



BELIZE SCORECARD

HOW IS BELIZE PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE?

BELIZE SCORECARD

7th July 2016

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CONTEXT

THE AIM OF THIS SCORECARD IS TO LOOK AT HOW THE BELIZE GOVERNMENT IS PERFORMING IN PROTECTING OUR REEF AND TO PROVIDE SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

The Belize barrier reef is the largest barrier reef in the western hemisphere, second in size globally only to Australia's Great Barrier Reef. [The Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System](#) (BBRRS) was the first marine World Heritage site in the Caribbean region when inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1996.

Belize is currently at a crossroad. The Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System was added to the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2009. Today the future of the site is still threatened by offshore oil drilling and damaging coastal construction. This, despite the fact that more than half of Belize's population, or about 190,000 people, are supported by incomes generated through reef-related tourism and fisheries. The annual economic contribution of reef-related tourism, fisheries and scientific research is estimated at around 15 per cent of Belize's gross domestic product (GDP)ⁱ.

The Belize government can choose sustainability and secure the long-term prosperity of the reef. Doing so would ensure that the reef could continue to support fisheries, provide coastal protection, and generate revenues for current and future generations. Further, such decisive actions could help the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System to be removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

As UNESCO's 40th World Heritage Committee (WHC) Meeting is approaching in July 2016, UNESCO will report on the Belize government's progress towards the corrective measures agreed over the latest Desired State of Conservation Reportⁱⁱ (DSOCR).

The aim of this scorecard is to look at how the Belize government is performing in protecting our reef and to provide some recommendations in the lead up to the WHC Meeting in July 2016 and beyond. We will use this scorecard to track future policies and actions.

METHODOLOGY

WWF, Oceana, Healthy Reefs Initiative, BELPO, and BAS have undertaken an assessment of the performance of Belize government in addressing the key environmental challenges the Belize's reef and its associated ecosystems face. This assessment is based on reviewing a range of publicly available information, such as published government policies, information derived through desktop research and other official publications.

The indicators that make up the scorecard assessment are focused on government policies and actions. Policies are an important indicator of a government's commitments. However, it is important to stress that policies have little meaning if they are not effectively enforced and implemented.

Starting from a set of desired indicators for each theme, we have reviewed publicly available data relevant to the scorecard priorities, and assessed how close the government of Belize came to our recommendations. The scorecard uses three scores to describe the adequacy of addressing the recommendations. In order to ensure transparency of the process, we will make available all the background indicators and calculations used to generate the final scores.

These are:

SYMBOL	SCORE	CRITERIA
	3: GOOD PROGRESS	Significant work underway. Appropriate policies fully adopted.
	2: SOME CONCERN	Some progress but actions/decisions do not go far enough. Policies under development but fall short.
	1: MAJOR CONCERN	No progress. No meaningful actions or policies adopted.

In carrying out the scoring and summation, fractions with decimal point less than point 5 (0.5) were added down and those with decimal points above point 5 (0.5) were added up (e.g. 1.4 was added down to 1 and 1.6 was added up to become 2).

COMMENTARY ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following table includes the recommendations from WWF, Oceana, Healthy Reef Initiative, BELPO, and BAS based on UNESCO World Heritage Committee Desire State Of Conservation (DSOC) for the Belize Barrier Reef System World Heritage Site and an analysis of relevant actions/policies being undertaken by the Belize government towards the protection of the Belize barrier reef and its associated ecosystems, where applicable an assessment score on progress.



REEF SCORECARD

How is Belize protecting our heritage?

Tracking Belize's progress.
Recommendations from WWF, Oceana,
Healthy Reef Initiative, BELPO, and BAS

SCORE

OIL



MANGROVES



COASTAL AREAS



ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS



FISHERIES



WORLD HERITAGE STATUS VALUE



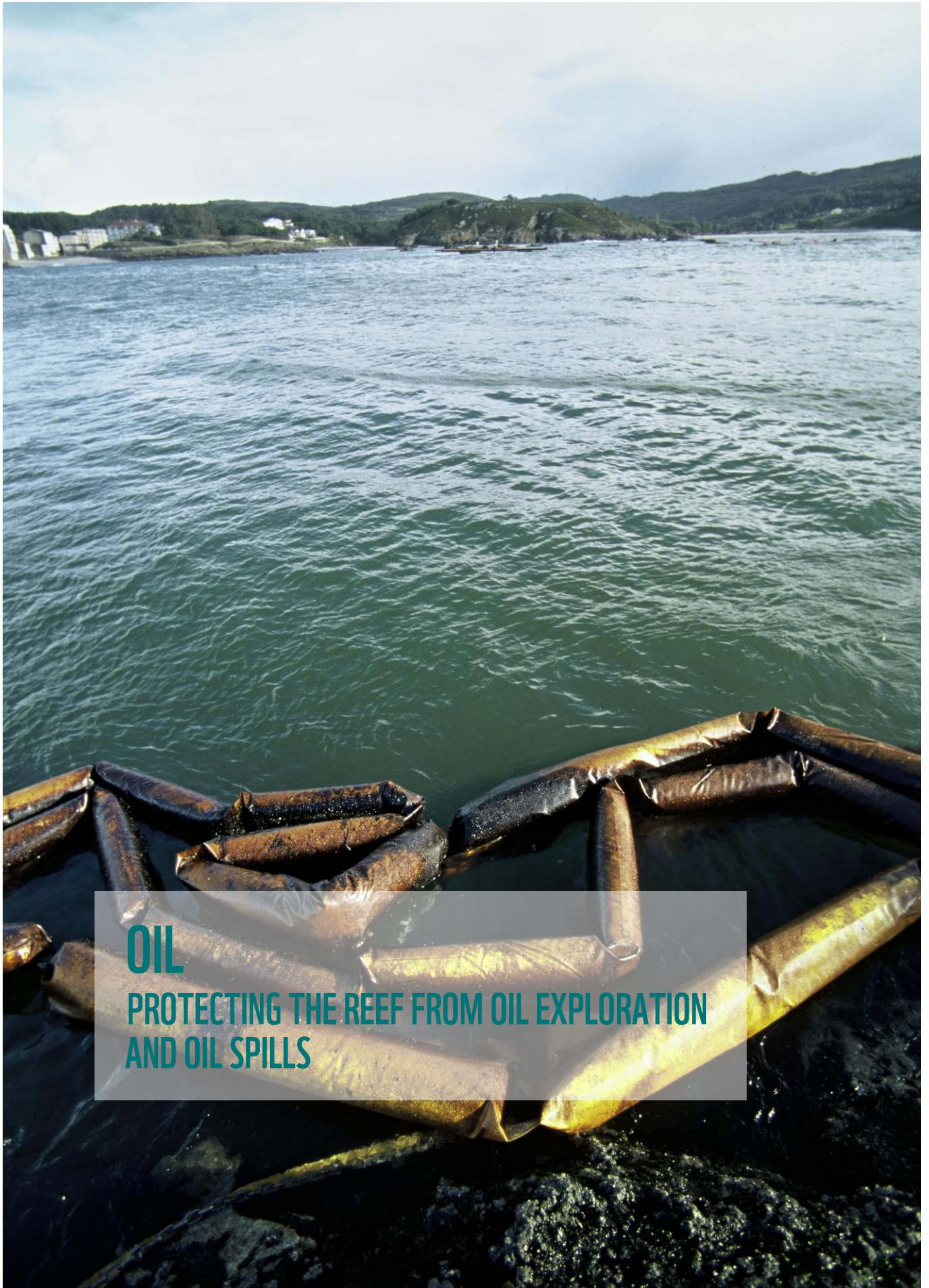
Good progress



Some concern



Major concern



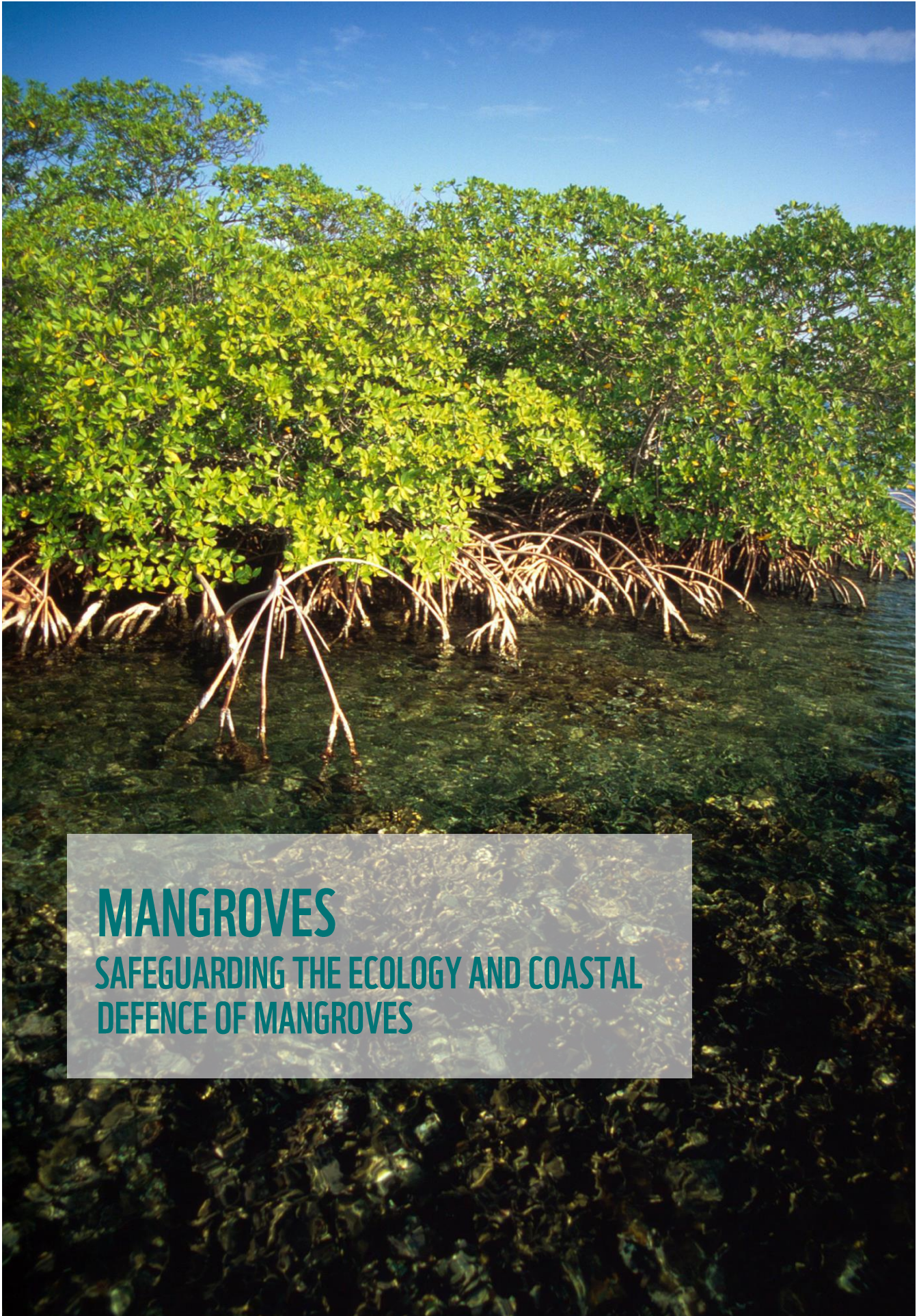
OIL
PROTECTING THE REEF FROM OIL EXPLORATION
AND OIL SPILLS

OIL

Protecting the reef from oil exploration and oil spills

Recommendation	Relevant actions and policies addressing recommendation	Score
An effective full ban on offshore oil exploration and drilling in all of Belize's waters is declared, formalized and implemented.	The Ministry of Petroleum's CEO has confirmed via an email to Oceana its approval of a policy to legally apply a ban on offshore oil exploration in areas along the Belize Barrier Reef System and within the seven World Heritage Sites in Belize (corresponding to 15% of BZ waters). A map of the area and required legislation is lacking ⁱⁱⁱ	2
A legally binding instrument detailing the defacto moratorium currently in place is available.	A moratorium on offshore exploration announced by the Prime Minister on the media on March 15 th 2016 but has not been formalized. ^{iv}	2
The GOB seeks clear mandate from the public before issuing any offshore oil exploration licenses via a transparent, and fair national referendum.	No stated commitment to seek a public mandate.	1
Environmental Impact Assessments (including oil exploration,) carried out prior to receiving licenses; a stringent Environmental Compliance Plan that is drawn up with stakeholder input is put in place and strictly monitored and enforced. Safety guidance is met by companies prior to receiving licenses and ongoing, during operations, as part of the ECP.	Draft of Petroleum Policy and Offshore Exploration Guidelines & Petroleum Act developed but Ministry not consulted widely. ^v	2
All oil exploration requests that are submitted to the GOB are published online.	No information of this nature is currently made available to the public.	1
EIA Schedules amended to include oil exploration into Schedule 1 (i.e. must have an EIA).	Public commitments have been made (for over 3 years) to amend the EIA regulation. EIA regulations are now in the process of being revised but no guidelines have been developed yet. ^{vi}	2
A Petroleum Environmental Mitigation Fund and insurance bond funded by licensees for mitigating damages caused during petroleum operations are established; with contribution to the funds being a condition of the licenses.	The Petroleum Act makes provision for the establishment of a common fund to which the contractor(s) would contribute, to be held in trust and managed for the sole purpose of indemnification against any or all environmental damage(s) caused during petroleum operations. ^{vii}	2

Recommendation	Relevant actions and policies addressing recommendation	Score
A petroleum specific unit established within the DOE (with the required expertise and resources to monitor and respond) charged with the mandate to ensure compliance with the requirements of environmental standards and relevant laws, and with dedicated funds (paid by industry) to support the unit and all information pertaining to this be available to the public.	Such unit is currently not in place. ^{viii}	1
Belize become a signatory to the IMO (UN) Convention on Oil Spill Pollution, Preparedness, Response and Cooperation.	Belize is yet to sign on to the IMO Convention.	1
Average score		2



MANGROVES

SAFEGUARDING THE ECOLOGY AND COASTAL DEFENCE OF MANGROVES

MANGROVES

Safeguarding the ecology and coastal defence of mangroves

Recommendation	Relevant actions and policies addressing recommendation	Score
National Mangrove Regulations is revised consultatively and legally implemented, including permitting procedures, specific impact assessments, and stronger fees for infractions.	A revised draft of the Mangrove Regulations was done in 2009 but it was never signed by the Minister; there are current actions being taken to finalize this under the Marine Conservation and Climate Adaptation Project. ^{ix}	2
Specific policy strategies for mangrove environs are identified and implemented such as:		
No-go areas for clearance or land development.	Some no-go areas mentioned in draft revised Mangrove Regulations but have not yet been approved and implemented. ^x	2
80% of existing mangrove habitats within managed access zones, as confirmed by the 2010 assessment, is retained and legally adopted maintaining a rate of loss no greater than 1% per annum.	No target mangrove cover established formally. Current covered is estimated to be 90%. ^{xi}	2
Appropriate zoning for dredging, filling, sedimentation and construction activities.	Fisheries regulations provide some sensitive areas as off limits but a more comprehensive zoning plan required especially in sensitive areas that require further technical study. ^{xii}	1
Protection against effluent discharge.	There is increasing macroalgal growth. Effluent regulations exist, but inadequate infrastructure and urban planning and a lack of enforcement remains a major challenge. ^{xiii}	1
Appropriate tax incentive schemes for programs or activities that significantly restore, enhance or create mangrove habitats are under implementation.	There are currently no tax incentive schemes developed and including in fiscal regulations. ^{xiv}	1
Average score		2



**COASTAL DEVELOPMENT
AND TOURISM
FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

COASTAL DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Fostering sustainable development practices

Recommendation	Relevant actions and policies addressing recommendation	Score
Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan adopted into law.	Cabinet adopted the ICZM Plan in February 2015. ^{xv}	2.5
Sufficient resources allocated for effective socialization, implementation, and monitoring of the Belize ICZM Plan.	ICZM Plan adopted but currently insufficient allocated in the government budgets for its effective implementation. ^{xvi}	2
The Coastal Zone Management Act is revised to provide the necessary legal backing for the ICZM Plan. There must be public participation and a new round of consultations	There is a Coastal Zone Management Act and existing efforts are underway to revise it under the MCCAP Project. ^{xvii}	2
By the end 2017, a comprehensive national Sustainable Tourism Bill to legislatively guide sustainable development practices for the Tourism Industry in Belize is developed and enacted.	A Sustainable Tourism Master Plan has been developed however it is not being followed fully. Existing regulations and policies on Tourism are out of date as they have not kept pace with current realities such as the boom in cruise tourism. ^{xviii}	2
An updated land tenure analysis within the WHS property and all other MPAs exists.	Plans are in motion by the Ministry of Natural Resources to carry out a land tenure analysis for the WHS property. ^{xix}	1
Average score		2

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

CREATING, STRENGTHENING, HARMONIZING,
AND ENFORCING ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS



ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

Creating, strengthening, harmonizing, and enforcing environmental laws

Recommendation	Relevant actions and policies addressing recommendation	Score
Environmental Protection Act (EPA) and Regulations are reviewed and harmonized with other environmental regulations (e.g. MPA, Fisheries Act, Forest, Mangrove, Wildlife Protection Act, Mining, etc.) with public/stakeholder consultation.	There is an Environmental Protection Act in place but harmonization of regulations have not yet taken place. ^{xx}	1
Public participation is increased by strengthening stakeholder consultation mechanisms.	The current Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulation requires a public consultation to be held but the process is not conducive to real public participation, because there is not adequate information prior to consultation, not enough prior notice. No feedback as to whether comments were shared with the National Environmental Appraisal Committee (NEAC) or taken into consideration. Meetings have been held, since the 2007 amendment to EIA Regulations were passed, but no changes made. ^{xxi}	1
A zoning plan for dredging within the coastal zone is developed and implemented.	There is a Mines and Minerals Act (2000) and there are dredging and mining guidelines in place. However, there is no zoning contemplated in the guidelines. ^{xxii}	2
The technical capacity of NEAC is strengthened and NEAC membership and decisions be available to stakeholders.	The current Key Biodiversity Assessment (KBA) project has the strengthening of NEAC as one of its objectives through the revision of the EIA regulations. ^{xxiii}	2
Environmental Impact Assessments (including of exploration activities, trans-shipment) and safety guidance are being met by companies prior to receiving licenses and during operations.	There is no such action in place at the moment. ^{xxiv}	1
Average score		1

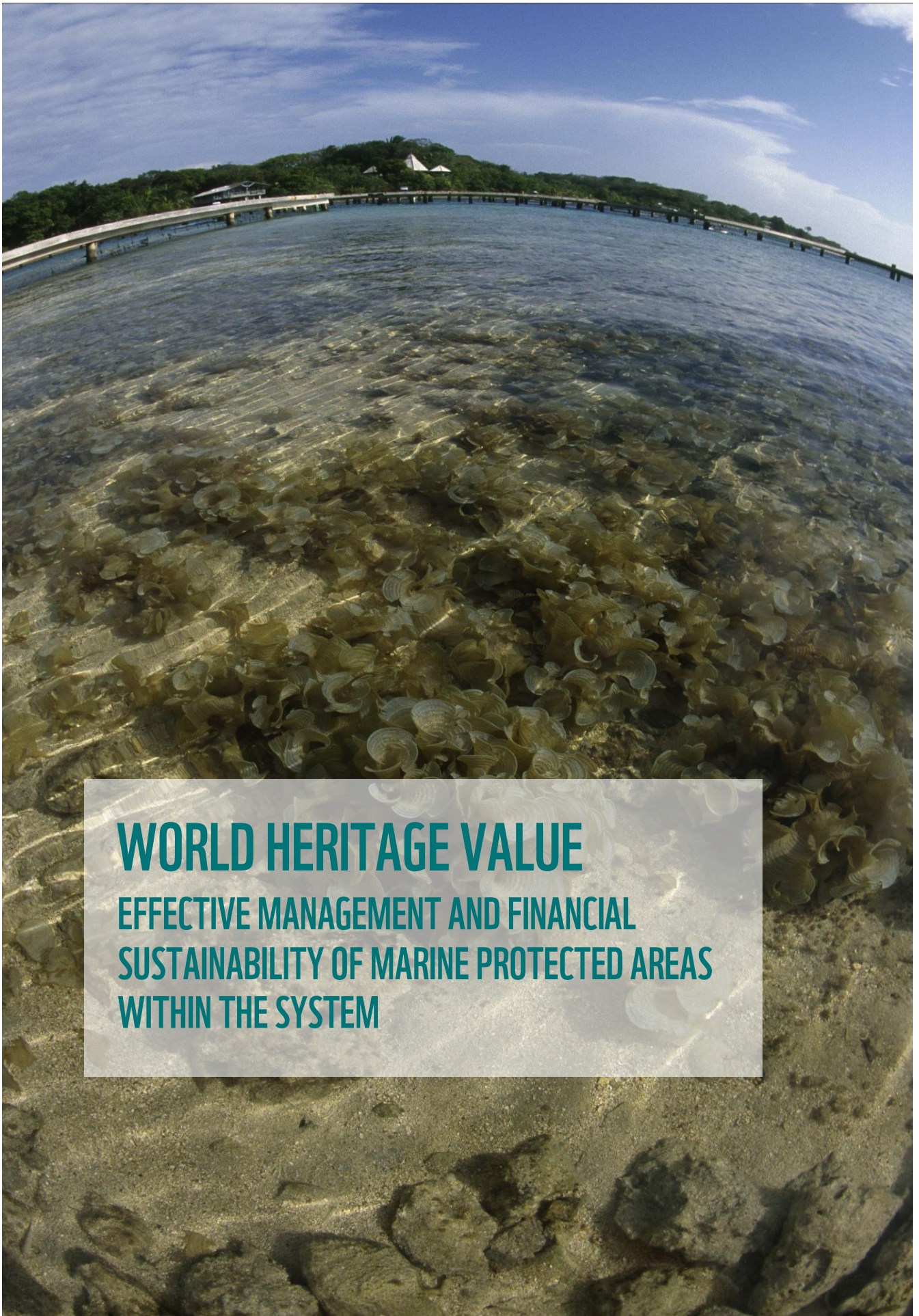


FISHERIES
ENHANCING GOVERNANCE OF FISHERY INDUSTRY

FISHERIES

Enhancing governance of fishery industry

Recommendation	Relevant actions and policies addressing recommendation	Score
Enactment and implementation of the new Fisheries Bill.	Fisheries/Aquatic Resources Bill has been drafted but has not yet been submitted to neither the Cabinet nor the Legislature. There is a long delay as the project to draft this new bill was started in 2010. ^{xxv}	2
Use of destructive fishing gear reviewed with steps taken to prevent impacts from these on fisheries resources.	No measures are currently in place to address this. ^{xxvi}	1
Average score		2



WORLD HERITAGE VALUE
EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL
SUSTAINABILITY OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS
WITHIN THE SYSTEM

WORLD HERITAGE VALUE

Effective management and financial sustainability of Marine Protected Areas within the System

Recommendation	Relevant actions and policies addressing recommendation	Score
Existence of financial sustainability for WHS or the building of financial sustainability mechanism for effective long-term management from internal and external threats.	A protected areas financial sustainability strategy has been developed but not being fully implemented. PACT provides funding for protected areas. Managers and co-managers are required to identify and meet funding gaps. ^{xxvii}	2
A WHS protection bill is enacted to ensure strict development guidelines and development incentives are provided for.	A WHS protection bill is recommended in the ICZMP. The bill is only a concept at this stage. ^{xxviii}	1
WHS Management Plans are in place to ensure preservation of Outstanding Natural Value for all sites.	Not all of the management plans are up to date. ^{xxix}	3
Average score		2

CREDITS

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NOTES

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