

Stories of Impact

A series highlighting achievements in disaster risk management

Stakeholders Engage to Build Belize's Climate Resilience



Sittee River Road, Belize
Credit: Walter Rodríguez

REGION: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARRIBBEAN

FOCUS: RISK IDENTIFICATION, RISK REDUCTION

COUNTRY: BELIZE



RESULTS:

- A \$1.15 million grant from GFDRR and the Africa Caribbean Pacific–European Union Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program supported development of Belize's National Climate Resilience Investment Plan (NCRIP) to help identify and prioritize mitigation investments in the country. The NCRIP is Belize's first comprehensive national strategy to address climate resilience.
- The NCRIP identified \$430 million in investment needs and helped the government create an information baseline for a \$30 million World Bank project that aims to build climate resilience in the transportation network. In addition, the government has since leveraged the NCRIP to inform investments from international donors.
- The NCRIP has been fully adopted by the government of Belize and has resulted—for the first time—in the integration of climate change impacts into national investment planning across all sectors and ministries.

With the increasing incidence of climate-related disasters, the government of Belize is working to improve its resilience to the impacts from natural hazards by transforming the country's approach to economic and social development.

A highly participatory process brought together a range of key stakeholders to create a national plan for investment that cuts across all sectors of the economy and incorporates socio-economic considerations including vulnerability, poverty, and education. This plan integrates climate resilience and disaster risk management into every aspect of the country's development planning, with the goal of ensuring long-term sustainable growth throughout Belize.



GFDRR
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery



WORLD BANK GROUP

ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program

An initiative of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group, funded by the European Union and managed by GFDRR

CONTEXT:

In coastal low-lying Belize, climate change related impacts pose an increasing threat to socio-economic activities. Communities and businesses face significant losses due to climate-related hazards such as floods, drought, salt water intrusion, and coastal erosion. Between 1993 and 2012, losses from disasters were estimated at \$58 million, with an annual average loss of approximately 3.3% of GDP. Recurrent flooding affects the connectivity of roads and transport systems. This impacts all sectors of the economy, but the agriculture and tourism industries are particularly vulnerable, accounting for more than 50% of the national economy. Recognizing these urgent needs, the government of Belize developed the National Climate Resilience Investment Plan (NCRIP).

APPROACH:

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development of Belize led a series of consultations with key stakeholders from the private and public sectors, as well as civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to gather input for the national investment plan. The financial resources for this process were provided by the European Union (EU) through the Africa Caribbean Pacific- European Union Natural Disaster Risk Reduction (ACP-EU NDRR) Program, managed by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR).

The NCRIP identified four priority regions where investment in the transportation sector will help to reduce economic losses and ensure continued connectivity along socially important corridors. It draws lessons from the Caribbean Region Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) of the Climate Investment Funds, which also used a participatory approach to develop technical and investment projects. Key elements include:

- Technical data and knowledge transfer: the GFDRR grant supports the collection of geospatial data and risk assessments. This is essential for developing effective land use planning investments to strengthen Belize's critical roads and bridges.
- Strengthening the transportation network: based on the priority areas determined under NCRIP, a number of projects have been identified to physically upgrade Belize's transportation network including drainage.
- Comprehensive disaster risk management: in addition to infrastructure needs, NCRIP has identified social, environmental, economic, and cultural interventions needed to strengthen disaster risk management, physical planning, and climate resilience, all of which will better protect vulnerable communities.

NEXT STEPS:

The national plan is expected to be fully integrated into Belize's development strategy and is aligned with the Horizon 2030 Development Framework, a national set of development goals to be achieved by 2030. While Belize is raising substantial resources for the improvement of its public services, particularly in the transport sector, the government has identified a significant financial gap and is exploring ways to raise additional resources and reduce costs. The next steps are to carry out the recommendations set forth in the plan to reduce climate vulnerability in the transport sectors of four priority regions in Belize: the Greater Belize City area, west of Belmopan, the northern area around Corozal, and the southern area around Independence.

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*ALL MONETARY VALUES IN USD



"We need to put in place a national policy and strategy, an action plan to deal with the realities of climate change. The government is looking at doing this across sectors, getting information from various entities in a nice integrated approach, and I applaud them for taking this very important step."

– Nadia Bood, Director, World Wildlife Fund, Belize

LESSONS LEARNED:

Strong analytic work and a transparent process are critical to build stakeholder consensus. The use of technical assessments and risk information enabled key stakeholders to remain engaged at each stage of the NCRIP development process. This transparency was essential for the plan to be integrated in Belize's medium-term national development strategy.

Developing national plans of this scale requires an iterative process that allows stakeholders to be involved in its development, review, and refinement. During the preparation of the NCRIP, which was led by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, stakeholders could express how climate change and natural disasters could affect their sectors. This inclusive process allowed for the integration of financial, physical, social, environmental and cultural factors. Participants, which included government agencies such as the Ministries of Education, Tourism and Agriculture, academia, civil society such as youth and sports groups, industry groups such as chambers of commerce, and NGOs, such as the Red Cross, could voice their concerns and make recommendations on how to build climate resilience not only for their sectors but also for all of Belize.