



Belize Fund For A Sustainable Future



Marine Spatial Planning

Stakeholder Engagement Field Report

Meeting Session: 1	Date: March 23 rd , 2023
Location: Punta Gorda Social Security Board Meeting Room	Time: 6:30pm – 7:45pm
Number of participants: 26	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, media, and environmental protection sectors. The purpose was to discuss and address key concerns regarding conservation efforts, fishing regulations, and the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) process.

2. Main outcome/findings:

Key outcomes and findings from the meeting included:

- Participants discussed existing conservation measures in Southern Belize, particularly the establishment of no-take zones and restrictions on deep-sea fishing. Concerns were raised about the impact of these measures on local fishing communities.
- Stakeholders expressed the need to pause and reevaluate restrictions in the Sapodilla Cayes area, particularly regarding deep-water fishing.
- Some participants highlighted the locking off fishing zones in certain areas, resulting in significant restrictions on fishing activities.
- There was a perception that conservation efforts were prioritizing animal welfare over the interests of human communities, particularly indigenous groups.

3. Concerns/challenges:

Two concerns/challenges were identified during the meeting:

- Stakeholders expressed concerns about feeling left out of the MSP process and questioned where and how they would fit into the decision-making process.
- Some participants raised concerns about the transparency of the MSP process and questioned whether there were any hidden agendas at play.

4. Collaboration:

Collaborative opportunities discussed during the meeting included:

- Participants expressed interest in organizing a follow-up meeting with the Fisheries Department to further discuss fishing regulations and conservation measures.
- There was a suggestion to involve the Belize Fishermen Cooperative Association (BFCA) in the Technical Working Groups to ensure representation of fishing communities' interests.

5. Follow up actions by TNC/CZMAI:

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

- Sector-Specific Meeting on Major Use Zones: CZMAI, with assistance from TNC and the Belize Fisheries Department, will organize a sector-specific meeting to further discuss major use zones and address concerns related to fishing restrictions.
- Organizing Follow-Up Meeting with Fisheries Department: TNC and CZMAI will coordinate a follow-up meeting with the Fisheries Department to address concerns and discuss potential revisions to fishing regulations.
- Incorporating BFCA in Technical Working Groups: Efforts will be made to involve BFCA in the Technical Working Groups to ensure the representation of fishing communities' perspectives in the MSP process.

6. Key Takeaways and Next Steps:

Takeaways:

- Efforts should be made to balance conservation goals with the needs and interests of local fishing communities.
- It is crucial to ensure transparency and inclusivity in the MSP process to address stakeholders' concerns and foster trust.
- Collaboration between stakeholders and government agencies is essential for effective decision-making and the successful implementation of conservation measures.
- Regular communication and follow-up meetings will be necessary to address concerns and keep stakeholders informed about the progress of the MSP process.

Next Steps:

- CZMAI and TNC will work together to organize a sector-specific meeting to address concerns related to fishing restrictions and conservation measures.
- Efforts will be made to coordinate a follow-up meeting with the Fisheries Department to discuss potential revisions to fishing regulations and address stakeholders' concerns.
- Steps will be taken to involve BFCA in the Technical Working Groups to ensure representation of fishing communities' interests in the MSP process.