



# Belize NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY 2016-2026



OUR CULTURES • OUR VALUES • OUR IDENTITY • OUR PROSPERITY

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2016-2026

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*Belize is a beautiful country born from a mosaic of historic, cultural, economic and political experiences. From the height of our Maya civilizations, to genocide and slavery, we have shaped our history in ways that reflect who we are as a people. Out of our struggles for survival, we have emerged into a resilient nation whose cultural diversity remains a hallmark of our identity. Culture is a platform from which we continue to shape our future with a common vision of “Culture as identity, identity as creativity and creativity as democracy.”*

*As the Minister responsible for Culture, I am proud to present you with a National Cultural Policy that embraces all aspects of our tangible and intangible cultural heritage. It provides the framework within which the Government will continue to protect our archaeological and historic landmarks, recognize our national heroes, celebrate our national festivals, foster the development of our cultural and creative industries and promote these nationally, regionally and internationally. We aim to do this in collaboration with our private sector and civil society partners since Policy implementation must be a truly national process.*

*A cornerstone of this Policy is the Cultural Bill of Rights: our right to participation and decision-making, our right to cultural expression, our right to formal and informal education about our culture, as well as our right to social and economic benefits derived from culture. So as we honor the intrinsic values that make us unique, we see it as imperative that we promote economic prosperity for all our children, youth, men and women whose multiple talents contribute to sustainable development.*

*This National Cultural Policy is therefore holistic, relevant and multi-dimensional. It is intended to foster a greater sense of unity, diversity and nationalism among all of us. It takes into account our people’s hopes and aspirations as well as our day-to-day realities. For this reason, I am convinced that this policy is truly “for the people.”*

*As we move forward with the implementation of this policy, I humbly ask you to remain engaged and to play your part in ensuring the long term survival of Belize’s rich cultural heritage and to use this heritage to make our lives better.*

*Sincerely,*

*Hon. Elodio Aragon Jr.  
Minister of State  
Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture*



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*Dear friends in Culture:*

*It is with great pleasure that I present to you Belize's first National Cultural Policy. The first efforts to develop a Cultural policy for Belize began more than twenty years ago, though a final policy document was never produced until now. Along the way, Belize has seen significant milestones, including the establishment of the National Institute of Culture and History.*

*Thanks to the efforts of my predecessors and current professional staff, NICH is today the country's premier cultural institution with responsibility for creating an enabling environment for the safeguarding of Belize's cultural heritage and for the development of our cultural and creative industries. In line with this vision, we recognized the need to consult with the Belizean people in order to develop some understanding of our cultural dynamics and to further develop a set of guides or policies that can be used by all Cultural Stakeholders for the purpose of social and economic development.*

*In particular, the policy provides a guide for all Government Ministries and Departments who have a responsibility for aspects of culture. It is anticipated that this policy will be aggressively implemented over the next ten years. In the initial phase, the National Institute of Culture and History will be conducting an education campaign about the critical aspects of the policy document. This will be followed by the development of strategic plans and actions by various government agencies for implementation and for collaboration with a cross-section of cultural stakeholders.*

*Upon the launch of this document, we will make every effort to continue to create an environment which we may come to enjoy the social and economic benefits derived from culture. It is our hope that all Belizeans can come to appreciate and live out the principles enshrined in this policy document: Our Cultures, Our Values, Our Identity, Our Prosperity.*

*I thank you for your work in culture and remain committed to the work ahead.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Diane C. Haylock*

*President*

*National Institute of Culture and History*



## *ACKNOWLEDGEMENT*

The Government of Belize recognises and appreciates the contributions of government ministries, local authorities, civil society and non-governmental organisations, international organisations, the private and corporate sector and all cultural activists and individuals who participated in developing this National Cultural Policy.

We also recognize the support of UNESCO Paris and the UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for their responsiveness and support in preparing the final document.

We also thank Nigel Encalada , John Morris and their technical staff for their work in preparing this document. We also thank UNESCO cultural expert Stephen Chifunyise for his critical review of the final policy document.



## *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

The National Cultural Policy provides the policy framework for the safeguarding of Belize's tangible and intangible cultural heritage; the promotion of cultural expression and creativity; the development of cultural and creative industries and the wise management of Belize's cultural resources.

During the course of two years of consultations, cultural activists, stakeholders and community participants repeatedly identified a vision for Belize's development that was based on the collective values of respect, tolerance, hard work, democracy and social justice. It was suggested that these core values should be reanimated to ensure the success of future generations of Belizeans. For this reason, this policy framework is value-based. The participants also identified the need to build social cohesion among Belize's diverse populations and to do so by proposing a model that allows all of Belize's cultural groups the theoretical and practical space for cultural expression and creativity.

In order to fulfil this vision, the policy proposes a democratic and decentralized model for culture in Belize. It is referred to as the Belize Culture Model. It assumes that culture and cultural practices exist in all persons, communities, groups and institutions in Belize, with each having a role to play. The Belize Culture Model calls upon all stakeholders to fulfil their functions within the mores, laws and customs of a multi-cultural and democratic society. It asks that all cultural actors consider the freedoms which are guaranteed within the Constitution of Belize and to allow the fulfilment of these rights so that persons may properly assert their Belizean cultural identity and exercise creativity for personal growth and national development.

The National Cultural Policy document comprises three parts. The First Part covers Vision of the Policy; Core Values; Rationale for the Policy; Guiding Principles and Context; Bill of Cultural Rights; Process in Policy Formulation; Definitions of Culture in the Context of Belize and Legal and Institutional Frameworks; Policy Objectives; Policy Framework; and the Belize Culture Model. The Second Part covers Priority Policy Areas and Policy Interventions on Cultural Heritage Safeguarding; Cultural and Creative Industries; Culture in Education and Environment; Culture in Tourism, National Development and Poverty Eradication; Culture, Youth and Technology; Domestic, Regional and International Cultural Relations and Financing and Administration of Culture. The Third Part covers Policy Governance and Implementation Matrix and Policy Review Schedule.



## 1.0 VISION OF POLICY

The National Cultural Policy expresses the vision of forging a prosperous nation of united, resilient, peaceful and creative people driven by the shared values and beliefs of a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and democratic society. This vision is represented in the slogan: OUR Cultures, OUR Values, OUR Identity, OUR Prosperity.

## 2.0 CORE VALUES

The values which are promoted by this National Cultural Policy and which should be given emphasis in the process of national development include: respect, responsibility, hard-work, family, community, tolerance, civic pride, courtesy, unity, peace, freedom, democracy and social justice.

## 3.0 RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY

Belize's Horizon 2030 establishes a vision for the long-term development of a collective national identity as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. Based on this vision, the Government undertook to develop a national cultural policy as a framework for understanding Belizean culture; for guiding the safeguarding and promotion of the nation's cultural heritage and for balanced, efficient and equitable access to and distribution of resources for the development of a viable and sustainable cultural sector.

## 4.0 PRINCIPLES OF THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY

This National Cultural Policy has been formulated on the basis of the following historical context and principles:

- Belize is a young nation with a diverse people uneasily struggling to create a national identity.
- The demographic profile of Belize is a result of patterns of voluntary and involuntary migration.
- The people of Belize have a rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage that is crucial in both identity and nation building.
- Culture is central to identity. Therefore expression, presentation and promotion of Belize's culture through the implementation of this policy should bring people to respect both our uniqueness as individuals and our diversity as Belizeans.
- Nation building efforts and strategies must include advocacy for culture; effective mobilization of resources for cultural development; diaspora involvement in the overall development of the nation; promotion of and respect for national heroes and national symbols; multi-stakeholder consultation and collective decision making.
- The rich and diverse cultural and creative expressions of all communities in Belize have to be nurtured and effectively promoted to ensure full participation in cultural life and the expression of our democratic values.



## 5.0 BILL OF CULTURAL RIGHTS

The Government of Belize is committed to the creation of an enabling environment for cultural promotion and social transformation within communities in order to strengthen national identity and to nurture social cohesion. In this regard, the Government of Belize shall ensure that culture and the arts form an integral part of the Belize 2030 Plan, the Tourism Master Plan and the NICH Strategic Plan and shall ratify and adhere to international conventions, protocols and agreements in the field of culture in the best interests of Belize's people.

This National Cultural Policy provides a Bill of Cultural Rights that emphasises those rights and privileges that are already enshrined in the Belize Constitution and are therefore viewed as critical for the development of cultural awareness and confidence.

Therefore, the Government of Belize calls upon all stakeholders to respect these rights and to operate within the provisions of this policy to ensure the development of culture for national development and social cohesion. The following is the Bill of Cultural Rights:

- 5.1 A right to cultural expression and exchange
- 5.2 A right to representation and participation in decision-making
- 5.3 A right to social and economic benefits derived from culture
- 5.4 A right to holistic formal and informal education including arts and culture
- 5.5 A right to respect, integrity, tolerance and excellence in arts and culture
- 5.6 A right to the use, preservation and promotion of language
- 5.7 A right to promotion of arts and culture nationally and internationally
- 5.8 A right to community and place
- 5.9 A right to redress of cultural grievances and conflicts

## 6.0 PROCESS IN THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY FORMULATION.

In early 1989, Inez Sanchez's "Thoughts towards the formulation of a national cultural policy" called for an integrated plan of cultural action and initiated the written discussion on the need for a national cultural policy for Belize. This was followed, in the early 1990s by a UNESCO sponsored national workshop and consultations. In September 1992, findings of these consultations were published by the Belize National Arts Council in a document entitled "What the People Said".

Ten years later the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) was established, replacing the Belize National Arts Council. NICH is now the country's enabling institution of cultural development and expression. Since it was more than ten years after the last national consultation on culture took place, the Government of Belize, through the Ministry of Tourism and Culture and NICH, undertook in 2012 to revisit the views of Belize's cultural stakeholders towards the development a national cultural policy that would facilitate Belize's future social and economic development.



The multi-stakeholder consultation process, which was designed to get feedback from a cross-section of the population, was conducted in three phases. The first phase was district-level consultations which involved known cultural activists and representatives of community arts and cultural organisations and the general public invited through radio, television and social media outlets.

The second phase involved holding consultations with arts and cultural organisations that have a national cultural agenda such as the the National Kriol Council, National Garifuna Council, Music Industry Association of Belize and other non-governmental organisations.

The third phase involved the use of a web-based and paper copy survey instrument to solicit feedback on several cultural issues from members of the general public as well as those with interest in the development of a national cultural policy. Through cultural workshops, festivals, concerts and other events which involved cultural stakeholders, the Institute for Social and Cultural Research also conducted assessments for consideration within the national cultural policy.

This final document was preceded by the presentation and vetting of a draft policy document which was released on August 28, 2013 to coincide with the 10 year anniversary celebration of the National Institute of Culture and History. Feedback on the draft cultural policy was solicited from organisations, cultural professionals, scholars and persons interested in cultural development and the general public. Feedback and suggestions were also provided by selected readers and personnel of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Aviation. Their suggestions were incorporated in the production of the final policy document. As a final step, the draft document was reviewed and amended by a UNESCO appointed expert. The process of cultural policy development was consultative, participatory and inclusive.

## 7.0 DEFINITION OF CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF BELIZE

The definition of culture used in this National Cultural Policy is adopted from the UNESCO definition where CULTURE comprises the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of human beings, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

In the context of Belize, culture is the sum total of the ways in which a society preserves, identifies, organises, sustains and expresses itself. The Nation of Belize is endowed with a rich and diverse cultural heritage including the cultures of indigenous people and afro-descendants, as well as other people who have settled in Belize over time. Belize's development goals cannot be adequately realized when the nation is not able to collectively appreciate the significance and value of our cultural heritage. Culture is a form of capital with the potential to move people out of income poverty.



## 8.0 LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

### *8.1 National Legal Framework*

The Government of Belize has enacted several laws that have led to the establishment of institutions and agencies that deal with, regulate, or impact the cultural sector. This National Cultural Policy not only takes into consideration the existence of these legal instruments, but also regards them as vital frameworks that should be taken into consideration in its implementation. The following are some these laws:

- National Institute of Culture and History Act-Cap 231
- Belize Broadcasting and Television Act-Cap 227
- Belize Copyright Act-Cap 252
- Customs Regulations Act-Cap 49
- Protected Areas Conservation Act-Cap 218
- Entertainment Tax Act-Cap 51
- Environmental Protection Act-Cap 328
- Wildlife Protection Act-Cap 328
- Fisheries Act-Cap 210
- Education Act-Cap 36
- Income and Business Tax Act-Cap 55
- Abandoned Wreck Act-Cap 23

### *8.2 International Legal framework*

The Government of Belize has ratified some UNESCO Conventions in the field of culture whose objectives are in tandem with many of the objectives of this National Cultural Policy. In many respects, these international conventions should be considered as an integral part of Belize's legislation in the field of culture and as being vital instruments that set the direction of the cultural sector. When these conventions are effectively implemented or utilized, they provide solutions to some of the complex problems being faced by the cultural sector. Indeed, when these legal instruments are taken on board by stakeholders in the cultural sector, they have an impact similar to that intended in this National Cultural Policy. The following are the UNESCO Conventions in the field of culture that Belize has ratified and is implementing:

- 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict
- 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage
- 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property
- 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
- 2005 Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

### *8.3 Institutional Framework*

The government intervenes in the cultural life of the people at many points that may not be noted and clearly articulated in this National Cultural Policy. Apart from the Ministry of Culture, which is mandated with specific responsibility for culture, there are other arms of government responsible for policies that impact the cultural sector. It is important to recognise other arms of government ministries and public agencies with roles, responsibilities and functions that directly or indirectly



impact on the cultural sector and which should be considered as crucial and supportive institutional frameworks for the implementation of the National Cultural Policy. The following are some of the ministries and public agencies:

- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
- Ministry of Labour, Local Government and Rural Development
- Ministry of Local Government
- Ministry of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of the Environment, Forestry and Sustainable Development
- Statistical Institute of Belize
- Belize Trade and Investment Development Services
- National Library Services and Information System
- Belize Archives Records and Services
- Bureau of Standards

The Ministry responsible for Culture has a legal mandate and is therefore responsible for overseeing the professional and technical implementation of this policy through the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) – a statutory body which comprises the following institutions:

- The Institute of Archaeology (IA)
- The Institute for Social and Cultural Research (ISCR)
- The Museums of Belize and Houses of Culture (MOB-HOC)
- The Institute of Creative Arts (ICA)

With regard to the indications in this policy of what institutions will be responsible for specific policy interventions, the stating of Government of Belize will prevail, although in some cases particular ministries, agencies and institutions will be cited. However, in the action plan for the implementation of this National Cultural Policy, ministries, departments, agencies, and institutions with responsibilities for specific policy interventions will be indicated.

## 9.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 9.1 To nurture and forge the development of a Belizean national identity.
- 9.2 To foster awareness, appreciation and respect for the cultural diversity of Belize.
- 9.3 To promote intercultural understanding.
- 9.4 To safeguard, conserve and transmit knowledge of Belize's cultural heritage.



- 9.5 To promote an appreciation of and respect for the aesthetic and functional values of the surroundings, the history, national heroes and national symbols of Belize.
- 9.6 To develop national pride, strengthen self-confidence, increase citizen engagement and foster a collective spirit among all Belizeans.
- 9.7 To identify, stimulate and develop the creative potential of Belizeans.
- 9.8 To promote awareness of and respect for intellectual property rights.
- 9.9 To recognise and encourage the contributions of the Belizean Diaspora and to make provisions for their full participation in cultural expression and cultural development.
- 9.10 To create and encourage appropriate institutions and organisations that foster cultural development.
- 9.11 To foster the development of the human capacity for specialization and leadership in fields associated with cultural development.
- 9.12 To promote and facilitate the training of cultural practitioners.
- 9.13 To promote communication and institutional collaboration and coordination in the development of the cultural sector.
- 9.14 To establish platforms and links between the cultural policy and other national policies.
- 9.15 To formulate strategies for cultural infrastructure development.
- 9.16 To promote viable cultural and creative industries and entrepreneurship particularly among the youth and women.
- 9.17 To ensure that cultural policies and those policies related to industrial development, environment protection, and tourism product enhancement are aligned and integrated.
- 9.18 To instil an appreciation for and understanding of the cultures of the Caribbean, Latin America and the world.
- 9.19 To identify and facilitate the securing of resources for funding of cultural development and promotion.

## 10.0 BELIZE CULTURE MODEL

The Belize Culture Model assumes that culture emanates from all demographic sectors of society. Hence, it is the view of the Government that the safeguarding, conservation and promotion of the cultural and creative sectors for forging national unity, social cohesion and economic gain, can only come from the collective participation of cultural groups, councils, organisations, individuals and government entities. A vital element of this model is the establishment and maintenance by the Government of communication and evaluation processes; along with the promotion of democracy and the conditions that enable the Belizean society to achieve a national identity as well as gain social and economic benefits.

## 11.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

No definition of cultural activity can be entirely adequate. However, the components are critical in shaping a direction and in framing an action plan for culture in the development of Belize.



It is essential that our perception of culture shifts to a developmental model with culture as a critical component. Based on the objectives and strategies of Horizon 2030, the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, cultural policy consultations and regional cultural policy documents, this National Cultural Policy Document establishes the policy framework and is presented under the following headings:

- Cultural Heritage Safeguarding: Tangible and Intangible
- Cultural and Creative Industries: Development and Promotion
- Culture in Education and Environment
- Culture in Tourism, National Development and Poverty Eradication
- Culture, Youth and Technology
- Domestic, Regional and International Cultural Relations
- Financing and Administration of Culture
- Policy Government and Implementation Matrix
- Policy Review Schedule

## 12.0 PRIORITY POLICY AREAS AND POLICY INTERVENTIONS

### 12.1 Cultural Heritage Safeguarding

Belize is a pluralistic, multi-cultural society whose ethnicities have a desire to share their unique qualities and characteristics in an all-encompassing national identity. Cultural heritage is our collective memory-going back many generations. It preserves our varied recollections on life and responses to circumstances. Just as individuals cannot understand themselves or make authentic choices without their own personal memories, neither can a nation hope to achieve social harmony without collective memory. Our collective memory, embedded and expressed in many forms, shows us both the positive and negative aspects of ourselves; and these insights may allow us to use that knowledge to build our nation effectively.

#### 12.1.1 Intangible Cultural Heritage

In 2008 the Government of Belize ratified the UNESCO 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in recognition of the need to develop and implement policies which ensure the continued safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage which is contained in the following domains: oral traditions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe and traditional craftsmanship.

#### Policy Interventions

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Facilitate the adoption by all communities in Belize of the widest scope of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding measures that include research, identification, documentation, protection, promotion, preservation, conservation, revitalisation, enhancement, awareness-raising and intergeneration transmission of intangible cultural heritage present in Belize.
- Provide information and facilitate access by national and community organisations, custodians and practitioners of intangible cultural heritage to the International Fund for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage that provides international assistance towards effective safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.



- Facilitate the establishment of a national platform for coordinating the comprehensive inventorying of all Belize's intangible cultural heritage with the effective participation of concerned communities of custodians and practitioners of intangible cultural heritage.
- Ensure that all development sector policies take into account the safeguarding of Belize's intangible cultural heritage.

Based on public consultations, the following have been identified as aspects targeted for policy intervention:

- Ethnicity
- Language and Oral Traditions
- Music
- Health and (Alternative) Traditional Medicine
- Family and Religion
- National Days, National Heroes and National Symbols.
- Research, Cultural Documentation, Archiving and Safeguarding

### *12.1.1.1. Ethnicity*

Belize's population comprises various ethnic groups including the Maya, Garifuna, Mestizo, Creole, East Indians, Mennonite, Chinese, other Asians and Middle Easterners. Each ethnic group has its own history, language, music, dress, religious traditions and ancestry. However, patterns of settlement and resettlement and intermingling have led different ethnic groups to adopt cultural forms characteristic of other groups.

### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard the Government of Belize shall:

- Create conditions to ensure the full and equitable participation of ethnic groups in cultural expression and national development.
- Ensure and support projects to collect knowledge and to publish the history of all peoples of Belize.
- Ensure that universities and organisations of higher learning are supported to effectively engage in research, writing and audiovisual documentation of Belizean history and intangible cultural heritage.

### *12.1.1.2 Languages and oral traditions*

Language is the principal medium of transmitting intangible cultural heritage over generations, in particular through oral traditions: story-telling, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles etc. Language is also the medium for survival of cultural, historical, and ecological knowledge and practices.

### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Ensure the development of education policies that promote minority languages as mediums of instruction in the education system.
- Facilitate and support the identification, research and digital recording of language patterns within Belize.



- Ensure the examination of models which allow for the use, retrieval and preservation of Belize’s languages.
- Help publicize best practices and models in the intergenerational transmission of cultural, historical and ecological and oral traditions of Belize.
- Recognise and facilitate activities in cultural spaces that encourage and enhance transmission of knowledge and practice of oral tradition at both the community and national levels.
- Ensure the utilization of information and communication technology to make knowledge available and to maintain and revitalize endangered languages.

### *12.1.1.3 Music*

Belizean music is a combination of indigenous, African and recently evolved genres influenced historically by local and regional events. These combinations allow Belizeans to express our Belizean identity and creativity and to forge social cohesion and to project that identity into international contexts. Furthermore, both live and recorded music provides not only entertainment, but also opportunities for employment and wealth creation.

### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Establish a Music Development Fund(MDF) to assist artists to create and present new music to the public.
- Ensure the enhancement of the standards and the quality of Belizean music through effective instruction, capacity building of music creators and their access to innovations.
- Ensure the establishment of national platforms for the promotion of intellectual property rights of musicians and other related creators and the effective protection and enforcement of such rights.
- Provide support to the establishment and effective operations of national music rights collection and management organisations.
- Enact or review legislation aimed at removing tariffs, custom duties and tax barriers and to provide for concessions and incentives to musicians, music producers and other cultural and creative practitioners in order to enable them to secure the required tools of trade ,especially new technologies that enhance their competitiveness and effective and viable entry into the global music market.

### *12.1.1.4 Traditional skills in handicrafts*

A large number of traditional skills in handicraft production are being practiced in Belize including musical instrument making, weaving, dorey-building, wire-working, sewing, culinary art, the making of objects and costumes for rituals and rites. Many of these skills provide opportunities for income generation through the production and marketing of authentic crafts. However, some of these are at risk of being lost.

### *Policy Interventions*

In this regards, the Government of Belize shall:

- Support programmes and provide resources for the revitalization of skills in craft-making that are in danger of disappearing through effective utilisation of remaining custodians and practitioners of such traditional skills.



- Provide technical support to programmes in intergenerational transmission of traditional skills in the production of marketable Belizean crafts.
- Facilitate the establishment of mechanism of financing micro enterprises and cottage industries that utilize traditional skills.
- Provide support in the identification of local and international markets for Belizean crafts to ensure continued practice of such traditional skills.

### *12.1.1.5 Health and Alternative(Traditional) Medicine*

Before conventional medical practices came to Belize, communities relied on nature-based remedies for healing. As all aspects of social activity depend on good health, our ancestors had vast knowledge for effective health practices. Knowledge of herbal medicine and traditional healing practices are recognised for health benefits among many of Belize's cultural groups.

#### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Ensure that the knowledge and practice in traditional medicine are safeguarded through the evaluation of the philosophy, knowledge and health practices of previous generations and the ascertaining of the degree to which this knowledge and these practices can be applied in Belize's modern health system.
- Support programmes that aim at comprehensive inventorying of the knowledge in flora and fauna in Belize and the subsequent investigation of their medicinal properties and their potential health risks and benefits.
- Support research into and scientific development of nature-based traditional medicines that will enhance the well-being of all.
- Facilitate the integration of knowledge of traditional medicine into programmes of medical tourism.
- Promote and support programmes that investigate health models that incorporate the best practices of knowledge of traditional medicine and knowledge of conventional medicine.
- Ensure that the production of systems of protecting intellectual property rights in knowledge of traditional medicine is supported.
- Promote the patenting of the knowledge of traditional medicine by the communities, custodians and practitioners of knowledge and practice of traditional medicine.

### *12.1.1.6 Family and Religion*

Belize enshrined freedom of expression in its Constitution. Various religious denominations in Belize provide educational service, contribute to national development, foster family values and promote positive values in society. Furthermore both men and women play significant roles in the nurturing of family, which is an important social unit where children are born, raised and socialised. Hence, the whole society in Belize benefits from active faith communities and strong families.

#### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Support religious denominations in activities which ensure that cultural and family values are nurtured and promoted.



- Support the establishment of cultural programmes aimed at educating and providing opportunities to young men and women and in particular the disadvantaged youth.
- Enact legislation that ensures the establishment and support of cultural programmes which eliminate discrimination against the elderly and the disabled.
- Support organisations which provide care for the elderly and the disabled and for their integration into and participation in Belizean life.
- Recognise and facilitate the provision of financial support to women's organisations in civic and cultural activities.
- Support research on the contribution of religious denominations to national development.

### *12.1.1.7 National Days, National Heroes and National Symbols*

How individuals in a society view themselves and how they regard each other as people of one nation is vital in developing their national identity. Nurturing and developing a Belizean national identity is enhanced by respecting the collective practice of Belize's culturally diverse people as well by recognising those aspects that symbolise their nationhood.

#### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Ensure effective promotion of those aspects that foster among Belizeans national pride, greater commitment, responsibility, self-confidence, self-discipline and cooperative spirit.
- Support programmes that inculcate appreciation of and respect for the aesthetic and functional values surrounding our history, national heroes and national symbols.
- Facilitate comprehensive evaluation, revision and adoption of suitable mechanisms for naming national heroes, and establishing of national days and national symbols.

### *12.1.1.8 Research, Archiving and Safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage present in Belize*

The actual practice of cultural forms is the primary method of safeguarding and promotion of the forms. An equally essential method of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is to research, document and archive such forms.

#### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Ensure the availability and use of audio visual technology to record, document, describe and present information regarding Belize's intangible cultural heritage giving special attention to those forms or elements in danger of disappearing and requiring urgent safeguarding.
- Facilitate the development of an appropriate ICT framework for the proper documentation, storage and dissemination of information about intangible cultural elements of Belize's multicultural society.
- Support programmes that use the print media such as journals, books, and newspapers to document, describe and make available information about Belize's intangible cultural forms giving special attention to those in danger of disappearing.



- Ensure that information about intangible cultural elements or forms that reflect unique creativity, forms and practices of Belizean society (past and present) are integrated into a National Collection and are showcased at various locations including the National Museum .
- Facilitate and support the conduct and organization of local and international conferences and symposia for presentations and discussions on the historical, social and economic aspects of Belize's heritage.

### *12.1.2 Tangible Cultural Heritage*

Tangible heritage is those natural spaces used by Belize's inhabitants over time. Tangible cultural heritage also includes those man-made structures, monuments, historical places and buildings as well as artifacts which may be used to reveal information about how people in Belize lived in the past and in the modern context how people currently live. These include:

- Archaeological and historical antiquities and monuments
- Underwater archaeological heritage
- Historic sites and landmarks.

#### *12.1.2.1 Archaeological and historical antiquities and monuments*

Belize is a regional inheritor of the legacy of Paleo-Indians, Archaic peoples and the ancient Maya. The physical remains of the ancient Maya civilization have been restored, conserved and established as Maya archaeological sites and reserves for the purpose of education and tourism.

#### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Ensure the strategic and legal protection of such sites and monuments for the benefit of current and future generations of Belizeans and visitors.
- Continue to facilitate the identification, research and conservation of these archaeological sites for the establishment of an economically viable network of sites.
- Facilitate the integration of living cultural heritage into the activities of enhancing the preservation, promotion and management of archaeological sites.
- Support educational efforts which are geared toward the prevention of destruction, looting and trafficking of valuable archaeological sites and historical artefacts.
- Provide additional financial resources for the upgrading and maintaining of archaeological reserves and access roads to major tourist destinations in accordance with the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan.
- Facilitate the establishment of a network of public and communal galleries, museums, libraries and archives as instruments and platforms for the preservation and promotion of culture and history.
- Support all efforts that effectively utilise and promote cultural heritage as a vital asset for a viable cultural economy.
- Review the NICH Act and other related legislation governing the promotion, preservation and management of archaeological sites and historical artifacts.



### *12.1.2.2 Underwater Archaeological Heritage*

Human-environmental interactions and climate change have created a diverse underwater cultural heritage in Belize. This is especially through of the Paleo-Indian, ancient Maya, Spanish and English settlement periods. Belize's multi-cultural and multi-ethnic history is preserved in submerged landscapes and materials that can be found in cenotes, rivers, lagoons and territorial waters. Underwater cultural heritage ranges from fossilized Pleistocene mammals to ancient Maya production sites and various colonial period shipwrecks. Underwater cultural heritage represents a diverse and endangered cultural repository that is largely undocumented.

### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Review the Abandoned Wreck Act, Chapter 235, in order to ensure that the legislation has adequate provision for the effective protection and preservation of underwater cultural heritage.
- Ensure the ratification and implementation of the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.
- Support educational efforts that create awareness of the value of underwater cultural heritage and mitigate heritage destruction and the illicit exportation, transfer and trafficking of cultural property.
- Facilitate comprehensive inventorying and safeguarding of underwater cultural heritage in a manner that ensures sustainable preservation of underwater archaeological sites and artefacts and effective promotion of the value of this cultural heritage.
- Facilitate the establishment of underwater archaeological reserves and destination planning standards for viable and sustainable utilization of underwater cultural heritage in heritage tourism ventures.
- Facilitate the mobilization from multilateral agencies and the local corporate community of the financial resources required for the sustainable conservation and management of underwater cultural heritage.

### *12.1.2.3 Historic Sites and Landmarks*

Belize's historical heritage includes periods from Spanish efforts at Christianization and British colonization to national independence. This colonial legacy remains, in part, in the form of architecture. The history of such sites and landmarks forms part of our historical narratives. However, in recent years, many historical structures have come under threat of destruction because of development pressures.

### *Policy interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Ensure the identification, research, documentation and registration of all colonial sites and landmarks and their conservation and promotion in a manner that retains their colonial characteristics for the purpose of identity-building, education and sustainable cultural tourism.
- Review appropriateness of current legislation in order to ensure enactment of legislation that ensures adequate preservation and management of colonial sites and landmarks.



- Facilitate the establishment of destination planning standards for the use of historical and traditional architecture in cultural tourism programmes.
- Provide incentives and tax rebates to private individuals and corporations that are engaged in or that sponsor activities aimed at the preservation of historical sites and buildings.
- Facilitate the mobilization from multilateral agencies and local the corporate community of the financial resources required for the preservation, management and promotion of historic sites and landmarks.

### 13.0 DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Cultural and creative industries are the creation, production and distribution of goods and services generated as or through the following: audio-visuals (films and videos); crafts; culinary arts; design (interior, graphic arts and fashion, jewellery, toys); digital arts (software and computer games) heritage festivals and fairs; performing arts (music, dance and theatre); sound recording; book publishing and printed media; visual arts (painting, drawing, sculpture etc.)

Culture has been taken into consideration in discussions of economic development. Culture has great potential for employment creation and income generation by those involved in its development and promotion for their benefit and that of the national economy as a whole. The inclusion of culture in this analysis brings to the fore the important place of culture in the development process. Therefore, it is crucial to build the capacity of players in the development of cultural and creative industries and to promote the acquisition of knowledge, techniques and tools needed in the efficient production of high quality Belizean cultural goods and services.

The many fairs and festivals organised to project cultural characteristics of Belize's people provide a platform for the people's full participation in their cultural life as well as for intergenerational transmission of knowledge. These festivals assist with the promotion of community cohesion and identity building. Some of the premier Belizean fairs and festivals include San Joaquin Fiesta, Benque Fiesta, Chocolate Festival and Costa Maya Festival.

#### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Provide support towards research and development of instruments for validating or determining the contribution of the cultural and creative industries to national economy.
- Ensure effective collaboration and consultation between the NICH and the BELTRAIDE, the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Belize Coalition of Service Industries on issues dealing with the development and promotion of the cultural and creative industries and the effective marketing of cultural goods and services.
- Facilitate the creation of conditions for the development of Public-Private Partnerships in the cultural and creative industries especially for effective and viable distribution of cultural goods and services within Belize and internationally.
- Consider special export incentives for goods and services from the cultural and creative industries for increased investment into these sectors.
- Provide technical support for the development of a calendar of major local fairs and festivals.



- Provide financial support for the strategic development of major fairs and festivals which target local, regional and international participants and tourists.
- Consider the creation of a sound recording annual production fund.
- Support the establishment of national organisations of practitioners in different sections of the cultural and creative industries.
- Support the development of incubator programmes for the cultural and creative industries.
- Support the development of coaching mentorship programmes for business development in the cultural and creative industries.
- Belizeanize public spaces and government offices by displaying locally produced visual arts, crafts, murals and posters to show the depth of Belize's cultural diversity and to promote national identity and patriotism.
- Ensure the enactment of legislation and the production of statutory instruments that protect the social and economic status of artists and other creative professionals and that guarantee them rights to health, pension and disability insurance.
- Support programmes that target the training of female cultural professionals in cultural and creative industries and of women contributing to decision making processes in their cultural organisations.
- Ensure that local authorities shall facilitate the development and designation of creative hubs, creative centres and creative clusters as sites that receive economic incentives to ensure the growing of a viable creative economy.

## 14.0 CULTURE IN EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENT

### 14.1 Education

Education has a critical and irreplaceable role in developing creative imagination, not only for artistic interests, but for problem-solving in general. Moreover, education develops self-reliance and awareness of the social and economic opportunities that cultural heritage provides. It is recognised that some of the education content, methodologies and structure are no longer relevant to our present aspirations.

#### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Ensure that cultural context and knowledge shall inform the development of education content, methodologies and structures.
- Ensure the full integration of the teaching of national heritage, culture and the arts at all levels of the education system and at all education institutions.
- Support the development of community programmes that offer comprehensive arts education and training beyond and including formal education.
- Ensure the development of programmes for the building of the capacity of educators and trainers in heritage, culture and the arts in schools, vocational training institutions and universities.
- Provide opportunities for the provision of grants, scholarships and awards to cultural workers at various levels pursuing cultural education and arts training.



- Establish education programmes which promote a multi-lingual society.
- Support the promotion of models of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE).
- Recognize and support non-formal modes of education which promote cultural awareness and appreciation especially among disadvantaged and rural communities.
- Facilitate the establishment of programmes for training skilled professionals in all art forms.
- Support private sector efforts outside the formal education system that promote talent, creativity and self-reliance.
- Facilitate the establishment of a liberal arts department at the National University.
- Promote the teaching of Belizean history at every level of instruction and the development of teaching resources for this purpose.
- Support the writing and publication of a General History of Belize.
- Appoint cultural ambassadors to represent Belize, to educate local, regional and international partners in matters relating to Belizean culture and its promotion.

## *14.2 Environment*

Environmental awareness, the protection of the global environment and appreciation of the impact of climate change are critical. Cultural practices affect the environment in both positive and negative ways, creating need for evaluating and managing these effects.

## *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Support efforts to inculcate in all individuals an appreciation of and respect for the aesthetic and functional value of our natural surroundings.
- Facilitate promotion of greater recognition of the significance of micro-environments (land and sea, national parks, ecosystems and so on) in the national context and the importance of cultural beliefs in the protection of these environments.
- Facilitate promotion of greater sensitivity to cultural considerations and implications in working out solutions to environmental problems and the appreciation of the need to ensure that the solutions that are sought are culturally compliant.
- Support research by Government agencies and private sector entities on the link between cultural practices and the environment, especially where those environments are valuable and fragile.
- Support initiatives that promote practices which allow for sustainable livelihood and the protection of the environment.
- Ensure the production of environmental education for both formal and informal education systems which effectively incorporates the knowledge of cultural practices which promote or enhance environmental protection.



## 15.0 CULTURE IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND POVERTY ERADICATION

### 15.1 National Development

The connection between culture and development is at the heart of this National Cultural Policy. Development is the fundamental purpose of government and its policies. Culture is inseparable from the development process.

Traditionally, national planning has focused largely on the economic aspects and has not taken sufficient account of the cultural context. National development planning that does not take into account the culture of the people affected tends to arouse resistance.

#### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Support the establishment of mechanisms to address the cultural context within which national planning must take place.
- Ensure that cultural considerations become a normal element of national planning.
- Conduct assessments of the various agents of development—formal organisations, informal networks, social institutions and others in order to delineate the roles that each can play in the development process.
- Produce an inventory of national cultural assets for strategic and efficient use.
- Facilitate the provision of financial resources and technical support for start-up companies which use cultural forms (fashion, crafts, audio-visuals, music etc.) for the production of goods and services.
- Facilitate the development of the entertainment industry that effectively utilizes Belize's culture through supporting capacity building of the skills and competences of various actors (performers, producers, promoters, managers etc.) and the establishment of organisations of professionals in the industry in order to grow it into a vibrant economic sub-sector.

### 15.2 Tourism

Tourism makes a significant contribution to the national economy through job creation. Cultural tourism, which is a result of local and international tourists visiting the country's regions and communities to become familiar with the cultural landscape, has great potential for developing good international relations. Tourism also poses potential hazards in the cultural spheres.

#### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Foster the development of sustainable levels of a holistic cultural tourism product that shall benefit local residents and local institutions.
- Encourage the adoption of measures that ensure the development of tourism that does not harm the integrity of Belize's cultural identity in all its manifestations.
- Support the development of a mega multi-cultural festival as a major tourism product that aims at promoting diversity and excellence in the arts to generate economic benefits and to unite the region and become world renowned.



- Encourage the development of programmes which are oriented toward Belize’s cultural heritage and ensure that more space is made available within the conventional tourist activities for such programmes.
- Facilitate the development of a Belize Cultural Tourism Brand through effective featuring of a wide diversity of Belize’s cultural heritage.
- Support the development of a network of Enchanted Belizean Villages as an opportunity for tourists and Belizeans to enjoy the culture, traditions and way of life within these communities.
- Ensure the development of marketing synergies between culture and tourism agencies for destination and event promotion.
- Facilitate effective collaboration between tourism agencies, local authorities and other land authorities in designating land for tourism development and investment.
- Ensure mechanisms are developed for measuring the contribution of tourism to the national economy.
- Ensure effective promotion of and awareness raising of all communities about the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan.
- Consider the review of existing tourism legislation in line with the provisions of this National Cultural Policy.
- Ensure the development of mechanisms or platforms that highlight the value of tangible and intangible cultural heritage as critical drivers of destination attractiveness and competitiveness.

### *15.3 Poverty Eradication*

The Government of Belize’s development policy, as expressed in Horizon 2030 and National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, recognises that the eradication of poverty is necessary for the improvement of the standard of living of all the Belizean people.

### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Facilitate the development of mechanisms for effective protection and promotion of culturally related practices, skills, goods and services from which economic benefits are derived to reduce poverty levels.
- Support initiatives for the safeguarding, preservation and promotion of cultural elements which have a potential for sustainable economic returns to custodians and bearers and practitioners of cultural heritage.

## **16.0 CULTURE, YOUTH AND TECHNOLOGY**

### *16.1 Youth*

There is an urgent need to forge relationships among young people through cultural exchange in different parts of Belize in order for them to develop appreciation for the arts, culture and history of Belize. In order to foster the development of new industries based on cultural content and the creative talent of young Belizeans, strategies for the development of young people’s access to and participation in the arts and cultural activities are necessary.



## *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Support and facilitate the development of forums, conferences, workshops and national showcase events which allow the youth to share the rich national cultural diversity and to demonstrate and improve their creative and artistic abilities.
- Support and facilitate cross-generational encounters that enable young people to benefit from the knowledge and skills of elders who are bearers of knowledge and skills in order for them to develop new forms of cultural expressions.
- Facilitate inexpensive access to multi-media technology and training opportunities by the youth that allow them to innovate and express themselves creatively.
- Provide 100% free Internet access to all schools.
- Support the development of programmes which integrate radio, television and audiovisual productions and equip the youth with requisite skills to produce world-class audio-visual products.
- Support culture-based regeneration of urban environments especially those involving creative youth.

## *16.2 Youth and Sports*

Sports play a vital role in the development of a healthy nation and in projecting national culture and pride into the international context. Sport is a national unifying force and a contributor to the economic development of the nation.

## *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Support all efforts aimed at promoting and developing high standards of sporting activity nationally, regionally and internationally bearing in mind the personal and social benefits of discipline, pride and cooperation engendered by playing to a high standard.
- Provide technical and financial support to well-established and functional agencies that focus on the development of excellence in national sports teams and that project Belizean excellence on the world stage as well as providing economic opportunities to the Belizean youth.
- Support the undertaking of research on sport, recreation and leisure activities traditional to Belize.
- Support efforts at community and national levels aimed at safeguarding and promoting traditional or indigenous games in danger of disappearing.
- Facilitate the collaboration of public agencies, sports organisations and institutions of learning in developing a comprehensive curriculum for sports education that will include traditional games for all learners at all levels of the education system.
- Construct world class sporting facilities.

## *16.3 Information and Communication Technology and the Mass Media*

Conventional mass media and the social media have enormous potential for both positively and negatively shaping perceptions and values and influencing action. Information and Communication Technology is also important for the preservation of national heritage and for the development of cultural activities.



## *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Support and encourage the use of mass media to present a positive portrayal of Belizean life, the honest reflection and discussion on the national goals and direction.
- Facilitate the lowering of rates for higher bandwidths for Internet usage in order to promote collaboration among professionals in different parts of the country and abroad.
- Encourage the use of mass and social media to disseminate widely and globally the knowledge of the works of Belizean artists in the county and in the Diaspora.
- Support efforts towards the development among Belizean audiences of the capacity to assess the mass media.
- Promote programmes aimed at digitisation of cultural content and the development of digital museums, libraries and national collections.
- Support programmes that promote new forms of art and entertainment based on digital technologies.
- Support education programmes fostering new media and information literacy.

## **17.0 DOMESTIC, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS**

The multi-cultural nature of Belize requires that issues of geographic location and settlement patterns of Belizeans, cross-cultural dialogue, Diaspora and changing demographic profile are discussed. For these reasons, cultural exchanges within Belize and outside of our national borders are critical in the promotion of respect, tolerance and social cohesion.

### *17.1 Domestic Cultural Exchange*

Cultural exchange in the context of a multi-cultural Belize is critical in mitigating cultural misrepresentations, stereotyping and discrimination among Belize's cultural groups.

## *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Support and facilitate programmes which allow for cultural exchanges particularly involving interactions across generations and among the youth.
- Declare a single national day for all cultures of Belize to celebrate and showcase Belize's multiculturalism.

### *17.2 Diaspora*

A significant number of Belizeans who have migrated abroad have retained strong loyalty to and affection for Belize. These Belizeans remit large financial resources, knowledge and skills to Belize.

## *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Facilitate the engagement of Belizean communities abroad in processes, programmes and strategies for cultural development and nation-building.



### *17.3 Cultural Councils and Organisations*

Cultural councils and organisations are major actors in the safeguarding, preservation, retrieval and presentation of Belize's tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

#### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Provide technical support for the establishment and capacity-building of cultural councils and organisations in order to ensure their effective and equitable representation of Belize's cultural interests in public spheres.
- Provide financial support to cultural councils and organisations that present clear agenda and work plans in the preservation, retrieval and presentation of Belize's cultural heritage.
- Engage community and national cultural councils and organisations in the implementation of the UNESCO conventions in the field of culture which Belize has ratified.
- Ensure that all national laws on culture are harmonised with the provisions of the UNESCO conventions in the field of culture.

### *17.4 Private Museums, Houses of Culture, Art Galleries and Cultural Spaces*

Communities in all parts of Belize should tell their stories, express their creativity and be involved in the social discourse of the nation. Public and private museums, galleries, centres and culture houses also provide opportunities for the creation, production and demonstration of community cultural forms and materials.

#### *Policy Interventions*

The Government of Belize shall:

- Ensure that private efforts at establishing private and community museums, art galleries and houses of culture are supported.
- Establish a network of public and private museums, art galleries, and houses of culture in order to facilitate effective information-sharing and the nurturing and sustaining of excellence in the creation of cultural products and in the development of standards and regulations.
- Ensure the provision of resources for the construction, refurbishing and effective maintenance of world-class venues for the creation, production and presentation of Belize's visual and performing arts.
- Ensure that NICH facilitates the development of standards for the presentation and showcasing of cultural forms and materials.

### *17.5 Regional and International Cultural Exchange and Relations*

Cross-border cultural exchanges have global benefits as mechanisms for achieving integration and for minimizing conflict.

#### *Policy Interventions*

The Government of Belize shall:

- Facilitate the creation of vast opportunities for cultural exchange through regional fairs, festivals, carnivals, conferences and symposia.



- Conduct an assessment of the mechanisms used in local Administration in the implementation of international conventions promoting international cultural exchanges and relations.
- Establish mechanisms and platforms for evaluating the benefits of signing and ratifying international conventions in the field of culture such as those sponsored by EU, UNESCO, ACP, SICA and CARICOM.
- Sign agreements that promote Belize's cultural agenda of protecting and preserving its cultural heritage.
- Enter into cooperation and trade agreements which include cultural products in the trade repertoire of the country.
- Build capacities of Embassies and Consulates abroad for commercial diplomats to better support the marketing and promotion of Belize's cultural goods abroad.

## 18.0 FINANCING AND ADMINISTRATION OF CULTURE

The implementation of the National Cultural Policy requires that budgetary and administrative provisions are made subsequent to the identification of strategic actions for inclusion in the national, ministerial and departmental work plans.

The Government of Belize recognises the importance of both government agencies and agencies of NGOs in the adoption of policy positions in the National Cultural Policy for its effective implementation and service to the people of Belize.

### *18.1 National Institute of Culture and History*

The Government of Belize has given the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) the legal mandate to administer and finance the culture and history agenda in Belize.

#### *Policy Intervention*

In this regard the Government of Belize shall:

- Provide NICH with resources that enable it to provide technical and policy support to institutions under it and to facilitate effective inter-ministerial collaboration on culture and history issues.
- Revise and enact legislation that will further empower NICH to carry out its mandate.
- Ensure that NICH develops programmes of building the capacity of persons within non-governmental and community-based agencies involved in culture and history activities.
- Ensure that NICH has the requisite resources to build administrative and technical capacity to effectively develop the culture and history agenda.
- Ensure that mechanisms are developed for non-governmental and community-based cultural agencies to access funding from credit unions, banks and other appropriate lending agencies.
- Ensure that NICH develops programmes that facilitate access to regional and international funding for non-governmental and community-based cultural groups.
- Enact legislation that ensures the provision of financial and tax incentives to public and private partnerships financing arts and culture programmes and the development of cultural infrastructure.



## *18.2 National Museum of Belize*

Belize owns many cultural artifacts which it should showcase and use for education and economic gain. Belize also has many narratives about its history and culture which may be showcased for education and economic gain.

### *Policy Interventions*

The Government of Belize shall:

- Ensure that NICH provides funding and technical support that enable the Museum of Belize located in Belize City to continue with its functions in education and tourism.
- Ensure the identification and securing of a suitable space for the construction of a state-of-the-art national museum that shall showcase Belize's material and intangible cultural heritage and history.
- Allocate additional resources for the construction of a state-of-the-art centre primarily for the deposit into the national collection and for conservation of ancient and contemporary cultural objects.

## *18.3 Cultural Information Management System*

It is vital that Belize is able to adequately account for culture's contribution to the GDP and to adhere to regional and international obligations for information sharing.

### *Policy Interventions*

In this regard, the Government of Belize shall:

- Develop a cultural information and management system for the purpose of qualitatively and quantitatively describing culture; for identifying trends which may help with decision-making and investment in culture and for determining the contribution of the cultural sector to the National Development Product.



## 19.0 NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Effective implementation of this National Cultural Policy will require close collaboration between the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) and its social, economic and public sector partners. NICH as the premier institution for cultural affairs has responsibility for the implementation and evaluation this policy that shall follow the following steps:

### Step 1:

Establishment of a unit for the socialisation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy. The unit will also have the responsibility to collect and report on data from each ministry and social and economic partners implementing this policy.

### Step 2:

Mounting of a campaign to educate the nation about the contents of the National Cultural Policy and to ensure its wide distribution to stakeholders in the cultural sector.

### Step 3:

Organising of workshops with ministries, department and public agencies to develop and adopt strategic actions to effect articulated policy interventions.

### Step 4:

Organising of workshops with community and national cultural organisations to develop and adopt strategic actions and activities to effect the articulated policy interventions.

### Step 5:

Table for consideration and inclusion in the national budget financial resources required to implement strategic actions and activities resulting from Step 3 and Step 4.

### Step 6:

Consideration by the National Institute of Culture and History of any strategic actions and activities resulting from Step 3 and Step 4 for possible inclusions in the Institute's five year strategic plan and its year-year work plans and budgets.

### Step 7:

Compiling of national reports and submitting them to Government for implementation in five year increments.

### Step 8:

Conducting of national consultations to review the National Cultural Policy and its revision in year 3 of the second five-year evaluation and reporting period.



## 20.0 NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY REVIEW SCHEDULE

The national cultural policy evaluation and periodic reporting process shall be as follows:

First five-year period

Year 1(2016-2017) to Year 5(2021-2022)

Second five-year period

Year 1(2022-2023) to Year 3 (2024-2025) Budgeting, Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Year 4 (2025-2026) National consultations for the review of the National Cultural Policy

Year 5 (2026-2027) Production of the revised National Cultural Policy and the submission of a national report

Commence the next 10 year cycle-2027



## *LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS*

*CARICOM*     *Caribbean Community*

*BELTRAIDE*   *Belize Trade and Investment Development Services*

*EU*             *European Union*

*ACP*            *Africa, Caribbean and Pacific*

*ICT*             *Information and Communication Technology*

*SICA*           *Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana*

*NICH*           *National Institute of Culture and History*

*NGO*           *Non-Governmental Organisations*

*UNESCO*     *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation*



## *DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS*

- Arts:** *The cross-section of visual, auditory and performing forms of cultural expression.*
- Audio-visuals:** *Recordings such as films and videos that present information in a pictorial and audible form and engage both senses of hearing and seeing.*
- Convention:** *An international agreement concluded among States in a written form that outlines goals and sets out methods and standards for achieving them.*
- Community:** *A network of people with a common history and a common interest.*
- Culture:** *The whole complex of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.*
- Cultural industries:** *The mass production and distribution of products that convey ideas, symbols, messages, opinions, information, moral and aesthetic values.*
- Creative industries:** *Cycles of creation, production, and distribution of goods and services that use creativity and intellectual capital as primary inputs.*
- Cultural tourism:** *Tourism that is concerned with a country's culture*
- Cultural expressions:** *Those expressions that have cultural content and are a result of the creativity of individuals, communities or groups.*
- Cultural heritage:** *The entirety of the tangible and intangible elements which comprise the cultural landscape.*
- Cultural diversity:** *Different ways in which the culture of different people is expressed as well as diverse modes of creation, production, distribution and presentation of their arts.*
- Intangible cultural heritage:** *Practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and spaces associated therewith that communities and groups and in some cases individuals consider as part of their heritage.*
- Safeguarding of Heritage:** *Efforts of communities and traditional bearers to maintain continuity in the practice of a cultural heritage.*
- Protection of Heritage:** *Deliberate measures taken at official level to defend cultural heritage from threats and harm to its continued practice of existence.*



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