



Darwin Initiative Capability & Capacity: Final Report

To be completed with reference to the “Project Reporting Information Note”:
(<https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/information-notes-learning-notes-briefing-papers-and-reviews/>).

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 20 pages** in length, excluding annexes.

Submission Deadline: no later than 3 months after agreed end date.

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line.

Darwin Initiative Project Information

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| Project reference | DARCC008 |
| Project title | Strengthening civil society engagement in conservation and fisheries governance, Belize |
| Country(ies) | Belize |
| Lead Partner | Blue Ventures Conservation |
| Project partner(s) | Wabafu Fishermen's Association (WFA) and Chunox Fishermen's Association (CFA) |
| Darwin Initiative grant value | GBP £167,860 |
| Start/end dates of project | 1st April 2022 - 31st May 2023 |
| Project Leader's name | Ruth Sharman |
| Project website/blog/social media | https://blueventures.org/ |
| Report author(s) and date | Ronalee McKenzie and Celso Sho, 31st July 2023 |

1 Project Summary

Belize’s marine environment encompasses globally important marine ecosystems, which are critically important not only for the country's economy but also for the 3,000+ small-scale fishers (SSF) that rely on their marine resources to secure food and income. Coastal communities in Belize stand on the front lines of changes to our environment, and face increasing threats from the adverse effects of climate breakdown, habitat degradation, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the lack of capacity to actively participate in governance and fisheries management.

Despite having a globally progressive legal framework for marine management, Belize’s fisheries sector continues to face a number of challenges, including decreasing fish size, the loss of multi-species fish spawning aggregation sites, and invasive species such as the lionfish which pose a direct and adverse threat to coral reef fish community health. Although the Belize Fisheries Department (BFD) has implemented a number of changes to address these challenges, such as a National Lionfish Management Strategy, several challenges remain, including the limited inclusion and participation of fisher communities in decision making.

Belize's fisheries and tourism sectors are the backbone of the country's economy, contributing to over 30% of the GDP. Currently, over half of Belize's population lives in poverty, and income inequality is increasing countrywide. SSF and residents of coastal communities are among the most vulnerable, yet, they have often been overlooked. To address this, this project aimed to deliver capacity-building support in order to build equitable and inclusive management of Belize's marine resources, alongside strengthening the capacity of local stakeholders for lionfish control and monitoring in marine protected area (MPA) fish replenishment zones in line with Belize's National Lionfish Management Strategy

In February 2020, after a decade of negotiations, Belize passed a new Fisheries Act, mandating participatory fisheries management through a Fisheries Advisory Council. As part of the Act's commitment to promoting more inclusive management, five of the council's 12-person membership must represent a fisher association, fishing cooperative or local marine conservation body.

Despite sound frameworks for participatory management, meaningful community engagement has proved challenging. This has been compounded by the economic disruption from the pandemic. Covid-19 restrictions and limited technological capacity has meant that the Fisheries Department and communities alike have struggled to communicate directly to address pressing issues such as economic hardship, and other challenges in the fisheries sector. Further, technological and communication capacity limitations among fisher communities make the bureaucratic regulatory environment difficult to engage with.

Understanding the urgent need to bridge existing communication gaps between stakeholders in Belize's fisheries and marine conservation sectors, and promote a holistic approach to fisheries management, this project was developed to provide institutional strengthening and increase the capacity of fisher-led associations so that they are better equipped to advocate for their rights and to effectively participate in the decision making, with specific objectives to provide technical and financial support to create a space for knowledge exchange, networking and capacity building of fisher-led associations.

The primary beneficiaries of this project are SSF and residents of coastal communities. Blue Ventures (BV) provided technical support to two fishing associations in Belize: Chunox Fishermen's Association (CFA) which is located in Chunox Village - a remote fishing community in northern Belize; and Wabafu Fishermen's Association (WFA) which is located in Dangriga Town, a small vibrant and diverse fishing community in southern Belize. Representatives of both associations also convened in Belize city to participate in technical meetings, and in South Water Caye Marine Reserve WFA members participated in the implementation of Belize's National Lionfish Management Strategy.



Figure 1: Map of Project sites (Belize City and South Water Caye Marine Reserve)



Figure 2: Map of Project sites (Dangriga Town and Chunox Village)

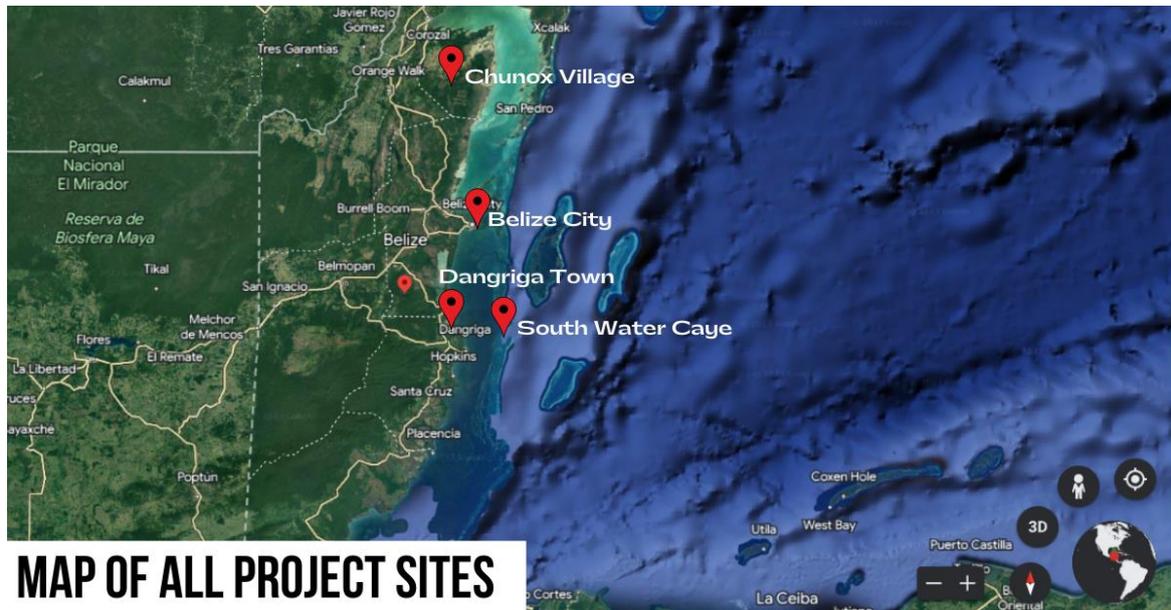


Figure 3: Map of all Project Sites

2 Project stakeholders/partners

In May and June of 2021, BV interviewed stakeholder agencies and actors in the fisheries sector to better understand their perspectives on the status and relevance of fisher associations across Belize. An independent consultant was hired to assess the status and functionality of the 22 fishing associations registered in Belize to determine the viability of providing technical support and provide recommendations of potential associations that would benefit from a partnership with BV.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) were assessed on their values, goals and community perceptions. Formalised partnerships were then formed with two associations: WFA and CFA. At the time of the assessment, WFA had recently voted in new leadership (2021) in an effort to re-establish themselves as an active association. Located in Dangriga Town, Wabafu's leadership now features a female leader and a diverse membership who are predominantly Garinagu.

BV provided technical support based on the unique needs and priorities of each association. The project's success relied on our participatory approach to inclusive governance and fisheries management and the endorsement of the Belizean Government. The BFD is the governing body that is responsible for marine conservation and the sustainable use of Belize's fishery resources, licensing of SSF, and fisheries research, export and law enforcement. Their support and involvement as a key project stakeholder were necessary to successfully execute all project activities in a collaborative and inclusive manner.

This project featured diverse stakeholders that all played a critical role in ensuring a successful project outcome. Representatives of both fisher associations shared their experiences of collaborating with BV as well as their experiences of participating in this capacity and capability project. The contributions made from both WFA and CFA were used to develop this final project report.

Fishing associations are often formed by community members who have a common interest in advocating for their rights, and in safeguarding the marine resources that sustain their livelihoods. Executive positions are often voluntary, and in most cases these associations are formed with little to no capital or long-term support. Resource limitations have made it increasingly difficult for associations to realise change in their respective communities. To address these challenges, we ensured that our capacity-building intervention would be sustainable, equitable and mutually beneficial to our partners.

A three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was used to formalise the partnership with both fishing associations. BV has a vested interest in maintaining a long-term relationship with both partners that goes beyond the project end date. Capacity building of CSOs requires long term effort, commitment and financial support to ensure they are well positioned to sustainably and effectively operate. This project was developed to build the foundation for a long-term capacity building program with the potential to support fisher-led organisations and other marine resource users across Belize.

3 Project Achievements

This project directly supported WFA and CFA in key areas in order to strengthen their engagement in marine conservation: communications, governance, institutional management, and practical training in fisheries management. Both associations have made advancements after participating in project activities that had been developed under the following goals:

Goal 1: Enhance engagement between government and civil society through increased representation of fishers in existing participatory frameworks for natural resource governance and management in Belize, including the Caribbean Spiny Lobster Fishery Improvement Project, Managed Access Committees and Fisheries Advisory Council.

Goal 2: Build the capacity of fisher-led civil society organisations in Belize to drive fisheries improvements and promote transparency.

3.1 Outputs

Output 1: Fisher association participation in governance bodies and their perception of this engagement improves, measured via surveys and meeting records.

For fisher associations to formally participate in meetings, they must meet basic administrative and internal governance requirements, which in turn requires management capacity. For the first six months of the project, BV frequently met with the executive committees of both partner associations in an effort to formalise their organisational structure, establish their legal status, and standardise the means of how they would operate. By successfully completing project activities 1:1:1, 1:1:2, 1:2.1 1:2:2 and 1:1:4, both associations have been able to demonstrate increased capacity in the internal governance of their respective associations and have been able to update their legal status. As a result, they have been invited to participate in several technical meetings and workshops led by either the BFD, or other organisations in Belize's marine conservation and fisheries sector. WFA participated in a total of four technical meetings

led by the BFD which focused on updates to Belize's fisheries regulations, and the revision of fisheries data. Meanwhile, CFA participated in a total of three technical meetings. CFA's most notable achievement would be their participation in Belize's Fisheries Advisory Council meeting.

Both associations must be legally registered at the Belize Companies and Corporate Affairs Registry and maintain an active status to effectively participate in the governance and management of Belize fisheries. Both WFA and CFA were required to submit organisational documents and demonstrate the capacity to functionally operate to receive a Certificate of Good Standing issued by the Belize Companies and Corporate Affairs Registry. The "Good standing" document certifies that the association has met the requirements to be legally registered and can legally operate as a non-governmental organisation in Belize. The acquisition of this document for both partners serves as a means of verification for this output.

Output 2: Two CSOs equipped with the tools to effectively engage in Belize's marine conservation and fisheries management sectors.

After establishing their standard operating procedures, we provided technical support to both partners for the development of a strategic plan. Building capacities in this area allowed both associations to formally define their respective values, goals and strategic objectives.

We began the strategic planning process with WFA by working with the association's wider membership using a participatory approach to define their organisation's values, mission, vision and organisational goals. After completing the initial steps in the strategic planning process, it became clear that a three-year plan would be more practical and realistic for both associations, rather than the five-year roadmap that was originally anticipated. Following a series of four sessions, WFA now has a comprehensive three-year strategic plan that outlines SMART goals. To date WFA has successfully achieved several goals outlined in the plan as a result of having increased administrative capacity. An office space has been secured in the centre of Dangriga town and their general membership has increased by 12%, totalling 78 registered members. As a consequence of its increased capacity, the association has developed a strong presence in the Dangriga community by hosting events to engage members and town residents. Earlier this year, WFA was able to achieve one of the goals outlined in its new strategic plan by hosting its Second Annual Fisherfolk Festival - which is a public outreach event that celebrates the livelihoods of SSF and raises awareness of the vital role that SSF plays.

Similarly, CFA participated in the strategic planning process which led to the development of a three-year strategic plan. Their plan outlines strategic goals that have been designed to address existing communication gaps and create opportunities for their members and community. In September 2022, CFA held their Annual General Meeting which led to the election of an executive committee. Since then, the new Chairperson has been able to successfully grow the association's membership, and has collaborated with the local government to facilitate several outreach events for the benefit of Chunox village.

Following the strategic planning process, both partner associations participated in a series of capacity building workshops that helped to improve their understanding of governance and fisheries management. The BFD played an integral role in ensuring the success of workshops that would be key to bridging existing communication gaps. With support from BFD, we were successful in facilitating a data literacy workshop for both associations, creating an opportunity for SSF to understand the importance of data collection in fisheries management, and how such data is used to inform policy.

All project activities featured a multi-stakeholder and collaborative approach with the intention of closing existing communication gaps between SSF and other actors in Belize's SSF and marine conservation sectors. Both WFA and CFA have been able to demonstrate measurable improvement in their administrative capacity as well as their capacity to participate in fisheries management. This includes having an intricate understanding of organisational priorities, having an improvement plan and being actively engaged in marine management, monitoring and evaluation. The strategic plan and the results of the pre- and post- capacity assessment were used as means to verify the improvement and increased capacity of both partners.

Output 3: Two CSOs have improved operational functionality in areas of administration and financial management.

WFA participated in a financial literacy workshop that was designed to develop their capacity in self-financing and transparent financial management. The session featured realistic scenarios that helped to inform the association's senior leadership on the best practices for financial management and transparency. After conducting a survey, their knowledge and perception of financial reporting were used as indicators for this output, with membership work plans, meeting minutes and published reports produced as means of verification.

All three of the project outputs were successfully achieved, despite some delays, largely due to fishers' unavailability as a result of the nature of their livelihoods being heavily dependent on weather patterns, and demanding schedules at sea. The project activities required participation and high engagement from as many members as possible. However, coordinating project activities around fisher schedules was at times challenging. As a result, some project activities were postponed and adjustments were made to schedule activities on Saturdays and Sundays to secure high engagement and high participation.

3.2 Outcome

We were able to successfully achieve the desired project outcome of empowering two fisher-led partner CSOs so that they are better equipped actors to effectively participate in fisheries and conservation management in Belize.

The success of the project's outcome has been determined by the noticeable improvements and the measurable progress made by both WFA and CFA. This project awarded the executive committees of both associations the opportunity to represent their respective organisations at a high level by tabling the concerns of their members and channelling pressing issues to the BFD. As the project progressed, the leadership

committees of both associations have improved their communication skills and have remained committed to the common goal of participating in sustainable fisheries management.

Through technical support to both partners, BV has reached an additional 10,000 coastal community residents and raised the collective voice of more than 1,000 fishers and their family members - empowering them to defend and promote their rights and livelihoods, build their networks to coordinate and reinforce each other's actions, and mobilise support from civil society. The success of this project demonstrates the power of an inclusive and participatory approach to fisheries management, achieved when fisher-led associations are equipped with the appropriate tools, and capacity to inform policy and become the leaders in protecting their own coastal resources.

3.3 Monitoring of assumptions

We closely monitored the following assumptions by engaging partners and key stakeholders in the planning and coordinating of project activities. This inclusive approach awarded WFA and CFA the opportunity to provide direct feedback which helped us to monitor their interest in the project, and adjust our approach where necessary.

Assumption 1: Interest of CSO members to participate in policy discussions and marine management is maintained.

Comments: The core objective of this project was to build the capacity of fisher-led CSOs so that they are able to advocate for their rights and participate in fisheries management. To realise a favourable project outcome, it was assumed that both WFA and CFA maintained a vested interest in participating in all project activities. This assumption was proved correct, as demonstrated through engagement survey results and participation of the association members in activities throughout the duration of the project.

Assumption 2: There is interest from MPA Managers in engaging and working with CSO members, and it is maintained.

Comments: Protected area and fisheries resource managers within the BFD showed support for the participation of small-scale fisher-led associations in fisheries management during the project. Responsible for the governance and enforcement of all fishery laws and regulations, these are one of the most influential stakeholders in the sector. Endorsement from the department was necessary for the successful completion of this project, and the engagement of these stakeholders in technical meetings and workshops held during the project proved this assumption to be correct.

As the project progressed, additional assumptions were identified and were subsequently monitored. These included:

- Actors in Belize's marine conservation and fisheries sectors would be willing to collaborate with small scale fisher-led organisations.

Comments: In an effort to bridge existing communication gaps and to promote a collaborative and participatory approach to fisheries management it was assumed that actors in Belize's fisheries and marine conservation sector would be willing to

work with and support both associations in their efforts to engage in policy and governance.

- Partner associations will maintain a vested interest in maintaining a partnership with Blue Ventures beyond the scope of the project end date.

Comments: A three-year partnership agreement was signed with both associations since it was assumed that both associations would maintain a vested interest in the continuity of capacity building work that goes well beyond the end date of the project.

- Partner associations will honour partnership agreements outlined in signed MoU.

Comments: Both WFA and CFA have been able to honour their commitments outlined in the signed three-year MoU. Both associations agreed to receive technical support, and agreed to participate in capacity-building activities that serve to improve their internal governance and administrative capacity.

- Potential for low engagement and participation in project activities as a result of fishers having a productive fishing season.

Comments: Understanding that SSF have demanding and gruelling work schedules, we assumed it would be difficult to garner high attendance and engagement for project activities on weekdays.

4 Contribution to Darwin Initiative Programme Objectives

4.1 Project support to the Conventions or Treaties (e.g. CBD, Nagoya Protocol, ITPGRFA, CITES, Ramsar, CMS, UNFCCC)

The project's outcomes have contributed directly to Belize meeting its commitments to the Convention on Biological Diversity (ratified by Belize in 1993), in particular **Articles 8 In-situ Conservation, Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity And Impact Assessment and Minimising Adverse Impacts.**

By reinforcing the effective management of marine resources through community management, the project protects critical ecosystems and ensures local, low-income communities benefit sustainably from biodiversity; helping Belize achieve CBD Aichi Biodiversity **Targets 6** (sustainable fishing), **11** (effective conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services) and **14** (safeguarding health, livelihoods and wellbeing).

Project activities have made substantial contributions towards Belize's commitment to SDG 14 – conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

As Belizean coastal communities are largely reliant on small-scale fisheries for their livelihoods, this work addresses SDG 1 (end poverty) by ensuring fair access and good management of marine resources.

Finally, the project addresses SDG 5 (gender equality) through our work with partner WFA, who currently have three women (75%) on its four-member executive committee.

Through supporting them to build their capacity, they hope to recruit more women to increase female participation in decision making.

4.2 Project support to biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction

The project increased representation of fishers in existing participatory frameworks for natural resource governance and management in Belize through working in close collaboration with the BFD, MPA co-managers and other actors in Belize's marine conservation sector. The project's scope was designed to respond directly to Belize's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan targets submitted to the CBD in 2016. The approach and objectives contribute to the key targets: reduce the causes of biodiversity loss through integration into productive sectors; reduce direct pressures and encourage sustainable use; conserve ecosystems and species; and reinforce implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building.

Funding from this project also supported the implementation of Belize's National Lionfish Control Management Strategy which features a participatory approach to addressing the lionfish invasion that adversely affects Belize's reef health. Our approach built the capacity of marine resource users and stakeholders who co-manage MPAs across Belize. Under this project we were able to support the Control Strategy through procurement of scuba diving equipment, stipends for members of the lionfish brigade, boat fuel and other direct costs and technical support for field implementation. As a result, we were able to successfully implement the Control Strategy in Managed Access Area 3 (South Water Caye Marine Reserve) in collaboration with the BFD and WFA.

Against this backdrop, the project has affected change through training, financial support and mentoring to strengthen the capacity of two fisher-led CSOs to attend and actively engage in fisheries governance and management meetings with the stakeholders mentioned above. Through improved communications and organisation, these two associations have given over 1,000 fishers and their family members a collective voice and influence to defend and promote their rights and livelihoods, build their networks to coordinate and reinforce each other's actions, and mobilise support from civil society (Standard Indicators DIB05 & DI-B07 Annex 3).

In the long term, the increased capacity of these two CSOs enables them to practise good governance and management, which will open doors for them to engage with regional networks and national fora, improving their ability to realise their goals – whether through participating in policy reform, building equitable supply chains, or taking collective action at the macro-level of fish stocks or seascapes. Empowering fisher associations to actively engage in policy development and processes will ensure those policies respond to the needs of the fishers and MPAs and therefore increase the likelihood that the policies will be respected and adhered to in the future. This will

contribute to ensuring the sustainability of critical fisheries in Belize and subsequently the livelihoods and food security of approximately 15,000 Belizean SSF and their family members. Supporting fishers through local institutions that fully represent them is an efficient way to deliver services and overcome the challenges of traditional 'top down' management or conservation approaches: this project's strategy can be used to scale community management by multiplying impact through networks of community institutions.

4.3 Gender equality and social inclusion

BV works diligently to promote gender inclusion and gender equality. In Belize, women are traditionally absent from community-based resource management discussions where collective decision-making is often dominated by men. However, women are often in charge of households and thus do have a say in the day to day working of small-scale fisheries in their communities.

The project activities were designed to reinforce and strengthen gender integration in locally led fisheries management by promoting the recruitment of women, many of whom are already active small-scale fishers and some of whom are members of a fisher association, and giving women a greater voice to participate in their fisher association's objectives and goals.

All locally led activities were tailored to account for different gender perceptions, using gender-separated groups where necessary. Training activities and opportunities were accessible equally to men and women to further gender integration and equity, and there was equal participation from both men and women (Standard Indicator DI-A01, Annex 3). There was a total of six female staff working closely with the project partners (on field implementation, and providing remote support), and the senior leadership of one partner (WFA) consists of at least 50% women.

4.4 Transfer of knowledge

This project is part of a long-term approach to build local support, capacity, and leadership for equitable and transparent marine management across Belize. Our capacity-building program draws on BV's experience of supporting CSOs in the Coral Triangle and the Western Indian Ocean to support fishers' associations in Belize. The outcome of this long-term endeavour will inevitably be used to develop tools and techniques that capture best practices for promoting inclusive management at the community level.

Since 2021, we have been collecting data on fishing communities to inform management plans and policies. Data collection techniques will eventually be transferred and placed into the hands of our partners. This will enable monitoring to continue beyond the project's lifetime, and ensure decision making is grounded in evidence. The impact of

our work is also available to the general public via infographics and reports that can be accessed on our social media channels and our website.

4.5 Capacity building

This capacity and capability project serves as the first step in developing the capacity of our CSO partners across several thematic areas. The long-term goal for our capacity building program is to ensure that our partners are able to sustain the capacity required to operate independently of BV's intervention. All activities under this project were designed to build the confidence of fisher-led organisations so that they are better positioned to voice the concerns and needs of their members, drive fisheries improvements and promote transparency in Belize's small-scale fisheries sector (Standard Indicators DIA03 & DIB02, Annex 3).

Subsequently, both partners have been invited to participate in wider national committees: after demonstrating increased administrative capacity both partners now sit on technical committees and working groups that work to govern Belize's marine ecosystems and marine resources. CFA is now part of the management committee for Lighthouse Atoll which is a productive managed access area that is co-managed by the Belize Audubon Society. Similarly, WFA has been invited to join the Belize Mangrove Alliance, which serves to preserve Belize's vulnerable mangrove ecosystem network. Additionally, the leadership committees of both associations are actively working to channel information to their members by meeting with the BFD, and other government agencies to ensure that their members remain well informed.

5 Monitoring and evaluation

In February 2023, a request was confirmed for proposed changes to the project logframe. These included implementing new activities under Output 3, to improve the operational functionality of the partner CSOs, including providing training in financial and budget management, membership and group management, in order to build their capability as formal Fishers Associations, with empowered members who have the technical skills to form and run effective fishers groups. The change request also addressed new activities in partnership with the CSO within the community under Output 2 to increase engagement of the partner CSOs with relevant stakeholders, raise awareness of the fishers associations and begin development of a fisheries-focussed CSO network across Belize.

The project's integrated M&E system, carried out by BV's M&E Coordinator, enabled the project team to learn from, adapt and improve project performance, while ensuring accountability to communities, partners and Darwin. We were able to identify progress against targets, including strengthening two CSOs to promote policy dialogue, monitoring CSO engagement in policy discussions and the launch of an area-based lionfish control plan in an MPA covering 477 km² (Managed Access Area 3 in South Water Caye Marine Reserve).

6 Actions taken in response to Annual Report review

N/A

7 Lessons learnt

Prior to the launch of this project, BV's scope of work in Belize had primarily been centred around marine ecosystem restoration. Establishing a formal partnership with WFA in 2021 marked the pivot of the Belize Program. This project served as the foundation for Belize's long-term capacity building program. Although it was a relatively smooth transition there were some communication and coordination challenges that our team had to address to ensure the success of this project.

1. After formalising partnerships with both associations, we quickly learned the importance of having a formal mode of communication between all the project stakeholders. We developed a stakeholder communication plan to ensure a clear flow of communication was maintained. This plan also helped us to assign one point of contact to each community or partner association to avoid miscommunication and/or confusion in coordinating project activities.
2. Monitoring and evaluation of project expenditure - fluctuations in expenditure occurred against the budget, primarily due to unexpected changes in staff which led to the need to adapt roles and responsibilities within the team. We have learnt the need for enhanced capacity for monitoring project expenditure and reducing underspend. However, the project still managed to deliver its objectives, demonstrating the efficiency and dedication of the remaining project staff who went above and beyond to ensure the project was delivered.
3. To effectively manage stakeholder expectations, we learnt to clearly define the boundaries of technical support that would be provided under the partnership agreement. This proved important to avoid the creation of unrealistic expectations in vulnerable communities that are interested in receiving long term support.
4. During the implementation of this project, we learned how to adopt and tailor our approach to meet the unique needs of each community group. Although coastal communities may share common challenges, their needs and expectations are drastically different. Fishing associations across Belize are culturally diverse, especially in some communities where SSF use traditional fishing methods to secure their catch. Understanding the differences in the nature, customs, and cultural identity of each community helped us to ensure that our support met their specific needs.
5. The success of this project required the participation and high engagement of members from WFA and CFA. Attending workshops and participating in meetings requires a significant amount of time, especially if travel is required. In the early stages of this project we faced several delays in the project's schedule because of the unavailability of fishers. In some cases, fishers would be out at sea for 10 days at a time. To accommodate their busy schedules our team held sessions on weekends and learned to flex the meeting schedules to ensure high engagement of members.

6. The Belize Fisheries Act outlines the roles and responsibilities of fishing associations. The Act also outlines the ways in which fishing associations can participate in local governance and fisheries management. With support from the BFD we learned how to compartmentalise technical language and communicate it in a manner that would enable SSF to understand and internalise governance policies and technical frameworks.
7. We learnt that it takes time to build capacity with associations at this level, and particularly with regards to financial management capacity there is more work to be done. Neither association has access to direct funding, and as such they have not yet been able to publish financial reports. However, financial management training was delivered successfully and is a first step towards financial sustainability and independence. Given that both associations were dormant prior to the start of this project, updates only became apparent after both associations began to participate in project activities. In addition to financial training, the development of strategic plans during this project now enable WFA and CFA to report on their achievements, and both are preparing to publish an annual report at their 2024 Annual General Meeting, detailing progress made as a result of this project and existing partnership with Blue Ventures.
8. During the implementation of this project, our team learned how to reinforce the boundaries of our intervention through effective communication. This was done to ensure that both partners invested the required effort to grow their respective associations and remain committed to becoming fully independent.

8 Risk Management

All identified risks were closely monitored and updated in the project's risk register. In the initial stages of this project, our team developed a risk management plan to ensure that there would be a response or a mitigation plan for each risk. Minimal and low impact risks such as the unavailability of fishers caused slight delays in the project's schedule, however, our team was able to adapt and mitigate this issue to successfully complete all project activities. There were no major unforeseen threats that became apparent following the launch of this project and all risks had been ranked and categorised in the project's risk register.

9 Sustainability and legacy

Our approach to institutional strengthening focuses on the functional areas of governance, administration, management and advocacy. We have strategically designed project activities around the unique needs of our partners to ensure that the core competencies of their respective associations can be maintained and sustained beyond the end of this project. Additionally, we have supported the development of frameworks and action plans that are subject to continuous improvement as the priorities of each association may change over time.

Supporting fishers through local institutions that fully represent them empowers them to actively engage in policy development, and is an efficient way to multiply impact through

networks of community institutions. This will contribute to ensuring the sustainability of critical fisheries in Belize and subsequently the livelihoods and food security of approximately 15,000 Belizean SSF and their family members. Specifically, building the capacity of these fishing communities enables them to engage in future opportunities such as the new Conservation Fund for Belize which is expected to generate approximately US\$4 million per year in support of marine protection. Opportunities such as these can in turn ensure that the voices of fishing communities are heard and that they are part of the decision-making process.

10 Darwin Initiative identity

During the implementation of this project, we have openly and transparently acknowledged the Darwin Initiative. We have included the Darwin logo in awareness-raising and branding materials. We also acknowledged the Darwin Initiative funding and UK Government’s support in a locally produced short [video](#) that highlights the success of our support. The project partners (WFA and CFA) have been made aware of the financial support and contributions made by the Darwin Initiative that have made this project a reality.

11 Safeguarding

BV prioritises the safety and wellbeing of the communities and the people that we serve. We have worked to develop a robust Health & Safety and Safeguarding (HSS) policy that serves to safeguard our partners and vulnerable community groups. After formalising partnerships with both associations, we conducted a safeguarding training session to inform both partners about our safeguarding policy, shared our safeguarding documents and shared the process of how they could channel any safeguarding concerns. Across all country programs we have clear policies, procedures and governance in place that are continuously reviewed and updated to ensure that our presence and intervention does not compromise the wellbeing of intended project beneficiaries.

| | |
|--|--|
| Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months? | Yes |
| Have any concerns been investigated in the past 12 months | No |
| Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point? | Yes: Celso Sho, [REDACTED] |
| Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months? | Yes - annually, BV Belize has a HSS refresher training, which was conducted with staff on the 27th of May 2022. In addition, our Belize Safeguarding focal point has regular bi-weekly contact meetings with the BV global HSS manager. |
| What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding? | 100% of staff members have received formal safeguarding training as part of their induction process. |

Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses.

During the project, the safeguarding policy acknowledged and took into consideration the customs and culture of the communities, ensuring that the community knew the process of reporting for any concerns that may arise. During engagement with the community, some members were reluctant to fill a sign-in sheet, however regular visits from our field coordinator built the trust with community members and by sharing BV safeguarding protocols enabled the community members to understand and respect the purpose. Taking the time to discuss the purpose of sign-in sheets and photos for means of verification bridged the gap with communities, and the associations as they began to consider such protocols for their own organisational development, including for raising funds for their project activities.

In addition, communities voiced a resistance to provide data during the data literacy workshop, and we considered this as a safeguarding issue, placing further efforts to raise awareness of the need for transparency, the responsibility to request the purpose of data collected to provide consent, and to sharing the results of data collection with the community.

We have learnt that working with communities requires consistent technical support in various aspects and having a very transparent approach helps the community build its capacity in organisational management.

12 Finance and administration

12.1 Project expenditure

| Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report | 2022/23 Grant (£) | 2022/23 Total actual Darwin Initiative Costs (£) | Variance % | Comments (please explain significant variances) |
|---|-------------------|--|------------|---|
| Staff costs (see below) | | | | |
| Consultancy costs | | | | |
| Overhead Costs | | | | |
| Travel and subsistence | | | | |
| Operating Costs | | | | |

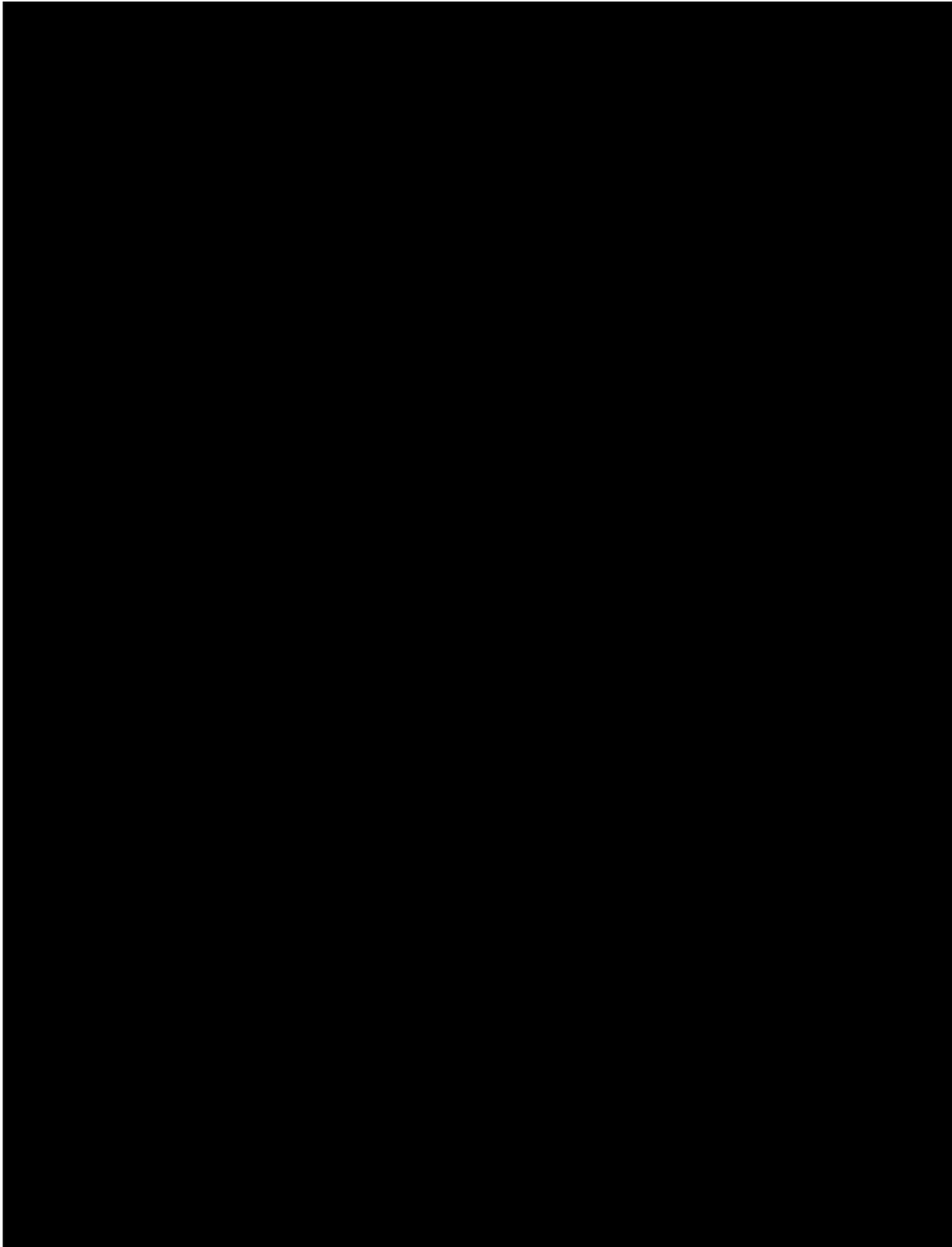
| | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|------|--|
| Capital items (see below) | | | | |
| Others (see below) | £ 3,381 | £ 3,682 | 109% | |
| TOTAL | £ 118,821 | £ 100,310 | | |

| Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report | 2023/24 Grant (£) | 2023/24 Total actual Darwin Initiative Costs (£) | Variance % | Comments (please explain significant variances) |
|---|-------------------|--|------------|---|
| Staff costs (see below) | | | | |
| Consultancy costs | | | | |
| Overhead Costs | | | | |
| Travel and subsistence | | | | |
| Operating Costs | | | | |
| Capital items (see below) | | | | |
| Others (see below) | | | | |
| TOTAL | £ 49,039 | £ 38,730 | | |

A budget amendment was submitted in year 1, predominantly to use underspend on COVID Tests & PPE (in the Other Costs category) as a result of changing government regulations on COVID-19

| Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report | Total Grant all years (£) | Total actual Darwin Initiative Costs all years (£) | Variance % | Comments (please explain significant variances) |
|---|---------------------------|--|------------|---|
| Staff costs (see below) | | | | |
| Consultancy costs | | | | |
| Overhead Costs | | | | |
| Travel and subsistence | | | | |
| Operating Costs | | | | |
| Capital items (see below) | | | | |
| Others (see below) | | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------|-----------|-----------|--|--|
| TOTAL | £ 167,860 | £ 139,040 | | |
|-------|-----------|-----------|--|--|



12.2 Additional funds or in-kind contributions secured



12.3 Value for Money

Community-based approaches are proven to be cost effective and support local ownership. Supporting fishers by working with local associations and partners that fully represent them is a cost-efficient way to deliver services and scale community management and the impact of that management through networks of community institutions. The BV Belize team working on this project consisted of a small and efficient group of six staff.

The project was underspent but still managed to deliver its objectives. While this was in part due to unexpected staff changeovers and so not something we would look to replicate, overall it shows efficiency and dedication in the remaining project staff who went above and beyond to ensure the project was delivered. It also enabled more costs to be spent on activity delivery on the ground including those that will continue to support communities and/or associations (for example equipment).

13 OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds Secretariat to publish the content of this section (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

Funding from this project enabled Blue Ventures to scale its support to vulnerable coastal communities that have been excluded from opportunities to participate in the governance and management of Belize's fisheries resources. Supporting the legal registration of our two partners, Wabafu Fishermen's Association and Chunox Fishermen's Association, and helping them to secure a "Good Standing" status at the Belize Companies and Corporate Affairs Registry can be recognized as an outstanding achievement for this project. This was a lengthy process that required legal support provided by an independent consultancy to ensure that both partners met the registration requirements to legally operate in Belize. Working to institutionally strengthen grassroots community groups has proven to be challenging and, in some cases, unsustainable, if the association or community group is not recognized as a legally registered entity.

The acquisition of a "Good Standing" certificate awards both associations the opportunity to legally operate as a Civil Society Organization (CSO) in Belize, empowering them to advocate for their rights, and create meaningful change for their communities through subgrants, fundraising, co-management of marine protected areas and project implementation.

Blue Ventures remains committed to nurturing the partnerships we have been able to establish with funding from this project. Our goal is to continue to build the capacity of small-scale fisheries to increase their representation, and to promote inclusive fisheries management and good governance of Belize's marine resources. Towards the end of this project, executive committee members of both associations shared their unique experiences of participating in project activities. We have combined their testimonies in a short video [here](#).

Annex 1 Project’s original (or most recently approved) indicators of success, including indicators, means of verification and assumptions.

Note: Insert your full indicators of success. If your indicators of success have changed since your application and was approved by a Change Request the newest approved version should be inserted here, otherwise insert the indicators of success.

| Project summary | SMART Indicators | Means of verification |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Outcome:</p> <p>Partner CSOs are empowered actors in fisheries and conservation management in Belize.</p> | <p>Members of two partner CSOs perceive the level of engagement of their CSO with marine resource governance bodies to have increased by May 2023, measured against a baseline established at the beginning of this project.</p> <p>Two partner CSOs increase their capacity to engage in policy discussions by May 2023, measured against a baseline established at the beginning of this project, supporting effective management of natural/marine resources, influencing decision-making, and promoting the needs of their members.</p> | <p>Engagement survey (pre- and post- action) with each CSO</p> <p>Capacity assessment (pre- and post- action) facilitated with each CSO</p> |
| <p>Output 1</p> <p>Fisher association participation in governance bodies and their perception of this engagement improves, measured via surveys and meeting records.</p> | <p>1.1 Two partner CSOs are in Good Standing at the Belize Company Registry, enabling their participation in formal meetings and governance bodies.</p> <p>1.2 Two partner CSOs share information on the updated status of marine resource management indicators and policy discussions and decisions that the CSO is involved in, amongst their leadership and with the broader community that they represent, throughout the duration of the project - something that is not currently occurring, as evidenced by scoping assessments conducted in 2021.</p> | <p>1.1 Certificate of Good Standing for each CSO</p> <p>1.2 Annual Report for each CSO</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | | |
| <p>Output 2</p> <p>Two CSOs equipped with the tools to effectively engage in Belize's marine conservation and fisheries management sectors.</p> | <p>2.1 Two partner CSOs have each developed an understanding of their members' and organisations' strengths, needs and priorities and have a plan to improve that has been shared with their broader membership, by May 2023.</p> <p>2.2 Two partner CSOs increase their capacity to engage in marine management, by May 2023, including monitoring and evaluation and supporting effective management of Belize's natural /marine resources - an identified capacity gap as evidenced by scoping assessments conducted in 2021.</p> <p>2.3 Two partner CSOs increase their engagement and share information amongst stakeholders and with the broader community through engagement in patrols with MPA managers (TASA and BFD), participating in marine-focussed events, including a SSF forum.</p> | <p>2.1 Five-year roadmaps to increased engagement and capacity for each CSO.</p> <p>2.2 Capacity assessment (pre- and post- action) for each CSO</p> <p>2.3 Activity logs and participant registers for each CSO</p> |
| <p>Output 3</p> <p>Two CSOs have improved operational functionality in areas of administration and financial management</p> | <p>3.1 By May 2023, two partner CSOs have each developed an understanding of management and organisational best practice, as evidenced by a published calendar of events and transparent financial reporting.</p> | <p>3.1 Membership work plans and meeting minutes from each CSO</p> <p>3.2 Published financial reports available for members and external audits from each CSO</p> <p>3.3 Activity and events calendar and participant registers for each CSO</p> |
| <p>Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)</p> <p>Activity 1.1.1 Meetings between BV and Wabafu (existing CSO partner)</p> <p>Activity 1.1.2 Meetings between BV and potential new CSO partners (CFA)</p> <p>Activity 1.1.3 CSO Annual General Meetings</p> | | |

Activity 1.1.4 Partner CSO board meetings

Activity 1.2.1 Partner CSO attend meetings

Activity 1.2.2 Community engagement feedback sessions

Activity 2.1.1 Wabafu capacity assessment (policy, participation)

Activity 2.1.2 Co-create priorities/plans with Wabafu

Activity 2.1.3 Safeguarding training with Wabafu

Activity 2.1.4 Training: SSF guidelines with two CSO partners

Activity 2.1.5 Capacity assessment (policy, participation) with new CSO partner

Activity 2.1.6 Co-create priorities/plans with new CSO partner

Activity 2.1.7 Safeguarding training new CSO partner

Activity 2.2.1 Training: using data and understanding indicators

Activity 2.2.2 Compliance review

Activity 2.2.3 Review national CPUE data

Activity 2.2.4 Training: scientific diving and invasive lionfish control

Activity 2.3.1 support boat to boat activity with TASA in Managed Access Area 6

Activity 2.3.2 Support boat to boat activity with the Belize Fisheries Department (BFD) in Managed Access Area 3

Activity 2.3.3 Support CSO participation in Reef Week

Activity 2.3.4 Support CSO participation in Small-Scale Fisheries Forum

Activity 2.3.5 Participate in Annual Lionfish Tournament

Activity 3.1.1 Activity and budget planning

Activity 3.1.2 Membership Management

Activity 3.1.3 Building organisational management principles

Activity 3.1.4 Activity reporting and governance

Activity 3.1.5 Building on the self-financing scheme

Activity 3.1.6 Supporting with analysing financial statements

Activity 3.1.7 Proposal and project development for small grants

Important Assumptions

1. Interest of CSO members to participate in policy discussions and marine management is maintained.
2. There is interest from MPA Managers in engaging and working with CSO members, and it is maintained.

Annex 2 Report of progress and achievements against final project indicators of success for the life of the project

| Project summary | SMART Indicators | Progress and Achievements |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Outcome</p> <p>Partner CSOs are empowered actors in fisheries and conservation management in Belize.</p> | <p>Members of two partner CSOs perceive the level of engagement of their CSO with marine resource governance bodies to have increased by May 2023, measured against a baseline established at the beginning of this project.</p> <p>Two partner CSOs increase their capacity to engage in policy discussions by May 2023, measured against a baseline established at the beginning of this project, supporting effective management of natural/marine resources, influencing decision-making, and promoting the needs of their members.</p> | <p>After 12 months of participating in the capacity building initiative, we conducted a post engagement and capacity assessment to evaluate the progress that both associations made as a result of BV's support.</p> <p>The results from capacity and engagement surveys, and the feedback shared, indicate that WFA and CFA have been able to demonstrate improvements in their administrative capacity, including in financial management, and in their abilities to maintain a presence within their respective communities, however, both organisations have identified the need to make improvements in membership engagement and channelling information down to their members.</p> |
| <p>Output 1</p> | <p>Two partner CSOs are in Good Standing at the Belize Company Registry, enabling</p> | <p>Both WFA and CFA have been awarded a certificate of Good Standing from the Belize Companies and Corporate Affairs Registry</p> |

| Project summary | SMART Indicators | Progress and Achievements |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Fisher association participation in governance bodies and their perception of this engagement improves, measured via surveys and meeting records.</p> | <p>their participation in formal meetings and governance bodies.</p> <p>Two partner CSOs share information on the updated status of marine resource management indicators and policy discussions and decisions that the CSO is involved in, amongst their leadership and with the broader community that they represent, throughout the duration of the project - something that is not currently occurring, as evidenced by scoping assessments conducted in 2021.</p> | <p>after having met the registration requirements.</p> <p>This status allows both associations to be recognized as legal entities having the right to operate as a non-governmental organisation in Belize. Having a Good Standing status also ensures that both associations are recognized as key stakeholders in Belize's small-scale fisheries sector - giving them a space to openly advocate for, and safeguard their rights.</p> <p>Both associations are actively working to bridge communication gaps with the Belize Fisheries Department. Significant progress has been achieved in improving the frequency and flow of communication. Information received is shared with the associations' wider membership so that fishers are able to receive undated and policy and any other pressing issues regarding Belize's small-scale fishery sector.</p> |
| <p>Activity 1.1.1 Meetings between BV and Wabafu (existing CSO partner)</p> | | <p>Since the launch of this project BV has facilitated a total of 30 meetings with WFA's executive committee, in addition to the capacity building workshops that were held to provide institutional strengthening.</p> |
| <p>Activity 1.1.2 Meetings between BV and potential new CSO partners</p> | | <p>Since the launch of this project BV has facilitated a total of 19 meetings with CFA's executive committee, in addition to the capacity building workshops that were held to provide institutional strengthening.</p> |

| Project summary | SMART Indicators | Progress and Achievements |
|---|------------------|---|
| Activity 1.1.3 CSO Annual General Meetings | | <p>In early May of 2022, WFA held its 2nd Annual General Meeting which saw the attendance of their wider membership, residents of the Dangriga Community and key stakeholders in Belize's fisheries and marine conservation sectors. This was a monumental accomplishment for the association as the event served to garner support from the community, and to demonstrate their commitment to building their capacity to be effective leaders.</p> <p>In the latter half of 2022, CFA held their 3rd Annual General Meeting, which saw the attendance of their wider membership and residents of the Chunox Community. This event featured an election where members voted for an entirely new executive committee. Since taking on this role, CFA's new Chairman has remained committed to transparent and inclusive leadership as we continue to provide technical and institutional support to their association.</p> |
| Activity 1.1.4 Partner CSO board meetings | | <p>WFA and CFA have both made efforts to comply with the minimum meeting requirements as outlined in their respective Articles of Association. Executive meetings have convened in person and via telephone to accommodate the work schedules of committee members. Adhering to mandates outlined in their Articles of Association and having regular executive committee meetings are indicators that both associations are practising good governance.</p> |
| Activity 1.2.1 Partner CSOs attend meetings | | <p>To demonstrate increased capacity and truly advocate for their rights, it is critically important that representatives of both WFA and CFA participate in technical meetings and discussions led by Belize's Fisheries Department.</p> <p>Since the launch of this project CFA have been invited to participate in 4 technical meetings led by the BFD and the Belize Federation of</p> |

| Project summary | SMART Indicators | Progress and Achievements |
|---|---|--|
| | | Fishers. This includes a meeting with Belize's Fisheries Advisory Council. Meanwhile WFA attended 3 technical meetings, including a consultation with representatives from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) regarding potential funding opportunities. |
| Activity 1.2.2 Community engagement and feedback sessions | | We supported WFA in hosting its first community engagement session where they invited members of the community to share their ideas on activities that can be done to increase their engagement and presence in the community. Similarly, CFA had the opportunity to engage with residents of Chunox and promote their association by participating in a local small business fair. Fishers and residents had the chance to voice their concerns and share their perspectives with the association to identify areas for improvement. |
| <p>Output 2.</p> <p>Two CSOs equipped with the tools to effectively engage in Belize's marine conservation and fisheries management sectors.</p> | <p>Two partner CSOs have each developed an understanding of their members' and organisations' strengths, needs and priorities and have a plan to improve that has been shared with their broader membership, by May 2023.</p> <p>Two partner CSOs increase their capacity to engage in marine management, by May 2023, including monitoring and evaluation and supporting effective management of Belize's natural /marine resources - an identified capacity gap as evidenced by scoping</p> | <p>A three-year strategic plan has been co-developed with both WFA and CFA. By conducting a SWOT analysis and by participating in several group activities, both associations were able to successfully develop their respective organisational goals, and chart an action plan to guide them in achieving these goals.</p> <p>The plans have been shared with several key stakeholders in the fisheries sector including the BFD. Defining their organisational priorities will help to inform stakeholders on how to best engage and support both associations.</p> <p>WFA is now engaged in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) efforts in marine management. Three members of their association are part of the Lionfish Brigade for Managed Access Area 3 (South Water Caye Marine Reserve). The primary role of this brigade is to monitor and</p> |

| Project summary | SMART Indicators | Progress and Achievements |
|---|---|---|
| | <p>assessments conducted in 2021.</p> <p>Two partner CSOs increase their engagement and share information amongst stakeholders and with the broader community through engagement in patrols with MPA managers (TASA and BFD), participating in marine-focussed events, including a SSF forum.</p> | <p>control lionfish populations within the marine reserve, in line with Belize's National Lionfish Management Strategy.</p> |
| <p>Activity 2.1.1 Wabafu capacity assessment (policy, participation)</p> | | <p>After 12 months of working with the executive committee and facilitating capacity building activities, we conducted a capacity assessment to evaluate the progress WFA has made as a result of BV's support. The assessment primarily focused on the organisation's internal governance and organisational management. The results of this assessment indicate that WFAs leadership has made significant improvements in their administrative capacity as well as their efforts to increase their presence in their community.</p> |
| <p>Activity 2.1.2 Co-create priorities/plans with Wabafu</p> | | <p>We provided the technical support required for WFA to develop a three-year strategic plan accompanied by an Action Plan that will guide the association's leadership on steps required to achieve those goals. The strategic planning process also helped the association to define its mission, vision and values. Defining their organisational identity has helped the association to prioritise their goals and has helped them to be more effective in participating in governance and fisheries management.</p> |

| Project summary | SMART Indicators | Progress and Achievements |
|--|------------------|--|
| Activity 2.1.3 Safeguarding training with Wabafu | | Introducing the concept of social and environmental safeguarding to fisher-led organizations (WFA and CFA) has helped to build their capacity and increase their awareness on “how” and “why” it is critically important to safeguard the communities that they serve and the natural resources that they depend on to sustain their livelihoods. Both associations have received a certificate of participation for their attendance and contribution to the training workshop. The workshop was strategically designed using relatable scenarios and was the first step to developing an informed safeguarding policy. |
| Activity 2.1.4 Training: SSF guidelines with two CSO partners | | We collaborated with the BFD to host a multi-stakeholder workshop that focused on how Belize has adopted the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines published by the Food and Agriculture Organisations (FAO). WFA and CFA were both key stakeholders that played an integral role in ensuring the success of this event. Additionally, it gave both organisations an opportunity to voice their concerns on how the department has adopted the guidelines. |
| Activity 2.1.5 Capacity assessment (policy, participation) with new CSO partner | | After 12 months of working with the executive committee and facilitating capacity building activities, we conducted a capacity assessment to evaluate the progress CFA has made as a result of our intervention. The assessment primarily focused on the organisation's internal governance and organisational management. The results of the assessment have proved that our intervention has led to growth in CFA's administrative capacity, as well as their interest in collaborating with other key stakeholders to bridge communication gaps. |
| Activity 2.1.6 Co-create priorities/plans with new CSO partner | | We provided the technical support required for CFA to develop a three-year strategic plan accompanied by an Action Plan that will guide the association's leadership on the steps required to achieve |

| Project summary | SMART Indicators | Progress and Achievements |
|--|------------------|--|
| | | <p>their organisational goals. The strategic planning process also helped the association to define its mission, vision and values. Defining their organisational identity has helped them to prioritise their goal which is to effectively participate in governance and fisheries management.</p> |
| <p>Activity 2.1.7 Safeguarding training new CSO partner</p> | | <p>See activity 2.1.3</p> |
| <p>Activity 2.2.1 Training: using data and understanding indicators</p> | | <p>In June 2022, we collaborated with the BFD to host a Data Literacy Workshop to highlight the importance of data collection and analysis. The sessions were held in Dangriga town for WFA and in Chunox village for CFA. This workshop was structured to help fishers understand the types of data that is used in fisheries management, and how such data is used to govern Belize’s marine resources. At the end of the session, attendees participated in a short survey that served to demonstrate their increased understanding of how data is used to assess fish stock, inform policy, and assess the status of commercial fishery species.</p> |
| <p>Activity 2.2.2 Compliance review</p> | | <p>A compliance review was integrated in both sessions of the Data Literacy Workshop led by the BFD. This review awarded fishers the opportunity to understand how compliance is measured in Belize, and what the indicators are used to determine an increase or decrease in compliance of Belize’s fisheries regulations.</p> |
| <p>Activity 2.2.3 Review national CPUE data</p> | | <p>We reviewed national lionfish Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) data with the members of the Lionfish Brigade for South Water Caye Marine Reserve (which includes WFA representatives). This session served to build capacity in data analysis and data interpretation, allowing the brigade members to understand the effectiveness and impact of the National Lionfish Management Control Strategy. As part of this activity, members of the WFA were directly involved in the marine</p> |

| Project summary | SMART Indicators | Progress and Achievements |
|---|------------------|---|
| | | data collection and M&E efforts of this control strategy within the MPA. |
| Activity 2.2.4 Training: scientific diving and invasive lionfish control | | Members of WFA were selected to be part of a 10-member Lionfish Brigade for Managed Access Area 3 (South Water Caye Marine Reserve). This awarded them the opportunity to receive training in Advanced Open Water (AOW) scuba diving, emergency first response, and the Lionfish Focused Search Survey Methodology. Having representation on the Brigade created the opportunity for WFA to be actively engaged in M&E efforts for the implementation of Belize's National Lionfish Control Management Strategy. |
| Activity 2.3.1 Support boat to boat activity with TASA in Area 6 | | CFA was not able to conduct boat to boat out-reach in Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve due to capacity and mobilisation limitations. Instead, a fishing engagement activity was held at the docking area in Chunox. CFA's executive committee was able to engage over 30 fishers to promote their association's values and recruit 10 new members. |
| Activity 2.3.2 Support boat to boat activity with BFD in Area 3 | | <p>We supported WFA in conducting a one day "boat to boat" engagement field activity. This was a proactive approach taken by the association's leadership to engage fishers who were out at sea fishing.</p> <p>WFA met with fishers to promote the values of the association, discuss membership benefits and award fishers the opportunity to voice any concerns that the association might be able to address. A total of 13 fishing vessels were engaged and the feedback was later shared with the association's wider membership.</p> |
| Activity 2.3.3 Support CSO participation in Reef Week | | We supported CFA's participation in Belize's Reef Week event which is an annual marine conservation fair that promotes the importance of Belize's Barrier Reef. CFA's participation marked a milestone |

| Project summary | SMART Indicators | Progress and Achievements |
|---|---|--|
| | | <p>accomplishment since it was the very first time they had the opportunity to represent their association at such a public and highly trafficked event. Participating in this event also awarded the association's leadership to build their networking skills by engaging with stakeholders of the marine conservation and NGO sectors who were also present at the event.</p> |
| <p>Activity 2.3.4 Support CSO participation in Small Scale Fisheries Forum</p> | | <p>See activity 2.1.4</p> |
| <p>Activity 2.3.5 Participate in Annual Lionfish Tournament</p> | | <p>BV held its very first lionfish tournament in South Water Caye which awarded fishers and stakeholders who utilise this area the opportunity to participate in lionfish culling efforts. Members of WFA participated in the event and sold their catch to an international buyer. Following the success of this event, Wabafu is exploring the idea of potentially harvesting lionfish for export.</p> |
| <p>Output 3 Two CSOs have improved operational functionality in areas of administration and financial management</p> | <p>3.1 By May 2023, two partner CSOs have each developed an understanding of management and organisational best practice, as evidenced by a published calendar of events and transparent financial reporting.</p> | <p>WFA has made significant progress in demonstrating increased capacity for transparent financial management by participating in a financial literacy workshop. This activity was instrumental in strengthening WFA's approach to financial inclusion for their wider membership.</p> <p>Similarly, CFA has been able to demonstrate increased capacity in their organisational capacity by working to develop a fundraising management plan.</p> |
| <p>Activity 3.1.1 Activity and budget planning</p> | | <p>We supported both WFA and CFA in establishing a financial process for planning and coordinating activities. This included budget planning, financial and technical reporting, financial claims and reimbursement. This has helped both associations to utilise best</p> |

| Project summary | SMART Indicators | Progress and Achievements |
|---|------------------|---|
| | | practices in financial and administrative management of their respective associations. |
| Activity 3.1.2 Membership Management | | We supported both partners with developing plans for membership engagement and management. WFA has recently proposed an annual membership fee package that would be used to sustain basic operational expenses. Meanwhile CFA is actively working to develop a membership and stakeholder engagement plan that would guide their leadership on best practices for engaging relevant stakeholders, and maintaining the interest and commitment of their members. |
| Activity 3.1.3 Building organisational management principles | | Supporting both partners in building organisational management policies served as the foundation of institutional strengthening. In addition to reviewing the organisation's by-laws, we supported the leadership committees of both WFA and CFA in establishing a standard for the internal management and operation of their respective associations. |
| Activity 3.1.4 Activity reporting and governance | | Both associations have worked to demonstrate increased administrative capacity by recording meeting minutes and writing short summary reports on the project activities that they have participated in. |
| Activity 3.1.5 Building on the self-financing scheme | | Based on organisational priorities defined in WFA's strategic plan, we provided the technical support required to help the association identify viable options for financial and operational sustainability. The association has expressed interest in launching an ice factory to commercially produce ice for local retail in the Dangriga community. To date, we have supported the initial stages of developing a business plan and a concept note to support WFA in realising this long-term goal. |

| Project summary | SMART Indicators | Progress and Achievements |
|---|------------------|---|
| Activity 3.1.6 Supporting with analysing financial statements | | The Financial Literacy Workshop featured group activities that allowed participants (members of WFA) to analyse financial statements and write sample financial reports using relatable mock scenarios. |
| Activity 3.1.7 Proposal and project development for small grants | | In the latter part of this project we supported WFA with developing a pipeline for potential funding opportunities. Both CFA and WFA are better positioned to pursue funding opportunities from donors such as the Environmental Defense Fund and GEF Small Grants. |

Annex 3 Standard Indicators

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

| Indicator number | Darwin Initiative Standard Indicator | Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators | Units | Disaggregation | Year 1 Total | Year 2 Total | Total to date | Total planned during the project |
|------------------|---|---|--------|---|--------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| DI-A01 | Number of people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training | Number of national stakeholders who received training in emergency first response, scuba diving and in the Lionfish Focused Search Survey Methodology (LFS) | People | Women and indigenous people | 0 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| DIA03 | Number of local/national organisations with improved capability and capacity as a result of the project. | Number of legally registered Civil Society Organizations (CSO) that have been able to demonstrate increased capability and capacity as a result of this project | Number | None | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| DIB02 | Number of new/improved species management plans available and endorsed | Number of new / improved national plans available and endorsed: Belize National Lionfish Management Plan - endorsed in South Water Caye Marine Reserve | Number | Introduction to Marine Protected Area | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| DIB05 | Number of people with increased participation in local communities / local management organisations (i.e., participation in Governance/citizen engagement). | Number of small-scale fishers represented by two active fishing associations in Belize. | People | Community Groups / Management Organizations | 800 | 500 | 1,300 | 1,500 |
| DI-B07 | Number of people participating in community-based management groups and/or Payment for | Total number of members of Wabafu Fishermen's Association and total number of members of Chunox Fishermen's Association | People | Women, Age Group | 100 | 30 | 140 | 100 |

| Indicator number | Darwin Initiative Standard Indicator | Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators | Units | Disaggregation | Year 1 Total | Year 2 Total | Total to date | Total planned during the project |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-------|----------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| | Ecosystem Service schemes. | | | | | | | |

Table 2 Publications

| Title | Type (e.g. journals, manual, CDs) | Detail (authors, year) | Gender of Lead Author | Nationality of Lead Author | Publishers (name, city) | Available from (e.g. weblink or publisher if not available online) |
|-------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Checklist for submission

| | Check |
|---|-------|
| Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line. | Y |
| Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line. | N/A |
| If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 13)? | N/A |
| Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report. | Y |
| Do you have hard copies of material you need to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number. However, we would expect that most material will now be electronic. | N/A |
| Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors | Y |
| Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully? | Y |
| Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report. | |