

E-Newsletter

MARITIME MATTERS

INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT MARINE REGISTRY OF BELIZE

Reflecting on a Year of Progress, Purpose, and People

As we sail through another year, we're taking a moment to reflect on the journey behind us, one marked by steady progress, meaningful milestones, and the collective dedication of our employees, affiliates and key stakeholders.

This year challenged us to adapt, refine, and reaffirm our commitment to excellence. Across our operations, we continued to strengthen our role as a responsible and reliable partner within the maritime sector, guided by professionalism, compliance, and service.

Key highlights of the year included:

- Advancing operational efficiency and internal processes.
- Strengthening governance, audits, and regulatory standards.
- Investing in professional development of our employees and knowledge-sharing.
- Deepening engagement through industry events, outreach, and collaboration.
- Giving back through initiatives that supported both our employees and the wider community.

Beyond achievements and statistics, what truly defined this year was our employees. The dedication, resilience, and teamwork displayed across departments ensured continuity, growth, and a shared sense of purpose even when navigating change.

We also embraced opportunities to celebrate connection and compassion. From professional milestones to community-focused initiatives, the year reminded us that impact extends beyond the office and into the lives we touch.

As we look ahead, we do so with gratitude for the lessons learned and optimism for what lies ahead. The foundation built this year positions us well for continued growth, innovation, and leadership in the maritime industry.

Thank you to every team member, partner, and stakeholder who contributed to making this year one of progress and purpose. Together, we sail forward; stronger, wiser, and ready for the opportunities ahead.



Strengthening Compliance in 2026

By David Guerra

As 2025 draws to a close, I extend my sincere appreciation to every IMMARBE team member and stakeholder for their unwavering commitment to quality and compliance.

This year, we focused on strengthening staff competence in quality processes, sanctions compliance, flag State administration, and port State control, while successfully transitioning to a new ISO 9001 Certification Body. These initiatives were not only operational improvements; they were strategic investments that reinforce our alignment with international conventions, IMO instruments, and ISO standards, positioning IMMARBE for continued success in 2026.

Looking ahead, our foremost priority is addressing the findings of the IMO audit conducted this year under the organization's member-state audit scheme. Closing these gaps is critical to maintaining international credibility and ensuring full compliance with IMO requirements. We will implement robust corrective action plans, assign clear accountability, and monitor progress through quarterly performance reviews. This proactive approach will not only resolve current issues but also strengthen our resilience against future audits.

Beyond audit closure, we will enhance oversight in key operational areas - port State control, vessel inspections, and Recognized Organization (RO) monitoring. To achieve this, IMMARBE will introduce structured KPIs and systematic reporting processes. These measures will allow us to identify trends, mitigate risks early, and ensure that delegated functions meet the highest standards of compliance.

Stakeholder engagement remains central to our mission. Compliance is not just about rules; it's about trust and satisfaction. We'll revamp our feedback mechanisms by moving away from broad surveys toward targeted more frequent consultations tailored to specific stakeholder groups. This will help us capture meaningful insights and demonstrate that stakeholder input drives real improvements in our services.

To sustain these efforts, IMMARBE will embrace digital transformation through an electronic Quality Management System (eQMS) aligned with ISO 9001. This platform will centralize documentation, integrate risk management, and provide real-time compliance indicators which will enhance audit readiness, process control, and data-driven decision-making.

Compliance is a shared responsibility. In 2026, IMMARBE will continue collaborating with stakeholders to set a global benchmark for quality and integrity among flag administrations. **Compliance is not a checkbox; it is a culture of excellence that reflects the trust placed in us and the reputation we strive to protect.**



Recognizing Excellence

Celebrating the Top Performing Deputy Registrars

This year has been marked by dedication, resilience and an unwavering commitment to high standards. These qualities have been exemplified by our Deputy Registrars. They delivered results with professionalism and integrity. Among our Deputy Registrars, five stood out for their exceptional performance, leadership and positive impact.

Excellence isn't defined by results alone, it's reflected in their consistent accomplishments, accountability, collaboration and upholding our service standards.

Our top 5 performing Deputy Registrars demonstrated these qualities throughout the year.

While today we spotlight these 5 outstanding performers, this recognition also reflects the collective efforts of our entire team. Excellence is contagious, and it thrives in our environment where teamwork, support and shared purpose are valued.

As we move into the new year, we carry forward the momentum built by this year's achievements.

To our top performers, thank you for your exceptional contributions, professionalism and commitment.

Together we set the standard. Together we move forward.



Diego Corrado
SINGAPORE



Erik De Koning
ROTTERDAM



Mark Guang Ning
CHINA



Young Mo-Gu
KOREA



Ong Ah Kim
SINGAPORE

Employee of the Year 2025

IMMARBE's Employee of the Year

IMMARBE is proud to recognize Ms. Kimberly King as our Employee of the Year, an honour that reflects exceptional dedication, professionalism and consistent excellence throughout the year.

Beyond performance, Kimberly embodies our core values through collaboration, reliability and a positive attitude. Whether managing daily responsibilities or stepping in to support colleagues, she approaches every task with dedication and pride.



Kimberly King shared:

“Excellence is not a skill; it’s an attitude. Being Employee of the Year reflects dedication, teamwork, and a commitment to going above and beyond every day.”

Join us in congratulating her on this well-deserved achievement. We thank her for her continued contributions and look forward to her ongoing success.

BHSFU's Employee of the Year

IMMARBE is thrilled to shine a spotlight on Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit's (BHSFU) employee of the year, Mr. Ernie Howe.

This recognition is testament to his hard work and the values he brings to our organization every day.

On reflection on this achievement, Mr. Ernie shared a mantra he greatly believes in and practices daily:

“Success doesn’t come from what you do occasionally, but from what you do consistently.”

IMMARBE congratulates him on this well-deserved honour and celebrate the continued strong partnership between IMMARBEE and BHSFU which allows us to grow and achieve shared goals together.



Flag State Update: Recent Regulatory and Procedural Changes

Building Belize's Maritime Legal Future: A Year of Progress

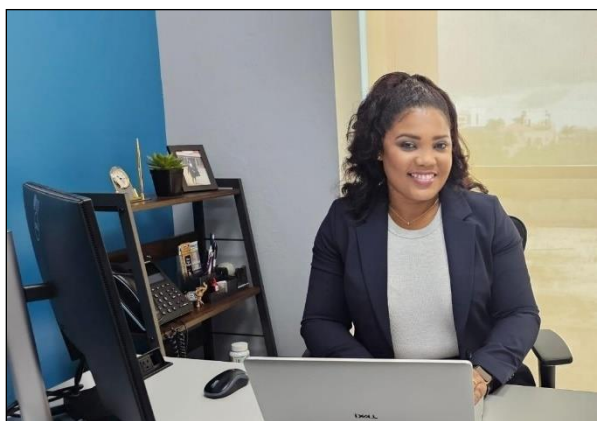
By Janelle Thomas-Shorter

2025 has been a transformative year for IMMARBE with the establishment of our Legal Department. This is a milestone that reinforces our commitment to compliance and global standards.

As Legal Officer, one of my core responsibilities is ensuring IMMARBE operates in full alignment with international maritime law, domestic legislation, and the regulatory frameworks that govern global shipping.

Working closely with the Legal Counsel of the Belize Port Authority, we have advanced the interpretation and domestication of key IMO instruments, including the MARPOL and TONNAGE Conventions.

Our shared goal is to complete national implementation of these conventions by the first quarter of 2026.



At the same time, we are drafting regulations for the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC 2006)—the seafarers' bill of rights. This vital convention guarantees fair employment terms, decent living conditions, medical care, and repatriation rights, while promoting safety at sea.

The Legal Department is more than a compliance unit; it is a driver of progress. By modernizing legislation and upholding international standards, we protect Belize's maritime interests and strengthen its global standing.

Together, we're shaping a safer, stronger, and more competitive maritime future for Belize.

IMMARBE's Flag State Inspection Programme

By Darlin Gaitan



In November 2025, Belize underwent the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS). The Audit brought into strong focus our systems' effectiveness in the implementation of relevant IMO Instruments. IMMARBE has instituted various policies and programs as part of its Flag State Implementation.

One such initiative is the Flag State Inspection (FSI) Programme. The program's goal is to annually inspect 100% of its merchant fleet, which is subject to Port State Control. It intends to serve as a strong safety net, promoting proactive monitoring and enforcement, and complementing similar inspection regimes.

The FSI Programme was reintroduced in March 2024 following a decade-long suspension. This decision was driven by the necessity to conduct independent assessments of our merchant fleet, ensuring compliance with Belize's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), domestic maritime laws, and other applicable international maritime agreements.

Since its relaunch, the FSI Program has amplified its reach, as the total number of inspections has exponentially increased. In 2024, a total of 92 flag state inspections were completed, as compared to 196 inspections in 2025. This figure to date accounts for almost 70% of the target inspection goal.

The FSI program, as it matures, will provide crucial information for the Fleet's performance. The program's data, along with PSC records, will signal critical areas for improvement, such as common and major deficiencies in the fleet. Such valuable datasets will form the basis for implementing corrective strategies and improving the safety of the Belize Merchant Fleet.

Looking to the future, the FSI Programme is here to stay and will be strengthened as a tool for effective monitoring and oversight of our Flag State obligations.

IMMARBE's Community and Social Impact

IMMARBE is committed to making a positive and lasting impact beyond its core regulatory mandate. From 2023 to 2025, IMMARBE, together with its employees, has actively supported annual Christmas donation initiatives, contributing time and resources to assist vulnerable individuals and families within the community. These collective efforts reflect a strong culture of compassion, teamwork, and social responsibility across the organization.

Community and Social Impact (cont.)

In addition, IMMARBE has demonstrated its support for gender equity and professional development in the maritime sector through its continued backing of initiatives led by the Women in Maritime Association, Caribbean (WiMAC). By supporting WiMAC programmes and activities, IMMARBE reinforces its commitment to inclusion, leadership development, and the empowerment of women in maritime.

Through these community-focused initiatives, IMMARBE and its employees continue to align their professional excellence with meaningful social engagement, strengthening both the maritime sector and the wider community it serves.



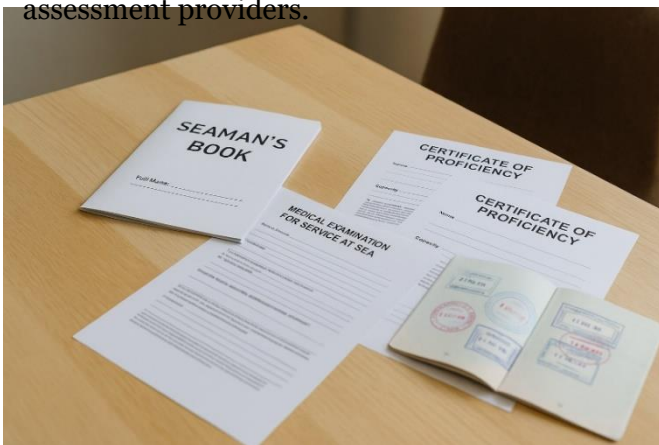
LAUNCHING NEW SERVICE

Certificate of Proficiency Now Available!

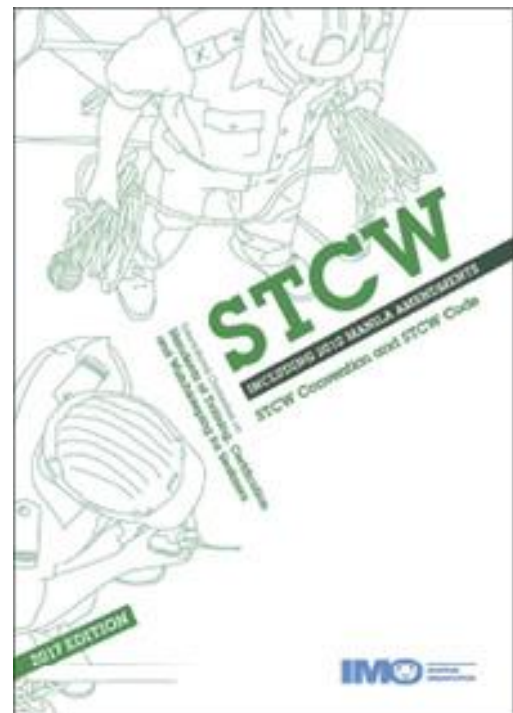
In a strategic move aimed at enhancing our services and continued support of professional development of seafarers, IMMARBE is pleased to announce the launch of a new service.

Our Certificate of Proficiency is designed to formally recognize seafarers' expertise and qualifications in accordance with International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for Seafarers (STCW). This new service underscores IMMARBE's commitment to promoting safety, competence, and professionalism within the global maritime industry.

In conjunction with this launch, IMMARBE has also enhanced its official website to improve access to critical information for seafarers and industry stakeholders. The updated website now includes clearly identified listings of approved Maritime Training Facilitators, Training Institutes, and Auditors, providing greater transparency and ease of reference when selecting recognized training and assessment providers.



These improvements reflect IMMARBE's ongoing focus on service modernization, regulatory integrity, and stakeholder engagement, while supporting the continuous development of maritime human resources.



Seafarers and industry stakeholders are encouraged to visit the IMMARBE website to apply for the Seafarer Certificate of Proficiency and to view the updated list of approved Maritime Training Facilitators, Training Institutes, and Auditors.

Check out our approved affiliates [here!](#)

Meet our Staff

Uncover the Stories of our Dynamic Team

Mrs. Janelle Thomas-Shorter
LEGAL OFFICER



Stepping into the maritime sector and contributing to the development of international maritime instruments immediately after joining the IMMARBE team has been an incredibly stimulating experience for me.

The maritime industry is a dynamic and fast-growing field that offers countless opportunities for professionals, including attorneys like me. It provides access to a wealth of specialized training across diverse areas, ensuring of course, that no two days are ever the same. Naturally, there is never a dull moment in this industry.

Being part of the IMMARBE team for a quarter of the year thus far, I can confidently say that I've learned a great deal and continue to learn every day. My initial limited knowledge of maritime and international law has expanded significantly, and each experience has been both enriching and exciting.

I look forward to what lies ahead, but above all, I am deeply grateful for the team I work with. They are truly inspiring, they demonstrate diligence and dedication in everything they do, and it is truly a privilege to learn from peers who are committed. Here's to continuing the journey together and making waves in the maritime world!

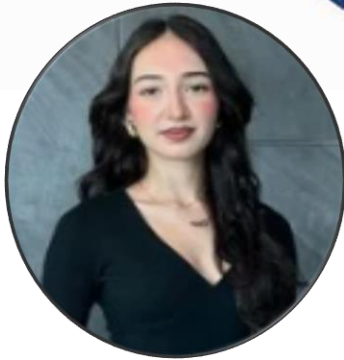
Ms. Bibiana Paquil
ACCOUNTANT



As one of the newest members of the IMMARBE family, having joined in September, it has been truly inspiring to witness the professionalism, dedication, and collective drive that define this team. IMMARBE's commitment to growth, efficiency, and excellence makes me proud to be part of the organization.

Stepping into the role of Accountant has given me a deep appreciation for the complexity and importance of IMMARBE's work not only in maintaining a strong and reputable registry but also in supporting the wider maritime sector as it continues to evolve. Working closely with financial planning and accountability, I am excited to contribute to improvements that ensure IMMARBE remains poised for sustainable growth.

Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond, I am encouraged by the organization's strategic direction and shared vision for continued excellence. I look forward to growing in my role alongside a team that has already shown me the value of collaboration, professionalism, and purpose-driven work.



Ms. Jana Hijazi
SEAFARER OFFICER

The maritime sector remains one of the world's most resilient and dynamic industries. Recent years have brought challenges for shipowners, flag administrations, and seafarers, but also opportunities through innovation, digitalization, and stronger regulatory frameworks.

For Belize and IMMARBE, this period has been marked by growth and transformation. Enhanced compliance mechanisms improved digital services, and a focus on efficiency, safety, and global competitiveness have strengthened our position internationally. Every case handled, vessel registered and seafarer assisted reflects the impact of our work on the global maritime community.

Adaptability is essential. From navigating complex legal matters to addressing welfare concerns and meeting evolving international standards, the industry demands continuous learning and commitment. Digitalization, greener operations, and advanced safety systems are no longer optional, they're becoming the norm.

Looking ahead, IMMARBE will continue to modernize processes, strengthen partnerships, and reaffirm Belize's leadership on the global stage. As we enter a new year, let us remain committed to excellence, innovation, and service. Together, we play a vital role in shaping the future of maritime



Mr. Haldane Stephenson
OPERATIONS ASSISTANT

I began my journey at IMMARBE as a janitor, working during the day while attending University of Belize in the evenings. At first, it was challenging, but with determination, I adapted and embraced the routine.

When I started, I knew very little about IMMARBE. That changed when my supervisor, Mrs. Kenisha Allen, explained the organization's mission and impact. I was fascinated by the work and eager to learn more. Thanks to the support and guidance of other supervisors and colleagues of the Registration, Technical, and Seafarer, I gained valuable insight into the maritime industry and its global significance.

A few months later, I was offered the role of Operations Assistant, a position I truly enjoy.

I am deeply grateful to my peers in the Operations Department for their direction and encouragement along the way.

Looking ahead, my goal is to continue learning, growing within the department, and strengthening areas where I can improve. I am committed to developing my skills and contributing positively to IMMARBE's mission.

My story is proof that perseverance and curiosity can open doors to incredible opportunities. At IMMARBE, growth is possible and I'm proud to be part of that journey.

Department Spotlight

Finance Department

By: Bibiana Paquil and Ellen Williams

As 2025 comes to a close, we reflect with pride on a year defined by resilience, progress, and meaningful achievement. Throughout the year, the Finance Department remained committed to providing strong financial leadership, sound governance, and clear visibility into the company's financial performance.

The Finance Department plays a critical role in safeguarding the organization's financial integrity through effective budgeting, financial reporting, compliance, risk management, and strategic financial planning. By ensuring transparency, accountability, and fiscal discipline, the department supports informed decision-making and long-term organizational sustainability.

In 2025, the Finance Department successfully underwent a comprehensive four-year audit aimed at strengthening financial operations and oversight.

The audit provided valuable insights and highlighted areas for improvement, enabling us to enhance internal controls, improve processes, and better serve both our clients and the organization as a whole.

Our team worked collaboratively with all departments and stakeholders to streamline financial processes and deliver timely, data-driven insights. These efforts contributed to improved operational efficiency, strengthened financial controls, and the maintenance of a solid financial foundation as we prepare for the year ahead.



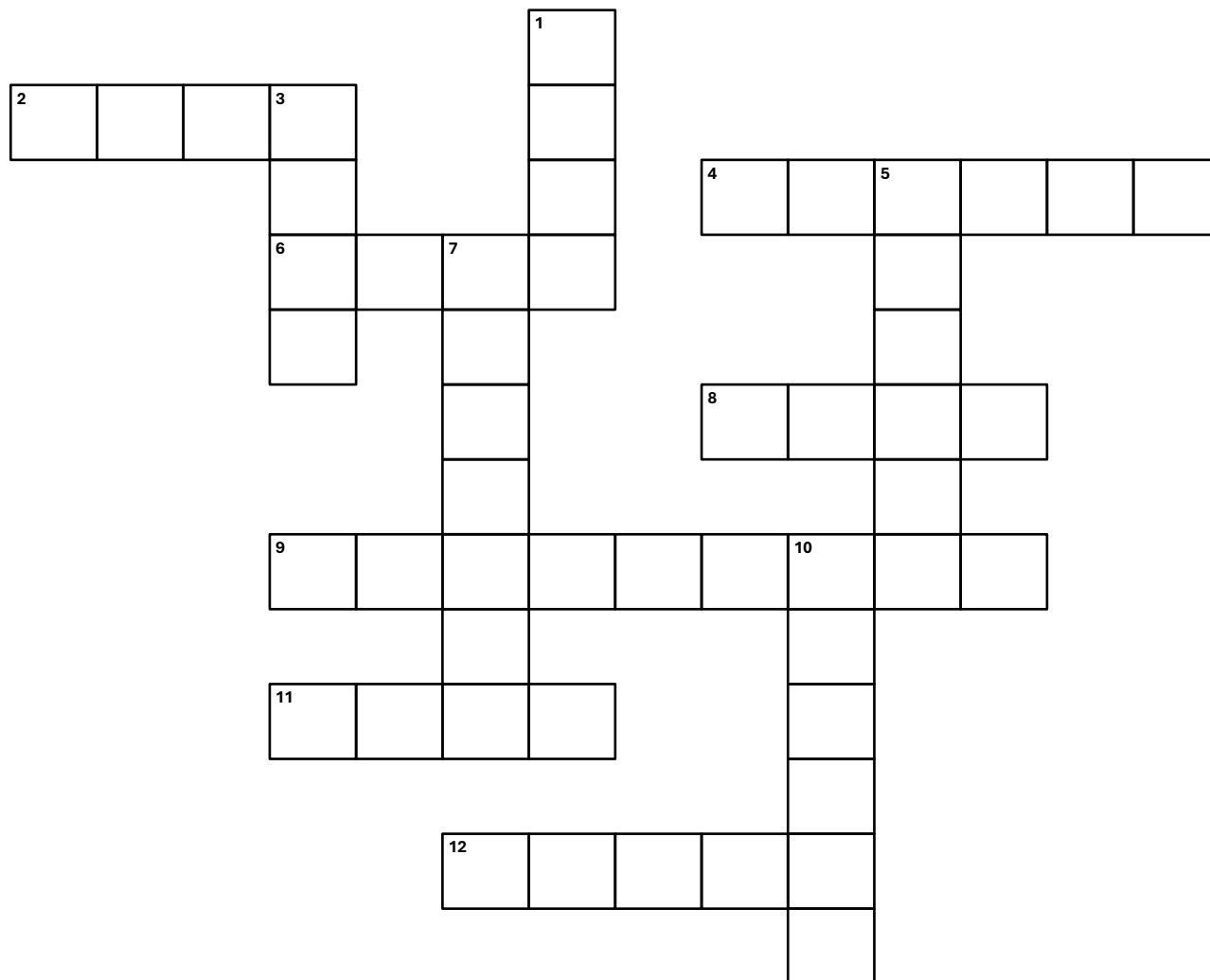
Left to right: Mrs. Ellen Williams, Accounts Officer and Ms. Bibiana Paquil, Accountant



Looking to 2026, we are optimistic and determined to build on this momentum by pursuing opportunities for sustainable financial growth, continued compliance excellence, and enhanced financial transparency.

Maritime Cross word puzzle

By Haldane Stephenson



Across

- [2] Nautical term for a vessel's left side
- [4] Watercraft capable of navigation
- [6] Horizontal surface forming a ship's floor
- [8] Outer structure that encloses a ship's interior
- [9] Nautical term for a vessel's right side
- [11] Vertical spar supporting sails or rigging
- [12] Items transported commercially by ship

Down

- [1] Structure where vessels are secured or unloaded
- [3] Cyclical rise and fall of seawater
- [5] Crew member trained in operating a ship
- [7] Instrument used to determine directional heading
- [10] Device used to secure a vessel in one location

