TC ABSTRACT

I. BASIC PROJECT DATA

▪ Country/Region:	Belize/CID
▪ TC Name:	Project preparation studies for George Price Highway Rehabilitation
▪ TC Number:	BL-T1063
▪ Team Leader/Members:	Leopoldo Montanez, Team Leader (INE/TSP); Raúl Rodríguez, Isabel Granada, María Romero (INE/TSP); Brian Mc Nish (TSP/CPN); Hisakhana Corbin (VPS/ESG); and Andrés Consuegra (LEG/SGO)
▪ Indicate if: Operational Support, Client Support, or Research & Dissemination.	Operational Support
▪ If Operational Support TC, give number and name of Operation Supported by the TC:	BL-L1019: Road Program for Belize Integration
▪ Reference to Request: (IDB docs #)	Special mission Aide Memoire –Government request (see link)
▪ Date of TC Abstract:	October 2nd , 2013
▪ Beneficiary (countries or entities which are the recipient of the technical assistance):	Government of Belize (GoBL)
▪ Executing Agency and contact name:	Ministry of Works and Transport
▪ IDB Funding Requested:	US$540,000
▪ Local counterpart funding, if any:	US$135,000 (in kind)
▪ Disbursement period (which includes execution period):	16 disbursement, 12 months execution
▪ Required start date:	December 1st, 2013
▪ Types of consultants (firm or individual consultants):	Firms
▪ Prepared by Unit:	Transport Division (INE/TSP)
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	Belize (CBL)
▪ Included in Country Strategy (y/n); ▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	Yes Yes
▪ GCI-9 Sector Priority:	Lending to a small and vulnerable country Lending to support climate change initiatives Lending to support regional cooperation and integration

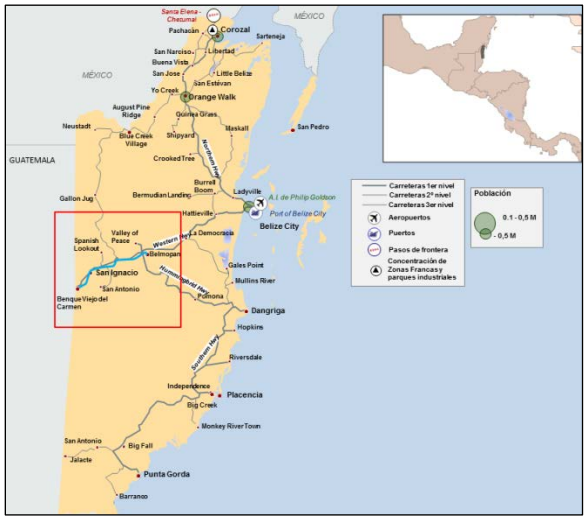
II. OBJECTIVE AND JUSTIFICATION

As part of the implementation of the Country Medium-Term Development Strategy (2010 – 2013), which highlights the importance of an efficient transport service for economic development, the Government of Belize (GoBL) has requested support to the Bank to finance the rehabilitation of the Western trunk corridor (see Map 1), that connects the city of Belmopan with the border crossing with Guatemala at Benque Viejo. This corridor has a major importance for the agricultural, agro-industrial, tourism and social development of Belize, including fostering regional trade between Belize and Central American countries[1].

[1] George Price Highway is part of the Tourism Corridor prioritized connecting Guatemala (El Ceibo – Flores) with Belize (Belmopan) – Mexico (Cancun) and El Salvador (Trujillo).

Moreover, the corridor serves officially as the primary evacuation route of the country in case of natural hazard and natural disasters [2]. This is of extreme importance, as Belize lies in the subtropical geographic belt and has a climate governed strongly by seasonal variations in rainfall. Its long history of devastating weather related events have affected the country, on average, once every three years[3], making evident the vulnerability of its infrastructure. Increased precipitations and extreme weather events as a result of climate change, give great urgency to the need to protect infrastructural assets that are indispensable for two of the country's biggest GDP contributors, agriculture and tourism taking into account, not only historical data but also future projections[4].

Map 1. Western truck corridor



The rehabilitation of this corridor will therefore imply to ensure better climate change resilience[5] while enhancing road user safety in accordance to national highway standards. This program will cover the intervention of George Price Highway between miles 47.9 – 79.4 and the rehabilitation or replacement of Roaring Creek Bridge at mile 48.

Accordingly, this technical cooperation is intended to support the development of technical and economic feasibility studies, as well as the needed environmental and social assessment for the rehabilitation of this road and its bridge. Through this technical input,

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[2] The George Price Highway is the designated national evacuation route in case of natural hazard and natural disaster. In the event of major natural events, citizens of Belize City and northern communities are requested to mandatory evacuate these areas and commute to San Ignacio and Santa Elena through the George Price Highway.

[3] Tropical depressions, tropical storms, or hurricanes have been recorded in 1931, 1955, 1961, 1971, 1974, 1978, 2000, 2001, and 2007, according to hurricane tracks available from the US National Weather Service.

[4] Belize Second National Communication to the UNFCCC, 2011. Chapter 3 states "The assessment report of 1999 stated that approximately 60% of coastal areas were permanently inundated. With a projected 30 – 50 cm increase in mean sea level over the next 50 years, areas that are presently a few centimeters above sea level will convert to wetland and current wetlands will convert to shallow lagoons.

[5] Extreme events and increased rainfall as well as flooding from sea level rise and intense rain will exacerbate the negative impacts on these corridors and contribute to their deterioration. Soil needs to be stabilized and better drainage systems will have to be developed in order to tackle these climate related effects. This should be part of a national adaptation program for the road network.

the Bank will be able to establish the physical scope of the program and accurately determine project costs.

Particularly, this technical assistance will help to determine, the average cost per km of the intervention, the works needed to mitigate the effects of heavy rains, identify and prioritize critical points along the corridor in terms of road safety that must be addressed, determine the scope of works for the Roaring Creek Bridge rehabilitation, assess the environmental and social impacts of the project in accordance with the Bank's operational policies, draft a mitigation plan to ensure the protection of the environment and affected populations throughout the project life cycle and develop a preliminary economic evaluation of the project.

Depending on the preliminary results of this technical assistance, the Bank will evaluate the need to apply for additional non-reimbursable resources[6] to proceed with detailed engineering studies.

III. Description of Activities and Outputs

This technical cooperation will finance the following studies:

a. Technical feasibility studies

- Analysis of existing information
- Traffic and road safety studies
- Preliminary geometric study and design
- Pavement structure analysis
- Critical structure identification (i.e. slopes to be stabilized or drainages to improve)
- Road signaling and marking analysis
- Assessment of the Roaring Creek Bridge condition and study of alternatives for its rehabilitation

b. Economic feasibility studies

These will comprise the preliminary assessment of costs and benefits expected.

c. Social and environmental assessments

This activity will characterize the area of study in terms of social and environmental issues. It will also identify and assess direct, indirect and cumulative social and environmental impacts of the project, as well as its material sources. Areas of ecological fragility and protected areas among others will be determined. Within the frame of these activities, social and environmental assessments will define existing conditions in the areas of intervention, including hydrological and geological characteristics, soil quality, land use, weather, etc., as well as base lines for those specific items that will potentially be modified by the intervention.

[6] A preliminary estimation of resources required to develop detailed engineering studies indicates a total of USD 700.000 in addition to the amount being requested.

A social and environmental management work plan will be prepared to include all necessary actions for the social and environmental management of the project, containing prevention, mitigation, adjustment and compensation procedures for all impacts identified, defining costs, execution responsibilities and deadlines.

Regarding land acquisition and resettlement requirements, an assessment will be carried out in accordance with the Bank's Policy OP-710 and will comprise a socio-economic inventory of all affected communities, follow up procedures for resettlements, including costs by activity, execution responsibilities and deadlines.

IV. BUDGET

The total cost of this technical cooperation is US$675,000 and its time of execution is 12 months and 16 months for payments.

V. INDICATIVE BUDGET

Table 1. Indicative budget

Activity/Component	IDB Financing (US$)	Country Financing (in kind) (US$)	Total Financing (US$)
Technical and economic feasibility studies	350,000		350,000
Social and environmental assessments	150,000		150,000
Supervision/Execution	40,000	135,000	175,000
Total	540,000	135,000	675,000

VI. EXECUTING AGENCY AND EXECUTION STRUCTURE

The beneficiary agency for this technical cooperation will be the Ministry of Works and Transport. An already created technical unit in charge of the management of multilateral resources will be the executing agency, and thus will be responsible for contracting and monitoring the implementation technically and administratively. The Bank's project team will also be responsible for the management of financial risks and will be in charge of filing all documents related to transactions made. The process of selecting consultants and firms financed with Bank's resources will be implemented in accordance to the Bank's Policy for the Selection and Hiring of Consultants (Document GN-2350-9 of March 2011).

VII. PROJECT RISKS AND ISSUES

There are no identified foreseeable risks for the preparation or the implementation stages of this technical assistance.

VIII. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CLASSIFICATION

Being focused on the preparation of feasibility studies and assessments, this technical cooperation has no social or environmental impacts. Such feasibility studies and assessments will identify the potential positive and negative impacts associated with the execution of the specific works to be financed, which in turn, will allow for timely and appropriate formulation of mitigation strategies.

Safeguard Policy Filter Report and Safeguard Screening Form are saved under IDBDocs No. 38138907.