

Preface

The concept of a 'green economy' has received considerable international attention as a model of how to overcome the challenges of climate change and promote sustainable development. A large amount of discussion and analysis has helped to conceptualise the green economy and set out model policies that could help to realise it. There has been far less analysis of the realities of putting this concept in practice, and in particular, what the implications and options are for small states to transform their economies in this way. There is recognition that the transformation to a green economy requires a consistent and joined-up approach, to shift incentives and investments toward less resource-intensive technologies and industries. It also requires sustained support from the highest levels of government, backed by communication campaigns to persuade businesses and citizens of the value of greening their activities. These are not straightforward or linear processes, and so it is worthwhile to reflect on which pathways may be identified by particular countries and what these can hope to achieve.

The purpose of this publication is to explore the process of transformation to a green economy in small states: the opportunities, constraints and challenges it presents, and what sort of policies it means in practice. As the international community has recognised, small island developing states and islands supporting small communities, are a special case for both environment and development, because they are ecologically fragile and vulnerable and their small size, limited resources, geographic dispersion and isolation from markets all place them at a disadvantage economically and prevent economies of scale. This publication comprises eight case studies from countries that have shown public commitment to transform to a green economy, namely: Botswana, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Mauritius, Nauru, Samoa and Seychelles.

We are delighted to be producing this publication in 2014, the International Year of Sustainable Development in Small Island Developing States. We hope that the material contained in this publication will prove valuable to many in small states in considering how to start a process of transformation to a green economy, or in exploring further what this concept could mean in their own country. This year also marks 25 years since the landmark Langkawi Declaration on Environment, when Commonwealth Heads of Government set out formally the need for environmental protection to be fully integrated with development objectives. Although the concept of a green economy did not emerge until much later, many of the principles set out in 1989 share the aims and aspirations of the green economy concept.

The case studies presented in this book were initially put forward for discussion at the Second Global Biennial Conference on Small States, convened in September

2012 by the Commonwealth Secretariat, and they have since been reviewed at regional meetings related to the green economy. The Biennial drew the participation of senior government officials, representatives from regional and international organisations and academics from within the Commonwealth and beyond to discuss on key developmental issues for small states and propose practical steps to support sustained growth and development, including green growth and the green economy concept. The case studies were produced by independent researchers based in the respective countries. The authors used a mixed approach to their analysis, drawing from review of literature and policy documents, combined with a series of interviews with stakeholders from government, the private sector, and civil society. The authors were able to review the different studies and reflect on the different approaches and successes identified in each country, to reflect on comparisons and similarities. The case studies represent the findings and analysis of the authors, and should not be taken to reflect the views of the respective governments or the Commonwealth Secretariat.

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