

TERMS OF REFERENCE

“Integrating the social domain of Ocean Accounts in Belize: a pilot study towards global standards”

Project: Integrating the Social Domain of Ocean Accounts in Belize: A Pilot Study Towards Global Standards

Contracting Authority: Global Ocean Accounts Partnership Secretariat (GOAP)

Country: Belize

Contract Type: Short-Medium Term Consultancy

Assignment Duration: Six (6) months

Start Date: October 2025

1.0 Background/Rationale

Belize’s blue space plays a vital role in supporting domestic food security, livelihoods, cultural identity, and national development. Despite this importance, the social, cultural, and equity dimensions of the ocean-human relationship are often underrepresented in decision-making processes.

Social Accounts offer a structured way to capture, analyse, and report data on these dimensions within an integrated accounting framework. They provide a more holistic picture of how marine resources support communities and livelihoods, while also highlighting equity outcomes. This approach helps uncover patterns and dynamics that are often hidden in aggregate statistics. By linking social vulnerabilities with environmental conditions, Social Accounts enable more targeted and place-based decision-making. For example, they can identify which coastal communities are most exposed to environmental changes and dependent on marine resources. In addition, Social Accounts incorporate informal economies, traditional knowledge, and subsistence activities that are frequently excluded from official datasets. This ensures that local planning reflects the actual use and value of marine resources across different demographic groups.

Ultimately, Social Accounts support participatory governance by bridging local priorities with national conservation and development objectives, fostering more inclusive and equitable blue economy outcomes.

This consultancy will develop Belize’s first Pilot Social Account as a core component of the country’s Ocean Accounting framework. The Social Accounts will:

- Integrate social Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) into existing Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) system.
- Support evidence-based inclusive marine governance.
- Inform national policies, Blue Economy development, and international reporting obligations



- Serve as a model for global methodology development under GOAP.

Belize is well positioned to lead this work, building on its Ocean Accounts pilot work, Blue Economy MRV system, and established policy framework.

The Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP) and the Belize Ministry of Blue Economy and Marine Conservation (MBEMC) are collaborating to develop and implement a Social Accounts project for Belize.

2.0 Goal and Objectives

Overall Goal:

To develop a Pilot Social Accounts for Belize as a part of its comprehensive Ocean Accounting Framework, ensuring the social dimensions of the blue economy are systematically measured and integrated into national decision-making.

Specific objectives:

- To co-design Social Accounts with key national and local actors (including the government agencies, local NGOs, and research institutions), ensuring its relevance, applicability, and practical for KPI framework revision and broader blue economy decision-making in Belize.
- To identify and evaluate additional secondary data sources beyond those already catalogued in the Blue Economy monitoring project, suitable for integration into a comprehensive Pilot Social Account that meets Ocean Accounting standards.
- To develop a spatially explicit Social Account using secondary data which enables monitoring, reporting and verification of the 17 social KPIs (i.e. focused on cultural values, gender equity and livelihoods). This will ensure integration of the NatCap approach.
- To conduct a systematic gap identification process to identify data, methodological and analytical gaps for the KPI framework (including social KPIs).
- To formulate a strategic action agenda that outlines pathways for enhancing and expanding co-ordinated work which ensures the value of Belize's blue economy is fully integrated into national decision-making.
- To build sustainable institutional capacity within Belize for the ongoing compilation, maintenance, and analysis of KPIs, through the broader Ocean Accounting framework.
- To ensure seamless integration with the Blue Economy dashboard and broader MRV system, enabling Social Account data to flow directly into the centralized MRV system
- To demonstrate practical application of Social Accounts for evidence-based decision-making and planning for sustainable blue economy development in Belize, particularly in relation to



Blue Economy development, Blue Bond and RBB PFP commitments, marine spatial planning, and MPA management.

3.0 Scope and Approach

This consultancy will be implemented in close coordination with GOAP, The Ministry of Blue Economy and Marine Conservation, and the MRV project Steering Committee. The governance structure and coordination mechanisms are outlined below:

Governance structure: This Social Accounts work operates within the broader Project Steering Committee (PSC) framework established for Belize's Ocean Accounts and Blue Economy MRV system, chaired by the Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit (BBFP) and co-chaired by the Ministry of Blue Economy and Marine Conservation (MBEMC).

Lead organizations: GOAP provides methodology development, technical support and international standards alignment, while MBEMC ensures national leadership and policy integration, and the subcontractor will lead the implementation of the project. All major decisions are coordinated through the PSC to ensure alignment with broader blue economy objectives.

Coordination mechanisms:

- Strategic-level: Regular PSC meetings with all partner organizations
- Technical-level: Joint working sessions between Ocean Accounts Fellows, GOAP Secretariat, IDB, and NatCap teams
- Operational-level: Coordination through the BBFP, Blue Economy Unit and Ocean Accounts Fellows Group

All consultative processes under this exercise must employ a transparent and inclusive process to ensure effective stakeholder involvement. This will include monitoring and evaluation support for consultations and stakeholder workshops.

To attain the objectives of this exercise, the Consultant Team will undertake at a minimum, the actions listed below.

Key activities include:

- **Co-design partnership** - Serve as an ongoing co-design partner on the MRV project and aid the development of the Pilot Social Account development, contributing local expertise, cultural knowledge, and organizational capacity to ensure research design is contextually appropriate and culturally sensitive for Belize.
- **Data integration with GOAP** - Partner closely with GOAP to identify, share, and thoughtfully integrate relevant social data sources that tell the story of Belize's relationship with its ocean resources, working together to weave this information into iterative drafts of the Pilot Social Account.
- **Community consultations** - Lead and facilitate consultations with Belizean stakeholders and communities across the districts to understand what they would like included in Social Accounts, taking a first draft of the Pilot Social Account to them based on available secondary data.



- **Decision-maker interviews** - Undertake interviews with national, regional and local decision-makers across districts to understand what they would like Social Accounts to look like, involving taking a first draft of the Pilot Social Account to them based on available secondary data.
- **Consultation reporting** - Produce a consultation summary report documenting findings, community priorities, and stakeholder perspectives.
- **GESI considerations** - Deliver a summary of key Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) considerations for the design and implementation of Belize's Pilot Social Account.
- **Continuous insights** - Provide continuous insights and findings throughout the engagement period to inform real-time compilation of the various drafts of the Pilot Social Account.
- **Validation workshops** - Deliver validation workshops with communities, stakeholders and decision-makers presenting the final Pilot Social Account, which has been modified based on their shared vision.
- **Training and capacity building** - Provide training and capacity building for ongoing maintenance of the Pilot Social Account.

Deliverables

- Project plan (timeline, consultation plan, ethics, field workplan and stakeholder mapping)
- Draft workshop outline and materials
- Delivery of interviews with decision-makers
- Delivery of: (i) workshops with community and stakeholders and (ii) a short summary document (approx. 2 pages) with key points on GESI and how to improve the Pilot Social Account.
- Full consultation report
- Follow-up validation workshop/events to present the final Pilot Social Account for Belize

Duration and Timeline

The consultancy will run for six (6) months, October 2025 – March 2026.

Proposed dates	Key milestones
13 th October 2025	Project plan (timeline, consultation plan, ethics, field workplan and stakeholder mapping)
17 th October 2025	Draft workshop outline and materials
22 nd October 2025	Co-delivery of stakeholder workshop on Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) and Social Accounts
10 th December 2025	Delivery of interviews with decision-makers
20 th January 2026	Delivery of: (i) workshops with community and stakeholders and (ii) a short summary document (approx. 2 pages) with key points on GESI and how to improve the Pilot Social Account.
10 th February 2026	Delivery of draft consultation report
27 th March 2026	Follow-up validation workshop/events to present the final Pilot Social Account