



PAGE 3: B. ABOUT YOU

Q1: Respondent details

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Q2: Country or Customs territory

TAIPEI, CHINESE

Q3: Organization

Public sector

PAGE 4: C. ABOUT YOUR CASE STORY

Q4: Title of case story

Belize City House of Culture and Downtown Rejuvenation Project (Belize)

Q5: Case story focus

Infrastructure upgrading and the development of related services markets, including through support for investment climate reforms.

Q6: Case story abstract

Tourism, a top national priority, is one of the main drivers of economic growth in Belize. In reference to Belize's National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (NSTMP), the TaiwanICDF committed a soft loan of USD 5.3 million to initiate the rejuvenation of Belize City's historical downtown through a living eco-museum concept. As one of the nation's bridge to the world, this eco-museum located in the downtown area of Belize City would give impetus to cultural tourism based services and products, motivate visitors to explore the diversity of the nation, and consequently enlarge economic participation and opportunities. In the long run, Belizeans can help sustain their country's progress with the inspiration and better understanding of their urban identities they gain by participating in the rediscovery of the dynamic history of the city.

Q7: Who provided funding?

Bilateral donor

Q8: Project/Programme type

Single country

Q9: Your text case story**1. Project Description**

The Belize City House of Culture and Downtown Rejuvenation Project was first proposed by the Government of Belize (GoB) with the aim to attract cruise tourists to the downtown area of Belize City. The proposal was modified later in 2011 under the Capacity Development Technical Assistance carried out by the GoB and a Chinese Taipei consulting team. Instead of single-spot infrastructure constructions, a more pervasive eco-museum plan of the downtown area was proposed. The Project consists of hard and soft components. The hard component includes physical works on (1) rejuvenation of selected old buildings; (2) construction of a new activities building; and (3) public space/landscaping. To support the sustainable operation of these rejuvenated places, buildings and eco-museum, the soft components of the Project covers historical interpretation, community capacity building, and the establishment of a professional and creative management team.

2. Executing Arrangement

The Executing Agency (EA) is the Belize Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation (MTCA) through its Planning and Project Development Unit (PPDU). The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established among related governmental stakeholders, including the MTCA, the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH), the Belize City Council (BCC), and other relevant agencies, to provide oversight over the Project and integrate ongoing and future investments and projects in the downtown area of Belize City.

3. Project Development Objectives

The core objective of the Project is to improve awareness and appreciation of colonial heritage and cultural identity through the rejuvenation of a "pilot" selection of historical/colonial buildings, during which the concept of operating an eco-museum was also established. In the longer term, the number of historical buildings located around the urban area of Belize City being preserved will be increased and the spatial extent of the eco-museum will be expanded. Ultimately, the benefits of the Project could address the core issue of loss of economic opportunities in the downtown via the development of cultural tourism

- (1) Output: Increase the numbers of public space and well-maintained historical buildings in the Belize City downtown area; improve the awareness and appreciation of colonial heritage; and improve legislation to preserve urban colonial heritage.
- (2) Outcome: Rejuvenate cultural heritage and identity.
- (3) Impact: Rejuvenate urban environment thus increase economic growth through tourism-related activities.

4. Project Rationale

Belize City was the first mainland-Colombian settlement in the country and Belize's first capital city. Since 1980, however, the population of Belize City has been declining, which has led to uneven development trends within the city. People have moved out to rural areas, the new capital city (Belmopan) or neighboring countries. During this counter-urbanization transition, economic and social activities and the accessibility of public services have declined due to a lack of urban planning, poor governance and a lack of socio-economic integration.

Within the framework of Horizon 2030 Vision, the Belize Medium Term Development Strategy (BMTDS) 2010-2013, the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (NSTMP) and the Belize City Master Plan (BZCMP), the rejuvenation and preservation of historical houses in Belize City's downtown area is one of the most significant catalysts for urban development and cultural tourism development. The abundant externalities of the Project could bring more inclusive and sustainable impacts to locals, and at the same time build connections between locals and tourists by creating a mutually beneficial mechanism.

Q10: Lessons learnt

Adequate technical assistance is critical to project implementation. Considering the various competencies such as urban planning, civil construction and museum development required during the implementation process, including an adequate technical assistance mechanism within the project would largely facilitate its progress. Setting up the consulting team in advance with sufficient budget support covered by the project is therefore suggested.

Note: The Project is under implementation with an expected completion date in year 2018.