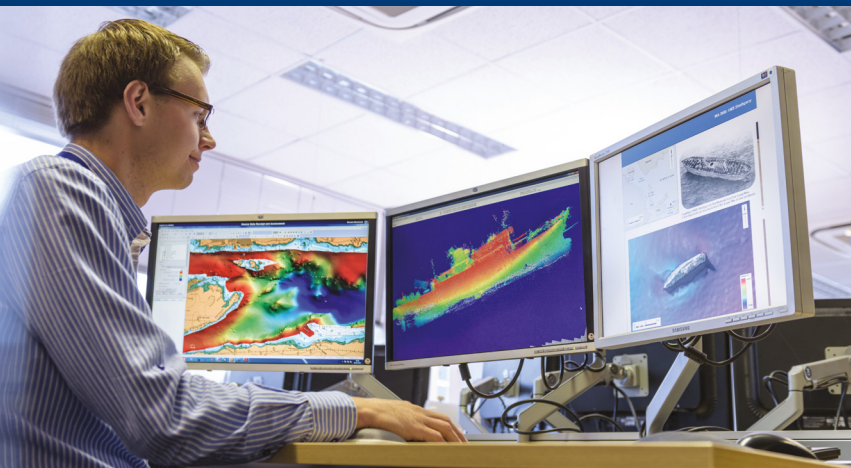


Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme

Enabling Safe and Sustainable Marine Economies across Commonwealth Small Island Developing States

Programme overview





Summary

In November 2015 the British Prime Minister announced a £5.6million package of measures to help small island countries alleviate poverty by preserving their marine environments and harnessing maritime resources that will support the sustainable growth of Commonwealth Small Island Developing States (SIDS) within the Caribbean, Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.

The Commonwealth Marine Economies (CME) Programme is being delivered on behalf of the UK Government by a partnership of world-leading UK government marine expertise: the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO), the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and the National Oceanography Centre (NOC).

Challenges and potential

SIDS face a common set of threats and challenges due to their small size and populations, remoteness, narrow economic bases and high degree of vulnerability to external shocks (both environmental and economic).



Compounding these challenges are the impacts of climate change and wider environmental degradation including declining fish stocks and the loss of habitats as a result of pollution and ocean acidification. These threaten subsistence livelihoods, commercial fishing and food supplies. The populations of SIDS account for a tiny fraction of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions but are likely to be among the first to suffer the consequences of global warming. SIDS are home to communities experiencing high-levels of poverty.

Commonwealth SIDS have strong potential for economic development based on greater, and better informed, use of their marine resources. Despite their size, many Commonwealth SIDS are surrounded by considerable natural economic and environmental resources. However, due to their low level of economic development and lack of resources these countries have been unable to afford to invest in surveying and researching these areas, leaving them at risk of missing out on major opportunities for economic development and job creation.

Enabling sustainable blue growth and prosperity

By providing the information and capacity building that Commonwealth SIDS need to manage and develop their marine economies, the programme will deliver the United Kingdom’s commitment at the 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to use UK capabilities to support Commonwealth SIDS in the sustainable use of their marine environment.

The Commonwealth SIDS themselves have pushed for recognition of the Marine (Blue) Economy as an avenue to sustainable development; most recently as Goal 14 of the United Nation’s Agenda 2030 and the 2014 UN SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (SAMOA Pathway).

Accurate navigational information based on modern survey techniques enhances the safety of shipping, attracting more and larger ships, which benefits the economy. Developing maritime trade and infrastructure will be important for long-term sustainability as seaborne trade is forecast to quadruple by 2050.

The CME Programme aims to ensure marine resources in Commonwealth SIDS are better understood and managed, enabling sustainable, growing marine economies that create jobs, drive national economic growth, reduce poverty, ensure food security and build resilience against external shocks.

The programme also recognises the importance of social factors in the sustainable management of marine resources, particularly poverty and gender inequality.



What will CME Programme deliver?

By providing training and support to Commonwealth SIDS institutions, as well as addressing economic and environmental needs, the programme seeks to ensure a lasting legacy of growing self-sufficiency in Commonwealth SIDS for their research needs. The first step in achieving this will be to undertake a technical assessment of the needs of each Commonwealth SIDS that will help guide further hydrographic and oceanographic work.

The CME Programme is intended to provide SIDS with accurate hydrographic and scientific data in the form of National Hydrographic Action Plans, to help manage their marine environment. The information collected will also be used to inform the development of National Marine Environmental Action Plans. This will allow SIDS to develop economies and livelihoods based on sustainably managed marine resources and to mitigate associated environmental and economic risks.

The programme will also enable training and capacity building for national agencies involved in the research and management of marine resources. Most Commonwealth SIDS have a strong tradition of collaboration, resource sharing and knowledge transfer. Training and expert advice provided in one Commonwealth SIDS is therefore likely to be disseminated across other countries in scope for this programme. This cooperation will be further enhanced through three regional workshops and by engaging with regional partners.

SIDS in scope

States (including coastal states) are in scope from the Caribbean, Pacific and Indian Ocean Regions. These countries fulfil the project criteria since they are Commonwealth SIDS and are eligible to receive Official Development Assistance. The programme will provide marine data and capacity building in all of these Commonwealth SIDS.

States in scope	Region
Antigua and Barbuda (until the end of 2016)	Caribbean
Belize	Caribbean
Dominica	Caribbean
Fiji	Pacific
Grenada	Caribbean
Guyana	Caribbean
Jamaica	Caribbean
Kiribati	Pacific
Mauritius	Indian Ocean
Nauru	Pacific
Papua New Guinea	Pacific
Saint Lucia	Caribbean
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Caribbean
Samoa	Pacific
Seychelles (until the end of 2016)	Indian Ocean
Solomon Islands	Pacific
Tonga	Pacific
Tuvalu	Pacific
Vanuatu	Pacific

Priority projects

The following projects have been selected, in collaboration with Commonwealth SIDS, as priorities in their national waters for the first year of activity. From the beginning of the programme, local and regional stakeholders have been engaged to ensure that the projects offered fit the needs identified by their existing plans. The regional workshops and stakeholder survey will identify further scope for collaboration and enable projects to be of use to as many Commonwealth SIDS as possible.

- Hydrographic Action Plans developed *for every beneficiary country*, providing an analysis of scientific data and existing local capacity to manage their marine environment, and a commitment from each government to use these in national economic development planning.
- Marine Environmental Action Plans developed *for every beneficiary country and their region*, and a commitment from each government to use these in national development planning. These plans will provide analysis and define specific activities to meet environmental, scientific and sustainability priorities.
- An understanding of the drivers and ecosystem impacts of harmful algal blooms in the *Seychelles*, including the capacity to monitor at local and regional scales and identify key species. This will enable the Seychelles’ Government to take action to inform the public, protect fish stocks and marine ecosystems which support fisheries, tourism and aquaculture.
- Seabed habitat maps developed to inform marine conservation and sustainable aquaculture in *Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*.
- The development of sustainable aquaculture and fisheries in *Saint Lucia*.
- Installation of radar technology tide gauges in *Saint Lucia* to monitor the impacts of climate change and contribute to the regional tsunami warning system, and training in use of sea-level data. Saint Lucia’s Government will commit to using these new capabilities in planning coastal infrastructure and defences to existing critical infrastructure under threat from sea-level change.
- Installation of autonomous marine sensors in the *Seychelles* to monitor impacts of climate change and pollution on the marine environment, and training in the deployment and maintenance of sensors and use of water chemistry data. The Seychelles’ Government will be able to use these capabilities to protect fish stocks and the ecosystem on which fisheries and aquaculture depend.
- Development of a socio-economic framework for the *Seychelles* Government’s Blue Bond proposal. This will underpin the evidence base, provide advice for issuing the Blue Bonds and provide assurance for potential Blue Bond investors.
- A regional evaluation of the impact of climate change on the marine environment in the *Caribbean*, which will provide vital evidence for further analysis of the consequential socio-economic issues.
- An assessment of water quality and the impact of pollution in *Vanuatu* that will enable the government to preserve and develop its fisheries, aquaculture and tourist industries.
- Provision of fisheries science advice and capacity building to support Guyana’s ongoing Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP). The completed FIP will prove their key industrial seabob fishery’s sustainability, enabling *Guyana* to achieve Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification.
- Significantly improved hydrographic charting and data in *Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, which will be targeted towards facilitating trade and infrastructure development in a sustainable manner.

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For more information on the Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme, please contact us via:

www.gov.uk/guidance/commonwealth-marine-economies-programme

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