



INCEPTION REPORT

"SECURING WATER RESOURCES THROUGH SOLAR ENERGY AND INNOVATIVE ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT (SEAM) PROJECT"

Financed by:
Adaptation Fund

Executed by:
Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT).

**Implemented by: Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour
and Local Government (MRT)**

Date of Project Inception: April 24th 2026

Date of Report: June 16, 2026

Prepared by: Juanita Garcia-Saqui
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PACT

Submitted to:

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1. Introduction and Background

Belize, particularly its rural and coastal communities, is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including water scarcity, droughts, flooding, and changes in precipitation patterns. The Toledo District, a Maya enclave, and the low-lying coastal areas of Northern Belize are especially susceptible. Water sources in communities have deteriorated due to land use, geological characteristics, and climate stress, leading to food security issues, poverty, and health concerns.

The Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT), as the National Implementing Entity (NIE) for the Adaptation Fund (AF), has received grant funding for the project "Securing Water Resources through Solar Energy and Innovative Adaptive Management (SEAM)". The project was officially approved for funding of US \$5,000,000 (BZ 10 million) by the Adaptation Fund Board.

The goal of the project is to empower communities to sustainably manage their water resources, which are affected by climate change, through investments in capacity building, climate-resilient water infrastructure, ecosystem restoration, livelihood diversification, and strengthened governance.

The project is implemented by PACT and executed by the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government (MRT), targeting four vulnerable rural communities:

- Dolores (Toledo District)
- Otoxha (Toledo District)
- Boom Creek (Toledo District)
- Copper Bank (Corozal District)

As part of the preparatory phase for the project, a meeting was held on November 7, 2025, among PACT, the Ministry of Rural Transformation (MRT), and the Ministry of Economic Transformation - the Designated Authority for the Adaptation Fund in Belize. The meeting aimed to present the project to the MRT, clarify the roles and responsibilities of each party, and agree on immediate next steps. Following the successful completion of all pre-implementation actions, the project was officially launched on April 24, 2026, in Punta Gorda Town, Toledo District. This launch marked the formal inception of the project. This report summarizes the project's progress from the preparatory phase meeting through to the public launch.

2. Preparatory Phase Meeting Objectives (November 7, 2025)

The objectives of the SEAM project meeting were to:

- Provide a brief overview of the project, its components, and its strategic objectives.
- Gain a common understanding of how the program will be rolled out.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of each party, particularly PACT as the grant recipient and MRT as the Executing Entity (EE).
- Discuss and agree on the leadership and process for Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) with the indigenous Maya communities in the Toledo District.
- Agree on project governance structures and define immediate next steps.

3. Summary of Meeting Discussions & Decisions (November 7, 2025)

The meeting included representatives from PACT, MRT, and the Ministry of Economic Transformation (MET/NDA). Key outcomes were:

- PACT serves as fiduciary manager and NIE; MRT serves as the Executing Entity responsible for on-the-ground implementation. A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be established within MRT.
- MRT will take the lead on the FPIC process in the Toledo District, with PACT participating. A preliminary meeting with the Maya Leaders Alliance (MLA) and Indigenous People's Affairs (IPA) was scheduled.
- Agreement to formalize a Project Steering Committee (PSC) for oversight and a Technical Committee (including IPA) for advisory support.
- A workplan was to be developed by PACT, and community consultations were to be scheduled by MRT following the internal meeting with MLA/IPA.

4. Pre-Launch Activities (November 2025 – April 2026)

Following the preparatory meeting, the following actions were completed:

- Official approval letter received from the Adaptation Fund.
- Terms of Reference for the PMU and PSC were drafted.
- An internal meeting was held with the Maya Leaders Alliance (MLA) and the Indigenous People's Affairs (IPA) department to present the project and develop a streamlined FPIC approach, as agreed upon in the preparatory meeting.
- MRT initiated ground testing in the four target communities.
- A Grant Agreement was finalized by PACT and shared with the MRT for their revision and input.

5. Official Project Launch – Inception: April 24th, 2026

5.1. Event Overview

The SEAM project was officially launched on Friday, April 24th, 2026, at the Punta Gorda Welcome Center in the Toledo District. The event marked a significant national milestone for Belize's climate resilience and rural development agenda and the Inception of the project. The Master of Ceremonies was Dr. Francis Arzu Sr.

The launch brought together senior government officials, community leaders from the four beneficiary villages (Dolores, Otoxha, Boom Creek, and Copper Bank), technical officers from implementing partners, and members of the media.

5.2. Key Remarks & Highlights

- Opening Remarks – Mr. Carlos Pol, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Ministry of Economic Transformation: Mr. Pol highlighted the strategic importance of climate finance for Belize's national development. He reaffirmed his Ministry's role as the Designated Authority for the Adaptation Fund and their full support for the project.
- Project Overview was provided by Dr. Juanita Garcia-Saqui, Adaptation Fund Project Coordinator, PACT. Dr. Garcia-Saqui delivered a comprehensive presentation on the project's three core components, timeline, and expected outcomes. She emphasized that SEAM is designed as an integrated adaptation initiative that brings together technology, ecosystems, and people. Key points from her remarks included:
 - Component 1: Solar-powered hybrid water systems tailored to each community, including geo-resistivity testing, elevated storage tanks, chlorination, and metering.
 - Component 2: Ecosystem restoration (riparian forests in Toledo, mangroves in Corozal) linked to livelihood diversification (agroforestry, beekeeping, eco-tourism) and targeted training for women in solar system maintenance.
 - Component 3: Strengthening Water Boards and village governance with a mandate for at least 50% female representation, peer-to-peer learning exchanges, and national public awareness campaigns.
 - She concluded by stating the project's goal: *"Let us build not just water systems - but resilience, dignity, and hope."*
- Special Remarks – Hon. Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Solid Waste Management: Minister Habet placed the SEAM project within the context of Belize's national climate commitments.
 - He noted that Belize is ranked 3rd among SIDS for disaster risk and 5th globally for climate change risk.
 - He highlighted recent government actions, including the 10-year Water Sector Adaptation Plan, the upcoming carbon bill, and the launch of NDC 3.0 (which targets 75% renewable energy by 2030).
 - He praised SEAM as a model for integrated, community-led adaptation, stating: *"The SEAM project is not just another infrastructure project. It is the kind of integrated, community-led, climate-resilient solution that my Ministry has been championing."*
- Special Remarks – Hon. Oscar Requena, Minister of Rural Transformation, Community Development & Local Government: Minister Requena, as the Area Representative for Toledo West, welcomed the project to his constituency. He reaffirmed MRT's commitment to its role as Executing Entity and emphasized the importance of local ownership and the leadership of the Alcalde system in the success of the project.
- The event featured cultural presentations by local groups from the Toledo District, celebrating Maya heritage and the spirit of community collaboration.
- Closing Remarks were given by Mr. Valentino Shal, CEO, Ministry of Rural Transformation. Mr. Shal closed the event by thanking all partners and the communities. He reiterated MRT's dedication to working alongside PACT and the Adaptation Fund to ensure the project delivers lasting, tangible benefits for the people of Dolores, Otoxha, Boom Creek, and Copper Bank.

5.3. Media and Public Outreach

A Media Factsheet was distributed to press attendees, summarizing the project's purpose, key components, beneficiary communities (1,800+ direct beneficiaries), and funding. Media contact was provided by Ms. Jeanelle Mencias, Communications & Marketing Manager at PACT. The launch garnered coverage from major Belizean news outlets, highlighting the government's commitment to climate resilience and rural development.

6. Project Status & Way Forward

As of the April 24th, 2026 inception, the SEAM project has officially transitioned from the design and planning phase to active implementation. The immediate next steps include:

1. Finalizing the grant agreement between PACT and the MRT.
2. Finalizing the recruitment and onboarding of the full Project Management Unit within the MRT.
3. Convening the first official meetings of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and the Technical Committee.
4. Launching the procurement process for the detailed engineering design studies for the water systems in each community, in parallel with the formal FPIC process in the three Toledo District communities, led by MRT.
5. Conducting detailed baseline data collection in each community to finalize indicators for monitoring and evaluation.
6. Submitting the first annual workplan and budget to the PSC for approval to enable first disbursement of funds for Year 1 activities.

The SEAM project is now ongoing, with strong political backing, clear community ownership, and a robust institutional framework. PACT and MRT remain committed to transparent, inclusive, and impactful implementation over the project's five-year duration.

7. Next Steps

The follow-up steps include the following:

- Finalize the TOR for the PMU
- Fill all PMU positions to start the implementation of the project activities
- Finalized the development of the project standing committee TORs
- Conduct an orientation meeting for MRT staff who will be working on the project in one way or another
- Develop a detailed M&E plan for the project between the PMU and PACT's M&E team
- Implement the project as per the project implementation plan for year 1 within the available budget.

Annex 1: Agenda of Preparatory Meeting for AF SEAM

DATE: November 7th, 2025

TIME: 2:00 pm

LOCATION: MRT'S's Conference Room

METTING AGENDA

NO.	ITEM DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE
1	Welcome	CEO Shal
2	Introduction	All
3	Project activities, Budget and Implementation Arrangement	Mr. Eli Romero – PACT
4	Project Management Arrangements (TOR for PM and hosting)	Discussion
5	FPIC protocol with Indigenous Communities in Toledo	CEO-Shall and MRT Team
6	Next steps and follow up	Mr. Eli Romero
7	Adjournment	

Annex 2: List of Inception Meeting Participants

No.	Name	Position	Institution
1	Mr. Carlos Pol	CEO	Ministry of Economic Transformation
2	Mr. Leroy Martinez	Acting Director	
3	Mr Valentino Shal	CEO	Ministry of Rural Transformation
4	Mr. Juan Marin	Rural Water Director	
5	Mrs Cindy Chan- Noble	Policy Coordinator	
6	Mr. Adrian Cus	District Coordinator	
7	Mr. Abil Castañeda	Executive Director	PACT
8	Mr. Eli Romero	Climate Finance Manager	
9	Melissa Berges	Project Development Officer	
10	Mrs. Juanita Garcia- Saqui	Project Manager	EDA Project / PACT

Annex 3: Agenda of Official Project Launch (April 24, 2026) – PROJECT INCEPTION

Agenda



ADAPTATION FUND

PACT
Protected Areas Conservation Trust

AGENDA

SEAM Project Launch

Friday, April 24th, 2026 | 09:30 AM- 10:35 AM
Punta Gorda Welcome Center | Toledo District
Master of Ceremonies | Senor J.P. Dr. Francis Arzu Sr.

09:30 am - 09:35 am	<u>National Anthem / National Prayer</u>
09:35 am - 09:40 am	<u>Opening Remarks</u> Mr. Carlos Pol Chief Executive Officer Ministry of Economic Transformation
09:40 am - 09:55 am	<u>Project Overview</u> Dr. Juana Garcia Saqui Adaptation Fund Project Coordinator PACT
09:55 am - 10:00 am	<u>Cultural Presentation</u>
10:00 am - 10:25 am	<u>Special Remarks</u> Honourable Dr. Osmond Martinez Minister of State: Ministry of Economic Transformation Area Representative Toledo East Honourable Orlando Habet Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Solid Waste Management Area Representative Cayo Northeast Honourable Oscar Requena Minister of Rural Transformation Community Development & Local Government Area Representative Toledo West
10:25 am - 10:30 am	<u>Cultural Presentation</u>
10:30 am - 10:35 am	<u>Closing Remarks</u> Mr. Valentino Shal Chief Executive Officer Ministry of Rural Transformation Community Development & Local Government

Annex 4: SEAM Project Media Factsheet (Distributed at Launch)

**SEAM PROJECT LAUNCH**
MEDIA FACTSHEET

**PACT**
Protected Areas Conservation Trust

PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Project: SEAM: Securing Water Resources through Solar Energy and Innovative Adaptive Management
- Total Funding: BZ\$10 Million (Adaptation Fund)
- Duration: 5 years
- Implementing Entity: Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT)
- Executing Entity: Ministry of Rural Transformation (MRT)
- Supporting Ministries: Ministry of Economic Transformation (MET) & Climate Finance Unit

PROJECT PURPOSE

To strengthen climate resilience and water security in vulnerable rural communities through innovative, sustainable, and community-driven solutions.

COMMUNITIES IMPACTED

- Toledo District: Boom Creek, Dolores, Otoxha
- Corozal District: Copper Bank
- Direct Beneficiaries: 1,800+ residents

KEY COMPONENTS

Water Security

- Solar-powered hybrid water systems
- Reliable, safe, and sustainable household water supply

Ecosystem Restoration

- Reforestation and watershed rehabilitation

Agroforestry initiatives

- Livelihood Support
- Economic opportunities, especially for women
- Climate-resilient income diversification

Governance & Capacity Building

- Strengthening local water boards
- Promoting inclusive and equitable water management

Media Contact: Jeanelle Mencias, Communications & Marketing Manager,
cmmanager@pactbelize.org

Highlights of the SEAM Project:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1FShcJ92Y6/>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/18uWPCGKDe/>

Annex 5: Summary of Key Ministerial Remarks (April 24, 2026)

Hon. Osmond Martinez, Ministry of the Ministry of Economic Transformation:

- Emphasized the importance of water security for the beneficiary communities recounting his experience growing up as a child in the Toledo District.
- He affirmed his Ministry's commitment to the implementation of the project bringing needed infrastructure to the Toledo District.

Hon. Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Solid Waste Management:

- Emphasized that SEAM is a model for integrated, community-led adaptation.
- Linked the project to national goals: NDC 3.0 (75% renewable energy by 2030, 63% increase in GHG removals), the 10-year Water Sector Adaptation Plan, and the National Biodiversity Strategy.
- Praised the project's adherence to FPIC protocols and its focus on gender equity (50% women on Water Boards).
- Stated: *"When we secure water, we secure life; and when communities lead in protecting their resources, they do not just adapt, they thrive."*

Hon. Oscar Requena, Minister of Rural Transformation, Community Development & Local Government:

- Minister Requena, as the Area Representative for Toledo West, welcomed the project to his constituency. He reaffirmed MRT's commitment to its role as Executing Entity and emphasized the importance of local ownership and the leadership of the Alcalde system in the success of the project.

Dr. Juanita Garcia-Saqui, PACT Adaptation Fund Projects Coordinator:

- Detailed the three interconnected components consisting of solar-hybrid water systems, ecosystem restoration with livelihood diversification, and inclusive governance.
- Highlighted innovative aspects which include training Indigenous women as solar technicians, linking reforestation to income (cacao, beekeeping), and peer-to-peer learning exchanges.
- Confirmed the project will benefit over 330 households directly.

Annex 2: List of invited Guest for Launch

SEAM PROJECT LAUNCH					
Friday, April 24th, 2026 at 9:30 am					
	Organization	Salutation	Name	Surname	Role
1	Alcalde Boom Creek	Mr.	Israel	Sanchez	1st Alcalde
2	Alcalde Dolores	Mr.	Vicente	Pan	1st Alcalde
3	Alcalde Otoxa	Mr.	Adandino	Ack	1st Alcalde
4	Belize Power Connect Limited	Ms.	Florentina	Choco	Solar Engineer
5	Belize Power Connect Limited	Ms.	Miriam	Choc	Solar Engineer
6	Belize Power Connect Limited	Ms.	Cristina	Choc	Solar Engineer
7	Belize Social Investment Fund (BSIF)	Mr.	Carlos	Tun	Executive Director
8	Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE)	Mr.	Ishmael	Quiroz	Executive Director
9	Belize Water Services Limited (BWSL)	Mr.	Cornelio	Acosta Jr.	Executive Chairman
10	Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)	Dr.	Colin	Young	Executive Director
11	Chairperson Boom Creek	Mr.	Jairo	Morales	Chairperson
12	Chairperson Copper Bank	Mr.	Andy	Arguelles	Chairperson
13	Chairperson Dolores	Mr.	Maximo	Pan	Chairperson
14	Chairperson Otoxa	Mr.	Bernadino	Salam	Chairperson
15	DAVCO Toledo District	Mr.	Gregorio	Choco	President
16	Development Finance Corporation	Mr.	Henry	Anderson	C.E.O
17	District Agricultural Officer				
18	Julian Cho Society	Mr.	Pablo	Mis	Executive Director
19	Ministry of Infrastructural Development and Housing	Mr.	Victor	Espat	CEO
20	Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and New Growth Industries	Hon.	Rodwell	Fergusom	Minister
21	Ministry of Economic Transformation	Mr.	Carlos	Pol	CEO
22	Ministry of Economic Transformation	Hon. Dr.	Osmond	Martinez	Minister of State
23	Ministry of Economic Transformation	Mr.	Leroy	Martinez	Director of Climate Finance Unit
24	Ministry of Economic Transformation	Mr.	Denham	Chuc	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
25	Ministry of Indigenous, Constitution & Religious Affairs & Transport	Hon. Dr.	Louis	Zabaneh	Minister
26	Ministry of National Defence & Border Security	Hon.	Florencio	Marin Jr.	Minister
27	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change - NHS	Ms.	Tennielle	Hendy	Principal Hydrologist, Hyrdology Department
28	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change - NCCO	Mrs.	Edalmi	Pinelo	Chief Climate Change Officer
29	Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Solid Waste Management	Ms.	Milagro	Matus	CEO
30	Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Solid Waste Management	Hon.	Orlando	Habet	Minister
31	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change - NBIO	Mr	Saul	Cruz	Director
32	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change - SDU	Mr	Victor	Alegria	Director
33	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change - DoE	Mr	Anthony	Mai	CEO
33	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change - FD	Mr	John	Pinelo	Deputy Chief Forest Officer
	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Climate Change - Solid Waste Management	Mr			
34	Ministry Rural Transformation, Community Development and Local Government	Hon.	Oscar	Requena	Minister
35	Ministry Rural Transformation, Community Development and Local Government	Mr.	Valentino	Shal	C.E.O
36	Ministry Rural Transformation, Community Development and Local Government	Mr.	Charles	Galvez	D. of Rural Development
37	Office of Indigenous Peoples Affairs	Mr.	Gustavo	Requena	Director
38	Toledo Alcalde Association	Mr.	Pedro	Teul	President
39	Toledo Cacao Growers Association	Mr.	Orlando	Coc	Managing Director
40	UNICEF Belize	Mr.	Sajid	Ali	Country Representative
41	United Nations Development Program (UNDP)	Mr.	Michael	Lund	Country Representative
42	Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE)	Mr.	Leonardo	Chavarria Jr.	Executive Director
43	Punta Gorda Town Council	Mr.	Carlos	Galvez	Mayor
44	Yaaxche Conservation Trust	Ms.	Christina	Garcia	Executive Director
45	Belize Livestock Producers Association	Mr.	Arden	Edwards	President
	PACT				
46	Protected Areas Conservation Trust	Mr.	Abil	Castaneda	Executive Director
47	Protected Areas Conservation Trust	Dr.	Juanita	Garcia- Saqui	Adaptation Fund Project Coordinator
48	Protected Areas Conservation Trust	Mr.	Eli	Romero	Climate Finance Manager
49	Protected Areas Conservation Trust	Mr.	Pablo	Ayala	Finance & Administrative Manager
50	Protected Areas Conservation Trust	Ms.	Robin	Burns	Conservation Investment Manager
51	Protected Areas Conservation Trust	Mr.	Rumile	Arana	PACT Director of Operations