



## CASE STUDY



# TOWARDS A MORE EFFICIENT, DISASTER-RESILIENT AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY HEALTH SECTOR IN BELIZE

## CONTEXT

Belize, in Central America, is a medium-level developing country of 367 000 inhabitants with a young and growing population (46 % are 18 and younger, while 6.5 % are over 60). Its health sector has been evolving to face the challenges of non-communicable diseases (like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and chronic respiratory disease), which are responsible for 40 % of deaths annually, as well as communicable illnesses (such as HIV, dengue and respiratory infections), emerging diseases, a low-rate of health professionals per capita, and the threat of weather-related disasters which also affect major sectors of the economy, including agriculture and tourism.

To assist Belize with the challenges, the European Union has designed a cooperation programme with a multidisciplinary, participatory, climate-resilient and sustainable approach to support the implementation of the [Belize Health Sector Strategic Plan \(BHSSP 2014-2024\)](#), aligned with the [Horizon 2030 National Strategy](#) and the [Belize Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy 2016-2019](#).

### PROGRAMME NAME

Health Support Programme Belize

### PERIOD

2018-2022

### TOTAL COST

€ 11 600 000

### EU CONTRIBUTION

€ 10 560 000

### BENEFITING ZONE

Belize

### PARTNERS

- ▶ European Union
- ▶ Government of Belize
- ▶ Ministry of Health (MoH)
- ▶ Ministry of Economic Development and Petroleum (National Authorizing Office)

## OBJECTIVES

The principal objective of the EU's 'Health Support Programme Belize' is to achieve a better quality of life for all Belizeans, living now and in the future, with a view to increasing the equity of its benefits, management efficiency, and the effectiveness of actions to satisfy the health needs of the population. Specifically, the project aims to:

1. develop efficient, effective, equitable, disaster-resilient and environmentally friendly health facilities;
2. strengthen the health information system coupled with an environmental surveillance system; and
3. improve the structure, organisation and management of health services.

## IMPACT

Through these objectives the programme will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals – not only as relates to “good health and well-being” (No. 3) and its related 17 targets, but also other goals such as safe water and sanitation (No. 6), clean energy (No. 7), reduced inequalities (No. 10) and climate action (No. 13).

The EU, a signatory to the International Health Partnership (IHP+), is committed to reducing the exposure of developing countries to global shocks, such as those due to climate change, and to improving their health sector functioning through a rational use of resources such as water and energy, cutting costs, increasing efficiency in operations and reducing carbon emissions.



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## FACTS & FIGURES

- ▶ 3 regional hospitals and 3 community hospitals upgraded to become energy & water efficient, disaster-resilient, and environmentally friendly facilities.
- ▶ 1 Multi-Hazard Plan designed and training for health teams in disaster preparedness.
- ▶ 200 health sector staff and 500 community and municipal government members trained to respond to disaster situations
- ▶ Health information system strengthened, including a surveillance system for waterborne and vector outbreak diseases (dengue, zika and malaria).

Due to Belize's geographic location, the country is at risk of water-related hazards such as floods, storms, cyclones, hurricanes and droughts. It is therefore essential that health care facilities be properly prepared and equipped to remain operational before, during and after a natural disaster.

In this context, Belize's Health Support Programme has integrated environmental and climate-related considerations through a multidisciplinary and sustainable approach for developing efficient, effective, equitable, climate-smart, disaster-resilient and environmentally friendly health facilities. This contributes to more reliable and functional health infrastructure.

Three regional hospitals, three community hospitals and the Central Medical Laboratory are being refurbished and retrofitted in accordance with the Smart (Green and Safe) Hospitals Initiative, funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom. A health facility preventive maintenance plan and a multi-hazard plan are also being developed; and health staff are being trained in disaster management (prevention, preparedness, response and recovery) and in preventive maintenance.

As relates to the Smart (Green and Safe) Hospitals Initiative, the following aspects are being taken into account:

- ▶ Improving the structural and operational safety of hospitals with green interventions, to convert them into climate-smart and disaster-resilient health care facilities
- ▶ Reducing energy and water use through the installation of alternative, efficient and sustainable (low-carbon and using renewable energy sources) supply solutions
- ▶ Improving air quality and reducing harmful emissions
- ▶ Enhancing waste and solid waste management
- ▶ Strengthening disease surveillance and control
- ▶ Equipping hospitals with efficient and environmentally friendly appliances and fixtures

The 'smart (green and safe)' health facilities should deliver reductions in public expenditure related to utility bills, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved air and light quality, enhanced physical access to hospitals, improved access to safe water and improved safety conditions.

In addition, the Belize Health Information System is being upgraded and interconnected with laboratory, public health and electronic clinical records modules, as well as being expanded to rural health facilities, and training is provided for surveillance and data systems. The Health Information System and improved surveillance will make data readily available to ensure appropriate decisions and deployment of a rapid response to prevent potential disease outbreaks, notably infectious diseases related to climate events.

To improve the performance, organisation and management of health services, an 'Integrated Health Service Delivery Network' approach is being implemented in all regions, focusing on primary care and fostering partnerships with different stakeholders. Within this approach, organisational structures are being modified to make them more efficient. Training in results-based management, strategic planning, programme budgeting, and monitoring & evaluation systems are accompanying the measures, including surveillance of waterborne and vector outbreak diseases that can be related to the weather and shall be closely monitored due to climate change.

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## Greening EU COOPERATION

Integrating environment & climate change

The Environment and Climate Change Mainstreaming Facility offers remote and on-site assistance to EU staff and national partners, to integrate environment and climate change into all phases of the programme cycle of operations.

For methodological advice and further training on environment and climate change mainstreaming, contact:

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## TESTIMONIES: SMART, GREEN & SAFE HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

*"The European Union is proud to support the main objective of Belize's Health Sector Plan 2014-2024: "Achieving a better quality of life, for all Belizeans, living now and in the future". Improving infrastructure and capacity building of the health sector and its employees will provide better health for the people of Belize and increased protection from frequent environmental threats like storms and flooding."*

Malgorzata Wasilewska, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Jamaica, Belize, Turks and Caicos Islands, Bahamas and the Cayman Islands

*"The action aims to support the Health Sector to achieve its Strategic Multiannual Plan which is aligned with the Horizon 2030 National Development Strategy. Substantive changes in the different structures and functions of the sector will be introduced, with a view to increasing the equity of its benefits, the efficiency in its management, and the effectiveness of its actions to achieve the satisfaction of the health needs of the population."*

Nicolaus Hansmann, Team Leader Belize, Delegation of the European Union to Jamaica, Belize, Turks and Caicos Islands, Bahamas and the Cayman Islands

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