



Belize Fund For A Sustainable Future



Marine Spatial Planning

Stakeholder Engagement Field Report

Meeting Session: 1	Date: June 21st, 2023
Location: Pelican Beach Resort, Dangriga Town, Stann Creek District	Time: 6:30pm – 8:00pm
Number of participants: 8	Language: English
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 attended by the public along with a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from the education sector, fisheries, citizens, and environmental protection organizations. The objective was to discuss key issues and potential solutions related to marine spatial planning (MSP) and the sustainable development of Belize’s coastal and marine resources.

2. **Main outcome/findings:**

Key outcomes and findings from the meeting included:

- Community members expressed a keen interest in understanding the composition and operation of the Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future (The Belize Fund).
- There was significant interest in learning about the process and criteria for obtaining funding through the Grants Awards Program (GAP).
- Participants wanted to know if activities occurring within the high-water mark would be included in the MSP.
- Concerns were raised that no-take zones might negatively impact fisherfolks rather than improve their livelihoods.

- There is a need to improve communication mechanisms for uneducated stakeholders to help them understand the MSP process.
- The MSP process must consider the availability and accessibility of stakeholders, particularly during busy times, for engagement sessions, meetings, or surveys.
- The need for more simplified communication mechanisms was highlighted, with suggestions for more immersive social media engagement, such as competitions.

3. **Concerns/challenges:**

Several concerns and challenges were discussed:

- Community Involvement in Law Suggestion: Will the community have any say in suggesting laws for MSP development?
- Questions were raised about the effectiveness of expanding reserves when current ones are not adequately managed or enforced.
- There is impatience regarding how long it will take for the MSP to mature and show tangible results.
- Clarification was sought on whether the MSP would cover the entire water column or just surface water-based activities, and if it would include land-based planning.
- Participants wanted to know if there would be community-based engagements focused on users' experiences within marine space.
- Stakeholder Contribution to Legal Instruments: Will stakeholders be able to contribute to the creation of legal instruments?
- Concerns were raised about how information would be collected from those who cannot use technology, suggesting the need for in-person surveys.

4. **Collaboration:**

The meeting emphasized the importance of collaboration:

- It was suggested to have community representatives in sector-specific meetings to gather data and inform people about upcoming meetings.
- The active involvement of tourism agencies in the MSP process was deemed necessary.

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

Several follow-up actions were identified to ensure ongoing progress:

- CZMAI, with assistance from TNC and the Belize Fisheries Department, will organize sector-specific meetings to focus on major use zones.
- Efforts will be made to consult with locals about the best times for follow-up meetings, incorporating a mix of interviews, one-on-one discussions, and community meetings.

6. **Key Takeaways and Next Steps**

Key Takeaways:

- Developing better communication strategies to reach uneducated stakeholders and ensuring their understanding of the MSP process.
- Ensuring community involvement in the suggestion of laws and creation of legal instruments for the MSP.
- Addressing concerns about the expansion and management of marine reserves.
- Utilizing social media and other simplified communication methods to engage the community more effectively.

Next Steps:

- CZMAI, with support from TNC, will schedule and plan sector-specific meetings to address major use zones.
- Implementing alternative communication strategies, such as social media competitions and engaging educational institutions, to ensure broad community outreach.
- Initiating outreach programs that include in-person surveys to gather information from community members who cannot use technology.