

**DECISION-MAKING PROTOCOLS
AND
GUIDING PRINCIPLES
FOR THE
STEERING COMMITTEE
OF THE
BELIZE SUSTAINABLE OCEAN PLAN**

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Background

On November 4th, 2021, the Government of Belize finalized a debt conversion transaction comprising the Blue Loan Agreement (BLA) and the Conservation Funding Agreement (CFA). Under these agreements, Belize agreed to eight Conservation Commitments. Clause 1 of the CFA obliges Belize to complete a legally enforceable Marine Spatial Plan (MSP). Key milestones for the MSP process are further elaborated in Exhibit A to the CFA. Milestone 3 stipulates that:

“No later than one (1) year after signing the Agreement, the Government shall initiate the process of developing a MSP for its Ocean by: (i) designation of a lead ministry or agency for the MSP process and (ii) establishment of a MSP steering committee comprised of senior level officers or employees from governmental and non-governmental stakeholders from sectors/areas including fisheries, coastal zone management, tourism, water resources, shipping, environment, finance, academia and energy. A representative of the Nature Conservancy will be a member of the MSP steering committee.”

Accordingly, the Government of Belize has designated the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI), under the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation, as the government’s lead agency for the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) process. Furthermore, it established a Steering Committee comprising the broad sectoral representation as mandated. A full Terms of Reference has been developed for the Steering Committee (SC) and is attached as Annex 1 hereto. It defines the Committee’s purpose, composition, roles, and responsibilities; its procedures and communications; and a governance framework for the MSP process. Belize’s MSP has been named the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan (BSOP).

The marine spatial plan, as defined in Clause 7 of the CFA is **“a plan analyzing and allocating parts of three-dimensional marine spaces (or ecosystems) to specific uses or objectives in order to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives that are specified through a political process”**. Therefore, the development of this Plan will require broad stakeholder engagement and participatory decision-making. The decision-making protocols and guiding principles set forth in this document are intended to support the BSOP Steering Committee (BSOP-SC) in the fulfillment of its roles and responsibilities as it steers the MSP process.

Governance Framework

A governance framework has been established to guide the marine spatial planning process. Figure 1 below shows the composition of the Executive Committee, the Steering Committee, the Core Team, and Technical Working Groups. It depicts the two-way flow of information between the Steering Committee and industry and resource management sectors as well as the public. The Steering Committee is charged with channeling outputs and recommendations to the Executive Committee for final endorsement.

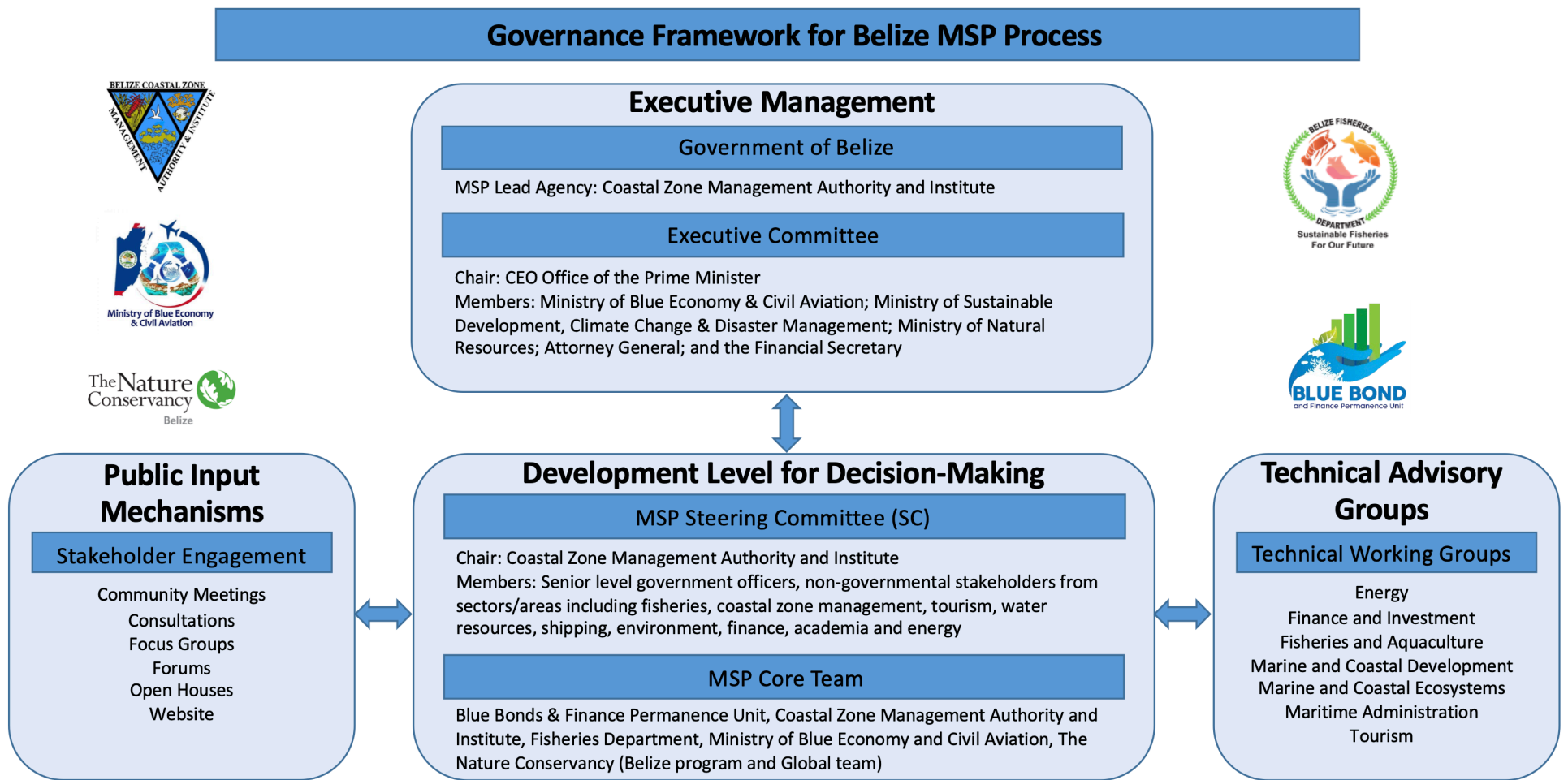


Figure 1: Governance Framework for Belize's MSP Process

Within this governance framework, the general purpose of the BSOP-SC is:

- To provide oversight and guidance for the implementation of the MSP process.
- To coordinate submission of technical, policy and legislative inputs.
- To review outputs and work to find agreement on these outputs from all relevant sectors engaged in the MSP Process.
- To make recommendations for consideration and decision-making at the executive management level.
- To be responsible for high-level process management, ensuring consistency with MSP global best practices and principles.

The Steering Committee will provide their recommendation(s) on outputs via the Blue Bonds and Finance Permanence (BBFP) Unit for approval by the Executive Committee before outputs are presented to MSP Stakeholder Workshops and the public.

Scope of the Decision-making Protocols

These decision-making protocols and guiding principles for decision-making are for use by the BSOP-SC in the conduct of their meetings to make decisions on recommendations and outputs to be presented to the Executive Committee for approval. These protocols will remain in force throughout the planning process up to the finalization of the BSOP, no later than November 2026. Within that timeframe, changes to these protocols may be made by the BSOP-SC itself, as deemed necessary.

Decision-making Roles of the MSP Steering Committee

Within the Terms of Reference of the BSOP-SC, key decision-making responsibilities of the BSOP-SC (extracted from the Terms of Reference) include:

“(4) Approve the MSP process workplan and timelines, and provide necessary oversight and coordination support to ensure timely delivery of the workplan.

(5) Discuss and review updates provided by the MSP Process Lead and identify issues requiring executive-level decisions to be submitted via the BBFP Unit to the CEO¹ Committee and/or Cabinet.

(6) Review all outputs of the plan and provide recommendations via the BBFP Unit before outputs are presented to the MSP Stakeholder Workshops.

(11) Abide by the MSP Guiding Principles for Decision-making.”

¹ Whereas this excerpt from the Terms of Reference for the BSOP-SC refers to a CEO Committee, the Governance Framework refers to this body as the Executive Committee. Within this document, these terms are therefore considered synonymous and their use herein is consistent with the phrasing in the Terms of Reference.

Guiding Principles for Decision-making

UNESCO's MSP Global International Guide on Marine/ Maritime Spatial Planning² states that:

[G]uiding principles usually reflect basic ideas about:

- How the process needs to be conducted in relation to stakeholders (*participative; inclusive; transparent*)
- How the plan needs to be developed (*ecosystem-based approach; precautionary principle; knowledge-based; adaptive; climate smart*)
- What the plan needs to deliver (*sustainable development; social justice*) (UNESCO-IOC, Page 74)

Belize has defined guiding principles for its MSP process that apply to its unique political, cultural, social, and ecological context, scope, and the vision, goals, and objectives for the BSOP. These overarching principles will guide decision-making, as well as establish the ethos of how the process will be conducted and how stakeholders will be engaged. Establishing and publicly sharing the Guiding Principles at the start of the planning process aids in transparency and accountability since it lets all stakeholders know the principles on which decisions will be based. Secondly, lets stakeholders know what to expect from the stakeholder engagement activities.

The following Guiding Principles will be used in guiding decisions for the development of the BSOP. They are grouped by the general themes given in the UNESCO recommendation above:

How the process will be conducted in relation to stakeholders

1. Inclusivity

The MSP process and the resulting plan will address the social, cultural, and economic needs of all stakeholders. Particular efforts will be made to include minority, marginalized, and under-represented groups, and to ensure that stakeholder engagement venues, language, times, and processes are accessible to all stakeholders.

2. Participation

Stakeholders will be invited to participate and contribute, through widespread consultations, in data gathering, planning, and making decisions about uses and zonation of Belize's ocean. Participation should allow for the integration of the expectations, needs and opportunities of various stakeholder groups into the MSP process and outputs. It should address potential conflicts through open dialogue to facilitate equitable and balanced solutions. The Governance Framework and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy reflects the opportunities for multi-stakeholder participation. The Steering Committee for the MSP process will comprise government and non-government representatives from key sectors that depend on and manage marine resources and will be supported by Technical Working Groups.

² UNESCO-IOC/European Commission. 2021. *MSP Global International Guide on Marine/Maritime Spatial Planning*. Paris, UNESCO. (IOC Manuals and Guides no 89)

3. Transparency

The Belize MSP process will be open to public scrutiny. At the start of the MSP process, the vision, goals, objectives, and guiding principles will be widely disseminated to set expectations early in the process. Subsequently, information regarding activities underway, information products developed, decisions made, progress reports, and other relevant information will be promptly shared on multiple media channels in language and formats that are widely accessible and easily understood by the public.

How the plan needs to be developed

4. Ecosystem-based approach

The strategy for decision-making will ensure “the integrated management of land, water, and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way”³, which recognizes that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of ecosystems, and that ecosystem goods and services are integral for national development.

5. Precautionary principle

The precautionary principle enables decision-makers to adopt precautionary measures when scientific evidence about an environmental or human health hazard is uncertain and the stakes are high. When there are threats of serious or irreversible harm to the environment or society, a precautionary approach will be applied to ensure that a lack of scientific certainty shall not be a reason to postpone decisions or actions that prevent or minimize such harm.

6. Evidence-based planning

Decisions will be based on scientific information and global best practices. Where data are insufficient or current information is not available, reasonable efforts will be made to address data and information gaps by consulting the scientific literature, seeking expert scientific opinion and advice, consulting stakeholders, and/or direct field measurement or modeling.

7. Climate smart

The MSP process will take into account the extreme vulnerability of Belize’s coastal and marine areas to climate change, which may have dramatic negative impacts on coastal populations as well as coastal and marine ecosystems in the short-, medium-, and long-term.

What the plan needs to deliver

8. Equity

Decisions made during the MSP process, as well as in the conduct of the process itself, will aim to deliver fair and equal access to participatory processes, economic opportunities, and marine resources, and will make particular efforts to compensate for pre-existing inequalities.

9. Balance

The MSP process will seek the optimal balance between social, cultural, economic, and ecological objectives to provide economic opportunities and preserve cultural and social values, while protecting and improving management of Belize’s ocean and minimizing adverse impacts

³ As defined by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. Accessed on August 8, 2022, at <https://www.cbd.int/ecosystem/>

on the environment. Balance is achieved when the protection of marine ecosystems and demands for development are given due consideration in an open and strategic manner.

Decision-making protocols

The procedures outlined in the BSOP-SC Terms of Reference require that:

“(5) The Committee will meet quarterly, at minimum, and convene special meetings as needed during the term of the project. Project documents, such as terms of reference, reports, etc., can be reviewed for approval and responses provided by members via email correspondence. Members will be given a deadline of 10 working days, unless otherwise agreed; a member’s agreement will be assumed if s/he does not respond by the deadline date established.

“(6) The quorum for meetings will be 50% of the membership plus one and shall include five of the seven NGO/private sector representatives. “

Item 6 in Section 6 Procedures and Communications of the Steering Committee, of the Terms of Reference T further stipulates that:

“6. Decisions shall be made by consensus. Should there be differing opinions, voting will be done. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall have the casting vote.”

Within this framework, this section elaborates on the BSOP-SC’s decision-making protocols to provide clear guidance on consensus decision-making and voting.

Consensus is defined as “general agreement” or “unanimity of opinion”. Whereas it does not require whole-hearted agreement by all, consensus decision-making does require that a fair and participatory process be employed for receiving, discussing, and considering inputs from all parties. Given the multiple and diverse interests in marine spatial planning; the high economic, ecological, and social impacts of the final plan; and the Government of Belize’s commitment to a fair and transparent planning process, it is imperative that best efforts are made to achieve consensus, especially on the most consequential matters. This will ensure beneficial outcomes for all Belizeans and maximize political, sectoral, and public support and compliance during plan implementation.

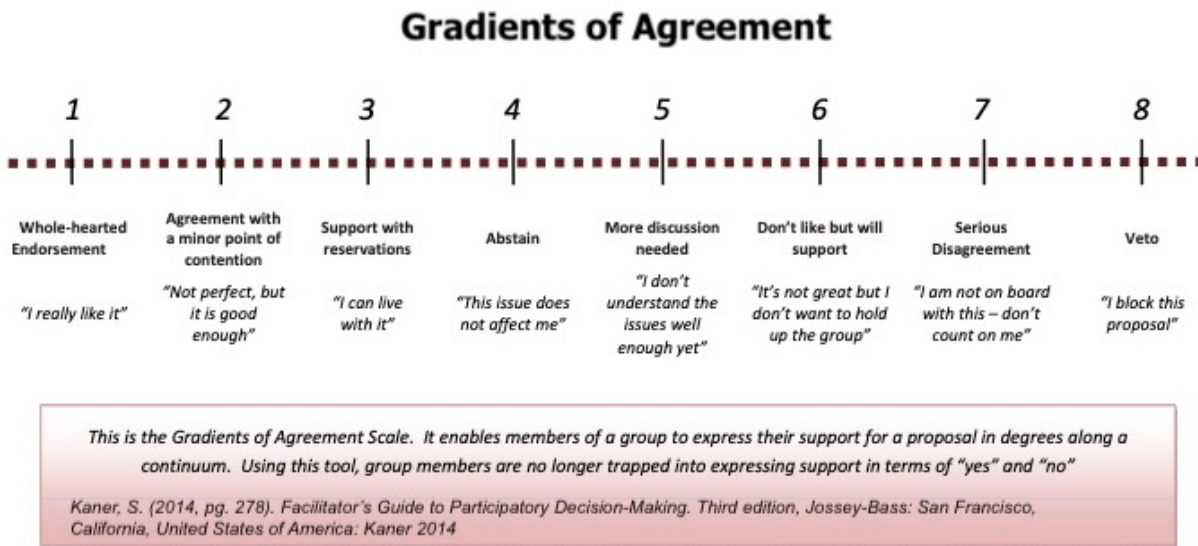
For the purpose of the BSOP-SC's planning process, consensus decision-making will entail the following:

- Each member will be individually polled to give their inputs and opinion on the matter at hand.
- Careful consideration will be given to each member's inputs, allowing adequate time for discussion by the entire group.
- Efforts will be made to address each member's legitimate concerns or points of contention.
- Members shall refer to, and abide by, the BSOP-SC's guiding principles.
- Where necessary, consensus building measures may be employed to achieve the highest possible level of agreement.
- Members may request additional time and/or information for further consideration before finalizing their input. The Chair can then determine the time frame and additional information required.
- When all efforts at attaining consensus have been exhausted, the Chair will propose a vote. By default, this vote would be by a show of hands.
- If unanimity cannot be achieved through discussion, and the decision is made by majority vote, members may make a formal objection in writing, which will be recorded and reported along with the final decision.

During consensus decision-making, the Gradients of Agreement Scale⁴ (Kaner, 2014) will be used to gauge members' degree of agreement. (See Figure 2 below.) This scale is a tool for democratic and participatory decision-making. It supports the application of the BSOP's guiding principles of inclusivity, participation, and equity by providing a well-defined spectrum – from “whole-hearted endorsement” to “veto” – for members to express their degree of agreement on any matter to be decided. The BSOP-SC may choose to make amendments to this Gradients of Agreement Scale as needed to fit the Belize and BSOP context.

⁴ Kaner, S. (2014, pg. 278). *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*. Third edition, Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, California, United States of America

Figure 2: Gradients of Agreement Scale



To build consensus, the BSOP-SC, guided by the Chair, can employ the following measures:

- Invite presentations from SC members, TWG members, or external experts to elucidate the matter to be decided on.
- Identify and build upon areas of shared interests.
- Invite an external facilitator or mediator to assist the group in reaching consensus.
- Include BSOP-SC members, TWG members, and key stakeholders in the development of outputs and proposals throughout the process.

It is recognized that, notwithstanding its benefits, consensus decision-making does require more time. The Chair must therefore exercise judgement, within the framework of the guiding principles, on the level of effort and investment of time required for a particular decision.

Decisions on Matters of Substance

It is recommended that the Terms of Reference for the BSOP-SC be amended to include:

- (1) The requirement for a special majority vote for matters of substance. This special majority vote will require that at least 2/3 (two thirds) of the members vote "yes"; no more than 1/4 (one fourth) of the voting members vote "no"; and abstentions are not counted.
- (2) The definition of what constitutes a matter of substance as well as the identification of specific decisions which by default would be treated as matters of substance. In legal terms, a matter of substance is one that goes to the essence of the issue, as opposed to a matter of form which deals with technical aspects of method or style. In the case of the BSOP, matters of substance would be those that treat with the vision, goals, objectives, and guiding principles. Examples of what may constitute matters of substance would be the approval of the final BSOP, approval of intermediate zonation outputs leading up to the final plan, and changes to stakeholder representation on the Steering Committee. It

is recommended that the BSOP-SC define a preliminary list of foreseeable matters of substance. This list can be modified as needed throughout the planning process. Additionally, the BSOP-SC may determine before a particular matter is presented for discussion whether it shall be considered a matter of substance.

Recording of Decisions

Transparency is one of the guiding principles of Belize's marine spatial planning process. The principle states that:

"The Belize MSP process will be open to public scrutiny. At the start of the MSP process, the vision, goals, objectives, and guiding principles will be widely disseminated to set expectations early in the process. Subsequently, information regarding activities underway, information products developed, decisions made, progress reports, and other relevant information will be promptly shared on multiple media channels in language and formats that are widely accessible and easily understood by the public."

Fulfilment of that principle then calls for adequate reporting on the meeting proceedings and decisions made by the BSOP-SC. Item 3 of Section 6 Procedures and Communications of the Terms of Reference, states that:

"3. Minutes of all meetings will be produced, approved, signed and filed for the record."

This procedure and communications protocol will be further elaborated below in accordance with the Transparency Guiding Principle. Specifically,

1. Minutes will contain action points, including decisions made.
2. All decisions made will be recorded, whether by consensus or by voting, within the minutes.
3. The record of each decision will include:
 - a. the exact phrasing and description of the question/issue decided on.
 - b. a summary (not a verbatim transcript) of the principal issues raised in discussion.
 - c. how the decision was made – whether by consensus or by voting.
 - d. if by voting, an account of how each representative agency voted (yes, no, abstain) and the final count of each.
 - e. if by consensus, the level agreement, as described in the gradients of agreement scale adopted by the steering committee.
4. After adoption by the BSOP-SC, the minutes of meetings will be:
 - a. Forwarded through the BBFP Unit to the Executive Committee.
 - b. Circulated to the BSOP-SC members for their reference.
 - c. Securely and permanently stored by the Lead Agency, the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute; and
 - d. Publicized and openly accessible on the BSOP website.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference for the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan Steering Committee



TERMS OF REFERENCE MARINE SPATIAL PLAN (MSP) STEERING COMMITTEE 2022

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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE MSP PROCESS

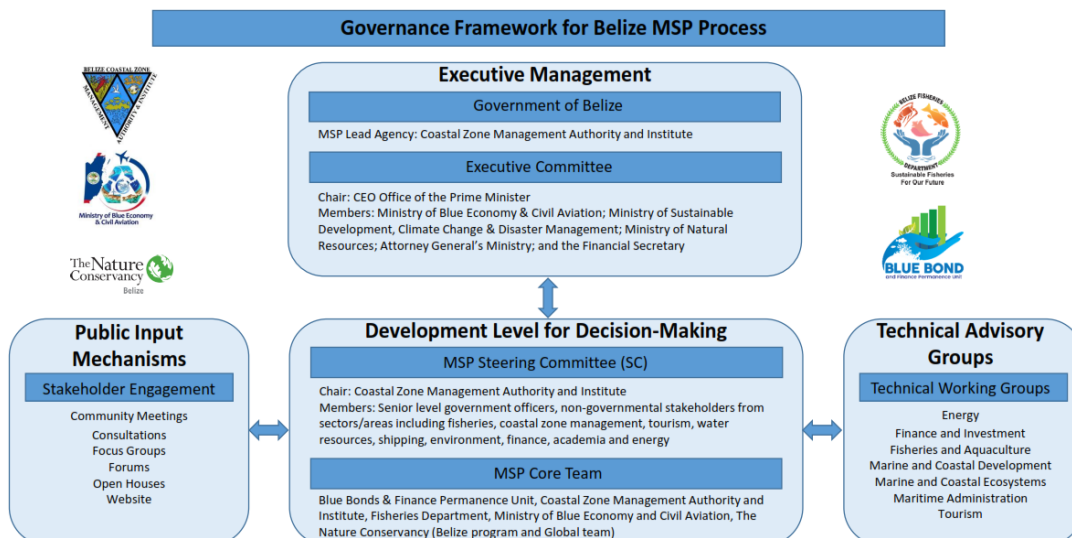
On November 4th, 2021, the Government of Belize signed the Blue Loan Agreement (BLA) and Conservation Funding Agreement (CFA) in collaboration with the Belize Blue Investment Company (BZBIC) and the Nature Conservancy (TNC). The BLA and the CFA are contingent on eight primary Conservation- Commitments/Targets and an agreed payment schedule to be realized by the Government of Belize by the 8th anniversary of the agreements. Clause 1 of the CFA obligates Belize to complete a legally enforceable Marine Spatial Plan (MSP). Key milestones for the MSP process are outlined in Annex I of this Terms of Reference.

The MSP, as defined in Clause 7 of the CFA is **“a plan analyzing and allocating parts of three-dimensional marine spaces (or ecosystems) to specific uses or objectives in order to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives that are specified through a political process”**. The marine spatial planning process includes identifying Biodiversity Protection Zones in an iterative process. The goal of having 30% of Belize’s Ocean in Biodiversity Protection Zones will be part of the overall design such that the Biodiversity Protection Zones identified will facilitate achievement of Milestone 4.

The Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI), under the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation, has been designated as the government’s lead agency for the Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) process with funding support from the Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future (BFSF).

2 GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK FOR THE BELIZE MSP PROCESS

The governance framework is currently being developed. However, key components are listed below:





One of the key components of the governance framework is the Steering Committee, which is also a requirement outlined under Milestone 3 “ *No later than one (1) year after signing the Agreement, the Government shall initiate the process of developing a MSP for its Ocean by: (i) designation of a lead ministry or agency for the MSP process and (ii) establishment of a MSP steering committee comprised of senior level officers or employees from governmental and non-governmental stakeholders from sectors/areas including fisheries, coastal zone management, tourism, water resources, shipping, environment, finance, academia and energy. A representative of The Nature Conservancy will be a member of the MSP steering committee. For the avoidance of doubt, the Government shall have full discretion to determine whether the governmental stakeholders participating in the MSP steering committee are Ministry or agency-level members.*”

3 PURPOSE OF THE MSP STEERING COMMITTEE

The MSP Steering Committee will provide leadership and oversight of outputs and the timeline to complete the MSP. The purpose of the Steering Committee is to review outputs, provide technical, policy and legislative input, and work to find agreement on these outputs from all relevant sectors engaged in the MSP Process. The Steering Committee will provide their recommendation(s) on outputs via the Blue Bonds and Finance Permanence (BBFP) Unit for approval by the Executive Committee before outputs are presented to MSP Stakeholder Workshops and for the general public engagement.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MSP STEERING COMMITTEE

The MSP Steering Committee (SC) is responsible for coordinating technical, policy and legislative input into the outputs, and tasked with overseeing and requesting input from Technical Working Group (TWG) members. Specific functions of the Committee are to:

1. Provide oversight to and ensure coordination, collaboration and synergies between, the MSP process and the multiple national/large-scale initiatives.
2. Approve the establishment of the Technical Working Groups, based on the recommendations of the MSP core team, to provide technical expertise, best practices, scientific advice and local knowledge for outputs and Steering Committee recommendations.
3. Provide oversight and guidance to the Technical Working Groups in their review of all outputs of the process, as required.
4. Approve the MSP process work plan and timelines, and provide necessary oversight and coordination support to ensure timely delivery of the work plan.
5. Discuss and review updates provided by CZMAI, and identify issues requiring executive-level decisions to be submitted via the BBFP Unit to the CEO Committee and/or Cabinet.
6. Review and approve all outputs and provide recommendations via the BBFP Unit before outputs are presented to the MSP Stakeholder Workshops.



7. Assist with the review of on-going monitoring and evaluation of MSP process activities.
8. Provide inputs to inform necessary legal and policy reforms to support the implementation and enforcement of the MSP
9. Serve as the focal point tasked with supporting the provision of appropriate information from their respective agencies/organizations to the MSP process through the established data sharing arrangement.
10. Facilitate the dissemination of information or minutes of meetings where applicable on the MSP Process particularly, among their agencies, organizations, departments and stakeholders to ensure efficiency and uniformity of the information disseminated.
11. Abide by the Ground Rules and Code of Conduct (Annex II).
12. Abide by the MSP Guiding Principles for Decision Making (To be developed).

Responsibilities of the **Steering Committee Chair** are the following:

1. The Chair of the Committee is the Chief Executive Officer of the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute. The Vice-Chair will be elected from amongst the membership, and will be eligible for re-appointment. The term of the Vice Chair will be two years.
2. The Chair of the Committee shall perform the following functions:
 - i. Serve as the primary Steering Committee representative and liaison with the BBFP Unit to provide continuous updates and report major issues or concerns, which arise during the project, and matters requiring decisions at the Chief Executive Officer and/or Ministerial level;
 - ii. Work closely with the MSP Process Lead to facilitate smooth and effective Committee and project operations and processes;
 - iii. Provide effective facilitation and leadership to the Committee.

Specific tasks for all **Steering Committee Members and Alternates** are the following:

1. Participate in Steering Committee meetings; If SC member or alternate fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings, a formal letter of concern will be sent from CZMAI, as the Committee Chair, to the respective Ministry or Organizations to re-affirm their participation.
2. Review and provide feedback on proposed inputs and outputs within ten (10) business days to project documents. For urgent and time-sensitive matters requiring a quicker response, the timeframe for submission of feedback shall be specified.
3. Collaborate with other Steering Committee members and the MSP Process Lead during meetings and in between meetings as required;



4. Assist with the project outreach and/or networking with individuals, groups, organizations and government agencies involved in integrated marine management and MSP processes in the country;
5. Serve as an active and effective liaison between the Steering Committee, CZMAI and, the sector/agency/organization that they represent;
6. Disseminate collectively agreed information about the process and derived products to their own networks, according to the processes outlined within the MSP process Communications Plan and Strategy;
7. Consult and liaise with their sector/agency/organization on planning related issues; and
8. Communicate any concerns or questions to the Steering Committee.

5 MSP STEERING COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

Committee members are invited to join the Steering Committee (SC) to represent the numerous sectors and user groups necessary for a broad scale and multi-sector planning process. The Committee reflects all sectors of interest, with representatives from Government, Non-Government, Private Sector and non-commercial user groups. Steering Committee members reserve the right to reconsider their involvement in the process at any time through established procedures. The MSP Process Lead will be the secretary to the SC while the MSP Coordinator will serve as the Recording Secretary along with other necessary support from the MSP core team as needed. The Steering Committee should include representatives from the following as per milestone 3:

1. Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation
2. Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management
3. Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations
4. Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment
5. Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining,
6. Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute
7. Blue Bonds/Finance Permanence Unit, Office of the Prime Minister
8. The Nature Conservancy
9. Belize Network of Non-Governmental Organizations (BNN)
10. Belize Port Authority
11. Energy Unit, Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy and Logistics
12. University of Belize (UB)
13. Belize National Coast Guard
14. Belize Fisheries Department
15. Belize Forest Department
16. Department of Environment
- 17-20. Chairs of 4 TWGs: (1.) Finance and Investment; (2.) Fisheries (*inclusive of Aquaculture*); (3.) Marine and Coastal Ecosystems; (4.) Tourism



Technical Working Groups

The Technical Working Groups will be established under the guidance of the Steering Committee. Detailed TORs will be prepared, the working groups will include the following thematic areas and proposed Chairs:

1. Energy (Recommended Chair Chair-Belize Electricity Limited)
2. Finance and Investment (Recommended Chair-Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
3. Fisheries inclusive of Aquaculture (Recommended Chair-Northern Fishermen Co-operative Society Ltd.)
4. Marine and Coastal Development (Recommended Chair-*TBD*)
5. Marine and Coastal Ecosystems (Chair-Wildlife Conservation Society)
6. Maritime Administration (Recommended Chair- *TBD*)
7. Tourism (Chair- Belize Tourism Industry Association-BTIA)

6 PROCEDURES AND COMMUNICATIONS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

1. The Secretary of the Committee is the MSP Process Lead, and the Recording Secretary is the MSP Coordinator.
2. Meetings will be led by the Chair, according to an approved agenda.
3. Minutes of all meetings will be produced, approved, signed and filed for the record.
4. The Committee will meet quarterly, at minimum, and convene special meetings as needed during the term of the project. Project documents, such as terms of reference, reports, etc., can be reviewed for approval and responses provided by members via email correspondence. Members will be given a deadline of 10 working days, unless otherwise agreed; a member's agreement will be assumed if s/he does not respond by the deadline date established.
5. The quorum for meetings will be 50% of the membership plus 1, and shall include attendance by five of the seven NGO/private sector representatives.
6. Decisions shall be made by consensus. Should there be differing opinions, voting will be done. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall have the casting vote.
7. One alternate for each member may be appointed. An alternate member will have voting authority, when needed, only in the absence of the member. The nominated alternate shall provide relevant comments/feedback, to the Ministry or Organization they are representing.

7 AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Steering Committee shall periodically review its own performance and Terms of Reference (ToR) and recommend any changes it considers necessary this ToR in order to improve the delivery of its functions and responsibilities.



ANNEX I – MSP MILESTONES

Exhibit A: Conservation commitments related to the MSP

Milestone 3: No later than one (1) year after signing the Agreement, the Government shall initiate the process of developing a MSP for its Ocean by: (i) designation of a lead ministry or agency for the MSP process and (ii) establishment of a MSP steering committee comprised of senior level officers or employees from governmental and non-governmental stakeholders from sectors/areas including fisheries, coastal zone management, tourism, water resources, shipping, environment, finance, academia and energy. A representative of The Nature Conservancy will be a member of the MSP steering committee. For the avoidance of doubt, the Government shall have full discretion to determine whether the governmental stakeholders participating in the MSP steering committee are Ministry or agency-level members.

Milestone 4: No later than three (3) years after signing the Agreement, the National Assembly shall approve and the Government shall formally sign into law and Gazette Biodiversity Protection Zones covering a total of 25% of its Ocean. After achievement of this Milestone, a Conservation Event will occur under the Agreement in respect of this Milestone if and only if Belize shall thereafter have less than 25% of its Ocean in Biodiversity Protection Zones.

Milestone 6: No later than five (5) years after signing the Agreement, (a) the National Assembly shall approve and the Government shall formally sign into law and Gazette Biodiversity Protection Zones covering a total of 30% of Belize's Ocean, or the percentage stated in the MSP; and (b) the MSP shall have been completed and approved by the National Assembly, signed into law, Gazetted and Implemented. After achievement of this Milestone, a Conservation Event will occur under the Agreement in respect of this Milestone if and only if Belize shall thereafter have less than the lower of 30% and the percentage stated in the MSP of its Ocean in Biodiversity Protection Zones or Belize shall rescind the enactment of the MSP.

Milestone 8: No later than eight (8) years after signing the Agreement, Belize shall have approved Management Plans for the Biodiversity Protection Zones, and the ministry with authority over such plans shall have signed the Management Plans. After achievement of this Milestone, a Conservation Event will occur under the Agreement in respect of this Milestone if and only if Belize shall rescind such Management Plans



ANNEX II – STEERING COMMITTEE GROUND RULES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

A member's participation on MSP Committees and/or Technical Working Groups entails responsibilities to their sector's interests, the broader public and the Committee or Group itself. To ensure that each member's interactions are transparent, effective, and efficient as per the MSP Guiding Principles for Decision Making (To be developed), Ground Rules and a Code of Conduct (outlined below). All members will endeavour to adhere to the following and should bring concerns to the attention of the MSP Executive Committee Chair.

GROUND RULES

1. Use the best available knowledge and information to inform decisions for the MSP including best available ecological, economic, social and cultural data.
2. Draw on the experience, knowledge and expertise of government staff, resource managers, marine stakeholders, the conservation community, local experts and scientists to develop sound, scientifically defensible decisions and recommendations.
3. Utilize methods that are transparent in their application.
4. Work cooperatively to achieve project goals.

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Demonstrate a commitment to the Committee or Technical Working Group by working cooperatively and in good faith to move the process towards its goals and products, respecting the context and objectives of the MSP process described above;
2. Demonstrate a commitment to the Committee or Technical Working Group by planning for the continuity of their membership until the end of the process;
3. Demonstrate respect for other members by respecting their values and interests, avoiding inflammatory language, listening to others without interrupting, and being punctual;
4. Ensure honest and open communication and the timely sharing of information or concerns relevant to the Committee or Technical Working Group;
5. Ensure appropriate communication with external audiences that accurately describes the Committee or Technical Working Group and is consistent with this Terms of Reference;
6. Promote the planning process above individual interests;
7. Ensure accountability to the interests of their sector and Committee or Technical Working Group by:
 - attempting to fulfill all of the responsibilities outlined in these Terms of Reference,
 - communicating their sectors' issues and information to the Committee or Group; and
 - communicating progress to other audiences.



DATE OF ENDORSEMENT:

28TH DAY OF OCTOBER 2022

SIGNED:

CHANTALLE SAMUELS (MRS.)

CHAIR

MSP STEERING COMMITTEE