



PR#150-25

## PRESS RELEASE

### GOB Achieves the Delivery of Milestone 4 Under the Belize Blue Bonds Program

Belmopan, August 20, 2025.

In November 2024, the Government of Belize, through its Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit, submitted the required documentation to the Belize Blue Investment Company Limited (BIC) to complete *Milestone 4*, one of the key conservation targets under the Conservation Funding Agreement (CFA) of the Belize Blue Bonds Program.

Milestone 4 required that, by the third year of the Agreement, 25% of Belize’s ocean territory be designated as Biodiversity Protection Zones (BPZs). To meet this target, the Government proposed 1,669.64 km<sup>2</sup>, or 5%, of new Medium Protection Zones, bringing the total protected ocean area to 8,360.1 km<sup>2</sup>, or 25.05%.

Following BIC’s review and assessment, Belize officially achieved Milestone 4, marking a major milestone in the country’s journey toward ocean sustainability and long-term marine conservation.

These newly designated zones were identified through an inclusive, science-based marine spatial planning process led by the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI), with support from the Belize Fisheries Department and other agencies. Consultations were held nationwide to engage and inform stakeholders about the areas of protection.

The new zones were legally established under SI Nos. 132, 133, 134, and 135 of 2024, available on the Belize Fisheries Department’s official legislation library: <https://fisheries.gov.bz/download-category/legislation/>

Ocean Space Protected		
New Areas of Protection established under Milestone 4)	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	%
Lighthouse Reef General Use I	507.45	1.52
Lighthouse Reef General Use II	720.56	2.16
Glover’s Reef General Use Zone (Expansion)	261.65	0.78
Bacalar Chico General Use Zone (Expansion)	179.99	0.54
<b>Milestone 4 Protection Total</b>	<b>1,669.64</b>	<b>5</b>
Milestone 1 Protection Total	6,690.46	20.05
<b>Total Ocean Space Protected (to date)</b>	<b>8,360.1</b>	<b>25.05</b>

These Medium Protection Zones allow for limited, well-managed use, ensuring that marine ecosystems remain healthy while supporting the livelihoods of coastal communities. The protection of key habitats, such as reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds, enhances fisheries productivity, strengthens coastal resilience, and preserves biodiversity, delivering long-term benefits to both nature and the people of Belize.

The Government, through the Blue Bond and Finance Permanence Unit, remains committed to working with CZMAI and other partners to finalize Belize's Sustainable Ocean Plan and deliver the remaining conservation goals under the Blue Bonds Program, securing a thriving, sustainable blue economy for current and future generations.

## **Ends**

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