



Belize Fund For A Sustainable Future



Marine Spatial Planning

Stakeholder Engagement Field Report

Meeting Session: 1	Date: June 14 th , 2023
Location: Lion's Den, San Pedro, Ambergris Caye	Time: 6:30pm – 8:00pm
Number of participants: 36	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 with a wide range of stakeholders from various sectors, including tourism, fisheries, local citizens, and environmental protection groups. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss critical issues related to marine and coastal management and to gather community input on these matters.

2. **Main outcome/findings:**

Key outcomes and findings from the meeting included:

- Discussions revolved around the superbond and the implications of expanding marine protected areas (MPAs).
- Questions were raised about the construction of a pier or port near Goff's Caye and what actions CZMAI could take regarding this development.
- Stakeholders emphasized the need to enforce existing rules and regulations, particularly concerning coastal development.
- There was a strong sentiment that the community should have a decisive role in what development actions are taken.
- The importance of developing and enforcing regulations on land use and coastal areas to prevent the destruction of littoral forests was highlighted.

- Participants stressed the need to protect rivers and inland waterways used for commercial and recreational fishing.
- Concerns were raised about the impact of "Blue Economy" initiatives on coral reefs and critical habitats, especially in areas like Bacalar Chico.
- There was a call for increasing and properly managing no-take zones to protect marine biodiversity.
- Specific issues related to coastal development in San Pedro were brought to attention, indicating a need for stricter management.

3. Concerns/challenges:

Several concerns and challenges were identified during the meeting:

- Questions about who would be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations were raised.
- Clarifications were sought regarding CZMAI's role in the Blue Economy Strategy and Operational Plan (BSOP) process.
- Concerns were voiced about the expansion of MPAs and the effectiveness of existing regulations.
- Issues related to the actions of private landowners and their impact on the environment were discussed, with a call for these to be covered under new regulations.
- The need for better coordination between departments like DOC, CZMAI, and Fisheries was emphasized.
- There was a need for greater public awareness about MPAs, including their locations and permitted activities.

4. Collaboration:

It was suggested to have a representative from the community in sector-specific meetings to gather data and keep the community informed about upcoming meetings and decisions.

5. Follow up actions by TNC/CZMAI

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

- CZMAI, with assistance from TNC and the Belize Fisheries Department, will organize sector-specific meetings to discuss major use zones and address concerns related to fishing restrictions and coastal development.
- Efforts will be made to speak to local communities to determine the best times for follow-up meetings, ensuring a mix of interviews, one-on-one talks, and larger meetings to gather comprehensive input.
- Initiatives will be developed to increase public awareness of MPAs, including their locations and the activities allowed within them.

6. Key Takeaways and Next Steps:

Key Takeaways:

- Efforts should be made to balance conservation goals with the development needs of local communities.
- Ensuring community involvement in decision-making processes is crucial for the successful implementation of conservation measures.
- Greater transparency and improved coordination between government departments and agencies are essential to address the concerns raised by stakeholders.
- Launching public awareness campaigns to educate the community about MPAs and their significance will be critical.

Next Steps:

- CZMAI and TNC will work together to organize sector-specific meetings to address concerns related to coastal and marine management.
- Efforts will be made to engage with local communities to determine the best times for follow-up meetings and gather comprehensive input.
- Developing and implementing public awareness campaigns about MPAs and their importance.