



Climate-compatible Tourism Project: Key Summary Findings from Policy Analysis

Policy Brief

2014



Overview:

Belize's natural capital demonstrates real potential in driving the country's development agenda. However, there is a clear need to mainstream adequate environmental protection and sustainable development policies and strategies, including climate change, into the various sector national plans and programmes to protect the integrity of the resource base. Belize's current path towards a macroeconomic situation generates important concerns for the future of the environment in Belize. It is feared that the need for the country to recover from recent economic downturns will force an intensive and unsustainable use of its natural resources. At the same time, Belize is considered a country that is vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. With that said, national and sector planning bodies need to include considerations of climate change/ climate variability, adaptation and mitigation in planning deliberations and processes.

Existing measures and programmes currently in place at the national level in Belize are based on legislation enacted by the Government of Belize. The legal framework provides the basis on which biodiversity may be integrated into regulations and policies. Presently, Belize has a number of significant pieces of legislations, some of which are in the process of being amended, and others, which require amending to meet tomorrow's needs. Some laws directly governing sustainable use and protection of biodiversity that are of relevance to this project were analysed.

The project analysed key relevant policy instruments to determine whether they support or undermine climate-compatible tourism development based on the integration of sustainable tourism measures, maintenance of ecosystems health and function, and climate adaptation/resilience building.

The main objective of this initiative was to identify areas of existing policy that support or inhibit climate-compatible tourism development in Belize

The project focused on examining policies to determine whether existing public policies and plans support or undermine:

- a) tourism development
- b) ecosystem health and function
- c) climate adaptation

It considered both single and triple-wins with respect to sustainable development, biodiversity protection and climate adaptation.



Approach:

The policy review considered both explicit policies - those that are formulated with the intention to address tourism, coastal/marine health and/or climate change adaptation; and implicit - those that were formulated to address other issues but are relevant in that they influence vulnerability to climate change impacts or ecosystem health.

A content analysis of the key policy documents was carried out to look for climate adaptation language and potential to influence possible adaptive responses. From this process we have identified:

- i) No regrets policies and plans that have multiple benefits;
- ii) Policies that require trade-offs or may increase vulnerability to climate change;
- iii) Policy gaps where absence of policy or regulation may be detrimental to sustainable tourism development.

Areas of concern in existing policies were considered and changes suggested that could advance climate-compatible tourism development.

Results:

A total of 39 documents were reviewed. These include:

- 24 public policies, strategies and plans
- 15 relevant laws (Acts, Legislations and Regulations)



Inventory of Belize's policies that are of relevance to the project "Identifying opportunities for climate-compatible tourism development in Belize"

Belize's natural capital demonstrates real potential in driving the country's development agenda. However, there is a clear need to mainstream adequate environmental protection and sustainable development policies and strategies, including climate change, into the various sector national plans and programmes to protect the integrity of the resource base. Belize's current path towards a macroeconomic situation generates important concerns for the future of the environment in Belize. It is feared that the need for the country to recover from recent economic downturns will force an intensive and unsustainable use of its natural resources. At the same time, Belize is considered a country that is vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. With that said, national and sector planning bodies need to include considerations of climate change/ climate variability, adaptation and mitigation in planning deliberations and processes.

No.	Policy document	GoB ministry/department	Year developed	Policy Vision	Policy goals/objectives	Relevance to this project (categorization)	Specific section on climate change?
1	Belize national landuse policy and planning framework for land resource development (52pages)	Ministry of Natural Resources (Lands Department)	2011	A national landuse policy that guides Belize towards an environmentally and socially responsible use of land resources that enables national development.	1.) To provide guidance and direction in institutional, economic and legal reforms that will lead to improved land governance at national, local and community levels while ensuring that land is put to its most suitable use; 2) To provide a participatory platform for the people of Belize to partake in decision making regarding the use of, and equitable access to, land resources through an accountable and transparent process; 3) To establish a firm and consensual basis on which development can take place and provide maximum local and national benefit; 4) To facilitate economic growth and social progress by ensuring the development of land is founded upon feasible and sustainable grounds.	Includes special discussion areas on: natural resource and conservation strategies, climate change strategies, national infrastructure network strategies, landuse planning strategies in relation to flood risks, agriculture landuse strategies, aquaculture landuse strategies, and tourism landuse strategies.	Yes on page 33
2	Government of Belize policy on adaptation to climate change (12pages)	Ministry of Natural Resources (Meteorology Office)	2000	All sectors in Belize both public and private, academia, civil society and the media playing important roles in climate change advocacy and public awareness campaigns, and a much greater role to play in developing and participating in programmes and projects that are becoming available through the climate change negotiation process.	1.) Explore and access the opportunities being developed through the climate change negotiation process to meet the development objectives of the nation; 2) Prepare all sectors of Belize to meet the challenges of global climate change; 3) Promote the development of economic incentives, which encourage investment in public and private sector adaptation measures; 4) Develop Belize's negotiating position on climate change at the regional and international levels to promote its economic and environmental interests; 5) Foster the development of appropriate institutional systems for planning and responding to global climate change.	The Belize Climate Change Adaptation Policy mandates the relevant government agencies to prepare adaptation policy options for their sectors. These include but are not limited to agriculture, coastal zone, energy, environment, fisheries, forestry, health, housing, local government, tourism, transportation, and water resources.	Yes throughout the document
3	Horizon 2030 development (2009-2013) strategy and framework (120pages)	Ministry of Economic Development, Commerce and Industry and Consumer Protection	2010	The Horizon 2030 Strategy provides a new sustainable development context for the country, with a clear strategic focus on social and economic development.	The objective of the Horizon 2030 Framework is to clearly establish a set of long-term development goals, targets, and indicators that will guide concerted action by all stakeholders involved in the development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of both long term and intermediate sector programs and Government's long- and medium-term plans	It identifies those sectors critical for long term policy actions and investments and in varying degrees serve to focus sector specific strategies and plans. Some relevant targets highlighted in the Horizon 2030 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper management, allocation and utilization of the country's natural resources guided by the principles of sustainable development. • Integrated planning with a focused on the symbiotic relationship between natural resource management and social and economic development. • Adequate and sustained protection of marine and coastal areas as part of a larger strategy to mitigate the effects of climate change. • "Green" technology is being utilized by households, the private sector and across society. The document flagged the key economic goals for 2030 as being: building economic resilience, promoting productivity and competitiveness and ensuring the environmental sustainability of economic activity. Such includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase agricultural production in a sustainable way and increase local values added through the development of agro-processing. • Ensure a sustainable and profitable tourism sector. • Develop a strong small business sector, a strong work force and a strong corps of entrepreneurs. • Ensure that government is able to make timely investments in key economic infrastructure. 	No but it has a section on Economic Resilience (page 74) that stipulates Belize's economy as being highly vulnerable to external shocks (natural disasters or international economic crises). It went on to mention that planning can mitigate the effects of these shocks and that the effectiveness of mitigation measures and the quickness within which an economy can return to normal are indications of how resilient the economy is.
4	Belize Medium Term Development Strategy 2010 -2013 : Building Resilience against Social, Economic and Physical Vulnerabilities (106pages)	Ministry of Economic Development, Commerce and Industry and Consumer Protection	2010	Development efforts over the 2010 to 2013 period will incorporate measures to improve the economic and social structures and the capacity of its citizens to embrace economic opportunities in the face of the ongoing economic crisis and to proactively manage economic shocks and natural disasters.	To clearly establish the framework to guide concerted action by all stakeholders involved in development planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as medium-term development strategies and intermediate sector programmes.	Has a focus area on 'Environment and Disaster Risk Management'. The document made mentioned that confronting economic and physical shocks requires the ability to plan adequately and to make adjustments at the individual, institutional and community level. Furthermore, ensuring that individuals have decent living conditions, sources of income and an assurance of resources for future consumption will require the sustainable use of natural resources.	Yes on page 25
5	National Environmental Assessment Policy and Strategy	Ministry of Natural Resources	1999	Aimed at providing an overview of the major environmental issues facing Belize and guiding the Government in the wise use and management of its natural resources. It focused on issues, policies and programs which were considered most critical to Belize.	To provide a blueprint for the Government of Belize to address the environmental problems in Belize and to identify possible areas of assistance that could be provided by donor agencies.	Considers the natural environment but now outdated.	No

Policies, strategies and plans reviewed (n=24; only 6 considered CC)

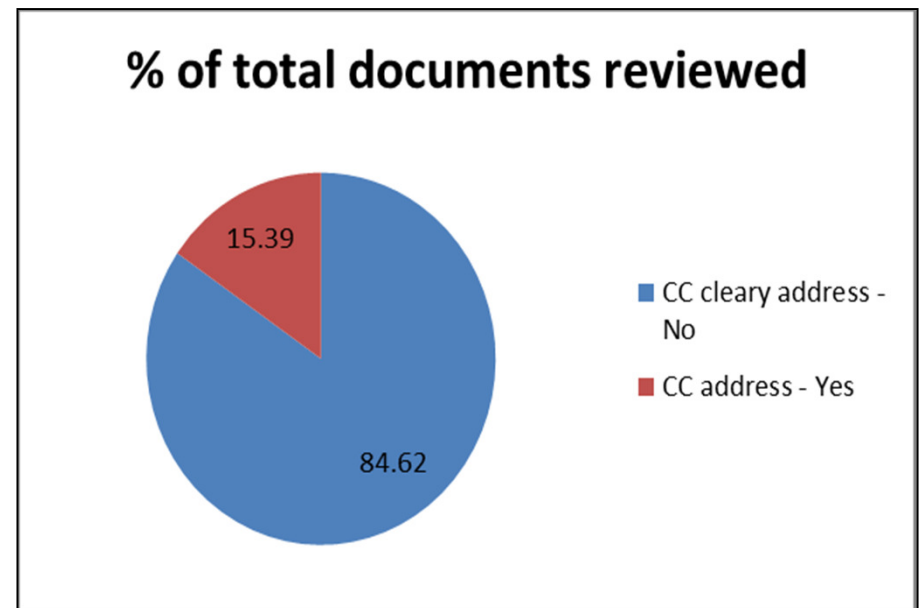
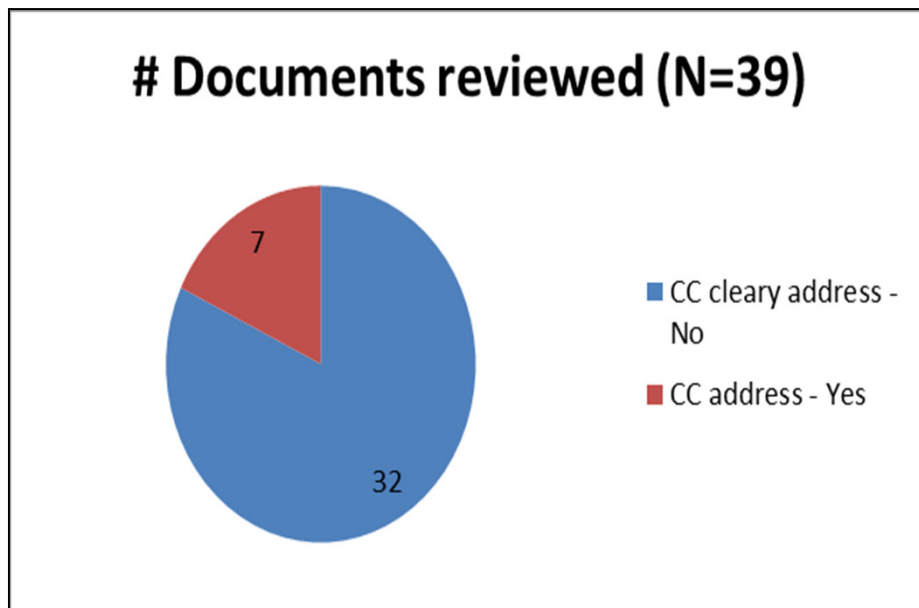
- National Land use Policy Framework (2011)*
- Climate Change Adaptation Policy (2000)**
- Horizon 2030 (2012)
- Belize Medium Term Development Strategy 2010 - 2013 : Building Resilience against Social, Economic and Physical Vulnerabilities (2010)*
- National Environmental Assessment Policy and Strategy (1999)
- Belize National Environmental Policy (2006)
- National Environmental Action Plan (1996)
- Guide for developers (2011 edited version)
- National Tourism Policy (2005)
- Belize's National Policy on Responsible Tourism (2010)
- National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (2011)
- National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (1998)
- National Biodiversity Policy (2006)
- National Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan (2005)
- Agriculture Development Management and Operational Strategy (2003)
- National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (2011)
- National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (1998)
- National Biodiversity Policy (2006)
- National Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan (2005)
- Agriculture Development Management and Operational Strategy (2003)
- The National Food & Agriculture Policy (2003)
- National Aquaculture Policy and Plan (2003)
- Belize National Hazard Mitigation Policy (2003)
- National Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for Belize (2000)
- ICZM Plan (2014)**
- Cayes Development Policy (2001)
- National Climate Resilience Plan (2013)**
- Integrated Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment (2014 draft)**

Relevant laws reviewed (n=15; only 1 considered CC)

- Coastal Zone Management Act (1998)
- Environmental Protection Act (2000 edited version)
- EIA Regulations (2007 amended)
- Effluent Limitation Regulations (2009 amended version)
- Forest Act (1927)
- Forest Mangrove Protection Regulations (1992 but in revision)
- Fisheries Resources Bill (2012)
- Wildlife Protection Act (2003 revised edition)
- National Parks System Act (2003)
- Private Forest 'Conservation' Act (200)
- Aquaculture Development Bill (2006)
- Hotel and Tourist Accommodation Act (2000)
- Land Utilization Act (2000)
- National Lands Act (2000)
- Disaster Preparedness and Response Act (2002)**

Of the documents reviewed, some are outdated while others used loose languages such as ‘need for resource and biodiversity protection, environmental sustainability, sustainable development, etc’ – but in general manner. The documents ranged from year1927 to 2014.

Analysis of the 39 documents revealed that only 15% considered impacts from climate change (CC) effects and basic options to address them.



The project also looked at what impact this finding could have on potential for climate-compatible development. Findings from analysis of some of the documents are show in the following tables.

Impact on climate-compatible tourism development (+/-)

* = considers CC + = support CC - = undermine CC

Documents reviewed	Relevance
Landuse Policy* ++	Includes special discussion areas on: <u>natural resource and conservation strategies</u> , <u>climate change strategies</u> , <u>national infrastructure network strategies</u> , <u>landuse planning strategies in relation to flood risks</u> , <u>agriculture landuse strategies</u> , <u>aquaculture landuse strategies</u> , and <u>tourism landuse strategies</u> .
CC Adaptation policy** ++	Mandates relevant government agencies <u>to prepare adaptation policy options for their sectors</u> (e.g. agriculture, coastal zone, energy, environment, fisheries, forestry, health, housing, local government, tourism, transportation, and water resources). <u>Outdated</u>
Horizon 2030 +-	Mentions need to conserve biodiversity. Has a section on Economic Resilience and speaks about Belize's economy as being <u>highly vulnerable to external shocks (natural disasters or international economic crises)</u> . It mentions that <u>planning can mitigate the effects of such shocks but does not provide concrete ways of doing so</u> .

*Double ratings (e.g. **, ++ or --) depict that there is a higher contribution*

Impact on climate-compatible tourism development (+/-)

* = considers CC + = support - = undermine

Documents reviewed	Relevance
Belize Medium Term Development Strategy 2010 - 2013 : Building Resilience against Social, Economic and Physical Vulnerabilities* +	Has a focus area on 'Environment and Disaster Risk Management'. <u>Makes mentioned that confronting economic and physical shocks requires the ability to plan adequately and to make adjustments at the individual, institutional and community level.</u> Also mentions the need to ensure sustainable use of natural resources as a means to having decent living conditions, sources of income and an assurance of resources for future consumption.
Belize National Environmental Policy + -	Promotes sustainable use of Belize's natural environment, <u>however does not provide concrete steps to do so under changing climatic conditions.</u>
National Tourism Policy + -	Provide guidance for the development of all types of tourism and is predicated on policies to also look at significant changes in the external environment. CC not addressed.
Belize's National Policy on Responsible Tourism + -	Includes a program area on the need to safeguard biodiversity and protected areas <u>but no mention of addressing climate change issues and measures to adapt.</u>

Impact on climate-compatible tourism development (+/-)

* = considers CC + = support - = undermine

Documents reviewed	Relevance
National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan + -	Provides a framework that allows for <u>sustainable development planning</u> which is good since consideration of sustainability aspects allows for a competitive advantage. It also seems to <u>consider nature-based tourism but no mention of addressing climate change issues and measures to adapt.</u>
National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan + -	<u>Climate change not considered but there is a small section on natural disasters highlighted under threats to biodiversity.</u> <u>Outdated...needs to be revised.</u>
National Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for Belize + -	Outlines some measures to promote sustainable use and planned development of Belize's coastal resources. <u>No CC consideration but has a section on 'confronting coastal vulnerability' on pg 63.</u> <u>Outdated...needs to be revised.</u>
ICZM Plan*+	<u>Recommends actions that will ensure sustainable coastal resources use by balancing conservation ideals with the economic and social needs of the country.</u> <u>Climate change impacts and minor options to address them highlighted within.</u>

Impact on climate-compatible tourism development (+/-)

* = considers CC + = support - = undermine

Documents reviewed	Relevance
National Climate Resilience Plan*+	<u>Looks at climate change impact on infrastructure and the environment from a development perspective. Highlight interventions to address key CC threats and vulnerability.</u>
Integrated Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment*+	<u>Aims to enhance adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change in national policies and demonstrate actions that support effective climate change governance.</u>
EIA Regulations + -	Seeks to address potential anthropogenic impacts by introducing measures that are conducive to maintaining a healthy and natural environment <u>but does not consider climate change and measures to address such threats.</u>
Coastal Zone Management Act + -	Enacted to promote sustainable development of coastal and marine areas through coordination of legislations affecting coastal resources and through building capacity and expertise to manage said areas. <u>Does not address climate change and measures to address impacts. Outdated...needs to be revised.</u>

Recommendations:

Very few legal documents considers climate change, adaptation to climate change or building resilience to climate change. Urgent action is thus needed to revise or amend these to address climate change threats with concrete actions to buffer against impact. As a starting point, priority should be given to the following ones:

1. ***Sustainable Tourism Master Plan*** - revise to integrate green climate adaptation options to help deal with current and future disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate risk factors within the tourism development landscape.
2. **CZM Act** - revise to grant greater protection to Belize's coastal habitats, including those beyond the high water mark as well as to ensure that it is climate smart to sufficiently addressed risks and vulnerabilities posed by a changing climate. A revised ACT will also grant greater strength to the ICZMP's implementation.
3. **EIA Regulations** – revise to ensure that the EIA Regs, including associated development checklist, fully call for the accounting of the value of nature in combating risks and vulnerability related to climate change effects.
4. **Mangrove Regulations** - revise/update to grant greater protection to mangroves, and to reflect the critical goods and services provided by these ecosystems in buffering against climate impacts; essentially to climate-smart the regulation.
5. **Horizon 2030 Development Plan** - needs to clearly account for the influence (negative or positive) of climate change on our environmental, social, and economic sectors. Belize's main economies are nature-based and climate change may compromise some of the benefits we are receiving from nature if appropriate planning and management actions are not set in place.

Biography

Nadia Bood is a Reef Scientist and Climate Adaptation Advisor for the World Wildlife Fund Mesoamerican Reef Program. Leandra Cho-Ricketts is the Administrative Director and Marine Science Director at the University of Belize Environmental Research Institute (UBERI) where she is in charge of the marine science programs at the Institute. Chantalle Clarke-Samuels is the Director of the Belize Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute.

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