**Belize**

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| Institutional Partner | Government of Belize/Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries |
| Project dates | 19th May 2022 – 31st March 2023 |
| Project Title | Modernizing the medicolegal death investigation system in Belize through legal reform and enhanced stakeholder engagement |

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| **Project Objectives** | **Project Outcomes and Impact** |
| The medicolegal death investigation system in Belize serves to answer questions surrounding the identity of the deceased, date of death, location of death, medical cause of death, and by what means the death occurred. This system is currently decentralized across various agencies and involves law enforcement officers, medical officers, judicial officers and forensic practitioners. The project aims, through stakeholder engagement, to consolidate and centralize the authority for medicolegal death investigations which would allow for greater efficiency, accuracy, transparency and accountability in investigating all sudden, unexpected, suspicious, unexplained and/or violent deaths that occur in Belize. | The outcome of the project is the modernizing of legislation (through two draft bills) governing medicolegal death investigation. The bills will make it mandatory that all reportable deaths fall under the authority of an Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and that only trained Medical Examiners working under the authority of the Chief Medical Examiner are responsible for performing forensic post-mortem examinations as part of medicolegal death investigations. The long-term impacts will be greater investments in the human and physical resources of the National Forensic Science Service, which would translate into major health and security benefits for the country by having secure morgue and mortuary facilities with ancillary testing services for all medicolegal death investigations and improved cause of death data |

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| **Project Sustainability** |
| Improvements to the current MLDI legal framework will enhance the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of MLDI service delivery while leveraging existing human and physical resources. The project compliments ongoing efforts by the Government of Belize to strengthen the institutions involved in MLDI and administration of justice, i.e. the National Forensic Science Service, Judiciary, Police, Prosecutor’s Office and the Public Health System. |

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| **Project Outputs** |
| * 3 MLDI stakeholder consultation workshops were held
* 1 MLDI legal framework review was conducted
* 2 draft bills to reform MLDI legislation were prepared
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