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● **RESOURCE**  
● **MANAGEMENT &**  
● **PARTNERSHIP**

● Plan 2024-2030 ● ● ● ● ●

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*The National Assembly of Belize*

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# Resource Management and Partnership Plan (2024-30)

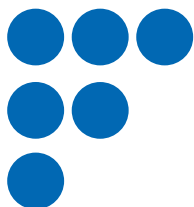


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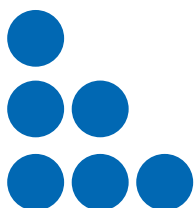


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# FOREWORD



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**HON. VALERIE WOODS**

**Speaker of the House of Representatives**  
National Assembly of Belize

The National Assembly of Belize is proud to present the Resource Management and Partnership Plan 2024-2030. This plan represents a step forward in our ongoing efforts to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Assembly of Belize, reinforcing our commitment to transparent governance.

As the legislative body entrusted with representing the people of Belize, the National Assembly must operate with efficiency and foresight. Thus, having an effective resource management and strategic partnership plan is crucial to achieving this goal. The plan ensures that we allocate our financial, human, and infrastructural resources in a way that maximizes our impact and supports our legislative functions.

By establishing clear priorities and leveraging external collaborations, we aim to enhance the capacity of the National Assembly to meet its objectives and respond to the evolving needs of our society. Strong partnerships with government agencies, civil society organizations, and stakeholders will provide us with additional expertise and resources, enabling us to tackle challenges more effectively and drive positive change.

This plan reflects our commitment to ensuring that the National Assembly operates as a model of accountability, transparency, and efficiency. I extend my sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to the development of this plan especially the staff of the National Assembly, the National Assembly Staff Committee and the UNDP for their technical and funding support.

As we move forward with the implementation of this plan, let us embrace the opportunities it presents and work together to build a stronger and more impactful National Assembly.



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## KISHAN KHODAY

**Resident Representative for Belize**  
United Nations Development Programme

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is proud to support the development of the National Assembly's Resource Management and Partnership Plan 2024-2030, an initiative aimed at enhancing the capacity of the National Assembly and contributing to strengthening democratic governance.

This plan signifies a crucial step forward in strengthening the National Assembly's ability to serve its vital role in Belize and underscores the National Assembly's Staff Committee (NASC) in optimizing resource allocation and management while building and leveraging partnerships. By strategically aligning financial, human, and infrastructural resources, the National Assembly can enhance its efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness.

Equally important is the establishment of strategic partnerships. UNDP places a strong emphasis on strategic partnerships as a core approach to sustainable development. UNDP recognizes that addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and governance requires collaboration across various sectors (governmental and non-governmental). It is essential for achieving impact and allows the National Assembly to be better positioned to access additional expertise and mobilize resources.

UNDP remains committed to supporting the National Assembly in a shared vision of contributing to a stronger and more resilient democratic governance. I extend my appreciation to the National Assembly and to everyone who has been instrumental in developing this plan as we move forward in paving the way to an enhanced and effective democratic system as well as advancing the development agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY STAFF COMMITTEE (NASC)

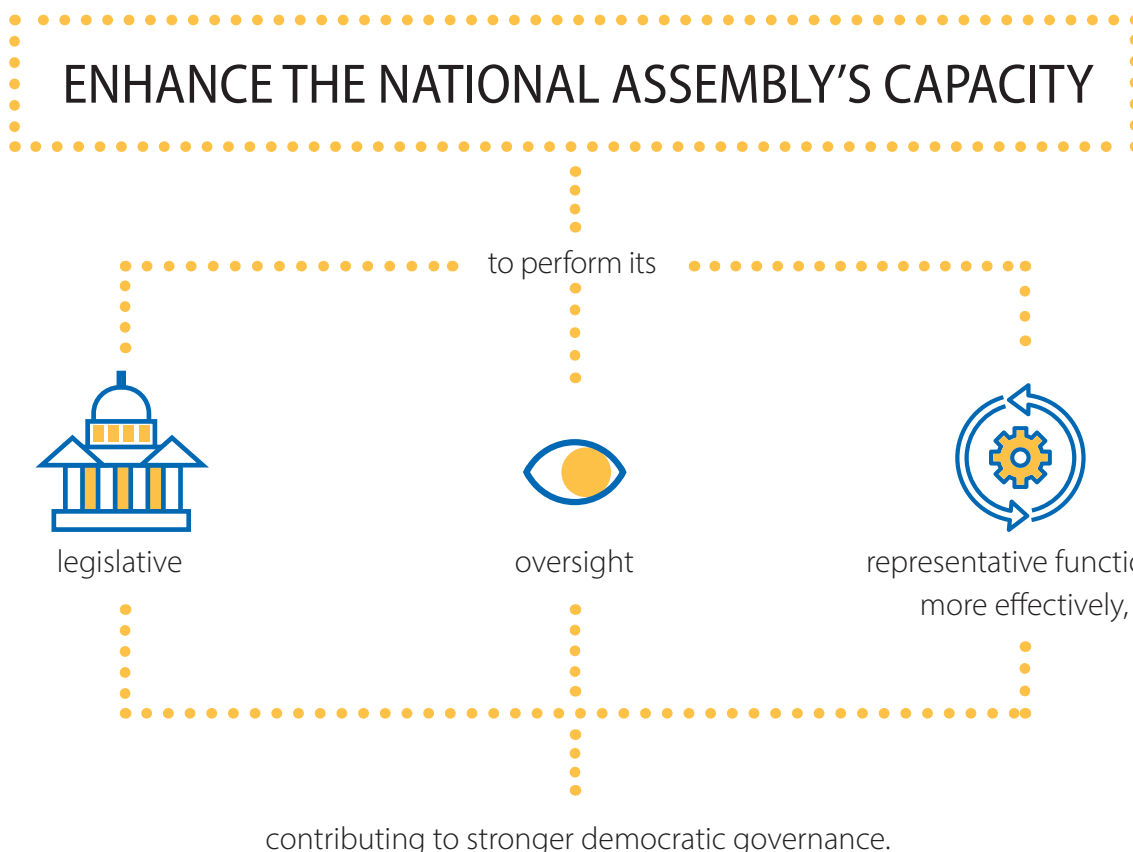
The NASC of the National Assembly of Belize has embarked on an ambitious programme of reform including the establishment of an



## OUTREACH AND EDUCATION STRATEGY (2024-30) AS WELL AS A STRATEGIC PLAN (2024-2030).

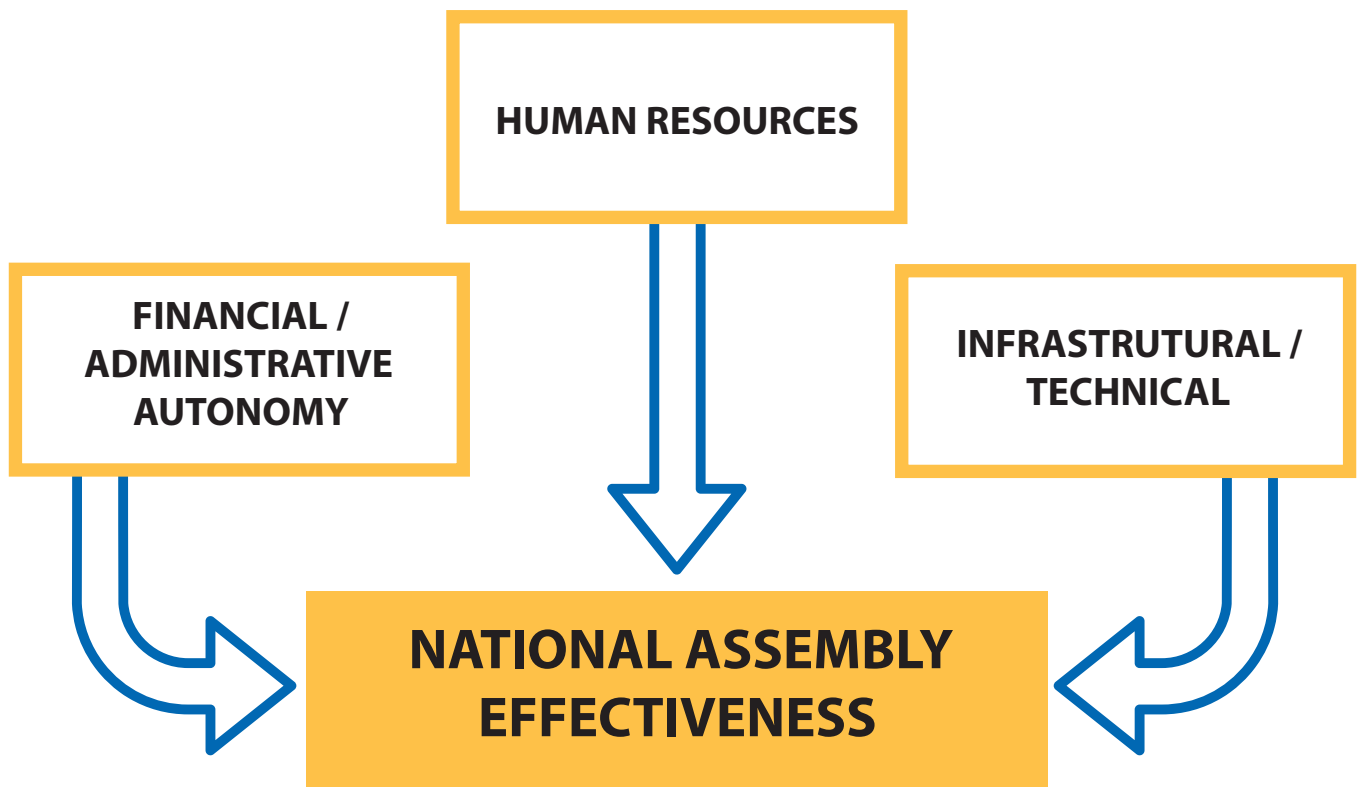
This Resource Management and Partnership Plan underpins both strategies. It demonstrates the NASC's determination to efficiently allocate and manage the resources of the National Assembly while establishing and leveraging strategic partnerships.

### The overall goal is to



# CURRENT SITUATION

Previous studies<sup>1</sup> have examined existing resources available to the National Assembly and identified gaps and areas where additional steps are required to improve parliamentary functions and services. These gaps can be summarised as follows:



<sup>1</sup> Including the self-assessment against the agreed “Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures” that have been developed by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and an Administrative Review (published in 2023) that followed the Benchmark assessment as well as consultations between a parliamentary consultant and key stakeholders in March/April 2024.



## A. FINANCIAL/ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY

Both the Benchmarks Self-Assessment and Administrative Review highlighted how, in terms of financing, the National Assembly of Belize is beholden to the executive. This severely compromises parliamentary autonomy and leaves the National Assembly vulnerable to under-funding and to the accusation that funding is politically motivated. Indeed, low levels of funding for the National Assembly are both a symptom and a cause of a parliament's institutional weakness.

International best practice is for parliament to be responsible for setting its own budget, as a separate issue from the Executive's budget proposals. This enables the legislature to manage more effectively its administration and financing, although to achieve this it is often necessary to strengthen the Parliament's own internal governance structures.

Procedures can be put in place to ensure that parliament's requests for resources are benchmarked against and broadly in line with other constitutional entities.

*For example, according to the IMF's Role of the Legislature in Budget Processes, "Parliament can perform its role effectively when it is adequately funded and when it has autonomy for preparing its own budget".*

The IMF document<sup>2</sup> suggests two good practice points for legislative budgeting autonomy:



While parliament's budget should be prepared independently from that of the executive, parliaments should nonetheless be subject to the same general procedures for executing and reporting on spending of their own budgets.



Parliaments should not abuse their powers by increasing parliament's operating and investment expenses so that they become out of line with other national constitutional entities, such as the expenses of the judiciary, or the external auditor.

The medium to long-term aim is for the National Assembly to obtain full administrative and financial autonomy. However, the short-term objective must be to develop a transparent and accountable budgeting process for the National Assembly, overseen by the NASC, including strong financial controls and Human Resources

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/tnm/2010/tnm1004.pdf>.

## B. HUMAN RESOURCES

The National Assembly has a small number of dedicated staff working under the Clerk and Deputy Clerk. Previous assessments have identified several gaps, and the strategic plans refers of the need to recruit adequate and competent staff. These are expected to include an Outreach and Communication Officer; Research Officer(s) for Members and Senators; Parliamentary Counsel/Legal Officer; and Parliamentary Officer(s).

The Strategic Plan includes a commitment to invest in continuous professional development and training programs for all parliamentary staff (existing and new) and review and update job descriptions and performance management processes. Infrastructural and Technical Resources



**Outreach and Communication Officer**



**Research Officer(s) for Members and Senators**



**Parliamentary Counsel/Legal Officer**



**Parliamentary Officer(s)**

## C. INFRASTRUCTURAL AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES

The National Assembly building was originally designed to fit 18 Members and all stakeholders accept that the existing space does not work for its current composition (31 Members and 13 Senators). The Presiding Officers have led efforts to redesign of the National Assembly, and Stage 1 of this reform is expected to launch shortly. These plans are outlined in the Strategic Plan of the NASC.

# THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP PLAN

There are three central objectives of the Resource Management and Partnership Plan as follows:

	<b>ENHANCED EFFICIENCY:</b>	Optimizes the use of resources, reducing waste and improving overall efficiency.
	<b>INCREASED CAPACITY:</b>	Strengthens the National Assembly's capacity to achieve its goals through strategic partnerships and resource optimization.
	<b>SUSTAINABILITY:</b>	Promotes sustainable practices that ensure long-term availability and stewardship of resources

## 1. BUDGET ALLOCATION AND OPTIMIZATION

The Clerk is responsible for the overall management and the financial affairs of the National Assembly and, under the direction of the Presiding Officers<sup>3</sup>, exercises supervision and control over other members of the staff. The Clerk's responsibilities include preparing and submitting to the Ministry of Finance the budget estimates for each financial year (including any supplementary estimates).

The Minister includes the estimates in the General Revenue Appropriation Bill for that financial year with such amendments, if any, as he may consider necessary.

<sup>3</sup>Standing Order 7(10) of the House of Representatives and Standing Order 6(10) of the Senate.

The Resource Management and Partnership Strategy sets out a structured and transparent process for setting the parliamentary budget under the statutory framework as follows:

1. The Clerk will continue to prepare the parliamentary budget consulting with various services within the National Assembly to gather inputs and estimates of the required funds. The parliamentary budget will be based on the Strategic Plan, ensuring that resources are allocated to priority areas and essential functions.
2. The draft budget will be submitted to the NASC who will review, amend and approve the draft budget. This includes a detailed examination of each item and allocation. The Clerk and other senior members of the parliamentary administration may be called upon to justify the budget requests and the merits of different allocations.
3. The Clerk will submit the revised budget to the Ministry of Finance who will include the estimates in the General Revenue Appropriation Bill following the normal procedure. The National Assembly will scrutinize the Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, including the parliamentary budget. Upon approval, the parliamentary budget is enacted and becomes the official financial plan for the National Assembly for the upcoming fiscal period. Details of the parliamentary budget will be shown on the website to ensure transparency and accountability.
4. The Clerk is responsible for managing the overall implementation of the budget. NASC will monitor the implementation of the budget to ensure funds are allocated and spent according to the approved plan and receive quarterly in-year reports on budget implementation from the Clerk. If necessary, the Clerk can submit adjustments to the parliamentary budget to address unforeseen circumstances or changing priorities. Such requests will be approved by the NASC before submission to the Minister. All supplementary budget requests are subject to the approval of the National Assembly.
5. The NASC may conduct internal audits to review compliance with financial procedures and to identify any areas of risk or inefficiency.
6. The Auditor-General conducts audits of the National Assembly's budget to ensure proper use of funds and compliance with financial regulations. The Clerk will be responsible to the NASC to ensure that any issues identified by the Auditor General are addressed. The Clerk and other relevant parliamentary officials may be called to account by the Joint Public Accounts Committee to explain financial decisions and address any concerns raised in audit reports.
7. All relevant financial documents, including the annual audit report and financial statements, are published on the National Assembly's website. This transparency allows the public and stakeholders to review and scrutinize the National Assembly's financial management.

By combining these internal and external mechanisms, the NASC will ensure a robust process for compiling, approving and monitoring the parliamentary budget, promoting financial integrity, accountability, and public trust in how parliamentary funds are managed.

# 1.1 PROCUREMENT

The Strategic Plan includes a provision to enhance efficiency in procurement of goods and services; resource utilization; monitoring and evaluation.

The NASC procurement policy will ensure that the National Assembly's procurement:



Our procurement will follow the legal framework<sup>4</sup> and all procurement guidelines, including the Handbook on Public Procurement Procedures<sup>5</sup> developed by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

When we deal with suppliers and potential suppliers, National Assembly staff must maintain:



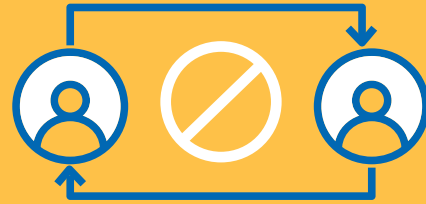
<sup>4</sup> See <https://procurement.gov.bz/legal-framework>

<sup>5</sup> See <https://procurement.gov.bz/public-procurement-procedures-handbook>

Staff who are involved in the procurement process, including those perceived to be able to influence purchases, must:



declare any relationship or interest in organisations likely to bid for National Assembly contracts



not seek or accept contributions of any kind from National Assembly contractors, or those likely to bid for National Assembly contracts

When it makes purchases and awards contracts, the NASC aims to:



minimise its environmental impact

promote positive social and economic benefits



## 1.2 NEW BUDGETARY PROVISIONS UNDER THE STRATEGIC PLAN

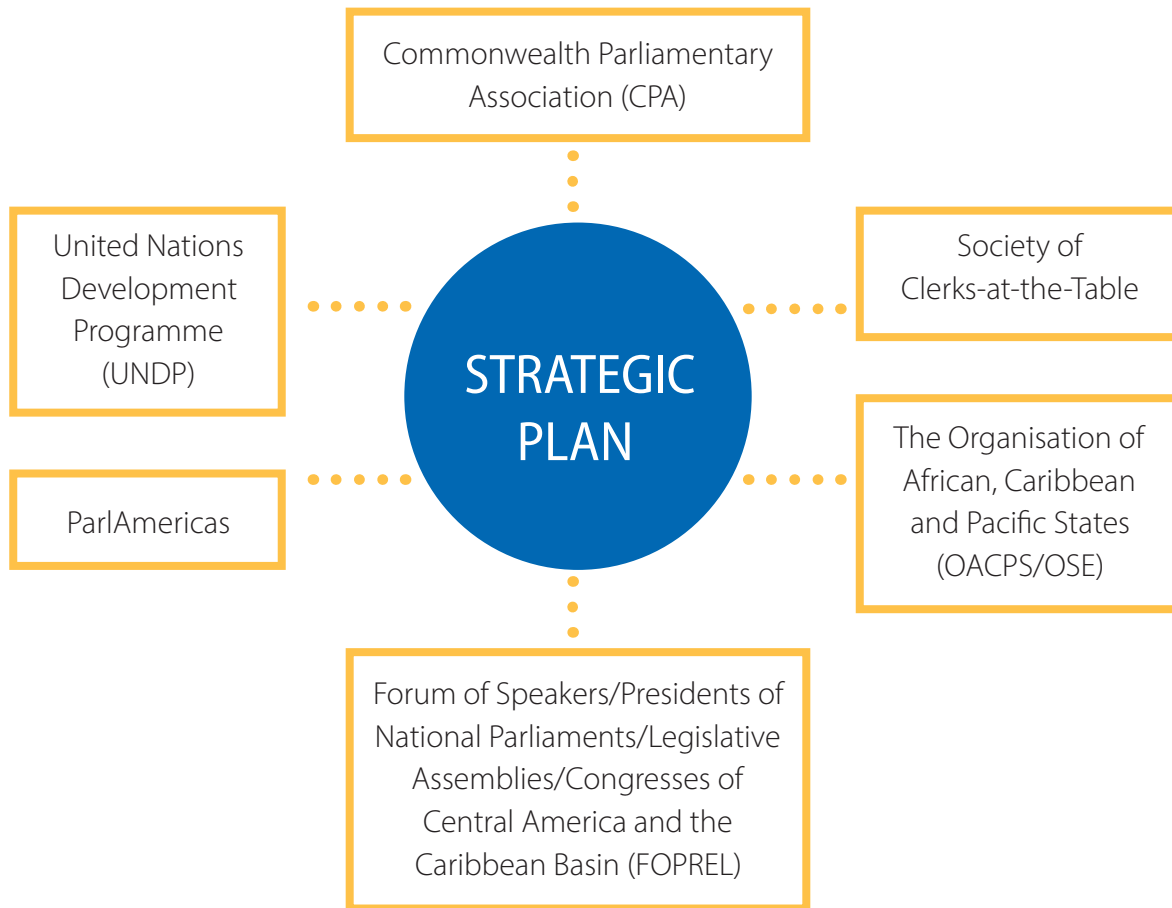
As mentioned earlier, the parliamentary budget will be based on the Strategic Plan, ensuring that resources are allocated to priority areas and essential functions. The key areas identified in the Strategic Plan with new budgetary indications are as follows:

**TABLE A: NEW BUDGETARY PROVISIONS REQUIRED**

Strategic Objective	Action	Responsibility	Indicative Budgetary Allocation	Timeline
1. To support Members and Senators fulfil their constitutional functions.	Establish a Budget line for professional development of Members and Senators and the assignment of a staff person in charge for these programs.	Clerk/Finance Officer	\$	2024 for fiscal year 2025/6 and then ongoing.
1. To support Members and Senators fulfil their constitutional functions.	Appoint new parliamentary officer(s) or Clerk of Committees to support the functioning of the Committee system and arrange appropriate training.	Clerk/NASC	Indicative starting salary of new position	2025 (or following review of committee system)
3: Maintain a professional and progressive Parliamentary Service to ensure quality administrative support services and uphold the independence of a strong and effective National Assembly.	New Budget line for professional development of Staff	Clerk/NASC	\$	2024 for fiscal year 2025/6 and then ongoing.
4: Strengthen engagement with the public and international community by developing the outreach work of the National Assembly.	(1) Implement the Outreach and Education Strategy  Note from Outreach and Education Strategy  1.5 NASC to agree on bid to Ministry of Finance for resources to support initiatives in this Strategy (if unsuccessful consider alternative funding options).	NASC / Clerk / Communication and Outreach Officer	\$	2024 for fiscal year 2025/6 and then ongoing.

## 2. IDENTIFICATION AND BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

The Strategic Plan includes a commitment to maintain membership of key regional and international bodies and participate in national, regional and global meetings, including:



The Strategic Plan also includes a commitment to seek the cooperation from other legislatures and international organisations whilst maintaining coordination and avoiding duplication of effort. The Outreach and Education Strategy also encourages the National Assembly to agree twinning partnership with suitable parliament (s) to support outreach efforts.

Three legislatures have been identified as the most likely partners for the National Assembly over the duration of the Strategic Plan: CPA (UK Branch), the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago and the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

**Table B** identifies the potential partners for specific actions and tasks identified in the Strategic Plan and Outlook and Communication Plan.



**TABLE B: POTENTIAL STRATEGIC PARTNERS FOR SPECIFIC ACTIONS**

		Partner										
Strategic Objective/ Initiative	Action / Tasks	CPA	UNDP	FOPREL	OACPS	Society of Clerks	ParlAmerica	CPA UK	T+T Parliament	Albert LA	A-G of Belize	Republic of China (Taiwan)
<b>Strategic Plan Objective 1:</b> To support Members and Senators fulfil their constitutional functions.	Organise and facilitate an orientation and induction program for Members and Senators.	x										
	Seek out continuous professional development opportunities for Members and Senators	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		
	Arrange specialised training for JPAC.							x			x	
	Enhance the interaction between the Auditor General's office and JPAC and follow-up the findings and recommendations of AG reports.							x			x	
	Training on the committee system, including how to scrutinise information, how to conduct an enquiry and how to follow up on recommendations following a report.	x										
	Arrange specialised training for the joint select committee for the Women's Parliamentarians Caucus.							x	x			
	Commission an Independent Review of remuneration and allowances (including committee allowances) for Members and Senators.		x									
<b>Strategic Plan Objective 2:</b> Modernise and Improve the Institutional Capacity of the National Assembly.	Take steps to ensure the construction of a new wing to ensure the provision of modern facilities.											x

**TABLE B: POTENTIAL STRATEGIC PARTNERS FOR SPECIFIC ACTIONS**

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<b>Strategic Plan Objective 3:</b> Maintain a professional and progressive Parliamentary Service to ensure quality administrative support services and uphold the independence of a strong and effective National Assembly.	Conduct sensitization workshop for Members and Senators on revised Standing Orders and new Codes of Conduct.	X										
	Creation of handbook to explain the Standing Orders.	X	X									
	Develop and implement a financial performance monitoring and reporting framework/ manual.					X			X	X		
	Ensure the annual accounts of the National Assembly are audited and made publicly available.										X	
	Review, revise and maintain a new performance management system for all staff.					X			X	X		
	Development of a new HR manual to include gender, Youth, disability and Occupational Health and Safety policies.					X			X	X		
	Professional development of Staff / Capacity building of the National Assembly's management and staff.	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
<b>Strategic Objective 4:</b> Strengthen engagement with the public and international community by developing the outreach work of the National Assembly.	Implement the Outreach and Education Strategy.						X		X	X		
	Maintain membership of key regional & international bodies & participate in national, regional & global meetings.	X	X	X	X	X	X					
	Seek the cooperation from other legislatures and international organisations whilst maintaining coordination and avoiding duplication of effort.	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		
	Engage with governance and knowledge networks.	X	X	X	X	X	X					

**TABLE B: POTENTIAL STRATEGIC PARTNERS FOR SPECIFIC ACTIONS**

		Partner										
Strategic Objective/ Initiative	Action / Tasks	CPA	UNDP	FOPREL	OACPS	Society of Clerks	ParlAmerica	CPA UK	T+T Parliament	Albert LA	A-G of Belize	Republic of China (Taiwan)
<b>Outreach and Education Initiative 1.</b>  Governance of Outreach and Education – management of the Strategy	1.4 Arrange appropriate training for Communications/Outreach Officer in other legislatures	X						X	X	X		
	1.6 Agree twinning partnership with suitable parliament (s) to support outreach efforts.	X						X	X	X		
<b>Outreach and Education Initiative 2.</b>  Improve online presence (i.e. the website and social media)	All Tasks under this initiative								X	X		
<b>Outreach and Education Initiative 3.</b>  Communications that promote the work of the National Assembly and encourage engagement	3.2 Developing a corporate policy for the use of social media.					X			X	X		
	3.2. Publish informative materials (e.g. books, pamphlets) that promote and explain aspects of the National Assembly’s work and history.		X									
	3.3 Organise Events within the National Assembly that inform and connect people to the legislature.					X			X			
	3.6 The creation of short explainer videos on the NA website, which can be delivered by Presiding Officers on a range of parliamentary topics (including Standing Orders).										X	
	3.9 Regularly assess the effectiveness of the outreach and educational efforts through surveys, feedback, and data analysis.								X	X		
<b>Outreach and Education Initiative 5.</b>  Rural and Regional outreach	5.1 (a) Undertake research into which groups/regions are not currently engaging with National Assembly, and what would encourage and enable them to participate.		X									
	5.2 (b) National Assembly outreach visits/community forum to rural and regional areas where citizens can interact with MPs, Senators, and parliamentary staff.		X						X	X		

**TABLE B: POTENTIAL STRATEGIC PARTNERS FOR SPECIFIC ACTIONS**

		Partner										
Strategic Objective/ Initiative	Action / Tasks	CPA	UNDP	FOPREL	OACPS	Society of Clerks	ParlAmerica	CPA UK	T+T Parliament	Albert LA	A-G of Belize	Republic of China (Taiwan)
<b>Outreach and Education Initiative 6.</b>  Improve relations with the media.	6.1 Creation of a media lounge/ space in renovated National Assembly.											x
	6.5 Enhance the media's understanding of the National Assembly by providing them with information/ briefings to explain how the parliament works and how it is administered.	x	x						x	x		
	6.6 Establish a protocol for managing media enquiries and a framework for media liaison (including the process to correct promptly inaccurate, misleading or unbalanced coverage) to ensure a consistent and active voice that speaks on behalf of the National Assembly.								x	x		
	6.7 Media Training to Members and Senators on how and when to engage with the media.	x						x				
<b>Outreach and Education Initiative 7.</b>  Improve political literacy amongst young people.	7.1 (a) The development of accessible and easy to understand educational resources for teachers to help them teach civics in the classroom.									x		
	7.1 (b) Build a new Education section on the website and populate it with relevant materials for all schools and students who wish to explore the parliamentary system.									x		
	7.5 (b) Seek support from ParlAmericas to develop a Youth Parliament for Girls run by the National Assembly.	x						x				

## 2.1 OTHER POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Analysis of the government's Public Sector Investment Programme<sup>6</sup>, coordinated by the Ministry of Economic Development (MED), shows that the National Assembly is not listed as a beneficiary of funding from the projects listed under the description Public Administration.

The NASC will therefore seek meetings with the Minister of Economic Development to discuss potential funding avenues for the National Assembly. For example, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) is currently supporting a project to strengthen public expenditure management in Belize, and this could be extended/amended to include JPAC<sup>7</sup>. Other potential partners that are funding relevant projects include Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and European Union (EU).

### Dods Training

The NASC has identified Dods Training<sup>8</sup> as a key potential strategic partner. Dods has a twenty-year track record of delivering skills-based programmes including training in Belize for public servants in Belize (funded by CDB) in the areas of policy analysis and public expenditure scrutiny which could potentially be extended to Members and Senators and parliamentary staff. The NASC will therefore explore this avenue with the Ministry. Other alternatives for the development of tailored training programmes for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in Belize are the University of Belize and the University of the West Indies.

<sup>6</sup> See <https://med.gov.bz/quarterly-psip-reports/>

<sup>7</sup> The project aims to promote the fiscal sustainability of Belize by increasing the efficiency of public resources through strengthened public financial management.

<sup>8</sup> Dods partner with governments, businesses, international institutions, central and development banks, academia, and UN agencies to devise learning and development solutions that help improve people, organisational, and systems performance. For example, the Public Sector Policy Analysis and Management programme funded by the CDB took place from 2017 to 2020 across nineteen countries. In May 2018 a one-week policy training was delivered in Belize. The Public Expenditure Scrutiny (PES) Project (2021) for MPs funded by the CDB was a series of three webinars and videos to help MPs across the Caribbean (15 countries) to learn about best practices in PES.

## Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)<sup>9</sup>

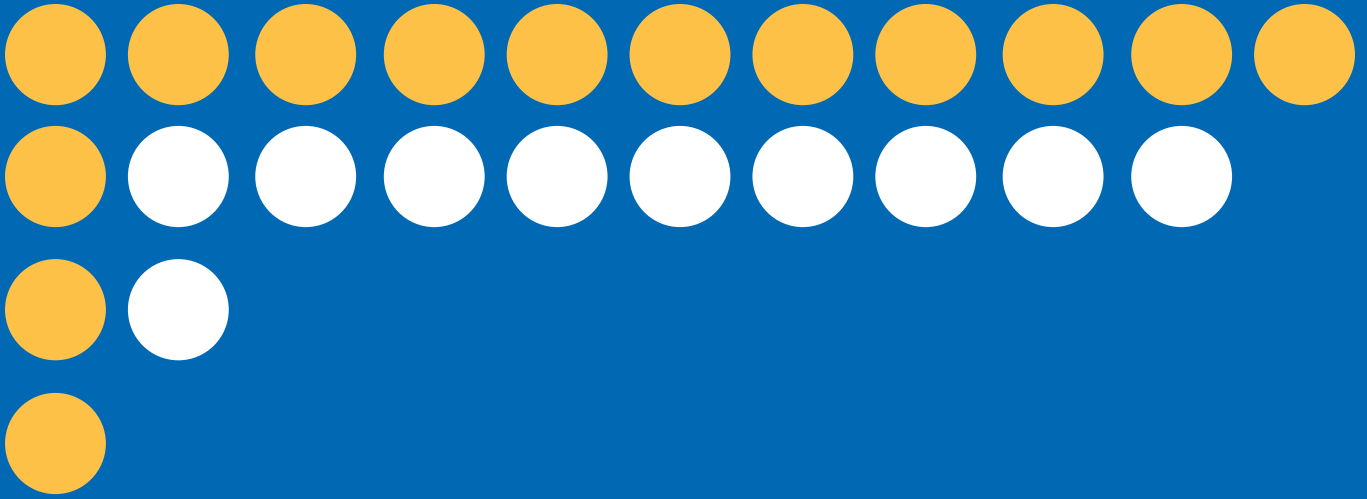
Over the course of this strategy, the NASC will also continue to explore with the Ministry of Finance the possibility of joining the IPU, the global organization of national parliaments. The IPU facilitates parliamentary diplomacy and empowers parliaments and parliamentarians to promote peace, democracy and sustainable development around the world. The IPU's strategic objectives aim to make parliaments more effective, representative and innovative so that they can take collective parliamentary action to improve people's lives in the following policies areas:



## Monitoring and Evaluation

The Clerk of the National Assembly will provide the NASC with an annual written update on progress made in implementing the Resource Management and Partnership Plan. NASC will support both a mid-term review and end of term evaluation of the Resource Management and Partnership Plan, alongside the review of the Strategic Plan. The reviews are to be conducted by an independent consultant as selected by the NASC possibly in cooperation with international partners and shall report directly to the NASC.





The National Assembly of Belize, August 2024

