



INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CULTURE AND HISTORY

Archaeological Impact Assessments Policy and Procedures

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1. Glossary of Terms

Terminology and expressions used in this policy document are defined as follows:

Institute of Archaeology: is the Institute of Archaeology established under section 34 of the National Institute of Culture and History Act Chapter 331 of the Substantive Laws of Belize 2000, Revised edition 2020.

Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA): is a systematic analysis carried out to determine whether or not a project, programme or activity will have an adverse impact on any archaeological features.

Permittee: refers to the person authorized by a permit issued under this Archaeological Impact Assessment policy to conduct activities as prescribed herein.

NGO's: The term refers to organizations, duly established under the NGO Act of Belize.

Concessionaires: is the name of the person, company, or group of individuals authorized to conduct business in a protected area.

Regulatory Agencies: The term refers to all Government Ministries, Departments and Institutions authorized by law to represent the Government of Belize.

KML: Keyhole Markup Language (KML) is an XML-based format for storing geographic data and associated content (archaeological features) and is an official Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) standard.

Shape File: is a simple, nontopological format for storing the geometric location and attribute information of geographic and archaeological features.

Archaeological feature: refers to all ancient monuments, antiquities, and heritage assets that were used, modified by, or belong to the Paleon Indian, Archaic, Maya, and Historic periods or any other period of national memory or historical significance.

Ancient Monuments: means any structure or building erected by man or any natural feature transformed or worked by man, or the remains or any part thereof, whether upon any land or in any river, stream, or watercourse or under the territorial waters of Belize, that has been in existence for one hundred years or more.

Antiquities: Means any article manufactured or worked by man, whether of stone, pottery, metal, wood, glass, or any other substance, or any part thereof: and being of an age of one hundred years or more.

Developers: Refers to any company or person who is engaged in any development as the principal rather than an agent or contractor.

Contractor: A contractor is someone who is hired to build or develop something on behalf of the developer or owner.

2. Context

The Institute of Archaeology recognizes that development activities have an adverse impact on archaeological remains in Belize. The NICH Act mandates the Institute of Archaeology (IA) to ensure that no development, regardless of size, willfully destroys any cultural features in Belize.

Our legal mandate states that, all activities as it relates to AIA shall strictly adhere to all the provisions of the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) Act, Chapter 331 of the Subsidiary Laws of Belize 2000, Revised Edition 2020. Specifically:

63. (1) The Director may direct any land owner, lessee, concessionaire, contractor or any other person who is about to engage in any operation which in the opinion of the Director is liable to destroy, damage, interfere with or otherwise be to the detriment of any ancient monument or antiquity:
 - a. not to proceed with any operation until the Director shall have had an archaeological exploration and survey carried out; and,
 - b. to take or to refrain or desist from taking any such action as part of the operation as the Director may decide to be fair and reasonable for the proper protection of the ancient monument or antiquity.

This policy therefore, guides Government Agencies, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) preparers, NGO's and consultants of our policy regarding cultural remains within any development area.

3. Policy Statement

The Institute of Archaeology is committed to the sustainable development of Belize's Cultural and Natural Resources. It recognizes the need to work closely and in partnership with Regulatory Agencies, NGO's, Concessionaires, Developers and Contractors to ensure that all developments are done in a sustainable manner, taking into consideration and respecting Belize's Cultural Patrimony. This policy has been established to ensure the proper management of any impact on Belize's archaeological and cultural resources in consideration of any proposed development activity.

4. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to any development within the country of Belize, whether upon land or any river, stream or watercourse or under the territorial waters of Belize, that is bound to affect any archaeological or cultural feature. It shall be the responsibility of the IA to effectively implement this

policy, while also the responsibility of Regulatory Agencies, NGO's, Concessionaires and Developers, Contractors to ensure its adherence.

5. General Consideration

The AIA is a rapid assessment specifically designed to gather comprehensive information on the cultural resources threatened by development, and which makes recommendations that will allow decisions to be made by the Director of the IA as it relates to cultural and archaeological features within the development area. The IA will review and consider the recommendations within the AIA made by the Permittee and where necessary will provide feedback and further recommendations to strengthen the AIA. The review and approval process is expected to be completed within a one (1) month period after the submission of a complete AIA package.

6. Objective

The primary objectives of the AIA are to:

1. Identify and evaluate archaeological and cultural resources within a development area;
2. Identify and assess all impacts on archaeological and cultural resources which might result from a particular development project;
3. Recommend all viable alternatives or mitigation measures where impacts are likely to occur. This may include a preliminary program for:
 - a. Implementing and scheduling impact management actions, and where necessary;
 - b. Conducting surveillance and/or monitoring during any development project.

7. Application Procedure

This application procedure applies to all accredited archaeologists contracted to conduct AIAs.

To apply for an AIA permit, the following conditions must be fulfilled and submitted to the IA at least two (2) weeks prior to the intended start of any AIA. Documents should be submitted in hard and electronic copies.

1. Submit a formal letter of application to conduct an AIA. This letter of application must be accompanied by a complete 'Project Description' in the following format:
 - a. Applicant Name and Address
 - b. Current CV of applicant and team members (where applicable)
 - c. Name, location, and size of the development project (KML files should be included)
 - d. Proposed date of commencement of field investigations
 - e. Proposed date of completion of field investigations
 - f. Project Description
 - i. Description of the development;

- ii. Research design outlining survey methodology and scope of activities to be conducted.

2. Demonstrate adequate financial resources for the projected cost of the survey.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

8. Composition of an AIA Consulting Team

The team conducting any AIA shall consist of an accredited archaeologist. An accredited archaeologist must have:

- A) An advanced degree (Master's Degree or higher) in archaeology/anthropology from an accredited university along with a minimum of three (3) years field experience working in Belize **or**;
- B) A Bachelor's Degree in archaeology/anthropology from an accredited university along with a minimum of ten (10) years field experience working in Belize.

No staff member of the Institute of Archaeology shall engage in the preparation of any AIA. Unless it is specifically requested as part of a project that is of national interest and is requested and sanctioned by the GOB.

Annexed is a list of qualified and accredited archaeologists recognized by the IA.

9. General Conditions

1. A permit is valid for the period and location specified in the formal letter of application;
2. The IA shall consider requests for an extension and/or amendment to the permit. Requests must be submitted in writing to the Director of the IA with proper justification for such requests. A response will be provided within one week after submission of request.
3. The Permittee shall be personally involved in the field assessment and is required to carry out the works or directly supervise the individuals conducting the assessment for at least 75% of the time necessary to complete the project;
4. The Permittee shall not conduct any type of archaeological research outside of the limits prescribed in the granted permit;
5. The land explored by the Permittee, and any ancient monuments and antiquities discovered by the Permittee, shall always be open to inspection by the Institute of Archaeology.

10. Methodology

The following methods must be utilized in conducting an AIA:

1. Literature and archival research of the study area;
2. Field assessment methodology must be clearly defined, including the nature of techniques to be used (surface inspection, sub-surface testing, etc.), frequency of transects and shovel tests, data recording procedures (WGS 84, KML and Shape files), LiDAR, photos, videos, etc. Survey methodologies must be clearly justified in the research design. Where the methodology requires modification in the field, any such modification must be vetted and approved by the IA;
3. Field assessment may include both surface and sub-surface inspection, as required. Artifact collections and site disturbance should be kept to a minimum. Only representative samples of cultural material should be collected. Collections should be processed in accordance with policies outlined under the IA cataloguing system for the Belize National Collection (the format will be provided along with the permit);
4. All sites must be recorded under the IA site inventory format (the format will be provided along with the permit). All resources must be assessed as to their significance (Maya, Archaic, Colonial, Historic) and integrity (level of disturbance, state of preservation);
5. Reporting must be conducted in accordance with policies outlined under *Reporting Procedure* below.

11. Reporting Guidelines

The reports must fulfill the requirements of the NICH Act and adhere to the following guidelines established under the AIA policy:

1. Introduction

The description shall constitute material already provided in the Project Description.

2. Description of the Project Area

This section should contain a brief description of the project area. Emphasis should be placed on relating the project area to the natural and cultural environments. This section should also contain a succinct description of the location and boundaries of the actual study area, including specific areas in which mitigation measures have been or will be undertaken.

3. Survey Methodology

The basic research plan and the precise methods and equipment used to implement the plan should be outlined in this section. Each activity (inventory, site evaluation, and impact identification and assessment) should be described individually.

4. *Literature and Archival Review*

This aspect should involve a thorough review of library and archival literature as well as other relevant data sources. The research should include, but not be limited to:

- a. A check of extant records including the IA library and Site Inventory, legal land survey records, and other pertinent records and inventory files;
- b. A review of all previous archaeological investigations in the study area or in immediately adjacent areas.

5. *Results of the Survey*

This section should contain results of the archaeological site inventory including:

- a. Maps showing areas surveyed and indicating the level of survey intensity;
- b. Maps showing all recorded archaeological and cultural features in relation to the proposed project;
- c. The number of archaeological features recorded;
- d. Map of all survey transects with their GPS locations;
- e. Where and how often subsurface testing was employed and the particular techniques or practices used inclusive of test frequency, interval spacing, GPS location, and unit dimensions, and must provide details of all findings from any surface or subsurface testing.

6. *Conclusions and Recommendations*

The Permittee recommendations for managing positive, unavoidable, and adverse impacts on archaeological features are presented here. Mitigation measures should be recommended for each impacted feature. Recommendations should be presented in sufficient detail to allow the IA to comment on their appropriateness.

Where salvage excavation is recommended the IA will determine the level and extent of salvage necessary, and will provide the proper requirements for such to the developer. The developer will bear the full cost of any salvage excavation, backfill and coverup.

Where stabilization/conservation is recommended for any architecture or areas of archaeological significance the IA will determine the level and extent of such stabilization/conservation and will provide the proper requirements for such to the developer. The developer will bear the full cost of any stabilization/conservation.

7. *References Cited*

All literary sources cited in the report such as publications, documents and records, as well as names and dates of all personal communications should be listed.

8. *Appendices*

A variety of items should be appended to the report including:

- a. Tables, charts, graphs, maps (ArcMap/Google Earth), Photos, LiDAR and other supportive materials;

- b. A list of recorded archaeological features directly relevant to the study area;
- c. A complete catalogue of all cultural materials and ancillary samples collected during systematic data recovery operations.

12. Deliverables

At the end of the AIA the Permittee shall submit one (1) printed copy and one (1) digital copy of the completed assessment to the Director of the IA. This submission must be independent of the final EIA report.