

Terms of Reference

Consultancy services to carry out an Assessment of Blue Economy Development across six OECS Member States

1. Background

The Commonwealth Secretariat (the Secretariat) through its Ocean Division, assists Member countries in advancing sustainable ocean management. The Secretariat is partnering with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to commission a consultancy service to carry out an assessment of blue economy development across six OECS member states: **Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Saint Kitts and Nevis.**

The six OECS member states have significant potential to advance their blue economy sectors yet continue to face challenges in fully realising the economic benefits of their marine resources. Governance structures are not yet fully aligned with Blue Economy principles, and together with fragmented regulatory frameworks, are undermining effective marine resource management and enforcement. Limited financial and technical resources, coupled with environmental and ecological challenges, threaten the very ecosystems on which the blue economy depends.

The six OECS member countries have positioned the concept of blue economy development at the centre of the Eastern Caribbean Regional Ocean Policy (ECROP). Recognizing the vast potential of their marine spaces, these OECS member states are pursuing integrated ocean governance, ecosystem-based management, sustainable fisheries management, climate-resilient coastal infrastructure, marine renewable energy, research and innovation and expanded marine tourism. Through regional cooperation, the OECS member states aim to strengthen maritime security, enhance ocean-based livelihoods, and attract investment blue economy sectors.

Purpose

The consultancy will evaluate how effectively national and regional institutions support blue economy development and identify ways to strengthen ocean governance, policy coordination, and investment readiness while ensuring effective marine ecosystem conservation.

Key Objectives

The objectives of conducting the assessment of blue economy development across OECS member states are to:

1. Governance and Coordination

- Strengthen national coordination mechanisms for blue economy development.
- Strengthen/develop national ocean governance coordination mechanisms to enable cross-sectoral planning, policy alignment, and stakeholder engagement that foster sustainable ocean-based economic development in OECS member states.
- Strengthen the OECS regional ocean governance coordination mechanism.

2. Policy, Legislative, and Regulatory Frameworks

- Identify policy, legislative, and regulatory frameworks gaps through examining of existing national policies, laws, and regulations relevant to the blue economy.
- Propose practical, actionable policy reforms and regulatory amendments to strengthen governance, enhance investment readiness, and promote sustainable use of marine resources. Recommendations should be tailored to the national context and aligned with regional frameworks such as ECROP and ACOD, as well as relevant international ocean governance commitments.

3. Capacity Building and Leadership

- Build institutional and technical capacity of the regional coordinating mechanism (OECS OGT (Ocean Governance Team)) to effectively support national-level ocean policy implementation, promote regional policy coherence, and drive blue economy development and investment opportunities across the six OECS member states.
- Establish a network of blue economy champions across the six countries.

4. Stakeholder Engagement and Knowledge Sharing

- Promote and foster inclusive, transparent, and participatory decision-making in ocean governance and blue economy planning.
- Improve information sharing, data use, best practices, and evidence-based decision-making to enable collective actions that contribute to blue economy growth

3. Scope of Work and Deliverables

The Commonwealth Secretariat is seeking a suitably qualified consultant [or consortia?] to undertake the following key activities:

Activity 1: Conduct national institutional reviews on Blue Economy Development in six countries, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Saint Kitts and Nevis

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of national institutions responsible for blue economy development.
- Examine mandates, legal frameworks, inter-agency coordination, technical and human resource capacities, and organizational structures.
- Identify functional overlaps, coordination gaps, and opportunities for vertical and horizontal alignment across ministries such as Fisheries, Environment, Blue Economy, Planning, Tourism, Maritime Affairs, Economic Planning, and Finance.
- Provide actionable recommendations on regional and national policies, legislation, and regulatory frameworks that could be revised or introduced to enhance investment, foster economic growth, and support sustainable development of the blue economy.
- Assess institutional culture, leadership, and attitudes toward cross-sector collaboration and innovation.

- Assess alignment of national policies with international and regional frameworks (ACOD, ECROP) and identify gaps and opportunities for harmonization.

Deliverable 1:

Evidence-based reports highlighting institutional gaps, structural weaknesses, and recommendations for strengthening coordination and identifying national blue economy champions.

Activity 2: Assess the effectiveness of the OECS Regional Coordinating Mechanism

- Evaluate the effectiveness, structure, and functionality of the OECS Ocean Governance Team (OGT).
- Identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities to improve regional coordination, policy coherence, and alignment with national efforts.
- Assess the OGT's role in facilitating collaboration among Member States, supporting investment promotion, value-chain development, and sustainable resource use.
- Provide recommendations to strengthen the OGT's role as a driver of cohesive regional ocean governance and blue economy growth.

Deliverable 2: Assessment report on the effectiveness, structure, and functionality of the OECS Ocean Governance Team, including findings, strengths, gaps, and actionable recommendations

Activity 3: Facilitate Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

- Organize national multi-stakeholder meetings and workshops, following the institutional reviews, to validate the findings and collect feedback from stakeholders. Most of these meetings are expected to be conducted virtually.
- Ensure alignment of findings with stakeholder priorities and on-the-ground realities.
- Engage participants from government, civil society, academia, the private sector, and community-based organizations.
- During meetings, promote inclusive dialogue on governance reforms and economic opportunities.
- Identify entry points for private sector engagement, investment partnerships, and innovation in blue economy sectors

Deliverable 3:

A consultation report summarizing key findings, priorities, and recommendations for coordinated action.

Activity 4: Review Policy Alignment and Develop Institutional Strengthening Roadmaps

- Develop a tailored roadmap to improve operational effectiveness, strengthen regional coordination capacity, and enhance the OGT's role in supporting ocean and blue economy champions

- Develop individualised roadmaps for at least two Member State based on findings of ‘Activity 1: Conduct national institutional reviews on Blue Economy Development’ to clarify institutional roles and mandates, mobilize and empower ocean and blue economy champions, enhance inter-agency coordination and governance mechanisms, and reform legal and policy frameworks to support sustainable blue growth

Deliverable 4: Tailored institutional strengthening roadmaps for the OECS Ocean Governance Team and for two Member State, with actionable recommendations to enhance governance, coordination, and sustainable blue economy development

Activity 5: Design Capacity training program

- Design a training for government staff and institutions on ocean governance, blue economy planning, data management, and investment facilitation.

**Deliverable 5:
Training program for government staff and institutions designed.**

4. Expected Outcomes

- An established and coordinated network of blue economy champions capable of leading and advocating for ocean-based growth.
- Strengthened national ocean governance coordination mechanisms and clarified institutional roles.
- Aligned national policies and strategies with regional frameworks (ECROP) and international commitments.
- Enhanced stakeholder engagement, inclusivity, and transparency in ocean governance.
- Improved strategic investment, resource mobilization, and partnerships for sustainable blue economy growth.
- Strengthened technical and institutional capacity to manage ocean governance processes, implement policies, and attract investment.
- OECS Member States positioned to engage effectively in regional and global ocean initiatives.

6. Governance and Reporting

- The consultant/s will report to the Commonwealth Blue Charter at the Commonwealth Secretariat and OECS Commission.
- Regular monthly progress updates will be provided to ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with the CBC priorities and OECS.

7. Duration, Timeframe and Payment Schedule

Deliverable	Final Due Date	Payment
Inception Meeting and Inception Report Inception Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify the roles and responsibilities of partner organisations and consultants Expectations, deliverables, and timelines Communication protocols and coordination mechanisms Identify risks, constraints, and resource considerations Inception Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope and Objectives, Methodology, Workplan Outline of all deliverables and reporting back frameworks Stakeholder mapping and engagement strategy Data Collection and Baseline Information Risk Assessment and Mitigation Risk assessment and mitigation strategies 	June 2026 - 20% £6,000	
Deliverables Governance and Institutional Assessment Report National Institutional Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of institutional arrangements in each of the six countries. Identification of policy and legal gaps and recommendations. Assessment of governance capacities at the national level. OECS OGT (Organization of Eastern Caribbean States - Observing Governance and Transparency) Regional Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of existing regional coordination mechanisms. Analysis of inter-country collaboration and policy harmonization. Recommendations for improving regional governance and operational effectiveness. Stakeholder Consultation and Validation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of stakeholder consultation processes across countries. Validation of findings from the national and regional assessments. Incorporation of feedback and perspectives from key stakeholders. Final recommendations based on integrated national, regional, and stakeholder insights. Integrated Recommendations and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actionable recommendations for closing policy and legal gaps. Strengthening governance capacities at both national and regional levels. 	July 2026 - 40% £12,000	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed roadmap for improved regional coordination and stakeholder engagement. 	
Deliverable OECS Blue Economy Capacity Development and Knowledge Management Frameworks Regional Capacity Development and Training Program blue economy Monitoring, Reporting, and Knowledge Management Framework Final Synthesis Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consolidating all findings, recommendations and roadmaps with an executive summary for policymakers and investors 	August 2026 - 40% £12,000
Total	£30,000

**Offers above £30,000 will not be considered.*

Key outputs:

- Inception report - Detailed methodology, workplan, stakeholder engagement plan and data sources for the consultancy services
- National institutional reviews - Report analysing the institutional arrangements, policy and legal gaps and governance capacities in the six countries.
- Policy Legal Recommendations - report evaluating the effectiveness of policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks with recommendations on changes to strengthen initiatives on blue economy development.
- An approved capacity development and training program for blue economy development for OECS membership
- Monitoring, Reporting, Knowledge Management (MRKM) framework for OECS. - Framework including tools, templates, and guidelines to track progress, report outcomes and share knowledge.
- Final synthesis report - consolidating all findings, recommendations and roadmaps with an executive summary for policymakers and investors

8. Required Qualifications

- Advanced degree in marine policy, environmental governance, ocean economics, international development, or a related field. Given the range of activities, the team should comprise at least 3 persons: Blue Economy Specialist; Legal Specialist; and Capacity-building Specialist
- Experience working with international or regional organisations such as the Commonwealth Secretariat or Caribbean regional institutions.
- Knowledge of blue economy financing, ocean investment, or marine spatial planning.

9. Required Expertise

The consultant (or consortium) should demonstrate the following expertise:

- Ocean governance and blue economy development: Proven experience in sustainable ocean management, marine policy, and blue economy planning, particularly in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Experience with OECS member states would be an asset.
- Institutional and governance analysis: Experience conducting institutional assessments, organizational reviews, and designing coordination mechanisms across government agencies.
- Policy and regulatory frameworks: Strong understanding of ocean-related policy frameworks, including regional and international ocean governance instruments (e.g., regional ocean policies, blue economy, biodiversity and fisheries governance frameworks).
- Stakeholder engagement and facilitation: Demonstrated ability to conduct multi-stakeholder consultations, workshops, and participatory processes involving government, the private sector, civil society, and academia.
- Capacity building and training: Experience designing and delivering training programmes, technical assistance, and institutional strengthening initiatives.
- Monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge management: Skills in developing monitoring and reporting frameworks, data systems, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms for policy implementation.
- Regional experience: Familiarity with governance systems and development challenges in the Eastern Caribbean, particularly within the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).
- Project management and reporting: Strong analytical, research, and report-writing skills with the ability to deliver high-quality outputs within tight timelines.

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