

Terms of Reference

Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser, Belize

Post Title:	Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser, Belize
Project Title:	Strengthening gender-responsive climate financing in Commonwealth countries
Project Location:	Belize
Duration:	1 year
Responsible To:	Chief Climate Change Officer National Climate Change Office, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Government of Belize & Commonwealth Regional Climate Finance Adviser, Caribbean Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH)
Start Date:	July 2025

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Belize is extremely vulnerable to natural disasters and long-term impacts of climate change. The country faces hurricanes, flooding, sea level rise, coastal erosion, coral bleaching, and droughts, with impacts likely to intensify given expected increases in weather volatility and sea temperature. Despite meeting the population criterion for small states (below 2 million), Belize has a relatively large landmass compared to other Caribbean countries. Not being geographically small in relative terms means it is less vulnerable to disasters than most other Caribbean states, but it has its own unique climate change challenges. Its low-lying topography makes it exceptionally vulnerable to sea-level rise: the capital city was moved inland to Belmopan after the inundation of Belize City during Hurricane Hattie (1961). Home to the second largest coral reef system in the world (after Australia's Great Barrier Reef), its habitats are particularly vulnerable to global warming, thereby threatening the local economy and livelihoods (for example, tourism, fishing). Belize also differs from many small island states in having a much higher share of renewable energy (57% of electricity supply)—which limits the scope to achieve further mitigation goals.

Belize's response to climate change is well-articulated. Evidenced by several policy frameworks over the last decade to respond to climate and sustainable development objectives. Such as: Horizon 2010-2030, Sustainable Energy Action Plan 2014-2033, National Climate Resilience Investment Plan 2013, Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy 2016-2019 and The National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan (NCCPSAP) 2015-2020. Horizon 2030 is the national development framework; which was developed after extensive stakeholder consultation inclusive of all political parties. One of its four main pillars is responsible environmental stewardship. The strategies to achieve this pillar, namely integrating environmental sustainability into development planning and promoting sustainable energy for all, address the areas of concern relating to Belize's climate change and emission profile.

Similarly, Belize Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) includes a strategy with well-developed adaptation and mitigation goals along with the need for capacity enhancement.

However, while climate planning is advanced and consistent with the broader sustainable development strategy, the implementation capacity remains a challenge. Belize has strong physical emergency planning but receives comparatively little disaster aid and falls short on longer-term financial provisioning. A number of international and regional institutions and entities are supporting Belize in meeting its NDC objectives as well as other climate actions.

The climate finance gap in Belize cannot be bridged only through a single source such as dedicated climate funds. Engagement and contributions from different parties and all sources of finance including both public and private, are required to meet this gap. According to the [Climate Finance Landscape](#) assessment for Belize undertaken in 2022 under the Commonwealth NDC Programme, the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) are the single largest source of climate finance for Belize. An integrated strategic approach as outlined in the [Climate Finance Strategy for Belize](#) is therefore, crucial in bridging the climate finance gap. It also requires multiple stakeholder engagement. The implementation of proper coordination mechanisms and capacity building is highly important to implement an integrated approach.

This technical assistance to Belize is delivered under the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH) to facilitate improved access by small and other vulnerable countries to climate finance to meet priority needs of the country in achieving resilience as well as securing sustainable development. To do this, the Hub places long-term Advisers at regional and national levels within Small States and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and other vulnerable countries in the Commonwealth, to support national efforts to access and effectively use international climate finance. The focus is on supporting countries to build the necessary capacity to access climate finance through on-the-job training in developing project proposals and completing application procedures for relevant funds such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Adaptation Fund and through promoting South-South cooperation, exchange and mutual learning.

The Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser (CNCFA) will provide support in strengthening the initiatives of various departments of Government and other stakeholders engaged and responsible for implementing defined climate policies and resilience strategies through the provision of technical support for the establishment of the policies and measures to address policy gaps, institutional strengthening and ultimately enhanced access to climate finance. Specifically, to facilitate training and institutional strengthening to different ministries and departments for preparing high quality and bankable project proposals. The capacity building process must meet a central objective of enabling Belize to successfully build resilience and capacity and implement scaled-up climate finance.

The project “Strengthening gender-responsive climate financing in Commonwealth countries” aims to increase the resilience and to support low carbon development of small and other vulnerable Commonwealth member countries to the adverse impacts of climate change. The project directly supports Belize, to improve its enabling environment for inclusive climate policy-making, and to enhance access to climate financing for nature positive and inclusive climate change mitigation and adaptation projects.

The CNCFA will also provide support by ensuring that the baseline data needed to carry out financial feasibility and baseline studies are in place and effectively used in preparation of funding proposals in demonstrating the funding justification and theory of change.

SCOPE OF WORK

The role of the Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser (CNCFA) is to primarily provide strategic and technical guidance on mobilising climate finance so that officials can build the capacity to draw on funds to support the implementation of the NDC 3.0 and other climate related projects. The CNCFA will be expected to strengthen the enabling environment for inclusive climate adaptation and mitigation policy making and programming at the national level and enhance the capacity of national actors to develop and strengthen climate change related policies, strategies and commitments including for mainstreaming gender and health relevant climate action.

The main responsibilities of the Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser include, inter alia:

Output 1. Enhanced capacity of national actors to develop and strengthen climate change related policies, strategies and commitments (including for mainstreaming gender and health along with loss and damage)

Expected activities include (but not limited to):

- Review the revised NDC, GCF country programme, National Adaptation plan, National Communications and other relevant national and sectoral plans and focused documents to understand the breadth of needs for international climate financing.
- Conduct updated climate finance landscape assessment (policy, commitments and strategies) including steps for accessing the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD).
- Support policy processes to strengthen policies based on internationally agreed standards with reference to mainstreaming gender and health.
- Improved access to private sector finance for climate action
- Develop strategies for de-risking investments from climate extremes
- Accreditation support for national entities in Belize to multilateral funds such as the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Output 2. Increased development of gender-responsive, youth and health focused project proposals at national level to enhance access to inclusive climate finance

Expected activities include (but not limited to):

- Prioritisation exercise for climate action pipeline projects, focussing on adaptation and loss and damage
- Systematically track available international climate finance windows, calls for proposals and other funding opportunities to meet support gaps for NDC 3.0 implementation.
- Conduct bilateral consultations with international partners working in climate change issues in the country and region to map out interest and opportunities. Discuss possibilities with governmental authorities including at the sectors to prioritise the ideas to be developed into concept notes
- Under the guidance of Government officials, lead the development of project concept notes, considering national priorities and the implementation needs of the revised NDC, in accordance with the purpose and requirements of the targeted climate finance window(s).

- Support the development of full funding project proposals. The number and timing will depend on the approval of the above-mentioned concept notes and timing of the international call for proposals. It is expected that the adviser will support the development of at least 1 - 2 full proposals.

Output 3. Increased knowledge of key stakeholders (including government and non-governmental bodies) on climate funding sources and requirements

Expected activities include (but not limited to):

- Convene and facilitate strategic dialogues with relevant stakeholders including sector experts from Ministries and other Government agencies, private sector and civil society representatives to discuss focus of proposal and gather necessary inputs for the concept note and proposal development.
- Training methodology and approaches shared on climate finance projects development (including on mainstreaming gender and health)
- Peer to peer learning delivered.
- Collect information and support development of knowledge products (handbook, guidelines, manuals, newsletters) for use by counterparts and for dissemination to Hub partners.
- Support information sharing and knowledge exchange with national and sub-national government, civil society and private sector stakeholders.
- Sharing of best practices and experiences with other Commonwealth countries, including through south-south exchanges.
- Establish and strengthen links for sharing knowledge and experiences at national level and across the CCFAH network of advisers.

Output 4. Increased awareness and capacity of key stakeholders (officials and institutions) to develop gender, youth and health inclusive climate change projects.

Expected activities include (but not limited to):

- Capacity baseline and needs assessment in areas of climate finance, gender mainstreaming, health-climate nexus established for select national stakeholder institutions.
- Climate finance capacity building incorporating gender mainstreaming and health-climate nexus and based on country plan delivered.
- Climate finance capacity building incorporating mainstreaming of gender and health delivered to select national stakeholders.
- Provide necessary capacity building of staff including one to one mentoring and training workshops for identified needs.
- Provide training of key stakeholders within relevant institutions to effectively access climate finance resources.
- Participate in relevant meetings as indicated by the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change and prepare and provide inputs as requested.

MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The CNCFA will be based in the National Climate Change Office, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Belize, reporting on a day-to-day basis to the Chief Climate Change Officer as well as the Commonwealth Regional Climate Finance Adviser for the Caribbean Region.. There is an urgent need to mobilise climate finance for NDC implementation, adaptation planning and capacity building. The CCFAH Adviser will support the Belize's UNFCCC Focal Point in accessing climate finance windows through the development of project concept notes, proposals, and project pipelines and will support in subsequent tracking.

The Adviser will be required to submit an inception report to Commonwealth Secretariat within 4 to 6 weeks of commencement of duties. This report will be agreed with the

reporting officer and stakeholders and will set the context, work plan and baseline against which progress can be measured during the project period. The Adviser will be required to submit a mid-term report at six-months that will provide an update on accomplishments, risks, how to mitigate such and plan for the following six months and a final report at the completion of one year. Monitoring and Evaluation of the project will take place during the course of its implementation.

Transfer of Expertise

The Commonwealth Secretariat attaches particular importance to the transfer of expertise and knowledge to counterparts. The adviser in his/her discussions with the Reporting Officer should draw attention to the need for key staff to be assigned as counterparts at the beginning of the assignment. This should be reported in the Inception Report. A training programme for key counterpart staff should be produced by the adviser and agreed with the Reporting Officer. An update should be provided on this in the first Progress Report.

Gender and Youth Mainstreaming

The Adviser under this project will be expected to actively support the Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender Equality Policy. This Policy provides a mandate and framework for realising the Commonwealth's commitment to mainstreaming gender equality and equity into all its policies, structures, systems and operations. It is intended to strengthen and guide the collective effort of all Secretariat staff to ensure that women, men, girls and boys benefit equally from their work.

Further, the Commonwealth Secretariat has produced an analysis on '[Gender Integration for Climate Action: A Review of Commonwealth Member Country Nationally Determined Contributions](#)' to understand better how and to what extent Commonwealth member countries are integrating gender and social inclusion concerns into their NDCs; with a view to identifying prevailing gaps, entry points and opportunities for the integration of gender into NDCs. Building on this analysis, the Commonwealth [Best Practice Guide on Gender Integration in NDCs](#) was developed to enhance practical support succinctly mapping out a timeline of tangible action points which member countries can undertake to enhance gender integration in their NDC update cycle. The report has a set of best practice recommendations shared with all CCFAH Advisers for cognisance in their work along the following topics - prioritising gender in context, policy integration of gender, and institutional coordination across gender and climate change, capacity building in technology, MRV systems, sex-disaggregated data and information and financial resources for Gender inclusion.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is also committed to supporting governments in developing countries to implement youth-focused policies and programmes. The Commonwealth support young people to lead change and be recognised as development partners, by promoting their engagement at all levels of decision-making.

The Adviser will be expected to highlight and respond to specific gender and youth questions attached to the process under this project, which will be included in all project reporting.

REQUIRED SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

Academic qualifications:

A post-graduate qualification (Masters degree) in any of the following: Climate Change, Environmental Studies/ Economics, Natural Resources Management, Energy, Project Management, and Business Studies.

Experience:

- At least 8 years of work experience in climate policy development and management of projects in the area of climate change, energy, forestry, biodiversity, agriculture and technical assistance initiatives.
- Demonstrated experience in climate finance readiness, grant proposal writing, climate change capacity building and development of climate related insurance products
- Demonstrated experience in resource mobilisation, stakeholder relationship building and collaboration with government agencies, donors and/or international development partners, and nongovernment organisations.
- Demonstrated experience with supporting the development of, and operationalisation of national or regional Climate Change Trust Funds.
- Experience in developing countries, particularly in the Caribbean region, is a strong advantage.

Competencies

- Demonstrated integrity, accountability and respect for diversity.
- Understanding of the circumstances of climate change and sustainable development in developing countries.
- Sharing of knowledge and demonstrated management of knowledge platforms.
- Technical skills for assessing climate change impacts, identifying mitigation and adaptation measures and responding to loss and damage.
- Ability to formulate bankable project proposals and budgets.
- Developing and implementing resource mobilisation plans and strategies.
- Keeps abreast of new developments in climate change.
- Computer literacy in Microsoft packages (MS Word, MS PowerPoint, MS Excel, Outlook).
- Demonstrate strong interpersonal and motivational skills and the ability to work with minimal supervision and in diverse groups.
- Able to work independently and under pressure

Language:

- Fluency in both written and spoken English is essential.
- Knowledge of Spanish is an advantage.