

Annual Technical REPORT 2023-2024



Ministry of Youth,
Sports and Transport



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Message from the Minister



I am pleased to present the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Transport's (MYSTs) Annual Technical Report for the period 2023-2024. As we navigate the post-pandemic landscape with renewed vision, the Ministry continues to enhance its services to the people of Belize. The past year has seen remarkable advancements in our athletes' performance in sports, youth participation and engagement, and regulatory reform, capacity building in our transport sector. Our athletes have achieved remarkable success, earning gold, silver, and bronze medals in various competitions. We have also enhanced on the job skill training and other thematic areas for our at-risk youth age 14-29 population, while continuing to address regulatory reforms in the transport sector. Additionally, we have expanded our education, sports and outreach programs, reaffirming the critical role of the Department of Youth Services (DYS) and National Sports Council (NSC) in fostering harmonious and productive relations within the youth population.

Despite human resource and financial constraints, we have initiated important programs and activities aimed at supporting the population we serve. We remain committed to building on this progress, continuing to enhance the quality and efficiency of all our departments. Looking ahead, we will invest in resources, improve capacity building of our staff, equipping them with the necessary tools and skills to our service delivery. We are also focused on improving our internal structures to better address the evolving needs of the public, implementing broad strategic plans to ensure that our services are effective and impactful.

Notwithstanding these achievements, there are several factors limiting the Ministry's ability to scale up its efforts, with the most impactful being a limited budget and inadequate staffing of key units. These constraints significantly restrict our contributions to the Ministry. As it stands, more than 50% of the Ministry's approved budget for 2023/2024 was allocated to recurrent expenditure – administration, salaries, and emoluments – leaving less than 40% to carry out our programmatic work. As a result, the Ministry has been heavily dependent on external funding to ensure the effective execution of its duties. As we continue to deliver on the commitments of #planBelize, we need a greater financial commitment to scale up efforts in all activities across the Ministry and build upon the current successes for the upcoming 2024/2025 fiscal year. In closing, I extend heartfelt thanks to all the staff of the MYST, and our stakeholders, for their unwavering support throughout the year. Together, with determination, dedication, and hard work, we strive to improve our service delivery to better serve the populace, overcoming challenges and building the prosperity that the people of Belize deserve.

Hon. Rodwell Ferguson, Minister of Youth, Sports and Transport

List of Abbreviations

CODICADER	Consejo del Istmo Centroamericano de Deporte y Recreación.
CONCECADE	Central American and Caribbean Sports Council
DOT	Department of Transport
DYS	Department of Youth Services
MYST	Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Transport
NACACAA	North American, Central American and Caribbean Athletic Association
NSC	National Sports Council
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
OJT	On the Job Skills Training Program
Q	Quarter of the year
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures

Executive Summary

Over the past 13 years, Belize has faced persistent challenges in the deterioration of sports infrastructure, insufficient support for at-risk youth, and inefficiencies within the transport sector. In response, the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Transport (MYST) has initiated a strategic overhaul aimed at addressing these critical sectors through a structured and results-driven approach.

MYST's strategy centers around five key priority areas:

1. **Policy and Legislative Reform:** Drafting and amending legislation, including the Transport Act and Youth Policy, with a target of passing these by Q4 2024.
2. **Digitization:** Implementing digital systems for the Department of Transport (DOT) and Department of Youth Services (DYS), with a goal of digitizing 80% of key services at the department of transport by Q4 2025.
3. **Strategic Development:** Strengthening technical capacity and operational efficiency at MYST, additionally focusing on capacity building and revenue generation for the National Sports Council (NSC) by Q3 2024.
4. **Reorganization:** Expanding DYS rural outreach, aiming to increase youth engagement by 25% in underserved areas by 2025.
5. **Resource Optimization:** Reducing the carbon footprint through the integration of electric buses, targeting a 15% reduction in emissions by 2026.

In 2023, MYST successfully engaged 15,000 youth through programs enhancing employability and entrepreneurship. In sports, the country secured 16 gold medals in powerlifting and a bronze in volleyball, aligning with our objective to foster international athletic success.

In the transport sector, MYST procured two inter-city electric buses, marking a pivotal step toward energy-efficient transportation, with a target to operationalize these buses by Q2 2024. Road safety was strengthened by acquiring six highway patrol vehicles, aiming to reduce road traffic accidents by 10% by 2025.

These actions reflect MYST's commitment to transformative change, with clear objectives to enhance youth services, sports infrastructure, and sustainable transport. This proactive approach is designed to foster a more inclusive, resilient, and prosperous Belize.

1. Introduction

The MYST is committed to enhancing the quality of life for all Belizeans through comprehensive and dynamic services in youth development, sports, and transportation. This technical report for the fiscal year 2023-2024 reflects our relentless pursuit of excellence and our dedication to achieving sustainable and impactful outcomes.

In the face of the challenges posed by the post-pandemic recovery phase, MYST has continued to make significant advancements. We have successfully implemented various programs aimed at fostering youth engagement, enhancing sports participation, and improving transport infrastructure. These efforts are part of our broader vision to create a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous Belize.

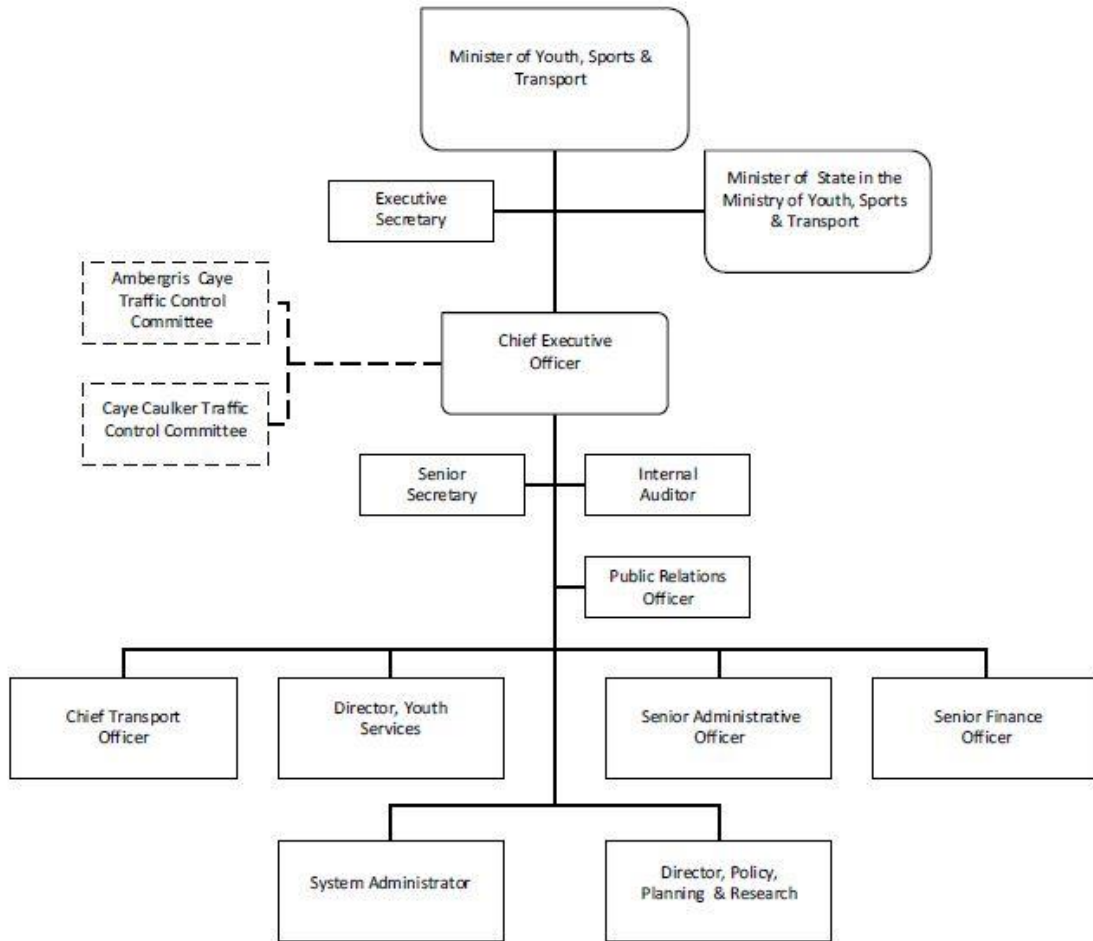
Our mission is driven by key priorities: policy and legislative reforms, digitization, strategic development, and strengthening technical capacity. These pillars guide our initiatives and ensure that our actions are aligned with the evolving needs of our population. Despite the notable progress, we face ongoing challenges, particularly in the realms of budgetary constraints and technical staffing shortages. These limitations hinder our ability to scale up our efforts and fully realize our strategic objectives.

This report provides a detailed account of our achievements, ongoing projects, and future priorities. It also highlights the critical need for increased funding and technical expertise to overcome the barriers that impede our progress. As we navigate the complexities of the current landscape, our commitment to innovation, collaboration, and strategic resource management remains steadfast.

By addressing these challenges head-on and leveraging our strengths, MYST aims to create a sustainable framework that supports the development and well-being of Belize's youth, athletes, and the populace. Through strategic planning and focused execution, we will continue to drive positive change and contribute to the national development agenda.

The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Transport is led by the Honorable Rodwell Ferguson and supported by the Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Gilroy Middleton. See figure I.

Figure 1: Organizational Chart Ministry of Youth Sports and Transport



2. Mission, Vision and Priorities of the Ministry

Mission

To empower youth with relevant and marketable social and economic skills, foster a culture of sports participation and excellence, and develop a robust, efficient and climate resilient transportation system for all.

Vision

To have strong positive, and skillfully trained youths cultivating their own sustainability to be productive adults, and having developed international potential athletes in all sports discipline, whilst maintaining a transformed transportation sector through an established legal framework.

Priorities of the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Transport

The MYST plays a pivotal role in fostering the development of Belize's youth, enhancing sports participation, and ensuring the efficiency and safety of the nation's transport systems. The Annual Technical Report for 2023-2024 outlines the Ministry's strategic priorities, reflecting a comprehensive approach to addressing the critical needs of the population. The Ministry's priorities are centered around policy and legislative reform, digitization, strategic development, reorganization, and strengthening technical capacity, with a strong emphasis on sustainable practices and inclusive outreach.

Policy and Legislative Reform

One of the primary priorities for MYST is the revision and updating of the legislative and policy framework governing the youth, sports, and transport sectors. The report identifies several weaknesses within the existing Transport and Sports Council legislation, underscoring the necessity for reforms that align with current realities and the demands of the new economy. The Ministry commenced the revision of the Transport Act and developed a harmonized approach to youth policy. These legislative changes are crucial for creating a robust foundation that supports sustainable development and addresses the evolving needs of the public.

Consequently, the Ministry is committed to advancing critical legislative reforms that will support sustainable development in youth, sports, and transport sectors. We have established the following timeline for key reforms:

1. **Youth Bill:**

- Drafting: Completed by Q4 2024.
- Stakeholder Consultations: Completed by Q3 2024.
- Parliamentary Approval: Expected by Q1 2025.
- Implementation: Initiated by Q2 2025, with monitoring and evaluation conducted biannually.

2. **Transport Act:**

- Draft Amendments: Completed by Q4 2024, addressing road safety, electric mobility, and driver compliance.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Ongoing, with final consultations by Q1 2025.
- Full Implementation: Expected by Q3 2025.

3. **Sports Council Legislation:**

- Amendment to modernize governance structures: Draft completed by Q3 2024.
- Parliamentary Reading and Enactment: Q4 2025."

Digitization

In an era where technology drives efficiency, MYST prioritizes the digitization of its services. The Ministry is investing in digital solutions to streamline service delivery, including online platforms for vehicle registration, license renewals, and real-time data analytics. These efforts aim to improve operational efficiency, reduce wait times, and enhance user experience. By embracing technology, MYST is positioning itself to better serve the public and make data-driven decisions that enhance the effectiveness of its programs.

Strategic Development and Capacity Building

Strategic development and capacity building are at the core of MYST's priorities. The Ministry recognizes the importance of strengthening its internal structures and equipping staff with the necessary tools and skills. This includes continuous professional development and specialized training in emerging technologies and best practices in youth and sports management. A critical challenge identified is the lack of expertise in data collection and legal drafting. Addressing these gaps is essential for creating effective policies and ensuring accurate reporting and decision-making processes.

To overcome these challenges, MYST prioritizes:

Recruitment of skilled professionals: Hiring experts in data collection and analysis, as well as legal drafting, to enhance the Ministry's capability in these vital areas.

Capacity Building and Training: Providing targeted training for existing staff to develop skills in data management and policy drafting, ensuring they can adapt to the dynamic needs of the Ministry.

Internship and Fellowship Programs: Establishing programs to attract young professionals and graduates, providing them with practical experience and fostering a pipeline of future talent.

Youth Development and Outreach

The DYS' mission is to provide young people with access to education, training, and life skills development. The Ministry prioritizes expanding services to rural areas, ensuring broader access for the youth population. Key initiatives include on-the-job skills training (OJT), entrepreneurial hubs, counseling and wellness programs, behavior modification, and conflict management. These programs aim to support the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of young people, fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and addressing the needs of at-risk youth.

Sports Development

Improving sporting facilities and fostering a vibrant sports culture are central to MYST's agenda. The Ministry has achieved notable success in international competitions, and there is a strong focus on upgrading key sports facilities to improve conditions for athletes. Additionally, MYST is working on a strategic plan to direct future goals and operations of the National Sports Council, which includes facility maintenance and revenue generation. These efforts aim to promote the knowledge and practice of sports and leisure activities, contributing to the social well-being of Belizeans.

Transport Sector Enhancements

The transport sector is another critical area of focus for MYST. The Ministry is dedicated to enhancing the efficiency, safety, and sustainability of Belize's transportation system. This includes expanding services to underserved areas, improving road safety through the acquisition of patrol vehicles, and promoting sustainable transport solutions such as electric buses. By updating legislation, enhancing enforcement activities, and investing in infrastructure, MYST aims to provide better public service and reduce the carbon footprint of the transport sector.

Sustainable Practices

Sustainability is a cross-cutting priority for MYST. The Ministry is committed to reducing its carbon footprint by accelerating the transition to e-mobility and promoting sustainable practices across all sectors. This includes the introduction of electric buses and the development of necessary infrastructure such as charging stations. Sustainable practices are not only environmentally beneficial but also essential for creating a healthier and more resilient transportation system.

Conclusion

In alignment with our strategic priorities, the Ministry has established the following SMART objectives to ensure targeted progress across youth services, sports, and transportation:

1. Youth Services:

Objective: Increase rural youth engagement by 25% by 2025 through expanded outreach and digital platforms.

Milestone: Launch three new rural youth centers in underserved districts by Q4 2024.

2. Sports Development:

Objective: Improve the performance of Belizean athletes in international competitions by securing 10 gold medals annually by 2025.

Milestone: Complete upgrades to two major national sports facilities (Santiago Ricalde Stadium and MCC Grounds) by Q2 2024.

3. Transport Sector:

Objective: Reduce road traffic accidents by 15% by 2025 through the deployment of 10 new highway patrol vehicles and automated speed tracking systems.

Milestone: Complete national deployment of electric buses for urban routes by Q3 2024.

The MYST has outlined a strategic vision that addresses the multifaceted needs of Belize's population. By focusing on policy and legislative reform, digitization, strategic development, youth outreach, sports development, transport sector enhancements, and sustainable practices, MYST is paving the way for a more inclusive, efficient, and prosperous future. The Ministry's priorities reflect a comprehensive approach to overcoming current challenges and building a foundation for long-term success. Through these concerted efforts, MYST aims to create a sustainable and efficient future for the nation's youth, sports, and transport sectors, ultimately contributing to the national socio-economic development agenda.

3. Department of Youth Services

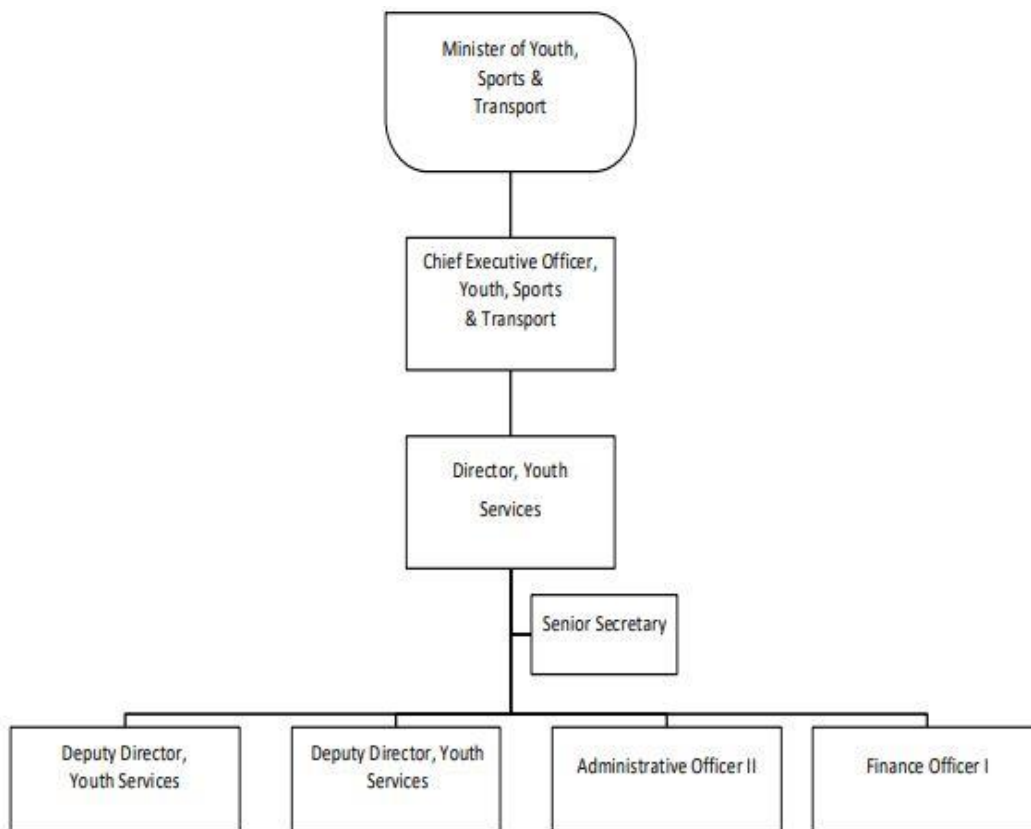
#Impacting 15,310 Lives

Mission:

To ensure young persons of Belize have access to multiple opportunities and available resources to acquire education, training, and life skills development to succeed in employment, careers, self-sufficiency, and become exemplary youths of Belize.

The organization chart for the Department of Youth Services visually represents the structure and hierarchy within the department. It highlights the various roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines. This chart provides clarity on who is responsible for specific tasks and helps ensure effective communication and coordination within the department.

Figure 2: Department of Youth Services



The definition of youth varies much like the diverse cultures of the Caribbean. Different organizations define youth with different age ranges. For example, many Caribbean youth policies categorize individuals between 15 and 30 years old as 'youth'. The United Nations, however, defines 'youth' as

those between 15 and 24 years old. In Belize the context for youth is define as those between 14 -29 years. Within the parameters of the age range, below is the population from Statistical institute of Belize

Table 1: Youth population

Population of Individuals 16-29 years			
Year	Total Population	Male Population	Female Population
2022	100,337	48,952	51,385
2023	102,029	49,835	52,194

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

Operational Pillars

1. Youth Entrepreneurship and On-the-Job Training Skills
 - Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth), 9 (Industry Innovation), 17 (Partnership), and 10 (Inequalities)
 - Description: This pillar focuses on providing practical, hands-on experience to young individuals by placing them in workplace environments where they can learn and develop industry-specific skills. It includes networking and building partnerships with businesses and organizations to prepare young people for the labor market, fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and supporting the creation of new businesses.

2. Counselling and Wellness
 - SDGs: 5 (Gender Equity), 10 (Reduce Inequalities), 16 (Peace & Justice), 17 (Partnerships)
 - Description: This pillar aims to support the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of young persons. Programs include a range of services and interventions aimed at promoting holistic health, addressing mental health issues, and fostering positive relationships, social cohesion, and a sense of belonging.

3. Behaviour Modification and Conflict Management
 - SDGs: 16 (Peace & Justice), 17 (Partnerships)
 - Description: This pillar focuses on intervention and prevention approaches tailored to at-risk youth. It addresses behavioural challenges such as delinquency, exposure to violence, and academic underachievement through community outreach, skills training, and mediation programs.

Key Achievements

1. Governance and Policy

- Drafting of the National Youth Commission Bill: Establishes a commission dedicated to addressing the needs and concerns of young people.
- Drafting of the National Youth Policy: Supports sustainable youth development and empowers the young population.
- National Belize Youth Rising Star: A platform for young people to showcase their talents.
- National Youth Awards: Recognizes young people for their contributions to development in various fields.



2. Ongoing Projects/ Programs

- National Peer Helpers Program: Empowering young people to support their peers in personal, social, and academic matters.
- OJT: Engaging 93 young persons in practical work experiences.
- Entrepreneurial Hub: Supporting 257 youth entrepreneurs through capacity building and networking.
- School Engagements: Reaching approximately 4,000 young persons through various educational programs.

- Summer Enrichment Program: Engaging 878 young persons in skill development and life skills sessions.

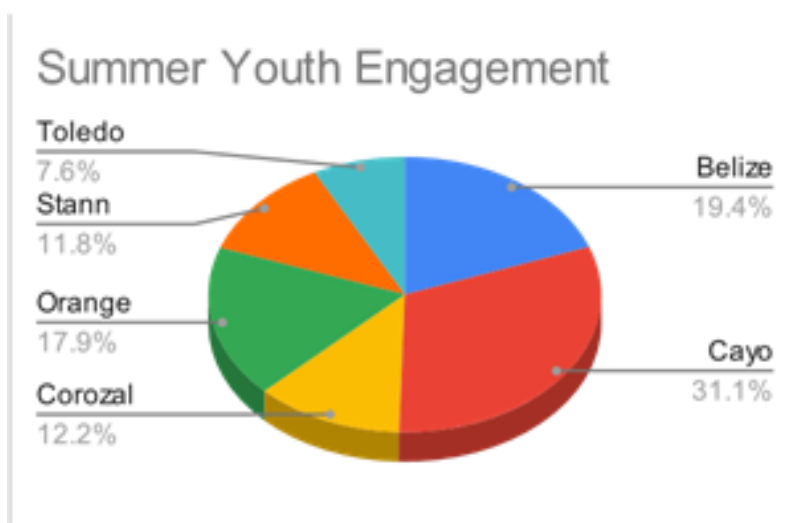


Number of Impacted Youth: 878 (Males 441 & Females 437)

Table 2: Youth Impacted

District	Total	Male	Female
Belize	170	101	69
Cayo	273	138	135
Corozal	107	34	73
Orange Walk	157	67	90
Stann Creek	104	59	45
Toledo	67	42	25

Figure 3: Summer Youth Engagement



- UNICEF Rural Community Outreach: Engaging 861 participants in activities focused on health and lifestyle.
- Suspension Program: Teaching high school students about accountability and responsibility.
- U-Report Platform: Increasing youth participation in social mobilization and advocacy.
- Increased Collaboration: Working with various organizations to enhance program effectiveness.

-
- Initiation of Podcast Studio: Building public speaking and communication skills among youth.
 - Learning Institutions: Training over 200 youth in various vocational programs.

Lessons Learned

1. The importance of having an online data collection system for reporting purposes.
2. The value of collaboration with key youth stakeholders at the national and local levels to increase outreach and impact.
3. The necessity of rural community outreach for equity and inclusive youth engagement.
4. Universal and tailored/targeted interventions are essential for effective programming.
5. Active youth participation in program design and implementation is crucial.
6. Continuous training and capacity building for staff are necessary to adapt to the dynamic nature of youth work.
7. Youth participation and leadership is a core program gap of the Department, which is critical to comprehensive youth development in Belize

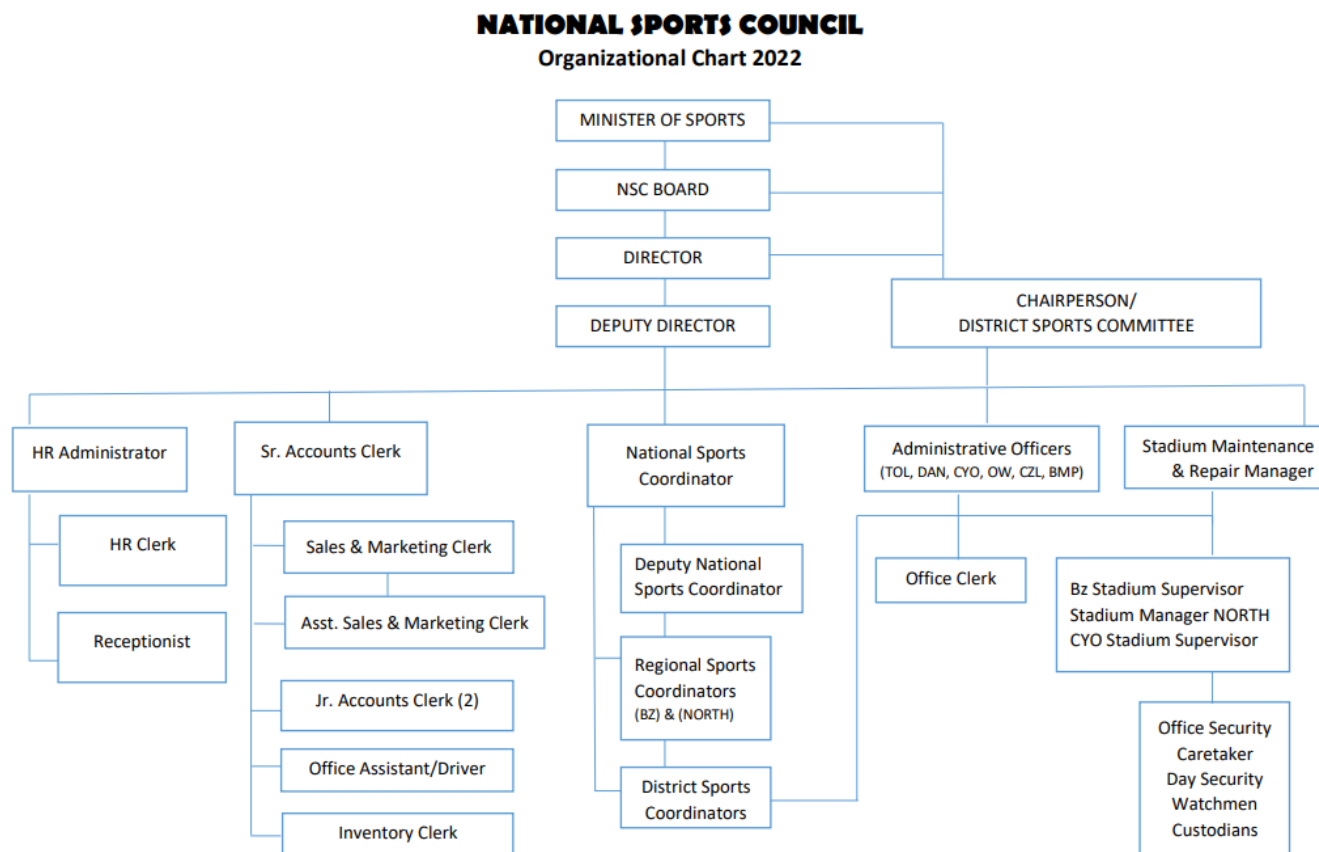
4. National Sports Council

Mission:

To promote and develop the knowledge and practice of all sports and leisure activities for the social well-being of Belizeans, and to ensure all sporting organizations maintain high standards

The organization chart for the National Sports Councils visually represents the structure and hierarchy within the NSC. It highlights the various roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines. This chart provides clarity on who is responsible for specific tasks and helps ensure effective communication and coordination within the Council.

Figure 4: Organizational Chart of the National Sports Council



Main Achievements/Highlights:

1. Awards and Medals:

- **Judo:** Athletes won 3 bronze medals in various international competitions.
- **Karate:** Achievements included 1 silver and 3 bronze medals at the Central American Karate Championship.
- **Cycling:** 1st female Belizean athlete from the Caribbean region to place 9th overall in the Commonwealth Youth Games and Intelligentsia Cup.
- **Special Olympics:** 3 silver and 1 bronze medals in bocce and athletics respectively.
- **Athletics:** 2 Bronze medals in long jump and triple jump at the NACAC Championships.
- **Powerlifting:** 16 gold, 9 silver, and 16 bronze medals at the North American Powerlifting Championship.
- **Volleyball:** Bronze medal at the Central American Men's Volleyball Championship with additional awards for **Best Opposite, Best Striker and Best Receptionist**.



2. Events Hosted:

✚ **Poktapok World Games 2023:** Successfully hosted with significant participation from multiple countries.



✚ **CODICADER Games:** Bronze medal by the **U15 team at Belize CODICADER Games**
Belize hosted both basketball and table tennis events at the **CODICADER Games**.

3. **Partnerships and Sponsorships:**

✚ Collaboration with United States Peace Corps Volunteers for the “YES” project.

✚ Support from Belize Water Service and the Ministry of Education for primary school sports programs.

4. **Programs:**

✚ Successful execution of primary school sports programs in football, basketball, volleyball, and track and field in partnership with primary school administrations

Ongoing Projects or Programs:

1. **Primary School Sports Programs: 8,211 student athletes countrywide participating in National Primary School Sports Program** Continuing to support and conduct various sports activities despite budget constraints.

2. **Facilities Maintenance:** Prioritizing rehabilitation and maintenance plans for sports facilities.

3. **Future Renovations:**

Integral renovation of the Football Stadium in Corozal.

Upgrading football fields in Orange Walk and other main population centers.

4. **Sport Award:** Recognition event planned to honor the best athletes, teams, organizations, and staff annually.

5. **Strategic Planning:** Emphasis on creating a strategic plan to direct future goals and operations.

Lessons Learned:

1. **Budget Constraints:** The current budget is insufficient to meet the growing demands of the council and its operations. There is a need for a proper budget to cover both operational and developmental needs.
2. **Facility Conditions:** Many facilities are in poor condition, affecting athletes' performance and revenue generation. A maintenance plan is crucial for sustainable operations.
3. **Strategic Plan Necessity:** A strategic plan is urgently needed to achieve specific goals and improve overall council performance.
4. **Legislation:** Amendment of the Sports Act

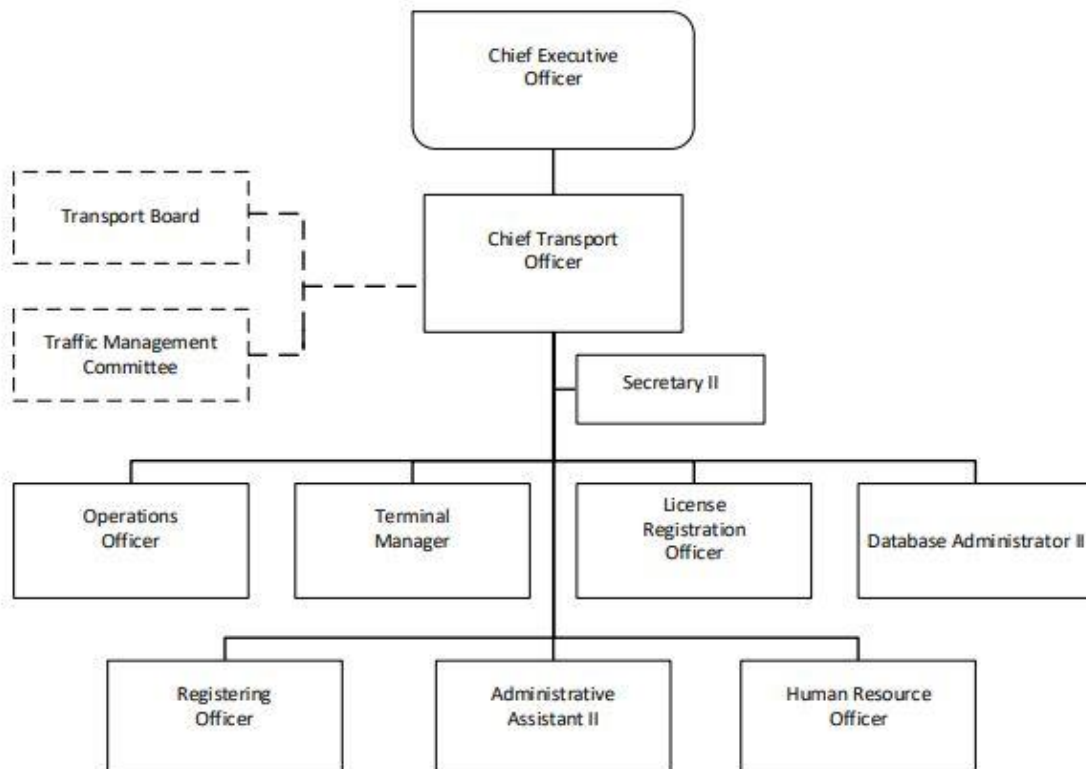
5. Department of Transport

Mission:

The mission of the Department of Transport is to enhance the efficiency, safety, and sustainability of the transportation system in Belize. This includes the implementation of policies, programs, and projects that promote the development and maintenance of transportation infrastructure, improve service delivery, and ensure regulatory compliance.

The organization chart for the Department of Transport visually represents the structure and hierarchy within the department. It highlights the various roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines. This chart provides clarity on who is responsible for specific tasks and helps ensure effective communication and coordination within the department.

Figure 5: Organizational Chart of the Department of Transport



Main Achievements:

1. Institutional Strengthening:

- Expanded services to Independence Village and Spanish Lookout, improving accessibility and service delivery.

2. Successfully conducted a National Traffic Conference, fostering collaboration among key stakeholders to improve traffic management and road safety.



3. Collaboration:

Worked with the Forestry Department, Police Department, and local municipal authorities to enhance enforcement activities and road safety management.

4. Collaborating with UNDP/European Union funded E-mobility Project, in reducing the carbon footprint and promoting sustainable transportation to introduce e-buses and capacity building.



5. Road Safety Initiatives:



- The acquisition of six new highway patrol vehicles expanded operations and enforcement .to 75% capacity of our major highways
- Equipped wardens with advanced tools and equipment for effective road operations resulting in a 20% increase in the efficiency of road operations, including faster response times and improved enforcement of traffic regulations.

6. Legislation:

- Drafting legislation mandating seat belt use for all passengers and prohibiting the use of electronic devices while driving.
- Implemented the use of speed guns during highway operations to enforce speed limits more effectively.

Ongoing Projects or Programs:

1. Electric Buses Expansion:

- In addition to the two intercity electric buses, three more electric buses will be introduced for intracity routes, contributing to cleaner air and a healthier urban environment.

2. Road Safety Project:

- Continued efforts to improve road safety through the acquisition of patrol vehicles and advanced tools for wardens.

3. Digitization of Services:

- Investing in digital solutions to streamline service delivery, including online platforms for vehicle registration and license renewals.
- Implementing real-time data analytics and automated enforcement technologies to improve performance.

4. Training Programs:

- Expanding training programs for officers and wardens, including first aid, weapons training, evasive manoeuvring, and enforcement operations.

5. Legislation:

Drafting legislation mandating seat belt use for all passengers and prohibiting the use of electronic devices while driving.

Lessons Learned:

1. Structure and Communication:

- Lack of a clearly defined chain of command and communication protocols can lead to confusion and inefficiencies. Establishing a clear organizational structure and comprehensive communication protocols is essential.

2. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):

- Absence of standardized procedures leads to inconsistencies and inefficiencies. Creating detailed SOPs for all key processes and tasks is necessary.

3. Succession Planning:

- The absence of a succession plan results in operational disruptions and loss of institutional knowledge. Developing a succession plan with mentoring and training strategies is recommended.

4. Collaboration:


- Limited collaboration with other entities can hinder effective transportation issue resolution. Strengthening partnerships through formal agreements and regular inter-agency meetings is beneficial.

5. Data Collection:



- Reliance on manual data collection is time-consuming and prone to errors. Investing in digital technologies for data collection and management will improve accuracy and decision-making

6. Future Priorities of the Ministry

These are:

<p>Strategic Management</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen Strategic Leadership: Implement a Leadership Development Program by Q3 2024 to equip senior managers with strategic planning and financial management skills. 2. Build a Culture of Accountability: Introduce a Performance Management Framework by Q1 2025, linking individual staff performance to departmental goals through clear KPIs. 3. Improve Operational Efficiency: Establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for key operations (finance, procurement, HR) by Q3 2024 to ensure consistency and efficiency. 4. Enhance Data-Driven Decision Making: Implement a centralized Management Information System (MIS) by Q4 2024 to improve real-time data collection and reporting. 5. Focus on Capacity Building: Implement a Management and Leadership training with Government partners or by Q1 2025, aiming to upskill 75% of mid-level managers and technical staff by 2026. 6. Develop Succession Planning: Introduce a Succession Planning Framework by Q2 2025 to identify and mentor high-potential staff for future leadership roles. 7. Strengthen Stakeholder Engagement: Establish a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy by Q3 2024 to enhance collaboration with private sector, donors, and government partners.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extension of Suspension Program Nationwide: Expand the Suspension Program to all districts by Q2 2025 to ensure uniform access for at-risk youth. 2. Completion and Adoption of the National Youth Policy: Finalize and adopt the National Youth Policy by Q2 2024 to provide a cohesive framework for youth development. 3. Completion and Adoption of the Youth Bill: Complete and secure adoption of the Youth Bill by Q1 2025, ensuring legislative support for youth initiatives.

	<p>4. Expansion of Rural Community Outreach: Open one new youth center in a rural area by Q4 2024 to increase access to services for underserved youth.</p> <p>5. Increase Program Participation in Rural Areas: Boost the number of participants in rural youth programs by 20% by the end of 2025 through targeted outreach.</p> <p>6. Reach U-Report National Goal: Achieve the U-Report National Goal of 25,000 participants by Q4 2024 to enhance youth engagement and feedback.</p> <p>7. Implement Youth Challenge Program: Launch the Youth Challenge Program by Q1 2025 to encourage youth leadership and community service.</p> <p>8. Host National Debate Forums: Create and host national debate forums on social issues affecting youth by Q3 2024 to foster critical thinking and civic engagement.</p> <p>9. Increase Collaboration with Youth Stakeholders: Strengthen collaboration with national and local youth stakeholders by establishing regular quarterly meetings starting in Q1 2024.</p> <p>10. Conduct Youth Surveys: Integrate youth-focused surveys into existing national surveys by Q2 2025 to better understand and address youth needs.</p> <p>11. Focus on Certified Training: Offer certified training programs for both staff and youth participants, aiming to certify 50% of youth in vocational skills by Q4 2025.</p> <p>12. Implement a Program Database Platform: Deploy a centralized program database by Q2 2024 to track program participation and outcomes.</p> <p>13. Launch Department of Youth Website: Launch a dedicated Department of Youth website by Q3 2024 to improve access to information and resources.</p> <p>14. Open Northern Training Institute: Establish the Northern Training Institute by Q4 2024 to expand vocational training opportunities in the northern districts.</p> <p>15. Strategic Plan Realignment Post-2025:</p>
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete Renovation of Key National Sports Facilities: Finish upgrading major sports facilities by Q4 2026, ensuring integration of sustainable energy solutions. 2. Upgrade Specific Sporting Facilities: Complete upgrades at the following facilities: Santiago Ricalde Stadium Orange Walk People’s Stadium Roger Stadium MCC Stadium Norman Broaster Stadium 3. Host Annual Sport Awards: Establish an annual awards program by Q1 2025 to recognize top athletes, teams, and organizations. 4. Representation in Regional Tournaments: Continue active participation in regional tournaments, including: CODICADER CONCECADE 5. Create and Implement a Strategic Plan: Develop and launch a comprehensive Strategic Plan for Sports by Q3 2024 to guide future sports development and investment.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Digitizing the System: Invest in digital solutions for service delivery by Q4 2024, focusing on real-time data analytics and automated enforcement technologies to enhance performance. 2. Training and Development: Expand staff training programs by Q3 2024 to equip them with the skills needed to handle new technologies and meet evolving enforcement challenges. 3. Legislative Amendments: Establish a framework for the continuous review of traffic laws by Q2 2025, incorporating international best practices and adapting them to Belize’s local context. 4. Promoting Sustainable Transport: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the electric bus fleet and encourage private sector participation in adopting electric vehicles by Q4 2024. • Implement a nationwide network of electric vehicle charging stations by Q1 2025 with a goal to reduce transport sector carbon emissions by 15% by 2026.

5. Create and Implement a Strategic Plan:

Develop and implement a comprehensive Transport Strategic Plan by Q3 2024 to guide sustainable development and future investments.

8. Staffing

Across the entire Ministry, the gender distribution is relatively balanced, with males constituting 54% and females 46% of the workforce. This overall balance demonstrates the Ministry's commitment to gender inclusivity, although there are variations in gender representation across different departments.

Table 3: Staff Distribution by Department and Gender

AREA	NUMBER OF STAFF	Male	Female
Headquarters	23	9	14
Department of Transport	192	82	110
Department of Youth Services	91	42	49
National Sports Council	133	104	29
TOTAL NUMBER	439	237	202

Operational Efficiency and Human Capacity Development Plan:

To meet our strategic objectives, the Ministry has identified the need to enhance technical capacity across all departments. Our focus will be on recruiting specialized professionals and offering ongoing training for existing staff:

1. Recruitment Plan:

- Hire 15 new professionals across policy, M&E, data analysis, legal drafting, and digital services by Q3 2024.
- Develop a partnership with local universities to offer internship and fellowship programs for emerging talent in youth development and sports management.

2. Training and Capacity Building:

- Continuous professional development in emerging technologies and best practices, with a goal to upskill 60% of current staff by Q3 2025.

- Invest in leadership training programs to ensure a robust succession plan and reduce operational disruptions.

9. Financial Considerations

The total budget ceiling for the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Transport shows a consistent increase from the 2021/22 actual figure of \$11,827,343 to the 2023/24 revised estimate of \$14,695,295. This progression reflects a steady expansion of the ministry's budget over the years, despite the slight reduction in the 2023/24 revised estimate compared to the initial budget estimate. This trend indicates an overall growth in financial allocations to the Ministry, supporting its increasing operational and developmental needs over this period. The original budget estimate for the Ministry in 2023/24 was \$15,284,604, but this was later revised downward to \$14,695,295, indicating a reduction of \$589,309. Breaking down the expenditures, the recurrent expenditure initially budgeted at \$12,232,959 was slightly increased to \$12,626,295 in the revised estimates, reflecting a need to cover ongoing operational costs. Conversely, capital expenditures saw a notable reduction, with the original budget of \$3,051,645 being scaled back to \$2,069,000.

The Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Transport faces several budgetary weaknesses in its 2023/24 revised estimates. Youth Support Services and Sports Development have seen reductions in capital expenditures, potentially limiting progress in youth initiatives and sports infrastructure. Transport Administration and Enforcement also experienced a significant cut in capital funding, which could impact public safety and transportation efficiency. Additionally, the drastic reduction in the Strategic Management and Administration budget may hinder the Ministry's ability to implement strategic improvements and enhance overall efficiency.

Table 4: Budget FYS 2021-2022; 2022-2023 and 2023-2024

Ministry of Youth, Sports and Transport – Programme Expenditure Summary				
Programme	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Budget Estimate	2023/2024 Revised Estimate
Strategic Management and Administration	\$790,742	\$1,058,723	\$1,098,744	\$959,344
Recurrent Expenditures	\$776,386	\$1,058,723	\$1,074,744	\$936,814
Capital II Expenditures	\$14,356	\$0	\$24,000	\$22,530
Capital III Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Youth Support Services	\$4,000,005	\$5,552,118	\$5,283,608	\$4,561,490
Recurrent Expenditures	\$3,372,176	\$4,162,722	\$4,882,608	\$4,034,101
Capital II Expenditures	\$95,000	\$570,729	\$401,000	\$525,324
Capital III Expenditures	\$532,829	\$818,666	\$0	\$2,065

<i>Sports Development</i>	\$2,067,587	\$3,305,702	\$3,263,246	\$3,713,254
<i>Recurrent Expenditures</i>	\$1,902,587	\$2,913,193	\$3,072,240	\$2,977,258
<i>Capital II Expenditures</i>	\$165,000	\$392,509	\$191,006	\$735,996
<i>Capital III Expenditures</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Transport Administration and Enforcement</i>	\$4,524,409	\$6,788,193	\$5,639,066	\$6,271,233
<i>Recurrent Expenditures</i>	\$3,730,784	\$4,118,061	\$5,124,072	\$5,485,995
<i>Capital II Expenditures</i>	\$716,154	\$1,835,889	\$514,994	\$785,238
<i>Capital III Expenditures</i>	\$77,472	\$834,243	\$0	\$0
TOTAL BUDGET CIELING	\$11,382,743	\$16,704,735	\$15,284,664	\$15,505,321
<i>Recurrent Expenditures</i>	\$9,781,932	\$12,252,699	\$14,153,664	\$13,434,168
<i>Capital II Expenditures</i>	\$990,510	\$2,799,127	\$1,131,000	\$2,069,088
<i>Capital III Expenditures</i>	\$610,301	\$1,652,910	\$0	\$2,065

The Ministry recognizes that budget constraints have hindered the ability to fully scale key initiatives. In response, we are adopting a comprehensive financial strategy to maximize resource allocation and pursue additional funding streams. Our plan includes:

1. Cost-saving measures:
Streamlining administrative processes and reducing operational inefficiencies, which will free up an estimated 5% of our recurrent budget for programmatic use.
2. Public-private partnerships:
We are actively engaging the private sector to co-fund sports facility, bus terminals upgrades. Our goal is to secure \$500,000 in private funding by Q4 2025.
3. Fee-based services:
The Ministry plans to implement tinting registration fees for vehicles generating an estimated \$1,000,000.00 in revenue by Q4 2025.
4. Long-term projections:
We anticipate a 15% increase in capital investments through external grants and partnerships by 2026. This includes targeted outreach to international donors.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Transport has made significant strides in enhancing services across its Departments. Our commitment to improving the lives of Belizeans through youth development, sports, and efficient transportation systems remains unwavering. However, our progress has been hampered by budgetary constraints and insufficient technical staffing, which have limited our ability to fully implement our programs and initiatives.

The analysis of our financial allocations reveals that a substantial portion of our budget is consumed by recurrent expenditures, leaving limited funds for programmatic work. This financial limitation necessitates a strategic approach to maximize the impact of available resources while seeking additional funding sources. Furthermore, the shortage of skilled technical staff has hindered our capacity to implement and sustain key projects, particularly in areas requiring specialized expertise.

Conclusion

The Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Transport stands at a critical juncture, where targeted strategic investments and comprehensive reforms are essential to maximizing our impact. To achieve our objectives, it is imperative that we address budgetary constraints and strengthen our technical capacity, enabling us to fully realize our commitment to enhancing the well-being of all Belizeans. By prioritizing sustainable practices, embracing technological advancements, and rigorously implementing effective policies, we are laying the groundwork for transformative change.

Our forward-looking approach will not only improve service delivery but will also ensure long-term resilience and sustainability across all sectors under our purview. With a concerted focus on innovation, collaboration, and strategic resource management, we are well-positioned to navigate the challenges ahead. By harnessing our collective efforts and maintaining a steadfast commitment to strategic planning, the Ministry will drive the progress necessary to build a more inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous Belize.

Recommendations

Strategic Budget Allocation and Additional Funding

1. **Increase Programmatic Funding:** Reallocate funds to ensure a higher percentage is dedicated to programmatic work, reducing the proportion spent on recurrent expenditures.
2. **Seek External Funding:** Actively pursue grants and partnerships with international organizations and private sector entities to supplement the Ministry's budget. This will enhance our ability to execute critical projects and initiatives.
3. **Efficient Resource Management:** Implement cost-saving measures and optimize resource utilization across all departments to stretch the impact of every dollar spent.
4. **Enhancement of Technical Capacity: Recruitment of Technical Staff:** Prioritize the hiring of skilled professionals in key areas such as digitalization, transport management, and youth program development, and data collection/research, monitoring and evaluation. This will improve our capacity to deliver high-quality services and drive innovation.
5. **Capacity Building and Training:** Invest in continuous professional development for existing staff to equip them with the latest skills and knowledge. This includes specialized training in emerging technologies and best practices in youth and sports management.
6. **Internship and Fellowship Programs:** Establish programs to attract young professionals and graduates to the Ministry, providing them with practical experience and fostering a pipeline of future talent.
7. **Policy and Legislative Reforms: Introduce, Update Legislative Framework:** Accelerate the revision and updating of key policies and legislation, such as youth bill, youth policy, the Transport Act and the Sports Council legislation, to align with contemporary needs and international standards.

Strengthen Policy Implementation: Ensure effective implementation of revised policies through robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This will enhance accountability and ensure that reforms translate into tangible benefits for the public.

8. **Digitization and Technological Advancements: Expand Digital Solutions:** Continue to invest in digital platforms for service delivery, including online registration and licensing systems. This will improve efficiency, reduce wait times, and enhance user experience.

Data-Driven Decision Making: Implement real-time data analytics and automated enforcement technologies to enhance operational efficiency and inform strategic decisions. This will support proactive management and improve service outcomes.

Infrastructure Development and Maintenance

9. Upgrade Sporting Facilities: Prioritize the renovation and maintenance of key sports facilities to improve conditions for athletes and increase revenue generation potential.
10. Sustainable Transport Infrastructure: Expand the electric bus fleet and develop necessary infrastructure, such as charging stations, to support sustainable transportation solutions across Belize.

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