

Belize

This one-pager is part of a broader project¹ examining how gender considerations are reflected in fisheries governance. A systematic content analysis of fisheries governance documents from 20 countries assessed how gender is addressed across policy language, institutional arrangements, objectives, and strategies. Project findings are intended to strengthen recognition of women's contributions across the sector and support equitable access to marine resources, share of benefits, and participation in decision-making.

Each one-pager summarizes key findings for a focal country, analysing fisheries governance documents as a collective policy bundle to identify system-level patterns. The analysis draws on documents collected up to May 2025, and the findings inform both this one-pager and the governance section of the corresponding country fact sheet.²

Taken individually or collectively across the 20 countries, these one-pagers aim to inform decision-makers, civil society actors, funders, and researchers by providing insights on gender considerations in fisheries governance.

Area of Analysis	Country Findings
Total number of documents analysed	48
Number of documents with women/gender terms only	1
Number of documents with she/her pronouns only	3
Number of documents with both terms and pronouns	0
<i>Qualitative assessments are based only on documents with women/gender terms (1), she/her pronouns (3), or both (0).</i>	
Structural integration <i>Low / Medium / High</i>	Medium: Gender is substantively articulated in one national fisheries policy, where equality and equity are framed as guiding principles.
Objective of gender integration <i>Ecological / Economic / Social</i>	Ecological (primary): Women's inclusion is linked to sustainable fisheries management, stewardship, and effective governance of marine resources. Social (secondary): Women's participation and representation is recognized alongside other vulnerable groups within the fisheries sector.
Approach to gender integration <i>Reach / Benefit / Empower / Transform</i>	Reach: Gender inclusion is expressed through gender-sensitive policy principles and recognition of women's participation, with engagement concentrated at the level of acknowledgment and standards-setting.

Methodology Snapshot

Qualitative Assessment Framework

Qualitative assessments reflect how gender considerations are articulated within the reviewed documents. They are derived from content analysis of texts referencing women, gender, or feminine pronouns. The categories below outline the criteria guiding this framework.

Structural integration (extent of institutional embedding)

- *Low* – Gender considerations appear in governance texts without shaping policy goals or structures.
- *Medium* – Gender considerations inform policy goals or institutional commitments without binding mandates.
- *High* – Gender considerations are embedded in binding mandates, quantified targets, or formal representation.

Objective of gender integration (intended aim)

- *Ecological* – Linked to sustainability or natural resources management effectiveness.
- *Economic* – Linked to livelihoods, income generation, or value chains.
- *Social* – Linked to equity, participation, or women’s rights.

Approach to gender integration (mode of operationalization)

- *Reach* – Women are recognized, referenced, or included in consultation or governance processes.
- *Benefit* – Targeted resources improve women’s access or material outcomes.
- *Empower* – Women hold decision-making representation or influence within governance processes.
- *Transform* – Institutional or structural reforms address underlying norms, power imbalances, or inequalities.

Governance Document Selection Criteria and Content Search

Document selection criteria were established to identify fisheries-specific governance instruments addressing:

- fisheries management and regulations;
- fisheries production systems and value chains, including pre-harvest, harvest, processing, and trade activities;
- broader development and economic strategies explicitly linked to fisheries-sector activities.

Key gender-related terms – including “gender,” “women,” “girls,” “mothers,” “she,” and “her” – were systematically searched across the selected documents and analysed in context. For full methodology, see the accompanying metadata³ document.

Selected Fisheries Governance Documents for Analysis

Documents and key attributes are compiled in a project database⁴, with hyperlinks to original text where available.

Large Scale Pelagic Driftnets, Fishing Vessel Circular FVC-10/03.

Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (S.I. No. 126 of 2024).

Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (S.I. No. 135 of 2024).

Fisheries (Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (S.I. No. 132 of 2024).

Fisheries Resources (Amendment) Act No. 7 of 2022.

Fisheries (Amendment) (No. 2) (Revocation) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 105 of 2022).

Fisheries Resources (Stone Crab) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 108 of 2022).

Fisheries (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2021 (S.I. No. 128 of 2021).

Fisheries Resources Act No.7 of 2020.

Fisheries Resources (Gill Net Prohibition) Regulations 2020 (S.I. No. 158 of 2020).

High Seas Fishing Act, Chapter 210:01, Revised Edition 2020.

National Fisheries Policy, Strategy, and Action Plan of Belize.

High Seas Fishing Vessel Policy of Licensing.

National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks 2017-2022.

National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks on the High Seas.

High Seas Fishing (Licensing) Regulations (S.I. No. 33 of 2014).

High Seas Fishing (Monitoring, Control and Surveillance) Regulations (S.I. No. 39 of 2014).

High Seas Fishing Sanctions Regulations (S. I. No. 32 of 2014).

National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing on the High Seas.

Belize High Seas, Fishing Vessel Circular FVC-13/02.

High Seas Fishing Act, 2013 (No. 26 of 2013).

Fisheries (Nassau Grouper Protection) Regulations, 2009 (S.I. No. 49 of 2009).

Fisheries (Caye Caulker Marine Reserve) Regulations, 2008.

Fisheries (Hol Chan Marine Reserve)(Amendment) Regulations, 2008 (S.I. No. 114 of 2008).

Fisheries (Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve) Regulations (S.I. No. 95 of 2003).

High Seas Fishing Act, Chapter 210:01, Revised Edition 2003.

Fisheries (Nassau grouper protection) Regulations, 2003.

Fisheries (Spawning aggregation site reserves) order.

Fisheries (Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve) Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 68 of 2001).

Fisheries (Port Honduras Marine Reserve) Regulations (S.I. No. 18 of 2000).

Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations 1999 (S.I. No. 13 of 1999).

Fisheries (Hol Chan Marine Reserve)(Amendment) Regulations, 1999 (S.I. No. 101 of 1999).

Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations 1997 (S.I. No. 27 of 1997).

Fisheries (Amendment)(No. 2) Regulations 1997 (S.I. No. 68 of 1997).

Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations 1996 (S.I. No. 34 of 1996).

Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations 1996 (S.I. No. 155 of 1996).

Fisheries (Glovers Reef Marine Reserve) Regulations 1996 (S.I. No. 70 of 1996).

Fisheries (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 76 of 1997).

Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations, 1993 (S.I. No. 55 of 1993).

Fisheries (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations, 1993 (S.I. No. 143 of 1993).

Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations 1991 (S.I. No. 169 of 1991).

Fisheries (Amendment) Regulation 1990 (S.I. No. 68 of 1990).

Fisheries (Amendment) Regulation 1982 (S.I. No. 17 of 1982).

Fisheries (Amendment) Regulation 1982 (S.I. No. 83 of 1982).

Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations 1980 (S.I. No. 24 of 1980).

Fisheries Regulations 1977.

Fisheries (Export of Fish) Regulations (Cap. 320).

Fisheries Act (Chapter 210).

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The opinions, findings, and conclusions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the organisations listed above.



¹ Project website – <https://oceanrisk.earth/fact-sheets/>

² Country fact sheet – <https://oceanrisk.earth/fact-sheets/#belize>

³ Metadata document – <https://oceanrisk.earth/fact-sheets/#supplementary-material-for-country-fact-sheets>

⁴ Zenodo database – Cutting, A., Wabnitz, C.C.C., Woodhead, A.J., & Norström, A. (2025). Database of Fisheries Governance Documents for Gender Equity Analysis [Data set]. Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15098509>