

Belize

<b>Background</b>	<b>Name of EMB:</b>	Elections and Boundaries Commission/Department of Belize
	<b>Status:</b>	Permanent
	<b>Number of commissioners:</b>	Five commissioners including the chairperson.
	<b>Number of full-time EMB staff:</b>	Sixty-nine permanent staff (additional temporary staff are employed during an election period)
	<b>Constitutional and/or legislative provisions for establishment of the EMB:</b>	Section 88 of the Belize Constitution establishes the Elections and Boundaries Commission. The legislative provisions are the Representation of the People Act, City Council Acts, Town Council Act, Village Council Act, Referendum Act and Recall Of Elected Representative Act.
<b>Establishment of the EMB</b>	<b>EMB's mandate:</b>	Responsible for the direction and supervision of the registration of voters, conduct of elections, referenda and all matters connected therewith, re-registration of voters, boundary redistricting, voter education and matters for recall of elected representatives.
	<b>EMB model:</b>	There are two electoral management bodies: the Elections and Boundaries Commission and the Elections and Boundaries Department. The Commission is independent, as commissioners shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority and shall act in accordance with the Representation of the People Act or any other law, rule or regulation. The Department is under a government ministry headed by a minister.
	<b>What standards are established in the constitution or other legislation for democratic legitimacy?</b>	The Constitution and the Representation of the People Act provide for every citizen of Belize or a citizen of any Commonwealth country who has attained the age of 18 years and who satisfies the requirements of the Representation of the People Act shall have the right to vote. Votes shall be cast in a secret ballot.

<b>Appointment, tenure and removals</b>	<b>Provisions for the appointment of commissioners:</b>	<p>The Chair and two other members shall be appointed by the Governor-General, acting in accordance with the advice of the prime minister, given after consultation with the leader of the opposition. The remaining two members shall be appointed by the Governor-General, acting in accordance with the advice of the prime minister, given with the concurrence of the leader of the opposition. In the process of consultation with the leader of the opposition for the appointment of the chair, the prime minister shall use his/her best endeavours to secure the agreement of the leader of the opposition.</p>
	<b>Political status of commissioners:</b>	<p>Political party affiliation (three ruling party and two opposition party)</p>
	<b>Chair qualifications:</b>	<p>No specific qualification; however, the chair shall be a person of integrity and high national standing. No person is qualified to be appointed as a member of the commission if he or she is a member of the National Assembly or if he/she holds or is acting in any public office.</p>
	<b>Commissioner qualifications:</b>	<p>No specific qualification; however, all commissioners shall be persons of integrity and high national standing. No person is qualified to be appointed as a commissioner if he or she is a member of the National Assembly or if he/she holds or is acting in any public office.</p>
	<b>Tenure of chair and commissioners:</b>	<p>All Commissioners are appointed for a five-year term on a renewable basis.</p>
	<b>Provisions for the removal of commissioners:</b>	<p>Commissioners can only be removed from office for inability to perform the functions of office (whether arising from infirmity of mind or body of from any other cause) or for misbehaviour, and shall not be so removed. Removal is referred to the Belize Advisory Council, which advises the Governor-General on the issue of removal.</p>
	<b>Provisions for the appointment of EMB senior staff:</b>	<p>EMB staff are the responsibility of the Chief Elections Officer, who heads the Election and Boundaries Department. This Department is one of the two electoral management bodies (the Election and Boundaries Department and Elections and Boundaries Commission). The Department staff are public officers, who are appointed by the Public Services Commission and governed by the Public Services Regulations. The Department is a government department which falls under a government ministry.</p>

	<p><b>Tenure of EMB senior staff:</b></p>	<p>The mandatory retirement age is 55 years; therefore, officers can work up to the age of 55 years if they so desire.</p>
	<p><b>Provisions for the removal of EMB senior staff:</b></p>	<p>Removal of senior staff is made through the process outlined in the Public Services Regulations. This process involves the Public Services Commission, which is also a constitutional body, writing to the officer with reasons for the intended removal. The officer would then be given a chance to respond. All documentation goes to the Public Services Commission, which reviews the circumstances and sets a hearing when deemed necessary. Officers are allowed to have union or legal representatives. Officers also have the option to appeal to the Belize Advisory Council if they are not satisfied with the decision of the Public Services Commission.</p>
<p><b>Funding arrangements</b></p>	<p><b>Setting and control of EMB's budget:</b></p>	<p>It is the responsibility of the Elections and Boundaries Department to prepare a proposed budget based on the EMB's needs and to submit this to the ministry. Thereafter it goes through the budgetary cycle of government. Ceilings etc. are set by the Ministry of Finance, which is the ministry responsible for approval of funds.</p>
	<p><b>Financial autonomy:</b></p>	<p>There is no financial autonomy. The department falls under a government ministry, which has a chief executive officer who is the accounting officer for the department. The minister responsible for finance prepares and lays before parliament in each financial year, estimates of revenues and expenditures for the following financial year. Supplemental funds can be approved in circumstances where the amount appropriated is insufficient.</p>
	<p><b>Legal provisions for financial autonomy:</b></p>	<p>Legal provisions are the Financial Orders, Stores Orders, Control of Public Expenditure, Finance and Audit (Reform Act), which are acts governing all government ministries/departments, as there is no financial autonomy.</p>
<p><b>Electoral system</b></p>	<p><b>Number of chambers/houses within the legislature:</b></p>	<p>Bicameral: the Senate consist of 12 members appointed by the Governor-General for a five-year period (six on the advice of the prime minister, three on the advice of the leader of the opposition, one each on the advice of the Belize Council of Churches, Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry and National Trade Union Congress). The House of Representatives consists of 31 members elected by direct popular vote (first-past-the-post).</p>

	<b>Voting system:</b>	FPTP.
	<b>Amendments to electoral laws:</b>	Both electoral management bodies (the Commission and the Department) can propose amendments to electoral laws. These bodies work hand in hand, as the commission delegates its duties to the chief elections officer. The chief elections officer also serves as the secretary to the commission.
	<b>Drafting of electoral regulations:</b>	No drafting is done by the commission/department. Recommendations for changes are sent to the Attorney-General's ministry, which has legal staff to deal with drafting for all government entities – including the commission/department. The minister responsible for elections has the power to make changes, and therefore would consult with cabinet on any proposed changes. The minister would then sign the amendment into law.
<b>Electoral disputes</b>	<b>Electoral dispute resolution mechanisms:</b>	Electoral disputes are resolved by filing an election petition at the Supreme Court and tried by a judge who is referred to as an 'election judge'.
<b>Other issues:</b>		
<b>Secretariat</b>	<b>Administrative autonomy:</b>	The Elections and Boundaries Department can recommend; however, the Ministry of the Public Service and the Ministry of Finance have to give approval. The Elections and Boundaries Department falls directly under the Ministry of the Public Service for all administrative matters.
	<b>Women in senior positions:</b>	The Elections and Boundaries Commission: two of five or 40 per cent of the commissioners are women. The Elections and Boundaries Department: 18 of 22 or 81 per cent of the senior officers are women.

	<p><b>Administrative structure:</b></p>	<p>The commission is an independent body and makes all policies, which the department staff are required to carry out. For the purpose of discharge of its functions, the commission may confer any of its powers and impose any of its duties on the chief elections officer. The chief elections officer is assisted by one assistant chief elections officer.</p> <p>The department has responsibility to carry out all functions relating to elections. these include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. conducting general, municipal and village council elections, including any by-elections;</li><li>2. voter registration;</li><li>3. referendum;</li><li>4. boundary delimitation;</li><li>5. voter education;</li><li>6. public education;</li><li>7. training of election workers etc.</li><li>8. All officers are expected to be versed in all areas, as there are no separate departments.</li><li>9. There are 14 registration offices across the country and each office is responsible for all aspects of electoral matters. Additionally, the central office provides the administrative and financial hub, along with key areas such as data management.</li></ol>
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