



**Asesoramiento  
Ambiental  
Estratégico**



**CENTRE FOR APPLIED  
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

## **Environmental and Social Management Framework for the REDD+ Readiness Project in Belize**

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## List of Acronyms

AAE	Asesoramiento Ambiental Estratégico
BENIC	Belize National Indigenous Council
BLPA	Belize Livestock Producers Association
BNN	Belize Network of NGOs
CADS	Centre for Applied Development Studies
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Authority
DFC	Development Finance Corporation of Belize
EIAs	Environmental Impact Assessments
ES	Ecosystem Services
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
FCCs	Forest Co-Management Councils
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FGRM	Feedback, Grievance and Redress Mechanism
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FREL	Forest Reference Emissions Levels
GA	Grant Agreement
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GHGI	Greenhouse Gas Inventories
GOB	Government of Belize
GPL	General Poverty Line
GSMU	Geospatial Monitoring Unit
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
IPPF	Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework
ITT	Indigenous Technical Team
LRP	Livelihood Restoration Plans
LTFL	Long-Term Forest Licenses
LTFLE	Long Term Forest Licensees and Exporters
LTPFP	Long-Term Private Forest Permits
MAFFESD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, the Environment and Sustainable Development
masl	Meters above sea level
MLA	Maya Leaders Alliance
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification system
MSA	Mapping and Stakeholder Analysis
MSDCCDRM	Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management
NCCO	National Climate Change Office
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NFMS	National Forest Monitoring System
NGC	National Garifuna Council
NLUP	National Land Use Plan



NMAB	Northern Maya Association of Belize
OP	Operational Policy
PACT	Protected Areas Conservation Trust
PF	Process Framework
PLRs	Policies, Laws and Regulations
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation plus the role of forest conservation, sustainable management of forest and forest carbon stock enhancement
R-PP	Readiness Preparation Proposal
REDD+ CU	REDD+ Coordination Unit
SA	Stakeholder Analysis
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SIB	Statistical Institute of Belize
SIS	Safeguards Information System
UBERI	University of Belize Environmental Research Institute
TAA	Toledo Alcaldes Association
TIDE	Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WB	World Bank



## 1. Executive summary

With the aim to access funding for the preparation of REDD+ in Belize, the government of Belize submitted a Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) to the Participants' Committee of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) in July 2013. In March 2014, the Readiness Preparation Grant Agreement (GA) was signed.

Countries receiving REDD+ readiness funding from the FCPF are required to conduct a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) and develop an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) for REDD+ implementation. The following box explains these two terms in further detail.

### Box 1: Definition of the terms SESA and ESMF (FCPF 2018)

A **Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA)** helps to ensure compliance with relevant safeguards by integrating key environmental and social considerations covered by the relevant safeguard policies and procedures at the earliest stage of decision making. It also creates a platform for the participation of key stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and local communities who depend on forest resources.

Unlike an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), which applies to project level, a SESA is conducted at program level, i.e. where broad policies and measures have been identified, targeting a large area, as in a national-level program, but without detailed information on the exact location for implementation of activities and/or on how they will be implemented. Its focus is on the enabling environment.

A key output of the SESA is an **Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)**. The ESMF helps countries manage and mitigate the environmental and social risks and impacts of future investments associated with implementing a country's REDD+ strategy. The ESMF provides a direct link to the relevant safeguard standards.

The present report is the ESMF for REDD+ implementation in Belize. It introduces the main biogeographic and socio-economic characteristics of the country, Belize's National REDD+ Strategy and the institutional framework for its implementation (chapter 2). It then presents the applicable environmental and social safeguards, describes the SESA process and details the objectives and scope of the ESMF (chapter 3). Chapter 4 provides an overview of Belize's Policies, Laws and Regulations (PLRs) in the context of the applicable safeguards requirements. Chapter 5 presents the main findings of the SESA process, i.e. obstacles to REDD+ implementation as well as benefits and risks of REDD+ implementation in Belize. It provides information on the extent to which the REDD+ Strategy in itself will help address identified obstacles and risks and will promote to obtain benefits. The chapter concludes with the presentation of mitigation measures to address the identified obstacles and risks in REDD+ implementation in the form of an Action Plan (see chapter 5.4), which is one of the centerpieces of the ESMF. However, since many details about where REDD+ will be implemented in Belize and how exactly this is going to happen are still unknown, an additional component is needed to ensure alignment with safeguards during implementation: A procedure for screening for and addressing risks and impacts once such detail is available, i.e. at the level of "REDD+ subprojects". This procedure is detailed in chapter 6, followed by a chapter on the importance of stakeholder engagement and information about accountability and grievance redress in chapters 7 and 8. Chapter 9 then sets out what needs to be considered for monitoring and evaluation of ESMF implementation under REDD+, before chapter 10 talks about institutional arrangements for ESMF implementation and chapter 11 concludes with some remarks regarding the budget for ESMF implementation.



The following graph illustrates the core components of the present ESMF that jointly ensure that REDD+ implementation will be in line with the applicable safeguards.

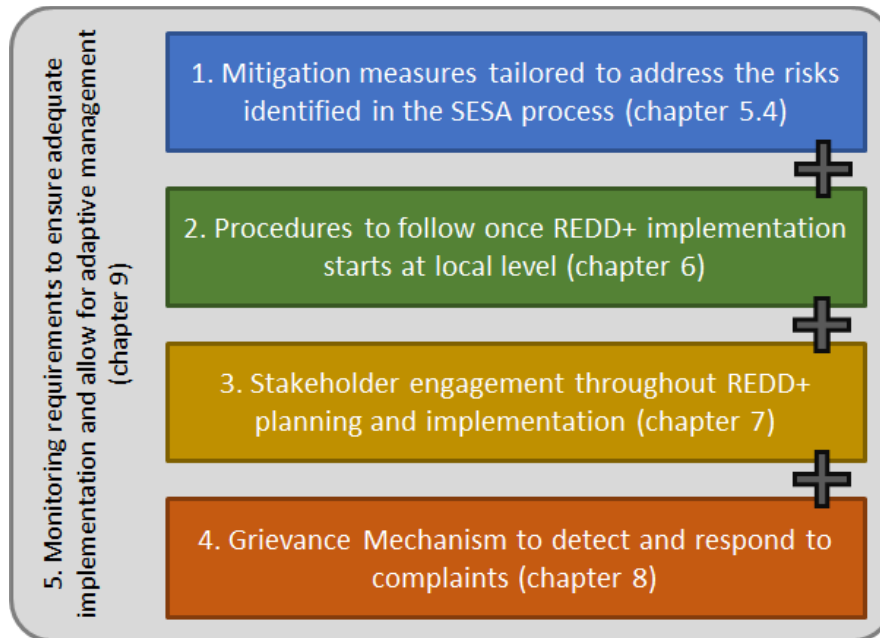


Figure 1. Core components of Belize’s ESMF

Main risks identified for REDD+ implementation include reversal or non-permanence of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions achieved through the REDD+ strategy; unequal access to REDD+ benefits, which can lead to conflict and competition within and between communities and loss of stakeholder support as well as exacerbation of the gender gap, inappropriate implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and fire management practices, which can adversely affect forests and associated biodiversity; disregard of IP rights; economic displacement, or unsustainable harvesting of forest products for alternative livelihoods, which can impact forest health and quality and health and safety of communities. The World Bank Operational Policies (WB OPs) triggered by these risks are:

- WB OP 4.01 Environmental Assessment;
- WB OP 4.09 Pest Management;
- WB OP 4.10 Indigenous Peoples;
- WB OP 4.12 Involuntary Resettlement; and
- WB OP 4.36 Forests.

For each identified risk, based on how it is addressed by existing Policies, Laws and Regulations as well as by Belize’s National REDD+ Strategy, mitigation measures were identified to ensure alignment with the requirements of the WB OPs. The mitigation measures reflect the importance of meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout REDD+ implementation, including the need for free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) where applicable, the importance of supporting and empowering especially vulnerable groups of stakeholders under REDD+, including Belize’s Indigenous Peoples, women, youth and others, and the importance of further assessment for those elements of the National REDD+ Strategy where detail is as yet missing on what exactly will be happening under REDD+, where and how. The mitigation measures also address several of the obstacles to REDD+ implementation



identified through the SESA process and promote REDD+ benefits and their fair and equitable sharing among stakeholders.

Due to the importance of risks related to Indigenous Peoples and the risk of economic displacement, an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) and a Process Framework (PF) have been developed as part of the ESMF and are attached as Annexes. These Frameworks include further detail regarding procedures of importance in the context of IP and economic displacement risks, e.g. on eligibility and compensation in the case of resource access restrictions as a result of REDD+ implementation. They also clarify the expected process of development and content of Indigenous Peoples Plans and Livelihood Restoration Plans, which will be required once there are more detailed plans for REDD+ implementation on the ground.

The combination of implementing the mitigation measures included in the present ESMF together with the IPPF and PF, applying the procedure defined for “REDD+ subprojects”, promoting meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout REDD+ implementation, using the FGRM and following up on all of this through monitoring and evaluation can be considered a strong response of the Government of Belize to the challenge of avoiding, and where this is impossible, minimizing and managing environmental and social risks and impacts from REDD+ implementation in Belize.

It is important to note that this ESMF, including the IPPF and PF, applies throughout REDD+ implementation in Belize, independently from the sources of funding for the next phases of REDD+.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Bio-geographic characteristics of Belize

Belize is located on the Caribbean coast of Central America on a total land area of 22,960 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 5% is distributed over more than 1,060 mangrove Cayes (small islands). It lies between 15.75°N and 18.5°N Latitude and 87.5°W and 89.25°W Longitude and it is bounded to the north by Mexico, to the west and south by Guatemala and to the east by the Caribbean Sea. Including Belize’s large extension of territorial sea, the total territory is 46,620 km<sup>2</sup> (GOB 2011).

Topographical features divide the Belizean landscape into two main physiographic regions: (1) the northern lowlands (approximately 250 masl), with limestone hills and escarpments, which lie over the Yucatan Platform - a hard dense limestone - along with the southern coastal swampy plains, and (2) the remaining south and central Belize which share the mountainous geology of eastern Guatemala (Fairbridge, cited in GOB 2011).

The dominant feature of the latter is the Maya Mountains, a tectonically uplifted block of ancient meta-sedimentary granite and volcanic rocks, which rise from the coastal lowlands to heights of about 1,100 masl, with a maximum elevation of 1,124 masl - Doyle’s Delight - stretching west into Guatemala’s Peten district (Bateson and Hall 1976). The Maya Mountains are surrounded by low karstic limestone hills that grade into the coastal plain (GOB 2011).

Belize has a tropical climate, strongly governed by seasonal variations in rainfall rather than in temperature. Mean monthly temperatures range from 16°-28° C between November to February, to 24°-33° C between March to October. Average rainfall varies considerably and a strong precipitation gradient exists from north to south, ranging from approximately 1,100 mm in northern and western Belize to over 4,000 mm in the extreme south (GOB 2011). Distinct wet (June – December) and dry (January – May) seasons are most pronounced in the northern and central regions, where during the dry season rainfall is below 100 millimeters per month. Also, in the north, unseasonal drought conditions are becoming more frequent (GOB 2016). Tropical storms and hurricanes have historically affected the country once every three years, and are more likely to hit the northern districts than

those in the south (CDKN 2014). More recently, however, hurricanes and tropical storms have increased in the western district.

The coastal lowlands and the amount of rain favored the formation of an important interlocking network of waterways and water bodies: rivers, creeks, and lagoons. Overall, the country has 16 major watersheds and numerous smaller ones (for more information on water resources, see SESA report). As a consequence of its biogeography, Belize has a wide variety of terrestrial, marine, and freshwater ecosystems. According to the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (MAFFESD 2016), Belize has five global ecoregions (Olsen *et al.* 2002), with fourteen broad natural and two anthropogenically altered ecosystem types identified under the national ecosystem mapping.

In relation to forests, in 2018 Belize retained 61.75% of its natural forest cover largely intact (CATHALAC 2020), providing habitats for keystone species such as jaguar and white-lipped peccary, absent from many forests in other Central American countries (GOB 2016) (for more information on Belize biodiversity, see section 5.2 of SESA Report). In addition, Belize has large areas of low-lying wetlands and is very rich in both surface and groundwater. The importance of Belize's wetlands is reflected in the declaration of two Ramsar sites: (1) Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary (1998), a 165 km<sup>2</sup> wetland complex connected to the Belize River via two streams in northern Belize, and more recently (2) Sarstoon Temash National Park (2005) in the south, a 35 km<sup>2</sup> wetland surrounded by tropical wet broadleaf forest ecosystems and land cover (GOB 2011; MAFFESD 2016). The wetlands of northern Belize tend to occur as expansive lagoon systems containing multiple habitat types like swamp forests, herbaceous marshes, and open water areas. They occur at or below five meters above sea level, are spring-fed and many are perennially waterlogged, with water fluctuations of about 1m.

Lastly, the reefs of Belize form a significant component of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System, the largest barrier in the western hemisphere - 220km - running parallel to the shore (GOB 2011). Their unique values and importance are recognized through the designation of seven of Belize's marine protected areas as a serial World Heritage Site – the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System. “The coastal lagoon lying between the reef and the mainland has extensive interconnected seagrass beds and mangrove-lined cayes that provide the essential ecosystem connectivity for the maintenance of Belize's exceptionally diverse marine life” (GOB 2016, p.27).

The following map shows Belize's land use and land cover as of 2018 (CATHALAC 2020) (See figure 2).

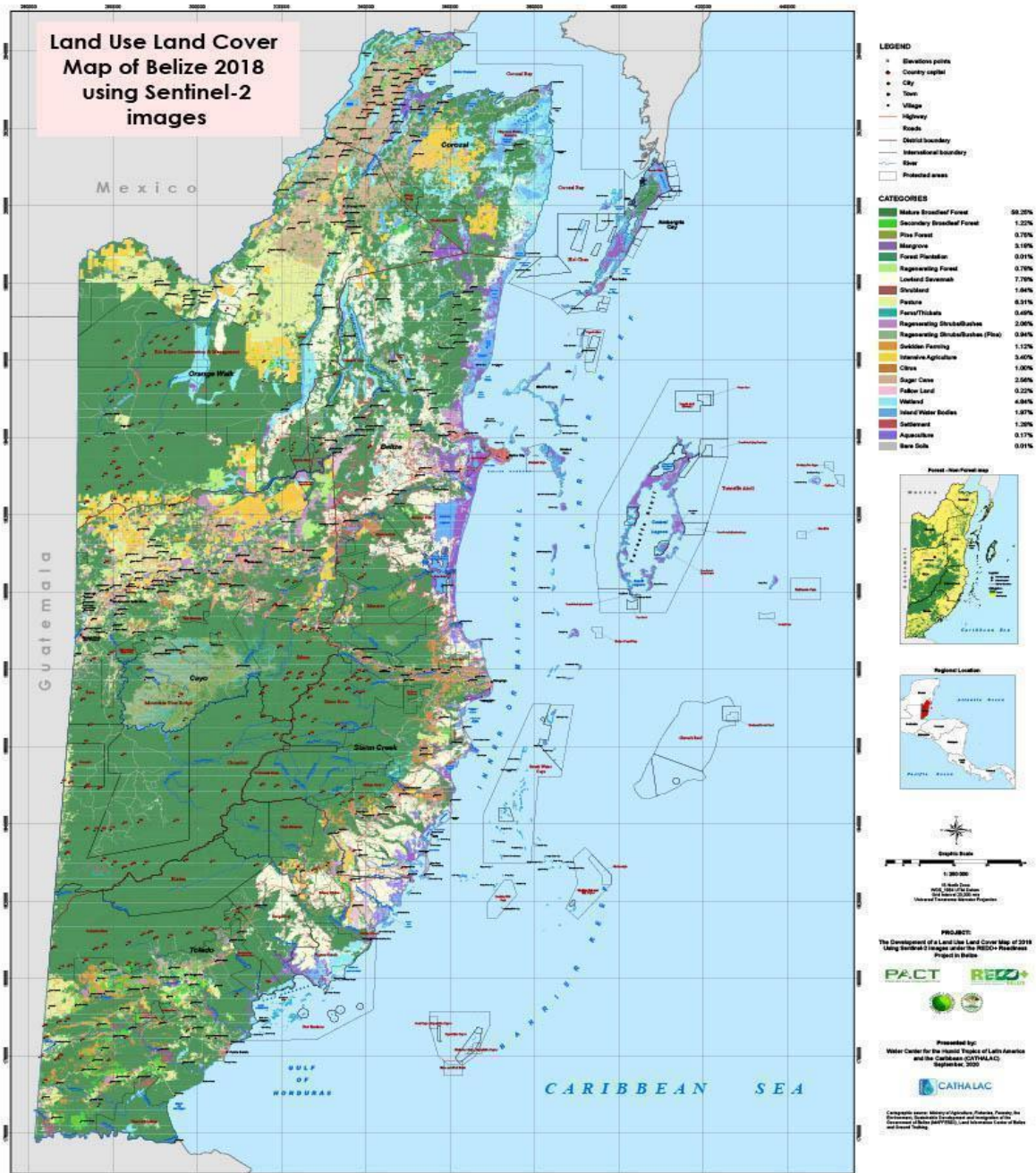


Figure 2. Land use and land cover map of Belize from 2018. Source: CATHALAC 2020.

## 2.2. Socio-economic characteristics of Belize

The population of Belize, based on the latest information from the SIB (SIB 2021b) is 430.191 people. Belize is a diverse, multiethnic and multilingual country with six dominant ethnic groups including Mayas, Garifuna, Mestizo/Spanish/Latino, Mennonites, Creoles and East Indians, who are spread out across the country (SIB 2021b). The Mestizo/Spanish/Latino population accounts for just over half of the population at 52.9%, while the Creole constitutes 25.9%, Mayas 11.3%, Garifuna 6.1%, East Indians 3.9% and Mennonites 3.6% respectively.

Overall, the majority of Belizeans, 231,950 (55.33%) live in rural communities (SIB 2020), however, the population distribution indicates that slightly more men (118,198) than women (113,752) live in rural communities. Traditionally however, some ethnic groups predominate in certain areas of the country (see table 1).

*Table 1. Percentage of Population in each Ethnic Group. Group by District. Source: Taken from SIB 2013.*

Ethnic Groups	No of Persons	Percentage of Population	Percentage of Population in District Claiming Ethnic Group					
			Corozal	Orange Walk	Belize	Cayo	Stann Creek	Toledo
Asian (Japanese, Chinese, Taiwanese)	3,316	1.0	0.8	0.8	1.5	1.0	0.9	0.3
Caucasian/White	4,015	1.2	1.0	0.3	1.7	1.3	1.7	1.0
Creole	83,460	25.9	8.0	7.2	56.5	18.5	22.0	5.0
East Indian	12,452	3.9	4.3	0.7	5.4	2.1	5.0	6.3
Garifuna	19,639	6.1	0.9	0.8	6.4	2.0	27.5	6.1
Maya	36,507	11.3	2.8	1.7	2.4	8.0	16.9	66.5
Mennonite	11,574	3.6	6.7	11.1	0.2	4.2	0.2	0.8
Mestizo/Spanish/Latino	170,446	52.9	79.3	79.7	34.5	67.5	33.9	19.9
Other	4,010	1.2	0.9	0.5	2.4	0.9	1.0	0.5
Not Stated	845	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
<b>Total Population</b>	-	<b>322,453</b>	<b>41,061</b>	<b>45,946</b>	<b>95,292</b>	<b>75,046</b>	<b>34,323</b>	<b>30,785</b>

\*Column percentages will not sum to 100, as some persons claim more than one ethnic group

IPs consisting of the Maya and Garifuna peoples live mostly in the southern districts of Toledo and Stann Creek respectively; the Creole populations live mostly in the Belize, Stann Creek and Cayo districts, which are located in the central and western regions of the country; the Mestizos can be found in Corozal and Orange Walk in the north as well as in Cayo in the west. The East Indian population lives predominantly in the south in the Toledo district; and the Mennonite populations generally reside in Orange Walk in the north and Cayo in the west. The Maya Indigenous Peoples constitute the majority population in the Toledo District, even though it is the least populous of the districts (SIB 2013). The Belize District is the largest district with a population of 127,683 (SIB 2020).

East Indians (India – Hindu descendants) are mostly located in the Toledo District, in the Corozal District and in Belize City. The first group of East Indians had arrived in the West Indies in 1838 as indentured servants, to fill a gap in the labor force created when the freed slaves left the plantations after the abolition of slavery. Indentured workers were encouraged to come to the Caribbean to work, under a signed contract, for about five years; after which time they were free to return to India or remain in the Caribbean as laborers on their own terms. In 1858 the British Parliament arranged for the transportation of one thousand Indian mutineers with their wives and families, after the suppression of the Indian Mutiny in India (BelmopanOnline 2021).

Around 11,500 Mennonites reside in Belize, with a majority of them present in Corozal, Orange Walk and Cayo. In 1959, some 3,000 Mennonites moved to Belize, hoping to start a farming community. They signed a special agreement with the government that exempt them from military service and certain forms of taxation while giving them complete freedom to farm within their communities (Minority Rights Group International 2017). Mennonites are early players in large-scale commercial food-based agriculture and are at the forefront of Belize's food exports. They keep expanding by buying more land to accommodate the aspirations of the young Mennonites and have started taking loans from commercial banks to ensure planned growth.

The latest poverty study in Belize was conducted by the Statistical Institute of Belize with assistance of Statistics Canada during the first quarter of 2020 based on information from the 2018/9 Household Budget Survey (SIB 2021a). The General Poverty Line (GPL) was defined at \$7961 based on the cost of acquiring food items. With this GPL, 52% of the population were living in poverty and 9% were indigent or critically poor. These numbers represent an 11-point increase in poverty and a 7-point decrease in indigent population with respect to 2009. In addition, 14% were classified as vulnerable to poverty. The rise in poverty rates is explained mainly by the rise from 28 to 43% of the poor population in urban areas; and by 3 points in rural areas, from 55 to 59%. Notable Toledo District has the highest poverty rates and Corozal was the only district in which poverty rates declined between 2009 and 2018.

Indigenous groups have higher poverty rates than the general population and they follow the growing trend from 2009 to 2018. Mayas have a poverty rate of 77%, while Garifuna have a poverty rate of 52%, similar to the national average.

Household size and level of education are related to poverty rates. The percentage of households below the GPL increases as the number of persons in the household grows from 2 to 7. Of all households with 2 members, 6% are indigent and 25% are poor; figures grow to 20% and 58% in households with 7 members (SIB 2021a).

In relation to education, indigence and poverty decrease as years of education increase. In households with no formal education indigent levels are 18% and poverty levels are 64%, while in households with college or university indigent levels are 1% and poverty levels are 12% (SIB 2021a).

Regarding income inequality, the GINI coefficient for 2018 was 0,49, which shows an increase in inequality in relation to 2009 when it was 0,38 (SIB 2021a).

For further detailed information on different socioeconomic aspects, please see the baseline information gathered in the SESA report.

### **2.3. Belize's National REDD+ Strategy**

Belize's National REDD+ Strategy is being prepared through a participatory approach with the involvement of national and local level stakeholders and uses the country's national context, policies, plans and sustainable development as the basis for the strategy.

An Operational Working Draft of the REDD+ strategy has been used to inform the SESA. It was subsequently improved with greater detail resulting from the SESA and feedback from stakeholders, including IPs, submitting a Second Draft. A third and almost final draft was elaborated and shared among stakeholders after an in-country writing workshop the 4th of October in Belmopan. It is expected that perhaps a Final Draft of the Strategy will be elucidated before the Strategy is considered finalized. However, this version has already been reviewed and validated by stakeholders in the final workshop on the 6th of December.

The version that was used as a basis for the SESA process consists of four pillars, each of which has several strategic lines allocated to it. It is a general strategy, which does not yet provide specific activities under each strategic line. Thus, the SESA and the ESMF are done based on possible lines of actions but not already determined activities. Box 2 provides an overview of the final pillars and strategic lines.

**Box 2: Overview of the pillars and strategic lines of the Second version of the National REDD+ Strategy of Belize**

**Pillar 1: Strengthen Institutional Coordination, Legal and Policy Framework and Enforcement**

**Strategic line 1.1** Officially implement, regulate and enforce a National Land Use Policy to help guide land use change authorizations, Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), conservation and restoration



**Strategic line 1.2** Develop clear criteria and procedures for the review of development plans connected to land allocation approvals and EIAs in which forest lands are involved

**Strategic line 1.3** Improve coordination between government actors for better management (e.g. authorizations), monitoring, control and enforcement of existing and new regulations

**Strategic line 1.4** Address inconsistent or perverse incentives in national legislation and design incentives to reduced GHG emissions and enhance carbon sequestration from forests

**Pillar 2: Increased and meaningful community engagement and empowerment**

**Strategic line 2.1** Enhance Recognition and Respect for the Rights of all Stakeholders

**Strategic line 2.2** Institute Inclusive and Culturally Appropriate Community Engagement and Participation Mechanisms

**Strategic line 2.3** Support, enhance and reward the sustainable land and forest stewardship of local communities and Indigenous Peoples

**Strategic line 2.4** Support, technically and financially, and enhance Sustainable Development Initiatives and Livelihoods for local communities and Indigenous Peoples

**Strategic line 2.5** Address Customary Land Tenure Issues, by creating appropriate norms and implementing existing rulings and internationally recognized rights

**Pillar 3: Sustainable Forest Management and Conservation**

**Strategic line 3.1** Institutional harmonization of forest policies and actions

**Strategic line 3.2** Define another system for timber valuation that captures the fair value of timber

**Strategic line 3.3** Promotion of utilization of secondary hardwoods and lesser-known timber species

**Strategic line 3.4** Improving monitoring and control of approved operations and plans

**Strategic line 3.5** Implementing integrated pest and fire management

**Strategic line 3.6** Enhancing forest conservation through a set of incentives and regulations

*Note: Strategic Line 3.2 and 3.3 might become merged into one S.L. "Assessing the efficiency of the current timber royalty system for contributing to sound forest management and fair public income"*

**Pillar 4: Forest Information, Monitoring**

**Strategic line 4.1** Develop, process and share forest related information

**Strategic line 4.2** Monitoring forest area and condition through remote sensing and community involvement

**Strategic line 4.3** National forest Inventory and permanent plots

## 2.4. Institutional framework for REDD+ implementation

The Belize REDD+ Readiness Project is a Government of Belize (GOB)-led project spearheaded by the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (MSDCCDRM). MSDCCDRM is the implementing agency for REDD+ activities in Belize. It makes such decisions as requesting funds for further REDD+ activities and deciding where in Belize those activities should be targeted. The MSDCCDRM also oversees the activities of the Forest Department (FD) which has the legal mandate for sustainably managing Belize's forest resources.

The FD was established in 1935 as an entity directly under the control of the central government. The FD has a staff number of 100, both technical staff and administrative/support staff from a broad spectrum of professionals from Natural Resource Management, Business Administration, Tropical Forest Management and Conservation, Climate Change Adaptation and Crop Protection, among others. The decentralized management technique of the FD means that every regional unit has a full complement of staff with the educational capacities to oversee and carry out the functions of the FD at the range level. All ranges comprise of a Senior Forest Officer, a protected areas officer, wildlife officer and staff from the clerical and field pool. The decentralized nature of the FD results in a better management of on-the-ground activities, such as monitoring and enforcement, and allows the FD to

have better collaboration and coordination with its partners at the community level. The 3 other units are the Geospatial Monitoring Unit (GSMU), the National and International Program, and the Fire Management and Restoration Unit. The FD are technically supporting the National Climate Change Office (NCCO), the organism responsible for the coordination of Belize's national, regional and international response to climate change (GOB 2021).

The MSDCCDRM has the important task of sustainable development planning as a result of Belize's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 global goals. The Sustainable Development Agenda commits Belize and each country to mitigate and adapt to climate change. As REDD+ activities contribute directly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 15 which address climate change, reducing deforestation and the sustainable use of ecosystems; these activities are best conducted within the climate change mitigation and adaptation framework.

Consequently, the MSDCCDRM and the FD are technically supporting the National Climate Change Office (NCCO) which is responsible for the coordination of Belize's national, regional and international response to climate change. This body works closely with other sister agencies such as the FD, Department of the Environment (DOE), Agriculture Department and the Lands and Surveys Departments. As an example, the FD provides the technical inputs related to the collection of Activity Data and emissions and removals associated, to the FRL report and to the MRV system. The NCCO spearheads the REDD+ Project on behalf of the Ministry, a responsibility previously executed by the FD.

The establishment of REDD+ activities within the NCCO follows the accurate advice that, “[i]n creating institutional arrangements to carry out the [REDD+] long-term vision[s] and strategic plan[s], countries should build upon existing arrangements, such as those developed for greenhouse gas inventories (GHGI) that underpin National Communications. Building on and strengthening existing institutional arrangements in establishing an NFMS for REDD+ will reduce duplication of effort and costs, facilitate use of official data sources, avoid institutional conflicts and help maximize co-benefits and consistency in reporting” (GFOI 2016).

The NCCO is further supported administratively by a Project Steering Committee (PSC) and technically by a Technical Expert Group (TEG). The PSC comprises representatives of government ministries and departments which provide fiscal and administrative oversight of the Project. It includes the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, Finance, Economic Development, Rural Development, Natural Resources and the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT). The TEG comprises government and non-government representatives within the forest sector who provide advice and recommendations to help guide the technical aspects of the Project. They review technical documents and lead on technical issues such as the production of the forest reference emissions levels (FREL), the REDD+ strategy and the monitoring, reporting and verification system (MRV). Membership of the TEG includes the NCCO, FD, Ministry of Natural Resources, University of Belize Environmental Research Institute (UBERI), the Belize National Indigenous Council (BENIC), the Belize Livestock Producers Association (BLPA), and the Belize Network of NGOs (BNN).

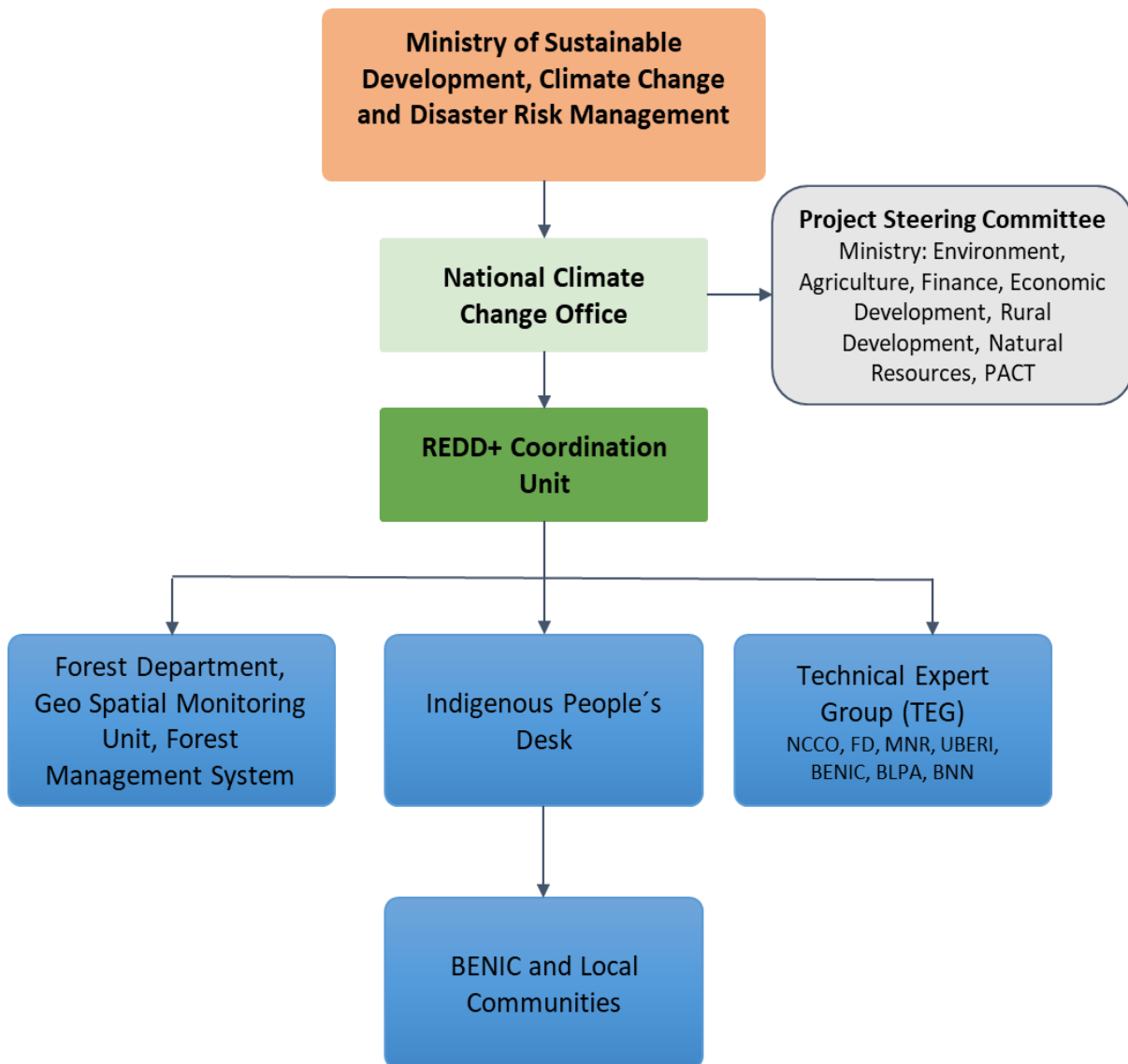
Finally, the REDD+ CU is a unit under the NCCO which coordinates all REDD+ related activities, promotes collaboration between government agencies and facilitates multi-sectoral discussions leading to the development and implementation of REDD+ plans and strategies in Belize. It works closely with the FD, DOE, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Natural Resources and other government agencies, to ensure improved collaboration and better decision-making processes in the forest sector. The REDD+ CU responds directly to the NCCO.





An important achievement of the REDD+ CU is the establishment of the Indigenous Peoples Desk (IP Desk) in February 2019, which serves as the catalyst for facilitating feedback from various indigenous groups on activities related to REDD+. The IP Desk also functions as a focal point for dissemination of information and to aid in enabling planning engagement with communities. An Indigenous Technical Team (ITT) was also established under BENIC with an IP's consultant of their choice to support IP engagement in REDD+ technical matters. The IP Desk coordinates the work of the ITT villages, especially when the ITT provides input to key activities of a REDD+ project.

BENIC consists of the National Garifuna Council (NGC); Northern Maya Association of Belize (NMAB) and the Maya Leaders Alliance/Toledo Alcalde Association (MLA/TAA) in representation of the Garifuna, Yucatec, Mopan and Q'eqchi Maya communities. The role of the BENIC is to support its constituent members and by extension their respective communities; provide a space for dialogue, analysis, and harmonization of the voices of the IP of Belize on issues that are of concern and will impact all IP. In harmonizing these voices, BENIC respects the autonomy and distinct realities of each constituent member.



*Figure 3. Original Institutional framework for REDD+ activities in Belize. Source: Own Elaboration.*

This figure shows the original institutional framework proposed for REDD+ Readiness in Belize yet for implementation it will be modified based on lessons learned from the preparation phase (refer to the REDD+ Strategy). In such revision, the role of the IP Desk as well as the ITT is an important one that should be reviewed in collaboration with the BENIC.

The institutions mandated to manage Belize’s natural resources and guide its sustainable development, particularly in relation to forests, REDD+ and its Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) are listed in the following table.

*Table 2. Forests, REDD+ and FCPF Related Institutions. Source: Adapted from GOB 2015, p. 76.*

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Legal/Administrative Mandates</b>	<b>Roles in Forests, REDD+, FCPF Implementation</b>
Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management	Oversees sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk management portfolios.	Land use planning, coordination of Climate Change including REDD+, sustainable development planning.
Forest Department	Oversees the sustainable management of Belize's forest resources.	Lead agency in development of REDD+ R-PP, forest planning and monitoring, forest carbon assessment, and participation in International REDD + initiatives.
REDD+ Coordination Unit	Planning and executing REDD+ activities.	Project implementing agency. Promoting the mainstreaming of REDD+ initiatives, activities, and products into various sectors of the economy; development of proposals for national REDD+ pilot initiatives; planning and oversight of relevant research and studies as part of readiness activities and promoting collaboration and partnerships with local and national institutions towards achieving the objectives of the REDD+ Strategy.
National Climate Change Office	Relays information to the public and private sectors, local communities and schools on all aspects of Climate Change; guides the initiative of having both the public and private sectors work in conjunction with each other to build Belize's resilience to Climate Change; ensures that Climate Change ideologies enter and remain in Belizean colloquialism, action and decision making.	Works closely with the REDD+ Coordination Unit in planning and executing REDD+ activities.
Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT)	To contribute to the sustainable management and development of Belize's natural and cultural assets for the benefit of Belizeans and the global community, both now and for future generations.	Fiduciary agent of the REDD+ Readiness Preparation Grant.
Department of the Environment	Prevents and controls environmental pollution, prohibits dumping, requires and regulates environmental impact assessments, interprets issues regarding nutrients,	Conduct environmental monitoring, enforcement and require and regulate the conduct of environmental impact assessments (EIAs).

	environmental investigations and applying general penalties.	
Lands and Survey Department	Management and allocation of national lands, registration of land tenure, authentication of plans for all legal surveys, subdivision of lands, valuation of lands, land use planning, land information management.	Implementation of National Land Use Policy in particular in relation to land tenure and the rights of indigenous Peoples.
Agriculture Department	Provides an environment that is conducive to increase production and productivity, promoting investment, and encouraging private sector involvement in agribusiness enterprises in a manner that ensures competitiveness, quality production, trade and sustainability.	Development of a climate resilient agriculture sector in Belize through the fulfillment of climate change adaptation and mitigation activities using sustainable practices and the promotion of climate smart agricultural technologies.

### 3. Environmental and social safeguards standards and their application

#### 3.1. Applicable safeguards standards

With the aim to access funding for the preparation of REDD+ in Belize, the Government of Belize submitted a Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) to the Participants' Committee of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) in July 2013. In March 2014, the Readiness Preparation Grant Agreement (GA) was signed. Where countries receive REDD+ readiness funding from the FCPF, the environmental and social safeguards standards of the World Bank need to be adhered to. The World Bank applies a set of eleven Environmental and Social Policies, also referred to as the "Safeguard Policies" and "Operational Policies" (OP), with the aim to ensure that the environment as well as people are protected from possible adverse impacts of project implementation<sup>1</sup>. Nine out of the eleven OPs are considered potentially relevant in the context of REDD+ readiness and implementation in Belize. The only two OPs that are not considered applicable are OP 4.03 Performance Standards for Private Sector Activities and OP 4.37 Safety of Dams. The potentially relevant World Bank OPs are introduced in Box 3.

In Belize's SESA process, these Operational Policies as well as additional guidance documents have been considered throughout. The main tool through which this is visible is the so-called "OP: risks identification matrix", which reflects the requirements of the operational policies. It was used to identify risks and ensure that all necessary requirements to deal with certain risks are incorporated in the ESMF. For further detail, please refer to the respective section in chapter 4.5.

#### **Box 3: World Bank Operational Policies applicable to REDD+ readiness and implementation in Belize**

**OP 4.01 Environmental Assessment:** To help ensure the environmental and social soundness and sustainability of investment projects/strategies and to support integration of environmental and social

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that a new set of environmental and social policies, the Environmental and Social Framework, was adopted by the World Bank in August 2016 (see [here](#)). However, since Belize signed the Grant agreement with the World Bank prior to that date, the previous Safeguard Policies are applicable, as described in the chapter.



aspects of projects/strategies into the decision-making process.

**OP 4.04 Natural Habitats:** To promote environmentally sustainable development by supporting the protection, conservation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of natural habitats and their functions.

**OP 4.09 Pest Management:** To promote the use of biological or environmental control methods and reduce reliance on synthetic chemical pesticides to manage pests that affect either agriculture or public health.

**OP 4.10 Indigenous Peoples:** To design and implement projects/strategies with the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in a way that fosters full respect for Indigenous Peoples' dignity, human rights, traditional knowledge, and cultural uniqueness and diversity and so that they: (i) receive culturally compatible social and economic benefits and (ii) do not suffer adverse effects during the development process.

**OP 4.11 Physical and Cultural Resources:** To assist in preserving physical and cultural resources and avoiding their destruction or damage. Physical and cultural resources include resources of archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, religious (including graveyards and burial sites), aesthetic, or other cultural significance.

**OP 4.12 Involuntary Resettlement:** To avoid or minimize involuntary resettlement and, where this is not feasible, to assist displaced persons in improving or at least restoring their livelihoods and standards of living in real terms relative to pre-displacement levels or to levels prevailing prior to the beginning of project/strategy implementation, whichever is higher.

**OP 4.36 Forests:** To realize the potential of forests to reduce poverty in a sustainable manner, integrate forests effectively into sustainable economic development, and protect the vital local and global environmental services and values of forests.

**OP 7.50 Projects on International Waterways:** To ensure that the international aspects of a project on an international waterway are dealt with at the earliest possible opportunity.

**OP 7.60 Projects in Disputed Areas:** To ensure relations between the Bank and its member countries and also between the country in which the project is carried out and neighboring countries are not affected while also ensuring that any dispute over an area in which the proposed project is located is dealt with at the earliest possible stage.

### 3.2. The SESA and development of the ESMF

The Strategic Social and Environmental Assessment (SESA) process in Belize has four main deliverables:

1. A **Scoping Report**, providing an overview of the REDD+ implementation environment in Belize based on existing information;
2. A **Prioritization Report**, presenting obstacles to, as well as benefits and risks resulting from REDD+ implementation identified through stakeholder engagement;
3. The **SESA Report**, describing the entire SESA process, its methodology, engagement events and findings; and,
4. The **Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)**, which is the framework that needs to be implemented to ensure that REDD+ implementation in Belize is in line with the WB OPs, and is based on the outcomes of the SESA process.

The present report represents the fourth deliverable of the above list, i.e. the ESMF.

The methodology to develop the SESA included an initial desk-based analysis, together with a stakeholder analysis which were used to gain a thorough overview of the biogeographical and socio-economic environment for REDD+ implementation in Belize, the actors involved and their roles and interests. This was presented in the Scoping Report and a shorter and improved version was presented in the SESA Report (chapter 5). This was followed by stakeholder consultations, which provided deeper insight into obstacles, risks and benefits from REDD+ implementation. Results were presented in the prioritization report and are also presented in the SESA Report (chapters 8 and 9). However, further analysis of the obstacles, risks and benefits was done based on expert knowledge and the results of the analysis of Belize's legal framework for implementation of WB OPs (section 4.4 and results presented in chapter 7 of the SESA Report).

A risk matrix (summarized in section 5.3 and available as Annex 11 of the SESA) was populated using all available information from the desk-based analysis, expert knowledge, the consultation findings regarding the risks and PLR results and a final response was included. It thus reflects all the risks that were identified through stakeholder consultation, but also some additional risks based on the desk-based analysis and expert knowledge.

When no risks were identified or a risk was mentioned in consultations but concluded by expert knowledge it would not materialize through REDD+ implementation, this was justified in the risk matrix. For justification, all available information was used, including results from the PLR analysis, content of the current draft version of the National REDD+ Strategy, desktop-review and expert knowledge.

For the preparation of the ESMF, where a risk was identified, this is mentioned in the risks matrix and the analysis was taken further:

- A. A description of the risks and possible impacts is provided;
- B. Information was added on the extent to which existing Policies, Laws and Regulations (PLRs) address the identified risk;
- C. Information was added on the extent to which the draft National REDD+ Strategy addresses the identified risk, including on potential to further refine the draft National REDD+ Strategy to optimize the extent to which it addresses the risk;
- D. Based on the previous above points and the information included in the WB OP matrix on requirements under each OP, mitigation measures were developed for inclusion in the ESMF.

The results from A to D are included in chapter 5.3 of the present ESMF. The mitigation measures mentioned in step E can be found in chapter 5.4.

Conducting the SESA in a participatory manner and reflecting the views of REDD+ stakeholders in Belize's ESMF, especially of the country's IPs, was a major objective of the consultancy team involved in the assignment, as reflected in the following box.

**Box 4: The importance of participation and feedback in Belize’s SESA and ESMF**

Belize’s SESA was a highly participatory process that gathered a lot of input from different stakeholders, and especially from IP representatives, on social and environmental considerations for REDD+ in Belize, current issues and concerns in and around the forest sector, benefits and risks from REDD+ implementation and other topics. All this input was fed into the SESA Report and its preliminary outputs, the ESMF and the parallel processes of developing Belize’s National REDD+ Strategy and Safeguards Information System (SIS) for REDD+.

It should be noted that every output, i.e. the Scoping Report, the Prioritization Report, the SESA Report and the ESMF, was shared as final draft version with the Government of Belize, with the World Bank and with the BENIC, feedback was received on all products and comments were addressed carefully throughout the process. For maximum transparency, responses to substantive comments were provided in a separate excel sheet alongside re-submission of the revised outputs. For more information on the stakeholder engagement process conducted for the SESA and ESMF, please see chapter 7.2 and respective annexes.

### 3.3. Objectives and scope of the ESMF

The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) is a framework instrument that examines safeguards issues and impacts of Belize’s National REDD+ Strategy as a whole as well as of REDD+ “subprojects” (i.e. separate activities or series of activities) that may in the future get developed under the strategy. The main objective of the ESMF is

*“To provide a combination of already identified necessary mitigation measures and procedures to jointly avoid, or where this is impossible, minimize and manage risks and impacts on Belize people and nature that could result from REDD+ implementation”.*

This ESMF contains provisions aiming at avoiding, and where this is impossible, minimizing, mitigating and/or compensating risks and adverse impacts, including cumulative or indirect environmental and social risks and impacts of multiple activities at REDD+ project level. The same provisions also contribute to enhancing REDD+ benefits, especially considering vulnerable groups of stakeholders, such as Belize’s IPs, women, youth and others. The ESMF also addresses the principles, guidelines and procedures for the screening, scoping, assessment, development of subproject-specific plans to manage residual risks, and for monitoring and evaluation in relation to the anticipated environmental and social risks and impacts of future REDD+ subprojects. All in all, the ESMF addresses REDD+ risks and impacts through the following main tools (see also figure 1):

- 1) High-level mitigation measures;
- 2) Subproject level procedures;
- 3) Stakeholder engagement throughout further REDD+ planning and implementation;
- 4) The REDD+-specific GRM; and,
- 5) Monitoring and evaluation of the above 4 to allow for adaptive management.

The ESMF was prepared during the REDD+ Readiness phase, in line with the outcomes of a highly participatory SESA process.

#### 4. Legal framework supporting application of the safeguards standards

As explained in the SESA Report, the analysis was focused on those PLRs that were identified as particularly relevant concerning the different WB OPs. The full analysis of the PLRs according to all the WB OPs applicable is included in Annex 9 of the SESA Report. Table 3 below provides a summary identifying some of the main gaps in the legal framework to ensure the respect and consideration of the WB OPs. The identification of gaps was expanded based on legal cases, precedents, and information on the implementation of the PLRs.

*Table 3. Summary of existing PLRs addressing the WB OPs and main gaps.*

WB OPs	Belize PLRs - Main Gaps identified
OP 4.01: Environmental Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Belize's laws are not fully compliant with international requirements on the impacts of hazardous waste.</li> <li>● The national laws require project implementers to prepare a report on an environmental impact assessment that includes a description of the likely significant effects including concerning its possible impact on human beings (social impacts). This however, is very broad in scope and there is no regulation which sets out the parameters that must be addressed in a social assessment to address social impacts. For example, there is no specification that impacts of activities on Indigenous Peoples need to be considered.</li> <li>● There are no domestic EA laws in Belize that include specific provisions for addressing transboundary impacts or impacts of a regional nature. Only laws relating to fisheries and domestic obligations emanating from the Law of the Sea take into consideration addressing transboundary and regional impacts.</li> <li>● There are no domestic laws that specifically enable the identification and avoidance of irreversible impacts caused by the implementation of a project. Irreversible impacts would however, be identified in the EA process and reported in the EA report for consideration by the regulatory authorities.</li> <li>● Gaps in contemplating the use of energy in project implementation.</li> <li>● Positive environmental and social impacts of implemented activities are not specifically considered in the national norms.</li> </ul>
OP 4.04: National Habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gaps in addressing the filling of wetlands, or laws addressing invasive species.</li> </ul>
OP 4.09: Pests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are no domestic laws promoting or disincentivizing the use of biological or environmental control methods or Integrated Pest Management or promoting reliance on synthetic chemical pesticides.</li> </ul>
OP 4.10: Indigenous Peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are no legislation/regulations defining IPs.</li> <li>● The recognition of IPs' (Southern Maya) customary rights to land and natural resources is embodied in the common law (case law) of Belize. The jurisprudence has detailed the legal principles for legally recognizing IP's customary rights to land and natural resources. In the absence of an expressed act of parliament, it is not known if the facts surrounding any claim to customary land and rights to natural resources by other IPs will be such as to be in accord with those principles and consequently be so legally recognized.</li> <li>● There are procedures in case law that have established legally recognized rights to lands and territories traditionally occupied by Mayan IPs. However, absent legislation, it is not known if these will apply to other IPs (like Garifuna).</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case law regulates the consideration of the involuntary taking of land of IPs with traditional land-based modes of production. Legislation/regulations in this regard is however required.</li> <li>• Case law regulates consultations with IPs for involuntary taking of land, as well as consideration of IPs cultural preferences. Legislation/regulations in this regard is however required.</li> <li>• Case law regulates FPIC of any activity on or that affects IPs' land. Legislation/regulations in this regard is however required.</li> <li>• There are no legislation/regulations for benefit sharing and compensation measures for the use of resources from IP areas.</li> <li>• Case law offers clarity to IPs/affected communities on their rights to natural resources that are subject to commercial development. Legislation/regulations in this regard is however required.</li> <li>• There are no regulations on restrictions imposed on PAs that may affect habitats that are considered by IPs as culturally valuable or sacred sites.</li> <li>• There are no legislations/regulations addressing PAs that may overlap with Indigenous lands or where there are Indigenous land claims.</li> <li>• There is no legislation/are no regulations addressing IPs relocation.</li> <li>• No carbon rights policy that recognizes Indigenous rights</li> </ul>
<p>OP 4.11: Physical and Cultural Resources</p>	<p>No major gaps were identified in this regard.</p>
<p>OP 4.12: Involuntary Resettlement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic displacement or restrictions in access to natural resources are unregulated.</li> <li>• There are no legislation/regulations requiring resettlement activities and associated measures as a requirement to be implemented before project implementation starts.</li> <li>• Gaps in consideration of vulnerable actors that could be affected by such restrictions.</li> <li>• Gaps in provision of compensation or resettlement assistance as a consequence of the involuntary taking of land or restriction of access to natural resources for persons who do not have formal legal rights to land; or for those who have no recognizable legal right or claim to the land they are occupying.</li> <li>• Gaps in resettlement and compensation measures and the participation of displaced persons in the establishment of such measures, including vulnerable peoples among them.</li> <li>• Gaps in requiring execution of resettlement activities and payment of compensation before the implementation of a project.</li> <li>• Gaps in establishment of compensation measures and/or measures to reestablish livelihoods for persons who are the subject to restriction in access to resources in legally protected areas, as well as in the involvement and participation of displaced persons.</li> <li>• There are no institutions and laws regulating grievance redress mechanisms for the case of resettlement.</li> </ul>
<p>OP 4.36: Forests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National policies in Belize are in general aligned with its international obligations concerning the protection of forests. However, there are major gaps between the national policy and the existing legislation. The existing legislation needs to be updated to reflect the aspirations of the policy.</li> <li>• There are no domestic laws defining forests, natural forests, critical natural forests.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belize's laws do not provide that commercial harvesting operations be certified under an independent forest certification system. They also do not provide that for harvesting operations conducted by small-scale landholders, by local communities under community forest management, or by such entities under joint forest management arrangements, a standard of forest management developed with the meaningful participation of locally affected communities, consistent with the principles and criteria of responsible forest management must be achieved.</li> <li>• There are no laws that prevent the establishment of plantations that involve any conversion or degradation of critical natural habitats, including adjacent or downstream critical natural habitats.</li> <li>• There are no domestic laws preventing the establishment of plantations with invasive species or that at least involve the undertaking of environmental assessment and mitigation measures in that regard.</li> <li>• The national norms do not require a standard of community forest management with the meaningful participation of locally affected communities or an action plan developed with participation of affected communities.</li> <li>• There is no general law regulating the use and market of non-timber forest products in Belize. Non-timber forest products, like agricultural products and other products, may be marketed by the Belize Marketing Board or they may have their own legislation.</li> </ul>
OP 7.50: Projects on International Waterways	No major gaps were identified in this regard.
OP 7.60: Projects in Disputed Areas	No major gaps were identified in this regard.

## 5. Management of REDD+ obstacles, benefits and risks

### 5.1. Identified obstacles for REDD+ implementation

This section presents the socio-economic, political/institutional and legal obstacle categories identified through stakeholder consultation as part of Belize's SESA process and based on expert knowledge. Under each category, the obstacles are further described to provide a more comprehensive picture of stakeholder contributions on the topic. Each category finishes with a concluding table which provides an overview of the extent to which the current draft version of the National REDD+ Strategy addresses the obstacles and where further potential lies in the Strategy or ESMF. However, there are certain issues that are National or Regional contextual realities beyond the scope of what a National REDD+ Strategy or an ESMF can address.

#### 5.1.1. Socio-economic obstacles

Table 4 below presents an overview of the socio-economic obstacles, the extent to which the National REDD+ strategy addresses them and potential either to further refine the strategy or include mitigation measures in this ESMF.

*Table 4. Overview of the socio-economic obstacles and how they are addressed by the Draft National REDD+ Strategy*

Socio-economic obstacles	Part of the current version of the National REDD+ Strategy addressing the obstacle
SE 1: Lack of knowledge leading to a lack of REDD+ ownership	<p>At the national level, awareness raising and capacity building of key actors involved in decision-making in different sectors could be part of strategic lines 1.1, 1.3, 3.1 and 4.1 but there is potential to include this more visibly in the current version of the National REDD+ Strategy.</p> <p>At the local level, the obstacle would be addressed to a large extent under Pillar 2, and especially strategic line 2.2 Foster Inclusive and Culturally Appropriate Community Engagement for the Development and Implementation of REDD+. Further mitigation measures are built into the ESMF to ensure comprehensive, balanced, inclusive and culturally appropriate stakeholder engagement over time, which should help overcome this obstacle.</p>
SE 2: Agriculture	<p>Strategic lines 1.3 Improve coordination between government actors for better management (e.g. authorizations), monitoring, control and enforcement of existing and new regulations and 1.4 Address inconsistent or perverse incentives in national legislation from pillar 1 together with strategic line 3.4. Improving monitoring and control of approved operations and plans and 3.5 Implementing integrated pest and fire management in pine uplands from pillar 3 can help address the obstacle to some extent. Lastly, Pillar 2 with strategic line 2.3 and 2.4 aims to support sustainable livelihoods and initiatives of local communities which move away from damaging agricultural practices. While there may be scope to enhance the extent to which the REDD+ Strategy addresses the obstacle, it is likely that the balance between agricultural development and REDD+ implementation will remain delicate.</p>
SE 3: Stakeholder concerns leading to mistrust	<p>To some extent, Pillar 2 can help address this obstacle by increasing community engagement and empowering communities. Strategic line 2.1 aims to Enhance Recognition and Respect for the Rights of all Stakeholders. Activities like, developing or strengthening community institutions would increase trust, as well as Strategic line 2.2 Foster Inclusive and Culturally Appropriate Community Engagement for the Development and Implementation of REDD+. Lastly, actively involving local communities so they receive REDD+ benefits, could help address the feeling of mistrust and not receiving REDD+ benefits. Further mitigation measures are built into the ESMF to ensure comprehensive, inclusive and culturally appropriate stakeholder engagement over time, and the development of a REDD+ Benefit-Sharing Mechanism is underway.</p>
SE 4: Expanding rural populations	<p>To officially implement, regulate and enforce a National Land Use Policy (strategic line 1.1) can help reduce and manage impacts from habitat conversion as a consequence of expanding rural populations. Strategic line 1.2 which deals with criteria and procedures for the review of development plans connected to land allocation approvals in which forest lands are involved. To promote the utilization of secondary hardwoods and lesser known species (strategic line 3.3) and the support of sustainable livelihoods under Pillar 2 (strategic line 2.3 and 2.4), can also help reduce pressure on forests by growing populations.</p>

SE 5: Expanding tourism activities	The current draft version of the National REDD+ Strategy contains strategic lines 1.1 and 1.2 which can help prioritize ecosystems particularly endangered and important as mangroves. It also has Pillar 4 which should lead to a better understanding and management of forests.
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### 5.1.2. Political/institutional obstacles

The below table presents an overview of the Political/Institutional obstacles, the extent to which the National REDD+ strategy addresses them and potential either to further refine the strategy or include mitigation measures in this ESMF.

*Table 5. Overview of Political/Institutional obstacles and how they are addressed by the Draft National REDD+ Strategy*

Political/institutional obstacles	Part of the current version of the National REDD+ Strategy addressing the obstacle
PI 1: Lack of capacity and training	This obstacle is partially addressed by Pillar 4 at a national level (Strategic line 4.1 Develop, process and share forest related information) and Pillar 2 at community level: increased and meaningful community engagement and empowerment. It aims to do this by capacity building, ensuring stakeholder stay informed, among other possible activities. The Strategy fails to deal specifically with lack of capacity at “high levels”, like government offices. This could be reinforced in future drafts.
PI 2: Lack of coordination and collaboration	Coordination and collaboration are equally needed at national, sub-national and local levels especially among the Indigenous organizations. At national level this could be reinforced by Strategic line 1.3 Improve coordination between government actors for better management (e.g. authorizations), monitoring, control and enforcement of existing and new regulations. At a sub-national and local levels this could be partly addressed by Pillar 2, strategic lines 2.1 and 2.2 through specific actions to strengthen community institutions and to broaden local level input into national level forest management programs, among others.
PI 3: Lack of authority at local level	Pillar 2 in its Strategic line 2.1, Enhance Recognition and Respect for the Rights of all Stakeholders could help strengthen established community leadership and governance structures.
PI 4: Low position of the environment on political agenda	The way the REDD+ strategy could help overcome this obstacle is by increasing awareness and communication on forest benefits. At the moment, Pillar 4 Forest information, particularly Strategic line 4.1 Develop, process and share forest related information can support this at a national level as well as Pillar 2, strategic line 2.2, if specific activities on community capacity building and education are incorporated. Nevertheless, there is potential to include this more visibly in the current version of the National REDD+ Strategy. Also, if fully and successfully implemented, Pillars 1 and 3 could raise the importance of the environment on the political agenda.
PI 5: Lack of continuity	There are some issues that are not possible to be addressed by a REDD+ Strategy like the continuity of political positions or political priorities. However,

	the REDD+ strategy can present a blueprint to be followed even as political positions change and priorities shift. Moreover, this blueprint combined with adequate funding and project positions related to REDD+ can sometimes represent the institutional memory required to continue the implementation of REDD+ even through a changing political context.
PI 6: No/slow policy development and implementation	Pillar 1 Strengthen Institutional Coordination, Legal and Policy Framework and Enforcement deals with some of the issues under this obstacle, like the implementation of the National Land Use Policy. Yet, the concern still remains that slow policy development and implementation might lead to a slow REDD+ implementation. The implementation of REDD+ through external funding can sometimes help expedite the execution process as funds have strict implementation timelines.
PI 7: Lack of REDD+ incentives	Direct financial, monetary or credit incentives to communities, groups or land holders are not strongly considered in the first draft of the Strategy. The inclusion of these types of direct incentives in the Strategy is a decision to be made by Belize authorities, but if done it can help address this obstacle.  Other types of benefits can be derived from the current version of the Strategy, such as those under Pillar 4 Forest Information and particularly under Pillar 2, which aims to strengthen and provide support to local communities' sustainable initiatives.
PI 8: Ministerial Discretion	The REDD+ strategy under Pillar 1 includes a strategic line specifically directed at developing clear criteria and procedures for the review of development plans connected to land allocation approvals and EIAs in which forest lands are involved. These criteria can help reduce discretion, at least in relation to the land allocation approvals and EIAs.

### 5.1.3. Legal obstacles

The below table presents an overview of the Legal obstacles, the extent to which the National REDD+ strategy addresses them and potential either to further refine the strategy or include mitigation measures in this ESMF.

*Table 6. Overview of Legal Obstacles and how they are addressed by the Draft National REDD+ Strategy*

Legal obstacles	Part of the current version of the National REDD+ Strategy addressing the obstacle
L 1: Legal gaps	Under Pillar 1, Strengthen Institutional Coordination, Legal and Policy Framework and Enforcement, Strategic line 1.2 addresses some of the issues raised under this obstacle (e.g.: managing land clearing) proposing to develop clear criteria and procedures for the review of development plans connected to land allocation approvals and EIAs in which forest lands are involved. Strategic line 1.1, officially implement, regulate and enforce a National Land Use Policy would help eliminate some of the legal gaps.

L.2: Lack of implementation/ enforcement of existing law	Pillar 1, Strengthen Institutional Coordination, Legal and Policy Framework and Enforcement, deals specifically with this obstacle. Particularly important are strategic lines 1.1, 1.2, 1.3. Also, Strategic line 2.5. which supports Complying with CCJ Ruling on Maya Customary Land Tenure (as well as any other customary land tenure issues) and Strategic line 3.4 Improving monitoring and control of approved operations and plans.
L.3: Lack of communication of existing law	<p>As stated on obstacle PI 4, there is potential to include this more visibly in the current version of the National REDD+ Strategy, and future mitigation measures will be included in the ESMF to reinforce proper communication of existing laws which in turn can help address other obstacles like SE 1: Lack of knowledge leading to a lack of REDD+ ownership.</p> <p>At the moment this is partly addressed with Pillar 2: Increased and meaningful community engagement and empowerment, Strategic lines 2.1 and 2.2 which aim to increase awareness and capacity building of communities and Pillar 4: Forest Information, specifically Strategic line 4.1 Develop, process and share forest related information could focus on sharing forest related laws.</p>
L.4: Legal disregard of IP rights and practices	The National REDD+ Strategy addresses the issue with Pillar 2. Strategic line 2.1 Enhance Recognition and Respect for the Rights of all Stakeholders and Strategic line 2.5 Address Customary Land Tenure Issues, Including Complying with CCJ Ruling on Maya Customary Land Tenure. The ESMF addresses these concerns, aiming for a balanced consideration of all of Belize's IP constituencies, through the identified mitigation measures and a tailored Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF, see Annex 1).
L.5: Contradicting policies, laws and regulations	There are two specific strategic lines to deal with this issue. Under Pillar 1: Strategic line 1.4 Address inconsistent or perverse incentives in national legislation and under Pillar 3, Strategic line 3.1 Institutional harmonization of forest policies and actions.
L.6: Lengthy and bureaucratic processes	At the moment this is partly addressed with Pillar 2: Increased and meaningful community engagement and empowerment, Strategic lines 2.1 and 2.2 which aim to increase awareness and capacity building of communities yet this does not change the existing processes. Regarding Pillar 3, Strategic line 3.1 Institutional harmonization of forest policies and actions: Although this strategic line was seen as a potential cause of increased bureaucracy, this strategic line could aim to do the opposite. There is an opportunity to strengthen this in the strategy.

## 5.2. Identified benefits from REDD+ implementation

REDD+ was developed to serve as a mechanism to support the financing of activities for forest conservation, reforestation and reduce deforestation. These result-based incentives, aside from bringing direct benefits to the forest health and quality, bring direct benefits for mitigation and adaptation for climate change. Since the Cancun Agreements at the COP 16 in 2010, the climate change agenda has been promoting the co-benefits for the environment in general and the communities deriving from REDD+ activities, both short and long term.

The benefits presented for the SESA report after expert review and incorporating other benefits were organized into new categories:



1. Improved Forest Governance
2. Protection/Conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity
3. Community Benefits and
4. Economic benefits

In Table 7, all subcategories of benefits are shown under the corresponding category. The detail provided in the table helps to illustrate how the implementation of Belize's National REDD+ Strategy and of the present ESMF contribute to promoting these benefits.

Table 7. Benefits of REDD+ implementation, including subcategories of benefits.

Benefits of REDD+ Implementation	WB OP related to the benefit
<p><b>1. Improved forest governance</b></p> <p>All benefits under this category refer to the fact that, improved forest governance (monitoring and accountability), sustainable forest management with inclusion of communities, increased knowledge and capacity to manage forests, and clarity on land tenure rights will lead to more healthy forests and clearer definition of what and how they could be harvested, positively impacting forest-dependent communities and society as a whole (mitigation and adaptation to climate change).</p>	
<p>1.1. Forest governance</p>	<p>4.01, 4.10, 4.36</p>
<p>The category improved forest governance encompasses contributions regarding monitoring and accountability as well as reduced corruption and it was highlighted during consultations as a benefit from REDD+. If REDD+ is properly implemented, improved forest governance is one of the main benefits of REDD+ for forest dependent communities. Improved forest governance is an opportunity for communities to participate in decision-making more effectively about the forests that they own, steward, occupy, live nearby, or depend on. In the case of Indigenous communities, it is an opportunity to increase the recognition of their governance systems and their contribution to REDD+ and an opportunity to strengthen and facilitate their ongoing contribution.</p> <p>Fulfilling REDD+ objectives entails strong institutional arrangements and mechanisms to efficiently record changes and uses of the forest and its resources. Forest governance also <b>ensures benefit sharing among stakeholders</b> and <b>fair decision-making</b>.</p> <p>The effective implementation of <b>monitoring and accountability systems</b> can also lead to the creation of new mechanisms (or improvement of existing ones) in order for them to be <b>more transparent</b> in their processes and ultimately <b>protect the forests</b> by improving spatial and land use planning.</p> <p>Most of the mechanisms to improve forest governance also rely on <b>improving data accessibility</b>, management and linking policies and institutions.</p>	
<p>1.2. Knowledge and capacity building</p>	<p>4.01, 4.10, 4.36</p>
<p>REDD+ projects heavily rely on one aspect and that is that all stakeholders involved, from communities to state actors, are aware of and understand the important role that forests play in the context of climate change and environmental welfare in general. This information includes knowing the benefits that forests provide directly to</p>	



communities' livelihoods, rights, and responsibilities. Any government implementing REDD+ should acknowledge these and have specific activities to

- a) further strengthen stakeholders' knowledge on sustainable forest management and existing laws and regulations.
- b) recognize and understand the value of local knowledge and capacities on forests and better document and leverage such knowledge.

Improved community forestry, statistics and research, stakeholder engagement events to share information and knowledge, making spaces for citizen science, are benefits of REDD+ if properly implemented. Training and flow of information do not have to be top down, on the contrary; REDD+ should further strengthen this. Training of REDD+ to state actors to increase their knowledge of forests and local communities' knowledge and systems is also a key benefit.

1.3. Improved sustainable forest management capacities

4.01, 4.10, 4.36

REDD+ gives the opportunity to **work at "landscape" level**. During consultations, it was revealed that there was an interest in REDD+ projects to offer the opportunity for **logging industries to be better regulated and managed**.

Effective forest management leads to **better decision-making on use of forest resources, reduction of conflicts related to forest resources/use, and co-sharing the management of forest resources**. It should be noted that this latter is a benefit only if properly implemented. In fact, a risk identified (4.10.4) was that IPs and other rural community organizations are not properly integrated into forest management systems, and that this would increase lack of ownership. Thus, there is an opportunity for REDD+ to avoid this risk by integrating IP and other rural communities' organizations into forest management to **increase their ownership**. They are the ones who live in or use the resources and they have invaluable knowledge and capacity.

1.4. Improved and clearer land tenure

4.01, 4.10, 4.12, 4.36

REDD+ projects can help to **resolve issues of land tenure and property rights**, like monitoring progress of implementation of the CCJ Court Ruling. Most development programs and institutional arrangements deriving from REDD+ projects, should clarify land tenure rights and ensure respect of such rights. It should consider **collective and customary rights of Indigenous Peoples**. In order to effectively address drivers of deforestation and degradation, it needs to be clear how the land is being used, by who and who owns it or has rights to its use. In Belize there are procedures in case law that have established, legally recognized rights to lands and territories traditionally occupied by IPs. In Belize there are procedures in case law that have established, legally recognized rights to lands and territories traditionally occupied by IPs. The CCJ Ruling on Maya Customary Land Tenure is one example, which sets a precedent and could be useful in the recognition of other Indigenous Peoples' rights. However, with absent legislation, it is still uncertain if other IPs such as the Garifuna will get recognition of their land tenure rights or if they also will need to do a constitutional claim to the Belize Supreme Court and the CCJ alleging the failure of the Government of Belize to recognize and protect their customary land rights. Thus, an important benefit in Belize from implementing the REDD+ could be to get clarity on land tenure rights and ensure collective and customary rights are respected at all times. This will lead to **community empowerment, increase community safety and security, and avoid future conflicts** on land tenure rights.

<p><b>2. Protection/Conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity</b></p> <p>All benefits under this category are those environmental benefits including yet going beyond forest conservation and restoration. All these benefits trickle down to all stakeholders in Belize but are of particular importance to forest-dependent communities.</p>	
2.1. Conservation/enhanced availability of forest resources	4.01, 4.04, 4.10, 4.36
<p>REDD+ has a direct positive impact on forests and its resources. More than half of Belize's territory corresponds to forest cover and multiple stakeholders depend on them. Preserving the forest and its resources is of key interest to the country. The implementation of actions for the conservation, maintenance and improvement of forests would not only <b>contribute to the conservation of biodiversity</b> in general (2.4. biodiversity conservation benefit) but would also help ensure the provision of forest products to local communities and Indigenous Peoples (3. Community benefit). Moreover, IPs not only “use” forest resources but see forests as a sacred place, it is a place on which to pass on traditions and knowledge. Also, stakeholders specifically emphasized the benefit of reduced and/or better managed illegal activities, including poaching, exploitation and incursions, which are a common reality in Belize, which in turn would lead to enhanced availability of forest resources. REDD+ could help <b>ensure the availability of resources for future generations</b>. Also, stakeholders highlighted better productivity as a result of “easier access” to forest resources because of replenished stocks that are in closer proximity to the villages and communities, which can lead to <b>poverty alleviation</b> and <b>increased safety and security</b> (including food security).</p>	
2.2. Reforestation/forest restoration	OP 4.01, 4.04, 4.10, 4.36
2.3. Healthy ecosystems	
2.4. Biodiversity conservation	
<p>Ecosystem services (ES) provided by forests are extremely important and diverse. The most known are food and fuel. Most of the practices using forest resources are the main cause of the emission of GHG and deforestation. Belize holds important wetlands, mangroves and primary forest. Most of the economic uses of forests in Belize have been timber-products leading to a weak ecosystem services management.</p> <p>Furthermore, these types of ecosystems provide important services for both adaptation and mitigation measures such as <b>flood protection</b> and <b>carbon sinks</b>. REDD+ initiatives help <b>prevent the loss or degradation</b> of these ecosystems. When forests are replenished and restored, they can capture more carbon and increase the support for the communities living in and around them.</p> <p>By reducing reforestation and restoring other forested areas, there is a direct impact in <b>forest connectivity and reduced loss of habitat</b> from which biodiversity benefits.</p>	



This also includes wildlife. Belize holds approximately 137 animal species in the Red List of Threatened species.	
2.5. Watershed protection	OP 4.01, 4.04, 4.12
<p>Watershed protection will improve <b>water cycles</b> and ensure sufficient water supply and watershed connectivity. <b>Securing water provision for communities</b> is critical for their well-being and water availability is threatened by poor land uses. Effective water management through REDD+ activities include reducing pressure on watershed forests by promoting more sustainable practices such as agro-forestry and improving water resources management.</p> <p>Watershed protection is of great concern in Belize and was specifically emphasized three times as a potential REDD+ benefit by stakeholders, including with reference to the importance of maintaining both quality and quantity of water for human consumption as well as for agriculture, and for future generations.</p>	
2.6. Ecosystem resilience for natural disaster risk management	OP 4.11, 4.12
<p>Usually, activities restoring and increasing biodiversity lead to healthier ecosystems. As a result, these areas tend to restore their resilience to shocks and stressors, such as natural hazards. Indeed. Resilience of ecosystems indicates an ability to recover from important changes in conditions, such as storms and intense precipitation, hurricanes, etc. <b>Increased ecosystem resilience</b> comes along with a higher capacity to protect coastlines, <b>control flooding</b> events, faster soil recovery after floods, protection from fires, etc. These benefits are also felt by the communities which can be more protected with natural barriers from restored ecosystems.</p>	
<p><b>3. Community Benefits</b></p> <p>All benefits in this category are directly related to communities and are a direct result from the two above-mentioned categories of benefits: increased forest governance and conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity which would lead to healthier forests and associated biodiversity. In today's economies, the value of nature is not fully appreciated. The different co-benefits deriving from REDD+ activities can support the re-evaluation of nature and its resources. Understanding the human benefits originating from the environment can help increase the value of natural resources and protect them more efficiently.</p>	
3.1. Food security	4.01, 4.10, 4.09
<p>Activities enhancing conservation and sustainable use of forest resources promote the availability and continued supply of natural resources, including forest products used as food sources. Therefore, REDD+ projects implementing such activities also support <b>food security</b> of local communities. REDD+ projects have an important aspect of durability when it comes to forests, as they tend to involve long periods of time.</p>	



3.2. Intrinsic value of forest: conservation of natural beauty and environmental appreciation	4.04, 4.10, 4.11
<p>There is an important psychological aspect of the benefits of nature to people’s mental health and this was acknowledged and highlighted by stakeholders, including IPs. Stakeholders referred to “continued experience of the beauty of nature” in general, as well as to the use of Belize’s natural beauty in the sense of “attractive recreational spaces”. Environmental appreciation refers specifically to the noted benefit of REDD+ implementation to generate love and respect for the forest in communities, as a contribution to understanding the importance of conserving and protecting it. Stakeholders recognize an increased appreciation for the intrinsic value of the forest as a benefit of REDD+ implementation.</p>	
3.3. Improved Health	4.10, 4.36
<p>Intact forest ecosystems play an important role in human health, particularly for IPs but also in improving human health of Belize's population in general. Forests firstly contribute to the provision of clean air and water and allow for a “healthier lifestyle” overall. As Belizeans are a predominantly outdoor people, the health of the forests will improve the overall health and wellbeing of the general public. Also, forests produce multiple medicinal plants. Communities that live in and/or depend on forests like local communities would be positively impacted by an increase in these plants for them and for future generations. Traditional medicinal plants are very important to IPs, it reflects another way of relating to the land. They are an important element mentioned several times by the stakeholders in the consultation process.</p>	
3.4. Intergenerational transfer of indigenous knowledge and practices	4.10, 4.36
<p>Included in REDD+ objectives, there is a need to promote Indigenous Peoples’ rights, knowledge and traditions, not only for maintaining <b>cultural identity, heritage and security</b>, but also because these communities know how to work the land whilst at the same time preserving and appreciating it. Most of the uses of natural resources for medicinal purposes come from traditional indigenous knowledge. Preserving this knowledge is a benefit for all Belizeans, and increasing healthy and sustainable ecosystems will help to protect and transfer this knowledge. The transfer of knowledge between generations is central to sustaining cultural identity, and a healthy relationship with the lands and forests for IPs. The ability to transfer this knowledge is in fact intimately connected to the land. In many ways the forest is that sacred space in which to pass on traditional knowledge but it's also a classroom, and a teacher. This also speaks to the potential longevity of REDD+ programming to positively influence multi-generational households.</p>	
3.5. Empowerment	4.01, 4.10, 4.36
<p>The knowledge and learned skills from REDD+ activities can empower communities to understand and <b>actively engage in decision-making processes</b>. REDD+ should ensure full and effective participation of all stakeholders, upholding IPs’ right to <b>Free Prior and Informed Consent</b> when an action will affect them in any way. The creation of</p>	

mechanisms for active and meaningful participation and contribution of all stakeholders for better and transparent community inclusion is a key benefit REDD+ aims to achieve.

Moreover, empowerment also relates to the context of greater partnership between communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government, more socialization of REDD+ within communities (e.g. through sustainable livelihood options under Pillar 2), **valuing Indigenous capacities, knowledge and institutions** and using such knowledge and capacities could create a “community feeling of pride” or “community spirit” while sustainably managing the forest and its resources.

3.6. Gender equality and equity

4.01, 4.10

REDD+ should **empower women** particularly rural and Indigenous women. There is a heavy dependence on forest resources amongst women. Historically, women have often been marginalized from participating in forest management decision-making and they face more obstacles to access land and forest resources, also decreasing their opportunity to participate. REDD+ activities are gender-inclusive and acknowledge that for efficient implementation, both men and women need to actively participate. Given that they have also worked on the land and have different uses for and dependence on forest resources than men, women can provide a different point of view on how to efficiently introduce REDD+ activities in order for them to be sustainable in every aspect. By supporting women and being gender inclusive, REDD+ implementation aims to help **reduce the gender gap**.

#### 4. Economic benefits

This category refers specifically to the economic benefits for stakeholders derived from REDD+. Economic benefits (income and job opportunities, together with sustainable livelihoods as well as direct benefits from sustaining forests) were the second most mentioned social benefit during consultations.

4.1. Income opportunities

4.10, 4.12, 4.36

4.2. Job creation

REDD+ activities directly generate **income for the beneficiaries**. From the implementation of REDD+ programs, there are several new mechanisms and activities that require new staff to be properly managed. To properly follow REDD+ guidelines, there are important tasks of monitoring and controlling leading to **job creation**. Also, the transition from existing forest uses towards new, more sustainable practices anticipates the need for new jobs

These **new ‘green jobs’** are low carbon, **poverty-reducing** types of employment. The financial interest in REDD+ projects also supports these jobs to have a fair income,



<p>when usually land-related jobs tend to be extremely intensive, not well remunerated, and in most cases, informal. Income opportunities could also include direct financial benefits derived from managing and sustaining forests. Indigenous communities have been sustaining and conserving large areas of healthy forests. There is value in their forests as carbon sinks and they should directly benefit from any exchange.</p>	
4.3. Sustainable livelihoods	4.10, 4.11
<p>Financial incentives for forest protection and emission reduction are a source of income for the parties interested and can even support the livelihoods of communities who are transitioning from unsustainable practices to sustainable practices. These practices can help with <b>poverty alleviation, increase land productivity</b> whilst <b>reducing environmental impact</b>. Also, these incentives are result-based, meaning that they encourage people to implement new and sustainable practices, to keep pursuing them and to have other sources of income.</p>	
4.4. Green economy transition	OP 4.01
<p>All the institutional arrangements and financial mechanisms that will be implemented from REDD+ implementation support Belize to become more attractive to investors as it will become a ‘safer’ opportunity. Many international standards and certifications can be obtained, certifying the validity, transparency, and formality of the processes throughout the different stages of REDD+ implementation.</p> <p>As a result, from an increase in investment in these types of projects, it also supports the country with its public finances that will be directed for the transition towards a green economy that usually requires important funds.</p>	



### 5.3. Identified risks from REDD+ implementation

A risk in this context is defined as a possible negative outcome accruing to the environment and/or households, groups or communities as a result of the implementation of REDD+. This section presents the description of risks identified based on the draft version of Belize's National REDD+ Strategy available at the time of stakeholder consultations. As shown in chapter 5.3, the strategy describes elements of REDD+ in Belize in general terms and does not yet include specific activities under each strategic line. Thus, the SESA and its analysis of risks was done based on possible lines of action but not already determined and detailed activities.

Identified risks are presented under each OP, with a description of the risks, based on all the above information, consultations results (Prioritization Report) and further expert knowledge in different fields such as forestry, Indigenous Peoples, gender or legal issues (PLR analysis). Information on impacts of each risk is also provided, together with information on the extent to which existing Policies, Laws and Regulations (PLRs) address the risks and impacts, the extent to which the Belize's National REDD+ Strategy itself addresses these and implications for Belize's REDD+ ESMF

*Table 8. Description of risks identified under each OP*

OP 4.01: Environmental Assessment	
<b>Risk</b>	<b>4.01.1: Risk of reversal or non-permanence of GHG emissions reductions achieved through the REDD+ strategy</b>
<b>Related Strategic Line</b>	This is a risk related to the strategy as a whole (all pillars) but in particular if these strategic lines 1.4, 2.3, 2.4, 3.5 fail or are not properly crafted this risk has a greater chance of happening.
<b>Description</b>	<p>There may be a risk of reversal or non-permanence of the reduction of GHG emissions related to the implementation of the REDD+ Strategy, product of external factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unintentional forest fires;</li> <li>● Climate change (more frequent droughts or floods);</li> <li>● Instability in the market prices of commodities such as sugar or animal feed. For example, increases in commodity prices or fluctuations in the rate of change could affect the long-term success and sustainability of forest management practices, or lead to the expansion of agriculture in the forest area.</li> </ul> <p>The reversal can also occur due to internal factors of the Strategy itself. The possible scenario that REDD+ implementing activities are not sustainable over time could result in a return to previous practices that potentially cause more emissions than the practices introduced as part of REDD+ implementation. This could be due to insufficient human or financial resources to provide technical assistance to stakeholders' individual projects or meaningful programs to assist IPs over time and/or where there is a lack of capital to implement or use sustainable forest management practices, stakeholders may revert back to their previous practices, with the possible effect that emissions reductions would be achieved over a short period of time before reverting back to previous emissions levels. The high turnover in key ministries and the shortage of key technical staff also point to this risk. In this sense, it is noteworthy that historically the environment has had a low position on the political agenda and less resources have been allocated to environmental programs. In fact, this was an obstacle identified during consultations.</p>
<b>Impacts</b>	The direct impacts are related to the increase in GHG emissions, the loss of biodiversity and other ecosystem services provided by these forests. Among the indirect impacts are those linked to health problems if these reversals occur due to burning (fires) and economic ones if access to forest products is lost due to the loss of the ecosystem.
<b>Belize's PLR</b>	While this is not specifically covered by any existing legal instrument, in April 2016, Belize ratified the Paris Agreement and submitted its first Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to implement the Paris Agreement. "The Government of Belize is committed to strategically transition to low carbon development while strengthening its resilience to the effects of



	<p>climate change. Belize has mainstreamed climate change into its national development planning framework, including the long-term development plan (Horizon 2030) and medium-term development plan (Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy). In addition to the existing NDC, the government has developed a National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan as well as a climate-resilient investment plan. Many sector-level plans include climate targets. The 2016 NDC builds on these plans and focuses on reducing emissions from the forestry, transport, energy, and waste sectors and strengthening the resilience of coastal and marine resources, agriculture, water resources, tourism, fisheries and aquaculture, human health, infrastructure, and forestry." (GOB 2021)</p>
<b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b>	<p>The current draft version of the National REDD+ Strategy can provide some responses, especially through Pillar 2, strategic lines 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4. if they are implemented in a way that supports, enhances and rewards the sustainable land and forest stewardship of local communities and Indigenous Peoples, as well as technical and financial support to enhance sustainable Livelihoods; and with Pillar 4, which will enable a better understanding and monitoring of forests.</p> <p>The ESMF will include additional mitigation measures to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) strengthen the aspect of sustainable support over time in order to minimize and manage the risk.</li> <li>b) ensure that local communities, in particular IPs, are active participants in sustainable forest management. This could be as land owners and as stewards of land and forests but also, through co-management of certain areas (i.e. Forest rangers).</li> </ul>
<b>Risk</b>	<b>4.01.2 Increased demand for water due to alternative livelihoods options adversely impacts the environment</b>
<b>Related Strategic Line</b>	2.3, 2.4
<b>Description</b>	<p>Pillar 2 encourages the promotion and adoption of alternative livelihoods. These alternative livelihoods are still not determined and it will be a decision to be taken by the Government of Belize. The National REDD+ strategy should never encourage alternative livelihoods that have a significant use of water or that could negatively impact water quantity or quality. On the contrary, livelihoods encouraged should seek to be alternatives to more environmentally damaging practices. Nevertheless, if sustainable livelihood options are not part of a comprehensive and well-thought-out plan they could potentially lead to adverse impacts to the environment. Special attention should be given to water resources because, despite Belize having plenty of water resources, in fact Belize is considered to have the highest per capita water resources across the Americas (MAFFESD 2016), its water resources and the ecosystem services they provide are under pressure due to increasing use and climate change. The issue of water was mentioned as a risk in one of the online National SESA Workshops, referring to the possibility of ecotourism being promoted and the excessive use of water this could imply. During consultations with IPs they were mostly in favor of the development of alternative livelihoods if they are carefully planned. Yet they multiple times mentioned the dwindling state of water resources due to lack of watershed protection among others.</p>



	<p>While the likelihoods of this risk materializing is low, it was kept to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any alternative livelihood proposed is carefully designed and fast tracks the implementation of poverty reduction programs in rural and Indigenous communities adjacent to forests and coastal areas.</li> <li>- Special attention is given to the use of water resources. Water resources are important for economic, social and cultural practices as well as for spiritual connection, stewardship and belonging for the IPs of Belize. The IPs of Belize give different cultural uses to this sacred liquid: Osb'tefil Ha' (sacred water), in their ceremonial and spiritual celebrations, in medicine and therapeutic treatments, in agriculture and daily community life. In particular, for the Garifuna people, freshwater sources are an integral part of their spiritual practices.</li> <li>- If ecotourism is encouraged it is accompanied by a socio-environmental screening and diagnosis that prevents any significant impact to the environment and water resources in particular. Excessive use of water for ecotourism was the main point highlighted during consultations. Expanding responsible tourism plays an important role in Belize's Long-Term National Development Framework "Horizon 2030" (GOB 2010). Tourism development has brought environmental problems in Belize in the past and it should be ensured that the development of ecotourism alternatives does not bring adverse impacts. In fact, ecotourism has been successfully established in many parts of Belize and this should not be the exception.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Impacts</b></p>	<p>The impacts are both environmental and social: The reduction in the quantity and quality of water can impact the composition of the species that make up ecosystems with other potential environmental and social impacts, e.g. where communities depend on certain species for their livelihoods. Moreover, if there is an increased draw of water this will challenge the management and maintenance of rural water systems in Indigenous and rural communities. In the absence of strong management capacities and technical assistance from government ministries and agencies, unsustainable water harvesting may happen.</p> <p>Cumulative impacts: the risk may be aggravated by impacts of climate change and activities in other sectors that result in water pollution or reduction of its quantity. Likewise, water reduction or pollution can have spiritual and cultural impacts on IPs of Belize and on the health of communities.</p>
<p><b>Belize's PLR</b></p>	<p>There are laws in Belize establishing the requirement of environmental assessment including assessment of impacts in the natural environment (air, water, land and on biological resources); i.e., the Environmental Protection (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1995. Regulation 19 of the Environmental Protection (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1995 as amended provides that a report of an environmental impact assessment shall include the following: (h) a description of the likely significant effects, direct and indirect, on the environment of the development, explained by reference to its possible impact, including on air and water. Possible impacts on air are regulated by the Environmental Protection (Pollution) Regulations, 1996, which make provisions for regulating the emission of contaminants into the environment. Possible impacts on water are regulated by the Environmental Protection (Pollution) Regulations, 1996, Part IX Water Pollution and Marine Crafts which make provisions for control of water pollution, haulage or wastewater.</p> <p>Although air pollution is included in the above regulations, there are no domestic Environmental Assessment laws which contemplate the use of energy in project implementation.</p>



	<p>Moreover, in 2008 Belize adopted the National Integrated Water Resource Management Policy which included considerations for climate change (Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology 2008). This plan laid out the issues related to the ownership, governance, planning for and valuation of water. In fact, it was the first initiative in Belize to be authorized to put a cost on an environmental service – opening the way for payment for environmental services. It raised issues as to how to “develop estimates of water availability and value to implement measures to ensure wise use and long-term sustainability of Belize’s water resources” (MAFFESD 2016, p.28). This included the prevention of pollution (although to date there is a limited monitoring system of quality of water), and the conservation of critical ecosystems, such as forest blocks to maintain water catchments.</p>
<p><b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b></p>	<p>There is a potential for the current draft National REDD+ Strategy to further clarify which are reasonable alternative livelihoods, and the importance of them being designed as part of a comprehensive plan.</p> <p>The ESMF will ensure that increased demand for water and possible consequences of such increased demand will be considered in the design and implementation of REDD+ activities (subprojects), i.e. by demanding environmental and social screening of any alternative livelihood or project proposed.</p> <p>Both changes in the strategy and ESMF mitigation measures should be aligned with what was recommended in the description.</p>
<p><b>Risk</b></p>	<p><b>4.01.3: Unequal access to REDD+ benefits, including financial benefits, leads to conflict and competition within and between communities and loss of stakeholder support</b></p>
<p><b>Related Strategic Line</b></p>	<p>2.3, 2.4, 2.5</p>
<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>There is a risk that certain stakeholders such as youth, IPs, local communities and other Vulnerable Groups will not be able to access or will find restrictions to participate in the benefits of the National REDD+ Strategy. This could include access to capacity building and financial resources as much as employment opportunities. This is linked to risk 4.01.5 ‘Increased bureaucracy excludes participation of some stakeholders’. For example, where access to financial resources is a bureaucratically complex process and time consuming, some stakeholders might not be able to access benefits, which could eventually lead to conflict.</p> <p>An exacerbation of the gender gap as a risk to women, as a Vulnerable Group that could have unequal access to REDD+ benefits, was left as a separate risk to have specific measures to support them (risk 4.01.6).</p> <p>Countries preparing for REDD+ develop a REDD+ Benefit Sharing Mechanism that aims to ensure that stakeholders can benefit in a fair and equitable way from REDD+ implementation, including through financial benefits. However, if not carefully crafted so every stakeholder has equal access this</p>



	<p>could lead to multiple impacts such as conflict and loss of stakeholder support. Especially when financial benefits come into play, there is potential that there will be competition and conflict within and between communities over such benefits if any stakeholder feels in a disadvantaged position to access such benefits. Belize has no experience with benefit sharing for stakeholders working in natural resource protection and sustainable management. To do so for REDD+ implementation will require substantive capacity building and the setting up of requisite structures and systems both at the national as well as at the community levels. These structures must be transparent and have the unequivocal buy-in and endorsement from the communities. This would generate support and confidence from stakeholders and reduce the likelihood for conflict.</p> <p>Equally important as developing a fair and transparent BSM, is strengthening the capacities of communities to manage conflict. While the FGRM (see ESMF chapter 8) will help monitor and mediate conflict in general, it should be noted that IPs have systems of governance such as the Alcalde system which plays a central role in conflict resolution within communities. Additionally, the Toledo Alcalde Association as part of the system of governance supports the role of Individual Alcaldes in managing conflict at the level of the community and plays a central role in intercommunity conflict management. Therefore, it will be important to ensure that the FGRM works in conjunction with such pre-existing systems of conflict resolution.</p>
<p><b>Impacts</b></p>	<p>Impacts include: Competition and conflict within and between communities. Also, the loss of stakeholder support, in particular IPs and other forest dependent communities, for the implementation of the National REDD+ Strategy, which will make the sustainable implementation of REDD+ impossible over time. Another important impact would be the disempowerment of IPs and other forest-dependent communities. Cumulative impact: Conflict can be aggravated by past or current conflicts, for example, over land tenure.</p>
<p><b>Belize's PLR</b></p>	<p><b>Regarding access to benefits:</b> Since REDD+ implementation has not started yet, there are currently no national legal instruments regulating access to REDD+ finance. Belize does have an international obligation however in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992, applicable to IPs, to protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements (art. 10 (c)); and to benefit-sharing by taking all practicable measures to promote and advance priority access on a fair and equitable basis by Contracting Parties, especially developing countries, to the results and benefits arising from biotechnologies based upon genetic resources provided by those Contracting Parties; such access to be on mutually agreed terms (art. 19 (2)). It is important to note that the implementation of the CCJ court order will include the development of law which may have a bearing on access to benefits.</p> <p><b>Regarding access to equal employment opportunities:</b> Section 15 (1) of the Belize Constitution provides that no person shall be denied the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, whether by pursuing a profession or occupation or by engaging in a trade or business, or otherwise. The Belize Constitution, section 16 provides for protection from discrimination on the grounds of race, etc. Sec. 16 (1) provides that subject to the provisions of subsections (4), (5) and (7) of this section, no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect; and section 16 (2) provides that subject to the provisions of subsections (6), (7) and (8) of this section, no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person or authority. Section 16 (3) defines the term "discriminatory" as affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by sex, race, place of origin, political opinions, color or creed whereby</p>



	<p>persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject or are accorded privileges or advantages which are not accorded to persons of another such description. These two sections of the Constitution of Belize, sections 15 and 16, effectively guarantee non-discriminatory access to employment opportunities and equal employment opportunities.</p> <p><b>Regarding the risk of conflict/competition in general:</b> Regulation 19 of the Environmental Protection (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1995 as amended provides that a report of an environmental impact assessment shall include the following: (h) a description of the likely significant effects, direct and indirect, on the environment of the development, explained by reference to its possible impact on human beings. This however, is very broad in scope and there is no regulation which sets out the parameters that must be addressed in a social assessment to address social impacts, so that it is not certain that conflict potential would be identified as a risk.</p>
<p><b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b></p>	<p>Belize is currently preparing the development of a REDD+ specific benefit sharing mechanism. The current version of the National REDD+ Strategy includes several strategic lines that should help ensure inclusiveness and prevent conflicts and competition, especially the strategic lines under pillar 2, which aim to enhance the recognition and respect for the rights of all stakeholders, promote and create capacity to support alternative livelihoods and address customary land tenure issues. Nevertheless, it could specifically address the issue of strengthening the capacities of IP communities to manage conflict by strengthening local governance and specifically IPs governance systems such as the Alcalde system.</p> <p>The ESMF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Includes provisions to ensure that best practice guidance will be considered during the development of the BSM and that concerns raised by stakeholders over access to benefits are taken into account.</li> <li>b) Includes provisions to assess the potential for conflict in the design of REDD+ implementing subprojects</li> <li>c) Includes the FGRM which will also help monitor and mediate possible conflicts over access to REDD+ benefits/opportunities. This FGRM is aligned with existing complaints mechanisms, including at local level, for cultural appropriateness.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Risk</b></p>	<p><b>4.01.4: Increased bureaucracy reduces participation of some stakeholders, in particular Vulnerable Groups, further excluding their views and aggravating their vulnerability</b></p>
<p><b>Related Strategic Line</b></p>	<p>Strategic line 3.1. and Pillar 1.</p>
<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>In this case, where REDD+ implementation leads to increased bureaucratic complexity for different stakeholders (e.g. to access certain resources), this can result in frustration, self-exclusion from participation and loss of support for REDD+ as a whole. This concern was raised in the context of envisioned institutional harmonization of forest policies and actions, which was related to potential further centralization and “more cumbersome processes that become a barrier for certain rural stakeholders to access resources legally”. The issue of always having to go to Belmopan to resolve a</p>



	<p>situation or access certain benefits was highlighted. This is linked to risk 4.01.3. unequal access to REDD+ benefits and opportunities but in this case, the reason for unequal access would be increased bureaucracy.</p> <p>It should be noted that existing length and bureaucratic processes were also identified as an obstacle for REDD+ implementation. During consultations it was stated that the lengthy, unclear and bureaucratic process makes some stakeholders prefer doing things "illegally" or "informally". It was stated that the current system for logging does not cater for domestic or household use and that registration of logging at community level is absent as the formal system is lengthy and costly and deter community members to engage with it. This is important to highlight as REDD+ under no means should aggravate or increase bureaucracy but on the contrary, aim to improve processes and support rural community members to engage legally in any REDD+ related process.</p>
<b>Impacts</b>	Aside from reduced participation of certain stakeholders, in particular vulnerable groups that cannot for instance go to Belmopan, this could lead to aggravating their vulnerable situation as they cannot access resources legally while other more powerful or resourceful stakeholders can. This could eventually lead to conflict and social unrest.
<b>Belize's PLR</b>	There are no legal instruments that deal with such a risk.
<b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b>	<p>The current draft version of the national REDD+ Strategy does not include specific content to address the risk. There is a possibility to further strengthen this under:</p> <p>a) strategic line 3.1, ensuring that increased harmonization does not translate to increased centralization.</p> <p>The ESMF will include mitigation measures to ensure that, to the extent possible, the implementation of REDD+ builds on established, including traditional procedures that will not translate into a burden for REDD+ stakeholders. The strategy could also include steps to simplify and decentralize procedures when possible.</p>
<b>Risk</b>	<b>4.01.5: Lack of understanding of REDD+ leads to failure to engage with and get support from all stakeholders</b>
<b>Related Strategic Line</b>	Pillars 2 and 3
<b>Description</b>	<p>During consultations multiple times it was highlighted the lack of understanding of either REDD+ or of the benefits REDD+ could bring to a particular stakeholder group. This was reflected under obstacles:</p> <p>Obstacle SE1: Lack of knowledge and understanding of REDD+ and Obstacle PE1: Lack of capacity and training, which identified as a capacity gap understanding what REDD+ is and its value</p>



	<p>However, this was included as a risk where REDD+ fails to be understood; it will not be able to engage stakeholders and their support will not be achieved or it will diminish over time, which is likely to negatively impact REDD+ performance. Keeping stakeholders engaged is thus of outstanding importance, including those stakeholders, that may have a large impact on forest land and resources. For example, the lack of support of Mennonite communities and large-scale agricultural actors would present a missed opportunity for REDD+ implementation in Belize. In fact, the consultation with the Mennonite community in Spanish Lookout showed that this group of stakeholders acts under a particular understanding of what REDD+ is, and feels that it will not gain anything from REDD+. They specifically consider that food production worldwide requires that forests are transformed to make room for agriculture. Therefore, they have little interest in participating in the process. Considering the significant stake that some of the Mennonite communities have in contributing to land use change in the country, it may be of particular importance to provide awareness raising interventions and direct engagement to increase their knowledge of the importance of sustainable farm practices in Belize as a whole and the contribution that REDD+ can make.</p> <p>Maintaining all stakeholders engaged requires providing clear and accessible information and continued consultation as part of REDD+ implementation as well clear pathways for the implementation of equitable benefit sharing mechanisms for all stakeholders. It also requires maintaining clear information flows to the local level.</p> <p>For Belize, the lack of knowledge on REDD+ is indicative of the challenges associated with providing information and consulting with stakeholders who live in disparate regions and use multiple languages. This is further complicated by the differences in literacy levels, cultural practices and educational attainment among groups.</p>
<b>Impacts</b>	<p>Reluctance on the part of stakeholders to engage or support the implementation of the REDD+ strategy on the ground. This leads to other actors losing confidence in the strategy, also withdrawing their support.</p>
<b>Belize's PLR</b>	<p>There are no domestic laws in Belize specifically establishing consultation protocols with IPs before, during and after project implementation; or which provide for the use of socially and culturally appropriate consultation methods which consider particularly women, the elderly and youth; or which foresee the provision of information on the project to IPs at each stage of project preparation and implementation; or which require that IPs provide their broad support to a project before it can be implemented.</p> <p>There is however, the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 1995, which applies to all groups of persons including IPs, which mandates that during the course of an environmental impact assessment, the developer shall provide an opportunity for meetings between the developer and interested members of the public, especially within or immediately adjacent to the geographical area of the proposed undertaking, in order to provide information concerning the proposed undertaking to the people whose environment may be affected by the undertaking; and to record the concerns of the local community regarding the environmental impact of the proposed undertaking (sec. 18 (1) (a) and (b)).</p>



	<p>The CCJ court ruling, while it still needs to become legislation, requires consultation with Maya people of southern Belize (para 4 CCJ Consent Order); the implementation will require the development of law to protect Maya lands and this will have a bearing on obligations of the government regarding consultation. Also, an FPIC protocol is in the process of development. In the absence of a law specific to protect Maya land tenure rights, the government has a duty to comply with CCJ Consent Order, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of IPs (UNDRIP), and other international human rights conventions it is a party to, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Charter of the Organization of American States.</p> <p>It should be noted that Belize has signed onto the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2018, which guarantees the full and effective implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the rights of access to environmental information, public participation in the environmental decision-making process and access to justice in environmental matters, and the creation and strengthening of capacities and cooperation, contributing to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in a healthy environment and to sustainable development. As Belize has not ratified the convention, it has no obligations in regards to it.</p>
<p><b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b></p>	<p>The current draft version of the National REDD+ Strategy includes Pillar 4: Forest Information, Monitoring, specifically Strategic line 4.1 Develop, process and share forest related information which should help better inform stakeholders about REDD+ and its benefits. However, there is potential to include this more visibly in the current version of the National REDD+ Strategy, referring to awareness raising interventions and development of information/education campaigns. This could also fall under Pillar 2 Increased and meaningful community engagement and empowerment. The strategic lines under this pillar further promote inclusive processes throughout REDD+ implementation as a means to ensure stakeholder support and buy-in.</p> <p>The ESMF, through specific mitigation measures targeting (a) stakeholder engagement over time accompanied by respective indicators and (b) continued information sharing, aims to ensure that this risk is minimized and managed adequately.</p>
<p><b>Risk</b></p>	<p><b>4.01.6: Gender gap exacerbated due to unequal access of women to benefits from the REDD+ Strategy, including engagement opportunities thus their visions are not reflected in future actions</b></p>
<p><b>Related Strategic Line</b></p>	<p>Pillar 2</p>
<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>In Belize women face multi-dimensional barriers to access opportunities and have their voices heard. Despite the government having taken steps to improve the status of women and girls, they continue to face distinct socio-cultural constraints. For instance, the low political participation of women in the political agenda is highly notable (Castillo and Strecker 2017). Moreover, in some community groups and geographic areas of Belize,</p>





participation at REDD+ events is clearly male dominated, likely due to patriarchal social norms and customs.

In particular, in the case of the Maya women, in consultations held only with Indigenous Maya women it was made clear that there is a common belief that Indigenous women have no voice or vote in community decisions and processes, because these are almost always led by men and the face of the movement before the State and the rest of Belizean society has always been represented by men (summary of comments of consultations). However, Mayan society has been working to change this situation. “The Future we Dream”, for instance, outlines the following: “The practice of Ab’ink calls for us to make space for the voices, concerns, needs and aspirations of everyone. Youth and women are two significant populations of our communities for whom we recognize we must make space and be responsive to. This program aims to better understand the needs, concerns, and aspirations of our youth and women, and to create spaces for their meaningful participation in ushering in our Maya future”.

The disadvantaged position of women in general in Belize, can lead to unequal opportunities for women to engage, to have their voices heard and their concerns taken into consideration in future design of REDD+ actions and implementation. Moreover, the Mapping and Stakeholder Analysis (MSA) (REDD+ CU 2019a) also identified that eight (8) of the nine (9) women’s organizations have enterprises and livelihoods that are forest-based, so their stake in REDD+ is high, since they are dependent on forest resources for their enterprises. Yet, the MSA noted that none have the capacity to engage in REDD+ and that they have very little power or influence on REDD+. This positions them as a vulnerable group for REDD+. Being mostly indigenous or rural women, there is the need to ensure that their rights, interests, and inputs are adequately considered by the REDD+, and that they receive tailored capacity building to ensure their active participation in REDD+ implementation.

This situation does not only happen in Belize but is a global issue. The GEO Gender observed that women’s involvement in REDD+ decision-making was limited and that significantly fewer women than men had knowledge and information about REDD+ (Larson et al. 2015). While stakeholder engagement during this process made special arrangements to better engage women (for example, by having women’s only workshops for cultural reasons), the increased number of women participating at local level is not sufficient to realize the full potential of women as agents of change at community level.

Women need to be supported to access benefits from the National REDD+ Strategy. There is a risk that women will not be able to access or find de facto restrictions to participate in the benefits of the REDD+ strategy such as employment opportunities or financial benefits. There is a rooted gender gap in Belize. For example, in terms of access to financial support, despite financial inclusion having become an increasingly important priority for Development Finance Corporation of Belize (DFC), the situation is not good. Between 2016 and 2018 individual male borrowers received an average of 61% of total loans each year; they also received 55% of the value of all loans. In contrast, individual female borrowers received 38% of the total number of loans, representing only 23% of the value of all loans (Jackson et.al., 2019). Loans offered by financial institutions are still less accessible to women, not because of any outright discriminatory policy, but because women are far more unlikely than men to have collateral like land titles to provide a financial institution as security for loans. This is even harder for rural women, who might not understand how the loan system works, or where to obtain a loan (related to obstacles in lengthy compliance and bureaucratic processes). Also, women’s strong educational



	<p>achievements are not always matched in the labor market; women still tend to earn less than men in the same or comparable jobs (Jackson et.al.,2019).</p> <p>This unequal access to opportunities by women in Belize could be aggravated by the fact that the REDD+ Strategy does not reflect their visions because they were not included in consultations (engagement events) or because there are no specific measures to support them to overcome social and cultural barriers.</p> <p>As key considerations for improved gender equality and women’s employment, REDD+ should enhance the capacity to absorb the skills-base from female students who have completed the Natural Resource Management course at the University of Belize. This capacity enhancement would be especially useful to improve women’s employment and their contribution to natural resource management and environmental protection since they have in the past accounted for the majority of graduates in this program.</p>
<p><b>Impacts</b></p>	<p>If active measures are not established to support or contribute to eliminate or reduce long established social norms that hinder or undermine gender equity REDD+ is likely to end up disproportionately benefiting men, and within these, those who are in a better economic, legal or even political position. This would imply that the REDD+ strategy could aggravate the existing gender gap in certain communities or contexts, which could lead to greater disempowerment of women and worsening of their economic dependence on the men in the family, both with respect to income and ownership and decision-making processes. This would be contrary to the objectives of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) ratified by Belize, and all policies aimed at achieving gender equality. Another impact could include the loss of support for the implementation of the strategy by women, making it harder to sustain REDD+ implementation over time. In turn, we would miss out on the opportunity to work on this key aspect of achieving equity and sustainable development with the REDD+ strategy.</p>
<p><b>Belize’s PLR</b></p>	<p>Belize is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which is the foundation of Belize's National Gender Policy (2002). However, a transition from established social norms is a long-term process.</p> <p><b>Regarding access to equal employment opportunities:</b> Section 15 (1) of the Belize Constitution provides that no person shall be denied the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, whether by pursuing a profession or occupation or by engaging in a trade or business, or otherwise. The Belize Constitution, section 16 provides for protection from discrimination on the grounds of race, etc. Sec. 16 (1) provides that subject to the provisions of subsections (4), (5) and (7) of this section, no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect; and section 16 (2) provides that subject to the provisions of subsections (6), (7) and (8) of this section, no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person or authority. Section 16 (3) defines the term "discriminatory" as affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by sex, race, place of origin, political opinions, color or creed whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject or are accorded privileges or advantages which are not accorded to persons of another such description.</p>

	These two sections of the Constitution of Belize, sections 15 and 16, effectively guarantee non-discriminatory access to employment opportunities and equal employment opportunities.
<b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b>	<p>Regarding engagement for this process, special measures were taken to have women only workshop in the case of the southern Maya IP constituencies, as men and women tend to meet separately in public and formal meetings, and to have a representative number of women in all workshops to make sure their vision is reflected.</p> <p>The current draft version of the National REDD+ Strategy, while promoting inclusiveness, does not explicitly address the risk nor includes gender-sensitive strategic lines. However, the Pillar 2, with its focus on improved community engagement and empowerment, should be a tool to better include women (as well as youth), and it provides strategic lines that aim to support existing initiatives dealing with these issues (i.e. “The Future We Dream” outlines the importance of youth and women).</p> <p>The ESMF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensures that all mitigation measures are gender-inclusive;</li> <li>• includes gender-specific mitigation measures as appropriate; and,</li> <li>• includes mitigation measures specifically promoting the engagement of and opportunities for women to benefit from REDD+ implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Risk</b>	<b>4.01.7: Youth exclusion gets exacerbated due to unequal access of youth to benefits from the REDD+ Strategy, including engagement opportunities thus their visions are not reflected in future actions</b>
<b>Related Strategic Line</b>	2.3, 2.4
<b>Description</b>	In relation to youth, it was highlighted that there is an increased migration from rural youth to urban areas due to lack of economic opportunities but also the lack of a possibility to engage in decision-making processes. IPs and local communities pointed out that, if younger generations keep leaving, there is a risk of losing traditional practices and ways of life. While this is clearly not a risk of REDD+ implementation, REDD+ should not aggravate the situation and should look for ways to better engage the youth, so their visions are included in the design and implementation of REDD+ on the ground and opportunities are created for them to participate, i.e. in sustainable livelihood options.
<b>Impacts</b>	The impacts include the loss of support for the implementation of the REDD+ by youth which would make sustainable and effective implementation uncertain. Another important impact would be to increase youth exclusion or migration in certain communities or contexts.
<b>Belize’s PLR</b>	Nothing specifically on IP youth.



	<p><b>Regarding access to equal employment opportunities:</b> Section 15 (1) of the Belize Constitution provides that no person shall be denied the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, whether by pursuing a profession or occupation or by engaging in a trade or business, or otherwise. The Belize Constitution, section 16 provides for protection from discrimination on the ground of race, etc. Sec. 16 (1) provides that subject to the provisions of subsections (4), (5) and (7) of this section, no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect; and section 16 (2) provides that subject to the provisions of subsections (6), (7) and (8) of this section, no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person or authority. Section 16 (3) defines the term "discriminatory" as affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by sex, race, place of origin, political opinions, color or creed whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject or are accorded privileges or advantages which are not accorded to persons of another such description.</p> <p>These two sections of the Constitution of Belize, sections 15 and 16, effectively guarantee non-discriminatory access to employment opportunities and equal employment opportunities.</p>
<p><b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b></p>	<p>The current draft version of the National REDD+ Strategy, while promoting inclusiveness, does not explicitly address the risk. It does not foresee specific youth-sensitive strategic lines. However, Pillar 2, with its focus on improved community engagement and empowerment, should be a tool to better include youth, and it provide strategic lines that aim to support existing initiatives dealing with this issues (i.e. "The Future We Dream" outlines the importance of youth and women).</p> <p>However, the same document foresees incorporating specific youth actions when it is further developed.</p> <p>The ESMF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensures that mitigation measures are youth-inclusive</li> <li>• includes mitigation measures specifically promoting the engagement of and opportunities for youths to benefit from REDD+ implementation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Risk</b></p>	<p><b>4.01.8: Uncertain performance of the REDD+ strategy due to insufficient monitoring and control, lack of intra- and inter-institutional coordination, lack of resources, training or ministerial discretion.</b></p>
<p><b>Related Strategic Line</b></p>	<p>Pillar 1 and Pillar 4</p>
<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>This risk refers to the fact that it may not be possible to determine with certainty the performance of the REDD+ strategy or that its effective implementation is not possible, due to the lack of effective monitoring and control of the implementation of its activities, for reasons such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient intra and inter institutional coordination and collaboration at national, sub-national or local levels that hinders the articulation</li> </ul>



	<p>of activities (obstacle PI 2);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of efficient institutional presence (authority) at local level, financing and resources (obstacle PI 3);</li> <li>• Ministerial discretion (PI 8);</li> <li>• Lack of sufficient training in the sectors of application;</li> <li>• Lack of implementation/enforcement or monitoring of existing laws (obstacle L 2);</li> <li>• Land degradation due to deficient implementation and loss of stakeholder support (related to risk 4.01.3 and 4.01.4);</li> <li>• Lack of material or human resources for the correct monitoring and control of the measures provided under each action.</li> </ul>
<b>Impacts</b>	<p>The potential impacts of this risk are multiple and include both environmental and social impacts, for example: destruction and/or degradation of habitats and ecosystem services; aggravation of existing inequalities or historical conflicts (like IPs customary Land Tenure). Indirect and cumulative impacts are difficult to identify at the program level yet could also derive from this specific risk. This risk means that adverse impacts of all kinds can occur and go unnoticed or without consequence. Where they go unnoticed, it is impossible to adjust and rectify the management of the implementation of the REDD+ strategy. Some strategic lines suggested in the strategy, together with the ESMF, should prevent them from occurring without consequence.</p>
<b>Belize's PLR</b>	<p>This risk is actually pointing to failures of Belize's PLRs, lack of proper implementation or harmonization so there is nothing to address this risk in particular.</p>
<b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b>	<p>Many of the identified obstacles have been taken into account in the development of the current version of the National REDD+ Strategy. Where potential to further strengthen the National REDD+ Strategy towards more comprehensively addressing these obstacles exists, findings from the SESA process will be used to do so. At the same time, it must be noted that the National REDD+ Strategy is but one national instrument with a certain objective and that it will not be possible to resolve every nation-wide issue that may present an obstacle to REDD+ implementation. Consistent, lasting and inner -as well as inter- institutional will and leadership will be needed to enable successful and sustainable REDD+ implementation in Belize, as well as confronting persisting REDD+ obstacles and working jointly to overcome as many of them as possible over time. In the ESMF, measures are proposed to reinforce the monitoring and control of the REDD+ strategy in its eventual implementations of activities.</p>
<b>OP 4.04: Natural Habitats</b>	
<b>Risk</b>	<p>No risks were identified under this OP. There are risks related to biodiversity and ecosystems services yet those were identified under OP 4.36 Forests as any risk related to natural habitats, ecosystem services and biodiversity are related to forests.</p>
<b>OP 4.09: Pest Management</b>	



<b>Risk</b>	<b>4.09.1: Inappropriate implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices adversely affect forests and associated biodiversity</b>
<b>Related Strategic Line</b>	3.5
<b>Description</b>	<p>There are risks that the implementation of the National REDD+ strategy generates different impacts due to the lack of adequate design and/or monitoring of the Strategy’s implementation activities, especially in the case of Strategic line 3.5 Implementing integrated pest and fire management in pine uplands.</p> <p>IPM practices are an improvement with respect to other practices. IPM is even proposed in the government’s plans. Belize’s Pesticides Control Board has launched a GROW-SAFE Belize Campaign which among other objectives, aims to stimulate wider adoption of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), “a broad-based approach that applies the practices of prevention, monitoring, and control to suppress pests below the economic injury level”; and which approach is effective and also minimizes risks to people and the environment as a result of increased use of biological and cultural pest control practices, and through reduced reliance on pesticides.</p> <p>However, while IPM practices are presented as an improvement with respect to other practices, the strategy does not make further reference to best practice standards related to the term. Also, as the strategy is still at a broad level, part of the future work will be to define specific actions. Emphasis should be on strengthening the resilience of the forest rather than reacting to the attack of pests that used to be applied. This does not require the use of chemicals. This is in line with the most recent research in the region “The Central American forest management community needs to evolve its focus away from reactive, short-term, pest-focused activities and towards long-term management for healthy, resilient, and sustainable regional forest ecosystems, to prevent the continuation or increase of forest mortality.” (Gomez, Shiroma and Jiri 2020).</p> <p>In conclusion, while IPM practice should never produce significant adverse impacts on habitats and biodiversity, this risk was included due to the lack of clear recommendations and best practices in the strategy and thus, the lack of clarity of which practices will be implemented and the impacts this could mean. Also because current monitoring approaches, systems and technologies might not adequately capture these changes, especially in terms of sustainable forest management, and restoration interventions, particularly at the local level.</p>
<b>Impacts</b>	It is hard to visualize impacts when there is a lack of clarity on actions, but this would be degradation of forests and its associated biodiversity.
<b>Belize’s PLR</b>	<b>Related to pest management:</b> There are no domestic laws promoting or disincentivizing the use of biological or environmental control methods or Integrated Pest Management or promoting reliance on synthetic chemical pesticides. However, the Pesticides Control Board has launched a GROW-SAFE Belize Campaign which among other objectives, aims to stimulate wider adoption of IPM, a broad-based approach that applies the practices of prevention, monitoring, and control to suppress pests below the economic injury level; and which approach is effective and also minimizes risks to



	<p>people and the environment as a result of increased use of biological and cultural pest control practices, and through reduced reliance on pesticides. Some elements of the World Health Organization’s Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard and Guidelines are incorporated in the Pesticides Control Act, 2000, but not to the extent that they appropriately consider human health issues.</p> <p><b>Related to biodiversity:</b> Belize is a member to a large number of international conventions, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 1994; the Convention on Biological Diversity, 1993; and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, 1996; the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, 1975; the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972; and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. In order to be in line with these conventions, biodiversity and ecosystem integrity should not be disregarded in National Land Use Planning processes.</p>
<p><b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b></p>	<p>The strategy will be further refined to ensure clear regional recommendations for IPM practices are included, make clear that emphasis should be on strengthening management and that the use of chemicals is not encouraged. Some actions to be recommended will be joint work at the regional level, a major monitoring program, and local research development following recommendations from recent researches that state that “Central American bark beetle outbreaks need to be studied locally, and the local climate, biotic elements, and silvicultural history need to be considered. The key to reducing the impacts of SPB (Southern pine beetle) in Central America are local research and implementation of proactive management. In Central America, management options lack empirical evidence.”</p> <p>The ESMF will include measures that ensure that a screening of definite actions is carried out before deciding on implementing any IPM action and to ensure monitoring of activities.</p>
<p><b>Risk</b></p>	<p><b>Risk 4.09.2: Inappropriate fire management practices adversely affect forests, other natural habitats and associated biodiversity</b></p>
<p><b>Related Strategic Line</b></p>	<p>3.5</p>
<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>There are risks that the implementation of the National REDD+ strategy generates different impacts due to the lack of adequate design and/or monitoring of the Strategy’s implementation activities, especially in the case of Strategic line 3.5 Implementing integrated pest and fire management in pine uplands. The Integrated pest and fire management practices are presented as an improvement with respect to other practices, nevertheless if fire as a management tool is not properly used, this could lead to negative impacts to forest and other ecosystems. Despite this being unlikely, and this strategic line mostly focusing on resilience it was decided to be included to ensure that if fire management practices are encouraged are used, this is done following best practices and with proper monitoring.</p> <p>It should be noted that fire management practices could be considered an IPM practice yet it was decided to keep this risk separate as fire impacts</p>



	could be worse than from other practices and because this implies different things for the ESMF.
<b>Impacts</b>	Impacts include degradation of forests and associated biodiversity and, if fires burn beyond the expected area this could damage other ecosystems.
<b>Belize's PLR</b>	There is nothing specifically for fire management practices, yet this could be considered part of IPM practices. Belize is a member to a large number of international conventions, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1994; the Convention on Biological Diversity, 1993; and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, 1996; the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, 1975; the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972; and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. In order to be in line with these conventions, biodiversity and ecosystem integrity should not be disregarded in National Land Use Planning processes.
<b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b>	The strategy will be further refined to ensure clear regional recommendations for IPM practices are included, make clear that emphasis should be on strengthening management and resilience of forests and that fire management practices should be used in specific and controlled cases. The ESMF will include measures that ensure fire management is more strictly regulated and monitored under strategic line 3.5.
<b>OP 4.10: Indigenous Peoples</b>	
<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk 4.10.1: Lack of observance of existing IP rights when developing or updating legal instruments affecting IPs leads to adverse impacts to their lives and livelihoods, i.e.: involuntary restriction of access to legally designated parks or protected areas</b>
<b>Related Strategic Line</b>	1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 3.1
<b>Description</b>	<p>When developing new regulations or updating existing legal instruments like the National Land Use Plan (NLUP) (strategic line 1.1) there is the risk that IP customary rights might be ignored or not properly integrated (e.g. the CCJ ruling which is a legal binding obligation of the state beyond REDD+ that specifically requires the state to resolve the land tenure of the Maya people in Southern Belize). This could lead to access restrictions to forests or resources they have traditionally used or occupied (linked to risk 4.12.1).</p> <p>The lack of awareness of IP rights and their representation in such policy making processes was mentioned as an underlying cause of this risk during</p>



	IP consultations. Ultimately, this risk also encompasses the perception that IPs will not have equal decision-making roles during the implementation of REDD+.
<b>Impacts</b>	Impacts include loss of confidence and stakeholder support for implementing the REDD+ strategy as their rights are being ignored and not respected. Also, restricted access to the forest, the space in which IPs pass on cultural and spiritual values, heritage, and on which their livelihoods depend leads to adverse impacts to IP livelihoods and ancestral practices. It could also lead to social unrest and conflict. Moreover, the disregard for Indigenous peoples' rights and knowledge also prevent IPs from contributing to advancing the goals of REDD+ due to the valuable contributions that Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and practices can make to advancing REDD+.
<b>Belize's PLR</b>	This risk refers largely to ignoring IP rights in land use planning: <b>Regarding land rights:</b> There are procedures to establish legally recognized rights to lands and territories traditionally occupied by IPs. In the Consent Order of 2015, Order 3, affirmed by the CCJ, the Court accepts the undertaking (legal obligation) of the Government to, in consultation with the Maya people or their representatives, develop the legislative, administrative and/or other measures necessary to create an effective mechanism to identify and protect the property and other rights arising from Maya customary land tenure, in accordance with Maya customary laws and land tenure practices. However, absent further legislation, this cannot be considered a general rule applying to all IP constituencies and thus would not apply to other IPs without legal challenges.
<b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b>	The current draft version of the National REDD+ Strategy addresses this risk to a large extent, especially through the strategic lines under pillar 2, which comprehensively address both the concern about disregard of rights to land and the concern about lack of engagement. The ESMF will further address these concerns, ensuring that efforts are made to support all IP constituencies equally, without emphasizing one over the other, through a tailored Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework.
<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk 4.10.2: Design and implementation of the REDD+ strategy without meaningful consultation of IPs, including FPIC as appropriate, disregards their rights and knowledge and leads to adverse impacts on their livelihoods and ancestral practices</b>
<b>Related Strategic Line</b>	Entire ER strategy
<b>Description</b>	There is a risk that the specific actions for the implementation of the REDD+ Strategy that have implications for IP territories will not be designed and implemented in accordance with the requirements of meaningful consultation (including FPIC), according to the ILO Convention 169 and the



	<p>corresponding national legal framework.</p> <p>The country does not have an established procedure to obtain FPIC, nor does it have a culturally appropriate claim mechanism for IPs. There are no domestic laws in Belize specifically establishing consultation protocols with IPs before, during and after project implementation; or which provide for the use of socially and culturally appropriate consultation methods which consider particularly women, the elderly and youth; or which foresee the provision of information on the project to IPs at each stage of project preparation and implementation; or which require that IPs provide their broad support to a project before it can be implemented. It is worth mentioning that through the implementation process under the supervision of the CCJ the Maya are finalizing a Maya FPIC Protocol to be adopted by the GOB and the Maya people that could be used for the rest of IP if considered appropriate. Other difficulties that may be encountered for the involvement of certain IPs are related to the difficult accessibility to workshops and meetings if these are centralized in certain regions.</p> <p>If IPs are not included when deciding on specific activities as part of the National REDD+ strategy, their views and ways of life won't be reflected and respected and this could lead to not only to adverse impacts to their livelihoods and ancestral ways of life, and the social structure and well-being of the community but also to the state of forests.</p>
<p><b>Impacts</b></p>	<p>Lack of meaningful consultation can result in loss of confidence and support in the implementation of the National REDD+ Strategy. If the vision, traditions and values of IPs are not taken into account in the design and implementation of the strategy this could adversely affect their livelihoods, knowledge and ancestral practices (intangible cultural heritage). It can affect their access to forests, a space in which to pass on cultural and spiritual values, heritage, and security needs. It could also disrupt established governance systems, among others. The alienation or loss of traditional knowledge and uses of natural resources may mean a loss of opportunities to improve the sustainable management of such resources and gain better knowledge about these resources, for example medicinal uses. If serious, these impacts could lead to increased vulnerability ,exposure to increased exploitation and impoverishment, loss of knowledge, and loss of wellbeing of the land, forests and people which could end with complete loss of identity for IPs. Moreover, the disregard for Indigenous peoples' rights and knowledge also prevents Indigenous peoples from contributing to advancing the goals of REDD+ due to the valuable contributions that Indigenous peoples are making or can make to advancing REDD+.</p>
<p><b>Belize's PLR</b></p>	<p>This risk refers largely to ignoring IP rights in decision-making processes and thus relates to engagement:</p> <p>There are no domestic laws in Belize specifically establishing consultation protocols with IPs before, during and after implementation; or which provide for the use of socially and culturally appropriate consultation methods which consider particularly women, the elderly and youth; or which foresee the provision of information on the project to IPs at each stage of project preparation and implementation; or which require that IPs provide their broad support to a project before it can be implemented.</p> <p>There is however, the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 1995, which applies to all groups of persons including IPs, which mandates that during the course of an environmental impact assessment, the developer shall provide an opportunity for meetings between the developer and interested members of the public, especially within or immediately adjacent to the geographical area of the proposed undertaking, in order to</p>



	<p>provide information concerning the proposed undertaking to the people whose environment may be affected by the undertaking; and to record the concerns of the local community regarding the environmental impact of the proposed undertaking (sec. 18 (1) (a) and (b)).</p> <p>It should also be mentioned that the CCJ court ruling requires consultation with Maya people of southern Belize despite the absence of a law. Moreover, the implementation of the order requires the development of a law to protect Maya lands and this will have a bearing on obligations of the government regarding consultation and that an FPIC protocol is in the process of development.</p> <p>Lastly, it should be noted, that Belize has signed on to, but not ratified the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2018, which guarantees the full and effective implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the rights of access to environmental information, public participation in the environmental decision-making process and access to justice in environmental matters, and the creation and strengthening of capacities and cooperation, contributing to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in a healthy environment and to sustainable development. As Belize has not ratified the convention, it has no obligations in regards to it.</p>
<p><b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b></p>	<p>The Strategy partly addresses this issue with Pillar 2, yet it could further strengthen the issue of FPIC</p> <p>The ESMF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Includes a section on stakeholder engagement, which includes strategic guidelines for future engagement processes.</li> <li>- Includes an IPPF.</li> <li>- Proposes mitigation measures especially aimed at ensuring meaningful consultation and FPIC, where the implementation of the strategy may negatively impact on land rights and access to land and natural resources subject to traditional ownership or customary use and occupation;</li> <li>- Establish a FGRM at the local level (or adapt existing one), which is accessible and culturally appropriate</li> </ul>
<p><b>Risk</b></p>	<p><b>Risk 4.10.3: Emphasis of the Strategy on one IP constituency may disadvantage the recognition of rights of other IP groups and local communities organizations</b></p>
<p><b>Related Strategic Line</b></p>	<p>2.5</p>
<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>The first draft version of the National REDD+ Strategy, while promoting inclusiveness, in strategic line 2.5. made a specific mention to compliance with the CCJ Ruling on Maya Customary Land Tenure, making emphasis on one of the IP constituents. While the CCJ ruling is a legally binding obligation of the state beyond REDD+ that specifically requires the state to resolve the land tenure of the Maya people in Southern Belize, the specific mention of the CCJ ruling in the strategic line ignored that there are other IP groups that need to have their land tenure issues solved and clear. In terms of REDD+ implementation, the risk is that attention is paid only to areas where rights are legally recognized while areas where no</p>



	<p>rights are legally recognized are ignored, not only disregarding but disenfranchising other IPs on local community groups of their rights. Thus, this risk speaks towards making sure the rights of all IPs are equally considered, as well as of any other local community.</p> <p>Also, this risk is of particular relevance as according to the PLR analysis the recognition of some IPs customary rights to land and natural resources is unknown, and it is unknown if the factual situation of other IPs (the Garifuna), in terms of their historical land tenure practices, will result in the legal recognition of communal land rights and rights to access of natural resources as is the case with the Maya of southern Belize.</p> <p>Based on the SESA this strategic line was modified so now it is “Address Customary Land Tenure issues, by creating appropriate norms and implementing existing rulings and internationally recognized rights” and in the description, the CCJ ruling is one of the things explained, yet no IP group is left behind.</p>
<b>Impacts</b>	<p>The impacts include the loss of support for the implementation of the REDD+ by certain groups which would make sustainable and effective implementation impossible. This could also lead to disempowerment of other IPs and local communities, leaving them in a more vulnerable situation.</p>
<b>Belize’s PLR</b>	<p>There are no legal instruments addressing this risk. The PLR team identified that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The recognition of IPs customary rights to land and natural resources is embodied in the common law (case law) of Belize. The jurisprudence has detailed the legal principles for legally recognizing IP’s customary rights to land and natural resources. In the absence of an expressed act of parliament, it is not known if the facts surrounding any claim to customary land and rights to natural resources by other IPs will be such as to be in accord with those principles and consequently be so legally recognized.</li> <li>- There are procedures in case law that have established, legally recognized rights to lands and territories traditionally occupied by IPs. However, absent legislation, it is not known if it will apply to other IPs (like Garinagu).</li> </ul>
<b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b>	<p>While the current draft version of the National REDD+ Strategy through the separate mentioning of the CCJ ruling puts particular emphasis on one the IP constituents, this does not imply that other stakeholder groups could be disadvantaged. However, further potential to strengthen this point in the National REDD+ Strategy will be explored.</p> <p>Also, Belize is currently preparing the development of a REDD+ specific benefit sharing mechanism.</p> <p>In addition, the ESMF includes mitigation measures to ensure inclusiveness across all stakeholder groups and with particular attention to vulnerable groups, including women, youth and elderly, as well as all three of Belize’s IP constituents. Moreover, as explained in risk 4.10.1, the ESMF further addresses these concerns through a tailored Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework, which applies to all IP constituencies and does not emphasize one over another.</p>
<b>Risk</b>	<p><b>Risk 4.10.4: IPs and other rural community organizations are not properly integrated into forest governance and management systems increasing lack of ownership and leading to REDD+ failure.</b></p>

<b>Related Strategic Line</b>	1.1, Pillar 3 and Pillar 4
<b>Description</b>	<p>This risk speaks to the fact that at present, IPs and rural governance systems exist and should be integrated in REDD+ implementation. For IPs, forest governance at the local level is connected to indigenous forms of governance such as the Alcalde system. The Alcalde system plays a central role in issues such as conflict resolution within communities. It is important not to ignore such systems but affirm and integrate them into forest governance and management systems to be proposed under REDD+. Equally important is strengthening the capacities of such systems.</p> <p>If indigenous and rural governance systems are not integrated in REDD+ project implementation, they will be challenged to uphold the management systems that will be instituted. Moreover, this would be a missed opportunity as they can help to reduce obstacles or risks to REDD+ implementation, such as illegal logging, lack of enforcement of regulations, among others. There is a high risk that if indigenous and local communities' forms of governance fail to be acknowledged and properly integrated, REDD+ would fail as their support to implement and sustain REDD+ in the long run is of utmost importance.</p>
<b>Impacts</b>	Disregard of indigenous and other rural communities' ways and forms of governance leads to disempowerment and lack of ownership, loss of confidence and trust in REDD+ and loss of their support. In the long run this could lead to REDD+ failure.
<b>Belize's PLR</b>	There is nothing in Belize PLR to address such risk. It should be mentioned that the CCJ court ruling requires consultation with Maya people of southern Belize and the implementation will require the development of law to protect Maya lands and this will have a bearing on the place of Indigenous governance.
<b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b>	The present National REDD+ strategy under Strategic line 2.1 aims to Enhance Recognition and Respect for the Rights of all Stakeholders, yet this is not sufficient to ensure that their governance systems will be included and considered. Under Pillar 2 it also promotes meaningful and culturally appropriate consultations, where stakeholders could express their concerns. There is potential to make a specific mention of indigenous governance systems, in particular the Alcalde System, and that they be integrated into forest governance and management systems. The ESMF and IPPF include a mitigation measure that speaks specifically to this issue.
<b>OP 4.11: Physical Cultural Resources</b>	
<b>Risk</b>	No risks were identified to Physical Cultural Resources (refer to World Bank OP matrix).



OP 4.12: Involuntary Resettlement	
<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk 4.12.1: Access restrictions to land and/or resources in new or existing legally protected areas leads to economic displacement, adverse effects to lives and livelihoods and potentially conflict</b>
<b>Related Strategic Line</b>	Pillar 1, 3 and 4
<b>Description</b>	<p>In no case will implementation of the REDD+ Strategy result in physical displacement of people from land. Moreover, where indigenous land rights exist, and especially where these have been affirmed by the court, such as through the 2015 CCJ ruling, restrictions to land and/or resources would be a violation of the law. The implementation of certain REDD+ interventions, however, can lead to the risk of economic displacement by restricting access to land and/or resources in legally protected areas. This could happen due to an increase in legally pre-established control (reinforcing monitoring and controls could discover and restrict the irregular use of land) (suggested under pillar 1 and Pillar 4) or by the implementation of new protected areas (pillar 3). The latter could be through the creation of a <b>new PA</b> (strategic line 3.6), or enforcement of a <b>National Land Use Policy</b> (strategic line 1.1) which restricts certain activities in certain areas (refer to Annex 11 for a map of PA and IP communities). While this is expected to bring positive benefits in terms of forest conservation and restoration - and this was recognized by stakeholders in all consultations - it can also have negative consequences by restricting or reducing access to resources. Concerns raised by stakeholders referred specifically to reduced access to medicine, food, timber, construction materials for housing and sites of cultural importance, with possible impacts on people’s ability to maintain traditional practices and culture. The issue of hunting and loss of wildlife meat together with access to medicinal plants was mentioned in almost all of the IP consultations. Related to wild game, around 20% of Belizeans eat it on a regular basis. Where poverty is highest, in southern Belize, reliance on game meat increases, as an important protein source of the subsistence diet (Foster et al., 2014).</p> <p>IPs attribute cultural and spiritual values to forests. It is also a space in which to transmit such cultural and spiritual values, their heritage, and indigenous knowledge in general. If its access is being restricted because their rights and knowledge are not properly considered when deciding on specific activities as part of the National REDD+ strategy (risk 4.10.2), this could have adverse impacts on IPs’ ancestral ways of life.</p> <p>Moreover, restrictions on access to certain areas and resources could lead to competition and conflict within and between communities over the available resources and also increased pressure on other forest resources (e.g. causing increased hunting).</p> <p>However, the Strategy and ESMF are designed to ensure the risk cannot disproportionately affect any group nor can any group be left in a disadvantaged position. On the contrary, project affected people have to be engaged in a process of informed and meaningful consultation to identify and implement mitigation measures to address such impacts. The livelihood of affected people have to be improved or at least restored to how they were before the project. It is indeed important that REDD+ implementation does not result in the further erosion of Indigenous ways or in</p>



	<p>further restrictions and exclusion of IPs from their lands. Where the creation of a PA would be planned in or near an area inhabited by IPs, this would require FPIC, which means that IPs have the possibility to <b>not give consent</b> to the envisaged intervention and thus implementation could not go ahead. In addition, the creation of a new PA may never lead to physical displacement as such an activity would not be eligible under REDD+ in Belize, as already explained.</p> <p>This is a risk at the subproject level, and not at the National REDD+ Strategy level and, therefore, the corresponding risks must be evaluated through subproject screening and, where the screening identifies a risk of economic displacement, a specific ESIA process must be conducted and a Livelihood Restoration Plan developed based on the Process Framework (see ESMF Annex 2).</p>
<p><b>Impacts</b></p>	<p>In this case impacts are mostly social: Disagreement over new restrictions imposed on protected areas, or the creation of new protected areas, which could lead to conflict, loss of trust and support from stakeholders for the implementation of the strategy, increased poverty and vulnerability where the actors are economically displaced, food insecurity, health problems when there is a restriction in access to medicinal plants was mentioned a lot during IP consultations. Also, restricting access to the forest could adversely affect IPs' ancestral practices and cultural heritage as the forest is a space of central importance to cultural and spiritual values, heritage, and food and livelihood security needs. Environmentally speaking the biggest threat would be the displacement of pressure on natural resources to other areas or to other resources if only certain resources are limited.</p>
<p><b>Belize's PLR</b></p>	<p><b>In relation to access restrictions:</b> By law, restriction of access to natural resources is dealt with in the context of PAs. The National Protected Areas System Act, 2015 does not recognize any IP rights when such restrictions take place. However, Section 30 of the National Protected Areas System Act, 2015 provides that the local community that may be affected has the opportunity to enter into an agreement with the Minister for joint co-management of the area and the regulation of human activities that may affect the area. Also Belize does have an international obligation, in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992, applicable to IPs, to protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements (art. 10 (c)); and to benefit-sharing by taking all practicable measures to promote and advance priority access on a fair and equitable basis by Contracting Parties, especially developing countries, to the results and benefits arising from biotechnologies based upon genetic resources provided by those Contracting Parties; such access to be on mutually agreed terms (art. 19 (2)). It can also be stated with some certainty, that based on the reasoning in the case of Jalacte Village v. the Attorney General, compensation is also an appropriate remedy when restriction of access to natural resources takes place in IPs' lands.</p> <p><b>In relation to conflict/competition in general:</b> Regulation 19 of the Environmental Protection (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1995 as amended provides that a report of an environmental impact assessment shall include the following: (h) a description of the likely significant effects, direct and indirect, on the environment of the development, explained by reference to its possible impact on human beings. This however, is very broad in scope and there is no regulation which sets out the parameters that must be addressed in a social assessment to address social impacts, so that it is not certain that conflict potential would be identified as a risk.</p>



	<p><b>Regarding conflict in the context of restrictions to the use of timber:</b> The Forests (Protection of Trees) Regulations, 1992, prohibits any person from converting any species of primary hardwoods, secondary hardwoods or softwoods as specified ... without permit into lumber without first having obtained a Licence ... (reg. 3); and prohibits any person to whom a permit is granted ... from converting any species of primary hardwoods, secondary hardwoods and softwoods to lumber by using chainsaws or any of its modifications (reg. 5). The Forest (Forest Rules), 1971 prohibits the felling or removal of the following trees and plants: Allspice or Pimento, Breadnut, Copal, Wild Rubber, All Species of the Orchid Family (rule 42).</p> <p><b>Regarding conflict in the context of competition over wildlife resources:</b> The Wildlife Protection Act, 1982, prohibits any person, in any area closed to hunting of wildlife pursuant to the provisions of the Act or any other enactment for the time being in force, save as the Minister may by regulations provide, (a) hunt any wildlife of any species; (b) be found in possession of any wildlife or part thereof; (c) carry any gun, spear, trap or other means for hunting wildlife (sec. 4 (1)); and prohibits any person without a licence from hunting any wildlife in a forest reserve (sec. 4 (2)).</p> <p><b>Regarding IPs and the use of resources of relevance:</b> Belize has an international obligation in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992, applicable to IPs, to protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements (art. 10 (c)); and to benefit-sharing by taking all practicable measures to promote and advance priority access on a fair and equitable basis by Contracting Parties, especially developing countries, to the results and benefits arising from biotechnologies based upon genetic resources provided by those Contracting Parties; such access to be on mutually agreed terms (art. 19 (2)). Belize is also a signatory to UNDRIP. At a national level, Belize is obligated to comply with the CCJ consent order which affirms Maya land tenure and associated rights, Belize has a duty to recognize and respect Maya People’s right to own and control their lands and forests, the use and occupation of those lands, and bring all existing laws/administrative measure in conformity with the now recognized and affirmed rights through the development of a law to protect such rights. Para 4 is specific to any activity that may affect the use and enjoyment of their lands and resources must first obtain their FPIC.</p>
<p><b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b></p>	<p>The current version of the National REDD+ Strategy includes several strategic lines that should help prevent access restrictions in protected areas that could adversely affect livelihoods and ways of life and create conflicts and competition, especially under pillar 2. It includes strategic lines which aim to enhance the recognition and respect for the rights of all stakeholders, promote and create capacity to support alternative livelihoods and address customary land tenure issues.</p> <p>The ESMF includes further provisions to minimize and manage this risk through a tailored Process Framework. Moreover, the ESMF includes provisions to assess the potential for conflict in the design of REDD+ implementing subprojects and the REDD+ FGRM can help monitor and mediate conflicts.</p>
<p><b>OP 4.36: Forests</b></p>	



<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk 4.36.1: Harvesting of forest products for alternative livelihoods, if unsustainable, impacts forest health and quality and health and safety of communities</b>
<b>Related Strategic Line</b>	Strategic line 2.3 and 2.4
<b>Description</b>	Alternative livelihoods, while holding potential to provide social benefits, can result in unsustainable harvesting of forest products, including of non-timber forest products, if there are no clear policies to address sustainable use and extraction. The Northern Maya specifically raised this concern in the context of the use of forest products for tourism purposes as an alternative livelihood option. Additionally, during consultations it was mentioned the emergence of a domestic trade in non-forest timber products to the growing urban population. Thus the strategy should ensure no activity aggravates this situation, but on the contrary sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products is promoted.
<b>Impacts</b>	This could not only impact forest health and quality (its resources and ecosystem services) but also health and safety of communities. For example, if certain medicinal resources start to be extracted in unsustainable ways this could impact the health of local communities, particularly IP who depend on them.
<b>Belize's PLR</b>	There is no general law regulating the use and market of non-timber forest products in Belize. Non-timber forest products may be marketed by the Belize Marketing Board or they may have their own legislation. Non-timber forest products with their own legislation in relation to use and marketing includes chicle, with the Chicle Protection Act, 1935 which provides that the Minister may from time to time make regulations for the protection of chicle and for regulating the transport by land, water, or by any other method, and the import and export of chicle, and in particular may prohibit any person from bleeding, preparing, selling, buying, storing, transporting, importing or exporting any chicle or otherwise engaging in the chicle business except under licence, at such seasons, upon such terms and conditions and upon payment of such fees as may from time to time be prescribed (sec. 3). Similarly, the Wildlife Protection Act, 1982, provides that no person shall carry on the business of a dealer in wildlife except pursuant to a valid dealer's licence (sec. 7); and that commencing on the day on which this Act comes into force, there shall be an eleven-year moratorium on the sale, exchange, hire or any other dealing for profit in any wildlife of any species or parts or products thereof. This shall not apply to sales of meat from species the hunting of which is not prohibited and which is acquired by the consumer within fifteen miles of the place where the animal was killed or captured (sec. 8 (1)).
<b>How the Strategy address the issue and</b>	The current version of the draft National REDD+ Strategy partly addresses this risk under pillar 3 Sustainable Forest Management and Conservation, and Pillar 4 Monitoring and Information, but there may be potential to further strengthen the strategy in this regard. The ESMF will include provisions to ensure that sustainability considerations are integrated into the design of REDD+ implementing subprojects for the development of alternative livelihoods.

<b>implications for the ESMF</b>	
<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk 4.36.2: Extraction of secondary hardwoods, if unsustainable and not properly regulated, impacts forest health and quality and safety of communities</b>
<b>Related Strategic Line</b>	Strategic line 3.3
<b>Description</b>	<p>While secondary hardwoods play a limited role in Belize’s forest sector to date, several species are being used by local communities for different purposes such as construction, furniture craft, posts for fences among others. Assuming these species were gaining more economic importance as a result of REDD+ implementation, if this is not monitored, this may lead to a competition between use for commercial vs. use for subsistence purposes impacting lives and livelihoods of forest dependent communities.</p> <p>Moreover, commercial harvesting is regulated by licenses with attached conditions by the Forestry Department. If the strategy proposes commercial harvest by local communities or the private sector, it would also have to insist on the implementation of the requirements for forest certification systems to be WB compliant. In this case, the WB requirements are more rigorous than the laws of Belize.</p> <p>As a conclusion, alternative livelihoods cannot be thought of in isolation but need to be part of a broader rural development strategy. Most importantly, forest dependent communities should be a central part in this process. Any new harvesting operations need to be aligned with the WB requirements for forest certification systems.</p>
<b>Impacts</b>	The impacts of this risk could be both environmental and social. Environmental impacts include deforestation or forest degradation, and loss of the ability to provide certain ecosystem services. Social impacts that could arise are a reduction or even loss of basic resources local communities or IPs depend directly on which could result in competition between use for commercial vs. use for subsistence purposes, affecting is safety and security as they use secondary hardwoods for multiple purposes (housing, agriculture, etc.).
<b>Belize’s PLR</b>	The Forests (Protection of Trees) Regulations, 1992, prohibits any person from converting any species of primary hardwoods, secondary hardwoods or softwoods as specified ... without permit into lumber without <b>first having obtained a Licence</b> ... (reg. 3); and prohibits any person to whom a permit is granted ... from converting any species of primary hardwoods, secondary hardwoods and softwoods to lumber by using chainsaws or any of its modifications (reg. 5). The Forest (Forest Rules), 1971 prohibits the filling or removal of the following trees and plants: Allspice or Pimento, Breadnut, Copal, Wild Rubber, All Species of the Orchid Family (rule 42).



	Regarding commercial harvesting and commercial harvesting and forest certification systems. In Belize, it is regulated by licenses with attached conditions by the Forestry Department. The requirements for forest certification systems of the WB are more rigorous than the laws of Belize.
<b>How the Strategy address the issue and implications for the ESMF</b>	The current draft version of the National REDD+ Strategy partly addresses this issue under strategic line 3.4 and also under Pillar 4 by increasing monitoring capacities. The ESMF will therefore include mitigation measures to minimize and manage the risk, ensuring local communities that are forest dependent and more vulnerable are supported. Any harvesting operation needs to have achieved a standard of forest management developed with the meaningful participation of locally affected communities, consistent with internationally recognized standards of responsible forest use or have adhered to a time-bound phased action plan to achieve such a standard. The ESMF will ensure that all WB requirements for forest certification systems are included.
<b>OP 7.50: Projects on International Waterways</b>	
<b>Risk</b>	No risks were identified.
<b>OP 7.60: Projects in Disputed Areas</b>	
<b>Risk</b>	No risks were identified.

#### 5.4. Action plan for minimizing, mitigating and managing REDD+ risks

The following table provides mitigation measures addressing all social and environmental risks identified in the course of Belize’s SESA for REDD+. The mitigation measures have been identified based on all available information about the risks, their impacts, how existing PLRs and the National REDD+ Strategy address them and the applicable social and environmental safeguards requirements of the World Bank. Some of these mitigation measures at the same time address certain obstacles. For example, for obstacle SE 1. “Lack of knowledge leading to a lack of REDD+ ownership”, the inclusion of further mitigation measures built into the ESMF to ensure comprehensive, balanced, inclusive and culturally appropriate stakeholder engagement over time should also help overcome this obstacle (see for example MM4.10.1b. “Provide capacity building on legal language and matters to representatives of the BENIC and of the Western Yucatec Maya in the Cayo District to ensure they can contribute in a meaningful way to the process of developing and updating legal instruments” or MM4.10.2c. where the monitoring framework provided by the IPPF for each subproject shall be specifically aimed at assessing the degree of participation of IP representatives in consultations, the level of ownership of IP communities along the process and the degree of satisfaction with respect to the project responses to potential impacts. Likewise, these further mitigation measures could also help address obstacle SE 3. “Stakeholder concerns leading to mistrust”, together with actively involving local communities so they receive REDD+ benefits.

To understand the table of mitigation measures, the following should be noted:

- Due to the importance of the risks identified under OP 4.10 Indigenous Peoples and OP 4.12 Involuntary Resettlement, an Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) and a Process Framework (PF) have been annexed to the present ESMF and are referred to in the mitigation measures of the following table.
- The important topic of stakeholder engagement is dealt with in a number of mitigation measures and is further strengthened in chapter 7.
- Gender considerations have been mainstreamed throughout all mitigation measures, and were also considered in chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9.

*Table 9. Action Plan for managing for minimizing, mitigating and managing REDD+ risks*

<b>OP 4.01: Environmental Assessment</b>
<b>RISK 4.01.1 Risk of reversal or non-permanence of GHG emissions reductions achieved through the REDD+ strategy</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
MM4.01.1a) Ensure that the REDD+ Strategy addresses the drivers of deforestation, which should lead to a permanent reduction in forest-based activities that release GHG emissions.
MM4.01.1b) Where REDD+ implementing subprojects aim to promote sustainable livelihood options to reduce pressure on forest, suitable options must be identified together with affected stakeholders, equipment and sufficient training provided (including on the maintenance of the necessary equipment) and sustainability of those options must be ensured beyond the runtime of the subproject.
<b>RISK 4.01.2 Increased demand for water due to new livelihoods options adversely impact the environment</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>

MM4.01.2a) Subprojects aiming to promote sustainable livelihood options are screened for risks and impacts related to water consumption, and where a risk gets identified in this context, additional assessments cover the aspect of water consumption as well (see ESMF chapter 6).
MM4.01.2b) Where a risk of increased demand for water gets identified for subprojects and cannot be avoided, adequate mitigation measures are identified, together with indicators and targets for their monitoring.
<b>RISK 4.01.3 Unequal access to REDD+ benefits, including financial benefits, leads to conflict and competition within and between communities and loss of stakeholder support</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
MM4.01.3a) Belize's REDD+ Benefit Sharing Mechanism must be designed to ensure equitable access to REDD+ benefits, whether these are financial or not financial, including for vulnerable stakeholders (e.g. those whose rights to land and resources are not formalized) and especially considering IPs, women and youths.
MM4.01.3b) Ensure participation of key stakeholders in the process of developing Belize's Carbon Rights Policy, such as IPs, but also private landowners and private protected area managers
MM4.01.3c) REDD+ subprojects, during their design include information sessions on benefits envisioned by the subproject and their sharing among individuals/communities affected by the subproject to increase transparency and manage expectations, ensuring adequate representation of Vulnerable Groups, such as IPs, women and youths.
MM4.01.3d) Existing structures and processes are identified and used at community level to organize roundtables to discuss and resolve possible tensions between stakeholders regarding the accrual or sharing of REDD+ benefits. The meetings will be facilitated by a trusted person from within the community in a culturally appropriate manner, if necessary, with support from a professional mediator with appropriate language skills. Where no trusted person can be identified at community level, a professional mediator will be hired to facilitate the roundtables as needed. Participation of women and youths in such roundtables must be ensured.
MM4.01.3e) Capacity building sessions will be provided to communities involved with REDD+ implementation on the existing Grievance Redress Mechanisms and its functioning. It will be ensured that these sessions are gender-balanced and youths are represented in adequate proportion.
MM4.01.3f) Grievance in the context of REDD+ benefit sharing will be monitored and the management of the project/subprojects adjusted as necessary.
<b>RISK 4.01.4 Increased bureaucracy reduces participation of some stakeholders, in particular Vulnerable Groups, further excluding their views and aggravating their vulnerability</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
MM4.01.4a) REDD+ implementation will seek to minimize bureaucracy at project level, and especially for Vulnerable Groups among stakeholders, including IPs, women and youths, e.g. by promoting decentralization and using established local structures and processes to the extent possible.
MM4.01.4b) Subprojects are designed to use established local and/or traditional structures and processes for implementation to decrease the burden of adjusting to new procedures and any form of stakeholder engagement and information disclosure will use suitable language, using translators if needed, to ensure broad understanding and promote local stakeholder support and ownership during implementation.
<b>RISK 4.01.5 Lack of understanding of REDD+ leads to failure to engage with and get support from all stakeholders</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>

MM4.01.5a) An awareness and capacity needs assessment will be conducted within the government to identify ways to ensure inter-ministerial understanding of REDD+ and its importance and thus to secure coordination on and support of REDD+ across ministries.
MM4.01.5b) An awareness and capacity needs assessment will be conducted in a gender-sensitive manner to identify where and which stakeholder groups will require support to ensure their understanding of REDD+, resulting in a gender-inclusive Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Plan, including the integration of awareness raising in school curricula, considering traditional knowledge, geographical coverage and language preferences of different stakeholder groups.
MM4.01.5c) Under MM4.01.5b) participation of stakeholders will be maximized by providing the necessary means for stakeholder to be present at consultations (e.g. internet cards for virtual consultations, transportation, accessible venues, time, child care, etc.).
MM4.01.5d) Where stakeholders need to acquire new skills and knowledge in order to engage in REDD+ implementation, especially Vulnerable Groups of stakeholders, such as IPs, women and youths, capacity building is provided in a culturally appropriate manner and in appropriate language.
MM4.01.5e) The REDD+ Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Plan gets implemented with a special view to involving Vulnerable Groups, such as IP, women, youths, etc.
MM4.01.5f) The REDD+ Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Plan is considered a working document that gets revised at least annually. Where additional needs for awareness raising and capacity building are identified in the course of REDD+ implementation, these needs get incorporated into the plan and addressed in further implementation.
<b>RISK 4.01.6 Gender gap gets exacerbated as women have unequal access to benefits from the REDD+ Strategy, including engagement opportunities, and thus their visions are not reflected in future actions</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
The risk is addressed through mitigation measures under risks 4.01.3, 4.01.4 and 4.01.5, which have all been developed to ensure gender-inclusivity.
<b>RISK 4.01.7 Youth exclusion gets exacerbated as youth have unequal access to benefits from the REDD+ Strategy, including engagement opportunities thus their visions are not reflected in future actions</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
The risk is addressed through mitigation measures under risks 4.01.3, 4.01.4 and 4.01.5, which have all been developed to ensure that the voices of youth are heard and considered and that youth have equal access to REDD+ opportunities and benefits.
<b>RISK 4.01.8 Uncertain performance of the REDD+ strategy due to insufficient monitoring and control, lack of intra- and inter-institutional coordination, lack of resources, training and ministerial discretion</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
MM4.01.8a) This risk is addressed by Strategic Line 1.3 “Improve coordination between government actors” (Pillar 1) and “Pillar 4: Forest Information and Monitoring”. An information sharing mechanism (resulting from Pillar 4) is a prerequisite for proper coordination between government actors (SL 1.3) and it should be ensured this is carefully designed and implemented, as well as an early warning system for monitoring and control of forest degradation and deforestation (SL 4.2).
MM4.01.8b) Prepare a study on the incidence, risks and impacts of "ministerial discretion" in the management of economic resources related to the National REDD+ Strategy, good practices and MM after at least a year of implementation.
MM4.01.8c) Disseminate information about the efforts undertaken within the REDD+ project framework to strengthen existing monitoring systems and capacities.



<b>OP 4.09: Pest Management</b>
<b>RISK 4.09.1: Inappropriate implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices adversely affect forests and associated biodiversity</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
MM4.09.1a) Subproject design and implementation consider best practice guidelines on IPM (see ESMF chapter 6.5).
MM4.09.1b) Subproject proposals (where no further assessment is needed) and ESMPs (where further assessment was conducted) include adequate mitigation measures to avoid, or where this is impossible, minimize and manage adverse impacts on forests and biodiversity.
MM4.09.1c) Mitigation measures are duly implemented and monitored and subproject management is adjusted where monitoring reveals adverse impacts.
<b>RISK 4.09.2: Inappropriate fire management practices adversely affect forests, other natural habitats and associated biodiversity</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
Since fire management can be considered part of IPM, MM4.09.1a)-c) apply here as well. In addition: MM4.09.2a) Subproject design and implementation should consider specific guidance on fire management practices, such as FAO (2012) and further resources available from <a href="http://www.fao.org/forestry/firemanagement/en/">www.fao.org/forestry/firemanagement/en/</a> . The document "Good DRM practices for Belizean small farmers" (Holder nd) should also be consulted.
MM4.09.2b) Belize's fire-control programmes are adjusted to increasingly involve local stakeholders in community-based fire management, as described in FAO (2011).
MM4.09.2c) Belize's NFMS monitors forest fires and the information gets used to update any forest fire management plans and practices accordingly.
<b>OP 4.10: Indigenous Peoples</b>
<b>RISK 4.10.1 Lack of observance of existing IP rights when developing or updating legal instruments affecting IPs leads to adverse impacts to their lives and livelihoods, i.e.: involuntary restriction of access to legally designated parks or protected areas</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
MM4.10.1a) Before REDD+ implementation, finalize adjustments required to the 2014 FPIC Framework for the Southern Maya to ensure it is also appropriate for the Northern Maya (NMAB) and the Garifuna (NGC). An agreement with the Western Yucatec Maya on how to adjust the 2014 FPIC Framework for the Southern Maya to their needs should also be sought.
MM4.10.1b) Apply FPIC in any preparation of legal reform that affects IPs, in line with the IPPF. All four IP constituencies should be represented in the procedure, i.e. including the Western Yucatec Maya in the Cayo District.
MM4.10.1c) Provide capacity building on legal language and matters to representatives of the BENIC and of the Western Yucatec Maya in the Cayo District (as long as these have not joined the BENIC) to ensure they can contribute in a meaningful way to FPIC processes as part of developing and updating legal instruments.
MM4.10.1.d) Provide access to legal support where necessary and possible.
See also MM 4.10.4a and respective indicators and targets

<b>RISK 4.10.2 Design and implementation of the REDD+ strategy without meaningful consultation of IPs, including FPIC as appropriate, disregards their rights and knowledge and leads to adverse impacts to their lives and ancestral practices</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
See also MM 4.10.1a) and respective indicators and targets
MM4.10.2a) Apply FPIC in any REDD+ activity of non-legal nature that affects IPs, in line with the IPPF. All four IP constituencies should be represented in the procedure, i.e. including the Western Yucatec Maya in the Cayo District
MM4.10.2b) Implement the Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) that has been prepared as part of the ESMF package, including FPIC as mentioned in MM4.10.2a) and an early screening process for all subprojects to identify possible risks and impacts on IPs and their livelihoods, with the participation of BENIC, representatives of the Western Yucatec Maya in the Cayo District (as long as these have not joined the BENIC) and partner entities. Where risks and impacts are identified in the screening, a detailed social assessment will be performed by a team of experts knowledgeable on Belize's IP, and an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) will be prepared for the identification of adequate mitigation and livelihood restoration measures. For all stages of the process, meaningful consultation will be ensured through the involvement of the BENIC and/or representatives of the Western Yucatec Maya in the Cayo District (as long as these have not joined the BENIC), as applicable.
MM4.10.2c) The IPPF provides a monitoring framework, calling for the need to prepare a specific monitoring and evaluation plan for each IPP prepared in the framework of the National REDD+ Strategy. The monitoring system for each subproject shall be specifically aimed at assessing the degree of participation of IP representatives in consultations, and their level of community support or consent for the project. The framework also calls for the need to perform a final audit on the application of IP safeguards and relevant legislation across all subprojects.
MM4.10.2d) Disclosure mechanisms of relevant safeguards instruments (IPP, Social Assessment Reports, Livelihood Restoration Plans (LPRs), etc.) will make use of culturally appropriate dissemination means and will be translated as needed for IP communities.
<b>RISK 4.10.3: Emphasis of the strategy on one IP constituency may disadvantage the recognition of rights of other IP groups and local communities organizations</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
The risk is addressed through the mitigation measures established under 4.10.1, 4.10.2 and 4.10.4, which emphasize the need to always ensure that all four IP constituencies are considered.
<b>RISK 4.10.4. IPs and other rural community organizations are not properly integrated into forest governance and management systems, increasing lack of ownership and leading to REDD+ failure.</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
MM4.10.4a) Capacity building of state actors will be carried out on Indigenous Peoples rights, traditional knowledge and systems and on the importance of and ways to consider these in their work, thus promoting the creation of awareness at national level and a feeling of ownership at local level.
MM4.10.4b) The Process Framework includes as part of the institutional arrangements for the implementation of the REDD+ initiative at local level the adoption of a co-management approach through the creation of Forest Co-Management Councils (FCC), where appropriate, with the participation of representatives of affected IPs. Decision making at local level in connection to the nature and extent of subproject activities, the identification of possible impacts, the development of LRP and the discussion of



mitigation measures and sustainable livelihood options will be conducted under a co-management model.
MM4.10.4c) Awareness raising activities through introductory and training sessions before commencement and during formal meetings of FCC and consultations will be carried out, with a particular focus on IP leaders and representatives (see section 6.3 of PF)
<b>OP 4.12: Involuntary Resettlement</b>
<b>Risk 4.12.1: Access restrictions to land and/or resources in new or existing legally protected areas leads to economic displacement, adverse effects to lives and livelihoods and potentially conflict</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
MM4.12.1a) Screening for economic displacement impacts early in the process for each subproject, as laid out in the PF. For subprojects under category B and C, a scoping process will be carried out to determine the depth of additional assessment needed to identify affected stakeholders and impacts of subproject implementation, with special consideration of the most vulnerable stakeholders, including IPs, women and youths.
MM4.12.1b) For all subprojects with a risk related to economic displacement identified in the screening, an ESIA will be conducted with special focus on identifying stakeholders affected by economic displacement, with special consideration of the most vulnerable stakeholders, including IPs, women and youths, and to agree with them on adequate eligibility criteria and compensation, considering gender-differentiated needs, which will be reflected in a Livelihood Restoration Plan annexed to the ESMP.
MM4.12.1c) The Process Framework is applicable to individuals and communities who experience economic displacement as a result of resource access restriction in PAs due to the implementation of REDD+ as a whole and of any subproject as part of implementing Belize's REDD+ National Strategy, and it will inform the creation of Livelihood Restoration Plans (LRP) at subproject level (See Section 4.1.3 of Process Framework).
MM4.12.1d) The development of LRPs will be informed through a participatory process and, where appropriate, a co-management approach through the creation of Forest Co-Management Councils (FCCs), with the participation of all relevant local stakeholders and project affected people under the coordination of the REDD+ CU (see sections 4.1.2 and 6.2 of Process Framework)
MM4.12.1e) The contents and principles of LRP are detailed in the Process Framework including a list of exemplary mitigation measures to be implemented in case of economic displacement and negative effects on the livelihoods of affected communities. Examples of sustainable livelihood options and compensation measures are available in Section 4.2 of the Process Framework.
MM4.12.1f) A Monitoring and Evaluation system will be put in place to follow up progress on overall operations and processes as described in the PF and to assess the compliance with outcomes set in the LRP. Monitoring and Evaluation activities will be carried out both at subproject level, with the implementation of specific systems in each LRP, and at program level through the aggregation of data and information collected across different subprojects.
MM4.12.g) The CCJ court rulings will be upheld and land rights respected by all activities that fall under REDD+ implementation.
<b>OP 4.36: Forests</b>
<b>RISK 4.36.1 Harvesting of forest products for new livelihoods, if unsustainable, impacts forest health and quality and health and safety of communities</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
MM4.36.1a) Subprojects aiming to promote sustainable livelihood options are screened for risks and impacts related to unsustainable resource use, and where a risk gets identified in this context, additional assessments cover this aspect as well (see ESMF chapter 6).
MM4.36.1b) Where a risk of unsustainable resource use gets identified for subprojects and cannot be

avoided, adequate mitigation measures are identified, together with indicators and targets for their monitoring.
MM4.36.1c) Where sustainable livelihood options are successfully established, availability of resources used and impacts resulting from their use get monitored beyond the runtime of the project and it is ensured that no over extraction with further impacts on people and nature occur over time.
<b>RISK 4.36.2 Extraction of secondary hardwoods, if unsustainable and not properly implemented and regulated, impacts forest health and quality and safety of communities</b>
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>
MM4.36.2a) Strategic line 3.3 Promotion of utilization of secondary hardwoods and lesser-known timber species will be designed to promote reduced impact logging practices, using best practice guidance such as Ellis and Ellis (2021) and IUCN (2006).
MM4.36.2b) Where extraction of secondary hardwoods gets practiced, at REDD+ project or subproject level, risks and impacts get identified, minimized, managed and monitored with suitable indicators.
MM4.36.2c) Community surveys will be conducted on a regular basis (e.g. bi-annually) in the area of influence to ensure the extraction of secondary hardwoods does not adversely affect their livelihoods, whether directly or indirectly. Where survey results show adverse effects, project/subproject management gets adjusted immediately.

## 6. Procedures for REDD+ implementation in line with applicable safeguards standards

Belize’s National REDD+ Strategy includes a number of national policy level interventions and does not at the moment contain detail about specific interventions to be implemented on the ground. However, the strategy includes policy lines that hint at future implementation of certain activities at local level. Since it is as yet unknown what kinds of activities will be implemented where and how, it is difficult to assess precisely what the impacts of such activities will be. Therefore, this chapter describes the procedures that will be applied to site-specific interventions, in the following called “REDD+ subprojects” implemented under the National REDD+ Strategy. More specifically, the chapter has the following objectives:

- (i) Define how subproject activities’ environmental and social risks and their potential impacts are identified and assessed under the applicable safeguards policy;
- (ii) Define how environmental and social impacts will be addressed through the definition of appropriate and proportionate management plans and/or mitigation/compensation measures.

The following figure summarizes the process and indicates responsibilities for each step. The following subsections provide further detail about the procedure for identifying and assessing safeguard impacts of REDD+ subproject activities and assessing mitigation measures.

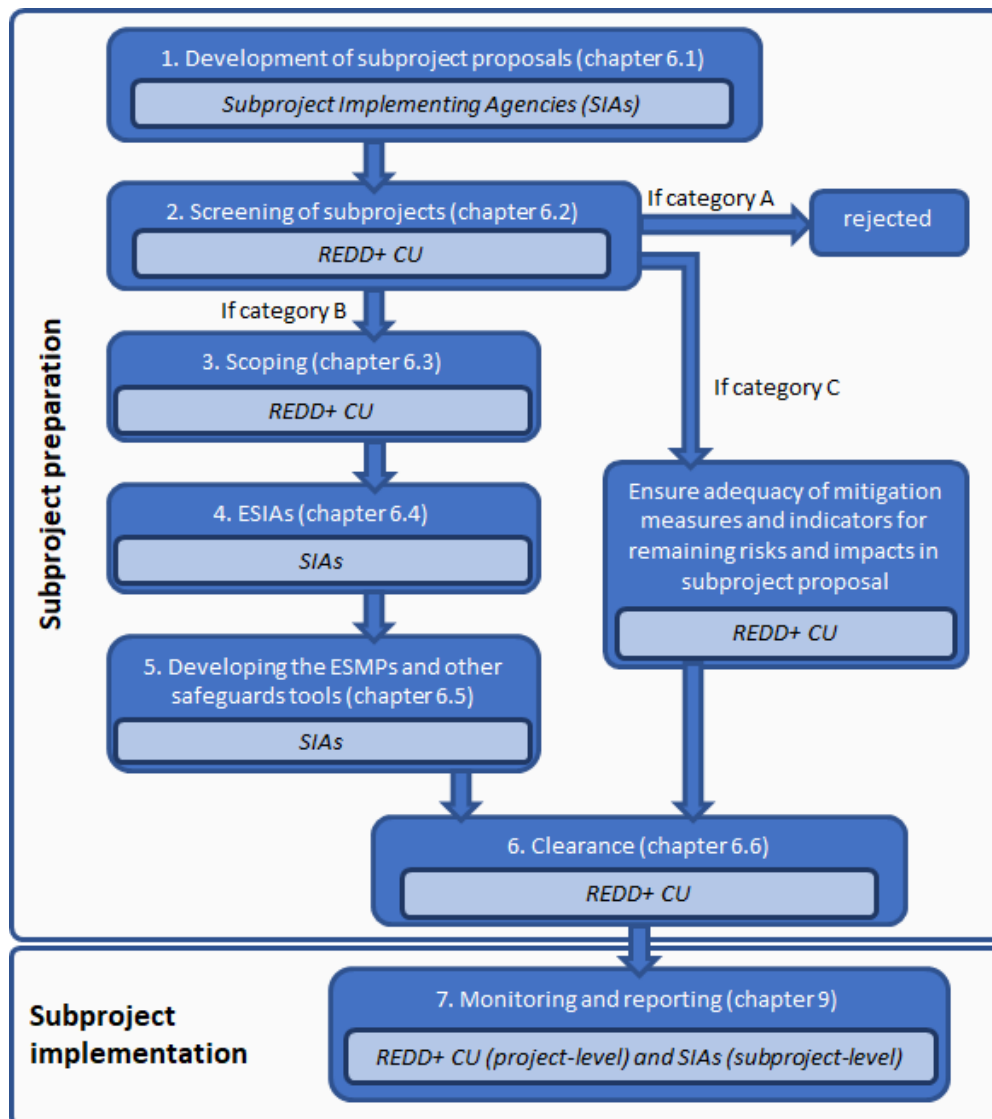


Figure 4. Overview of the steps that form part of the procedures needed to ensure alignment with applicable safeguards

### 6.1. Subproject proposals

More detailed planning of the envisaged activities should include the development of subproject proposals. These proposals should include the following information:

1. Title of the proposal;
2. Name, address and contact point of applicants;
3. Objectives of the subproject and how it links with the objectives of the National REDD+ Strategy as a whole;
4. Description of the intended activities in as much detail as possible and how they contribute to achieving the subproject and REDD+ objectives;
5. Location of the intended activities, including map showing sites in focus for implementation, location of settlements, roads and infrastructure, protected areas and other information of interest;



6. Names of villages/settlements in and near the subproject site, including those of IP villages, and number of people (potentially) affected (positively and/or negatively), disaggregated by gender;
7. Bio-geographic characteristics of importance to subproject implementation;
8. Socio-economic characteristics of importance to the subproject implementation with a special view to characteristics of Vulnerable Groups, such as IPs, women, youths and elderly;
9. Description of risks and impacts of the planned activities as well as of mitigation measures to avoid, or where this is impossible, minimize and manage these;
10. Description of benefits of the planned activities, expected beneficiaries (m/w), efforts to actively promote benefits and measures to ensure fair distribution of benefits, with a view to achieve gender equity and reach especially the most vulnerable stakeholders, including IPs;
11. Description of provisions for long-term ecological, social and financial sustainability of the subproject;
12. Stakeholder consultation before, during and subsequent to implementation and information disclosure, including gender-sensitive approaches to consultation and culturally appropriate consultation of IPs;
13. Existing procedures to raise and address grievances (e.g. established communication channels) and how they will be used in the subproject;
14. Monitoring and evaluation of subproject implementation, including indicators for the monitoring of benefits, risks and impacts and provisions for continued monitoring after completion of the project;
15. Implementation arrangements, including responsibilities, schedule and budget for subproject implementation.

Under item 9, the following should be considered:

- Risks and impacts should be identified considering the entire life-cycle of the subproject, and to the extent possible, risks and impacts associated with primary supply chains should also be considered;
- The mitigation hierarchy should be applied, i.e. risks and impacts to workers, affected communities and the environment should be anticipated and avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized, and, where residual impacts remain, these should be managed and/or compensated/offset;
- Where risks get identified, the WB OPs and best practice guidance should be used in the preparation of mitigation measures. For example, mitigation measures and useful guidance documents, please see the table included in chapter 6.5.

Under item 12, the FCPF and UN-REDD Programme (2012) “Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness with a Focus on the Participation of Indigenous Peoples and Other Forest-Dependent Communities” should be consulted. In addition, to ensure gender sensitivity, it should be considered how women’s decision-making will be brought to par with men’s at all stages of the subproject. Here, the CI (2019) “Guidelines for Integrating Gender and Social Equity into Conservation Programming” can be used as a reference, among others.

## 6.2. Safeguards Screening

According to OP 4.01, once the specific interventions are defined, all subprojects and activities performed under the REDD+ NS will need to be subject to a safeguards screening process to determine the appropriate type and extent of subsequent environmental assessments to be applied in each case. Subprojects and activities are subject to the screening process using the Safeguards Screening Form

presented below to determine potential level of environmental and social impacts. The form will be timely applied by the REDD+ Coordination Unit (in coordination with the relevant partners and agencies, when applicable).

After completion of the screening form, the National REDD+ Coordination Unit (in coordination with the relevant partners and agencies, when applicable) will determine, in accordance with World Bank policies, the appropriate preliminary categorization of the subproject. The categorization is defined as follows:

- Category A subprojects are those that have potential significant adverse environmental and social impacts that are:
  - Sensitive (i.e., a potential impact is considered sensitive if it may be irreversible)
  - Diverse, or unprecedented; and/or
  - Affecting an area broader than the sites or facilities subject to physical works (e.g., a dam that may affect downstream communities or road construction that may have induced impacts on nearby forests and natural habitats).

Generally, Category A projects are those where interventions are likely to have significant adverse environmental or social impacts that may be irreversible.

- Category B subprojects are those that have potential adverse environmental and social impacts that are less adverse, site-specific, that can be readily addressed through mitigation measures; and few if any of the impacts are irreversible.
- Category C subprojects are those that have minimal or no adverse environmental and social impacts.

A positive answer to any of the questions from the screening form classified as A-relevant will imply the categorization of the subproject as A. Positive answers to more than three questions classified as A/B-relevant will imply the categorization of the subproject as A, unless solid evidence on the effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures can be provided. Such evidence shall be provided and assessed during ESIA stage. In light of the collected evidence, the National REDD+ Coordination Unit (in coordination with the relevant partners and agencies, such as the BENIC, when applicable) may review the categorization of the subproject and propose the discontinuation of the subproject in case it is classified as A.

Following the final and agreed categorization of the proposed subprojects, the REDD+ CU will launch the preparation of the required safeguard instruments as determined above, including the drafting of the corresponding TORs when these are to be performed by external organizations and/or consultants through a tendering process. For subprojects with very limited risks and impacts, applicable codes of environmental practice or equivalent guidelines will be followed<sup>2</sup> and need to be incorporated into the subproject proposal.

Since the SESA concluded that Belize's National REDD+ Strategy as a whole is a Category B project, i.e. of moderate risk, **no REDD+ subproject should be approved that is of Category A as per the screening.** For Category B subprojects, a scoping phase will determine the level of detail and scope required for additional assessment and development of ESMPs and other safeguards instruments. Although Category C subprojects may not require further assessment and ESMPs or other safeguards instruments, it needs to be ensured that adequate mitigation measures for remaining risks and impacts are included in the subproject proposal, together with suitable indicators to monitor risks and impacts and allow for adaptive management of subprojects.

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<sup>2</sup> These will be mostly cases of Category C projects, unless the preparation of a simplified ESIA/ESMP is required.

*Table 10. Safeguards Screening checklist form*

Checklist Question	Yes	No	n/a	Brief description of the risk	Triggered WB OP	Likely category if answer "yes"	Applicable safeguard tool
Is the subproject likely to have significant adverse environmental impacts that are sensitive, diverse or unprecedented?					OP 4.01 Environmental Assessment	Category A	Not eligible under REDD+
Do the impacts affect an area broader than the sites or facilities subject to physical works?					OP 4.01 Environmental Assessment	Category A/B	In case of Category A, this is not eligible under REDD+, in case of Category B, ESIA and ESMP
Are the significant adverse environmental impacts irreversible?					OP 4.01 Environmental Assessment	Category A	Not eligible under REDD+
Are the subproject impacts likely to have significant adverse social impacts, including land acquisition and/or livelihoods, that are sensitive, diverse or unprecedented? This includes activities that involve the taking, confiscation, removal or damage of cultural, intellectual, religious and/or spiritual property from indigenous people.					OP 4.01 Environmental Assessment	Category A	Not eligible under REDD+
Will the project site be located near rivers, waterways or water bodies/ponds?					OP 4.01 Environmental Assessment	Category A/B	In case of Category A, this is not eligible under REDD+, in case of Category B, ESIA and ESMP
Does the project involve exposure to possible risks to assets of Belize's historical cultural heritage (or places adjacent to them) including historical, archeological, architectural, religious or					OP 4.11. Physical cultural resources	Category B	ESMP with Cultural Heritage Management Plan and Chance Find Procedure (CFP), as appropriate



aesthetic importance or of any other type of cultural importance?							
Does the project pose a risk to landscapes and natural features of historical cultural heritage (or places adjacent to them)?					OP 4.11. Physical cultural resources	Category B	ESMP with CFP
Does the project carry risk for the conservation of natural habitats and for the maintenance of their ecological functions?					OP 4.36 Forests OP 4.04 Natural Habitats	Category B	ESIA and ESMP
Does the project involve the significant conversion of natural habitats?					OP 4.36 Forests OP 4.04 Natural Habitats	Category A/B	In case of Category A, this is not eligible under REDD+, in case of Category B, ESIA and ESMP
Does the project have adverse impacts on the health and quality of the forest?					OP 4.36 Forests OP 4.04 Natural Habitats	Category A/B	In case of Category A, this is not eligible under REDD+, in case of Category B, ESIA and ESMP
Does the project affect the rights and well-being of communities that interact with or depend on the forest, particularly Indigenous Peoples?					OP 4.36 Forests OP 4.04 Natural Habitats	Category B	ESIA and ESMP
Does the project involve changes in the management, protection and / or use of natural forests or plantations, regardless of whether these are public or private?					OP 4.36 Forests OP 4.04 Natural Habitats	Category B	ESIA and ESMP
Does the project require the use of pesticides (chemical or biological) to control pests in the agricultural field?					OP 4.09 Pest Management	Category B	ESIA and Pest Management Plan
Does the project require the use of phytosanitary products (chemical or biological) to control pests that may pose a threat to public health?					OP 4.09 Pest Management	Category B	ESIA and Pest Management Plan



Will any physical works be sited on privately owned, used or customary or state land? Will this be acquired through market-based lease, government lease or sublease, or purchase?					OP 4.12 Involuntary Resettlement	Category B	Evidence of Land Title and market-based transaction.
Does the project involve the acquisition of land and/or can cause physical displacement (relocation, loss of housing) or economic displacement (loss of land, assets or access to assets that leads to the loss of sources of income) and the affected people or communities do not have the right to refuse to acquire land?					OP 4.12 Involuntary Resettlement	Category A/B	Subprojects involving involuntary acquisition of land and/or that can cause physical displacement are not eligible under REDD+. For Category B subprojects potentially causing economic displacement the Process Framework must be followed to prepare a Livelihood Restoration Plan.
Does the project involve large-scale involuntary land acquisition or physical relocation of people?					OP 4.12 Involuntary Resettlement	Category A	Not eligible under REDD+
Does the project involve minor involuntary land acquisition, loss of assets or access to assets, or loss of income sources or means of livelihood?					OP 4.12 Involuntary Resettlement	Category B	Subprojects causing physical displacement are not eligible under REDD+. For subprojects potentially causing economic displacement the Process Framework must be followed to prepare a Livelihood Restoration Plan.



### 6.3. Safeguards Scoping

Scoping refers to the phase of environmental and social assessment that determines the appropriate terms of reference for the required assessment type.

Once it is decided that an ESIA (full or limited) needs to be conducted, Terms of Reference should be developed to determine the scope of such assessment. The scope should be realistic given the time and resources available for implementing the subproject, including the time period and subproject components, existing or planned evaluations, target groups, and issues that are outside the scope (IEG 2011).

The TORs for the environmental and social assessment should be informed by the risks identified in the proposals and screening undertaken and may include:

1. a requirement for description of
  - i. boundaries of the land or sea or other rural and or urban area to be assessed;
  - ii. specific wildlife, aquatic or other habitats to be examined;
  - iii. community and rural populations to be consulted;
2. specific project phases, technologies, practices or processes to be investigated;
3. specific specialist skills to be engaged (e.g. a cultural heritage specialist where the screening has revealed a risk to tangible or intangible cultural heritage);
4. a requirement that the competent authorities of other involved sectors be appropriately consulted;
5. specific stakeholder consultation requirements.

The level of assessment will depend on several factors, including national regulation requirements, the type, location, sensitivity, and scale of the proposed intervention, as well as the nature and magnitude of its potential impacts. As a principle, meaningful consultation and engagement with project affected people, especially considering vulnerable groups, such as IPs, women, youth and elderly, should always be part of additional assessment (see point 5 above).

### 6.4. Full or limited ESIA

Where an **environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA)** is required, this will be undertaken by qualified consultants or technical specialists in consultation with project-affected people to identify the level of adverse impacts of subprojects and proposed activities prior to any works taking place. An ESIA and an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) will be required for all Category B subprojects. To ensure a gender-inclusive approach to conducting additional analyses, it is recommended that SRA's "Mainstreaming Gender for Baseline Data Collection and Analysis" document is consulted (SRA 2021).

The actual contents and level of detail in the ESIA for Category B subprojects will depend on the nature and scope of the proposed activities as well as the magnitude of impacts identified in the scoping stage. Nevertheless, the full or limited ESIA report should include as minimum content the following elements:

- (i) Description of stakeholder engagement and consultation with project-affected people conducted as part of the full or limited ESIA;



- (ii) Description of the local context, regulatory setting, institutional capabilities and country obligations under international treaties and conventions;
- (iii) Baseline environmental and socio-cultural conditions that include land use, water and air quality, biodiversity, soils, geology, topography, pollution, climate, physical cultural resources, and socio-economic (census) baseline surveys;
- (iv) In depth description and categorization according to internationally recognized methodologies of all identified potential environmental and social risks and impacts resulting from subproject implementation.

The process and preparation of the full or limited ESIA report will be determined by national regulation on environmental impact assessment, and the applicable environmental codes of practice, where these are adequate to meet Bank safeguard requirements. This implies that in case a subproject does not require an ESIA under national regulations but is classified as Category B, an ESIA will still be required under REDD+ in full observance with OP 4.01.

For specific livelihood related impacts, such as possible economic displacement or loss of assets or access to assets, the Process Framework will guide the preparation and implementation of any necessary specific LRPs in accordance with OP 4.12. The impacts of land acquisition (if any, and considering that involuntary land acquisition is ineligible under REDD+ in Belize) shall be validated in coordination and consultation with all the relevant stakeholders and project-affected people. Identified risks and the subsequent mitigation measures may have an inequitable impact on women or other particularly vulnerable groups. The proposed subproject design must consider mitigation options and crosscutting inclusiveness measures with regard to women, youths, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups or persons where applicable (e.g. the elderly).

Chapter 7 below provides further detail about stakeholder engagement in REDD+ implementation, whereas the PF also determines specific consultation requirements related to social impacts.

### **6.5. Developing the ESMP and other safeguards tools**

Mitigation measures will also be part of the ESIA documentation in the form of an ESMP. Such measures will be developed in accordance with the applicable safeguards, national regulations, applicable environmental codes and technical standards where relevant to help prevent and mitigate potential negative impacts. For each of the checklist questions in the screening form that receives a positive answer, subproject applicants will need to prepare the additional safeguard instruments indicated in the form (e.g. Livelihood Restoration Plan). Once a proper assessment of potential social and environmental risks and impacts that could arise during implementation of the subproject is complete, the ESMP and necessary safeguard instruments will be prepared.

For Category B subprojects with identified risks and impacts, an ESMP will be included as part of the ESIA process for all subprojects, which will be included as part of the bidding documentation and contractual obligations for any works tendered out. The ESMP shall provide practical and actionable means to meet compliance with environmental and social safeguards, including a set of mitigation, monitoring and institutional measures to be taken during implementation and operation of the project. The measures should be aiming to eliminate adverse environmental and social impacts, offset them, or reduce their effects to acceptable levels. The ESMP will generally include the following contents:

- (i) Description of the proposed subproject, including detailed description of where and how activities are to be implemented;

- (ii) Summary of anticipated risks and impacts including location, duration and magnitude, as described in the corresponding ESIA;
- (iii) Detailed mitigation measures including indicators, targets and budget for implementation;
- (iv) Statement of institutional arrangements, training requirements and responsibilities for implementing each mitigation measure and overall ESMP compliance.

For livelihood related impacts, Annex 2 includes the PF, which identifies circumstances that may trigger the need for a Livelihood Restoration Plan or other instruments, which will be assessed once detailed and site specific descriptions of approved subprojects are available.

Example mitigation measures for some of the possible adverse impacts are included in the following table. Existing good practice guidance documents that can be consulted for the task of identifying suitable measures and/or for further planning of the subproject activities have also been listed. The respective guidance notes for each OP can be found in the World Bank's Operational Manual - Operational Policies (OPs), available [here](#).

*Table 11. Example mitigation measures and further guidance for use in the development of subproject ESMPs*

<b>OP 4.01: Environmental Assessment</b>
<p><b>Example mitigation measures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Suitable livelihood options identified together with project affected people, equipment and sufficient training provided, and sustainability of those options must be ensured beyond the runtime of the subproject;</li> <li>● Existing structures and processes are identified and used at community level to organize roundtables to discuss and resolve possible tensions between stakeholders regarding the accrual or sharing of REDD+ benefits;</li> <li>● Provide capacity building sessions to communities involved with REDD+ implementation on the existing Grievance Redress Mechanisms and its functioning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Further guidance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● IFC (1998). <a href="#">Operational Policies OP 4.01: Environmental Assessment</a>.</li> <li>● The Inspection Panel and The World Bank (2017). <a href="#">Environmental Assessment. Emerging Lesson Series No. 3</a></li> <li>● FAO. <a href="#">REDD+ Implementation</a>. See especially last section: "Thematic readings "From REDD+ Readiness to Implementation and Results: FAO's support to countries""</li> <li>● Alusiola, R.A.; Schilling, J.; Klär, P. (2021) <a href="#">REDD+ Conflict: Understanding the Pathways between Forest Projects and Social Conflict</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>OP 4.09: Pest Management</b>
<p><b>Example mitigation measures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Apply sustainable pest control, ensuring the protection of valuable ecosystem services, such as pollination, and reducing pre- and post-harvest crop losses;</li> <li>● Reduce the amount of pesticides used, which in turn reduces residues and reduces production costs;</li> <li>● Consider weed management systems, such as crop rotation or stale seed beds techniques;</li> <li>● Choose disease resistant varieties, as well as adequate irrigation and nutrient management programmes;</li> <li>● Ensure that the activities carried out conserve the underlying natural resource base (i.e. soil, water and biodiversity) and enhance ecosystem services (i.e. pollination, healthy soils, diversity of species);</li> </ul>

- Strengthen farmer knowledge of ecosystem functioning adapted to their local context, which in turn promotes farmer stewardship;
- Consider specific guidance on fire management practices for subproject design and implementation;
- Ensure that Belize's NFMS monitors forest fires and the information gets used to update any forest fire management plans and practices accordingly;
- Adjust Belize's fire-control programmes to increasingly involve local stakeholders in community-based fire management.

**Further guidance:**

- The World Bank (2005). [Sustainable Pest Management: Achievements and Challenges](#)
- FAO. [Integrated Pest Management](#). See also the 'Case studies on IPM' section.
- UK's Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (2017). [Integrated Pest Management Guidance Document](#)
- FAO's Guidelines for Packaging and Storage of Pesticides (Rome, 1985), Guidelines on Good Labeling Practice for Pesticides (Rome, 1985), and Guidelines for the Disposal of Waste Pesticide and Pesticide Containers on the Farm (Rome, 1985) are used as minimum standards. [Plant Production and Protection Division: Links for Integrated Pest Management \(fao.org\)](#)
- G.D. Holder (nd). Good DRM practices for Belizean small farmers and an approach at inclusion and acceptance, on a pilot basis, to promote Disaster Risk management in the agriculture sector
- Further resources from FAO on fire management can be found [here](#).

#### OP 4.10: Indigenous Peoples

**Example mitigation measures:**

- Develop IPPs for subprojects in a participatory, gender-inclusive and culturally appropriate manner and publicly disclose, implement and monitor these;
- Ensure meaningful participation of IP representatives in consultations, the level of ownership of IP communities along the process and the degree of satisfaction with respect to the project responses to potential impacts is duly considered and addressed;
- Conduct an FPIC process as needed, according to guidelines laid out in the IPPF. Outcomes to be publicly disclosed;
- Consultation and decision-making at local level in connection with the nature and extent of subproject activities, the identification of possible impacts, the development of LRP and the discussion of mitigation measures and sustainable livelihood options will be conducted under a co-management model involving consultation with project affected people, as included as part of the Process Framework;
- Carry out awareness raising activities through introductory and training sessions before commencement and during formal meetings of FCC and consultations, with a particular focus on IP leaders and representatives.

**Further guidance:**

- FCPF/UN-REDD Programme (2012). [Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness With a Focus on the Participation of Indigenous Peoples and Other Forest-Dependent Communities](#).
- UN-REDD Programme (2011). [UN-REDD Programme Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent](#).
- UN-REDD Programme (2013a). [Legal Companion to the UN-REDD Programme Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent \(FPIC\)](#).
- UN-REDD Programme (2013b). [Asia-Pacific Lessons Learned: Civil Society Organizations and Indigenous Peoples Representative Selection \(in Cambodia\)](#).

#### OP 4.12: Involuntary Resettlement

**Example mitigation measures<sup>3</sup>:**

- Provide training on efficient and sustainable production techniques of alternative products;
- Support subproject affected people by strengthening market access for such products;
- Empower traditional institutions to facilitate economic cooperation and networking among the villagers;
- Enhance the ability of subproject affected people to possess or to access physical assets to support family life and economic activity;
- 
- Undertake screening for economic displacement impacts as per OP 4.12 and develop LRPs, as needed, in line with the PF and in consultation with project-affected people.

**Further guidance:**

- EBRD (2017). [Resettlement Guidance and Good Practice](#)
- FCPF/UN-REDD Programme (2012). [Guidelines on Stakeholder Engagement in REDD+ Readiness With a Focus on the Participation of Indigenous Peoples and Other Forest-Dependent Communities.](#)
- Government of Germany, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (2013). [Participation and Consultation Standards, Guidelines and Country Experiences: National REDD+ Processes.](#)
- UN-REDD Programme (2017). [Methodological Brief on Gender.](#)
- UN-REDD Programme (2012). [Implementing Gender-sensitive Effective and Sustainable REDD Strategies.](#)
- Center for International Forestry Research (2014). [Adaptive Collaborative Management and Improving Women's Participation.](#)

**OP 4.36: Forests**

**Example mitigation measures:**

- Provide incentives to local communities to ensure that the harvesting of forest products for livelihoods remains sustainable;
- Develop livelihood options that help people move out of forest productive activities;
- Identify degraded forest areas and appropriate regeneration measures;
- Provide training on forest fire management;
- Introduce lower impact animal husbandry practices

**Further guidance:**

- Katherine Warner (FAO). [Forestry and sustainable livelihoods](#)
- FAO (2000). [Strategic Plan for Forestry](#)
- The World Bank (2004). [Sustaining Forests: A Development Strategy](#)
- The World Bank (2013). [Sustaining Forests and Livelihoods in a Changing World](#)

Developing a Stakeholder Engagement Plan as part of the ESMP can help to address capacity needs, and plan and manage informed consultations with communities and affected persons, including the most vulnerable stakeholder groups, such as IPs, women and youth, in a transparent and culturally appropriate manner. The process needs to be gender-inclusive and respectful of traditional protocols and decision-making processes, as well as language preferences of different stakeholder groups. The consultations with national and local level stakeholders should inform assessment regarding the likelihood and magnitude of such impacts (including geographical extent, socio economic

<sup>3</sup> The presented example mitigation measures refer specifically to measures addressing economic displacement, since physical displacement was not identified as a risk of REDD+ implementation during the SESA and subprojects with a risk of physical displacement are thus not eligible for REDD+ as part of Belize.

consequences, gender-related dimensions, etc.) as well as the appropriateness of mitigation activities and interventions, but also eligibility criteria and suggested compensation and monitoring and evaluation approaches. The process will allow for concerns to be raised and integrated into decision-making. Chapter 7 as well as the IPPF and PF determine specific consultation requirements for the definition of specific mitigation and compensation measures.

## 6.6. Clearance

All REDD+ implementing subprojects need to be officially cleared before implementation can start, independently from the risk category of the subproject. This means the following:

**For Category C REDD+ implementing subprojects:** These subprojects will not have conducted further assessment and will not have an ESMP or other Annexes. However, the subproject proposals still need to contain sufficient information to justify the categorization and have to include adequate mitigation measures for all remaining risks and impacts, together with indicators and targets to support their monitoring and evaluation. While the REDD+ CU holds the main responsibility for the clearance of Category C subprojects, additional experts should be involved in the process as appropriate, such as cultural experts, gender experts, and the BENIC.

**For Category B REDD+ implementing subprojects:** These subprojects have undertaken further assessment and have produced ESMPs and probably also additional safeguards tools that need to be reviewed and cleared before implementation starts. The review process should specifically ensure that the categorization is justified and that adequate and sufficient mitigation measures are included to address the identified risks and impacts, together with indicators and targets to support their monitoring and evaluation. While the REDD+ CU holds the main responsibility for the clearance, it is suggested that for Category B subprojects tailored committees are assembled on a case-by-case basis to support the clearance process, consisting of technical experts (e.g. on gender, stakeholder engagement, etc.) as well as representatives of subproject affected people. For REDD+ implementing subprojects that may affect Indigenous Peoples, the BENIC and/or, as appropriate, representatives of the Maya of the Western Cayo District should always be involved in the clearance process.

Revision and clearance should follow an agreed timeline, starting from the day of submission of the final subproject documents, i.e. final subproject proposals in the case of Category C subprojects and final ESMPs and annexes in the case of Category B subprojects. The timeline should allow for sufficient time for revision and input while not unnecessarily delaying the implementation of the subproject. Revision and clearance timelines may be shorter for Category C subprojects as compared to Category B subprojects.

## 7. Stakeholder engagement

The FCPF and the UN-REDD Programme (2012) state that *“For REDD+ programs to succeed, [these] risks have to be identified, reduced and mitigated, and stakeholders have to be involved at the project/program formulation as well as the preparation and implementation stages in order to ensure that REDD+ programs respect indigenous peoples’ rights and comply with relevant international obligations.”* (FCPF and the UN-REDD Programme 2012).

In Belize, stakeholder engagement throughout REDD+ planning and implementation is of crucial importance. The development of the National REDD+ Strategy, the SESA process and the development of the ESMF and Safeguards Information System (SIS) have all been highly participatory processes. The present chapter presents a summary of the stakeholder engagement activities as part of REDD+ planning and establishes guidelines for stakeholder engagement requirements for REDD+ implementation. These requirements are also reflected in the mitigation measures included in chapter 5.4 and in the procedures described in chapter 6 of the present document.

## 7.1. Stakeholder analysis

An important step of the desktop review process as part of Belize’s SESA was to identify all REDD+ stakeholders in Belize. The Mapping and Stakeholder Assessment (MSA) carried out by the REDD+ CU in 2019 (REDD+ CU 2019a), prior to this phase of REDD+ preparation, served as the basis to identify the key stakeholders for inclusion in SESA consultations. The categories of stakeholders identified then were:

1. Government of Belize Agencies and Ministries;
2. Agroindustry;
3. Conservation Community;
4. Long Term Forest Licensees and Exporters (LTFLE);
5. Indigenous and Other Community Organizations;
6. Other Interest Groups, consisting mostly of women’s groups.

For the stakeholder consultations as part of REDD+ Readiness in 2021, the overarching *categories of the stakeholders’ list* detailed in the REDD+ MSA were maintained yet “Key National Experts” were identified as having potential to add to this SESA process and so they were included as a separate stakeholder category. Moreover, in some cases institutions or organizations identified were updated, like in the case of “Government of Belize Ministries and Agencies” as in 2020, after the November general elections, changes were made to the existing Ministries, and additional Ministries were created. Thus, there were discrepancies with the MSA list of 2019. The updated definition of the stakeholder categories for the stakeholder consultations as part of REDD+ Readiness in 2021 is presented below in Box 5.

### BOX 5: REDD+ Stakeholders - Belize

The stakeholder identification process which was conducted by the REDD+ CU in 2019 identified all those groups who have a ‘stake’ in the process, and who, as individuals and entities, use or manage forest resources. For the consultations as part of the development of the National REDD+ Strategy, the SESA, the development of the ESMF and the Safeguards Information System (SIS) in 2021, these stakeholders were engaged and Key National Experts included as a new category.

**1. Government of Belize (GOB) Ministries and Agencies:** The government agencies identified are those that are responsible or mandated through legislation to provide regulatory oversight and/or management of the sectors that involve or are related to REDD+. These are the:

- Ministry of Natural Resources Petroleum and Mining, including Lands, Mining and Hydrology Departments;
- Ministry of Blue Economy & Civil Aviation, including the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMA/I);
- Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, including the Forest Department, Department of Environment, PACT and the National Climate Change Office;
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise; and,
- Ministry of Human Development, Families & Indigenous People’s Affairs including Women’s Department and Women’s Commission.

**2. Agroindustry:** This refers to any agricultural activity that is for commercial purposes. They may include producers or those persons involved in commercial activities that impact on land and forests resources, including large and small agriculture producers and their associations, groups or cooperatives; aquaculture producers and their associations. Example of some of this organizations consulted are:

- Toledo Cacao Growers Association

- Belize Livestock Producers Association
- Corozal Sugarcane Producers Association
- Spanish Lookout Farming Community

**3. Conservation Community:** These may include organizations that work directly in forest management and or conservation of protected areas management; they also coordinate and/or advocate for critical matters of interest of IPs and communities who are regular users of forest resources. such as environmental NGOs. Example of some of this organizations consulted are:

- Ya'axche Conservation Trust
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Protected Areas Conservation Trust
- Friends for Conservation and Development

**4. Long Term Forest Licensees and Exporters (LTFLE).** These may include short and long-term timber and other non-timber license holders. Example of some of this organizations consulted are:

- Boom Creek Lumber Production Association
- Conejo Creek Community Forest Group
- Santa Teresa Community Forest Group

**5. Indigenous and Other Community Organizations:** These may include Indigenous and non-indigenous organizations in and around forest areas, and buffer communities. The Belize National Indigenous Council (BENIC), as the national level IP representative body was the contact point for most IPs associations, including Northern Mayan Association of Belize, National Garifuna Council, Toledo Alcaldes Association, Maya Leaders Alliance (MLA). The Western Yucatec Maya were independently consulted as they are not represented by BENIC.

**6. Special Interest Groups:** These included women and youth organizations primarily in rural areas. Examples of organizations consulted are:

- Fajina Women's Group
- Toledo Maya Women's Council
- San Antonio Women's Group (Cayo)
- Santa Teresa Women's Group (Toledo)

**7. Key National Experts:** Subject experts who are not associated with any agency or organization but who are subject specialists and have played a leading role in the development and implementation of research and policy that impact the management of natural resources. These may also include representatives of tertiary level education institutions. Their areas of expertise tend to include Watershed and Riparian Forests, general Forest Management, Natural Resource Policy Development, Meteorology and Hydrology, Disaster Management and Response, Natural Resource Management Plan Development, Land Use and Forest Cover Remote Sensing, and Government Policy.

Aside from identifying all relevant stakeholders, identifying vulnerable actors is also a function of the social and environmental safeguards for REDD+. Safeguards speak to the considerations for "vulnerable" individuals or groups. The World Bank defines disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals as "those individuals or groups who, by virtue of, for example, their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, physical, mental or other disability, social, civic or health status, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic disadvantages or indigenous status, and/or dependence on unique natural resources, may be more likely to be adversely affected by the project impacts and/or more limited than others in their ability to take advantage of a project's benefits" (World Bank 2021). Also, according to the WB requirements, countries implementing FCPF funds should comply with the WB standards that include the development of a SESA which places a focus on risks for identified



vulnerable actors and those that contribute to deforestation. In the context of REDD+ the Vulnerable Groups identified in Belize are listed below in Box 6.

**BOX 6: Vulnerable Groups**

For the purposes of REDD+ in Belize, a vulnerable group will be defined as a group or category of individuals who would be disadvantaged or otherwise deprived of benefits from the implementation of a REDD+ program.

A “vulnerable group” is generally in a position of disadvantage through no fault of its own. In the Belizean REDD+ context, the group’s unequal access to economic opportunities, social protection and decision-making spaces may be based on a host of conditions which could include:

- Higher than usual dependence on forest resources for their livelihoods;
- Close cultural and spiritual reliance on forest or natural resources;
- High dependence on forests for food and construction materials;
- Land access and ownership;
- Heavy reliance on ecosystem services, primarily in coastal and flood-prone areas;
- Living below the poverty line, particularly in rural communities;
- Sex;
- Age;
- Living with disability (ies);
- Exclusion from decision-making and governance spaces; and,
- Geographical location.

Each of the factors listed above (on their own or collectively) could render a group vulnerable to any changes in forest access, restrictions to the amounts of resources available, or reductions in the benefits derived from ecosystem services. Because these groups may experience discrimination and may have difficulties in claiming and defending their rights, they will need special protections and considerations during REDD+ implementation.

Once the final list of relevant stakeholders for the REDD+ process was updated, a series of workshops and consultations were held for the SESA and the development of the ESMF for the REDD+ Programme in Belize. These consultations are described in the following chapter.

**7.2. Stakeholder engagement for the SESA and ESMF**

The existing “Stakeholder Engagement Protocol” (REDD+ CU 2019b) served as the main guideline to secure the adequate participation of all stakeholders. It provides guiding principles and specific approaches to be followed. The document is flexible and accommodates the overarching principles for Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) when engaging with forest-dependent communities, including IPs.

The guiding principles for the REDD+ consultation process were (REDD+ CU 2019b):

- To be **transparent** about the engagement, consultation, and participation process of stakeholders in the Project, providing **information** in a timely manner;
- to be **accountable** to stakeholders by documenting their inputs clearly showing how their concerns are incorporated into project documents (see Annex 3);
- to foster an **environment of discussion** and co-design of solutions;
- to be considerate of **stakeholders’ time** by having a clear objective of engagement, planning, and preparing for engagement sessions;
- to be **inclusive of the meaningful participation** of women, youth, the elderly, and men, without discrimination or prejudice; and,

- to respect and accommodate the **cultural differences** between and among stakeholders (this could mean need for translators, modality of consultation among others),
- to ease participation by providing the necessary means for stakeholder to be present at consultations (e.g. internet cards, transportation, accessible venues and times, etc.).

These principles are in line with the FCPF and UN-REDD Programme's common guiding principles for effective stakeholder engagement (FCPF and UN-REDD Programme 2012). Procedures and requirements established in Belize's Stakeholder Engagement Protocol were followed in all engagement activities.

For the planning of the meetings, all communications with stakeholders were done through the REDD+ CU. In particular, to consult with the IPs of Belize, the REDD+ CU communicated directly with the Belize National Indigenous Council (BENIC). Specifically, the IP Desk, managed by the Technical Indigenous Coordinator, assisted the REDD+ CU and the consultants leading the SESA (AAE-CADS consortium) with all logistics involved with the consultations with all IPs in Belize.

To establish a meeting with a stakeholder group, the REDD+ CU contacted the stakeholder a minimum of **two (2) weeks** in advance by sending an invitation to the workshop. If and when consultations were online and no IPs were involved, **one (1) week** in advance was sufficient. When the BENIC was being consulted, contact was made a minimum of **three (3) weeks** in advance of the proposed workshop.

Together with the invitation, all relevant information tailored specifically to the stakeholder groups was provided. Such documents included background information, the objective of the session (e.g. to inform, to consult, to build capacity, etc.), an agenda, the modality of consultation (online or in person), consultation approach, any logistical arrangements (transportation, meals, venue, translation services). The objective of sharing this in advance was that stakeholders were given time to review the documents and suggest amendments to the agenda if necessary. A final agenda was provided to stakeholders one (1) week in advance—confirming date and venue or zoom link.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and following WB and REDD+ CU recommendations, and regulations in place by the Government of Belize at that time, all consultations with non-IP stakeholders were planned to be online. In the specific case of IPs, BENIC and its constituent groups were consulted about the preferred meeting modality (see Annex 1 of the SESA Report) through a communication sent by REDD+ CU to BENIC on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May, 2021. This communication also included content of the consultations, and the request for permission to conduct consultations. BENIC provided feedback (see Annex 5) to such documents, highlighting the Proposed FPIC Framework for the REDD+ Readiness Phase shared with the REDD+ CU, which, among others, required the consultations with IPs to be in person, at multiple locations owing to the BENIC constituencies consulted. In this regard, the logistics, planning modality and methodology were different for in-person consultation with IPs and online consultations with the rest of the stakeholder groups. For in person consultations, COVID-19 precautionary measures were followed in compliance with restrictions in place on the hosting of public events in Belize at that time. The measures were the following: for the venue, 50-percent capacity was allowed, provided the social distancing measure - minimum of six feet of physical distance - could be enforced and there was proper ventilation (Fans were placed next to windows to improve circulation of air). Also, participant's temperatures were measured on arrival to the venue, hand sanitizer was provided, participants wore masks at all times and there was pre-arranged seating to enable adequate social distancing.

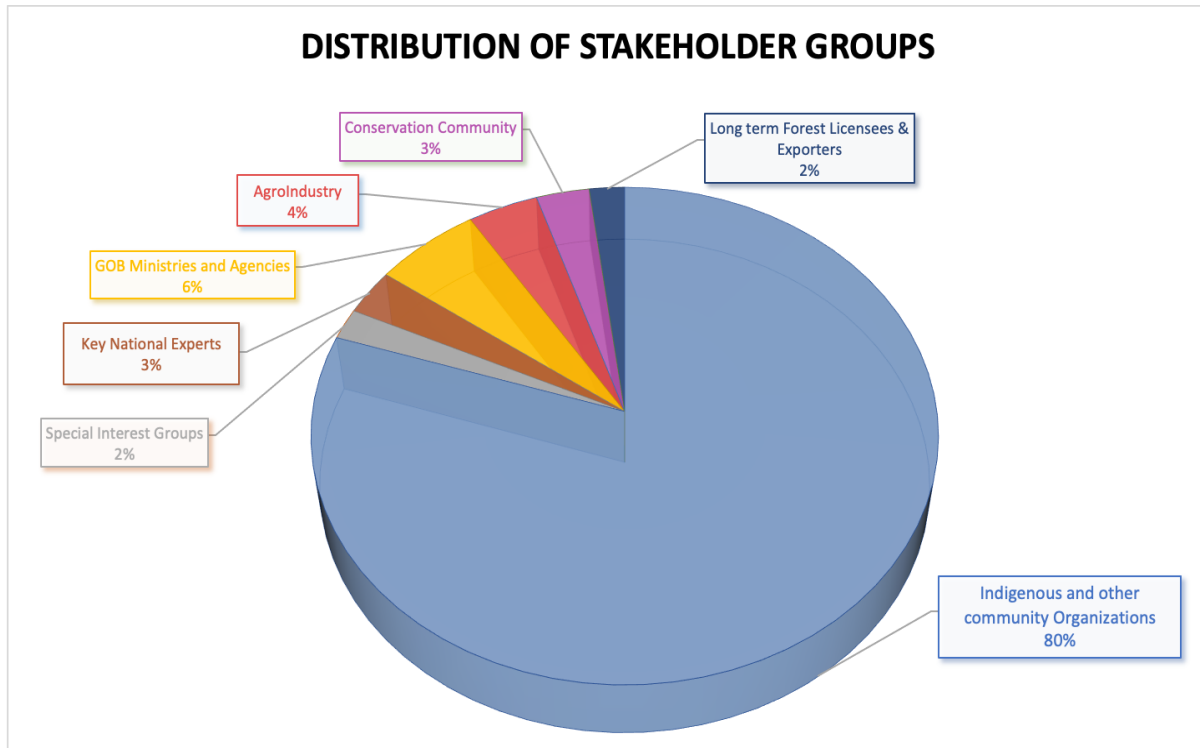
For the SESA, the consultations were designed and facilitated in the period May - August 2021. The following table summarizes these consultation events. The distribution of participants according to stakeholder category is presented in Figure 5.

*Table 12. Overview of consultation events conducted as part of the SESA process for REDD+ in Belize.*

Date	Event	Location	Stakeholder groups	No. of male participants	No. of female participants	Total No.
28/05/2021	Online National Workshop 1	Online	Government of Belize (10), Conservation Community (4), Agroindustry (4), LTFLT (3), Key National Experts (5)	15	11	26
04/06/2021	Online National Workshop 2	Online	Indigenous and Other Community Organizations (10), Agroindustry (3), Special Interest Groups (3)	9	7	16
18/06/2021	In Person IP Workshop	Sapa Building, Punta Gorda	Southern Maya (Community Leaders)	14	0	14
18/06/2021	In Person IP Workshop	TIDE Conference Room	Southern Maya (Women)	1	23	24
19/06/2021	In Person IP Workshop	Sapa Building, Punta Gorda	Southern Maya	15	0	15
19/06/2021	In Person IP Workshop	Parish Hall, Punta Gorda	Southern Maya	17	2	19
27/06/2021	In Person IP Workshop	Lan Barangu Luba Garifunaduau Museum, Barranco	Garifuna	4	6	10
03/07/2021	In Person IP Workshop	Maracas Bar & Grill, Orange Walk Town	Northern Yucatec Maya	11	6	17
17/07/2021	In Person IP Workshop	Holy Family Roman Catholic School, Hopkins Village	Garifuna of Punta Gorda and the Stann Creek District (1)	5	10	15
17/07/2021	In Person IP Workshop	Holy Family Roman Catholic School, Hopkins Village	Garifuna of Punta Gorda and the Stann Creek District (2)	8	7	15
21/08/2021	In person IP Workshop	Log Cab-Inn Conference Room, San Ignacio Town	Western Yucatec Maya	15	5	20

Total people consulted across all events	114	77	191
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\*These consultations reflect only those carried out in 2021 for the SESA and ESMF. There are detailed reports including minutes of every consultation available upon request from the REDD+ CU: [info.redd@environment.gov.bz](mailto:info.redd@environment.gov.bz).



**Figure 5.** Distribution of Stakeholder Groups Representation

(IP's requested to have multiple members represent each community that explains the difference in representation for the other stakeholder categories, one individual was invited to represents the organization/institution)

Overall, eleven consultation sessions were held with stakeholders to examine pertinent considerations for the SESA. Of this number, nine of the sessions were held with IPs of which a total of 149 participants were engaged. All nine IP consultations were done in person. Of the two sets of non-IP SESA sessions, 10 participants represented non-IP communities, 4 conservation communities, 3 special interest groups (women organizations), 10 represented governments, 7 represented agroindustry, 5 Key National Experts and 3 represented LTFLE stakeholders. These two sessions were held online.

Our records show that 81 participants, or 44% were females and 110, or 56%, were males. For the most part, there was a high turnout of both men and women. However, in the case of the southern Maya, the males (47) outnumbered the females (25) by approximately 2:1. There was a separate consultation in Toledo which was held for Indigenous women only and at which there were 23 women in attendance. In the Cayo District, a consultation session was held with 20 IPs who are also Yucatec Maya. Five participants were women who accounted for 20% of the total number of participants. Consultations with the Northern Maya who are also Yucatec Maya yielded more males than females consistent with the other consultations. In these consultations, there were 11 males and 6 females. In contrast, the consultations with the Garifuna had more females (23) than males (16) in the consultation sessions. See Figure 6 below.

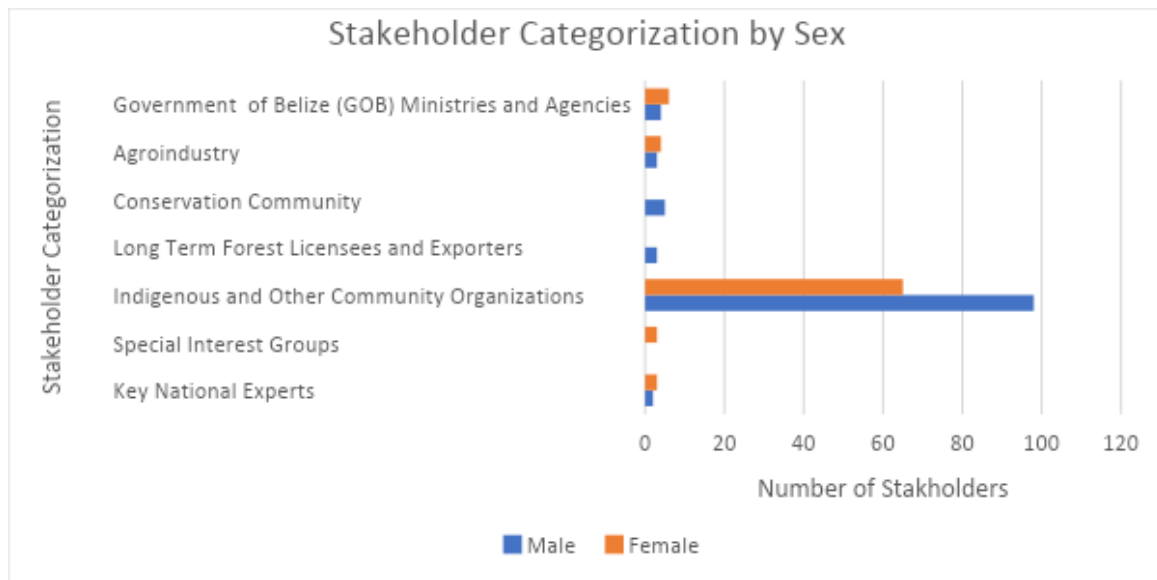


Figure 6. Male and Female Stakeholders Consulted.

For further detail on the consultation process as part of the SESA, please refer to the SESA Report. For engagement specifically with Belize’s IPs, please refer to the respective chapter in the IPPF (Annex 1) and the signed statement from the BENIC confirming support of the consultation process and its outcomes (Annex 4). Further consultations were also conducted in the form of virtual workshops and technical meetings as part of the development of the National REDD+ Strategy and Safeguards Information System (SIS).

After the submission of every output, REDD+CU distributed the drafts with BENIC, state stakeholders, and World Bank and they were given three weeks to provide feedback. All feedback was then, if possible, incorporated into the final submission. If not, answers of why those comments were not integrated were provided. An example of the feedback table for the ESMF and its annexes (IPPF and PF) is included in Annex 3. It should be noted that the assignment was concluded through a virtual validation workshop that took place on 6 December 2021. It was attended by a broad range of stakeholders. Specific feedback received during the workshop was added to the feedback already received on the ESMF and its annexes and addressed and is equally included in Annex 3.

### 7.3. Stakeholder engagement for REDD+ implementation

Stakeholder engagement will be of outstanding importance during REDD+ implementation in Belize. Belize’s National Strategy fosters stakeholder engagement with a special focus on Indigenous Peoples and local communities under Pillar 2. For any and all stakeholder engagement during REDD+ implementation, the same principles of meaningful engagement that were applied during REDD+ Readiness should be maintained (see chapter 7.2). The mitigation measures defined to address risks of REDD+ implementation identified through the SESA in many ways reflect the ambition to achieve meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout REDD+ implementation, at project as well as subproject level, and with a view to especially promote the engagement of vulnerable groups, including IPs, women, youth, and others. However, despite this special focus, it is important to emphasize that other stakeholder groups, though they may be less vulnerable and potentially less obviously linked to future REDD+ activities, should not be overlooked in stakeholder engagement throughout REDD+. One example here are the Mennonite communities. Due to their important role in the management of land and forest, their engagement in REDD+ is of great importance. To date, no clear niche for the Mennonite communities in REDD+ in Belize has been identified, however, several mitigation measures suggested in the present ESMF provide opportunities to do so.

For example, some of the mitigation measures under WB OP 4.01 'Environmental Assessment' require stakeholder engagement, such as those for risks regarding unequal access to REDD+ benefits, and increased bureaucracy reducing participation of some stakeholders. These mitigation measures focus on ensuring that stakeholders understand REDD+, can access REDD+ benefits, and that they are represented in all stages of the project. Especially MM 4.01.5b), which requests the development of a REDD+ Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Plan offers the opportunity to include Mennonite communities more consistently from now onwards.

Other mitigation measures that refer to stakeholder engagement are, for example, under WB OP 4.10 'Indigenous Peoples', in this case in relation to IPs, that include action such as ensuring that IP rights are not disregarded by applying FPIC for the development and updating of legal instruments that affect IPs, ensuring that IP rights and knowledge are adequately considered, providing capacity building on legal language and matters so that all stakeholders can contribute in a meaningful way to the process of developing and updating legal instruments, and overall ensuring that there is meaningful consultation with all stakeholders throughout the design and implementation of REDD+. Finally, mitigation measures under WB OP 4.12 'Involuntary Resettlement' also mention the importance of stakeholder engagement including with project affected people, e.g. including the need for additional assessment to identify affected stakeholders and impacts of subproject implementation (with special consideration of the most vulnerable stakeholders, including IPs, women and youth) and conducting an ESIA to avoid access restrictions to land and/or resources that can lead to economic displacement.

The need for meaningful stakeholder engagement in REDD+ implementing subprojects is also reflected in chapter 6 and in the Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework and Process Framework attached to this document (Annex 1 and 2).

## 8. Accountability and grievance redress

A main theme of REDD+ is the implementation of accountability. As the World Bank notes, to ensure that all views are considered, including those of disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups, it is useful to follow systems and processes that foster the accountability of those identified as community representatives. This consideration may take into account the degree of authority and legitimacy residing with those representatives. Good practice suggests that when a stakeholder group is offering a perspective that is relevant to the project, its views should be considered (World Bank 2018).

The effective implementation of monitoring and accountability systems can lead to the creation of new mechanisms or improvement or extension of existing ones in order for them to be more transparent in their processes. Also, unnecessary and complex processes can be identified and removed, as well as transaction costs that usually most negatively impact the most vulnerable stakeholders and can be an obstacle for the transparency of forest management and land-use activities. In terms of accountability, strong institutional arrangements can enforce more effectively the laws and regulations created to protect the forests and to assign responsibility for actions.

An important element in good practice regarding accountability is information disclosure, i.e. how stakeholders get informed about engagement activities in advance, the topics at stake, how their views have been taken into account and what conclusions and outputs were derived from engagement processes. During the REDD+ Readiness Phase in Belize and also during the SESA process, the principle of accountability was rigorously upheld, i.e. all major interim outputs were circulated to key stakeholders, comments incorporated and documents re-shared to show how comments have been considered, background information provided as requested, early invites to stakeholder engagement events sent out to stick to agreed timelines, etc. For the ESMF specifically, accountability not only

refers to the sharing of the document with national stakeholders for their input but also to disclose the English version on the WB's external website. In order to maintain a high level of accountability during REDD+ implementation, the REDD+CU will continue to adhere to best practice on information disclosure at project and subproject levels. For example, Subproject Implementing Entities should ensure that subproject safeguard documents are disclosed not only at national level but also at the subproject sites in English and, if applicable, in any of the indigenous or local languages, as needed. A notification about the disclosure should be published and comments sought within one month of the disclosure date.

In addition to providing information and inviting stakeholder input, a grievance redress mechanism through which questions, concerns and complaints regarding REDD+ implementation can be registered and addressed is a valuable tool to support safeguards compliance and enhance accountability. Not only does it provide stakeholders with a channel to voice concerns and complaints but it can also help understand where the management of REDD+ implementation in Belize may need to be adjusted.

The following box details the World Bank requirements regarding the need for a Grievance Redress Mechanism.

**Box 7: Reference to the need for a Grievance Redress Mechanism in the World Bank's Environmental and Social Safeguard Policies (World Bank 2005)**

Under OP 4.10 on Indigenous Peoples, the World Bank includes as Operational Principle 7 out of 9 to *"Prepare an Indigenous Peoples Plan that is based on the social assessment and draws on indigenous knowledge, in consultation with the affected Indigenous Peoples' communities and using qualified professionals. Normally, this plan would include a framework for continued consultation with the affected communities during project implementation; specify measures to ensure that Indigenous Peoples receive culturally appropriate benefits, and identify measures to avoid, minimize, mitigate or compensate for any adverse effects; and include grievance procedures, monitoring and evaluation arrangements, and the budget for implementing the planned measures."*

Under OP 4.12 on Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement, the World Bank includes as Operational Principle 4 out of 12 to *"Consult project-affected persons, host communities and local nongovernmental organizations, as appropriate. Provide them opportunities to participate in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the resettlement program, especially in the process of developing and implementing the procedures for determining eligibility for compensation benefits and development assistance (as documented in a resettlement plan), and for establishing appropriate and accessible grievance mechanisms. Pay particular attention to the needs of vulnerable groups among those displaced, especially those below the poverty line, the landless, the elderly, women and children, Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minorities, or other displaced persons who may not be protected through national land compensation legislation"*.

While the World Bank requirements make specific mention of a Grievance Mechanism under OP 4.10 on Indigenous Peoples and OP 4.12 on Involuntary Resettlement, many countries are extending their REDD+ Grievance Redress Mechanisms to be applicable to REDD+ implementation in its entirety, without restricting it to concerns and complaints in the context of Indigenous Peoples and Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement.

Belize has developed a REDD+-specific Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (FGRM) (Forest Department 2020) for the Readiness as well as Implementation phase of REDD+. The FGRM is understood to be a channel that citizens use to provide feedback, make complaints, and/or seek redress on matters related to the REDD+ Project activities. The FGRM was developed in three phases

by Equal Chances Green Development (ECGD): 1. Preparation, 2. Situational analysis and FGRM design, and 3. Operationalization. Multiple consultations were conducted. The initial consultation process included several interventions, such as an inception mission, two rounds of local workshops, a group workshop and bilateral institutional consultations. The consultations with IP stakeholders included initial meetings with BENIC, Maya Leaders Alliance/ Toledo Alcaldes Association (MLA/TAA), three separate data collection meetings and three separate validation sessions with each IP organization (MLA/TAA), National Garifuna Council (NGC) and Northern Maya Association of Belize (NMAB)). To further refine the FGRM recommendations, working group sessions, interviews and email communication with the stakeholders to obtain their feedback were conducted, including one final session with BENIC to discuss the FGRM deliverables, whereby each of the aforementioned IP organizations shared their useful insights (Forest Department 2020).

The FGRM is a set of necessary procedures to effectively share information and address questions, conflicts and grievances arising from the REDD+ Readiness Project activities. The Mission of the Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism is to provide mechanisms through which PAPs and the public can contact the REDD+ CU, provide information, engage in dispute resolution, and systematically resolve grievances related to the REDD+ program.

The FGRM is founded on the basis of the following Strategic Objectives:

1. Provide information to queries about the REDD+ Project and its related activities in Belize.
2. Utilize the received feedback, recommendations and reviews to enhance operational efficiency and incorporate systemic improvements to the REDD+ Project and its related activities.
3. Resolve complaints and grievances related to REDD+ in Belize through investigations and proposing realistic responses.
4. Engage and promote dispute resolution through non-adversarial methods between petitioners and defending parties.

The FGRM design considers the 8 principles (legitimacy, accessibility, predictability, fairness, transparency, rights compatibility, continuous learning, engagement) that characterize sound FGRMs according to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and UN-REDD, while building on the contextual situation as identified during consultations, key informant interviews and literature research.

The FGRM framework sets out a process consisting of seven steps:

1. The REDD+ Coordination Unit will receive and register the REDD+ query, feedback, complaint and/or grievance (within 2 business days of initial contact) and the petitioner will receive a unique tracking number specific to the submission
2. The REDD+ Coordination Unit will acknowledge, assess, assign the case (within 2-7 business days of receipt)
3. The REDD+ Coordination Unit, in collaboration with the relevant sector agencies, will develop a proposed response to the case (within 10-20 business days of receipt)
4. The REDD+ Coordination Unit and sector agencies will seek agreement on the aforementioned proposed response with the petitioner (within 25-30 business days of receipt)
5. The Sector agencies will implement the agreed response, closely monitored by the REDD+ Coordination Unit and the petitioner (within a reasonable time frame, as indicated by the specific sector agency)



6. The REDD+ Coordination Unit will review the case (within 10-20 business days of the claims closure)
7. If all response options are exhausted and/or all parties are satisfied, the grievance will be referred or closed out (within 5 business days of the claims closure).

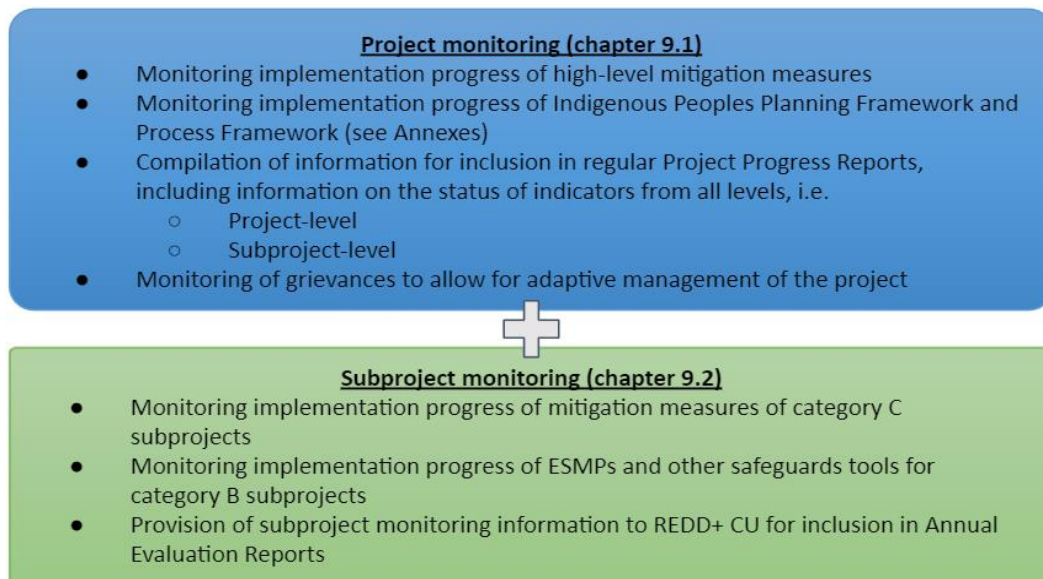
The complaint/grievance can be received by the REDD+CU via regular mail (NCCO, MFFESD, Market Square, Belmopan, Belize), phone call (+(501) 828 9066) or email ([info.redd@environment.gov.bz](mailto:info.redd@environment.gov.bz)) to the REDD+CU.

An online version of the grievance form is available at the following address: <https://fgrm.gov.bz/grievance/>

To the extent possible, Subproject Implementing Agencies are encouraged to use existing local structures and processes as additional entry points to register grievances and feed them into the above system. In doing so, it needs to be ensured that local stakeholders are aware of the possibilities to register grievances and that vulnerable groups, including women and youths, have equal knowledge of and access to the mechanism.

## 9. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring of REDD+ implementation will need to happen at two levels, (1) at project level, and (2) at subproject level (see Figure 7).



*Figure 7. Overview of safeguards monitoring requirements*

Information from monitoring at both levels should feed into regular Project Progress Reports (the term for these reports can vary, e.g. depending on funding agencies under which REDD+ in Belize gets implemented) and some of the information should also be fed into Belize Safeguards Information System for REDD+, which will be available online once finalized.

The following subchapters provide further detail about monitoring at these two levels.

## 9.1. Project Monitoring

The following table provides indicators and targets to monitor implementation of each of the mitigation measures needed to address the identified risks at project level. As can be seen, several of the suggested indicators are descriptive at this stage, rather than numerical. More specific and numerical indicators will be included in the subproject ESMP(s) and should then be considered complementary to the below project level indicators.

Information on the status of the indicators and on whether targets have been achieved should be included in the Annual Project Progress/Evaluation Reports. Where targets have not been achieved or cannot be achieved, a justification should be provided together with corrective measures taken to achieve the target in the future.

*Table 13. Indicators and targets to monitor progress with the implementation of mitigation measures at project level*

<b>OP 4.01: Environmental Assessment</b>		
<b>RISK 4.01.1 Risk of reversal or non-permanence of GHG emissions reductions achieved through the REDD+ strategy</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
MM4.01.1a) Ensure that the REDD+ Strategy addresses the drivers of deforestation, which should lead to a permanent reduction in forest-based activities that release GHG emissions.	I4.01.1a) Description of how the REDD+ Strategy addresses the drivers of deforestation.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
MM4.01.1b) Where REDD+ implementing subprojects aim to promote sustainable livelihood options to reduce pressure on forest, suitable options must be identified together with affected stakeholders, equipment and sufficient training provided (including on the maintenance of the necessary equipment) and sustainability of those options must be ensured beyond the runtime of the subproject.	I4.01.1b) Descriptions of how subprojects engage stakeholders on the identification of suitable livelihood options, and measures taken to ensure (i) stakeholders have the necessary equipment and are sufficiently trained (including on maintenance of equipment) and (ii) sustainability of those options beyond the runtime of the project.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
<b>RISK 4.01.2 Increased demand for water due to new livelihoods options adversely impact the environment</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
MM4.01.2a) Subprojects aiming to promote sustainable livelihood	I4.01.2a) Screening questions cover the topic of	yes/no

options are screened for risks and impacts related to water consumption, and where a risk gets identified in this context, additional assessments cover the aspect of water consumption as well (see ESMF chapter 6).	increased water consumption.	
MM4.01.2b) Where a risk of increased demand for water gets identified for subprojects and cannot be avoided, adequate mitigation measures are identified, together with indicators and targets for their monitoring.	I4.01.2b) Description of how subprojects address the risk through mitigation measures and examples for indicators and targets identified.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
<b>RISK 4.01.3 Unequal access to REDD+ benefits, including financial benefits, leads to conflict and competition within and between communities and loss of stakeholder support</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
MM4.01.3a) Belize's REDD+ Benefit Sharing Mechanism must be designed to ensure equitable access to REDD+ benefits, whether these are financial or not financial, including for vulnerable stakeholders (e.g. those whose rights to land and resources are not formalized) and especially considering IPs, women and youths.	I4.01.3a)-1 Description of how Belize's BSM ensures equitable access to REDD+ benefits, whether these are financial or not financial, including for vulnerable stakeholders (e.g. those whose rights to land and resources are not formalized) and especially considering IPs, women and youth.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
	I4.01.3a)-2 Number of REDD+ beneficiaries in Belize by stakeholder group and separately for IPs, women and youth. (Accumulated indicator from REDD+ subprojects)	T4.01.3a)-1 At least 75% of REDD+ beneficiaries in Belize are IPs, 50% are women and 25% are youths.
MM4.01.3b) Ensure participation of key stakeholders in the process of developing Belize's Carbon Rights Policy, such as IPs, but also private landowners and private protected area managers	I4.01.3b)-1 Description of how IPs have been involved in a) drafting, b) reviewing and b) finalizing Belize's Carbon Rights Policy, including evidence of how their input was taken into account.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
MM4.01.3c) REDD+ subprojects, during their design include information sessions on benefits envisioned by the subproject and their sharing among individuals/communities affected by the subproject to increase transparency and manage expectations, ensuring adequate representation of Vulnerable Groups, such as IPs, women and youths.	I4.01.3c) Number of participants in benefit sharing information sessions per subproject, separately listing IPs, women and youth.	T4.01.3c) 50% of the participants in benefit sharing information sessions per subproject are women and 25% are youths. Where subprojects target sites with IPs within their area of influence, at least 75% of the participants in benefit sharing information

		sessions per subproject are IPs.
MM4.01.3d) Existing structures and processes are identified and used at community level to organize roundtables to discuss and resolve possible tensions between stakeholders regarding the accrual or sharing of REDD+ benefits. The meetings will be facilitated by a trusted person from within the community in a culturally appropriate manner, if necessary, with support from a professional mediator with appropriate language skills. Where no trusted person can be identified at community level, a professional mediator will be hired to facilitate the roundtables as needed. Participation of women and youths in such roundtables must be ensured.	I4.01.3d) Description of how existing structures and processes were identified and are used for community level roundtables to discuss and resolve possible tensions over REDD+ benefits at project and subproject level and how participation of women and youth is ensured.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
MM4.01.3e) Capacity building sessions will be provided to communities involved with REDD+ implementation on the existing Grievance Redress Mechanisms and its functioning. It will be ensured that these sessions are gender-balanced and youths are represented in adequate proportion.	I4.01.e)-1 Number and geographical coverage of capacity building sessions conducted at project and subproject level about the existing GRM and its functioning. A beneficiary feedback survey would be needed to assess stakeholders knowledge of the GRM and how it functions.	T4.01.3e)-1 In each geography where REDD+ implementation at project and subproject level starts, stakeholders are well informed about the GRM and its functioning and feel confident to make use of it as needed.
	I4.01.e)-2 Percentage of participants belonging to the Vulnerable Groups of women and youths in each of the capacity building sessions about the existing GRM and its functioning.	T4.01.3e)-2 The average percentage of participants belonging to Vulnerable Groups in the capacity building sessions about the existing GRM and its functioning is 50% for women and 25% for youths.
MM4.01.3f) Grievance in the context of REDD+ benefit sharing will be monitored and the management of the project/subprojects adjusted as necessary.	I4.01.3f) Number of grievances in the context of REDD+ benefit sharing and percentage of those that have been satisfactorily concluded.	T4.01.3f) 100% of grievances in the context of REDD+ are satisfactorily concluded.
<b>RISK 4.01.4 Increased bureaucracy reduces participation of some stakeholders, in particular Vulnerable Groups, further excluding their views and aggravating their vulnerability</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
MM4.01.4a) REDD+ implementation will seek to minimize bureaucracy at project level, and especially for Vulnerable Groups among	I4.01.4a) Description of examples for how bureaucracy is kept at a minimum in REDD+	N/A (descriptive indicator)

stakeholders, including IPs, women and youths, e.g. by promoting decentralization and using established local structures and processes to the extent possible.	implementation at programme level, especially for Vulnerable Groups.	
MM4.01.4b) Subprojects are designed to use established local and/or traditional structures and processes for implementation to decrease the burden of adjusting to new procedures and any form of stakeholder engagement and information disclosure will use suitable language, using translators if needed, to ensure broad understanding and promote local stakeholder support and ownership during implementation.	I4.01.4b) Description of examples for how subproject implementation uses local and/or traditional structures and processes and of additional measures taken to minimize bureaucracy and maximize local uptake and support.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
<b>RISK 4.01.5 Lack of understanding of REDD+ leads to failure to engage with and get support from all stakeholders</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
MM4.01.5a) An awareness and capacity needs assessment will be conducted within the government to identify ways to ensure inter-ministerial understanding of REDD+ and its importance and thus to secure coordination on and support of REDD+ across ministries.	I4.01.5a) A REDD+ Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Plan has been developed, targeting stakeholders from different government entities at national and subnational level in Belize.	yes/no
MM4.01.5b) An awareness and capacity needs assessment will be conducted in a gender-sensitive manner to identify where and which stakeholder groups will require support to ensure their understanding of REDD+, resulting in a gender-inclusive Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Plan, including the integration of awareness raising in school curricula, considering traditional knowledge, geographical coverage and language preferences of different stakeholder groups.	I4.01.5b) A gender-inclusive REDD+ Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Plan has been developed, targeting non-government stakeholders and schools, and considering traditional knowledge, a balanced geographical coverage, and varying needs and language preferences of different stakeholder groups.	yes/no
MM4.01.5c) Under MM4.01.5b) participation of stakeholders will be maximized by providing the necessary means for stakeholder to be present at consultations (e.g. internet cards for virtual consultations, transportation, accessible venues, time, child care, etc.).	I4.01.5c) Description of measures taken to maximize participation of stakeholder, especially Vulnerable Groups, including women and youths.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
MM4.01.5d) Where stakeholders need to acquire new skills and knowledge in order to engage in REDD+ implementation, especially Vulnerable Groups of stakeholders, such as IPs, women and youths,	I4.01.5d) List of capacity building events conducted at project and subproject levels among stakeholders, especially Vulnerable Groups, to	N/A (descriptive indicator)

capacity building is provided in a culturally appropriate manner and in appropriate language.	ensure understanding and continued support and participation in REDD+ implementation.	
MM4.01.5e) The REDD+ Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Plan gets implemented with a special view to involving Vulnerable Groups, such as IP, women, youths, etc.	I4.01.5e) Description of progress in implementing the REDD+ Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Plan	N/A (descriptive indicator)
MM4.01.5f) The REDD+ Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Plan is considered a working document that gets revised at least annually. Where additional needs for awareness raising and capacity building are identified in the course of REDD+ implementation, these needs get incorporated into the plan and addressed in further implementation.	I4.01.5f) Description of updates made over time to the REDD+ Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Plan to be considered in reporting progress of implementation under I4.01.5e).	N/A (descriptive indicator)
<b>RISK 4.01.6 Gender gap gets exacerbated as women have unequal access to benefits from the REDD+ Strategy, including engagement opportunities, and thus their visions are not reflected in future actions</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
The risk is addressed through mitigation measures under risks 4.01.3, 4.01.4 and 4.01.5, which have all been developed to be gender-inclusive.	N/A	N/A (descriptive indicator)
<b>RISK 4.01.7 Youth exclusion gets exacerbated as youth have unequal access to benefits from the REDD+ Strategy, including engagement opportunities thus their visions are not reflected in future actions</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
The risk is addressed through mitigation measures under risks 4.01.3, 4.01.4 and 4.01.5, which have all been developed to ensure the voices of youths are heard and considered and youths have equal access to REDD+ opportunities and benefits.	N/A	N/A (descriptive indicator)
<b>RISK 4.01.8 Uncertain performance of the REDD+ strategy due to insufficient monitoring and control, lack of intra- and inter-institutional coordination, lack of resources, training and ministerial discretion</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>

MM4.01.8a) This risk is addressed by Strategic Line 1.3 “Improve coordination between government actors” (Pillar 1) and “Pillar 4: Forest Information and Monitoring”. An information sharing mechanism (resulting from Pillar 4) is a prerequisite for proper coordination between government actors (SL 1.3) and it should be ensured this is carefully designed and implemented, as well as an early warning system for monitoring and control of forest degradation and deforestation (SL 4.2).	I4.01.8a) An Information Sharing Mechanism has been developed and implemented in line with Pillar 4.	Yes/no
	I4.01.8b) Description of actions and measures taken to improve coordination between government actors	N/A (descriptive indicator)
	I4.01.8c) An early warning system for deforestation and forest degradation has been developed and implemented, based on remote sensing and the involvement of local and indigenous communities in monitoring efforts	yes/no
MM4.01.8b) Prepare a study on the incidence, risks and impacts of “ministerial discretion” in the management of economic resources related to the National REDD+ Strategy, good practices and MM after at least a year of implementation.	I4.01.8d) Hiring of consultant (s) to prepare the study and present description of main results	yes/no
MM4.01.8c) Disseminate information about all the efforts undertaken within the REDD+ project framework to strengthen existing monitoring systems and capacities	I4.01.8e) Number of means of communication used and type of material produced	T4.01.8a)-1 In each geography where REDD+ implementation at project and subproject level starts, at least two (2) means of communications are used in the language(s) most appropriate for the area, and communication material published also in appropriate languages
<b>OP 4.09: Pest Management</b>		
<b>RISK 4.09.1: Inappropriate implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices adversely affect forests and associated biodiversity</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
MM4.09.1a) Subproject design and implementation consider best practice guidelines on IPM (see ESMF chapter 6.5).	I4.09.1a) Subprojects with risks and impacts in the context of pest management have been checked to have used best practice guidance to avoid, or where this is impossible, minimize and manage risks and	yes/no

	impacts in the context of pest management.	
MM4.09.1b) Subproject proposals (where no further assessment is needed) and ESMPs (where further assessment was conducted) include adequate mitigation measures to avoid, or where this is impossible, minimize and manage adverse impacts on forests and biodiversity.	I4.09.1b) Mitigation measures in the context of pest management are adequate across all subprojects that have identified risks and impacts on this topic.	yes/no
MM4.09.1c) Mitigation measures are duly implemented and monitored and subproject management is adjusted where monitoring reveals adverse impacts.	I4.09.1c) Monitoring reports from subprojects show that mitigation measures in the context of pest management are duly implemented and risks and impacts on the topic thus minimized and managed.	yes/no
<b>RISK 4.09.2: Inappropriate fire management practices adversely affect forests, other natural habitats and associated biodiversity</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
Since fire management can be considered part of IPM, MM4.09.1a)-c) apply here as well. In addition: MM4.09.2a) Subproject design and implementation should consider specific guidance on fire management practices, such as FAO (2012) and further resources available from <a href="http://www.fao.org/forestry/firemanagement/en/">www.fao.org/forestry/firemanagement/en/</a> . The document "Good DRM practices for Belizean small farmers" (Holder nd) should also be consulted.	I4.09.2a) Subprojects with risks and impacts in the context of fire management have been checked to have used best practice guidance to avoid, or where this is impossible, minimize and manage risks and impacts in the context of fire management.	yes/no
MM4.09.2b) Belize's fire-control programmes are adjusted to increasingly involve local stakeholders in community-based fire management, as described in FAO (2011).	I4.09.2b) Description of progress made in adjusting fire-control programmes/establishing community-based fire management.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
MM4.09.2c) Belize's NFMS monitors forest fires and the information gets used to update any forest fire management plans and practices accordingly.	I4.09.2c)-1 Description of how Belize's NFMS monitors forest fires and the response strategies in place upon detection of irregular fires.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
	I4.09.2c)-2 Hectares of forest lost through irregular forest fires/year	T2.09.2c) The data shows that the amount of forest lost through irregular forest fires/year is shrinking, thereby demonstrating that fire management



		practices are effective.
<b>OP 4.10: Indigenous Peoples</b>		
<b>RISK 4.10.1 Lack of observance of existing IP rights when developing or updating legal instruments affecting IPs leads to adverse impacts to their lives and livelihoods, i.e.: involuntary restriction of access to legally designated parks or protected areas</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
MM4.10.1a) Before REDD+ implementation, finalize adjustments required to the 2014 FPIC Framework for the Southern Maya to ensure it is also appropriate for the Northern Maya (NMAB) and the Garifuna (NGC). An agreement with the Western Yucatec Maya on how to adjust the 2014 FPIC Framework for the Southern Maya to their needs should also be sought.	I4.10.1a)-1 The 2014 FPIC Framework for the Southern Maya was adjusted by 31 March 2022 and is from then on also appropriate for the Northern Maya (NMAB) and the Garifuna (NGC).	yes/no (if yes, documentation needs to be provided)
	I4.10.1a)-2 An agreement exists between the Government of Belize and the Western Yucatec Maya by 31 March 2022 on how to adjust the 2014 FPIC Framework for the Southern Maya to their needs, including a timeline for these adjustments.	yes/no (if yes, documentation needs to be provided)
MM4.10.1b) Apply FPIC in any preparation of legal reform that affects IPs, in line with the IPPF. All four IP constituencies should be represented in the procedure, i.e. including the Western Yucatec Maya in the Cayo District.	I4.10.1b)-1 Documentation exists on a) the procedure and b) the result of each FPIC process conducted as part of REDD+ activities that include the development of new or revision of existing legal instruments that can affect IPs.	yes/no (where yes, documentation needs to be provided)
	I4.10.1b)-2 Description of how a gender-balanced input is assured in the FPIC process.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
	I4.10.1b)-3 Survey based measurements of the degree of satisfaction and level of ownership during FPIC meetings.	T4.10.1b)-3 Survey results show that at least 75% of participants (of men and women equally) are satisfied with the FPIC meetings and feel a certain level of ownership.
MM4.10.1c) Provide capacity building on legal language and matters to representatives of the BENIC and of the Western Yucatec Maya in the	I4.10.1c) List capacity building sessions conducted on legal language and matters to ensure the BENIC	N/A (descriptive indicator)

Cayo District (as long as these have not joined the BENIC) to ensure they can contribute in a meaningful way to FPIC processes as part of developing and updating legal instruments.	can contribute in a meaningful way to the process of developing and updating legal instruments.	
MM4.10.1.d) Provide access to legal support where necessary and possible.	I4.10.1d)-1 Description of how IPs have been informed about the possibility to receive assistance for accessing legal support.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
	I4.10.1d)-2 Description of cases where access to legal support was provided.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
See also MM 4.10.4a and respective indicators and targets	N/A	N/A
<b>RISK 4.10.2 Design and implementation of the REDD+ strategy without meaningful consultation of IPs, including FPIC as appropriate, disregards their rights and knowledge and leads to adverse impacts to their lives and ancestral practices</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
See also MM 4.10.1a) and respective indicators and targets	N/A	N/A
MM4.10.2a) Apply FPIC in any REDD+ activity of non-legal nature that affects IPs, in line with the IPPF. All four IP constituencies should be represented in the procedure, i.e. including the Western Yucatec Maya in the Cayo District.	I4.10.2a)-1 Documentation exists on a) the procedure and b) the result of each FPIC process conducted as part of REDD+ activities that might affect IPs.	yes/no (where yes, documentation needs to be provided)
	I4.10.2a)-2 Description of how a gender-balanced input is assured in the FPIC process.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
	I4.10.2a)-3 Survey based measurements of the degree of satisfaction and level of ownership during FPIC meetings.	T4.10.2a)-3 Survey results show that at least 75% of participants (of men and women equally) are satisfied with the FPIC meetings and feel a certain level of ownership.
MM4.10.2b) Implement the Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) that has been prepared as part of the ESMF package, including FPIC as mentioned in MM4.10.2a) and an early screening process for all subprojects to identify possible risks and impacts on IPs and their livelihoods, with the participation of BENIC, representatives of the Western Yucatec Maya in the Cayo District (as long as these have not	I4.10.2b)-1 Description of screening and social assessment reports produced for the development of IPPs of REDD+ implementing subprojects.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
	I4.10.2b)-2 IPPs approved for subprojects performed under the National REDD+ Strategy,	yes/no

joined the BENIC) and partner entities. Where risks and impacts are identified in the screening, a detailed social assessment will be performed by a team of experts knowledgeable on Belize's IP, and an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) will be prepared for the identification of adequate mitigation and livelihood restoration measures. For all stages of the process, meaningful consultation will be ensured through the involvement of the BENIC and/or representatives of the Western Yucatec Maya in the Cayo District (as long as these have not joined the BENIC), as applicable.	including culturally appropriate mitigation measures together with measurable indicators and adequate targets.	
MM4.10.2c) The IPPF provides a monitoring framework, calling for the need to prepare a specific monitoring and evaluation plan for each IPP prepared in the framework of the National REDD+ Strategy. The monitoring system for each subproject shall be specifically aimed at assessing the degree of participation of IP representatives in consultations, and their level of community support or consent for the project. The framework also calls for the need to perform a final audit on the application of IP safeguards and relevant legislation across all subprojects.	I.4.10.2c)-1 Monitoring reports produced in the framework of subproject specific IPPs	yes/no (target levels and specific indicators to be defined in IPPs)
	I.4.10.2.c)-2 The final IP audit of subprojects demonstrates overall good performance of subproject implementation in the context of IP rights	yes/no
MM4.10.2d) Disclosure mechanisms of relevant safeguards instruments (IPP, Social Assessment Reports, Livelihood Restoration Plans (LPRs), etc.) will make use of culturally appropriate dissemination means and will be translated as needed for IP communities.	I.4.10.2d) Description of disclosure mechanisms of relevant safeguards instruments and of the use of culturally appropriate mechanisms.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
<b>RISK 4.10.3: Emphasis of the strategy on one IP constituency may disadvantage the recognition of rights of other IP groups and local communities organizations</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
The risk is addressed through the mitigation measures established under 4.10.1, 4.10.2 and 4.10.4, which emphasize the need to always ensure that all four IP constituencies are considered.	N/A	N/A
<b>RISK 4.10.4. IPs and other rural community organizations are not properly integrated into forest governance and management systems, increasing lack of ownership and leading to REDD+ failure.</b>		

Mitigation Measures (MM)	Indicators (I)	Targets (T)
MM4.10.4a) Capacity building of state actors will be carried out on Indigenous Peoples rights, traditional knowledge and systems and on the importance of and ways to consider these in their work, thus promoting the creation of awareness at national level and a feeling of ownership at local level.	I4.10.4a) Number and description of capacity building activities carried out with state actors as set out in MM4.10.4a) with examples of how this gained knowledge can be used in practice to increase involvement and respect for IP rights, traditional knowledge and systems.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
MM4.10.4b) The Process Framework includes as part of the institutional arrangements for the implementation of the REDD+ initiative at local level the adoption of a co-management approach through the creation of Forest Co-Management Councils (FCC), where appropriate, with the participation of representatives of affected IPs. Decision making at local level in connection to the nature and extent of subproject activities, the identification of possible impacts, the development of LRPs and the discussion of mitigation measures and sustainable livelihood options will be conducted under a co-management model.	I4.10.4b) Participation rates of IP leaders and representatives in Forest Co-management Council (FCC) meetings.	Target levels and specific indicators to be defined in IPPs
MM4.10.4c) Awareness raising activities through introductory and training sessions before commencement and during formal meetings of FCC and consultations will be carried out, with a particular focus on IP leaders and representatives (see section 6.3 of PF)	I4.10.4c) Number of awareness-raising activities (including training and dissemination sessions) aimed at IP and their representatives.	Target levels and specific indicators to be defined in IPPs
<b>OP 4.12: Involuntary Resettlement</b>		
<b>RISK 4.12.1: Access restrictions to land and/or resources in new or existing legally protected areas leads to economic displacement, adverse effects to lives and livelihoods and potentially conflict</b>		
Mitigation Measures (MM)	Indicators (I)	Targets (T)
MM4.12.1a) Screening for economic displacement impacts early in the process for each subproject, as laid out in the PF. For subprojects under category B and C, a scoping process will be carried out to determine the depth of additional assessment needed to identify affected stakeholders and impacts of subproject implementation, with special	I4.12a) Short description of subprojects where the risk of economic displacement has been identified and description of decisions from scoping on additional assessment needed.	T4.12a) In all subprojects where the risk of economic displacement has been identified the scoping has determined that detailed social assessment must be conducted to identify affected stakeholders and impacts

consideration of the most vulnerable stakeholders, including IPs, women and youths.		of subproject implementation.
MM4.12.1b) For all subprojects with a risk related to economic displacement identified in the screening, an ESIA will be conducted with special focus on identifying stakeholders affected by economic displacement, with special consideration of the most vulnerable stakeholders, including IPs, women and youths, and to agree with them on adequate eligibility criteria and compensation, considering gender-differentiated needs, which will be reflected in a Livelihood Restoration Plan annexed to the ESMP.	I4.12b)-1 Percentage of subprojects for which the risk of economic displacement has been identified and that have either - an ESIA underway - an ESIA completed and approved - an ESMP under development - an ESMP completed and approved in line with requirements provided in the Process Framework	T4.12b) All subprojects for which the risk of economic displacement has been identified have completed and approved ESIA's and ESMPs.
	I4.12b)-2 Description of how gender-differentiated needs have been considered in determining eligibility criteria and compensation for subproject-level Livelihood Restoration Plans.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
MM4.12.1c) The Process Framework is applicable to individuals and communities who experience economic displacement as a result of resource access restriction in PAs due to the implementation of REDD+ as a whole and of any subproject as part of implementing Belize's REDD+ National Strategy, and it will inform the creation of Livelihood Restoration Plans (LRPs) at subproject level (See Section 4.1.3 of Process Framework).	I4.12c) LRPs are approved for subprojects where livelihood impacts and/or the risk of economic displacement are identified during screening and ESIA process, including a set of specific livelihood alternatives and mitigation/compensation measures in accordance with the terms of the PF.	T4.12c) In all subprojects where the risk of economic displacement associated to access restriction to natural resources in PA has been identified a LRP has been approved under a participatory approach, including a set of actionable mitigation measures and livelihood alternatives
MM4.12.1d) The development of LRPs will be informed through a participatory process and, where appropriate, a co-management approach through the creation of Forest Co-Management Councils (FCCs), with the participation of all relevant local stakeholders and project affected people under the coordination of the REDD+ CU (see sections 4.1.2 and 6.2 of Process Framework)	I4.12d) FCCs are constituted for all subprojects where restrictions of access to natural resources and the subsequent impacts on livelihoods require mitigation options and the definition of sustainable livelihood options.	T4.12d) In all subprojects where the risk of economic displacement associated to access restriction to natural resources in PA has been identified a functioning FCC has been constituted
MM4.12.1e) The contents and principles of LRPs are detailed in the Process Framework including a list of exemplary mitigation measures to be implemented in case of economic displacement and negative effects on the livelihoods of affected communities. Examples of sustainable	See I4.12c)	See T4.12c)

livelihood options and compensation measures are available in Section 4.2 of the Process Framework.		
MM4.12.1f) A Monitoring and Evaluation system will be put in place to follow up progress on overall operations and processes as described in the PF and to assess the compliance with outcomes set in the LRP. Monitoring and Evaluation activities will be carried out both at subproject level, with the implementation of specific systems in each LRP, and at program level through the aggregation of data and information collected across different subprojects.	I4.12f) 1. A functioning and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism is defined in each LRP, including suitable performance and effectiveness indicators together with their target values.	T4.12f) In all subprojects where a LRP has been approved, a M&E system has been put in place, including the definition of performance and effectiveness indicators at subproject level.
MM4.12.g) The CCJ court rulings will be upheld and land rights respected by all activities that fall under REDD+ implementation.	I4.12.g)-1 Description of how CCJ court rulings are upheld and land rights respected by all activities that fall under REDD+ implementation.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
	I4.12.g)-2 Number of complaints raised in the context of disregard of the CCJ rulings and/or land rights as part of REDD+ implementation.	T4.12g)-2 No complaints have been raised in this context.
<b>OP 4.36: Forests</b>		
<b>RISK 4.36.1 Harvesting of forest products for new livelihoods, if unsustainable, impacts forest health and quality and health and safety of communities</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
MM4.36.1a) Subprojects aiming to promote sustainable livelihood options are screened for risks and impacts related to unsustainable resource use, and where a risk gets identified in this context, additional assessments cover this aspect as well (see ESMF chapter 6).	I4.36.1a) Screening questions cover the topic of unsustainable resource use.	yes/no
MM4.36.1b) Where a risk of unsustainable resource use gets identified for subprojects and cannot be avoided, adequate mitigation measures are identified, together with indicators and targets for their monitoring.	I4.36.1b) Description of how subprojects address the risk through mitigation measures and examples for indicators and targets identified.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
MM4.36.1c) Where sustainable livelihood options are successfully established, availability of resources used and impacts resulting from their use get monitored beyond the runtime of the project and it is	I4.36.1c) Description of how subprojects ensure that sustainability of sustainable livelihood options gets assured beyond the runtime of the subproject.	N/A (descriptive indicator)

ensured that no over extraction with further impacts on people and nature occur over time.		
<b>RISK 4.36.2 Extraction of secondary hardwoods, if unsustainable and not properly implemented and regulated, impacts forest health and quality and safety of communities</b>		
<b>Mitigation Measures (MM)</b>	<b>Indicators (I)</b>	<b>Targets (T)</b>
MM4.36.2a) Strategic line 3.3 Promotion of utilization of secondary hardwoods and lesser-known timber species will be designed to promote reduced impact logging practices, using best practice guidance such as Ellis and Ellis (2021) and IUCN (2006).	I4.36.2a) Description of how reduced impact logging practices are considered in the further planning and implementation of strategic line 3.3.	N/A (descriptive indicator)
MM4.36.2b) Where extraction of secondary hardwoods gets practiced, at REDD+ project or subproject level, risks and impacts get identified, minimized, managed and monitored with suitable indicators.	I4.36.2b) Summary of the status of indicators identified to monitor possible adverse effects from the extraction of secondary hardwoods.	T4.36.2b) The summary clearly shows that adverse effects on forests and livelihoods are avoided or at least minimized and adequately managed.
MM4.36.2c) Community surveys will be conducted on a regular basis (e.g. bi-annually) in the area of influence to ensure the extraction of secondary hardwoods does not adversely affect their livelihoods, whether directly or indirectly. Where survey results show adverse effects, project/subproject management gets adjusted immediately.	I4.36.2c) Summary of community survey results	T4.36.2c) The summary of the community survey results clearly shows that the extraction of secondary hardwoods does not lead to adverse effects on the forest and livelihoods.

## 9.2. Subproject Monitoring

Subproject proposals (where considered risk category C), ESMPs and annexed safeguards tools will include indicators and targets for each of the suggested mitigation measures that should be monitored over the time of project implementation to be able to observe subproject impacts on people and the environment, whether these are positive or negative, and allow for adaptive subproject management over time. The appropriate frequency of monitoring indicators can vary from one indicator to the next, and monitoring certain indicators may only become relevant at a later stage, depending on the implementation schedule for the respective mitigation measure (e.g. within year 1 of the project vs. within the last 2 years of project).

While it should be the responsibility of the Subproject Implementing Agencies (SIAs) to monitor the site-specific indicators, it will be important that a schedule is agreed for the submission of subproject progress reports to the REDD+ CU that include monitoring information. This will allow the REDD+ CU to keep an overview of potential issues at local level and to provide guidance as needed. In addition, such monitoring reports can inform project progress reports covering all components of the project.

In addition to the indicators included in individual ESMPs, the REDD+ CU will use Belize’s REDD+ Grievance Redress Mechanism (<https://fgm.gov.bz>) to observe potential issues at subproject level and, where necessary, adjust project management accordingly.

## 10. Institutional arrangements for ESMF implementation and capacity building

ESMF implementation includes different tasks and requires different capacities. The following table lists such tasks and includes a suggestion for responsibilities to conduct these. As can be seen, implementation of certain tasks may need support from a technical specialist.

*Table 14. Tasks, timing and responsibility for ESMF implementation*

Task	Timing/frequency	Responsibility
<b>Project-level</b>		
Provision of capacity building to project staff, including service providers, on safeguards and gender requirements	At the beginning of project implementation	REDD+ CU with support from technical experts, e.g. on safeguards, gender, IP rights, or legal matters, as appropriate
Implementation of the project-level Action Plan for managing risks and impacts (chapter 5.4)	From beginning of and throughout project implementation	REDD+ CU and Subproject Implementing Agencies (where MM refer to subproject level)
Implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework and Process Framework	From beginning of and throughout project implementation	REDD+ CU with support from an expert on IP rights or livelihood restoration, as applicable. A role for the BENIC to support this task should also be explored.
Progress monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan	Every six months	REDD+ CU. A role for the BENIC to support this task should also be



for managing risks and impacts (chapter 5.4)		explored.
Progress monitoring of the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework and Process Framework	Every six months	REDD+ CU. A role for the BENIC to support this task should also be explored.
Implementation of REDD+ Feedback Grievance Redress Mechanism (chapter 8)	From beginning of and throughout project implementation	REDD+ CU
Overall project monitoring and oversight	From beginning of and throughout project implementation, monitoring every six months	REDD+ CU with monitoring information provided by all those involved in project and subproject implementation
Preparation of monitoring information for inclusion in Project Progress Reports and SIS	Frequency depends on agreement with funding agencies supporting REDD+ implementation and RBP	REDD+ CU
<b>Subproject level</b>		
Preparation of subproject proposals in line with safeguards and gender requirements (chapter 6.1)	From beginning of project implementation	Subproject Implementing Agencies (SIAs)
Screening of subproject proposals (chapter 6.2)	As and when proposals are received	REDD+ CU. A role could be explored to include support of BENIC on subprojects proposals that are on or could affect Indigenous People's land and rights.
Scoping for potential additional assessments for subprojects (chapter 6.3)	When screening results are available	REDD+ CU
Full or limited ESIA (chapter 6.4)	Following scoping decisions	SIAs
Development of ESMPs and other safeguards tools (chapter 6.5)	Following completion of full or limited ESIA	SIAs
Clearance of subprojects (chapter 6.6)	Based on final subproject proposals and their ESMPs and other safeguards tools, as applicable	REDD+ CU. A role could be explored to include support of BENIC on clearance of subprojects.
Implementation of subprojects and their mitigation measures, ESMPs and other safeguards tools, as applicable	Following clearance	SIAs

Progress monitoring of implementation of subprojects and their mitigation measures, ESMPs and other safeguards tools, as applicable	Every six months from the start of subproject implementation	SIAs
Provision of progress monitoring reports from subprojects to REDD+ CU for inclusion into overall Project Progress Reports and SIS (where applicable).	Every six months from the start of subproject implementation	SIAs

As can be seen from this table, ESMF implementation requires a solid understanding of safeguards and gender requirements as well as of monitoring needs. It is therefore recommendable that the REDD+ CU conducts an internal assessment of capacity needs to ensure all staff involved are trained to conduct the necessary work. It may also be helpful to assess whether responsibilities should be determined by mitigation measures, as this can help in the identification of capacities required for ESMF implementation. In some cases, such as implementation and monitoring of the IPPF, the REDD+ CU should explore the possibility of including BENIC as a responsible party of some of the tasks. This could be done through the IP Desk and/or ITT based on lessons learned from the preparation process.

## 11. Budget for ESMF implementation

Implementation of the present ESMF has a cost, which includes the cost of implementing the mitigation measures themselves (such as running capacity building activities) as well as the staff time needed for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Depending on existing capacities within the REDD+ CU, it may be necessary to hire new staff for the implementation of the ESMF, possibly with specific background, e.g. on gender, meaningful engagement or IP rights.

While the cost of implementing the mitigation measures specified in chapter 5.4 will be borne by the REDD+CU, time and effort is also required from the Subproject Implementing Agencies involved in the planning and implementation of subprojects in order to follow the procedures outlined in chapter 6.

Whether the financing for REDD+ implementation comes from a country's Government directly or from one of the available funding agencies, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), there are usually opportunities to use some of the existing budget lines for REDD+ implementation to cover for some of the cost of implementing the ESMF. For example, where REDD+ implementation includes activities to foster meaningful stakeholder engagement, planned engagement events can be slightly expanded to include topics identified as important in the ESMF, whereby there is no extra cost for these activities as part of ESMF implementation.

Since many details about REDD+ implementation in Belize are still uncertain, it is too early to produce a detailed budget for ESMF implementation. For example, before the cost for capacity building sessions at local level can be determined, it needs to be agreed how many locations such sessions should be taking place in. However, any further REDD+ planning should consider the cost of ESMF implementation from the very beginning to avoid difficulties with implementation at a later stage.

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## Annex 1: Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework



## Annex 2: Process Framework



### Annex 3: Feedback and Answers Table ESMF





## **Annex 4: BENIC's Statement Confirming Support of the Consultation Process and its Outcomes**



## Annex 5: FPIC Protocol for REDD+ Readiness Phase