

Belize

Western Hemisphere / **Central America**

CAPITAL Belmopan	TERRITORY 22,810 km ²	POPULATION (2020) 397,621.00	GDP TOTAL (2020) \$1.764B USD	GDP PER CAPITA (2020) \$4,435.62 USD	INCOME GROUP Lower middle income
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Convention Implementation



In progress

22nd of 31 western hemisphere
7th of 8 Central American countries

Prevention



Core-deficient

Criminalization and law enforcement

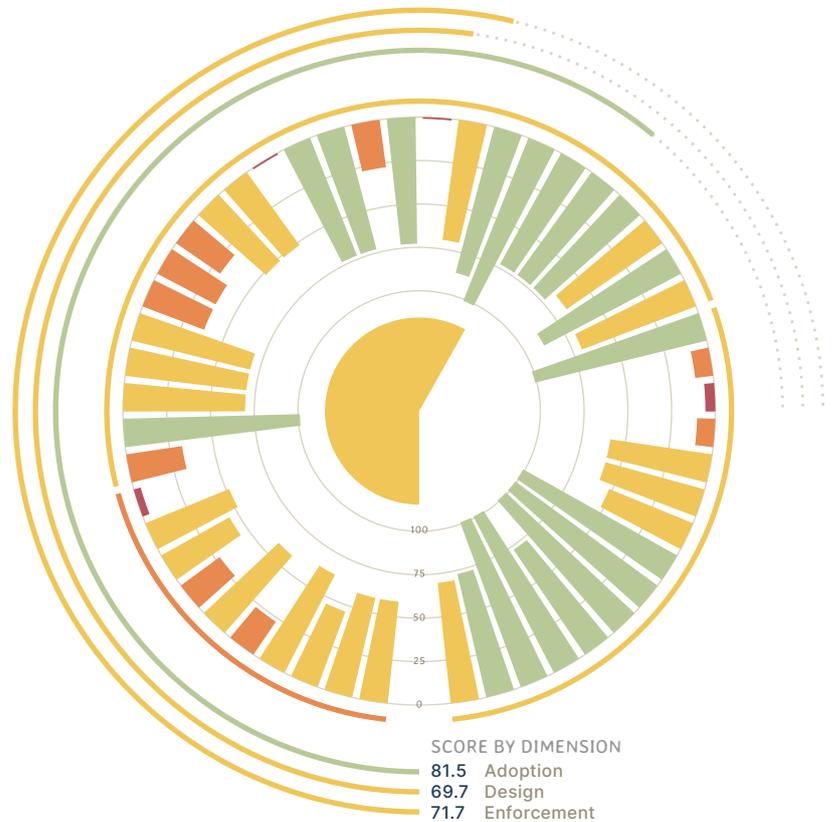


In progress

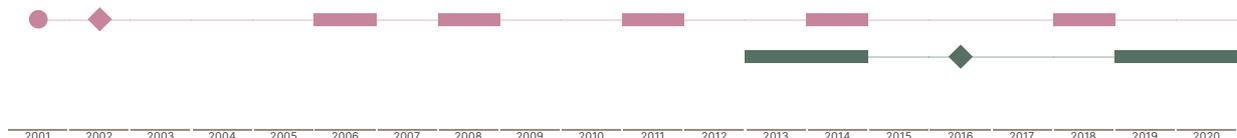
International cooperation



In progress



Anti-corruption conventions timeline



CONVENTIONS

- IACAC - Inter-American Convention Against Corruption
- UNCAC - United Nations Convention against Corruption
- OECD Anti-Bribery Convention

KEY EVENTS

- Signed
- Ratified/acceded
- Review rounds

Prevention

Core-deficient

42.7

✓ Adoption 80.0 ✎ Design 70.0 ⌚ Enforcement 55.0

Standards of Conduct In progress 57.8 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 100.0 ⌚ 50.0	Enforcement of Standards of Conduct In progress 57.8 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 100.0 ⌚ 50.0	Training of Public Officials In progress 45.3 ✓ 25.0 ✎ 100.0 ⌚ 50.0	Asset and Conflicts of Interests Declarations In progress 62.5 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 83.3	Transparency in Government Contracting Core-deficient 21.9 ✓ 75.0 ✎ 33.3 ⌚ 33.3
Elimination of Favorable Tax Treatment In progress 57.8 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 100.0 ⌚ 50.0	Oversight Bodies Core-deficient 26.6 ✓ 75.0 ✎ 50.0 ⌚ 33.3	Measures to Deter Domestic and Foreign Bribery Core-deficient 43.8 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 50.0	Encouraging Participation by Civil Society In progress 50.8 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 83.3 ⌚ 50.0	Study of Other Preventive Measures No implementation 3.1 ✓ 25.0 ✎ 0.0 ⌚ 100.0

Criminalization and law enforcement

In progress

59.1

✓ Adoption 79.0 ✎ Design 64.0 ⌚ Enforcement 77.3

Protection of Those who Report Acts of Corruption Core-deficient 31.3 ✓ 50.0 ✎ 83.3 ⌚ 33.3	Scope Implemented 100.0 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 100.0 ⌚ 100.0	Jurisdiction: Offense-in-Territory In progress 68.8 ✓ 75.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 100.0	Jurisdiction: Offense-by-National In progress 68.8 ✓ 75.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 100.0	Jurisdiction: Offender-in-Territory In progress 68.8 ✓ 75.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 100.0
Passive Public Bribery Core-deficient 36.7 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 50.0 ⌚ 50.0	Active Public Bribery Core-deficient 36.7 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 50.0 ⌚ 50.0	Abuse of Functions Core-deficient 29.7 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 33.3 ⌚ 50.0	Money Laundering In progress 50.8 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 83.3 ⌚ 50.0	Participation and Attempt In progress 50.8 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 83.3 ⌚ 50.0
Active Foreign Bribery No implementation 0.0 ✓ 0.0 ✎ 0.0 ⌚ 0.0	Illicit Enrichment In progress 71.9 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 100.0	Use of State Property In progress 71.9 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 100.0	Illicit Acquisition of a Benefit Core-deficient 26.6 ✓ 75.0 ✎ 33.3 ⌚ 50.0	Public Embezzlement In progress 71.9 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 100.0
Passive Foreign Bribery No implementation 0.0 ✓ 0.0 ✎ 0.0 ⌚ 0.0	Private Bribery In progress 68.8 ✓ 75.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 100.0	Private Embezzlement Implemented 85.9 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 83.3 ⌚ 100.0	Obstruction of Justice Implemented 100.0 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 100.0 ⌚ 100.0	Liability of Legal Persons In progress 71.9 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 100.0
Statute of Limitations In progress 71.9 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 100.0	Prosecution, Adjudication and Sanctions In progress 71.9 ✓ 100.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 100.0	Consequences and Compensation In progress 65.6 ✓ 50.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 100.0	Cooperation With Law Enforcement Implemented 87.5 ✓ 25.0 ✎ 100.0 ⌚ 100.0	Asset Recovery In progress 68.8 ✓ 75.0 ✎ 66.7 ⌚ 100.0

International cooperation

In progress

66.8

✓ Adoption 86.7 ✎ Design 78.9 ⌚ Enforcement 73.3

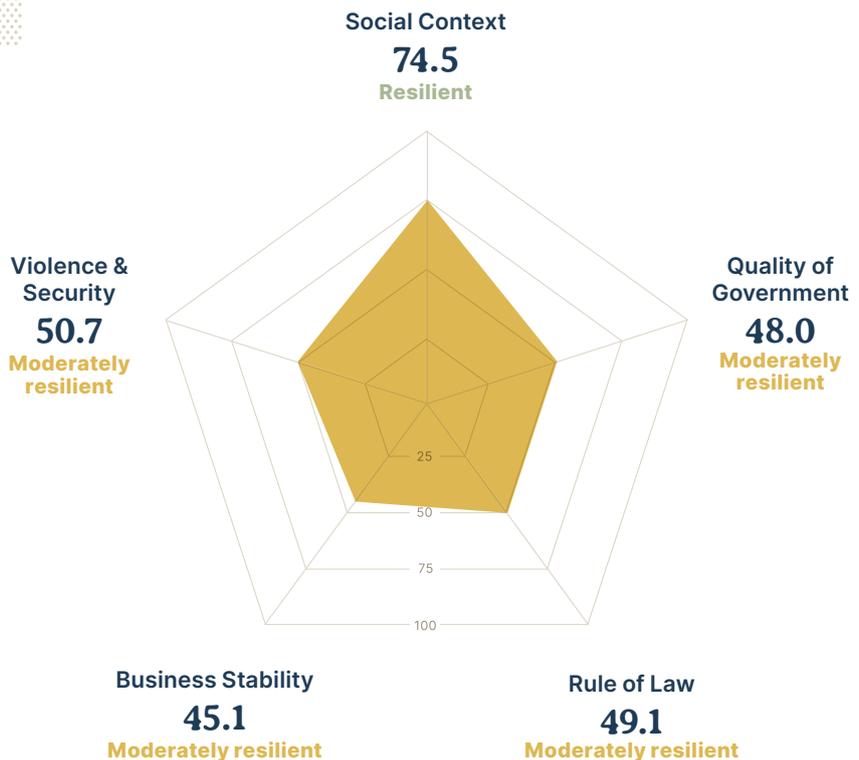


Corruption Resilience

53.5

Moderately resilient

19th of 31 western hemisphere
 3rd of 8 Central American countries



Analysis

Convention Implementation

Belize signed the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACAC) on June 5, 2001, and ratified it on August 2, 2002. It is a State Party to the Follow-Up Mechanism for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC) since June 9, 2003. The country also acceded to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) on December 12, 2016. Accordingly, Belize has undergone five rounds of review under MESICIC, and one round of review under the UNCAC review mechanism.

Belize's record in implementing its commitments to IACAC and UNCAC exhibits a number of failures and very few successes, with the bulk of the committed measures still in progress. With an overall score of 58.1, the measures adopted place the country in the lower level of compliance with international norms—but not far from countries at the middle point—surrounded by El Salvador (51.5), Dominican Republic (55.7), Haiti (58.2), and Paraguay (60.8). Despite the low level of implementation and enforcement, some degree of progress is found in all three sections (although leaning towards criminalization and international cooperation rather than prevention, as is the case throughout the region). Conversely, Belize's significant measures may also be described as lacking across prevention and criminalization.

The prevention of corruption is deficient but not totally lacking, classified as “core-deficient” by its average score and with prominent measures given a score below 30—i.e., transparency in government contracting and the state of oversight bodies. However, aside from these and the study of preventive measures related to equitable compensation and measures to deter domestic and foreign bribery related to accounting regulations, all other provisions found in this section are found to be in progress. Indeed, preventive measures account for less than one third of all underdeveloped measures in the country.

In terms of criminalization and law enforcement, Belize shows better results than those regarding prevention—yet, significant deficiencies remain, with over a quarter of measures within this section classified as core-deficient or not implemented. The country is found to have successfully implemented two key commitments: actions to control embezzlement in the private section and the obstruction of justice. However, significant measures are found completely lacking—i.e., the criminalization of active and passive bribery of foreign officials—or given low scores, including those pertaining to the abuse

of functions, whistleblower protection, and the active and passive bribery of public officials in the country. Other measures, such as the fight against money laundering, the establishment of jurisdiction over corruption offenses, and the liability of legal persons, among several others, are found in progress due to limitations in their legal features. Belize's record in promoting and engaging with international cooperation is also lackluster, achieving an average section score only slightly higher than that for criminalization and law enforcement (discussed in the previous paragraph) and receiving a classification of “in progress”. Among the few highlights identified here, the country is found fully compliant in its commitments to establish effective central authorities charged with the handling of requests for assistance and cooperation. On the other hand, measures related to extradition are severely deficient, not least due to the fact that Belize does not recognize either convention as a legal basis for extradition. In this regard, the report for the third round of MESICIC reached the following conclusion: “Therefore, because the Convention cannot be the basis for extradition, and because Belize has only entered into bilateral extradition treaties with Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States, extradition would not be possible with any of the remaining States Parties to the Convention, with respect to the acts of corruption contained therein.”

Finally, the review of implementation and/or enforcement activities pertaining to several measures contained in this report could not be elaborated on due to the lack of information. Belize is frequently cited during MESICIC rounds as providing little or no statistical information to assess the level of implementation of legally adopted measures. This point is also brought forward by the UNCAC review mechanism. While lack of monitoring and data collection mechanisms is not solely found in Belize, the issue is worth emphasizing in order to support a more detailed and effective assessment.

Corruption Resilience

In 2020, Belize's social context indicator was above the Western Hemisphere average by 9.6 points. Despite the country's score dropping by 4.1 points from the previous year, the country's civil liberties, political rights, and media freedom are respected and guaranteed. In 2010 and 2013, Belize's social context indicator scores were (81.2 and 82.8, respectively) the highest scores it has had in a decade.

With respect to the quality of government indicators, in 2020, Belize's score declined by 1.9 points from the previous year. The country's score was

below the Western Hemisphere average for 2020 by 2.6 points. Since 2010, the country's score has been steadily declining. Belize's score for quality of government indicator is not optimal, and it is attributed to the serious problem of corruption within the country.

In 2020, Belize's rule of law indicator declined by 3.1 points from the previous year. The country's rule of law score has been consistently low over the decade and declining since 2010. Within the Western Hemisphere, the rule of law indicator is 51.1 for 2020, and Belize's score is 2.0 points below the average for the region. Despite an independent judicial system, there are occasions of interference in the courts by political and business entities within the country. In addition, the country has a problem with its criminal and civil justice system. The country's score improved over the decade primarily due to the independence of the judicial system. Nonetheless, the judicial system does have a few shortcomings, such as limited resources.

Belize's business stability indicator declined in 2020 by 2.5 points from the previous year. The country is 5.4 points below the Western Hemisphere 2020 average and falls in the 25th percentile. Since 2010, the country's score has been declining, where it had the highest score in 2010 of 52.4 and the lowest score of 43.0 in 2015. Belize's declining score is largely attributed to the uneven enforcement of private property rights and inefficiency within regulations and policies.

The country's violence and security indicator decreased in 2020 by 9.8 points from the previous year. Belize's violence and security score reached 50.7, which falls 3.6 points below the Western Hemisphere's for the indicator in 2020. The country's indicator score has varied over the decade, reaching its lowest score in 2020 and its highest score of 70.8 in 2016. Belize's fluctuating score is largely impacted by illicit trafficking and organized crime.