

Reporter

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70% in Six Days!

So far, 13,000 Belizeans call for 'Ganja' Referendum

By Michelle Sutherland

In six days, a total of 13,000 Belizeans have signed a petition asking the Government of Belize to consider holding a referendum to ask Belizeans to decide on whether or not they agree with the legalization of marijuana in Belize.

The petition, which was launched late last week by the National Evangelical Association of Belize (NEAB), the Belize Council of Churches, and several other church bodies across the country, was distributed in schools, homes, businesses, and



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National Evangelical Association of Belize (NEAB) members tallying the number of signatures received over the last week.

Police to double presence in Mahogany Heights and Belize City in the wake of murders



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By Michelle Sutherland

Due to a recent increase in crime, which has led to the murder of a total of five persons in the past five days alone, the Commissioner of Police Chester Williams said that his department will be ramping up its presence in the



ComPol Chester Williams

Deadly Weekend, 8 Persons Dead

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Carlton Gladden 52, Mark Lord 39, Joshua Samuels 17, John King 28, Edison Usher 48, Kadeem Banks 41, Daniel Gutierrez 16



70% in Six Days!...

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Jesus is the Light of the world! He is the Light because he came to dwell among men to tell them about the nature and majesty of the God of Creation, the One who made the universe with its billions of galaxies, plunging through limitless space at unbelievable speed!

Prior to this men had a hazy and incomplete knowledge of God. Many nations, even the most sophisticated, worshipped false gods. The universe which God created has the ability to renew itself. It has been around for more than 7 billion years, and shows no sign of weakening.

Astrophysicists are now of the view that this universe can and will go on forever. The God of Creation also created man, a frail and fragile human, destined for death, but with an incredible spirit that has the power to elevate him to a new status wherein he can gain the approval of God. This approval of God sets him apart as a son of God, and an heir of heaven. These are some of the things that Jesus, the Light, taught us.

We know that they are true because Jesus chose to die rather than change any part of his teaching. He died and rose from the dead to prove his power and authority. "For this was I born," he told Pontius, the Roman Governor. "And for this came I into the world, to give witness to the truth. All who are of the truth hear my voice".

There are others who testified by their life and death that Jesus is the Light. Among them are two of his original apostles, Matthew and John. The historical evidence on the life and teachings of Jesus are stronger and better documented than the historical evidence on the life of Alexander the Great. Jesus was put to death because of his teaching.

The temple people, who were the elite of Hebrew society at the time, regarded him as a threat and ordered his execution. He was put to death on a Friday, and three days later, on Easter Sunday, Jesus rose from the dead.

That is why we celebrate Easter. It is the affirmation of our faith in Jesus, as the Light of the world.

churches, and even on the streets. The aim of the petition was in an effort to garner at least 19,000 signatures, which is representative of 10% of the voting population in order to trigger a referendum under the Referendum Act, Chapter 10 of the Laws of Belize.

On Tuesday, following the counting of the signatures, NEAB sent out a press release outlining the results:

"In only six days, 70% of the required petitions to trigger a Referendum have been collected. To God be all the glory! It's a Miracle to have reached 13,000 plus signatures in just 6 days, never before attempted, much less accomplished."

But while NEAB

was not successful in meeting its goal of 19,000 signatures, NEAB's Vice President Pastor Scott Stirm told the Reporter on Tuesday described the outcome as an "amazing effort and success" and, according to him, in the majority of the locations across the country almost 95% of persons, who walked by, stopped in to sign the petition calling for a referendum. Something which he says is quite extraordinary.

Stirm indicated that while they weren't able to meet the threshold, they have not given up as yet. "Well we got information that there was going to be an extension for five more days so what we are aiming for right now is to get 5,000 signatures in 5

days. We did 13,000 in six days; I think we should be able to do it."

Stirm said that they will now be targeting areas that they had not visited before. He said that the churches will be "getting the word out" since they are of a collective view that "this is a very wrong direction for our nation and we believe that there is a very large percentage of the population that feels the same way."

Since last week the churches have been up in arms in relation to the Cannabis and Industrial Hemp Control and Licensing Bill 2022, which passed both the House and Senate last week. The Bill which seeks to provide for the control and licensing of the cannabis industry in Belize,

by establishing the necessary legislative framework to govern and regulate the cultivation, processing, distribution, and delivery of cannabis products for adult use, was to officially be signed into law on Monday, April 11th the Governor-General H.E. Froyla Tzalam.

The last known petition of this nature to have occurred in Belize was in February 2012 when 18,000 people signed a petition to trigger a referendum on offshore drilling. That resulted in what is now known as "the People's Referendum" in which 30,000 Belizeans, showed up to cast their votes. Of that number of persons, a staggering 96% voted NO to offshore oil drilling in Belize's waters.

Police to double presence in Mahogany Heights and Belize City in the wake of murders

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Affected areas ahead of the festive Easter Holiday in an effort to contain any further surge in violence.

On Monday, the Commissioner, speaking at a press conference in Belmopan said, "From a police response standpoint, we are ramping up our presence on the ground. We have put additional features to our Mahogany Heights operations as well as our operations in the city, where we are now going again at these gang members with a view to see how we can stem any further retaliation."

Williams, however, clarified that the murders are not believed to be gang-related, but are a bit isolated from each other; something which he says makes it a bit more difficult for authorities to contain. Nevertheless, Williams said that the department has since enlisted the assistance

of the Leadership Intervention Unit to go into the communities and conduct an intervention between the parties involved. The police's main objective, according to Williams, is to solve the respective murders.

As it relates to the murders, Williams said that the first one that happened in Mahogany Heights on Thursday is believed to be gang-related, while the second murder of Carlton Gladden, 52, in the same village is believed to be drug-related.

Moving to Belize City Williams classified the murder of Mark Lord, 39, as stemming from an altercation between two fathers. The second murder of John King, 28, is what has investigators puzzled since they say that he was not known to them as a gang member. Investigators did say that they suspect that he was the intended target and

that he was killed due to his affiliation with certain gang members.

The last murder in Belmopan, which is that of teenager Daniel Gutierrez is believed to have been triggered by a previous dispute that he had with two other individuals, both of whom have since been detained for questioning.

"There is a lot that we are doing to deal with these matters from an investigative standpoint as well as from an operational standpoint. With

respect to the first Mahogany Heights murder, we currently have the suspect in custody. We have sufficient evidence to charge him at this time so we should be charging by the end of the day. In respect to the first murder in Belize City, thanks to a quick police response, they were able to apprehend two persons and recover the weapon of choice that was used in the commission of that murder. And we continue to deal with the others to gather evidence," ended

THE REPORTER

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Deadly Weekend, 8 Persons Dead

By Michelle Sutherland

A total of eight persons were found dead over the weekend, following a series of separate events.

First, in Corozal Town the lifeless body of 36-year-old Chinese businessman Daquan Li was pulled out of the sea near Corozal Bay. Information from the police is that while there were no visible signs of injury on Li's body, their investigation into his possible cause of death remains under investigation.

The second death for the weekend was that of 52-year-old Carlton Gladden who was found shot to death inside his home in Mahogany Heights Village. According to the police's investigation around 7:30 on Friday night, they received a call from residents in the area complaining of hearing multiple gunshots. Police

then responded to the area where they found Gladden's motionless body inside the living room area of a blue cement bungalow structure in the village.

On Saturday, just after 6:35 p.m., 39-year-old Mark Lord, a construction worker, was also shot to death while walking on Jones Street in Belize City. Investigators say that Lord was walking towards McKay Boulevard when he was approached by someone who shot him multiple times. Quick police response to the area led to the detention of two suspects along with the suspected murder weapon.

A 17-year-old teenager, identified as Joshua Samuels, of a Gales Point Manatee address, also died tragically in a motorcycle accident on Saturday night. Information is that around 6:54

p.m., Samuels was driving a motorcycle in the village when he unexpectedly lost control of the motorbike and crashed into a lamppost. While he was rushed to the Southern Regional Hospital by family members, Samuels succumbed to multiple head and body injuries, shortly after his arrival.

The fifth death for the weekend was that of John King, 28, a popular musician and athlete of a Pickstock Street address in Belize City. On Saturday night, King was reportedly at a residence on Victoria Street in Belize City when around 7:30 someone was heard calling out "evil" outside of the residence. King reportedly got up and walked towards the door and pushed it open to check who it was, but instead of meeting a friendly face, he was met by

a barrage of bullets, which claimed his life shortly after being transported to the KHHM.

Sunday's double tragedy, which marred the Female Cross Country Cycling Classic, and shocked the nation, was the deaths of veteran cross country commentator Edison Usher (DJ Vintage), 48, and his driver Kadeem Banks, 41. Sources say that both men were on their way to San Ignacio Town to cover the

starting of the race, when upon reaching the entrance of Cotton Tree Village, the gas tank for the motorcycle that they were traveling on allegedly exploded. The impact of the blast killed Banks on the scene while Usher died while receiving treatment at the Western Regional Hospital.

To end off the deadly weekend, early on Sunday morning investigators in Belmopan cordoned off an area near the

San Martin Cemetery where the badly decomposed body of a missing teenager, 16-year-old Daniel Gutierrez was found. Gutierrez's body, which had multiple stab wounds, was found just after 7:42 am inside a drain at the rear of the cemetery grounds. Police say that Gutierrez who was a resident of Massan Street in Maya Mopan was last seen leaving his home on Tuesday of last week.

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NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

"Notice is hereby given to all interested parties that the below companies have been dissolved and struck off the International Business Companies Register.

<u>Company Name</u>	<u>Date of Dissolution</u>
Viland Invest Limited	11th day of April 2022
Listeka Business Corp.	11th day of April 2022

**Alpha Consulting (Belize) Ltd.
Registered Agent**

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Qualification: Bachelor's Degree, preferably in Business Administration, Hospitality Management, Public Administration, or related field and ten (10) years' experience in the management and administration of a casino gaming establishment. Any combination of education from an accredited college or university in a related field and/or direct experience in this occupation totaling fourteen (14) years may substitute for the required education and experience. Eight (8) years supervisory experience.

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Taiwanese NGOs donate BZ\$100,000 worth of medical equipment

By Javan Flowers

Ambassador David Kuan-Chou Chien, along with Minister of Health Hon. Kevin Bernard attended a handing-over ceremony that saw the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) receive medical equipment and materials valued at BZ\$50,000.

The said medical equipment and materials, with a total value of US\$50,000 (BZ\$100,000) provided by the Taiwanese NGOs “Puh Sein Foundation,” “Cao Zhong Zhi foundation,” and “SimplyHelp Foundation,” included 70 wheelchairs for children, 52 toilet chairs, 76 walkers, 160 aluminum canes, 200 foldable canes, 60 canes for the visually impaired, 120 axillary crutches, 80 forearm crutches, and 40 polio crutches, 20,000 isolation gowns, and 400 face shields.

Subsequent to the ceremony, the Taiwanese Embassy issued a release stating that “The Embassy will continue to work closely with the Ministry to improve the health care system of Belize and thus to promote the well-being of Belizean people.”

Additionally, the Embassy also took the opportunity to extend its appreciation to the Government of Belize for supporting Taiwan’s participation in the World Health Organization (WHO) and its annual Assembly.

Project empowers Rural Women to earn income

By William Ysaguirre

Three women’s groups from Corozal, Cayo and Toledo have been empowered by a \$40,000 project funded by the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs, which was launched in partnership with Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labor, and Local Government, at the headquarters of the National Association of Village Councils (NAVCO) in Belmopan on Monday, April 11.

The project aims to help the women earn an income and improve their social welfare by developing potential businesses, which will also benefit their families. In Corozal, the Sunshine Women’s group is in the cake-decoration business and is now expanding to cater for special events by offering tables, chairs, and tents for rental. The project will also help them market their services outside of their home district.

The Cayo West Women’s Group sews clothes on a small scale and does general tailoring. They will be trained to prepare a budget, as well as enhancing their sewing and embroidery skills, to be able to design and create a range of clothing, bags, masks and other products. This training is aimed to build their confidence, develop their leadership skills and enhance their business acumen.

The Xaibe Women’s Group of the Toledo District will set up a cultural food business, so their members may earn an income. The severe challenges of the pandemic forced the women to learn new skills, and they branched out into sewing clothes for their children, a service they can now offer to other customers.

NAVCO is implementing the project for a three-month period with technical support from the Ministry. Ministers Hon. Oscar Requeña, Hon. Dolores Balderamos Garcia, Hon. Elvia Vega-Samos, Hon. Ramiro Ramirez, Hon. Jorge Espat, Senator Hon. Collet Montejo and chief executive officer Tanya Santos all attended the launch.



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Easter

and always!

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Human Resources Manager
P.O. Box 29, Tower Hill, Orange Walk
Or email
HR.Belize@asr-group.com



DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FORM AND ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS IS APRIL 22, 2022.

A Few Thoughts on Constitutional Reform



By Ambassador Daniel Gutierrez

I remember September 21st, 1981, clearly, the buzz, the music, and festivities, the bangs of the celebratory exuberance of a nation born. I guess it is only human to look back and realize that the soiree deafened any discussion on the new set of rules we inherited. When the parties ended, it was time to roll up the proverbial sleeves and build our nation. We would leave any discussion and education about the way we are governed to the school system. Period! End of story!

The problem with this approach is that—of course, with the rare exception of a zealous social studies teacher here and there—this in-depth discussion and understanding of our rulebook did not happen. At least not for those in my generation. I am not making our school system a scapegoat; I am simply admitting, that for many Belizeans, there is only a cursory understanding of the rules we live under, and by this I mean our Constitution.

So, here we are 40 plus years after independence and about to enter into the most important exercise in a generation, again. Without the benefit of a crash course

on the Constitution, we are about to re-write the rule book. Many Belizeans have voiced that constitutional reform must be undertaken. I for one agree with them. Having said this I think it prudent to caution the current framers against throwing out the baby with the bathwater. The very fact that we can have a public discussion on our Constitution and the way we are governed without people being carted off to jail, means that something has worked and those aspects of our political culture ought to remain sacrosanct.

I should also be clear that this piece is not meant to be an exhaustive guide to all the areas where the current constitution needs to be improved upon. I will instead concentrate on a couple of the areas, in no particular order of importance, that have been in the public discourse recently.

As we read these paragraphs and others written by other Belizeans, I invite us to not look at the potential changes to come and measure these by the yardstick of other nations. By this, I mean that what other nations in other times and places have constructed for themselves should not be our straitjacket. We should welcome these as guides, but not as prescriptions. Belize should construct a system of governance that works for Belize, fully conscious of our nuances, our politics, our way of life. We should not copy and paste from anyone no matter how glamorous they appear to live. We can be guided by what has worked for them, but we must build something that will work for us, or we shall fail.

First, with no disrespect to the current Monarch or its representatives in Belize, the time has come for Belize to have a Belizean-born head of state. The Monarchy and the Governor-General are vestiges of colonialism and we must move on. As we explore the possibility of a post monarchical Belize, we need to ask ourselves what the nation should expect from its head of state. Given our experiences since 1981, we would be wise to have a head of state that is first the guardian of the constitutional order and second who is outwardly nonpartisan.

The first is achieved in the system of laws; however, the second is trickier but imperative. Any outcome that achieves neither of these is merely an expensive decoration.

The framers of our new constitution should not shy away from a system where the head of state serves for a period of no less and no more than a decade, or a period that goes beyond a specific government. I can understand how the direct election of the person holding this office is attractive to representational purists. However, given our Belizean experience in party politics, we should guard against a person elected through the same party politics mechanism.

The goal of legitimizing this office while sidestepping the basic tenants of representational democracy and at the same time vaccinating it against the malaise of party politics is indeed a tall order. To be clear though, if this office is to remain divorced from the everyday political back and forth, then this delicately balanced outcome must be our north star.

Second, more Belizean voters must have a say in who the leader of the opposition or party leader and, by extension, a potential Prime Minister is. Party conventions where a select club, handpicked by an even more exclusive cabal, decides who the next Prime Minister or Opposition leader is, is anachronistic, exclusionary, and nonrepresentative. Although Belizeans

(Cont'd on pg. 6)



HAPPY EASTER!

HAPPY EASTER!

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Peace, Love and Happiness at Easter!**

SPECIAL OPENING HOURS

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A Few Thoughts on Constitutional Reform

(Cont'd from pg. 5)

accept this status quo, many don't like it, and this reform process would be an opportunity missed were this practice not end up in its crosshairs.

Third, we must endeavor to remove the coercive participation of money and influence from the system of governance. This is not easy, but we must undertake this task with urgency and with clear eyes. In doing so, however, we must not assume that the political parties are the only entities in governance that have powerful forces whispering in their ears, a platform denied to most Belizeans. Clearly, the political parties have money influencers. This is not new and I will not expound further as there exists a mountain of literature in this regard. Suffice to say we have an opportunity to address it without unduly curtailing the right of any Belizean to make financial contributions to the party or parties of their choice.

Since the inclusion of the social partners in formal national discourse started with constitutional reforms years ago, we have not stopped to realize that social partners are not immune to money influencers or chain of command influencers and we must find a way to address this in this reform. Before I go any further, I should point out that the underlying assumption regarding my position on the chain of command influencers in the Senate is premised on there being no change to how senators are appointed, or elected. However, I do not know if it is desirable to leave the Senate in its current form.

The Senate in its current form, not including the appointments by the political parties, is elected from exclusive groups of Belizean organizations, and it is arguable that this exclusivity in and of itself is not participatory and thereby non-democratic.

We must examine our conscience, question ourselves, and ask if as a people, and in the maximum expression of our national persona, meaning our system of governance, are we content in providing a platform to some to the exclusion of many, notwithstanding the parliamentary eloquence and good intention of the some? Further discussions need to be had on this topic and we should enter into this process guaranteeing protection to no sacred cows.

Let me be clear, I have participated in the Senate as a part of the Business Sector. I support the principle of social partnership and I am witness to the positive benefit of having diversity in discussions of national importance. I am still a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and I support the inclusion of social partners fully. I merely posit that the way social partners participate in our democracy needs to be reexamined in the current exercise.

In the case of social partners representing workers, their domain, their motivation, and their command and control is Belizean, enough said. Social partners representing the private sector are made up of companies and entities that are legally Belizean, although there are foreign-owned entities therein. The majority are companies that live and die based on what happens in Belize, thereby, making their impetus the progress of Belize's economy as a matter of survival. In their majority, the command and control are Belizeans, but not always.

Social partners representing the churches have their organizations, parishioners, and their outreach grounded in Belize, but by the very nature of how they are set up, in several cases, their command and control is foreign. This is not a criticism of them, but it is a description of the reality where they

are concerned. It does not make them bad, or less effective as participants in the system, but when you're not the boss, you're not the boss, period. Their command and control is in Europe or in North America.

The responsibility of the state is to its citizens first and foremost, and while the churches have participated with good intent as social partners, the state and the organs of the state like the Constitution must ensure that parental influences, which are incongruent with our ethos as a people, and without curtailing people's rights to freedom of conscience, are kept in check.

Regarding the NGO community, the representatives, the efforts, and the results there from are in Belize and focused on Belize, but as with other social partners, the command and control may not be. It is no secret that the money and the influence behind several of our NGOs are not from this country. In fairness to their efforts and in the broadest description of their work, the pursuits and goals of the NGO community are laudable, but in many cases, these are unabashedly global pursuits.

Unless we are naïve, it should be clear to

any detached observer that global pursuits and local needs will never line up 100%. It is just life and we need to understand this clearly. I also want to be clear about one thing: I know several public personas in the NGO movement and those I know are all in for Belize and want the best for this country. A Constitution, though, cannot rely on personalities. It must prescribe parameters if it wants to stem the coercion that in this case may come from abroad and pursue objectives that may not completely align with our own in Belize.

I hope that this article, and others like it, stimulate conversation and lead us to face topics that may be difficult to discuss. Please discuss these with your family and friends, over dinner and after church, in school, and at work. They are not easy, but constitutional reform is not for the faint of heart, toes will be stepped on and feathers might get ruffled. That is par for the course. So let us take on this generational conversation with zeal, honesty, patriotism, and always with respect for each other. Our country, our children, and grandchildren should expect this of us and we must deliver.



Belize Solid Waste Management Authority

of the

Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining

Invitation to Quote (ITQ)

The Government of Belize (GOB) has received financing from the *Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)*, towards the cost of the Solid Waste Management Project II and a Non-reimbursable Technical Cooperation- Innovation in the Solid Waste Management Sector in Belize and intends to apply part of the proceeds towards the **supply, delivery, and customization of two (2) cargo tricycles**.

The Belize Solid Waste Management Authority now invites eligible bidders to submit a sealed quotation for the Supply, Delivery and Customization of the following item:

ITEM	QUANTITY
Cargo Tricycles	2

The Invitation to Quote (ITQ) may be obtained, free of cost, by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below. Interested Bidders may obtain further information and details about the requested customization by writing to the email address given below.

All ITQs must be delivered to the address below no later than 10:00 a.m. (Belize local time) on Thursday, April 14, 2022. Electronic submission will not be permitted. Late ITQs will be rejected.

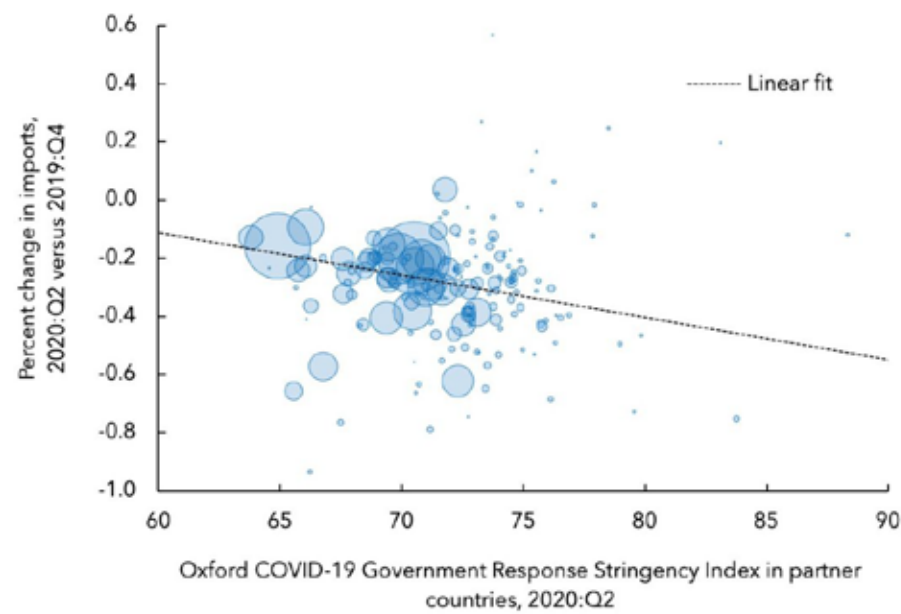
ITQs will be opened at 10:15 a.m. (Belize local time) on Thursday April 14, 2022, at the Conference Room of the Belize Solid Waste Management Authority at the address below, in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

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 E-mail: GladdenM@gobmail.gov.bz

Global Trade Needs More Supply Diversity, Not Less

Spillovers from lockdowns on imports

Lockdown policies of trading partners caused imports to fall.



Sources: Hale et al. (2021); IMF, Direction of Trade Statistics; and IMF staff calculations. Note: The Oxford Stringency Index is constructed taking 2018:Q3-2019:Q4 import flows as weights. The size of each country's bubble is proportional to the value of its imports (in USD) in 2019:Q4. The solid line is a linear fit of a weighted regression of the change in imports between 2020:Q2 and 2019:Q4 against the Oxford Stringency Index in partner countries, in which the weights are the values of imports (in US dollars) in 2019:Q4. The estimated coefficient is equal to -0.015 (t-stat = -2.44)



By Davide Malacrino, Adil Mohammad, and Andrea Presbitero

The demand and supply shocks unleashed by the pandemic were expected to lead to a dramatic collapse in trade, but international commerce has proven more resilient than during previous global crises.

While goods trade fell sharply in the second quarter of 2020, it bounced back to pre-pandemic levels later in the year. The decline for services in 2020 (such as tourism) was worse, and has recovered more slowly, given persistent restrictions to contain infection in some countries.

International spillovers

Factors specific to the pandemic help explain these trade patterns.

First, goods imports were larger in 2020 than would be predicted by demand (and relative prices) alone, more so in countries with stringent lockdowns or severe outbreaks.

Second, lockdowns had significant—if unintended—international spillovers. Countries with trade partners that implemented more stringent lockdowns experienced larger declines in imports of goods. Trade partner lockdowns accounted, on average, for up to 60 percent of the decline in imports in the first half of 2020. These impacts were larger in industries that rely heavily on global value chains, and are further downstream in the production process (such as electronics).

The effects were short-lived, however, suggesting that global supply chains were resilient. And remote work also lessened the trade spillovers from lockdowns.

Even so, disruptions wrought by the pandemic led to calls for more domestic production of goods (reshoring). Our latest World Economic Outlook shows that dismantling global value chains is not the answer—more diversification, not less, improves resilience.

Global value chains adapted

Trade data affirm this. By mid-2020, Asian countries, which were hit early by COVID-19 but then managed to contain it (just when many European countries imposed severe mobility restrictions) saw an increase in their market share of GVC-related products of 4.6 percentage points in Europe, and 2.3 percentage points in North America. These gains were large and quick by historical standards but as countries adjusted to the pandemic, they've partially unwound, suggesting that the changes were likely temporary.

Though global value chains have adjusted, some industries such as automobiles have faced large supply disruptions, pointing to

the need to enhance resilience. We analyze two options for building supply chain resilience: diversifying inputs across countries, and greater substitutability of inputs.

Boosting trade resilience

We simulated the effects of disruptions in a global economic model and compared outcomes under higher levels of diversification, or higher substitutability (how easily a producer can switch inputs from a supplier in one country to another). We considered two scenarios: supply disruption in a single, large, input supplier country; and supply shocks to multiple nations.

Our analysis shows that diversification significantly reduces global economic losses in response to supply disruptions. Following a sizable (25 percent) labor supply contraction in a single, large global supplier, gross domestic product for the average economy falls by 0.8 percent under the baseline. In the high-diversification scenario, this decline is reduced by almost half.

Higher diversification also reduces volatility when multiple countries are hit by supply shocks. We estimate that the volatility of economic growth in the average country is reduced by around 5 percent in this scenario. Diversification offers little protection, however, when a major disruption hits all economies at the same time, like the first four months of the pandemic.

Countries can diversify by sourcing more intermediate inputs from abroad. Currently there is a significant “home bias” in the sourcing of such supplies. Firms in the Western Hemisphere, for example, source 82 percent of their intermediates domestically. Re-shoring of production would thus lower diversification further.

Substitutability can be achieved in two ways: through greater

(Cont'd on pg. 8)



Belize Solid Waste Management Authority

of the

Ministry of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining

Invitation to Quote (ITQ)

The Government of Belize (GOB) has received financing from the *Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)*, towards the cost of the Solid Waste Management Project II and a Non-reimbursable Technical Cooperation- Innovation in the Solid Waste Management Sector in Belize and intends to apply part of the proceeds towards the **supply, delivery, and maintenance of two (2) vertical balers.**

The Belize Solid Waste Management Authority now invites eligible bidders to submit a sealed quotation for the Supply, Delivery and Maintenance of the following item:

ITEM	QUANTITY
Vertical Balers	2

The Invitation to Quote (ITQ) may be obtained, free of cost, by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below. Interested Bidders may obtain further information by writing to the email address given below.

All ITQs must be delivered to the address below no later than 10:00 a.m. (Belize local time) on Thursday, April 14, 2022. Electronic submission will not be permitted. Late ITQs will be rejected.

ITQs will be opened at 10:15 a.m. (Belize local time) on Thursday April 14, 2022, at the Conference Room of the Belize Solid Waste Management Authority at the address below, in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

Procurement Officer
 Belize Solid Waste Management Authority
 3013 Bougainvillea Street, Orchid Garden Area
 City of Belmopan, Belize, C.A.
 Tel: (501) 802 1527
 E-mail: GladdenM@gobmail.gov.bz

Global Trade Needs More Supply Diversity, Not Less

(Cont'd from pg. 7)

flexibility in production, such as when electric vehicle maker Tesla Inc. rewrote software to enable its cars to use alternative semiconductors in response to the semiconductor shortage; or by standardizing inputs internationally. For example, General Motors Co. recently announced that it is working with semiconductor suppliers to

reduce the number of unique chips that it uses by 95 percent, down to just three families of microcontrollers. This standardization would replace a host of chips, eliminating the costs of substituting between them.

Considering again the scenario of a 25 percent labor supply contraction in a large global supplier of intermediate inputs, we find that with greater

substitutability, GDP losses in all countries (other than the source country) are reduced by about four-fifths.

Policy implications

Ensuring equitable access to vaccines and treatments remains the first policy priority. Recent targeted lockdowns in China are a reminder that pandemic-related restrictions continue to have an impact far beyond the affected country. It is

in the self-interest of all countries, including those with high vaccination rates to end the acute phase of the pandemic everywhere.

Amid rising concerns regarding global economic fragmentation and “friendshoring” following the war in Ukraine, our analysis also shows that greater diversification and substitutability in inputs can enhance resilience. While corporate decisions will predominantly shape the future resilience of global value chains, government policies can help by providing a supportive environment and lowering the costs.

One obvious area is improved infrastructure. The pandemic has

shown that infrastructure investments in certain areas are critical to mitigate supply disruptions related to trade logistics. For example, upgrading and modernizing port infrastructure on key global shipping routes would help reduce global chokepoints. Better digital infrastructure to facilitate telework can also help mitigate spillovers to other countries.

Governments can also help to make information more widely available, so firms can make more strategic decisions. For example, automobile manufacturers on average conduct business directly with about 250 Tier1 suppliers, but this number rises to 18,000 suppliers in the full

value chain. Improving access to information on inter-firm transactions and supply chain networks, by for example, digitalizing firms’ document filings, such as tax returns, can be helpful, especially for smaller firms with fewer resources.

Finally, reducing trade costs can help diversify inputs. There is room to reduce non-tariff barriers, which would give a significant medium-term economic boost, especially in emerging markets and low-income developing countries. In addition, reducing trade policy uncertainty, and providing an open and stable, rules-based trade policy regime, can support greater diversification.

Compol Williams speaks on Easter operations across the country



Compol Chester Williams
By Michelle Sutherland

With the approach of the busy and festive Easter weekend, commuters and the public can expect an increase in police presence in the public as well as on the highways as they carry out their Easter operations in an effort to crackdown on drunk driving, speeding, crime, and violence as well as public drinking.

On Monday, April 11th, shortly after exiting a management meeting with his senior commanders from across the country, the Commissioner of Police Chester Williams avoided divulging too many details of police operations but said, “From a law enforcement standpoint, I want to assure the general public that we will do what we can to ensure that crime and violence remains at a minimal during the Easter Holiday. You will see increased police presence on the highways doing what we refer to as the road policing, which encapsulates all forms of policing and not only traffic.”

The Commissioner noted that while police presence has increased over the past couple of weeks with officers conducting checkpoints, handing out pamphlets, and advising drivers to slow down there has been a worrying increase in road accidents. Something which he

says is very worrisome to him as “some drivers are just not taking heed.”

With the expected increase in water-related sports and even drowning, the Commissioner also sent out a warning to Belizeans across the country who are planning to indulge in any sort of water sport. He urged them to be extremely careful and for them to refrain from venturing out into the deep and ensure that they are accompanied by another adult in the case an emergency arises.

The Commissioner explained that they will also be addressing liquor consumption, starting with an inspection of all liquor premises across the country to find out what type of license they are now operating under. According to Williams during the pandemic majority of the establishment that was operating as nightclubs and bars, applied for a restaurant license which they are still operating under despite the recent changes to the Statutory Instrument. The problem with this, according to Williams, is that restaurants are only allowed to open until 12 midnight and no later than that.

Another public nuisance that the police department will also be addressing is public drinking.

“We want people to please abide by the law if it is that you are going to drink please don't drive, if you are going to drive please don't drink. If you are going to swim please don't drink and if you intend

to drink please don't do it on the street; do it in the safety of your home or in a setting where the law allows that you can do it there,” ended the Commissioner.



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Financial Services Commission

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DEPARTMENT HEAD, HUMAN RESOURCES

Location: BELMOPAN CITY

Job Summary:

The Department Head for the Human Resources (DH-HR) is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Human Resources Department of the Financial Services Commission (the “FSC”), which includes delivering Human Resources (“HR”) support services required by the FSC, planning, administering, coordinating, controlling, and maintaining all HR needs and activities that seeks to facilitate the employees’ quality contributions to achieving the corporate objectives. The DH-HR will lead and direct the routine functions of the Human Resources (HR) department including hiring and interviewing staff, overseeing special payroll functions, benefits, and leave, and enforcing company policies and practices.

Education & Experience:

- Bachelor's degree in Human Resources Management, Business Administration, or a related subject from a recognised tertiary institution and/or over 5 years in related work experience, with at least 3 years' experience in management.
- Minimum of 3 years demonstrated professional experience in coordinating human resource activities in a company or government ministry or agency.
- The candidate requires an understanding of human resources programs, such as compensation and benefits plans; human resources software; and general sound knowledge of Belize's labour and health and safety laws and regulations.
- Knowledge and experience in employment law, compensation, organizational planning, recruitment, organization development, employee relations, safety, employee engagement, and employee development.

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Applications must be submitted electronically by visiting our webpage at www.belizefsc.org.bz/career/

Application must include:

1. Letter of Application referencing the post	5. Three (3) letters of reference (no older than six months) - two (2) must be professional references.
2. Curriculum Vitae	
3. Copy of most recent qualification	6. Police Record (no older than six months)
4. Copy of Social Security Card	

***Only applicants who submit all required documents will be considered.**

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 22nd April 2022

For a copy of the full **Job Description of Vacant Post—Department Head, Human Resources**, visit our webpage at www.belize.org.bz/career/ or contact us at (501) 822-3800/2974.

Belize abstains on vote to suspend Russia from UN Human Rights Council

By Javan Flowers

The United Nations General Assembly voted this week to suspend Russia from the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council after allegations of "war crimes" were levied against Russian soldiers during the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The voting results were 93 in favor, 24 against, and 58 abstentions.

A 2006 resolution says the General Assembly may "suspend the rights of membership in the Human Rights Council of a member of the Council that commits gross and systematic violations of human rights."

The resolution adds that the Council has "grave concern" regarding reports of "gross and systematic violations and abuses of human rights"

and "violations of international humanitarian law" committed by the Russian Federation during its invasion of Ukraine.

Therefore, the General Assembly needed a vote of approval from two-thirds of the countries present to remove Russia from the UN Human Rights Council.

Interestingly, Belize was a part of the 58 nations that abstained from voting. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration issued a statement to explain the vote. The statement opened by asserting that Belize has co-sponsored and supported two United Nations resolutions, on March 2 and March 24, 2022, regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"Those resolutions expressed strong condemnation of



93 countries voted in favor of the resolution, with only 24 voting against it. 58 countries abstained.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and urgent diplomatic efforts to seek a peaceful resolution of the conflict, and expressed grave concern about the plight of civilians in Ukraine," The Ministry added.

However, regarding the recent vote, "Belize decided to abstain

following obligatory consultations among the CARICOM Member States on April 4 and April 7, which did not yield a regional consensus position."

It continued by noting that the HRC has established a Commission of Inquiry mandated to investigate all alleged violations and abuses of human

rights and violations of international humanitarian law and related crimes in the context of the aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation. Additionally, the International Criminal Court Prosecutor is currently investigating the situation in Ukraine, including any alleged war crimes and any

alleged crimes against humanity in all parts of Ukraine.

Thus, considering that these investigations are still ongoing, "Belize is of the view that a determination to suspend Russia from the HRC would be best considered after the receipt of any definitive and actionable findings resulting from the investigations."

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beyond conservation

JOIN A GLOBAL GROUP OF CONSERVATION PROFESSIONALS
We are in search of a dynamic and competent Program Coordinator - Fisheries to join our Belize Team!

BV's office in Sarteneja and a co-working space in Belize City are accessible to staff, who also have the option to work remotely from their homes across Belize.

Blue Ventures develops locally led approaches to marine management that benefit people and nature alike. By listening and responding to community needs, we design our models to catalyze and sustain marine conservation, unlocking the potential of coastal communities to manage their resources. We work in places where the ocean is vital to local cultures and economies, and are committed to advancing the rights of small-scale fishers throughout the coastal tropics.

Our Belize team is also optimally placed to expand our work in the wider Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region. Building on our experience in Asia and Africa, Blue Ventures is now scoping opportunities to identify and support values-aligned partners on fisheries management and governance across the wider region with a view to developing a thriving regional programme.

Summary Job Description

- The successful candidate will be a motivated, proactive and highly organized individual, with an excellent working knowledge of the small-scale fisheries, marine conservation and development sectors. You will demonstrate a proven track record of project management, effective written and interpersonal communications, and partnership building.

Responsibilities

Governance and institutional strengthening

- Work closely with partner organizations to evaluate community and organization needs, facilitate strategic planning as required, and design work plans.
- Gather feedback from partners to guide efforts to improve performance

Fisheries Knowledge Management

- Facilitate and/or lead discussions around local fisheries management practices, drawing on best practice insights from similar contexts
- Deliver and/or facilitate training with partners in technical fisheries management concepts and data use as necessary

Communications Support

- Champion excellent communications with colleagues, communities and partners
- Develop executive summaries of technical reports to share with a variety of stakeholders across different platforms

Skills and Experience Required

- Fluency in written and spoken English and Spanish
- Undergraduate degree or equivalent experience in natural resource management, fisheries, marine conservation or related field

Desired

- Experience with participatory monitoring and social research
- Previous international organization or NGO experience
- At least 2 years' practical experience working in community-based conservation or development

For more information or to apply to any of these positions, please visit:
<https://careers.blueventures.org/jobs>

Kindly submit applications online. Only applications submitted through our online system will be considered. **Deadline for submission: Sunday 17th April 2022, midnight local time.**

Man survives Crocodile Attack in Caye Caulker

By Javan Flowers

A resident of Caye Caulker, identified as Joshua Young, was attacked by a crocodile while diving and spearfishing on the island's northern side earlier this week.

The Belize Forest Department subsequently addressed the incident, which detailed that the department had received reports of a crocodile attack in Caye Caulker Village.

According to a police report, the attack happened on the north side of the Split area in the village. The victim was identified as Joshua Young, a Belizean resident



of Caye Caulker. As issued in the department's release, "Investigations revealed that Mr. Young was diving and spearfishing when the crocodile attacked him. As a result, he

received injuries to his forehead and chin. He was transported to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital for further treatment and is in a stable condition."

The Forest Department is working

with its wildlife partner ACES Wildlife Rescue, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and protection of Belize's native wildlife and their critical habitats, to search for and

capture the crocodile.

The Forest Department also took the opportunity to advise the public to adhere to the following safety protocols to prevent encounters with crocodiles: (1) Do not feed any crocodile. This is a dangerous practice and can cause crocodiles to lose their fear of humans; (2) Do not dispose of fish carcasses nearby or in fishing areas. This can cause indirect feeding of crocodiles; (3) Protect your pets if you live close to the water; (4) Place garbage in its proper place and do not dump trash in or close to the water. This can also cause indirect feeding

of crocodiles.

Finally, the department advises that in the event of an encounter with a crocodile, proceed to calmly walk away and refrain from attempting to capture it or further engaging in actions that could be interpreted as a provocation.

The department's release emphasizes that practicing these safety measures can prevent crocodile attacks on humans. Furthermore, the public is advised that if a crocodile is demonstrating aggressive behavior, contact the Forest Department at 822-1524 or ACES at 623-7920.

U.S. Embassy and GOB Launch Inaugural "Court Case Backlog" Reduction Workshop

By Javan Flowers

The U.S. Embassy and the Government of Belize (GOB) hosted an Inaugural Case Backlog Reduction Workshop with senior Belize judiciary and legal community officials this week.

As reported by a joint press release issued by the U.S. Embassy, the exercise is "the next step in the U.S.-funded Backlog Reduction Program," which seeks to have both officials from Belize and the U.S. appraising both the framework and standards of criminal case management processes to assess what challenges stand

in the way of reducing the case backlog in Belize.

Department of State Director for Central American Affairs Patrick Ventrell, during the Inaugural ceremony, underscored that "all vibrant democracies require strong, reliable criminal justice systems. Citizens must have confidence that crimes will be investigated, victims will be protected, and that wrongdoing will be addressed fairly and impartially. Simply put, courts play a key role in determining whether citizens have faith in the system."



The initiative is designed to assist the judiciary in clearing cases.

"As Chief Justice, I welcome this workshop. As we embark on a strategy to deal with the backlog that plagues our courts, this workshop brings together all stakeholders to not only acknowledge the challenges we face

but also to provide input and ideas on shared objectives that we can then utilize in moving this Backlog Reduction project forward," highlighted Chief Justice Michelle Arana.

The workshop was also attended by

Attorney General Hon. Magali Marin Young, Chief Magistrate Sharon Frazer, and Director of Public Prosecution Cheryl-Lynn Vidal. Also in attendance were representatives of the Belize Judiciary, the Bar Association,

Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of Human Development, the Police Department, and representatives from the U.S. Embassy's Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL).

The release closed by highlighting previous meetings between Belize and the U.S. to further strengthen cooperation on national and regional security issues. Additionally, "since 2009, the United States has provided more than the U.S. \$34.8 million in INL assistance to advance security in Belize."

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Dangerous Global Debt Burden Requires Decisive Cooperation

By Vitor Gaspar and Ceyla Pazarbasioglu

We live in dangerous times. The world faces renewed uncertainty, as war comes on top of an ever-changing and persistent pandemic, now in its third year. Moreover, problems that predated COVID-19 have not gone away. When policymakers return to Washington in the coming days for the Spring Meetings of the IMF and World Bank, one of the central topics will be growing debt vulnerabilities in the world.

Debt was already very high before the first Coronavirus lockdowns. As the pandemic hit, unprecedented peacetime economic support stabilized financial markets and gradually eased liquidity and credit conditions around the world. In many countries, fiscal policy was able to protect people and firms during the pandemic. It supported monetary policy, too, by adding to aggregate demand and avoiding deflationary dynamics. It all contributed to financial and economic recovery.

Now the war in Ukraine is adding risks to unprecedented levels of public borrowing while the pandemic is still straining many government budgets. The situation highlights the urgent need for authorities to undertake reforms, including governance reforms, to improve debt transparency and strengthen debt management policies and frameworks to reduce risks.

The Fund will continue to help address the root causes of unsafe debt with granular policy advice and capacity-building activities. But, with elevated sovereign debt risks and notable budget and financial constraints, international cooperation to minimize stress during the period ahead will be needed. In cases where liquidity support alone is not enough policymakers need to take a cooperative approach to ease the debt burdens of the most vulnerable countries, foster greater debt sustainability, and balance the interests of debtors and creditors.

Record debt

During the pandemic, deficits increased and debt accumulated much faster than they did in the early years of other recessions, including the largest: the Great Depression and the Global Financial Crisis. The scale is comparable only to the two 20th century world wars.

According to the IMF's Global Debt Database, borrowing jumped by 28 percentage points to 256 percent of gross domestic product in 2020. Government accounted for about half of this increase, with the remainder from non-financial corporations and households. Public debt now represents close to 40 percent of the global total, the most in almost six decades.

Emerging market and developing countries (excluding China) accounted for a relatively small share of the increase. Although their public debt remains far below 1990s levels, debt in these economies has risen steadily in recent years. This partly reflected their ability to tap private markets, increased creditworthiness, and development of their domestic debt markets. Servicing costs have also been on a steep incline. About 60 percent of low-income countries are now in, or at risk of, distress.

Risks from rising inflation

Until recently, low debt service costs assuaged concerns about advanced economies' record high public debt. There were two elements. First, nominal interest rates were very low. In fact, they were close to zero or even negative all along the yield curve in countries such as Germany, Japan and Switzerland. Second, neutral real interest rates were on a significant downward trend in many economies, including the United States, the euro area, and Japan, as well as a number of emerging markets.

This, combined with real interest rates below real growth rates, contributed to a perception of painless fiscal expansion. However, with heightened risk perception and expected monetary policy tightening, debt vulnerabilities are back in focus.

High public and private borrowing contribute to financial vulnerabilities, which are already concerning. The number of advanced economies with debt ratios larger than the size of their economy

has increased significantly. There is a risk that ever-higher levels of debt lead to a widening of interest rate spreads for countries with weaker fundamentals, making it costlier for them to borrow. Moreover, although inflation surprises may lower debt-to-GDP ratios in the short-run, persistent inflation—and inflation volatility—ultimately can raise the cost of borrowing. This process can happen quickly in countries with short debt maturities.

In advanced economies, economic activity, the primary balance, spending, and revenues are projected to return close to pre-pandemic projections by 2024. But the situation in developing countries is much more concerning. Both emerging and low-income economies face persistent GDP and revenue losses. This implies that primary spending will be persistently lower as a consequence of the pandemic, pushing countries further back from reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. That is a matter of global concern.

Sharp increases in energy and food prices are adding to these pressures for the poorest and most vulnerable. Food accounts for up to 60 percent of household consumption in low-income countries. These countries face a unique confluence of factors: dire humanitarian needs intersect with extremely tight financial constraints. For low-income countries that rely on imported fuel and food, the shock may require more grants and highly concessional financing to make ends meet while supporting those households in need.

Global financial conditions are tightening as major central banks raise interest rates to contain inflation. In most emerging markets, sovereign spreads are already above pre-pandemic levels.

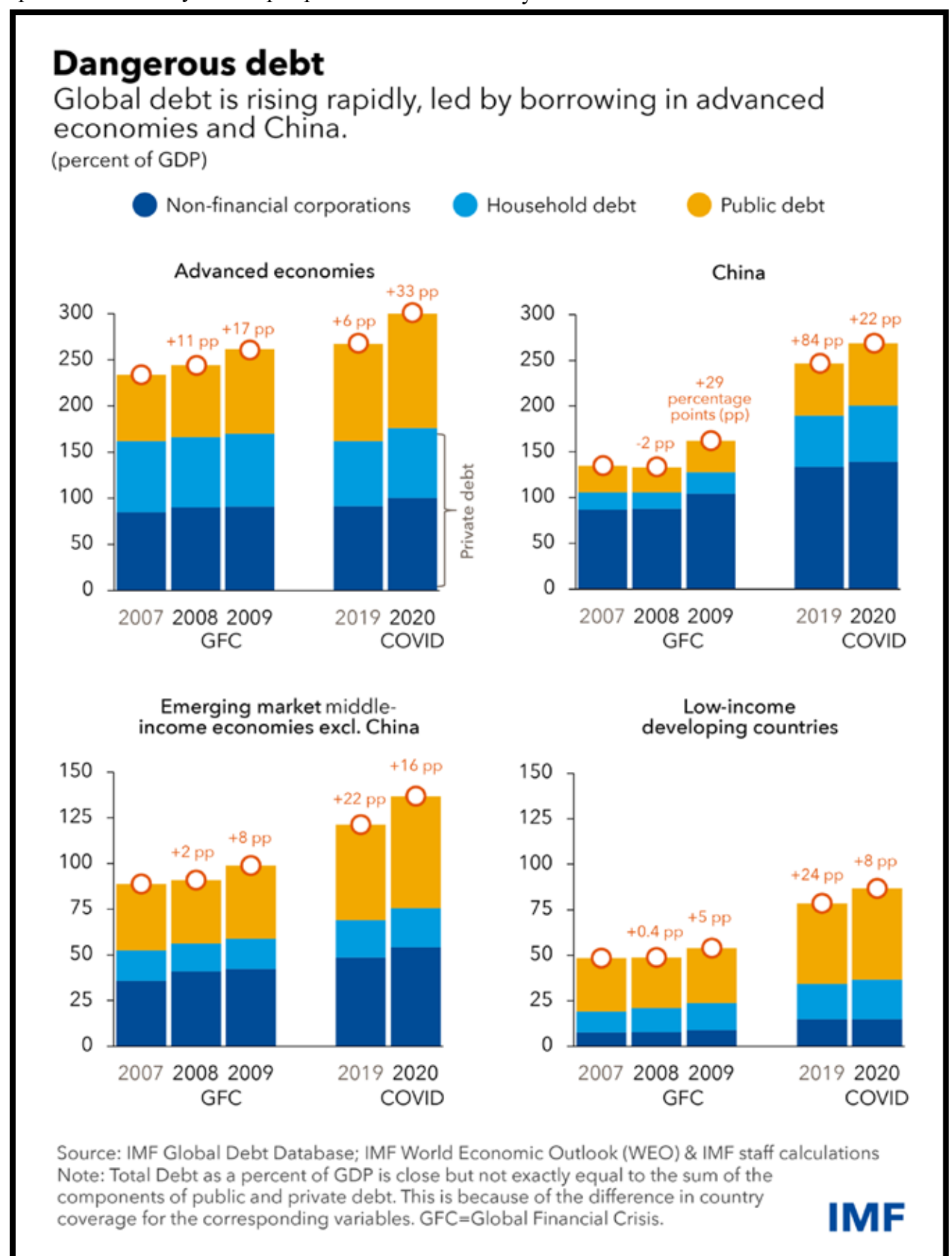
The credit crunch is exacerbated by declining overseas lending originating from China, which is confronting solvency concerns in the real-estate sector; expanding lockdowns in Shanghai and other major cities; the transition to a new growth model; and problems associated with existing loans to developing countries.

A global cooperative approach

Debt restructurings are likely to become more frequent and will need to address more complex coordination challenges than in the past owing to increased diversity in the creditor landscape. Having mechanisms in place for orderly restructuring is in the best interest of creditors and debtors alike.

For low-income countries, the Debt Service Suspension Initiative expired at the end of 2021. And the Group of Twenty's Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the DSSI has yet to deliver. Improvements are needed. Options should also be explored to help the broader range of emerging and developing economies that are not eligible for the Common Framework but who would likely benefit from a globally cooperative approach in the period ahead. Muddling through will amplify costs and risks to debtors, creditors and, more broadly, global stability and prosperity. In the end, the impact will be most sharply felt by those households that can least afford it.

With sovereign debt risks elevated and financial constraints back at the center of policy concerns, a global cooperative approach is necessary to reach an orderly resolution of debt problems and prevent unnecessary defaults. The views and interests of debtors and creditors must be reflected in a balanced way.





STRENGTHENING OF TAX ADMINISTRATION PROJECT

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Consulting Services to design and implement an Internal Control Model including the implementation of a system to support internal control processes

Institution: The Ministry of Finance (MOF)
Country: Belize
Project: Strengthening of Tax Administration (STA)
Abstract: Consulting Services to design and implement an Internal Control Model including the implementation of a system to support internal control processes

Loan No.: 4839/OC-BL
Deadline: April 26th, 2022, Belize Local Time

The Government of Belize (GOB) has received financing from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for the execution of a five-year tax modernization project entitled "Strengthening of Tax Administration" (BL-L1031). Through this project, the Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD) has procured a Modern Integrated Tax Administration System (the Revenue Management System (RMS) and is presently in the implementation process. This new system will be used in the management of the Belize Tax Administration.

BTSD staff integrity is a concern for its management. The BTSD strategic plan indicates that: "Corruption has devastating effects on the integrity of any organization. At the BTSD the effects would be particularly harmful as corrupt activities could compromise the collection of revenue; impede tax compliance; negatively impact the image of the Agency and reduce the public's confidence in the Agency's ability to objectively administer taxes.

As such, an Internal Audit Division will be executed to conduct investigations into alleged employee misconduct and ensure that commensurate disciplinary actions are taken when staffers are found culpable. Additionally, a new Employee Code of Conduct will be drafted, which will be instructive on the standards of Professional Conduct. Given that partnerships with the public are important in combating corruption, Outreach Programs will be utilized to engage civil society and to aid in deterring and reporting immoral activities."

Management is also concerned about internal audit. They have identified the need for regular reviews the compliance with the department's regulations, operations, procedures, and controls and if they comply with the international goods practices and operate effectively.

So, BTSD is looking for reorganizing its Internal Audit Division into an Internal Control Division with the view of improving both, the control of staff integrity and the internal audit. This consultancy is intended to address this concern.

Consequently, the BTSD will explore the introduction of a Risk Management Plan (RMP) to properly respond to the risks identified on a timely basis, to minimize overall compliance burden for both the taxpayers and the tax administration. As an important aspect of the RMP, risk mitigating strategies will be proposed for application against potential and existing risks. The plan will highlight all areas of risks including risk-based assessments, risk-based audits, risk-based sector and taxpayer segmentation, compliance risks (registration, filing, reporting and payments) and international risks. Risk mitigation reduces the extent of exposure and ensures that the strategic objectives are achieved."

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So, BTSD is looking for reorganizing its Internal Audit Division into an Internal Control Division with the view of improving both, the control of staff integrity and the internal audit. This consultancy is intended to address this concern.

The consulting services ("the services") includes the contracting of a Consulting Firm for a period of eight (8) months is to design and implement an Internal Control Model including the implementation of a system to support internal control processes. The main activity of the consultancy includes:

- 1 **Prepare the action plan for implementation of the new Internal Control function includes:**
 - a. Detailed project, its outcomes and success indicators
 - b. Intended results and their justification
 - c. The consultancy risk assessment and mitigation
 - d. Cost and other detailed resource requirements, if necessary
 - e. Schedule for implementation
- 2 **Carry out an assessment**
 - a. Review BTSD current practices and recent events regarding Internal audit and integrity investigation
 - b. Review BTSD Internal Audit Division organization, staff, and legal framework
 - c. Review the BTSD current regulations, operations, procedures, and controls with a view to prepare internal audit and integrity investigation plans
 - d. Review BTSD compliance with the new ITAS procedures
 - e. Review recent cases of BTSD staff integrity issues
 - f. Interview relevant stakeholders to determine the general perception on the BTSD staff integrity
- 3 **Draft Internal Control Model**
 - a. Outline the guidelines and policies to the implementation and operation of the BTSD Internal Control Model including internal audit and integrity investigations
 - b. Define the Internal Control procedures inclusive case selection and processing
 - c. Define the necessary changes in, or queries to ITAS to provide information on potential integrity deviations and for case selection
- 4 **Design and implement the BTSD Internal Audit organizational structure**
 - a. Propose the organizational structure of the BTSD Internal Division including the internal audit and integrity investigation units
 - b. Prepare the job descriptions, including competencies, for staff of the BTSD Internal Audit Division
 - c. Estimate the necessary HR for the unit
 - a. Define the required BTSD Internal Control staff skills, knowledge, and abilities,
 - b. Define the requirements for the Internal Control staff training
 - c. Train the Internal Control Division staff
- 5 **Development of the Internal Control Manuals, handbooks, and Code of Conduct**
 - a. Draft the Internal audit manual
 - b. Draft the integrity investigation manual
 - c. Draft the necessary handbooks for both areas
 - d. Draft the BTSD staff Code of Conduct
 - e. The Internal Audit manual should include at least:
 - i. The Internal Audit mission and strategies
 - ii. The Internal Audit procedures
 - iii. The Internal Audit organizational structure as part of the Internal Control Division
 - iv. The job descriptions for the Internal Audit staff

- v. The estimation of Internal Audit staff by function
 - vi. The applications/software needs.
 - vii. The Internal Audit's performance indicators and targets
- f. **The Integrity Investigation manual should include at least:**
- i. The Integrity Investigation mission and strategies
 - ii. The Integrity investigation procedures
 - iii. The Integrity Investigation organizational structure as part of the Internal Control Division
 - iv. The job descriptions for the Integrity Investigation staff
 - v. The estimation of Integrity Investigation staff by function
 - vi. The Integrity Investigation applications/software needs.
 - vii. The Integrity Investigation's performance indicators and targets

6 Execute dissemination sensitization workshops on the Internal Control model and manuals, including Internal Audit and Integrity Investigations

- a. Deliver seminar for the BRS managers
- b. Deliver seminars for the Internal Control staff
- c. Deliver seminars for the BTSD staff
- d. Deliver seminars to other authorities
- e. Deliver seminars for main stakeholders
- f. Train the Internal Audit Staff
- g. Train the Integrity Investigation Staff

The consulting firm should have a minimum of five (5) years' experience in similar assignment. In addition, the consulting firm should have a minimum of five (5) years specific experience in the following:

- Organizational development and design
- Development of internal audit and staff integrity investigation systems
- Development of internal audit and staff integrity investigation organizations
- Development of internal audit and staff integrity investigation procedures and manuals
- Job analysis and job evaluation
- Training needs analysis, and;
- Staff training capacity

The firm will need to have or demonstrate expertise in internal audit and integrity investigation, communication and interpersonal skills, business Strategy (supporting business and organizational goals), Presentation and facilitation skills, flexibility and adaptability, time management skills, fluency in written and spoken English is essential, and highly motivated and committed. As well as have knowledge and experience working in Belize and or the Caribbean environment in a similar assignment.

The Ministry of Finance now invites eligible Consulting Firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested eligible Consultants must submit an Expression of Interest providing information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services (description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills, etc.). **The term "consultant" means a legally established professional consulting firm or an entity that may provide the services.**

Expression of Interest package should contain:

- (i) Document explaining interest, experience, and competence of the consulting firm.
- (ii) Firms experience in the assignment of similar consultancy services during the past five years. Description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments.
- (iii) Firms evidence of past jobs. (These includes letters from the respective client on the job (s) carried out, or a copy of contract or agreement with the client including copy of the TOR).
- (iv) Two references
- (v) **Proof of nationality:** Copy of certificate of incorporation, information of shareholders of company specifying the shares owned by each respective shareholder of the company and a copy of documentation of nationality of the shareholders of the company.

Additional documentation required for National Consultants:

- (vi) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from Belize Company Registry
- (vii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Social Security Board
- (viii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Belize Tax Service
- (ix) Copy of Current Trade License

The total estimated contract price for this consultancy inclusive of taxes is US \$ 319,805.00

Consultants will be selected in accordance with the with the Quality and Cost - Based Selection (QCBS) procurement method set out in the Inter-American Development Bank: **Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants financed by the Inter-American Development Bank** (GN-2350-15, May 2019 edition) and is open to all eligible consultants as defined in the IDB policies. The selection of the successful firm will be based on a competitive process among short-listed firms that takes into account the quality of the proposal and the cost of the service. **Only the short-listed firms will be notified and will be asked to submit a technical and price proposal.**

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications. For the purpose of establishing the short list, the nationality of a firm is that of the country in which it is legally incorporated or constituted and in the case of Joint Venture, the nationality of the firm appointed to represent it.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours **Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.** Expressions of interest must be delivered via direct mail or e-mail at the address indicated below by **3:30 p.m. (Belize local time) on Tuesday April 26th, 2022.**

Interested consulting firms are asked to submit their expression of interest via e-mail to Michelle.Longsworth@bts.gov.bz marked **STAP- Consulting firm to design and implement an Internal Control Model including the implementation of a system to support internal control processes** in the subject header, or submit on or before **3:30 p.m. (Belize local time) on Tuesday April 26th, 2022** to the following address:

Director General
Belize Tax Service
Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Charles Bartlett Hyde Building
Mahogany Street, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114

For clarifications kindly contact:

Procurement Officer
Project Executing Unit
Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Charles Bartlett Hyde Building
Mahogany Street, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114/E-mail: Ian.Ramirez@mof.gov.bz

RES PUBLICA

Belizeans demand Referendum as Marijuana legalization faces non-accommodative policy env.

In one way or the other, many individuals may have come across the term “entrepreneurial ecosystem.” As the World Economic Forum (WEF) defines it, the entrepreneurial ecosystem is the “system of interrelated pillars that impact the speed and ability with which entrepreneurs can create and scale new ventures in a sustainable way.”

Essentially, the state of the ecosystem determines, on average, whether the economy in question would have robust or frail entrepreneurial activity. Using the WEF’s framework, there are eight pillars of this system: Accessible Markets, Human Capital/Workforce, Funding & Finance, Support Systems/Mentors, Government & Regulatory Framework, Education and Training, Major Universities as Catalysts, and Cultural Support.

Some of these pillars’ roles are intuitively appreciated. Take “Accessible Markets,” for instance. If the freshly minted entrepreneurial venture does not have access to local or foreign buyers, then it is doomed to fail: a business needs customers, it’s that simple.

Similarly, a dearth of finance flowing to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) is easily understood as a death knell for many startups. Finally, the role of the regulatory framework created by the country’s government matters. This is where the business community in most market economies is heard clamoring for “easing” when it comes to the processes for starting a business, or demanding improvements in key infrastructure such as telecommunications or road networks.

Non-accommodative conditions in any one or more of those pillars can decelerate the emergence of strong entrepreneurial activity. The term “ecosystem” is, therefore, appropriate because it immediately communicates the interconnected nature of the various components.

And, to the point of this article, a similar concept exists for public policies, as policy entrepreneurs likewise have to maneuver the policy conditions as they advance their preferred solutions to public problems.

The policy landscape can either be accommodative or non-accommodative, and that is the lesson that the proponents of marijuana legalization are learning, as Belizeans push back against the Cannabis and Industrial Hemp Control and Licensing Bill 2022, and demand a referendum to settle the matter.

From Ecosystems to Streams: Marijuana Legalization

Analogous to the role played by the entrepreneurial ecosystem as devised by economists and management experts, political scientists and public policy analysts likewise have identified various frameworks to aid in gauging whether or not a particular policy will make its way through the policy process successfully. The policy process includes six iterative steps: “(1) problem emergence, (2) agenda-setting (problem identification), (3) consideration of policy options, (3) decision-making, (5) implementation, and (6) evaluation.”

Because all policy solutions begin with “a problem,” policy entrepreneurs (i.e. policymakers, advocacy organizations, think tanks, special interest groups, lobbyists, and the like) actively keep an eye out for “windows of opportunity” within which they try to get their favored or preferred policy solution on the decision agenda. Given the fact that the decision agenda is where the problem and its accompanied solution are set to be acted on by the government, this is the coveted spot among competing policy entrepreneurs.

But how do policy entrepreneurs know when a window of opportunity has “opened?” And how do they know when it has “closed?”

John Kingdon’s (1984) Multiple Streams Framework is one of several models that provide answers to those questions. Of course, as these things go, over the years Kingdon’s model has benefited from advancement, including the contributions by the likes of Nikolaos Zahariadis (2003) and Isabel Flores (2017). Nevertheless, the core tenets remain unchanged. According to the Kingdon model, policy windows “open” when the problem, politics, and policy streams (as he calls them) are active and have converged.

Using the operationalization approach proposed by Zahariadis (2003) and Flores (2017) (henceforth, “the model”), PolicyScape360 examined the policy environment with respect to the idea of marijuana legalization in Belize. The quantitative results predict an “Unsuccessful” bid for “4:20” supporters. The rest of this article is dedicated to elaborating on the “why.”

What’s the Problem, Anyway?!

Let’s begin here. Policy windows seldom open, and when they do, they hardly stay open for very

from the start. The recent Senate meeting attested to this fact, with the social partner senators voicing their concerns and lack of support for the Cannabis and Industrial Hemp Control and Licensing Bill 2022.

But the mood was possibly best articulated by Church Senator Hon. Alvin Benguche, who, on March 30th, said to the Senate:

“No matter how many consultations are held, insofar as the church is concerned this is not the direction in which we should be going at this time. [Especially] when we heard earlier from this morning that we now have a robust economy and the economy is growing and things are looking up and all the possibilities. I can agree with the government that things are looking up.”

Benguche’s words did not only signal that the “window,” in his and the churches’ view, had closed, but he also questioned if the problem even still existed.

The government, the policy entrepreneurs, in this case, had sold legalization, inter alia, as the solution to an economic problem. In answering a question on the speed with which the Government had been moving with the Bill, Minister of New Growth Industries Hon. Kareem Musa had said to the Belizean media:

“You have to understand that our administration came in on a mandate to rebound our economy. It’s been a year. Some people will argue and say it’s taking too long, because this is one of those industries where we can see significant value back to our economy, back to getting that 10% for our teachers and our public officers.”

That interview was given in November 2021. Fast forward, however, to the recent budget debates, and we have the Prime Minister, via his budget speech, painting a far rosier picture:

“According to recent estimates by the IMF [International Monetary Fund], Belize’s economy expanded by 12.5 percent in 2021 relative to 2020. The SIB’s preliminary number is just below 10 percent. This impressive performance follows a 16.7 percent

decline the year before when the country faced severe pandemic-related economic losses, marking one of the most significant GDP swings since independence and among service-based economies within this region. [...] According to the Central Bank, job opportunities improved amid pandemic-related disruptions and Government’s myriad efforts to drive up employment opportunities. The unemployment rate fell to 9.2 percent in September 2021. [...] I announced the policy decision to restore the 10 percent wage adjustment, which had become effective July 01 of last year. Wages will therefore be restored 2 years ahead of schedule.”

Listening carefully to Benguche’s words, the sentiment, among other things, is that one of the chief problems to which this policy was attached has already been solved! Without the legalization of marijuana, the economy, according to the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues, has been rebounding. Also, without legalization, even the 10% salary cut was reversed ahead of schedule. So, where’s the economic problem that this controversial new-growth industry was supposed to solve?

When unemployment was hovering closer to 30%, it was easier for the government to have defined an unemployment problem that requires an aggressive solution via the advent of a legitimate cannabis industry. However, with *Cont’d on pg. 15*



long. These “windows” tend to open following a recent change in administration, especially when the energies post-General Elections are still high. They also open when there is a change in the “national mood” on a particular issue, or a new problem (or a new way of looking at an old problem) emerges.

The window, of course, can close as easily, if the problem supposedly being addressed is either already fixed or the crisis itself has passed or has otherwise been averted.

Based on the foregoing, the model shows that it is hard-pressed to still think of the November 2020 general elections as being “recent” enough. Moreover, the incumbent administration had spent a great deal of its newfound political capital on other unpopular policies such as the 10% salary cut for public officers and teachers.

While that issue too was not without its opposition by the directly affected parties, the (at the time) recent general elections had afforded the administration enough “capital” with the general public to let that policy somewhat slide. Can the government, however, rely on the “honeymoon” effect when it comes to marijuana legalization? Fact is that it has been almost two years since November 2020.

In terms of the national mood, the social partners—as expressed via their senate representatives—had remained apprehensive of the idea of legalization

RES PUBLICA

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Cont'd from pg. 14 employment being reported at 9.2% (on the surface even lower than 2019's pre-COVID 10.4%), then Benguche and his colleagues are expected to be more adamant in their opposition.

Of course, legalization was not exclusively sold as an economic panacea. It was likewise attached to social justice considerations, as well as a way to purge the shadow economy of cartel activity. Regarding the latter, Hon. Musa has reiterated, in an April 5th interview, the point that it would address the cartel problem:

"A release that the NEAB put out a couple of weeks ago said that we are going to create a narco-state. Now, like I said they are not in touch with what is going on on the ground especially in Belize City because we are importing marijuana, we are importing cannabis from Mexico and what is coming along with this illegal trade are guns, let's be real. The cartels are actually sending drugs and sending guns to our young men who are just 'killing up' one another over this plant. Imagine that. And so we are saying that as a government we want to implement more controls, more regulations."

Conversely, members of the National Evangelical Association of Belize (NEAB) argue that the opposite outcome is likely. NEAB officials recently told the media:

"Our government in knowing that we live in a human trafficking and drug trafficking regime where our banks have been derisked before because drug money has been found in it is now legalizing a cash-only industry. This is sending a direct signal to cartels that their dirty money is welcomed here in this industry to be washed."

Here, there are clearly different definitions of the cartel problem. Fundamentally, the group that gets their "definition" to win has the advantage. This point was well summarized by Imer Eric Schattschneide (1960):

"The group that successfully describes a problem will also be the one that defines the solutions to it, thereby prevailing in the policy debate."

Therefore, for the economic problem, the momentum from the "focus event" of the surging unemployment has been (at this time) dampened based on the government's own words. And as far as the black market is concerned, there is no consensus that legalization will cure Belize of cartel money. There are those who argue that it could, in fact, make it worse.

The Policy Feasibility

However, even if the stakeholders could agree on the problem, the policy solution of legalization would still need to be judged based on the evaluative criteria that weigh, inter alia, its legal and technical feasibilities. Similarly, it must consider the policy's level of value acceptability within the community, as well as the degree of resource adequacy.

Starting with legal feasibility, the small open nature of the Belizean economy forces the country to consider the impacts on the banking sector, particularly, as it pertains to international correspondent banking relationships (CBRs).

We have written on this matter here at PolicyScape360 before (see [HERE](#)). And more recently, The Reporter interviewed former Central Bank Governor Glenn Ysaguirre and Heritage Bank's Managing Director Steven Duncan. Both interviewees repeated the longstanding concern regarding the likelihood of legalization triggering another round of "derisking" by CBRs.

Duncan was asked if Belize could simply rely on non-USA banks, considering that it's the United States' penalties that most CBRs fear.

"Two of the three private-sector banks in Belize use the same bank as correspondent bank out of the United Kingdom," Duncan told The Reporter. "Because the US is our country's largest trading partner, that bank in the UK must have relations with an American clearing bank to complete transactions. They cannot complete it on their own."

Closely connected to the legal feasibility, is the matter of technical feasibility. On this, Kingdon wrote:

"Advocates of a proposal must delve deeply into details and technicalities, gradually eliminating inconsistencies, attending to the feasibility of implementation, and specifying the actual mechanisms by which an idea would be brought into practical use."

The government's challenge here is that it allowed sufficient room for there have been fundamental questions raised about the government's ability to properly implement and enforce its legalization policy. A case in point is the point raised by NGO Senator Janelle Chanona who, in the Senate, questioned the age discrepancies between the current and previous laws aimed at easing restrictions.

"[There is the] need that you have to be 21 to get a [Cannabis Identification] Card but right now the law says it's decriminalized at age 18. So, for those three years is that a window that either needs to be closed or opened further?"

Chanona likewise touched on the risks to the financial sector:

"Today in terms of how hard we've worked to come as far as we have financially so they underscore their number one concern is that the industry would somehow pose some indirect or direct threat to our financial system. I know the minister has spoken about dealing with community entities, those that don't have correspondent banking relationships."

Here, Chanona is fundamentally asking how these community banks would work. Also inherent in the question is a concern as to how the government can be certain that there would not be cross-contamination, as at some point the cash parked in the community entities will have to enter the circulation in the wider economy, and ultimately find its way back to the commercial banks. This type of query demanded an elaborative response that would have alleviated these fears, by demonstrating a clear ring-fencing program to avoid such an outcome. In the absence of such explanations, however, the inconsistencies remain too conspicuous for the social partners to overlook.

Chanona also raised a point relevant to investor confidence:

"Conversation with the minister and his team in terms of if that [the financial system risks] came to pass in any way that there would be some pulling or some cease and desist of the industry. So ... then what is the clarity conveyed to investors if everything has to be shut down because of some crisis regarding the financial aspect. Then who bears losses of investors' risks?"

The NGO Senator's question rightfully alludes to whether or not the Government of Belize (GOB) would be exposed to lawsuits from investors if it is that the government must halt the industry to

stave off any imminent financial sector threat. Will the government be forced to compensate investor losses?

There may be sensible and practical answers to these questions, but clearly, the pushback from the social partners signals that there have not been sufficient signs of the government following Kingdon's advice as it pertains to them delving "deeply into details and technicalities, gradually eliminating inconsistencies."

Within the policy stream, there's also the matter of society's values and the acceptability of a policy. For years, high school students have been made to parade through the streets of Belize for "Red Ribbon Week" with signs saying things such as "Drug Free is the Way to Be" or "A Healthy Me is Drug Free." There was even the 2018 slogan: "Life is your journey. Travel Drug Free."

This message and the like have been promulgated throughout learning institutions and other guardians of society's values for decades. Entire generations of Belizeans have adopted these views. Therefore, a sharp change in policy has not given sufficient Belizeans time to reconcile the two dimensions of this debate.

The policy, therefore, does not appear to pass the social partners' assessment of its legal and technical feasibilities, and it does hold up against the country's traditional values.

Not Enough To Hold the "Window" Open

Now, we can look into the Politics Stream, however, at this stage, it is worth reminding that Kingdon's model underscores that only when all three streams (policy, problem, and politics) are active and converge can it be said that the Policy Window is "Open." As a result, the challenges facing the problem and policy streams alone are enough to signal that the window has "closed."

Within that backdrop, the call for a referendum ought not to be surprising, but rather an inevitability. Ideally, it would have been prudent for the call for the referendum to have been made by the government itself, as it would have certainly augmented its 'good will' with the people, thereby, replenishing its political capital.

As was stated at the start of this article, as is true of the entrepreneurial ecosystem's impact on MSMEs, public policies likewise rely on certain conditions to thrive. Of course, the government has the ability to use its authority to ram ahead with its preferred policy decisions, but it must be aware that in so doing it would burn up more of its political capital. It will, then, boil down to whether Cabinet deems such political cost as worth it.

In short, there is prudence in the administration acknowledging that the window is effectively closed, and it is being given an opportunity to rely on the referendum to breathe legitimacy into this process, even though referenda are not necessarily legally binding on GOB.

Candidly speaking, there are no guarantees as to which direction the final vote will go on a referendum. If GOB wins a free and fair majority "YES" vote, it can save some face, but it would also be wise to still address the technical and legal feasibilities. And considering the values element, even with a "Yes" vote on the referendum, a gradual approach to implementation would have great value.

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Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper's stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.





Belize Agricultural Health Authority

The Belize Agricultural Health Authority invites applications from suitably qualified candidates to fill the following positions:

1. QUARANTINE INSPECTOR

Minimum qualification and skills:

1. Associate Degree in Agricultural Science or related field;
2. Work experience in the Agriculture Sector is an asset;
3. Superior work ethics and practices;
4. Excellent public relations;
5. Bi-lingual (English and Spanish)
6. Very good written and verbal communication skills;
7. Computer Literate;
8. Valid class "A" driver's license;

The primary function of the position is to Safeguard Belize's Agricultural Health and Food Safety through inspection of imported commodities.

Salary: \$17,810.76 x 852.84 - \$34,014.72

Station of Duty: The quarantine inspector is subject to rotation throughout the country every two to three years.

2. FOOD SAFETY LABORATORY TECHNICIAN

Minimum qualification and skills:

1. Bachelor's degree in Biology and/or Chemistry with a minimum of one (1) year work experience in testing of food, feed, environmental or biological samples;
2. Strong work ethics and practices, honesty and integrity;
3. Capacity to achieve results through teamwork;
4. Strong inter-personal, organizational and communication skills;
5. Bi-lingual (ability to speak and write English and Spanish);
6. Knowledge and experience with laboratory equipment;
7. Knowledge or work experience in laboratory techniques;
8. Knowledge of sample handling principles;
9. Computer literate;
10. Team player who is flexible, objective, highly motivated and takes initiative;
11. Valid class "A" driver's license;

The primary function of the position is to conduct analysis of foods and other matrices and perform other laboratory activities in support of food safety monitoring programmes.

Salary: \$20,665.92 x 927 - \$38,278.92

Station of Duty: Central Investigation Laboratory, Belize City

3. AGRONOMIST

1. A Bachelor's Degree in Agronomy with two (2) years work experience in plant protection activities;
2. Superior work ethics, honesty and integrity;
3. Superior written and verbal communication skills;
4. Superior planning, analytical, data collecting, and resource management skills;
5. Ability to lead a team;
6. Bi-lingual (ability to speak and write English and Spanish);
7. Computer Literate;
8. Team player who is highly motivated and takes initiative;
9. Valid class "A" driver's license;

The agronomist will be responsible to provide support to the Plant Health Department in all areas of Plant Protection. The post will be a middle management post and the successful candidate will be required to supervise staff.

Salary: \$26,351.52 x 1,137.12 - \$47,956.80

Station of Duty: Central Farm, Cayo District

4. MEDITERRANEAN FRUIT FLY TECHNICIAN

Minimum qualification and skills:

1. Associate Degree in Applied Science (Agriculture) or Agricultural Science with one (1) year work related experience;
2. Superior work ethics, honesty and integrity;
3. Superior written and verbal communication skills;
4. Computer Literate;
5. Team player who is highly motivated and takes initiative;
6. Valid class "A" driver's license.

The primary function of the Mediterranean fruit fly technician is to perform surveillance and inspection activities to ensure a medfly-free status of Belize.

Salary: \$17,810.76 x 852.84 - \$34,014.72

Station of Duty: Punta Gorda Town, Toledo District

5. FINANCE DIRECTOR

Minimum Qualification and Experience Requirements:

- Master's degree in Accounting and/or Business Administration with five (5) years financial management experience or a Bachelor's degree in Accounting and/or Business Administration with 10 years financial management experience; OR
- Professional Qualification in Accounting (CPA, ACCA, etc.) with five (5) years accounting and financial management experience;
- Thorough understanding of accrual accounting, International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS);

The primary function of the finance director is to provide oversight on the financial operations of the Authority; review and make recommendations on accounting policies, procedures, standards, and controls to ensure financial system(s) are accurate, efficient, and complies with professional accounting practices; and will be responsible to prepare the Authority for an annual financial audit.

Additionally, the finance director will be responsible for financial forecasting, budgeting, and cost recovery and reduction schemes as well as to provide timely financial reports to the Managing Director.

Key Job Responsibilities:

- Manage the preparation of the Organization budget in collaboration with the Management team;
- Maintain a documented system of accounting policies and procedures following International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and/or other applicable accounting guidelines; ensures complete and up to date operating procedures for all accounting and financial controls;
- Forecast cash flow positions, related financing needs, and available funds for investment;
- Ensure maintenance of effective internal controls to assure safeguarding of assets; carryout annual inventory counts and implement replacement plans for vehicle and It Equipment;
- Update fixed asset register and schedule on a quarterly basis;
- Manage the accounts receivables portfolio; timely revenue collection, recording and processing of customers financial transactions;
- Manage the accounts payable portfolio; timely approval of expenditure per department within budget allocations and constraints.
- Prepare financial reports and carry out procurement processes for grant/project funds received by the Organization;
- Prepare audit schedule for external auditor and acts as a liaison between the Organization and auditors;
- Participate in and provide support to the Finance Committee of the BAHA Board of Directors; Management representative on BAHA Provident Fund Committee and BAHA Employee Provident Fund Board of Trustees.

Salary: \$35,460.84 x 1,433.76 - \$62,702.28


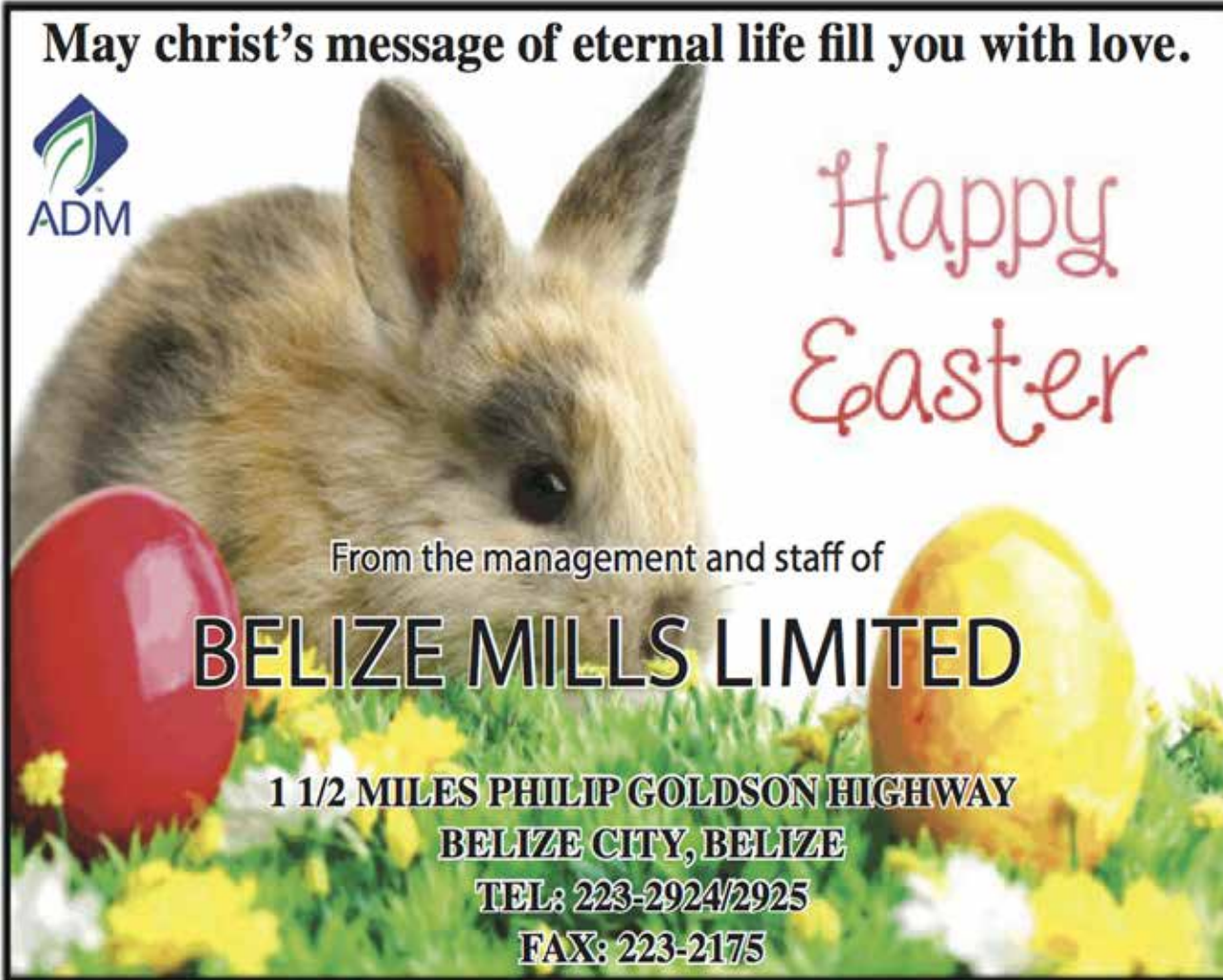
Station: BAHA Headquarters, Belmopan

Kindly indicate the job position of interest on your application package.

Interested persons may submit letter of application, résumé, proof of qualification, official transcript and two recent reference letters and a police record, no later than **Thursday, April 21st, 2022** to:

Human Resource Director
Belize Agricultural Health Authority
P.O. Box 169
Cor. Hummingbird Hwy. & Forest Dr., Belmopan, Belize
Phone: 501-8220197, Fax: 501-8220271
E-mail: baha@btl.net, website: www.baha.org.bz

May christ's message of eternal life fill you with love.

Happy
Easter

From the management and staff of

BELIZE MILLS LIMITED

1 1/2 MILES PHILIP GOLDSON HIGHWAY
BELIZE CITY, BELIZE
TEL: 223-2924/2925
FAX: 223-2175

Belize Global Travel Services Ltd.
and
Aero Dispatch Services Ltd.


Would like to inform their customers of their working hours for the Easter weekend,

The office will be closed at 1:00 pm on Thursday, April 14, 2022 and will reopen on Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at 8:00 am

The management and staff take this opportunity to thank all their valued customers for their patronage and wish everyone a safe and blessed Easter



Happy Easter



Belize Electric Company Ltd.
A FORTIS COMPANY

Belize Electric Co. Ltd.
1 Caracol St.
San Ignacio Town
Cayo District
Belize, Central America
Telephone: 501-824-3016
Facsimile: 501-824-4512

PRESS RELEASE

The Belize Electric Company Limited (BECOL), in collaboration with the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), the Department of Environment (DOE), and the Ministry of Health (MOH) will host a virtual public discussion for communities downstream of the BECOL hydroelectric facilities and the general public on Wednesday, April 27th, 2022. The virtual public meeting will take place from 2pm to 4:30pm and will be live-streamed on the Government of Belize Press Office Facebook page, the Love FM Facebook page, and on Love TV. This interactive discussion is aimed at educating and informing residents and stakeholders on issues such as the Early Warning System (EWS) and related emergency procedures, mercury-in-fish data, water quality of the Macal, and other topics that may be of concern to stakeholders.

This exercise is an ongoing effort by BECOL/NEMO/DOE/MOH to inform and educate the public and to safeguard the wellbeing of the communities along the Macal River. All stakeholders and the general public are encouraged to tune in to the live broadcast.

Belize Port Authority Concerned Over Illegal Increase in Water Taxi Fares

By Michelle Sutherland

The Belize Port Authority has issued a press release informing commuters of the standardized passenger fares across the country, in an effort to prevent them from being overcharged, as complaints of water taxi operators increasing their fares ahead of the Easter weekend have started to increase.

The Belize Port Authority, which is the body in charge of regulating water transport, notified the public that they have not approved any recent changes to the passenger's fares and that any charges above the approved rates are unlawful and will not be tolerated.

The Port Authority said that they "are alarmed at the total disregard of the law by some water taxi operators." and that they have taken urgent and immediate steps to ensure that all water taxi operators are in full compliance with the Water Taxi Regulations and that they respect the rights of commuters.

A schedule signed by the Ports Commissioner Major Gilbert Swaso notified that for San Pedro Belize Express a maximum one-way ticket from Belize City to Caye Caulker is \$25.00 while a maximum of \$35.00 is for round trips. From Belize City to San Pedro the maximum one-way fare should be priced at \$35.00 while a maximum round trip fare should cost \$55.00. From San Pedro to Caye Caulker the one way fare should be priced at \$25.00 and round trip between the two islands should be \$35.00.

In the case of Hokey Pokey, which transit between Independence and Placencia, the maximum one-way fare for adults is \$7.25, \$4.25 for children and \$10.25 for tourist.

Belize Sea Shuttle Express which operates from out of the north has been approved to charge commuters a maximum one-way fare from Corozal to Sarteneja \$30.00 and \$55.00 round trip, while from Corozal to San Pedro, the maximum one-way fare should be \$60.00 and \$55.00 round trip.

While these are just a portion of the approved fees for water taxi's that operate both inside and outside of the country, the additional list can be found on the Government Press Office Face Book Page.

The Belize Port Authority is furthermore asking for the public's cooperation in reporting any attempts by any water taxi operator to charge more than the approved rates. That can be done by submitting ticket stubs, with the price attached, to the department. That will then result in the water taxi operator being made to refund those excess charges to the commuter.

It can also lead to charges being brought against the water taxi operator for breach of the Harbours and Merchant Shipping Regulations. Any water taxi operator found guilty of such an offence is liable to a fine of \$5,000 for each offence (ticket sold). If found guilty, their tour operators' licences could also be revoked.



Oración al Espíritu Santo

Espíritu Santo. Tú que me aclaras todo, que iluminas todo mis caminos para yo alcance mi ideal; tú que das el don divino de perdonar y olvidar el mal que me hacen y que en todos los instantes de mi vida estas conmigo, yo quiero en este corto diálogo agradecerte por todo y confirmar una vez más que nunca quiero separarme de ti, por mayor que sea la ilusión material! Deseo estar contigo y todos mis seres queridos por tu misericordia para estar conmigo y los míos. (La persona debiera rezar esta oración 3 días seguidos sin decir el pedido. Dentro de tres días será difícil que sea. Publicar en cuando se reciba la gracia.

Gracias Espíritu Santo.

R.M.L.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The U.S. Embassy Belmopan is seeking eligible and qualified applicants for the following position:

Position Name: Supply Clerk
Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-11
Closing date: April 23rd, 2022

Interested applicants must submit their application via the Electronic Recruitment Application (ERA) system, a web-based system. To view and apply for this vacancy, visit the ERA site at: <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/blz/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

Please visit the Embassy's website for instructions on how to apply via the ERA system: <https://bz.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/>

Note 1: Resumes will not be considered. Candidates must note all work experience when completing the ERA application. Insufficient or incomplete information will result in an ineligible application.

Note 2: Candidates must submit applicable required documentation by the closing date of this announcement. Failure to provide the required documentation will result in an ineligible application.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The U.S. Embassy Belmopan is seeking eligible and qualified applicants for the following position:

Position Name: Trades Helper
Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-07
Closing date: April 14th, 2022

Interested applicants must submit their application via the Electronic Recruitment Application (ERA) system, a web-based system. To view and apply for this vacancy, visit the ERA site at: <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/blz/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

Please visit the Embassy's website for instructions on how to apply via the ERA system: <https://bz.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/>

Note 1: Resumes will not be considered. Candidates must note all work experience when completing the ERA application. Insufficient or incomplete information will result in an ineligible application.

Note 2: Candidates must submit applicable required documentation by the closing date of this announcement. Failure to provide the required documentation will result in an ineligible application.

BELIZE CITY,

Estate of TYRON CARLTON HERNANDEZ also known as TYRONE HERNANDEZ, deceased

STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Pursuant to Section 36 of the Administration of Estates Act, Chapter 197 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that all creditors and other persons having any claims or demands upon or against the Estate of TYRON CARLTON HERNANDEZ also known as TYRONE HERNANDEZ, late of Dangriga, Stann Creek District, Belize, are required to send particulars in writing of their claims or demands to the Administrator of the said estate, RYAN SHELDON NEAL of #2944 Plantain Street, Second New Site, Dangriga, Stann Creek District, Belize, and to send such particulars not later than the 9th day of July, 2022, AND NOTICE IS HEREBY ALSO GIVEN that at the expiration of the last mentioned date, the Administrator will proceed to distribute the assets of the said TYRON CARLTON HERNANDEZ also known as TYRONE HERNANDEZ, deceased, amongst the parties entitled thereto having regard only to the claims or demands of which particulars have been delivered and the Administrator will not be liable for the assets of the deceased or any part thereof so distributed to any person or persons of whose claims or demands he shall not then have had notice.

DATED this 6th day of April, 2022.


PHILIP ZUNIGA, S. C.
Attorney-at-Law for the Administrator



May your Easter basket be filled with joy, happiness, and peace this season and always.



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As we celebrate Easter, may we all remember God's perfect love for all mankind. May that love fill us with hope during this season and the days to come. We wish all Belizeans a safe and blessed Easter Weekend.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF OUR OFIFCE HOURS

HOLY THURSDAY APRIL 14, 2022	8 AM - 1 PM
GOOD FRIDAY APRIL 15, 2022	CLOSED
HOLY SATURDAY APRIL 16, 2022	CLOSED
EASTER MONDAY APRIL 18, 2022	CLOSED



No Excuses

Racing to the Bottom!

Contributed by Sedi

The recent legalization of marijuana in our country is now being heatedly debated at home, in the Belizean diaspora, on radio and TV, and on social media. Feelings are running high! Our society is sharply divided on this emotional issue. As a political activist for over fifty years I have never seen nor heard the Roman Catholic Church, in particular, and all other denominations in our country, express so openly and passionately their opposition to a government initiative as they are now expressing against the new marijuana law.

One priest has gone so far as to suggest that our government runs the risk of being labeled a “narco government.” And, it is not only the churches that are outraged. Social partners are equally outraged, and so too are a large number of law-abiding Belizeans who are generally fearful of the consequences that will flow from marijuana legalization.

The bipartisan support for the legislation in the National Assembly in the face of unprecedented public opposition points to a sad reality. Our elected representatives and nominated senators have now attained a level of sophistication where they defer more readily to the wishes of the drug cartels than they do to the churches and our civic organizations. It also tends to suggest that those leaders are more powerfully swayed by the lure of “Thirty Pieces of Silver”, than they are by their civic, ethical, and moral duty to protect the citizenry of this country whose paid servants they are.

In that regard, it is not without significance that none of our present political leaders has any track record of generous disinterested public service. And, none can lay claim to be-

ing, or show proof of being, a principled patriotic statesman. On the streets, the popular conviction is that our politicians are myopic, greedy, and corrupt and that they are no more virtuous than prostitutes! That is not surprising!

Recall that the settlement which evolved into the nation of Belize was started not by visionary intellectuals and statesmen, but by British pirates and buccaneers who used the cayes and forests as hiding places and places of refuge. These pirates and buccaneers earned their livelihood by violently attacking Spanish ships sailing to Spain, laden with gold and silver which the Spanish conquistadores were systematically plundering from Latin America. Fast forward to today.

Our national leaders are all direct descendants of those very pirates, buccaneers, and their slaves and colonized people whom the British had conscripted and transported to our settlement to work for them in the jungles. Our national leaders were therefore neither heirs to any great ethical or moral tradition nor to any great intellectual tradition. The little ethical and moral instructions which they received were taught to them by the churches, which most of them no longer attend.

As a consequence of death, ethical and moral values, and persistent poverty, our politicians have always fallen easy prey to the blandishments of drug dealers and fraudsters. And a number of them gained notoriety for their alleged connection with drug dealers even before we gained Independence in 1981. A glimpse of that sad development can be gleaned from the report of a decision of the Belize Court of Appeal in Civil Appeal No 8

of 1982. That report contains a summary of one of the earliest allegations of complicity between a Belizean politician and high officials of the Belize Police Force and drug dealers. This particular appeal was against a decision given in a Libel suit brought by our then Premier George Price against Evan Hyde and the Amandala newspaper. The report is now easily accessible on Google. It is public information. It is not libelous as deceased persons cannot be libeled.

The summary reads as follows:

It is chillingly dispiriting and certainly does not bode well for the future of our country, that our youthful, university educated, politicians and their advisors seem convinced that the legalization of marijuana is a panacea for the numerous ills which now afflict our county.

“Before considering the arguments of counsel it may be convenient to summarize the story contained in the offending article. The tone of the article was set by the headline “dead (?) Narcotics trafficker connected with Belize Premier.” In the body of the article, the “narcotics trafficker” was identified as Barrera, the vice president of Belize Air Cargo Co., a company which Barrera boasted” was the property of George Cadle Price, Prime Minister of Belize.”

Barrera was reported to have been shot coming out of a bank in Houston, Texas and three of his associates, who were arrested at the same time, had financed the planting and guaranteed the purchasing of many areas of marijuana in Campeche; and after his death, it was rumored all the marijuana found on the beach north of Quintana Roo belonged to Barrera as also did many aircraft found in clandestine airstrips in the middle of the jungle. The

police affirmed that Barrera and his associates are only a link in the chain of “International Drug Traffick of South America and the U.S.A.” The article said it is often repeated that Belize continues to be a refuge for “contrabandists” and gangsters of all kinds

The government of George Price has accused the opposition of being financed by the American mafia. Nevertheless, George Price himself has business in foreign countries but appears at home to be upright and pure. Barrera in Merida used an

elegant Mercedes-Benz with Belize diplomatic licenses plates which “shows the direct connection with Premier George Price and links him in different special businesses.

Those of us who know the history of our country cannot claim to be surprised by the bi-partisan support that the marijuana law received in the Legislative Assembly and in the Senate. Historically, members on both sides of the aisles in those two bodies are known to be sympathetic to and even friendly with drug dealers. The drug dealers, it is believed, help finance their political campaigns.

There has always been a percentage of Belizeans, representing every social class in our country and every gender, who regularly consume marijuana for pleasure and or for medicinal purposes. And no one in Belize doubts that marijuana has significant medicinal values. Those Belizeans who use it for medicinal purposes swear by it. Equally, no one doubts that cocaine

has significant medicinal value. Indeed, no one is more grateful for a cocaine injection than this writer when in the dentist’s chair. But, it cannot be doubted, that the use and trade of both drugs have wreaked and continue to wreak havoc, violence, death, and destruction wherever they are traded. Presently in our country, we are experiencing a catastrophic epidemic of murder and violence that are directly related to the drug trade, which no Belizean administration over the last 39 years has been able to contain. Thus, the drug epidemic is getting worse inexorably, with drug planes landing seemingly nightly in our country with licenses.

Thanks to technology, Belizeans are now able to receive contemporaneously, reports of the barbarous carnage and utter disregard for law and order going on relentlessly in Mexico, our big neighbour to the north. We also learn of the complicity of the Mexican security forces and politicians in the drug trade. Further to the north, the mighty United States has for many years now been waging a losing war on drugs. Sadly its population has an insatiable demand for narcotic substances, including marijuana.

In some states, marijuana has been decriminalized. To date, however, there is no data pointing conclusively to the fact that the benefits of legalized marijuana are outweighing the social burdens that such legalization is bringing upon those states. Preliminary perceptions in those states, however, tend to suggest that with legalization there is a marked increase in homelessness, incidences of violence, and the number of people who have fallen deeper into poverty.

The majority of Belizeans are poor,

unskilled, and ill-educated. They eke out a hand-to-mouth existence. Our security and social institutions are in the main small, fragile, and chronically under-resourced. Our youth, our most valuable assets, are being slaughtered relentlessly and wantonly by drug dealers. And the safety and security of our citizens are eroding in every city, town, and village.

What guarantee do we have that legalization of marijuana will help to preserve the lives of our youth, will enhance our nation’s safety and security, and will help to improve our economic situation? No one, Belizean nor foreigner, can point to a single country in the entire world in which the drug trade has enriched its population and has enhanced the lives, livelihood, and security of its citizens.

It is chillingly dispiriting and certainly does not bode well for the future of our country, that our youthful, university educated, politicians and their advisors seem convinced that the legalization of marijuana is a panacea for the numerous ills which now afflict our county. To this septuagenarian, the thought of the legalization of marijuana as a panacea conjures up visions of a drowning man grasping at straws. It certainly will not be a panacea!

But it may well be the opening up of Pandora’s Box. And, the temerity of our politicians to be foisting this law upon us smacks of rank disrespect and despotism!

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper’s stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.

NOTICE

Estate of Bernard Bertran Santos Deceased STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Pursuant to section 36 of the Administration of Estates Act, Chapter 197 of the Laws of Belize Notice is hereby Given that all creditors and other persons having any claims or demands upon or against the **Estate of Bernard Bertran Santos** deceased late of **#22 Haulover Creek Street, Belmopan City, Cayo District, Belize** are required to send particulars in writing of their claims or demands addressed to the Administrators of the estate **Bernard Bertran Santos, P.O. Box 442, Belmopan City, Cayo District, Belize** and to send such particulars on or before the expiration of three months from the first publication hereof and notice is further given that at the expiration of the said three months the Administrators will proceed to distribute the assets of the said estate amongst the parties entitled thereto having regard only to the claims or demands of which particulars have been delivered and the Administrators will not be liable for the assets or any part thereof so distributed to any person or persons of whose claims or demands he shall not then have had notice.

Dated this 8th day of April 2022

Administrators Estate Bernard Bertran Santos

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The U.S. Embassy Belmopan is seeking eligible and qualified applicants for the following position:

Position Name: Supervisory General Services Assistant

Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-10

Closing date: April 23rd, 2022

Interested applicants must submit their application via the Electronic Recruitment Application (ERA) system, a web-based system. To view and apply for this vacancy, visit the ERA site at: <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/blz/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

Please visit the Embassy's website for instructions on how to apply via the ERA system: <https://bz.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/>

Note 1: Resumes will not be considered. Candidates must note all work experience when completing the ERA application. Insufficient or incomplete information will result in an ineligible application.

Note 2: Candidates must submit applicable required documentation by the closing date of this announcement. Failure to provide the required documentation will result in an ineligible application.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The U.S. Embassy Belmopan is seeking eligible and qualified applicants for the following position:

Position Name: Mail Room Clerk

Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-09

Closing date: April 23rd, 2022

Interested applicants must submit their application via the Electronic Recruitment Application (ERA) system, a web-based system. To view and apply for this vacancy, visit the ERA site at: <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/blz/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

Please visit the Embassy's website for instructions on how to apply via the ERA system: <https://bz.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/>

Note 1: Resumes will not be considered. Candidates must note all work experience when completing the ERA application. Insufficient or incomplete information will result in an ineligible application.

Note 2: Candidates must submit applicable required documentation by the closing date of this announcement. Failure to provide the required documentation will result in an ineligible application.

BELIZE CITY,

Estate of CLIVE ALEXANDER DOUGAL, deceased STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Pursuant to Section 36 of the Administration of Estates Act, Chapter 197 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that all creditors and other persons having any claims or demands upon or against the Estate of CLIVE ALEXANDER DOUGAL, late of Belize City, Belize, are required to send particulars in writing of their claims or demands to the Administratrix of the said estate, **KAREN NICOLE DOUGAL** of **#2925 Fabers Road, Belize City, Belize**, and to send such particulars not later than the **9th day of July, 2022**, AND NOTICE IS HEREBY ALSO GIVEN that at the expiration of the last mentioned date, the Administratrix will proceed to distribute the assets of the said CLIVE ALEXANDER DOUGAL, deceased, amongst the parties entitled thereto having regard only to the claims or demands of which particulars have been delivered and the Administratrix will not be liable for the assets of the deceased or any part thereof so distributed to any person or persons of whose claims or demands she shall not then have had notice.

DATED this 6th day of April, 2022.



PHILIP ZUNIGA, S.C.

Attorney-at-Law for the Administratrix

Weh Wi Ga Fi Seh

Vairos di eez dong,
bot kip op yu helt.

Bles Evribadi ahn Bles Bileez pahn Eesta Sondeh, Ayrpil 17, 2022

Ai ga fi mee hoap ahn kanfidens eena Gaad jos laik dehn man [*ahn uman*] ya dat wan day Gaad wahn rayz op di raichos ahn di wikid.

Aks: 24:15

Wi bradaz ahn sistaz, wi waahn unu fi noa di chroot bowt di bileeva dehn weh don ded, soh dat unu noh wahn sad laik how dehn ada peepl sad, bikaaz dehn noh ga no hoap eena Gaad. Wee bileev seh dat Jeezas mi ded ahn dat ih rayz op bak fahn di ded. Ahn wee bileev sayhn way dat Gaad wahn sen bak wid Jeezas aala dehn wan weh mi ded ahn weh mi put dehn fayt eena Jeezas.

1 Tesaloanyanz 13-14

Weh yu di du dis Eesta 2022? Ah noa seh sohn a wi redi fi spen wi fos Eesta widownt tu moch woriz bowt di koroanavairos. Wi hoap seh evribadi ga wahn hapi Eesta seezn, ahn wahn blesid Eesta Sondeh. Yu da krass konchri persn? Yu da kee persn? Yu da rivabenk person pahn Eesta? Yu memba yu choch? Eet op hat kraas bon? Wateva yu du, wi aal hoap Faada Gaad bles wi ahn bles Bileez. -----

Silvaana Udz, Ed.D. da fahn Bileez. If yu waahn tel shee bowt sohnting sheshal fu put eena dis Kriol aatiki, eemayl: sudz142@gmail.com Vizit: www.nationalkriolcouncil.org

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The U.S. Embassy Belmopan is seeking eligible and qualified applicants for the following position:

Position Name: Residential Security Equipment Technician

Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-08

Closing date: April 15th, 2022

Interested applicants must submit their application via the Electronic Recruitment Application (ERA) system, a web-based system. To view and apply for this vacancy, visit the ERA site at: <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/blz/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

Please visit the Embassy's website for instructions on how to apply via the ERA system: <https://bz.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/>

Note 1: Resumes will not be considered. Candidates must note all work experience when completing the ERA application. Insufficient or incomplete information will result in an ineligible application.

Note 2: Candidates must submit applicable required documentation by the closing date of this announcement. Failure to provide the required documentation will result in an ineligible application.



STRENGTHENING OF TAX ADMINISTRATION PROJECT

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Consultancy Firm to prepare and implement the Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD) Enforcement Collection Model based on risk criteria

Institution: The Ministry of Finance (MOF)
Country: Belize
Project: Strengthening of Tax Administration (STA)
Abstract: Consulting Services – Consultancy Firm to prepare and implement the Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD) Enforcement Collection Model based on risk criteria
Loan No.: 4839/OC-BL
Deadline: April 29th, 2022, Belize Local Time

The Government of Belize (GOB) has received financing from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for the execution of a five-year tax modernization project entitled “Strengthening of Tax Administration” (BL-L1031). Through this project, the Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD) has procured a Modern Integrated Tax Administration System (the Revenue Management System (RMS) and is presently in the implementation process. This new system will be used in the management of the Belize Tax Administration.

The authorities’ concerns on the growth of the arrears balance are reflected in the BTSD strategic plan; “The stock of debt has been steadily increasing throughout the years, with the largest increase recorded between 2017 and 2018. The respective annual increases from 2016 to 2018 were 4%, 7% and 23%. There is a need to institute a mechanism to facilitate monitoring and timely enforcement actions to collect and recover revenues.”

The consulting services (“the services”) includes the contracting of a Consultancy Firm for a period of **five (5) months**. The main activity of the consultancy includes:

1. To assess the current situation of BTSD enforcement collection and review the organization and resources of the collection area as well as their skills
2. To assess the potential sources for information on taxpayer transactions and assets that could be used as arrears payments (Customs, social security, immovable property registration department, Bank accounts, City Council’s Traffic Departments, etc.)
3. Propose a strategy for enforcement collections and prioritization based on risk analysis, define risk parameters and relevant mitigation measures as well as special procedures according to taxpayer segments
4. Establish a system of payment by instalment via Internet, with parameters defined by BTSD with payments through automatic debit in the taxpayer bank account and to freeze delinquent taxpayers’ bank accounts via Internet
5. Establish rules for writing off uncollectable debts and modify ITAS to incorporate them
6. Update the BTSD Enforcement Collection manual defining the procedures to select the debts to be enforced, the task to collect the debt, the identification, and procedures to put a lien on debtors’ properties, the rules, and procedures for agreements for payment by instalment, etc.
7. Propose performance indicators for monitoring the enforcement collection
8. Deliver workshops and train the collection staff in the new procedures
9. Implement the new procedures
10. Conduct Pilot with the designated BTSD staff to plan, execute and report on randomly selected taxpayers.

The Consultancy Firm should have a minimum of **five (5) years’** relevant working experience in the following areas:

- **Organizational development and design;**
- **Enforced arrears collections;**
- **Tax administration training**

As well as minimum of five (5) years relevant assistance to tax administrations, particularly in the arrears collection areas. In addition, the Consultant firm should have at least three (3) years of previous experience specifically in conducting programs on arrears collection with the use of risk analysis techniques or similar programs and consultancies between the calendar years 2015 to 2020, as well as experience in Belize, and Caribbean environment.

The Ministry of Finance now invites eligible Consultancy Firms (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested eligible Consultants must submit an Expression of Interest providing information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services (description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills, etc.). *The term “consultant” means a legally established professional consulting firm or an entity that may provide the services.*

Expression of Interest package should contain:

- (i) Document explaining interest, experience, and competence of the consulting firm.

- (ii) Firms experience in the assignment of similar consultancy services during the past five years. Description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments.
- (iii) Firms evidence of past jobs. (These includes letters from the respective client on the job (s) carried out, or a copy of contract or agreement with the client including copy of the TOR).
- (iv) Two references
- (v) **Proof of nationality:** Copy of certificate of incorporation, information of shareholders of company specifying the shares owned by each respective shareholder of the company and a copy of documentation of nationality of the shareholders of the company.

Additional documentation required for National Consultants:

- (vi) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from Belize Company Registry
- (vii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Social Security Board
- (viii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Belize Tax Service
- (ix) Copy of Current Trade License

The total estimated contract price for this consultancy inclusive of taxes is US **\$133,555.00**.

A Consulting firm will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost - Based Selection (QCBS) procurement method set out in the Inter-American Development Bank: *Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants financed by the Inter-American Development Bank* (GN-2350-15, May 2019 edition) and is open to all eligible consultants as defined in the IDB policies. The selection of the successful firm will be based on a competitive process among short-listed firms that takes into account the quality of the proposal and the cost of the service. **Only the short-listed firms will be notified and will be asked to submit a technical and price proposal.**

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications. For the purpose of establishing the short list, the nationality of a firm is that of the country in which it is legally incorporated or constituted and in the case of Joint Venture, the nationality of the firm appointed to represent it.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours **Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.** Expressions of interest must be delivered via direct mail or e-mail at the address indicated below by **4:00 p.m. (Belize local time) on Friday April 29th, 2022.**

Interested eligible Consultants are asked to submit their expression of interest via e-mail to Michelle.Longsworth@bts.gov.bz marked STAP-Consultancy Firm to prepare and implement the **Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD) Enforcement Collection Model** based on risk criteria in the subject header, or submit on or before **4:00 p.m. (Belize local time) Friday April 29th , 2022** to the following address:

Director General
Belize Tax Service
Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Charles Bartlett Hyde Building
Mahogany Street, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114

For clarifications kindly contact:

Procurement Officer
Project Executing Unit
Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Charles Bartlett Hyde Building
Mahogany Street, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114/E-mail: Ian.Ramirez@mof.gov.bz



STRENGTHENING OF TAX ADMINISTRATION PROJECT

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Consulting Services for Consulting firm to Prepare, Implement and Execute a New Audit Model, making use of the wider range examination and risk-based techniques (to include analytical tools for audit)

Institution: The Ministry of Finance (MOF)

Country: Belize

Project: Strengthening of Tax Administration (STA)

Abstract: Consulting Services for Consulting Firm to Prepare, Implement and Execute a New Audit Model, making use of the wider range examination and risk-based techniques (to include analytical tools for audit).

Loan No.: 4839/OC-BL

Deadline: April 29th, 2022, Belize Local Time

The Government of Belize (GOB) has received financing from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for the execution of a five-year tax modernization project entitled "Strengthening of Tax Administration" (BL-L1031). The main beneficiaries of the Project are: (a) the Government, which will have more revenues to implement its public policies; (b) taxpayers, who will have more support and a digital environment to fulfil their tax obligations; and (c) the population, from the government policies implemented. Through this project, the Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD) has procured a **Modern Integrated Tax Administration System (the Revenue Management System (RMS))** and is presently in the implementation process. This new system will be used in the management of the **Belize Tax Administration**.

The BTSD management has identified the need for a modern audit approach based on risk analysis. The BTSD Strategic Plan states that:

"BTSD will explore the introduction of a Risk Management Plan (RMP) to properly respond to the risks identified on a timely basis, to minimize overall compliance burden for both the taxpayers and the tax administration. As an important aspect of the RMP, risk mitigating strategies will be proposed for application against potential and existing risks. The plan will highlight all areas of risks including risk-based assessments, risk-based audits, risk-based sector and taxpayer segmentation, compliance risks (registration, filing, reporting and payments) and international risks. Risk mitigation reduces the extent of exposure and ensures that the strategic objectives are achieved."

The consulting services ("the services") includes the contracting of a consulting firm for a period of ten (10) months to Prepare, Implement and Execute a New Audit Model, making use of the range examination and risk-based techniques (to include analytic tools for audit). **The main activities of the consultancy include:**

1. To assess the status of BTSD taxpayer audit strategies and operations for all tax type.
2. To review the Audit Division organization and resources, as well as the staff skills.
3. To suggest the strategy for centralization/decentralization of the audit.
4. To propose a new organization area (if required).
5. To propose the staff composition by area and by location.
6. To propose the different audit programs taking into consideration taxpayer segments and different audit locations (central, districts).
7. To propose a system of massive audit based on IT verification of returns against risk factors and third-party information. The selected cases should be resolved very quickly (4 cases a day) as they are based on firm verification.
8. To propose modern analytical tools for tax auditing suitable for Belize's environment by conducting a SWOT analysis to support the audit work.
9. Once the proposal of the modern analytical tools is approved, the consulting firm will procure the Analytical tools software for auditing with 50 licenses with subscription for 3 years, implement, and train auditors in its utilization for adoption.
10. To execute onsite Pilot audit (for at least one month in duration) with the audit team to plan, execute and report on randomly selected taxpayers.
11. To develop training materials and manuals in hard copies and digital copies in Microsoft Word format.

The consulting firm should have a minimum of five (5) years' experience in similar assignment. In addition, the consulting firm should have a minimum of three (3) years specific experience in the following areas (* are must):

- Tax administration taxpayer audit and risk analysis. (*)
- Conducting design of modern taxpayer audit programs. (*)
- Conducting design of risk-based audit programs. (*)
- Training tax administration staff in audit techniques (*)
- Using modern audit analytic tools. (*)
- Developing programs for organizational strengthening for tax administration.
- Developing modern taxpayer audit programs.
- Conducting design of modern information crosschecking programs.
- Business Strategy (supporting business and organization goals).

The firm should prove ability to identify strategic issues, opportunity and risks. As well as have knowledge and experience working in Belize and or the Caribbean environment in a similar assignment.

The Ministry of Finance now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested eligible Consultants must submit

an Expression of Interest providing information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services (brochures, description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills, etc.). *The term "consultant" means a legally-established professional consulting firm or an entity that may provide the services.*

Expression of Interest package should contain:

- (i) Document explaining interest, experience, and competence of the consulting firm.
- (ii) Firms experience in the assignment of similar consultancy services during the past five years. Description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments.
- (iii) Firms evidence of past jobs. (This includes letters from the respective client on the job (s) carried out, or a copy of contract or agreement with the client including copy of the TOR).
- (iv) Two references
- (v) **Proof of nationality:** Copy of certificate of incorporation, information of shareholders of company specifying the shares owned by each respective shareholder of the company and a copy of documentation of nationality of the shareholders of the company.

Additional documentation required for National Consultants:

- (vi) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from Belize Company Registry
- (vii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Social Security Board
- (viii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Belize Tax Service
- (ix) Copy of Current Trade License

The total estimated contract price for this consultancy inclusive of taxes is **US\$ 451,328.00.**

Consulting firm will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) method set out in the **Inter-American Development Bank: Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (GN-2350-15, May 2019 edition)** and is open to all eligible consultants as defined in the IDB policies. The selection of the successful firm will be based on a competitive process among short-listed firms that takes into account the quality of the proposal and the cost of the service. **Only the short-listed firms will be notified and will be asked to submit a technical and price proposal.**

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications. For the purpose of establishing the short list, the nationality of a firm is that of the country in which it is legally incorporated or constituted and in the case of Joint Venture, the nationality of the firm appointed to represent it.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours **Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.** Expressions of interest must be delivered via direct mail or e-mail at the address indicated below by **4:00 p.m. (Belize local time) on Friday, April 29th, 2022.**

Interested consulting firms are asked to submit their expression of interest via e-mail to Michelle.Longsworth@bts.gov.bz marked **STAP- Consulting Firm to Prepare, Implement and Execute a New Audit Model** in the subject header, or submit on or before **4:00 p.m. (Belize local time) on Friday, April 29th, 2022** to the following address:

**Director General
Belize Tax Service
Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Charles Bartlett Hyde Building
Mahogany Street, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114**

For clarifications kindly contact:

**Procurement Officer
Project Executing Unit
Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Charles Bartlett Hyde Building
Mahogany Street, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114/E-mail: Ian.Ramirez@mof.gov.bz**



STRENGTHENING OF TAX ADMINISTRATION PROJECT

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Consultancy Firm to prepare and implement a Taxpayer Account Model to allow for fast taxpayer centric overview

Institution: The Ministry of Finance (MOF)

Country: Belize

Project: Strengthening of Tax Administration (STA)

Abstract: Consulting Services – Consultancy Firm to prepare and implement a Taxpayer Account Model to allow for fast taxpayer centric overview

Loan No.: 4839/OC-BL

Deadline: April 29th, 2022, Belize Local Time

The Government of Belize (GOB) has received financing from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for the execution of a five-year tax modernization project entitled “Strengthening of Tax Administration” (BL-L1031). Through this project, the Belize Tax Service Department (BTSD) has procured a **Modern Integrated Tax Administration System (the Revenue Management System (RMS))** and is presently in the implementation process. This new system will be used in the management of the **Belize Tax Administration**.

The consulting services (“the services”) includes the contracting of a Consultancy Firm for a period of six (6) months. The main activity of the consultancy includes:

1. To assess the current situation of BTDS taxpayer account in Integrated Tax Administration System (ITAS).
2. Develop a model for a new taxpayer account in ITAS. The model should specify the entities dealing with the taxpayer account, the information that flows to and from the account, and the transactions that will be allowed with the taxpayer account (e.g., debt from tax returns, debts from refunds, debts from adjustments, debts from audits, debts from payment by instalment agreements, credits from regular payment, credits for adjustments in appeals cases, credit from payments of payment by instalment agreements, etc.). The account will be organized by Taxpayer Identification Numbers (TIN), tax type and period
3. Define the procedures for taxpayer access to his account via Internet
4. Define which transactions taxpayers would be allowed to perform through the Internet
5. Define the changes to be made in ITAS for the introduction of the new model
6. Prepare the taxpayer account manual
7. Implement the new taxpayer centric current account
8. Train BTS staff in the new taxpayer account design and operation

The Consultancy Firm should have a minimum of five (5) years’ relevant working experience in the following areas:

- **Designing modern taxpayer account**
- **Preparing taxpayer account procedures and manuals**
- **Training enforcement agents in taxpayer account;**

As well as minimum of five (5) relevant working experience in enforcement of arrears payment and design of modern taxpayer current account. In addition, the Consulting firm should have at least three (3) years of previous experience conducting consultancies to countries implementing modern taxpayer accounts.

The Ministry of Finance now invites eligible Consultancy Firms (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested eligible Consultants must submit an Expression of Interest providing information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services (description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments, experience in similar conditions, availability of appropriate skills, etc.).

Expression of Interest package should contain:

- (i) Document explaining interest, experience, and competence of the consulting firm.
- (ii) Firms experience in the assignment of similar consultancy services during the past five years.
Description of similar assignments specifying start and end dates of assignments.
- (iii) Firms evidence of past jobs. (These includes letters from the respective client on the job (s) carried out, or a copy of

contract or agreement with the client including copy of the TOR).

(iv) Two references

(v) **Proof of nationality:** Copy of certificate of incorporation, information of shareholders of company specifying the shares owned by each respective shareholder of the company and a copy of documentation of nationality of the shareholders of the company.

Additional documentation required for National Consultants:

(vi) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from Belize Company Registry

(vii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Social Security Board

(viii) Copy of Certificate of Good Standing from the Belize Tax Service

(ix) Copy of Current Trade License

The total estimated contract price for this consultancy inclusive of taxes is **US \$133,555.00**.

A Consulting firm will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost - Based Selection (QCBS) procurement method set out in the Inter-American Development Bank: ***Policies for the Selection and Contracting of Consultants financed by the Inter-American Development Bank*** (GN-2350-15, May 2019 edition) and is open to all eligible consultants as defined in the IDB policies. The selection of the successful firm will be based on a competitive process among short-listed firms that takes into account the quality of the proposal and the cost of the service. **Only the short-listed firms will be notified and will be asked to submit a technical and price proposal.**

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Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours **Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.** Expressions of interest must be delivered via direct mail or e-mail at the address indicated below by **4:00 p.m. (Belize local time) on Friday April 29th, 2022.**

Interested eligible Consultants are asked to submit their expression of interest via e-mail to Michelle.Longsworth@bts.gov.bz marked **STAP-Consultancy Firm to prepare and implement a Taxpayer Account Model to allow for fast taxpayer centric overview** in the subject header, or submit on or before **4:00 p.m. (Belize local time) on Friday April 29th, 2022** to the following address:

**Director General
Belize Tax Service
Strengthening of Tax Administration Project
Charles Bartlett Hyde Building
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Tel: 501-222-5114**

For clarifications kindly contact:

**Procurement Officer
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Charles Bartlett Hyde Building
Mahogany Street, Belize City
Tel: 501-222-5114/E-mail: Ian.Ramirez@mof.gov.bz**



The Board of Directors
 Management & Staff of
HRCU



wish it's member-owners and all Belizeans a

**Happy, Blessed, and Safe
 Easter Season 2022**



**HRCU reminds member-owners to
 save regularly, borrow wisely
 and repay promptly!**



**HRCU will close at 1:00 p.m
 on Holy Thursday! (April 14, 2022)**

**Our ATM's in Belize City and Independence
 remain open 24 hours.**

**HRCU - making a difference in
 people's lives!**



HAPPY
 easter



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