentations on RBB projects. Identification of risks, identification of use of time between genders, gender perceptions and gender violence, livelihood intervention support desired by the community,	The meeting was held and organize by the Fisherman Association, many fishermen were out of town and their wives came to the meeting. The association has intern problems and those were reflected during the focus group. Women are looking for more participation in the fisherman association and more economic participation, they would be interested in business workshops. There is a lack of trust to the government and some ONGs, (WWF was not mentioned). There is an interest on diversification of activities because most families depend on tourism.	Participants included: 3 males and 5 females
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March 20, 2024		Copper Bank		There was no participation of community members in the focus group meeting. The team was also unable to obtain household surveys from community members as they were distrustful of purpose, and did not want to participate. There is the fear that this information will be used to restrict fishers from more areas, increasing the competition within limited spaces to fish for conch and lobster.	
September 2024	Virtual call [interview] for GEF-SCCF Project	Virtual call	To gather information on fisher association status, strengths and opportunities to inform project development.	Wabafu Fishermen Association has a lot of potential for project investments in strengthening these associations. Some participants in the association were identified as having an interest in capacity building in leadership and support for community projects. There is room for improved communication within this association, specifically to resolve internal conflicts.	Mark Thompson, Chairman, Wabafu Fishermen Association

Sept. – Nov. 2024	Virtual call [interview] for GEF-SCCF Project	Virtual call	To gather information on fisher association status, strengths and opportunities to inform project development.	There is possibility and interest for Punta Negra fishers to register an association. Online registration is possible for interested associations. Blue Ventures believe that handholding of the associations should be five years or more. For the FiD to regain the trust of the associations, it was recommended that a Fisheries Extension Officer be hired to assist and that the leadership of the associations be rotational to reduce competition among members, while older members or fishers can be advisors. Blue Ventures also observed that there is dislike between southern and northern fishers. Southern fishers believe that northern fishers are encroaching on their areas and do not agree with the fishing methods used. Communication between the two bodies of fishers was encouraged.	Celso Cho, Blue Ventures Breanna Conoquie, Director, Blue Ventures
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Sept. – Nov. 2024	Virtual call (interview) for GEF-SCCF Project	Virtual call	To gather information on fisher association status, strengths and opportunities to inform project development.	The executive of the association are all fishers making it difficult for them to meet. While the association is satisfactorily active, its administrative capacity needs to be strengthened. The association is registered and has at least 100 active members. It is also awaiting its certificate of good standing. Fishers find it difficult to pay their fees or make donations (\$10) because they have children to send to school and would also get affected by storms during the hurricane season. The association has a strategic plan, developed by the executive. It was also mentioned that the association does not feel that they are properly represented by the Belize Federation of Fishers nor the cooperatives. It was recommended that the association executive is supported when they need to attend meetings since they would likely be missing time from fishing. Leadership training of young fishers would be ideal for them to help lead the association.	Amisai Arevalo and Chairman Arevalo, Chunox Fishermen Association
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				The association would also seek training opportunities such as administration, financial management, etc. for its members since most of them did not attend high school. The Sarteneja Fishermen Association is active but needs to re-register. Of note is that those who are active are women.	
Sept. – Nov. 2024	Virtual call (interview) for GEF-SCCF Project	Virtual call	To gather information on fisher association status, strengths and opportunities to inform project development.	The association still has regular meetings and is not registered but will be doing so. They need help to organize themselves better. They are presently focused on GraGra Lagoon and the co-management of this. There will be opportunities for fisher families through the Blue Action Fund project. Barranco Fisher Association and Copper Bank Fishermen Association may also be active.	Norman Castillo, Hopkins Fishermen Association

Sept. to Nov. 2024	Virtual call (interview) for GEF-SCCF Project	Virtual call	To gather information on fisher association status, strengths and opportunities to inform project development.	Independence Fishermen Association is not active. They were active several years ago but due to members leaving, they are no longer active. They are possibly not interested to re-register,	Brandon Jacobs, Fisher Gonzalo
Sept. – Nov. 2024	Key informant interviews for GEF-SCCF Project	Virtual calls	To gather information on fisher association status, strengths and opportunities to inform project development.	Inactive associations: Independence Fisher Association, Riversdale Fishermen Association, Blue Water Fishermen Association, Toledo Fishers Association, Southern Fisherfolk Alliance Association, Seine Bight Fishermen Association, Monkey River Fishermen Association (more into tourism now). Fisher associations allow for representation of fishers in communities but need project manager/leader who is not a fisher, to be able to dedicate their time to the business of the associations. Associations fail due to lack of capacity and training in areas such as basic governance, meeting planning and execution, mentorship, and need a liaison person between the FiD and the associations. Lack of communication among associations	Current and/or previous leaders and/or members of fisher associations

				(recommendation: select a representative from regional associations to meet and discuss). Major gap is lack of communication and support system. Other recommendations: Increase opportunities and support for learning exchanges for fishers. Provide incentives for implementing best practices to improve product quality.	
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