

BELIZE

FREE ZONES ACT
CHAPTER 278

REVISED EDITION 2020

SHOWING THE SUBSTANTIVE LAWS AS AT
31ST DECEMBER, 2020

This is a revised edition of the Substantive Laws, prepared by the Law Revision Commissioner under the authority of the Law Revision Act, Chapter 3 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020.

This edition contains a consolidation of amendments made to the law by Act No. 27 of 2019.



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CHAPTER 278

FREE ZONES

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CHAPTER 278

FREE ZONES

26 of 2005.
27 of 2019.

[25th June, 2005]

PART I

Preliminary

Short title.

1. This Act may be cited as the Free Zones Act.

Interpretation.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires–

"a Board" means the Board of Directors of the NFZA established under section 4;

"Chief Executive Officer" or "CEO" means the Chief Executive Officer of a CFZ;

"Commercial Free Zone" or "CFZ" means a geographic area in Belize designated as such by the NFZA or by the Minister under section 6 of this Act;

"Commercial Free Zone business" or "CFZ business" means a private or public party which has been granted approval to operate such a business under this Act and any regulations;

"Commercial Free Zone developer" or "CFZ developer" means any person or entity, private or public, who has been issued a Certificate of Designation by the NFZA or the Minister under this Act and regulations;

"Corozal Free Zone" means the free zone established under Part IV of this Act;

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"Export Processing Zone" or "EPZ" shall have the meaning assigned to it under the Export Processing Zone Act; CAP. 280.

"Minister" means the Minister to whom the responsibility for commercial free zones is for the time being assigned by the Governor-General under section 41 of the Constitution; CAP. 4.

"National customs territory" means any area within Belize which is located outside of a CFZ or an EPZ and which is subject to the national customs and excise laws;

"National Free Zone Authority" or "NFZA" means the Authority established under section 3 of this Act;

"private party" means any individual, partnership, company, corporation, or other entity, domestic or foreign, which is not a government agency or owned in any part by a government agency;

"private sector managed zone" means any free zone other than a public sector managed zone;

"public party" means any agency or instrumentality of the Government of Belize;

"public sector managed zone" means the Corozal Free Zone or any other free zone managed by the Government of Belize or by any agency or instrumentality of the Government of Belize;

"public service" means any service which is provided in Belize by the Government of Belize or any of its agencies;

"regulations" means regulations made under this Act.

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PART II

Establishment, Functions, etc., of the National Free Zone Authority (NFZA)

Establishment of the NFZA.

3. A National Free Zone Authority, or NFZA, is hereby established which shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal, and with powers as such to enter into contracts, to sue and be sued by law in its corporate name and which may for all purposes be described by such name; to acquire, hold, mortgage, lease and dispose of all kinds of properties, movable and immovable, and to do and perform such acts and things as bodies corporate may by law do and perform, subject to the provisions of this Act.

Board of Directors of the NFZA.

4.–(1) There shall be a Board of Directors of the NFZA which shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, be responsible for the general policy of all Commercial Free Zones.

(2) The Board of Directors shall comprise the following members–

(a) one representative of the Ministry responsible for Commercial Free Zones;

(b) the Comptroller of Customs or his representative;

(c) one representative of the Ministry of Finance;

(d) one representative of the Ministry responsible for industry;

(e) one representative of the Ministry responsible for labour;

(f) Governor of Central Bank of Belize or his representative;

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(g) a representative of the National Trade Union Congress of Belize;

(h) one representative of each of the following Commercial Free Zones, namely, the International Free Zone, the Belize Port Free Zone, the Benque Viejo del Carmen Free Zone, the Western Free Zone and the Toledo Free Zone; and two representatives of the Corozal Free Zone, one of whom shall be a representative of private sector developers of that Zone and the other shall be a representative of public sector developer (s) of that Zone.

(i) the Coordinator of the NFZA appointed under sub-section (4) of this section, who shall have no right of vote.

(3) At the commencement of this Act, and thereafter during the month of January every year, the Minister shall appoint one of the members of the NFZA to be the Chairperson and the members shall elect one of their number to be the Deputy Chairperson of the Board.

(4) The NFZA shall appoint a suitably qualified person as the Coordinator who shall perform such functions as the NFZA may specify.

(5) The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the NFZA and in his absence, the Deputy Chairperson shall preside.

(6) The NFZA shall meet at least once every two months on a date and at a time set by the Chairperson of the NFZA or at the request of two or more members thereof provided that prior written notice of such meeting and the agenda for the same is given two weeks prior to all such meetings.

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(7) The quorum of the NFZA shall be eight members thereof.

(8) The decisions and resolutions of the Board shall be by a majority of total membership of the Board, excluding the Coordinator.

(9) Subject to the provisions of this Act and any regulations, the NFZA may regulate its own procedure.

Functions of the NFZA.

5. The functions of the NFZA shall be as follows–

(a) to designate Commercial Free Zones in accordance with this Act and any regulations, based on the need for economic development in the proposed CFZ area, and the viability of designation in creating direct and indirect employment and other considerations of public interest;

(b) to formulate for recommendation to the Minister, comprehensive policies for free zones;

(c) to regulate and define the relations between all free zones and the NFZA as well as any other entity whose activities are closely related to the operation of the free zones;

(d) to carry out all functions and discharge responsibilities assigned under this Act and any regulations;

(e) to issue Certificates of Designation to CFZ developers in accordance with this Act and regulations;

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(f) to maintain a list of certificates of compliance issued to CFZ businesses by the Board of Directors of a CFZ.

Designation of CFZ's.

6.–(1) The NFZA shall establish by regulations, the procedure by which public or private parties may apply for CFZ designation or for designation as a CFZ developer.

(2) The designation of a CFZ or a CFZ developer shall be by a majority of total membership of the Board, excluding the Coordinator.

(3) The designation of a CFZ and of a CFZ developer shall be subject to negative resolution of the National Assembly.

(4) Notwithstanding sub-section (1) of section 5 of this section, the Minister may, if he considers it expedient and with the approval of the Cabinet, and subject to the same conditions as of the NFZA, designate any area in Belize to be a commercial free zone for the purposes of this Act, or designate a CFZ developer, and every such designation shall have the same effect as if made by the NFZA and shall be subject to negative resolution of the National Assembly.

Financing of the NFZA.

7.–(1) All CFZ's shall contribute equally towards the financing of the NFZA office and its operations.

(2) For the purpose of sub-section (1) of this section, the amount of contributions to be paid by CFZ's shall from time to time, be prescribed by the NFZA by regulations made under this Act.

PART III

Private Sector Managed Zones

Designation of CFZ developers.

8.–(1) A CFZ developer may be one or more private or public incorporated entity.

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(2) A CFZ developer shall obtain a Certificate of Designation from the NFZA or the Minister in accordance with this Act and any regulations.

Powers and responsibilities of CFZ developers of private sector managed zones.

9.–(1) A CFZ developer shall have power to–

(a) appoint a Board of Directors of his CFZ;

(b) lease or sell land to any entity which has been granted a Certificate of Compliance by the Board of Directors of that zone;

(c) make improvements, construct facilities and develop infrastructure including improved regulated utilities to enhance a CFZ's economic development;

(d) subject to this Act, provide regulated utilities, public or other services within a CFZ;

(e) construct as applicable, roads, drains, railways, airports, ports, wharves, docks, places of embarkation and disembarkation, stations to transit passengers and merchandise, or loading and unloading docks which shall facilitate trade within a CFZ and with a CFZ and international trading parties;

(f) subject to regulations made under this Act charge fees for any services, regulated utilities or facilities it provides within a CFZ;

(g) adopt agreements, rules and policies within a CFZ to promote the safe, efficient and successful operation of a CFZ business, consistent with this Act and any regulations and any other laws;

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(h) promote and advertise CFZs to prospective investors, business owners and operators and promote CFZs abroad to increase sales for clients;

(i) provide adequate services and facilities in accordance with the recommendations of the NFZA;

(j) conduct other activities authorized under this Act or any regulations.

(2) Any powers exercised by a CFZ developer under this Act or regulations shall be in accordance with the relevant laws of Belize.

Appointment and functions of the Board of Directors of a CFZ.

10.–(1) A CFZ developer shall appoint a Board of Directors and a CEO of a private sector managed zone to manage the affairs of that zone.

(2) The Board of Directors of every private sector managed zone shall include a representative of the Ministry responsible for commercial free zones who shall have no right of vote.

(3) The Board of Directors of a CFZ shall be responsible for formulating policy guidelines and general administration of the zone.

(4) Subject to sub-section (3) of this section, the CEO of a private sector managed zone shall be responsible for issuing Certificates of Compliance to CFZ businesses within that zone subject to confirmation by the Board of Directors of the NFZA.

Functions of the CEO of a CFZ.

11.–(1) The functions of the Chief Executive Officer of a CFZ shall be to–

(a) attend to the daily management of the business activities of the CFZ in accordance with this Act and any regulations and policy guidelines

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governing the CFZ and to carry out the instructions of the CFZ developer and the CFZ Board of Directors;

(b) employ, supervise and remove staff subject to confirmation by the Board of Directors of a CFZ;

(c) formulate loan requests for the CFZ and an annual budget with plans and programmes for presentation to and approval by the CFZ Board of Directors;

(d) prepare periodic reports and an annual report, including an audited statement of the accounts of the CFZ, to be presented to the CFZ Board of Directors and the Ministry responsible for commercial free zones;

(e) execute decisions and resolutions made by the CFZ Board of Directors, including, but not limited to, the purchase, sale and disposal of properties and assets of the office of the CFZ developer:

(f) contract the services of management or technical experts on matters of the organization and operations of the CFZ, subject to the dire ™ ns of the Board of Directors of a CFZ;

(g) collect administrative fees and charges as prescribed under this Act, the regulations, or by the CFZ developer and duly account for such fees and charges;

(h) issue Certificates of Origin to those businesses operating within the CFZ;

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(i) ensure that all building and landscape plans within a CFZ comply with guidelines given by the CFZ Board of Directors, and the laws of Belize;

(j) Carry out any other responsibilities that may be assigned by the CFZ developer or the Board of Directors of a CFZ.

(2) For the purpose of this section, "Certificate of Origin" means the documentation issued by the NFZA or any authorised agency in Belize for the purpose of import and export trade, designating goods and services as originating from Belize subject to regulations made under this Act.

PART IV

Public Sector Managed Zones

Designation of public sector managed zone.

12. The Corozal Free Zone situated at Santa Elena, Corozal District, at the Northern Border of Belize is hereby designated as a public sector managed zone.

Corporate status of Corozal CFZ.

13. The Corozal Free Zone shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal, and with powers as such to enter into contracts, to sue and be sued by law in its corporate name and which may for all purposes be described by such name; to acquire, hold, mortgage, lease and dispose of all kinds of properties, movable and immovable, and to do and perform such acts and things as bodies corporate may by law do and perform, subject to the provisions of this Act.

Board of Directors of Corozal CFZ.

14.–(1) The affairs of the Corozal Free Zone shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of ten persons as follows–

(a) one representative of the Ministry responsible for commercial free zones;

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(b) one representative of the Ministry of Finance;

(c) one representative of the Ministry responsible for industry;

(d) the Comptroller of Customs or his representative;

(e) one representative of the Ministry responsible for labour;

(f) four private sector representatives elected every two years from the membership of the Corozal Free Zone Chamber of Commerce; and

(g) the Chief Executive Officer of the Corozal Free Zone, who shall have no right of vote.

(2) The Minister shall appoint one of the members of the Board to be the Executive Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

(3) The Board of Directors of the Corozal Free Zone shall have the status of a CFZ developer and shall carry out all the functions appurtenant to the developer of a commercial free zone.

Vesting of assets and liabilities.

15. At the commencement of this Act, all the assets, liabilities, and contractual rights and obligations of the former Commercial Free Zone Management Agency shall vest in the Corozal Free Zone.

Application of certain provisions to public sector managed zones.

16. Subject to this Part, sections 9 to 11 of this section relating to the powers and responsibilities of CFZ developers and the appointment and functions of the CEO of a CFZ shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to public sector managed zones.

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PART V

Commercial Activities, Tax Regime, etc., of Commercial Free Zones

Establishment of wholesale and retail businesses.

17. Any private or public party or group of parties may establish wholesale and retail services and other CFZ developer approved businesses on property it owns or has leased within a CFZ, provided that it has secured a Certificate of Compliance from the CEO of the respective CFZ to establish such businesses in the areas designated for that purpose.

Applications for operation within a CFZ.

18.–(1) Any public or private party desirous of operating in a CFZ shall submit an application to the CEO of that CFZ for review and approval in accordance with this Act and any regulations.

(2) The CEO of a private sector managed zone shal1 examine every such application and submit the same to the Board of Directors of his CFZ with his recommendations.

27 of 2019.

(3) Subject to sub-section (3A), the CEO of a private sector managed zone may approve an application submitted under sub-section (2) of this section if the proposed business enterprise–

(a) will conduct services, trade and investment activities such as a commercial office, warehouse, manufacturing, tourism, temporary hotel accommodation within defined areas for guests and employees, and related international services or other professional or related activities;

(b) will not have a deleterious effect on the environment having regard to any environmental impact assessment made for the purpose;

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(c) will he conducted in compliance with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements under the laws of Belize and all the rules and regulations of a CFZ established under this Act and the NFZA.

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(3A) Approval to operate as a CFZ business shall not be granted to any of the following businesses–

(a) banking services;

(b) financial businesses;

CAP. 272.

(c) international financial services as defined in the International Financial Services Commission Act;

(d) internet or computer gaming services, including online gaming;

(e) gaming;

(f) foreign exchange business, including casa de cambio; or

(g) radio or telecommunication services.

27 of 2019.

(3B) Notwithstanding sub-section (3A), the CEO of a CFZ may grant permission to the following businesses to provide their respective services within a CFZ–

(a) banking services;

(b) internet or computer gaming services, including online gaming;

(c) gaming; or

(d) radio or telecommunication services.

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(3C) Permission granted under sub-section (3B) shall not confer any benefits under this Act to any of the businesses. 27 of 2019.

(4) Private and public parties shall operate only within the CFZ in which they have been authorised to operate.

(5) Subject to the provisions of this Act, only CFZ businesses which have been certified by the CEO of a private sector managed zone shall operate within a CFZ.

(6) Any investor whose private sector managed zone business application has not been approved by the CEO shall have a right of appeal to the CFZ developer and the Board of Directors of that CFZ.

CFZ imports and exports.

19.–(1) Subject to this Act, all merchandise, articles, or other goods entering a CFZ for commercial purposes shall be exempt from import duties, stamp duties, sales tax and revenue replacement duties.

(2) Subject to this Act, all fuel and goods, including building materials, furniture, equipment, supplies and parts required for the proper functioning of a CFZ business shall likewise be exempt from all duties and taxes and charges referred to in sub-section (1) of this section.

(3) Motor vehicles and fuel for personal use entering a CFZ shall not be exempted from the taxes and duties referred to in this section.

(4) Only service and utility vehicles together with spares for such vehicles shall be allowed to enter a CFZ free of taxes and duties and shall be subject to taxation if such vehicles enter the national customs territory.

(5) No quotas upon any article, item, good or service shall apply to imports or exports of a CFZ business.

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(6) The provisions of sub-sections (1) to (5) of this section shall apply mutatis mutandis to CFZ developers.

(7) Where a CFZ business operating in a CFZ is exempt from the taxes and duties mentioned in this section, the CEO of the CFZ shall exercise responsibility and control in accordance with regulations, over all such goods and merchandise allowed to enter and leave that CFZ.

(8) Subject to the provisions of this Act, no imports or exports by a CFZ business shall require an import or export licence.

(9) All imports and exports of a CFZ shall be exempt from all customs duties, sales taxes, consumption taxes, excise taxes, export duties, intransit taxes or export taxes, except those destined for and directly entering areas subject to the national customs territory.

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(10) *Repealed.*

(11) For the purpose of this section, "service and utility vehicles" means forklift trucks, platform trucks and similar vehicles which are to be used exclusively within the CFZ and not outside.

(12) The Minister may from time to time, by Order, amend the definition of "service and utility vehicles" under sub-section (11) of this section to extend or restrict the category of vehicles.

Prohibition on certain goods.

20. The following goods shall not be allowed to enter a CFZ–

(a) goods which are prohibited by law;

(b) firearms, gunpowder and ammunitions for commercial purposes;

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(c) merchandise not approved for sale by the CFZ developer;

(d) goods and articles which are not required for the commercial functioning of a CFZ.

Merchandise entering a CFZ.

21.–(1) Merchandise destined for a CFZ shall be taken from its port of entry in sealed containers to the CFZ where they shall be inspected by customs authorities and a CFZ officer to ensure that–

(a) they do not contain any prohibited items or materials; and

(b) the goods are accompanied by the appropriate documentation.

(2) All merchandise entering a CFZ shall be signed to a person or firm established in that CFZ.

(3) Merchandise warehoused in a CFZ may be wholesaled or retailed for–

(a) sales to diplomats of other countries who under customary and conventional international law are exempt from payment of duties;

(b) sales to ships that dock at ports in Belize and are destined for other foreign ports;

(c) sales for direct export whether by sea, air or land, provided that such merchandise arrive at the port of exit under customs control;

(d) entry into national customs territory, provided the goods are sold wholesale, and the import licence if so required, is secured and the customs duties paid;

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(e) entry into national customs territory, provided that the goods are sold retail in operations which have Certificate of Compliance to sell duty-free to residents and non-residents who are leaving the country and have submitted proof of departure and such duty-free retail goods shall be delivered to the buyers at a port of exit or embarkation.

(4) Merchandise may be sold inside a CFZ from one business to another, provided that a proper record is kept of such transactions.

(5) Merchandise may remain in a CFZ for an unlimited period of time, provided that they are non-perishable and are warehoused in places and under conditions suitable for such merchandise.

(6) The Health Department may require the CEO of a CFZ to remove any particular merchandise from a CFZ, which may pose a threat to public health and safety.

Duty of CFZs to submit records, etc.

22.–(1) All CFZ businesses within a CFZ shall submit a detailed account of inventories, record of all transfers and destruction of goods and a record of sales on a monthly basis to the CEO of that CFZ. In special cases, the CEO may deem it necessary to have an inventory account, sales and transfer record prepared on demand and these records may also apply to CFZ activities.

(2) All CFZ businesses shall submit audited financial statements to the CEO of the NFZA on an annual basis not later than four months after the close of the CFZ's fiscal year.

(3) The companies or other entities which operate both in the national customs territory and in the free zone shall maintain separate books and accounts in respect of each activity.

(4) The CEO of the NFZA shall appoint duly qualified compliance officers to perform on-site inspections of CFZ

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businesses and all CFZ businesses shall render full cooperation to the compliance officers in the discharge of their functions.

Duty to notify NFZA and Customs of exports, imports, etc.

23.–(1) All CFZ businesses and CFZ developers shall notify the NFZA and the Customs Department of all their exports from their respective CFZ.

(2) The Customs Department, the Ministry responsible for commercial free zones or the NFZA, while informing the CEO of a CFZ, may require a CFZ business to furnish such information about imports, exports and other transactions occurring within a CFZ as may be reasonably necessary to exercise regulatory control over CFZ activities.

(3) A CFZ business which is required to furnish information in accordance with sub-section (2) of this section, shall comply with such request without undue delay and shall cooperate fully with the Customs Department, the Ministry responsible for commercial free zones, the CEO and the NFZA in the proper discharge of their regulatory functions.

Social fee.

24.–(1) Notwithstanding any provision of this Act or any other law to the contrary, there shall be charged a social fee on the value of goods and services imported into a CFZ at such rate as may be prescribed by the Minister by Order made under this section, after consultation with the NFZA, and until such time as the order aforesaid is made by the Minister, the rate of social fee in force immediately before the commencement of this Act shall continue to apply.

(2) The Comptroller of Customs shall be responsible for the collection of the social fee levied on imports under this section.

CAP. 49.

(3) For the purpose of collecting and enforcing the payment of the social fee levied under this section, the Customs Regulation Act and any Regulations made thereunder relating to the importation of goods shall apply in the same manner as if the fee were a duty of customs.

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(4) The social fee levied under this section shall become due and payable at the time when the goods are entered and shall be paid by the importer.

(5) The social fee levied under this section shall be used exclusively for sports and educational development, for the provision of health and other social services provided by the Government and for the alleviation of poverty.

(6) The social fee levied under this section shall also be payable on imports from one CFZ to another CFZ provided that no goods shall be moved from one CFZ to another CFZ without the written approval of the Ministry of Finance.

Sales within a CFZ.

25.–(1) Except as otherwise provided in this Act, no licence shall be required for the sale of any goods or services provided within a CFZ.

(2) All CFZ businesses shall conduct all transactions in the currency or currencies prescribed by the Central Bank of Belize after consultation with the NFZA.

(3) No price controls imposed under any law shall apply to the sale of any article, good or service sold or supplied within a CFZ.

CFZ regulatory regime.

26.–(1) Subject to any regulations made by the NFZA, no person shall be allowed to ordinarily reside within a CFZ except in certain cases in temporary hotel accommodation and with the written permission of the CEO of that CFZ.

(2) Each CFZ business shall open and actively operate an account in the currency or currencies prescribed by the Central Bank of Belize with a duly registered bank or approved financial institution located in the respective CFZ.

(2A) Every CFZ business shall deposit the proceeds of all sales, and confine all banking/monetary transactions involving

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the CFZ business to the account opened in accordance with sub-section (2).

(2B) Every CFZ business shall submit a copy of its bank statement and any other information to the Central Bank of Belize or the CEO of the NFZA, if so required by either of them.

(3) Every CFZ business shall furnish to the CEO of the CFZ and the NFZA and the Central Bank of Belize a monthly report of transactions in its foreign currency accounts.

(4) Banks and financial institutions which are licensed under the laws of Belize shall be allowed to operate within a CFZ, but their transactions shall be limited to only CFZ businesses.

(5) The Rent Restrictions Act shall not apply to a CFZ business or to rental of property within a CFZ. CAP. 195.

(6) An exclusive franchise to sell any particular good or service shall not be granted within a CFZ.

(7) Every CFZ business shall submit a detailed account of its full inventory in whole or in part to the CEO of that CFZ within one week from the last day of every month or upon request by the CEO and such an account shall include all records of entry, sales, destruction and transfers of such inventory.

(8) No restrictions shall be placed on the transfer of investment of any CFZ business within a CFZ.

(9) No CFZ business shall be restricted to investing in any other CFZ business in its purchase of stocks or bonds, and the sale of stocks and bonds of any CFZ business shall be registered at the General Registry, and a certified copy of the company certificate and articles of memorandum shall be furnished to the CEO of that CFZ within two weeks of such registration.

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(10) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act or any other law, no person shall provide any of the following services in or from within a CFZ without a licence or permission from the respective regulatory body as required under the laws of Belize– 27 of 2019.

(a) banking services;

(b) internet or computer gaming services, including online gaming;

(c) gaming; or

(d) radio or telecommunication services.

CFZ tax regime.

27.–(l) During the first ten years of its operation, a CFZ business shall be exempt from the payment of business tax or any other corporate tax, and any dividends paid by a CFZ business shall be exempt from such tax for the first ten years of its operation.

(2) A CFZ business shall pay business tax at the rate of 2% or such other rate as may be specified by the Minister by Order published in the Gazette upon the expiration of the tax holiday period under sub-section (1).

(3) In the computation of business tax under this section, there shall be given tax credits in accordance with the number of Belizean workers employed on a continuing basis by a CFZ developer or CFZ business in accordance with the following scale, No. of workers Tax Credit–

(a) 10 to 30 Belizean workers - 1% of annual business tax due under this section;

(b) 31 to 50 Belizean workers - 1.5% of annual business tax due under this section;

(c) over 50 Belizean workers - 2% of the annual business tax due under this section.

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(4) Where a CFZ business incurs a total net loss over the ten years tax holiday specified in sub-section (1) of this section, that loss may be carried forward and set off against business profits payable in the three years following the tax holiday period.

(5) Any proceeds from the sale of stock or other partial or complete ownership interest in a CFZ business shall be exempt from tax levied under this section.

(6) The tax levied under this section shall be collected by the Commissioner of Income Tax and the provisions of the Income and Business Tax Act shall, subject to this section or any regulations, mutatis mutandis apply to the collection of such tax and any appropriate action against the defaulter. CAP. 55.

(7) A CFZ fee equal to the sum of five per centum of the tax collected by the Commissioner of Income Tax under this section in any year of assessment shall be placed to the credit of the NFZ

(8) The NFZA shall be exempt from the payment of income tax, business tax, property tax and stamp duties.

28.–(1) All CFZ businesses shall pay their workers in the currency determined by the Central Bank of Belize after consultation with the NFZA. CFZ labour regime.

(2) There shall be no restrictions on the opening and closing of CFZ businesses which may open twenty-four hours, seven days a week, provided that such businesses obtain the prior approval of the respective CEO.

(3) The Immigration Department, on the recommendation of the respective CEO, may grant work permits to non-resident persons who are shareholders of a CFZ business or CFZ developer or who are required to work within a CFZ in managerial or technical positions.

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PART VI

Miscellaneous

Assignment of goods imported, etc.

29.–(1) No merchandise, articles or other goods entering a CFZ under section 19 shall be sold, hired, lent, given away or otherwise disposed of outside a CFZ except after payment of the import duty, and all other duties and taxes payable on the value of the article at the date of the transaction as assessed by the Comptroller of Customs.

(2) Any person who contravenes or fails to comply with any of the provisions of this section commits an offence and shall be liable upon summary conviction to a fine equal to three times the market value of the goods as assessed by the Comptroller of Customs or to a fine of five thousand dollars, whichever is the greater, and in every such case, the merchandise, article, or other goods in respect of which the offence was committed shall be forfeited.

Enforcement, liabilities and general provisions.

30.–(1) The NFZA shall have the power and responsibility to impose fines for violations of any of the provisions of this Act by a CFZ developer or a CFZ business and may make regulations for that purpose.

(2) The Board of Directors of a CFZ may, subject to the approval of the NFZA, make regulations to impose fines for violations of any of the provisions of this Act or regulations by a CFZ business in that zone.

(3) Where a CFZ business on at least three occasions violates the provisions of this Act or regulations, the Board of Directors of the respective CFZ, after due notice and hearing, may revoke the status of the CFZ business to operate within the CFZ whereupon the business enterprise concerned shall cease to be eligible for any benefits under this Act.

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(4) Every CEO and other regulatory authority shall have the right to inspect any CFZ operations or facilities to investigate violations of applicable requirements and laws.

(5) Where a CEO determines that a foreign national working for a CFZ business ceases to comply with the requirements of a work permit, the CEO shall recommend to the Immigration Department that the work permit of such a person may be revoked.

(6) A CFZ business shall be liable for any damage to persons or property which may result from any violation of relevant regulatory requirements by the CFZ business.

(7) Every CFZ developer and CFZ business shall comply with all the laws of Belize save as otherwise provided in this Act.

(8) Every CFZ business shall have the right to appeal to the Board of Directors of the respective CFZ against any decision of a CEO.

(9) Every CFZ business shall enjoy protection from arbitrary deprivation of property, in accordance with section 17 of the Belize Constitution. CAP. 4.

(10) The NFZA shall establish the procedure to be followed for revocation of a Certificate of Compliance of a CFZ business for repeated failure to pay fines imposed under this Act or any regulations.

(11) All fines imposed by the NFZA or the Board of Directors of a CFZ under this Act or regulations shall operate as a debt to the NFZA or the respective CFZ as the case may be, from the offender and may be recovered as a civil debt as provided for by law.

31. Every CFZ developer or CFZ business who contravenes or fails to comply with the provisions of this Act or regulations General penalty.

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made thereunder shall, unless otherwise specially provided, be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or to both such fine and imprisonment.

Regulations.

32.–(1) The NFZA may, by a two-thirds majority, make regulations for the better carrying out of the provisions of this Act. and for prescribing anything that needs to be prescribed under this Act.

(2) Any regulations made by the NFZA under this section shall be placed before the National Assembly through the Minister as soon as may be after the making thereof and shall be subject to negative resolution.

Repeals and savings. CAP. 278.

33.–(1) The Commercial Free Zone Act, 1994, Revised Edition 2000 is repealed.

(2) Notwithstanding the repeal of the said Act–

(a) all rules, regulations and orders made thereunder shall continue in force insofar as they are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act and until repealed and replaced by rules, regulations and orders made under this Act; and

(b) Ever license, certificate, permit or other document issued under the said Act shall, in so far as the same is not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act or regulations continue to be in force for such period and subject to such terms and conditions as are stated therein.

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