



**NOTIFICATION OF ARRANGEMENTS AND PROGRESS IN THE PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT OF CATEGORY C DESIGNATIONS**

COMMUNICATION FROM BELIZE

The following communication, dated 9 March 2023, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Belize.

Belize hereby notifies information on the arrangements concluded and progress made in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support of the following category C designations, in response to Article 16 of the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 1.1	Publication	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2023
Article 1.2	Information Available through Internet	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2023
Article 1.3	Enquiry Points	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2024
Article 1.4	Notification	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2023
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> Caribbean Development Bank				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
Trade-related information are accessible to traders on various national websites Belize, however, has not been able to secure donor assistances in the following areas:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop a trade portal within the website for the Directorate General for Foreign Trade.</li> <li>In securing technical and financial assistance to develop and implement a wide-area network for BAHA.</li> </ul>				
In addition, the Belize Customs and Excise Department require technical and financial assistance to improve its website and build capacity in website design to support greater publication of trade information.				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 2.1	Opportunity to Comment and Information before entry into force	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2023
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> to be determined				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
Currently, the features of the WTO SPS and TBT e-ping platform that allows for private sector or other stakeholders to comment on draft regulations under the SPS and TBT are limited accessed in Belize. Belize appreciates any additional support from other development partners/WTO for national training on the use of the WTO SPS and TBT e-ping platform to promote and accommodate other stakeholders including the private sector access to essential updates on product requirements in foreign markets.				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 2.2	Consultations	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2024
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> to be determined				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
To date no development partner has been identified. Assistance is required to employ effective strategies to engage stakeholder in areas without access to internet and mobile communication.				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 3	Advance Rulings	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2023
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> IMF Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre (CARTAC)				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
The Belize Customs and Excise Department received technical assistance from CARTAC in the form of a workshop in 2020 that assisted in the initial stages of developing an adequate advance rulings system. It built awareness and pointed to aspects for Belize to consider when designing an advance ruling system. The Customs and Excise Department currently require additional technical support and capacity building to: (i) further develop an advance ruling system for classification, and (ii) Train the trainer on classification, valuation and origin of goods.				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 4	Procedures for Appeal or Review	C	22 February 2022	31 December 2024
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> to be determined				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
Currently Belize requires development partner assistance in: (i) Designing and creating policy on appeals in accordance with the existing regulation and (ii) Designing/creating standard operating procedure that compliments the Policy.				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 5.1	Notification for Enhanced controls or Inspections	C	22 February 2019	31 December 2024
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (OIRSA) and United States Department of Agriculture(USDA)				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
Belize received assistance in the implementation of a nonintrusive system for inspection at the airport, including k9 and x-ray machines. Additional K9 units at the airport and other border points are needed. Also, assistance with risk-based inspection, training and support (financial support for appropriate inspection facilities) at all points of entry are required.				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 5.2	Detention	C	22 February 2022	31 December 2030
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> to be determined				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
To date no development partner has been identified				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 5.3	Test Procedures	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2024
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> <i>to be determined</i>				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
To date no development partner has been identified.				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 6.3	Penalty Disciplines	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2024
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> to be determined				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
Belize would appreciate any opportunity from among the development partners for capacity development and training activities on managing the disciplines on penalties be available to Customs Officials.				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 7.1	Pre-arrival Processing	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2026
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> to be determined				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
Currently no development partner has been identified.				
Belize requires assistance and support in upgrading and incorporating other agencies (including Shipping Agents, BAHA, the Port Authority, BELTRAIDE, Forest Department, Department of the Environment, Ministry of Finance, and Central Bank) to a full electronic system suitable to connect to the ASYCUDA World System. This process will entail a revision of the current systems, updating existing ones and creation of new systems (Single-window approach).				
Belize appreciates any opportunity from development partners for the relevant officials to participate in capacity development and training activities on Pre-Arrival Processing.				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 7.2	Electronic Payment	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2026
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> Caribbean Development Bank				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
<p>Currently the Belize Customs and Excise Department utilizes an electronic payment system through the ASYCUDA World System purchased from UNCTAD with donor support from CDB. However, the Supplies Control Unit and other Border Agencies do not have in place such system. Belize would appreciate any assistance that would allow the accommodation of electronic payment through the ASYCUDA World system or another system for these agencies.</p>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 7.4	Risk Management	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2024
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> Caribbean Development Bank, WCO Mercator Program, IMF CARTAC				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
<p>Belize Customs and Excise Department developed internally, using WCO risk management compendium and RKC, a Risk Management framework, Policy, Strategy and Plan.</p> <p>Under the Caribbean Development Bank Project: "Development of a Risk-based Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Import and Export Control System for Belize" (GA74/BZE), the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) will be conducting a risk categorization of all products, establishments and eventually even Importers; and establish an electronic platform to facilitate import, export and transit, and conduct on-going training in risk-based inspection. The project has been delayed.</p> <p>Belize will require additional technical support and capacity building in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Building and coding of risk criteria</li> <li>o Data analysis and software analytical tool that can interface with ASYCUDA world for other border agencies.</li> <li>o e-platform to interface BAHA with ASYCUDA world system.</li> </ul>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 7.5	Post-clearance Audit	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2024
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> CARTAC and WCO				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
<p>Belize Customs and Excise Department received capacity building and technical support in post-clearance audit from CARTAC (2017-2020). Belize benefited from the WCO Mercator Programme. A Diagnostic Scoping Mission was conducted in October 2018 for areas of risk management and post clearance audit. A risk assessment and selectivity workshop and post clearance audit mission were scheduled for March 2020 but was disrupted by the COVID19 pandemic. Belize Customs Excise Department have plans to reengage WCO to resume initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Belize Customs and Excise Department is currently modelling the CARTAC Post-Clearance Audit Procedure Manual.</li> <li>- Draft Customs Control and Management Bill and Regulations (Harmonized Customs Bill) contains legal provisions for post-clearance audit. The Bill and Regulations are pending domestication.</li> </ul> <p>Belize would appreciate additional Technical support and financial assistance to develop the Post-clearance Audit (PCA) unit in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Analytical tool/software</li> <li>o Technical support to develop a plan for the specialization of the PCA unit</li> <li>o Specialized training - Auditing and accounting principles</li> </ul>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 7.6	Establishment and Publication of Average Release Time	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2024
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> Caribbean Development Bank (current funding TRS)				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
The Caribbean Development Bank is currently providing funding to conduct a Time Release Study anticipated to take about 7-10 months. The WCO assisting in this as well.				
Further technical assistance will be required following the launch of a TRS for additional training and to conduct subsequent TRSs.				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 7.8	Expedited Shipments	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2023
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> to be determined				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
To date no development partner has been identified.				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 7.9	Perishable Goods	C	22 February 2021	31 December 2030
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> to be determined				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
To date no development partner has been identified.				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 8.2 (b) – (e )	Border agency Cooperation	C	31 December 2030	31 December 2030
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> to be determined				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
No development partner has so far been identified in the following areas:				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assistance to conduct feasibility study on the establishment of a one stop border post. The study should include an analysis for the alignment of procedures and formalities using best practices and international standards.</li> <li>2. Technical assistance to learn best practices in countries that have introduced joint border controls and one-stop border post control.</li> <li>3. Financial assistance for facility, equipment and software.</li> <li>4. Technical assistance for strengthening of human resource management of border agencies.</li> <li>5. Technical assistance and cooperation for training and awareness building.</li> </ol>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 10.1	Formalities and Documentation Requirements	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2023
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> Caribbean Development Bank				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
<p>Belize is currently conducting a feasibility study for an Electronic Single Window system with funding from the Caribbean Development Bank which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- further simplify, harmonize and standardize procedures for customs with other government agencies for import, export and transit;</li> <li>- use international best practices;</li> <li>- reduce transaction time and cost; and</li> <li>- promote involvement and buy-in from all government agencies and private sector.</li> </ul> <p>However, Belize appreciates any additional assistance and support from development partners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- implement the electronic single window system; and</li> <li>- develop the software, hardware and increase and build technical expertise.</li> </ul>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 10.3	Use of International Standards	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2023
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> Caribbean Development Bank and 11 <sup>th</sup> EDF/European Funds				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
<p>Belize received support from the Caribbean Development Bank Standby Facility under GA72/BZE, to strengthen national quality infrastructure in Belize by building institutional technical capacity for improved Quality Management Systems in accordance with ISO 9001 and ISO/IEC 17025.</p> <p>Further assistance from development partners will be appreciated in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to develop more national standards, regulations and policies for food and agriculture and food safety; and</li> <li>-to have relevant officials participate in meetings of the International Standard Setting Bodies and the WTO/SPS and TBT Committee Meetings.</li> </ul> <p>The Belize Customs and Excise Department is currently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementing the HS2022 as per Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS Convention) which was approved on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023 under Act No.1 of 2023. CARTAC provided an expert on tariff classification to guide CARICOM Customs Committee working group in 2021.</li> <li>- Exploring donor/development assistance to ratify the RKC and Harmonized System. Although not a signatory to the RKC, Belize currently bases its Customs procedures that are related to automated clearance system (the ASYCUDA world) developed by UNCTAD on the RKC.</li> <li>- Belize Customs is currently upgrading ASYCUDA World to its latest version and will include new automated customs procedures such as: pre-clearance and post clearance audit modules, valuation database module, offense management module, improved selectivity criteria module, foreign exchange control module, and duty exemption management module. The upgrading came from a support extended contract stemming from the initial implementation of ASYCUDA World in 2008 which was funded by CDB ; and</li> <li>- Belize is currently using the WCO Risk Management Compendium for the development of a National Risk Management Policy, Strategy and Plan.</li> </ul> <p>Belize would appreciate any opportunities from other development partners to assist with additional support and assistance in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scoping mission to assess the legal and administrative readiness to ratify the RKC and the HS Convention;</li> <li>- Capacity building within Customs and Excise Department and other relevant agencies on Risk Management and HS.</li> </ul>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 10.4	Single Window	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2026
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> Caribbean Development Bank and IDB				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
<p>The Caribbean Development Bank is providing funding to conduct a feasibility study for an Electronic Single Window (ESW) to review the status of trade facilitation in Customs procedures, other regulatory stakeholders' procedures, and review the legal and regulatory framework governing trade facilitation and clearance of goods and make recommendations for the implementation for an ESW.</p> <p>Belize has secured funding through a loan from the IDB to conduct the first phase of implementation of a Foreign Trade Single Window. This component will finance: i) Gap analysis of the current platform, and identification of barriers from a triple perspective: technology, usability, and integrating with existing systems and business process re-engineering to ensure that trade processes are optimized and aligned with international best practices, ii) deployment of a Licenses, Certificates, and Permits (LCP) module that will serve as the single-entry point and management system for all import and export LCPs issued by participating agencies, which will include the generation of gender disaggregated reports. Project is delayed.</p> <p>The IDB consultancy for the ESW will elaborate on recommendations for medium and long-term financial sustainability of the ESW, both for operational costs and capital investments in accordance with the technical work developed by the Caribbean Development Bank (Feasibility Study); and iii) enhancement of IT equipment to facilitate the migration to a paperless environment and use of the system. Belize will require further assistances.</p> <p>Time frame of Project: 18 months to complete.</p> <p>Belize will require additional support in the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Technical assistance and training for relevant officials in establishing and managing a Single Window facility;</li> <li>ii. Equipment for the operational use of the Single Window</li> <li>iii. Capacity building training for users of the Single Window</li> <li>iv. Building awareness among the private sector entities</li> <li>v. For the integration of other border agencies into the Single Window facility</li> </ol>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 10.9	Temporary Admission of Goods and Inward and Outward Processing	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2023
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> to be determined				
<b>Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:</b>				
<p>Belize appreciates any opportunity from other development partners/WTO for the relevant officials to participate in specialized training in the supervision and audit of manufacturing operations.</p>				

Provision	Heading/Description	Category	Indicative date for implementation	Definitive date for implementation
Article 11.1 - 11.3	Freedom of Transit	C	22 February 2022	31 December 2024
<b>Donors / Agencies:</b> to be determined				

**Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:**

No development partner has so far offered any assistance in the area of transit charges, regulations, and formalities.

Belize appreciates any opportunity from other developing partners to assist in providing technical assistance and capacity building to undertake periodic review of transit regulations and formalities to assess the impact of trade.

<b>Provision</b>	<b>Heading/Description</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Indicative date for implementation</b>	<b>Definitive date for implementation</b>
Article 11.16 - 11.17	Freedom of Transit	C	22 February 2020	31 December 2024

**Donors / Agencies:** to be determined

**Progress in the provision of technical assistance and capacity building support:**

To date no development partner has been identified in the area of cooperation and coordination.

Belize appreciates any opportunity from other developing partners to assist in providing technical assistance and capacity building to undertake periodic review of transit regulations and formalities to assess trade impact.