



BE-CLME+ Project: Promoting National Blue Economy Priorities Through Marine Spatial Planning in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) Plus (GEF Project ID 10211)

Terms of Reference for a Consultancy to develop a national stakeholder-driven, gender inclusive Implementation and Monitoring Plan for the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan (BSOP)

1.0 Background & Justification.

1.1 The BE-CLME+ Project is a regional initiative aimed at promoting Blue Economy (BE) development in the Caribbean region through Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF), development of climate-smart sustainable fisheries value chains, and knowledge management in Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Panama. The Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) is the Executing Agency for the project, while the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations are the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Co-Implementing Agencies.

1.2 The 2026-2027 BE: CLME+ Project Workplan & Budget was approved by the Regional Steering Committee on March 17, 2026, and calls for a consultancy to conduct national stakeholder-driven Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) following project MSP protocol and in support of nationally relevant priorities.

1.3 The current mechanisms for planning coastal and marine development as well as for addressing user conflict and unsustainable practices are disjointed and often lack a cohesive common goal. Resource management and strategic planning is currently performed on a sectoral basis, independent of what are often perceived as the external interest of competing industries, ministerial jurisdictions, or resources users. This disjointed planning is further limited by i) incomplete information regarding the overall impact on the marine and coastal resource base (from all sectors and users); ii) inadequate internal capacities and skills; and iii) underdeveloped and often inadequate planning tools. Cross- sectoral and transboundary collaborative values and integrated planning practices of both the marine and coastal space must be articulated among the array of institutions operating in the Caribbean.

MSP allows Caribbean states to coordinate and balance the many uses of marine space - tourism, fisheries, conservation, and emerging blue economy sectors - while mitigating conflicts, promoting ecosystem resilience, and responding to global and regional commitments. To shore up countries to realise Blue Economy priorities, the Caribbean Regional Marine Spatial Planning (CRMSP) Step-by-Step Guide was developed to assist Caribbean nations in using marine spatial planning (MSP) as a tool and process to achieve sustainable marine management and blue economy objectives. Grounded in international best practice but tailored for the Caribbean Region, the Guide was produced through substantial national and stakeholder consultation as part of the Blue Economy – Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Plus (BE-



CLME+) Project, reflecting both the growing demands on Caribbean marine resources and the urgent need for more integrated governance and equitable decision making.

1.4 Coastal ecosystems in Belize sustain a variety of commercial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries. To address the impacts of coastal and marine development, Belize is undertaking an inclusive, transparent, equitable, science-based, participatory, and interactive Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) process. Through this process, the country will rationalize and allocate ocean space to support both existing and emerging activities that may lawfully occur within Belize’s marine areas, thereby advancing the implementation of a sustainable Blue Economy. This effort will be supported by the development of a national ocean zoning framework that identifies areas suitable for permissible blue economy activities. In addition, the MSP process will facilitate the identification, designation, and management of Biodiversity Protection Zones (BPZs) within Belize’s ocean space. The goal of designating up to 30% of Belize’s ocean as BPZs forms part of the broader national MSP framework. Key strategic objectives include: 1) signing into law and Gazetting the Biodiversity Protection Zones using a phased approach, and (2) completing, enacting and publishing a legally enforceable MSP by November 4th2026. Belize’s MSP—currently under development and referred to as the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan (BSOP)—will serve as the primary mechanism for achieving sustainable ocean management in the country. To date, Belize has legally designated 25.05% of its total ocean space as BPZs. To meet the 30% target, the country plans to designate an additional 4.95% of its ocean area as BPZs by November 4, 2026. A draft of the BSOP is expected to be completed by the end of May 2026, with the final version—incorporating a comprehensive implementation plan—scheduled for completion by November 4, 2026.

1.5 The purpose of this consultancy is to support the CRFM Secretariat in preparing an Implementation and Monitoring Plan for the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan, which integrates and strengthens participation, gender responsiveness, and social risk management in the implementation of the BSOP. The consultancy should reference and be guided by preliminary project activities completed thus far namely the data gaps and needs assessment to inform MSP in Belize¹, and the [Caribbean Regional MSP Step by Step Guide](#) which covers the entire MSP cycle, making it relevant for countries at all stages, and adaptable for both national and subnational scales and across diverse political, economic, and environmental contexts and the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan (BSOP). The BSOP- Implementation and Monitoring Plan must be developed in an inclusive manner by providing a platform and opportunities for indigenous peoples, rightsholders, local communities and women to participate in addressing regional and national marine management matters that affect their lives. It is expected that this BSOP- Implementation Plan will guide and inform strategic actions towards the sustainable growth and development of Belize’s blue economy (BSOP Goal 3), ensure fair and equitable access for all Belizeans to benefits derived from ocean resources and space (Goal 4), and support the Biodiversity Protection Zones identified through the BSOP process.

2.0 Objective of the Consultancy.

¹ Report on Data Gaps and Needs Assessment to inform MSP in Belize will be made available to the consultant upon request

The CRFM Secretariat seeks to engage a consulting firm or consortium to provide technical assistance to the BE CLME+ Project: “**Promoting National Blue Economy Priorities Through Marine Spatial Planning in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (CLME) Plus**” in the preparation of a data driven, inclusive and gender responsive Implementation and Monitoring Plan for the Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan (BSOP Implementation and Monitoring Plan). The process to develop the BSOP-Implementation and Monitoring Plan will integrate meaningful and inclusive stakeholder engagement early and throughout all phases of the Consultancy , and shall ensure that a gender responsive approach is applied to ensure equitable participation, access to resources, and leadership opportunities for women, men, and youth. Recommendations for the BSOP Implementation and Monitoring Plan will in turn seek to address inequalities, strengthen women’s roles in decision-making, and promote equitable social and economic benefits across the fisheries sector and other maritime sectors. To ensure that the BSOP and its implementation and monitoring plans are informed by the best available data, the project will also support the identification and evaluation of ocean space for projected sustainable expansion and management of traditional, existing and emerging economic uses.

3.0 Key Tasks include but not be limited to those listed below.

3.1 Prepare Inception Report (Product 1): The firm will prepare a detailed workplan outlining, amongst others, the team undertaking the work and the management structure set out to ensure successful delivery of the consultancy outputs; the schedule, inclusive of milestones, key deliverables of the project and performance monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. M&E will be a critical process that should be carried out throughout the MSP process. Note that monitoring activities expected from the consulting firm have to fit into the overall monitoring system of the BE CLME+ Project and provide information in a way that learning and strategic decisions can be facilitated. For this reason, it is necessary to set up the monitoring and evaluation system in close cooperation with the CRFM.

Contingencies must be built into planning to allow the consultant to adapt to changing conditions. In preparing the workplan the consulting firm will participate in an inception meeting convened by the CRFM/PMU, with attendance from national focal point agencies upon commencement of the assignment to:

- a) Review the process for the conduct of all activities within the scope of services;
- b) Determine roles and responsibilities of the consulting team, national focal point agencies and the CRFM/PMU,
- c) Discuss the basis on which this work will be implemented, and
- d) Finalise the work plan and schedule. A final work plan and inception report (Product 1) on the outcome of the inception meeting will be prepared by the consultant and submitted to the CRFM/PMU for review and approval.

3.2 Undertake literature review and stakeholder consultations and prepare Situational Assessment Report (Product 2) : The consultant will review and assess all existing national and regional policies, plans, institutions and mechanisms to support BSOP future implementation; proposed and ongoing project

documents relevant to marine spatial planning including marine biodiversity conservation and the blue economy development such as the draft Belize Sustainable Ocean Plan and associated documents, Belize Maritime Economy Plan, Belize's Blue Economy Strategy and Plan, and management plans developed for respective marine reserves/ marine protected areas in Belize. This activity will assess the status of MSP and biodiversity conservation processes in Belize and seek guidance and direction from the main authorities on specific needs and support required for the development of the BSOP Implementation and Monitoring Plan. The consultant will conduct desk top study and assessment, in-country visits and stakeholder focus group consultations to collect additional information and insights, and prepare a Situational Assessment Report to include recommendations to consider in developing the BSOP-Implementation and Monitoring Plan.

To ensure that the BSOP- Implementation and Monitoring Plan is stakeholder driven and gender responsive, the Situational Assessment should also assess the roles, and interests of all relevant stakeholders including indigenous peoples and local communities, women's groups, youth organisations, NGOs, researchers, and emerging blue economy stakeholders. Special attention should also be given to identifying any vulnerable, marginalised and gender groups who may be impacted by the MSP process and its implementation, and should account for different stakeholder categories, considering power dynamics and ensuring marginalised groups receive adequate consideration for meaningful participation at relevant points throughout the MSP implementation.

3.3 Prepare a BSOP- Implementation and Monitoring Plan (BSOP-I&MP) that is stakeholder driven and gender responsive (Product 3): The BSOP-I&MP should move the vision and goals of the BSOP into action and must provide a clear, structured roadmap that outlines the specific tasks, timelines, responsibilities, and resources needed to implement the MSP. It sets the foundations for organising and managing plan implementation efforts effectively. The implementation plan should therefore include all essential and necessary information for administration, operations, budgets, research and monitoring, enforcement and management of zones, building capacity and awareness, policy and legal instruments and education. The plan should also address both operational and adaptive needs to ensure that management actions are effective, coordinated and sustainable.

The Monitoring Plan should establish a systematic approach for how the BSOPs implementation and outcomes will be tracked to ensure goals and objectives are met and to inform adaptive management. It should be grounded in clear objectives, defined indicators, robust data management, and stakeholder participation. Both quantitative and qualitative indicators should track environmental, economic, governance, and social dimensions realistically, accounting for external influences such as political and socio-economic changes. Detailed methods for consistent and systematic monitoring, including frequency, geographic scope, and responsible parties should be set out, alongside roles and responsibilities of relevant agencies, institutions, or stakeholder groups for data collection, analysis, reporting, and review.

Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) and Gender Equality considerations

Recognising the differentiated roles, needs, and constraints of women and men operating within the marine space, the MSP process incorporates Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) and Gender Equality considerations as core principles. As such, additional ESS-related activities² and outputs have been identified as critical to strengthening inclusive participation, gender responsiveness, and social risk management within the MSP Implementation process. During the process, the consultant will undertake a detailed literature review of related policies and plans such as the Ministry of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation (MBECA) Gender Action Plan, Belize National Climate Change Gender Action Plan 2022- 2027, and Gender Analysis, Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming in Fisheries of Member States of the CRFM³ to facilitate and support focus group dialog on integrating gender considerations into the BSOP- I&MP and recommended decision making structures. The consultant will document the key findings and actionable recommendations to inform the BSOP I&MP.

3.4 Prepare National Validation Workshop Concept Note, Agenda and Convene National Workshop (Product 4): In coordination with the CRFM/PMU, the consultant will organise and convene and in-person national workshop with key stakeholders including BSOP Governance structure Core Team, Steering Committees and Technical working groups to present on the BSOP-I&MP, as applicable, and to discuss synergies with other national and/or regional activities and projects. The consultant will prepare a final national workshop report which would include workshop activities and discussions, net steps and a disaggregated list of participants in accordance with the BE CLME+ Project Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) guidelines.

3.5 Prepare communication and visibility material (Product 5): Communication and visibility materials will be developed periodically highlighting critical aspects and lessons on the MSP process for Belize. The Consultant will be responsible for providing the technical content of the assignment/ consultancy to the CRFM that is communicable and consistent with the CRFM’s communications guidelines. The communication and visibility material could include press releases, newsletters, flyers, brochures, website content, infographics, social media posts which will be submitted to the CRFM/PMU and relevant national agency for review, vetting of content, and onward communication via the CRFM’s Knowledge Management and Information System and broader regional networks. The consultant will provide data/information collected from workshops and other activities such as voice recordings, videos, and photographs from interviews, focus group consultations, etc. as applicable to support the development of communication and visibility material.

3.6 Prepare a Final Technical Report (Product 6): This report should highlight, *inter alia*:

- a) The nature of the assignment undertaken, noting the level of success and constraints;
- b) The quality of participation in consultations;
- c) Lessons learned during the assignment;

² BE CLME+ Project Gender Action Plan and Indigenous Peoples Plan will be made available to the consultant upon request

³ https://www.crfm.int/~uwohxjxf/images/CRFM_Tech_Advisory_Doc_No._2020-06_Gender_ASAP_-_22.10.2020.pdf

- d) Any limitations to the outputs and their intended use; and
- e) Recommendations for continued monitoring of consultancy outputs and sustainability.

4.0 Expected Outcomes and Deliverables.

4.1 The consultant(s) are expected to deliver the following deliverables:

Product 1: Inception Report, Work Plan and Schedule

Product 2: Situational Assessment Report

Product 3: (a) Draft BSOP: Implementation and Monitoring Plan with Budget; and (b) ESS and Gender consultation report as an appendix

Product 4: Stakeholder validation workshop concept note and Agenda, and Validation workshop report

Product 5: Final BSOP: Implementation and Monitoring Plan with ESS and Gender consultation report as an appendix

Product 6: Communication and visibility material

Product 7: Final Technical Report

5.0 Project Schedule and Milestones

Deliverable	Output due at end of month	Payments
Product 1: Inception Report, Work Plan and Schedule	0.5	25%
Product 2: Situational Assessment Report	2.5	25%
Product 3: (a) Draft BSOP: Implementation and Monitoring Plan with Budget; and (b) ESS and Gender consultation report as an appendix	4	20%
Product 4: Stakeholder validation workshop concept note and Agenda, and Validation workshop report		
Product 5: Final BSOP Implementation and Monitoring Plan with Budget; and (b) ESS and Gender consultation report as an appendix	5	20%
Product 6: Communication and visibility material; Product 7: Final Technical Report	5.5	10%

7.0 Reporting Requirements.

7.1 The consultant will present the deliverables following the schedule established in section 6 of these terms of reference. The deliverables must include reports in Word⁴, PowerPoint presentation of the major findings and recommendations, and other documents used as the basis of the analysis (including other formats such as Excel spreadsheets, etc. as applicable) and a folder with the list of bibliographic references used to develop the analysis. All materials must be delivered in English. All reports, studies, plans, drawings, source code, technical data, specifications, and any other material prepared by or worked upon by the consultant exclusively for the CRFM under this Agreement are the sole and exclusive property of the CRFM and as such the CRFM has exclusive title, rights, and interest in all such material including the right of dissemination, reproduction, and publication. The consultant will also work closely with the Regional Project Coordinator and the Marine Spatial Planning Specialist of the BE: CLME+ Project on the assignment.

8.0 Acceptance Criteria.

8.1 Payments will be authorized once the CRFM and FAO accepts the products specified by the TOR. The CRFM will have up to three weeks to provide written comments/recommendations to the consultant(s) reports. Unless previously determined, the CRFM and FAO will generally accept the deliverables once the consultant or consulting firm confirms the following: (i) receipt and additional inclusion of comments/recommendations in a revised version and (ii) provision of date for presentation of the revised versions of the submitted deliverables. The consultant(s) are expected to include these comments two weeks after receipt.

9.0 Consultant's Effort and Required Skills

9.1 This consultancy has been estimated to require a maximum of six (6) months.

9.2 The consulting team must consist of experts who will provide the skill mix as detailed in the scope of services presented below;

- Advanced degree (master level or higher) in marine science, natural resource management, spatial/development planning, economics, politics, law, or a relevant social or natural science degree.
- At least 7 years experience in development of Implementation Plans, Performance Management/Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks
- Demonstrate strong skills and knowledge in marine and coastal resources management with demonstrable experience in integrated coastal zone management, coastal and marine spatial planning, master plan development, and maritime policy development.
- Proven track-record and working experience in the management and implementation of multi-stakeholder and multi-country projects/consultancies relating to the abovementioned areas of work.

⁴ All reports should follow the CRFM Guidelines for Publications and Reports

- Experience in the successful implementation of (regional and international) consultancy work relating to marine spatial planning and implementation.
- Experience in data management, including collection and aggregation, as it relates to marine spatial planning processes and implementation.
- Experience working with small island states and or in the Caribbean region is an asset.

The consulting team must also include an ESS and Gender expert with the following qualifications;

Social / Gender or ESS Specialist

- Postgraduate degree in Social Development, Gender Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, Development Studies, or a related field.
- Certificate or Professional Development training in Social Safeguards is desirable not mandatory.
- Minimum 7 years of professional experience in:
 - Social development and gender equality or integration in development projects
 - Stakeholder engagement and participatory consultation processes
 - Development of GBV prevention and response frameworks, other social risk management and inclusion initiatives
 - Demonstrated experience working on:
 - Fisheries, coastal, marine, or natural resource management projects or sector
 - Marine Spatial Planning or similar multi-stakeholder planning processes (preferred)
 - Familiarity with donor safeguard frameworks (e.g. GEF, FAO, World Bank, CDB, UN agencies) is an asset.

10.0 Application and Selection Procedure.

10.1 Interested consulting firms are invited to submit their Technical and Financial Proposal outlining observations on these Terms of Reference, understanding of the objectives of the assignment, details of methodology to be applied, proposed work plan and timeline, personnel to be involved, skills and Curriculum Vitae of **all proposed team members**, declaration of availability, declaration of no conflict of interest, and tax-inclusive price proposal with details of professional fees for team members, logistics, travel, printing, and all other associated costs.

10.2 Technical and Financial Proposals will be evaluated using a Quality and Cost-Based Selection procedure, in which the Technical Proposal can be awarded a maximum of 70% of the evaluation score and price a maximum of 30% of the evaluation score.

10.3 Please submit your application in PDF format by **30 April 2026** to jobs@crfm.int and secretariat@crfm.int.

Budget Breakdown

Cost Item (Description)	Cost (USD)
Professional Fees (2 experts): To cover consultancy days, insurance and administration	45,000.00
Travel and Field missions: To cover at least 2 field missions to Belize- (1) In-country stakeholder consultations (Product 2) and (2) National validation workshops(Product 4) (airfare, accommodation, meals, workshop costs)	30,000.00