

TC Document

I. Basic Information for TC

▪ Country/Region:	BELIZE
▪ TC Name:	Support migration initiatives in Belize
▪ TC Number:	BL-T1143
▪ Team Leader/Members:	Elias Gonzalez, Alison (SCL/MIG) Team Leader; Naslund-Hadley, Emma Ingrid (SCL/EDU) Alternate Team Leader; Adela Davalos (SCL/MIG); Bryant, Alexis (CID/CBL); Lunstedt Tapia, Christian (VPC/FMP); Sanmartin Baez, Alvaro Luis (LEG/SGO); Sobral De Elia, Mariana (SCL/MIG); Tapia Alba, Mauricio (VPS/ESG); Watson, Brodrick Raylando (VPC/FMP)
▪ Taxonomy:	Operational Support
▪ Operation Supported by the TC:	BL-J0002
▪ Date of TC Abstract authorization:	06 Oct 2021.
▪ Beneficiary:	Ministry of Education Culture Science and Technology (MoECST); Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration (MFA)
▪ Executing Agency and contact name:	Inter-American Development Bank
▪ Donors providing funding:	OC Strategic Development Program for Social Development(SOC)
▪ IDB Funding Requested:	US\$150,000.00
▪ Local counterpart funding, if any:	US\$0
▪ Disbursement period (which includes Execution period):	24 months
▪ Required start date:	January 2022
▪ Types of consultants:	Firms and individuals
▪ Prepared by Unit:	SCL/MIG-Migration Unit
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	SCL/SCL-Social Sector
▪ TC included in Country Strategy (y/n):	No
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	No
▪ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2010-2020:	Social inclusion and equality; Gender equality

II. Description of the Associated Loan/Guarantee

2.1 **Background.** Belize has received the largest foreign population in relation to its population, accounting to 15 percent of the total population, around 55,000 (UN 2019; IOM 2021). Looking to improve social and employment opportunities have driven immigrants from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras to Belize, turning the country into a host nation for its displaced neighbors (IOM 2013). The emigration of a large share of Creoles (Afro-Belizeans) and the inflow of Central American immigrants have changed Belize's ethnic composition. Mestizos have become the largest ethnic group, and Belize now has more native Spanish speakers than English or Creole speakers, despite English being the official language ([CIA, 2021](#)).

2.2 Compared to native families, migrant families are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and their education levels are lower ([Näslund-Hadley, E. et al., 2020](#)). This translates into educational and other integration challenges for migrant children and their families

in Belize. Migrant children face challenges of their own in integrating into their host country and face learning difficulties. Most migrant children in Belize are native Spanish speakers and only one-third are literate for their age. Furthermore, slightly over one-third speak English, but their literacy skills in the language are low ([Näslund-Hadley, E. et al., 2020](#)). School principals attribute language barriers as the top barrier to integration and learning. Some Belizean schools have made efforts to face these challenges by providing orientation or induction programs to newly arrived students and parents, welcome packages in Spanish and other languages, and a welcome tutor ([Näslund-Hadley, E. et al., 2020](#)). Despite these efforts, migrant children underperform their native peers. School attendance is already below the region's average in Belize, with attendance rates even lower for migrant students (83 vs. 93 percent) (SIB, 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic is likely exacerbating the challenges faced by migrant students and may increase dropout rates among migrant students as well as their ability to perform in school due to economic and other factors associated with the pandemic.

2.3 In October 2020, the Education Quality Improvement Program II (EQIP II – BL-L1030) was modified to 1) help primary and secondary schools experiencing learning challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and 2) integrate non-reimbursable resources from the Inter-American Development Bank's Grant Facility (GRF) to improve learning in diverse and multicultural environments in migrant recipient communities (BL-J0002). Additional resources to support the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (MoECST) in the evaluation of EQIP II, particularly on Belize's youth situation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and related school closures, were approved in 2021 (BL-T1130). This TC seeks to complement BL-T1130, focusing exclusively on understanding the situation of migrant students due to COVID-19-related school closures and restrictions.

2.4 In addition, acknowledging the contributions of migrants to Belize, and in support of these populations, the Government of Belize has been working on its migration policy to ensure that the incoming migrants could complement the Belizean labor force, expanding and tailoring existing vocational and training institutions to respond to the needs of the market, including training of migrants. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration (MFA) in collaboration with UN agencies is working on strengthening its capacity to provide services to migrants through the digitization of migration documents and the enhancement of asylum requests processing capabilities ([Belize Immigration, 2021](#)). However, the Ministry's capacities need to be further strengthened, particularly in digitalizing its processes, to be able to reach out to and provide for most of its vulnerable migrant population. In technical meetings with the IT Team of the MFA's Immigration Department,¹ different needs and challenges – including the harmonization of immigration systems, collaboration with other countries for background checks, mass regularization of immigrants, and streamlined

¹ These include the Nationality and Passports Department, the Department of Border Management and Immigration Services, and the Refugees Department.

application processes, among others – were identified for the effective provision of digital services to migrant and refugee populations.

- 2.5 Of the different challenges and needs identified, four were highlighted: First, a lack of statistical data collection, analysis, and processing capabilities. MFA officials regularly collect large amounts of information, but their limited knowledge in data analysis prevents them from using it to inform policy. Further, the Immigration Departments do not have data analytics personnel to support these processes. Second, limited experience and knowledge on how to maximize their digital immigration efforts to provide quality and streamlined services to the migrant population. The increased migration flows to some countries in the world, along with the COVID-19 pandemic, pushed countries such as Chile, Canada, and New Zealand to develop streamlined and user-friendly online migration services, which include best practices that can be shared with other migrant recipient countries around the world. Third, there is a large vulnerable segment of the population that is in irregular migratory condition and face two problems: 1) they are remotely located, and it is difficult for government to reach out to them and provide assistance, and 2) they believe that their migratory condition puts their permanency in the country at risk and are afraid to seek services or immigration officers' help.

III. Objectives and Justification of the TC

- 3.1 **Objectives.** The TC will increase government capacity to produce and analyze data related to migration in order to support project evaluation and decision making in Belize.
- 3.2 **Specific objectives.** The specific objectives are: (i) support the MFA, specifically in the digital transformation process of its migration services; and (ii) support the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (MoECST) in the evaluation of EQIP II (BL-L1030), specifically on the situation of migrant students in the wake of the COVID-19 related school closures.
- 3.3 **Strategic Alignment.** The TC is consistent with the Second Update to the Institutional Strategy (UIS) 2020-2023 (AB-3190-2) and is strategically aligned with the area of emphasis on technology adoption and innovation by supporting innovative migration systems through the use of technologies and data as well as through the measurement analysis of education quality which will strengthen the governance of the public education sector. It is also aligned with the UIS' development challenge of social exclusion and inequality and the area of emphasis on promoting gender equality, diversity and inclusion as it will target vulnerable migrant populations and will support their regularization. Further, it will also finance activities that aim to improve the quality of education services that are financed through EQIP II. In that sense, it is expected that this TC will contribute to improved quality of the services that will be provided to the most vulnerable part of the population.
- 3.4 The TC is also consistent with: (i) the Strategy on Social Policy for Equity and Productivity (GN-2588-4) as it is expected that the results will allow to support the

improvement of school quality in vulnerable, underserved communities; and (ii) the objectives of the Ordinary Capital Strategic Development Program for Social Development (GN-2819-1), particularly the second objective which includes strengthening public institutions' effort to become more effective and efficient in social programming.

- 3.5 The TC is also aligned with (i) the Skills Development Sector Framework Document (GN-3012-3), which promotes quality education, including a focus on the COVID-19 related impact on school systems, and the learning of migrant students; (ii) Belize's IDB Group Country Strategy Update 2020-2021 (GN-2746-3), which prioritizes improved access to quality education and institutional strengthening, as well as the IDB Country Strategy with Belize 2022-2025, which includes migration as a priority of dialogue areas with the government; and (iii) the Migration Action Framework (GN-2947-6) as it will generate knowledge that will potentially give migrants access to basic services as well as documents and justice, assist them with their integration, and help them build their social networks.

IV. Description of activities/components and budget

- 4.1 To achieve its objectives, the TC is structured around three components: (i) Strengthening of the Immigration Departments' institutional capacity; (ii) Evaluation of the Situation of Migrant and Refugee Students; and (iii) Dissemination of the findings. Diversity will be a crosscutting element throughout all components. To obtain as much representation of all populations affected by migration as possible, ethnic, language, and nationality diversity will be considered during design of activities.

- 4.2 **Component I: Strengthening of the Immigration Departments' institutional capacity (US\$80,000).** This TC will fund three subcomponents: a) capacity building in data analytics; b) capabilities and best practices assessment; and c) informational and awareness campaigns.

- a) Capacity building in data analytics. Activities will include online trainings on data analytics offered by certified educational institutions. These trainings will be complemented by in-person trainings based on the needs of MFA's Immigration Department.
- b) Capabilities and best practices assessment. Activities will include an assessment of Belize's capacity to provide migration services as well as gaps in data analysis and processing. The results from this assessment will inform the design of the in-person training under subcomponent (a). Also, an in-depth study on best practices worldwide on the implementation of digital migration systems will be carried out. This study will analyze best practices of online migration systems implemented in countries such as Chile, Colombia, Perú, New Zealand, and Canada, among others. The best practices assessment will be accompanied by a regional exchange with one of the countries analyzed to learn more about their online migration system, and the best practices and lessons learned implementing it.

c) *Informational and awareness campaigns.* Activities will include informational and awareness campaigns (videos, print, radio) to sensitize migration officers and populations on mechanisms available to regularize their status and generate increased trust between them. Also, it will include migration support workshops in remote communities to socialize migration services to complement the information and awareness campaigns.

4.3 The main results expected for this component are Immigration Department's technical teams trained and strengthened management and analysis of data, the identification of gaps, best practices and opportunities to strengthen Belize's migration policy, and enhanced communication mechanisms to facilitate access of vulnerable migrant communities to migration services.

4.4 **Component II: Evaluation of the Situation of Migrant and Refugee Students (US\$50,000).** Funds from the TC will finance a survey of the situation of migrant and refugee students at the primary, secondary and vocational levels. Research questions will include: How are migrant students and their families experiencing the disruptions of the pandemic? How are the school closures impacting migrant students learning? How are COVID-19 and related social distancing measures shaping migrant students' perceptions about the future? How is the mental wellbeing of migrant students? The survey questions will complement the survey carried out under BL-T1130 as well as the originally foreseen topics of EQIP II evaluation. The TC will collect survey data from all secondary and technical vocational schools in Belize to help answer the research questions.

4.5 Survey design will capitalize on the Näslund-Hadley et al. (2020) migration study in Belize that included the conduction of interviews and surveys in Spanish to migrant population. In addition to English and Spanish, the project team will explore the possibility of conducting surveys in different indigenous languages to ensure diversity and inclusion.

4.6 The survey will include a battery of instruments to be applied among primary and secondary migrant students, parents, and teachers. Due to the context of COVID-19 all instruments will be applied remotely and only one round is planned through different communication outlets: online surveys, telephone surveys and / or surveys by WhatsApp (or similar software). The instruments for parents, teachers, and students will include measurements of perceptions towards education, remote schooling, integration into school and communities, multicultural education, self-esteem, personality, identity, parental support, and information on aspects that may be worsening due to the pandemic such as "cyberbullying" and accessibility. Finally, the instruments will collect information on the characteristics of students, parents, and teachers (gender, age, ethnicity), as well as other information such as identifiers (e.g., student identification number) and information relevant to be able to locate respondents in the future if needed. The data collection and management will be conducted following the [IDB Data Privacy Policy](#).

4.7 The expected results for this component include an enhanced understanding of migrant students' situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the learning and integration challenges they face as well as recommendations to better serve this vulnerable population through the activities of EQIP II.

4.8 **Component III. Dissemination (US\$20,000).** Funds from the TC will finance the dissemination of activities and results carried out under the project. Specifically, the dissemination may include a workshop to socialize results with main stakeholders, as well as communication materials to highlight and document the project's progress with beneficiaries and government authorities.

4.9 **Budget.** The total cost of the TC is US\$150,000 and will be financed through a contribution from resources of the OC Strategic Development Program for Social Development (SOC).

Indicative Budget (US\$)

Activity/Component	Description	IDB/Fund Funding	Total Funding
Component I. Strengthening of the Immigration Departments' institutional capacity	Firms and individual consultants	US\$80.000	US\$80.000
Component II. Evaluation of the Situation of Migrant and Refugee Students	Firm	US\$50.000	US\$50.000
Component III. Dissemination	Individual consultants	US\$20.000	US\$20.000
Total		US\$150.000	US\$150.000

4.10 The Project Team Leader will be responsible for executing this project in coordination with the MoECST and MFA's Immigration Departments. The Migration Unit in the Social Sector will be responsible for supervision of costs and will coordinate with the IDB BL-L1030 and BL-J0002 project team to carryout component II.

4.11 **Monitoring.** The Project Team will be responsible for the review of all technical and financial reporting. The Team Leader will be responsible for annual monitoring of activities in the field, and continuous progress meetings with the counterparts and consultants.

V. Executing agency and execution structure

5.1 The IDB, through the Social Sector Unit (SCL/MIG) will execute the TC. The Government of Belize has requested that the IDB execute the TC given that the Bank is implementing BL-T1130 and this TC complements it. In line with Appendix 10 of the Operational Guidelines for Technical Cooperation Products (GN-2629-1), as modified in Annex 2 of GN-619-4, Bank execution of the TC is justified as contracting by the IDB enhances the independence of an experimental evaluation. Moreover, the Bank has developed important work with migration offices in the region and international

organizations focused on migration, hence, the Bank is well placed to coordinate all activities to be financed by this TC and to serve as the executing agency.

5.2 As the executing agency of the TC, the Bank will be responsible for: (i) coordinating the actors involved in the activities; (ii) identifying the studies and technical work necessary to carry out the TC; (iii) selecting and contracting consultants to provide the necessary services; (iv) supervising the consulting services to which the beneficiary provides technical inputs; and (v) managing the execution and provision of consulting services. The Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment has submitted a letter of non-objection, requesting that the Bank is responsible for all aspects of project management, including the administration of resources, and the contracting of specialized consulting services in accordance with Bank policies and procedures.

5.3 **Procurement.** All activities to be executed under this TC have been included in the Procurement Plan (see Annex) and will be contracted in accordance with Bank policies as follows: (a) AM-650 of the Administrative Manual “Complementary Workforce”; (b) consulting firms for services of intellectual nature in accordance with the Policy for the Selection and Contracting of Consulting Firm for Bank-Executed Operational Work (GN-2765-4) and its Operational Guidelines (OP-1155-4); and (iii) for logistic services and other related services, the Corporate Procurement Policy (GN-2303-28) will apply.

5.4 **Single-source selection.** Direct contracting is foreseen for [Innovations for Poverty Action](#) (IPA) in the amount of approximately US\$50,000 to undertake the survey on the situation of migrant students due to COVID-19-related school closures and related social distancing measures (Component II). IPA is qualified and considered an agency with exceptional worth for the assignment in accordance with 4.1.3(d) of the Policy for the Selection and Contracting and Consulting Firm for Bank-executed Operational Work (GN-2765-4). This nongovernmental organization has completed more than 600 evaluation surveys across the globe with an additional 300 ongoing. The single source selection is also in line with 4.1.3(a) of the same policy, which allows for the continuation of previous work carried out by the firm. IPA is carrying out the survey for BL-T1130, therefore this recommendation is based on the need to ensure comparability and continuity with the data collection.

VI. Major issues

6.1 No major risks are expected from this project. The Team will communicate and work closely with the MoECST and MFA’s Immigration Departments regarding the activities and consultants hired to carry out project activities.

6.2 Moreover, the execution of a pilot in times of COVID-19 could present health risks to enumerators. In response to this challenge, the survey will be virtual, including online and phone-based data collection. If connectivity restrictions arise, a central mobile location where participants can connect either by phone or internet will be set up in coordination with the respective authorities and community leaders.

6.3 Participation of migrant in surveys could be low for several reasons such as fear to provide personal information or their status in the country. To mitigate this risk, no information regarding their migratory status will be requested in surveys and anonymity of responses will be emphasized. Furthermore, with the support of the MoECST, the survey objectives will be socialized with school principals and teachers that will also help informing the rest of the school communities. These actions will contribute to reduce any trust issues or fear of repercussions from participating in the survey.

VII. Exceptions to Bank policy

7.1 There are no exceptions to Bank policy.

VIII. Environmental and Social Strategy

8.1 The TC will not finance feasibility or pre-feasibility studies of investment projects or associated environmental and social studies and therefore does not have applicable requirements of the Bank's Environmental and Social Policy Framework (ESPF). Additionally, the TC is not anticipated to have direct environmental or social impacts and has been classified as "C" which corresponds to the BL-J0002 classification.

Required Annexes:

[Request from the Client - BL-T1143](#)

[Results Matrix - BL-T1143](#)

[Terms of Reference - BL-T1143](#)

[Procurement Plan - BL-T1143](#)