

The Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme

2016-2022 SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

The UK Government is at the forefront of ocean science and the fight against climate change, and continues to be committed to supporting countries in developing their economies for the benefit of their people.

Since launching the Commonwealth Marine Economies (CME) Programme in 2016, the UK Government has been leading the way working through a partnership approach with Commonwealth countries to support their transition to a sustainable blue economy.

This commitment was strengthened in 2018 with the signing of the landmark Commonwealth Blue Charter, and again in 2022 with the launching of the £500 million UK Blue Planet Fund.

Between 2016 and 2022, the CME Programme supported 17 Caribbean and Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in better understanding and conserving their coastal and marine environments and thus allowing them to make the most of their resources to catalyse sustainable economic development. It was designed to promote growth, innovation, jobs and investment whilst safeguarding healthy seas and ecosystems, helping participating countries in meeting their commitments to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Change Accord.



"Tackling the truly alarming threat of climate change and finding some ways of mitigating the risks it presents is and must continue to be a top priority for the Commonwealth. I am particularly pleased to know therefore that through the Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme the mapping of St. Lucia's sea bed will not only inform our understating of the effects of climate change but has the potential to help develop St. Lucia's vital blue economy in significant and sustainable ways."

**HRH Prince Charles, speech made at
St. Lucia's 40th Independence Anniversary
Celebrations at the Phillip Marcellin
Ground Vieux Fort, March 2019**



CARIBBEAN

Antigua & Barbuda	Guyana
Belize	Jamaica
Dominica	Saint Lucia
Grenada	Saint Vincent & the Grenadines

SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC

Fiji	Solomon Islands
Kiribati	Tonga
Nauru	Tuvalu
Papua New Guinea	Vanuatu
Samoa	

The CME Programme delivered activities in three key areas:

Government Engagement and Dialogue

The UK Government engaged in partnerships with SIDS Governments at a pace and technical level that matched their capacity and fitted alongside their socio-economic development priorities throughout the CME Programme. Through an open and continuous dialogue with partners it was possible for the CME Programme to continue work with newly elected governments, and re-focus priorities swiftly to those that suited the countries when affected by economic and natural disasters. Many strong collaborative links and partnerships continue today, beyond the end of the CME Programme.

Scientific Research and Capacity Building

The majority of the activities under the CME Programme focused on the collection of data, scientific research, and capacity building, to enable the sustainable management and use of marine resources. Some examples of these include the support to **Jamaica** and **Guyana** to gather knowledge and complete evidence reports to apply for MSC certification for their key commercial fisheries; or training local youth in business development linked to spiny lobster aquaculture in **Saint Lucia** and the wider Caribbean.

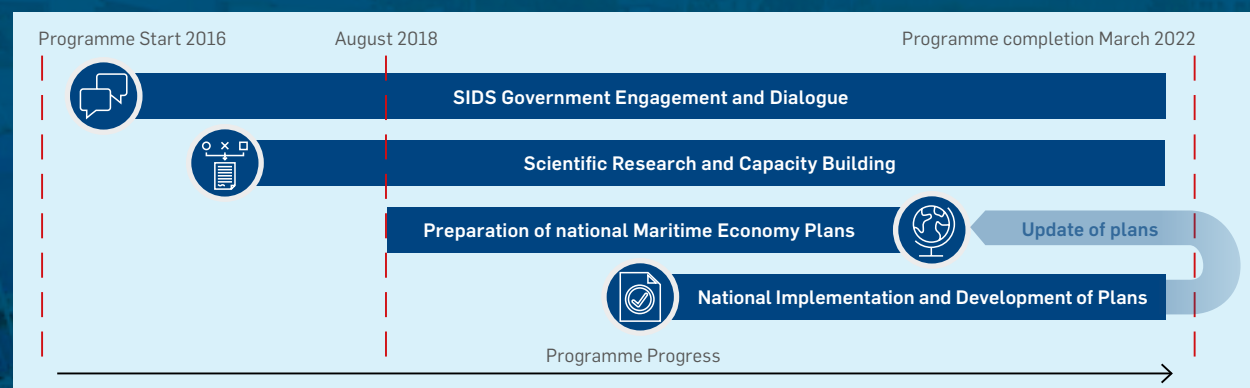
The activities of CME Programme linked to marine data collection and knowledge exchange also contributed to UN-led initiatives such as developing blue bonds and increasing community resilience against climate change.

Preparation of national Maritime Economy Plans

Following requests from SIDS Governments, the CME Programme worked in partnership with countries to develop Maritime Economy Plans tailored to their individual objectives and maritime potential, according to what they identified as their needs and priorities. A maritime economy can include diverse components, from established ocean industries such as fisheries, tourism and maritime transport, to emerging activities such as offshore renewable energy, aquaculture, deep sea mining, and marine biotechnology.

The Maritime Economy Plans seek to benefit the countries by supporting the diversification of their economy and increase their competitiveness while restoring and protecting the diversity, productivity, and resilience of the natural capital and marine ecosystems on which their economies depend.

Prior to developing these plans, a cross-sectoral assessment of their marine economy and natural resources was carried out to identify obstacles and opportunities for development. Marine economy baseline assessments were completed for the 17 countries of the CME Programme, after which, four Maritime Economy Plans were developed, namely for **Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, and Guyana**. The CME Programme subsequently worked with those Governments to implement some of the recommendations within the Maritime Economy Plans.



Under the CME Programme, more than 65 initiatives supporting capacity building, marine science, and technology transfer have been carried out with more than 30 partners, in 17 countries.

With support of the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO), the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), the National Oceanography Centre (NOC), Atkins Limited and numerous technical experts, the CME Programme has provided expertise and technical support to countries enabling them to advance their social and economic agendas.

Between 2016 and 2022, the CME Programme supported 17 Caribbean and Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

A small selection of some of the successes delivered by the CME Programme includes:

Supporting Antigua and Barbuda through a gap analysis to identify resources and funding options for the new Department of the Blue Economy to promote and develop the blue economy in the country.

Supporting Grenada in their coastal risk assessment through the development of local capacity in gathering and interpreting environmental data. This enabled Grenada to identify areas at risk of coastal flooding and plan the site of a new school on the north coast of the country.

Supporting Pacific SIDS in tackling plastic and water pollution in the marine environment by identifying pollution hotspots, sources and management strategies.

Supporting 10 postgraduate students across the Caribbean (4) and the Pacific (6) to complete their studies and return to their nations with enhanced knowledge and capabilities to support the development of their national blue economies.

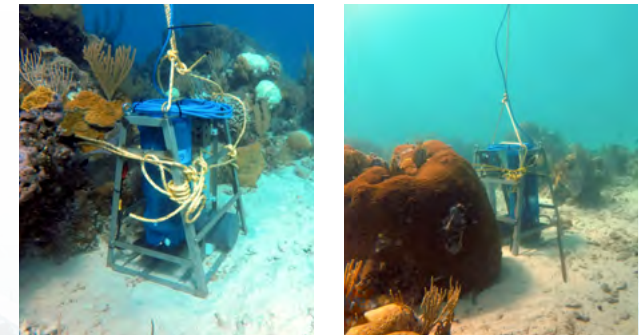
Supporting Belize, Dominica, and Saint Lucia with new sea level monitoring infrastructure that enabled them to have operational early warning systems for tsunamis and coastal flooding, as well as support to coastal planning and decision making.

Supporting Vanuatu with new bathymetric data to use alongside habitat maps to inform future decision making and environmental management, which contributed to a decision by the government of Vanuatu not to construct a jetty in Port Resolution or Sulphur Bay.

Provision of hydrographic equipment to Guyana, Antigua and Barbuda and Jamaica to continuously monitor and map changes in their sea bed.



Formal presentation of the Grenada Maritime Economy Plan (MEP) by British High Commissioner to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Scott Fursedonn-Wood to Hon. Yolande Bain-Horsford, Minister for Sports, Culture and the Arts, Fisheries and Cooperatives, at a joint ceremony on July 14, 2021



Ocean Acidification Sensors, Belize

Supporting the Pacific SIDS through a study on blue economy financing in the region that enables multi-donor programmes to focus their activities to those places and sectors where it is most needed, minimising programme overlap.

Supporting the development of a sustainable tourism industry in **Fiji** and **Vanuatu** through an analysis of the social and economic value of coastal and marine habitats to foreign visitors, including an assessment of the distribution and health of seagrass beds, their vulnerability to climate change and an estimation of their blue carbon storage potential.

Supporting St Vincent and the Grenadines in coastal management and planning by training staff and building institutional capabilities in coastal modelling and remote sensing to characterise the impacts of sea level rise, waves and storm surges on coastal regions, including impacts from climate change.

Supporting resilient Caribbean fisheries by developing a tool which helps Caribbean countries in assessing the vulnerability of their fisheries sectors and to implement national commitments relating to climate resilient fisheries and livelihoods. This supports a wider ongoing initiative which has developed a Caribbean climate risk insurance product enabling vulnerable fishing communities to recover after often devastating climatic disasters.

Supporting Tuvalu in developing safe and efficient maritime trade by carrying out marine data collection and assessing the increasing risk of climate change to coastal infrastructure and produce up-to-date navigation charts, contributing to long term socio-economic growth.



Media interviews Robotic engineer Terry Wood on C-worker being deployed in Dominica's waters to gather to map the ocean area in Makuba Bank



Ocean Acidification Training, Belize



Kiribati training for WQ and human health work, Cefas, NOC, MELAG (Kiribati)



Pollution sampling, Port Vila Bay, Vanuatu, August 2018



UKHO provides demonstration to HC Jane Miller and Minister Juan Edghill on how Guyana's sea bed is mapped

Since 2016, the Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme, through the capture and provision of cutting-edge oceanographic, environmental and meteorological data, combined with increased human capital through the delivery of extensive capacity building activities, catalysed the development of the blue economy in the Commonwealth SIDS.

In so doing, the UK Government has established a strong legacy and foundation upon which to build its future cooperation and investments in the blue economy of Commonwealth SIDS.

For more information regarding the programme please email:
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"The CME Programme provided the opportunity for Belize to create a plan that is dedicated to the development of its Blue Economy and set its blue space and resources as one of the pillars for development and improved quality of life for its people. It has allowed the Government to develop a framework to support its prioritization of a successful ocean-based economy and the effective management of its blue resources (Blue assets) which are central to the country's economy recovery and people's livelihoods."

Beverly Wade, Director Blue Bond Unit, Office of the Prime Minister, Belize

"The work of the CME Programme has impacted Antigua and Barbuda in a good way. The country has since launched its Maritime Blue Economy Plan, which has attracted investors, training programmes and workshops for employees. It has also created much needed jobs and driven national economic growth."

"The CME Programme has built a strong foundation on which a new national economic sector can be developed. Such a development is expected to be a long term one which will augur well for the citizens and residents of Antigua and Barbuda."

**Hon. Dean Jonas, Minister Ministry of Social Transformation
and Blue Economy, ANTIGUA and BARBUDA**