

GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE

Ministry of Finance, Economic Transformation, and Investment



STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT PLAN (SEP)

**Belize Early Childhood Development and Female
Empowerment**



Friday May 12, 2025.



QUALITY MANAGEMENT

GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE
MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION, AND INVESTMENT
CENTRAL EXECUTING UNIT

Stakeholders Engagement Plan (SEP) for the World Bank funded Project - P508072: Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment (ECDFE)

Document Control Sheet

Document Name: SEP – WB ECDFE Project

Date Issued: Friday March 14th, 2025

Version No.	Prepared by/Date:	Reviewed by/date:	Approved by/date:
1 First Draft	Dr. Pedro Villegas Environment and Social Specialist Friday March 14th, 2025	Focal Point: Eric Swan March 18th, 2025	Rey Guerrero CEU Director March 21st, 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	Page
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	5
I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
II. INTRODUCTION	7
III. PROJECT SUMMARY	9
III.1. Objective	11
IV. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION DISCLOSURE	12
V. STAKEHOLDERS IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS	13
V.1. Methodology for Stakeholder Engagement	13
V.2. Affected Parties and other Interested Parties	14
V.3. Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Individuals or Groups	14
VI. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM	15
VII. PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS/COMMUNITY MEETINGS/INFORMATION SESSIONS	16
VII.1. Principles governing meaningful Consultations	17
VII.2. Meaningful Consultation in the Context of Indigenous Peoples	18
VII.3. Minimum content of the Consultations	18
VII.4. Institutional Arrangements for Plan Implementation	18
VII.5. Stakeholders Mapping	19
VII.6. Documents to Disclose and Availability of Information	20
VII.7. Disclosure of the Event	21
VII.8. Development of the Public Consultation Process	22
VII.8.1. Consulting with Indigenous People (IP's)	22
VII.9. Publication on the GOB Website	23
VII.10. Consultation Report	23
VIII. GRIEVANCE MECHANISM (GM)	23
VIII.1. GM Guidelines	24
VIII.2. Management of the GM	25
CONTENT	Page



GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE - CENTRAL EXECUTING UNIT
MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT
SEP for Project: Belize Early Childhood Care and Education and Female Employment



VIII.3. Scope	25
VIII.4. Dissemination of the Grievance Mechanism	25
VIII.5. Receipt and Registration of Claims	25
VIII.6. Claims Evaluation	26
VIII.7. Grievance Closure and Monitoring Mechanism	27
VIII.8. Conflict Resolution	27
VIII.9. Deadlines for Response to Claims	27
VIII.10. Monitoring and Documentation	27
VIII.11. Implementation Timeline	28
VIII.12. Grievance Committee (GC)	28
VIII.13. Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment Incidents	29
IX. PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN	32
X. MONITORING AND REPORTING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SEP	33
X.1. Reporting back to the Stakeholder Groups	33
XI. CONCLUSIONS	33
XII. REFERENCES	35
ANNEX 1. AGENDA FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS FOR THE PROJECT: BELIZE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT	37
ANNEX 2. GRIEVANCE FORM FOR THE WORLD BANK PROJECT: BELIZE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT	38
ANNEX 3. GRIEVANCE DATABASE FOR PROJECT: BELIZE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT	39
ANNEX 4. EXAMPLE OF PROJECT BROCHURE	40
ANNEX 5. EXAMPLE OF PRESS RELEASE/PUBLIC NOTICE	42
ANNEX 6. STAKEHOLDERS' LIST THE PROJECT: BELIZE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT	43
ANNEX 7. STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT PLAN (SEP) BUDGET	44
ANNEX 8. STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS	45
ANNEX 9. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS	47



LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES	Page
Table 1. Summary of the main activities included in this Stakeholders Engagement Plan	15
Table 2. Schedule for the Public Consultation Sessions for this Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment Project	16
Table 3. Stakeholders Groups for the Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment Project	19
FIGURES	Page
Figure 1. Relevant Environmental and Social Standards for ECDFE Project	10
Figure 2. Stakeholders for Group 1 for this Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment Project	19
Figure 3. Stakeholders for Group 2 for this Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment Project	20
Figure 4. Stakeholders for Group 3 for this Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment Project	20
Figure 5. Grievance Mechanism Process Flow	28



ABBREVIATIONS (ABB.) AND ACRONYMS

ABB.	EXPLANATION
ECDFE	Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment
CERC	Contingent Emergency Response Component
CEU	Central Executing Unit
CSO's	Civil Society Organizations
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EA	Executing Agency
ESCP	Environmental and Social Commitment Plan
ESF	Environment and Social Framework for the World Bank
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESS-WB	Environmental and Social Standards for the World Bank
ESS-CEU	Environmental and Social Specialist at the Central Executing Unit, MFETI
GOB	Government of Belize
GC	Grievances Committee
GM	Grievances Mechanism
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organization
IP's	Indigenous People
IEP's	Individual Education Plans
MFETI	Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment
MHDFIPA	Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology
MRTCDLLG	Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour, and Local Government
NGO's	Non-Government Organizations
OSH	Occupational Health and Safety
OP/BP	Operational Policy and Bank Procedure
PMU	Project Management Unit
SDG's	Sustainable Development Goals
SEP	Stakeholders Engagement Plan
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SH	Sexual Harassment
SIB	Statistical Institute of Belize
WB	World Bank



I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Government of Belize (GOB), with the support of the World Bank (WB), has endeavored on Project **P508072: Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment (ECDFE)**, looking at the improvement of Belize's access to quality early childhood care and education and female employment in targeted communities in Belize.

The project will have positive impacts by improving early childhood care and education and female employment. The project will mainly finance information and sensitization initiatives, capacity building, improving access to early childhood and education services, improving access to skills development and employment opportunities. Minor civil works are expected, which include the construction of preschool classrooms in existing primary schools; and refurbishment of existing classrooms, to make them more child friendly and inclusive.

The project aims to deliver significant benefits by improving access to quality early childhood care and education, as well as enhancing female employment in targeted rural communities in Belize. It seeks to reach different ethnicities and regions within the country, contributing to the removal of barriers faced by women, indigenous people, youth, and elderly and persons with disabilities, among others.

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is a strategic communication plan. It is a step-by-step process outlining how the ECDFE Project Team will communicate with their stakeholders to increase the likelihood of positive Project outcomes. This SEP is an effective and actionable strategy to help ensure successful project execution. This SEP will be implemented through the following activities:

- Public Consultations.
- Public Information Sessions.
- Community Outreach Meetings.
- Focus Group Meetings.
- Grievance Redress Mechanism.
- Public Awareness Campaign, etc.

These Public Consultations/Public Information Sessions/Community Outreach Meetings and Focus Group Meetings are an important step to identify and evaluate the Project's Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, perceived by the main Stakeholders. The Stakeholders will be also informed about the implementation of the Grievance Mechanism that will allow them to raise any complaint or concern during the execution of the project activities. Care must be taken to ensure that even though the Public Consultations are open to the general public, the appropriate audience is targeted and encouraged to attend.



II. INTRODUCCION

Belize is a mainland Caribbean country that spans across 8,867 square miles. It is located on the northern coast of Central America and is bordered to the north by Mexico, the west and south by Guatemala and the east by the Caribbean Sea. The country is subdivided into six administrative districts, each with its own unique environmental, demographic, and economical characteristics. The National Population Census (Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB), 2022) data count the population at 391,483. The major ethnic groups in Belize include Mestizos (51.7%), Creoles (25.2%), Maya (11.2%), Garifuna (4%), East Indians (1.5%) and other groups (5.6%).

Pre-primary schools in Belize are categorized by management and funding: government (52), government-aided (117), private (49) and specially assisted (5). There are 223 pre-primary schools across urban (90) and rural (133) locations in Belize with 7,007 three- to four-year-olds enrolled. Of the 395 in-service teachers employed at the pre-primary level, 73.7% are trained. In urban areas, the teacher to student ratio is 1:19 while in rural areas the ratio is 1:16.

Global evidence indicates that participation in pre-primary education leads to significant increases in cognitive and social-emotional skills, subsequent educational attainment, and increased income later in life. The MoEST recognizes that the performance of the pre-primary education sector is pivotal for the development of children. At the preschool level, children are usually accepted at the earliest 2 years 8 months and leave at 5 or just under the age of 5. The 2022 population census identified 15,784 persons, or 4% of the population, to be in the above age range. Beyond the significant benefits of laying the foundation for lifelong learning, fostering positive behavioral development, and scaffolding social integration, the MoEST has the responsibility of improving access to education at all levels. Moreover, the MoEST must keep the quality of education consistent, especially at the pre-primary level. Also, as the responsible governing authority, the MoEST must maintain the pre-primary sector's internal efficiency and implement equitable cost and financing to attain educational outcomes and promote national and social equity.

Providing access to pre-primary education is one of the most vital and cost-effective investments a country can make in its people. The overwhelming evidence of the impact of pre-primary education on the learner directly supports the importance of multidimensional access to quality pre-primary education. The world has made significant strides in reaching universal primary education over most localities, but coverage of pre-primary education is still low in many countries. Hence, the specific target of the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) marking 'Quality Education' states "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education". This target objectively underpins increased access to pre-primary education. Nonetheless, of the 193 nations that signed onto the SDG's, only 38 countries are currently offering free, mandatory pre-primary education; 85% of preschoolers in low-income countries do not have access to pre-primary education. Access to pre-primary education in Belize is influenced by various factors



including geographical location, socio-economic status, and cultural norms. While pre-primary education has not been made mandatory in Belize, data has shown that rural areas face significant challenges in accessing quality pre-primary education compared to urban locations. This local factor which is not unique to Belize, indicates that in Latin America and the Caribbean, pre-primary facilities in rural areas of many nations are scarcer and of sub-standard quality compared to urban areas. While rural and indigenous communities are particularly underserved, natural growth in several communities have further influenced disparities in Belize. Then, looking at the pre-primary school two-year program in Belize, the MoEST has identified disparities in enrollment and completion which indicate higher enrollment and completion of level 2 (for four-year-olds), which is the second year and very low enrollment in level 1 (year one for three-year-olds).

The quality of an education system describes the inclusive conditions and equitable standards under which any child is developed holistically for lifelong learning and success. A quality school is evidenced by its mandate for inclusion, equal opportunity, learning over the long term, child friendly environments and effective teaching.

This multidimensional description of quality begins with inclusion. Inclusion in pre-primary education entails ensuring that all children, regardless of their background or abilities, could participate in early childhood programs. Research indicates that children with disabilities and those from marginalized communities often face barriers to inclusion due to inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained teachers, and social stigma.

Moreover, further research denotes that only four countries in the Caribbean have ratified the right to non-discrimination in education as embedded in the eight international conventions of the rights of children. Belize, has made strides in promoting inclusive education. The MoEST now supports 972 clients and 31 special classrooms with over 260 registered students across the country. While 60% of the students in special education classrooms at the end of the 2022-2023 school year had Individual Education Plans (IEPs), challenges remain. Challenges in special education identified at the pre-primary level must see further documentation and greater action to address the prominent issues.

Access, inclusion, equity, cost, and financing are critical components of pre-primary education in Belize. While there have been improvements in these areas, significant challenges remain. Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach, involving policy reforms, increased equitable distribution of resources, sustainable investment, and collaboration between government and non-governmental entities. Ensuring that all children in Belize have access to quality pre-primary education is essential for fostering an equitable and inclusive society.

Women's labour force participation and earnings remain lower than men's. In 2024, 44.8% of women (29.1% of Mayan women) and 71% of men participated in the labour force. Despite having higher levels



of education than men, women are less likely to work in well-paying STEM fields. Men are 2.4 times more likely to enrol in vocational training programs.

III. PROJECT SUMMARY

The Government of Belize requested the World Bank support through a Specific Investment Loan. The Project identified as **P508072: Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment (ECDFE)**. The recently established Central Executing Unit (CEU) housed at the Ministry of Finance, Economic Transformation, and Investment (MFETI) has been proposed as the Project Management Unit (PMU), in direct collaboration with the key line Ministries - Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST), Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs (MHDFIPA); and The Ministry of Rural Transformation, Labour, and Local Government (MRTCDLLG), in collaboration with other relevant ministries as needed per project design. This proposal corresponds to the multi-sectoral nature of the Project and facilitates oversight by the MFETI. The Project is being prepared under the World Bank's Environment and Social Framework (ESF).

The Proposed Project Development Objective is to improve Belize's access to quality early childhood care and education and female employment in targeted communities in Belize. The project will support four components:

Component 1: Expanding ECCE Access (\$18M)

This component focuses on building and upgrading preschools and early development centers, prioritizing underserved rural communities. It includes climate-resilient infrastructure and creates employment opportunities, particularly for women in the ECCE sector.

Component 2: System Strengthening (\$4M)

This component establishes national standards for early childhood education and develops digital tools to improve learning and data management. It also promotes female empowerment through skills training and awareness campaigns.

Component 3: Project Management (\$2M)

The Central Executing Unit oversees implementation, ensuring coordination across ministries and monitoring progress. Climate-smart practices are integrated into all project operations.

Component 4: Emergency Response

This component enables rapid financing by reallocating uncommitted Project funds during a declared national emergency, upon formal request from the Government of Belize (GoB). If eligible, GoB can request the World Bank Group (WBG) to redirect funds for emergency response. A CERC manual and emergency action plan, meeting WBG requirements, must be prepared as a disbursement condition.



These documents will also ensure alignment with the Paris Agreement for funded activities..

Stakeholder Engagement is an inclusive, continuous, and iterative process that takes place throughout the project lifecycle (preparation, implementation, and closure). The process must be properly designed and carried out, sustained by the establishment of solid, constructive, and responsive relationships that are important for the satisfactory management of the environmental and social risks and impacts of the Project.

The nature, scope and frequency of Stakeholders' Engagement is commensurate with the nature and scale of each project, its development and implementation schedule, and its potential risks and impacts. The Ministry of Finance, Economic Transformation, and Investment (MFETI) will be responsible for defining and evaluating the necessary instances of participation and dissemination of the works.

This Stakeholders Engagement Plan (SEP) aims to guide the overall implementation of this Project and was developed as part of the socialization process of the Project. This Plan sets out the general principles of participation and a collaborative strategy to identify Stakeholders and plan a participatory process in line with World Bank Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) #10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure, along with ESS#1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts; ESS#7 Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities; and with the other relevant Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) for the project. The summary of the World Bank Environmental and Social Standards (ESS-WB) relevant to this Project is presented in Figure 1.

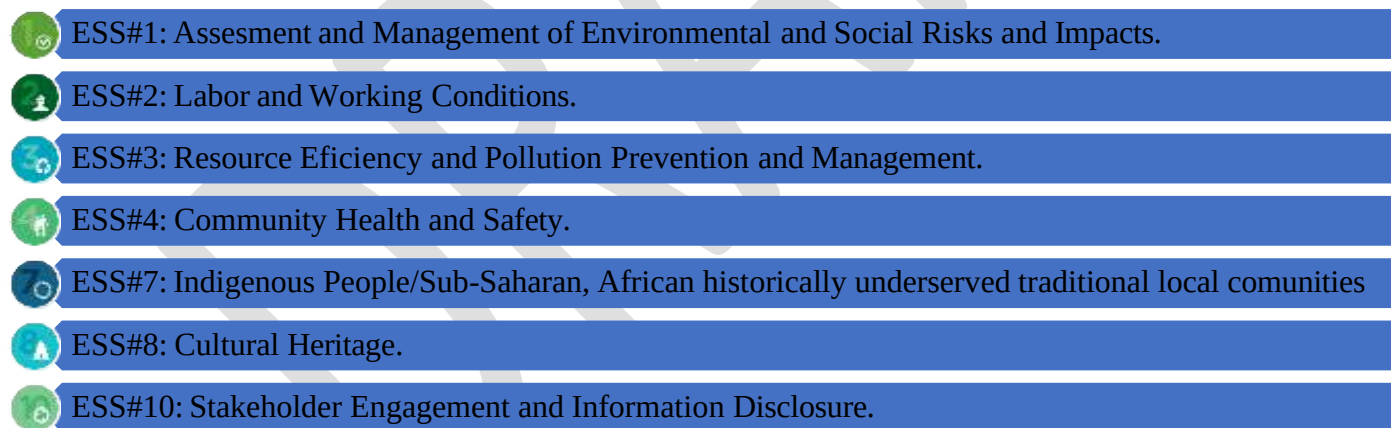


Figure 1. Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) relevant for ECDFE Project.

The entire participation process must be properly documented. The MFETI shall take steps to maintain confidentiality where required and where necessary to protect personal data. It is in this context that the following Stakeholder Engagement Plan is proposed, which presents the minimum guidelines and criteria to carry out the consultation process.



The main project stakeholders include government ministries and agencies, local governments; the private sector; civil society organizations and vulnerable groups including women, unemployed people, children, indigenous people, low-income households, the youth, sexual minorities, persons with disabilities, etc.

III.1. Objective

The overall objective of this SEP is to define a program for Stakeholder Engagement, including public information disclosure and consultation throughout the entire project cycle. The Specific objectives of this SEP are to:

- i) Establish a systematic approach to stakeholder engagement that will help identify stakeholders and build and maintain a constructive relationship with them, in particular project-affected parties.
- ii) Assess the level of stakeholder interest and support for the project and to enable stakeholders' views to be considered in project, and Project activities' design and environmental and social performance.
- iii) Promote and provide means for effective and inclusive engagement with project-affected parties throughout the project life cycle on issues that could potentially affect them.
- iv) Ensure that appropriate project information on environmental and social risks and impacts is disclosed to stakeholders in a timely, understandable, accessible and appropriate manner and format. The scope and level of detail of the SEP is commensurate with and proportionate to the nature and scale, potential risks, and impacts of the project.

This SEP is a strategic communication plan. It is a step-by-step process outlining how the ECDFE Team will communicate with their Stakeholders to increase the likelihood of positive Project outcomes. This SEP is an effective and actionable strategy to help ensure successful project execution. This SEP will be implemented through the following activities:

- Public Consultations.
- Community Outreach Meetings.
- Public Information Session.
- Focus Groups Meetings.
- Grievance Mechanism (GM).
- Public Awareness Campaign, etc.

The Public Consultations/Community Outreach Meetings/Information Sessions and Focus Groups Meetings are an important step to identify and evaluate the project's environmental and social risks and impacts. These consultations aim to:

1. Disclose information on the project and the results of the environmental and social aspects.
2. Assess the level of risk as perceived by stakeholders.
3. Identify challenges and limitations.
4. Identify priorities, needs, and investment opportunities in the farmer and tourism sectors within the scope of the proposed project.



IV. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION DISCLOSURE

This SEP outlines the following:

- a) Who are the key stakeholders.
- b) How key stakeholders are to be engaged.
- c) How often the engagement will occur throughout the project implementation.
- d) How feedback will be solicited, recorded, and monitored over the project.
- e) Who will be responsible for this engagement.
- f) Timeline for this engagement, and so on.

The process of stakeholder engagement will begin during preparation and continue into implementation. During early stage of Project preparation, the following measures will be implemented:

1. Stakeholder identification and analysis.
2. Planning how the engagement with stakeholders will take place.
3. Disclosure of information and
4. Consultation with relevant Stakeholders.

V. STAKEHOLDERS IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

Stakeholders of this project can be divided into the following core categories:

- Project-affected Parties.
- Other Interested Parties.
- Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Individuals or Groups.

V.1. Methodology for Stakeholder Engagement

To meet best practice approaches, this project will apply the following principles for Stakeholder Engagement:

- **Openness and life-cycle approach:** Public Consultations for the project will be arranged during the whole life cycle, carried out in an open manner, free of external manipulation, interference, coercion, or intimidation.
- **Informed participation and feedback:** Information will be provided to and widely distributed among all stakeholders in an appropriate format; opportunities are provided for communicating stakeholder feedback, and for analyzing and addressing comments and concerns.
- **Inclusiveness and sensitivity:** Stakeholder identification is undertaken to support better communications and build effective relationships. The participation process for this project is inclusive. All stakeholders are always encouraged to be involved in the consultation process. Equal access to information is provided to all stakeholders. Sensitivity to stakeholders' needs is the key principle underlying the selection of engagement methods. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups that may be at risk of being left out of project consultation processes and benefits, particularly



women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, displaced persons, and migrant workers and communities, and the cultural sensitivities of diverse ethnic groups.

- **Flexibility:** If social distancing, cultural context, or governance factors inhibit traditional forms of face-to-face engagement, the methodology should adapt to other forms of engagement, including various forms of internet- or phone-based communication.

V.2. Affected Parties and other Interested Parties

Affected parties are considered persons, groups, and other entities within the Project Area (PA) that are directly influenced (actually or potentially) by the project and/or have been identified as most susceptible to change associated with the project, and who need to be closely engaged in identifying impacts and their significance, as well as in decision-making on mitigation and management measures.

Other interested parties are comprised of individuals, groups, or organizations with an interest in the Project. This interest may be because of the Project location, its characteristics, its impacts, or matters related to public interest. These parties may include regulators, government officials, the private sector, the scientific community, academics, unions, women's organizations, other Civil Society Organizations (CSO's), and cultural groups. Given the nature of this Project, other potential stakeholders are subsumed within this grouping. The WB guidance note for ESS#10 defines other potential stakeholders as government officials, local organizations, Non-Government Organization (NGO's), and companies, and nearby communities, politicians, religious groups, national social and environmental public-sector agencies, and the media.

V.3. Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Individuals or Groups

Vulnerable Groups are persons who may be disproportionately impacted or further disadvantaged by the project(s) compared with any other groups due to their vulnerable status and that may require special engagement efforts to ensure their equal representation in the consultation and decision-making process associated with the project.

It is particularly important to understand whether project impacts may disproportionately fall on disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups, who often do not have a voice to express their concerns or understand the impacts of a project, and to ensure that awareness raising and stakeholder engagement be adapted to take into account such groups' or individuals' particular sensitivities, concerns, and cultural sensitivities and to ensure a full understanding of project activities and benefits. Engagement with vulnerable groups and individuals often requires the application of specific measures and assistance aimed at the facilitation of their participation in the project-related decision making so that their awareness of and input into the overall process are commensurate with those of other stakeholders. Vulnerable groups may include:

- a) **Women:** it must be ensured that community engagement teams are gender-balanced and promote women's leadership within these, design online and in-person surveys and other engagement activities so that women in unpaid care work can participate; consider provisions for childcare, transport, and



safety for any in-person community engagement activities; there may also be women who face multiple challenges, for example, indigenous women, women with disabilities, etc.

- b) **Indigenous peoples:** the Maya and Garifuna: Consult IP's on the cultural appropriateness project implementation and identify and address any economic or social constraints (including those relating to gender) that may limit opportunities. to benefit from these. See section V.5.1 of this SEP which addresses the principles to apply when consulting with IP's.
- c) **Elderly and people with existing medical conditions:** develop information on specific needs and explain why they are at more risk and what measures to take to care for them; tailor messages and make them actionable for living conditions (including assisted living facilities), and health status; target family members.
- d) **People with disabilities:** provide information in accessible formats, such as braille or large print; offer multiple forms of communication, such as text captioning or signed videos, text captioning for the hearing impaired, and online materials for people who use assistive technology.
- e) **LGBTI+:** The CEU will implement differentiated measures, for example, creating safe and confidential spaces to allow the effective participation of sexual and gender minorities (for example for the development of policies,) ensuring that their voices are heard, and their concerns are addressed.

VI. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Project information will be disclosed using the following procedures/activities: Public Consultations, Community Meetings, Public Notices, Press Releases, notes on GOB websites; information leaflets and brochures; Focus Group Meetings with vulnerable groups, etc. The details of all these activities are described below. Table 1 summarizes the main activities included in this Stakeholders Engagement Plan. A comprehensive summary of the Stakeholders Program by components is presented in Table 1.



Table 1. Summary of the main activities included in this Stakeholders Engagement Plan (SEP).

Project Stage	Estimated Date	Topic of Consultation/ Message	Method Used	Targeted Stakeholders	Responsible
Design	March to April/2025	The purpose, nature and scale of the project and receive feedback. Potential risks and impacts including on vulnerable groups, and suggested mitigation measures. Stakeholder Engagement Process, GM, etc.	Public Consultations, Focus Groups Discussions	Local Communities and Vulnerable Groups	ESS-CEU Institutional Stakeholders
Execution	Permanent Consultation on Project progress twice a year	Relevant ES docs: SEP, ESCP, GM; etc. Inform on Project progress and receive feedback. Disclosure of other Project Documentation	Community Outreach Meetings Information Sessions	Relevant Stakeholders, Local Communities and Vulnerable Groups	Project Manager ESS-CEU Contractors

VII. PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS/COMMUNITY MEETINGS/INFORMATION SESSIONS AND STRATEGY TO INCORPORATE THE VIEWS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

The project will seek the views of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. The main objective of this Consultation Process (Public Consultations/Community Outreach Meetings/ Public Information Sessions, etc.) is to present to the affected population and other interested parties the description of the Project, its potential environmental and social impacts and the mitigation measures planned to ensure adequate environmental and social management during the execution of the works, and their subsequent operation.

This instance of participation aims to respond to the doubts and concerns that may arise, and to collect suggestions which will be evaluated to determine the possibility of incorporating them into the design of the Project, and its activities, when appropriate.

Stakeholders will be kept informed as the project develops, including reporting on project environmental and social performance and implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and the Grievance Redress Mechanism, and on the project's overall implementation progress.

Public Consultations are an effective way to make people aware about project execution, project activities and other relevant project information. All consultations should be fully documented, this includes the number of consultations held, attendance sheet detailing participants information, logistics and all arrangements and agreements made. Pictures evidence must be included with all documentation. An evaluation of each consultation should be made with a view to implementing lessons learned in subsequent consultations. Evaluations and the details of such evaluations must also be documented.

The tentative schedule for Public Consultations through Online Focus Groups Sessions is presented in Table 2. The list of the Stakeholders is also presented in Annex 6.



Table 2. Schedule for the Public Consultation Sessions for this Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment Project.

Area/Zone	Date	Stakeholders	Town/Village
During Project preparation stage			
Central Belize (1 day)	May 7th/2025	40 per Zone	Belmopan City
During Project execution			
Northern Belize (1 day)	Every 6 months	40 per Zone	To be defined
Central Belize (1 day)	Every 6 months	40 per Zone	To be defined
Southern Belize (1 day)	Every 6 months	40 per Zone	To be defined
Western Belize (1 day)	Every 6 months	40 per Zone	To be defined

VII.1. Principles governing meaningful Consultations

- ✓ The stakeholder consultation process will be continuous and interactive throughout the project cycle and will begin as early as possible.
- ✓ It will ensure that different categories of stakeholders are represented and participate in the consultations.
- ✓ Efforts will be made to manage sufficient resources, both budgetary, personnel and collaboration with authorities, so that the opinions of stakeholders, to the extent possible, are considered and inform the design and implementation of the project and its activities, to respond positively to the suggestions and concerns of stakeholders.
- ✓ The Consultations will be transparent, based on objective information, including on the scope of the consultation and the ability of stakeholders to influence project decisions.
- ✓ The Consultation Process will be equitable and non-discriminatory and will ensure that the poorest or most vulnerable affected stakeholders have a voice. When appropriate, safe spaces will be ensured for consultations with vulnerable groups that may require it.
- ✓ Interested parties will have prior information on relevant aspects of the project, in the language in case the latter is applicable, the format and the way that are appropriate for them. Different groups and different contexts will need different approaches, but at the very least, this information should be conveyed in a way that is understandable and accessible to all.
- ✓ Consultation events and other forums or means of engaging with stakeholders will be respectful and free from coercion. Interested parties who express concern or criticism of the project, or the authorities will not be retaliated against.
- ✓ When necessary, appropriate or when requested, confidentiality of information will be guaranteed to interested parties.
- ✓ The consultation process will be systematically documented, and its relevant aspects will be publicly disclosed. This without revealing the identity of the interested parties, when there is no consent for this.



VII.2. Meaningful Consultation in the Context of Indigenous Peoples

The principles of meaningful consultation with indigenous communities, in addition to the principles mentioned above, will be consistent with ESS 7, among which are:

- ✓ Proactively involve indigenous peoples to ensure their participation in the development of the Project's activities that concern them.
- ✓ Provide sufficient time for indigenous peoples' decision-making processes: based on the prior disclosure and dissemination of relevant, transparent, objective, meaningful, and easily accessible information in a timeframe that allows for meaningful consultations with stakeholders in a culturally appropriate format, in the relevant local languages, and understandable to indigenous peoples.
- ✓ Stakeholder engagement in a manner that is appropriate in terms of gender and generations.
- ✓ Involve indigenous peoples' representative bodies and organizations in consultation processes and, where appropriate, other community members.
- ✓ Allow the effective participation of indigenous peoples in the design of mitigation activities or measures that may affect them positively or negatively.
- ✓ Free from external manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination and intimidation; and
- ✓ Appropriate documentation and disclosure of relevant information.

VI.3. Minimum content of the Consultations

The minimum content for consultations shall include, among other things, the following:

- a) **Purpose, nature and scale of the project and the activity consulted:** Detailed description of the objective of the project, its nature and the magnitude of the activities involved.
- b) **Duration of the proposed activities:** Specification of the estimated time for the execution of the planned activities.
- c) **Expected benefits of the project and measures to avoid the exclusion of the most vulnerable:** Identification of the expected benefits of the project and the strategies implemented to ensure that the most vulnerable groups are not excluded.
- d) **Potential risks and impacts of project activities on local communities:** Description of the potential risks and impacts preliminarily identified and according to the Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) relevant to the project and applied to the specific local context. Risks and impacts that may disproportionately affect vulnerable and disadvantaged groups will be highlighted, and the differentiated measures taken to avoid and minimize them will be described.
- e) **Stakeholder Engagement Process:** Description of the ways in which stakeholders can participate in the project, including times and methods of participation.
- f) **Process and Means for Addressing Post-Consultation Questions, Suggestions, and Grievances:** Detail of the procedure and channels available for interested parties to raise and resolve their post-consultation questions, suggestions, complaints, and grievances. During consultations, allow sufficient time for stakeholder engagement with suggestions to inform the design of the activity consulted.



VII.4. Institutional Arrangements for Plan Implementation. Resources and Responsibilities for implementing this Stakeholders Engagement Plan

The CEU Director from the MFETI, as the Executing Agency (EA), has the overall responsibility for leading and implementing the Project Stakeholder Engagement Plan. The Environmental and Social Specialist (ESS) of the CEU will oversee all the stakeholder's engagement activities.

The budget estimate for preparing and implementing this SEP is 300,000 USD for the life of the project, assuming 6 consultations per year, at a price tag of 2,500 USD per activity, and costs related to the communication consultants, communication outreach, surveys, and managing the Grievance Mechanism, among others. A defined project budget and a breakdown that will follow the structure of Annex 7.

The contact information in case people have comments or questions about the project or the consultation process is the following:

- **Email:** pvillegas@ceu.mof.gov.bz
- **Phone number:** +501 822-4106
- **Website:** www.mof.gov.bz
- **Physical Address:** Sr. Edney Cain Building. Belmopan City, Cayo District
- **Title of responsible person:** Environmental and Social Specialist.

The programming and dissemination of the consultation should be carried out in such a way as to ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders. Every effort will have to be made to involve groups likely to be affected by the activities of the project, and those groups that have been identified as stakeholders, regardless of whether they do not belong to the affected population. It is important to recognize the reduced accessibility to these consultation spaces by populations with greater vulnerabilities such as women, aboriginal (Indigenous) communities, in situations of immobility, in street situations, LGBTIQ+ populations (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer), among others. With this, it must be ensured that the call is made considering the obstacles that these populations may face for participation. The consultation process shall consider at least the following elements:

- Stakeholder Mapping.
- Documents to disclose and availability of information.
- Dissemination of the consultation process through the website, social media, and other means.
- Development of content and documentation to be socialized.
- Public consultation procedure.
- Report on the public consultation process.

Below is a brief description of the requirements to be considered at each stage of the consultation process.



VII.5. Stakeholders Mapping

Stakeholder mapping consists of identifying the directly affected population and organizations relevant to the consultation. From a preliminary identification, it emerges that, at a minimum, the Stakeholders Groups presented Table 3 should be included in the process.

It is important to note that the proposed stakeholder mapping is preliminary, and that the final selection of the stakeholders can be adjusted by the MFETI and the municipalities. Therefore, any other stakeholders that the authorities consider appropriate to invite to contribute to guaranteeing a broad, representative, and meaningful participatory process may then join.

Table 3. Stakeholders Groups for the Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment Project.

GROUP #	TYPE	DESCRIPTION OF THE STAKEHOLDERS	AMOUNT
G1	Internal	This group supports the project's direct implementation and may include line Ministries and other GOB agencies: MFETI, MECST, MHDFIPA, MRTCDLLG, MHW, Municipalities; Village Councils	10
G2	Other interested parties	National Women's Commission; Maya Leaders Alliance; Belize National Indigenous Council; Northern Maya Association; National Garifuna Council; Belize Maya Forest Trust; Employment Training and Education Services (ITVET); Service Providers (Contractors); Academia, Representatives of the Financial Institutions, etc.	10
G3	Project affected parties	Affected parties and potential beneficiaries of the Program: Unemployed People, Indigenous People; Low-income Households with 4-years old children; People with Disabilities; Vulnerable Groups; Civil Society Members (Neighbors), etc.	20

Figures 2-4 summarizes the Stakeholders Groups for this Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment Project.



Figure 2. Stakeholders for Group 1 for this Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment Project.



Figure 3. Stakeholders for Group 2 for this Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment Project.



Figure 4. Stakeholders for Group 3 for this Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment Project.

VII.6. Documents to disclose and availability of information

Below are the documents to be socialized, which must be published on the EA's website and other means, and available to the public for at least 14 days prior to the consultation events.

- Stakeholders Engagement Plan (SEP).
- Summary information on the Project (description, works, etc.).
- A timeframe for consultations with locations.
- Grievances Redress Mechanism (GM).



Once the information is available on the website, the consultation process will be disseminated to the interested parties.

VII.7. Disclosure of the Event

The invitation to the event (Public Consultations/Community Outreach Meetings/ Public Information Sessions, etc.) will be made directly to the interested parties identified in the mapping of the stakeholders, and to the public through publication in relevant information media, such as radio, local TV, digital media, important newspapers, and on the institutional website and social network profiles and the municipalities involved. Also, personal email submissions and brochure handling can be used, to ensure the adequate dissemination of the process. The following information shall be detailed:

- Project Proponent and Project activities.
- Website with the publication of the documentation and as a space for the channeling of queries and concerns about the Project.
- Procedure of the consultation process.
- Duration of the consultation process.
- Topics to be addressed (including Project and main works to be carried out, benefits associated to the operation of the Project, parties involved and institutional responsibilities, outline of the applicable regulatory framework and relevant standards, main environmental and social impacts identified, main management measures, and existing mechanisms to address complaints and resolve conflicts).
- Documentation available, etc.

The estimated date for the consultation events during Project preparation is tentatively the weeks from April 14th to April 25th, 2025. To ensure participation, the consultation events must be advertised in advance.

As part of the Project preparation, there will be about six (6) Consultation Events countrywide (one per district). The stakeholders will mostly consist of institutional representation (GOB and Town/Village Authorities) and civil society member, including vulnerable groups. These consultation events will be complemented with community information campaigns, to be conducted once project implementation starts.

VII.8. Development of the Public Consultation Process

The consultation process will be carried out face to face. The coordinator of the process will be the Environmental and Social Specialist from the CEU with experience in previous consultation processes.

VII.8.1. Consulting with Indigenous People (IP's)

The project implementation will require the engagement of the Indigenous People of Belize, including their representations. Regarding the above, consultations with IP's will be carried out following the requirements of ESS#7:

1. For the development of activities that could affect IP's (whether positively or negatively), proactively engage with IP's to ensure their participation in the development of such activities.



2. Provide sufficient time for IP's decision-making processes: Is based on the prior disclosure and dissemination of relevant, transparent, objective, meaningful and easily accessible information in a timeframe that enables meaningful consultations with stakeholders in a culturally appropriate format, in relevant local language(s) and is understandable to IP's.
3. Consult with IPs as to the cultural appropriateness of the policies.
4. Gender and inter-generationally appropriate stakeholder engagement
5. Involve IP's representative bodies and organizations in the consultation processes and, where appropriate, other community members.
6. Allow for IPs' effective participation in the design of related activities or mitigation measures that could affect them positively or negatively.
7. Since some IP's in Belize like the Mayas has established consultation methodologies, they will be followed as much as possible.
8. Is free of external manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination, and intimidation; and
9. Is documented and disclosed considers and responds to feedback.

VII.9. Publication on the GOB website

This SEP along with other relevant Environmental and Social information must be published at MFETI website (www.mof.gov.bz) for a minimum of two weeks prior to the consultation events. It should explain the objective of the consultation, clarifying that, although it is not in itself binding, the questions and proposals arising from the persons participating will be analyzed and answered and, where relevant/possible, will inform Project design and/or Project activities.

The Grievance Mechanism (GM) and the available channels for making complaints or consultations on the Project will also be disclosed.

VII.10. Consultation Report

A report will be prepared containing the main concerns raised during the consultation process, indicating how they will be addressed at the time or, where appropriate, what responses will be subsequently prepared and how they will be communicated to stakeholders and the public.

The proposals received will be evaluated and the explanation of their relevance to be included in the report. If these are relevant, the consultation report could result in proposals for changes to the Project and/or the ESCP (regarding consultations during implementation), specifically recommendations for: (i) project design; (ii) mitigation measures and (iii) mechanism for dealing with complaints and grievances.

The consultation report will also include the invitation process, the links to the web pages where the project has been published and the corresponding environmental and social documentation, the description of the call mechanism used, the list of participants, photos (Photos used will have the consent of the individuals depicted, consistent with privacy guidelines) or screenshots of the process, informative banners, publications made in local media, and other dissemination materials used.



The following is a minimum content outline of the Consultation Report:

1. Participation strategy: Description of how the consultation process was developed (prior coordination with authorities, key stakeholders, methodology, selection of topics to be addressed, etc.).
2. Stakeholder mapping (groups, institutions or people who were invited) and selection criteria of the invited stakeholders, invitation mechanism.
3. Dissemination: Invitations issued and publications of the event on institutional websites and media.
4. Website and term.
5. Description of the category of stakeholders who participated.
6. Gender-disaggregated data of participants.
7. Materials submitted and/or published during the consultation process.
8. Queries made and responses (proposals, claims or questions made by the different stakeholders, and how they were addressed).
9. Indication of how the proposals received will be incorporated into the design of the project. Any formal agreement reached with the people consulted.
10. The main conclusions on positive or negative perception of the project by the participants, including the agreements.
11. Annex a copy of the presentation made (it must be ensured that the impacts and mitigation measures of the specific project have been presented).
12. Annex a sample copy of invitation letters sent.
13. Annex a copy of the acknowledgments of receipt of the sending of the invitation letters.
14. Annex the list of invited people.
15. Annex the list of participants: interested persons/affected persons, governmental, institutional, and general population participants.
16. Annex photographs of the activities.

The Consultation Report must be published on the institutional website of EA, as communicated to the people participating in the consultation meeting.

VIII. GRIEVANCE MECHANISM (GM)

The Program will have a feedback claims management system that includes their entry, reception, analysis, monitoring, and resolution (see Grievance Database in Annex 3).



The principles of the Grievance Mechanism (GM) are:

- The interaction/claims management system will have mechanisms in accordance with the local context and the sociocultural characteristics of the groups involved in each subproject/activity to be financed by the Project, with special consideration and respect for the most vulnerable groups (Youth, Women, people with disabilities, migrants, people belonging to indigenous communities, among others).
- The procedures for complaint, the process that will follow, the deadline and the resolution mechanisms will be widely disseminated for the knowledge of interested parties and complainants.
- In all cases, a record will be kept of the reception, analysis and resolution of claims and conflicts.

VIII.1. GM Guidelines

In general, the Grievance Mechanism (GM) will follow the following guidelines:

- **Proportional:** The Mechanism will proportionally consider the level of risk and possible negative impacts on the affected areas.
- **Culturally appropriate:** The Mechanism will be designed to consider the local customs (Indigenous communities) of the area and will address the requirements of ESS#7. The GM of the Updated SEP (as identified in the ESCP) will reflect the requirements of ESS#7.
- **Accessible:** The Mechanism will be designed in a clear and simple way so that it is understandable to all people. There will be no cost related to it.
- **Anonymous:** The complainant may remain anonymous. Anonymity is distinguished from confidentiality in that it is an anonymous complaint, the personal data (name, address) of the complainant are not recorded.
- **Confidential:** The Project will respect the confidentiality of the complaint. Information and details about a confidential report will only be shared internally, and only when it is necessary to report or coordinate with the authorities.
- **Transparent:** The process and operation of the Mechanism will be transparent, predictable, and readily available for use by the population.

VIII.2. Management of the GM

The procedure begins with the presentation of the consultation, claim, complaint and/or suggestions (orally or written) by any person linked or affected by the actions of the Project. The process ends with the closure and agreement in the resolution of both parties. The process will be documented by means of a record (in a physical and digitized file: Grievances Forms and Grievance Database). Complaints received by phone or email must be addressed and classified.

Complaints received at the level of individual projects to be financed by the Project (via the contractors or municipal agencies) must be redirected to Environmental and Social Specialist ESS from the CEU (ESS-CEU) for management and follow-up.



VIII.3. Scope

The GM applies and may be used by any person (general population) who expresses any type of claim, complaint or query related to the activities to be financed by this Project.

VIII.4. Dissemination of the Grievance Mechanism

For the reception and registration of claims, a specific email address and a complaints mailbox will be available at the respective Municipalities and at the facilities of the contractors of individual projects under Component 2 of this Project. In the context of Indigenous Peoples, the Grievance Mechanism will consider traditional existing community channels for updating grievances from community members, while maintaining the option for Indigenous Peoples to use the project channels available to non-Indigenous communities.

Information on these means of receiving complaints must be disseminated through the different dissemination channels used by the Project, among which are:

1. **Signs at Worksites:** Each subproject will include the contact details of the contact information for receiving complaints (telephone, email, and website)
2. **Formal and informal meetings:** In these meetings, contact details for receiving complaints (telephone, email and/or website) will be disseminated.
3. **Others** (to be agreed with the communities during the consultation process).

The specific dissemination mechanisms should be detailed based on the information collected on the specific communities to be impacted by the benefits of the Project. All Project Personnel such as the main Stakeholders will be made aware of the Grievance Redress Mechanism; the notification will include:

- ✓ A summary of the Grievance Mechanism and how it will be used (Brochure).
- ✓ Specifications about who can raise complaints.
- ✓ Details of the process, such as who is responsible for receiving and responding to Grievances.
- ✓ What sort of response can be expected.
- ✓ Copy of the Proposed Grievance Forms.
- ✓ Safeguards in place to ensure confidentiality, etc.

VIII.5. Receipt and Registration of Claims

The following mechanisms and channels will be available for the reception of concerns:

- **Email:** grievance@ceu.mof.gov.bz
- **Phone number:** +501 822-4106
- **Physical address:** CEU, 2nd Floor Sr. Edney Cain Building. Belmopan City, Cayo District.
- **Website:** www.mof.gov.bz

VIII.6. Claims Evaluation

All claims/concerns related to the works will be managed and responded to by the Executing Agency, the Central Executing Unit (CEU) from the MFETI.



If the claim or complaint is rejected by the Grievance Committee, the complainant will be informed of the decision and the reasons for it. To this end, relevant and understandable information will be provided in accordance with the sociocultural characteristics of the claimant.

Complaints received will be categorized according to the following:

- **Not admissible:** Complaints or claims that do not meet one or more of these requirements:
 - ✓ It is not directly related to the work, its contractors, and the actions of the project.
 - ✓ Its nature exceeds the scope of the GM.
 - ✓ There is no real cause of the action.
 - ✓ There are other formal mechanisms and institutions for filing complaints according to the nature of the complaint.
 - ✓ Related to labor issues must be addressed to the corresponding instances of the construction company. However, if for any reason the workers do not want to use the contractor's grievance mechanism, they can use the Worker Grievance Mechanism established at the project level.
- **Low importance:** This category corresponds to complaints that do not require resolution but only require information or a certain clarification that must be provided to the complainant. This category includes complaints that have been previously evaluated and received a definitive response from the Project.
- **Medium importance:** Complaints and claims related to health, the environment, transportation, and contractors and subcontractors.
- **High importance:** Includes complaints related to the safety of personnel, as well as those related to the health and safety of construction workers.

Within a period not exceeding ten working days, the ESS-CEU will have to evaluate the documentation presented by the claimant. Where possible, if additional information is required for the proper evaluation of the complaint, CEU will contact the complainant within a maximum of ten working days, to obtain the necessary information. Once the complaint is completed and reviewed, ESS-CEU will proceed to register the complaint. The file should include, along with the complaint, a summary and the name of the person who received and processed it. Registration information will be updated periodically to reflect the status of the case until the complaint has been finalized. (See GM Database in Annex 3).



VIII.7. Grievance Closure and Monitoring Mechanism

The resolution of claims will be carried out through two instances:

1. **Internal:** the management of reception of claims and resolution of conflicts is the responsibility of CEU and will be referred to the competent agency in the subject according to the complaint/claim.
2. **Mediation:** cases of claims and conflicts not resolved in the first instance will be dealt with under the mediation mechanism. Mediation is a form of dispute resolution in which the parties are invited to get together, talk about their concerns and develop forward-looking solutions. The person in charge of this instance must have sufficient authority to mediate for the resolution of claims and conflicts, and sufficient independence to project credibility in the parties.

VIII.8. Conflict Resolution

If there is no agreement between CEU and a complainant, either because of a rejected concern or because there is no agreement on the solution to be implemented, the means to reach a joint agreement between the parties may be arbitrated. This may include, among others: promoting the participation of technical third parties, inviting dialogue tables, mediations, conciliations, etc. The CEU shall ensure that claims handling and dispute resolution are conducted in an appropriate and comprehensive manner.

VIII.9. Deadlines for Response to Claims

All complaints must be registered, and your proposed solution must be communicated to the interested party within the following deadlines: low importance complaints will be dealt with within a maximum period of 30 calendar days, medium-importance complaints will be dealt with within 15 calendar days, and high importance complaints will be dealt with within a maximum period of 7 calendar days. The deadlines set can be adjusted by the CEU.

In all cases, a complaint response report will be drawn up and signed by the person who filed the complaint in accordance with the attention of the complaint. The CEU will systematize the complaint records and the minutes of attention to these. The information provided will be relevant and understandable according to the sociocultural characteristics of the person who consults. Likewise, it will oversee supervising the process, detecting deviations, and ensuring its solution.

VIII.10. Monitoring and Documentation

The ESS-CEU will be responsible for maintaining an up-to-date Grievances Database with all documentation and information related to complaints submitted. It will also be responsible for following up on the complaint processing process, in coordination with the areas involved, and for facilitating the complainant's participation in the process. A follow-up form will be completed for each case. Once an agreement is reached, follow-up will be followed up to confirm that the relevant resolution measures are being implemented. The complaint registry must demonstrate that all these actions and processes were carried out in accordance with this document. It will include:

- Date on which the complaint was registered.
- Person responsible for the complaint.



- Information on the remedies proposed/communicated by the complainant (if applicable).
- Date on which the complaint was closed; and
- The date of the response was sent to the complainant.

In the Semi-annual Compliance Reports, the CEU will report to the WB on the status and follow-up of the management of complaints and grievances received in the framework of the execution of this Project.

Any complaint closed with conformity by the complainant must be monitored for a reasonable period to verify that the reasons for the complaint or claim were effectively resolved. The estimated period for this purpose is 6 (six) months from the response and/or solution of the claim.

VIII.11. Implementation Timeline

Project Team must keep in mind that the handling of a complaint must start at the local level to be eligible at the next level. The Grievance Mechanisms will be available throughout the duration of the Project the overall process flow is outlined in Figure 5.

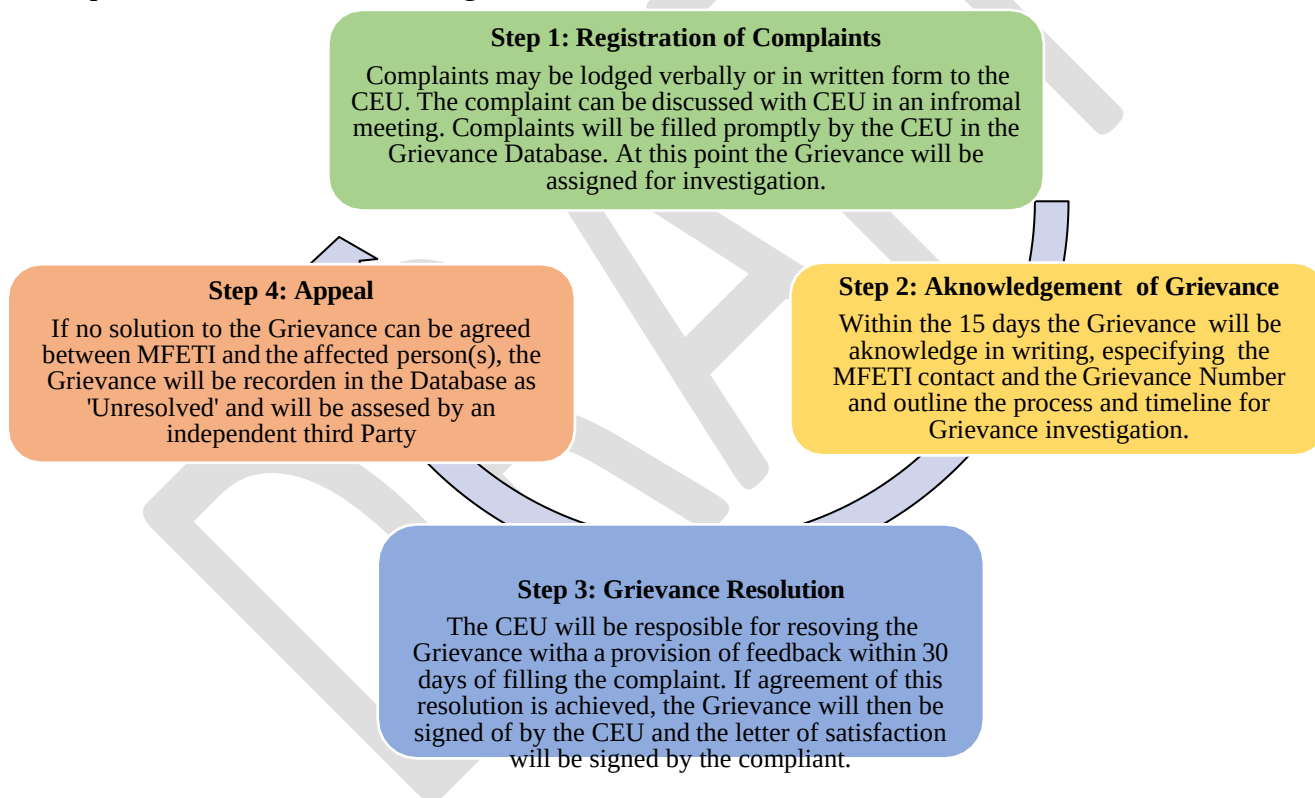


Figure 5. Grievance Mechanism Process Flow

VIII.12. Grievance Committee (GR)

The Grievance Committee (GC) will be established to address complaints logged in the grievance register. The GC shall comprise the following:

- ☐ CEU Representative with the power to make decisions (CEU Director).
- ☐ One Representative of the Institutional Stakeholders.
- ☐ Project Manager.



- ☐ CEU Designated Person to manage the whole process.
- ☐ Representative from External Stakeholders

VIII.13. Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment Incidents

The specific nature of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and of Sexual Harassment (SH) requires tailored measures for the reporting, and safe and ethical handling of such allegations. A survivor-centered approach aims to ensure that anyone who has been the target of SEA/SH is treated with dignity, and that the person's rights, privacy, needs, and wishes are respected and prioritized in all interactions.

The GM will specify an individual who will be responsible for dealing with any SEA/SH issues, should they arise. The person responsible for handling SEASH-related complaints will receive training and sensitization on how to manage these types of complaints. A mapping of SEA/SH service providers will be kept available by the project. The GM should assist SEA/SH survivors by referring them to Services Providers for support immediately after receiving a complaint directly from a survivor. The mapping of SEA/SH service providers will be available after the project effectiveness and before the start of project activities.

To address SEA/SH, the Project Team will follow the guidance provided on the World Bank Technical Note: Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) in Human Development Projects. The GM will follow the official WB definitions described on the Technical Note as shown below:

- **Sexual Abuse (SEA)** is an actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions
- **Sexual Exploitation (SE)** refers to any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
- **Sexual harassment (SH)** is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favor, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
- **Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) service provider:** An organization offering specific services for SEA/SH survivors, such as health services, psychosocial support, shelter, legal aid, safety/security services, etc.
- **Survivor-centered approach:** It is based on a set of principles and skills designed to guide professionals, regardless of their role, in their engagement with survivors (predominantly women and girls but also men and boys) who have experienced sexual or other forms of violence. The survivor-centered approach aims to create a supportive environment in which the survivor's interests are respected and prioritized, and in which the survivor is treated with dignity and respect. The approach



helps to promote the survivor's recovery and ability to identify and express needs and wishes, as well as to reinforce the survivor's capacity to make decisions about possible interventions.

The SEA/SH Grievances will be received through a defined available channel that will ensure anonymity if desired for these types of complaints, and will be considered as **“High-profile Grievances”**, that if not resolved promptly may represent significant risks to the survivor or the community. A list of SEA/SH service providers will be kept available by the Project. Additionally, if an incident occurs, it will be reported as appropriate, keeping the anonymity and confidentiality of the complainant, and applying the survivor-centered approach (The survivor-centered approach is based on a set of principles and skills designed to guide professionals —regardless of their role— in their engagement with survivors (predominantly women and girls but also men and boys) who have experienced sexual or other forms of violence. The survivor centered approach aims to create a supportive environment in which the survivor's interests are respected and prioritized, and in which the survivor is treated with dignity and respect. The approach helps to promote the survivor's recovery and ability to identify and express needs and wishes, as well as to reinforce the survivor's capacity to make decisions about possible interventions). Any cases of SEA/SH brought through the GM will be documented but remain closed/sealed to maintain the confidentiality of the survivor. The WB will be notified within 24 hours from when the Project Manager and the ESSS learn about the complaint.

If an alleged SEA/SH related incident is reported, it will be logged in the GM, as appropriate and keeping the survivor information confidential. Specifically, following steps will be taken once an incident occurs:

A) Action 1: Complaint Intake and Referral

If the survivor gives consent to lodge a formal complaint with the project GM, the CEU Social Specialist (ESS) or other designated Specialist, fills in a complaint form excluding any information that can identify the survivor:

- The nature of the allegation (what the complainant says in her/his own words without direct questioning)
- If the alleged perpetrator was/is, to the survivor's best knowledge, associated with the project (yes/no)
- The survivor's age and/or sex (if disclosed); and,
- If the survivor was referred to services.

If the survivor does not want to provide written consent, her consent can be verbally received. The CEU ESS refers the survivor to relevant SEA/SH service providers, identified in the mapping of SEA/SH service providers and according to pre-established and confidential referral procedures. The survivor's consent must be documented even if it is received verbally. The service providers will be able to direct survivors to other service providers in case the survivor wishes to access other services. The CEU ESS will keep the survivor informed, per survivor's consent, about any actions taken by the perpetrator's employer. If the survivor has been referred to the relevant SEA/SH service providers, received adequate assistance, and no longer requires support; and if appropriate actions have been taken against the



perpetrator or if the survivor does not wish to submit an official grievance with the employer, the CEU ESS can close the case.

B) Action 2: Incident Reporting

The ESS from the CEU needs to report the anonymized SEA/SH incident as soon as it becomes known, to the Project Manager who will in turn inform the World Bank Task Team Leader (TTL) or directly to the TTL within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident.

Complaint Forms and other detailed information should be filed in a safe location by the CEU ESS. Neither the CEU ESS nor the Project Manager should seek additional information from the survivor.

SEA/SH incident reporting is not subject to survivors' consent but the CEU ESS needs to provide ongoing feedback to the survivor, per survivor's consent, at several points in time: (1) when the grievance is received; (2) when the case is reported to CEU and WB; (3) when the verification commences or when a determination is made that there is an insufficient basis to proceed; and (4) when the verification concludes or when any outcomes are achieved or disciplinary action taken.

As long as the SEA/SH incident verification remains open the CEU ESS and/or Project Manager should update the World Bank TTL on the measures taken to close the incident.

C) Action 3: Grievance Verification and Investigation

Each alleged SEA/SH incident should be verified to determine if it was related to the WB financed project. The CEU ESS should form a SEA/SH verification committee comprised by the SEA/SH GM point person, one member of the CEU, one member of a local service provider and a representative of the contractor (if relevant). The CEU ESS should notify the SEA/SH Committee of the incident within 24 hours of incident notification. The SEA/SH verification committee will consider the SEA/SH allegation to determine the likelihood that the grievance is related to the project.

If after the committee review, SEA/SH allegation is confirmed and it is determined that it is linked to a project, Project actors are:

- a) People employed or engaged directly by the GOB, including the project proponent and the project implementing agencies to work specifically in relation to the project (direct workers).
- b) People employed or engaged through third parties (, subcontractors, brokers, agents, or intermediaries) to perform work related to core functions of the project, regardless of location (contracted workers).
- c) People employed or engaged by the Borrower's primary suppliers (primary supply workers).
- d) People employed or engaged in providing community labor such as voluntary services or participation in project activities and processes (community workers), the verification committee discusses appropriate actions to be recommended to the appropriate party—i.e., the employer of the perpetrator, which could be the CEU or a contractor. The CEU will ask contractors to take appropriate action. The committee reports the incident to the perpetrator's employers to implement the remedy/disciplinary



action in accordance with local labor legislation, the employment contract of the perpetrator, and their codes of conduct as per the standard procurement documents.

For SEA/SH incidents where the survivor did not consent to an investigation, the appropriate steps should be taken to ensure the survivor is referred to/made aware of available services and that the project mitigation measures are reviewed to determine if they remain adequate and appropriate or if they require strengthening.

If the survivor is interested in seeking redress and wishes to submit an official complaint with the employer, or with entities in the Country legal system, the CEU ESS should provide linkages to the relevant institutions. Ensuring due legal process within the national legal system is up to the police and the courts, not the SEA/SH verification committee. Unlike other types of issues, the CEU ESS does not conduct investigations, make any announcements, or judge the veracity of an allegation.

Any cases of SEA/SH brought through the GM will be documented but remain closed/sealed to maintain the confidentiality of the survivor. Here, the GM will primarily serve to:

- Refer complainants/survivor/s to the SEA/SH Services Provider.
- With complainant's consent to formally lodge a complaint, undertake appropriate administrative review of the alleged incident and take appropriate action against the alleged perpetrator.
- Record the resolution of the complaint.
- Undertake a review of the project's mitigation measures to determine if they remain adequate and appropriate or if they require strengthening.

The GM will also immediately notify both the Implementing Agency and the World Bank of any SEA/SH complaints providing only the minimum necessary non-identifying information

IX. PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

A proper Public Awareness Campaign is essential to guarantee successful project execution. People in the project execution area must be properly informed about project activities. To accomplish that, a consultant could be hired to develop this campaign. Some ideas are the following:

- Printing of Project Brochures (See Annex 4).
- TV and Radio Ads.
- Social Media Ads.
- Advertising on the MED Web Page and BWS Web Page.
- Public Notices and Press Releases, among other activities (See Annex 5).

The proposals of the brochures are presented in Annex 4 and an example of Public Notices/Press Releases is presented in Annex 5. The budget for the implementation of the Public Awareness Campaign will be determined at later stages during this project preparation.



X. MONITORING AND REPORTING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SEP

The SEP will be monitored based on both qualitative reporting (based on progress reports) and quantitative reporting linked to results indicators on stakeholder engagement and grievance performance.

SEP reporting will include the following:

- (i) Progress reporting on the ESS10-Stakeholder Engagement commitments under the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) and the Stakeholder Engagement Indicators (Annex 8).
- (ii) Cumulative qualitative reporting on the feedback received during SEP activities, in particular (a) issues that have been raised that can be addressed through changes in project scope and design, and reflected in the basic documentation such as the Project Appraisal Document, Environmental and Social Assessment, Resettlement Plan, or SEA/SH Action Plan, if needed; (b) issues that have been raised and can be addressed during project implementation; (c) issues that have been raised that are beyond the scope of the project and are better addressed through alternative projects, programs or initiatives; and (d) issues that cannot be addressed by the project due to technical, jurisdictional or excessive cost-associated reasons. Minutes of meetings summarizing the views of the attendees can also be annexed to the monitoring reports.
- (iii) Quantitative reporting based on the indicators included in the SEP.

X.1. Reporting back to the Stakeholder Groups

The SEP will be revised and updated as necessary during project implementation.

Semiannual summaries and internal reports on public grievances, enquiries, and related incidents, together with the status of implementation of associated corrective/preventative actions will be collated by responsible staff and referred to the project managers.

Specific mechanisms to report back to the stakeholders include focus groups, communal assemblies, public meetings, etc. to be used by the project to report back to the stakeholder groups that have been/will be consulted. This reporting back to the stakeholders will be at least on a semiannual basis and could be in-person or virtual, prioritizing in-person events.

XI. CONCLUSIONS

1. The Project aims to address equity, inclusion, and climate change resilience to close existing gaps. This Project will include national interventions and targeted community support. It will prioritize climate resilience in early childhood care and education environments, promote green and blue industries for skills and employment, and implement climate-smart solutions in communities receiving entrepreneurship support. These efforts align with Belize's Nationally Determined Contributions for Climate Change mitigation and adaptation.
2. This project will prioritize communities with high poverty rates and low female labour force participation, including those with significant indigenous populations.



3. Tailored interventions will address the specific socio-economic barriers faced by indigenous people, informed by ongoing studies and technical work.
4. Stakeholders have tremendous sway over the project's success. This Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is the foundation for achieving a proactive communication strategy with all relevant Stakeholders.
5. Community and stakeholder engagement is about relationship building. The many stakeholders all have different needs and wants, and their power and interest in the project are all unique, requiring specialized consultation requirements. Once the stakeholder engagement plans are put into action, the project management team is continuously updated regarding the status of each stakeholder.
6. This SEP outlines the communication and consultation requirements of each person (or group of people) impacted by this Project. This SEP will also address the requirements of meaningful consultation in the context of indigenous peoples.
7. This SEP will allow the Project Team at the CEU to manage expectations and deliver the right information to the right people at the right time during project execution. This SEP will also help to minimize negative perceptions, amplify positive impacts, and resolve conflicts before they escalate.
8. Public Consultations are an adequate scenario to engage project-affected people and other stakeholders related to this project on issues that could potentially affect them and to ensure that relevant environmental and social information are disclosed and disseminated.
9. Public Consultation would help to identify potential gender-based risks and impacts that would allow the Project the introduction of effective measures to avoid, prevent, or mitigate such risks and impacts, thereby eliminating the possibility of reinforcing pre-existing inequalities or creating new ones.
10. A proper Public Awareness Campaign will ensure that appropriate information on the project's environmental and social risks and impacts is disclosed to stakeholders in a timely, understandable, accessible, and proper manner and format.
11. Grievance Mechanism will provide stakeholders with accessible and inclusive means to raise questions, proposals, and concerns.
12. This SEP ensures an active engagement with stakeholders by understanding their needs and concerns, building trust, loyalty, and support. This plan also anticipates and addresses potential issues proactively, minimizing the chances of major grievances or work stoppages that could hinder project success.
13. This SEP will allow the Project team to easily coordinate and generate an institutional memory to empower future engagement efforts, getting a long-term view about strategic stakeholder engagement.
14. This SEP will be periodically revised and updated as necessary throughout the life cycle of this Project. Summaries and internal reports on public grievances, enquiries, and related incidents, together with the status of implementation of associated corrective/preventive actions, will be collated by responsible staff and referred to the senior management of the project. The six monthly summaries



will provide a mechanism for assessing both the number and nature of complaints and requests for information, along with the Project's ability to address those in a timely and effective manner.

XII. REFERENCES

1. August, A. L. (2012). "Preschool Education in Belize: Research on the Current Status and Implications for the Future". College of Education and Human Services, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, USA. Available at: <http://article.sapub.org/10.5923.j.edu.20120207.03.html>.
2. Government of Belize (2010). "Horizon 2030 - National Development Framework for Belize 2010-2030". Available at: <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/en/plans/horizon-2030-national><https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/en/plans/horizon-2030-national-development-framework-belizedevelopment-framework-belize>
3. Government of Belize (2016). "Belize's Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy 2016-2019". <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/sites/default/files/plan/files/BelizeGSDS.pdf>
4. IDB (2013). "Challenges and Opportunities in the Belize Education Sector". Available at: https://edc.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/IDBDOCS-37750500-v1-Challenges_and_Opportunities_in_the_Belize_Education_Sector.pdf.
5. MoEST (2024). "An analysis of the Status and Performance of the pre-primary sector in Belize" Policy, Planning, Research and Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, July 2024.
6. MoEST (2022). "Abstract of Education Statistics 2021-2022". Policy, Planning, Research and Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology. Available at: <https://www.MoEST.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Abstract-of-Education-Statistics-2021-2022.pdf>. May 2022.
7. MoEST (2021). "Belize Education Sector Plan 2021-2025". Policy, Planning, Research and Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology. Available at: https://www.MoEST.gov.bz/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/The-Belize-Education-Sector-Plan-2021-2025_MoEST.pdf.
8. Ministry of Human Development. (2019). Community Action for Public Safety II.
9. SIB (2013). "2010 Population Data". Available at: http://sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/2010_Census_Report.pdf
10. SIB. (2022). "Abstract of Statistics of Belize Census". Statistical Institute of Belize, Available at: http://sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/2022_Abstract_of_Statistics.pdf
11. SIB (2023). "2022 Population and housing census". Available at: <https://sib.org.bz/census-2022/> Statistical Institute of Belize, 2023.
12. SIB (2023). "Labour Force and Labour Force Participation". Available at: https://sib.org.bz/wp-content/uploads/LabourForce_2023-04.pdf. Statistical Institute of Belize, July 12th, 2023.
13. Trading Economics (2023). "Belize - Labor Force, Female". Available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/belize/labor-force-female-percent-of-total-labor-force-wb->



[data.html#:~:text=Labor%20force%2C%20female%20\(%25%20of,compiled%20from%20official%20recognized%20sources.](#)

14. Villegas, P. J. (2024) “Public Consultations Report for the World Bank Project Belize Blue Cities and Beyond (BBCB)”. Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment, Government of Belize. Available at: <https://med.gov.bz/public-consultations-report/>
15. Villegas, P. J. (2024) “Stakeholders Engagement Plan for the World Bank Project Belize Blue Cities and Beyond (BBCB)”. Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment, GOB. Available at: <https://governmentofbelize.sharepoint.com/:w/s/CEUEnvironmentalSocial-WorldBank-BBEP/ESN7n3BcFydKha5PvluRf2EBqjX5jGmORSzMcw8M2CqK4A?e=kx8ahc>
16. Villegas, P. J. (2024) “Stakeholders Engagement Plan for the World Bank Project Belize Reliant and Resilient Energy System (BRRES)”. Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment, Government of Belize. Available at: <https://med.gov.bz/sep-belize-renewable-integration-and-resilient-energy-system-bries/>
17. World Bank (2022). “Gender Data Portal for Belize”. Available at: <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/economies/belize>
18. World Bank (2023). “Environmental and Social Standards (ESS)”. Available at: <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/environmental-and-socialframework/brief/environmental-and-social-standardsframework/brief/environmental-and-social-standards>
19. World Bank (2023). “Country Partnership Frameworks”. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/collections/5d713a66-3a73-5e53-9266-7bcf21b71a78>.
20. World Bank (2024). “Environmental and Social Review Summary (ESRS) for the World Bank Project Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment ”. Available at: <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099030625104038980>. October 23rd, 2024.



ANNEX 1. AGENDA FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS FOR THE PROJECT: BELIZE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION AND FEMALE EMPLOYMENT

Stakeholder Consultation Session Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment Project

May 7th 2024, Oasis Conference Center Belmopan

Proposed Agenda:

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 14:00 | Greeting and Roll call |
| 14:10 | Introduction of Coordination Team (Facilitator and Lead Experts) |
| 14:15 | Introduction of Participants |
| 14:20 | Start of Slide Session |
| 14:45 | Stretch break 5 minutes |
| 15:20 | Feedback from participants |
| 16:20 | Closing Remarks and next steps |



Ministry of Finance, Economic Transformation,
and Investment



GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE - CENTRAL EXECUTING UNIT
MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT
SEP for Project: Belize Early Childhood Care and Education and Female Employment



**ANNEX 2. GRIEVANCE FORM FOR THE WORLD BANK PROJECT - P508072: BELIZE
 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT**

Name:				Grievance Number:			
Email:				Phone Number:			
Address:							
Gender:			Date:			Time:	
Complainant Category	☐ Resident ☐ Rover ☐ Unemployed person ☐ Village/Municipal ☐ Leader ☐ GOB Worker ☐ Teacher ☐ Employer OTHER						
Description of the Grievance <i>What happened?</i> <i>Where did it happen?</i> <i>Who did it happen to?</i> <i>What is the result of the problem?</i>							
Date of the Incident/Grievance	☐ One time Incident/Grievance (Date: _____) ☐ Happened more than one time (How many times? _____) ☐ On-going (currently experiencing the problem)						
What would you like to see happen to resolve the problem?							

Grievant Signature: (if applicable)			Date:		
Indicate how you prefer to be contacted			Preferred language for communication:		
Received by:			Date:		
Grievance Received by:	☐ Email ☐ In Person ☐ Telephone Call ☐ Grievance Box Other _____				

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Grievance will proceed. If the reason		
Action to be taken to address this grievance and timeline implementation:		
Date for GM Meeting:	Has the Grievance been resolved: (if yes include close date, if no include reason)	
Name of Responsible Body:	Signature:	



ANNEX 3. DATABASE FOR BELIZE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

**GRIEVANCE MECHANISM DATABASE FOR FOR PROJECT- P508072: BELIZE
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT**

Nu.	Date Submitted	Full Name	Phone Number	Residence Place	Complaint Description	Grievance Deadline	Resolution Proposal
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							



ANNEX 4. EXAMPLE OF PROJECT BROCHURE

The Grievances Redress Mechanism (GM) will be in place to address stakeholders' concerns and complaints. The Grievances cycle is summarized below:



The Grievances Redress Mechanism (GM) will be in place to address stakeholders' concerns and complaints. This Grievances process has been designed to:

1. To ensure fairness and transparency.
2. To Address issues and concerns.
3. To mitigate risks and impacts.
4. To build trust and goodwill amongst stakeholders and project beneficiaries.

The following mechanisms and channels will be available for the reception of concerns:

- Email: grievance.ceu@cpu.mof.gov.bz

- Phone number: +501 822-4106
- Website: www.mof.gov.bz
- Address: 2nd Floor Sr. Edny Cain Building, City of Belmopan, Cayo District.



For the success of this Project, an effective **Stakeholder Engagement Plan** is required; this is a comprehensive approach that includes ongoing communication, listening and collaboration.



Gender enhancement: The Program will implement strategies to ensure that women can have the opportunity to participate in Program activities.

GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE



MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND INVESTMENT



World Bank Project P508072: Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment

"The resources may be limited, but with proper planning, determination to improve the lives of our people and a good team, anything is doable. We are blessed at the MOFEDI with all hands-on deck mentality, and together we have been able to work for our people across the country. All we do for our people is not too big or too small."



GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE - CENTRAL EXECUTING UNIT
MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT
SEP for Project: Belize Early Childhood Care and Education and Female Employment



The Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment informs the Public that the World Bank funded Project **P508072: Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment** will be executed by the Central Executing Unit (CEU) with the main stakeholders the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology; the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs and the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour, and Local Government.

The Project Objective is to improve Belize's access to quality early childhood care and education and female employment in targeted communities in Belize. The project will support four components:

Component 1. Cross-sectoral interventions with nationwide reach and adaptations to different ethnicities and regions. Subcomponent 1.1. Information and sensitization to improve behaviour, culture and environment in support of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and female employment. Subcomponent 1.2. Capacity building and system building to systematically improve quality, effectiveness and inclusiveness of ECCE and skills development and employment support platforms and programs.

Component 2. Improving access to quality ECCE services in underserved communities, with multi-

sectoral collaboration. Subcomponent 2.1. Enhancing the scope of in-home Roving Care Program targeting ages 0-2 and their mothers/parents/caretakers. Subcomponent 2.2. Increasing access to quality preschool and childcare

Component 3. Improving access to skills development and employment opportunities in selected communities, with collaboration. Subcomponent 3.1. Promoting relevant skills development, job search and intermediation. Subcomponent 3.2. Promoting entrepreneurship.

Component 4. Project Management and Monitoring. It will support the Ministry of Finance to coordinate overall project implementation and manage the implementation of project activities.

Component 5. Contingent Emergency Response Component will allow for rapid reallocation of uncommitted project funds in the event of an eligible emergency as defined in the World Bank rapid response to crises and emergencies guidance.

GOB will prepare appropriate assessments to manage the Environmental and Social risks and implement the Grievance Mechanism (GM).

The Environmental Risk of this project was classified as moderate. The project will have positive impacts by improving early childhood care

and education and female employment. The project will mainly finance information and sensitization initiatives, capacity building, improving access to early childhood and education services, improving access to skills development and employment opportunities. Minor civil works are expected which include the construction of preschool classrooms in existing primary schools; and refurbishment of existing classrooms, to make them more child friendly and inclusive.

The Social Risk is also rated as moderate. The project aims to deliver significant benefits by improving access to quality early childhood care and education, as well as enhancing female employment in targeted rural communities in Belize. It seeks to reach different ethnicities and regions within the country, contributing to the removal of barriers faced by women, indigenous people, youth, and elderly and persons with disabilities, among others. However, the project also entails certain low to moderate social risks, such as the potential exclusion of the most vulnerable living in remote areas, lack of cultural appropriateness when engaging indigenous groups, elite capture, and the risk of gender-based violence.



ANNEX 5. EXAMPLE OF PRESS RELEASE/PUBLIC NOTICE



GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE

Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, and
Investment

Ground Floor, Right Wing, Sir Edney Cain Building, Belmopan City,
Belize, Central America

PUBLIC NOTICE/PRESS RELEASE

World Bank Project

Belmopan, Thursday, March 6, 2025.

The Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment informs that the World Bank funded Project **P508072: Belize Early Childhood Development and Female Empowerment (ECDFE)** will be executed in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs and the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour, and Local Government.

This Project aims to improve Belize's access to quality early childhood care and education and female employment in targeted communities in Belize.

The main projects components are **Component 1:** Cross-sectoral interventions with nationwide reach and adaptations to different ethnicities and regions. **Component 2:** Improving access to quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) services in underserved communities, with multi-sectoral collaboration. **Component 3:** Improving access to skills development and employment opportunities in selected communities, with collaboration. **Component 4:** Project Management and Monitoring and **Component 5:** Contingent Emergency Response Component.

The Ministry invites the public to contact us in case of any additional information.

-END-

For further information, please contact:

Dr. Pedro Julio Villegas

Environmental and Social Specialist

Email: pvillegas.ceu@cpu.mof.gov.bz

Phone: 822-4106



GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE - CENTRAL EXECUTING UNIT
MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT
SEP for Project: Belize Early Childhood Care and Education and Female Employment



ANNEX 6. STAKEHOLDERS' LIST FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE & EDUCATION & FEMALE EMPLOYMENT

Nu.	Full Name	Phone	Email	Institution	Post
1	Dian Maheia	828-4910	ceo@moe.gov.bz	Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology	Chief Executive Officer
2	Yolanda Gongora	822-2380	gongorayo@gobmail.gov.bz	Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology	Chief Education Officer
3	Dr. Neulin Nelson-Villanuev	822-2380	nvillanueva.bcdt@med.gov.bz	Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology	Deputy Chief Education Officer
4	Cecilia Ramirez-Smith	822-2380	cecilia.smith@moe.gov.bz	Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology	Deputy Chief Education Officer
5	Dylan Williams	828-4626	director.ppu@humandev.gov.bz	Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs	Director of Policy and Planning Unit
6	Cynthia Williams	828-4626	hdc.wd@humandev.gov.bz	Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs	Women's Department Coordinator
7	Diana Pook	828-4626	hdc.compar.hsd@humandev.gov.bz	Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs	Community & Parenting Empowerment Coordinator
8	Maria Teck	828-4626	inspector.ssi@humandev.gov.bz	Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs	Human Development Inspector
9	Ellyne Serrano	804-2098 615-7216	hdc.eeu.wd@humandev.gov.bz	Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs	Coordinator- Economic Empowerment Unit
10	Rey Guerrero	610-5464	rev.guerrero@mof.gov.bz	Ministry of Finance	Procurement Director/CEU Director
11	Raquel Guerra	615-3702	raquel.guerra@mof.gov.bz	Ministry of Finance	Economist
12	Duane E. Belisle	822-2526	duane.belisle@med.gov.bz	Ministry of Economic Development	Policy Director
13	Eric Swan	607-3958	eswan.ceu@med.gov.bz	Central Executing Unit	Admin Officer
14	Dr. Pedro Villegas	669-8812	pvillegas.ceu@med.gov.bz	Central Executing Unit	Env. & Social Specialist
15	Martha Woodye	605-5885	martha.woodye@med.gov.bz	Ministry of Economic Development	MEALS Officer
16	Nephi Pott	822-2526	nephi.pott@med.gov.bz	Ministry of Economic Development	Economist
17	Gabriele Hulse	822-2526	gabrielle.hulse@med.gov.bz	Ministry of Economic Development	Economist
18	Valentino Shal	635-6951	ceo@labour.gov.bz	Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour & Local Government	Chief Executive Officer
19	Clifford King	670-2643	clifford.king@labour.gov.bz	Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour & Local Government	Director of Local Government
20	Ary Sosa	671-4967	ary.sosa@chr.health.gov.bz	Ministry of Health and Wellness - Central Health Region	Water Analysis-CHR
21	John Bodden	613-8583	jbodden@health.gov.bz	Ministry of Health and Wellness	Representative
22	Sheldon Samuels	203-4798	sheldon.samuels@moe.gov.bz	Employment Training & Education Services	ITVET Country Coordinator
23	Elma Kay	610-3982	ekay@bmft.org.bz	Belize Maya Forest Trust	Director
24	Cynthia Williams	280-4284	hdc.wd@humandev.gov.bz	National Women's Commission	Representative
25	Pablo Mis	662-1663	mayaleadersbelize@gmail.com	Maya Leaders Alliance	Representative
26	Marissa Cervantes	280-4284	marissa.cervantes@gmail.com	National Women's Commission	Representative
27	Filiberto Penados	822-3307	belize.indigenous.council@gmail.com ; fpenados@gmail.com	Belize National Indigenous Council	Representative
28	Yahaira Vega	629-9390	yucatecmayabelize@gmail.com	Northern Maya Association of Belize	Representative
29	Arturo Cantun	607-6888	yucatecmayabelize@gmail.com	Northern Maya Association of Belize	Representative
30	Cynthia Eve Aird	615-6657	earid@galen.edu.bz	Galen University	Representative
31	Denise Robinson	223-0256	drobinson@ub.edu.bz	University of Belize	Representative



ANNEX 7. STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT PLAN (SEP) BUDGET

BUDGET CATEGORIES	Quantity	Unit Costs	Times/ Years	Total Costs	Notes
1. Indicative Consultant fees					
1a. Communications Consultant	1	15,000	1	15,000	
1b. Travel costs for consultants	1	5,000	1	5,000	
1c. Social Liaison Officers	2	24,000	1	48,000	
2. Consultations/ Participatory Planning, Decision-Making Meetings					
2a. Public Consultations	2	2,500	2	10,000	
2b. Organization of focus groups	12	500	2	12,000	
3. Communication Outreach Meetings					
3a. Posters, flyers	50	150	2	15,000	
3b. Social media campaign	2	1,000	2	4,000	
4. Trainings					
4a. Training on social and environmental issues	1	5,000	1	5,000	
4b. Training on Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	1	5,000	1	5,000	
5. Beneficiary surveys					
5a. Perception survey	3	10,000	1	30,000	
6. Grievance Mechanism (GM)					
6a. Training of GM committees	1	3,000	1	3,000	
6b. Suggestion boxes in villages	2	500	4	4,000	
6c. GM communication materials	2	1,000	2	4,000	
6d. Grievance investigations and site visits	2	1,500	4	12,000	
6e. GM Information System (setting up and maintenance)	1	1,000	2	2,000	
6f. Other GM Logistical Costs (Grievance Committee Meetings)	1	250	36	9,000	
7. Other expenses					
7a. Travel expensed and DSA	12	2,000	4	96,000	
7b. Unexpected expenses (7.5% total budget)	-	-	-	21,000	
TOTAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT BUDGET				300,000	



ANNEX 8. STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS

INDICATOR NAME	DEFINITION DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY	DATA SOURCE	METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION	RESPONSIBILITY FOR DATA COLLECTION
Beneficiary satisfaction with project's Stakeholder Engagement Process, of which are women and youth	This indicator will measure the average citizen satisfaction rate with the project's stakeholder engagement process. This indicator aims to report on the effectiveness of the stakeholder engagement processes in the project. The planned project surveys will be extended to obtain feedback from community members on their satisfaction with: (i) access to project information and awareness of decisions taken, (ii) their opportunities to provide feedback and participate in the dialogue; and (iii) the responsiveness of the implementing entity to feedback provided. These criteria will be rated on a 1-5 scale and will be equally weighted. In addition, qualitative feedback will be collected as well to improve the stakeholder engagement processes, if needed. For example, what is working well? How can the project improve its information dissemination strategy? etc. The CEU will oversee this survey and report annually (CEU will start reporting from year 3 of the project). Results will be gender disaggregated. Detailed mechanisms for collecting this data will be developed in year 1 of the Project by the CEU MEAL section, with the support of the Bank.	Annually. The CEU will start reporting from year 2 of the project	Perception survey	Perception survey. Measurement methodology will be defined by the CEU during year 1 of the Project and prior to launching the surveys.	MEAL Specialist with the support of the E&S Specialist of the CEU.
INDICATOR NAME	DEFINITION DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY	DATA SOURCE	METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION	RESPONSIBILITY FOR DATA COLLECTION



GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE - CENTRAL EXECUTING UNIT
MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT
SEP for Project: Belize Early Childhood Care and Education and Female Employment



Grievances responded to in the stipulated time.	The indicator will measure the proportion of grievances responded to in the stipulated time, as defined in the SEP.	Semi-annual	Progress Reports (CEU). Measurement methodology will be defined by the CEU.	Progress Reports prepared by the CEU	MEAL Specialist with the support of the E&S Specialist of the CEU
Number of community meetings held to discuss project progress, disaggregated by participation rate, of which women and youth	The indicator tracks the frequency of organized community meetings aimed at discussing the progress of the project and related topics. It measures the level of community engagement by recording the number of such meetings and the participation rate, with a specific focus on the inclusion of women and youth.	Semi-annual	Progress Reports (CEU). Measurement methodology will be defined by the CEU.	Progress Reports prepared by the CEU	MEAL specialist with the support of the E&S specialist of the CEU



ANNEX 9. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Child	Any person below the age of eighteen years
Community Workers	People employed or engaged in providing community/voluntarily Labour
Contracted Workers	People employed or engaged through third parties to perform work related to core functions of the project, regardless of location
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	It was established in 1969. It requires states to take measures to eradicate all manifestations of racial discrimination wherever they exist, including regarding property.
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions	The Convention provides a new framework for informed, transparent, and participatory systems of governance for culture. It was adopted in 2005.
Direct Workers	People employed or engaged directly by the Borrower (including the project proponent and the project implementing agencies) to work specifically in relation to the project
Equity	Principle of fairness in providing educational opportunities, resources, and treatment to all students, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religious identity, socioeconomic status, or ability to help them achieve their full potential.
Force Labor	Work that is performed involuntarily and under the menace of any penalty. It refers to situations in which persons are coerced to work using violence or intimidation, or by more subtle means such as manipulated debt, retention of identity papers or threats of denunciation to immigration authorities
Gender-based Violence	An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts; coercion; and other deprivations of liberty
Gender Equality	Provision of equal opportunities to access, participate and use public services to all women and men



TERM	DEFINITION
Grievances Mechanism	A grievance mechanism is a formal complaint process that can be used by individuals, workers, communities and/or civil society organizations that are being negatively affected by certain project activities and operations
Internal efficiency	How well an Education System facilitates student advancement from one grade level to the next using indicators such as dropout rate, repetition rate and student performance.
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 27)	It was adopted in 1976. It establishes that in those States in which ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.
Labor and Working Conditions	Contractors will keep records of recruitment/employment, wages, leave, incidence etc., in accordance with specifications set out in Bangladesh Labor Law. The CEU may at any time require records to ensure that Labour conditions are met. The CEU will review records against actuals at a minimum monthly and can require immediate remedial actions if warranted. A summary of issues and remedial actions will be included in the reports to the WB.
Migrant Workers	Workers who have migrated from one country to another or from one part of the country to another for purposes of employment
Primary Suppliers	Suppliers who, on an ongoing basis, provide directly to the project goods or materials essential for the core functions of the project
Sexual Abuse	Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another
Sexual Harassment	Any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment



TERM	DEFINITION
Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)	Given the nature of project interventions, project workers may be subject to some OHS concerns during civil/construction work, including, fall and struck by machines, spread of disease due to close interaction, fire and electrocution, traffic incidence etc. To address issues of OHS the bidding document and the contract agreement will stipulate measures so that Contractors ensure a safe working environment by providing training on safety, correct use of equipment, machine and equipment inspection, regular and informal toolbox talks, crisis management protocol, monitoring of working conditions, supply of PPE etc. Construction related OHS guidelines may be referred to plan OHS management and implementation. Given the nature of this project, the workers may be subject to various work-related incidences including fire, stuck by machines, fall, lack of PPE, lack of OHS related training, etc. A risk hazard assessment must be carried out before commencing work, following the law of proportionality, by the Contractor. Contractors must engage a minimum of one safety representative. Smaller contracts may permit the safety representative to carry out other assignments as well. The safety representative ensures the day-to-day compliance with specified safety measures and records of any incidents. Minor incidents shall be reported to respective PMU monthly, serious incidents shall be reported immediately. Minor incidents will be reflected in the reports to the WB, major issues will be flagged to the World Bank immediately. The reporting criteria will follow ESCP guidelines (notice within 24 hours of occurring), and the Contractor will carry out a Root Cause Analysis (RCA) as well as develop and implement a Safeguard Corrective Action Plan (SCAP) with the assistance of the CEU. The Contractor is required to follow international best practices on OHS (for example ILO OSH 2001 - Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems, ILO Code of Practice Safety and Health (1991).
Pre-primary	Initial stage of formal education that precedes primary school which typically targets children between ages 2 and 9 months to age 5 years old; synonymous with preschool.
Quality	The inclusive conditions and equitable standards under which any child is developed holistically for lifelong learning and success
Raising awareness	The project will take the initiative to organize sessions on raising awareness of the communities on issues relevant to the project's compliance and standards (e.g., Labour standards). This, in addition to project's Communication Strategy, will ensure effective and efficient participation of different stakeholders of the project.



TERM	DEFINITION
Rural communities	Rural areas are areas which are not towns or cities. They are often farming or agricultural areas. Rural is the opposite of urban, which means that buildings and places where people work and live are all close together.
Social Environment	It includes the values, beliefs, customs, and practices of a group of people. A business is subject to an external social environment and its own internal social environment. The external social environment provides both risks and opportunities for a business. Factors in the social environment that are important to health include those related to safety, violence, and social disorder in general, and more specific factors related to the type, quality, and stability of social connections, including social participation, social cohesion, social capital, and the collective.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)	The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. It provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go together with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.
Trained Teacher	Teachers who have satisfied the required pedagogical qualifications for licensing at a particular level.
Unscrupulous Labor Practices	Workers may be selected not basing on inherent job requirement, women may be left out of employment opportunities, pay differentials and scope of advancement may be skewed to workers favored by the employers. Noncompliance with Labour law may generate unhealthy working relations and conditions. Contract bidding document and agreement will require following the provisions of Labour law (especially referring to equal wage for equal work) and equal opportunity for all applicants, including women and persons with disability.
Workers Grievances	Contractors will be required to present a worker Grievance Mechanism (GM) which responds to the minimum requirements in this SEP. The Environmental and Social Specialist from the CEU's will review records monthly. Where worker concerns are not resolved, the CEU will keep abreast of the issue and reflect it in six monthly reports to the World Bank. Given the anticipated number of the project workers the Labour GM will be a separate undertaking apart from the Project level GM, though personnel in the committees (GC) on the GM may have overlapping functions. Reporting Channels for the GM may also be same.