



Terms of Reference

Consultancy for **Legal Professional(s)** for the project:

Strengthening Civil Society Participation in Democracy Through Effective, Inclusive, Good Governance Reform and Oversight

BACKGROUND

The Belize Audubon Society (BAS) and the Belize Network of NGOs (BNN) are leading the implementation of the European Union (EU) funded project “***Strengthening civil society participation in democracy through effective, inclusive, good governance reform and oversight***.” This project seeks to build a more democratic, inclusive, gender and culturally sensitive good governance and public accountability architecture in Belize. The main outcome will be to influence constitutional and legislative reform to amplify the voices of traditionally marginalized groups such as youth, women, Indigenous populations, the disabled, LGBTQ+ groups, and other underserved populations by establishing a stronger institutional good governance framework and NGO legislation.

In the upcoming phase, in partnership with the Financial Services Commission (FSC), the project will focus on reviewing the current legal and regulatory framework governing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other types of non-profit organizations (NPOs) and making recommendations for a modern NGO and NPO law that allows for the effective functioning of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Belize. To achieve this, we seek to engage a qualified Legal Professional to analyze the current legislative framework, identify gaps and challenges, and propose recommendations for reform. This analysis will inform a new consolidated legislation that will repeal and replace the current NGO and NPO acts to align with regional and international best practices while addressing the specific needs of NGOs and NPOs operating in Belize.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the consultancy are to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of existing laws and regulations pertaining to NGOs and NPOs in Belize (including but not limited to the Non-Governmental Organization Act (NGOA), Non-Profit Organization Act (NPOA), Belize Companies Act, Money Laundering and Terrorism (Prevention) Act) to assess the current legal and regulatory framework and determine necessary changes that reflect national needs.
2. Benchmark the existing NGO and NPO Acts in Belize against legislation in at least three (3) other countries to identify best practices that can be adopted to enhance the legislation.
3. Identify recommendations for the Registrar of the NPOA and the NGOA to ensure areas for enhanced efficiency while maintaining compliance.
4. Assist the BNN in socializing the recommendations produced through national consultations with CSOs and any other required engagements with key

stakeholders.

5. Draft legislation (and develop accompanying regulations based on best practices and standards, and guided by civil society recommendations to create a conducive environment for their stability and growth while maintaining the accountability of these organizations in Belize) that consolidates the current NGOA and NPOA and reflects the unique characteristics of each classification.

DURATION AND TIMELINE

The consultancy is expected to last from August 1, 2025, to February 15, 2026, with the following milestones:

1. **Month 1 and 2:** Revision of existing laws and regulations, including those of at least three other countries
2. **Month 2:** Stakeholder consultations
3. **Month 3:** Comparative analysis
4. **Month 4:** Drafting of proposed legislation and regulations
5. **Month 5:** Provide at least 2 updates to the draft bill and regulations based on feedback
6. **Month 6:** Submit final bill, regulation, and guidance/guidelines

DELIVERABLES

The Legal Professional is expected to produce the following deliverables:

1. **Legal Analysis Report:** A comprehensive report on the current legal and regulatory frameworks governing NPOs and NGOs in Belize, and at least three other countries, highlighting issues, challenges, and areas for harmonization.
2. **Presentation:** A PowerPoint presentation summarizing the issues and challenges, including potential recommendations and areas for harmonization, to be delivered at five (5) CSO consultations across Belize.
3. **Facilitation:** First-hand participation in five (5) facilitated consultations across Belize to gather diverse insights and recommendations for legal and regulatory reform.
4. **Feedback Report:** A report summarizing key inputs and recommendations of the CSO consultations.
5. **Draft Legislation and Regulations:** Draft legislation for consolidation of the existing NGO and NPO legislations, including provisions where necessary, to ensure a conducive environment for the growth and accountability of these organizations in Belize while simultaneously reflecting the individual and unique characteristics of each classification.
6. **Final Bill and Regulations:** Final NGO and NPO Bill and Regulations with required legislative language with a Commonwealth jurisdiction following receipt of recommendations from BNN and FSC.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

The Legal Professional(s) should possess the following qualifications:

1. Advanced degree in law or equivalent (must possess Legal Education Certificate or equivalent).
2. At least 5 years of experience working with legal frameworks and drafting legislation.

SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

1. **Constitutional and Administrative Law Expertise:** Deep understanding and familiarity with the operations and laws governing or applicable to NGOs and NPOs in Belize and the region (e.g., the Commonwealth).
2. **Analytical and Critical Thinking:** Ability to critically evaluate both immediate and long-term consequences, spotting any potential legal ambiguities, loopholes, or anticipating possible enforcement challenges.
3. **Understanding of Civil Society Dynamics:** Familiarity with the roles, functions, and challenges of CSOs, allowing a more tailored analysis focused on practical implications for the sector.
4. **Knowledge of Human Rights Law and International Standards:** Strong grounding in human rights law and relevant international treaties to assess alignment between national amendments and international standards.
5. **Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Skills:** Proficiency in engaging with stakeholders, such as CSOs, civil society leaders, government officials, and the public, to gather insights and recommendations.
6. **Risk Assessment and Strategic Foresight:** Skill in identifying legal, operational, and reputational risks posed by the recommendations and proposed amendments to civil society and governance.
7. **Attention to Detail:** High attention to detail to ensure each clause of the proposed recommendations and amendments is thoroughly reviewed for nuanced language or phrasing that may impact civil society operations.
8. **Legal Drafting and Policy Analysis:** Proficiency in legal drafting and strong policy analysis skills to evaluate the broader socio-political context of the amendments and proposed regulations.

TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

The Legal Professional(s) must be willing and able to travel across the country to engage with CSOs and stakeholders in five (5) district consultations and meet in person or virtually with additional key stakeholders.

MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENT

The Legal Professional(s) will work closely with the BNN Executive Manager, the BNN Board of Directors, the Belize Audubon Society (BAS) Executive Director, the Financial Services Commission (FSC) Director of Legal and Enforcement, the FSC Director of Compliance, and the Deputy Registrar of Non-Profit Organizations.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Kindly submit a letter of interest, a resume, and a proforma invoice with hourly rates. Documents should be submitted digitally as attachments to the following e-mail address: executivemanager@belizengos.org by July 15, 2025.

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