

BELIZE SUSTAINABLE OCEAN PLAN

52nd Core Team Meeting

Thursday, March 19th, 2026

Duration of meeting: 9:00 am – 10:55 am

Location: Coastal Zone Management Authority & Institute Conference Room & via Zoom

Minutes

Meeting Objectives:

1. To provide an update on Science and Technical Activities
2. To provide an update on Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Activities
3. Other Matters

Present:

Samir Rosado – MSP Process Lead, Coastal Zone Management Authority & Institute

Janel McNab – MSP Coordinator, Coastal Zone Management Authority & Institute

Delwin Guevara – MSP GIS Mapping & Spatial Analysis, Coastal Zone Management Authority & Institute

Janiel Chan – MSP GIS Technician, Coastal Zone Management Authority & Institute

Kelsie Garbutt – MSP Communications & Personal Relations Officer, Coastal Zone Management Authority & Institute

Serena Reyes – MSP Project Assistant, Coastal Zone Management Authority & Institute

Adriel Castaneda – Fisheries Officer, Belize Fisheries Department

Nidia Chacon – Stakeholder Engagement Specialist, The Nature Conservancy

Kate Longly-Wood - Marine Spatial Planning Science Manager, The Nature Conservancy

Alana Godoy- Belize Blue Bonds Director, The Nature Conservancy

Belizario Carballo-Technical Officer, Blue Bonds Finance & Permanence Unit

Carlie Gillett- Blue Economy Officer, Blue Economy Unit

Minutes :

Agenda Item Number	Notes/Comments/Advice	Action Response
Welcome & Meeting Called to Order		
1.1	The MSP Process Lead welcomed the Core Team (CT) members and called the meeting to order at 9:15 am.	
1.2	The agenda was presented, the meeting objectives were reviewed and accepted. CT members were asked if anyone had any additional items would like to address during other matters section of the meeting. Objective were: 1. To provide an update on Science and Technical Activities 2. To provide an update on Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Activities 3. Other Matters	
Process Update: Future Planning Workshop Updates		
2.1	<u>Overview of Workshop</u> The team provided updates from the February 25-27 Future Planning Workshop, with approximately 38-39 people per day. Key outcomes included the completion of a compatibility matrix exercise that identified many moderately compatible interactions between uses and highlighted environmental protection as a priority across sectors. The team noted that illegal activities like gill netting and gravel mining were appropriately identified as prohibited activities that should not be planned for. The team discussed the need to address illegal activities like fishing and wastewater disposal in the planning matrix, agreeing to handle them as cross-cutting issues rather than removing them completely.	
2.2	<u>Planning Matrix Cross-Cutting Issues Discussion</u> The team confirmed they have developed definitions for activities in the matrix, though some definitions were missing from the recent workshop. Key considerations for overlap analysis were identified, with livelihoods ranked as the top priority followed by sustainability, environmental impact, economic importance, and safety. The discussion also covered emerging uses across different sectors, with notable priorities including commercial fishing, port operations, coastal protection, and cultural/historical conservation in the tourism sector.	Core Team raised concerns about ship waste discharge regulations in Belize, particularly for cruise ships, suggesting the need for designated areas to prevent environmental impact on reefs.
2.3	<u>Marine Uses and MPA Planning</u> The team discussed emerging marine uses and their likelihood over the next 5-15 years across different sectors. For fisheries and mariculture, hatchery operations and integrated multitrophic aquaculture were identified as highly likely, while for tourism, nautical/yacht tourism and sunken ship/Maya beach truck historical sites were prioritized. The team also reviewed MPA design criteria where protection of unique or vulnerable habitats was identified as the top priority, followed by ecosystem	Core Team noted issues with the data presentation in the report, suggesting improvements to the graphics and legends for better clarity.

	diversity representation, economic policies and governance, and protection of cultural heritage areas.	
2.4	<u>Deepwater Habitat Protection Planning</u> The team discussed progress on deepwater habitat protection, with workshop participants focusing on this area and identifying a need to clarify whether protection should cover the entire water column or just seafloor features. The team indicated they would combine information from workshop sheets with previously identified targets to create criteria by the end of the month. The team also reviewed plans for upcoming community sessions, which include an icebreaker, introduction to the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan, discussion of drivers of change (climate change and governance), and scenario-based future planning exercises. The sessions aim to gather community input on spatial analysis considerations, though attendance and timing challenges have required some agenda adjustments.	
Science & Technical Updates		
3.1	<u>Compatibility Matrix Update</u> The team presented a compatibility matrix viewer that replaced a previous Excel version.	C. Collier suggesting improvements including clearer definitions for compatibility levels and recommended reorganizing the layout with definitions at the top.
Communications & Stakeholder Engagement		
4.1	<u>Community Future Planning Targeted Working Sessions</u> The team reviewed plans for upcoming community sessions, which include an icebreaker, introduction to the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan, discussion of drivers of change (climate change and governance), and scenario-based future planning exercises. The sessions aim to gather community input on spatial analysis considerations, though attendance and timing challenges have required some agenda adjustments. The team explained their presentation process, including using color-coded maps for different scenarios and focusing on identifying opportunities and potential losses. The team discussed challenges with stakeholder attendance and confusion between their current work and previous Resilient Bold Belize (RBB) discussions, noting that some participants were misinterpreting the purpose of the meetings.	Core Team suggested changing the terminology from "best scenario" to "preferred scenario" to avoid implying judgment and to better reflect participant preferences from a previous workshop.
4.2	<u>Community Meeting Engagement Strategies</u> The team discussed strategies to improve participation and engagement in upcoming community meetings.	C. Collier suggested transitioning to an open house format with kiosks or activity tables to address attendance challenges and allow for more flexible participation.

	The team also discussed the importance of pre-meeting socialization to build community trust and ensure better attendance, as well as the need to establish ground rules for observers to minimize disruptions.	
4.3	The team discussed communications activities, noting that educational and public outreach for the first quarter had been completed, and outlined plans for the new financial year including aligning communication work with the wider MSP work plan and developing a public relations strategy to address community feedback about RBB.	
Other Matters		
5.1	The team discussed updates on three consultancy projects. - The cumulative effects assessment (CEA), the inception report was submitted on March 9th and is currently under review. - The integrated climate risk assessment, the team selected Epsilon from the US after contract negotiations, with the process expected to be finalized by early April. - The MSP Document Composer Editor Consultancy, the team evaluated three strong candidates over a two-day process and submitted for approval, aiming to start the project by the end of March to meet the May deliverable deadline. - The multimedia consultancy process where two firms are being considered for contract negotiations.	
5.2	<u>Assessment of Timeline</u> The team discussed upcoming assessments and their timelines, with the cumulative effects assessment and climate risk assessment both expected to be completed around August, aligning with the 5-month MSP document composer editor consultancy. The team confirmed that assessment outputs would be developed with integration into the MSP in mind and noted potential for extending the MSP document composer editor contract using GSA funds if needed. The team also discussed plans for future northern community meetings, including the need for translator support and efforts to ensure proper stakeholder representation.	
5.3	<u>Coral Protection Messaging Strategy Discussion</u> The team discussed concerns about mixed messaging regarding coral protection targets, with Core Team members expressing worry that this might impact stakeholders. The team explained that their focus on biodiversity protection zones (BPZ) rather than coral reefs, recommending consultations with fishers specifically on those areas. The team discussed the need to finalize MPA design criteria and targets for BSOP, to complete identification of the final 5% for BPZ areas by end of April.	Core Team suggested presenting multiple scenarios to stakeholders, showing how feedback is incorporated

Closing of Meeting			
6.1	Next Core Team meeting date, 16 th April 2026. MSP Process Lead ended the meeting at 10:55 am.		
Item #	Next Steps/Action Items	Status	Date
1	To circulate summarised zoning framework and MPA design criteria document to the core team and steering committee for review and approval by early next week. <i>Sent yesterday</i>		
2	Continue update the master list of definitions for the MSP process & document		
3	Update and improve the compatibility matrix, including adding clear definitions and legends for online and printed versions, and ensure definitions are easily accessible to users.		
4	Share the finalized zoning framework and MPA design criteria with Rick (and team) for scenario analysis as soon as criteria are agreed, aiming to have an area of interest for BPZs by end of April.		
5	To share Stakeholder list to be reviewed by CT members Stakeholder Engagement List- CT Copy.xlsx		
6	Organize and schedule upcoming engagement sessions in Northern & Central Belize, including arranging for translation support.		
7	Begin planning for a potential short-term consultancy to assist with the implementation plan, including identifying necessary resources and ensuring gender specialist input for access points for vulnerable groups.		

Minutes submitted by:

Janel McNab, MSP Coordinator

Approved

Mr. Samir Rosado
Marine Spatial Plan Process Lead,
CZMAI

Date

Annex 1: Meeting Agenda



52nd BSOP Core Team Meeting

Agenda

Date	Thursday 19 th March 2026		
Time	9:00 a.m. – 10:55a.m. (BZE local time)		
Format	Hybrid: CZMAI Conference Room & Zoom https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84489244379?pwd=zsevvwayz1bUDEgRsO50QUexeeRBpb.1		
Recorded	Yes		
Format	Presentation and discussions		
Objectives	1. Updates on Science & Technical 2. Updates on Communications & Stakeholder Engagement 3. Other Matters		
AGENDA			
#	Time	Topic	Presenter(s)
1	9:00 – 9:10	Welcome & Meeting Called to Order	S. Rosado
2	9:10 – 9:25	Update on action items from 51st Core Team Meeting, 19 th February 2026.	J. McNab
3	9:25 – 9:40	Process Update	S. Rosado
4	9:40 – 10:00	Science & Technical	S. Rosado
5	10:00 – 10:10	Break	
6	10:10 – 10:25	Communications & Stakeholder Engagement	K. Garbutt
7	10:25 – 10:40	Other Matters	All
8	10:40 – 10:55	Closing of Meeting	S. Rosado

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