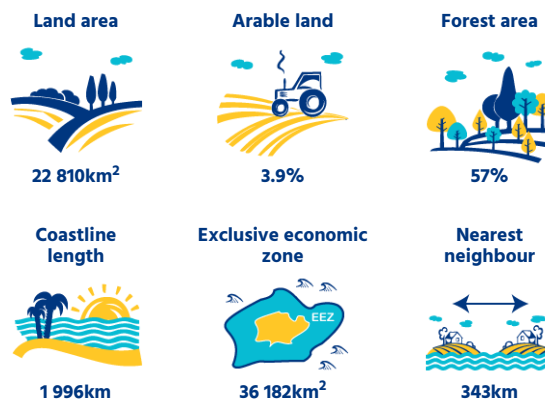# Belize

> **Capital:** Belmopan (17°15´N 88°46´W)
> **International airport(s):** Philip S. W. Goldson Airport
> **Official language(s):** English
> **Currency:** Belize dollar
> **Time:** UTC -6
> **Region:** Caribbean

Land area	**Arable land**	**Forest area**
22 810km^2	3.9%	57%

Coastline length	**Exclusive economic zone**	**Nearest neighbour**
1 996km	36 182km^2	343km

GEOGRAPHY

Belize is located on the northeast, Caribbean coast of Central America. It borders Mexico to the north and Guatemala to the west and south, making it the only Central American country without a Pacific coastline. While the northern and southern borders are largely defined by the courses of two rivers, the Hondo and the Sarstoon River, respectively, the western border follows no natural features and runs in a relatively straight line north-to-south through highland plateaus and the country's predominant lowlands (swampy at the coast and covered in forest inland). A total land border of 516 km is contrasted by the 386 km coastline to the east in the Caribbean Sea. The coast is flanked by the second-longest barrier reef in the world. The Belize Barrier Reef consists of a 300 km long section of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System with a total length of 900 km. Belize has 1 060 islands and many lagoons along the coast.

CLIMATE

Having a tropical climate, Belize experiences pronounced wet and dry seasons. Temperatures in Belize are affected by elevation, proximity to the coast and the effects of trade winds from the Caribbean. Average temperatures range from 23 °C in January to 27 °C in June (World Bank, 2020), with the interior having somewhat higher and highlands somewhat lower temperatures. Seasons are mostly determined by the amount of rainfall. The wet season in Belize occurs during the months of May to October and the dry season from November to April. During the wet season, Belize usually receives mean monthly rainfall of 150-400 mm in the south of the country; in the rest of the country precipitation is limited with less than 100 mm of rainfall per month (World Bank, 2020).

Hurricanes have major effects on the climate of Belize, often devastating ones. The city of Belmopan was built in 1970 to become the new capital, since Belize City was so often devastated by hurricanes. Belmopan is the third-largest settlement in Belize, following Belize City and San Ignacio.

ECONOMY

Belize's economy has traditionally been based primarily on agriculture. Key export crops include citrus, sugar, banana, and marine products such as shrimp (World Bank, 2020). According to the FAO (FAO, 2020), less than 4 per cent of the territory is classified as arable land. The share of agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing in total value added has fallen to just below 11 per cent in 2019, whereas services now account for three quarters (UNCTAD, 2021). Agriculture accounts for about 17 per cent of employment in the country; roughly 24 per cent for men. Over 85 per cent of women and 55 per cent of men are employed in service sector (ILO, 2020a).

Tourism has been gaining importance in the economy of Belize since the early 2000s: inbound tourism expenditure as a per cent of GPD was over 27 per cent in 2019 and the number of inbound tourists reached almost 1.7 million by 2018 (UNWTO, 2021). Belize's main export partners are the United States of America and the United Kingdom, jointly dominating the trade accounting for around 60 per cent of Belize's total exports. Jamaica, Ireland and Spain are also important export partners. (UNCTAD, 2021).
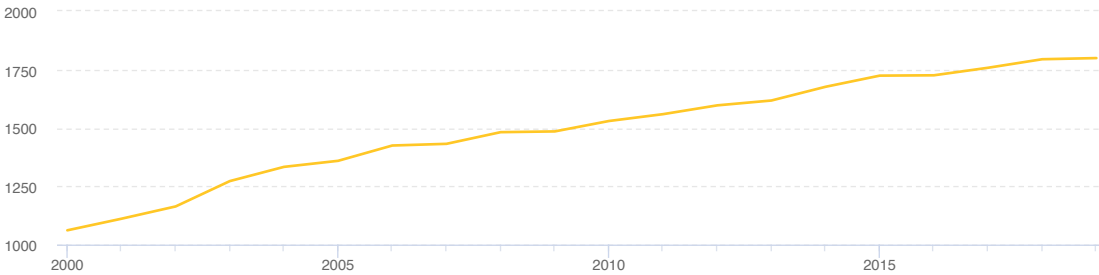
CULTURE

Belize's culture is an amalgamation of various ethnicities in the country, ranging from Central American to Afro-Caribbean, with a blend of Indian and Chinese communities. This is most pronounced in cuisine, but also in music and national folklore, the latter reflecting various legends.

Local food is diverse and influenced by the history of the country. Belizean cuisine offers spicy Creole dishes, corned beef and fried paca, which is a small jungle rodent. Beans and rice are a staple for most meals, and they commonly include coconut milk, hot peppers and plantains. Underground roasted pig is one of the delicious dishes still prepared, especially in the countryside.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

Gross domestic product
US dollars at constant prices (2015) in millions

GDP per capita
2019

US$4 815

Productive Capacity Index
2018

34.3

Economic and environmental vulnerability index
2019

40

Consumer Price Index growth
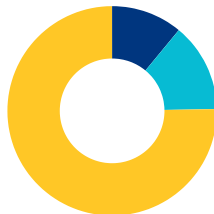**2019**

0.4%

Unemployment rate
2017

Total 6.6%
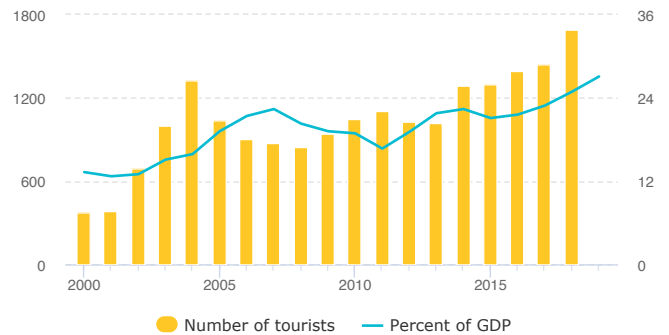**Female 9.8%, Male 4.6%**

Main economic sectors, 2019
Percentage of GDP

- Services
- Industry
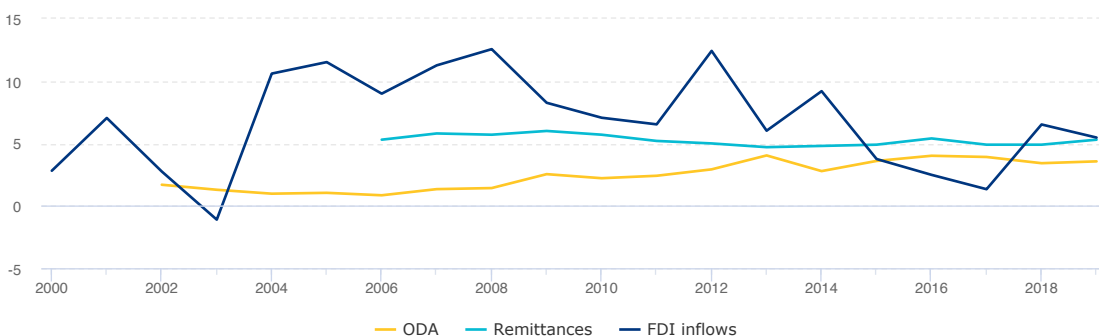- Agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing

Tourist arrivals
Thousands of tourists, percentage of GDP

Number of tourists　　Percent of GDP

External financial resources
Percentage of GDP

ODA　　Remittances　　FDI inflows

Public debt as % of GDP
2018

95.2%

MARITIME TRANSPORT

Fleet size
Number of ships

Ship type	2011	2019
Total fleet	1 407	1 407
Oil tankers	264	266
Bulk carriers	311	333
General cargo	161	77
Container ships	52	49
Other types of ships	619	682

Port performance
Ranked by 2019 data within SIDS group

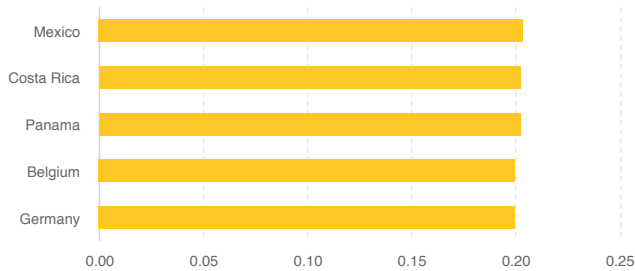| Indicators	2019	SIDS Ranking
Number of port calls	570	20
Median time in port (days)	0.5	28
Average age of vessels	13	28
Average size (GT) of vessels	70 933	1

Container port throuput
2019

44 510 TEU

Bilateral connectivity index, 2019
Top 5 partners

Liner shipping connectivity index
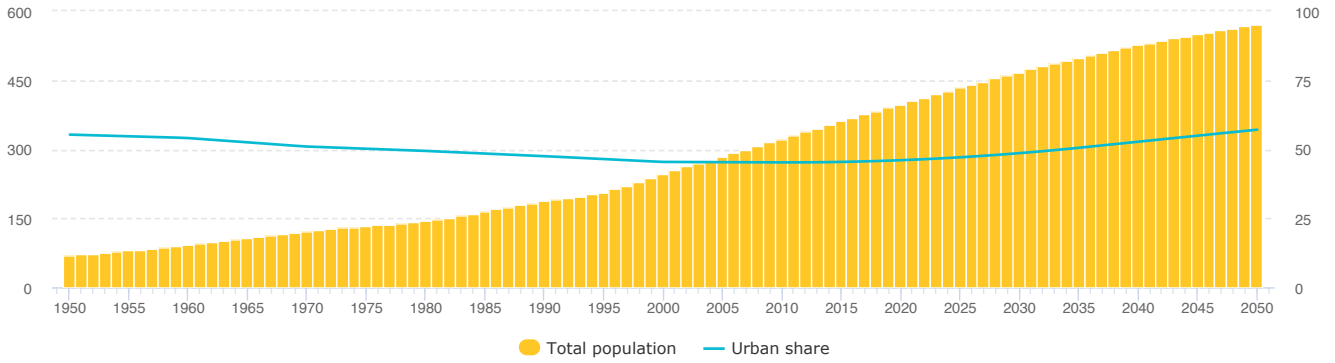Maximum China Q1 2006=100

POPULATION

Total population
Thousands of people, share of urban population

Legend: Total population ● Urban share ─

Population development indicators

Indicators	Period	Value
Poverty headcount (% of population)	..	..
Human development index	2018	0.7
Human assets index	2020	86
Adult literacy rate (15+ years, both sexes %)	..	..
Gender inequality index	2019	0.4

Life expectancy at birth
2019

75 years

Population density
2019

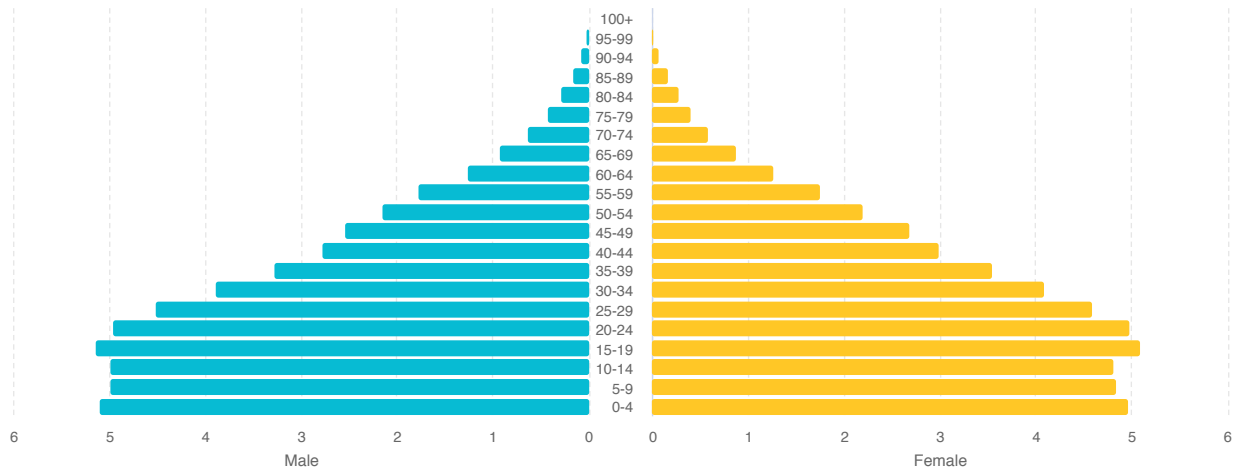**17 persons per km²**

Dependency ratio
2019

Child: 45.4
Old-age: 7.4

Age structure by gender, 2019
Percentage of total population

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Merchandise and services trade
US dollars in millions

Indicators	2005	2010	2015	2019	2019 (% of GDP)
Merchandise exports	319	478	538	462	24.6
Merchandise imports	593	706	991	986	52.5
Services exports	307	354	496	686	36.5
Services imports	159	162	221	295	15.7

Trade openness Goods and services
2019

63% of GDP

Export concentration index
2019

0.29

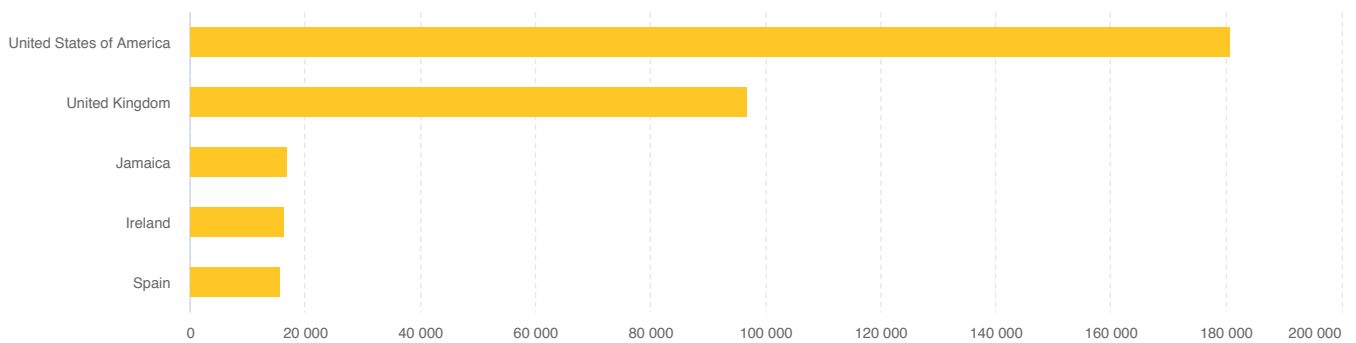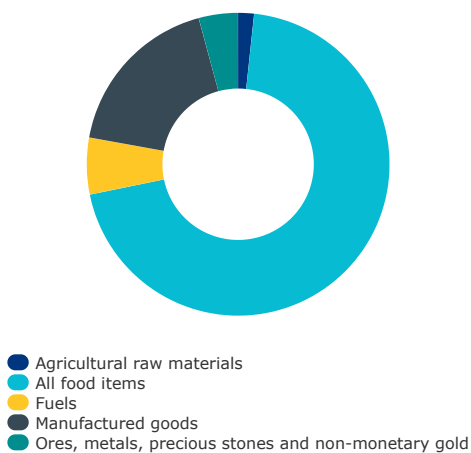**Food import dependency**
Average 2015-2019
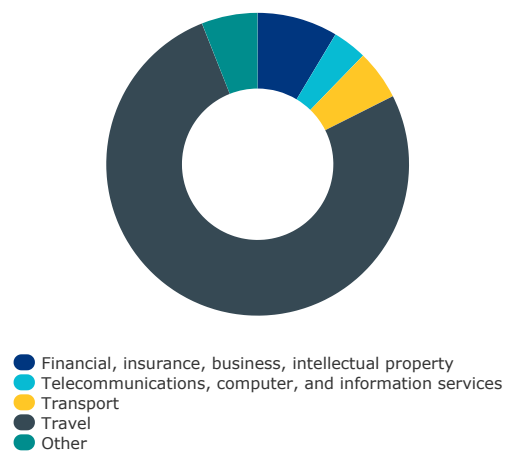
-16.19

Top 5 partners in merchandise trade, 2019
Exports in millions US dollars
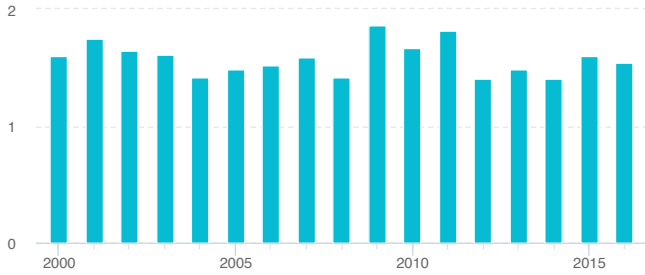

Merchandise exports by product group, 2019

- Agricultural raw materials
- All food items
- Fuels
- Manufactured goods
- Ores, metals, precious stones and non-monetary gold

Services exports by category, 2019

- Financial, insurance, business, intellectual property
- Telecommunications, computer, and information services
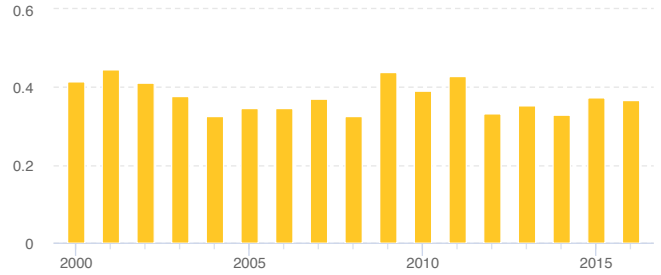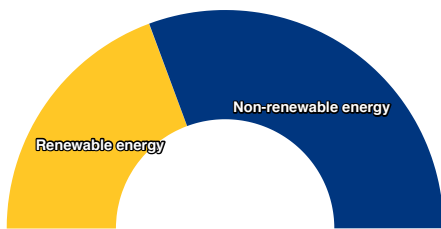- Transport
- Travel
- Other

ENVIRONMENT

CO$_2$ emissions per capita
Kg per capita

CO$_2$ emissions per GDP
Kg per 2010 US$ of GDP

Renewable energy share in total energy consumption, 2017
Percentage of total energy consumption

Material footprint per capita	Terrestrial protected area	Marine protected area
2016	**2018**	**2018**

Renewable energy

Non-renewable energy

15.1kg   **37.7%**   **10.08%**

Disasters indicators

Data not available

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Trade in ICT goods	Trade in ICT services	Share of internet users
2019	**2019**	**2017**

Exports: 0.4%
Imports: 3.1%
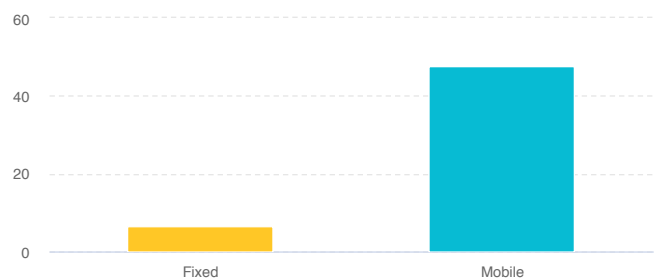
Exports: 3.5%
Imports: 6.5%

47%

Fixed broadband vs Mobile broadband subscriptions
Number of subscriptions per 100 people

Sources

Source of data: UNCTAD (2021) except indicators listed below.

- Adult literacy rate: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2021)
- Arable land: World Bank (2021) https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.ARBL.ZS
- CO_2 emissions per capita: World Bank (2021) https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.PC
- CO_2 emissions per GDP: World Bank (2021) https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.KD.GD
- Distance to nearest neighbour: [NO_PRINTED_FORM] (Package "cshapes," 2016) https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/cshapes/index.html
- Economic losses due to disasters: United Nations (2021) https://www.sdg.org/datasets/e3adb2406c2e452b81c3654e276fc5ca_0
- Exclusive economic zone: Sea Around Us (2016) http://www.seaaroundus.org/
- Fixed broadband/mobile subscriptions: ITU (2019). World telecommunication/ICT indicators database. Available at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/publications/wtid.aspx (accessed 28 May 2020).
- Forest area: World Bank (2021) https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.FRST.ZS
- Gender inequality index: UNDP (2020). Gender inequality index (GII), http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii
- Human assets index: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2021) http://data.uis.unesco.org/
- Human development index: UNDP (2021) http://hdr.undp.org/en/data#
- Life expectancy at birth: World Bank (2021) https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN
- Marine protected area: World Bank (2021) https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ER.MRN.PTMR.ZS
- Material footprint: UNEP (2021) https://environmentlive.unep.org/indicator/index/12_2_1
- Number of people affected by disasters: United Nations (2021) https://www.sdg.org/datasets/1beb260e9ca14674b391b815e4874990_0
- ODA: OECD (2021) https://stats.oecd.org
- Percentage of population in low elevated coastal zones: World Bank (2021) https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.EL5M.ZS
- Poverty headcount ratio: World Bank (2021) https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.DDAY
- Renewable energy share in total energy consumption: World Bank (2021) https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.KD.GD
- Share of internet users: ITU (2019). World telecommunication/ICT indicators database. Available at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/publications/wtid.aspx (accessed 28 May 2020).
- Terrestrial protected area: World Bank (2021) https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ER.LND.PTLD.ZS
- Tourism: UNWTO (2020) Compendium of Tourism Statistics dataset [Electronic], UNWTO, Madrid, data updated on 21/09/2020.
- Unemployment rate, total/female/male: ILO (2020b) https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer2/?lang=en&segment=indicator&id=SDG_0852_SEX_AGE_RT_A
- World risk index: Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft (2020): https://weltrisikobericht.de/download/1386/

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- ITU (2019). World telecommunication/ICT indicators database. Available at https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/publications/wtid.aspx (accessed 28 May 2020).
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- Sea Around Us (2016). Tools & Data. Available at http://www.seaaroundus.org/data/#/eez/ (accessed 8 November 2020).
- UNCTAD (2021). UNCTADStat. Available at https://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN/Index.html (accessed 11 January 2021).
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- UNDP (2021). HDI database. Available at http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi (accessed 9 February 2021).
- UNEP (2021). 12.2.1 Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP. Available at https://environmentlive.unep.org/indicator/index/12_2_1 (accessed 13 January 2021).
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2021). Available at http://uis.unesco.org/ (accessed 15 March 2021).
- United Nations (2021). Global SDG Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/ (accessed 2 April 2021).
- UNWTO (2020). Compendium of Tourism Statistics, Data 2014-2018, 2020 Edition. UNWTO. Madrid.
- UNWTO (2021). UNWTO database. Available at https://www.unwto.org/tourism-statistics-data (accessed 10 February 2021).
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- World Bank (2021). World Development Indicators. Available at http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators (accessed 8 November 2020).