

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A CONSULTANT TO
UPDATE AND FINALIZE A NATIONAL LAND USE
POLICY FOR BELIZE

Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining



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Introduction

The Government of Belize (GOB) recognizes the urgent need to review, update and implement its National Land Use Policy. Key national strategies, policies and plans such as the #Plan Belize Medium-Term Development Strategy 2022-2026, the recently updated National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Master Plan, and Belize's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) underscores the implementation of this policy as a crucial aspect of Belize's sustainability and climate resilience framework. The Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining is embarking on an inclusive and participatory process to review, update and finalize the National Land Use Policy through the GEF (Global Environment Facility) funded, Caribbean Small Island Developing States (CSIDS) SOILCARE Project. The CSIDS SOILCARE project, of which Belize is a participating country, is being executed by Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) while the GEF implementing partner is the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The project objective seeks to create a conducive enabling environment and supports countries to establish, implement monitor and report on progress towards Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets. Component 5 of the project focuses on Mainstreaming SLM and Sustainable Soil Management (SSM), into National and Regional LDN Strategy. This Policy Review will through this partnership, recruit a consultant to provide technical expertise to the Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining in the review, updating and finalizing of the National Land Use Policy.

Background

Belize is yet to adopt and implement a clearly defined land use policy. Land use continues to be addressed through many uncoordinated legal and policy frameworks that have resulted in a haphazard approach to managing the various land use practices; and an inability to effectively confront the myriad of issues that affect land use management. Belize is at a critical juncture where pressing land use challenges exacerbated by intense and intensifying demand for land for competing uses may erode progress made towards sustainable development targets such as reducing poverty, eradicating hunger, enhancing health and well-being; and making cities and human settlements safe, sustainable, resilient, and inclusive. Furthermore, as a small developing state, vulnerable to increasingly frequent disasters brought on by climate variability and change; land use planning and management demands an approach that prioritizes disaster risk reduction and enhances climate resilience. Effective land use management is therefore a vital aspect of governance to drive economic prosperity, conserve and protect valuable cultural and environmental assets, reduce the incidence of poverty, strengthen food security, and shape the human settlement patterns of the country to assure the highest quality of life for current and future generations. A sound land use policy that responds to the dynamic and integrated process of development planning and management is therefore a critical tool to define and guide an innovative and transformative approach to managing Belize's finite land resources ensuring its highest and best use to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

In 2011, A National Land Use Policy and Integrated Planning Framework for Land Resource Development was developed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment through the Forest Department under the auspices of the Mainstreaming and Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management Project. The National Land Use Policy articulated the Government of Belize's (GoB) position and strategy for the transparent and accountable allocation and distribution of land, and to guide the use and development of land according to its suitability and functionality. The policy sought to inform sectoral policies dealing with land use (forest, agriculture, human settlements, tourism etc.) and to facilitate a holistic approach to development by integrating Land Use Planning into Development Planning. The National Integrated Planning Framework for Land Resource Development was a technical and spatial framework designed to secure the rational and orderly development of lands in an environmentally sound manner. It proposed the establishment of a National Land Use Planning Office (NLUPO) as a technical office, that would have been charged with updating and monitoring the performance of any current land use policy, and all contemporary land use characteristics and trends. The planning framework also proposed a system of land use plans – a National Level Zoning Strategy with a countrywide focus, and Local Land Use Plans for the municipalities and rural areas. The policy and planning framework was endorsed by the Cabinet in November 2011¹, but was not implemented.

In 2016, the Government of Belize (GOB), with execution support of the Social Investment Fund and Technical support from the World Bank, began implementing the Belize Climate Resilient Infrastructure Project (BCRIP). Under component 2 of the BCRIP, technical assistance support was provided to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) for the updating of the National Land Use Policy and Planning Framework and preparation of an Action Plan for the implementation of the National Land Use Policy and Planning Framework. The objectives of the review and updating process entailed aligning the National Land Use Policy with national development policies and objectives, and specific sector policies and objectives; and identifying viable, practical, and feasible options for the implementation of the policy and plan.

In response to the above, a Draft Updated National Land Use Policy was developed in August 2018, with support of two key baseline documents: an Institutional Assessment of the Ministry of Natural Resources and a Baseline Assessment in Support of the Updated Land Use Policy and Planning Framework. The draft policy was subjected to a series of sector-specific focus groups discussions, and stakeholder institutions also provided written comments, observations and recommendations on the draft, all of which are considered in the development of the final policy.² Furthermore, it is highlighted that in the process of developing the framework, careful consideration was given to factors that may maximize success, such as easy integration into the recently restructured Ministry of Natural Resources, facilitation of relevant land use coordination functions with other agencies, political acceptance and expediency, regulatory reform under existing legislation (as opposed to amending or creating new legislation), and a gradual implementation approach to be distributed over a 10-year implementation time frame, thus

¹<https://www.sanpedrosun.com/politics-and-government/2011/11/29/cabinet-minutes-november-29-2011/>

² Final Land Use Policy Framework; March 2019

allowing for the building of relevant capacity as the land administration and management needs evolve.

The outputs of the updating process were finalized in March of 2019 and included a series of documents and a web mapping tool namely:

- Final Land Use Policy Framework
- Final Implementation Roadmap and Action plan
- Final NLUP Communications Strategy and Plan 2019-2021
- Final Resource Mobilization Strategy NLUP
- Land-Suitability-Map---Web Mapping Tool *link:* [Land Suitability Mapping](#)
- Land-Suitability-Map---Training-Report
- Land-Suitability-Map---User Guide

This 2019 updated National Land Use Policy was not taken to Cabinet for endorsement. Since 2019, there have been important developments that warrants that the existing draft Land Use Policy undergo a review and updating process to ensure adequate alignment with current national development priorities, strategies, and frameworks and to capture and reflect contemporary and emerging land use issues such as the customary land use and rights of indigenous peoples, gender equity, climate resilience and disaster risk reduction, among others.

Description of the Assignment

Overall Objective:

The objective of the consultancy is to provide the Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining with the technical expertise and guidance to undertake the following:

- i. *To review, prepare a draft and finalize a National Land Use Policy for Belize which clearly articulates the Government of Belize's position and strategy to guide the use and development of land in accordance with national development priorities, contemporary and emerging land use issues and global goals and commitments.*
- ii. *To secure national and local government commitment, stakeholder, and community buy-in through a participatory and inclusive process to ensure adoption and implementation of the National Land Use Policy.*

Job Summary

The Consultant will engage with the Land Use Policy Task Force (LUTF) and the Land Use Policy Review Committee (LURC) as outlined in the ***Work Plan to Finalize the National Land***

Use Policy to execute a rapid but robust review of the existing Land Use Policy Documents, prepare a draft National Land Use Policy and finalize the policy using an iterative, inclusive and participatory process to garner support and buy-in.

Scope of Services

The consultant is expected to undertake the following:

- 1) Conduct a comprehensive review of the existing Land Use Policy documents, national plans, strategies, frameworks, legislations, including the LDN Targets.
- 2) Organize meetings with key Agencies, Departments, focus groups NGOs, CBOs, Private Sector and stakeholders to better understand national priorities and the relevance and implications for the National Land Use Policy.
- 3) Lead working sessions with the Land Use Policy Task Force to update the National Land Use Policy.
- 4) Prepare a draft of the Updated National Land Use Policy for review by the Task Force.
- 5) Lead review sessions with the Land Use Policy Review Committee and revise draft document accordingly.
- 6) Prepare presentations for and participate in all stakeholder and community consultation sessions.
- 7) Finalize the National Land Use Policy to reflect input from the Land Use Policy Review Committee, stakeholders, and communities.

Main Tasks

- 1) Harvest and review all relevant documentation including but not limited to the 2011 and 2019 National Land Use Policy and Planning Frameworks and associated documents; #PlanBelize Medium-Term Development Strategy 2022-2026, the National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Master Plan, Belize's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan, other Sectoral Plans and Strategies, Municipal Plans, legislation etc The Review of Background Information and Documentation on Land Management shall include a Review of the Institutional and Legal Frameworks.
- 2) Prepare an Inception Report that summarizes the key findings from the review of documentation, outlines the conceptual framework for the National Land Use Policy, proposed Work Plan, highlights key risks, proposes a Risk Mitigation Strategy, and includes a draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan. During the Inception Mission, the Consultant shall undertake consultations with the key stakeholders with responsibility for Land Policy in Belize with a view to: (a) identifying key gaps and deficiencies in the

existing policy and legal framework for land management; (b) obtaining agreement on the institutional arrangements for undertaking the land policy process including agreement on time frames and the consultation processes; (c) gathering key documents, legislation and other information required to guide the work of the Consultant/ Team.

- 3) Draft an updated National Land Use Policy that addresses critical, contemporary, and emerging land use issues and challenges; and which provides an approach to optimal land utilization in Belize framed on the principles of sustainable development (economic, social, and environmental) climate resilience and disaster-risk reduction. The document should include an action framework for the implementation of the policy that identifies and outlines all the actions with indicative timelines and resources (human and financial) required to realize the implementation of the policy. The Review of the National Land Use Policy of Belize shall include all legislation and regulations governing land use, management and administration with the view of identifying gaps in the existing Draft Land Policy if any; fragmented, overlapping and/or ambiguous roles in the existing legislative instruments; and priority areas which should be considered for inclusion in a Draft Land Policy Enabling Act and Regulation.
- 4) Examination of regional models of land policy and enabling legislation, national environmental and development policies, strategic plans, and related documents with implications for sustainable land management.
- 5) Design and lead the review sessions with the Land Use Policy Review Committee. The consultant is expected to develop a methodology for the review sessions and prepare the necessary materials for the sessions (concept note, presentations, etc.) and work with the Policy and Planning Unit of the Ministry in organizing the sessions. The consultant will lead and execute the sessions with assistance from Ministry as required. The consultant is also expected to revise the draft document to reflect the outcome of the review sessions.
- 6) Design and participate in all the Stakeholder and Community Consultations. The consultant is expected to finalize the Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan drafted as part of the Inception Report and execute the Stakeholder Engagement Plan in collaboration with the Policy and Planning Unit of Ministry. The consultant is expected to prepare the necessary materials for the consultation sessions (concept note, presentations, etc.). The consultant is also expected to produce a Mid-Term Report detailing the outcome of the consultation sessions and revise the draft document to reflect the outcome of the consultation sessions.
- 7) Finalize and submit the National Land Use Policy document, draft Cabinet Paper, and deliver a final presentation at a public launch for the National Land Use Policy.

Required Competencies, Expertise and Qualifications

The assignment is to be undertaken by an individual consultant or a small local firm with experts with combined competencies and expertise. The individual or firm is expected to demonstrate the following competencies, expertise, and qualifications.

- Advance knowledge and expertise in land use/spatial, urban, and regional planning. Demonstrated capacity to lead and undertake strategic, integrated, and participatory planning processes at various geographic scales (urban, regional, national) and across sectors which promote the sustainable development of land and land resources.
- Integrated knowledge and understanding of Belize's contemporary development challenges including but not limited to national and local economic development; transportation, health, and human services; land and environmental degradation, pollution, urban-rural migration, social exclusion and marginalization, gender equity and the rights of indigenous peoples.
- Comprehensive knowledge and expertise in areas of climate resilience and governance and disaster risk management.
- Expert knowledge and understanding of the urban and rural spatial structure and function; demographic, economic, and socio-cultural context of settlements (cities, towns, villages, communities) in Belize.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the institutional, legislative, policy and planning framework (central and local) for land use planning, development control and regulation and land management in Belize.
- Demonstrated ability in facilitating and coordinating participatory processes utilizing a gender-sensitive approach; and engaging a broad range of stakeholders including indigenous peoples.

Qualifications

- Advanced degree (Masters or PhD) Development Planning, Spatial, Urban or Regional Planning, City Planning, Community Planning, Land Administration and Management, Geography, Public or Environmental Policy or Law or other related disciplines.
- At least 10 years' experience in formulating and updating national plans, strategies and policies for land use planning and management, sustainable development, climate resilience, disaster risk management, governance improvement etc.
- Strong Organizational, Analytical Writing and Reporting, Systems-thinking, and Project Management skills
- Excellent Interpersonal, Verbal and Written Communication, and solid Mediating and Consensus-building skills.

Reporting and Payment Requirements

The consultant will report to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining. The Director of Policy and Planning and the National Focal Point for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining must be included in all correspondence. The acceptance of reports requires the approval of the Chief Executive Officer on recommendation of the Land Use Policy Task Force.

The CSIDS-SOILCARE Project Manager should receive a monthly technical and financial report to aid in the project's reporting to the GEF.

All documents will be written in English. The consultant will be required to submit all reports in digital format along with two (2) hard copies.

The contract is a lump sum contract based on deliverables. Payments will be made based on reports and original invoices presented according to the schedule outlined below.

Deliverables, Timeline and Payment Schedule

	Deliverable	Timeline	Payment (%)
1.	Inception Report (final)	Week 4	15%
2.	National Land Use Policy (draft)	Week 12	35%
3.	Mid-Term Report (Consultation Sessions)	Week 22	15%
4.	National Land Use Policy (Final – document and presentation delivery)	Week 26	35%

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Level of Effort and Duration

The consultancy is estimated to require 75 person-days to complete. It will span a period of 26 calendar weeks.

Starting period

The expected starting date is September 1, 2023