



Belize Fund For A Sustainable Future



Marine Spatial Planning

Stakeholder Engagement Field Report

Meeting Session: 1	Date: March 24 th , 2023
Location: Placencia Community Centre, Placencia Village, Independence Stann Creek District	Time: 6:30 pm – 8:30pm
Number of participants: 17	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 is an MSP 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 brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from tourism, fisheries, citizens, media, and environmental protection sectors. The purpose was to discuss and address key concerns regarding the Blue Bonds initiative and environmental planning processes.

2. Main outcome/findings:

Key outcomes and findings from the meeting included:

- There was a consensus among participants that the Blue Bonds initiative might not adequately address the significant risks and losses associated with environmental degradation.
- Stakeholders emphasized the importance of conducting the planning process correctly to ensure its effectiveness.
- Some stakeholders raised concerns about the reservation of 30% of resources and questioned whether this approach was appropriate.
- There were perceptions that the planning process might be driven by financial objectives rather than environmental considerations.

- Participants questioned whether the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) plan would be utilized and built upon in the current planning process.
- Stakeholders highlighted the need for better process and structure in environmental planning to address disconnects between the process and the people it affects.
- Concerns were raised about the overpopulation of fishermen and the insufficient fishing spaces available.

3. Concerns/challenges:

Several concerns and challenges were identified during the meeting:

- Participants noted the absence of agriculture from discussions, despite its significant impact on the environment through runoff and pesticide use.
- Concerns were raised about the lack of enforcement against deforestation of mangroves, particularly in the Placencia area.
- Stakeholders sought reassurance that the environmental plan would effectively address and mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- Participants questioned how the current plan would differ from previous initiatives and what measures would be taken to ensure its success.
- There was a request for clarification on how the financial success of the plan would be measured.
- Stakeholders emphasized the need to involve beach management in discussions, as beach degradation is a pressing issue.

4. Collaboration:

Although collaboration opportunities were discussed during the meeting, specific collaborative actions were not fully developed. Future collaboration may involve coordinating efforts between stakeholders to address shared concerns and work towards common goals.

5. Follow up actions by TNC/CZMAI:

Several follow-up actions were proposed to address the issues raised during the meeting:

- CZMAI, with assistance from TNC and the Belize Fisheries Department, will organize sector-specific meetings to address major use zones and further discuss concerns raised by stakeholders.
- Efforts will be made to address environmental concerns such as deforestation of mangroves and beach degradation through collaborative efforts with relevant stakeholders.
- TNC and CZMAI will work on clarifying the objectives and mechanisms for measuring the success of the environmental plan, addressing concerns raised during the meeting.

6. Key Takeaways and Next Steps

Key Takeaways:

- It is essential to address stakeholders' concerns about the effectiveness and differentiation of the environmental plan from previous initiatives.
- Efforts should be made to ensure that all relevant sectors, including agriculture and beach management, are included in the planning process.
- Collaboration among stakeholders is crucial for the successful implementation of environmental plans and initiatives.
- Clear and transparent communication about the objectives, processes, and expected outcomes of the environmental plan is necessary to gain stakeholders' trust and support.

Next Steps:

- CZMAI and TNC will work together to schedule and plan sector-specific meetings to address major concerns and further engage stakeholders in the planning process.
- Continued engagement with stakeholders through various communication channels to address concerns and gather feedback on the environmental plan.
- Collaborative efforts will be initiated to address pressing environmental issues such as mangrove deforestation and beach degradation.