



## CANADA CARIBBEAN DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT FUND

# Country Snapshot

## Belize



### About the CCDRMF

The Canada Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Fund (CCDRMF) is one component of Global Affairs Canada's<sup>1</sup> (GAC) larger regional Caribbean Disaster Risk Management Program. The CCDRMF is a competitive fund which is designed to support community-driven projects that seek to enhance the resilience of communities and reduce risks from natural hazards (e.g. floods, droughts, tropical storms, hurricanes) and climate change.

Established in 2008 as a CAD \$3.0 M small grant facility, the CCDRMF finances projects ranging from CAD \$25,000 to CAD \$75,000, and up to CAD \$100,000 in exceptional cases. The targeted audience is community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, civil-society organisations, and government agencies wishing to undertake community projects in the following beneficiary countries<sup>2</sup>: *Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.*

For the purposes of the CCDRMF, a 'community' is defined as '*a group of people living in the same geographical area (such as a neighbourhood, district, city or town)*' or '*a group of people with similar interests (such as youth and women) or livelihoods (such as farmers or fishers)*'.

To date, the Fund has supported twenty-nine (29) community sub-projects totalling CAD \$1,770,517.11, of which twenty-three (23) are completed and six (6) are on-going. The Fund has also provisionally allocated CAD \$1,017,338.66<sup>3</sup> to eleven (11) projects that are under consideration for execution during the period 2017 to 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> Previously the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD)

<sup>2</sup> In addition, one small community project was approved for the British Virgin Islands

<sup>3</sup> Subject to amendment



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### Country Overview

Belize<sup>4</sup> is located on the north-eastern or Caribbean coast of Central America, bordered by Mexico to the north and Guatemala to the south and west – forming part of the Yucatan Peninsula. The total land area of Belize is 22,960 km<sup>2</sup>, 95% of which is registered mainland and the remaining 5% distributed among more than 1,060 islands and cayes. The country's coastal area extends for 280 km and includes the Belize Barrier Reef Complex – the second largest in the world and the largest in the northern hemisphere.

Belize has a diverse geography. Topographical features divide the landscape into two main physiographic regions. The first region is mountainous, with the Maya Mountains and the Cockscomb Range dominating the central and western parts of the country (the highest point being Doyle's Delight rising 1,124 m above sea level), along with the associated basins and plateaus. The second region comprises the northern lowlands and the southern coastal plain. Approximately 67.4% of Belize remains under natural vegetation cover; and 34.9% of its terrestrial area is protected forest (much of which is incorporated into the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor). Belize has a total of 18 major river catchments with another 16 sub-catchments which drain the Maya Mountains and discharge into the Caribbean Sea.

The climate is classified as tropical to subtropical, with temperatures ranging from 21°C to 32°C. There is a marked wet and dry season, separated by a cool transitional period. The rainy season begins in the south in the middle of May and arrives in the north in mid-June. It continues through to November, but most locations experience a drier period in August. Average annual rainfall for northern Belize is about 1,500 mm, while rainfall rises to 3,800 mm in southern Belize.

The 2010 Census recorded a total population of 322,453 (50% males and 50% females). The country is divided into six (6) administrative districts, namely Corozal and Orange Walk (North), Belize District (East and Central) and Cayo (West and Central), and Stann Creek and Toledo (South). A substantial proportion of the population reside in Belize District (29.99%) and Cayo (23.91%); and in total, about 35% of residents live along the long, low-lying coastline in densely populated urban areas. The Belizean economy is small and open, supported primarily by services derived from its natural resource base. Most of its foreign exchange is generated from tourism and the export of marine and agricultural products. In 2015, contributions to total gross domestic product (GDP) by key sectors were as follows: Wholesale and retail (16.52%), Transport and communication (10.12%), Agriculture and forestry (8.88%), Manufacturing, mining and quarrying (6.63%), Electricity and water (4.92%), Hotels and restaurants (3.74%), Construction (3.04%), and Fisheries (2.95%).

Belize is exposed to similar natural hazards as much of the insular Caribbean. Hurricanes and tropical storms are the principal hazards, with the country being hit by a major storm on average every 3 years. Hurricane Hattie, a Category 5 systems, which made impact in 1961 remains the most memorable and devastating hurricane in the nation's history. Hattie was responsible for the death of hundreds, the destruction of the former capital Belize City (which necessitated the establishment of a new administrative capital city, Belmopan, 80 km inland), and about US\$413 million in damages. In 1998,

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<sup>4</sup> Formerly British Honduras until the name of the country was changed in 1973.



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Hurricane Mitch caused significant damage to the Belize Barrier Reef Complex, reducing coral recruitment by as much as 80%; and in 2010, Hurricane Richard, a Category 1, damaged some 410,000 acres (11%) of Belize’s forest, as well as led to widespread flooding and extensive damage to infrastructure and the agricultural industry.

Due to its proximity to the boundary of three tectonic plates, Belize faces minor seismic and tsunami risk, particularly in the south-eastern region, away from the main population centres. There are no records of very major earthquake activity; however, there are minor earth tremors. Other natural hazards that have lower probability of affecting the country, but can nonetheless cause significant local damages, include lightning, storm surge flooding, inland floods, landslides, fires (started by natural causes), drought, and hail storms. Of course, Belize is also exposed to the impacts of climate change, including changes in temperature and precipitation, intensified hydro-meteorological events and associated hazards, and sea level rise.

### CCDRMF Project in Belize

The CCDRMF is a competitive small grant facility and between 2008 and 2015, there have been nine (9) Calls for Proposals. In total, the Fund received 212 project applications but only forty-three (43) projects, 20%, from thirteen (13) countries met the criteria and were deemed eligible for consideration.

From Belize, the CCDRMF has received sixteen (16) project applications. Of these, only three (3) community-based projects were approved. These projects supported disaster risk management through renovated disaster shelters, enhanced emergency communication systems, and capacity building. A brief overview of the completed projects can be found in the table below.



Figure 1 Renovation of the Rancho Dolores Shelter



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Project	Organisation	Objective(s)	Project Period	GAC Contribution (CAD\$)	Total Project Cost (CAD\$)
<b>HelpAge Belize Disaster Preparedness Project</b>	HelpAge Belize	To reduce vulnerability to the adverse effects of hurricanes for up to 200 male and female elderly persons living in Belize City by providing them with safe, elderly-friendly, disaster-shelter accommodation in Belmopan.	2011	\$21,178.00	\$23,297.00
<b>Emergency Radio Communications to Enhance Disaster Management among Rural Indigenous Communities in Southern Belize</b>	Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management (SATIIM)	To enhance the communication capabilities among five (5) rural indigenous communities <sup>5</sup> , the National and District Emergency Management Organizations (NEMO & DEMO), and SATIIM to facilitate communication, especially with regard to disaster mitigation, preparation, response and recovery.	2012	\$75,000.00	\$153,850.00
<b>Belize River Valley Community Disaster Mitigation Project</b>	National Association of Village Councils (NAVCO)	To strengthen the resilience and self-reliance of four flood-prone communities <sup>6</sup> by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Providing support to communities to repair, upgrade and maintain their emergency shelters to provide safe, sufficient and comfortable options for village members for during disasters.</li> <li>2. Providing support to villages to enhance their self-sufficiency in access to potable water, communications, medical supplies and other needs during disasters.</li> <li>3. Building on and strengthening linkages between the national</li> </ol>	2011-2014	\$90,137.35	\$134,922.35

<sup>5</sup> Barranco, Midway, Sunday Wood, Conejo, and Crique Sarco

<sup>6</sup> Rancho Dolores, Lemonal, Flowers Bank, and May Pen



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Project	Organisation	Objective(s)	Project Period	GAC Contribution (CAD\$)	Total Project Cost (CAD\$)
		government and community agencies in community-capacity building with respect to community-based disaster management.			
				<b>\$186,315.35</b>	<b>\$312,069.35</b>

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