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PRESS RELEASE

Government of Belize Takes Early Action Ahead of Sargassum Season

Belmopan, January 21, 2026.

As the Caribbean continues to experience increased sargassum activity, the Government of Belize is taking early, proactive steps to prepare for the 2026 season through the National Sargassum Task Force (STF). Co-chaired by the Ministry of Tourism, Youth, Sports, and Diaspora Relations, and the Ministry of Blue Economy and Marine Conservation, the STF is leading a coordinated national response to manage the continued impacts of sargassum in the five priority coastal destinations: San Pedro, Caye Caulker, Seine Bight, Hopkins, and Placencia.

To ensure operational readiness, the STF, along with municipal governments and local communities, has remained actively engaged in response activities. In support of these ongoing efforts, a Barber Beach Rake is being acquired to strengthen national shoreline management capacity. Additionally, funding has been provided for replacement parts for the Placencia Village Council's beach rake, ensuring the continued functionality of existing equipment already being utilized on the ground.

To further strengthen national preparedness and identify a scalable long-term solution, the Government has initiated a project scoping assessment to evaluate sargassum management in Caye Caulker and San Pedro. This assessment will review existing infrastructure, identify suitable disposal and processing sites, and enhance logistics through more efficient transportation. It will also develop a financial and operational model to examine circular economy technologies and define a phased implementation plan that addresses regulatory requirements and investment frameworks.

The STF is utilizing the Sargassum Monitoring (SAMTool) platform to

support evidence-based decision-making. The satellite-based tool provides near-real-time detection of sargassum mats, short-term drift forecasts, and statistical analyses, allowing national authorities to anticipate landings, prioritize response areas, and better coordinate on-the-ground operations. The use of the SAMTool supports Belize's ability to transition from reactive response to proactive management by informing planning, deployment of resources, and inter-agency coordination.

To strengthen operational capacity, the STF has procured specialized equipment intended to support nearshore and shoreline sargassum management, which includes a Weedoo TC-3014 workboat, a compact, highly maneuverable vessel specifically engineered for shallow-water sargassum and aquatic vegetation removal. The workboat has a highway-ready trailer, enabling efficient transport and deployment across destinations. Additional assets include the DESMI Tri-turtle, a specialized, stainless-steel, remotely controlled floating unit designed for the continuous removal of sargassum from the shallow, coastal waters without sand.

While equipment availability currently supports individual pilot operations, the STF emphasizes that full-scale deployment across all five destinations will roll out progressively as additional machinery and support systems come online. Lessons learned during site-specific deployment, particularly in San Pedro, will inform operational adjustments and guide national expansion.

Belize continues to experience significant sargassum impacts consistent with regional trends across the Caribbean. The STF underscores that while sargassum influxes cannot be prevented, their impacts can be minimized through proactive planning, sustained interagency coordination, and shared responsibility among government partners, municipal authorities, tourism stakeholders, and coastal communities.

The National Sargassum Task Force remains committed to advancing short-to long-term, sustainable solutions to manage sargassum and safeguard the resilience of Belize's coastal and tourism sectors. Further updates will be provided as the 2026 season progresses and additional equipment becomes operational.

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