



Press Release

Third Field Trip to Unserved Villages in the Toledo District

Belmopan. October 1, 2021.

The LAIT UP BELIZE! Project, steered by the Energy Unit of the Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy & Logistics, alongside the Ministry of Rural Transformation, continued its operations to reach villages in the Toledo District with no access to electricity. From September 27 to 30, 2021, the team visited villages in the remote areas of Boom Creek, Machakil Ha, Dolores, Otoxha and San Benito Poite.

The field trip was the third conducted in the Toledo District – and fifth in the country – as the final phase of data collection to establish a national plan for energy access in Belize. The national plan seeks to identify electricity service options, based on line extensions (from the national grid) or mini-grid technologies to provide the same level of service to all citizens in Belize. The field visits serve to determine what technical solutions are appropriate for providing electricity to these unserved customers by meeting with the villagers to assess their consumption needs and to conduct onsite inspections, and then to further stratify resources for investing in the required infrastructure.



Figure 1: Key stakeholders with the village leaders of San Benito Poite Village in the Toledo District



Figure 2: Meeting with village leaders at Machakil Ha in the Toledo District



The field trip as well as the national plan are funded by the European Union (EU) and organised by the technical assistance project called LAIT UP BELIZE! The EU is also providing a grant of EUR\$4.5 million to Belize Electricity Limited (BEL) for providing mini-grid infrastructure with hybrid solar/diesel generation and battery storage for some of the villages that will be identified as suitable for this kind of electricity infrastructure. The hope is that additional allocations of funding can be sought for providing electricity to all the unserved villages in the country. This will serve to meet the national policy objective of universal access to energy services, which is also a target in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



Figure 3: Village leaders of Boom Creek, Toledo walked through high waters to meet with the Energy Stakeholders on the roadside

Present at the meetings were Hon. Rodwell Ferguson, Minister of Public Utilities, Energy and Logistics; Hon. Michael Espat, Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, and Investment; and Hon. Oscar Requena, CEO Valentino Shal and other representatives of the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government. Representatives of key stakeholders such as BEL, Digi, the National Authorizing Office, and the technical support team from the LAIT UP BELIZE! Project also attended the visits.

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For further information, please contact Mr. Amin Matar, Energy Officer at the Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy and Logistics.