



# **ATTORNEY GENERAL'S MINISTRY**

## **ANNUAL TECHNICAL REPORT**

**2023/24**

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## Message from the Attorney General



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**Attorney General and**  
**Minister of Legal Affairs**



**Elisa N. Montalvo (Ms.)**  
**Solicitor General**

The duty of our Team at the Attorney General’s Ministry is to give legal advice to the Government of Belize and to represent it in all legal matters. Our team is headed by the Attorney General who is assisted by the Solicitor General.

The Attorney General’s Ministry has five units: (1) The Litigation Unit which handles all government litigation, (2) The Legislative Drafting Unit which drafts all legislative instruments enacted by the National Assembly or made by the Executive, (3) The Legal Advice Unit which provides legal advice to the Executive, (4) The Law Revision Unit which is responsible to revise all laws to make them current and (5) The International Legal Affairs Unit which handles all

mutual legal assistance offered to foreign states. These Units are all run by Crown Counsel who are trained attorneys-at-law dedicated to the public service and the business of governance.

The Attorney General's Ministry also manages the Vital Statistics Unit, the Belize Intellectual Property Office and the Legal Advice and Service Center.

Our Team provides the bedrock support for the rule of law in government and the country, and it takes great pride in the work performed in the public service and we aspire to offer the best professional service to the government and people of Belize. We aspire to embrace technology and innovation to make our work and the service rendered more efficient and transparent.

## List of Abbreviations

AGM	Attorney General’s Ministry
BELIPO	Belize Intellectual Property Office
CRVS	Civil Registry for Vital Statistics
DPP	Director of Public Prosecutions
GOB	Government of Belize
ILA	International Legal Affairs Unit
JLSC	Judicial and Legal Services Commission
LRU	Law Revision Unit
LASC	Legal Advice and Service Center
LAU	Legal Advice Unit
LDU	Legislative Drafting Unit
LU	Litigation Unit
MFA	Ministry responsible for foreign affairs
MLA	Mutual Legal Assistance
MOF	Ministry responsible for finance
MPS	Ministry responsible for the public service
PSR	Public Service Regulations
VSU	Vital Statistics Unit
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Office

## Executive Summary

The Attorney General's Ministry (AGM) is the fulcrum of the government service functioning as the government's law firm giving legal advice, guidance and providing legal representation in all civil matters by and against the Government of Belize (GOB). It is also responsible for the drafting and revision of subsidiary and substantive legislation.

Additionally, the office of the Attorney General is the nominal head of the judiciary under whose ministry this other branch of government falls. In addition to its main functions, the AGM has administrative oversight of the Vital Statistics Unit, the Belize Intellectual Property Office and the Legal Advice and Service Centre.

This Report highlights the AGM's accomplishments, challenges and plans for the future keeping in perspective its mission to provide a fair and accessible justice system to the GOB and the people of Belize.

## Introduction

The Belize Constitution designates the Office of the Attorney General as the Office responsible for the administration of legal affairs in Belize. As Head of that Office, the Attorney General is the principal legal adviser to the government and is assisted by Crown Counsel who are government officers acting under the direction and control of the Attorney General.

Together, the Attorney General, her legal staff and support staff form the Attorney General's Ministry and Ministry of Legal Affairs ("the AGM").

The AGM comprises the following five units—

- (a)* the Litigation Unit (LU);
- (b)* the Legislative Drafting Unit (LDU);
- (c)* the Legal Advice Unit(LAU);
- (d)* the Law Revision Unit (LRU); and
- (e)* the International Legal Affairs Unit (ILA),

and Offices—

- (a)* the Vital Statistics Unit;
- (b)* the Belize Intellectual Property Office;
- (c)* the Legal Advice and Service Centre.

The Litigation (LU) is a critical Unit of the AGM responsible for representing the GOB in all civil legal proceedings for or against it and which are required to be made in the name of the Attorney General. The LU is charged with a heavy mandate of proper representation which requires the ability to juggle heavy workloads with tight schedules. Striking that delicate balance

requires skill, patience and the ability to multi-task, among other qualities. The LU is staffed with a vibrant team of young and enthusiastic Crown Counsel.

The Legislative Drafting Unit (LDU) is the Unit responsible for preparing legislative instruments enacted by the National Assembly or made by the Executive. The translation of policy into law is a vital part of promoting good governance and the rule of law in society. Properly managed and executed, the legislative drafting process builds public confidence in the legal system; makes institutions and institutional frameworks more efficient and transparent. It is a process which poses various challenges for those involved, from formulating policy and issuing the drafting instructions, to the actual drafting of the legislation. The Unit works closely with client Ministries to translate policy into clear, effective and readable law. Our role will often begin when draft legislation is first being considered and we remain involved throughout the parliamentary process. The LDU is staffed with a cadre of skilled, brilliant and astute drafters.

The Legal Advice Unit (LAU) provides legal advice to the Executive. It was established in January 2021 in response to the Government of Belize's demands for legal advice on a wide range of legal matters. The Unit's mandate is to provide independent legal advice to the Government of Belize. The Unit receives instructions for legal advice directly through the Attorney General, Solicitor General, Chief Executive Officers and other Heads of Department. The Unit also liaises with other ministries and Government departments to confirm instructions and to organize the sharing of information relevant to a particular matter. The LAU is staffed with two young, savvy and brilliant Crown Counsel who are passionate about the law.

The Law Revision Unit (LRU) is responsible for the revision of subsidiary and substantive laws, to ensure all laws are updated. This unit's mandate is to produce updated laws. The 2020 Revised Edition of the Substantive Laws was completed in 2022. The 2020 Revised Edition of the



Subsidiary Laws was completed in 2023. The AGM is undertaking steps to revise both the substantive and subsidiary laws to January 2024. The Unit is headed by the Law Revision Commissioner who is also the Solicitor General and supported by a talented Law Revision Officer and her extraordinary support staff.

The International Legal Affairs Unit (ILA) is responsible for all mutual legal assistance offered to foreign states. The ILAU is tasked to advise the GOB and associated agencies on legal matters that have public and private international law components. The ILAU is staffed with a dedicated team and is led by an extraordinary Senior Crown Counsel.

The AGM is also responsible for the oversight and management of three other offices, namely, the Vital Statistics Unit (VSU), the Belize Intellectual Property Office (BELIPO) and the Legal Advice and Service Center (LASC).

The VSU is governed by the Registration of Births and Deaths Act<sup>1</sup> and is the registry of births, deaths, marriages and other vital statistics within Belize. The main branch is located in Belize City with an additional seven (7) outpost branches located throughout the districts. The head of the VSU is the Registrar who is currently the Solicitor General by virtue of a legislative designation under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act<sup>2</sup>. The Registrar is supported by a Deputy Registrar and as Assistant Registrar, both stellar women in the performance of their duties. These women are further supported by a dedicated and zealous team of members who go above and beyond the call of duty to serve the people and country of Belize.

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<sup>1</sup> CAP 157 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, R.E. 2020.

<sup>2</sup> *supra*.

The BELIPO is the National Intellectual Property Registry for Belize. The Office administers the intellectual property legislation of Belize; advises the GOB on intellectual property matters and promotes knowledge of intellectual property law in Belize. The Office is led by a young and vibrant Deputy Registrar.

The Legal Advice and Service Center (LASC) is a legal aid service provided to the people of Belize in an aim to provide access to justice to the poor and indigent and those who cannot afford private legal services on account of its high costs and their financial standing. The fees charged by the LASC are substantially below what would be charged in private practice and are sometimes waived for the poor and indigent. The LASC has two main offices, the main one being in Belize City and a second in the Orange Walk District. The Center is staffed with a team of enthusiastic Crown Counsel.

Our Team takes great pride in the work performed in the public service and aspires to offer the best professional service to the government and people of Belize. We aspire to embrace technology and innovation to make our work and the service rendered more efficient and transparent.

The AGM also offers administrative support to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). Notwithstanding the administrative support received, the Office of DPP is an independent office enjoying constitutional protection, its own budget and Crown Counsel and staff who are under the direction and control of the DPP.

## Mission and Vision Statement

### **Mission**

Our mission is to provide a fair and accessible justice system to the GOB and the people of Belize.

We look forward to contributing to the sustainable development of the nation and to implemental legal and structural reforms to enhance our democratic governance.

### **Vision**

To provide exemplary legal services to the Government and people of Belize.

### **Purpose**

To provide legal services to the Government and people of Belize as the Government's principal legal adviser.

## Achievements by Office

### Key achievements of the Attorney General's Ministry:

- undertaken the drafting of a new Magistrates' Court Bill;
- enacted a new and improved Extradition Act to simplify and expedite the procedure for extraditions;
- enacted legislation for the civil recovery of the proceeds of unlawful conduct which seeks to complement the Money Laundering and Terrorism (Prevention) Act;
- enacted several legislative amendments to the Money Laundering and Terrorism (Prevention) Act in an aim to satisfy the requirements of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) with respect to the laws governing national anti-money laundering, combatting the financing of terrorism and combating proliferation financing;
- amended the Families and Children Act to clarify the obligation of a spouse to maintain a non-biological child of a marriage;
- proposed amendments to the Registration of Births and Deaths Act–
  - to update the legislation and provide the mechanisms for the new CRVS;
  - to provide for a sitting Registrar of births and deaths;
  - to regularize processes;
  - to provide harsher penalties for breaches of provisions under the law;
  - to address gaps in the law;
- In an aim to promote mental health and wellness, AGM established an inhouse gym for use by the AGM membership.

## Attorney General's Ministry Reports by Unit

### The Litigation Unit

Litigation Yearly Report 2023-2024				
	No. of New Matters	No. of Settled Matters	No. of Concluded Matters	Total No. of Active Matters
HIGH COURT	94	5	27	138
COURT OF APPEAL	14	0	1	33
MAGISTRATE COURT	2	0	0	2
CCJ	2	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>175</b>
Notice of Intention	90			
1 legal assistant gained in March 2023				
1 legal assistant lost September 2023				
1 legal assistant on study leave				
<b>Total legal Assistants</b>	<b>3</b>			

## The Legislative Drafting Unit

For the period April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, the LDU undertook the following legislative work

Vital Statistics Unit Yearly Report (excerpt)	
Substantive Legislation drafted (Draft Bills)	57
Substantive Legislation passed (Acts)	47
Subsidiary legislation drafted (Draft Statutory Instruments)	161
Subsidiary legislation passed (Statutory Instruments (SIs))	161
Gazette Publications (Notices, etc)	46
<b>Other work</b>	
Trainings and seminars (virtual and physical)	10+
Committees of the National Assembly (all committees)	innumerable
Meetings	innumerable
Legal Advice (oral and written)	10+
<b>Some seminal pieces of legislation passed</b>	
Non-Profit Organisations Act, 2023 (No. 14 of 2023)	
Legal Aid Act, 2023 (No. 25 of 2023)	
Money Laundering and Terrorism (Prevention) (Amendment) Act, 2023 (No. 28 of 2023)	
Insurance Act, 2023 (No. 30 of 2023)	
Extradition Act, 2023 (No. 31 of 2023)	
Civil Asset Recovery and Unexplained Wealth Act, 2023 (No. 32 of 2023)	
Referendum (Amendment) Act, 2023	
National Women's Commission Act, 2024 (No. 1 of 2024)	
Families and Children (Amendment) Act, 2024 (No. 6 of 2024)	

## The Legal Advice Unit

For the period April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, the LAU undertook the following work

Legal Advice Unit Yearly Report 2023-2024			
Requests for legal advice			95
Ministries serviced			18
<b>Ministries with highest demand</b>	MOF		27
	MFA		8
	AGM		8
<b>Tribunals/Hearings</b>			
Labour Complaint Tribunal Matters			3 (2 successful; 1 withdrawn)
Public Services Commission Matter			1 (successful)
<b>Non-Ministerial Bodies Serviced</b>			
Financial Services Commission			2
National Assembly			2
Judicial and Legal Services Commission			3
<b>Membership on Committees</b>			
BIBCAP- Belize Investment and Business Climate Action Plan			
Blue Bonds Committee			
Maya Land Tenure Policy Committee			
Procurement Committee (CITO)			
GI3 Task Force			
Promotion Committee (SSC)			

## The International Legal Affairs Unit

Number of MLA Request from 30 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Year	MLA Requests	Successfully Executed
<b>1 April 2023</b>	29	27
<b>31 March 2024</b>	10	8

Number of Legal Opinions from 2023-2024

Year	# of Legal Opinions
<b>1 April 2023</b>	5
<b>31 March 2024</b>	5

**Bilateral Agreements**

Year	# of Bilateral Agreements
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<b>1 April 2023</b>	5
<b>31 March 2024</b>	2

**Multilateral Agreements**

<b>Year</b>	<b># of Multilateral Agreements</b>
<b>1 April 2023</b>	1
<b>31 March 2024</b>	0

**Extradition**

<b>Year</b>	<b>#of Extraditions</b>
<b>1 April 2023</b>	1
<b>31 March 2024</b>	2

**Training**

- Training in Trafficking in Persons (**November 2023**)
- Workshop on the implementation of the Civil Asset Recovery Act (**November 2023**)
- Workshop on Human Rights and Rule of Law in combatting Crime and Violence (**January 2024**)
- Training National Risk Management of Tax Crimes Modules (**May 6-7, 2024**)

**Other relevant information**

- Drafted responses for the Technical Compliance Questionnaire for the Caribbean Financial Task Force (**June 2023**)
- Drafted Responses for the Effectiveness Submission for the Caribbean Financial Task Force (**August 2023**)
- Drafted responses for the questionnaire under Mechanism to implement the Inter- American Convention against Corruption (**February 2024**)
- Participated and Negotiated in the 1<sup>st</sup> Round of trade Negotiations (**December2023**) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of Trade Negotiations (**April 2024**)

*Belize Intellectual Property Office has:*

- completed Digitalization Project



- joined Global Brands Database which provides access to the collections of international trademarks under the Madrid System;
- joined TM View which is a free online tool which allows any internet user to search in a single place for trademarks from the national register of all participating offices;
- completed the Upgrade of the Data Entry System to IPAS 4;
- conducted quarterly Public Awareness Activities;
- engaged staff in capacity building trainings and workshops;
- re-activated the Intellectual Property Task Force which is a cross-sectorial committee that deals with IP issues; it is a sub-committee of the Trade Technical Team of the Ministry of Trade and was established to provide technical support on matters specific to IP and included a core committee of members from relevant Ministries and Departments of Government; and
- created a Patent Unit with one Patent Officer

*Vital Statistics Unit has:*

- received equipment from the Korean Government to assist it in its daily operations;
- upgraded equipment to accord with the intended new CRVS;
- ongoing training of personnel;
- proposed a restructuring of the VSU to improve efficiency of service delivery;
- been actively engaged with the consultant in the developing of the new CRVS; and
- engaged temporary staff to assist in the digitizing of records to populate the new CRVS.

**Registrations, certificates, etc-**

- **Number of New Births Registered - April 2023 – March 2024**  
7,983 Births were registered (inclusively)

- **Number of Birth Certificate issued - April 2023 – March 2024**  
**18, 057 Birth Certificates were issued**
- **Number of Death Registration - April 2023 – March 2024**  
**1,706 Deaths where registered (inclusively)**
- **Number of Death Certificates issued - April 2023 – March 2024**  
**7, 530 Death Certificates were issued**
- **Number of Marriages Filed April 2023 – March 2024**  
**1,939 Marriages were filed**
- **Number of Marriage Certificates Issued - April 2023 – March 2024**  
**6, 727 were issued**
- **Number of Adoption Filed April 2023 – March 2024**  
**18 Adoptions were Filed**
- **Number of Adoption Certificates Issued**  
**76 Adoption certificates were issued**
- **Number of None- Marriage April 2023 – March 2024**  
**110 None-Marriages were processed**
- **Number of Deed Polls Filed April 2023 – March 2024**  
**514 Deed Polls were processed**
- **Number of Registrar Certificates Issued April 2023 – March 2024**  
**989 Registrars Certificates were processed**
- **Number of Mobile Clinics – April 2023 – March 2024**

**10 Birth Registration Mobile Clinics were conducted**

**May 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> 2023 – Yemerie Grove, Toledo District**  
**June 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023 - Santa Cruz Village, Stann Creek District**  
**August 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> – San Ignacio Town, Cayo District**  
**October 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> – Belmopan City, Cayo District**  
**November 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> – Orange Walk Town, Orange Walk District**  
**November 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> – Independence Village, Stann Creek District**  
**January 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> – San Ignacio Town, Cayo District**  
**January 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> – San Roman Village, Corozal District**  
**March 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> – Benque Viejo del Carmen Town, Cayo District**  
**April 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> – Independence Village, Stann Creek District**

### Legal Advice and Services Centre:

	Belize Legal Advice and Services Centre Yearly Report 2023/2024			
	No. of New Matters	No. of Active Matters	No. of Concluded Matters	No. of Settled Matters
Civil Matter High Court	18	6	12	
Civil Matter Magistrates Court	11	4	7	
Estate Matters	45	30	15	
Criminal Matter Magistrates Court	6	2	4	1
Family Matters	116	54	62	1
Criminal Matters High Court	25	16	9	
Court of Appeal	8	1	7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>116</b>	

The 116 family matters represent family matters in the Family Court and High Court including divorce.

The Criminal High Court matters include appeals, bail, murder and sexual offences.

The 15 concluded estate matters are mostly petitions for grants of administration with a few petitions for grants of probate.

The 62 concluded family matters include divorces, adoptions, maintenance, custody, occupation and protection orders, domestic violence matters and legal separations. The demand for divorce has always been high hence the high number of family matters.

The estimated rate of success is 70 percent. The areas of practice include practice in all courts in Belize.

### The Judiciary has:

- recruited two judicial assistants to support the work of the judges;
- increased support staff to support the work of the judiciary;

- digitization of the courts continues and to date, 60% of the cases in vault have been digitized;
- secured FTR equipment from the PACE Justice project as well as ICT to modernize the court;
- understudied the court system in Antigua and Barbuda to observe the modernization of the court;
- attended a conference in the 1<sup>st</sup> week of September 2023 to assist with the training of judges, prosecutors, defence attorneys to address the backlog of cases and to further assist in the reforms of the criminal sector;
- undertaken refurbishing of the High Court on Treasury Lane;
- established a Criminal Justice Board which will
  - adapt the Caribbean Court of Justice Academy for Law Needham's Point Declaration on Criminal Justice Reform;
  - look at the factors that are creating the backlogs in the criminal justice system and create solutions to reduce the backlogs or even eliminate them, including legislation, training programs and technological improvements;
- established the Civil Procedure Rules Revision Committee to review the current Civil Procedure Rules and recommend them to the Chief Justice and Rules Revision Committee;
- established the Judicial Education Institute Committee to implement continuous legal education programs, training and conferences for Judges, magistrates, judicial staff, attorneys at law and other stakeholders in the justice system and to provide assessments on what training and topics are most needed;

- established the Judicial Ethics Revision Committee to review the Senior Courts of Belize Code of Judicial Conduct and Etiquette and make recommendations to the Chief Justice;
- established the National Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee to implement some of the recommendations made in the CCJ Academy for Law Needham's Point Declaration on Criminal Justice Reform; and
- established the Sentencing Guidelines Committee to implement the recommendation in the CCJ Academy for Law Needham's Point Declaration as the first of its kind in Belize, to help reduce the uncertainty in criminal matters in the Magistrates' and High Courts and therefore help reduce the backlogs in the criminal justice system.

## Lessons Learnt

- Apart from its own administrative responsibilities, the AGM administratively supports the VSU, the BELIPO, the Office of the DPP, the General Registry of the High Court, the Family Court and the Magistrates Court. In so doing, the administrative duties of the AGM are very weighty. This is compounded by the fact that in many instances, the staff at the offices requiring the AGM support are either ill-equipped with administrative personnel or not equipped at all. Consequently, instead of providing support in the form of guidance, AGM administrative staff ends up carrying the administrative burden and weight of the respective offices.
- While the administrative responsibilities of the AGM fall on the Administrative Officers and their team from the various units, the AGM administrative staff bear the administrative burden of some of the responsibilities, including escalation of matters, sensitive matters,

and the AGM's general administrative matters. The role and functions of the JLSC, under the Constitution, are wider in scope than that of the commission in our neighbouring Caribbean islands. As such, the JLSC sees a lot of administrative work, the preparation of which falls within the remit of the desk of the Solicitor General.

- Additionally, considering the administrative load of the AGM, including the VSU, the BELIPO and the LASC, it is proposed that the offices which the AGM supports, namely, the Office of the DPP, the General Registry of the High Court, the Family Court and the Magistrates Court, hire competent and able administrative personnel to properly carry the load of the respective office, so that the AGM can properly do its job and only administratively support the respective offices instead of sometimes, doing their jobs.
- Additionally, the mistaken perspective of the public service that judicial and legal officers are public officers under the general public service has affected the ability of the AGM to fulfil its mandate and to properly address its internal issues of staffing and building a team of competence and skill.
- The judicial and legal services is made up of a specialized set of public officers who, while they work within the normal working hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and within the usual working days of Monday to Friday, are required, by the nature of their jobs, to put in extra hours, on multiple days, including the weekend with no additional compensation or incentives. However, the general public service, while they may also work outside of the normal working hours and days, are entitled to apply for overtime or time in lieu as compensation or an incentive for the extra hours of work they put in. This unequal treatment of the judicial and legal officers extends to increments and adjustments on the public services pay scale. As a consequence of the disparity in the treatment of officers within the public

service and officers within the judicial and legal services, the AGM successfully lobbied the JLSC to put forward a proposal for the creation of a new pay scale for judicial and legal officers.

- The discussions are ongoing and have been long drawn out on account of the misapprehension that judicial and legal officers should be treated like officers within the general public service, even though, it is evident that the treatment is nevertheless unequal.
- There remains the need to have greater collaboration and communication between MPS and the AGM and other ministries. Instead of seeing the AGM and other ministries as simply seeking to arbitrarily expand their personnel, the MPS senior officers need to be less antagonistic towards the other ministries and to respect the justification given by the respective ministries regarding their needs.
- There remains the need to bring specialized administrative staff that work within the legal Units of the AGM under the direction and control of the JLSC. This is required to address the issue of transferability of support staff within the general public service. The condition that support staff is transferrable has served to severely affect the productivity and effectiveness of a Unit which relies on specialized skill that a support staff develops while at the AGM and which is not useful to any other Ministry.
- The foregoing issue also pervades the BELIPO and the VSU since the specialized skill practising in intellectual property, for example, is of no use or value to any other Ministry, applications and procedures will be of no use to any other ministry and the expertise acquired in birth, death and marriage registration and identifying fraudulent registrations is of no use or value to any other Ministry except the VSU.

- For the AGM to achieve its vision to provide exemplary legal services to the Government and people of Belize, the AGM must remain resolute in its aim to maintain its offices and departments with competent, able, skilled and qualified staff.

## Future Priorities and Plans by Offices

### Attorney General's Ministry plans to:

- amend the Marriage Act to make better provisions for marriage officers, for their training and registration under the Act;
- enact a suite of legislation to govern alternative sentencing, plea discussions and plea agreements and rehabilitation of offenders in its aim to reform and improve the criminal justice system;
- amend the Registration of Births and Deaths Act to-
  - to update the legislation and provide the mechanisms for the new CRVS;
  - to provide for a sitting Registrar of births and deaths;
  - to regularize processes;
  - to provide harsher penalties for breaches of provisions under the law;
  - to address gaps in the law;
- restructure the Vital Statistics Unit post digitalization;
- propose an omnibus legislation which repeals the Family Courts Act, the Families and Children Act and the Married Persons (Protection) Act and to make better provisions for these institutions under one piece of legislation;



- improve the legal aid service to the public and to expand the avenue of services offered at legal aid;
- recruit additional experienced Crown Counsel within the Units of the AGM;
- continue to build capacity in AGM staff;
- establish a Criminal Justice Unit;
- establish a CARICOM Desk;
- establish an Information Technology Unit;
- continue the expansion of the library and its resources;
- continue to promote training and capacity building of its Crown Counsel;
- enact rules for applications under the Notaries Public Act;
- promote healthy lifestyle habits which include physiological, mental and emotional habits;
- create more team building opportunities;
- adopt policies that will help build a safer environment for AGM staff that is conducive to work and productivity; and
- develop mechanisms to show gratitude and appreciation for the hard work, dedication and commitment of the Ministry's team members.

[Belize Intellectual Property Office plans to:](#)

- revise the National IP Strategy and request Cabinet's approval;
- complete electronic filing;
- review and revise the Trademarks Act and the Copyright Act;
- communicate with WIPO to see how we can incorporate mediation in Opposition, Revocation and Invalidation Proceedings;

- conduct quarterly Public Awareness Activities;
- liaise with the Ministry of Education to get IP in schools using the strategy to be created by the Caripi Project;
- engage staff in capacity building trainings and workshops;
- review and consider acceding to The International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants ); and
- Conduct a new round of Consultation on GI Legislation.

Vital Statistics Unit plans to:

- restructure its organizational structure post digitalization;
- expand human resources and improve service delivery;
- conduct ongoing training of staff and personnel;
- finalize SOPs and other manuals;
- engage in general public education campaigns including in high schools; and
- expand registration of births and deaths services in rural communities by hosting monthly mobile registration clinics.

Legal Advice and Service Center plans to:

- expand its avenue of services to the public;
- deliver on its mandate to make legal aid readily available to persons of small or moderate economic means;
- expand its offices countrywide;
- hire experienced attorneys to complement its current cadre; and

- expand legal service to also include psychosocial services.

#### The Judiciary plans to:

- create posts for Criminal Masters;
- recruit employees in the positions of:
  - Chief Registrar;
  - Master;
  - Judicial Assistant;
  - Court Administrator
  - additional support staff;
- legislate for a pension scheme for judges;
- fully and completely digitalize the courts;
- acquire additional equipment for the technological advancement of the judiciary; and
- train staff generally and specifically in upgraded technology.

## Staffing Considerations

### Strengths

- committed management team which consistently goes over and beyond the call of duty to get the work of the AGM done;
- consistent senior management meetings and retreats to ensure leadership skills and mission of AGM is accomplished;
- forward thinking, solution-oriented management team;
- interest and support of management team for the training of legal and support staff;

- commitment of management team to-
  - provide necessary tools and equipment to ensure staff is properly equipped for work;
  - the health and safety of its employees;
  - support the ideas of staff that lend to the betterment of the work of the AGM and performance of its staff;
- enthusiastic and promising new recruits to the AGM's legal and support staff;
- increased attendance rate and productivity at work among support staff;
- consistent growth of the AGM; and
- open door policies to encourage access by staff to management team.

### Weaknesses

- transferability of support staff who develop specialized legal skills, critically affects legal units;
- administrative burden of the daily operations of the Ministry and the JLSC needs to be rerouted from the Solicitor General;
- continual and consistent upgrading/replacing of computers and other equipment, especially of legal staff;
- disconnect between the AGM and the MPS in supporting the work of the AGM and the judiciary; and
- delay in the delivery of work or services on account of the delay of Ministries to respond to requests of the AGM, be it for court preparation or administrative matters.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

**These include the following:**

- restructuring-
  - at the BELIPO, is required to accommodate the new changes post digitalization;
  - at the VSU, is required to accommodate the new changes that digitalization will bring;
- recruitment-
  - at the AGM, in both its legal and support units;
  - at the BELIPO, to support the expansion of the BELIPO on account of the Madrid System and to support the creation of a Patents Unit;
  - at the VSU, to support the reconfiguration of the administrative and support structure of the VSU after the digitalization process is completed;
- realignment of the administrative support of the legal units in the AGM under the judicial and legal services;
- enhancing remuneration packages for judicial and legal officers that allow for the government service to retain specialized legal skills and experience;
- ongoing training for legal and support staff;
- management training for management team; and
- creating an atmosphere of appreciation and gratitude to show appreciation for the dedication and hard work of the AGM team.

## Annex 1. Financial Considerations by Office for Financial Years 2023-2024

General Administration



### Government of Belize

## FUNDS CONTROL REPORT - Recurrent Expenditure for Fiscal Year 2025

Cost Centre	Item	Description	Approved	Supplement	Transfers	Adjusted Budget	Release	Encumbrance	Expense	Available	Reserved	Unspent
<b>31017</b>		<b>Attorney General - General Administration</b>										
	230	PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS	\$1,092,103	\$0	\$0	\$1,092,103	\$182,017	\$0	\$69,133	\$112,885	\$910,086	\$1,022,971
	231	TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	\$37,703	\$0	\$0	\$37,703	\$6,284	\$349	\$1,636	\$4,299	\$31,419	\$36,067
	340	MATERIAL AND SUPPLIES	\$120,024	\$0	\$0	\$120,024	\$20,004	\$4,266	\$12,209	\$3,529	\$100,020	\$107,815
	341	OPERATING COSTS	\$52,200	\$0	\$0	\$52,200	\$8,700	\$132	\$8,237	\$331	\$43,500	\$43,963
	342	MAINTENANCE COSTS	\$77,500	\$0	\$0	\$77,500	\$12,917	\$725	\$7,937	\$4,255	\$64,583	\$69,563
	343	TRAINING	\$18,000	\$0	\$0	\$18,000	\$3,000	\$0		\$3,000	\$15,000	\$18,000
	346	PUBLIC UTILITIES	\$84,000	\$0	\$0	\$84,000	\$14,000	\$500	\$13,432	\$68	\$70,000	\$70,568
	347	CONTRIBUTIONS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS	\$110,000	\$0	\$0	\$110,000	\$83,497	\$0	\$79,604	\$3,893	\$26,504	\$30,396
	348	CONTRACTS AND CONSULTANCY	\$553,176	\$0	\$0	\$553,176	\$92,196	\$0	\$88,031	\$4,165	\$460,980	\$465,145
	349	RENT AND LEASES	\$4,900	\$0	\$0	\$4,900	\$817	\$0		\$817	\$4,083	\$4,900
		<b>Total</b>		<b>\$2,149,607</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,149,607</b>	<b>\$423,431</b>	<b>\$5,971</b>	<b>\$280,218</b>	<b>\$137,242</b>	<b>\$1,726,176</b>



## Government of Belize

### FUNDS CONTROL REPORT - Recurrent Expenditure for Fiscal Year 2025

Cost Centre	Item	Description	Approved	Supplement	Transfers	Adjusted Budget	Release	Encumbrance	Expense	Available	Reserved	Unspent
<b>12128</b>		<b>Belize Intellectual Property Office (BELIPO)</b>										
	230	PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS	\$602,800	\$0	\$0	\$602,800	\$100,467	\$0	\$27,364	\$73,103	\$502,334	\$575,437
	231	TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	\$16,164	\$0	\$0	\$16,164	\$2,694	\$0	\$417	\$2,277	\$13,470	\$15,747
	340	MATERIAL AND SUPPLIES	\$59,844	\$0	\$0	\$59,844	\$9,974	\$9,194	\$454	\$326	\$49,870	\$59,390
	341	OPERATING COSTS	\$14,550	\$0	\$0	\$14,550	\$2,425	\$0	\$826	\$1,599	\$12,125	\$13,724
	342	MAINTENANCE COSTS	\$10,885	\$0	\$0	\$10,885	\$1,814	\$0	\$0	\$1,814	\$9,071	\$10,885
	346	PUBLIC UTILITIES	\$12,000	\$0	\$0	\$12,000	\$2,000	\$0	\$1,915	\$85	\$10,000	\$10,085
	349	RENT AND LEASES	\$2,100	\$0	\$0	\$2,100	\$350	\$0		\$350	\$1,750	\$2,100
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$718,344</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$718,344</b>	<b>\$119,724</b>	<b>\$9,194</b>	<b>\$30,977</b>	<b>\$79,553</b>	<b>\$598,620</b>	<b>\$687,367</b>



## Government of Belize

### FUNDS CONTROL REPORT - Recurrent Expenditure for Fiscal Year 2025

Cost Centre	Item	Description	Approved	Supplement	Transfers	Adjusted Budget	Release	Encumbrance	Expense	Available	Reserved	Unspent
<b>31031</b>		<b>Law Revision Unit</b>										
	230	PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS	\$1,119,782	\$0	\$0	\$1,119,782	\$186,630	\$0	\$73,562	\$113,069	\$933,151	\$1,046,220
	231	TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	\$47,336	\$0	\$0	\$47,336	\$7,889	\$0	\$2,100	\$5,789	\$39,447	\$45,236
	340	MATERIAL AND SUPPLIES	\$44,221	\$0	\$0	\$44,221	\$7,370	\$0	\$144	\$7,226	\$36,851	\$44,076
	341	OPERATING COSTS	\$4,200	\$0	\$0	\$4,200	\$700	\$0		\$700	\$3,500	\$4,200
	342	MAINTENANCE COSTS	\$12,750	\$0	\$0	\$12,750	\$2,125	\$0	\$490	\$1,635	\$10,625	\$12,260
	346	PUBLIC UTILITIES	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$6,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$754	\$246	\$5,000	\$5,246
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,234,289</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,234,289</b>	<b>\$205,715</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$77,050</b>	<b>\$128,665</b>	<b>\$1,028,574</b>	<b>\$1,157,239</b>





## Government of Belize

### FUNDS CONTROL REPORT - Recurrent Expenditure for Fiscal Year 2025

Cost Centre	Item	Description	Approved	Supplement	Transfers	Adjusted Budget	Release	Encumbrance	Expense	Available	Reserved	Unspent
<b>31058</b>		<b>Legal Services Unit</b>										
	230	PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS	\$1,596,992	\$0	\$0	\$1,596,992	\$266,165	\$0	\$109,400	\$156,766	\$1,330,827	\$1,487,593
	231	TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	\$85,998	\$0	\$0	\$85,998	\$14,333	\$0	\$3,932	\$10,401	\$71,665	\$82,066
	340	MATERIAL AND SUPPLIES	\$84,390	\$0	\$0	\$84,390	\$14,065	\$0	\$9,186	\$4,879	\$70,325	\$75,204
	341	OPERATING COSTS	\$24,225	\$0	\$0	\$24,225	\$4,038	\$0	\$1,735	\$2,302	\$20,188	\$22,490
	342	MAINTENANCE COSTS	\$13,825	\$0	\$0	\$13,825	\$2,304	\$40	\$2,005	\$259	\$11,521	\$11,820
	349	RENT AND LEASES	\$18,000	\$0	\$0	\$18,000	\$3,000	\$0		\$3,000	\$15,000	\$18,000
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,823,430</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,823,430</b>	<b>\$303,905</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>\$126,258</b>	<b>\$177,607</b>	<b>\$1,519,525</b>	<b>\$1,697,172</b>



## Government of Belize

### FUNDS CONTROL REPORT - Recurrent Expenditure for Fiscal Year 2025

Cost Centre	Item	Description	Approved	Supplement	Transfers	Adjusted Budget	Release	Encumbrance	Expense	Available	Reserved	Unspent
<b>32021</b>		<b>Vital Statistical Unit</b>										
	230	PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS	\$691,867	\$0	\$0	\$691,867	\$115,311	\$0	\$133,024	(\$17,713)	\$576,556	\$558,843
	231	TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	\$31,840	\$0	\$0	\$31,840	\$5,307	\$0	\$935	\$4,372	\$26,533	\$30,905
	340	MATERIAL AND SUPPLIES	\$138,476	\$0	\$0	\$138,476	\$23,079	\$7,477	\$1,758	\$13,845	\$115,397	\$136,718
	341	OPERATING COSTS	\$10,320	\$0	\$0	\$10,320	\$1,720	\$0	\$245	\$1,475	\$8,600	\$10,075
	342	MAINTENANCE COSTS	\$47,025	\$0	\$0	\$47,025	\$7,837	\$4,634	\$1,527	\$1,676	\$39,187	\$45,498
	346	PUBLIC UTILITIES	\$18,000	\$0	\$0	\$18,000	\$3,000	\$0	\$2,656	\$344	\$15,000	\$15,344
	349	RENT AND LEASES	\$4,500	\$0	\$0	\$4,500	\$750	\$0		\$750	\$3,750	\$4,500
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$942,028</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$942,028</b>	<b>\$157,005</b>	<b>\$12,111</b>	<b>\$140,145</b>	<b>\$4,749</b>	<b>\$785,023</b>	<b>\$801,883</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$7,677,832</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$7,677,832</b>	<b>\$1,344,802</b>	<b>\$29,287</b>	<b>\$661,256</b>	<b>\$654,260</b>	<b>\$6,333,030</b>	<b>\$7,016,576</b>



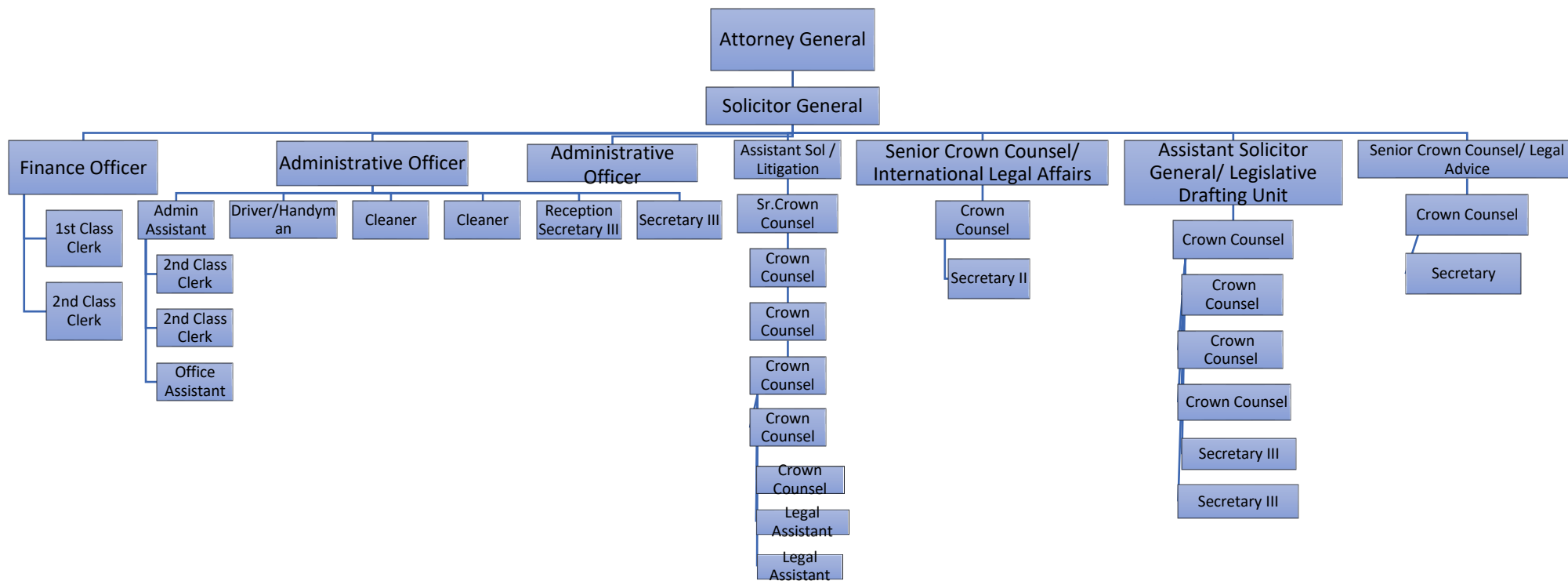
## Government of Belize

### FUNDS CONTROL REPORT - Recurrent Expenditure for Fiscal Year 2025

Cost Centre	Item	Description	Approved	Supplement	Transfers	Adjusted Budget	Release	Encumbrance	Expense	Available	Reserved	Unspent
<b>31028</b>		<b>Legal Advice and Service Centre</b>										
	230	PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS	\$642,125	\$0	\$0	\$642,125	\$107,021	\$0	\$900	\$106,121	\$535,104	\$641,225
	231	TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	\$79,344	\$0	\$0	\$79,344	\$13,224	\$0	\$1,211	\$12,013	\$66,120	\$78,133
	340	MATERIAL AND SUPPLIES	\$39,976	\$0	\$0	\$39,976	\$6,663	\$1,970	\$2,387	\$2,306	\$33,313	\$37,589
	341	OPERATING COSTS	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$2,500	\$0		\$2,500	\$12,500	\$15,000
	346	PUBLIC UTILITIES	\$13,290	\$0	\$0	\$13,290	\$2,215	\$0	\$2,110	\$105	\$11,075	\$11,180
	349	RENT AND LEASES	\$20,400	\$0	\$0	\$20,400	\$3,400	\$0	\$0	\$3,400	\$17,000	\$20,400
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$810,134</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$810,134</b>	<b>\$135,022</b>	<b>\$1,970</b>	<b>\$6,608</b>	<b>\$126,445</b>	<b>\$675,112</b>	<b>\$803,527</b>

# Annexes

## 1. Attorney General's Ministry Organizational Structure



## 2. List of Professional and Technical Staff

### **Senior Management**

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs:	Mr. Anthony Sylvestre
Solicitor General:	Ms. Elisa N. Montalvo
Administrative Officers:	Ms. Sherlet Thurton
	Ms. Olivia Cab
Finance Officer:	Ms. Roximae Williams

### **Litigation Unit**

Assistant Solicitor General:	Ms. Samantha Matute
Senior Litigator:	Mr. Jarvis Lou
Crown Counsel:	Mr. Israel Alpuche
	Ms. Imani Burgess
	Ms. Alea Gomez
	Mr. Stanley Grinage
Legal Assistants:	Mr. Giovanni Tillet
	Mr. Ronier Castillo

### **Legislative Drafting Unit**

Assistant Solicitor General:	Mr. Randall Sheppard
Crown Counsel:	Mr. Chris Banner
	Ms. Leandra Bodden -March
	Ms. Tori Lord-Thompson

### **Legal Advice Unit**

Crown Counsel: Ms. Alisha Garraway  
Ms. Jahina Dominguez

**International Legal Affairs**

Senior Crown Counsel: Ms. Stacy Martinez

**Registry Unit**

Administrative Officers: Ms. Sherlet Thurton  
Ms. Olivia Cab

Administrative Assistant: Mr. Luis Cocom

Second Class Clerk: Mr. Lionel Eck

Secretaries III: Ms. Karah Flores  
Ms. Jael Rivero

Office Assistant: Ms. Yoselyn Alvarenga

Cleaners: Ms. Corina Caal  
Mr. Edmond Thomas

Driver: Mr. Stephen Reneau

**Finance Unit**

Financial Officer: Ms. Roximae Williams

First Class Clerk: Ms. Chabelly Kotch

Second Class Clerk: Mr. Eustace Conoquie