

E-Newsletter

MARITIME MATTERS

INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE

Belize Advances Maritime Compliance with IMO Audit Scheme Workshop

Belize welcomed a team of consultants from the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for a National Workshop on the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS). The workshop was held in Belize City in February 2025. The Workshop brought together key stakeholders from the maritime sector to enhance the country's preparedness for its upcoming IMSAS audit.

Organized in collaboration with the IMO, the event aimed to strengthen Belize's compliance with international maritime conventions and ensure alignment with IMO's standards and best practices. Representatives from IMMARBE, Belize Port Authority, and Belize Coast Guard actively participated in discussions and training sessions.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Claude Haylock, the Registrar of Merchant Shipping, emphasized the importance of the IMSAS audit in assessing Belize's implementation and enforcement of IMO instruments. He noted that the workshop provided an invaluable opportunity for national authorities to review their roles, identify gaps, and enhance inter-agency coordination in preparation for the audit and the IMO's invaluable support in advancing safety, security, and environmental protection. His full speech can be accessed [here](#).



The IMO consultants conducted in-depth presentations on the audit process, key performance indicators, and best practices for ensuring compliance. They also facilitated interactive sessions where participants engaged in case studies and practical exercises to improve their understanding of IMSAS requirements.

Overall, Belize recognizes that the IMSAS aims to promote the consistent and effective implementation of IMO instruments worldwide by auditing member states' performance. Belize's participation in this initiative underscores its dedication to maintaining a safe, secure, and environmentally sound maritime industry.

The engagement of all stakeholders signifies Belize's proactive approach to strengthening its maritime governance and ensuring compliance with global standards.

Belize Delegation Strengthens Global Maritime Ties at Sea Asia 2025



25 - 27 March 2025
Marina Bay Sands, Singapore



A Belize delegation comprising of the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE), Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit (BHSFU), Belize Companies and Corporate Affairs Registry (BCCAR) and Finance Belize attended Sea Asia 2025 March 25-27,2025 in Singapore. This strategic engagement reinforced Belize's presence in the global maritime community and provided an invaluable platform for networking, collaboration, and business development.

Representing Belize were key members of the IMMARBE and BHSFU's management team, Managing Director, Mr. Paul Gersok, Deputy Managing Director & Director of High Seas Fisheries, Mrs. Valarie Lanza alongside Registration, Administration, Technical & Seafarer Head of Departments and other representatives from the companies within the Belize Delegation. Their participation underscored the country's commitment to strengthening its position as reputable and competitive on the international stage.

During the event, the Belize delegation engaged in constructive discussions with Deputy Registrars and potential clients, highlighting the advantages of the Belize Flag and exploring opportunities for collaboration. Members of IMMARBE's management team also visited the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and several leading maritime enterprises, fostering relationships aimed at expanding the visibility and reach of the Belize Flag Administration.

The discussions and engagements at Sea Asia 2025 reaffirmed Belize's dedication to excellence in ship registration, fisheries management, maritime services, companies' and corporate registration and potential investment initiatives. By actively participating in global forums such as Sea Asia, Belize continues to position itself as a preferred choice for shipowners, maritime stakeholders worldwide and savvy companies.

IMMARBE remains committed to innovation, service excellence, and strategic partnerships, ensuring continued growth and recognition in the ever-evolving maritime sector.



Recognizing Excellence

Celebrating top performing Deputy Registrars

IMMARBE is proud to recognize once more the top performing Deputy Registrar (DR) achievers who have excelled in their positions and made substantial impacts on our Registry. The success of our registry is built on the efforts of individuals who go the extra mile. These five deputy registrars are setting the benchmark for 2025! We commend their hard work and extend our genuine appreciation for their continuous outstanding accomplishments and contributions.

As we move forward, we remain committed to fostering a culture of recognition and appreciation for those who are contributing to our growth.

While we commend these top performers, we also recognize the collaborative efforts of our entire network of Deputy Registrars, whose relentless efforts and commitment propel our ongoing achievements. Well done to our top-performing Deputy Registrars for their exceptional enthusiasm and notable contributions to our organization.



Ms. Ong Ah Kim
Designated Office
SINGAPORE



Mr. Young Mo Gu
Designated Office
SOUTH KOREA



Mr. Erik DE Koning
Designated Office
ROTTERDAM



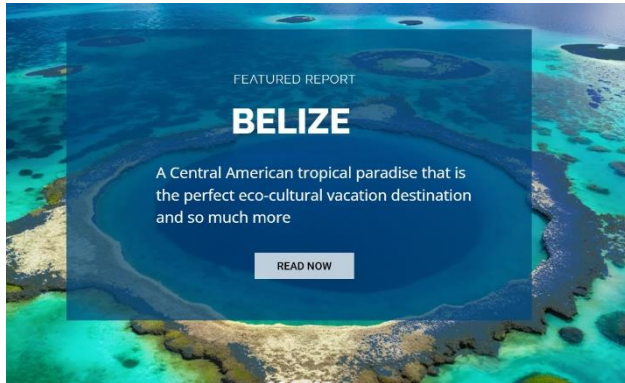
Mr. Diego Corrado
Designated Office
SINGAPORE



Capt. Li Fei
Designated Office
CHINA

Recent Developments in Belize's Maritime Sector

Belize Report in the Miami Herald



In the beginning of March, the Belize report was published in the Miami Herald. You can access the entire report [here](#).

IMMARBE was highlighted on page 5, where our Registrar of Merchant Shipping, Mr. Claude Haylock, emphasized key elements of our registry.

He briefly mentioned that with our 30 years of experience, IMMARBE is recognized as "the friendly flag of quality," providing ship registration, technical support, and seafarer certification. We practice strict adherence to international safety and environmental standards, implementing practices such as age limits for vessels, increased safety inspections, and rigorous monitoring to maintain a reputable open registry.

We encourage you to read the full report to know more about Belize's thriving and diversifying economy!

The Belikin La Ruta Maya Belize River Challenge

March 7 - 10, 2025

IMMARBE was proud to co-sponsor and support team *Cool Runnings* in the annual La Ruta Maya Belize River Challenge.

La Ruta Maya Belize is one of the most iconic sporting and cultural events in the country. This thrilling four-day canoe race not only showcases Belize's rich heritage but also promotes environmental conservation and community engagement.

La Ruta Maya, which spans over 175 miles along the Belize River, draws participants from across the nation and beyond, uniting athletes, adventurers, and conservationists in an exhilarating test of endurance.

IMMARBE's support is a testament to the organization's dedication to fostering opportunities, strengthening community ties, and advocating for the sustainable use of Belize's natural resources.

You can learn more about La Ruta Maya Belize [here!](#)



Quality over Quantity: IMMARBE Takes Firm Stance on Fleet Quality, Denying 126 vessels in 2024

The International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) reportedly declined to register 126 vessels totalling 4.6M GT during 2024. Two important factors leading to the refusal of registration for these vessels were their involvement in international sanctions and their unsatisfactory detention history.

This stance underscores IMMARBE's dedication to upholding superior quality standards within its fleet.

As stated by head of Registration Department, Felicia Vargas, *"Every vessel is thoroughly assessed before registering, and this year, the unfortunate truth is that several vessels did not meet our criteria. Declining to register vessels with poor detention records and sanctions demonstrates our approach to subpar standards. The integrity of the Belize Ship Registry will not be compromised."*

This decision underscores IMMARBE's firm commitment to upholding stringent quality in vessels registered under our flag. By denying these vessels, IMMARBE continues to prioritize operational safety, regulatory compliance, and environmental responsibility over sheer quantity, demonstrating our dedication to excellence in maritime operations.

"The decision to decline these registrations is a clear message to the maritime industry that quality is paramount. It is the operational excellence and adherence to international regulations that will define the strength of our registry. We won't negotiate our standards"- Managing Director, Paul Gersok.

As we move forward in 2025, IMMARBE remains steadfast in its commitment to upholding the highest standards of maritime safety and regulatory compliance across our fleet. Through continuous engagement with all our stakeholders, rigorous oversight and proactive measures, we strive to foster a culture of excellence and accountability within our Registry. Our goal is to maintain the integrity of the Belize flag while supporting our partners in achieving operational excellence and regulatory adherence.

Belize Coast Guard empowers women through two-day workshop

Article by LCDR Jasmine Bellini

In recognition of Women's Month and in alignment with this year's International Women's Day theme, "Accelerate Action," the Belize Coast Guard (BCG) hosted a two-day workshop on March 19–20 at its headquarters. The event was designed to empower women within the organization by providing them with the tools and knowledge to enhance their personal and professional lives.

The workshop featured interactive sessions focusing on key areas such as wellness, work-life balance, parenting, financial literacy, and goal visualization. The sessions were led by a distinguished panel of guest facilitators who shared their expertise and insights, fostering a supportive space for learning and growth.



Belize Coast Guard empowers women through two-day workshop

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Among the guest speakers was Ms. Christy Almeida, Executive Chair and Founder of Autism Belize, who provided valuable perspectives on parenting, particularly in the context of raising children with special needs. Mr. Dyon Elliott, General Manager of the National Bank of Belize, delivered an insightful session on financial literacy, equipping participants with practical strategies for financial planning and stability. Ms. Jaeda Sutherland, President of WiMAC Belize Chapter, spoke on work-life balance, offering advice on how to navigate professional responsibilities while maintaining personal well-being.

Additionally, Ms. Rose Che from the Ministry of Human Development's Community Rehabilitation Unit engaged participants in discussions about wellness and self-care, reinforcing the importance of mental and emotional health.

A key highlight of the workshop was the vision board exercise, where participants were encouraged to visualize their aspirations and create tangible representations of their goals.

This activity served as a powerful reminder of the importance of setting clear objectives and taking proactive steps toward achieving them. Through this session, attendees reflected on their ambitions, both within the Belize Coast Guard and in their personal lives, fostering a sense of motivation and direction.

The Belize Coast Guard's commitment to fostering an inclusive and empowering environment for women was evident throughout the workshop. By providing opportunities for learning, self-reflection, and personal development, the event reinforced the organization's dedication to the growth and well-being of its female members.

As the BCG continues to champion progress, initiatives like this workshop serve as a testament to the strength, resilience, and potential of the women within its ranks. With knowledge, support, and a clear vision for the future, the women of the Belize Coast Guard are well-equipped to accelerate action and achieve their goals.



Regulatory Insights

Belize Attendance to IMO Committee Meetings

Belize as a member state has been increasing its participation and attendance to IMO's committee, sub-committee and working group sessions.

In February, Mr. Anique Sabal and Mr. Edmond Staine represented Belize at the Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping 11th session virtually and in person respectively.

As reported by Mr. Edmond Staine, the HTW 11th session focused on key maritime human element issues, including training, certification, and regulatory updates. The agenda included adopting revised model courses, addressing fraudulent certificates, and reviewing the STCW Convention. Notable discussions covered alternative fuels, seafarer safety, and automation's impact on the industry.

International contributions highlighted ongoing challenges and advancements, with Belize actively engaging in policy discussions. The session concluded with the election of officials and preparations for future maritime regulatory developments.

Belize Hosts Ship Decarbonization Dialogue

On March 17th, the [Belize Port Authority](#) successfully hosted a Shipping Decarbonization Dialogue, bringing together key stakeholders from the shipping, trade, commerce, climate, and tourism sectors. The dialogue focused on the ongoing IMO Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Strategy negotiations and their implications for Belize and the wider Caribbean.

The workshop convened representatives from government ministries, private shipping companies, the shipping registry, and trade and commerce sectors to collaborate on actionable steps and pilot projects aligned with the IMO GHG Strategy. Notable attendees included Dr. Simon Walmsley and Ms. Kerlene Wills from the United Nations Foundation.

This meeting underscores Belize's commitment to sustainable maritime practices and active participation in global climate discussions.

To learn more, read the full post [here](#).

Meet our Staff

Get to Know our Team

Mr. Ryan Silva
Registration Officer I



The maritime sector offers boundless opportunities, and my experience has granted me deep insight into international conventions, ship registration, and regulatory compliance. I take pride in ensuring vessels meet safety, environmental, and operational standards—a role that is both challenging and rewarding. Beyond regulations, this industry has allowed me to engage globally through networking, collaboration, and attendance at industry symposiums, broadening my understanding of maritime trade's vital role in Belize's economic growth.

From a young age, I've been driven to make a meaningful impact on Belize. Recognizing the untapped potential in our maritime sector, I am passionate about shaping policies and strategies that elevate our industry. My vision is for Belize to emerge as a strong maritime nation—one that not only meets international standards but also drives economic progress, attracts investment, and strengthens our global presence.

Through innovation, compliance, and sustainable development, I am committed to building a thriving maritime future for Belize.

Ms. Kimberly King
Administrative Assistant to Managing Director



As a newcomer to the maritime industry, I have yet to experience all that this dynamic field has to offer. However, even in these early stages, I am already inspired by the incredible rewards and fulfilment a career in this sector can provide.

The maritime industry uniquely combines adventure, stability, and opportunities for professional growth, making it an exciting and rewarding career choice.

There are countless reasons I decided pursue a career in this field, but certain aspects stand out as particularly motivating. This industry offers more than just a job, it offers a lifelong journey of learning and discovery. As I continue to immerse myself in this field, my appreciation for its impact and opportunities only grows.



INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE

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