



Belize Fund For A Sustainable Future



Marine Spatial Planning

Stakeholder Engagement Field Report

Meeting Session: 1	Date: April 15, 2023
Location: Chunox Fishermen Association Office, Chunox Village Corozal District	Time: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Number of participants: 13	Language: Spanish
Report submitted by: Janel McNab, MSP Coordinator CZMAI	

Phase 1- Objectives of these targeted meetings are to:

1. Socialize the MSP launch (set expectations)
2. Present a timeline of activities
3. Explain what an MSP is and why is Belize doing one
4. Share where stakeholders can access information/updates on the MSP process
5. Receive stakeholder’s feedback on how they see themselves involved in the process
6. Receive stakeholder’s feedback on preferred methods of engagement for the MSP process

1. Organizer and Collaborators:

The meeting was organized with attendance from the public and various stakeholders, including representatives from the tourism sector, fisheries, citizens, and environmental protection organizations. The objective was to address and discuss key issues impacting these sectors and explore collaborative solutions.

2. Main Outcome/Findings:

Some critical outcomes and findings were identified during the meeting:

- The fisheries department has been ineffective in relaying messages from the fishermen, leading to miscommunication and sidetracked concerns.
- Fishermen face significant barriers in accessing funds due to restrictions and demands for funding applications. The grant writing process is time-consuming and requires technical expertise that many fishermen lack.
- Fishermen feel neglected compared to the tourism sector, especially during COVID-19 when tour guides received cheaper gas while fishermen did not. This has highlighted the disparity in resource mobilization between the two sectors.

- Fishermen’s livelihoods are heavily dependent on the environment and weather conditions, making their economic stability more vulnerable compared to the tourism sector, which receives more resources and support.

3. **Concerns/challenges:**

Key concerns and challenges discussed included:

- Questions were raised about the weight of importance assigned to different sectors within the Marine Spatial Planning framework.
- Expanding Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) could result in a loss of fishing grounds. Fishermen expressed concerns about potential compensation and benefits for these losses.

4. **Collaboration:**

- There was a strong call for including community representatives in decision-making processes. These individuals can effectively communicate decisions back to their communities and ensure local concerns are addressed.

5. **Follow up actions by TNC/CZMAI**

Follow-up actions were outlined to maintain progress:

- CZMAI, with assistance from TNC and the Belize Fisheries Department, will organize sector-specific meetings focusing on major use zones.
- Efforts will be made to consult with local communities to determine the best times for follow-up meetings. These will include a mix of interviews, one-on-one discussions, and broader community meetings.

6. **Key Takeaways and Next Steps**

Key Takeaways:

- There is a critical need to improve communication channels between the fisheries department and fishermen to ensure their voices are heard and concerns addressed.
- Simplifying the process for accessing funds and providing technical assistance for grant writing can help fishermen secure necessary resources.
- Addressing the disparity in resource mobilization between the tourism sector and fishermen is essential for balanced economic development.
- Including community representatives in decision-making processes can bridge the gap between policymakers and local communities, fostering better collaboration and understanding.

Next Steps:

- CZMAI, with support from TNC, will schedule and plan sector-specific meetings to address major use zones.
- Implementing effective communication strategies to ensure fishermen’s concerns are accurately conveyed and addressed.
- Launching outreach initiatives to engage with local communities and gather feedback on the best times and methods for follow-up meetings.