

UK government supports safe maritime trade and sustainable development across Commonwealth states

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) has launched a five-day capacity building conference to help islands across the Pacific and Caribbean support trade and develop sustainable marine economies.

Led by government experts in maritime safety, seabed mapping and ocean science, the conference will help representatives to achieve these outcomes by developing legislation and regulations that support the safe use of our oceans.

Legislation and regulations that guide the sharing of maritime information – up-to-date bathymetry (seabed mapping data), tides, navigational warnings and observations – are essential to the safe navigation of ships, protecting the lives of mariners and reducing the likelihood of groundings that could damage marine environments. This information, when combined with detailed analysis of marine life, can also help countries to develop evidenced based policy and legislation that supports the sustainable use of their natural resources.

Talks and practical sessions led by UKHO subject matter experts will include a focus on how maritime regulations and law can help islands to build sustainable 'blue' economies, as well as support the safe navigation of the many ships that travel in their territories.

Partners the [National Oceanography Centre \(NOC\)](#), [Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science \(Cefas\)](#) and ATKINS will also demonstrate how regulations support ocean science programmes, as well as how existing legislation supports different areas of ocean policy.

Commenting on the conference, Ian Davies, Hydrographic Programme Manager at the UKHO said:

This seminar has been a fantastic opportunity to work with partners from UK government and around the world to help build sustainable and resilient marine economies for the future. The oceans are vital for providing these states with food, security and livelihoods, so it's vital that we not only help them understand and monitor these areas, but also learn how to protect them through the development of strong governance and appropriate legislation.

This work forms part of the [Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme](#). Coordinated by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and funded by the National Security Committee's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF), the programme aims to help Commonwealth Small Island Developing States to create sustainable and resilient marine economies. Through this programme, the UKHO

has led the collection of marine geospatial data in over 6500km² of ocean, to help these countries support safe trade, combat the effects of climate change and develop sustainable marine economies.