

# Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme

Enabling safe and sustainable marine economies across Commonwealth Small Island Developing States

[www.gov.uk/guidance/commonwealth-marine-economies-programme](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/commonwealth-marine-economies-programme)  
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The Commonwealth Marine Economies (CME) Programme is supporting Caribbean and Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to preserve their marine environments and make the most of their maritime resources to catalyse sustainable economic development, whilst safeguarding the health of the ocean.

Our ocean is essential to life, it provides our largest source of oxygen and absorbs around a quarter of our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Yet human activity is putting the health of our ocean at risk.



Valuable ecosystems are being degraded and destroyed through pollution, overfishing, and climate change.<sup>1</sup>

In April 2018, Commonwealth leaders adopted the Commonwealth Blue Charter, a bold commitment to protect the ocean and help to sustain livelihoods and

ecosystems globally. The CME Programme supports the aims of the Commonwealth Blue Charter and the UK Government's International Ocean Strategy.

**“ To conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. ”**

United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 14

The 'maritime economy', more commonly referred to as the 'blue economy' is a concept which encourages better stewardship of our ocean or 'blue' resources. It underpins the thinking behind the Commonwealth Blue Charter, highlighting the close linkages between the ocean, climate change, and the wellbeing of the people of the Commonwealth. It supports the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SDG 14 in particular, and recognises the need for ambitious, co-ordinated actions to sustainably manage and protect the oceans for future generations.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://thecommonwealth.org/commonwealth-blue-charter>

<sup>2</sup> <http://thecommonwealth.org/blue-economy>

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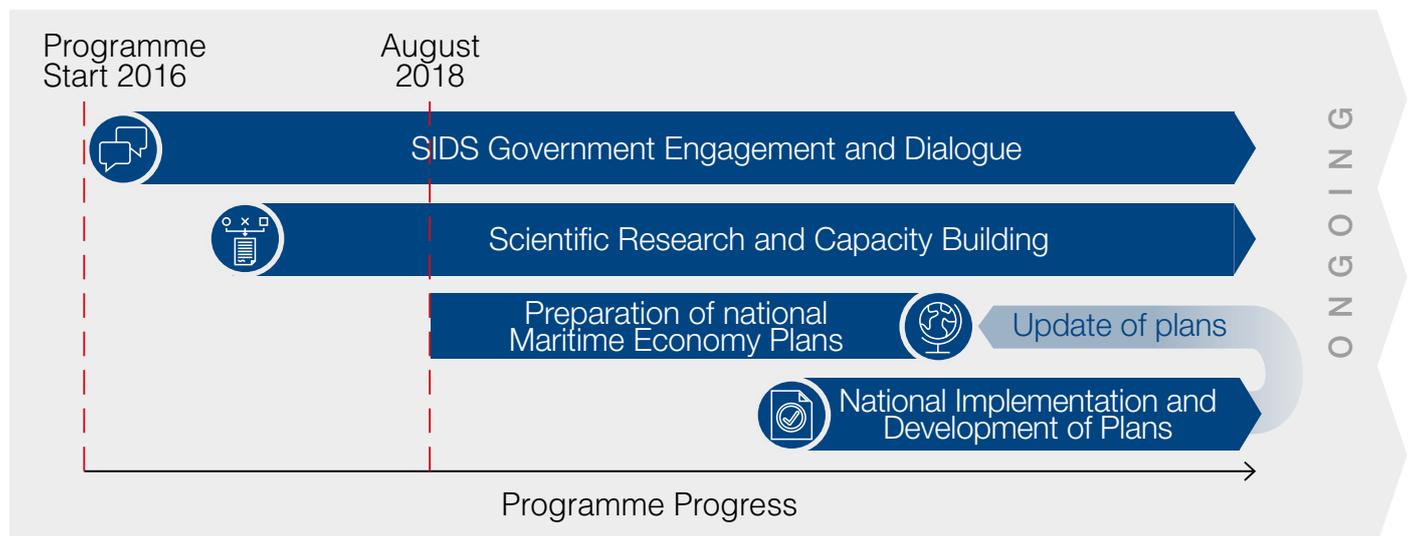
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## How is the CME Programme helping SIDS to build sustainable marine economies?



The maritime economy concept also promotes the development of ecosystem services and intangible blue resources such as carbon sequestration, traditional ways of life and coastal resilience, to help vulnerable states mitigate the often-devastating effects of climate change.

**The 'blue economy' model aims to improve human wellbeing and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.<sup>2</sup>**

In 2015, the CME Programme was announced by the British Prime Minister to help the most vulnerable SIDS take advantage of their natural resources, to enable sustainable economic growth and alleviate poverty. The Programme was launched in 2016 with the aim of supporting 17 Commonwealth SIDS in identifying the potential of, and developing their marine economies in a sustainable, resilient and integrated way. The small size, remoteness, narrow resource and

export base of SIDS make them vulnerable to external shocks from natural hazards, sea-level rise and other impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather events. However, their large marine estates compared to their land area present a huge opportunity to address these threats whilst also boosting their economic growth, tackling unemployment, reducing poverty and increasing food and energy security.

**“ The programme promotes growth, innovation, jobs and investment, whilst safeguarding healthy seas and ecosystems... ”**

Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme, 2018 ([link](#))

Since 2016, the UK Government-funded CME Programme has delivered world leading expertise in marine science through a strategic partnership of the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO), the National Oceanography

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Centre (NOC) and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS).

The CME Programme broadly comprises three components:

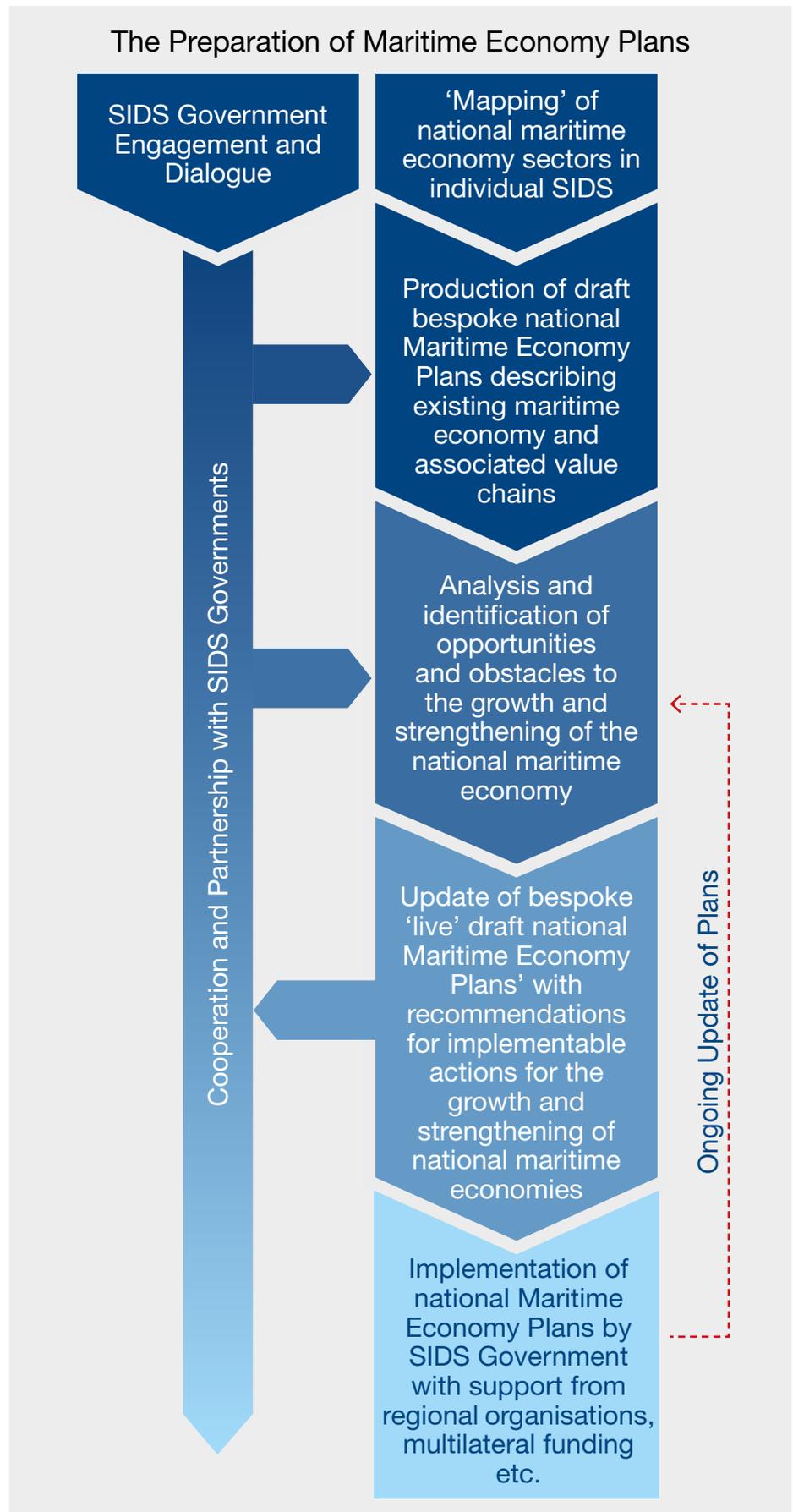
## Government Engagement and Dialogue:

The UK Government is committed to working alongside individual SIDS Governments at a pace and technical level that matches the capacity and needs of individual countries. Only by engaging in partnership with SIDS throughout the process is it possible to respond to national needs and priorities.

## Scientific Research and Capacity Building:

To sustainably manage and use marine resources, it is vital to understand them. The Programme has been collecting data, undertaking scientific research and delivering capacity building activities against a clear action plan developed from country requests. Summaries of activities to date in each SIDS are available upon request.

## The Preparation of Maritime Economy Plans



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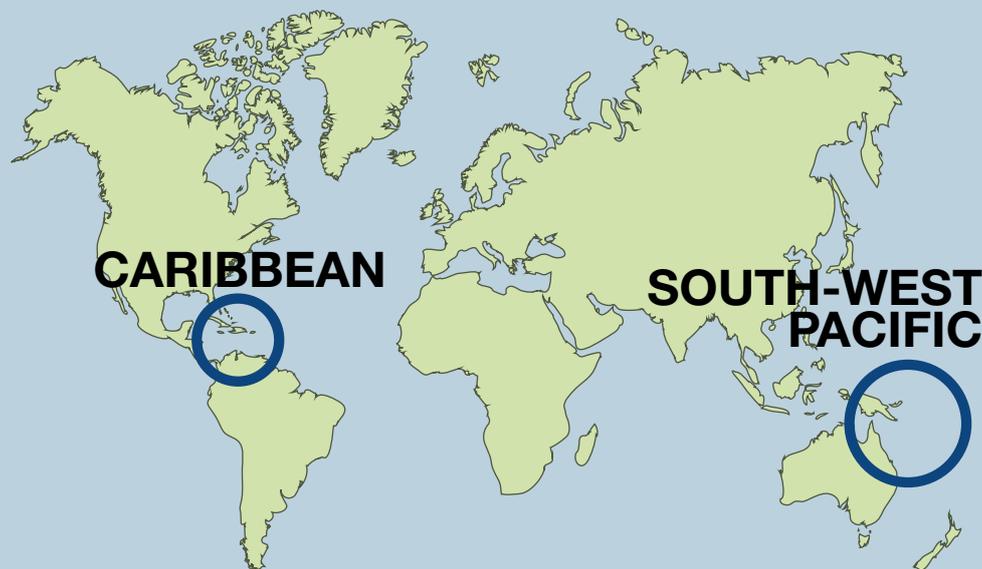


**Preparation of national Maritime Economy Plans:** In partnership with SIDS Governments, the Programme, where requested by SIDS, will develop bespoke national Maritime Economy Plans that assess the existing national maritime economies and identify the opportunities and obstacles to development, which individual countries can address to drive economic growth and alleviate poverty.

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 mix will depend on national circumstances but will provide social and economic benefits for current and future generations, restoring and protecting the diversity, productivity, resilience and natural capital of marine ecosystems.

The successful implementation of evidence based national Maritime Economy Plans will ensure the CME Programme leaves a positive legacy for Caribbean and Pacific small island countries of the Commonwealth.



## CARIBBEAN

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

## SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC

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