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PRESS RELEASE

GOB and CARICOM Development Fund Launch Project to Strengthen Article 164 Industries

Belmopan, August 26, 2026.

The Government of Belize, through the Directorate General for Foreign Trade (DGFT) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, in coordination with the CARICOM Development Fund (CDF), has launched a new project to strengthen the competitiveness, climate resilience, and inclusiveness of selected Article 164 industries in Belize.

Supported through a CDF grant, the 36-month project, “Strengthening Climate-Resilient and Inclusive Value Chains in Article 164 Industries through ESG-Driven Research, Capacity Building and Policy Reform,” will be implemented from September 2026 to August 2029.

The initiative forms part of a wider CARICOM effort to strengthen industries benefitting from Article 164. Article 164 provides temporary protection for selected industries in CARICOM’s Less Developed Countries to support domestic production and industrial development. The regional initiative complements this protection by providing practical support to help industries improve their competitiveness, resilience, and sustainability.

Belize is serving as the pilot country for this initiative, putting the regional programme into practical action at the national level. In Belize, the project will focus on three priority areas: furniture, animal feed, and turmeric. These areas were identified through regional and national consultations, engagement with Article 164 firms, and analysis of the challenges and opportunities facing the sectors.

The project will provide practical support in areas including industry research, policy development, business and technical capacity building, export readiness, climate resilience, sustainable practices, and value chain development. The aim is to help businesses and industry stakeholders better understand and address the challenges affecting their growth and competitiveness.

The project was formally launched through a Stakeholder and Ministry Kick-Off Session, which brought together representatives from Government ministries and agencies, technical institutions, industry representatives, and other partners. The session provided an opportunity to establish a shared understanding of the project, discuss roles and responsibilities, and identify the information, expertise, and industry perspectives needed to support implementation.

The session featured welcome remarks from Mr. Kyron Barker, the Acting Regional Director of the CARICOM Development Fund, and H.E. Oscar Arnold, the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. The project overview and implementation approach were presented by Janina Choj, Project Lead and Trade Economist responsible for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

Stakeholder collaboration will remain an important part of the project throughout its implementation, including through consultations, information and data sharing, technical input, review of project outputs, monitoring, and identification of challenges and lessons learned.

Through this partnership, the Government of Belize and the CARICOM Development Fund aim to support stronger, more competitive, climate-resilient, sustainable, and inclusive Article 164 industries, while generating lessons that can contribute to the wider CARICOM regional effort.

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