

SUPPORTING BELIZE TO BUILD RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL HAZARD EVENTS

CASE STUDY



The Issue

Through the **Special Development Fund (SDF)**, the **Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)** has been supporting the region to enhance climate resilience and implement climate actions. Belize is a country prone to the increasing threats of climate change due to its tropical climate and low-lying costs. In response, CDB has allocated USD 71 million and USD 45 million through SDF 8 and SDF 9 respectively, to support the **Government of Belize (GOBZ)** to improve the country's resilience to climate change and responding to natural disasters.

Aware of the threats that climate change poses to the sustainable economic and social development agenda, the GOBZ has committed to strategically transition to low carbon development whilst strengthening its resilience to the effects of climate change. Belize is therefore trying to build up resilience to the risks of climate change and natural disasters by adopting plans to tackle them. Joint regional efforts are required to achieve this, and the Bank has been providing support in the past few years.

The SDF-backed projects

In a case study developed as part of the multicycle evaluation of the SDF 8&9, three SDF-financed projects were analysed aiming to provide emergency assistance in the country. One project was related to immediate emergency response after Hurricane Earl in 2016, and the other two projects focused on providing support to sugarcane and livestock farmers during the 2019 drought. These three projects are:

- The Natural Disaster Management - Immediate Response Loan and Use of Funds (Consultancy Services) – **Hurricane Earl – Belize, hereafter Hurricane Earl project (loan, USD 770,000)** ;
- Enhancing Sugarcane Farmers Resilience to

Natural Hazard Events, **hereafter Sugarcane Farmers project (loan, USD 1,013,000)**;

- Disaster Management Emergency Relief Grant: Drought 2019 – Belize, **hereafter Livestock Farmers project (grant, USD 200,000)**.

The **Hurricane Earl project** was designed as an immediate response project to tackle the consequences of a natural event that deeply affected the country. As such, the GOBZ identified areas requiring specific attention for rehabilitating and conducting infrastructure works. The needs were identified based on the **Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis Committee (DANA)** report developed by the **National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO)** following Hurricane Earl. In addition, a characteristic of this project is that the funds coming from the CDB's loan aim to reimburse expenses incurred by the GOBZ to face the national emergency.

“I am a sugarcane farmer and I am also member of the Management Committee of the Belize Sugarcane Farmers Association. Well, I would like to give my experience in the project that was carried out in 2019-2020, where they supported us with a problem that we had because of the drought.

... the sugarcane farmers who were able to participate in it were quite good because it came to provide them with some needs that they could not meet because with the drop in production, the sugarcane farmers no longer had the finances to be able to buy the products they needed to maintain their sugarcane farms.”

Focus group with members of the Belize Sugarcane Farmers Association
January 25, 2024, Orange Walk, Belize

The **Sugarcane** and **Livestock Farmers** projects were conceived to face the effects of the 2019 drought. Both projects were designed together with representatives of the sugarcane and livestock industries.

It is important to note that the selected projects were aligned with the government's policy objective to support agriculture and rural development and to strengthen national capabilities in hydrology and meteorology and improve overall resilience to climate change and other natural hazard events. In addition, all projects were implemented in a timely manner with no reported delays.

The impacts

The **Hurricane Earl project** successfully managed to clear, clean and repair transport infrastructure in Belize, Cayo, Stann Creek, and Toledo districts by April 2017. In particular, the main activities conducted with the project were the (re)construction of a low line vehicular bridge, pedestrian bridges, and general works to clear debris and repair roads and streets. In consequence, the project managed to restore social and economic activities following Hurricane Earl, hence achieving its main objective. Moreover, a consultancy service was included (through CDB's Use of Funds) to assist with supervision of the project. Technical inspections and certifications of expenditure for goods and services confirmed the completeness of the project.

Overall, the **Hurricane Earl project** achieved its intended results. On one hand, the GOBZ was able to obtain reimbursement for expenses that were not budgeted, proving to be suitable for national emergencies. On the other hand, the project focused on restoring infrastructure for vulnerable communities in rural areas. Through the project, communities were able to restore their activities, such as access to schools, farms, or work.

Loan Funds allocated Livestock Farmers allowed the GOBZ to assist **sugarcane farmers** belonging to three farmers' associations to tackle the effects of the drought. The project assisted farmers through the provision of planting material, agrochemicals inputs, land clearing and preparation services, and provide technical advice in climate smart agriculture and cane agronomy.

Beneficiaries claimed that the damages to the

crops exceeded the assistance provided as allocated resources per farmer covered only a portion of the required inputs to mitigate the drought. Hence, the project allowed to minimize losses, but did not increase revenues for farmers. In fact, consulted farmers mentioned that sugarcane production has not been restored to pre-drought levels to this day as intended. Other Stakeholders highlighted that the project provided farmers an alternative option to obtain inputs without recurring to loans with financial institutions, which would have created an additional burden.

The grant resources allocated through the **Livestock Farmers** project provided small **livestock farmers** with emergency relief supplies and services, including the provision of animal silage, water storage devices and water supply services were. The project help farmers tackle their most pressing requirement, which was to sustain and secure their livestock through feed (silage and water for pastures). Overall, the impact of the project is very high since it allowed farmers to overcome the impact of the drought.

“...
[W]e can say that 90-95% of that project was very good, it was very well accepted by the cane growers, but not only the acceptance but also the benefit it gave to all of us who were able to participate in that project was really an excellent decision, it was very good and it was at a time when the cane growers really needed it”.

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