

Evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Support to Small States

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The Commonwealth

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Evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Support to Small States



The Commonwealth

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
CAYWA	Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Worker Associations
CCFAH	Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEP	Commonwealth Election Professional
CFA	Climate Finance Adviser
CHEC4YW	Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium for Youth Work
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CNCFA	Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser
CS	CommonSensing Project
CS-DRMS 2000+	Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSSO	Commonwealth Small States Office
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRF	Disaster Risk Finance
EMES	Effective Management of Education Systems
EO	Earth Observation
EPSS	Economic Policy and Small States
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EU	European Union
EYSDD	Economic, Youth, and Sustainable Development Directorate
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office
FOSS	Forum of Small States
FY	Financial Year

G20	Group of Twenty
GBP	Great British Pounds
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GIS	Geographical Information System
GPD	Governance and Peace Directorate
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	Intermediate Outcome
ISIL / ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
IT	Information Technology
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Plus
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEIDECC	Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change, and Communication
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MIS	Management Information System
NAMCOL	Namibian College of Open Learning
NDA	National Delivery Agency
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OBE	Order of the British Empire
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIANZEA	Pacific Islands, Australia, and New Zealand Electoral Administrators Network
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDMX	Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SIEC	Solomon Islands Electoral Commission
SO	Strategic Outcome
SPPDD	Strategy, Portfolio, Partnerships and Digital Division

SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SRS	Satellite Remote Sensing
TA	Technical Assistance
TONRD	Trade, Oceans, and Natural Resources Directorate
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNCTO	United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USD	United States Dollars
UVI	Universal Vulnerability Index
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WBG	World Bank Group
WTO	World Trade Organisation
YDI	Youth Development Index

Executive Summary

Introduction

This evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Support to Small States covers two strategic periods: 2013/14-2016/17 and 2017/18-2020/21. It focuses on selected interventions from the dedicated small states pillar (Pillar 5: Small and Vulnerable States) as well as the other pillars (Pillar 1: Democracy, Pillar 2: Public Institutions, Pillar 3: Youth and Social Development, and Pillar 4: Economic Development). The evaluation process ran from February 2021 to August 2021.

Thirty-two of the 56 Commonwealth member countries are small and vulnerable states, many of which share similar vulnerabilities and characteristics associated with their sensitivity and exposure to exogenous shocks.¹

Evaluation Purpose, Objectives, and Scope

Purpose: To provide evidence for the effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, coherence and alignment, sustainability, and likely impact of the Secretariat's support to small states over the last eight years; and to identify lessons learned and recommendations for the next Strategic Plan and future programming.

Scope: The evaluation covers the work of the Trade, Oceans, and Natural Resources Directorate (TONRD), Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate (EYSDD) and Governance and Peace Directorate (GPD), including the two small states offices in Geneva and New York. It also considers the alignment and coherence of the Secretariat's small states portfolio with the work of other institutions, such as the Bretton Woods, the OECD, and regional organisations.

Key objectives:

Conduct the evaluation using a participatory and consultative approach.

Produce 7 Country Case Studies: 1 – 2 from each region which showcase results achieved in small states under multiple strategic outcome areas.

Produce 3 Global Issue Case Studies.

Use an overarching analysis of the case studies along with additional stakeholder interviews and group discussions to answer the strategic questions outlined in the evaluation framework.

Identify lessons for future programming. Make recommendations for the consideration of the Secretariat's senior management and Board of Governors for the next strategic period.

Methodology and Approach

The evaluation took a qualitative case study approach which focused on seven small states and three global issues that matter for small states. Case studies are evaluative and are not designed for public relations. Country case studies cover Guyana, Malta, Namibia, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Trinidad and Tobago. Each country case study includes an account of interventions in two to four intermediate outcome areas, a summary assessment against the OECD DAC criteria, and more detailed findings that answer a set of more specific questions. The full case studies can be found in Annex A (attached as a separate document), while key findings against the OECD DAC criteria are synthesised in this report.

The global issues case studies cover three areas of strategic importance for small and vulnerable states: Trade Policy Advocacy around Fisheries and Fishery Subsidies; The Universal Vulnerability Index, and Access to Disaster Financing. Further details on the evaluation methodology are provided in Section 3 of the report, which includes insights into how data was analysed and synthesised. [Section 3.4](#) uses the Secretariat's own strategic plan overview to map areas of focus for each case study. Limitations to the evaluation approach are acknowledged. A quality of evidence analysis is included. Overall the evidence is deemed to be fair to good.

¹ The Commonwealth Universal Vulnerability Index: For a Global Consensus on the Definition and Measurement of Vulnerability. April 2021.

Given that the Secretariat does not have a database that includes which countries each programme is actively implementing in or country specific data on progress, the evaluators relied on the guidance of the Secretariat in selecting case studies. In some instances the evaluators discovered that some interventions were too early in the project cycle once the assessment was underway. The evaluation approach drew on an analysis of secondary data (design and implementation documents including six monthly and annual progress reports), as well as primary data (interviews with stakeholders who included Secretariat programme staff, and country level stakeholders such as government officials and civil society partners). It was not possible to interview the down-stream beneficiaries of interventions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Limitations section of the report provides more details on the challenges faced during the evaluation including limitations arising from, in some cases, a dearth in data and access to stakeholders.

As is standard practice, the evaluation also applied a utilisation approach. This approach promoted the active participation of those likely to use the findings and apply recommendations to the design of the next strategic plan. Key audiences include: the Director General's Office, Board Members, the Evaluation Reference Group, and key interlocutors in the relevant directorates, including Unit and Division Heads across the five strategic outcome areas.

Findings

Effectiveness: How effectively has the Commonwealth Secretariat delivered support to address the vulnerabilities, public governance, and development challenges of its small member countries?

The evaluation identified at least one achieved outcome in each of the seven country case studies. The outcomes identified are listed in [Figure 4.1](#). They are distributed across the strategic outcome areas as follows and illustrated in an infographic: Pillar 1: Democracy: 6 outcomes; Pillar 2: Public Institutions: 1 outcome; Pillar 3: Youth and Social Development: 6 outcomes; Pillar 4: Economic Development: 8 outcomes; Pillar 5: Small and Vulnerable States: 2 outcomes

In addition to achieved outcomes, the case studies also identify a number of likely outcomes (See Annex A). No achieved outcomes have been identified for the three global issue case studies.

The Secretariat has a strong convening power – both within the Commonwealth and with external stakeholders – that it needs to continue to leverage to promote learning, networking, idea development, and commitment to action among member countries.

No single delivery methodology appears to be more effective than others. Combining different methodologies, however, has shown to increase effectiveness in some cases. Flexible, timely, demand-driven, needs-based, and contextualised support is effective in delivering results as they lead to stronger partner ownership. Partners – for example, in Malta, Guyana, Solomon Islands, and Trinidad and Tobago – highlighted the Secretariat's efforts to tailor tools, systems and advice to small states and specific country contexts vis-à-vis some other donors.

Being demand-driven is a key strength of the Secretariat's programmes and it ensures that they respond to small member countries needs, policies, and priorities. At the same time, this approach also carries risks that need to be carefully managed. These risks are highlighted in the report. Trust in the support provided by the Secretariat appears to be a contributing factor to success. Feedback from partners and Secretariat staff suggest that factors supportive of trust include: Partner countries are themselves part of the Commonwealth and sit on the Board of the Secretariat, giving them a say in how the organisation is run; and a perception that the Secretariat and its advisors have no hidden agendas and there are no strings attached to support. The main report elaborates further.

In-depth engagement through consultants on the ground and/or long-term, repeated engagement, sometimes over multiple strategic planning periods, have shown greater potential for high-level results. Interventions in some cases could benefit from incorporating participatory approaches.

When working on highly politicised reforms it is unrealistic to expect that all interventions made by the Secretariat will lead to significant outcomes.

However, in some areas more work could be done to proactively generate political will and ownership for such reforms. Work that involves the development and promotion of toolkits, systems, legislations or similar products need follow-up and the delivery of continued support to partners.

Various external stakeholders and member countries suggest the need for strategies to promote scale-up/replication in some Secretariat programmes. At the same time, this has to be balanced with both the need for more in-depth, sustained interventions and the Secretariat's budget constraints as they are more likely to deliver results.

The evaluation struggled to assess higher-level results in all case studies due to the weakness of the Secretariat's monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system in monitoring outcomes (and impacts), and, in many instances, the lack of good quality theories of change/impact pathways. Separate MEL related findings and recommendations are provided in [Box 4.1](#).

Gender mainstreaming

Development interventions cannot be considered effective or as offering good value for money if they do not mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment. Findings from the case studies and Secretariat staff interviews suggest that gender is not sufficiently mainstreamed in most Secretariat programmes (including those aimed at small states) and that budget cuts have reduced this focus. It appears that in the second strategic period, the Gender Advisor's focus had to shift from assisting project staff in understanding why their sector mattered to gender equality, to a more concerted effort to address gender-based violence (GBV). The evaluators also feel that social inclusion needs to be included as part of gender mainstreaming. Social Inclusion when linked to Gender Equality brings a specific focus on those living with disability as well as those who are marginalised, vulnerable and excluded. At present, each intervention that the evaluators reviewed for the case studies does not have a visible analysis of why gender and social inclusion matters, or a gender strategy with clearly defined objectives and approaches, and an action plan that includes monitoring and evaluation arrangements and results indicators for gender equality and social inclusion.

Impact: To what extent has the Secretariat's support delivered longer-term high-level changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended)?

Drawing on the analysis of the ten case studies, the evaluation found that most interventions across all pillars have pathways to change that are likely to deliver higher-level results and to contribute to the increased resilience of small states and deliver benefits for their people in ways that promote socio-economic well-being and equality. The main body of the report provides examples of programmes where impact results are likely and where there is an indication of an intervention logic that can be further developed by Secretariat staff, or where the intervention logic and the result itself may need to be reframed.

The evaluation found more compelling evidence from the ten case studies that interventions for and in small states are designed to contribute to resilience. The report provides tangible examples of small states where Secretariat interventions contribute to resilience as well as examples of where the Secretariat is likely to contribute to impact in small states more broadly.

Sustainability: Which aspects of the Secretariat's interventions are likely to have an enduring impact?

From our analysis, there are interventions for small states across all five pillars that have strong potential in terms of sustainability for strategic outcomes listed in the 2017/18 – 2020/21 Strategic Plan. Secretariat interventions for and with small states are most likely to have enduring higher-level results when they are aimed at creating systemic change, i.e., improving policies and practices (knowledge, attitudes, capacities, systems, processes, and decision-making behaviours) that will endure and be replicated over time. Where programmes have high or likely levels of sustainability, they are also characterised by government buy-in, ownership, and commitment.

Robust communications facilitate sustainability where there is a need for further investment. This suggests more emphasis on the role of the Secretariat's Public Relations Department. Strategic partnerships with other international development partners are also important for sustainability.

Strategic partnerships with other international development partners are also important for sustainability. The report provides a detailed characterisation of sustainability interventions across small states for each intervention examined by the case studies. The evaluation also notes that sustainability is relevant for most but not all interventions and that the Secretariat's is best considered during the design of programmes. Insights are provided on what more can be done to promote sustainability across the Secretariat's work for small states.

Coherence and Alignment: How well do the Secretariat's small states interventions and support fit within an overarching Secretariat strategic intent; and with the actions of other institutions targeting small states?

Interventions for small states across all five pillars have good alignment with the goals of the strategic plan, but the key issue for small states themselves is whether the strategic plan and the Secretariat's interventions for small states are sufficiently prioritised and whether there is inbuilt flexibility and adaptation.

On the issue of alignment between the Secretariat's work and that of other institutions targeting small states, stakeholders from member countries feel that the Secretariat has created good alignment with key global institutions, including the World Bank and UN agencies, and that partnerships are in place. Small state representatives suggested that while alignment matters, the results of alignment matter more.

The World Bank Group (WBG) acknowledge on their website that its approaches pose eligibility challenges in accessing concessional financing.² The Bank is aware that international development institutions need to develop innovative tailored solutions to address their interrelated development and financing issues and they are committed to this result.

There is a strong perception among internal and external stakeholders that the Secretariat has been successful (to some extent) in giving small states both a voice and influence in the international arena and examples are provided in the report. Of some concern: the evaluation found no evidence of a

well-defined, structured, and coherent advocacy strategy on global issues that matter to small states. This is likely to be one of the main reasons why Secretariat staff find it difficult to measure the results of its advocacy work

Among most interviewees, there is consensus that the Secretariat's leadership on 'global issues that matter to small states' has scope to be more responsive, assertive, proactive, strategic, and adapted to changing circumstances. Follow-through on priority areas is also critical. For vulnerability and concessional financing, stakeholders acknowledge that the Secretariat has contributed significantly to helping the global community and multilateral organisations in recognising the special characteristics of small states and the need for a different understanding and measurement approach to vulnerability as a means to wider and more equitable access to development concessional finance. However, there are concerns and details are provided in the report.

The Secretariat has shown effective leadership on the issue of fisheries trade and fishery subsidies on behalf of small states using its convening power to bring small states together with large multilateral organisations such as the WTO and UN bodies (especially through the Commonwealth Small States Office in Geneva). The global issue case study notes that 'it is too soon' to assess the effectiveness and impact of interventions related to climate change and facilitating small states' access to disaster finance. At the same time, member countries suggest that the Secretariat's approach is not sufficiently calibrated to the needs of small states.

Leveraging entry points in global discussions

Evidence suggests that the Secretariat has not been as effective as it could be in leveraging entry points on global issues that matter for small states. The Secretariat has hosted many workshops and side events at large conferences and summits (which small states get invited to), but the critical issue for small states is: What are the tangible benefits?

Findings around leadership and entry points suggest that at every turn, the Secretariat needs to ask: will this alone yield results; if not, what next? Global leadership and advocacy are the 'means'—they are not an end in themselves.

² See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/smallstates/overview>

Relevance: What are the Secretariat's competitive advantage and value-added in supporting small states, and why?

All stakeholder interviews confirmed the Secretariat's competitive advantage and value-added in supporting small states. The report lists key factors which include: long-standing experience and expertise, the ability to understand unique needs and challenges; convening power; unique lesson learning role; the ability to leverage technical expertise, resources; and neutral engagement and advice.

Findings from the case studies suggest that the Secretariat is working on issues where there is a gap in assistance, a clear need for support, and/or it has strong technical expertise. Examples are provided in the report. The work of the two Commonwealth Small States Offices in Geneva and New York especially stand out by offering a fairly unique service among donors, providing small states with technical, human resource and logistical capacity to effectively participate in the work of multilateral organisations that they otherwise would not have access to.

With regards to the relevance of the Secretariat's support to small member states' priorities, the findings suggest a more mixed picture. Within programmes, feedback from civil servants in small states appear to confirm the relevance of the Secretariat's interventions to their priorities; although not always in line with available resources. When high-quality tools and approaches are viewed through a 'relevance lens', in a small number of cases resource constraints are not sufficiently taken into consideration. At the same time, interviews with Board members point to concerns about alignment between the Secretariat's overall portfolio of work and small states' current priorities (COVID-19 access to vaccines, access to disaster finance, and climate change).

While civil servants in member countries praised the demand-led nature of the Secretariat's support, at the strategic and political level there is a perceived need for better communication, consultation, and partnership with small states around defining real-time priorities.

There are various mechanisms in place in the Secretariat to gather intelligence on member country needs and priorities, including those of

small and vulnerable states. This suggests that the challenge is with acting on this information and reassuring small states that their voices are being heard and taken seriously.

Fragility in communications between small states and the Board on areas where the Secretariat did adapt—especially around the COVID-19 pandemic—appears to have contributed to the perception that small states' priorities are not adequately considered. Given perceived deficits in the areas of response and adaptation to emerging issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat could usefully consider strengthening its organisational agility and adaptive management capabilities. The evaluation findings also highlighted concerns with the balance of support, as well as the difference in the relevance of support, between small states in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Efficiency: Are the Secretariat's governance and resourcing arrangements fit for purpose for small states?

It has been challenging to assess the efficiency of the Secretariat's governance arrangements and budget processes just for small states. Consequently, most of the findings presented in this section are relevant for all states supported by the Secretariat.

The evaluation has not found any indication that small states as a group would be more disadvantaged by the Secretariat's governance arrangements and budget processes than other countries, with perhaps the exception of the Abuja Guidelines. There are concerns among some Secretariat staff that the Abuja Guidelines might negatively affect support for small states. Although a waiver can be and has been issued on occasion to allow support for these states, the Secretariat has, in the past, been hesitant to issue these.

Small states have the majority of seats (32 of the 56 seats) on the Commonwealth Secretariat Board of Governors, suggesting that they are adequately represented in the Secretariat's governance structure. The Board is currently chaired by the small state of St Kitts and Nevis.

Finding the appropriate balance between i) a portfolio of work that is well resourced enough

to deliver results; ii) a budget that is constantly shrinking; and iii) the diverse needs and priorities of member countries, especially small states, has been a challenge for the Secretariat. The Secretariat has an extremely difficult balancing act to perform. There are no easy fixes to resolving these tensions, but—as discussed in [Section 4.5 Relevance](#)—feedback from Board members suggest that engaging small states more closely in deciding on the strategic priorities for the portfolio and ensuring some agility within the strategic plan to pivot to emerging needs would be an important first step.

Several factors hinder the predictability—and most likely effectiveness—of available assistance to member countries, including yearly budget cycles, short-term contracts with advisers (e.g. Trade Advisers in Commonwealth Small States Office in Geneva), and sudden and unforeseen budget freezes.

In some sectors, the Secretariat's maximum daily fee rate for external consultants makes the recruitment of high-quality consultants challenging. The maximum daily fee rate for external consultants in the Secretariat is about GBP 500. While in some sectors this might be enough, the Guyana case study highlighted that in others it is not.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down Secretariat programmes and led to higher than usual underspending on the budget, the case studies suggest that overall, the Secretariat has adapted operations reasonably well to the changed circumstances. Where the Secretariat appeared to have struggled during the pandemic was with the recruitment of consultants. Some stakeholders noted that improvements could be made with scheduling online courses.

While partners in member countries understand the necessity of remote support, they look forward to the resumption of in-person support and visits, including from the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

Although there is evidence of improvement, cross-programme and cross-division collaboration within the Secretariat remain challenges.

Mainstreaming the Small States as Opposed to a Standalone Pillar

The evaluation findings suggest that small states are de facto mainstreamed across Pillars 1–4 (pillars not specifically focused on small states). However, the Secretariat should strongly consider formalising this mainstreaming and further increasing the visibility and effectiveness of support to small states through developing a formal small states strategy and strengthening country-level monitoring, reporting, and communication of expenditure, activities, and results.

Although the findings suggest that from a programmatic perspective mainstreaming (rather than having a standalone pillar) may be an attractive programming approach and is unlikely to reduce the effectiveness of support to small states, Board members interviewed for this evaluation were very clear that maintaining a separate small states pillar is a key priority for small member countries, which should be respected.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the Commonwealth Secretariat

At the Portfolio Level

1. The Secretariat needs a small states strategy that captures: i) short- and medium-term plans for small state-specific initiatives, including plans for follow-up work on flag-ship initiatives like UVI and Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Portal; ii) advocacy strategy regarding small states issues; iii) how small states are being mainstreamed in other pillars; iv) overall objectives and expected results of small states work, accompanied by a small states specific theory of change; and v) how small states work will be monitored and evaluated (indicators, evidence sources, approaches), and vi) a learning strategy. One Secretariat staff member commented on an initial draft of this report that there is a 'small advocacy strategy in place' (sic) 'which was jointly developed with the UN and currently the leaders (sic) are volunteering to serve as champions'. The staff member asserted that the strategy focuses on 'vulnerability, debt and climate change'. **HIGH PRIORITY**

2. Revisit mechanisms to understand and respond to the evolving needs of small states. 'Communication, consultation and partnership' need significant strengthening. **HIGH PRIORITY**
3. Re-instate a focus on mainstreaming gender (but also add) social inclusion (GESI) across all strategic pillars. **MEDIUM PRIORITY**
4. For the next Strategic Plan, retain the small states pillar. In parallel, implement a formal mainstreaming of small states in other pillars and purposefully set out to demonstrate that this approach can sufficiently ensure—or even increase—the visibility and prioritisation of issues that matter for small states. **HIGH PRIORITY**
5. In addition to funding programmes that run throughout the strategic planning period, ringfence a portion of the budget to be flexibly used to respond to emerging member country needs and priorities (small states or otherwise). **MEDIUM PRIORITY**
6. Given the likelihood of continued resource constraints, continue leveraging partnerships (for example with the World Bank on debt management) with other development organisations to secure funding for interventions that specifically benefit small states where needed. Consider incorporating the latter in the small states' advocacy strategy. **HIGH PRIORITY**
7. Improve public relations as this can yield important benefits concerning securing stakeholder support and international interest. Donors, including larger member countries, want stories of change that explain the relevance of the support and what is happening as a result of the Secretariat's work in small states. *'The Secretariat is made of good bones (sic) but they need to be a good storyteller. They achieve a lot but it doesn't always come across.'* **HIGH PRIORITY**
8. Initiatives that fill critical resource gaps in small states without necessarily expecting sustainable capacity improvement (e.g. the two Commonwealth Small States Offices in Geneva and New York or the exchange programme for judges) is a unique and valued offering that should be continued in the next Strategic Plan. **HIGH PRIORITY**
9. Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and learning. **HIGH PRIORITY.** This includes:
 - Strengthening the monitoring framework and processes, particularly around the measurement of outcomes (including baseline) and definition of theories of change for all programmes, so they are more suited for the complex and politically sensitive changes Secretariat programmes aim to achieve.
 - Ensuring that the management information and monitoring systems track expenditure, activities, outputs and outcomes at the country level. This would ensure greater visibility of small states in programmes outside of the small states pillar.
 - Commissioning fewer but more strategic evaluations. Savings from these could be usefully repurposed to invest in dedicated resources (internal or external) that support robust programme monitoring and learning.
 - Definition and consistent use of MEL terms (e.g., outcome and impact). Strive to harvest outcomes in the first instance and to understand how these are likely to produce impact over time.
 - Improving communication of results to member countries and external audiences, which includes packaging data from the Secretariat's MEL activities in a way that are accessible to non-specialist audiences (e.g., citizens of member countries).

At the Programme Level

1. Wherever possible, strive for depth over breadth in support. Evaluation findings indicate that in-depth and sustained interventions over time are more likely to deliver higher-level results. A good example concerns support to education where there are aspirations to develop more new tools and approaches, rather than consolidate, and ensure that the existing approaches and tools are implemented, monitored and evaluated for impact and adapted for scale-up. **MEDIUM PRIORITY**

2. Provide follow-up support to the development and delivery of toolkits, systems, legislation, policies, and similar products to ensure i) that partners have the capacity and resources to implement them and ii) that those higher-level results that may take time to materialise are captured. A good example concerns the costing approach to gender-based violence where there is an assumption that the pilot in Seychelles can be translated into guidelines that other states can then implement. We believe other states will also need a similar level of support to that received by Seychelles—and that Seychelles itself requires follow-up support and monitoring. **HIGH PRIORITY**
3. Where a demand-driven approach is used in programmes, continue to ensure that they are acted on when they fit with strategic objectives and the theory of change. If there are resource constraints, consider adding the '*likelihood of higher-level results being achieved*' to decision-making criteria. **HIGH PRIORITY**

Recommendations for the Commonwealth Member Countries (Board Members)

These recommendations apply to Commonwealth member states in their capacity as members of the Board and recipients of the Secretariat assistance.

1. Consider a bi-annual budget cycle. The unpredictability of funding to small states and initiatives is a considerable challenge, especially for countries that rely heavily on the Secretariat's support in certain areas. **HIGH PRIORITY**
2. Member countries also need to take responsibility for their contribution to the effectiveness, responsiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Secretariat's interventions by ensuring the predictability and sustained level of their funding. Although budget cuts are sometimes unavoidable due to circumstances outside the control of member countries, these need to be communicated to the Secretariat—especially on Extra Budgetary Resources—as soon as possible, so alternative funding sources can be located. **HIGH PRIORITY**
3. Acknowledge and agree on who has ownership of and responsibility for the delivery and measurement of higher-level results. Small states and other partners need to have a stake in MEL processes (e.g., commit to be interviewed by evaluators, provide access to data when interventions are evaluated; timely review of draft findings, etc.). **MEDIUM PRIORITY**

1. Introduction

1. This evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's (the Secretariat) Support to Small States covers two strategic periods: 2013/14–2016/17 and 2017/18–2020/21.
2. The evaluation covers selected interventions from the dedicated small states pillar (Pillar 5: Small and Vulnerable States) as well as the other pillars (Pillar 1: Democracy, Pillar 2: Public Institutions, Pillar 3: Youth and Social Development, and Pillar 4: Economic Development). The Small and Vulnerable States Pillar has specific performance measures and targets associated with the responsiveness of the international development community to small and other vulnerable states' development strategies and resilience needs; resilience, adaptation, and mitigation against climate change; and improved access to climate financing. For the other four pillars, there are no specific performance measures or targets for small states.
3. The evaluation process ran from February 2021 to August 2021. It included an inception period and the delivery of an inception report, which laid out the evaluation methodology and approach. The data and analysis period extended to 14 July and culminated in the delivery of this report. The evaluation process also included weekly progress meetings and updates with the Secretariat Evaluation Management Team. The evaluation team also had an introductory meeting and subsequently facilitated three workshops with the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG): the first was on the case study selection; the second was designed to include Secretariat staff in the meta-analysis of findings; the third was aimed at testing and co-creating recommendations in line with the evaluation's utilisation approach. Meetings and discussions with both the Evaluation Management Team and the ERG have been invaluable for their support, insights, and guidance.

2. Background

4. There are 32 of the 56 Commonwealth member states that are small and vulnerable states, many of which share similar vulnerabilities and characteristics.³ The Commonwealth has long been recognised as a champion of small states and it offers a range of support to these countries, including global advocacy, capacity and institution building, technical assistance, knowledge sharing, and policy development. Support to small and vulnerable states is a key area of focus for the Secretariat's Strategic Plan for both 2013/14–2016/17 and 2017/18–2020/21, with the latter bringing adaptation and mitigation against climate change into focus. The Strategic Plans also expected that small states benefit disproportionately from the Secretariat's delivery.
5. Small states are a diverse group, but all share common challenges associated with their sensitivity and exposure to exogenous shocks.⁴ This is reflected across several dimensions, including geography, population levels, income levels, financial flows and debt sustainability, vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change, and other features that result in a wide spectrum of development challenges and outcomes. A few examples from the seven small states that the evaluation targeted for case study analysis are provided below:

The seven small states selected for the evaluation are distributed across Africa (Namibia and the Seychelles), the Caribbean and the Americas (Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana), Europe (Malta), and the Pacific (the

Solomon Islands and Tonga). Four of them are small island developing states (SIDS): the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, and Seychelles.

Their population sizes range from about 100,000 people in Seychelles and Tonga to more than 2.5 million people in Namibia.

Malta, Trinidad and Tobago, and Seychelles are ranked as high-income by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Namibia, Guyana, and Tonga are upper-middle-income states, while the Solomon Islands is lower-middle-income.

Significant growth volatility—often associated with the impact of natural disasters, other exogenous shocks, and weak fiscal management—has contributed to substantial debt in many small states;⁵ although there is considerable diversity across individual states. Debt levels concerning the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the Solomon Islands, for example, is around 14%, while Seychelles' is around 94%. Tonga, Malta, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago have debt levels between 40% and 60%.

Many small states are disproportionately vulnerable to a range of natural disasters and climate change. Small island states (SIDS) are especially susceptible to external and economic and environmental shocks that harm their development. According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2020,⁶ which analyses to what extent countries have been affected by the impacts of weather-related events (such as storms, floods, and heatwaves), Tonga ranks as the 15th most vulnerable country in the world, followed by the Solomon Islands (29th), Namibia (85th), Trinidad and Tobago (88th), Guyana (=135th), Malta (=135th) and Seychelles (169th).

³ The Commonwealth defines small states as: countries with a population of 1.5 million or less; countries with a bigger population but which share many of the same characteristics, e.g., Botswana, Jamaica, Lesotho, Namibia, and Papua New Guinea. Small island developing states or 'SIDS' are especially susceptible to external economic and environmental shocks that have an adverse impact on their development. These nations are often remote, low-lying, and acutely vulnerable to climate change and rising seas.

⁴ The Commonwealth Universal Vulnerability Index: For a Global Consensus on the Definition and Measurement of Vulnerability. April 2021.

⁵ World Bank Group Support to Small States. 2021.

⁶ Eckstein et. al. Global Climate Risk Index 2020. Who Suffers Most from Extreme Weather Events? The Climate Risk Index is based on data from Munich RE.

2.1 Evaluation Purpose, Objectives, and Scope

6. Purpose: The purpose of this evaluation is to provide evidence for the effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, coherence and alignment, sustainability, and likely impact of the Secretariat's support to small states over the last eight years; and to identify lessons learned and recommendations for the next Strategic Plan and future programming. The evaluation seeks to help the Secretariat understand its value-added and make the most of its human and financial resources in meeting the needs of small states in the next strategic planning period.
7. Scope: The evaluation spans two strategic planning periods as it identifies strategic and intermediate outcomes of the Secretariat interventions for small states. It covers the work of the Trade, Oceans, and Natural Resources Directorate (TONRD), Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate (EYSDD) and Governance and Peace Directorate (GPD), including the two small states offices in Geneva and New York. It also considers the alignment and coherence of the Secretariat's small states portfolio with the work of other actors, such as the Bretton Woods institutions, the OECD, and regional organisations.
8. The objectives of the evaluation are to:
 - Conduct the evaluation using a participatory and consultative approach drawing on a review of documents, and internal and external interviews.
 - Produce 7 Country Case Studies: One to two from each region (except Asia due to the small number of interventions in small states there), which showcase results achieved in small states under multiple strategic outcome areas.
 - Produce 3 Global Issue Case Studies, which highlight results from the Secretariat's support to small states in global forums and discussions.
 - Use an overarching analysis of the case studies along with additional stakeholder interviews and group discussions to answer the strategic questions outlined in the evaluation framework with an analysis of what approaches work well and less well, and why.
 - Identify lessons for future programming.
 - Make recommendations for the consideration of the Secretariat's senior management and Board of Governors on how small state impact can be scaled up across the Commonwealth during the next strategic planning period.

3. Methodology and Approach

9. The evaluation used a case study methodology that drew on qualitative methods. The approach is explained in more detail in [Section 3.1](#). A case study approach was felt to be best suited to assess results for small states, not just from the dedicated pillar, but across all other pillars: Democracy, Public institutions, Youth and Social Development, and Economic Development. The approach focuses on seven small states and three global issues that matter for small states. Case studies are evaluative and are not designed for public relations.
10. Qualitative approaches included in-depth document reviews (strategic and mandate statements; intervention design documents; six-month and annual progress reports; evaluations; reviews; terms of references for technical support; methodologies; tool manuals produced as part of interventions; and so on) as well as third-party data sources including global literature.
11. The evaluation team conducted semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders (government officials and other implementing partners including involved academics, civil society organisations, and consultants) who were selected using a purposeful selection approach. In some cases, interviewees also recommended further interviewees who they considered important. The case studies provide a list of interviewees and a more comprehensive list of interviewees is provided in Annex C. Interviewees include:
 - Secretariat programme leads and implementation team members;
 - Other Secretariat staff and Senior Directors;
 - Board members (St Kitts and Nevis, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, the UK, and Canada);
 - Government stakeholders in case study countries; and
 - Other stakeholders (civil society, multilateral donors, and non-government organisations).
12. Despite our intention to use mixed methods for data collection, the evaluation was not able to draw on quantitative data as the data we reviewed and had access to was qualitative (e.g., progress reports and evaluations, and primary data collection through online interviews).
13. The evaluation also applied a utilisation focused approach which promoted the active participation and involvement of those likely to use the findings and apply recommendations to the design of the next strategic plan. Key audiences include the Secretary General's Office, Board Members, the Evaluation Reference Group, and key interlocutors in the relevant directorates, including unit and division heads across the five strategic outcome areas. The evaluation team held weekly meetings with the Secretariat's Evaluation Management Team in the Strategy, Portfolio, Partnerships, and Digital Division to provide updates on progress but also to test assumptions regarding findings and to identify stakeholders for interview.

3.1 Country Case Studies

14. Country case studies cover Guyana, Malta, Namibia, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Trinidad and Tobago. Each case study includes an account of interventions in two to four intermediate outcome areas, a summary assessment against the OECD DAC criteria, and more detailed findings that answer a set of more specific questions. The full case studies can be found in Annex A (attached as a separate document) while key findings against the OECD DAC criteria are synthesised in this report.
15. This was a purposeful selection of countries guided by Secretariat staff and based on agreed criteria that covered:
 - Geographic representation (Pacific, Africa, the Caribbean and the Americas, and Europe);
 - Recent Secretariat activity and strategic outcome area coverage;

Low risk of stakeholder fatigue in being contacted for evaluation interviews; and

The interest and learning needs of the Secretariat.

3.2 Global Issue Case Studies

16. The global issues case studies cover three areas of strategic importance for small and vulnerable states:

Trade Policy Advocacy around Fisheries and Fishery Subsidies;

The Universal Vulnerability Index; and

Access to Disaster Financing.

17. [Table 3.1](#) in [Section 3.4](#) maps intermediate outcomes to the country case studies and more specific interventions under review.
18. A key concern in conducting the evaluation was to avoid duplication and overwhelming stakeholders from small countries interviewed by other concurrent evaluations. Where recent comprehensive evaluations studies existed, such as an Evaluation of the Blue Economy Interventions in Seychelles, this work was mined heavily and clarification interviews were conducted with Secretariat staff.
19. The evaluation followed the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office's (FCDO) Ethics Principles and Guidance for Evaluation and Research and relevant policies and protocols. Stakeholder views are represented in this evaluation, but we have not named those who have provided insight; although there is a comprehensive list of all those interviewed.

3.3 Analysis of Data

20. The team held an internal and external meta-analysis workshop to map findings to the evaluation questions and to test their validity with the Evaluation Reference Group. In line with the utilisation approach, the team held a separate workshop to co-create recommendations. This approach is designed both to support buy-in and ownership and to accommodate different perspectives.

21. The evaluation has used tables to synthesise and summarise the rich findings from the case studies. Findings, however, are not drawn from the case studies alone, but from a desk review of reporting (progress reports and evaluations) over the two strategic periods, and interviews with external stakeholders, including country representatives from Board members and other stakeholders familiar with the Secretariat's work.
22. A review of annual progress reports over the two strategic periods can be found in Annex E. This was particularly useful in verifying findings from interviews and other documentation. It also helped to understand how the Secretariat reports results, at what level, and the potential across all pillars to report higher level results that are only likely to emerge over time and which will require a different approach to monitoring and evaluation. Further insights are provided in [Section 4.1](#) on Effectiveness.

3.4 Interventions Under Consideration

23. [Table 3.1](#) highlights the areas of focus for the evaluation across the pillars; the country case studies and global case studies appear in bold.

3.5 Limitations

24. The evaluators and the Secretariat noted several limitations during the inception phase and others were noted during implementation.
25. The case study approach, which is used to mine results (outcomes) in specific contexts, constrains attempts to make generalisations about whether similar results have also occurred in different country contexts. At the same time, with limited resources, time constraints, and the lack of a theory of change and standardised baselines across all contexts, a case study approach remains legitimate and it provides tangible insights on how and why interventions are relevant, effective, and have the potential for impact in specific small-state contexts. Case studies have also provided useful insights and lessons. Where there are similar contexts, it is valid to assume that change might happen in similar ways—particularly if there is political will, commitment, and follow-through.

Table 3.1 Interventions Under Consideration

	Democracy (Peace)	Public Institutions (Peace)	Youth and Social Development (People)	Economic Development (Prosperity)	Small and Other Vulnerable States (Planet)
Strategic Outcomes	1. Greater adherence to Commonwealth political values and principles	2. More effective, efficient, and equitable public governance	3. People of the Commonwealth fulfil their potential with dignity and equality in a healthy environment	4. More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development	5. Strengthened resilience of small and other vulnerable states, including adaptation and mitigation against climate change
Intermediate Outcomes	1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General (Guyana)	2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected (Tonga, Namibia)	3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes (Malta, Namibia)	4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth (Guyana, Tonga, Seychelles, Global Issue Case Study)	5.1 Improved access to climate financing (Solomon Islands, Tonga, Global Issue Case Study)
	1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections (Guyana, Solomon Islands)	2.2 Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all (Namibia)	3.2 Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies (Namibia)	4.2 Commonwealth positions advanced in international development and financing mechanisms (Global Issue Case Study)	
	1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member states to counter violent extremism (Trinidad and Tobago)		3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes (Malta, Namibia)	4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management (Trinidad and Tobago, Solomon Islands)	
			3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices; focus on assessing the costs of VAWG (Seychelles)	4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies (Guyana, Seychelles)	

26. The evaluators were not always able to triangulate evidence from multiple sources. Triangulating findings with feedback from partners and stakeholders in small states has been especially challenging due to stakeholder fatigue and/or inability of Secretariat staff to make introductions within the relatively short timeframe of the evaluation. The lack of triangulated evidence weakened findings and their independence in some areas and countries. Included, therefore, is [Section 3.6](#) which scores the quality of evidence for each case study by intermediate outcome area (or area of focus for the global issue case studies). Additionally, in some cases, Secretariat staff members added insights as comments to the first draft of this report but, given the timing, the evaluators were unable to triangulate their insights through a document review or interviews with stakeholders. A key example can be found in the Malta case study where a staff member listed a range of activities (rather than outcomes) that had not been brought to our attention during the evaluation. We have retained these activities as a courtesy, but we note again that our purpose was to seek and triangulate evidence for higher-level results.
27. The evaluation struggled to assess higher-level results in most case studies due to the weakness of the Secretariat's monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system in monitoring outcomes (and impacts), and, in many instances, the lack of good quality theories of change or impact pathways. For more on MEL-related findings and recommendations see [Box 4.1](#) under [Section 4.1](#) on Effectiveness.
28. The evaluation team relied strongly on the Secretariat's staff's input in selecting the case study countries. This was because no Secretariat database could record all active programmes at any given point in time or progress against results in each small state, which the evaluation team would have needed to select case study countries objectively. Relying heavily on Secretariat feedback carried the risk of selection bias, which the evaluators attempted to mitigate—to the extent possible—through the triangulation of the Secretariat's recommendations on case study countries with the analysis of results reported in the two most recent Annual Reports.
29. Engagement from Secretariat staff on case study selection and preparation has been uneven. This might have led to the underrepresentation of certain intermediate outcome areas within the case studies. Furthermore, in the case of some programmes recommended by staff to be included in the case studies, the evaluation could not determine results because these interventions are too early in their project cycle (e.g., interventions which are in the inception phase or where key outputs have only recently been produced) to deliver results. In other instances, results are politically sensitive and/or hard to measure, such as advocacy interventions. The COVID-19 pandemic has also disrupted work on the ground and its results.
30. Due to the relatively short timeframe and low personnel input of the evaluation vis-à-vis the portfolio of work in scope, the evaluators had limited opportunity to identify stakeholders and make connections with them through their networks where introductions were not made by the Secretariat.
31. The evaluation was also limited by the availability of documentation. Data and records at the country level are not available (or easily extractable) from the Secretariat's Management Information System (MIS) and programme documents. Additionally, some key documents (e.g., advocacy strategy on UVI; recent survey of member countries as part of strategic planning process) were only alluded to (not sent) in the final co-creation workshop or once project officers received the first draft of the report, which was too late for the evaluation team to consider.
32. Finally, the evaluation attempted to marry two perspectives: those of the Secretariat and those of small states. We were only able to interview a small sample of small state representatives, but most of those who were interviewed articulated their views with other small states in mind, not just their own. All institutions embody different perspectives,

and this evaluation is written in the spirit that those reading it will be open to and gracious about other points of view with which they do not necessarily agree.

3.6 Quality of Evidence

33. The quality of evidence for the evaluation of support to small states is generally fair to good, but there are also examples of strong evidence and, indeed, weak evidence. [Table 3.2](#) maps case studies and the strategic outcomes evaluated to judgement criteria that highlight where evidence is strong, good, fair, or weak.

34. The Secretariat's interventions that benefit small states are ranked as having a strong quality of evidence when higher-level results have been triangulated by the evaluators through multiple sources that include Secretariat staff, government agency partners, civil society, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data. Four case studies demonstrate clear examples of higher-level results in Pillars 1: Democracy, 3: Youth and Social Development, and 4: Economic Development. There is strong evidence of effective interventions for:

Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices in Seychelles;

Fair elections in the Solomon Islands;

Trade competitiveness in Tonga; and

Progress on trade competitiveness as a global issue.

35. Interventions are ranked as having good quality evidence for outcomes evaluated if there is a measure of triangulation, e.g., evaluation data and/or some stakeholder testimony. Four country case studies have higher-level results (or a likelihood thereof) for five strategic outcome areas where the evidence is good (e.g., triangulated to some extent). There is good evidence that interventions are effective for the majority of programmes (nine in total). This includes interventions to:

Empower young people in Malta;

Promote debt management in the Solomon Islands;

Support to the petroleum sector in Guyana;

Mechanisms for increased multilateral trade in Guyana;

Debt management in Trinidad and Tobago;

The rule of law and youth empowerment in Namibia; and

The promotion of human rights and climate financing outcomes in Tonga.

36. Interventions are ranked as having a fair quality of evidence for outcomes evaluated if the triangulation of results is more compromised, including by weak monitoring mechanisms, lack of access to external stakeholders who can validate results, or hard-to-measure results. There are eight interventions listed as having fair evidence. These include:

Two global issues, which are:

- Access to Disaster Finance where there is an unclear monitoring mechanism; and
- Taking vulnerability into account in access to concessional financing where it is too soon to anticipate high-level results.

In Malta, it is too soon to tell if the Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) will lead to better education outcomes and the pathway to change is unclear, which indicates a need for clarity on the theory of change and what will be measured in terms of results. A key issue here is whether the result is the uptake of the EMES or is the impact the EMES has on education management and education outcomes.

It is too soon to tell if the CommonSensing initiative in the Solomon Islands will lead to better outcomes. Overall, the evaluators believe that the theory of change and the pathway to specific results needs to be clearer for specific locations. These questions need to be answered: what are the interim results, and then what are the next-level results?

The Blue Economy initiative in Seychelles where triangulation of results with external stakeholders in the country is also weaker.

In Namibia, evidence for young people being empowered through the Youth Development Index (YDI) is not triangulated by stakeholder testimony. The Secretariat

Table 3.2 Case Study Mapping of the Quality of Evidence

STRONG	GOOD	FAIR	WEAK
<p>Description: Strong likelihood of strategic outcomes, or outputs that are already yielding higher-level results.</p> <p>Example: Triangulated testimonies from multiple sources, including M&E evidence and independent verification.</p>	<p>Description: Good evidence that the intervention will contribute to strategic outcomes.</p> <p>Example: Evidence from other evaluations and progress reports. Less triangulation for this evaluation from independent stakeholders.</p>	<p>Description: Evidence of activities but generally too soon to establish outcomes.</p> <p>Example: Weaker M&E data. Outputs reported but less focus on outcomes. Limited/no triangulation with external stakeholders.</p>	<p>Description: Anecdotal; hard to triangulate. A theory of change needs to be developed.</p> <p>Example: Poor M&E data with a focus on reporting activities rather than outputs and outcomes. Also limited/no triangulation with external stakeholders.</p>
<p>Seychelles</p> <p>3.4: Women, girls, and vulnerable groups: <i>Economic Costs of Violence Against Women</i>.</p> <p>Solomon Islands</p> <p>1.3 Fair Elections: Election observation.</p> <p>3.1 Young people engaged and empowered: <i>The Professionalisation of Youth Work</i>.</p> <p>Tonga</p> <p>4.1: Trade competitiveness. Triangulation of effectiveness of Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme and a pathway to impact.</p> <p>Global Issue</p> <p>4.1: Trade competitiveness. Triangulation of effectiveness of the Secretariat's approaches.</p>	<p>Malta</p> <p>3.1 Young people engaged and empowered: <i>Professionalisation of Youth Work</i>.</p> <p>Solomon Islands</p> <p>4.3 Debt Management.</p> <p>Guyana</p> <p>4.4 Support to the petroleum sector. Findings based on external evaluation of support to Guyana and Secretariat staff accounts; not triangulated with external stakeholder accounts.</p> <p>4.1 Multilateral trade. Triangulated but limited M&E data.</p> <p>Trinidad and Tobago</p> <p>4.3: Debt management. Triangulated by limited M&E data.</p> <p>Namibia</p> <p>2.2: Rule of Law. Evidence of high government buy-in and necessity.</p> <p>3.1: Young people engaged and empowered. <i>Professionalisation of Youth Work</i>.</p> <p>Tonga</p> <p>2.1: Human rights. Gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment training are mentioned in multiple sources.</p> <p>5.3: Improved access to climate financing: CCFAH support is mentioned in multiple sources.</p>	<p>Malta</p> <p>3.3 Education outcomes. <i>Effective Management Education System</i> (too soon to tell; M&E mechanism is unclear).</p> <p>Solomon Islands</p> <p>5.3 Improved access to climate financing: <i>CommonSensing</i> (too soon-to-tell; delays in project delivery).</p> <p>Global Issue</p> <p>5.1 Universal Vulnerability Index (too soon; political challenges)</p> <p>Seychelles</p> <p>4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies. Less triangulation. M&E mechanism is unclear.</p> <p>Namibia</p> <p>3.1: Youth. Evidence for <i>Youth Development Index</i> not triangulated.</p> <p>3.2: Sports. Too early to determine the results of the <i>Sports Development Index</i>.</p> <p>3.3: Education outcomes. Impact pathway vague, limited triangulation.</p>	<p>Guyana</p> <p>1.2 Election support. Findings based on Secretariat staff & advisor accounts & progress reports. No country-specific M&E data. No triangulation with external stakeholders.</p> <p>Trinidad and Tobago</p> <p>1.4 Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). Findings based on Secretariat staff accounts, progress reports, and evaluation with no specific country insights. Not triangulated</p> <p>Namibia</p> <p>2.1: Human rights. Status of Ombudsman recommendations not clear.</p> <p>Global Issue</p> <p>5.3: Access to Disaster Risk Finance (DRF). Unclear M&E mechanism.</p>

needs to consider how the YDI contributes to youth development; what is the pathway to change and how will results be monitored and evaluated? For interventions supporting development through sport, it is too early to tell in Namibia how this is impacting individual youth. For education outcomes, the pathway to results is not fully articulated.

37. Interventions are ranked as having a weak quality of evidence when there is no country specific-monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data and/or compromised triangulation with no external stakeholders who can testify to results outlined in evaluations and progress reports. This does not mean that there are no high-level results. There are four interventions that have weak evidence supporting results:

In Guyana, findings on electoral support are based on accounts from Secretariat staff and advisors and progress reports. There is no

specific M&E data and no triangulation with external stakeholders.

In Trinidad and Tobago, results for 'strengthened civil society paths to peace' to counter violent extremism are not triangulated with evidence from in-country stakeholders.

In Namibia, there was insufficient evidence to clarify whether human rights recommendations had been accepted.

38. At the outset of the evaluation, the Secretariat flagged that measurable results at a country-level across pillars 1 to 4 would be more challenging. However, this evaluation has shown that, where small states initiatives are integrated into pillars that are open to all states rather than focused on small states, gathering fair-quality to good-quality evidence is possible.

4. Findings

4.1 Effectiveness

Strategic EQ 1: How effectively has the Commonwealth Secretariat delivered support to address the vulnerabilities, public governance, and development challenges of its small member states?

Sub-EQ 1.1: What tangible outcomes (intended and unintended) have been achieved in the seven case study countries in the five regions by the Small and Vulnerable States and other pillars (Democracy, Public Institutions, Youth and Social Development, and Economic Development)?

Sub-EQ 1.2: How well are projects designed to respond to small member states' needs, policies, and priorities, and to continue to do so as the global context changes?

Sub-EQ 1.3: What approaches are most likely to deliver tangible outcomes or keep issues of priority for the Commonwealth and their members on the agenda in the seven case study countries?

39. The evaluation identified at least one achieved outcome in each of the seven country case studies. The outcomes identified are listed on the infographic in [Figure 4.1](#). The outcomes are distributed across the strategic outcome areas as follows:

Pillar 1: Democracy: 6 outcomes

Pillar 2: Public Institutions: 1 outcome

Pillar 3: Youth and Social Development: 6 outcomes

Pillar 4: Economic Development: 8 outcomes

Pillar 5: Small and Vulnerable States: 2 outcomes

40. In addition to achieved outcomes, the case studies also identified several likely outcomes, which are detailed in the case studies in Annex A.
41. No achieved outcomes have been identified for the three global issue case studies.
42. The Secretariat has a strong convening power—both within the Commonwealth and with external stakeholders—that it needs to continue to leverage to promote learning, networking, idea development,

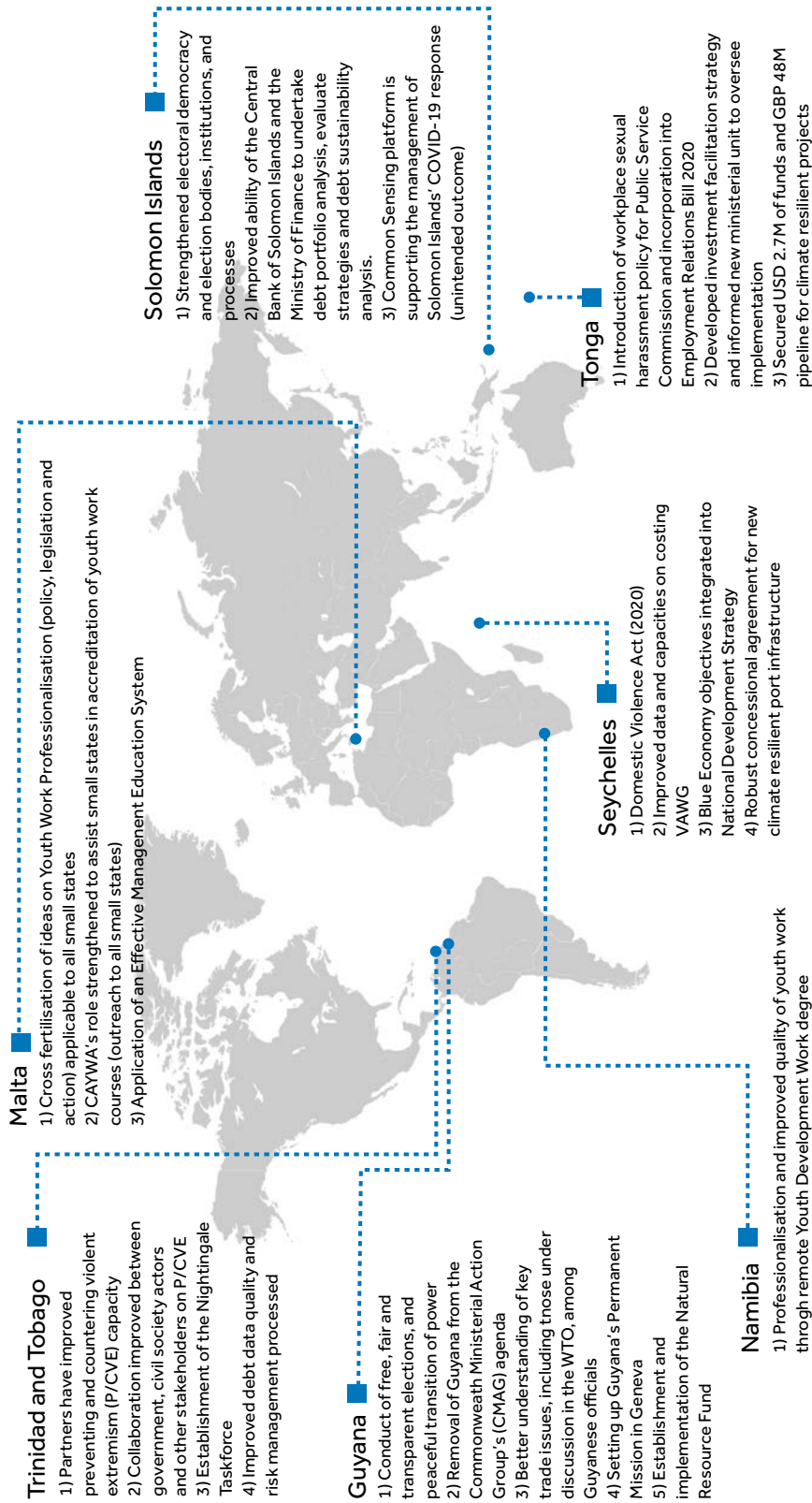
and commitment to action among member states. The case studies found numerous examples of effective convening—including in the Malta, Guyana, Seychelles, Namibia, and fisheries case studies. This confirms the findings of the *Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan 2017/18–2020/21* which notes that “the Secretariat’s convening power is seen as a significant advantage both internally, among member countries, and externally, among partners and peers.”

43. No single delivery methodology appears to be more effective than others. Combining different methodologies, however, has shown to increase effectiveness in some cases. The Secretariat is employing various delivery methodologies across its portfolio, including:

- Advocacy;
- Partnerships (e.g., convening, networking, peer-to-peer learning, etc.);
- Evidence and knowledge gathering, dissemination, and uptake;
- Long-term technical support (i.e., embedded advisors);
- Short-term technical support;
- Capacity-building;
- Development of tools and systems; and
- Diplomacy.

Partners see the benefits to all of these approaches for different reasons and because all have shown results in one context or another. The case studies suggest that combining different approaches has been critical to the effectiveness of interventions in some instances—for example, combining the development of tools with capacity-building as well as evidence and knowledge gathering, dissemination, and uptake activities on the ‘Economic Cost of VAWG’ in Seychelles; or diplomacy with technical support and election observation in the case of Guyana. At the same time, there are also examples of individual approaches, such as short-term technical support that represent one small cog in a

Figure 4.1 Outcomes that Secretariat Interventions Contributed to in Case Study of Small States



chain of other interventions, which will lead to a higher-level result, e.g., quality assurance of the concessional agreement for the construction of a new climate-resistant port in Seychelles.

44. Flexible, timely, demand-driven, needs-based, and contextualised support is effective in delivering results as they lead to stronger partner ownership. Partners—for example, in Malta, Guyana, Solomon Islands, and Trinidad and Tobago—highlighted the Secretariat's efforts to tailor tools, systems, and advice to small states and specific country contexts vis-à-vis some other donors. In most cases, within programmes, the Secretariat has also shown considerable flexibility in working around the emerging needs and availability of partners. This is critical in small states where government counterparts are more likely to face resource constraints and fulfil various roles simultaneously, even if it means that results will be slower to emerge. Nevertheless, there are still areas—such as training periods when multiple sessions are offered close to each other to the same stakeholders—where the Secretariat could pay more attention to capacity constraints. A significant proportion of the Secretariat's support within programmes is demand-driven (although not all). This form of support is highly appreciated by partners and is a key contributor to small states' ownership and buy-in. As Secretariat staff pointed out, this does not mean that their interventions are purely reactive as they also actively generate demand around issues with strategic importance, including through convening. An example where the Secretariat proactively worked to generate demand is co-authoring the *Policy Guide on Youth Entrepreneurship*, which was used to generate interest among member states in this area of work, and eventually led to technical support requests from Brunei Darussalam.
45. Being demand-driven is a key strength of the Secretariat's programmes and ensures that they respond to small member states' needs, policies, and priorities. At the same time, this approach also carries risks, which need to be carefully managed. The Fisheries, Solomon Islands, Seychelles, Namibia, and Tonga case studies highlight challenges with a demand-driven approach, including the risk of advice and activities not adding up to higher strategic objectives, and spreading the portfolio of work, budget, and staff too thinly for follow-up and follow-through to drive results. The demand-driven approach also means that the Secretariat can only engage in countries that request support.
46. Trust in the support provided by the Secretariat appears to be a contributing factor to success. Feedback from partners and Secretariat staff suggest that this trust derives from:
- Partner countries are themselves part of the Commonwealth and sit on the Board of the Secretariat, giving them an active role and a say in how the organisation is run;
 - A perception that the Secretariat and its advisors have no hidden agendas and there are no strings attached to support;
 - The Secretariat's long-standing experience and expertise in supporting small states; and
 - Its reputation for high-quality technical assistance.
47. Interventions in some cases could benefit from incorporating participatory approaches. In Seychelles and Malta, for example, some interviewees suggested a need to shift away from 'ready-made documents that require partner comments' towards more inclusive processes of joint drafting which may be time-consuming, but which ultimately produce more sustainable capacity. Findings suggest that the Secretariat should also consider engaging more directly with civil servants in small states and build their capacity to influence senior officials rather than trying to influence high-level decision-makers themselves through a top-down approach. This approach is recognised by social theory.
48. In-depth engagement through consultants on the ground and/or long-term, repeated engagement, sometimes over multiple strategic planning periods, have shown greater potential for high-level results. One of the apparent weaknesses of the Secretariat, as compared with other multi- and bi-lateral donors, is the lack of field presence in partner countries. This came into sharp focus with the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions. Although the Secretariat found

ways to continue support (see [Section 4.6](#) on Efficiency), interventions slowed down. Furthermore, face-to-face communications—which is valued more by some small state partners than online support—ceased. The case studies suggest that working with local consultants (see the Seychelles case study) and embedded advisors (see the Solomon Islands, Namibia, Seychelles, and Tonga case studies) can be an effective alternative strategy for field presence and is particularly important for embedding the use of new technologies, processes, and structures in partner organisations. This was also confirmed by the findings of the *MTR of the Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan 2017/18–2020/21*. Similarly, sustained, long-term engagement over multiple strategic planning periods, even when delivered by in-house staff based in London through remote work and short-missions, has shown promising results as it is more likely to build trust and the sustainable capacity of counterparts. These in turn are important for enacting complex, politically sensitive reforms. For further insights, see the case studies for Guyana, Solomon Islands, and Trinidad and Tobago.

49. When working on highly politicised reforms it is unrealistic to expect that all the Secretariat's interventions will lead to significant outcomes. However, in some areas, more work could be done to proactively generate political will and ownership for such reforms. Whether the Secretariat's advice is acted on is highly dependent on political will, especially in sensitive areas such as the petroleum sector, LGBTQIA+ rights, or electoral rights. Political will might also disappear or appear with changes in government. In this context, it is unrealistic to expect every intervention to lead to higher-level results. Therefore, the Secretariat might consider judging success by achieving a certain percentage of expected results rather than all of them. This approach is commonly used in adaptive programmes. While there is some evidence that the Secretariat is proactively trying to generate political will—particularly in the Governance and Peace Directorate where diplomacy through the Good Offices and technical entry points are used to raise political support—more could be done in some areas. For example, on

LGBTQIA+ rights, could the Secretariat direct support towards civil society groups looking to shift public opinion to promote reforms (see Namibia case study)?

50. Work continues on methodologies, approaches, toolkits, systems, legislation, and other products that need follow-up and continued support to partners on their implementation to deliver results. This needs to be factored into implementation strategies. Various examples emerged from case studies where the Secretariat has successfully delivered such follow-up support—e.g., the Natural Resource Fund Act in Guyana or the Meridian debt management system—which then led to higher-level results. However, the evaluation team also identified other areas (for example, the EMES toolkit, the DRF portal, and the VAWG cost assessment study), where follow-up technical support would be needed in the next strategic planning period to achieve the expected outcomes, which should include scale-up. This was echoed in interviews with small states partners who also highlighted the need for more systematic follow-up on initiatives. Some interviewees indicated that the notion that methodologies, tools, and approaches could be taken up and applied with minimal support and engagement is just not working. Small states lack capacity and the Secretariat needs to be far more cognizant of what is required in terms of capacity strengthening and engagement to translate ideas into action and, later, action into higher-level results.
51. Various external stakeholders and member countries also point to the lack of strategy for scale-up/replication in some Secretariat programmes. At the same time, the expectations for scale-up/replication need to be balanced with the need for more in-depth, sustained interventions and the Secretariat's budget constraints as they are more likely to deliver results. The lack of a clear strategy for scale-up/replication was highlighted for the same interventions listed above. At the same time, evidence from various case studies points towards the need for more in-depth and sustained interventions to achieve results (see paragraph 43). To manage the expectations of stakeholders regarding scale-up/replication, the Secretariat should

Box 4.1: Findings on the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning of the Secretariat's Small States Portfolio

Assessing outcome-level results, performance, and learning appears to be a first-order priority for the Secretariat. This is in line with other donors' approaches as impact-level results take time to emerge from outcome-level results (e.g., policy change and implementation, the application of methodologies and approaches, the use of analytical tools to secure intermediate outcomes, and so on) and contribution is much weaker at this level. However, the Secretariat should ensure that outcomes and their indicators of success are defined at the right level. The evaluation team noted various instances, especially in results frameworks attached to Project Design Documents, where outcomes are proposed to be measured through activity-level indicators. Example: Malta Youth Conference 2018 was considered an outcome in and of itself.

Tracking higher-level results requires urgent investment, including investment in monitoring mechanisms that can disaggregate activities, outputs, and outcomes at the country level and approaches that are more appropriate for monitoring complex interventions and results. There are good examples in the world of development of both indicator-based methods (e.g., outcome mapping, process monitoring of impact) and narrative-based methods (e.g., outcome harvesting, Most Significant Change) that can track the progress and results of interventions that aim to achieve complex socio-economic change, politically sensitive reforms, and/or use advocacy approaches. These approaches would be well suited to assess the effectiveness and higher-level outcomes of the Secretariat's work.

Findings on monitoring and evaluation deficits are supported by Board members who feel that the Secretariat needs to shift from reporting on 'things they've done' to 'what has happened as a result' (outcomes). For example, where the Secretariat advises policy/legislative reforms, are recommendations acted on? If so, what impact has this had for people on the ground? Member countries would also like to see data on results being packaged in a way that they can use in their public relations and external communications, including to justify funding of the Secretariat to their constituencies.

Another key challenge is measuring higher-level results from advocacy and influencing, which covers so much of the Secretariat's work for small states, particularly under Pillars 3, 4, and 5. Results in this area are hard to measure and a more structured approach is required, one which identifies desired goals and outcomes. Policies that need to change can be identified. Institutions and people who need to be influenced to a specific end can also be identified. Stakeholder analysis, power analysis, and policy analysis are all tools that can be used.

At present, the Secretariat appears to be over-reliant on external evaluations to identify higher-level results. At the same time, external and internal evaluations—including this one—appear to be compromised by a lack of the Secretariat's monitoring data, including sources of evidence, baselines, and access to stakeholders. In some instances, evaluations have misinterpreted the difference between outcomes and impact.

The Secretariat is fully aware of the challenges it faces in demonstrating higher-level results. Secretariat interviewees noted the need for far greater internal clarity on definitions. Key terms such as 'outcomes' and 'impact' are used interchangeably.⁷¹ They also recognise a need to be far clearer about 'attribution' and 'contribution' and when and why it matters. They feel there is a need for greater internal clarity and a need to raise awareness amongst Board Members about expectations for results, particularly in instances where interventions are at 'an arms removed from impact'.

⁷¹ The OECD DAC define impact as the result of a programme or project; the difference it has made to beneficiaries; the number of people affected. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/49756382.pdf>

Also important is the issue of responsibility and ownership for results. When the Secretariat develops methodologies and approaches and builds capacities, and when results are dependent on actions on the part of small states to enact policies, the Secretariat does not have control over the achievement of higher-level results. Examples include the Effective Management Education System and the approach to assess the economic cost of violence against women. However, the Secretariat is responsible for effective implementation which includes strategies to promote dissemination and uptake, and follow-up to nudge and track progress. A key question that needs to be asked for any implementation is: Is this intervention alone sufficient? If not, what next?

Not all of the Secretariat's work is evaluable (e.g., because of access to external and internal stakeholders, availability of sufficient monitoring data, and so on) and thus evaluability assessments should be routinely conducted before commissioning evaluations. This will ensure that evaluations deliver value for money and meet the expectations of the Secretariat and member countries.

Almost all interventions require better theories of change with greater visibility on the pathways to high-level results (including impact) and the underlying assumptions that support the pathways. Small states themselves need to be involved with the Secretariat agreeing on anticipated high-level results and tracking progress over time.

The Secretariat's results management system needs to be strengthened so that it can disaggregate monitoring data by country. This echoes the findings of other evaluations of the Secretariat's work (e.g., Guyana country evaluation). Even though there were attempts in 2013 to bring in a focus on results management approaches, the Secretariat staff noted that project data entered into the Management Information System cannot be easily extracted and analysed. In some cases, there appear to be gaps in robust results measurement frameworks, baseline surveys, indicator definitions, sources of evidence, and supportive monitoring and evaluation. In some programmes, results frameworks in Project Design Documents differ from those reported on in annual progress reports.

consider including a section that would set out the appropriate ambition for scale-up/replication in Project Design Documents, as well as detailed strategies in this regard where appropriate.

Gender mainstreaming and effectiveness

52. Development interventions cannot be considered as effective, or as offering good value for money, if they do not consider gender equality and women's empowerment. There is now a sufficient body of evidence that demonstrates why every development sector and intervention matters for gender equality and women's empowerment.
53. Findings from the case studies and Secretariat staff interviews, including with the gender expert, suggest that gender equality and women's empowerment is not sufficiently mainstreamed in most Secretariat programmes and that budget cuts have reduced this focus. Gender

mainstreaming includes consideration to intersecting characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, disability, and status as a refugee, among others. In the last strategic planning period, the Gender Mainstreaming Adviser offered support to all directorates. The initial objective was to help programme staff understand why gender mattered to their sector; to apply gender analysis; and to begin identifying objectives, strategies, and action. Fourteen areas of work were engaged, but the analysis in some cases is incomplete. Gender mainstreaming has been constrained by several factors, including resource constraints. This led to the gender team's decision to focus limited resources on external support to member states, including for the strong intervention designed to assist small states in assessing the economic costs of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). Other factors that have diminished efforts to mainstream gender include the institutional structure of the Secretariat coupled with

some resistance (to be expected), insufficient training available for staff, and weaknesses in the Secretariat Management Information System. Also, some areas require more specialised assistance, such as trade.

54. Social inclusion is a related issue, and many development programmes now merge gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) where social inclusion focuses on disability, vulnerability, and marginalisation. The Secretariat is a consensus-based organisation and member countries have divergent positions on vulnerable populations—for example, the LGBTQIA+ community, indigenous populations, or refugees—which means that mainstreaming other aspects of social inclusion across the portfolio is highly challenging. Nonetheless, the Secretariat should ensure all interventions mainstream GESI (where relevant).
55. The starting point for mainstreaming gender in interventions, including those for small states, is as the Secretariat gender expert emphasised in her interview with the evaluators: project staff need to assess and make visible in the programme documentation and in dialogue with implementing partners why and how their intervention matters for gender equality and social inclusion. Some sectors and interventions are easier than others when it comes to applying a gender lens. Most sectors will require some expert support. A second step for programme staff is to commission/apply a bespoke gender analysis that asks: Who (by gender, and other intersecting characteristics) has access to assets, resources, and capacities, and who doesn't and why? What are the challenges and barriers faced by excluded groups? Who is more likely to benefit/not benefit from the intervention? Undertaking a gender analysis requires time, resources, and dedicated expertise. A GESI analysis is not an end in itself: it should lead to a GESI strategy and action plan which details what aspects of gender inequality and social exclusion will be addressed, and why, with clear aims, objectives, and approaches. The GESI strategy and action plan should also include an M&E plan with clearly defined indicators at output and outcome levels. These gender mainstreaming aspects are not yet visible in programme documentation and nor were the processes associated with them raised in interviews with stakeholders. It is this deficit that has led to the conclusion that more emphasis in terms of staff capacity, support, and resources are required in the next strategic planning period to mainstream gender.
56. The evaluators caution the Secretariat in asking evaluators for gender analysis or gender-disaggregated data in future evaluations. More relevant is the request that a gender lens is applied in assessing Secretariat interventions. Key questions should include: To what extent do the Secretariat's interventions mainstream gender? Has a gender analysis been conducted and has this led to a realistic gender strategy and action plan? If so, are there any interesting results?
57. Further insights on promoting gender equality in small states (and all Commonwealth States) are considered in [Section 4.4](#) on Coherence and Alignment.

4.2 Impact

Strategic EQ 5: To what extent has the Secretariat's support delivered longer-term high-level changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended)?

Sub-EQ 5.1: What impact(s) do member states identify as a result of the Secretariat's interventions?

Sub-EQ 5.2: How do small states perceive their resilience to have changed over the last two strategic planning periods, and how might the Secretariat have contributed?

58. Drawing on the analysis of the ten case studies, the evaluation found that most interventions across all pillars have pathways to change at impact level—that is, over time, if implemented well, they are likely to contribute to the increased resilience of small states and deliver benefits for their people in ways that promote socio-economic well-being and equality. However, the

impact is rarely measured by the Secretariat and the evaluation noted that monitoring processes do not routinely collect the data that evaluators need to assess results and triangulate findings. Furthermore, the potential impact is not always highlighted in the Project Design Documents or in the way the results are reported in annual progress reports. It is often too soon to evaluate the impact and, most importantly, interventions

are not designed with impact measurement in mind. There is little, if any, follow-up over time to track higher-level results.

59. Not all programmes are underpinned by clear theories of change or an intervention logic. [Table 4.1](#) highlights examples of programmes where impact is likely and where pathways to change are visible and can be further developed by Secretariat staff. In the third

Table 4.1 Examples of programmes and intervention logic where it is reasonable to assume the potential impact

Country	Programme	Potential Impact and Intervention Logic
Guyana	Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies. (>=leads to)	Monitoring data for use by evaluators is not collected. However, as indicated in the case study, the Natural Resource Fund is likely to benefit future generations from oil revenues, reduce the vulnerability of the budget to economic shocks and oil price fluctuations, and bring additional revenues through the responsible investment of oil-related income, all of which are likely to contribute to inclusive economic growth and Guyana's resilience (impact). Indicative pathway to change: Finance (input) > Demand-led technical assistance (input), government commitment, civil society awareness (outputs and enabling factors); Natural Resource Fund (outcome); inclusive economic growth (impact).
Namibia	3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes. (>=leads to)	<u>Intervention</u> : professionalisation of youth work. The case study found a strong likelihood of impact as a result of the Secretariat's work. The pathway to change needs to be articulated as do the methods for assessing outcomes/impact (collection and analysis of monitoring data). <u>Indicative pathway to change</u> : Finance (input)>Community of practice and convening events (inputs)>Small state commitment to support Youth Development Degree courses (output)>Long-term professionalisation of youth work (output)>Young people's engagement with qualified youth workers (male/female) (outcome); Government engagement with the findings of the Youth Development Index (separate track outcome) >... gives voice to the concerns of young people; government acts on youth concerns (impact). Note: For young people to be empowered, the political and development environment has to be conducive.
Seychelles	Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups are empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices.	Intervention: Methodology, guidance, and coaching to assess the Economic Costs of VAWG. The higher-level result to date is the 2020 Domestic Violence Bill. While this is a notable result, the impact will only really be achieved when the Bill is implemented in its entirety and women have access to services that protect them. Intervention logic has been articulated. However, the evaluation questions whether the application of the approach in Seychelles and Kenya can be applied to other small states with the dissemination of a guidance document only. Also, the impact-level statement requires further definition to make visible the indicators of empowerment and protection.

example, the evaluators acknowledge that a theory of change has been developed but that assumptions regarding the pathway to change need to be surfaced and key terms in the results need to be defined. Each case study in the annexes provides further details on the likelihood of impact for each programme evaluated.

60. The evaluators conclude that outcome-level results (policy change, the implementation of systems and processes as a result of the Secretariat's work) are often more relevant and easier to harvest as this evaluation has demonstrated. However, even at the outcome level, there is a deficit in follow-up mechanisms and M&E approaches, which means that only lower-level results (activities and outputs) are reported year on year, an issue that frustrates many stakeholders. In the Malta case study, the evaluators were urged to include activities as an illustration of impact-level results that highlights a need

to help programme staff understand the nuances between inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact.

61. The evaluation found compelling evidence from the ten case studies that interventions for, and in small states are designed to contribute to resilience. Government stakeholders from small states and other international development partners interviewed for this evaluation said they found Secretariat interventions relevant to the objective of increased resilience and/or felt small state resilience is improving because of action (investments and commitment) on issues that the Secretariat is working on. However, in some instances, some stakeholders from more economically prosperous small states attribute their country's resilience to their government commitment and ownership. This is as it should be. Examples from the case studies are provided in [Box 4.2](#).

Box 4.2: Examples of Small States Where Interventions Are Likely to Contribute to Resilience

Guyana: Stakeholders confirm that the Secretariat's support for multilateral trade issues is relevant for the country's economic resilience. The Guyana Natural Resource Fund (established with Secretariat technical inputs) is expected to benefit future generations. The fund should also reduce the vulnerability of the country's budget to economic shocks and oil price fluctuations, and bring additional revenues through the responsible investment of oil-related income, which in turn will contribute to inclusive economic growth and Guyana's resilience. Under the democracy pillar, the evaluators noted that impact is not yet measured but an assumption can be made that Secretariat interventions have contributed to Guyana's public sector governance through support to free, fair, and credible elections and peaceful transfer of power. This contributes to resilience.

Seychelles: The country's Blue Economy Roadmap, which is integrated into its national development strategy, supports resilience through the sustainable management of marine resources. Representatives from large states (Canada and Australia) also point to the importance of the Blue Charter to the resilience of small states in the Caribbean and Pacific. Seychelles' new port infrastructure will be climate-resilient and accommodate a 45 cm rise in sea levels. It stands to increase trade and commerce, which ultimately should result in increased GDP and inclusive growth (long-term impact). In this instance, the Secretariat's technical assistance cost little but has been instrumental in protecting the country from private sector exploitation by ensuring a robust concession agreement.

Solomon Islands: The access to climate finance initiative through the CommonSensing project is in its infancy. However, there is a pathway to change from the institutionalisation of the platform to a robust evidence base that is likely to strengthen proposals/applications from small states, increasing the likelihood of finance that will improve capacity, infrastructure, and resilience. The Secretariat is also

making a critical contribution towards strengthening electoral democracy, election bodies, institutions, and processes. The evidence comes from multiple sources. For example, in 2019 the Observer Report conducted interviews with stakeholders who noted that electoral reforms with technical inputs from the Secretariat helped improved the General Election process and it had strengthened its democratic institutions and processes more generally. Each successful election contributes to resilience.

The Universal Vulnerability Index is calibrated towards supporting the resilience of small states, but, according to some stakeholders, it is only now beginning to 'move at pace'. A key issue is that the focus is on the UVI rather than the higher-level result (i.e., increased resilience of small states).

Table 4.2 Further Examples of Where the Secretariat Is Likely to Contribute to Impact in Small States

Pillar	Country Examples	Intervention	Impact Status Action Required
Likely Impact			
Pillar 5: Small and Vulnerable States	Tonga, Solomon Islands, and others	Access to climate financing: CommonSensing	Steps towards unlocking of finance. Too soon to tell.
Pillar 4: Economic Development	Guyana Multilateral Trade/ WTO	Natural Resource Fund	Clear contribution to long-lasting socio-economic benefits. Impact not measured by Secretariat/ onus on the small state.
	Seychelles	Port Authority Concession Agreement	Clear contribution to increased trade, inclusive growth, climate resilience. Onus on the small state.
	Trinidad and Tobago	Debt management	Improved debt management & data quality. Monitoring mechanism to track institutionalisation & action: unclear.
Pillar 3: Youth & Social Development	Namibia	Education Policy Framework	Small state action is required to enact policies that improve education outcomes.
	Malta, Jamaica, St Kitts, and others	Youth work professionalisation (CAYWA, Malta, Secretariat contribution)	A baseline survey, if repeated, can confirm higher-level results disaggregated by state but <i>not</i> impact on youth empowerment
	Malta, Jamaica	Effective Management of Education Systems	Too soon to tell. No clear monitoring mechanism. Expected impact: greater equality through 12 years of free schooling in small states (& others). Small state role in uptake is critical.
Pillar 2: Public Institutions	Namibia	Cybercrime and cyber security	Expected to contribute to resilience but the programme needs to be more explicit about this intention.

4.3 Sustainability

Strategic EQ 6: Which aspects of the Secretariat's interventions are likely to have an enduring impact?

Sub-EQ 6.1 Which outcomes of the Secretariat's interventions could be expected to be sustainable over the long term? Which are likely to disappear?

Sub-EQ 6.2 What more could be done to support longer-term sustainability?

62. From our analysis there are interventions for small states across all five pillars that have strong potential to endure. Interventions most likely to have an enduring impact are those that are aimed at creating systemic change, i.e., improving policies and practices (knowledge, attitudes, capacities, systems, processes, and decision-making behaviours) that will endure and be replicated over time (see [Table 4.3](#)).
63. Where programmes have high or likely levels of sustainability, they are also characterised by government buy-in, ownership, and

commitment. This suggests that sustainability is not just a question of what the Secretariat does; of equal importance is the action taken by small states who, in some instances, need to communicate ongoing needs for technical assistance and capacity strengthening back to the Secretariat.

64. Robust communication materials facilitate sustainability where there is a need for further investment. This suggests more emphasis on the role of the Secretariat's Public Relations Department. One stakeholder noted that 'good communication materials'—that raise awareness of why interventions matter and how they are contributing not just to results but also sustainability and resilience—help larger states and other donors argue for further investment for smaller states.
65. Strategic partnerships with other international development partners are also important for sustainability. Further insights on this are provided in [Section 4.4](#) on Coherence and Alignment.

Table 4.3 Characterisation of Sustainability from Secretariat Interventions Across Small States

Sustainability is highly likely (baked in)	Sustainability is contingent on continued government commitment and potentially more technical support	Sustainability is fragile and a sustainability strategy is required
<p>Guyana: Natural Resource Fund</p> <p>Seychelles: Concessional agreement for climate-resilient port infrastructure.</p> <p>Tonga: Climate-change-resilient finance. Human Rights UPR capacity. Investment Facilitation Programme.</p> <p>Namibia. Youth Development Index and Sports Development Index. Online Learning degree in Youth Development Work. Uptake of the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework</p> <p>Trinidad and Tobago. Reforms to support effective debt management.</p>	<p>Tonga: Understanding & capacity of civil servants on gender mainstreaming. Human rights policies.</p> <p>Solomon Islands: Electoral reforms. Debt Management (Meridian uptake and application).</p> <p>Malta and other small states: Continued investment in youth work professionalisation.</p> <p>Guyana: Enactment of electoral reforms.</p> <p>Malta and Jamaica: Institutionalising EMES</p> <p>Namibia: Cybercrime & Cybersecurity policies.</p>	<p>CAYWA's role in strengthening youth work professionalisation.</p> <p>Other small states: Uptake & institutionalisation of EMES</p> <p>Namibia: Process to enact HR policies on sexual/reproductive health, sexual orientation & social inclusion.</p> <p>Seychelles & other small states: Blue Economy. Pilot to test & disseminate approach to costing VAWG & its links to policy change.</p> <p>Solomon Islands: CommonSensing.</p> <p>Trinidad and Tobago: Violent Extremism measures.</p>

66. Drawing on an analysis of representative interventions, [Table 4.3](#) maps sustainability against three criteria: those interventions where sustainability is highly likely; those interventions where sustainability is contingent on action taken by small states themselves; and interventions where sustainability is fragile and where a sustainability strategy is required.
67. The evaluation also notes that sustainability is relevant for most but not all interventions. For example, Guyana is a small state with resource constraints and so it relies on the Commonwealth Small States Office in Geneva for advice on multilateral trade and WTO negotiations. Given the size of the country, this approach is highly unlikely to change. This is likely to be true for other small states and some other areas of Secretariat support. Sustainability in the provision of this support is, therefore, important; and so is the dynamic nature of advice to enable small states to adapt to new circumstances and opportunities.
68. Sustainability is best considered during the design of programmes. In the meta-analysis workshop jointly held with Secretariat, staff noted that 'sustainability is ground zero for impact'. Secretariat staff remarked that 'it's a grey-area in the M&E framework' and 'too often it is an afterthought'. It was also noted that sustainability is particularly fragile in demand-led technical support where consultants are parachuted-in, and thus devising a sustainability strategy might be overlooked. Sustainability needs to be carefully defined.

4.3.1 What More Can Be Done?

69. All directorates need to review their portfolios and understand where sustainability is relevant and not relevant. Where sustainability is relevant, strategies are required with action plans around continued engagement, follow-up, and monitoring. Best practice would be to agree on joint follow-up and monitoring arrangements with small states at the outset of interventions.
70. Where possible, all convening events that include small states need to be leveraged to track progress in creating the systemic change that leads towards sustainability in

terms of impact. While the Secretariat has to tread diplomatically in nudging progress forward, there are opportunities to secure buy-in from member countries, including small states, holding all partners to account for progress and sustainability. This is especially the case for interventions that are supported by declarations (such as the Effective Management of Education Systems and the Nadi Declaration and Action Plan).

4.4 Coherence and Alignment

Strategic EQ 4: How well do the Secretariat's small states interventions and support fit within an overarching Secretariat strategic intent; and with the actions of other institutions targeting small states?

Sub-EQ 4.1: To what extent are small states' interventions aligned to the goals of the strategic plan? Sub-EQ 4.2: On which global issues has the Secretariat demonstrated effective leadership on behalf of small states? Sub-EQ 4.3: How is the Secretariat's influence perceived in global discussions? Sub-EQ 4.4: How effectively has the Secretariat leveraged entry points in global discussions to support small states?

4.4.1 Alignment with the Overarching Strategic Intent and to the Secretariat's Strategic Goals

71. The Secretariat has identified three strategic areas of intent for small states and these are stated on its website^{8:7}

To push for international policies and rules to be more responsive to the needs of small states (*advocacy*);

To help Commonwealth small states access financing, build resilience, and have a voice on the global stage (*capacity strengthening*); and

To deliver work through economic research and analysis and put the Secretariat's ideas into action in toolkits for small states (*mixed approaches*).

72. This public articulation of the Secretariat's strategic intent is supported by a problem analysis. However, some small state stakeholders indicate 'strategic intent' should include the need to continuously understand

8 <https://thecommonwealth.org/our-work/small-states>

how small state realities are changing. Of particular relevance to small states is how COVID-19 has exacerbated existing problems and created new ones.

73. Interventions for small states across all five pillars have good alignment on the goals of the strategic plan, but the key issue for small states is whether the strategic plan and the Secretariat's interventions for small states are sufficiently prioritised and whether there is inbuilt flexibility and adaptation. At a meta-level, it appears that they are, but documented evidence suggests that some small states feel that the Secretariat's leadership on issues that matter to them could be strengthened given their specific vulnerabilities, including concerning COVID-19. Secretariat staff's perspective differs: they feel that mechanisms are in place to support alignment and they point to the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General to attend high-level UN meetings and to move operations online. This and other issues raised by the evaluation questions are discussed below.

4.4.2 Strategic Alignment with Other Institutions

74. The issue of programme alignment between the Secretariat's work and other institutions targeting small states is complex to disentangle. Stakeholders from member countries feel the Secretariat has created alignment through partnerships with global institutions, including the World Bank and UN agencies. However, other evidence from stakeholder interviews suggests that areas of alignment, and the need for it, need to be made visible and articulated in the relevant documentation and communicated to small states. The case studies yield more in-depth insights into intervention alignment where the Secretariat's work with other actors, such as the World Bank, the IMF, and other specific UN agencies, is making a difference for small states on certain issues. These include, for example, concessional financing, debt management, the Blue Economy, and fisheries. At the same time, this evaluation also found it challenging to triangulate evidence because contact details for interviews with multilateral partners were not forthcoming.

75. The World Bank Group (WBG) acknowledges on its website that its approaches pose eligibility challenges for small states in accessing concessional financing.⁹ The Bank is aware that international development institutions need to develop innovative, tailored solutions to address this, and they are committed to this result. What is less clear is the Secretariat's advocacy strategy with the World Bank and other multilateral organisations and key actors to ensure international policies and rules are responsive in line with strategic intent.
76. There are opportunities for strategic alignment that could yield important results for gender equality. For example, the Secretariat could usefully capitalise on the World Bank's initiative, *Women, Business and the Law*, which measures the laws and regulations that affect women's economic opportunity in 190 economies.¹⁰ The project presents eight indicators structured around women's interactions with the law as they move through their careers: Mobility, Workplace, Pay, Marriage, Parenthood, Entrepreneurship, Assets, and Pensions. This initiative makes an important contribution to research and policy discussions about the state of women's economic empowerment. The World Bank's evidence could be suitably used to inform a targeted advocacy initiative to ensure all Commonwealth countries have laws that promote women's economic opportunity on an equal footing with men. Page 10 of the World Bank's *Women, Business and the Law 2021 Annual Report* provides a ranking of 190 economies and how their laws score. Of note, just one Commonwealth country (Canada) scores 100. Many Commonwealth small states with Secretariat technical assistance could be guided in reforming discriminatory laws, and the results of their efforts could be captured in the World Bank's annual report as action on the part of Commonwealth nations. Outcome results for women could be tracked longer-term if women's rights organisations in states with deficits were to be involved in the legislative reform process.

9 See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/smallstates/overview>

10 <https://wbi.worldbank.org/en/wbi>

4.4.3 Perceptions of Alignment

77. There is a strong perception among internal and external stakeholders that the Secretariat has been successful (to some extent) in giving small states both a voice and influence in the international arena. This has been achieved through advocacy and the work of the two Commonwealth Small States Offices in Geneva and New York that are filling in critical resource gaps (e.g., human resources, technical expertise, office space, logistics, and admin support) in the representations of small states. Ensuring that small states have a voice appears to be an appropriate focus for the Secretariat's advocacy efforts—as opposed to advocating for small states' positions on certain issues that would not align with the interest of larger member states (e.g., on trade negotiations).
78. Examples of where the Secretariat successfully provided small states with a voice is on the issue of small state vulnerability, i.e., the need for donors and development organisations to consider factors other than GDP when addressing the vulnerabilities of small states. This concept is now widely accepted, but not yet translated into tangible outcomes (e.g., financing) for small states. Other areas highlighted by stakeholders hark back to the earlier strategic planning period and include: i) the Secretariat's role in providing access to small states to international financial institutions; ii) uniting position of all Commonwealth states, including small states, in climate negotiations where efforts were made to keep the target of 1.5 degrees Celsius on the table; iii) the work on Maritime Boundaries; iv) communicating the specific health needs of small states concerning non-communicable diseases. On the issue of the 1.5 degrees Celsius target, some stakeholders say the Secretariat needs to conduct advocacy to secure this position from all member states at the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference (COP26).
79. Again, the evaluation found no evidence of a well-defined, structured, and coherent advocacy strategy on global issues that matter to small states. This is likely to be one of the main reasons why the Secretariat staff

find it difficult to measure the results of its advocacy work and the contribution of the Secretariat to these. Measuring the outcome and impact of advocacy and policy influencing is notoriously difficult. However, there have been some innovations in the monitoring and evaluation field around measuring the outcome and impact of these efforts that the Secretariat might want to consider adopting in the next strategic planning period.¹¹¹⁰A cornerstone of most of these approaches is a strong advocacy framework.

4.4.4 Global Issues Where the Secretariat Has Shown Leadership for Small States

80. Before considering leadership, it is important to note what issues small state representatives say matter to them in the current context as articulated to the evaluators by interviewees from small states include:
- Access to vaccines and personal protective equipment;
 - Climate change (maintain the 1.5 degree Celsius position);
 - Access to concessional financing, disaster financing, and debt management;
 - Trade;
 - Tourism; and
 - Health, particularly knowledge and expertise in addressing the non-communicable disease profile of small states.
81. Tourism has collapsed during the COVID-19 pandemic but, even before 2020, there were issues related to profit extraction that needed to be addressed. Not all the issues can be classified as global, but the responses to them require global efforts.
82. Evidence suggests that the emphasis in Pillar 5 was correct during the last strategic planning period, but that Pillar 5 also needs

¹¹ Example of resources: ODI: Monitoring and evaluation of policy influence and advocacy; Julia Coffman & Ehren Reed: Unique Methods in Advocacy Evaluation Consultant Innovation Network; Intrac: Contribution to Advocacy Outcomes.

- to include advocacy for small states on additional issues in the new strategic plan: COVID-19; access to concessional finance; debt management; and specific health concerns facing small state populations.
83. Amongst most interviewees, there is consensus that the Secretariat's leadership on 'global issues that matter to small states' has scope to be more responsive, assertive, proactive, strategic and adapted to changing circumstances. Follow-through on priority areas is also critical. One-off interventions (a single training) are insufficient in contexts where capacities and resources are constrained. These perspectives are also encapsulated in the Non-Paper produced as a result of an *Informal Meeting of the Forum of Small States (FOSS) on the Commonwealth's Response to COVID-19* and other key issues (4 September 2020).
84. For vulnerability and concessional financing, stakeholders acknowledge that the Secretariat has contributed significantly to helping the global community and multilateral organisations recognising the special characteristics of small states, and the need for a different understanding and measurement approach to vulnerability as a means to wider and more equitable access to development concessional finance. However, some member states feel that:
- The Universal Vulnerability Index (UVI) work has moved too slowly;
- There is a lack of an overarching strategy for the promotion of this index among stakeholders outside of the Commonwealth;
- The issue has only really gained traction with COVID-19; and
- The Secretariat has potentially lost an important opportunity to become a global leader in this area as other players are now crowding in with their indices rather than championing the Secretariat's approach.
85. What is critical in this area is what happens with the UVI going forward: how it will be used and acted on. On this, the Secretariat needs to step up its leadership role and develop a strategy.
86. The Secretariat has shown effective leadership on the issue of fisheries trade and fishery subsidies on behalf of small states, using its convening power to bring small states together with large multilateral organisations, such as the WTO and UN bodies (especially through the Commonwealth Small States Office in Geneva). However, the primary form of representation for small states at the negotiations is through various regional negotiating blocs, such as the Caribbean Community; the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States; and the Pacific Community. External stakeholders like UNCTAD say that the Secretariat is a strong research partner on fisheries, fishery subsidies, and the Blue Economy. Where the Secretariat believe they have a leadership role to play, this needs to be visible in implementation strategies and approaches. The results of leadership (indicators of success) also need to be identified.
87. Concerning climate change and facilitating small states' access to disaster finance: while the case study for this evaluation notes that 'it is too soon' to assess effectiveness and impact, member countries suggest that the Secretariat leadership on this issue is undermined by the approach which is not sufficiently calibrated to the needs of small states. In October 2020, the Secretariat launched the Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Portal, a repository of information on a range of disaster finance instruments and mechanisms available for helping member states, including small states, to manage the financial impact of disasters and reduce risks. Small states say it is a complicated endeavour for them to 'work the portal' to their advantage. They suggest that both the Pacific and the Caribbean need a roaming technical assistant who can provide face-to-face capacity strengthening and assistance. Secretariat staff acknowledge that complementary programming is required for higher-level results.
88. Some small member states also suggest that the Secretariat could demonstrate more global leadership with its membership around climate change. With its unique

insights into the plight of small states and their climate change vulnerabilities, which stems in large part from the actions/emissions of large states, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive advocacy strategy, which secures commitments that would directly benefit small states' resilience and endurance.

4.4.5 Leveraging Entry Points in Global Discussions

89. Evidence suggests that the Secretariat has not been as effective as it could be in leveraging entry points on global issues that matter for small states. The Secretariat has hosted many workshops and side events at large conferences and summits (which small states get invited to), but the critical issue for small states is: what are the tangible benefits? In this latest COVID-19 period, one Secretariat staff member noted the tireless efforts on the part of the Secretary-General in attending high-level UN meetings on COVID-19. What small states wanted was: a line of communications to the Secretariat; an indication that the institution was in a listening mode; and direct, hands-on support for negotiating access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and vaccinations.
90. Findings around leadership and entry points suggest that at every turn the Secretariat needs to ask: will this alone yield results; if not, what next? Global leadership and advocacy are the 'means'—they are not an end in themselves. Advocacy is challenging and complex and many results are outside the control of the Secretariat and subject to political and vested interests. These complexities can be surfaced. This further underscores the need for theories of change to underpin every intervention, including advocacy, so that assumptions made about the effectiveness of one initial intervention leading to higher results are made visible and tested, preferably in consultation with small states.

4.5 Relevance

Strategic EQ 3: What is the Secretariat's competitive advantage and value-added in supporting small states, and why?

Sub-EQ 3.1. Is the Commonwealth involved where it should be, and to the level it should be, to be effective from a strategic perspective?

Sub-EQ 3.2. How responsive has the Secretariat's programming been to the evolving needs of small and vulnerable states and the global context?

Sub-EQ 3.3. Are there opportunities or gaps where the Commonwealth could/should be more deeply involved?

91. All stakeholder interviews confirmed the Secretariat's competitive advantage and value-added in supporting small states. These can be summarised as follows:

Long-standing experience and expertise in supporting small states, which means that the Secretariat understands their unique needs and challenges, including capacity and resource constraints as well as political economy environments.

The Secretariat brings a comparative perspective as along with strong convening power. As a result, it is well placed to facilitate learning across small states.

The Secretariat can leverage the technical expertise, resources, and data of all member states, particularly those of large countries, in providing assistance to small states.

Capacity and proven track record in advocating for and giving voice to small and vulnerable states.

Because of their shared history, Commonwealth states have several common traits and challenges in their economic and administrative structures and processes, as well as in their trade relations. Consequently, they find support from the Commonwealth more relevant to their country contexts.

When compared to other donors and international financial institutions, the Secretariat is perceived as neutral, providing support without strings attached or hidden agendas.

The Secretariat offers high-quality, bespoke technical assistance, capacity-building approaches, and tools.

The Secretariat is more able to work around the capacity and resource constraints of small states, dialling support up or down as need. In-house staff do not have the same pressures as external consultants and can afford, in most instances, to be patient and to be driven by process, rather than product.

92. Findings from the case studies suggest that the Secretariat is working on issues where there is a gap in assistance, a clear need for support, and/or it has strong technical expertise. Examples of where the Secretariat is filling in important gaps in available donor support include the work on youth professionalisation, the disaster risk financing portal, debt management support, LGBTQIA+ rights in Namibia, ocean protection, and costing the economic impact of VAWG in small states, among others. There is also strong evidence to suggest that the Secretariat's technical support work—e.g., through embedded consultants or short-term assistance on the drafting of legislation and policies—is filling in critical resource gaps in member countries. The work of the two Commonwealth Small States Offices in Geneva and New York especially stand out by offering a fairly unique service among donors: they provide small states with technical, human resource, and logistical capacity to effectively participate in the work of multilateral organisations to which they otherwise would not have access.
93. With regards to the relevance of the Secretariat's support to small member states' priorities, the findings suggest a more mixed picture. Within programmes, feedback from civil servants in small states appear to confirm the relevance of the Secretariat's interventions to their priorities, although not always to their available resources. Interviewed government partners highlighted the demand-led nature of support, which has likely significantly contributed to the perception of relevance. In the case of some programmes—for example, the CVE programme and the petroleum sector support in Guyana—the evaluation team also found evidence of needs assessments conducted prior to engaging in the country. When high-quality tools, methodologies, and approaches are viewed through a 'relevance lens', however, the evaluators also note that in a small number of cases they have not been designed or implemented in ways that sufficiently recognise the resource and capacity constraints faced by small states. Examples include Effective Management of Education Systems, CommonSensing, and VAWG Assessment of Costs. Tools and approaches are only relevant if they can be adapted to the context and used to achieve an outcome.
94. At the same time, interviews with Board members—which arguably only covered a small sample of small and large member states—point towards concerns about the relevance of the Secretariat's overall portfolio of work to small states' current priorities. It is widely acknowledged by interviewed member states that the Secretariat does high-quality and important work both in terms of advocacy and programme implementation, and the members have interesting ideas for support. The Secretariat's work is overall valued highly by small states. Examples include: work around the Climate Finance Access Hub, the Youth Development Index, UVI, maritime boundary revisions, Commonwealth Small States Offices, and the Meridian debt management software. These have been highlighted on numerous occasions. Interviewees also appreciate that the Secretariat has an extremely difficult task of meeting diverse needs for support with an ever-shrinking budget and member country contributions. However, there is also a perception that the support offered by the Secretariat is not always sufficiently aligned with the most pressing needs and priorities of small states.
95. While civil servants in member countries praised the demand-led nature of the Secretariat's support, at the strategic and political level the lack of communication, consultation, and partnership with small states around defining real-time priorities—particularly between the developments of Strategic Plans—has been raised as a significant challenge. The *Non-Paper from the Informal Meeting of Forum of Small States (FOSS) on the Commonwealth's Response to COVID-19* sends an implicit signal regarding the need for the Secretariat to remain attentive and relevant. [Box 4.3](#) provides a summary of small countries priorities that member countries felt are not being adequately addressed. There is also a concern among some member countries that the Board's attempt to feed small states' priorities to the Secretariat is often construed as an intent to micromanage the Secretariat's operations.

Box 4.3: Current Small States Priorities

Based on member country interviews and the FOSS Non-Paper, examples of current small state priorities that are not sufficiently addressed by Secretariat programmes and advocacy efforts include:

Disaster response;

Debt relief, concessionary finance, and balance of payments difficulties;

Medical supplies and equipment for the COVID-19 response, including facilitating access to vaccines and personal protective equipment;

Economic recovery from the pandemic;

Advocacy around climate change, including limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and insisting that large emitter countries cut their emission urgently rather than by 2050; and

Supply chain connectivity.

96. There are various mechanisms in place in the Secretariat to gather intelligence on member country needs and priorities, including those of small and vulnerable states. This suggests that the challenge is with acting on this information and reassuring small states that their voices are being heard and taken seriously. Secretariat staff highlighted various mechanisms designed to ensure that they are aware of member country priorities and needs, including:
- Survey of members as part of the strategic planning process;
 - Submission of member countries' requests for support to the Development and Political Assistance Commissions;
 - Board meetings; and
 - Attending Heads of State and Ministerial Meetings, as well as other events inside and outside of the Secretariat.
97. The evaluation did not have access to the survey analysis or transcripts of meetings, so we are unable to comment on whether these are the most effective approaches to identify the needs of small states. However, stakeholder feedback discussed previously suggests institutional weaknesses and the need to continuously improve tools to consult members to support the relevance of the Secretariat's interventions for small states.
98. Fragility in communications between the Secretariat and the Board on areas where the Secretariat did adapt—especially around the COVID-19 pandemic—appears to have contributed to the perception that small states' priorities are not adequately considered. For example, member country feedback suggests—and this is also confirmed by our enquiry—that when pressed about what the Secretariat is doing to support member countries in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, Secretariat's response focused on operational adaptations (e.g., shifting training sessions online, saving on travel budget) rather than strategic and programmatic adaptations, which is what members have been looking for. Positive examples of adaptations—such as increasing focus on youth employment or the Global Tourism Action Plan—appear to have been slow to reach concerned parties. It is important to note, however, that this view is not shared by all interviewed member countries, as there was one who praised the Secretariat's corporate communication around its adaptations to the pandemic.
99. Given perceived deficits in the areas of response and adaptation to emerging issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat could usefully consider strengthening its organisational agility and adaptive management capabilities. There is a perception among some interviewees that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant missed opportunity for the Secretariat to show small states that they can respond to their emerging priorities. The fact that other multilateral and bilateral donors managed to pivot support rapidly to Commonwealth

small states no doubt contributed to the disappointment. One interview highlighted climate change advocacy as another area where the Secretariat could ramp up its efforts to remain relevant, considering that climate change is an imminent threat to several member states, especially in the Pacific. The UVI, which has been 10 years in the making and has faced resource constraints, also needs a more focused strategy to retain relevance. Secretariat staff engaged by the evaluation acknowledged that agility is indeed a challenge for the organisation, but some of them also questioned whether building up rapid response capabilities would be the right focus.

100. The evaluation findings also highlighted concerns with the balance of support, as well as the difference in the relevance of support, between small states in the Caribbean and the Pacific. For example, one member country contrasted how the Secretariat responds in the aftermath of disasters in the two regions, noting that the Secretary-General and other high-level officials typically visit affected Caribbean countries in person, while they only issue statements in the case of Pacific countries. The interviewee noted that *"the most important thing they [the Secretariat] can bring is their face and body, not a letter to my country saying they are sorry. They need to show that the Secretariat has a heart and not just a brain."* Small states recognise that other entities are better placed to provide emergency relief, but the voice of the Secretariat needs to be amongst those articulating needs and demands for action. The lower level of digitalisation in the Pacific, and consequently the concerns about small states' ability in the region to benefit from the Secretariat's support to the same extent as the Caribbean, have also been highlighted. Many Secretariat activities have been conducted remotely during those 18 months and knowledge products and toolkits were typically also disseminated online, which limited access in Pacific small states. It is difficult to establish whether support is reasonably balanced between the two regions (considering also the cost of accessing the two geographies) without a detailed analysis of country-specific spending and activities.

However, the Secretariat noted that there are limits to how much they can balance their support with most of their programmes being demand-driven. There is also a perception in the Secretariat that Pacific small states have more support available from other donors. This might explain why there might be less demand, and consequently imbalances, in support between the two regions.

4.6 Efficiency

Strategic EQ 2: Are the Secretariat's governance and resourcing arrangements fit for purpose for small states?

Sub-EQ 2.1. Are the Secretariat's governance arrangements and budget processes fit for purpose for small states?

Sub-EQ 2.2. Should the Secretariat continue to frame support to small states as both a standalone pillar and integrated into other pillars in its new Strategic Plan, or is there a different configuration that would work better? If so, what are the implications?

101. It has been challenging to assess the efficiency of the Secretariat's governance arrangements and budget processes just for small states as these are common for all member countries regardless of their size or vulnerabilities. Consequently, most of the findings presented in this section are relevant for all states supported by the Secretariat.
102. The evaluation has not found any indication that small states as a group would be more disadvantaged by the Secretariat's governance arrangements and budget processes than other countries, with perhaps the exception of the Abuja Guidelines. There are concerns among some Secretariat staff that the Abuja Guidelines might negatively affect support to small states. The Guidelines stipulate that member countries that have not paid their contribution cannot benefit from Secretariat support. Small states find meeting payment obligations to be beyond their means more often than large states. Although a waiver can be and has been issued on occasion to allow support to these states, the Secretariat in the past has been hesitant to issue these.

103. Small states have the majority of seats (32 of the 56 seats) on the Commonwealth Secretariat Board of Governors, suggesting that they are adequately represented in the Secretariat's governance structure. The Board is currently chaired by the small state of St Kitts and Nevis.
104. Finding the appropriate balance between i) a portfolio of work that is well resourced enough to deliver results; ii) a budget that is constantly shrinking; and iii) the diverse needs and priorities of member countries, especially small states, has been a challenge for the Secretariat. The Secretariat has an extremely difficult balancing act to perform. On the one hand, it is a consensus-based organisation where members have their own priorities, needs, and interests with regards to programming that are challenging to translate into a small, well-defined portfolio of work. On the other hand, it has an ever-shrinking budget due to decreasing member country contributions. The Secretariat significantly downsized its portfolio prior to 2013 due to budget cuts, but many programmes continued to remain relative to the size of the organisation's funding. The portfolio then started to regrow during the last two strategic planning periods despite the continued decreasing budget. This growth approach in the face of budget cuts risks spreading programmes too thinly and reducing the likelihood that they will lead to significant, long-term results. There are also accompanying risks of disappointing member countries who feel that a decrease in focus areas reduces the likelihood that the Secretariat can meet the diverse needs of small states. There are no easy fixes to resolving these tensions, but—as discussed in [section 4.5](#) Relevance—feedback from Board members suggests that engaging small states more closely in deciding on the strategic priorities for the portfolio and ensuring some agility within the strategic plan to pivot to emerging needs would be an important first step. Some Secretariat staff members see the need for a political solution at the level of Heads of Government.
105. Several factors hinder the predictability—and most likely effectiveness—of available assistance to member countries, including yearly budget cycles, short-term contracts with advisers (e.g., Trade Advisers in the Commonwealth Small States Office in Geneva), and sudden and unforeseen budget freezes. This is a challenge for any developing country or programme, but it is likely to have even more severe implications for small states that have limited resources and rely heavily on Secretariat support in certain areas. Secretariat staff accounts suggest that yearly budget cycles mean they do not know what their budget will be until very close to the start of the next financial year. This makes planning difficult and creates unpredictability around the continuation of certain initiatives. Unforeseen budget freezes, such as the one in 2017, have also led to the cessation of activities in some programmes for several months. Trade advisers in the Commonwealth Small States Office in Geneva also struggle to respond and plan for advanced member requests as their contracts are typically three to six months long, and they cannot be sure of their deployment continuing. These findings align with those of the *Strategic Plan MTR*.
106. In some sectors, the Secretariat's maximum daily fee rate for external consultants makes the recruitment of high-quality consultants challenging. The maximum daily fee rate for external consultants is about GBP 500. While in some sectors this might be enough, the Guyana case study highlighted that in others it is not. For instance, legal consultants tend to cost significantly more. As a result, there is a considerable risk that the Secretariat may not always be able to attract the talent it needs, placing extra burdens on its staff and risking reputational damage. Alternatively, highly competent experts might charge for more days than they have used, undermining financial transparency and efficiency.
107. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down Secretariat programmes and led to higher than usual underspending on the budget, the case studies suggest that overall, it has adapted operations reasonably well to the changed circumstances. The evaluation team identified various examples of effective adaptations, including, for example, moving training sessions and other capacity-building activities online; training-up online local stakeholders to conduct election observation missions instead of sending external observers; and the Small States Office in

Geneva issuing more regular newsletters to members to maintain engagement. Where the Secretariat appeared to have struggled during the pandemic was with the recruitment of consultants—although one stakeholder suggested that this might have been related to recent changes in procurement policies. Some stakeholders noted that improvements could be made with scheduling online courses.

108. While partners in member countries understand the necessity of remote support, they look forward to the resumption of in-person support and visits, including from the Secretariat's Secretary-General. This is especially the case in the Pacific where digitalisation is lower and there is a feeling that some member countries have been missing out on the Secretariat's support and knowledge products during the pandemic due to low access. Some say that when disasters strike in small states the Secretary-General's presence, concern, and support must be felt on the ground.
109. Although there is evidence of improvement, cross-programme and cross-division collaboration within the Secretariat remain challenges. According to the *Strategic Plan MTR*, the lack of joined-up working has been a key obstacle for the Secretariat's teams, which is in part driven by the way the portfolio is structured (i.e., a programme-by-programme basis). The current evaluation found positive examples of cross-programme collaboration in small states, e.g., the Faith in Commonwealth programme that is a collaboration between the CVE and youth programmes; or the collaboration between the Good Offices and the rule of law programme in Lesotho. However, Secretariat staff still feel there is a lot of room for improvement in cross-programme and cross-division collaboration, which in turn would likely facilitate the delivery of higher-level results in small (and other) member countries and lead to greater efficiency.
110. The evaluation findings suggest that small states are already de facto mainstreamed¹² across Pillars 1–4 (pillars not specifically focused on small states). However, one staff member correctly notes that 'mainstreaming

small states' implies that small states and their concerns are always considered in the design of interventions but that this is not yet the case. The evaluators believe that the Secretariat should strongly consider formalising small states mainstreaming so that small states are always considered at the design phase. The evaluator also feels that the Secretariat should increase the visibility and effectiveness of support to small states through developing/enhancing a formal small states strategy and strengthening country-level monitoring, reporting, and communication of expenditure, activities, and results. The case studies and interviews with Secretariat staff suggest that all pillars, not just Pillar 5, benefit small states both in terms of support provided and outcomes achieved. The most significant outcomes for small states identified through the evaluation emerged from these other pillars. This suggests that support to small and vulnerable states is visible, although not mainstreamed purposefully, across the portfolio. However, the Secretariat needs to formalise and increase the visibility of mainstreaming through introducing a purposeful intention to mainstream at the design phase as well as a stronger country focus in its management information and MEL systems. In line with approaches to gender mainstreaming, small state mainstreaming should include an analysis of why and how small states matter and what the key issues are for them. This analysis should be supported with specific goals and objectives for small states, indicators to measure results and the inclusion of a monitoring plan. All those who need to understand higher-level results associated with programming in small states feel that the quality of communications needs to be improved. Feedback from one small member state suggests that it would welcome a formal strategy that describes the Secretariat's approach to supporting small states and reflects its priorities. One stakeholder in the Secretariat also suggested that mainstreaming should involve more reflection on how to best support small states, given their unique constraints, challenges, and needs, which could usefully be reflected in the strategy in the form of a theory of change.

¹² 'Mainstream' is understood as paying attention to the particular needs of small states when designing and implementing programmes.

111. Although the findings suggest that from a programmatic perspective mainstreaming (rather than having a separate pillar) may be an attractive programming approach and is unlikely to reduce the effectiveness of support to small states, Board members interviewed for this evaluation were very clear that maintaining a separate small states pillar is a key priority for small member states, which should be respected. Based on member country accounts, the main reason for this position appears to be a fear that mainstreaming will reduce the visibility of small states and their unique vulnerabilities and needs as it has with other issues (e.g., health) whose dedicated pillar was removed. Although it is the evaluation team's opinion that well-executed mainstreaming could significantly

increase the visibility of small states rather than decreasing it, findings suggest that there is not sufficient confidence at the moment among small states to support this change. To build trust for the next strategic planning period, the Secretariat should consider formalising the mainstreaming of small states in other pillars, which also includes communicating better expenditure and results for small states across all pillars with disaggregated reporting, while also maintaining the dedicated small states pillar. This will demonstrate that mainstreaming will not result in a de-prioritisation of small states and their needs.

5. Lessons

Strategic EQ 7: How does the Secretariat facilitate learning across small states programming?

112. Although there have been notable improvements in prioritising and facilitating learning across the Secretariat programmes, there is still some way to go to institutionalise cross-programme learning processes that need to be prioritised in the upcoming Strategic Plan. According to a Secretariat staff member, learning started to receive proper attention mid-way through the current strategic planning period. The first organisation-wide learning week was held in 2019. At the time, there were plans to repeat

this event yearly with a learning strategy implemented in-between. The COVID-19 pandemic halted these efforts. In April this year, the learning week was revived and included Learning Action Groups formulated around the Secretariat's five key impact pathways. According to the interviewed key informant, the Learning Action Group meetings received very positive feedback from participants, who appreciated the opportunity to share lessons and challenges with colleagues in different parts of the organisation in a context that is not charged by the tensions of budgeting and programme planning.

6. Conclusions

113. The evaluation provides evidence that the Secretariat has played an important role with and for small states with insights into achievements and progress across the last two strategic planning periods. The Secretariat's value-added is its long history of association and shared administrative processes, its knowledge and intellectual capacity, its neutrality, and the trust it has generated over the generations. It provides a unique combination of development-oriented interventions with diplomacy. In the global arena, small states expect the Secretariat to understand their evolving needs and to place their strategic priorities at the heart of the sustainable development agenda. The Secretariat reminds the world that one size does not fit all and that certain states have vulnerabilities that need to be appraised, considered, and acted on in different ways. The evaluation shows that there are different degrees of success in meeting these high expectations, but the trajectory is positive and work needs to continue to hone strategies and approaches.
114. Country case studies demonstrate that the Secretariat is highly valued for its strong technical work in small states, including the provision of demand-led technical support. The Secretariat's methodologies, approaches, and tool kits, as well as its capacity strengthening and technical support are considered for the most part to be intellectually rigorous, of high quality, relevant, and demand-driven. However, a concern is that some interventions are too thinly spread to drive through higher-level results or achieve impact through scale-up.
115. At the strategic level, the Secretariat's work on issues that matter for small states' survival and resilience is highly valued. This includes all actions under the small states pillar, but also those in Pillar 4: Economic Development. There are, however, concerns from some small states that while issues being addressed are important, they do not always reflect the current priorities of small states. There is also a perception that the voices of small states are not sufficiently heard and acted on by the Secretariat around their most pressing needs, especially in between strategic planning periods. Another key concern is that higher-level results are elusive and hard to measure on issues that matter most to small states. This is because much of the work centres on advocacy and influencing. In terms of its advocacy approach stakeholders believe that the Secretariat is pushing to put the needs of small states into the heart of agendas around, for example, climate change resilience and access to financing, debt management, and trade, but the organisation needs to be seen to be pushing harder for tangible results. For small states, climate action (in all its related aspects) is mission-critical. Climate change work, including for small states, requires a strategy and a structured advocacy approach where the desired results are identified as well as the policies and actions that are required to achieve them. The evaluators conclude that there is a need for a re-think of the small states strategy overall, with an emphasis on processes that allow for participation with key actors from small states with follow-up at specific points in the year to ensure the strategy is being implemented as intended.
116. In the last strategic period, the Secretariat undertook much-needed work to mainstream gender with tentative results. This needs to continue at pace as most interventions are unlikely to be effective unless they reap benefits for men, women, girls, boys, and those who are typically excluded. The good work to assess the costs of violence against women (which needs to continue at pace) is welcome but it cannot be considered as a replacement for gender mainstreaming. Mainstreaming social inclusion also matters so that factors of exclusion, such as disability, marginalisation, and other vulnerabilities, are part of the Secretariat's agenda for and with small states.

117. Gender mainstreaming should be considered as mission-critical if the Secretariat is to be fully effective in the support it provides to small states (and all states). Every pillar needs to make visible why its interventions matter for gender equality and women's empowerment. The design of interventions needs to be underpinned by a gender analysis and a gender strategy and action plan which should include M&E arrangements. Gender matters not just for interventions that impact on men and women—it also matters in the way programmes are delivered: who is included, and whose voice is heard and respected?
118. Strategic alliances are critical. The Secretariat cannot do everything, but it needs to have a relationship with those who are well-positioned to deliver the response small states need—particularly in emergencies and on the climate change agenda. In the new strategic planning period, there is scope for more emphasis on re-examining the needs of small states, greater consultation, and partnerships. There is also scope to further hone strategies and tactics. Good communications and diplomacy are at the core of this endeavour.
119. The evaluation also concludes that the Secretariat's approach to results measurement has much scope for improvement. The Secretariat's approaches are not calibrated to measure impact, or more importantly at this stage: outcomes which are, given the organisation's sphere of influence and funding, more relevant. In addition, it is not possible to track programmes and their results in individual Commonwealth countries from the Secretariat's project management information systems. In the quest to understand results, the Secretariat has over-invested in evaluations and under-invested in strengthening staff capacity to monitor, capture, and present results, as well as to develop robust monitoring systems to yield the data evaluators need—by country and other intersecting characteristics such as gender, age, and disability. More rigorous design processes are needed that include theories of change or an intervention logic for all interventions that make visible the underlying assumptions that are being made about the pathways to change and how they will be achieved.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Recommendations for the Commonwealth Secretariat

At the Organisational and Portfolio Level

1. The Commonwealth Secretariat needs a small states strategy that captures: i) short- and medium-term plans for small state-specific initiatives, including plans for follow-up work on flagship initiatives like UVI and DRF Portal; ii) advocacy strategy regarding small states issues; iii) how small states are being mainstreamed in other pillars; iv) overall objectives and expected results of small states work, accompanied by a small states-specific theory of change; v) how small states work will be monitored and evaluated (indicators, evidence sources, approaches); and vi) a learning strategy. **HIGH PRIORITY**
2. Revisit mechanisms to understand and respond to the evolving needs of small states. 'Communication, consultation, and partnership' need significant strengthening. The Secretariat needs to ensure that small states' voices are not only heard but also genuinely reflected in its priorities and portfolio of work, both in the strategic planning periods and in-between. COVID-19 has thrown a light on this issue and the Secretariat could consider whether the 'usual channels' are working and whether ears are open and receptive to tough messages that have no easy answers. Findings of this evaluation suggest that the ears are likely not receptive. **HIGH PRIORITY**
3. Reinstate a focus on mainstreaming gender (but also add) social inclusion (GESI) across all strategic pillars. The emphasis should be on helping Directorates understand why GESI matters to their work; how to conduct and integrate gender analysis; how to set goals and objectives for gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and the inclusion of other vulnerable and excluded populations; how to develop strategies and action plans; and how to identify measurable indicators of change and sources of evidence.

In some areas of the Secretariat's work, technical assistance on GESI will be required. **MEDIUM PRIORITY**
4. For the next Strategic Plan, retain the small states pillar. In parallel, implement a formal mainstreaming of small states in other pillars and purposefully set out to demonstrate that this approach can sufficiently ensure—or even increase—the visibility and prioritisation of issues that matter for small states. Ensure that the dedicated pillar accurately reflects small states' current priorities and has sufficient flexibility to adapt in real time to emerging needs. Also, ensure that the dedicated pillar is sufficiently resourced to take advantage of emerging opportunities to further small states' interest in the global arena. **HIGH PRIORITY**
5. In addition to funding programmes that run throughout the strategic planning period and have medium/long-term objectives, ringfence a portion of the budget to be flexibly used to respond to emerging member country needs and priorities (small states or otherwise). The current programme-focused approach is likely to be a factor that constrains agility, as it is difficult to meet member requests if these are not aligned with existing programme objectives/budget. Since Secretariat staff are assigned to programmes, discontinuing or scaling down programmes to give way to new initiatives during the strategic plan period is challenging. **MEDIUM PRIORITY**
6. Given the likelihood of continued resource constraints, continue leveraging partnerships with other development actors to secure funding for interventions that specifically benefit small states where needed. Consider incorporating the latter in the small states' advocacy strategy. **HIGH PRIORITY**
7. Improve public relations as this can yield important benefits concerning securing stakeholder support and international interest. Donors, including larger member countries, want stories of change that explain

the relevance of the support and what is happening as a result of the Secretariat's work in small states. *'The secretariat is made of good bones (sic) but they need to be a good storyteller. They achieve a lot but it doesn't always come across.'* **HIGH PRIORITY**

8. Initiatives that fill critical resource gaps in small states without necessarily expecting sustainable capacity improvement (e.g., the two Commonwealth Small States Offices in Geneva and New York or the exchange programme for judges) is a unique and valued offering that should be continued in the next Strategic Plan. **HIGH PRIORITY**
9. Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and learning. **HIGH PRIORITY**

This includes:

- Strengthening the monitoring framework and processes, particularly around the measurement of outcomes (including baseline) and definition of theories of changes for all programmes, so they are more suited for the complex and politically sensitive changes Secretariat programmes aim to achieve.
- Ensuring that the management information and monitoring systems track expenditure, activities, outputs and outcomes at the country level. This would ensure greater visibility of small states in programmes outside of the small states pillar.
- Commissioning fewer but more strategic evaluations. Savings from these could be usefully repurposed to invest in dedicated resources (internal or external) that support robust programme monitoring and learning.
- Definition and consistent use of MEL terms (e.g., outcome and impact).

Strive to harvest outcomes in the first instance and to understand how these are likely to produce impact over time.

At the Programme Level

1. Wherever possible, strive for depth over breadth in support. Evaluation findings indicate that in-depth and sustained interventions over time are more likely to deliver higher-level results. **MEDIUM PRIORITY**

2. Provide follow-up support to the development and delivery of toolkits, systems, legislation, policies, and similar products to ensure i) that partners have the capacity and resources to implement them and ii) that higher-level results that may take time to materialise are captured. **HIGH PRIORITY**
3. Where a demand-driven approach is used in programmes, continue to ensure that they are acted on when they fit with strategic objectives and the theory of change (when exists). If there are resource constraints, consider adding the *'likelihood of higher-level results being achieved'* to decision-making criteria. **HIGH PRIORITY**
4. Reinstate a focus on mainstreaming gender equality (and include social inclusion with a focus on those living with disabilities). Ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to empowering the gender advisor to work with each sector to highlight why gender matters; to apply a gender analysis in operational research (where relevant) and to develop clear gender strategies and action plans for every strategic intervention. **HIGH PRIORITY**

7.2 Recommendations for Commonwealth Member Countries (Board Members)

These recommendations apply to Commonwealth member countries in their capacity as members of the Board and recipients of the Secretariat's assistance.

1. Consider a bi-annual budget cycle. The unpredictability of funding to small states and initiatives is a considerable challenge, especially for countries that rely heavily on Secretariat support in certain areas. It also has implications for the effectiveness, efficiency (e.g., around recruitment), and sustainability of the organisation's interventions. **HIGH PRIORITY**
2. Member countries also need to take responsibility for their contribution to the effectiveness, responsiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Secretariat's interventions by ensuring the predictability and sustained level of their funding. Although budget cuts are sometimes unavoidable

due to circumstances outside the control of member countries, these need to be communicated to the Secretariat—especially on Extra Budgetary Resources—as soon as possible, so alternative funding sources can be located. **HIGH PRIORITY**

3. Acknowledge and agree on who has ownership of and responsibility for the delivery and measurement of higher-level results. For work that is aimed at securing system change in international policies and mechanisms, and responsiveness to small state priority issues (concessional financing, trade, climate change/disaster finance, and the marine economy), ownership and accountability for results will most often rest with the Secretariat, who advocates on behalf and

with small states. Although in some instances member countries on their own or as a united front will have a role to play in the Secretariat's advocacy efforts. However, in the case of work related to democracy, public institutions, and youth and social development, partner states will often have responsibility for turning Secretariat activities and outputs into further outputs and outcomes that potentially lead to impact (specifically, benefits for men, women, girls, and boys). Responsibility for MEL needs to be shared between the Secretariat and partner countries. The means that small states and other partners need to have a stake in MEL processes (e.g., obligations to be interviewed, to provide access to data, etc.).

MEDIUM PRIORITY

Annex A. Case Studies

A1.1 Country Case Study: Guyana

Case Study Country	Guyana				
Strategic Outcome Area(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Democracy	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Institutions	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth & Soc Dev	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eco Dev	<input type="checkbox"/> Small & Vulnerable States
Directorate(s) / Unit(s)	Governance and Peace Directorate, Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate				
Timeframe	1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General & 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections: September 2019 to 2019 4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth: October 2016 to 2019 4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Late 2012 to 2019				
Case Study Lead	Nora Loncsar	Date	July 2021		
Introduction					
This is one of 10 case studies conducted for an independent evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's interventions to support small states (July 2021). The case study has examined four intermediate outcome areas in Guyana:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Outcome 1: Democracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General ◦ 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections • Strategic Outcome 4: Economic Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth ◦ 4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies 					

Case Study Country	Guyana
<p>Summary of Findings</p> <p>Effectiveness</p> <p>How effectively has the Commonwealth Secretariat delivered support to address the vulnerabilities, public governance, and development challenges of its small member countries?</p>	<p>1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General & 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some evidence that through its support to the Guyana Elections Commission and the intervention of the Good Offices, the Secretariat contributed to the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections, and the peaceful transfer of power (strategic outcome). The Elections Commission implemented various recommendations made by Secretariat advisers, including on the design of the Elections Commission, engaging with civil society, advancing women's voices, and the participation of people with disabilities. Although the Commission's management of the electoral process was criticised by observers, it is likely that without Secretariat support it would have performed even worse. • The resolution of the post-electoral dispute that Secretariat advisers provided support to also contributed to the removal of Guyana from the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group's agenda. • It is difficult to assess the outcome and effectiveness of the Secretariat's support without access to partners in Guyana and adequate monitoring data that would track/record the full implementation of recommendations from the electoral advisers. • The trust that various Guyana Elections Commission stakeholders placed in the two Secretariat advisers was a key contributing factor to effectiveness. This was achieved by selecting highly competent experts with experience in managing large-scale elections and who were perceived as neutral due to having no previous involvement with Guyana. <p>4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from partner interviews suggests that the Commonwealth Small States Office's (CSSO) support has contributed to Guyanese officials in Geneva and Georgetown having a better understanding of key trade issues, including those under discussion in the WTO. The office space, administration, and logistical support offered by the CSSO were also critical in allowing Guyana to set up a permanent representation in Geneva. • Efforts to build a relationship of trust with members, including through quick turnaround times on requests and the provision of neutral and reliable information, has been critical to the effectiveness of support. • Support provided through the CSSO is demand-driven, flexible, and based on needs assessment and ad hoc requests. <p>4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most significant achievement of the Secretariat's support to the Guyana petroleum sector is the establishment and implementation of the Natural Resource Fund which meant that the country started oil extraction with a Sovereign Wealth Fund already in place to manage oil revenues. Such funds promote transparency and enhance opportunities for inclusive growth. The Natural Resource Fund also scored very highly on international transparency indexes.

Case Study Country	Guyana
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all advice from the Secretariat on the institutional, policy, and legislative framework has been taken on board, but this is not unexpected in the case of such highly politicised issues as the management of the petroleum sector. • Technical support to the petroleum sector is mostly provided through in-house Secretariat experts and it is regarded very highly by the Guyanese officials interviewed for this case study. The Secretariat's advice is considered at the highest level in ministries during decision-making.
<p>Coherence / Alignment</p> <p>How well do the Secretariat's small states interventions and support fit 1) within an overarching Secretariat strategic intent; and 2) with the actions of other institutions targeting small states as key beneficiaries?</p>	<p>For all outcome areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions are aligned with the Secretariat's strategic intents of a) helping Commonwealth small states access financing, build resilience, and have a voice on the global stage; and b) delivering work through economic research and analysis and putting Secretariat ideas into action in toolkits for small states. • Other donors and organisations also provide support on the issues tackled by the Secretariat, but actions are coordinated and the organisation's support has clear value-added.
<p>Impact</p> <p>To what extent has the Commonwealth Secretariat's support delivered to longer-term/high-level social, environmental, public governance and economic changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended)?</p>	<p>1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General & 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the impact of the Secretariat's interventions is currently not measured, it is reasonable to assume that it has contributed to the resilience of Guyana's public sector governance through its support to free, fair, and credible elections, and the peaceful transfer of power. <p>4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With slow progress on WTO negotiations, it is too early to assess impact. Also, at present, there appear to be no mechanisms in place to track the programme's impact. However, partners interviewed confirmed that the Secretariat's support on multilateral trade issues is relevant for Guyana's resilience. <p>4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact is not currently being measured. That said, the Natural Resource Fund is expected to ensure that future generations can benefit from oil revenues, reduce the vulnerability of the budget to economic shocks and oil price fluctuations, and bring additional revenues through the responsible investment of oil-related income, all of which in turn will contribute to inclusive economic growth and Guyana's resilience.

Case Study Country	Guyana
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>Which aspects of the Secretariat's interventions are likely to have an enduring impact?</p>	<p>1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General & 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability requires electoral and constitutional reform. Secretariat advisers provided recommendations in this regard, but it is not clear to what extent the Guyanese government has taken these on board. Based on media reports, however, there appears to be a willingness on the part of the government to reform the electoral process. <p>4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a small state with resource constraints, Guyana is not able to maintain a large representation in Geneva and, being a diplomatic mission, officials regularly rotate. WTO issues are also evolving quickly. Assessing the sustainability of the CSSO's support in its conventional sense is therefore not appropriate. <p>4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability is highly likely. Although some amendments to the National Resource Fund Act are expected, these are unlikely to put the sustainability of the Fund at risk.
<p>What have been the main interventions/programmes implemented by the Secretariat?</p>	<p>1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General & 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections</p> <p>In the context of a deeply polarised pre-election period, the Secretary-General's Good Offices deployed two embedded, short-term senior electoral advisers to the Guyana Elections Commission who remained in place throughout and after the elections. The two advisers provided wide-ranging support to the Guyana Elections Commission as a body, its chairperson, commissioners, and Chief Electoral Officer to help secure the confidence of the public and other stakeholders in the electoral process. Furthermore, their support also helped ensure a free, fair, and credible election. This support included, among other things, assistance on civic and voter education and the training of staff; coordination with political stakeholders; engagement with the public and other stakeholders on the ground, as well as conveying their feedback to the Guyana Elections Commission; and advice on resolving electoral disputes and conflict; international best practices, and electoral reform.</p> <p>The two advisers were deployed along with a Commonwealth Election Observation mission and interventions from the Secretary-General and her team (who were engaging with Guyanese officials from September 2019). They continued this engagement in the contentious post-election period.</p>

Case Study Country

Guyana

4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth

Guyana has benefited from a range of activities delivered by the CSSO in Geneva (with support from the Secretariat in London) aimed at increasing its understanding of multilateral trade policies and capacity to negotiate better trade deals. These included:

- In-person and online training sessions and workshops on WTO trade issues. Some of these have been tailored to the needs of Guyana, targeting the Geneva mission and/or trade officials in Georgetown (e.g., Technical Training Course for Guyana on Global Trade Governance, the WTO, and Emerging Trade Issues held in November 2019) while others have had a wider attendance (e.g., a session on trade and services in Geneva);
- The organisation of regional consultations to assist member countries to prepare for multilateral trade negotiations (e.g., Commonwealth-Caribbean Community-Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie Consultation on Multilateral, Regional, and Emerging Trade Issues for the Caribbean);
- Reports from WTO negotiations and meetings highlighting emerging issues and their implications for small states;
- Formal and informal technical advice from trade advisers on WTO negotiations, procedures, and reforms (e.g., advice was provided on WTO procedures about technical barriers imposed by the EU on the trade of rum);
- Research and knowledge products (e.g., briefing notes); and
- Office space in the CSSO building in Geneva and logistical support (e.g., internet services, access to administrative staff, etc.).

4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies

Since the discovery of the Liza Oilfield in Guyana in 2015, over six billion barrels of oil have been identified. Crude oil extraction was initiated in 2019 by ExxonMobil. Over the medium-term, the country is expected to become one of the world's larger oil producers per capita. The Secretariat has been providing advice to the Guyanese government on the institutional, policy, and legislative frameworks to manage the petroleum sector since late 2012. This has included:

- Technical support on drafting the Petroleum Policy and the Petroleum Commission Bill;
- Support on the amendment of the Petroleum Act and Regulations;
- Economic modelling and analysis for and advice on the drafting of the Petroleum Taxation Report, Model, and Bill;
- Technical support (including financial modelling) on drafting the Green Paper on the Natural Resource Fund and Natural Resource Fund Act;
- Technical support on the establishment of the Natural Resource Fund; and
- Support on the drafting of subsidiary legislation under the Maritime Zones Act 2010.

Case Study Country

Guyana

What significant results have been achieved or are likely to be achieved by Secretariat interventions? Have any of these been unintended?

1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General & 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections

Without access to partners in Guyana and Secretariat monitoring data that would track, for example, the implementation of recommendations from the electoral advisers, it is difficult to assess the outcome of the Secretariat's support. This challenge is compounded by a contentious post-election period in Guyana.

Although most international observers (e.g., the Commonwealth Observer Group and EU Election Observation Mission) judged the elections to be free, fair, and transparent, there were serious difficulties with the tabulation, transmission, and announcement of results in the largest and most decisive region: Region 4. This undermined the credibility of the elections and led to a five-month delay to the conclusion of the electoral process. The European Union Election Observation Mission's Final Report was also highly critical of the way the Guyana Elections Commission—the main beneficiary of Secretariat support—handled the situation, although it is likely that without this support it would have performed even worse.

That said, there is some anecdotal evidence from the Secretariat and one of its advisers that the advice provided by the electoral advisers contributed to the conduct of free, fair, and transparent elections by strengthening the ability of the Guyana Elections Commission to manage the electoral process (outcome). The Guyana Elections Commission implemented various recommendations made by Secretariat advisers, including on the design of the Elections Commission, engaging with civil society, advancing women's voices, and the participation of people with disabilities (see section 'Advice from the experts considered inclusion'). The advisers also continued to support the Elections Commission in the resolution of the post-election dispute. The elections ultimately resulted in the peaceful transfer of power to the opposition party (outcome) in a tense political context following the discovery of significant oil reserves.

The resolution of the post-electoral dispute also contributed to the removal of Guyana from the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group's agenda (outcome) where it had originally been placed because of concerns over Guyana's adherence to Commonwealth values. In its statement, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group commended the efforts of the two advisers and the Good Offices team in "advocating the conclusion of a credible, transparent, and inclusive electoral process".

4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth

Evidence from partner interviews suggests that the CSSO's support has contributed to Guyanese officials in Geneva and Georgetown having a better understanding of key trade issues, including those under discussion at the WTO (outcome). It has exposed Guyanese officials to emerging trade issues (e.g., trade and environment, e-commerce, and investment facilitation) which they are not actively following but which have relevance to their domestic policy priorities. With only a small mission in Geneva, Guyana is not able to attend all WTO negotiations as they often run in parallel. Therefore, notes and analysis from CSSO trade advisers provide Guyanese officials in Geneva with insights and understanding they could not have otherwise acquired, allowing them to prepare better briefing notes for country decision-making. Similarly, training sessions and the access these provided to external experts have received very positive feedback from partners in Georgetown and Geneva.

Case Study Country

Guyana

One key informant also felt that capacity-building provided by the CSSO positioned the permanent mission in Geneva to better negotiate trade deals favourable to Guyana (likely outcome). However, this is difficult to objectively verify as no agreements have been reached at the WTO since the Bali Ministerial Declaration in 2013.

Finally, partners suggested that the office space and administrative and logistical support offered by the CSSO were critical in allowing Guyana to set up a permanent representation in Geneva (outcome).

4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies

The only—albeit very significant—outcome achieved by the Secretariat's support to the Guyana petroleum sector so far is the establishment and implementation of the Natural Resource Fund which meant that the country started oil extraction with a Sovereign Wealth Fund already in place to manage resulting revenues (outcome). The Secretariat provided technical support on the drafting of the related act and preceding green paper, as well as on the implementation of the Fund. The government of Guyana was highly complimentary of the Secretariat's support.

According to the valuation of the Secretariat's Support to Guyana 2013/14–2016/17, the Natural Resource Fund "accords to international best practice and has been widely praised by the international community." The Secretariat also helped Guyana assess the Natural Resource Fund against international transparency indexes where it scored very highly.

Not all advice from ComSec on the institutional, policy, and legislative framework has been taken on board, but this is not unexpected in the case of such highly politicised issues as the management of the petroleum sector. For example, the government made amendments to the Petroleum Commission Bill draft submitted by the Secretariat which makes the Commission less independent. Similarly, it ignored the Secretariat's advice on the Tax Act and the related renegotiation of an ExxonMobil contract, likely losing billions in revenues.

What approaches are most likely to contribute to significant results?

1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General & 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections

The Guyanese electoral process was supported through:

- Technical advice and mentoring to the Guyana Elections Commission delivered through short-term, embedded technical advisers;
- Diplomacy; and
- An electoral observation mission.

A key contributing factor to the effectiveness of support was the trust that various Elections Commission stakeholders placed in the two advisers. This was achieved by selecting highly competent experts with experience in managing large-scale elections (the two advisers were former heads of the electoral commissions of Ghana and India) and because they were perceived as neutral due to having no previous involvement in the Guyanese context. Advice from the experts considered inclusion. For example, they liaised with the National Commission on Disabilities to secure data on persons with disabilities disaggregated by polling station—something the Guyana Elections Commission did not have before—and convinced the initially reluctant Elections Commission to use it to improve the accessibility of stations.

Case Study Country

Guyana

4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth

The CSSO is using a combination of different approaches to deliver support. These approaches include training, technical advice, research and knowledge products, and convening. Support is demand-driven, flexible, and based on needs assessments and ad hoc requests. Partner feedback suggests that no single approach stands out—they are all appreciated for different reasons. Partners found the training sessions tailored to Guyana highly relevant to their needs and realities, highlighting the access they have provided to trade experts, and that they are interactive. Convening activities, especially smaller ones, have also been appreciated as they have provided opportunities for networking. Briefing notes are more factual and highlight issues small states need to consider.

Feedback from CSSO trade advisers suggests that efforts to build a relationship of trust with members, including through quick turnaround times on requests and the provision of neutral and reliable information, has been critical to the effectiveness of support. Offering office space for several small states also creates opportunities for networking and informal technical advice.

4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies

Secretariat staff (and an external consultant working on the Tax Act—see 'What lessons should inform...' for more detail) have provided technical support—i.e., the drafting of policy documents and legislation, financial modelling, and extensive engagement with key stakeholders to secure ownership and buy-in around advice—to Guyana's petroleum sector and undertook various short-term missions to Guyana. The assistance has been demand-driven. The Evaluation of the Secretariat's Support to Guyana 2013/14–2016/17 found that Guyanese officials regarded its support very highly and its advice is considered at the highest level of decision-making within the ministries. The evaluation also suggested that a comprehensive needs assessment preceded the Secretariat's interventions.

Which results are likely to be sustainable?

1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General & 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections

To ensure the sustainability of results and the freedom, fairness, and transparency of future elections, Guyana needs to implement constitutional and electoral reforms. The two advisers provided over two dozen recommendations in this regard in their final report, but it is unclear to what extent these have been taken up by Guyanese stakeholders. Based on media reports, there appears to be a willingness in the government to reform the electoral process, and in 2021 the US committed to an 18-month project to support these efforts.

4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth

The evaluation team found that assessing the sustainability of the CSSO's support in its conventional sense is not appropriate. As a small state with resource constraints, Guyana is not able to keep up a larger representation and, being a diplomatic mission, officials regularly rotate. In addition, WTO issues are evolving quickly. New issues are continuously brought to the agenda by larger, better-resourced states with which small states struggle to keep up. In this context, building capacity that is sustained beyond the CSSO's interventions is not a realistic expectation.

Case Study Country

Guyana

The continued availability of support from the CSSO could be an alternative judgement criterion for sustainability. The evaluation team have not had access to sufficient evidence to assess this, but the fact that trade advisers tend to have short-term contracts (about 3-months) raises some concerns in this area (see 'What lessons should inform...' for more detail).

4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies

There is a high likelihood that the Natural Resource Fund Act is sustainable. As with many highly political reforms, one of the most significant threats to the sustainability of petroleum policies and legislation in Guyana is that subsequent governments reverse them. Indeed, the Guyanese government which came to power in late-2020 has already announced that they do not intend to follow the policies of the previous government. Some amendments to the Natural Resource Fund Act are also expected. However, neither the interview with Secretariat staff nor the recent country evaluation indicated that the existence of the Fund, which is already operational, was at risk of being abolished.

How well have Secretariat interventions been aligned with the efforts of other stakeholders working on issues related to the strategic outcome areas in focus?

1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General & 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections

Other organisations—for example, the International Republican Institute, the Carter Centre, the EU, and the UN Development Programme—also provided support to the electoral process and the two advisers regularly liaised with these stakeholders. However, the role of the Secretariat advisers differed from these other organisations because they worked on behalf of the Guyanese government for the benefit of Guyana. The Secretariat's electoral advisers were also unique among international advisers in terms of their experience of successfully managing significantly bigger electoral processes.

The comparative advantage of the Secretariat over other organisations offering electoral assistance is its long-standing experience supporting small Commonwealth member countries. This has provided the Secretariat with a strong understanding of small states' unique issues, vulnerabilities, and priorities which in turn has increased the trust member countries have for its support and expertise.

Typically, the Secretariat is also employing an integrated approach to electoral support programmes which includes political, electoral, and conflict prevention support in most countries—although conflict prevention was not part of the support package in Guyana. Furthermore, the Secretariat only works with credible, accredited partners—it has a list of about 100 accredited civil society organisations and national institutions in different thematic areas—which contributes to more effective support.

Case Study Country

Guyana

4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth

There are other stakeholders providing support on multilateral trade issues. These include, for example, UNCTAD, the EU (which provides support to the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States on WTO negotiations), and the International Institute for Sustainable Development. However, stakeholder feedback suggests that support from the Secretariat has several comparative advantages as outlined below:

- Member countries have a long-standing relationship with the Secretariat, and they are an active part of the organisation and have a say in running it, creating a higher level of trust.
- The Secretariat is one of the few organisations with a specific focus on small states and long-standing experience supporting them. It also has the convening power to link and facilitate lesson sharing between small states in different regions.
- Because of their shared history, Commonwealth countries share several common traits and challenges in their economic and administrative structures and processes, and in their trade relations. Consequently, they find support from the Secretariat more relevant to their country contexts.
- Although support on trade-related issues is available to Guyana from other donors, these tend to focus on a group of small states (e.g., all African and Caribbean small states) or the entire region. Support tailored specifically to Guyana is typically not available.
- Assistance from other donors and organisations is typically projectised with rigid workplans and objectives. On the other hand, support from the CSSO is flexible and can be provided on a short turnaround time.
- CSSO trade advisers attend WTO meetings which most other organisations cannot. This means that advisers can provide up-to-date, immediate information and analysis on emerging issues.
- For small member states housed in the CSSO like Guyana, trade advisers can also provide more hands-on and timely support.

4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies

The Secretariat's work is aligned with the support other donors and organisations – e.g., the World Bank, IMF, Deloitte, and the Inter-American Development Bank – have provided to the development of Guyana's petroleum sector policy and legislative framework. The coordination of support from these different stakeholders is being led by the government. The evaluation also noted the Secretariat has prioritised support in areas where the country is not receiving inputs from other development partners.

Secretariat staff see the comparative advantage of its support vis-à-vis other donors in that it has no hidden agendas or strings attached, unlike, for example, international financial institutions. The Secretariat's relationship with Guyana is based on trust; there are no consequences if the government decides not to take on board its advice, and it keeps its work confidential if beneficiary countries so wish.

Case Study Country

Guyana

Have Secretariat interventions contributed to an increase in the resilience (social, environmental, public governance, and economic) of the focus country? If so, how? Have there been any other significant impacts?

1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General & 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections

There is some evidence that the Secretariat's support provided through the two electoral advisers contributed to conducting free, fair, and transparent elections in Guyana which—albeit with some delays—led to the peaceful transition of power. Although the impact of the Secretariat's electoral support is currently not measured, it is reasonable to assume that this has contributed to the resilience of Guyana's public sector governance.

4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth

Partners interviewed confirmed that support on multilateral trade issues is relevant for the objective of increased reliance of small states. Historically, the economic structure of small states has not been diversified, and the exploration of significant oil reserves in Guyana puts the country at heightened risk of being over-dependent on one sector. Trade, and thus the negotiation of favourable trade deals, is critical to enable greater diversification. That said, it is too early to assess impact due to slow progress on WTO negotiations and, at the moment, there appear to be no mechanisms in place to track the programme's impact on resilience in beneficiary countries.

4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies

With time, Guyana's Natural Resource Fund is expected to ensure that future generations can benefit from oil revenues, reduce the vulnerability of the budget to economic shocks and oil price fluctuations, and bring additional revenues through the responsible investment of oil-related income. If these benefits indeed are realised, they will contribute to impact in terms of the economic resilience of Guyana.

What lessons should inform the next Secretariat Strategic Plan or future programming?

1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General & 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections

- Ideally, technical assistance should start 6–8 months in advance of the elections to ensure that stakeholders have time to act on the advice of Secretariat experts and implement reforms. In Guyana, advisers were deployed much later, about two months ahead of the elections. This was not the fault of the Secretariat, which showed considerable flexibility in circumventing the standard procurement procedures to speed up the deployment process. The delay was on the side of the beneficiary government, which needed to extend an invitation for support due to the political sensitivity of the electoral process.
- The delays in announcing the election results in Guyana also highlighted the need for the Secretariat to extend the mandate of election advisers beyond the election period (until approximately two months after the elections) so that they can effectively support the resolution of any issues or disputes emerging in the week of the ballot. In the case of Guyana, the experts were envisaged to spend about 74 days on the mission, but, due to the delays, ended up with about 139 days on it.
- The pandemic showed that, while not ideal, electoral support can be effectively delivered online.

Case Study Country

Guyana

4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth

- One key informant felt that support to small states on trade issues would benefit from greater involvement from both the Secretariat in London and large member countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, UK, Nigeria, etc. These large member countries play a critical role in the WTO negotiations and would enrich support with their different perspectives. Feedback from the Secretariat suggests that advisers are already working closely, but the effective involvement of London-based advisers could be further facilitated if the Commonwealth would gain observer status at the WTO covering several negotiating groups/committees, besides the Committee on Trade and Development. This would enable advisers to attend some WTO negotiating meetings to follow discussions and advise small states accordingly.
 - The extent to which member countries benefit from support depends on the traction permanent missions and the CSSO can generate in-country capitals.
 - Both the COVID-19 pandemic and remote working have posed some challenges to the work of the CSSO. Without the informal interaction between trade advisers and member countries in the corridors of the CSSO and WTO, the CSSO has had to be more proactive in engaging partners, for example, through newsletters and more regular briefs. Building trust and rapport in this context has also been more challenging for the trade adviser who joined during the pandemic.
 - Trade advisers in the CSSO in Geneva should have longer contracts. They typically have short-term three- to six-month contracts, making it very challenging to plan as would be needed, for example, for the organisation of larger events. This also means that they need to work on a reactive basis and cannot commit to the support requested ahead of time by member states around important WTO events.
 - Member countries would benefit from more trade advisers in the CSSO in Geneva because, over the past five years, the number of issues that are under negotiation in the WTO has expanded. Resourcing thus needs to follow suit. Alternatively, the involvement of London-based advisors could be increased (see first bullet point within this sub-section for more details).
- #### 4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies
- Whether the Secretariat's advice is acted on is highly dependent on the political will that is influenced by vested interests, especially in the case of high-profile sectors such as petroleum. Political will might also appear and disappear with changes in government. In this context, it is unrealistic to expect that all of the Secretariat's interventions will lead to significant outcomes.
 - When advising on highly sensitive and political reforms, Secretariat teams should consider developing an external communication strategy that covers media engagement. For instance, the Secretariat's draft of the Petroleum Commission Bill was amended by the government, reducing the independence of the proposed Commission. In parliament, the bill received significant criticism from the opposition as well as negative media coverage. A communications strategy would help to manage similar situations and reduce the risk of reputational damage for the Secretariat.
 - Consider increasing the fee ceiling for consultants in specific instances. The maximum daily fee rate for external consultants in the Secretariat is about GBP 500. While this might be enough in some sectors, legal consultants—who advise on tax legislation for instance—tend to cost significantly more. As a result, there is a considerable risk that the Secretariat may not always be able to attract the talent it needs, placing extra burdens on Secretariat staff and raising reputational risks.

Case Study Country		Guyana
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid sudden, short-term budget freezes such as the six-month budget freeze in 2017. These create unpredictability in the availability of support and risk damaging the working relationship with beneficiaries. • Strengthen the availability of country-specific management information. The Guyana Country Evaluation noted that there is no country focal point for coordination and reporting. Given the lack of country-specific information in the knowledge management system, the availability of country-based information is dependent on individual staff knowledge. 		
List of People Interviewed		
Name	Organisation	Position
1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General & 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections		
Abubakar Abdullahi	Commonwealth Secretariat/ Governance and Peace Directorate	Peace and Development Officer
Dr Nasim Zaidi	External Consultant	Adviser & Former Chief Election Commissioner of India
4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth		
Collin Zhuawu	Commonwealth Secretariat/ Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate	Economic Adviser (Multilateral Trade)
Brendan Vickers	Commonwealth Secretariat/ Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate	Head of International Trade Policy
Kim Kempel	Commonwealth Small States Office, Geneva	Trade Adviser, Trade Negotiations and Emerging Trade Issues
Tanvi Sinha	Commonwealth Small States Office, Geneva	Trade Adviser, Trade Negotiations and Facilitation Support
Deep Ford	Permanent Missions of Guyana to the United Nations in Geneva	Former Guyana Ambassador and Permanent Representative
Neville Totaram	Permanent Missions of Guyana to the United Nations in Geneva	Ambassador & Deputy Permanent Representative and Chargé d'affaires a.i.
4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies		
Daniel Wilde	Commonwealth Secretariat/ Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate	Economic Adviser, Natural Resources

Case Study Country

Guyana

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- 4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth
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 - Evaluation Forms: Technical Training Course for Guyana on Global Trade Governance, WTO and Emerging Trade Issues, 28–29 November 2019, Georgetown, Guyana.
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A1.2 Country Case Study: Malta

Case Study Country	Malta				
Strategic Outcome Area(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Democracy	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Institutions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Youth & Soc Dev	<input type="checkbox"/> Eco Dev	<input type="checkbox"/> Small & Vulnerable States
Directorate(s) / Unit(s)	Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate				
Timeframe	2016–2021				
Case Study Lead	Juliette Seibold		Date		July 2021
Introduction					
<p>This is one of 10 case studies conducted for an independent evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's interventions to support small states (July 2021).</p> <p>The case study has examined two intermediate outcome areas in Malta, both of which fall under Pillar 3 Youth and Social Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme 3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes: strengthening Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) practices 					
Summary of Findings					
Effectiveness	<p>3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key result is the 'refinement/cross-fertilisation of ideas' among all states on how to take forward the professionalisation of youth work in terms of policy, legislation, and action. This result comes from the March 2018 Youth Conference in Malta, as well as from the Commonwealth Youth Ministerial Meeting held in Uganda in 2017. Through the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (9CYMM) Resolution (Kampala, 2017) "ministers agreed to promote youth work as a profession through education and training for sectors where youth engagement is important, such as but not limited to the police, health, youth ministry, and social work. This includes the advancement of the Commonwealth higher education consortium for youth work (CHEC4YW). The 9CYMM acknowledged the increasing role of youth in the areas of social and economic progress, and the need to promote the professionalisation of youth work. The March 2018 Youth Conference in Malta reiterated commitments to action by stakeholders. The Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium for Youth Work (CHEC4YW) project, the Maltese Ministry of Youth and the Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Worker Associations (CAYWA) are effectively working to promote approaches for the professionalisation of youth work across all Commonwealth countries, including small states. Malta is playing a leadership role and there is evidence that other small states are continuing to engage, through the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CHEC4YW), drawing on their membership with CAYWA and their relationship with Malta. 				
How effectively has the Commonwealth Secretariat delivered support to address the vulnerabilities, public governance and development challenges of its small member states?	<p>3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key result is the 'refinement/cross-fertilisation of ideas' among all states on how to take forward the professionalisation of youth work in terms of policy, legislation, and action. This result comes from the March 2018 Youth Conference in Malta, as well as from the Commonwealth Youth Ministerial Meeting held in Uganda in 2017. Through the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (9CYMM) Resolution (Kampala, 2017) "ministers agreed to promote youth work as a profession through education and training for sectors where youth engagement is important, such as but not limited to the police, health, youth ministry, and social work. This includes the advancement of the Commonwealth higher education consortium for youth work (CHEC4YW). The 9CYMM acknowledged the increasing role of youth in the areas of social and economic progress, and the need to promote the professionalisation of youth work. The March 2018 Youth Conference in Malta reiterated commitments to action by stakeholders. The Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium for Youth Work (CHEC4YW) project, the Maltese Ministry of Youth and the Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Worker Associations (CAYWA) are effectively working to promote approaches for the professionalisation of youth work across all Commonwealth countries, including small states. Malta is playing a leadership role and there is evidence that other small states are continuing to engage, through the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CHEC4YW), drawing on their membership with CAYWA and their relationship with Malta. 				

Case Study Country	Malta
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAYWA's capacity has also strengthened and its membership has increased from 15 to 25 states, including more small states. More data that will shed light on higher-level results (e.g., new policies, investment in youth work, improved curricula, etc.) disaggregated by state will be available when the 2016 baseline study undertaken by the Commonwealth Secretariat is repeated. This could be usefully done on an annual basis. • Key approaches that contribute to results are convening (motivation, sharing ideas, securing commitment) and Malta's and CAYWA's technical assistance. Going forward, the most important approaches will be efforts on the part of CAYWA, Malta and the Secretariat to sustain engagement; follow-up and monitoring on the part of the Secretariat to track progress; disseminating the results of progress in compelling formats as this is likely to encourage others. This evaluation did not examine gender mainstreaming approaches in the youth worker curricula. However, some Secretariat staff say that more work could be done to ensure entry points for action in the curricula are being leveraged. <p>3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes: strengthening Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key results are still at the output level. They include: Malta's lead role in the development of the EMES toolkit which enables ministry officials across the Commonwealth to manage their education systems effectively so that they deliver 12 years of free and quality education to all boys and girls; the adaptation of the toolkit to other contexts by Jamaica, Kenya, and other stakeholders; the current piloting of the toolkit in Malta (June 2021) and subsequent piloting in Jamaica (date TBC). • It is too soon for outcome results on EMES, but the pathway to change is commitment and ownership on the part of small states to action (Nadi Declaration and Action Plan) and technical input and convening to develop the approach and adapt it to context. Going forward, more clarity on the following approaches would be helpful: engagement/advocacy to encourage uptake on the part of small states; monitoring and reporting on progress across the Commonwealth; disseminating results in compelling formats; and targeted technical assistance for specific small states to implement EMES.
<p>Coherence / Alignment</p> <p>How well do the Secretariat's small states interventions and support fit within an overarching Secretariat strategic intent; and with the actions of other institutions targeting small states as key beneficiaries?</p>	<p>3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat is the only institution that supports the professionalisation of youth work across all Commonwealth countries. However, the Council of Europe also provides relevant support to European small states (Malta and Cyprus). There is alignment in Malta's approach to the professionalisation of youth with lessons emanating from the Council of Europe. <p>3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes: strengthening Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initiative to develop a Pan-Commonwealth EMES toolkit is well aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 (inclusive education). It has also built on other initiatives to standardise education management approaches, most notably from the European Union. The development of the toolkit has involved the Association of Commonwealth Universities, Education International, and the Caribbean Community. However, this evaluation was not able to triangulate this evidence or explore these civil society perspectives through interviews.

Case Study Country	Malta
<p>Summary of Findings</p> <p>Impact</p> <p>To what extent has the Commonwealth Secretariat's support delivered to longer-term/high-level social, environmental, public governance and economic changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended)?</p>	<p>3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat staff and CAYWA note that most Commonwealth countries have youth workers who have been trained or are being trained as a result of past Secretariat interventions. The Secretariat has a historic legacy in ensuring the professionalisation of youth work (through diplomas) across Commonwealth countries, including most small states. Secretariat staff say that 'impact can be seen from the counterfactual', i.e., without the Secretariat's earlier work in this area, there would be no qualifications available for youth work. To further the professionalisation of the Youth Work sector, through the Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium for Youth Work (CHEC4YW) project, the Secretariat is supporting the education and training of youth workers and strengthening of youth work policy and practice. A key partner in the delivery of the project is the University of the West Indies (UWI), whose remit is small states of the Caribbean. The Consortium supports the implementation of a Bachelor's degree in youth work by Higher Education Institutions, through open and distance learning. It supports several HEIs in small states including Namibia, Guyana, Fiji and Mauritius. Support was provided to the Grenada Ministry of Youth Development, Sports, Culture and the Arts to establish a national youth work association (see letter from Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Youth). <p>The bullet points below were provided by a Secretariat education team member in the margins of the first case study draft. The evaluators note that these additions cannot be regarded as impact. There is also no commentary to explain why they might be considered as outcomes rather than activities or outputs. The bullets have been included as a courtesy and a reminder to both the evaluation and education team that there needs to be a joint understanding around key evaluation terms such as impact, outcome, output and activities.</p> <p>Impact in terms of youth empowerment is not measured which suggests that the intermediate indicator is set at too high a level (see the section on lessons).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to results in Malta, youth workers and civil servants in Grenada attended a training programme to enhance youth work practice. Grenada has aspirations to be a regional leader in youth work. The training programme was conducted by CHEC4YW/the Secretariat at the request of Grenada's Ministry of Youth Development, Sports and Culture. It ran as four weekly webinars from 9 July to 14 August 2020. The programme brought together youth workers alongside government officials from Grenada, the Bahamas, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Barbados. See press release under Attachments; M&E report (PMIS). Kate Lewis, Grenada's Minister for Youth Development, said: "Our ministry is pleased to be collaborating with the Commonwealth Secretariat to offer tailored courses for practising youth workers and civil servants. "This training could not have been timelier, as the world embraces the challenges of COVID-19 and also the opportunities that it presents." A Youth Work Training Workshop for the Ministry of Youth, the Bahamas, was launched on 2 September 2020. It ran throughout September and addressed these themes: Leadership and Management; Grief and Trauma; Peace and Conflict Resolution.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A similar workshop for approximately 30 attendees was launched on 4 September 2020 for the Ministry of Youth, Education Sports, Agriculture and Lands of the Cayman Islands. In addition to the themes mentioned above, it looked at issues of Health, Safety and Wellbeing. • The three workshops were held at the specific request of the line ministries and in collaboration with the UK's National Youth Agency (NYA), who facilitated the webinars. About 146 participants received training (approx. 75% female; 25% male). If training through the Council of Europe MOOC is taken into account, over 300 participants from across the Commonwealth received training. • On 5 November 2020, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the UK National Youth Agency (NYA) held the first virtual knowledge café in celebration of Youth Work Week 2020. The theme was 'making youth work fit for the challenges of the next decade'. The purpose of the session was to informally share knowledge, practices and ideas with like-minded individuals. Participants were mainly from Grenada, Sri Lanka, the Cayman Islands and Saint Lucia. • Responding to poll questions, all participants would like more virtual knowledge cafés, with the majority requesting one session per month. 100% said it would be useful to have a Commonwealth Youth Work Virtual Community of Practice and 100% confirmed they would contribute towards building that by sharing knowledge and would like to join. Further knowledge cafés will be explored in response to the positive feedback. <p>3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes: strengthening Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is too soon to measure higher-level results from the EMES. If EMES is refined and states are encouraged to adopt the approach, then there is a strong likelihood that it will aid both management and decision-making in ways that could reduce disparities and improve education outcomes. • A monitoring and evaluation mechanism will be required in the next strategic plan to track higher-level results from the EMES.
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>Which aspects of the Secretariat's interventions are likely to have an enduring impact?</p>	<p>3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat interviewees say that with more creativity and strategic thought to respond to changing dynamics such as the pandemic CAYWA could contribute effectively to the sustainability of professionalised youth work, including for small states through its technical assistance. • There is consensus that CAYWA needs to put in place a sustainability strategy. <p>3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes: strengthening Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EMES initiative will only be sustainable if the Secretariat can secure continued buy-in and action on the part of small states to adapt and implement the tool in their contexts. For this to happen, the Secretariat needs a clear sustainability strategy and plan of action to secure commitment.

Case Study Country

Malta

What have been the main interventions/programmes implemented by the Secretariat?

- 3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme
- Young people are reached indirectly through the Secretariat's interventions on the professionalisation of youth work across the Commonwealth as well as other related initiatives. Malta, as a small state, is an important partner for the Secretariat as they are considered to be a global leader in youth outreach and engagement. They are well-positioned to host events; showcase policies, practices, approaches, and tools; and provide technical advice to other small states. Key interventions are:
- The Third Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work held in Malta 7 – 9 November 2018 which was entitled 'Steering a Course for Youth Work as a Growth Profession in the Commonwealth and in Europe'. It was organised as a collaboration between the CAYWA and the Maltese Ministry of Youth with Secretariat support.
 - A baseline survey study was conducted in 2017 entitled Youth Work in the Commonwealth: A Growth Profession. It provides a comprehensive analysis of youth work in 35 member countries and important insights into the challenges and opportunities for youth work and youth development with a specific focus on the professionalisation of youth work. It also provides indicators/benchmarks against which progress is measured for all Commonwealth countries, including in the areas of youth policies and youth ministries, the promotion of youth work in legislation and/or a Youth Work Act in recognition of what youth work can achieve concerning young people, and diplomas/degrees and higher professional youth worker qualifications.
 - CAYWA was formally launched during the Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work in South Africa in March 2016. CAYWA represents youth worker organisations in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Americas, Europe, and the Pacific. It aims to raise the standard and status of youth work by connecting, strengthening, and championing the professionalisation of youth work, acting as a resource throughout the Commonwealth, and empowering young people. CAYWA is effectively networking with national youth work associations across the Commonwealth and provides country-level support for developing youth work qualifications and accreditation.
 - The Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium for Youth Work (CHEC4YW) led by the Secretariat was formally launched in 2017 as an association of Higher Education Institutions in the Commonwealth, which aims to support the education and training of youth workers, and contribute to strengthening youth work policy and practice.
- 3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes: strengthening Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) practices
- The main intervention is the development and testing of an approach to improve the management, governance, and delivery of education systems in Commonwealth countries, including small states. This is a Pan-Commonwealth initiative where Malta has taken the lead role in designing and piloting the EMES toolkit. The toolkit supports ministry officials to manage their education systems to support 12 years of free, quality education to all girls and boys across the Commonwealth. It provides a high-level dashboard of education indicators to inform ministers and civil servants of where they need to invest at a national level and report against Sustainable Development Goal 4 (inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all). The tool includes evidence-informed indicators that are most likely to relate to push factors that can impact equitable access to quality education (learning outcomes, efficiency, teachers, students, employability, and financial considerations). It allows for analysis of current performance, including challenges and opportunities, which in turn provides the information for decision-making. If implemented by a critical mass of Commonwealth states it would also allow for lesson-sharing.

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The process of developing this approach began with stating the need for EMES and securing commitment (the Nadi Declaration and Action Plan at the Commonwealth Education Ministers 20th Conference in Fiji, 2018). This was followed by technical working group meetings between the Commonwealth Accelerated Development Mechanism for Education and the Secretariat and international partner organisations. Once the EMES toolkit was developed, Malta hosted a working group of representatives which included Kenya, Jamaica (which is also a small state), and three partner organisations (the Association of Commonwealth Universities, Education International, and the Caribbean Community) to adapt the toolkit to other contexts.

What significant results have been achieved or are likely to be achieved by Secretariat interventions? Have any of these been unintended?

3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme

Stakeholders indicate three important results:

- The refinement / and cross-fertilisation of ideas among all states on how to take forward the professionalisation of youth work in terms of policy, legislation, and action (outcome). This came from the conference hosted in Malta. One Maltese stakeholder said: *'Small states are quite isolated so [the conference] was really important for them. Malta is part of Europe, but other small states only have the Commonwealth to generate a sense of community and shared problems. The conference offered solutions by pooling insights and expertise.'* The evaluation sought views from Jamaica on the value of the conference, but staff involved had moved on and institutional knowledge was missing.
 - CAYWA's strengthened role in driving the youth worker professionalisation agenda. Their membership has increased from 15 to 25 and now includes Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago (in progress), Solomon Islands, Namibia, Malta, Bahamas, and Grenada. The Chair of CAYWA says small states (and all states) can call on CAYWA for assistance to professionalise youth work through accredited degree courses. However, the Secretariat sees CAYWA's role differently. They believe it should work with countries to strengthen national youth worker associations. CAYWA provides access to resources, the evidence base on youth work, funding and support for emerging country youth associations, and funding for convening. No information was available on which small states have been directly supported by CAYWA (outputs that could lead to country-level outcomes).
 - Continued engagement by small states on the professionalisation of youth work can be seen as further outputs leading to potential country-level outcomes. After the 2018 conference, stakeholders from the Maltese Ministry of Youth provided demand-led capacity strengthening support to Mauritius at a capacity development workshop organised and led by the Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium for Youth Work; and to Saint Lucia to develop youth worker curricula (inputs leading to outcomes).
- The baseline study (2017) has yet to be updated so it is not possible to assess higher-level results. The pathway from the professionalisation of youth work and empowered youth needs to be more clearly expressed. While all stakeholders interviewed agree progress is being made there is a widely expressed view that the Secretariat and CAYWA could play a greater role in ensuring momentum and follow-up with a focus on knowledge-sharing and networking to connect small states to technical assistance and funds.

3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes: strengthening Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) practices

- The key result is Malta's lead role in the initial development of the EMES toolkit which enables ministry officials across the Commonwealth to manage their education systems effectively so that they deliver 12 years of free and quality education to all boys and girls; the adaptation of the EMES toolkit to other contexts by Jamaica, Kenya, and other stakeholders; and the piloting of the toolkit in Malta and Jamaica (June 2021).
- A stakeholder from the Ministry of Education in Malta testifies to the importance of the EMES: *'The value added of EMES is that it takes into consideration different contexts in ways that other tools do not. It helps countries take stock of their own individual contexts ... it helps them improve. EMES does not apportion blame. It recognises that all states start at different points. EMES has learnt from other standardised tools and it has built on best practices. It helps ministers acknowledge that whatever the situation is, the correct approach is one of continuous improvement.'*

Case Study Country	Malta
<p>What approaches are most likely to contribute to significant results?</p>	
<p>3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme</p> <p>The three key approaches that contribute to results are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convening and knowledge-sharing through, for example, successive conferences that bring states together to share experiences, including the 2016 and 2018 conferences. The 2016 conference gave birth to CAYWA while the 2018 conference showcased a wide range of approaches to youth work professionalisation from different contexts. As indicated, convening is an important approach that provides opportunities for learning, networking, idea development, and, most importantly, motivation to act. • Institutionalising networked youth associations through CAYWA: The establishment of CAYWA and its ongoing role in assisting national youth worker associations where there are universities with degree courses is critical in maintaining momentum, establishing vibrant networks, and channelling essential resources and expertise. Stakeholders believe these aspects need further strengthening to be effective. • Monitoring and evaluation approaches are also critical. The 2017 baseline survey is an excellent contribution from the Secretariat's work to encourage states, including small states, to put in place policies, funding, and action to promote youth as it provides transparency on where work needs to be done. Progress against its benchmarks needs to be updated annually and disseminated to leverage its utility both as a monitoring and motivational tool. <p>3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes: strengthening Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) practices</p> <p>Approaches that contribute towards results include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convening to elicit buy-in/ownership (Nadi Declaration and Action Plan). • The leadership and technical partnership with Malta and other stakeholders to develop, contextualise, and pilot the approach in other states (Jamaica). • Less visible at present are the following approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Gender mainstreaming, although it is highly likely that the EMES does involve gender-disaggregated data and analysis; and ◦ The Secretariat scale-up plan of action to facilitate the uptake of the EMES by Commonwealth countries. <p>One interviewee noted: <i>'Member states cannot be left on their own. They need support; they need a reference point, and they need a coordination structure'. The risk is that the Secretariat churns out excellent approaches and tools without ensuring uptake and an assessment of results.</i></p>	

Case Study Country	Malta
Which results are likely to be sustainable?	
<p>3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malta's professionalisation of youth work is likely to endure for the foreseeable future. • Jamaican stakeholders felt that sustainability needs to be better defined. They felt a need for a more explicit approach to sustainability with links to resilience, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. • It is not clear whether CAYWA has responsibility for reporting progress on the 2017 baseline benchmarks/indicators. • Secretariat staff say that the mechanism that supports sustainability for the professionalisation of youth work is solid, institutionalised national youth associations because they play a role in advocating in-country for policy change. CAYWA has a key role to play in strengthening the national youth workers associations. At present, there is a general feeling amongst stakeholders that CAYWA needs to do more to sustain the momentum gained from the conference in Malta. • According to interviewees, CAYWA itself is not sustainable without support and investment. Interviewees also note that further investment on the part of the Secretariat would help CAYWA improve its capacity. CAYWA interviewees believe that once it reaches a certain size CAYWA can apply for funding from other sources. 3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes: strengthening Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) practices <p>The EMES initiative will only be sustainable if the Secretariat can secure continued buy-in and action on the part of small states to adapt and implement the tool in their contexts. For this to happen, the Secretariat needs a clear sustainability strategy and plan of action to secure commitment.</p>	
How well have Secretariat interventions been aligned with the efforts of other stakeholders working on issues related to the strategic outcome areas in focus?	
<p>3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat asserts that it is the only institution working on the professionalisation of youth work across the Commonwealth as a whole. • At the same time, the Council of Europe's efforts in this area are relevant for Malta and Cyprus. Malta capitalises on lessons from its engagement with the Council of Europe and applies learning to practice. 3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes: strengthening Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) practices <p>The initiative to develop a Pan-Commonwealth EMES is well aligned with SDG 4 (inclusive education) as indicated above. It has also built on other initiatives to standardise education management approaches, most notably from the European Union. The development of the toolkit has also involved the Association of Commonwealth Universities, Education International, and the Caribbean Community. However, this evaluation was not able to triangulate this evidence through interviews.</p>	

Case Study Country

Malta

Have Secretariat interventions contributed to an increase in the resilience (social, environmental, public governance and economic) of the focus country? If so, how? Have there been any other significant impacts?

- 3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme
- Maltese stakeholders see their work on youth and the professionalisation of youth work as part of a wider strategy to promote resilience. Investing in those who teach and engage with young people is seen as a key pathway to strengthening country resilience. Malta sees the ability of young people to adapt to change (e.g., brought about by COVID-19 and/or climate change) as a key measure of resilience. Maltese stakeholders assert that they are a resilient small state.
 - Jamaican stakeholders said that 'learning from each other' during Secretariat conferences contributes to building resilience in both the youth and education sectors. They say that this is why the Jamaican government allocates resources ('huge support') to be part of Commonwealth activities.
- 3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes: strengthening Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) practices
- Initiatives that build the capacity of states to manage their education systems more effectively build resilience. The EMES system promotes 12 years of free education for all which in turn promotes inclusion and ensures that those who cannot afford to pay to receive a quality education. The Maltese Permanent Secretary for Education suggests that resilience is supported when states move away from a one-size-fits-all approach to education management as that approach tends to favour academic workstreams rather than a more balanced approach that also adds value to vocational careers. A more inclusive approach to education maximises opportunities for youth employment and resilience.

What lessons should inform the next Secretariat Strategic Plan or future programming?

- 3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme
- The monitoring and evaluation approach for capturing results around 3.1 could be usefully revisited. The pathway to change from professionalised youth workers to 'empowered youth' (intermediate outcome) needs to be clearer. The Secretariat could usefully consider whether the intermediate outcome is set at too high a level. What are the assumptions being made about the pathway to change?
 - Strengthen CAYWA and consolidate its role. Stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation concur that CAYWA requires further investment to grow its membership, attract outside funding, provide access to tools and resources, and extend its technical support to states, including small states, for the professionalisation of youth worker degrees and other courses.
 - Allocate more resources to support Secretariat communications, planning, organising, and follow-up around youth interventions that involve all states, including small states. This recommendation was flagged by stakeholders for the next strategic planning period.
 - Less didactic and more participatory approaches are desired. Some interviewees noted the importance of working in ways that engenders the confidence, leadership, and decision-making abilities of small states so that they are empowered to engage and act for themselves. The emphasis needs to shift away 'ready-made documents that require comments only' towards more inclusive processes of joint drafting. These may be time-consuming but ultimately produce more sustainable capacity.

Case Study Country		Malta
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next strategic plan could make its intentions for gender mainstreaming across all initiatives for youth more visible. Those working on this agenda need to understand why youth matters for gender equality (e.g., changing social norms that discriminate against women and girls). There are also important opportunities to reduce gender-based violence through engagement with young men and boys (as champions). One civil society stakeholder called for a greater focus on the management of youth work, namely how it might be financed and managed in small states. <p>3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes: strengthening Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A key priority for the Secretariat in the next strategic plan is to consolidate results around the EMES toolkit by developing a plan of action to facilitate sustainability, i.e., that states adopt the approach, and monitor the results. Secretariat staff interviewed for this evaluation noted that there are plans to develop other toolkits (such as an early childhood education toolkit and a technical and vocational education and training toolkit) that have Pan-Commonwealth relevance. Internally it would be useful for the Secretariat to consider whether it is best placed in embarking on areas of work that others may do better (e.g., UNICEF are better placed to produce materials on early childhood development). Also, there is a risk as Secretariat staff pointed out during the evaluation that embarking on continual new initiatives will not yield outcomes but rather a series of pilots that lack strategies, action plans, and sufficient investment for dissemination and scale-up, including targeted technical assistance in small states for adapting tools to new contexts. The Secretariat would do well to consolidate. 		
List of People Interviewed		
Name	Organisation	Position
3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes: the Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme		
Layne Robinson	Commonwealth Secretariat	Head of Social Policy Development, Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate
Amina Oswan	Commonwealth Secretariat	Advisor, Education, Secretariat Youth Programme.
Christian Mizzi	Maltese Ministry of Youth	Manager of Inclusion, transition and Employment
Miriam Teuma	Maltese Ministry of Youth	Chief Executive Officer
Simon Schembri	Maltese Ministry of Youth	Youth worker
Brian Belton	Independent Consultant	Lead writer Youth Professionalisation Baseline Study; Malta Youth Conference Coordinator
Robyn Broadbent	Chair Person	Commonwealth Association of Youth Worker Alliances (CAYWA)
Jamie Ann Chevannes	Senior Director	Youth and Adolescence, Jamaica
Yanique Williams	Senior Programme Development Specialist	Youth and Adolescence, Jamaica

Case Study	Country	Malta
3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes: strengthening Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) practices		
Nasir Kazmi	Commonwealth Secretariat	Adviser, Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate
Dr Francis Fabri	Malta Ministry of Education	Permanent Secretary
Bibliography		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2015) Commonwealth Secretariat Annual Results Reports for these reporting periods: 2014/15; 2015/16; 2016/17; 2017/18; 2019/20 • Crosscurrents: The Third Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work: Steering a Course for Youth Work as Growth Profession in the Commonwealth and in Europe. • Review of the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP). February 2017. Evaluation Series No 106 • 2019: E NEWS: NAMCOL and The Commonwealth High Education Consortium for Youth Work (CHEC4YW) organise a technical workshop for the delivery of youth work degree in South Africa. • August 2017. Terms of Reference for the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Task Force (YMTF), Kampala, Uganda, 31 July – 4 August 2017. • 2017. Youth Work in the Commonwealth: A Growth Profession. (Baseline Survey) Commonwealth Secretariat. • Effective Management of Education (EMES) Toolkit Working Group Meeting Report. October 2020. EMES Toolkit. Commonwealth Secretariat. 		

A1.3 Country Case Study: Namibia

Case Study Country	Namibia			
Strategic Outcome Area(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Democracy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Institutions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Youth & Soc Dev	<input type="checkbox"/> Small & Vulnerable States
Directorate(s) / Unit(s)	Social Policy Development Section			
Timeframe	2013–2021			
Case Study Lead	Julian Ratcliffe	Date	July 2021	
Introduction	<p>This case study is one of 10 case studies conducted for an independent evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's interventions to support small states (June 2021).</p> <p>The case study has examined five intermediate outcomes under two strategic outcomes:</p> <p>Pillar 2: Public Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved (roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion) • 2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all (review of Namibia's cybercrime and cybersecurity legislation and capacities) <p>Pillar 3: Youth and Social Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes (Namibian College of Open Learning–NAM-COL; Youth Development Work degree, development of the Namibia Youth Development Index) • 3.2: Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies (development of a Sports Development Index) • 3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes (Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop, and monitoring and technical assistance on workshop recommendation implementation) 			

Case Study Country	Namibia
Summary of Findings	
<p>Effectiveness</p> <p>How effectively has the Commonwealth Secretariat delivered support to address the vulnerabilities, public governance and development challenges of its small member countries?</p>	<p>2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of delivery, the Secretariat has been partially effective in providing demand-led support to the Ombudsman of Namibia for two roundtables with multiple stakeholders on human rights, specifically, sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion. Outcomes are unclear. In 2021, the Namibian justice minister indicated government consideration for reversing its ban on sexual relations between men (outcome). If there is an outcome, it is not clear if the Secretariat will have contributed as there are also legal cases pertaining to same-sex marriages in the High Court which may spur policy change independently. <p>2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the output level, the Secretariat has effectively delivered support to the Namibian government to review cybercrime and cybersecurity legislation in the country. While new regulations and legislation have not yet been introduced (as there is currently no specific cybersecurity legislation in place), reforms and new strategies are being actively considered and reviewed. Should those changes come into effect, the Secretariat will have directly contributed to outcome-level results and will be on the pathway to impact (a reduction in cybercrime). <p>3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes, and 3.2: Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat's support for the professionalisation of youth work has led to the institutionalisation of a degree course in Youth Development Work through the Namibian College of Open Learning. This is likely to improve the quality of youth services in the country (an outcome leading to impact, namely youth empowerment). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat provided effective support to the Namibian Ministry of Youth and Sport to implement the data gathering and analysis techniques necessary for the Youth Development Index. Building on the success of that intervention, the ministry requested support to implement a Sport Development Index. This is a tangible step towards a higher-level result. If implemented successfully the Sport Development Index will allow Namibia to gauge how sport contributes to national development objectives (such as through employment in the sector and by empowering people and communities). <p>3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat was effective in the delivery and convening of a technical workshop hosted in 2019 in Gaborone, Botswana on the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework. This led to collaboration between Southern African Development Community member countries on education policy and a review of Namibian education policies and national priority areas (such as school electrification and the provision of IT resources) (output). The African Development Bank (AfDB) awarded a loan to Namibia for school infrastructure maintenance and to cover the cost of the Education and Training Quality Improvement Project once they had been identified as priority areas with the Secretariat's assistance (output). These are positive steps towards outcome-level results i.e., revised education policies in Namibia that will reduce disparities.

Case Study Country	Namibia
<p>Coherence/Alignment</p> <p>How well do the Secretariat's small states interventions and supporting Secretariat overarching Secretariat strategic intent; and with the actions of other institutions targeting small states as key beneficiaries?</p>	<p>Each Secretariat initiative in Namibia aligns with national priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, there is little coherence between initiatives as there would otherwise be if implemented per an overarching country-level strategic plan. This stands as a missed opportunity to leverage synergies and improve the effectiveness of the overall package of Secretariat support to Namibia.</p> <p>2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion do not have other external stakeholders working with Namibia on the issue of LGBTQA+ rights. This means that the Secretariat fills an important gap in donor support. <p>2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat's technical assistance work with Namibia on cybersecurity and cybercrime aligns closely with Namibia's national priorities since Namibia currently does not have specific cybercrime legislation and, according to a scoping report on the issue, has rudimentary capacities at present. Given the growing urgency of the threat posed by cybercriminals, The Secretariat's activities on the issue cohere with a broader national strategy. Moreover, Namibia's long-term Vision 2030 strategy, which aims for increased industrialisation, necessitates improved cybersecurity capacities. <p>2.1 and 2.2 Alignment with SDGs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inputs and potential outcomes in Namibia also support SDGs 10 and 16 (reduced inequalities; and peace, justice, and strong institutions) and, nestled under these goals, targets 10.2 and 10.3, which promote economic, political, and social inclusion for all and the elimination of discriminatory policies, and 16.3, which emphasises the promotion of the 'rule of law' at national and international levels. <p>3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes, and 3.2: Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat interventions in Namibia closely align its strategic objectives. The Youth Development Index, Sports Development Index, and the Namibian College of Open Learning bachelor's degree in Youth Development Work all variously contribute to youth empowerment, sport's role in development, and the sustainability of the education system. The pathway to change, however, could be better articulated from output to outcome and impact levels.

Case Study Country	Namibia
	<p>3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes</p> <p>Activities related to the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework have closely aligned with existing government objectives and initiatives, such as the ongoing review of Namibia's education policy. Externally, that the AfDB loan application for school infrastructure maintenance and to cover the cost of the Education and Training Quality Improvement Project was successful and indicates coherence with the objectives of larger multilateral organisations operating in the space (in this case the AfDB).</p> <p>3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 Alignment with SDGs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat activities in Namibia under SO3: Youth and Social Development closely align with SDG 4 which relates to ensuring inclusive and quality education for all. Many of the targets falling under SDG 4 relating to literacy, gender parity in education, equitable access to education, the professionalisation of youth services, teacher training, and more are all related to the Secretariat's work on the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework. Youth Development Work degree provided through the Namibian College of Open Learning, and technical assistance to facilitate inter-country learning and access to finance through institutions such as the AfDB.
<p>Impact</p> <p>To what extent has the Commonwealth Secretariat's support delivered to longer-term/high-level social, environmental, public governance and economic changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended)?</p>	<p>2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is too soon to tell if the Secretariat's interventions relating to human rights have achieved impact in Namibia. The roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion were successful at bringing together stakeholders to discuss a topic perceived to be contentious. If the resulting recommendations are taken up by the government, then an impact may be expected. The Namibian justice minister indicated in May 2021 that the government was considering dropping the ban on sexual relations between men. <p>2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Namibian government has not yet changed its cybersecurity or cybercrimes policies (outcome). However, the Namibian government is actively reviewing existing capacities with a view to introducing specific legislation and cybercrime strategies in the future. Any impact will only be able to be measured if/when this policy change takes place. <p>3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes, and 3.2: Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For strategic outcome 3.1 and specifically the Secretariat's intervention that supports the professionalisation of youth work, there is a strong likelihood of impact as a result of the Secretariat's work, i.e., young people engaged and empowered. This is likely to stem from the institutionalisation of the degree course in Youth Development Work, but the pathway to change needs to be articulated as do the methods for measuring such impact. • The Youth Development Work degree provided through the Namibian College of Open Learning is likely to result in a long-term professionalisation of the youth sector and thus improve the quality of youth work accessible to young people in Namibia, the Youth Development Index will enable the government of Namibia to be more responsive to the needs of the country's youth as it provides extensive data on youth-related development indicators. <p>3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop led to a review of outdated education policies and school modernisation plans which is also likely to achieve impact in the future.

Case Study Country	Namibia
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>Which aspects of the Secretariat's interventions are likely to have an enduring impact?</p>	<p>2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion were intended to be sustainable through the Ombudsman's recommendations being taken forward by the government. However, Secretariat staff reported that this does not appear to have occurred as of July 2021 due to a lack of political will. While responsibility lies with the government to enact policies, the Secretariat has no plan of action to nudge progress towards sustainability. <p>2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Namibia's review of cybercrime and cybersecurity programmes is likely to be sustainable if the reforms are implemented as planned as they will be included in the country's statute books. However, responsibility for ensuring that the new laws/reforms are enforced lies with the government of Namibia. <p>3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes, and 3.2: Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Namibian College of Open Learning degree in Youth Development Work is a sustainable outcome since, being a blended learning degree, it incurs comparatively low implementation costs and high flexibility. In future, the impact of the course on youth empowerment needs to be measured both in terms of graduates getting employment in the sector and young people benefiting from graduates' work. • In the case of the Youth Development Index and Sports Development Index, sustainability will be achieved so long as institutional memory remains and the indices remain useful. <p>3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sustainability of the Secretariat's support to Namibia on the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework is strong. It is supported by clear buy-in from the government of Namibia (evidenced by initiatives for school electrification and policy reform) and strengthened capacities as a result of workshops, training, TA, etc.

Case Study Country

Namibia

What have been the main interventions/programmes implemented by the Secretariat?

In Namibia, the Secretariat has implemented a range of initiatives across five intermediate outcome areas.

- 2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
 - National consultations on sexual and reproductive health, and sexual orientation and social inclusion: This is part of the Secretariat's interventions on human rights in Namibia. At the request of the Ombudsman of Namibia, the Secretariat helped facilitate two roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion in 2019 with a variety of national stakeholders, including the First Lady Monica Geingos, religious leaders, LGBTQIA+ groups, and academics. The objective was to review the state of legislation relating to the issues and solicit views from various stakeholder groups to inform recommendations that would be submitted by the Ombudsman to the government.
 - 2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all
 - Review of Cybercrime and Cybersecurity legislation: The Secretariat has supported Namibia with demand-driven technical assistance on a review of their cybercrime and cybersecurity capacities and legislation. The review process is currently ongoing, but an initial scoping report found that Namibia did not have specific cybersecurity legislation and that its existing capacities and programmes were rudimentary. The Secretariat is thus supporting Namibia to improve in this regard as part of its long-term strategic Vision 2030 plan.
 - 3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes, and 3.2: Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies
 - Namibian College of Open Learning Degree in Youth Development Work: Since 2018, the Secretariat through the Commonwealth Higher Education Consortium for Youth Work (CHEC4YW), the University of the West Indies and other partners including the Youth Agency, Malta, has provided resources and technical assistance to run a blended learning degree in Youth Development Work at no cost to the Namibian College of Open Learning; facilitated the development of an action plan to implement the degree and related courses; and conducted several capacity-building workshops (both face to face and virtual) attended by lecturers, officials from the Ministry of Youth and Sport, and quality assurance practitioners. These are outcomes of the Secretariat's youth work professionalisation programme.
 - Youth Development Index: Since 2019, the Secretariat has provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Youth and Sport and Namibian Statistics Agency to collect, analyse, and leverage gender-disaggregated, youth-specific data to track the progress of youth development against SDGs.
 - Sport Development Index: On the back of the development of the Youth Development Index, the Secretariat is currently setting up a Sports Development Index at the request of the Ministry of Youth and Sport. The inception phase has just concluded, so details of implementation and results are not yet apparent.
- 3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes
 - Commonwealth Education Policy Framework: The Secretariat arranged a two-day workshop in Gaborone, Botswana in June 2019 at which the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework was rolled out to Southern African Development Community member states, including Namibia. The Secretariat followed this up by hiring three consultants to monitor and provide Technical Assistance for the implementation of the framework in the 10 Southern African Development Community Commonwealth member states.

Case Study Country	Namibia
<p>What significant results have been achieved or are likely to be achieved by Secretariat interventions? Have any of these been unintended?</p>	<p>There are indications of higher-level results (outcomes) in these areas.</p> <p>2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the case of the national consultations on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion, there are no clear results yet. According to Secretariat staff, the Ombudsman produced reports with recommendations for the government for consideration but no action has been taken yet. <p>2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all</p> <p>The Secretariat's support to Namibia to review and develop the country's cybercrime and cybersecurity legislation and capacities is still in the process but results are expected.</p> <p>3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Secretariat staff, the Youth Development Work degree provided through the Namibian College of Open Learning has successfully institutionalised a professionalisation process for the sector. While the long-term impacts of the Youth Development Work degree provided through the Namibian College of Open Learning will only be seen in the years to come, the Secretariat has provided ongoing support to the programme through training sessions and workshops which have yielded good results at outcome level. The Secretariat hosted a workshop in May 2019 for lecturers delivering the degree. A survey of attendees indicated that 90% of the lecturers felt better able to effectively deliver the course in the future. <p>3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes</p> <p>According to stakeholder interviews, Namibia identified three points for further action as a result of the workshop: 1) investigating the feasibility of free tertiary education, 2) developing a flexible IT-based curriculum, and 3) managing and maintaining physical infrastructure. To achieve 2), Namibia is pursuing a programme of school electrification and rolling out IT resources to schools. To achieve 3), Namibia secured a loan from the AfDB for repairs to damaged school buildings (and to cover the cost of the Education and Training Quality Improvement Project). The ground was fertile for these positive outcomes because of an underlying commitment by Namibia to transform its education system. The Secretariat, therefore, contributed to these outcomes.</p> <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results are difficult to determine concerning some of the interventions listed above as it is still too early in the project cycle for effective results capture. The support provided to Namibia to establish the Sports Development Index (3.2), for instance, has only just finished its inception phase so it is too early for results to have emerged. Similarly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, progress on supporting the implementation and roll-out of the Youth Development Index (3.1) has slowed significantly as the consultant hired by the Secretariat has not been able to work in the field to collect the data which would inform the framework for the baseline study.

Case Study Country

Namibia

What approaches are most likely to contribute to significant results?

The primary approaches that the Secretariat has used to provide support to Namibia have been through technical assistance and capacity-building. These approaches have set initiatives up for outcome and impact level results well because many of the Secretariat's interventions in Namibia require close, specialist expertise.

2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved

- Secretariat advocacy on sexual orientation and social inclusion has not yet yielded results due to a lack of political will. The role of civil society in changing public and political attitudes and policy may be equally important in years to come, meaning that direct support to civil society groups may also be required in the future.

2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all

- Technical assistance to Namibia for the Secretariat to review cybercrime and cybersecurity legislation and regulations is likely to lead to results. The initial scoping report highlighted a need for legislation on cybercrime and cybersecurity and capacity strengthening. The Secretariat is thus continuing to provide assistance.

3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes, and 3.2: Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies

- The provision of the Youth Development Work degree through the Namibian College of Open Learning utilises a very effective and relatively unique approach. Course materials and facilitation resources are provided by the University of the West Indies and the Commonwealth of Learning, meaning that the Namibian College of Open Learning incurs only a very low cost for administering the degree. Since it is an online course, the University of the West Indies and the Commonwealth of Learning incur very low costs too. This arrangement is facilitated by the Secretariat (through ongoing training sessions and TA, and its convening power). The low-cost, online approach has led directly to the degree's sustainability and scalability.

- The Secretariat provided TA (technical assistance) through an external consultant to the Namibian government to implement the Youth Development Index by providing capacity-building support on data gathering and analysis techniques. On the back of this success, the Ministry of Youth and Sport requested that the Secretariat provide TA support to establish the Sport Development Index (which is now just entering the project's implementation phase).

3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes

- Convening and technical assistance are the two main approaches that are likely to lead to results. The Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop hosted in Gaborone, Botswana helped the Namibian government to identify priority areas (e.g., the feasibility of free tertiary education and addressing gaps in school electrification and IT resources, a need all the more pressing during COVID-19 enforced remote schooling). The primary benefit of this approach was to encourage Namibian government officials to reflect and review the work they had done and to identify new action points. The external consultant monitored the implementation of the workshop's recommendations and facilitate learning between Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa. It was reported that additional monitoring and technical assistance provided by the consultant would have been more effective if they were able to focus on a single country more deeply than on several countries more superficially.

Case Study Country

Namibia

Mainstreaming gender

- It is not clear if gender has been systematically mainstreamed. The roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion conducted at the request of the Ombudsman of Namibia in 2019 indicate that there is an appetite in government to pursue gender and social inclusion (GESI) related objectives and reforms, but, as above, alternative approaches may be required to be effective.

It was reported by Secretariat staff that a more effective use of its resources might be to pursue “deeper” interventions in a few countries rather than lighter touch interventions in many countries. In the case of the implementation of the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework, this would mean hiring consultants to support, follow-up, and monitor the implementation of the framework in two or three rather than 10 countries. The challenge of such an approach would be to ensure equity between Commonwealth member states.

Which results are likely to be sustainable?

2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN’s UPR process improved

- It is too early to say whether Namibia will reform its ban on sexual relations between men, but in May 2021 the justice minister did indicate that the government was considering lifting the ban.

2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all

- The Secretariat’s support to review and develop Namibia’s cybersecurity and cybercrime legislation and capacity is likely to, be sustainable in the long-term because there is strong buy-in with an emphasis on drafting policies, strategies, and regulations, and on building capacity.

3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes, and 3.2: Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies

- The remote learning degree in Youth Development Work provided by the Namibian College of Open Learning is sustainable for as long as the UWI continues to provide the online resources for the course. The training and capacity-building support provided by the Secretariat to the Ministry of Youth and Sport to implement the required data gathering and analysis techniques for the Youth Development Index and Sports Development Index is likely to be sustainable since it builds institutional capacity.

3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes

- The results of the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop are likely to be sustainable because the government is invested in further actions such as a review of outdated education policies, securing funding for the roll-out of IT resources and school electrification, and securing financing from the AfDB for school infrastructure maintenance.

Case Study Country

Namibia

How well have the Secretariat's interventions been aligned with the efforts of other stakeholders working on issues related to the strategic outcome areas in focus?

- 2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
- The roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion partially align with Namibian national priorities and a broader human rights agenda which is championed by the UN. CSOs, advocacy groups, religious organisations, and beneficiaries were consulted to generate buy-in.
- The support provided to Namibia aligns with SDGs 10 and 16 (reduced inequalities; and peace, justice, and strong institutions respectively), with the priorities of relevant stakeholder groups such as the LGBT QIA+ community in the country, and with the arrangements of neighbouring countries such as South Africa (which is the only African country to have legalised same-sex marriage).
- 2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all
- The Secretariat's support to Namibia on cybercrime and cybersecurity closely aligns with Namibian national priorities and a more general requirement for appropriate legislation and capacities to counter cybercrime given its ever-increasing sophistication and incidence rate, including against state institutions. Namibia's Vision 2030 strategic plan envisages increased industrialisation in the country, meaning that improved cybersecurity capacities and regulations are necessary.
- 3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes, and 3.2: Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies
- The Youth Development Work degree administered through the Namibian College of Open Learning aligns with the Secretariat-wide intention to professionalise youth work and improve the quality of youth work among member countries. Other Commonwealth countries such as Bangladesh, Botswana, Ghana, Malaysia, Mauritius, Malawi, Malta, Sri Lanka, South Africa, and Uganda have also worked with the Secretariat to improve the standard of youth work, indicating that the Secretariat's activities in Namibia cohere with its wider scheme of work.
- The Youth Development Work degree also aligns with other activities and initiatives in the country such as the ongoing review of education policy and the Namibian government's implementation of the Education and Training Quality Improvement Project.
- The Youth Development Index aligns with the Secretariat's objective for young people to meaningfully participate in political and development processes.
- The Sports Development Index closely aligns with government plans to increase its focus on sport for development through increased employment in the sector, improved peace and stability via community participation, and individual empowerment.

Case Study Country

Namibia

3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes

- The Namibian government was already in the process of reviewing its education policies, so the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop hosted in Gaborone aligned with existing government objectives and helped to strengthen processes that were already underway.
- The Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop brought together representatives from 10 Southern African Development Community countries and encouraged the sharing of lessons and collaboration going forwards. In particular, the workshop made countries aware of what their neighbours were doing in education. Namibia, for instance, was made aware of the introduction of free tertiary education in Seychelles as a result of the workshop and began considering that as a long-term strategic objective (even though it is recognised that the Namibian higher-education sector does not currently have the capacity to implement or cope with such a policy). It was also noted that Southern African Development Community countries supported each other in the development and execution of education policy and reforms.
- Secretariat support on implementing the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop recommendations also helped Namibia to secure a loan from the AfDB to maintain school infrastructure and to cover the cost of the Education and Training Quality Improvement Project. This exhibits the Secretariat's ability to leverage their TA and capacity-building expertise to attract finance from other aligned stakeholders, thereby improving the sustainability prospects.

Have Secretariat interventions contributed to an increase in the resilience (social, environmental, public governance, and economic) of the focus country? If so, how? Have there been any other significant impacts?

It is too early to tell if the Secretariat's activities have increased the resilience of the country along social, environmental, governance, or economic lines. However, the initiatives the Secretariat has implemented in Namibia are highly likely to do so in the future.

2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved

- The roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion have not yet contributed to national social resilience as no policies have been changed so far as a result of them.

2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all

- The Secretariat's support to Namibia to review and develop cybercrime and cybersecurity legislation and capacity is ongoing and thus has not impacted the resilience of the country yet, but it is likely to do so in the future by increasing the country's ability to respond to cyber threats.

Case Study Country

Namibia

3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes, and 3.2: Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies

- The Youth Development Work degree provided through the Namibian College of Open Learning is likely to improve Namibia's social resilience by contributing to the professionalisation of the youth work sector and raising the quality of youth services, but it is too early to determine if it has done so.
- The Youth Development Index and the Sports Development Index seek to improve Namibia's social and economic resilience by providing the government with the data to be able to respond to the specific development needs of young people in the country and to build community cohesion, thereby improving the country's social resilience. It is, however, too soon to tell if these initiatives will be successful in achieving these impact-level results.
- 3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes
- The Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop and consequent monitoring support and technical assistance are likely to improve the country's social and environmental resilience.

What lessons should inform the next Secretariat Strategic Plan or future programming?

From the case study as a whole, we propose including the following lessons for the next strategic plan:

1. Depth, not breadth: There is some internal recognition that the Secretariat's resources could be better utilised by providing more intensive support to fewer countries rather than comparatively more superficial support to many countries. In the case of the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop, a more effective approach would be to engage an external consultant to monitor and provide technical assistance to a single country rather than three: Botswana, South Africa, and Namibia.
2. Ensuring that interventions align with an overarching national strategy would enable the Secretariat to better leverage their resources and create synergies across programmes. While the individual initiatives and interventions implemented in Namibia have all been effective, aligned well with national and Secretariat priorities, and are likely to lead to good results at the outcome-level, there is a lack of coherence between interventions.
3. The Secretariat convening power leads to actual results: There is strong evidence (triangulated across other case studies) to suggest that the Secretariat's convening power is effective and leads to significant value-added for small states in particular.
4. Advocacy efforts to change policies require follow up: This is illustrated by the intervention to promote human rights and change policies criminalising same sex marriages.
5. Systematic monitoring, evaluation, and learning required: Monitoring, evaluation, and learning is challenging, particularly capturing results from demand-led technical assistance. Further investment and capacity-building are required in this area to systematically track outcome-level results so that the good work the Secretariat does can be showcased to its members, other stakeholders, and beneficiaries. At the programme level, reporting is often not disaggregated by country, meaning that country-level performance can only be judged anecdotally.

Case Study Country	Namibia		
List of People Interviewed			
Name	Organisation		Position
2: Public Institutions			
Tawanda Hondora	Commonwealth Secretariat		Adviser and Head, Rule of Law Section
Gary Rhoda	Commonwealth Secretariat		Human Rights Officer
3: Youth and Social Development			
Anahita Alexander-Sefre	Commonwealth Secretariat		Education Programme Assistant
Annah Malosiwa	University of Botswana		Associate Professor, Department of Languages & Social Sciences Education
Layne Robinson	Commonwealth Secretariat		Head, Social Policy Development Section
Nasir Kazmi	Commonwealth Secretariat		Adviser, Education
Saurabh Mushra	Commonwealth Secretariat		Assistant Programmes Officer, Sport for Development & Peace
Caroline Brooks	Commonwealth Secretariat		Sport and the SDGs Project Officer
Bibliography			
2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved			
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2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all			
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Case Study Country

Namibia

- 3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes
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- 3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes
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A1.4 Country Case Study: Seychelles

Case Study Country		Seychelles			
Strategic Outcome Area(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Democracy	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Institutions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Youth & Soc Dev	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eco Dev	<input type="checkbox"/> Small & Vulnerable States
Directorate(s) / Unit(s)	Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate (VAWG)				
Timeframe	2013–2020				
Case Study Lead	Juliette Seibold	Date	June 2021		
Introduction					
<p>This is one of 10 case studies conducted for an independent evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's interventions to support small states (June 2021). It identifies three intermediate outcomes in Seychelles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Outcome 3: Youth and Social Development. Intermediate Outcome 3.4: Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups are empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices. Seychelles is one of two countries where the Secretariat is piloting a framework/methodology for assessing the economic costs of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). Strategic Outcome 4: Economic Development, Intermediate Outcome 4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth. Strategic Outcome 4: Economic Development, Intermediate Outcome 4.4: Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies with a specific focus on the Blue Economy Roadmap project. 					
Summary of Findings					
Effectiveness	3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices: Economic Costs of VAWG				
How effectively has the Secretariat delivered support to address the vulnerabilities, public governance and development challenges of small states? 1.1 Tangible outcomes; 1.2 project design meeting needs of SS; 1.3 effective approaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat has successfully worked with the government and other stakeholders to test a methodology and framework for assessing the economic costs of VAWG by examining not just direct costs, but also indirect, service, and transfer costs. In just three years and with a small budget, the Secretariat with the Ministry of Family Affairs have secured commitment from key stakeholders including ministers across multiple sectors (education, health, finance etc.) to buy into a practical approach to reduce VAWG, gathered and analysed complex data, and published a ground-breaking study. These outputs contributed to the government enacting the June 2020 Domestic Violence Bill which outlines tougher action against domestic abuse, better protection for victims, and penalties for perpetrators, as well as rehabilitation (outcome). The Family Department in the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Family are now focusing on institutionalising the methodology to build skills in data gathering and analysis (steps towards outcome). 				

Case Study Country	Seychelles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A government spokesperson said: <i>‘[The study] was a major eye opener for our policy and decision-makers. We have high rates of VAWG, but also violence perpetrated by women against men. When we got the results policymakers understood for the first time the costs of violence to the economy. They also understood that the problem couldn’t be tackled by government alone. We need dialogue and engagement with government, the private sector, and civil society.’</i> • Seychelles government stakeholders are, according to the government spokesperson, committed to repeating the study in five years, although it is likely that further support from the Secretariat will be required. • Progress in taking forward the recommendations (raising awareness, changing behaviour, and investing in actions to prevent and support a response) from the study is slower, according to the government spokesperson, than expected due to COVID-19. A media campaign and engagement activities with the private sector and communities needs to be planned. • Seychelles and Lesotho pilots have enabled the Secretariat to develop a facilitator’s guide and training programme so that all other small states can replicate the approach. (Outputs that are likely to lead to outcomes.) <p>4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth; Ports Authority Concession Agreement Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance is ongoing and is likely to be highly effective in ensuring that the terms and conditions of Seychelles engagement with the port development contractor/operator are not disadvantageous as they have been in other localities such as Djibouti and Mombasa, Kenya. • The documentation will be ready for review shortly, but the technical adviser has already provided, according to the Ports Authority interviewee, ‘good pointers’. <p>4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Blue Economy Roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat’s work to support the government of Seychelles with the development of a Blue Economy Roadmap has been effective. The plan has influenced the Seychelles National Development Plan, its narrative, and strategic approach to sustainable development regarding ocean resources (outcome). Seychelles is applauded for meeting its commitment to protect 30% of its 1.37 million square kilometres exclusive economic zone and territorial sea in marine-protected areas ahead of its SDG 14 2020 target (outcome). • The Secretariat mobilised dedicated technical assistance, who provided research and analysis, policy development, capacity strengthening, and awareness-raising (inputs). The project completed 10 out of 16 inputs in Seychelles; a further three inputs were partially delivered and three outputs were not initiated.

Case Study Country	Seychelles
<p>Coherence / Alignment</p> <p>How well do interventions fit within overarching Secretariat strategic intent; and with actions of other institutions targeting SS as beneficiaries?</p>	<p>3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices: Economic Costs of VAWG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with the Secretariat's intermediate outcome 3.4 as stated above. It is also aligned with SDG 5 (Gender Equality), targets 5.2 (eliminate all forms of VAWG in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation) and 5.3 (eliminate all harmful practice); and with the African Union commitments. • Potential alignment for consideration in the next strategic plan: encourage all small (and indeed all Commonwealth countries) to ratify the ILO Convention on Violence in the Workplace as it is strategically related. Also consider links with the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office's What Works to Prevent VAWG programme by disseminating the methodology and approach, the studies produced, and the tools, and showcase the approach in conferences, etc. <p>4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth: Ports Authority Concession Agreement Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The technical support to check the concession agreement between the Terminal Operator and the Ports Authority for the renovation and development of the Port of Victoria is in alignment with the Secretariat's economic strategy, objective 4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth. <p>4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Blue Economy Roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned with the SDGs and with the Secretariat's theory of change short-term outcome: The readiness to explore and support Blue Economy initiatives is enabled by investor-friendly rules, but managed in the country's long-term interests by a 'good governance' legal and fiscal framework. Also aligned with the work of other donors, particularly the World Bank, with efforts to avoid duplication. The Secretariat evaluation notes that national coherence was challenged by a 'patchy understanding of which ministries and stakeholders could be engaged operationally on Blue Economy Roadmap implementation'.

Case Study Country	Seychelles
<p>Impact</p> <p>To what extent has Secretariat support delivered to longer-term/high-level social, environmental and economic challenges (positive or negative, intended or unintended)?</p> <p>How do SS perceive their resilience to have changed over the 2 Strategic Planning periods? How has the Secretariat contributed?</p>	<p>3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices: Economic Costs of VAWG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In June 2020 Seychelles passed the Domestic Violence Act which outlines tougher action on the part of government against domestic abuse, better protection for victims, and penalties for perpetrators, as well as rehabilitation. This will add further impetus to take forward the recommendations for action and investment for targeted interventions in the study. The Secretariat's piloted approach contributed to this outcome. Widened cross-ministerial knowledge of the need for a holistic approach to address VAWG (response and prevention). This has come about through pilot testing the approach, the dissemination of the study, and convening to discuss its implications. Strengthened capacity to gather data to measure the cost of VAWG, although further technical assistance will be required. This stems from the Secretariat's technical assistance. <p>4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth: Ports Authority Concession Agreement Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of the technical assistance to review the concession agreement between the port operator and the Ports Authority is potentially significant, but it is too soon to measure at present. Construction, according to the Ports Authority stakeholder, will begin in 2022 and end in 2026. The new port infrastructure will be climate-resilient and will accommodate a 45 cm rise in sea levels. From an economic perspective, the new port infrastructure will enable Seychelles to diversify its markets to Southern Africa, the Middle East, and East Asia, and towards Europe if the port is efficiently managed. This will bring long-term prosperity to the island and hopefully inclusive economic growth. <p>4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Blue Economy Roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat support has delivered high-level commitment to the Blue Economy concept with key policy/planning documentation to support implementation. It is too soon to tell how Seychelles is performing against Blue Economy indicators or whether the pressures COVID-19 has brought on the economy will weaken the commitment. The Roadmap and the integration of its principles into the country's National Development Strategy 2019–2023 provide some assurances that Blue Economy concepts are understood and there is a commitment to implementation. Seychelles will not want to lose its standing as a global leader.

Case Study Country	Seychelles
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>Which aspects of the interventions are likely to have an enduring impact?</p>	<p>3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices: Economic Costs of VAWG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seychelles is in the process of institutionalising the methodology and approach. The government spokesperson said: <i>'Ministers are aware and involved. The data is a wake-up call. The flow of activities will continue.'</i> This implies that government ownership is a prerequisite for sustainability. • The Secretariat recognises that the Seychelles Ministry of Gender will need further support for a follow-up study and this should be included in the next strategic plan. • This is a strategic intervention for small states. To date, 2 out of 34 small states have piloted the approach. There are plans to scale up to all small states (but why not larger states too?). The new strategic plan should be ambitious in ensuring there is a sufficient budget for capacity strengthening and follow-up engagement and monitoring to track results. Such an approach would position the Secretariat as an important voice on the 'What Works to Prevent VAWG' project which would align well with the development agendas of the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office, International Labour Organisation, and United Nations Population Fund. <p>4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth: Ports Authority Concession Agreement Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability will be ensured if the Ports Authority takes up the advice of the technical advisor who is reviewing the concession agreement. This take-up is highly likely. The new port, if built as intended, is likely to endure for the next 50 years. <p>4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Blue Economy Roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance contributed to the publication of the Blue Economy Roadmap, but it also increased understanding amongst key government staff of the concepts it embodies (combining a sustainable Blue Economy with conservation). Will this endure particularly if there is staff turnover and insufficient funding to the Blue Economy Department? Will aspirations be translated into tangible actions? With continued support from other global players such as the World Bank and global civil society pushing to hold governments to account, there is a strong likelihood that the government will adhere to the policies and strategies outlined in the Roadmap and Seychelles' National Development Plan 2019–2023. A key factor in promoting sustainability could be a desire on the part of the government of Seychelles to uphold its reputation as a leader in this area.

Case Study Country

Seychelles

What have been the main interventions/programmes implemented by the Secretariat?

- 3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices: Economic Costs of VAWG
 - Phase 1 (6–12) months started in December 2017, and Phase 2 in December 2018 and is ongoing.
 - The Secretariat provided finance and technical assistance to the government of Seychelles agencies and other stakeholders to develop and apply a standard framework and methodology for measuring the economic costs of VAWG. The approach is informed by the work of, *inter alia*, Professor Sylvia Walby OBE, a British sociologist with the University of London, and Dr Nata Duvvury, Senior Lecturer and Director, Centre for Global Women's Studies, NUI Galway, and adapted by Dr Bazlul Khondker. The framework considers intimate and non-partner violence perpetrated in schools, workplaces, and/or public places. It goes beyond aggregating costs to individual women and families and includes estimates of the overall macro-economic impact of VAWG. It measures direct and indirect costs across justice, health, social services, education, business, and personal/household sectors. Costs are 'service costs' associated with the prevention and treatment of VAWG; 'transfer costs' associated with reduced tax revenue from the lower productivity of survivors; and 'second generation costs' applying to children who witness domestic violence, need child protection services, and are potentially at risk of delinquency and criminality, which also have longer-term associated costs. Phase 1 resulted in the study.
 - Phase 2 (ongoing) includes:
 - Technical support for consultative meetings to discuss the report findings and prioritise planning and budget investments for prevention. Convening and dialogue that brought together ministers and other stakeholders including civil society to engage on the approach and methodology.
 - Capacity strengthening including police training and how to engage with survivors.
 - Technical assistance to the Office of the Attorney General to finalise the Domestic Violence Bill which passed into law in June 2020.
- 4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth: Ports Authority Concession Agreement Review
 - The main intervention is technical assistance to review the Seychelles Ports Authority concession agreement to renovate and develop new port infrastructure.
- 4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Blue Economy Roadmap
 - The Secretariat delivered a package of interventions primarily through a technical assistance placement from 2013–2018.
 - In the first strategic period (2013–2017), interventions aimed to achieve strengthened, equitable, and sustainable management of maritime and other natural resources through technical assistance with support on technical drafting, assessment reports on opportunities for economic diversification (mariculture, blue biotechnology, and marine renewable energy), and research and convening.
 - In the second strategic period (2016–2021), the strategic outcome was reformulated to explicitly target Blue Economies and the sustainable development of marine and other natural resources including Blue Economies.

Case Study Country

Seychelles

- The key interventions for the second strategic period were focused on research and technical assistance and advisory services. This included capacity strengthening to develop the National Blue Economy Strategic Framework and Roadmap. The technical adviser provided strategic advice to government officials; inputs to Blue Economy policy processes, initiatives, and collaborative projects on blue finance and marine spatial planning; capacity development of small to medium-sized enterprises; support to and collaboration with ministries and agencies for policy development processes such as a maritime security policy and the mariculture policy; institutional capacity strengthening of the Blue Economy department, including mentoring young professionals across ministries and agencies; and awareness-raising activities with civil society.

What significant results have been achieved or are likely to be achieved by Secretariat interventions? Have any of these been unintended?

3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices: Economic Costs of VAWG

- In June 2020, Seychelles passed the Domestic Violence Act which outlines tougher action on the part of government against domestic abuse, better protection for victims, and penalties for perpetrators, as well as rehabilitation. This will add further impetus to take forward the recommendations for action and investment for targeted interventions in the study. The Secretariat's piloted approach contributed to this outcome.

- Widened cross-ministerial knowledge of the need for a holistic approach to address VAWG (response and prevention). This has come about through pilot testing the approach, the dissemination of the study, and convening to discuss its implications.

- Strengthened capacity to gather data to measure the cost of VAWG, although further technical assistance will be required. This stems from the Secretariat's technical assistance.

4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth: Ports Authority Concession Agreement Review

- It is too soon to assess the full results of the technical assistance to review the concessional agreement for the construction of the port, but key stakeholders in the Ports Authority say that inputs have already contributed to their understanding of components of the agreement. Once the agreement is signed, construction will start with the first phase due to be completed in 2024 and the second phase in 2026. According to the Ports Authority interviewee, the Seychelles Minister of Finance sees the port as a means to increase fish exports (canned and frozen) by 100%.

4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Blue Economy Roadmap

- Key result 1: The National Blue Economy Strategic Framework and Roadmap (known as the Roadmap), which was approved by the government of Seychelles on 31 January 2018. It describes an integrated approach to ocean-based sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Aichi Target 11 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change. An internal 2018 Secretariat evaluation notes that the Roadmap and its contributory processes have led to the realignment and adaptation of national plans and policies to embed Blue Economy principles and priorities. It has had a significant influence on the Seychelles National Development Strategy 2019–2023 where it is highlighted as a cross-cutting approach and its principles of economic efficiency, sustainability, social equity, resilience, innovation, transparency, accountability, and partnerships have been adopted. The Roadmap provides an accountability reference and it sets a plan for inclusivity so that civil society as a whole can identify with the principles and benefits, and hold the government to account.

Case Study Country

Seychelles

- Key result 2: Seychelles is seen globally to 'walk the talk' on the Blue Economy. In 2020, Seychelles was applauded for meeting its commitment to protect 30% of its 1.37 million square kilometres exclusive economic zone and territorial sea in marine protected areas ahead of its SDG 14 2020 target. The Secretariat has contributed to this outcome in partnership with other multilateral players such as the World Bank through convening and technical assistance.
- Key result 3: Seychelles have updated their Fisheries Policy (2019) to reflect Blue Economy principles. 'The people of Seychelles optimise on the benefits received from the oceans that surround them while also protecting them.'
- Key result 4: Stakeholders interviewed for the internal evaluation noted that the government's Blue Economy concept had become synonymous with 'blue' financing for Seychelles sustainable development. The framework has attracted impact investors and has opened the door for ocean-based economies to access the debt-for-nature swap market previously applied to green economies.
- Key result 5: Resource mobilisation from other donors and commitments/interest at the civil society level. Example: Seychelles is becoming a Mecca for marine scientific research which, in turn, if inclusively disseminated, will place pressure on key actors to implement Blue Economy commitments. It is not clear in this instance how the Secretariat's interventions have contributed and a theory of change could usefully explore causal pathways and the underpinning assumptions.
- These results overall relate to the Secretariat's short-term outcomes for Blue Economy Development in Targeted Member States. The key outcome in the theory of change is readiness to explore and support Blue Economy initiatives, enabled by investor-friendly rules, but managed in the country's long-term interests by a 'good governance' legal and fiscal framework. The internal evaluation found that the project overall validates the theory of change, but there are gaps in the evidence that challenge the contribution assessment. The assumption of sustained project buy-in was challenged given the long-term nature of the engagement.

What approaches are most likely to contribute to significant results?

- 3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices: Economic Costs of VAWGAll combined approaches are likely to contribute to results (economic costs of VAWG calculated and acted on by small states governments), including:
- This intervention has an intervention logic (theory of change) which argues that unless governments are aware of the economic costs of VAWG (direct and indirect costs) approaches will not tackle all aspects. Multisector approaches are required and significant savings can be made with targeted interventions which can be reinvested in other social welfare interventions.
 - Systematic monitoring of higher-level results is not part of the approach. The Secretariat is reliant on small states providing feedback on what happens next.
 - The Secretariat's identification of a holistic technical methodology and approach to help small states understand the direct and indirect costs of VAWG as a means to galvanise support for targeted cross-sector investment towards both prevention and response.
 - Piloting the methodology in two small states (Seychelles and Lesotho) and recognising that the approach needed to be tested, not just for an end product, but to understand the process of application and what capacities and levels of engagement are required to support the government in data gathering, analysis, and discussion of findings. In Seychelles, the Secretariat supported a local consultant to collect data..

Case Study Country

Seychelles

- The participatory process, which included convening, has resulted in a shift from individual sectoral responses to VAWG (health, education, child protection, refugees, and shelters) to a more holistic approach which is derived from the evidence produced by this project. Convening, engagement, and capacity-building processes provided the Secretariat with an understanding of who needs to be involved (e.g., multiple government agencies such as the Ministries of Public Health, Finance, Criminal Justice, and Education, and civil society) and also the means to gauge difficulties associated with data collection and dissemination that needed to be addressed. Making the approach work in one country has given insight into what needs to be done in other countries.

4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth; Ports Authority Concession Agreement Review

- There is just one approach (technical assistance) and it is likely to contribute to higher-level results.

4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Blue Economy Roadmap

- The first critical approach was convening from 2013–2020 which included multiple annual events, some generated by the Secretariat and some by other players such as the World Bank and the African Union. These events include meetings with senior officials and Secretariat advisers to discuss the multiple aspects of the Blue Economy concept, workshops, Secretariat missions, forums, and conferences (for details, see the timeline diagram in the Seychelles Blue Economy Internal Evaluation, p.12). This approach created awareness and buy-in amongst key stakeholders, a community of investors, supporters, and practitioners (small state countries and their government officials) working on a shared agenda.

- The second critical approach was a two-year dedicated technical assistance placement in 2016–2018. This TA project provided strategic advice to the Vice President and the Blue Economy Department on ocean governance and the implementation of the Blue Economy in Seychelles. Despite changes over the life of the project in Seychelles leadership and challenges relating to Secretariat project management and financing (delays and changes in expectations), the project was able to achieve results across all results areas, the most notable of which is the Blue Economy Roadmap. The TA was situated in the Blue Economy Department as a special adviser to the Vice President and ministers and was consequently at the heart of government decision-making in a key influencing and supportive position. The TA was adequate for achieving the results the Secretariat sought, but there is a need to maintain momentum on this issue in the next strategic planning cycle.

- Monitoring has not been a project approach. The Secretariat in a sense waits to be informed from the Seychelles government if there is an additional requirement for support. The lack of Secretariat monitoring of developments constrains its ability to track results and to understand its contribution.

Case Study Country	Seychelles
What results are likely to be sustainable?	<p>3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices: Economic Costs of VAWG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat considers sustainability to have been achieved if the government of Seychelles repeat the assessment of the cost of the VAWG study in five years. The Secretariat has focused on institutionalising the methodology and building capacities within government. However, the Ministry of Gender is likely to need further technical assistance to repeat the study and the Secretariat will keep this support on its agenda. <p>4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth: Ports Authority Concession Agreement Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unless Seychelles changes its plans for the development of Port Victoria, the technical assistance remains valid and the end result – the new port infrastructure – will be sustainable and climate change resilient for the next 50-60 years. <p>4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Blue Economy Roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seychelles' commitment to the Blue Economy principles and priorities is likely to be sustainable as it is embedded in government development policy. Seychelles is seen as a global leader on the Blue Economy so they will want to safeguard their reputation. There are challenges to sustainability, including: the need to establish a sound governance and institutional framework, which the government is working on; reputation risk if the Blue Investment does not deliver expected results for Seychelles; the need for the Blue Economy Department to strengthen its relevance as the strategic coordinator and increase its demands for budget and its influence on national decision-making. In the current context, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies note that COVID-19 may undermine Blue Economy commitments. The global economic downturn may result in: a decrease in law enforcement at sea; a rise in illegal fishing; temptations to overlook quotas; and a reduction in operational ocean science which could undermine stock assessments and management regimes even in currently sustainable fisheries. These observations suggest that small island states such as Seychelles who depend on their marine economy and tourism may overlook their Blue Economy principles in the future.¹
How well have Secretariat interventions been aligned with the efforts of other stakeholders working on issues related to the strategic outcome areas in focus?	<p>3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices: Economic Costs of VAWG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on VAWG is aligned with SDG 5, particularly target 5.2 (end all violence against women and girls). Seychelles is a high-income country, so there is far less of a donor focus in this area. No multilateral interventions are supporting VAWG in Seychelles, but there is alignment with civil society engagement (university and other groups). <p>4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth: Ports Authority Concession Agreement Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable.

1 <https://www.csis.org/analysis/COVID-19-sea-impacts-blue-economy-ocean-health-and-ocean-security>

Case Study Country	Seychelles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Blue Economy Roadmap • The project is aligned with SDG 14. • The Secretariat's internal evaluation noted national coherence and alignment with the work of other donors, particularly the World Bank, and efforts to avoid duplication. However, there is no donor coordination mechanism in Seychelles as it is a high-income country, which means that there is less impetus on the part of donors to coordinate and adhere to Paris Principles. • The Secretariat evaluation also noted that national coherence was challenged by a 'patchy understanding of which ministries and stakeholders could be engaged operationally on Blue Economy Roadmap implementation'. 	<p>Have Secretariat interventions contributed to an increase in the resilience (social, environmental, public governance and economic) of the focus country? If so, how? Have there been any other significant impacts?</p>
<p>3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices: Economic Costs of VAWG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear causal pathway from this intervention to resilience. If the government follow through on their understanding of the high economic costs of VAWG as laid out in the assessment study supported by the Secretariat, implement the new Domestic Violence Act, and invest more in VAWG response and prevention, then there is a strong likelihood that the resilience of women and girls will improve. In addition, over 5% of GDP will be available to invest in sectors that increase resilience such as education, health, social welfare, and environmental protection. 	<p>4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth: Ports Authority Concession Agreement Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review of the concession agreement will ensure that the construction of the port is in line with specifications for climate change resilience, i.e., an ability to cope with sea rises of approximately 45cm over the next 50 years.
<p>4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Blue Economy Roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is too soon to tell whether the Seychelles Blue Economy Roadmap has contributed to an increase in the resilience of the country. However, there is a strong likelihood that the principles and priorities of the Blue Economy will be implemented because Seychelles is regarded as a global leader on the Blue Economy. However, a key concern highlighted by beneficiaries interviewed for the internal evaluation is the risk of 'loss of momentum and commitment to Blue Economy in Seychelles as the vehicle for sustainable development'. 	

Case Study Country

Seychelles

What lessons should inform the next Secretariat Strategic Plan or future programming?

Lessons for the Secretariat, derived from its internal evaluation:

- 3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices: Economic Costs of VAWG
- The Secretariat's delivery of a high-quality methodology and approach matters and other components for the success of this project. Critical elements include:
 - The methodology and approach that has been adapted to context by Dr Khondker, and
 - National-level commitments and inputs to drive the process forward. Ownership and follow-through are critical and this needs to be factored into design and implementation with clear processes to assess whether ownership is on track in the form of action plans and momentum to drive progress forward.
 - The Secretariat plans to scale up in all small states. In the next strategic plan, it would be useful to place more emphasis on follow-up and monitoring to ensure scale-up. The government spokesperson interviewed for this case study highlighted that Seychelles needed to disseminate the VAWG cost assessment study more widely and start a conversation with key government agencies, the private sector, and civil society that would lead to action. It seemed from the interview that there was a lack of clarity on how to do this. Is further capacity-strengthening support required for action planning and further engagement, as well as behaviour change communications, engaging men and boys etc.,?
 - For the next strategic plan could the level of ambition be increased given the value of this intervention to achieving the SDGs? This intervention capitalises on the Secretariat's 24-year history in gender-responsive budgeting (which is an outcome of the approach). In the next phase, a different approach is being taken for rollout in other small states. This includes the development and dissemination of a facilitator's guide and training. Can the Secretariat secure an additional budget for technical support to support dissemination, action planning and behaviour change communication, programming for men and boys but also advocacy around the ratification of the International Labour Organisation's Convention on Violence in the Workplace?
 - On-the-ground advisers embedded in key ministries in small states to institutionalise action has been a key driver to success. This needs to be costed and agreed with small states in advance.
- 4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth: Ports Authority Concession Agreement Review
- The Secretariat's small-scale technical assistance can have immeasurable, but profound long-term impact.
- 4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Blue Economy Roadmap
- The need to ensure that technical assistance projects are consultative, inclusive, and sensitive to context. Inclusive ways of working improve the likelihood of ownership in policy and strategy development and implementation. The analysis of interviews with government officials suggests a need to strike a balance between achieving TA outputs while also being inclusive (e.g., favouring relationship building and processes over the delivery of readymade drafts).

Case Study Country

Seychelles

- Given resource constraints, the Secretariat could leverage its strengths as a convener and interlocutor to enable partnerships and knowledge sharing. This plays to its ability to wield influence in global discourses on small states and the governance of oceans. This can also serve as a means of monitoring and capturing pathways to higher-level results.
- The value of having clear exit strategies at the end of TA projects which indicate what will happen next and where further support is required. Some stakeholders noted a lack of momentum and the danger that commitments might not be translated into action. The final report from the consultant delivering TA highlights that the Blue Economy department remains small, under-resourced, and lacking in skills. It needs a mandate and a budget to advance Blue Economy implementation and to secure future investment and support. However, the Secretariat's role has to be demand-driven.
- The World Bank, cited in the internal evaluation, highlights the need for a more systematic approach based on a better understanding of nationally defined priorities, social context, and the resource base as this can guide sustainable and inclusive blue growth, coastal zone management, and an assessment of the value of marine resources. This suggests a need for support for Blue Economy baselines in small states against which progress can be measured.
- The internal evaluation also notes that long-term technical assistance projects risk being drawn into ad hoc advisory support to the government client institution rather than focusing on their terms of reference. This requires sensitivity on the part of the Secretariat.

List of People Interviewed

The case study draws extensively from the Secretariat's own internal evaluation of its interventions to support the Blue Economy in Seychelles, which in turn has drawn on stakeholder interviews.

Name	Organisation	Position
4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Blue Economy Roadmap		
Rosemary Cadogan	Commonwealth Secretariat	Legal Adviser (Maritime Boundaries); Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources
Katharine Marshall Kisson	Commonwealth Secretariat	Adviser, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices: Economic Costs of VAWG		
Monika Pindel	Commonwealth Secretariat	Programme Officer, Gender and Development, Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate.
Marie-Josée Bonne	Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Family Affairs, Seychelles
4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth: Ports Authority Concession Agreement Review		
Natalie Gupta	Commonwealth Secretariat	Technical Assistance
Philippa Samson	Seychelles Ports Authority	Deputy Director and Project Management, Ports Authority

Case Study Country	Seychelles
Bibliography	<p>4.4 Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies: Blue Economy Roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Bank Group. Oceans 2030. Financing the Blue Economy for Sustainable Development. Blue Economy Development Framework. Growing the Blue Economy to Combat Poverty and Accelerate Prosperity. Undated. https://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/446441473349079068/AMCOECC-Blue-Economy-Development-Framework.pdf • (Internal) Evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Support to Seychelles in the Development of Their Blue Economy. Final Report, December 2020. • Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation Technical Assistance Unit. Final report of progress of the Senior Ocean Governance Expert, Seychelles. Project period 28 January 2016 to 28 February 2018 (undated). • A baseline Line for the Blue Economy: Catch and Effort History in the Republic of Seychelles' Domestic Fisheries. 5 May 2020. Hanna J. Christ et al. Frontiers in Marine Science. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2020.00269/full <p>3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices: Economic Costs of VAWG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcement of the National Assembly approval of the Domestic Violence Bill by Marie-Josée Bonne: Principal Secretary of Family Affairs. 3 June 2020. Email. • The Commonwealth. The Economic Cost of Violence against Women and Girls. A study of the Seychelles. 2019. • VAWG Project Logical Framework. July 2019. PDF. • VAWG Project Design Document (PDD). July 2019. PDF. • VAWG First Pacific Regional Training for police on VAWG conducted in Fiji which Seychelles attended. October 2019. • Request to the Senior Director of Education, Youth and Social Development Division from the Ministry of Family Affairs confirming that the Government of Seychelles and the Office of the Attorney General of Seychelles requests legislative support for finalising legislation relating to gender violence. 17 March 2019. • Stata Training Workshop Report. March 2018. Ministry of Family Affairs, Mahe, Seychelles. • COVID-19 at Sea: Impacts on the Blue Economy. Ocean Health and Ocean Security. April 2020. https://www.csis.org/analysis/COVID-19-sea-impacts-blue-economy-ocean-health-and-ocean-security <p>4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth: Ports Authority Concession Agreement Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference: Consultancy to review the draft concession agreement between the Seychelles Ports Authority (SPA) and the terminal operator • Draft Report. December 2020. Consultancy to review the draft concession agreement between the Seychelles Ports Authority (SPA) and the Terminal Operator. • Comment on Draft Heads of Agreement for the Seychelles Ports Authority. 18 November 2020. • Report/Brief. Seychelles Ports Authority. Shipping Lines. April 2020.

A1.5 Country Case Study: Solomon Islands

Case Study Country	Solomon Islands			
Strategic Outcome Area(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Democracy	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Institutions	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth & Soc Dev	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eco Dev
Directorate(s) / Unit(s)	Governance and Peace Directorate (GPD): Electoral Support Section Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate (EYSD): Debt Management Unit and Climate Change sections			
Timeframe	2017/18 2020/21 Strategic Plan			
Case Study Lead	Nikos Papachristodoulou		Date	July 2021
Introduction	<p>This case study is one of 10 case studies conducted for an independent evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's interventions to support small states (July 2021). The case study has examined three intermediate outcomes and in the Solomon Islands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediate Outcome 1.3: Member states conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections • Intermediate Outcome 4.3: National frameworks facilitate effective debt management • Intermediate Outcome 5.3: Improved access to climate financing 			
Summary of Findings	<p>1. Greater adherence to Commonwealth political values and principles (1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat's interventions are making a critical contribution towards strengthening electoral democracy and election bodies, institutions, and processes in Solomon Islands. • Solomon Islands have accepted some, but not all, of the Secretariat's recommendations listed in the 2014 Commonwealth Observer Group report as part of their electoral reform process (outcome). • Five years later, the 2019 Commonwealth Observer Group included a further 21 recommendations, some of which were carried forward from the previous Commonwealth Observer Group according to Secretariat staff interviewed for this case study. At the time of the writing, the status of implementing the 2019 recommendations is not known. 			
Effectiveness	<p>How effectively has the Commonwealth Secretariat delivered support to address the vulnerabilities, public governance and development challenges of its small member states?</p>			

Case Study Country	Solomon Islands
	<p>4. More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development (4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to interviews with Secretariat staff, the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System (CS-DRMS 2000+) and the new Commonwealth Meridian system enhances the ability of the Central Bank of Solomon Islands and the Ministry of Finance officials to undertake debt portfolio analysis and debt sustainability analysis. This is a step towards effective debt management. The quality of evidence would be improved if the Secretariat's monitoring and evaluation approach captured country-level disaggregated data. <p>5. Strengthened resilience of small and other vulnerable states, including adaptation and mitigation against climate change (5.3 Improved access to climate financing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher-level results are constrained by various internal and external challenges. The CommonSensing project is a joint initiative involving a consortium of partners led by United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). Interviews with Secretariat staff and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) indicated that there have been delays in operationalising the platform in Solomon Islands, and the CommonSensing Climate Finance Adviser (CFA) was only appointed in early 2021. No proposals have been submitted to climate funds to date but the Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser (CNCFA) is currently working towards that objective. • An unintended positive result of the CommonSensing platform has been its use for supporting the management of Solomon Islands' COVID-19 response. A COVID-19 dashboard on the Geographical Information System (GIS)-based CommonSensing platform is used for decision making as part of Solomon Islands' National Disaster Risk Management structure.
<p>Coherence / Alignment</p> <p>How well do the Secretariat's small states interventions and support fit within an overarching Secretariat strategic intent; and with the actions of other institutions targeting small states as key beneficiaries?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greater adherence to Commonwealth political values and principles (1.3 Member states conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is good internal alignment with the Secretariat's strategic and intermediate outcomes (1 and 1.3). • The Pacific region as a whole is a good example of how the Secretariat is working with regional electoral associations—e.g., the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators Network (PIANZEA), according to interviews with Secretariat staff.

Case Study Country	Solomon Islands
	<p>4. More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development (4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat's debt management support to Solomon Islands aligns with the internal strategic priorities under the Economic Development pillar. • The Secretariat debt management teams are also part of a World Bank Task Force on debt statistics that is developing universal templates and reporting statistical guidelines. The Commonwealth Secretariat is in the process of incorporating the new format for the debtor reporting requirement Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) into the CS-DRMS 2000+ and Commonwealth Meridian software. <p>5. Strengthened resilience of small and other vulnerable states, including adaptation and mitigation against climate change (5.3 Improved access to climate financing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat's support strongly aligns with the priorities of Solomon Islands to secure climate financing. • Engagement with the broader development community has been limited to date because this work is in its infancy.
<p>Impact</p> <p>To what extent has the Commonwealth Secretariat's support delivered to longer-term/high-level social, environmental, public governance and economic changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended)?</p>	<p>1. Greater adherence to Commonwealth political values and principles (1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat's interventions are making a critical contribution towards strengthening electoral democracy and election bodies, institutions, and processes in Solomon Islands. • Evidence of impacts comes from triangulated testimonies from multiple sources. The 2019 Commonwealth Observer Group report and interviews with stakeholders noted the electoral reforms in Solomon Islands helped to improve the conduct of the General Election on 3 April 2019 and have strengthened its democratic institutions and processes more generally. <p>4. More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development (4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat's support is geared towards enabling Solomon Islands to undertake debt portfolio analysis and debt sustainability analysis which should help them identify the right resources for Solomon Islands' funding requirements. However, evidence for this impact is limited or hard to capture.

Case Study Country	Solomon Islands
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>Which aspects of the Secretariat's interventions are likely to have an enduring impact?</p>	<p>5. Strengthened resilience of small and other vulnerable states, including adaptation and mitigation against climate change (5.3 Improved access to climate financing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the relatively young age of the CommonSensing project in Solomon Islands, no evidence was found of impact achieved at scale as of mid-2021, although some activities show potential. In particular, the institutionalisation of the platform reinforces the potential for building an evidence base that in turn can strengthen the production of proposals that will succeed in accessing climate finance to increase Solomon Islands' resilience. <p>1. Greater adherence to Commonwealth political values and principles (1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible, and inclusive elections)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability of results is likely. It is enhanced by the fact that the Secretariat's electoral support is embedded in institutional processes in Solomon Islands and there is commitment and ownership of the electoral reform process by the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission and Solomon Islands stakeholders more generally. The evidence for sustainability comes from Commonwealth monitoring reports and interviews with Secretariat staff. <p>4. More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development (4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The introduction of new tools is likely to be sustainable as it is accompanied by extensive training in certain areas of debt management and for the uptake of the CS-DRMS 2000+ and Commonwealth Meridian software which ensures Solomon Islands' government officials have sufficient experience to train staff and run the systems themselves in the long term. <p>5. Strengthened resilience of small and other vulnerable states, including adaptation and mitigation against climate change (5.3 Improved access to climate financing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sustainability of results is not assured and needs to be addressed. The mid-term review of the CommonSensing project conducted in 2020 noted challenges relating to sustainability, including difficulties in selecting and deploying CNCFAs. This was corroborated in interviews with UNITAR.

Case Study Country

Solomon Islands

What have been the main interventions/programmes implemented by the Secretariat?

Member States (Solomon Islands) conduct fair and free elections

- Solomon Islands has received Secretariat support to strengthen its democratic institutions and processes and enable citizen participation and representation during elections since 2001.
- In 2019, at the invitation of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC), the Secretariat deployed a Commonwealth Observer Group to observe the Solomon Islands National General Election that was held on 3 April.²
- The Commonwealth Observer Group observed the preparations, the conduct, and the overall electoral environment. It also made recommendations for the future strengthening of the electoral process in Solomon Islands.
- Throughout the deployment, the Commonwealth Observer Group met with election officials, security officials, regional representatives of political parties, civil society groups, media, Commonwealth High Commissioners, domestic and international observer missions, and voters.
- Except for the Commonwealth Observer Group in 2019, there have been minimal country-specific Secretariat projects or activities undertaken in Solomon Islands, according to the interviews with Secretariat staff.
- A significant portion of Secretariat assistance is Pan-Commonwealth with these benefits for the Solomon Islands:³
 - Solomon Islands has participated in Commonwealth Elections Professionals (CEP) regional training events since the launch of these events in 2013.
 - In September 2019, Solomon Islands hosted a five-day CEP event on mobilising temporary election officials effectively, a challenge that has been identified by Commonwealth Observer Groups in many member countries, particularly in the Pacific region.
 - In July 2019, a Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) representative was funded to attend a meeting on the development of a Commonwealth Good Practice Guide on election cybersecurity so that he could feed in the Solomon Islands' experience of introducing biometrics into the voter registration process and discuss the guidance required by small states to secure their elections against cyber threats.

2 Solomon Islands National General Election: Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group. 2019.

3 Impact Story. 2021. How Commonwealth election observation helps to strengthen elections: The case of the Solomon Islands.

Case Study Country

Solomon Islands

National frameworks facilitate effective debt management

- Solomon Islands benefits from technical assistance and capacity-building in debt management. Initially, the Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System (CS-DRMS 2000+) was installed at the Central Bank of Solomon Islands and the Ministry of Finance with training provided on the software. In mid-2020, the Secretariat introduced the new Commonwealth Meridian system to Solomon Islands which incorporates advanced and improved functionalities to address emerging debt management requirements. Migration to the new system is currently in process.⁴

- In addition, the Secretariat continues to provide support to strengthen debt management capacity through institutional arrangements for debt management and training in debt data quality and standards, debt restructuring and analysis, and domestic debt management.

Improved access to climate financing

- The CommonSensing (CS) project is a joint initiative involving a consortium of partners led by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). It works in partnership with three Commonwealth member countries, including Solomon Islands (the other two being Fiji and Vanuatu). CommonSensing aims to support member countries like Solomon Islands through delivering tools and information for improved climate action and knowledge transfer using Satellite Remote Sensing and Earth Observation (SRS and EO) technologies.⁵

- The project developed a Geographical Information System (GIS)-based data information platform and is providing technical assistance by embedding a Commonwealth National Climate Finance Advisors (CFA) in the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology. The Climate Finance Advisors, in partnership with government counterparts, are expected to support the uptake of satellite data generated through the platform to enhance access to climate finance. Specifically, the responsibilities of the Climate Finance Advisors include providing⁶:

- Support to Ministries/National Delivery Agencies (NDAs) to access (or use more effectively) readiness support from regional and international climate finance institutions;
 - Provision of technical assistance to seek accreditation and/or strengthen capacity for direct access to different climate financial intuitions; and
 - Assistance to improve management and coordination of climate finance, as well as mobilisation efforts in international climate finance.
- It is envisioned that the CommonSensing project will link to the Commonwealth's Climate Finance Access Hub and provide tools, data, and information that can support project proposals to access climate finance.

4 Six-Monthly Progress on Results Report Economic Development, July–December 2020.

5 The CommonSensing Project: Building Climate Resilience with Small Island Nations. Project Brochure.

6 Terms of Reference: Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser for Solomon Islands.

Case Study Country

Solomon Islands

What significant results have been achieved or are likely to be achieved by Secretariat interventions? Have any of these been unintended?

Member States (Solomon Islands) conduct fair and free elections

- The Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) has been responsive to Commonwealth Observer Group's recommendations according to Commonwealth monitoring reports and interviews with stakeholders.⁷ This was particularly notable during the most recent election cycle (2014–2019) when a process of electoral reform was initiated and a new Electoral Act was passed.
 - Some (but not all) of the recommendations submitted by the 2014 Commonwealth Observer Group were accepted and implemented as part of the country's electoral reform. These include:⁸
 - The Solomon Islands Electoral Commission's statutory and regulatory framework be reviewed with a view to enhancing its capacity to fully exercise its oversight functions per international standards;
 - Penalties provided for under the National Parliament Electoral Provisions Act for election offences be reviewed and increased to more effectively deter corrupt practices;
 - Establish procedures for early voting;
 - The law be amended so that all electors who are present at a polling station before 5:00 pm will be able to cast their vote;
 - Polling procedures be reviewed, in particular the practice of recording the voter identification number on the ballot counterfoil; and
 - The training for journalists currently available will be further enhanced to increase public confidence in the accuracy and integrity of the media's coverage of future elections.
 - Five years later, the 2019 Commonwealth Observer Group included a further 21 recommendations, some of which were carried forward from the previous Commonwealth Observer Group, according to Secretariat staff. At the time of writing this case study, the status of implementation is not known.
- National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
- There are steps towards higher-level results but the evidence is limited and/or hard to capture as the Commonwealth's current M&E approach, including reporting, does not provide disaggregated country-level insights. However, according to interviews with Secretariat staff, its support is enabling the Solomon Islands to undertake their debt analysis, evaluate strategies (mid-term), and undertake sustainability analysis for risk management purposes (outcome). The new Commonwealth Meridian System, once operational, will further enhance the ability of Central Bank of Solomon Islands and Ministry of Finance officials to undertake portfolio analysis and debt sustainability analysis.
 - Operationalisation of the new Commonwealth Meridian system has been slow, according to Secretariat staff interviewed for this evaluation, partly as a result of the quality of data in the current CS-DRMS 2000+ software (in some instances data has been inconsistent or incorrect). This makes the verification and updating of data in the system, and the subsequent migration process, a challenging task.

7 Solomon Islands: Commonwealth Secretariat Engagement—Results Reported for FY 18/19. Note prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

8 Solomon Islands National General Election: Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group. 2019.

Case Study Country | Solomon Islands

Improved access to climate financing

- Higher-level results (i.e., Solomon Islands proposals submitted for climate funds) are constrained by various internal and external challenges. Secretariat staff say that by the end of the project they would like to have at least three proposals submitted to climate funds (Green Climate Fund or Adaptation Fund) in collaboration with accredited local or regional delivery partners (such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the UNDP, or the World Bank). However, no proposals have been approved to date.
- The project intends to also support Solomon Islands to maximise the utilisation of Satellite Remote Sensing and Earth Observation (SRS and EO) data in the preparation of project proposals to climate funds. However, interviews with Secretariat staff and external stakeholders (UNITAR) indicated that there have been delays in operationalising the platform in Solomon Islands. The CNCFA was only appointed in early 2021, partly due to the COVID-19 situation, and has been unable to date to use the platform because of technical issues concerning the instalment of the platform at the ministry.
- An unintended result of the CommonSensing platform has been its use for supporting the management of Solomon Islands' COVID-19 response, according to interviews with Secretariat staff and UNITAR. This is a good, but unintended result. Specifically, the CommonSensing project team created a COVID-19 dashboard that is used for decision-making as part of Solomon Islands' National Disaster Risk Management structure.

What approaches are most likely to contribute to significant results?

Member countries (Solomon Islands) conduct fair and free elections

- The Secretariat is using a 'full electoral cycle approach' in its engagement with Solomon Islands.⁹ This entails employing a combination of complementary approaches such as election observation (in the form of Commonwealth Observer Groups), and diplomacy, knowledge sharing, peer-to-peer networking, training, and technical assistance between elections to help implement Commonwealth Observer Group recommendations. According to interviews with the Secretariat staff, experience has demonstrated that such a holistic and integrated approach is more likely to yield results compared to ad hoc training, capacity-building, and technical assistance.
- Ownership: Another significant characteristic of the Secretariat's approach relates to Commonwealth Observer Group's impartiality and independence. The Commonwealth Observer Group reports are "owned" by the Commonwealth Observer Group members. These Commonwealth Observer Group members are eminent Commonwealth citizens and the Election Observation process is independent of the Secretariat. The Group's reports then provide the basis for the Secretariat's engagement with these countries.
- Promotion of gender equality and the rights of women is a Secretariat priority. Women remain poorly represented in national politics in Solomon Islands, but the situation is improving, albeit slowly. In 2019, 26 women stood as candidates for the first time since independence and two women won seats in the national parliament.¹⁰ National stakeholders had previously reached out to the Secretariat to request assistance in this area as a direct result of recommendations made in the 2019 Commonwealth Observer Group Report, but several factors (including the pandemic) prevented this engagement from proceeding, according to interviews conducted with Secretariat staff for this evaluation. Solomon Islands is a participating member of the Secretariat's Inclusive Dialogue and Women Political Participation initiative, although engagement with stakeholders has not taken place recently. The Secretariat is also preparing a guide on Women's Political Representation, but the guide is yet to be validated and published.

9 Commonwealth Election Training and Assistance. Available at: <https://thecommonwealth.org/election-training-and-assistance>

10 <https://devpolicy.org/attitudes-towards-womens-political-participation-in-solomon-islands-20200921/>

Case Study Country

Solomon Islands

National frameworks facilitate effective debt management

- The key approaches are capacity strengthening and tool development and dissemination. To enhance the likelihood of noteworthy results it is important to incorporate vulnerability into decision-making about debt management in countries like Solomon Islands and the Secretariat are trying to find a way to integrate this within the new Commonwealth Meridian software. Better integration will allow Solomon Islands to evaluate different products and choose the most appropriate for their portfolio structure.

Improved access to climate financing

- Demand-led and needs-based approaches tailored to context: Project elements are tailored to member countries' needs and priorities. The Commonwealth project is unique in that the development of the data information platform is tailored to meet the needs of the target member countries like Solomon Islands. According to interviews with Commonwealth and UNITAR staff, technical requirements are different in Solomon Islands compared to Fiji or Vanuatu, for example, hence the proposed tools and platform are going to be different. In addition, the scope of work of CNCFAs is focusing on the member countries' priorities and hence vary across countries based on needs and not generic TA. In the case of Solomon Islands, for example, the focus is more on accreditation support and preparation of project proposals to climate funds.¹¹
- Learning-by-doing with embedded technical assistance: The Secretariat builds on its established presence in Solomon Islands and adopts a learning-by-doing approach—engaging in real-life cases, especially for developing a justification for the platform. The full-time CNCFAs is embedded in government which allows them to mainstream the processes.

Which results are likely to be sustainable?

Member countries (Solomon Islands) conduct fair and free elections

- Evidence to date indicates that the Secretariat's electoral support is embedded in institutional processes in the Solomon Islands and there is commitment and ownership of the electoral reform process by the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) and Solomon Islands stakeholders more generally, according to the Secretariat monitoring reports and interviews with Secretariat staff.

National frameworks facilitate effective debt management

- The introduction of new tools is likely to be sustainable as it is accompanied by extensive training in certain areas of debt management and for the uptake of the CS-DRMS 2000+ and Commonwealth Meridian software to ensure beneficiary member countries have sufficient experience to train staff and run the systems themselves in the long term.

¹¹ Terms of Reference: Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser for Solomon Islands.

Case Study Country

Solomon Islands

Improved access to climate financing

- The sustainability of results is an issue that needs to be addressed and concerns have been raised according to interviews with both Commonwealth and UNITAR staff. A Sustainability Action Plan was devised to ensure that the CommonSensing platform and delivery tools and instruments under the project are technically, institutionally, and financially sustainable beyond the lifetime of the project and utilised to their maximum functionality for climate action.
- The mid-term review of the CommonSensing project conducted in 2020 and interviews with UNITAR noted challenges relating to sustainability, citing the difficulties in selecting and deploying CNCFAs due to COVID-19, including in Solomon Islands, even though recruitment of climate finance advisers is considered by most project stakeholders to be the CommonSensing's most valuable asset.

How well have Secretariat interventions been aligned with the efforts of other stakeholders working on issues related to the strategic outcome areas in focus?

Member countries (Solomon Islands) conduct fair and free elections

- The Pacific region provides a good example of how the Commonwealth Secretariat is working with regional electoral associations, specifically the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators Network (PIANZEA), according to interviews with Secretariat staff. What makes it unique is that PIANZEA's and the Secretariat's aspirations and priorities align (since many of the members are also Commonwealth member countries). Engagement of the two organisations include check-in meetings and joined training events which often include non-Commonwealth members. Unfortunately, similar associations do not often exist in other regions or are less compatible in terms of political agenda.

National frameworks facilitate effective debt management

- The Secretariat debt management teams are part of a World Bank Task Force on debt statistics that is developing universal templates and reporting statistical guidelines. The Secretariat is in the process of implementing the new format for debtor reporting requirement Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX). The Secretariat's CS-DRMS 2000+ and Commonwealth Meridian software meets these requirements.
- Moreover, the Secretariat is engaging with the IMF's TA centre in Fiji, which is responsible for assisting countries in the Pacific region, and is in the process of organising joint training workshops.

Improved access to climate financing

- The Secretariat's role in the CommonSensing project is key as it represents a trusted and credible partner and encompasses coordination and communication with government stakeholders in Solomon Islands.
- Engagement with the broader development community has been limited to date, however, partly because the work is in its infancy, but, according to interviews with Secretariat staff, the CommonSensing team does engage bilateral organisations such as the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), International Financial Institutions (IFIs) (such as the World Bank), and UN conventions (such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), amongst others, with whom they have strong potential for knowledge sharing and replication.

Case Study Country	Solomon Islands
Have Secretariat interventions contributed to an increase in the resilience (social, environmental, public governance, and economic) of the focus country? If so, how? Have there been any other significant impacts?	<p>Member countries (Solomon Islands) conduct fair and free elections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat's interventions are making a critical contribution towards strengthening electoral democracy and election bodies, institutions, and processes in Solomon Islands. Evidence for impact comes from triangulated testimonies from multiple sources. The 2019 Commonwealth Observer Group report and interviews with stakeholders noted the electoral reforms in Solomon Islands helped to improve the conduct of the general election on 3 April 2019 and have strengthened its democratic institutions and processes more generally. <p>National frameworks facilitate effective debt management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As mentioned above, the Secretariat's interventions are contributing to higher-level results, but the evidence is limited or hard to capture. The Secretariat's debt management support has been in the background and is not directly involved in supporting Solomon Islands to raise capital in domestic or international markets. Rather, the Secretariat's support is geared towards enabling Solomon Islands to undertake risk in its portfolio so that it can identify the right resources for its funding requirements. <p>Improved access to climate financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the relatively young age of the CommonSensing project in Solomon Islands, no evidence was found of impact achieved at scale as of mid-2021, although some activities show potential. In particular, the institutionalisation of the platform reinforces the potential for building an evidence base that can strengthen the production of proposals that will succeed in accessing climate finance to increase Solomon Islands' resilience.
What lessons should inform the next Secretariat Strategic Plan or future programming?	<p>Member countries (Solomon Islands) conduct fair and free elections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of a full electoral cycle approach by the Secretariat in its engagement with Solomon Islands, which involves a combination of complementary delivery approaches in an integrated/holistic manner during and between elections, is a significant contributing factor to achieving results. It will be hard to see delivery approaches in isolation. The demand-driven nature of technical assistance presents some limitations in terms of ability to support/engage member states if they do not make a request. It is relatively easier to implement logistical and administrative recommendations made by the Commonwealth Observer Group compared to broader issues involving legislative and sometimes constitutional checks that require political will and consensus. At the same time, such politically sensitive changes often happen faster in smaller states.

Case Study Country	Solomon Islands		
Improved access to climate financing			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of long-term, in-country support is important in embedding the use of new technologies, processes, and structures in government institutions and securing government approval and institutionalisation of the tools. It is hard to achieve a comparable impact on short-term engagements or through working remotely. It is also difficult to sustain engagement from government counterparts without in-country CNCFAs. • Provision of stand-alone reports and one-off training sessions are an ineffective method of delivering meaningful capacity-building. Outcomes can be significantly improved with sustained engagement. These reports provide a structure, aid, or backbone for capacity-building, but learning is likely to be less successful than intended under the original project plan without guidance and repetition. The prospects of suitability can also be enhanced by building the capacity of a critical mass of government officials that can manage the platform in the long term. 			
List of People Interviewed			
Name	Organisation	Position	
Sharon Ng'etich	Commonwealth Secretariat	Climate Change Officer, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate	
Michael Ha'apio	Commonwealth Secretariat	National Climate Finance Adviser for Solomon Islands	
Vikas Pandey	Commonwealth Secretariat	Systems Development Officer, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate	
Abubakar Abdullahi	Commonwealth Secretariat	Peace and Development Officer, Governance and Peace Directorate	
Angela Thomas	Commonwealth Secretariat	Political Officer Asia, Europe and Pacific, Governance and Peace Directorate	
Jonathan Milligan	Commonwealth Secretariat	Programme Officer, Political Division, Governance and Peace Directorate	
Andrew Baines	Commonwealth Secretariat	Programme Officer, Elections Division, Governance and Peace Directorate	
Oran No	United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)	CommonSensing Project Manager	
Joy Papao	United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)	CommonSensing Technical Expert	

Case Study Country	Solomon Islands
Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Solomon Islands: Commonwealth Secretariat Engagement—Results Reported for FY 18/19</i>. Note prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat. • Solomon Islands National General Election: Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group. 2019. • Impact Story. (2021) How Commonwealth election observation helps to strengthen elections: The case of the Solomon Islands. • IPP CommonSensing. (2020) <i>Sustainability Action Plan V.02</i>. • Back to Office Report. (2018) Climate Change Section Mission to Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands for the CommonSensing Project Inception Phase. • Secretariat CS Deliverables (No date). Impact of no-cost extension. • Terms of Reference: Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser for Solomon Islands. • The CommonSensing Project: Building Climate Resilience with Small Island Nations. Project Brochure. • CommonSensing Overview: Building climate resilience with small island nations. • Six-Monthly Progress on Results Report Economic Development. July–December 2020.

A1.6 Country Case Study: Tonga

Case Study Country	Tonga				
Strategic Outcome Area(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Democracy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Institutions	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth & Soc Dev	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eco Dev	<input type="checkbox"/> Small & Vulnerable States
Directorate(s) / Unit(s)	International Trade Policy Section; Social Policy Development Section				
Timeframe	2013–2021				
Case Study Lead	Julian Ratcliffe		Date	July 2021	
Introduction					
This is one of 10 case studies conducted for an independent evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's interventions to support small states (July 2021).					
The case study has examined three outcome areas in Tonga:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Outcome 2: Public Institutions. Intermediate Outcome 2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved; • Strategic Outcome 4: Economic Development, Intermediate Outcome 4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth; and • Strategic Outcome 5: Small States. Intermediate Outcome 5.3: Improved access to climate financing. 					
The findings relating to the third outcome, 5.3: Improved access to climate financing, have been based on desk review only and have not been triangulated with stakeholder interviews.					
Summary of Findings					
Effectiveness	2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved				
How effectively has the Commonwealth Secretariat delivered support to address the vulnerabilities, public governance, and development challenges of its small member countries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat has effectively delivered support to Tonga on the strengthening of public institutions. • The gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment workshop and training conducted was well attended by senior civil servants, and the sexual harassment policy drafted as a workshop outcome was adopted with the assent of Cabinet and had aspects of it included in the Employment Relations Bill 2020. • The Secretariat's capacity-building support on improving UN human rights universal periodic review (UPR) processes was also provided effectively with training sessions conducted regionally. In fact, 15 out of the 25 members of Tonga's Legislative Assembly and their staff attended the training, with attendees reporting that they felt their ability to meet the UPR requirements had improved as a consequence. 				

Case Study Country	Tonga
	<p>4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat has provided, and is continuing to provide, effective support to Tonga on trade competitiveness. • The support provided to Tonga on improving trade competitiveness (by designing an investment facilitation plan, identifying priority sectors and reforming the regulatory environment around them, and developing an investment policy website under the Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme) has been and continues to be effective because the Secretariat hired an external, on-the-ground consultant to work closely with the Ministry of Trade and other stakeholders. This work is still ongoing but has been implemented effectively with significant buy-in and ownership from the Tongan government evidenced by the establishment of a new unit within the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development which will coordinate and oversee the implementation of the strategy in the future. <p>5.3: Improved access to climate financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat has provided effective support to Tonga on climate financing. This was achieved by deploying a National Climate Financial Adviser to Tonga for two years during which time they increased Tonga's capacity to bid for finance through the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH) and secured US\$2.7 million funding (outcome) for climate resilience projects (as well as a GBP 48M pipeline).
<p>Coherence / Alignment</p> <p>How well do the Secretariat's small states interventions and support fit within an overarching Secretariat strategic intent; and with the actions of other institutions targeting small states as key beneficiaries?</p>	<p>2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat's activities in Tonga closely align with the objectives of the Commonwealth Strategic Plan for the period 2017/18–2020/21 and with the actions of other players operating in the region and human rights space (such as the World Bank, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the government of New Zealand). • The Secretariat's gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment training and technical assistance to draft a sexual harassment policy for the Public Service Commission aligns with both Secretariat human rights and inclusion priorities (as well as Intermediate Outcome 2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all). These activities were also conducted in collaboration with external stakeholders (such as the EU and the High Commissions of the UK, Australia, and New Zealand) and led to interest from the World Bank to build on Secretariat progress in the form of advocacy and support to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). • Building the capacity of the Tongan Legislative Assembly on UN human rights UPR processes is well aligned with the Secretariat's Strategic Plan, namely 2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved.

Case Study Country	Tonga
	<p>4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme strongly aligns with Tongan national priorities (such as restructuring the economy so that it can achieve climate-resilient growth) and existing economic strategies (such as the Tonga Trade Policy Framework), and with the objectives of the Commonwealth Strategic Plan for the period 2017/18–2020/21 and with long-term national priorities such as ensuring climate resilience. • Some interviewees said there was room for improvement. The Secretariat being demand-driven means that it can be difficult to leverage stakeholder partnerships effectively and this hinders the pursuit of overarching its strategic objectives. <p>5.3: Improved access to climate financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deploying a National Climate Finance Advisor to build institutional capacity to access funding through the CCFAH and to secure a pipeline of finance through the facility also strongly aligns with national priorities (such as building climate resilience and facilitating climate change adaptation in one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change).
<p>Impact</p> <p>To what extent has the Commonwealth Secretariat's support delivered to longer-term/high-level social, environmental, public governance, and economic changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended)?</p>	<p>2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is too early to determine if Secretariat activities relating to human rights improvements in Tonga have achieved impact, but there are promising signs that some of them will in the future. Responsibility for ensuring that the Secretariat's interventions achieve impact lies in large part with the Tongan government though, meaning that an analysis of Secretariat's contribution to impact is difficult to undertake. • As long as the new sexual harassment policy introduced into the Public Service Commission is enforced, it is likely to increase the ability of victims of sexual harassment to get justice and thereby achieve impact. Whether or not it lowers the overall incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace is more difficult to predict given the often tenuous link between specific policies and deterrence. • The gender mainstreaming training conducted with senior civil servants may lead to the creation of gender-sensitive policies and hence improve the situation of women in Tonga, but it is not possible to determine at this point. • The UPR capacity-building training provided to members of the Tongan Legislative Assembly is likely to improve the quality of Tonga's human rights reporting and thus Tonga's ability to implement UN human rights recommendations, in turn strengthening human rights in the country.

Case Study Country	Tonga
	<p>4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is too early to determine if Secretariat activities relating to economic development in Tonga have achieved an impact, but it is likely that they will in the future. The Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme is part of a larger national strategy to remove the country's economic dependence on remittances and overseas development assistance as it seeks to develop the bases of climate-resilient growth. Attracting foreign direct investment provides a clear pathway to achieving that goal, but it remains to be seen whether the investment facilitation strategy and regulatory reforms relating to priority sectors will be effective at doing so. Given the high level of government buy-in and ownership (manifested by the establishment of a new unit in the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development to oversee the implementation of the strategy), there is little else that the Secretariat or the Tongan government could do to set it up for success. <p>5.3: Improved access to climate financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is too early to tell if Secretariat activities relating to climate financing have achieved an impact, but it is highly likely that they will in the future. The funding for climate resilience and adaptation projects secured through the CCFAH is very likely to achieve impact in Tonga due to the country's high vulnerability to climate change and climate-related disasters. The high priority the government of Tonga places on climate resilience increases the likelihood that Secretariat interventions will achieve impact as they both align with existing national strategic priorities and have high levels of buy-in.
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>Which aspects of the Secretariat's interventions are likely to have an enduring impact?</p>	<p>2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both of the human rights-related interventions examined for this case study have good sustainability prospects. However, the responsibility for ensuring their longevity lies with the government partners as they are the stakeholders enforcing and implementing them, meaning that it is difficult to determine if sustainability should be attributed to the Secretariat. Nonetheless, the Secretariat should be commended for setting the projects up to produce sustainable results well, even if sustainability is not achieved due to government shortfalls. The gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment training provided to senior civil servants is likely to be sustainable so long as the training recipients remain in the Public Service Commission. Beyond this, the support provided to Tonga on sexual harassment is highly likely to be sustainable in the long term since the sexual harassment training resulted in the introduction of a Cabinet-approved workplace sexual harassment policy (which has also had portions of it added into the Employment Relations Bill 2020). However, enforcement of the policy and legislation lies with government partners, meaning that sustainability is out of the Secretariat's hands somewhat. This challenge can be met, however, by introducing ongoing monitoring arrangements at the design stage so that any shortfalls can be identified and rectified. The capacity-building activities related to human rights UPR processes, conducted with 15 of the 25 members of Tonga's Legislative Assembly and their staff, is highly likely to be sustainable. As the recipients of the training are actual members of the Tongan government, the training is more likely to have been institutionalised than other instances of capacity-building, protecting against risks such as turnover (as is the case among elected representatives).

Case Study Country	Tonga
	<p>4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results of the Secretariat's work relating to trade competitiveness is highly likely to be sustainable. The Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme is part of a larger long-term trade and economic plan developed by the Tongan government to make the country more resilient to climate change. This high-level coherence contributes to the likelihood of sustainability. With the stakes as high as they are in one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change, government buy-in is high and hence very likely to implement the investment facilitation strategy that will result from the programme. This is further strengthened by the fact that the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development recognised during implementation that a new unit would be required to oversee the implementation of the strategy to which they responded by promptly setting it up. This means that there will be specific human and financial resources for the sustainability of the programme, and appropriate channels of accountability and authority for its implementation, both of which are key components of programme sustainability. <p>5.3: Improved access to climate financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results of the Secretariat's work relating to climate-resilient finance is highly likely to be sustainable due to the establishment of a healthy pipeline (GBP 48M) through the CCFAH. While there is no guarantee that the pipeline will result in actual financing, the National Climate Finance Adviser specifically worked on building the capacities of officials to bid for finance through the hub. There is thus as good a chance as any that results will be sustainable.
	<p>What have been the main interventions/programmes implemented by the Secretariat?</p> <p>The Secretariat has conducted the following activities and interventions in Tonga within the previous two strategic plan periods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender mainstreaming: As part of the 2018 gender audit of the Tongan Public Service Commission, it was noted that the Public Service Commission lacked a workplace sexual harassment policy. After conducting a needs assessment in consultation with the Public Service Commission, the Secretariat hosted training on sexual harassment. A draft sexual harassment policy was one of the workshop's outcomes that have now been implemented and is being considered for implementation in other public bodies. Technical assistance (TA) was also provided to civil servants on gender in development and policymaking. Human rights capacity strengthening: The Secretariat has conducted several capacity-building activities to strengthen Tonga's human rights commitments. The Secretariat hosted a regional workshop on human rights universal periodic review (UPR) processes—at which at least 15 of the Tongan Legislative Assembly's 25 members and their staff attended—and conducted a capacity-building workshop on high-level stakeholder engagement with the Ombudsman human rights team.

Case Study Country

Tonga

- The Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme: At the request of the Tongan Minister of Trade, the Secretariat's trade competitiveness team is supporting the government to implement a raft of policies to make Tonga a more attractive investment destination. This includes 1) developing a new investment facilitation strategy, 2) helping the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development to identify priority sectors, and 3) producing an investment promotion website.
- Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH): The CCFAH helps small states to access funding to tackle climate change. The Secretariat deployed a National Climate Finance Adviser to Tonga between April 2018 and June 2020 who helped to build the capacity of the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communication (MEIDECC) to access and efficiently use climate finance in the country and to help prepare bids submitted through the facility.

What significant results have been achieved or are likely to be achieved by Secretariat interventions? Have any of these been unintended?

Secretariat interventions in Tonga have either already achieved good outcomes or are primed to achieve them in the future.

2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved

- The Secretariat's gender mainstreaming work has directly led to the introduction of a workplace sexual harassment policy in the Public Service Commission in March 2020. Moreover, the Tongan Legislative Assembly passed an Employment Relations Bill in September 2020. While the bill was introduced to the Assembly before the Secretariat's gender mainstreaming intervention, there were parts to address sexual harassment in employment that were included by the time it passed. There is a strong likelihood that the Secretariat's work with the Public Service Commission contributed to this addition. It was also relayed to the evaluation team that there was a government appetite to introduce other specific workplace sexual harassment policies in other public bodies and to conduct sexual harassment awareness training on some of the outer Tongan islands. Together, this indicates that Secretariat activities have contributed significantly both to an improved policy landscape for women in the workplace in Tonga and to a shift in political attitudes towards the topic.

- The results of the Secretariat's capacity-building support on UPR processes are not yet able to be determined as the next UPR reporting round is in 2023.

4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth

- The Secretariat's support to develop a nationwide investment facilitation strategy is on the cusp of producing significant results at the outcome level and is set to produce more in the medium to long term. The Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme is in the final stages of the process of finalising the foreign investment strategy (as of July 2021) which is expected to structure future trade and investment policy decisions. The government of Tonga recognised the need to establish a new unit inside the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development to oversee the foreign investment strategy as a direct result of Secretariat involvement.

5.3: Improved access to climate financing

- Regarding the CCFAH, since the Commonwealth Advisor was posted, Tonga has accessed over US\$2.7 million in funding through the Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility to strengthen its adaptation and institutional resilience in the face of the challenges climate change poses. Several training sessions and workshops have been hosted, improving the institutional capacity of government partners to bid for funding in the future. Before the advisor left in June 2020, a pipeline worth GBP 48M had been established, ensuring the sustainability of results.

Case Study Country

Tonga

What approaches are most likely to contribute to significant results?

The Secretariat has provided support to Tonga primarily through capacity-building activities and TA. In both cases, the Secretariat has worked particularly closely with Tongan government partners which is a central reason for the promising results seen so far and the positive prospective outlook towards impact.

2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved

- The Secretariat's gender mainstreaming activities in Tonga included gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment training for Public Service Commission staff. In close collaboration with the Public Service Commission and other external stakeholders, a draft sexual harassment policy for the Public Service Commission was produced as an output of the workshop as a form of targeted TA.
 - It was also relayed to the evaluation team that the Secretariat is often seen as a neutral, non-critical, trusted partner and as having a lower profile than many other multilateral organisations such as the World Bank or the UN, meaning that it is thus able to work more effectively on issues which are perceived to be contentious. This aspect of the Secretariat's operations provides particular value-added since the Secretariat can lay the groundwork for other external stakeholders to build upon further down the line, as was the case in Tonga with the World Bank looking to leverage the Secretariat's gender mainstreaming work to build momentum towards ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
 - The Secretariat's support to Tonga on increasing the government's capacity to engage in UN human rights UPR processes used a training and workshop approach. Uniquely, however, 15 out of the 25 members of Tonga's Legislative Assembly and their staff attended the training. This very high-level training contrasts to the forms of training the Secretariat usually pursues which target government officials and civil servants. The fact that the training and workshop were so high-level drove institutional buy-in for the UPR processes and is likely to contribute significantly to both institutional capacity and sustainability.
- 4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth
- The Commonwealth Investment Finance programme furnishes another example of close, protracted TA and capacity-building. While it is too early to determine the outcomes and likelihood of impact, the Secretariat has worked closely with the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development on the programme. A central component of the intervention approach has been to have an externally hired on-the-ground consultant working with government partners, highlighting both the depth of the intervention and the Secretariat's value-added (given that Tonga would have been unlikely to attract such a consultant independently).
- 5.3: Improved access to climate financing
- The Secretariat also pursued an on-the-ground approach in its implementation of the support to the Tongan government relating to the CCFAH. A National Climate Finance Advisor was deployed to Tonga for more than two years, during which time they built the capacity of MEIDEC to bid for finance under the facility (including helping to draft proposals) and established a GBP 48M pipeline. As with the sexual harassment policy drafted for the Public Service Commission, the Secretariat provided close and extensive TA in this respect.

Case Study Country

Tonga

Conclusion

- Except for the human rights UPR processes regional workshop and capacity-building that was conducted over a shorter period, these instances of capacity-building and TA using an on-the-ground approach stand in contrast with several other Secretariat capacity-building and TA interventions which usually tend to be comparatively less involved. The more extensive level of partner engagement and collaboration, in this case, has contributed significantly to the achievement of outcomes observed, as it has enabled the Secretariat to leverage its expertise in a meaningful way and ensure effective implementation. This echoes the findings in some of the other case studies: that deeper, more intensive interventions yield the best results.
- Precisely as a result of the success of the Secretariat's approach in Tonga, the challenge that duly arises is about ensuring that government partners have ownership of the interventions and hence ensure their sustainability. It is quite likely that this challenge will be met since all of the TA and capacity-building reviewed for this case study has been participatory and responsive to stakeholder priorities.

Which results are likely to be sustainable?

All of the results outlined above are likely to be sustainable in the medium to long term due to their institutional adoption, high level of government buy-in, and nature as components of larger national strategic objectives.

2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved

- The Secretariat's gender mainstreaming activities and sexual harassment policy support have resulted in Cabinet-approved policy changes at the Public Service Commission and had aspects of it included in new national employment legislation. So long as government partners ensure that those policies are enforced and acted upon, sustainability will be achieved.
- The capacity-building training provided to members of the Tongan Legislative Assembly on human rights UPR processes indicates that there is a high level of buy-in and appetite for such institutional capacity improvements. This appetite means that the resulting improved institutional capacity is likely to be institutionalised and thus not subject to institutional memory loss, even if those who received the training lose their seats in the assembly.
- 4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth
- The investment strategy, policy reforms, priority sectors, and stakeholder outreach initiated by the Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme will be taken up in future by a new unit within the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development responsible for foreign direct investment. This is part of the country's strategy to shift away from a reliance on overseas development assistance and personal remittances to a service-based economy as a means to improving national resilience.
- 5.3: Improved access to climate financing
- A Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser was deployed to Tonga between April 2018 and June 2020 who undertook capacity-building activities with the MEIDCC and other government partners to be able to effectively access and utilise the CCFAH. The sustainability of this set of activities is likely to be high due to high levels of government buy-in and uptake (as the Tongan government recognises the vital importance of climate-resilient growth given the existential threat that climate change poses to the country) and the fact that the adviser secured a GBP 48M pipeline through the CCFAH.

Case Study Country

Tonga

How well have Secretariat interventions been aligned with the efforts of other stakeholders working on issues related to the strategic outcome areas in focus?

Secretariat interventions in Tonga have been very well aligned with the activities of other stakeholders and partners.

2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved

- The sexual harassment policy for the Public Service Commission, an output of the Secretariat's gender mainstreaming activities, was drafted in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation–Fiji Office, and with input from the European Union and the High Commissions of Australia, the UK, and New Zealand in Tonga. It was also reported that Secretariat activities are often built upon by other external stakeholders such as the World Bank, United Nations Development Program, and the United Nations Population Fund, providing another route to sustainability. In this case, for instance, it was relayed to the evaluation team that the World Bank had approached the Secretariat about collaborating on encouraging Tonga to ratify CEDAW, the only Commonwealth member state not to have already done so. This provides evidence that Secretariat activities enrich the broader stakeholder ecosystem and provide footholds on which further interventions can gain purchase.

- The Secretariat's support to Tonga on improving institutional capacity on UN human rights UPR processes aligns with Tonga's commitments to implement the UN human rights recommendations which result from the reporting review. The training of Legislative Assembly members was also conducted with participants from other small states in the region, meaning that there is the possibility for lesson sharing among participants.

4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth

- The Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme builds on the recommendations of the Tonga Trade Policy Framework (developed since 2016 and launched in 2020), in particular the creation of an investment facilitation strategy, and coheres with the Private Sector Development Strategy and Action Plan. Creating a virtuous cycle, the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development has, in turn, aligned its activities with the Secretariat's work by setting up a unit in the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development to oversee foreign direct investment in light of the strategy drafted by the Secretariat.

5.3: Improved access to climate financing

- The deployment of the National Climate Finance Advisor to Tonga closely aligns with national priorities given Tonga's high vulnerability to climate change and the importance of facilitating access to sufficient funding to increase the country's resilience to climate-related shocks. This also aligns with the work of larger Commonwealth member countries (such as Australia) which have engaged extensively with small island developing nations in the region to utilise the CCFAH.

Case Study Country	Tonga
	<p>Have Secretariat interventions contributed to an increase in the resilience (social, environmental, public governance, and economic) of the focus country? If so, how? Have there been any other significant impacts?</p> <p>It is too early to tell if Secretariat interventions in Tonga have achieved impact, but there is a good chance that they will in the future.</p> <p>2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the newly introduced sexual harassment policy for the Public Service Commission and its partial integration into the Employment Relations Bill 2020 are enforced and acted upon, it is reasonable to suggest that victims of sexual harassment will be more likely to get justice—although reducing the overall incidence of sexual harassment in the Public Service Commission and in the workplace in Tonga generally is a separate issue. This will stand as a good instance of improved social resilience in the country. • In the case of Tonga's human rights UPR processes, the increased human and institutional capacity is likely to improve the quality of Tonga's reporting, but it is not possible to tell if this will lead to an improved human rights record in isolation from a broader analysis of the issue in Tonga, which is beyond the scope of this case study. <p>4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is also too early to determine the impact of the Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme and if it will increase foreign direct investment inflows. Moreover, it remains to be seen if those inflows increase Tonga's economic resilience, improve livelihoods, or enhance climate change resilience. However, if implemented successfully by the new unit setup in the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, the programme stands a decent chance of achieving those impacts. The timeline over which that may happen is, however, likely to be protracted. <p>5.3: Improved access to climate financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tonga's use of the CCFAH has resulted in significant additional financing for climate resilience projects, but it is still far too early to make a judgement regarding their impact and hence of the impact of the Commonwealth adviser deployed to Tonga to assist the government in accessing that new source of finance. <p>What lessons should inform the next Secretariat Strategic Plan or future programming?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Depth, not breadth: The Secretariat pursued a deep and close intervention approach in Tonga which has led to significant outcomes already and is primed to achieve more in the future. The deployment of on-the-ground resources in the case of the CCFAH and the Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme, and a close working relationship in the case of the gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment policy drafting has contributed to the significant outcomes observed and the promising future outlook. This is compounded by the fact that the Secretariat is one of the few organisations offering support to Tonga at a nationally specific, rather than regional, level. The Secretariat thus exhibits significant value-added in Tonga.

Case Study Country

Tonga

2. The Secretariat's low profile can be an advantage: Since the Secretariat is smaller than other multilateral organisations and international organisations it can operate with a comparatively lower profile. Coupled with the fact that the Secretariat is seen as a trusted partner which offers non-critical advice and support on issues that are perceived to be contentious, the Secretariat is able to generate buy-in for its interventions by reducing points of potential antagonism and defensiveness and fostering a collaborative working attitude.
3. Government uptake drives sustainability: In Tonga, all of the interventions the Secretariat has implemented have either been taken up by the government or will be in the future. This is a very effective means of ensuring sustainability as it ensures that financial and human resources are committed to the project. In this case, Secretariat interventions involved the creation of new regulations/legislation and through training sessions for high-level officials, both of which are effective methods of institutionalising Secretariat recommendations and activities. That said, the fact that the responsibility for sustainability lies with government partners under this model raises risks to sustainability due to the very real possibility of capacity constraints in a small island developing state such as Tonga. These can be mitigated, however, by introducing long-term monitoring arrangements at the design stage so that any drop-off after Secretariat exit can be identified and rectified promptly.
4. Demand-driven approaches pose challenges: While the fact that the Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme was demand-driven ensured partner buy-in, relevance, and alignment with national priorities, it was also reported that being demand-led can make it difficult to ensure that interventions are informed by a clear strategy. This can mean that leveraging partnerships and stakeholder relationships are rendered more difficult, lowering efficiency and effectiveness. A solution might thus be to outline a set of strategic priorities for the Secretariat as a whole to member countries who can then make requests based on them. Given the existing strength of support to small states (and small island developing states in particular), support to small states should continue to be one such priority.

List of People Interviewed

Name	Organisation	Position
2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved		
Tawanda Hondora	Commonwealth Secretariat	Adviser and Head, Rule of Law Section
Gary Rhoda	Commonwealth Secretariat	Human Rights Officer
4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth		
Opeyemi Abebe	Commonwealth Secretariat	Adviser and Head, Trade Competitiveness Section
Rejo Sam	Avasant	Associate Director
5.3: Improved access to climate financing		
Duncan Howitt	Australia High Commission	Political Officer, Commonwealth and Social Policy Issues

Case Study Country	Tonga
Bibliography	<p>2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2016). End of Term Review of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015. Available at https://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/103%20-%20CW%20Gender%20Plan%20of%20Action%202005-2015%20Evaluation%20Report_1.pdf • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2019). Commonwealth prepares Tongan civil servants to prevent workplace harassment. Available at https://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/commonwealth-prepares-tongan-civil-servants-prevent-workplace-harassment • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2019). Six-monthly progress report. July–December 2018. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2019). Tonga: Commonwealth Secretariat Engagement—Results Reported for FY 18/19. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2020). At Your Service: Commonwealth Secretariat Engagement 2017/18–2019/20. • Kingdom of Tonga. (2020). Employment Relations Bill 2020. Available at https://ago.gov.to/cms/images/LEGISLATION/BILLS/2020/2020-0003/EmploymentRelationsBill2020.pdf <p>4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avasant. (2021). Provision of Technical Assistance to Support Tonga's Investment Facilitation, Investment Promotion and Create Sector Profiles. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2020). Annual Results Report. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2020). At Your Service: Commonwealth Secretariat Engagement 2017/18–2019/20. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2020). Terms of Reference: Technical Assistance to support Tonga's Investment Facilitation, Investment Promotion and Create Sector Profiles. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2021). Supporting Trade Competitiveness in the Commonwealth. • WTO. (2021). Trade Policy Review. Available at https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/g409_e.pdf <p>5.3: Improved access to climate financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Secretariat. (Year unknown). Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub. Available at https://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/CFATermsOfReference-SteeringCommittee.pdf • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2020). Annual Results Report. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2021). Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub Impact Brochure. Available at https://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/CCFAH%20Impact%20Brochure_March%202021.pdf • International Financial Consulting. (2021). Evaluation of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Action Hub. Available at https://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/120%20-%20Evaluation%20of%20the%20Climate%20Finance%20Access%20Hub_with%20MR_0.pdf

A1.7 Country Case Study: Trinidad and Tobago

Case Study Country	Trinidad and Tobago				
Strategic Outcome Area(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Democracy	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Institutions	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth & Soc Dev	<input type="checkbox"/> Eco Dev	<input type="checkbox"/> Small & Vulnerable States
Directorate(s) / Unit(s)	Governance and Peace Directorate; Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate				
Timeframe	1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism: 2017 to 2020 4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management: Jul 2013 to 2020.				
Case Study Lead	Nora Loncsar	Date	July 2021		
Introduction	<p>This is one of 10 case studies conducted for an independent evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's interventions to support small states (June 2021). The case study has examined two intermediate outcomes in Trinidad and Tobago, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism; and • 4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management. 				
Summary of Findings	<p>1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation team was able to identify some examples of outcomes from progress reports. • Although there is still a long way to go, the Secretariat's 'whole of society' approach has shown some results in terms of improved government and civil society relationships in the context of countering violent extremism (CVE). • The Secretariat's participatory delivery approach helps to ensure that the CVE programme is reflective of key national needs and fosters local ownership. • A more comprehensive assessment of results would have been possible with access to external stakeholders (in particular government, civil society, and community stakeholders) and concerning country-specific results in the recent Evaluation of the Secretariat's Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programme. This was, however, not possible due to stakeholder fatigue. <p>4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat has significantly contributed to improved debt management and debt data quality in Trinidad and Tobago. • Results on the Secretariat's more recent interventions, such as the transition to Commonwealth Meridian (the new debt management software), have been slower to emerge. The reason behind this is not clear. • Partners in Trinidad and Tobago found all delivery approaches employed by the Secretariat useful, appreciate the hands-on nature of the support, and that advice is tailored to the needs of the country. 				
Effectiveness	<p>How effectively has the Commonwealth Secretariat delivered support to address the vulnerabilities, public governance and development challenges of its small member states?</p>				

Case Study Country	Trinidad and Tobago
<p>Coherence / Alignment</p> <p>How well do the Secretariat's small states interventions and support fit within an overarching Secretariat strategic intent; and with the actions of other institutions targeting small states as key beneficiaries?</p>	<p>1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CVE Unit built partnerships with a range of international, regional, and national stakeholders. • It is also working closely with other units in the Secretariat, including the Youth, Education and Sustainable Development Directorate and Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform. <p>4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance on debt management is available from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Bank and IMF, but demand for support is so high that there is a clear need for the Secretariat's work as well. The Secretariat coordinates and, on occasion, collaborates with these other stakeholders.
<p>Impact</p> <p>To what extent has the Commonwealth Secretariat's support delivered to longer-term/high-level social, environmental, public governance and economic changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended)?</p>	<p>1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member states to counter violent extremism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation team did not have sufficient evidence to assess the impact of CVE interventions. <p>4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from partners in Trinidad and Tobago suggests that Secretariat support has contributed to public governance and economic resilience as improved debt management and data quality have increased confidence in both the country's economy and the transparency of the government.
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>Which aspects of the Secretariat's interventions are likely to have an enduring impact?</p>	<p>1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat seeks to achieve this by strengthening the government's capacity to implement a whole of society approach to the phenomenon of violent extremism and has focussed on building expertise and understanding of the key issues that will facilitate long-term and sustainable government and civil society capacity in Commonwealth countries. In assessing the CVE programmes' sustainability in Trinidad and Tobago, the evaluation was only able to rely on one data source, the Evaluation of the Secretariat's CVE Programme for evidence. This evaluation was not specific to Trinidad and Tobago, and we had no opportunity to triangulate the findings. On sustainability, the evaluation found that the 'longer-term effects of the programme (as a whole and not specific to Trinidad and Tobago) to date were questionable.' We note that the Secretariat disagrees with this finding. <p>4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reforms supported by the Secretariat are highly likely to be sustainable.

Case Study Country

Trinidad and Tobago

What have been the main interventions/programmes implemented by the Secretariat?

1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism

Trinidad and Tobago has been one of the highest per-capita contributors of fighters to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or ISIS) which is designated as a terrorist organisation by the United Nations. To help the government of Trinidad and Tobago address violent extremism, the Secretariat has implemented a range of activities:

- Technical assistance to the government: This included, for example, assistance in developing its CVE National Action Plan and establishing the Nightingale Taskforce which is mandated to address the return and reintegration of foreign fighters and their families;
- Capacity-building to a range of partners on CVE: This included, for example, a retreat for imams where Islamist researchers talked about extremists ideas and how these are different from the correct interpretation of the Quran so that they can develop counter-narratives against extremism; capacity-building for the Prisons Service to prevent radicalisation and effectively manage the rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders; the 'Faith in the Commonwealth' programme; and a regional workshop for youth leaders on strategic communication and journalism skills to challenge violent extremism.
- Strategic communication and awareness-raising activities: These included, for example, various strategic communications projects for women and young people in the community to raise awareness on the drivers of extremism and how religious narratives are being used for recruitment, and collaboration with a local NGO on awareness-raising in secondary schools about extremist narratives.
- Advocacy for and representation of small states in global CVE fora (e.g., the Global Counterterrorism Forum and Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism) to which they are typically not invited.

4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management

The Secretariat has been providing support to Trinidad and Tobago on debt management throughout the 2013/14–2016/17 and 2017/18–2020/21 strategic planning periods. This included:

- Technical support to establish a comprehensive public debt database in the Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System;
- Capacity-building and technical assistance to address data quality issues within the Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System public debt database;
- Support to the development of a debt management procedures manual for institutionalising, recording, and monitoring public debt;
- Technical assistance to review Trinidad and Tobago's institutional arrangements and legal framework for debt management which resulted in several recommendations on reforms;
- Advisory reports for the Middle Office of the Debt Management Division on contingent liability risk assessment and the development of a domestic bond market;
- Trinidad and Tobago was one of the first pilot countries of the Secretariat's new debt management software called Commonwealth Meridian. As part of the pilot, the Secretariat provided extensive capacity-building support to the Debt Management Division and other stakeholders involved in the management of public debt, and technical support on the migration of data from the Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System to Commonwealth Meridian; and
- Technical assistance on the restructuring of Trinidad and Tobago's debt management legislative framework (currently consisting of about 17 pieces of legislation) into one piece of legislation.

Case Study Country

Trinidad and Tobago

What significant results have been achieved or are likely to be achieved by Secretariat interventions? Have any of these been unintended?

1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism

Without access to external stakeholders and reference to country-specific results in the recent evaluation of the Secretariat's CVE programme, the evaluation team was not able to comprehensively assess the outcomes of CVE interventions in Trinidad and Tobago. The following examples of outcomes were extracted from annual and six-monthly progress reports, but they haven't been validated through external interviews (triangulation):

- Anecdotal evidence shows that government partners have improved preventing and countering violent extremism capacity in Trinidad and Tobago. For instance, the follow-up evaluation of the second champions training on preventing violent extremism in prisons revealed that participants have reinforced their understanding of behavioural indicators of radicalisation and resilience to violent extremism; have developed short-, medium-, and long-term strategic responses to violent extremism; and improved their capacity on training new prison staff. Additionally, following engagement by the Secretariat, some civil society organisations arranged their community cohesion programmes and community leaders are engaging more with the media following the Secretariat's 'understanding media' training.
 - Although there is still significant room for improvement, there is some evidence that collaboration has improved between government, civil society actors, and other stakeholders. Feedback from civil society shows that stakeholders are willing to engage with the government and acknowledge that addressing issues of extremism requires a coordinated approach that involves stakeholders across all sectors. Trinidad and Tobago has existing consultation mechanisms for gathering community input into its CVE plans and there is some indication that the use of these mechanisms has become more regularised. For example, the Department of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs consulted civil society organisations on a draft law for repatriating foreign terrorist fighters.
 - With support from the Secretariat's CVE Unit, the government has established a multidisciplinary and multiagency team, the Nightingale Taskforce, which is mandated to support the repatriation of citizens of Trinidad and Tobago from Iraq and Syria. The task force successfully dealt with the repatriation of two minors who were taken to Iraq by their father without the knowledge of their mother.
- #### 4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
- As the key outcome of the Secretariat's technical support early in the 2013/14–2016/17 strategic planning period, Trinidad and Tobago established a comprehensive public debt database in the Secretariat's Debt Recording and Management System which represented a significant improvement and was more tailored to the needs of the country compared to the previously used UNCTAD database. Trinidad and Tobago reorganised its debt office in line with international best practices to facilitate specialisation and improve risk management processes. This was an outcome of the recommendations emerging from the Secretariat's institutional arrangements and legal framework review. Together, these efforts resulted in significant improvements in Trinidad and Tobago's debt data quality and risk management processes (outcome). Partner feedback confirmed that data quality significantly improved. This is evidenced by the fact that they no longer receive queries from Parliament, agencies, and the IMF regarding discrepancies between the data reported by the government and the Central Bank. Partners also noted that the efficiency of debt data reporting improved and that the Secretariat's support has been critical to the reforms that allowed these improvements.

Case Study Country

Trinidad and Tobago

Although data has been successfully migrated from Commonwealth Secretariat's Debt Recording and Management System to Commonwealth Meridian, Trinidad and Tobago has not yet fully transitioned to the new software and hasn't yet signed the Commonwealth Meridian licencing agreement. The reason behind this is not clear. According to partners in Trinidad and Tobago, they would need to pay a fee for the licence for the new software and pay extra charges for country reports and other fixes in the system. Consequently, they are waiting for all the issues with Commonwealth Meridian to be resolved through the pilot before signing the licence. The Secretariat has a different perspective. While there is a licence fee (there is one for the Secretariat's Debt Recording and Management System as well, but it hasn't been billed to countries for a while), there are no extra charges for reports and other fixes: the Secretariat instead suspects capacity constraints and concerns with the reporting templates are behind the delay. Nevertheless, partner feedback suggest that Trinidad and Tobago does intend to fully switch to Commonwealth Meridian. Once that happens, further improvements are expected in the way Trinidad and Tobago manages its public debt due to the enhanced functionalities of Commonwealth Meridian, including, for example, greater flexibility for financing options and recording, more accurate debt servicing forecasts, better reporting, improved accessibility for end-users through the web-based platform, and so on (expected outcome). Although still in development, the new consolidated legislative framework is expected to allow Trinidad and Tobago to use new financial instruments in debt management and confirm the mandate of the Debt Management Division (expected outcome).

What approaches are most likely to contribute to significant results?

1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism

The Secretariat has used a combination of approaches to deliver support, including:

- Technical support;
- Capacity-building; and
- Strategic communication and awareness-raising.

The Secretariat CVE Unit staff themselves play an active role in programme design and implementation. The evaluation of the Secretariat's CVE programme found that this allowed first-hand observations and provided opportunities for relationship-building with partners. However, COVID-19 showed that this approach also has limitations as maintaining continuity in the face of travel restrictions became a challenge.

The Secretariat has taken a 'whole of society' approach to delivering support on CVE, meaning it targets a wide range of stakeholders, from grassroots and civil society organisations to government, and that one of the key objectives of the interventions is to improve government-civil society relationships. For example, every activity in Trinidad and Tobago funded by the CVE Unit has incorporated at least one session that includes civil society and government exchange. As discussed under the section on outcomes, this approach has shown some signs of effectiveness as relationships between stakeholders have shown improvement.

Another key element of the Secretariat's delivery strategy is a participatory approach where the CVE Unit is working closely with member countries to develop a context-specific understanding of violent extremism and to design tailored interventions accordingly. This approach ensures that the programme is reflective of key national needs and fosters local ownership and acceptance of interventions.

Case Study Country

Trinidad and Tobago

The Secretariat's CVE Unit selected its focus countries and interventions based on a comprehensive needs assessment:

There was less success in integrating gender consistently: The evaluation report noted that at the time of the review, 'the programme had been less successful in integrating gender sensitivity at the programme and activity levels, although there were signs of improvement.' Examples where the programme successfully implemented gender-sensitive activities included training on gender dynamics in CVE and hosting a workshop on countering the narratives that terrorist and extremist organisations use to recruit women.

The evaluation also highlighted challenges with results measurement, noting that the Secretariat's 'engagement following the delivery of activities... that the Secretariat was in some cases limited' and 'the extent to which intermediate outcomes (and beyond) had been achieved could not be ascertained.'

4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management

The approaches the Secretariat has employed to support debt management in Trinidad and Tobago has included debt management software (the Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System and Commonwealth Meridian) with ongoing customer support, technical assistance (e.g., on institutional reforms, system migration, and the drafting of legislation), and capacity-building. The latter has included a wide range of activities such as in-person and online training, mentoring, and utilising a help desk. The Secretariat's debt management unit has been providing support to Trinidad and Tobago over an extended period, including the last two strategic planning periods.

Partners in the Trinidad and Tobago Debt Management Division have found all these approaches useful. For instance, they appreciated the objective, external perspective that the Secretariat's institutional and legal framework review provided and that it reflected the experience of other countries. They also highlighted the usefulness of training on the live database and that the Secretariat is always available to support and troubleshoot problems through phone and email in a way that fully considers their concerns and country context.

Partners noted that they prefer in-person training over the online training sessions that the Secretariat had to transition to due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Secretariat's support on debt management has no specific gender mainstreaming activities. However, Commonwealth Meridian includes features allowing users to align their borrowings to gender-specific activities and the SDGs.

Which results are likely to be sustainable?

1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism

Given the lack of access to external stakeholders, the case study relied on the evaluation of the Secretariat's CVE programme for evidence of sustainability. The evaluation found that the 'longer-term effects of the programme to date were questionable', mostly due to the emphasis of interventions on the 'short-term delivery of activities and Commonwealth visibility'. It also highlighted the lack of a 'sustainability and exit strategy' and of 'a coherent and 'programmatically' approach to capacity-building. " It is important to note, however, that these findings relate to the programme as a whole and are not specific to Trinidad and Tobago, and that the evaluation team did not have the opportunity to triangulate this finding. We also note that the Secretariat disagrees with this finding.

4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management

Partners in the Trinidad and Tobago Debt Management Division confirmed that reforms of the institutional arrangements are highly unlikely to be reversed. They also see clear benefits to the Secretariat's debt management software (both Debt Recording and Management System and Commonwealth Meridian) and thus won't be returning to an Excel-based system.

Case Study Country

Trinidad and Tobago

How well have Secretariat interventions been aligned with the efforts of other stakeholders working on issues related to the strategic outcome areas in focus?

1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism

An important element of the CVE Unit's delivery strategy is its partnership with international, regional, and national stakeholders. In line with this, the team has established relationships with a range of organisations, including the United Nations and UN bodies (such as UNDP, UNESCO, UNTOC, etc), the Organisation of American States, the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, the Council of Europe, Hedeyah, Common Purpose, the Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassadors Network, and the Global Counterterrorism Forum. The CVE team is also working closely with other units in the Secretariat, including the Youth, Education, and Sustainable Development Directorate and the Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform. For example, the CVE team collaborated with the Youth, Education, and Sustainable Development Directorate on the Faith in the Commonwealth programme.

4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management

On the software side, a similar system is available from UNCTAD (which is what Trinidad and Tobago switched from to then use the Secretariat's Debt Recording and Management System). On the policy side, support is available from the IMF and World Bank. However, demand for support on debt management is so high that there is a clear need for the Secretariat's work as well: the Secretariat coordinates, and on occasion collaborates, with these other stakeholders. For example, the Secretariat is one of the implementing partners of the World Bank's Debt Management Facility and are organising joint training sessions with the World Bank—however, high-income countries such as Trinidad and Tobago are not eligible for support from this specific Facility.

Partners in Trinidad and Tobago suggested that they do not consider asking for technical assistance from these other stakeholders as the Secretariat's support is 'spot on'. They see the comparative advantage of the Secretariat in that they tailor the debt management software to their needs and provide hands-on support. They feel that their relationship with the Secretariat team is personal and that the Secretariat regards Trinidad and Tobago's problems as its own.

Secretariat staff see the comparative advantage of its support vis-à-vis other stakeholders in that it has no ulterior and vested interests (e.g., a financial interest in the debt management software).

Have Secretariat interventions contributed to an increase in the resilience (social, environmental, public governance, and economic) of the focus country? If so, how? Have there been any other significant impacts?

1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism

The evaluation team did not have sufficient evidence to assess the impact of CVE interventions: such as: Did they prevent/counter radicalisation, violent extremism, and terrorism among citizens of Trinidad and Tobago? Measuring impact is complex, but there are methodologies available.¹²

4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management

The impact of the Secretariat's support on debt management is not currently monitored within the programme. Partners in Trinidad and Tobago, however, feel that it has contributed to public governance and economic resilience as improved debt management and data quality have increased confidence in the country's economy by domestic and international stakeholders, as well as Parliament's confidence in the transparency of the government.

12. See for example, <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/cct/measuring-impact> or <https://www.international-alert.org/publications/preventing-violent-extremism-toolkit>

Case Study Country

Trinidad and Tobago

What lessons should inform the next Secretariat Strategic Plan or future programming?

1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism

- Having a champion in a partner government is important when tackling sensitive reforms and issues. In the case of the CVE programme, this was the Attorney General (who himself is part of the Muslim community) and is keen to work with the Secretariat and the community on preventing and countering violent extremism. The Secretariat also managed to build a similarly strong relationship with the Ministry of National Security.
 - One of the key recommendations of the evaluation of the Secretariat's CVE programme for the CVE Unit is to shift their current 'diplomatic' approach towards a more 'developmental' approach. The unit, however, feels that their current approach focusing on supporting the government to address violent extremism is the right one given the relatively small annual budget of the programme.
 - The root causes of violent extremism are complex and addressing them requires interventions in a wide range of fields, from education to economic development. Consequently, the CVE Unit places a strong emphasis on collaborating with other units in the Secretariat. Despite some notable achievements in fostering collaboration—e.g., the Faith in Commonwealth programme—challenges remain, including the lack of mechanisms for information exchange between different teams or a single database where one can see what other Secretariat teams do in a given country.
 - Global fora on CVE tend to focus on larger states. This is a key challenge that the Secretariat tries to address as small states, like Trinidad and Tobago, would benefit significantly from learning about larger countries' experiences. Therefore, the Secretariat's efforts to link small states to these fora and advocate for them in meetings sounds like a worthwhile investment and the team should ensure that its efforts in this regard are captured in the results measurement framework.
- #### 4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
- Although the Secretariat was able to successfully transition to online support (there was no period without training) due to COVID-19, the pandemic did create challenges for the programme—for example, in the recruitment of consultants—which have led to delays. Partners also find in-person training and support more effective.
 - Trinidad and Tobago colleagues found the training for stakeholders outside the Debt Management Division very useful and hope that the Secretariat will restart these training sessions. They noted that there was a list of mandatory Secretariat training sessions with the Secretariat's DRMS which they would like to see the Secretariat reintroduce with Commonwealth Meridian.
 - Trinidad and Tobago's delay in fully transitioning to Commonwealth Meridian has been a key concern for the Secretariat given the time and resources invested in supporting the transition since 2017. To avoid similar delays in the future, the Secretariat is planning to give a clear roadmap and timeline for countries to transition to Commonwealth Meridian.
 - Successful reforms in debt management require political will and support from the highest levels of government in beneficiary countries. Civil servants in lower levels of government have a critical role in securing this.
 - Debt Management Units in small states are operated by small teams which means that they will not have the capacity to engage with donor support at times (e.g., during budget preparation). For technical assistance to be successful, implementing organisations need to be aware of and flexibly work around these constraints.

Case Study Country	Trinidad and Tobago		
List of People Interviewed			
Name	Organisation		Position
1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member states to counter violent extremism			
Mark Albon	Commonwealth Secretariat/ Governance and Peace Directorate		Head, Countering Violent Extremism
4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management			
Shezelle Bowman	Trinidad and Tobago Debt Management Division		Senior Debt Analyst, Back Office
Jimmy Wong	Trinidad and Tobago Debt Management Division		Analyst, Back Office
Zahra Mohammed	Trinidad and Tobago Debt Management Division		Assistant Manager
Narine Charran	Trinidad and Tobago Debt Management Division		Manager
Joanne Alline	Commonwealth Secretariat/ Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate		Business Analyst
Pamella McLaren	Commonwealth Secretariat/ Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate		Adviser and Head, Debt Management

Case Study Country	Trinidad and Tobago
Bibliography	<p>1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member states to counter violent extremism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2018) Six-monthly Progress on Results: July–December 2017. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2018) Commonwealth Secretariat Annual Results Report 2018/19. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2020) Project Design Document: Countering Violent Extremism Programme. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2020) Six-Monthly Progress on Results Report—Countering Violent Extremism Programme: January–June 2020. • The Commonwealth. (2018) The Commonwealth Secretariat's T&T P/CVE programme. July 2018 • The Commonwealth. (2019) Countering Violent Extremism in Prisons—Second Champion Training on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Prisons: Evaluation Report. • The Commonwealth. (2020) Evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Countering Violent Extremism Programme: Final Report. • The Commonwealth. Background Brief: P/CVE Support Program for Trinidad and Tobago. <p>4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Meridian. Introducing Commonwealth Meridian. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2014) Six-monthly Progress on Results: July–December 2013. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2014) Six-monthly Progress on Results: January–June 2014. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2015) Six-monthly Progress on Results: July–December 2014. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2015) Six-monthly Progress on Results: January–June 2015. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2016) Six-monthly Progress on Results: July–December 2015. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2014) Commonwealth Secretariat Annual Results Report 2013/14. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2016) Commonwealth Secretariat Annual Results Report 2015/16. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2018) Commonwealth Secretariat Annual Results Report 2018/19. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2021) Six-Monthly Progress on Results Report—Promoting International Sound Practices in Public Debt Management: July–December 2020. • Commonwealth Secretariat. (2021) Six-Monthly Progress on Results Report—Development of the Secretariat's Debt Management System—Commonwealth Meridian: July–December 2020. • Commonwealth Secretariat—Debt Management Unit. (2020) Commonwealth Meridian Implementation: Lessons Learned.

A1.8 Global Issue Case Study: Access to Disaster Financing: Development of a Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Portal

Global Issue in Focus	Access to Disaster Financing: Development of A Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Portal		
	<p>Strategic Outcome 4: More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development</p> <p>Strategic Outcome 5: Strengthened resilience of small and other vulnerable states, including adaptation and mitigation against climate change</p>		
Directorate(s) / Unit(s)	Economic Policy and Small States		
Timeframe	2018–2020		
Case Study Lead	Nikos Papachristodoulou	Date	July 2021
Introduction	<p>This is one of 10 case studies conducted for an independent evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's interventions to support small states (June 2021). This case study focuses on access to disaster finance, specifically the Secretariat's web-based Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Portal.</p> <p>A central issue for Commonwealth member countries, particularly small states, is the susceptibility to natural disasters and climate change. Disasters can reverse development gains and, in some instances, hamper national efforts geared towards achieving sustainable development. In October 2020, Secretariat developed the DRF Portal. It serves as a repository of information on a range of disaster finance instruments and mechanisms available for helping member countries, including small states, to manage the financial impact of natural disasters and reduce natural disaster risks. It also contains information about disaster-related knowledge products, events, and training information to facilitate learning and exchange among users.</p>		
Summary of Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Secretariat staff, their engagement with member countries (including small states), development partners, and other actors has demonstrated that there is interest in the DRF Portal. However, at present, there is no monitoring mechanism to track usage of the portal. This suggests the need for more emphasis on monitoring on the part of the Economic Policy and Small States section. • At the time of writing, no visible higher-level results can be identified in terms of support to member countries to manage the financial impact of natural disasters. The case study concludes that complementary technical support to member countries including small states on disaster finance will be instrumental in driving the effectiveness of the Secretariat's support on disaster finance in the future. 		
Coherence / Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DRF Portal aligns with the Secretariat's strategic intent, notably Strategic Outcome 4: More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development and Strategic Outcome 5: Strengthened resilience of small and other vulnerable states, including adaptation and mitigation against climate change. It also builds on the most recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2018 that recognised the importance of disaster finance and affirmed the value of disaster preparedness and the role of the Secretariat in supporting member countries to manage natural disaster risks. Furthermore, it aligns with the priorities of small states who believe there is an urgent need for disaster financing. 		

Global Issue in Focus	Access to Disaster Financing: Development of A Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Portal
What is the significance of the issue for small states?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small states are proportionately more vulnerable to natural disasters than larger states.¹³ Extreme events and natural hazards such as tropical cyclones and storms, floods, droughts, and earthquakes impose a heavy burden on vulnerable communities, natural ecosystems, livelihoods, the economy, and national budgets,¹⁴ and in turn impede progress towards sustainable development.¹⁵ The impacts of climate change on the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and disasters will increase small states' risks further.¹⁶ • Over the years Commonwealth member countries have developed disaster risk management strategies and have institutionalised governance structures through the establishment of disaster management authorities. Despite these advancements, small states in particular still face challenges in accessing finance and implementing disaster risk management strategies effectively.¹⁷ • Disaster finance for small states is available, but is fragmented, according to interviews with Secretariat staff. Multilateral banks, international organisations, and bilateral cooperation have made available a wide range of disaster finance products and instruments. However, finance architecture complexity¹⁸ has often been an impediment to demand and highlights the need for knowledge transfer and communication.¹⁹
How well have Secretariat interventions/projects responded to the needs and strategic priorities of small states?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting recognised the importance of disaster finance and affirmed the value of disaster preparedness and the role of the Secretariat in supporting member countries to manage natural disaster risks. Guided by this mandate, the Secretariat embarked on a work programme aimed at sensitising member countries, including small states, about the complexity of disaster risk finance instruments, identifying avenues for support, and strengthening capacity on disaster management. Central to the Secretariat's work programme on disaster finance has been the DRF Portal.
What have been the main interventions/projects implemented by the Secretariat to influence the focus issue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat developed a web-based DRF portal which was launched at the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting held on 7 October 2020. The portal serves as a "one-stop-shop" where member countries, including small states, can access information on international funding earmarked for disasters. It provides information on the available disaster finance products and instruments, eligibility or access criteria, and terms and conditions. To make it more accessible, the portal also includes case studies, a knowledge bank, and information on initiatives and programmes offered by other development partners. • Prior to the official launch of the portal, the Secretariat made presentations to publicise the content of the portal at various events (notably the 5th Global Biennial Conference on Small States held in Samoa in March 2019 which brought together senior officials from Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth small states), and to key regional and international development partners.

13 Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT). <https://www.emdat.be/>

14 Michael Hagenlocher, Davide Cotti, Jennifer Demno Cissé et al. 2020. Disaster risk and readiness for insurance solutions in Small Island Developing States. UNU-UHS.

15 James M. Shultz, Madeline A. Cohen, Sabrina Hermosilla, Zeide Espinel, and Andrew McLean. 2016. Disaster risk reduction and sustainable development for small island developing states, *Disaster Health*, 3:1. 32–44.

16 S.I. Seneviratne et al. 2012. Changes in climate extremes and their impacts on the natural physical environment. In: *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation* by C.B. Field et al. A Special Report of Working Groups I and II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

17 Commonwealth Disaster Risk Finance Programme: Building back better for resilient preparedness and recovery. (2021) Concept Note.

18 For example, in the case of index-based or parametric insurance products.

19 OECD. 2015. *Disaster Risk Financing: A global survey of practices and challenges*. OECD Publishing, Paris.

Global Issue in Focus	Access to Disaster Financing: Development of A Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Portal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat has identified several enhancements to be incorporated in the portal that can make the portal more interactive and increase learning and exchange among users. The following enhancements are tentatively scheduled to be completed by the last quarter of 2021:²⁰ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Chat function for instant response to queries. ◦ Newsfeed tracker on natural disasters. ◦ Creation of an exchange forum. ◦ Creation of information on DRM exchange hubs with restricted access. 	
<p>Which other development partners or global actors aim to influence the issue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaster finance is a crowded and competitive space. The DRF Portal attempts to consolidate already available information published by other development partners and global actors on disaster finance products and instruments. The platform uses data and information from the Centre for Disaster Protection, launched by the United Kingdom Prime Minister in 2017, but also the World Bank's various disaster-related portals (e.g., Disaster Risk Insurance Platform, ThinkHazard!, and others). Both the Department for International Development (now the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office) and the World Bank were invited to trial test and validate the content and functionality of the portal prior to its official launch. 	
<p>What change has Secretariat's influencing intended to achieve in the short- and medium-term?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DRF Portal primarily seeks to help member countries, including small states, to easily access information on the right type of financial support to prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters. • However, the Secretariat's current monitoring and evaluation approach does not capture data on the use of the DRF Portal by small states or other users. According to interviews with Secretariat staff, the organisation is currently considering the best approach and indicators for how to best capture how the DRF Portal is performing in terms of its visibility and use. • In the medium-term, the portal is expected to help promote more strategic responses to disaster management and build financial resilience, especially for climate-vulnerable small states. To this end, the Secretariat has prepared a concept note for a complementary capacity-building programme on disaster finance which it anticipates will commence the next financial year. According to the concept note, the objectives of the new Disaster Risk Management (DRM) programme will be threefold: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Complement the functionality of the portal; ◦ Design projects which seek to support member countries, including small states, manage the financial impact of natural disasters and build back better; and ◦ Strengthen capacity in disaster risk management for planning, response, and recovery purpose. 	

20 Commonwealth Disaster Risk Finance Programme: Building back better for resilient preparedness and recovery. (2021) Concept Note.

Global Issue in Focus	Access to Disaster Financing: Development of A Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Portal
What noteworthy results have been achieved by Secretariat influencing? Have any of these been unintended?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No visible higher-level results have been achieved to date in terms of small states using the portal and benefiting from it in specific ways. Secretariat staff acknowledge that higher-level results (outcomes/impact) are only likely if there is complementary programming for additional support to small states. The evaluation notes that a mechanism to capture results is also required. For reference, the expected outcome of the proposed new capacity-building programme on disaster finance, mentioned above, is strengthened technical and institutional capacity in disaster risk management for small states.
What is the Secretariat's value-added in influencing the issue vis-a-vis member countries' individual or other global actors' efforts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to interviews with Secretariat staff, what differentiates its portal from similar online repositories developed by other development partners or global actors is that it is more comprehensive. It was pointed out, for example, that while the World Bank also provides data and information on disaster finance to its beneficiary countries, this revolves around promoting their own financial products. the Secretariat's support is more independent as it provides information about a broad range of funding instruments from various providers such as multilateral banks, international organisations, and bilateral donors.
What lessons should inform the next Secretariat Strategic Plan or future programming?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the DRF Portal to be more useful/impactful it would be beneficial if the Secretariat expanded its scope (it can also cover COVID-19, for example) and functionality, and accompany it with country-specific technical support. The proposed complementary capacity-building programme can serve this purpose. The initiative could also benefit from closer collaboration with and utilisation of the Secretariat's existing capacity support programmes such as the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub. Moreover, the information in the portal is relevant to the Secretariat's work on debt management because small states that wish to apply for disaster financing should be in a position to know their debt levels before choosing finance instruments. The portal link is on the debt management system (Meridian). EPSS and Debt Management teams met several times to explore possible linkages. However, given the nature of Meridian (confidential treatment of member countries debt with strict access), it was agreed that the only way is to place the portal link within Meridian.

Global Issue in Focus		Access to Disaster Financing: Development of A Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Portal	
List of People Interviewed			
Name	Organisation	Position	
Motselisi Matsela	Commonwealth Secretariat	Economic Adviser	
Bibliography			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commonwealth Disaster Risk Finance Programme: Building back better for resilient preparedness and recovery. 2021. Concept Note. Disaster funds easier to access with new web portal. 2020. Available at https://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/disaster-funds-easier-access-new-web-portal Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Portal. Available at https://drf.thecommonwealth.org/ Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT). https://www.emdat.be Michael Hagenlocher, Davide Cotti, Jennifer Denno Cissé et al. 2020. Disaster risk and readiness for insurance solutions in Small Island Developing States. UNU-UHS. James M. Shultz, Madeline A. Cohen, Sabrina Hermosilla, Zelde Espinel, and Andrew McLean 2016. Disaster risk reduction and sustainable development for small island developing states. <i>Disaster Health</i>, 3:1, 32–44. OECD. 2015. Disaster Risk Financing: A global survey of practices and challenges. OECD Publishing, Paris. S.I. Seneviratne et al. 2012. Changes in climate extremes and their impacts on the natural physical environment. In: <i>Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation</i> by C.B. Field et al. A Special Report of Working Groups I and II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Geneva. World Bank. 2018. <i>Small States: Vulnerability and Concessional Finance</i>. Technical Note. Operations Policy and Country Services (OPCS). 			

A1.9 Global Issue Case Study: Taking Vulnerability into Account in Concessional Financing

Global Issue in Focus	Taking Vulnerability into Account in Concessional Financing	
Outcome Area(s)	Strategic Outcome 2: More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development	
Directorate(s) / Unit(s)	Economic, Youth, and Sustainable Development Directorate	
Timeframe	Vulnerability in general since the 1980s; Universal Vulnerability Index since 2018.	
Case Study Lead	Nikos Papachristodoulou	Date June 2021
Introduction		
<p>This is one of 10 case studies conducted for an independent evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's interventions to support small states (June 2021). This case study focuses on taking vulnerability into account in concessional financing for small states which relates to Intermediate Outcome 4.2: Commonwealth positions advanced in international development and financing mechanisms.</p>		
Summary of Findings		
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which the Commonwealth Universal Vulnerability Index (UVI) is informing global debates or policy and decision-making on issues of vulnerability and concessional finance in small states is not yet clear and it is potentially too early to assess. However, the Secretariat is effectively leveraging its UVI as an entry point for dialogue with multilateral organisations around how to support small states. Furthermore, the Secretariat's advocacy efforts on understanding vulnerability over the years has amplified the voice and influence of small states in the international multilateral system with the potential for achieving longer-term outcomes. However, results per se are difficult to quantify. The UVI defines measurements of vulnerability and provides an evidence base, but there is now a need for the Secretariat to develop and implement a well-defined and structured advocacy strategy and action plan that lays out how to engage and influence global actors in the next strategic plan so that they incorporate vulnerability into concessional finance. 	
Coherence / Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is very good alignment between the Secretariat's work on small states' vulnerability with the policy priorities of small states and with international agendas supported by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and its Disaster Resilience Strategies, the UN Committee for Development Policy, and the Caribbean Development Bank, amongst other players. 	

Global Issue in Focus

Taking Vulnerability into Account in Concessional Financing

What is the significance of the issue for small states?

- Understanding and measuring the vulnerability of small states is significant not just for small states, but also for the Secretariat, who advocates on behalf of small states and for other international development partners (as stated in previous section).
- Small states' demographic characteristics, poor physical infrastructure and connectivity, and low diversification of economic activities are some of the structural factors that contribute to their high sensitivity and exposure to exogenous shocks. This in turn makes small states disproportionately affected by emerging developments in trade, debt, international regulation, natural disasters, and climate change.²¹ The UVI is a way of making the specific concerns of small states visible.
- Small states are particularly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters which entail significant and often unanticipated costs. IMF research found that nearly one in ten disasters in small states causes damage amounting to more than 30% of GDP whereas it is often less than 1% for larger states.²² For example, Dominica lost more than 226% of its 2016 GDP due to Hurricane Maria.²³ The 2021 volcanic eruption in St Vincent and the Grenadines could cost up to half of the nation's GDP; other small states, such as Tonga, Grenada, and Antigua and Barbuda, have experienced similar disasters.
- Most Commonwealth small states have built institutions and mechanisms to mitigate against climate change. However, according to the Commonwealth Universal Vulnerability Index (UVI) and interviews with representatives of small states, it is very difficult to significantly reduce exposure. Resilience is influenced by income levels and structural factors such as governance and policy performance. Continued exposure to exogenous shocks inevitably worsens public finances, reduces investment and growth prospects, and hampers small states' efforts to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- The evaluation's external interviewees testified to the importance of incorporating vulnerability into development financing. Stakeholders from small states noted that despite their middle-income status, they still need access to concessional finance given widening fiscal deficits and risks to debt sustainability. As concessional finance is mostly allocated according to income levels and governance and policy performance indicators, a vulnerability index that does not disentangle structural factors from these elements would not be useful for development finance allocation purposes.²⁴ The Secretariat's UVI is designed to be used as evidence for the allocation of development finance and therefore clearly differentiates between exogenous and other factors linked to the present policies of small states.

21 The Commonwealth Universal Vulnerability Index: For a Global Consensus on the Definition and Measurement of Vulnerability. April 2021.

22 IMF. 2016. Small States' Resilience to Natural Disasters and Climate Change: Role for the IMF. Policy Paper.

23 Post-Disaster Needs Assessment: Hurricane Maria, 18 September 2017. A Report by the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

24 Foundation for Studies and Research on International Development (FERDI). Designing a universal vulnerability index: Towards a global consensus on a measure of vulnerability. A new framework. 15 December 2020. Presentation.

Global Issue in Focus	Taking Vulnerability into Account in Concessional Financing
How well have Secretariat interventions/projects responded to the needs and strategic priorities of small states?	<p>How well have Secretariat interventions/projects responded to the needs and strategic priorities of small states?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat's advocacy efforts to secure global awareness of the needs, vulnerabilities, and priorities of small states goes back to the 1980s. The Secretariat argues that GDP is not in and of itself an adequate measure of the development status of small states as they are disproportionately vulnerable to exogenous shocks. • The Secretariat was among the first international organisations to explore the vulnerability of small states. Interviews with representatives of member countries noted that there is an appreciation of the challenges as a group by nature of their size and added that the Secretariat has taken this a step further by turning the recognition of challenges into action in terms of support, including concerning concessional finance. • The Secretariat's efforts to develop a framework for measuring the vulnerability of small states remain highly relevant to the demands of small states according to interviews and the review of Secretariat reports and communiqués for senior officials. The UVI objectives and related advocacy efforts have been highly relevant to member countries national needs and priorities, as well as the global development financing and climate agendas. • In 2018, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting called "for consensus on the use of vulnerability measures to target appropriate support to those member countries most affected by natural disasters, including extreme weather events, dependent on need."²⁵ In addition, the Foreign Ministers at the Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting of Small States "acknowledged the need to build international consensus on defining and measuring economic vulnerability, and supported the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat in this area."²⁶ This mandate later led to the Secretariat's project to build a UVI.
What have been the main interventions/projects implemented by the Secretariat to influence the focus issue?	<p>What have been the main interventions/projects implemented by the Secretariat to influence the focus issue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat worked towards establishing a measure of vulnerability that could better track and quantify the challenges faced by small states relative to other groups of countries. This culminated in the development of the UVI flagship report which was published in April 2021. • The content of the report has been widely presented within the Commonwealth community (notably Commonwealth High Commissioners and other officials) and select international organisations such as the UN. An important next step is the official launch and endorsement of the UVI in the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (Rwanda, June 2022). • Following the endorsement of the UVI by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, The Secretariat plans to embark on an advocacy campaign to secure buy-in from development partners and global actors who are influential on the focus issue, notably the World Bank, IMF, and climate funds under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, such as the Green Climate Fund. • Interviewees with representatives of small and vulnerable states indicated strong support for the Secretariat's work. They noted the importance of establishing an accepted measure of vulnerability and the potential this has for widening their access to finance mechanisms.

25 Defining and Measuring Economic Vulnerability Report prepared for the Senior Officials Meeting during the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting, Bali, Indonesia, 10 October 2018.

26 Defining and Measuring Economic Vulnerability Report.

Global Issue in Focus

Taking Vulnerability into Account in Concessional Financing

Which other development partners or global actors aim to influence the issue?

- The Secretariat's UVI is well-timed. Representatives of small states and Secretariat staff say there is now more openness on the part of international development partners to the vulnerability of small states.
- Many international organisations have begun to engage with this issue in a more substantive way. For example, the World Bank has set up dedicated small states offices; various special funds have been created to address small states' specific needs,²⁷ including funds associated with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (such as the Adaptation Fund, Climate Investment Funds, and Green Climate Fund)²⁸; and new financial mechanisms have been introduced such as Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown Option, which is a financing line that provides immediate liquidity to countries to address shocks related to natural disasters and/or health-related events.²⁹ In addition, the IMF, in collaboration with the World Bank, is helping small states prepare Disaster Resilience Strategies to be piloted first in the small states of Dominica and Grenada with a view to fully integrating resilience-building in macro-fiscal frameworks and coordinating financial support from the international community.³⁰
- The rationale behind the Secretariat's proposal for a UVI stemmed from the realisation that none of the previous analytical work and indices—including the Secretariat's own Economic Vulnerability Index, the UN's Committee for Development Policy Vulnerability Index, and the Caribbean Development Bank's Multidimensional Vulnerability Index—helped build international consensus on defining and measuring vulnerability.³¹
- There are, however, challenges still to be overcome. Secretariat staff and small state representatives say there is still a lack of consensus on how to characterise vulnerability and, by extension, how it should be incorporated into resource mobilisation and concessional financing. Going forward, small states representatives say there is a need for all organisations involved in resource mobilisation and concessional finance to agree on a common framework.

What change has Secretariat's influencing intended to achieve in the short- and medium-term?

- The Secretariat's intention is for the UVI to form the basis of its annual vulnerability survey that would assess the vulnerability of countries and their efforts to build resilience. This will then serve as a basis for advocacy and policy dialogue on vulnerability and resilience measures between countries and the Secretariat. In addition, it will provide an evidence base that allows countries to improve their resilience efforts and thereby reduce the cost of financing by proving their efforts to reduce vulnerability. It can also potentially unlock technical assistance and concessional financing.
- In interviews with representatives of member countries the Secretariat noted the need to take advantage of the current momentum within the Secretariat on the UVI and explore ways to effectively engage influential development partners or global organisations and to embrace the UVI at regional and global levels. Success, they added, will be measured on the extent to which the UVI's endorsement informs the thinking and agendas of other organisations when it comes to concessional finance.

27 The Commonwealth Universal Vulnerability Index.

28 Financing for Development and Small Island Developing States: A Snapshot and Ways Forward. UNDP & UN-OHRLLS Discussion Paper. 2015.

29 IDA Catastrophe Deferred Drawdown (Cat DDO). World Bank Product Note.

30 Summary of Discussion: Extraordinary Meeting of Commonwealth Small States and IFIs.

31 Defining and Measuring Economic Vulnerability Report.

Global Issue in Focus

Taking Vulnerability into Account in Concessional Financing

What noteworthy results have been achieved by Secretariat influence? Have any of these been unintended?

- The key noteworthy result is the development of the UVI and related advocacy efforts (including presentations in international fora, workshops, etc.). These are output-level results. Although initial observations from member countries on the UVI are positive, it is still too early for higher-level results, notably the adoption of the UVI among development partners or global actors as a key step towards unlocking concessional finance. These are the results that advocacy efforts should now be focused on and future monitoring and evaluation efforts should capture.
- The Secretariat's advocacy efforts since 1985 on understanding vulnerability have amplified the voice and influence of small states in the international multilateral system, including at the G20.³² Over the years, there has been growing acceptance of the need for donors and development organisations to consider factors other than GDP when addressing the vulnerabilities of small states, although, according to representatives of member countries, this has not always translated into increased funding to small states. Recent experiences of the consequences of recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic have further raised awareness and deepened appreciation of the pressing urgency for action to be taken.³³

What is the Secretariat's value-added in influencing the issue vis-à-vis member countries individual or other global actors' efforts?

- Interviewees say that the Secretariat's added-value stems from an in-depth knowledge of the vulnerabilities of vulnerable states, a shared history and set of values, similar institutional and regulatory systems, and the relatively small membership of the Commonwealth compared to other multilateral organisations which enables it to build trust and cultivate personal relationships. Representatives of member countries interviewed for this evaluation see the Secretariat as a critical resource for analytical work, technical assistance, and supporting policy dialogue and advocacy.
- With regards to understanding vulnerability, a non-structural resilience index would have been very similar to a policy performance index such as the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment, Worldwide Governance Indicators, and Ease of Doing Business Index; the World Economic Forum's Competitiveness Index; or other similar indexes which select sub-components from those sources and aggregate them differently (as is done by the Heritage Foundation, Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative, etc.). Instead, the UVI encompasses structural vulnerabilities including political or societal fragility, economic vulnerability to external or environmental shocks, and vulnerability to climate change. This leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by vulnerable small states.

What lessons should inform the next Secretariat Strategic Plan or future programming?

- Achieving results from advocacy is not always straightforward, especially when it relates to politically sensitive issues such as resource mobilisation and concessional finance. The UVI initiative now needs to evolve if higher-level results are to be achieved. A key priority is to engage and influence development partners or global actors on the issue of incorporating vulnerability into concessional finance. This will require a comprehensive structured advocacy strategy and action plan, informed by a robust stakeholder and power analysis to understand who can influence who and how (by when and to what end). Smart tactics are required and a timeframe for clearly identified results.
- Inclusive and participatory advocacy approaches are important. Representatives of member countries feel that the Secretariat could engage more directly with civil servants in small states and facilitate a more bottom-up approach towards influencing senior officials. The current Secretariat approach is considered top-heavy and there are concerns that it may not yield the intended results. Interviewees noted that influencing can also happen through civil servants who then advise prime ministers and presidents. The critical influence of more junior civil servants in persuading key decision-makers at higher levels is well noted in Mark S. Reed's acclaimed *Research Impact Handbook*.

³² Defining and Measuring Economic Vulnerability Report.

³³ The Commonwealth Universal Vulnerability Index.

Global Issue in Focus	Taking Vulnerability into Account in Concessional Financing		
List of People Interviewed			
Name	Organisation		Position
Heather Cover-Kus	Commonwealth Secretariat		Economic Officer, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate
Karen-Mae Hill	High Commission of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Kingdom		High Commissioner
Jitoko Tikolevu	High Commission of Fiji to the United Kingdom		High Commissioner
Duncan Howitt	Australia High Commission		Political Officer, Commonwealth and Social Policy Issues
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A1.10 Global Issue Case Study: Trade Policy Advocacy Around Fisheries and Fishery Subsidies

Global Issue in Focus	Trade Policy Advocacy Around Fisheries and Fishery Subsidies	
Outcome Area(s)	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth	
Directorate(s) / Unit(s)	Commonwealth Secretariat, International Trade Policy Section, Commonwealth Small States Office	
Timeframe	2013–2021	
Case Study Lead	Julian Ratcliffe	Date July 2021
Introduction		
<p>This case study is one of 10 case studies conducted for an independent evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's interventions to support small states (June 2021). It falls under Strategic Outcome 4: Economic Development, Intermediate Outcome 4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth.</p>		
Summary of Findings		
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy on fisheries trade and fishery subsidies is a work in progress and outcome-level effectiveness can only be measured once there is a clear outcome for small states when the WTO negotiations conclude in 2021. • At an operational level, Secretariat support to small states on fisheries trade and fishery subsidies is effective at helping small state officials to engage with the WTO negotiations on fishery subsidies. This has been done through regular trade briefings, demand-driven technical assistance (TA), and advisory support to identify national priorities based on which small states have developed their negotiating positions. • The demand-driven nature of support enables the Secretariat to be flexible and responsive to the needs and priorities of small states. The effectiveness of this approach is potentially lessened, however, by the use of short-term contracts for sub-contractors which can make planning and continued stakeholder engagement difficult. 	
Coherence / Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat has closely aligned its advocacy strategy on fisheries trade and fishery subsidies with both the strategic and operational needs and priorities of small states. Secretariat operations on the issue are targeted at meeting the capacity constraints of small states (for instance, through regular trade briefings in the face of small states' difficulties tracking negotiation developments and emerging issues) and helping small states to identify national priorities and construct their negotiating positions accordingly. 	

Global Issue in Focus

Trade Policy Advocacy Around Fisheries and Fishery Subsidies

What is the significance of the issue for small states?

Trade Policy Advocacy Around Fisheries and Fishery Subsidies holds particular significance for small states for two primary reasons:

1. Many Commonwealth small states are small island developing states. Fisheries are a core plank of their economies and fisheries underpin artisanal economies and livelihoods. Many artisanal fishery sectors utilise sustainable fishing practices.
2. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) is seeking to resolve negotiations on fisheries subsidies which have been ongoing since 2001. WTO members are negotiating rules to prohibit subsidies that threaten the sustainability of fishing to help ensure the sustainable use and conservation of marine resources by eliminating subsidies to illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing, and by prohibiting certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing while ensuring special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries. The WTO is the only organisation that can set and enforce global agreements to rein in distortive subsidies. However, the outcome of the negotiations will have significant implications for many small states (especially small island developing states) as this case study explains as they are often among the most reliant on fishing for livelihoods.

How well have Secretariat interventions/projects responded to the needs and strategic priorities of small states?

With fisheries constituting essential livelihoods in small states and contributing to only a fraction of the overfishing performed by larger fishing nations such as China, Japan, the US, and EU nations, Commonwealth small states have formed and joined various regional negotiating blocs (such as the Caribbean Community, the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States; and the Pacific Islands Forum) in order to secure a settlement which accounts for their specific development needs such as allowing subsidies in some cases to protect sustainable artisanal fishing industries and the livelihoods they support.

Since the outcome of the WTO negotiations on fisheries subsidies will be determined primarily by larger countries, the Secretariat seeks to keep small states informed and provides a convening power to ensure that their interests are represented. While small states are represented at the WTO through these blocs (not through their Commonwealth membership), the Secretariat, according to its staff, acts as the “eyes and ears” for many small states through the support it provides to small states directly. This support includes convening meetings with multilateral organisations that small states would not have the capacity or profile to organise; regular briefings which have both informed the negotiating positions and priorities of small states, and which keep small states abreast of developments that they do not have the capacity to track; and physical office space in Geneva through the CSSO which duly provides access to WTO and UN events hosted in Geneva.

What have been the main interventions/projects implemented by the Secretariat to influence the focus issue?

Interventions and projects to support small states around fisheries and fishery subsidies are primarily demand-driven and provided on an ad hoc basis at the request of member countries. An indicative list of such interventions and support includes:

- Trade briefings: The CSSO in Geneva produces and distributes regular trade briefings (previously monthly, now weekly as the negotiations come to a head) to small states to keep them abreast of emerging trade issues that those states do not have the capacity to track themselves (due to, for instance, not having a permanent presence in Geneva). While many small states are aware of the issues and developments arising from the WTO negotiations on fisheries subsidies independently due to their higher profile, the Secretariat provides briefings on new issues such as e-commerce and digital trade to small states.
- Policy advocacy in collaboration with external stakeholders: Acting in a thought-leadership capacity, the Secretariat has co-authored numerous reports, white papers, and working papers on a variety of ocean, Blue Economy, and fisheries issues in partnership with other ecosystem actors such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) with whom the Secretariat has a memorandum of understanding (MoU). According to Secretariat staff, these have set the agenda regarding fisheries and fishery subsidy issues and have informed the negotiating positions of small states and regional groupings.

Global Issue in Focus

Trade Policy Advocacy Around Fisheries and Fishery Subsidies

- Providing an on-the-ground presence in Geneva for small states: This provides a base of operations for many small states to interface with multilateral organisations based in the city. It also allows officials from small states to collaborate more easily both with each other and Secretariat staff, and to engage with high-level multilateral activities such as the WTO negotiations on fishery subsidies.
- Leveraging the Secretariat's convening power to facilitate dialogue between small states and multilateral bodies: The Secretariat, and the CSSO in particular, regularly convene workshops, round tables, and meetings between institutional actors in the fisheries and fishery subsidies space including the WTO, UNCTAD, the ADB, and representatives of regional groupings. Small state officials are then also invited to participate, providing a platform for engagement that they would otherwise be unlikely to be able to access.
- Capacity-building and TA: The Secretariat provides targeted capacity-building, training, and TA to individual small state members on request. This has previously included analysing proposed negotiating positions. However, TA is usually provided on the basis of short-term contracts (renewable 3-to-6-month agreements) which often render project planning and stakeholder engagement difficult.

Which other development partners or global actors aim to influence the issue?

The main actors working in this space are UNCTAD and the WTO who have a stake in influencing fish subsidies and trade:

- UNCTAD is a thought-leader in this space. It has a dedicated Oceans Economy and Fisheries division which provides advice, convenes workshops, and produces detailed reports (many of which have been co-authored with the Secretariat) on, for example, the Blue Economy and ocean trade issues, including in relation to small states. UNCTAD aims to support small states by providing advice and capacity-building support on the fisheries subsidies negotiations. However, UNCTAD must remain neutral and thus is unable to assist small states to develop negotiating positions. The Secretariat, on the other hand, is free to do so. This constitutes significant value-added as many small states do not have the capacity to develop negotiating positions independently.
- The WTO is seeking a settlement that can secure differential treatment for small states (especially small island developing states). The WTO has to respond to small states' needs to protect their fishing economies and the livelihoods which depend on them while persuading large fishing economies such as China, Japan, the EU, and the US to remove subsidies in order to protect fish stocks. The WTO also needs to align the final subsidies agreement with the SDGs, in particular, SDG 14: Life below Water.
- Small states generally struggle to exert influence on the negotiations and so are represented through regional negotiating blocs such as the Caribbean Community, the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States, and the Pacific Islands Forum. These blocs can better leverage the collective negotiating power of small states.

What change has the Secretariat's influencing intended to achieve in the short- and medium-term?

- At the outcome-level, Secretariat advocacy on the issue of fisheries trade and fishery subsidies intends to secure differential treatment for small states, in particular small island developing states, in the final WTO agreement on fishery subsidies. If successful, the agreement should account for the fact that small states do not contribute to overfishing and the depletion of ocean resources and should thus include exemptions to subsidies that support artisanal fisheries which utilise sustainable fishing practices.
- At the output-level, the Secretariat advocacy intends to ensure that the voices of small states are heard at the WTO negotiations. This is pursued by convening meetings between multilateral actors (including the WTO and UN bodies) to which small states are invited and by assisting small states to develop their negotiating positions.

Global Issue in Focus	Trade Policy Advocacy Around Fisheries and Fishery Subsidies
What noteworthy results have been achieved by Secretariat influencing? Have any of these been unintended?	<p>Secretariat staff say that their influencing efforts have given voice to small states and small state alliances in WTO negotiations on the issue of fish subsidies and trade. It was reported that the Secretariat has also helped small states who have limited capacity to track multiple trade issues of importance and stay abreast of developments in Geneva. These results could not be triangulated with representatives from small states.</p> <p>Independently evaluated results for fisheries trade and fishery subsidies come from the 2015 Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat Assistance to Small States in Geneva on Multilateral Trade Issues. The evaluation concluded that the project had a high impact for small states as many country stakeholders "noted that their participation in the project significantly enhanced their understanding of the WTO and complex trade".</p> <p>The 2015 evaluation notes that the Pacific Islands Forum and the government of the Solomon Islands were 'appreciative' of TA provided on fisheries subsidies. Small states representatives reported that they were still using many of the Secretariat briefing papers. The technical assistance and the briefs helped inform small states' negotiating positions.</p> <p>A more systematic assessment of influencing outcomes is difficult to determine due to the lack of robust reporting indicators and the difficulty of attributing outcomes to Secretariat influencing activities in and of themselves. The Secretariat recognises these limitations.</p>
What is the Secretariat's value-added in influencing the issue vis-a-vis member countries' individual or other global actors' efforts?	<p>According to interviewees, the Secretariat's value added on fisheries and fishery subsidies stems from the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A unique understanding and insights on the sensitivities of fishery subsidies for small states, particularly small island developing states. 2. On-the-ground presence in Geneva through the CSSO and its ability to provide direct advice and support to member states that informs negotiating positions. 3. Ability to network with other Commonwealth countries on this issue. 4. Ability to leverage their relationship with UNCTAD. UNCTAD, in contrast with the Secretariat, is committed to neutrality between member countries. It can provide advice and alert members to risks. The Secretariat, on the other hand, can provide such support. This is limited somewhat by a requirement to neutrality among Commonwealth member countries (which include larger countries such as Australia, South Africa, and India), but it is nonetheless a strategic advantage over other multilateral bodies, especially vis-à-vis small states.

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Trade Policy Advocacy Around Fisheries and Fishery Subsidies

What lessons should inform the next Secretariat Strategic Plan or future programming?

From this case study, we suggest to do the following in future:

1. Strengthen indicators and identify sources of evidence for tracking progress on advocacy around the fisheries trade and fishery subsidies for the next strategic planning period: Determining the overall effectiveness of Secretariat advocacy initiatives in a systematic way is difficult due to a lack of indicators at outcome and impact levels against which progress can be judged. This is further complicated by the fact that, by nature, advocacy and influencing involve hard-to-measure results. It is also difficult to attribute outcomes to Secretariat advocacy activities. Evaluation challenges are further complicated by the demand-driven, ad hoc nature of the Secretariat's support which makes a systematic assessment of support provided to small states difficult due to the lack of common objectives. Work in a consultative capacity to identify qualitative indicators of high-level results (or types of results) that might emerge from the Secretariat's advocacy activities (without, for instance, having to wait on the publication of the final text of the WTO negotiations) and which enable the comparison of different ad hoc interventions. Keep a list of key contacts within small states who are willing to be consulted for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
2. Recognise that stakeholder engagement may need to extend beyond project completion to ensure that impacts can be tracked. Assess how to maintain relationships as well as budget implications, and determine if this is feasible and sufficiently important.
3. Deepen the relationship with UNCTAD: The MoU between the Secretariat and UNCTAD provides a framework for useful co-working on the publication of learning papers and policy briefs, convening workshops for small state officials, and trade advocacy which is sensitive to the specific needs and priorities of small states. This might be implemented through such arrangements as mutual secondments to encourage closer working. The policy infrastructure provided by UNCTAD's Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries treaty could also provide a platform to facilitate improved fisheries trade outcomes among small states by bypassing the large-state-dominated WTO.
4. Increase use of longer-term contracts: It was reported that support and TA provided to small states is often conducted on the basis of renewable 3-to-6-month contracts. While this is appropriate in many cases, it can also prevent effective planning and stakeholder engagement if the intervention period is extended again and again rather than clearly defined ahead of time. As such, an assessment should be completed about whether or not a longer-term contract should be used at the start of the intervention.

Global Issue in Focus		Trade Policy Advocacy Around Fisheries and Fishery Subsidies	
List of People Interviewed			
Name	Organisation	Position	
Brendan Vickers	Commonwealth Secretariat	Head, International Trade Policy Section	
Collin Zhuawu	Commonwealth Secretariat	Economic Adviser, Multilateral Trade	
Kim Kampel	Commonwealth Small States Office	Trade Adviser, Negotiations and Emerging Trade Issues	
Tarvi Sinha	Commonwealth Small States Office	Trade Adviser	
David Vivas	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Legal Officer, Division on International Trade and Commodities	
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Annex C. List of Interviews Conducted

Table C1

Name	Organisation	Position
General		
Paul Hailston	Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office	Lead Responsibility for Small States, Commonwealth Unit
Chloe Baudry	Global Affairs Canada	Acting Deputy Director, Commonwealth Unit
Duncan Howitt	High Commission of Australia	Political Officer, Commonwealth and Social Policy Issues
Arjoon Suddhoo	Commonwealth Secretariat	Deputy Secretary General
Kevin Monroe Isaac	High Commission of St Kitts and Nevis	High Commissioner
Elsa Wilkin-Armbrister	High Commission of St Kitts and Nevis	Minister Counsellor
Winnie Kiap	High Commission of Papua New Guinea	High Commissioner
Guyana		
Abubakar Abdullahi	Commonwealth Secretariat/ Governance and Peace Directorate	Peace and Development Officer
Brendan Vickers	Commonwealth Secretariat/Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate	Head of International Trade Policy
Collin Zhuawu	Commonwealth Secretariat/Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate	Economic Adviser (Multilateral Trade)
Daniel Wilde	Commonwealth Secretariat/Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate	Economic Adviser—Natural Resources
Deep Ford	Permanent Missions of Guyana to the United Nations in Geneva	Former Guyana Ambassador and Permanent Representative
Kim Kappel	Commonwealth Small States Office, Geneva	Trade Adviser, Trade Negotiations and Emerging Trade Issues
Nasim Zaidi	External Consultant	Adviser & Former Chief Election Commissioner of India
Neville Totaram	Permanent Missions of Guyana to the United Nations in Geneva	Ambassador & Deputy Permanent Representative and Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Tanvi Sinha	Commonwealth Small States Office, Geneva	Trade Adviser, Trade Negotiations and Facilitation Support

Name	Organisation	Position
Malta		
Brian Belton	Independent Consultant	Lead writer Youth Professionalisation Baseline Study; Malta Youth Conference Coordinator
Christian Mizzi	Agenzija Zhazagh (Malta Ministry of Youth)	Manager of Inclusion, transition and Employment
Francis Fabri	Malta Ministry of Education	Permanent Secretary
Jamie Ann Chevannes	Senior Director	Youth and Adolescence, Jamaica
Layne Robinson	Commonwealth Secretariat	Head of Social Policy Development, Economic, Youth and sustainable Development Directorate
Miriam Teuma	Agenzija Zhazagh (Malta Ministry of Youth)	Chief Executive Officer
Nazir Kazmi	Commonwealth Secretariat	Adviser, Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate
Robyn Broadbent	Chair Person	Commonwealth Association of Youth Worker Alliances (CAYWA)
Simon Schembri	Agenzija Zhazagh (Malta Ministry of Youth)	Youth worker
Yanique Williams	Senior Programme Development Specialist	Youth and Adolescence, Jamaica
Namibia		
Anahita Alexander-Sefre	Commonwealth Secretariat	Education Programme Assistant
Annah Malosiwa	University of Botswana	Associate Professor, Department of Languages & Social Sciences Education
Caroline Brooks	Commonwealth Secretariat	Sport and the SDGs Project Officer
Gary Rhoda	Commonwealth Secretariat	Human Rights Officer
Layne Robinson	Commonwealth Secretariat	Head, Social Policy Development Section
Nasir Kazmi	Commonwealth Secretariat	Adviser, Education
Saurabh Mushra	Commonwealth Secretariat	Assistant Programmes Officer, Sport for Development & Peace
Tawanda Hondora	Commonwealth Secretariat	Adviser and Head, Rule of Law Section
Seychelles		
Katharine Marshall Kisson	Commonwealth Secretariat	Adviser, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
Marie-Josée Bonne	Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Family Affairs, Seychelles
Monika Pindel	Commonwealth Secretariat	Programme Officer, Gender and Development, Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate.
Natalie Gupta	Commonwealth Secretariat	Technical Assistance
Philippa Samson	Seychelles Ports Authority	Deputy Director and Project Management, Ports Authority

Name	Organisation	Position
Rosemary Cadogan	Commonwealth Secretariat	Legal Adviser (Maritime Boundaries); Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources
Solomon Islands		
Abubakar Abdullahi	Commonwealth Secretariat	Peace and Development Officer, Governance and Peace Directorate
Andrew Baines	Commonwealth Secretariat	Programme Officer, Elections Division, Governance and Peace Directorate
Angela Thomas	Commonwealth Secretariat	Political Officer Asia, Europe and Pacific, Governance and Peace Directorate
Jonathan Milligan	Commonwealth Secretariat	Programme Officer, Political Division, Governance and Peace Directorate
Joy Papao	United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)	CommonSensing Technical Expert
Michael Ha'apio	Commonwealth Secretariat	National Climate Finance Adviser for Solomon Islands
Oran No	United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)	CommonSensing Project Manager
Sharon Ng'etich	Commonwealth Secretariat	Climate Change Officer, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate
Vikas Pandey	Commonwealth Secretariat	Systems Development Officer, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate
Tonga		
Duncan Howitt	Australia High Commission	Political Officer, Commonwealth and Social Policy Issues
Gary Rhoda	Commonwealth Secretariat	Human Rights Officer
Opeyemi Abebe	Commonwealth Secretariat	Adviser and Head, Trade Competitiveness Section
Rejo Sam	Avasant	Associate Director
Tawanda Hondora	Commonwealth Secretariat	Adviser and Head, Rule of Law Section
Trinidad and Tobago		
Jimmy Wong	Trinidad and Tobago Debt Management Division	Analyst, Back Office
Joanne Alline	Commonwealth Secretariat/ Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate	Business Analyst
Mark Albon	Commonwealth Secretariat/ Governance and Peace Directorate	Head, Countering Violent Extremism
Narine Charran	Trinidad and Tobago Debt Management Division	Manager
Pamella McLaren	Commonwealth Secretariat/ Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate	Adviser and Head, Debt Management

Name	Organisation	Position
Shezelle Bowman	Trinidad and Tobago Debt Management Division	Senior Debt Analyst, Back Office
Zahra Mohammed	Trinidad and Tobago Debt Management Division	Assistant Manager
Global Issue Case Study: Access to Disaster Financing: Development of a Disaster Risk Finance (DRF) Portal		
Duncan Howitt	Australia High Commission	Political Officer, Commonwealth and Social Policy Issues
Heather Cover-Kus	Commonwealth Secretariat	Economic Officer, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate
Jitoko Tikolevu	High Commission of Fiji to the United Kingdom	High Commissioner
Karen-Mae Hill	High Commission of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Kingdom	High Commissioner
Motselisi Matsela	Commonwealth Secretariat	Economic Adviser
Global Issue Case Study: Taking Vulnerability into Account in Concessional Financing		
Duncan Howitt	Australia High Commission	Political Officer, Commonwealth and Social Policy Issues
Heather Cover-Kus	Commonwealth Secretariat	Economic Officer, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate
Jitoko Tikolevu	High Commission of Fiji to the United Kingdom	High Commissioner
Karen-Mae Hill	High Commission of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Kingdom	High Commissioner
Global Issue Case Study: Trade Policy Advocacy Around Fisheries and Fishery Subsidies		
Brendan Vickers	Commonwealth Secretariat	Head, International Trade Policy Section
Collin Zhuawu	Commonwealth Secretariat	Economic Adviser, Multilateral Trade
David Vivas	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Legal Officer, Division on International Trade and Commodities
Kim Kempel	Commonwealth Small States Office	Trade Adviser, Negotiations and Emerging Trade Issues
Tanvi Sinha	Commonwealth Small States Office	Trade Adviser

Table C2 List of Interviews Conducted During Inception

Designation	Date	Name	Role at Commonwealth Secretariat		
Evaluation Reference Group	3 March 2021	Francisca Pretorius	Head, Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform, GPD		
		Pamella McLaren	Head, Debt Management, EYSD		
		Travis Mitchell	Head, Economic Policy and Small States, EYSD		
		Layne Robinson	Head of Social Policy Development, EYSD		
		Opeyemi Abebe	Adviser & Head, Trade Competitiveness Section, TONR		
		Colin Zhuawu	Economic Adviser (Multilateral Trade), TONR		
		Yinka Bandele	Trade Adviser, Trade Competitiveness Section, TONR		
		Evelyn Pedersen	Head of Evaluation and Learning		
		Purvi Kanzaria	Programme Officer		
		Katherine Marshall Kissoon	Adviser, Evaluation & Learning		
		Kathryn Paddock	Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer		
		Travis Mitchell	Head, Economic Policy and Small States, EYSD		
		Evelyn Pedersen	Head of Evaluation and Learning, Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division		
Economic Policy and Small States team	5 March 2021	Katherine Marshall Kissoon	Adviser, Evaluation & Learning, Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division		
		Christine Awiti	Economic Adviser, Economic Policy and Small States, EYSD		
		Sophie Emily Brain	Research Officer, EYSD		
		Heather Cover-Kus	Economic Officer, EYSD		
		Devyn Holliday	Research Officer, EYSD		
		Motselisi Matsela	Economic Adviser, EYSD		
		Akeem Rahaman	Economic Adviser, Economic Policy and Small States, EYSD		
		Ruth Kattumuri	Senior Director, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate (EYSD)		
		Director, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate (EYSD)	12 March 2021		

Designation	Date	Name	Role at Commonwealth Secretariat
Heads of Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate (TONR)	22 March 2021	Opeyemi Abebe	Head, Trade Competitiveness Section, TONR
		Kirk Haywood	Head of Connectivity Agenda, TONR
		Lisa Rodriguez	Operations Manager (Hubs and Spokes), TONR
Climate Change Team	24 March 2021	Brendan Vickers	Head, International Trade Policy Section, TONR
		Unnikrishnan Nair	Head of Climate Change, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate
		Uzoamaka Nwamara	Adviser, Climate Change, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate
Small States Office—New York Office	30 March 2021	Lorna McLaren	Office Manager, Commonwealth Small States Office, New York
EYSD Heads/Debt Management Unit (DMU)	30 March 2021	Pamella McLaren	Head, Debt Management, EYSD
		Mark Banda	Advisor/ Team Leader on Commonwealth Meridian (Debt management system)
		Sanjay Kumar	Advisor of DMU—Policy Unit
Heads of Governance and Peace Directorate (GPD)	31 March 2021	Francisca Pretorius	Head, Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform, GPD
	9 June 2021	Martin Kasirye	Head, Electoral Support, GPD
Director, Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate (TONR)	8 June 2021	Linford Andrews	Acting Head, Africa Section, GPD
		Paulo Kautoke	Director, Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate (TONR)

Annex D. Summary of Case Study Findings

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The DRF Portal aligns with the Secretariat's strategic intent, notably Strategic Outcomes 4 and 5. It also builds on the most recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 2018 that recognised the importance of disaster finance and affirmed the value of disaster preparedness and the role of the Secretariat in supporting member countries manage natural disaster risks. Furthermore, it aligns with the priorities of small states who believe there is an urgent need for disaster financing.		Access to disaster financing	Coherence / Alignment	4: Economic Development 5: Small States	4.2: Commonwealth positions, advanced in international development and financing mechanisms 5.3: Improved access to climate financing
There is very good alignment between the Secretariat's work on small states' vulnerability with the policy priorities of small states and with international agendas supported by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and its Disaster Resilience Strategies, the UN Committee for Development Policy, and the Caribbean Development Bank, amongst other players.		Concessional financing	Coherence / Alignment	4: Economic Development	4.2: Commonwealth positions advanced in international development and financing mechanisms.
The Commonwealth Small States Office (CSSO) in Geneva provides the physical infrastructure representatives small states need to engage with multilateral organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and United Nations bodies. Without this, small states that have limited resources would not be able to engage on issues that matter to them. The Geneva office also facilitates informal opportunities for small states to align their efforts to leverage their negotiating priorities collectively.		Fisheries	Coherence / Alignment	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth
The CSSO in Geneva acts as the "eyes and ears" for many small states by reporting on developments on a multitude of trade issues, not least fisheries and fishery subsidies. This also enables small states to align their national priorities with emerging issues and to develop trade positions in a coherent manner (both individually and as negotiating blocs).		Fisheries	Coherence / Alignment	4: Economic Development	4.1: Trade, employment, and growth

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
Interventions are aligned with the strategic intent of the Secretariat.		Guyana	Coherence / Alignment	All outcome areas	All outcome areas
Other donors and organisations also provide support on the issues tackled by the Secretariat, but actions are coordinated and the Secretariat's support has clear value-added.		Guyana	Coherence / Alignment	All outcome areas	All outcome areas
The Secretariat is the only institution that supports the professionalisation of youth work across all Commonwealth states. However, the Council of Europe also provides relevant support to European small states (Malta and Cyprus). There is alignment in Malta's approach to the professionalisation of youth with lessons emanating from the Council of Europe.	Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme.	Malta	Coherence / Alignment	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes
The initiative to develop a Pan-Commonwealth Effective Management Education System (EMES) is well aligned with SDG 4 (inclusive education). It has also built on other initiatives to standardise education management approaches, most notably from the European Union. The development of the toolkit has involved the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), Education International (EI), and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). However, this evaluation was not able to triangulate this evidence or explore these civil society perspectives through interviews.	Strengthening effective education management (EMES) practices.	Malta	Coherence / Alignment	3: Youth and Social Development	3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes
Each individual Secretariat initiative in Namibia aligns with national priorities and the SDGs, but there is little coherence between initiatives as there would be if implemented in accordance with an overarching country-level strategic plan. This stands as a missed opportunity to leverage synergies and the effectiveness of the overall package of Secretariat support to Namibia.		Namibia	Coherence / Alignment	All	All

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion, and the review of cybersecurity and cybercrime capacities and legislation partially align with the Secretariat's stated intermediate outcomes regarding human rights and rule of law (human rights promoted, rule of law strengthened, and access to justice ensured for all).	Roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion	Namibia	Coherence / Alignment	2: Public Institutions	2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
The roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion do not have other external stakeholders working with Namibia on the issue of LGBTQIA+ rights, meaning that the Secretariat provides value-added.	Roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion	Namibia	Coherence / Alignment	2: Public Institutions	2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
The Secretariat's technical assistance work with Namibia on cybersecurity and cybercrime aligns closely with Namibia's national priorities since Namibia currently does not have specific cybercrime legislation and, according to a scoping report on the issue, has rudimentary capacities at present. Given the growing urgency of the threat posed by cybercriminals, the Secretariat's activities on the issue cohere with a broader national strategy. Moreover, Namibia's long-term Vision 2030 strategy, which aims for increased industrialisation, necessitates improved cybersecurity capacities.	Review of cyber-crime and cybersecurity legislation and capacities	Namibia	Coherence / Alignment	2: Public Institutions	2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all
Inputs and potential outcomes in Namibia also support SDGs 10 and 16 (reduced inequalities; peace, justice, and strong institutions) and, nestled under these goals, target 10.2 and 10.3, which promote economic, political, and social inclusion for all and the elimination of discriminatory policies, and 16.3, which emphasises the promotion of the rule of law at national and international levels.		Namibia	Coherence / Alignment	2: Public Institutions	2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved 2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
<p>Secretariat interventions in Namibia closely align its own strategic objectives. The Youth Development Index, Sports Development Index, and the Namibian College of Open Learning degree in Youth Development Work all contribute in various ways to youth empowerment, sport's role in development, and the sustainability of the education system. The pathway to change however could be better articulated from output to outcome and impact levels.</p>	<p>NAMCOL Youth Development Work degree Youth Development Index and Sports Development Index</p>	Namibia	Coherence / Alignment	3: Youth and Social Development	<p>3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes 3.2: Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies</p>
<p>Activities related to the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework are closely aligned with existing government objectives and initiatives, such as the ongoing review of Namibia's education policy. Externally, the fact that the AfDB loan application, for school infrastructure maintenance and to cover the cost of the Education and Training Quality Improvement Project (ETQIP), was successful indicates coherence with the objectives of larger multilaterals operating in the space (in this case the AfDB).</p>	<p>Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop</p>	Namibia	Coherence / Alignment	3: Youth and Social Development	<p>3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes</p>
<p>Secretariat activities in Namibia under SO3: Youth and Social Development closely align with SDG 4 which relates to ensuring inclusive and quality education for all. Many of the targets falling under SDG 4 concerning literacy, gender parity in education, equitable access to education, the professionalisation of youth services, teacher training, and more are all related to the Secretariat's work on the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework. Youth Development Work degree provided through the Namibian College of Open Learning, and technical assistance to facilitate inter-country learning and access to finance through institutions such as the AfDB.</p>		Namibia	Coherence / Alignment	3: Youth and Social Development	All

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
Found to be aligned with the SDGs and specifically with the Secretariat's TOC short-term outcome: Readiness to explore and support Blue Economy initiatives; evaluation found member countries to be enabled by investor-friendly rules but also managed in the country's long-term interests by a 'good governance' legal and fiscal framework; and positives noted with the work of other donors, particularly the World Bank and efforts to avoid duplication. The Secretariat evaluation notes that national coherence was challenged by a 'patchy understanding of which ministries and stakeholders could be engaged operationally on BE Roadmap implementation'.	Blue Economy	Seychelles	Coherence / Alignment	4: Economic Development	4.4: Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies
Alignment with the Secretariat's intermediate outcome 3.4. It's also aligned with: SDG 5 (Gender Equality) targets 5.2 (eliminate all forms of VAWG in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation), 5.3 (eliminate all harmful practices), and with the African Union commitments.	Economic Costs of VAWG	Seychelles	Coherence / Alignment	3: Youth and Social Development	3.4: Women, girls and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices
Potential alignment for consideration in the next strategic plan: encourage all small states (and indeed all Secretariat countries) to ratify the ILO Convention on Violence in the Workplace as it is strategically related. Also consider links with the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) What Works to Prevent VAWG programme by disseminating the methodology, approach, studies produced, and the tools, as well as showcase the approach in conferences and elsewhere.	Economic Costs of VAWG	Seychelles	Coherence / Alignment	3: Youth and Social Development	3.4: Women, girls and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices
The technical support to check the concession agreement between the Terminal Operator and the Ports Authority for the renovation and development of the Port of Victoria is in alignment with the Secretariat's economic strategy, objective 4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade and increased access to trade, employment, and business growth.	Trade Competitiveness: Ports Authority: Concession Agreement Review	Seychelles	Coherence / Alignment	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
There is good internal alignment with the Secretariat's strategic and intermediate outcomes (1 and 1.3).		Solomon Islands	Coherence / Alignment	1: Democracy	1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections
The Pacific region as a whole provides a good example of how the Secretariat is working with regional electoral associations, for example the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators Network (PIANZEA), according to interviews with Commonwealth staff.		Solomon Islands	Coherence / Alignment	1: Democracy	1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections
The Secretariat's debt management support to Solomon Islands aligns with the internal strategic priorities under the Economic Development pillar.		Solomon Islands	Coherence / Alignment	4: Economic Development	4.3: National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
The Secretariat debt management teams are also part of a World Bank Task Force on debt statistics that is developing universal templates and reporting statistical guidelines. The Commonwealth Secretariat is in the process of incorporating the new format for a debtor reporting requirement. Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX), into the CS-DRMS 2000+ and Commonwealth Meridian software.		Solomon Islands	Coherence / Alignment	4: Economic Development	4.3: National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
The Secretariat's support strongly aligns with the priorities of Solomon Islands to secure climate financing.		Solomon Islands	Coherence / Alignment	5: Small States	5.3: Improved access to climate financing
Engagement with the broader development community has been limited to date, because this work is in its infancy.		Solomon Islands	Coherence / Alignment	5: Small States	5.3: Improved access to climate financing
The Secretariat's activities in Tonga closely align with the objectives of the Commonwealth Strategic Plan for the period 2017/18–2020/21, and with the actions of other players operating in the region and human rights space (such as the World Bank, Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the government of New Zealand).		Tonga	Coherence / Alignment	2: Public Institutions	2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The Secretariat's gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment training and technical assistance to draft a sexual harassment policy for the Public Service Commission aligns with both its human rights and inclusion priorities (as well as Intermediate Outcome 2.2: Rule of Law). These activities were also conducted in collaboration with external stakeholders (such as the EU and the High Commissions of the UK, Australia, and New Zealand) and led to interest from the World Bank to build on the Secretariat's progress in the form of advocacy and support to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).	Gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment training	Tonga	Coherence / Alignment	2: Public Institutions	2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
Building the capacity of the Tongan Legislative Assembly on UN human rights UPR processes is well aligned with the Secretariat's Strategic Plan, namely Intermediate Outcome 2.1: Human rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved.	UN human rights UPR processes capacity-building	Tonga	Coherence / Alignment	2: Public Institutions	2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
The Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme strongly aligns with Tongan national priorities (such as restructuring the economy so that it is able to achieve climate resilient growth) and existing economic strategies (such as the Tonga Trade Policy Framework), and with the objectives of the Commonwealth Strategic Plan for the period 2017/18–2020/21 and with long-term national priorities such as ensuring climate resilience.	Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme	Tonga	Coherence / Alignment	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth
Some interviewees said there was room for improvement. The Secretariat, being demand-driven, means that it can be difficult to leverage stakeholder partnerships effectively and this hinders the pursuit of overarching the Secretariat's strategic objectives.	Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme	Tonga	Coherence / Alignment	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
Deploying a National Climate Finance Advisor to build institutional capacity to access funding through the CCFAH and the secure a pipeline of finance through the facility also strongly aligns with national priorities (such as building climate resilience and facilitating climate change adaptation in one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change). The CVE Unit built partnerships with a range of international, regional, and national stakeholders.	Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub	Tonga	Coherence / Alignment	5: Small States	5.3: Improved access to climate financing
		Trinidad and Tobago	Coherence / Alignment	1: Democracy	1.4: Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism
It is also working closely with other units in the Secretariat, including the Education, Youth and Sustainable Development (EYSD) Directorate and Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform		Trinidad and Tobago	Coherence / Alignment	1: Democracy	1.4: Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism
Assistance on debt management is available from UNCTAD, the World Bank and IMF, but demand for support is so high that there is clear need for the Secretariat's work as well. The Secretariat coordinates and on occasion collaborates with these other stakeholders.		Trinidad and Tobago	Coherence / Alignment	4: Economic Development	4.3: National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
According to Secretariat staff, their engagement with member countries including small states, development partners, and other actors has demonstrated that there is interest in the DRF Portal. However, at present it is not known whether small member states or other stakeholders have used the platform. This suggests the need for more emphasis on the part of EPSS on monitoring.		Access to disaster financing	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development 5: Small States	4.2: Commonwealth positions, advanced in international development and financing mechanisms 5.3: Improved access to climate financing

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
At the time of writing no visible higher-level results can be identified in terms of resilience or disaster preparedness. The case study concludes that complementary technical support to member states including small states on disaster finance will be instrumental in driving the effectiveness of the Secretariat's support on disaster finance in the future.		Access to disaster financing	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development 5: Small States	4.2: Commonwealth positions, advanced in international development and financing mechanisms 5.3: Improved access to climate financing
The extent to which the Commonwealth Universal Vulnerability Index (UVI) is informing global debates or policy and decision-making on issues of vulnerability and concessional finance in small states is not yet clear and it is potentially too early to assess. However, it is evident that the Secretariat is effectively leveraging its Universal Vulnerability Index as an entry point for dialogue with multilateral organisations around how to support small states. Furthermore, the Secretariat's advocacy efforts on understanding vulnerability over the years has amplified the voice and influence of small states in the international multilateral system, with potential for achieving longer term outcomes. However, results per se are difficult to quantify.		Concessional financing	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.2: Commonwealth positions advanced in international development and financing mechanisms.
The UVI defines measurements of vulnerability and provides an evidence base but there is now a need in the next strategic plan for the Secretariat to develop and implement a well-defined and structured advocacy strategy and action plan that lays out how to engage and influence global actors so that they incorporate vulnerability into concessional finance.		Concessional financing	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.2: Commonwealth positions advanced in international development and financing mechanisms.
Secretariat support to small states on fisheries trade and fishery subsidies is broadly effective at helping small state officials to develop negotiating positions at the WTO negotiations on fishery subsidies through regular trade briefings, demand-driven technical assistance (TA), and advisory support.		Fisheries	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
<p>Determining the overall effectiveness of Secretariat advocacy initiatives in a systematic way is difficult due to a lack of indicators at outcome and impact levels against which progress can be judged. It's also difficult to attribute outcomes to Secretariat advocacy activities. Evaluation challenges are further complicated by the demand-driven, ad hoc nature of the Secretariat's support which makes a systematic assessment of support provided to small states difficult due to the lack of common objectives. Also, advocacy on this issue is a work in progress and effectiveness can only be measured once there is a clear outcome for small states when the WTO negotiations conclude.</p>		<p>Fisheries</p>	<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>4: Economic Development</p>	<p>4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth</p>
<p>The demand-driven nature of support enables the Secretariat to be flexible and responsive to the needs and priorities of small states. The effectiveness of this approach is potentially lessened, however, by the use of short-term contracts for sub-contractors which can make planning and continued stakeholder engagement difficult.</p>		<p>Fisheries</p>	<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>4: Economic Development</p>	<p>4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth</p>
<p>There is some evidence that through its support to the Guyana Electoral Commission (GECOM) and the intervention of the Good Offices. The Commonwealth Secretariat contributed to the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections, and the peaceful transfer of power (strategic outcome). The Electoral Commission implemented various recommendations from the Secretariat advisors, including on the design of the Electoral Commission, engaging with civil society, advancing women's voices and the participation of people with disabilities. Although the Commission's management of the electoral process was criticised by observers, it is likely that without Secretariat support it would have performed even worse.</p>		<p>Guyana</p>	<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>1: Democracy</p>	<p>1.2: Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General 1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections</p>

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The resolution of the post-electoral dispute that Secretariat advisors provided support to also contributed to the removal of Guyana from the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group's (CMAG) agenda.		Guyana	Effectiveness	1: Democracy	1.2: Member countries engaged with and benefited from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General 1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections
It is difficult to assess the outcome and effectiveness of the Secretariat's support without access to partners in Guyana and adequate monitoring data that would track/record the full implementation of recommendations from the electoral advisors.		Guyana	Effectiveness	1: Democracy	1.2: Member countries engaged with and benefited from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General 1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections
The trust of various Guyana Electoral Commission stakeholders in the two the Secretariat advisors was a key contributing factor to effectiveness. This was achieved by selecting highly competent experts with experience in managing large-scale elections, who were perceived as neutral due to having no previous involvement with Guyana.		Guyana	Effectiveness	1: Democracy	1.2: Member countries engaged with and benefited from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General 1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
Evidence from partner interviews suggests that the Commonwealth Small States Office's (SSO) support has contributed to Guyanese officials in Geneva and Georgetown having a better understanding of key trade issues, including those under discussion in the WTO. The office space and administration and logistical support offered by the SSO were also critical in allowing Guyana to set up a permanent representation in Geneva.		Guyana	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth
Efforts to build a relationship of trust with members, including quick turnaround times on requests, and the provision of neutral and reliable information, has been critical to the effectiveness of support.		Guyana	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth
Support provided through the SSO is demand-driven and flexible, and based on needs assessment as well as ad hoc requests.		Guyana	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth
The most significant achievement of the Secretariat's support to the Guyana petroleum sector is the establishment and implementation of the Natural Resource Fund (NRF), which meant that the country started oil extraction with a Sovereign Wealth Fund already in place to manage oil revenues. Such funds promote transparency and enhance opportunities for inclusive growth. NRF also scored very highly on international transparency indexes.		Guyana	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.4: Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies
Not all advice from the Secretariat on the institutional, policy, and legislative framework has been taken on board, but this is not unexpected in the case of highly politicised issues such as the management of the petroleum sector.		Guyana	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.4: Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
Technical support to the petroleum sector is mostly provided through in-house Secretariat experts, and it is regarded very highly by the Guyanese officials interviewed for this case study. The Secretariat's advice is considered at the highest level in ministries during decision-making.		Guyana	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.4: Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies
The key result is the 'refinement/cross-fertilisation of ideas' amongst all states on how to take forward the professionalisation of youth in terms of policy, legislation, and action. This result comes from the March 2018 Youth Conference in Malta.	Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme	Malta	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes
The Secretariat, the Agenzija Zgħazgħ (Malta Ministry of Youth), and the Commonwealth Alliance for Youth Worker Associations (CAYWA) are effectively working to promote approaches for the professionalisation of youth work across all Commonwealth countries, including small states. Malta is playing a leadership role and there is evidence that other small states are continuing to engage drawing on their membership with CAYWA and their relationship with Malta.	Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme	Malta	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes
CAYWA's capacity has also strengthened and its membership has increased from 15 to 25 states, including more small states. More data that will shed light on higher-level results (e.g., new policies, investment in youth work, improved curricula, etc.) disaggregated by state will be available when the 2016 Baseline Study is repeated. This could be usefully done on an annual basis.	Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme	Malta	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
<p>Key approaches that contribute to results: convening (motivation, sharing ideas, securing commitment) and Malta and CAYWA's technical assistance. Going forward, the most important approaches will be: efforts on the part of CAYWA, Malta, and the Secretariat to sustain engagement; follow-up and monitoring on the part of Secretariat to track progress; disseminating the results of progress in compelling formats as this is likely to encourage others; and more efforts to integrate a lens on gender equality into youth worker curriculum.</p> <p>The key results are still at the output level. They include Malta's development of the Effective Management of Education Systems (EMES) tool kit, which enables ministry officials across the Commonwealth to manage their education systems effectively so they deliver 12 years of free and quality education to all boys and girls; the adaptation of the toolkit to other contexts by Jamaica, Kenya, and other stakeholders; and the current piloting of the toolkit in Malta and Jamaica (June 2021).</p> <p>It is too soon for outcome results but the pathway to change is: commitment and ownership on the part of small states to action (Nadi Declaration and Action Plan); technical input and convening to develop the approach and adapt it to context. Going forward more clarity on these approaches would be helpful: engagement/advocacy to encourage uptake on the part of small states; monitoring and reporting on progress across the Commonwealth and disseminating results in compelling formats coupled with targeted technical assistance for specific small states.</p>	<p>Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme</p>	Malta	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes
	<p>Strengthening effective education management (EMES) practices</p>	Malta	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes
	<p>Strengthening effective education management (EMES) practices</p>	Malta	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
In terms of delivery, the Secretariat has been partially effective in providing demand-led support to the Ombudsman of Namibia for two roundtables with multiple stakeholders on human rights—specifically sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion. Outcomes are unclear. In 2021, the Namibian justice minister indicated government consideration for reversing its ban on sexual relations between men (outcome). If there is an outcome, the Secretariat will have contributed as there are a series of legal cases pertaining to same-sex marriages in the High Court.	Roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion	Namibia	Effectiveness	2: Public Institutions	2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
At output level, the Secretariat has effectively delivered support to the Namibian government to review cybercrime and cybersecurity legislation in the country. While new regulations and legislation have not yet been introduced (as there is currently no specific cybersecurity legislation in place), reforms and new strategies are being actively considered and reviewed. Should those changes come into effect, the Secretariat will have directly contributed to outcome-level results and will be on the pathway to impact (a reduction in cybercrime).	Review of cyber-crime and cybersecurity legislation and capacities	Namibia	Effectiveness	2: Public Institutions	2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all
The Secretariat's support for the professionalisation of youth work (3.1) has led to the institutionalisation of a degree course in Youth Development Work through the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL). This is likely to improve the quality of youth services in the country (an outcome leading to impact, namely youth empowerment).	NAMCOL Youth Development Work degree	Namibia	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
<p>The Secretariat provided effective support to the Namibian Ministry of Youth and Sport to implement the data gathering and analysis techniques necessary for the Youth Development Index (YDI). Building on the success of that intervention, the ministry requested support to implement a Sport Development Index (SDI). This is a tangible step towards a higher-level result. If implemented successfully the Sport Development Index will allow Namibia to gauge how sport contributes to national development objectives (such as through employment in the sector and by empowering people and communities).</p>	Youth Development Index and Sports Development Index	Namibia	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	<p>3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes</p> <p>3.2: Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies</p>
<p>The Secretariat was effective in the delivery of a convening and technical workshop hosted in 2019 in Gaborone, Botswana on the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework (3.3). This led to collaboration between Southern African Development Community (SADC) member countries on education policy and a review of Namibian education policies and national priority areas (such as school electrification and the provision of IT resources) (output). The African Development Bank (AfDB) awarded a loan to Namibia for school infrastructure maintenance and to cover the cost of the Education and Training Quality Improvement Project (ETQIP) once they had been identified as priority areas with the Secretariat's assistance (output). These are positive steps towards outcome-level results i.e. revised education policies in Namibia that will reduce disparities.</p>	Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop	Namibia	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The Secretariat's work to support the Government of Seychelles with the development of a Blue Economy Roadmap has been effective. The plan has influenced the Seychelles National Development Plan, its narrative and strategic approach to sustainable development regarding ocean resources (outcome). Seychelles is applauded for meeting its commitment to protect 30% of its 1.37 million square kilometre EEZ and Territorial Sea in marine protected areas ahead of its SDG - 14 2020 target (outcome).	Blue Economy	Seychelles	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.4: Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies
The Secretariat mobilised dedicated technical assistance who provided research and analysis, policy development, capacity strengthening, and awareness raising (inputs). The project completed 10 out of 16 inputs in Seychelles; a further 3 inputs were partially delivered and 3 outputs were not initiated.	Blue Economy	Seychelles	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.4: Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies
The Secretariat has successfully worked with the government and other stakeholders to test a methodology and framework for assessing the economic costs of VAWG by examining not just direct costs but also indirect, service, and transfer costs. In just three years and with a small budget the Secretariat with the Ministry of Family Affairs have: secured commitment from key stakeholders including ministers across multiple sectors (education, health, finance, etc.) to buy into a practical approach to reduce VAWG; gathered and analysed complex data; and published a ground-breaking study. These outputs contributed to the Government enacting the June 2020 Domestic Violence Bill, which outlines tougher action against domestic abuse, better protection for victims and penalties for perpetrators, as well as rehabilitation (outcome). The Family Department in the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Family are now focusing on institutionalising the methodology to build skills in data gathering and analysis (steps towards outcome).	Economic Costs of VAWG	Seychelles	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	3.4: Women, girls and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
A government spokesperson said: '(The study) was a major eye opener for our policy- and decision-makers. We have high rates of VAWG but also violence perpetrated by women against men. When we got the results policy-makers understood for the first time the costs of violence to the economy. They also understood that the problem couldn't be tackled by government alone. We need dialogue and engagement with government, the private sector, and civil society.'	Economic Costs of VAWG	Seychelles	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	3.4: Women, girls and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices
Seychelles government stakeholders are, according to the government spokesperson, committed to repeating the study in five years although it is likely that further support from the Secretariat will be required.	Economic Costs of VAWG	Seychelles	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	3.4: Women, girls and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices
Progress in taking forward the recommendations (raising awareness, changing behaviour and investing in actions to prevent and support a response) from the study is slower (according to the government spokesperson) than expected due to COVID-19. A media campaign needs to be planned and engagement activities with the private sector and communities.	Economic Costs of VAWG	Seychelles	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	3.4: Women, girls and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices
The Seychelles and Lesotho pilots have enabled the Secretariat to develop a facilitator's guide and training programme so that all other small states can replicate the approach. (Outputs that are likely to lead to outcomes).	Economic Costs of VAWG	Seychelles	Effectiveness	3: Youth and Social Development	3.4: Women, girls and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices
Technical assistance is on-going and is likely to be highly effective in ensuring that the terms and conditions of Seychelles engagement with the port development contractor/operator are not disadvantageous as they have been in other localities such as Djibouti and Mombasa, Kenya.	Trade Competitiveness: Ports Authority: Concession Agreement Review	Seychelles	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The documentation will be ready for review shortly but the technical advisor has already provided, according to the Ports Authority interviewee 'good pointers.'	Trade Competitiveness: Ports Authority: Concession Agreement Review	Seychelles	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth
The Secretariat's interventions are making a critical contribution towards strengthening electoral democracy and election bodies, institutions, and processes in Solomon Islands.		Solomon Islands	Effectiveness	1: Democracy	1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections
Solomon Islands have accepted some, but not all, of the Secretariat's recommendations listed in the 2014 Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) Report as part of their electoral reform process (outcome).		Solomon Islands	Effectiveness	1: Democracy	1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections
Five years later, the 2019 COG included a further 21 recommendations, some of which were carried forward from the previous COG according to Commonwealth staff interviewed for this case study. At the time of the writing the status of implementing the 2019 recommendations is not known.		Solomon Islands	Effectiveness	1: Democracy	1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections
According to interviews with Commonwealth staff, the Secretariat's Debt Recording and Management System (CS-DRMS 2000+) and the new Commonwealth Meridian system enhances the ability of Central Bank of Solomon Islands and the Ministry of Finance officials to undertake debt portfolio analysis and debt sustainability analysis. This is a step towards effective debt management. The quality of evidence would be improved if the Secretariat's monitoring and evaluation approach captured country level disaggregated data.		Solomon Islands	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.3: National frameworks facilitate effective debt management

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
Higher-level results are constrained by various internal and external challenges. The CommonSensing project is a joint initiative involving a consortium of partners led by United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). Interviews with Commonwealth staff and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) indicated that there have been delays in operationalising the platform in Solomon Islands, and the CommonSensing Climate Finance Advisor (CFA) was only appointed in early 2021. No proposals have been submitted to climate funds to date but the CNCFCA is currently working towards that objective.		Solomon Islands	Effectiveness	5: Small States	5.3: Improved access to climate financing
An unintended positive result of the CommonSensing platform has been its use for supporting the management of Solomon Islands' COVID-19 response. A COVID-19 dashboard on the Geographical Information System (GIS)-based CommonSensing platform is used for decision making as part of Solomon Islands' National Disaster Risk Management structure.		Solomon Islands	Effectiveness	5: Small States	5.3: Improved access to climate financing
The Secretariat has effectively delivered support to Tonga on the strengthening of public institutions.		Tonga	Effectiveness	2: Public Institutions	2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
The gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment workshop and training conducted was well attended by senior civil servants, and the sexual harassment policy drafted as a workshop outcome was adopted with the assent of Cabinet and had aspects of it included in the Employment Relations Bill 2020.	Gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment training	Tonga	Effectiveness	2: Public Institutions	2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
<p>The Secretariat's capacity-building support on improving UN human rights universal periodic review (UPR) processes was also provided effectively with training conducted regionally. Of the 25 members of Tonga's Legislative Assembly, 15 attended the training, with attendees reporting that they felt their ability to meet the UPR requirements had improved as a consequence.</p>	<p>UN human rights UPR processes capacity-building</p>	<p>Tonga</p>	<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>2: Public Institutions</p>	<p>2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved</p>
<p>The Secretariat has, and is continuing, to provide effective support to Tonga on trade competitiveness. The support provided to Tonga on improving trade competitiveness by hiring an external, on-the-ground consultant to design an investment facilitation plan, identify priority sectors and reform the regulatory environment around them, and develop an investment policy website under the Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme has been and continues to be effective. This work is still ongoing, but has been implemented effectively with significant buy-in and ownership from the Tongan government evidenced by the establishment of a new unit within the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development which will coordinate and oversee the implementation of the strategy in the future.</p>	<p>Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme</p>	<p>Tonga</p>	<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>4: Economic Development</p>	<p>4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth</p>
<p>The Secretariat has both effectively increased Tonga's capacity to bid for finance through the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH) and effectively secured US\$2.7 million in funding for climate resilience (as well as a GBP 48M pipeline). This has been achieved by deploying a National Climate Finance Advisor to Tonga for a two-year period, an approach which appears to be especially effective at achieving results at outcome level.</p>	<p>Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub</p>	<p>Tonga</p>	<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>5: Small States</p>	<p>5.3: Improved access to climate financing</p>

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The evaluation team was able to identify some examples of outcomes from progress reports.		Trinidad and Tobago	Effectiveness	1: Democracy	1.4: Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism
Although there is still a long-way to go, the Secretariat's 'whole of society' approach has shown some results in terms of improved government and civil society relationships in the context of CVE.		Trinidad and Tobago	Effectiveness	1: Democracy	1.4: Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism
The Secretariat's participatory delivery approach helps to ensure that the CVE programme is reflective of key national needs, and fosters local ownership.		Trinidad and Tobago	Effectiveness	1: Democracy	1.4: Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism
A more comprehensive assessment of results would have been possible with a) access to external stakeholders (in particular government, civil society and community stakeholders) and b) reference to country specific results in the recent Evaluation of the Secretariat's Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programme.		Trinidad and Tobago	Effectiveness	1: Democracy	1.4: Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism
The Secretariat has significantly contributed to improved debt management and debt data quality in Trinidad and Tobago.		Trinidad and Tobago	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.3: National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
Results on the Secretariat's more recent interventions, such as the transition to Commonwealth Meridian (the new debt management software) have been slower to emerge. The reason behind this is not clear.		Trinidad and Tobago	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.3: National frameworks facilitate effective debt management

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
Partners in Trinidad found all delivery approaches employed by the Secretariat useful, and appreciate the hands-on nature of the support and that advice is tailored to the needs of the country.		Trinidad and Tobago	Effectiveness	4: Economic Development	4.3: National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
Although the impact of the Secretariat's interventions is currently not measured, it is reasonable to assume that it has contributed to the resilience of Guyana's public sector governance through its support to free, fair and credible elections, and the peaceful transfer of power.		Guyana	Impact	1: Democracy	1.2: Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General 1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections
With slow progress on WTO negotiations, it is too early to assess impact. Also, at present, there appear to be no mechanisms in place to track the programme's impact. However, partners interviewed confirmed that the Secretariat's support on multilateral trade issues is relevant for Guyana's resilience.		Guyana	Impact	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth
Impact is not currently being measured. That said the Natural Resource Fund is expected to ensure that future generations can benefit from oil revenues, reduce the vulnerability of the budget to economic shocks and oil price fluctuations, and bring additional revenues through the responsible investment of oil related income, which in turn will contribute to the inclusive economic growth and Guyana's resilience.		Guyana	Impact	4: Economic Development	4.4: Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies
Secretariat staff and CAYWA note that most Commonwealth countries have youth workers who have been trained or are being trained as a result of past Secretariat interventions. The Secretariat has a historic legacy in ensuring professionalise youth work (diploma) across Commonwealth countries, including most small states. Secretariat staff say that 'impact can be seen from the counterfactual', i.e., without the Secretariat's earlier work in this area, there would be no qualifications available for youth work.	Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme.	Malta	Impact	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
Impact in terms of empowered youth is not measured, which suggests that the intermediate indicator is set at too high a level (see Lessons).	Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme.	Malta	Impact	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes
It is too soon to measure higher-level results from the Effective Management Education System (EMES). If EMES is refined and states are encouraged to adopt the approach, then there is a strong likelihood that it will aid both management and decision-making in ways that could reduce disparities and improve education outcomes.	Strengthening effective education management (EMES) practices.	Malta	Impact	3: Youth and Social Development	3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes
A monitoring and evaluation mechanism will be required in the next strategic plan to track higher-level results from the EMES.	Strengthening effective education management (EMES) practices.	Malta	Impact	3: Youth and Social Development	3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes
It is too soon to tell if the Secretariat's interventions relating to human rights and rule of law have achieved impact in Namibia. The roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion were successful at bringing together stakeholders to discuss a topic perceived to be contentious. If the resulting recommendations are taken up by the government, then impact may be expected. The Namibian justice minister indicated in May 2021 that the government was considering dropping the ban on sexual relations between men.	Roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion	Namibia	Impact	2: Public Institutions	2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The Namibian government has not yet changed its cybersecurity or cybercrimes policies (outcome), but the Namibian government is actively reviewing existing capacities with a view to introducing specific legislation and cybersecurity strategies in the future. Impact will only be able to be measured if/when this policy change takes place.	Review of cyber-crime and cyber-security legislation and capacities	Namibia	Impact	2: Public Institutions	2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all
For Strategic Outcome 3.1 and specifically the Secretariat's intervention that supports the professionalisation of youth work, there is a strong likelihood of impact as a result of its work, i.e., young people engaged and empowered. This is likely to stem from the institutionalisation of the degree course in Youth Development Work, but the pathway to change needs to be articulated as do the methods for measuring such impact.	NAMCOL Youth Development Work degree	Namibia	Impact	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes
The Youth Development Work degree provided through the Namibian College of Open Learning is likely to result in a long-term professionalisation of the youth sector and thus improve the quality of youth work accessible to young people in Namibia. The Youth Development Index will enable the government of Namibia to be more responsive to the needs of the country's youth as it provides extensive data on youth-related development indicators.	NAMCOL Youth Development Work degree Youth Development Sports Development Index	Namibia	Impact	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes
The Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop led to a review of outdated education policies and school modernisation plans, which is also likely to achieve impact in the future.	Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop	Namibia	Impact	3: Youth and Social Development	3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
<p>The Secretariat support has delivered high-level commitment to the BE concept with key policy/planning documentation to support implementation. It is too soon to tell how Seychelles is performing against Blue Economy indicators or whether the pressures COVID-19 has brought on the economy will weaken the commitment. The Roadmap and the integration of its principles into the country's National Development Strategy 2019–2023 provide some assurances that Blue Economy concepts are understood and there is commitment to implement.</p> <p>Seychelles will not want to lose its standing as a global leader.</p>	Blue Economy	Seychelles	Impact	4: Economic Development	4.4: Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies
<p>In June 2020 Seychelles passed the Domestic Violence Act which outlines tougher action on the part of government against domestic abuse, better protection for victims, and penalties for perpetrators as well as rehabilitation. This will add further impetus to take forward the recommendations for action and investment for targeted interventions in the study. The Secretariat's piloted approach contributed to this outcome.</p> <p>Widened cross-ministerial knowledge of the need for a holistic approach to address VAWG (response and prevention). This has come about through pilot testing the approach, the dissemination of the study, and convening to discuss its implications.</p>	Economic Costs of VAWG	Seychelles	Impact	3: Youth and Social Development	3.4: Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices
	Economic Costs of VAWG	Seychelles	Impact	3: Youth and Social Development	3.4: Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
Strengthened capacity to gather data to measure the cost of VAWG, although further technical assistance will be required. This stems from the Secretariat's technical assistance.	Economic Costs of VAWG	Seychelles	Impact	3: Youth and Social Development	3.4: Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices
The impact of the technical assistance to review the concession agreement between the port operator and the Ports Authority is potentially significant but it's too soon to measure at present. Construction, according to the Ports Authority Stakeholder, will begin in 2022 and end in 2026. The new port infrastructure will be climate resilient and will accommodate a 45 cm rise in sea levels.	Trade Competitiveness: Ports Authority: Concession Agreement Review	Seychelles	Impact	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth
From an economic perspective, the new port infrastructure will enable Seychelles to diversify their markets to southern Africa, Middle East, and East Asia and towards Europe if the port is efficiently managed. This will bring long-term prosperity to the island, and hopefully inclusive economic growth.	Trade Competitiveness: Ports Authority: Concession Agreement Review	Seychelles	Impact	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth
The Secretariat's interventions are making a critical contribution towards strengthening electoral democracy and election bodies, institutions, and processes in Solomon Islands.		Solomon Islands	Impact	1: Democracy	1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections
Evidence for impacts comes from triangulated testimonies from multiple sources. The 2019 COG report and interviews with stakeholders noted the electoral reforms in Solomon Islands helped to improve the conduct of the General Election on 3 April 2019 and have strengthened its democratic institutions and processes in general.		Solomon Islands	Impact	1: Democracy	1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The Secretariat's support is geared towards enabling Solomon Islands to undertake debt portfolio analysis and debt sustainability analysis, which should help them identify the right resources for Solomon Islands' funding requirements. However, evidence for this impact is limited or hard to capture.		Solomon Islands	Impact	4: Economic Development	4.3: National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
Given the relatively young age of the CommonSensing project in Solomon Islands, no evidence was found of impact achieved at-scale as of mid-2021, although some activities show potential. In particular, the institutionalisation of the platform reinforces the potential for building an evidence base that in turn can strengthen the production of proposals that will succeed in accessing climate finance to increase Solomon Islands' resilience.		Solomon Islands	Impact	5: Small States	5.3: Improved access to climate financing
It is too early to determine if Secretariat activities relating to human rights improvements in Tonga have achieved impact, but there are promising signs that some of them will in the future. Responsibility for ensuring that Secretariat interventions achieve impact lies in large part with the Tongan government though, meaning that an analysis of the Secretariat's contribution to impact is difficult to undertake.		Tonga	Impact	2: Public Institutions	2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
So long as the new sexual harassment policy introduced into the Public Service Commission is actually enforced, it is likely to increase the ability of victims of sexual harassment to get justice and thereby achieve impact. Whether it lowers the overall incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace is more difficult to predict given the often tenuous link between specific policies and deterrence.	Gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment training	Tonga	Impact	2: Public Institutions	2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
The gender mainstreaming training conducted with senior civil servants may lead to the creation of gender-sensitive policies and hence improve the situation of women in Tonga, but it is not possible to determine at this point in time.	Gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment training	Tonga	Impact	2: Public Institutions	2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The UPR capacity-building training provided to members of the Tongan Legislative Assembly is likely to improve the quality of Tonga's human rights reporting and thus Tonga's ability to implement UN human rights recommendations, in turn strengthening human rights in the country.	UN human rights UPR processes capacity-building	Tonga	Impact	2: Public Institutions	2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
It is too early to determine if Secretariat activities relating to economic development in Tonga have achieved impact, but it is likely that they will in the future. The Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme is part of a larger national strategy to remove the country's economic dependence on remittances and overseas development assistance as it seeks to develop the bases of climate resilient growth. Attracting foreign direct investment provides a clear pathway to achieving that goal, but it remains to be seen whether the investment facilitation strategy and regulatory reforms relating to priority sectors will be effective at doing so. Given the high-level of government buy-in and ownership (manifested by the establishment of a new unit in the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development to oversee the implementation of the strategy), there is little else that the Secretariat or the Tongan government could do to set it up for success.	Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme	Tonga	Impact	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth
It is too early to tell if Secretariat activities relating to climate financing have achieved impact, but it is highly likely that they will in the future. The funding for climate resilience and adaptation projects secured through the CCFAH is very likely to achieve impact in Tonga due to the country's high vulnerability to climate change and climate-change-related disasters. The high priority the government of Tonga places on climate resilience increases the likelihood that Secretariat interventions will achieve impact as they both align with existing national strategic priorities and have high levels of buy-in.	Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub	Tonga	Impact	5: Small States	5.3: Improved access to climate financing

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The evaluation team did not have sufficient evidence to assess the impact of CVE interventions.		Trinidad and Tobago	Impact	1: Democracy	1.4: Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member states to counter violent extremism
Feedback from partners in Trinidad suggest that Secretariat support has contributed to the public governance and economic resilience as improved debt management and data quality have increased confidence in the country's economy and the transparency of the government.		Trinidad and Tobago	Impact	4: Economic Development	4.3: National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
Sustainability requires electoral and constitutional reform. Secretariat advisors provided recommendations in this regard but it is not clear to what extent the Guyanese government has taken these on board. Based on media reports, however, there appears to be willingness on the part of the government to reform the electoral process.		Guyana	Sustainability	1: Democracy	1.2: Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General 1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections
As a small state with resource constraints, Guyana is not able to maintain a larger representation, and being a diplomatic mission, officials regularly rotate. WTO issues are also evolving quickly. Assessing the sustainability of SSO's support in its conventional sense is, therefore, not appropriate.		Guyana	Sustainability	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment, and business growth
Sustainability is highly likely. Although some amendments to the National Resource Fund Act are expected, these are unlikely to put the sustainability of the NIRF at risk.		Guyana	Sustainability	4: Economic Development	4.4: Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
With more investment, CAYWA is likely to contribute to the sustainability of professionalised youth work, including for small states through its technical assistance.	Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme	Malta	Sustainability	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes
The Secretariat needs to put in place a sustainability strategy for CAYWA.	Secretariat's Youth Work Professionalisation programme	Malta	Sustainability	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes
The EMES initiative will only be sustainable if the Secretariat can secure continued buy-in and action on the part of small states to adapt and implement the tool in their contexts. For this to happen, the Secretariat needs a clear sustainability strategy and plan of action to secure commitment.	Strengthening effective education management (EMES) practices	Malta	Sustainability	3: Youth and Social Development	3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve education outcomes
Sustainability is not yet integrated into the design of the intervention to support sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion (human rights). While responsibility lies with the government to enact policies, the Secretariat has no plan of action to nudge progress towards sustainable action.	Roundtables on sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation and social inclusion	Namibia	Sustainability	2: Public Institutions	2.1: Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
Namibia's review of cybercrime and cybersecurity programmes is likely to be sustainable if the reforms are implemented as planned as they will be included in the country's statute books. However, responsibility for ensuring that the new laws/reforms are actually enforced lies with the government of Namibia.	Review of cyber-crime and cybersecurity legislation and capacities	Namibia	Sustainability	2: Public Institutions	2.2: Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all
In the case of the Youth Development Index and Sports Development Index, sustainability will be achieved so long as institutional memory remains.	Youth Development Index and Sports Development Index	Namibia	Sustainability	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes 3.2: Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies
The Namibian College of Open Learning degree in Youth Development Work is also a sustainable outcome since, being an online degree, it does not involve additional costs to the provider of the course materials: the University of the West Indies (UWI). That said, NAMCOL nevertheless remains reliant on an external stakeholder for the degree, meaning that long-term sustainability would only be guaranteed by transferring those online resources in-house. In future, the impact of the course on youth empowerment needs to be measured both in terms of graduates getting employment in the sector and young people benefiting from their work.	NAMCOL Youth Development Work degree	Namibia	Sustainability	3: Youth and Social Development	3.1: Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
<p>The sustainability of the Secretariat's support to Namibia on the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework is strong. It is supported by clear buy-in from the government of Namibia (evidenced by initiatives for school electrification and policy reform) and strengthened capacities as a result of workshops, training, TA, etc.</p>	<p>Commonwealth Education Policy Framework workshop</p>	<p>Namibia</p>	<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>3: Youth and Social Development</p>	<p>3.3: Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes</p>
<p>Technical assistance contributed to the publication of the Blue Economy Roadmap but it also increased understanding amongst key government staff of the concepts it embodies (combining a sustainable Blue Economy with conservation). Will this endure particularly if there is staff turnover and insufficient funding to the Blue Economy Department? Will aspirations be translated into tangible actions? With continued support from other global players such as the World Bank and a drive by global civil society to hold governments to account, there is a strong likelihood that the government will adhere to the policies and strategies outlined in the Roadmap and its National Development Plan 2019–2023. A key factor in promoting sustainability could be a desire on the part of the Seychelles government to uphold their reputation as a leader in this area.</p>	<p>Blue Economy</p>	<p>Seychelles</p>	<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>4: Economic Development</p>	<p>4.4: Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including Blue Economies</p>
<p>Seychelles is in the process of institutionalising the methodology and approach. The government spokesperson said: 'Ministers are aware and involved. The data is a wake-up call. The flow of activities will continue.' This implies that government ownership is a pre-requisite for sustainability.</p>	<p>Economic Costs of VAWG</p>	<p>Seychelles</p>	<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>3: Youth and Social Development</p>	<p>3.4: Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices</p>

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The Secretariat recognises that the Seychelles Ministry of Gender will need further support for a follow-up study and this should be included in the next strategic plan.	Economic Costs of VAWG	Seychelles	Sustainability	3: Youth and Social Development	3.4: Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices
This is a strategic intervention for small states. To date, 2 out of 34 small states have piloted the approach. There are plans to scale-up to all small states (but why not larger states too?). The new strategic plan should be ambitious in ensuring there is sufficient budget for capacity strengthening and follow-up engagement and monitoring to track results. Such an approach would position the Secretariat as an important voice in the 'What works to prevent VAWG' discussion, which would align well with the development agendas of the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO), ILO, and UNFPA.	Economic Costs of VAWG	Seychelles	Sustainability	3: Youth and Social Development	3.4: Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices
Sustainability is ensured if the Ports Authority takes up the advice of the technical assistant who is reviewing the concession agreement, which is highly likely. The new port, if built as intended, is likely to endure for the next 50 years.	Trade Competitiveness: Ports Authority: Concession Agreement Review	Seychelles	Sustainability	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade; increased access to trade, employment, and business growth
Sustainability of results is likely. It is enhanced by the fact that the Secretariat's electoral support is embedded in institutional processes in the Solomon Islands and there is commitment and ownership of the electoral reform process by the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission and Solomon Islands stakeholders more generally. The evidence for sustainability comes from Commonwealth monitoring reports and interviews with Secretariat staff.		Solomon Islands	Sustainability	1: Democracy	1.3: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The introduction of new tools is likely to be sustainable as it is accompanied by extensive training in certain areas of debt management and for the uptake of the CS-DRMS 2000+ and Meridian software, which ensures Solomon Islands' government officials have experience to train staff and run the systems themselves in the long term.		Solomon Islands	Sustainability	4: Economic Development	4.3: National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
The sustainability of results is not assured and needs to be addressed. The mid-term review of the CommonSensing project conducted in 2020 noted challenges relating to sustainability, including difficulties in selecting and deploying CNCFAs. This was corroborated in interviews with UNITAR.		Solomon Islands	Sustainability	5: Small States	5.3: Improved access to climate financing
Both of the human rights-related interventions examined for this case study have good sustainability prospects. However, the responsibility for ensuring their longevity lies with the government partners, meaning that it is both difficult to determine the extent to which that is attributable to the Secretariat and that the Secretariat should be recognised for setting things up for sustainability so well, even if sustainability is not achieved.		Tonga	Sustainability	2: Public Institutions	2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
The gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment training provided to senior civil servants is likely to be sustainable so long as the training recipients remain in the Public Service Commission. Beyond this, since the sexual harassment training resulted in the introduction of a Cabinet-approved workplace sexual harassment policy (which has also had portions of it added into the Employment Relations Bill 2020), the support provided to Tonga on sexual harassment is highly likely to be sustainable in the long term. However, enforcement of the policy and legislation lies with government partners, meaning that sustainability is out of the Secretariat's hands somewhat. This challenge can be met, however, by introducing ongoing monitoring arrangements at the design stage so that any shortfalls can be identified and rectified.	Gender mainstreaming and sexual harassment training	Tonga	Sustainability	2: Public Institutions	2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
<p>The capacity-building activities related to human rights UPR processes, conducted with 15 of the 25 members of Tonga's Legislative Assembly and their staff, is highly likely to be sustainable. As the recipients of the training are actual members of the Tongan government, the training is more likely to have been institutionalised than other instances of capacity-building, protecting against risks such as turnover (as is the case among elected representatives).</p>	UN human rights UPR processes capacity-building	Tonga	Sustainability	2: Public Institutions	2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
<p>The results of the Secretariat's work relating to trade competitiveness is highly likely to be sustainable due to high levels of government buy-in and determinate actions the government has taken to prepare for long-term sustainability. The Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme is part of a larger long-term trade and economic plan developed by the Tongan government to make the country more resilient to climate change. With the stakes as high as they are in one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change, government buy-in is high and hence very likely to implement the investment facilitation strategy which will result from the programme. This is further strengthened by the fact that the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development recognised during implementation that a new unit would be required to oversee the implementation of the strategy to which they responded by promptly setting it up. This means that there will be specific human and financial resources for the sustainability of the programme, and appropriate channels of accountability and authority for its implementation, both of which are key components of programme sustainability.</p>	Commonwealth Investment Facilitation programme	Tonga	Sustainability	4: Economic Development	4.1: Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth

Findings	Intervention	Case Study	DAC Criteria	Strategic Outcome	Intermediate Outcome
The results of the Secretariat's work relating to climate resilient finance is highly likely to be sustainable due to high levels of government buy-in. The results seen from the Secretariat's deployment of a National Climate Finance Advisor to Tonga and use of the CCFAH are highly likely to be sustainable both due to the high level of government buy-in on the issue of climate resilient growth and due to the healthy pipeline (GBP 48M) set up by the advisor before the secondment came to an end.	Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub	Tonga	Sustainability	5: Small States	5.3: Improved access to climate financing
The case study relied on the Evaluation of the Secretariat's CVE Programme for evidence on sustainability, which found that the 'longer-term effects of the programme to date were questionable.'		Trinidad and Tobago	Sustainability	1: Democracy	1.4: Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member states to counter violent extremism
The reforms supported by the Secretariat are highly likely to be sustainable.		Trinidad and Tobago	Sustainability	4: Economic Development	4.3: National frameworks facilitate effective debt management

Annex E. Analysis of Results from the Commonwealth Secretariat's Interventions for Small States across Two Strategic Planning Periods: 2013/14–2016/17 and 2017/18–2020/21

A5.1 Observations

- Not all outcomes in small states will be recorded—only those where the small state (or region, e.g., Caribbean or Pacific) are mentioned explicitly are included. This will exclude the work of some centres and networks established as part of the Secretariat workstream, as the annual reports do not make explicitly clear how they lead to outcomes in small states.
- The outcomes that benefit small states but are not based *in* a small state (e.g., international organisations adopting policies that benefit small states) have been recorded and marked 'international' (or similar) in the 'country' column. These can be disregarded if desired.
- Notes in red indicate where higher-level results can be expected but are not yet recorded.
- Formats of annual reports changed over the years. Earlier years tend to give more detail (and therefore shed more light on potential outcomes).

A5.2 Strategic Plan 2013/14–2016/17

A5.2.1 Intermediate Outcomes

1. Democracy
 - 1.1 Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) is well informed and supported to protect and promote Commonwealth values and principles

- 1.2 Member countries engage with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General
- 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections
- 1.4 Values of 'respect and understanding' advanced
2. Public Institutions
 - 2.1 Effective institutions and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights
 - 2.2 Improved and constructive engagement of member countries in the UN's Universal Periodic Review process through technical assistance
 - 2.3 Effective mechanisms, procedures, and legal frameworks that ensure the autonomous and harmonious operation of the three branches of government and strengthen the independence of the judiciary
 - 2.4 National institutions effectively facilitating the administration and delivery of rule of law and justice
 - 2.5 Improved public administration
3. Social Development
 - 3.1 Strengthened national frameworks and policies improve health outcomes
 - 3.2 Strengthened national policies and frameworks improve education outcomes

- 3.3 Gender equality and the empowerment of women effectively mainstreamed into member country policies, frameworks, and programmes and the Secretariat's projects
- 3.4 Improved capacity-building for social development
- 4. Youth
 - 4.1 National and Pan-Commonwealth frameworks advance the social, political, and economic empowerment of young people
 - 4.2 Young people empowered and supported to participate meaningfully, and to take forward youth-led initiatives
- 5. Development: pan-Commonwealth
 - 5.1 Effective policy mechanisms for integration and participation in the global trading system
 - 5.2 Commonwealth principles and values advanced in global development and financing decisions (e.g., G20 and post-2015 MDG framework)
- 5.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
- 5.4 Effective, equitable, transparent, and sustainable management of marine and other natural resources
- 6. Development: small states and vulnerable states
 - 6.1 International policies, mechanisms and rules are more responsive to small states' development strategies and resilience needs
 - 6.2 Small states enabled to effectively participate in the international decision-making processes
 - 6.3 Improved climate financing frameworks.

A5.2.2 Annual Report 2013–2014

In this synthesis of findings culled from the annual report, the consultants have highlighted in red usual questions for the evaluation and sector teams to consider when reporting results.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Fiji	1.1 1.3	Restoration of constitutional democracy in Fiji. CMAG's recommendations on the promulgation of a new constitution; the enrolment of more than 540,000 voters; the establishment of an independent Electoral Commission; and the commencement of a dialogue between the commission and political stakeholders taken forward.
Maldives, Eswatini, Antigua and Barbuda	1.2 1.3	Fair elections: Invitations were secured for Commonwealth observers to be present at elections. A key recommendation of the Commonwealth's 2008 Observer Group in the Maldives was for clarity and coherence around mechanisms for complaints and appeals. This has since been addressed in the Presidential Election Regulation 2013, with the complaints process being implemented during the 2013 elections. Also, a National Elections Complaints Bureau has been established.
Lesotho	1.2	Constitution: Secretariat adviser to Lesotho helped strengthen the coalition government of the country, helped alleviate a serious political crisis, and was praised by stakeholders including the Prime Minister and UNDP.
Jamaica	1.4	Awareness raised for fair elections: Schools in Jamaica took part in knowledge product and capacity-building programmes on Commonwealth values on the themes of democracy, development and diversity, increasing awareness among schoolchildren.
Seychelles	2.1	Human rights: Finalisation of the National Human Rights Action Plan with technical assistance from the Secretariat.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Dominica, Seychelles, Vanuatu	2.2	Human rights: These states have progressed in their engagement with the UPR process, and noted the Secretariat's technical support in statements to the UNHRC.
Belize	2.4	In Belize, the Secretariat provided technical support to the Ministry of Justice to establish a Drafting Department. Strengthened institutional capacity: Of the substantive laws enacted in 2013, 19 of the 29 Acts were prepared by that department as opposed to being outsourced to consultant drafters.
Lesotho	2.4	Rule of law: Technical assistance from the Secretariat resulted in the establishment of a functioning commercial court in Lesotho. The commercial court backlog has been cleared; commercial court rules and procedures have been established; commercial court judges trained. This is a crucial aspect of the delivery of justice and also directly affects economic prospects as investors (domestic and foreign) gain confidence in the legal system. Accordingly, Lesotho has jumped 17 places in the World Bank 'Doing Business' scale from 156 to 139 between 2012 and 2013. Technical assistance has strengthened the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO).
Namibia	2.4	Strengthened institutional capacity: Over 300 magistrates trained, including over 40 new magistrates; nearly 200 clerks trained; a complete new administrative toolkit for magistrates' offices developed and introduced, including new civil and criminal bench books. The effect this has had on the performance of some of the magistrates' offices is clear, with the best (Keetmanshoop) showing a 70% decrease in outstanding cases.
Seychelles	2.4	Strengthened institutional capacity—judicial: Judicial support: two judges to the Supreme Court and court administration expert to Supreme Court. A simplified appeal procedure has been established and instituted with acceptance by defence counsel, respondent, and appellant. The movement of cases in court has improved: 20 cases have progressed to the judgment stage, with judgments delivered on the majority. Court sitting activities are now computerised, providing more accurate and reliable legal data.
Eswatini	2.4	Strengthened institutional capacity—judicial: Judge to the High Court of Swaziland: case backlog cleared by 890 cases heard and disposed, 57 judgments issued. A total of 40 court taxation officers have been trained. Database training for the uploading judgment to the national website was conducted; 296 cases have been disposed of with 17 judgments issued.
Grenada	2.6 4.1	Strengthened institutional capacity—procurement procedures: Senior commercial counsel support to the AG's Office has seen Cabinet approval and implementation of Government Contracts Protocol Policy; and creation of 3,000 secured jobs through successful negotiation of national investment and infrastructure projects. Economic development. 4.1
Jamaica	2.6	Strengthened rule of law: Technical adviser has made substantive improvements and aided the preparation of several Acts and Bills on Criminal Justice, Maritime Law and Tax Law.
Tonga	2.6	Strengthened judicial capacity—registering births and deaths: Ministry of Justice: audited and established procedures for the digitisation of birth and death registers. Eight staff have been trained in the processes of basic archival handling, basic conservation, scanning and photographing documents, and archive storage.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Botswana	3.2	Education: Botswana has adopted recommendations from the Guidelines for Quality Education Provision to Nomadic Communities for Africa and Asia, and is implementing policies to provide education to nomadic populations.
Saint Lucia, Jamaica	3.2	Policy recommendations on the subject of boys' underachievement in the Caribbean were produced for Saint Lucia and Jamaica. Both countries have adopted the recommendations and launched national strategies. Saint Lucia has started its intervention strategy, which is a school mentoring programme for boys.
Jamaica	3.2	The Secretariat provided technical assistance to the government on a school improvement strategy targeting boys' underachievement. The resulting strategy and policy brief gave recommendations to the government, many of which have been adopted, including the development of a mentoring programme, professional standards for teachers, and a school leaders framework developed by the Secretariat.
Trinidad and Tobago	3.4	Following training on gender-responsive budgeting, Trinidad and Tobago developed gender-responsive budgeting guidelines for institutionalising gender equality and gender-mainstreaming practices in government ministries.
Seychelles	3.4	In collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning, the Secretariat conducted the Institutional Quality Review of the National Institute of Health and Social Studies (NIHSS), Seychelles. The NIHSS is now carrying out the implementation of Review recommendations.
The Bahamas	3.4	The Secretariat has published <i>The Impact of Women's Political Leadership on Democracy and Development: Case Studies from the Commonwealth</i> . The Government of the Bahamas used the publication as a key resource in the development of a training programme for women aspiring to political leadership, improving the government's capacity for social development.
Caribbean	4.1	The inception of an online bachelor's programme in youth development at the University of the West Indies, in collaboration with the Secretariat and the Commonwealth of Learning.
Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu	4.1	The Secretariat delivered capacity-building to directors of ministries of youth and labour and strengthened their technical expertise on developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating youth employment programmes. During the workshop, senior officials worked on national action plans for youth employment to be integrated into national planning cycles.
Mauritius	5.1	Following technical assistance to Mauritius, the government established a 'Look Africa' policy and strategy to facilitate export from and investment into selected African destinations, and to give leverage to Mauritius as the location of choice for international companies doing business in the region.
Anguilla	5.1	A long-term CFTC expert has supported the implementation of Anguilla's Sustainable Tourism Master Plan. As a result, Anguilla has acquired associate membership in UNESCO; signed an MOU with the UK-based West India Committee (to support and facilitate tourism); and reached an agreement with the Anguilla Hotel and Tourism Association to collaborate in implementing a public awareness radio programme.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
ACP States	5.1	The Secretariat provided a fisheries adviser to support the operationalisation of the ACP Group Fisheries Mechanism in Brussels, resulting in the development and approval of the five-year Strategic Plan of Action for Fisheries and Aquaculture in ACP states.
Seychelles	5.1	Significant progress was made on Seychelles' market access issues and bilateral negotiations/agreements were completed with nine countries. A consultant provided by the Secretariat was directly involved in the process and made significant contributions to the outcomes of the negotiations.
Eswatini	5.3	Guidelines and regulations for public debt management have now been adopted by the Government to guide its debt operations in a prudent manner.
Barbados	5.3	Following policy advisory support on the policy framework and institutional arrangements on public debt management, the Government of Barbados is currently strengthening its policy framework and also undertaking institutional strengthening by putting middle office functions in place.
Malta	5.3	A partnership agreement was signed between the Secretariat and the Government of Malta. Malta will support strengthening debt management capacity in small states including high-level policy deliberations on their debt management challenges. In addition, assistance on the formulation of the Public Debt Act, provided to Malta, will enhance a robust and modern legal framework for promoting sound public debt management.
The Bahamas, Malta	5.3	Following consultation with the country authorities, a detailed reform plan on public debt management has been drawn up for Malta and the Bahamas for implementation through the Secretariat's support.
Trinidad and Tobago	5.3	The Secretariat provided support to Trinidad and Tobago to establish a comprehensive public debt database in CS-DRMS (the Secretariat's Debt Recording Management System). The final work to validate and reconcile the database for Trinidad and Tobago to ensure its comprehensiveness was completed in June and led to the following outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplication has been eliminated and only one institution (the Ministry of Finance) now owns the debt database in CS-DRMS. • The government is now using the system to support its debt management operations.
Jamaica	5.3	As a result of policy advice on reform of the debt management framework in Jamaica, debt stock of gross domestic product (GDP) dropped to 131.9% in 2013/14, down 3.7% from 2012/13; debt service declined by 5% from 2010/11 levels of GDP to 14.7% in 2013/14; interest charges reduced by 5.6% of total expenditure to 27.4% in 2013/14; there is a better debt structure in terms of currency, interest rate and maturity mix; a more responsible debt management governance has been instituted; professional expertise is growing as part of institution building; it serves as a role model for reforming other indebted Caribbean countries.
Seychelles, Mauritius	5.4	Advice was provided to Seychelles and Mauritius to implement a Joint Management Agreement on an area of extended continental shelf, which enabled them to finalise agreed-upon rules concerning the development of natural resources and the protection of the marine environment in the area covered by the joint management regime.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Saint Lucia	5.4	A long-term expert supported Saint Lucia's Ministry of Economic Planning and National Development to develop a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS).
St Vincent and the Grenadines	5.4	Legal and technical advice on maritime boundary negotiations, delimitation options and draft maritime boundary treaties to St Vincent and the Grenadines, has resulted in Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Maritime Boundary Policy Revision—states can now delimit with OECS and Caribbean Community (CARICOM) states, and as a group with Venezuela.
Cook Islands	5.4	Technical assistance given to the Cook Islands for the National Seabed Mineral Policy, has been approved by the cabinet, along with the fiscal policy settings for seabed minerals (also now approved).
International	6.1	The Commonwealth Resilience Framework developed in 2008 has been used by the IOC, UNDESA, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in the development of their resilience frameworks.
Indian Ocean Region	6.1	Following the capacity-building programme on international architecture on environmental and sustainable development (2011/12), a tripartite MoU between the Secretariat, the IOC and CoL was signed to further deliver the innovative online training to participants in the Indian Ocean region.
Pacific	6.3	Donor resources have been mobilised after the Secretariat complete seven CBAs of Pacific country climate change adaptation projects have been completed.

A5.2.3 Annual Report 2014–2015

In this synthesis of findings culled from the above annual report, the consultants have highlighted in

red usual questions for the evaluation and sector teams to consider when reporting results.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Lesotho	1.2	The Secretariat worked in partnership with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to enable the Lesotho Parliament to be recalled and to create a basis for fresh elections which successfully took place in February 2015. The Secretary-General's Special Envoy worked with the members of the newly formed Coalition Government to draft a Coalition Agreement that enjoys the buy-in of all coalition members.
Lesotho, Maldives, Eswatini	1.2	In Lesotho, Maldives, Mozambique, and Swaziland, the Secretariat engaged the wider international community in building a coherent international strategy and implementation plan, and partnerships to support it. In particular, the Secretariat worked closely with South Africa, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and SADC.
Vanuatu	1.2	A Political Leaders Dialogue on Reform in Vanuatu in March 2015, facilitated by the Secretariat, reached a consensus to address political reform to strengthen the stability of government through regulation and reduction of motions of no confidence, strengthening political parties, reform of the political system and strengthening parliamentary effectiveness.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Solomon Islands	1.3	Solomon Islands established a national biometric voter registration system, implementing a Commonwealth Observer Group recommendation.
Lesotho	1.3	Lesotho amended its National Assembly Electoral Act to provide a sound basis for conducting transparent and credible elections and focused on strengthening the credibility of the register, implementing Commonwealth Observer Group recommendations.
Papua New Guinea/ Bouganville	1.3	In PNG's Autonomous Region of Bouganville, the facility for out-of-constituency voting was expanded, implementing a Commonwealth Observer Group recommendation.
Mauritius	2.2	Human Rights Education Curriculum for Secondary Schools in Mauritius, developed by the Secretariat, was adopted by the government. This is in pursuance of accepted UPR recommendations from 2009 and 2013.
Tonga	2.3	A Judicial Services Commission has now been established in Tonga. The role of the judiciary which had been compromised by the 2010 Constitution was corrected and made independent. Implementation of constitutional reforms to be compliant with the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles has also begun.
Guyana	2.3	New Civil Procedure Rules and Practice Directions were produced and delivered to the judiciary of Guyana with judges, lawyers, and court officials trained in provisions of Civil Procedure Rules and Directions in November.
Vanuatu	2.4	The Secretariat's technical support enabled political leaders in Vanuatu to reach a consensus on addressing a number of legal and political issues, including through law reform in the areas of motions of no confidence, strengthening of political parties, reform of the electoral system, and strengthening parliamentary effectiveness.
Seychelles, Kiribati, Vanuatu	2.4	Institutional strengthening—judiciary: The backlog of cases was reduced substantially in three member countries as a result of the Secretariat's help to strengthen the capacity of the judiciary. In Seychelles, the backlog of criminal and civil cases was reduced by more than 70% and 25% respectively. In Kiribati, court staff and judicial officers received training to improve(ed) efficiency, and a target number of cases per session have been introduced to raise the pace of backlog clearance. In Vanuatu, a Master of the Court has been posted to institutionalise(d) processes to reduce a backlog of cases and improve the administration of justice for commercial cases.
Jamaica	2.4	Crime and Anti-Corruption legislation support to the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel saw a significant number of laws drafted and enacted including The Criminal Justice Administration Act 2015, and the Evidence Amendment Act 2015. Legal and administrative personnel were trained in drafting crime and anti-corruption legislation. With the approval for passage into law of the Evidence Special Measures Regulations and Rules 2015, vulnerable witnesses will now have some form of protection in the criminal justice system. Key result: enhanced justice system that will reduce the backlog of cases before the court.
Trinidad and Tobago	3.4	Trinidad and Tobago commenced implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting using guidelines prepared with Secretariat support.
Fiji	4.1	Fiji has adopted and developed its own version of the Commonwealth's Youth Development Index to track progress on youth policy.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Malta	4.1	Malta finalised a Youth Work Profession Act as part of its youth policy framework.
Trinidad and Tobago	4.1	The Commonwealth Youth SDP (CYSDP) Working Group developed and launched a Commonwealth SDK Advocacy Toolkit and has delivered associated capacity-building.
Guyana	4.2	Establishment of a National Youth Council.
Maldives	4.2	The Secretariat supported the Commonwealth Students Association to help build the national students association in the Maldives.
Jamaica	5.1	With the Secretariat's assistance to Jamaica for a Dry Docking market study, a consensus was reached within the maritime community to develop dry-docking/ship repair facilities in Jamaica.
Jamaica	5.1	Jamaica's National Export Strategy (NES) developed through the Secretariat's assistance was finally launched by the Prime Minister.
Seychelles	5.1	Accession to World Trade Organisation (WTO) saw the CFTC Trade Policy Adviser preparing Seychelles' Trade officials for negotiations with some of the most experienced WTO negotiators. Negotiation advice and technical capacity-building were provided to the Ministry of Finance and Trade throughout. Seychelles achieved accession to WTO on 27 April 2015.
The Bahamas	5.3	Following the provision of policy advice on developing domestic bond markets, the Central Bank of The Bahamas is in the process of implementing the recommendations of an advisory mission, which would facilitate improved access to funds from the domestic bond market at a reduced cost.
Barbados	5.3	The Government of Barbados has received assistance in recording its securities in Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System (CS-DRMS) in a more efficient manner to reduce the size of their database which had become restrictively large.
Grenada	5.3	Counsel drafted Fiscal Responsibility Bill, Public Debt Management Bill, Investment Bill, and Procurement Regulations were enacted in May 2015.
Botswana	5.4	The Secretariat's advice and assistance led to a new draft mineral policy for Botswana.
Namibia	5.4	The Secretariat's advice and assistance led to a new renewable energy policy for Namibia.
Guyana	5.4	The Secretariat's advice and assistance led to Guyana working on the formulation of a new upstream oil and gas policy.
Eswatini	5.4	Eswatini developed a new upstream petroleum bill during the reporting period complemented by resources management training delivered by the Commonwealth to Government officials.
Mauritius	5.4	Mauritius also developed a new seabed minerals law and draft legislation concerning the management of offshore petroleum resources, including an accompanying fiscal regime following Secretariat assistance.
Jamaica	5.4	The Secretariat also helped Jamaica develop a new Model Petroleum Agreement and provided complementary training to officials on offshore petroleum management.
St Kitts and Nevis, Fiji, Tuvalu	5.4	A number of island member countries were successful in settling territorial sea boundaries (St Kitts and Nevis) and exclusive economic zone boundaries (Fiji and Tuvalu).

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Barbados, St Vincent and the Grenadines	5.4	Barbados and St Vincent and the Grenadines reached a landmark agreement that settled boundary disputes between the two countries.
Seychelles	5.4	Secretariat assistance has led to the Blue Economy concept gaining prominence domestically and abroad through the facilitation of bilateral ties with the Nordic Council of Ministers.
Kiribati, Tuvalu;	6.2	Technical and logistic assistance was provided to enable the President of Kiribati and the Prime Minister of Tuvalu to participate in a full-day discussion on human rights and climate change at the UN Human Rights Council in March 2015.
International		<p>Small states are making use of the offices in Geneva and New York to attend international fora. This has enabled engagement with international processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported the intervention of Commonwealth small states in WTO activities • Furthered dialogue with Commonwealth small states on key issues such as non-tariff measures and trade facilitation; • Contributed to discussions and negotiations surrounding service trade • Assisted small states in articulating well-informed positions in negotiations and identifying key issues that could be addressed in the post-Bali environment.

A5.2.4 Annual Report 2015–2016

In this synthesis of findings culled from the annual report, the consultants have highlighted in red usual

questions for the evaluation and sector teams to consider when reporting results.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Seychelles	1.1, 1.3	<p>The Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) noted that the legal framework governing elections had undergone significant improvements since the last Presidential Elections of 2011, with many of the changes attributable to previous Commonwealth recommendations and follow-up technical support, which included the deployment of a technical expert from June to November 2012 to support the initial reform process.</p> <p>Seychelles have accepted the COG's latest 2015 recommendations with a view to preparing for future elections. These relate to the need to increase the number of polling stations as well as address issues such as vote-buying, inducement and campaigning in the cooling-off period, particularly in the run-off elections.</p>
Eswatini	1.2	Good Office engagement saw good progress, including the establishment of conditions for a dialogue between the King and civil society.
Trinidad and Tobago	1.3	Strengthened processes for campaign financing following Commonwealth Observer Group recommendations, and support from the Secretariat.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Nauru	1.3	Ongoing support in Nauru ahead of their July 2016 elections contributed to the establishment of a strengthened independent Election Commission and more robust voter verification and identification processes.
Jamaica	1.3	"Secretariat mission leading to recommendation uptake and requests for support" [no further details provided].
International/ Unknown	2.1	Outcomes of NHRI collaboration included 17 NHRIs adopting the St Julian Declaration on Climate Justice at a Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI) side-event at CHOGM 2015, which committed them to taking tangible action on climate justice in the context of discharging their mandates to protect and promote human rights.
Grenada	2.1	Bilateral technical support to establish and strengthen NHRIs progressed with Grenada initiating the process of establishing an NHRI, having previously been inhibited through Abuja Guidelines restrictions.
Mauritius	2.2	Mauritius responded to a previous UPR recommendation by successfully piloting and adopting a Human Rights Education Curriculum with Secretariat support, to be rolled out in all schools next year.
Tonga	2.3	Tonga continued to implement new constitutional reforms to strengthen Latimer House principles
Namibia	2.3	Namibia started the process of separating its magistracy from the Executive Branch of Government and establishing it as a constituent part of the judiciary.
Guyana	2.3	Key stakeholders in Guyana's criminal justice system were given technical and capacity-building support to deal with domestic abuse cases more effectively, and new Civil Procedures Rules which provide for expedited justice and strengthened rule of law came into force.
Eswatini	2.4	Eswatini used Secretariat tools and model laws for its new broadcasting laws.
Seychelles, Botswana	2.4	With Secretariat support, these members reformed legislation relating to cybercrime.
Mauritius	2.4	Adopted and utilised the Commonwealth Common Law provisions on Anti Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism.
Vanuatu, Seychelles, Guyana, Namibia, Fiji	2.4	Five countries (Vanuatu, Seychelles, Guyana, Namibia, and Fiji) created legal frameworks for the delivery of justice and promotion of reforms conducive to sustainable development with highlights including Namibia's reforms to the public accountants' legislation.
The Bahamas	2.4	Witness Care Policy introduced with technical support, resulting in Witness Care staff becoming more focused and well-motivated; more witnesses turning up at the trials to give evidence; and increasing by more than 300% the number of witnesses called per week.
Jamaica	2.4	Use of technology in courtrooms (resulting from technical assistance) to increase the number of vulnerable witnesses giving evidence has been welcomed. Acts passed with technical support have led to disruption of organised crime, and a decrease in perceptions of corruption.
Kiribati	2.4	Judge delivered to High Court by Secretariat has resulted in a new way of opening criminal cases, as well as clearing the case backlog with a total of 114 civil cases disposed and 66 cases cause listed for hearing during the period. Case backlogs for 2009–2012 were cleared, while the current backlog dropped to 225, down from 423 reported in the last period.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Seychelles	2.4	Capacity of judiciary strengthened, clearing cases backlog and enrichment of Seychelles jurisprudence.
Vanuatu	2.4	Capacity of the supreme court strengthened, backlog of cases reduced.
Namibia	2.4	Secretariat expertise built the capacity of magistrates and strengthens the magistrates' court system, leading to the recruitment of over 40 new magistrates, with over 300 magistrates and nearly 200 clerks trained. Cases backlogs have been cleared.
Belize	2.6	Capacity-building for staff in the Attorney General's office has led to increased legislation and legal advice (with all 16 acts passed in the reporting period receiving direct input from the office), great staff retention, improved record-keeping, and increased confidence in the Attorney General's ability.
Antigua and Barbuda	2.6	Significant improvements made to the government of Antigua and Barbuda's oversight of public financial management through the establishment of an Internal Audit Unit with a website to facilitate transparent publication of audits, public procurement modernising and strengthening, and a new model Policy Delivery Unit in the Cabinet Office supported by a CFTC Policy expert and a Knowledge Management Initiative which includes an online policy data bank. This comes following a consultative forum supported by the Secretariat.
Guyana	2.6	Guyana's Internal Audit System strengthened to expand the internal audit to an additional six line ministries.
St Vincent and the Grenadines	2.6	St Vincent and the Grenadines is currently making revisions to its Draft Public Service Act which will include a Code of Conduct for public servants.
Botswana	2.6	Between Zambia, South Africa and Botswana, 89 officials received in-country training on Effective Management of Anti-Corruption Agencies.
Grenada	2.6	Capacity-building in the Attorney General's office has led to increased emphasis on due process by the Prime Minister and Cabinet and a shift in behaviour and attitude at the highest levels of governance.
Fiji, Jamaica	3.2	Fiji and Jamaica successfully piloted the finalised Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) self-assessment tool, enabling both countries to identify gaps in their TVET systems—a key focus in the SDG agenda.
Jamaica, Saint Lucia	3.2	Boys' education projects in Jamaica and Saint Lucia successfully completed their initial phases, with both governments committing to taking ownership of future delivery under alternative funding.
The Bahamas	3.3	National support saw the Bahamas committing to elevate its Bureau of Women's Affairs to a Department of Gender Affairs following a Secretariat recommendation—an essential move in mainstreaming its gender policy across ministries.
Pacific, Caribbean	4.1	The Pacific and Caribbean Youth ministry and National Statistics Office officials received training and used the Youth Development Index toolkit to inform regional and national plans for monitoring SDG progress.
Jamaica	4.1	With Secretariat support, Jamaica's Professional Association of Youth Workers became a registered Civil Society Organisation, and new competency standards in youth work were operationalised.
Belize	4.1	Belize developed a National Sports Policy drawing on Commonwealth tools and guidelines.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Namibia, Belize	4.2	Namibia and Belize advanced their own youth empowerment programmes by using the Commonwealth Youth Awards model to create a National Youth Awards.
The Bahamas	5.1	The Bahamas passed a new Petroleum Bill and Regulations (Feb 2016) following three years of technical support from Secretariat specialists. The new legislation is complemented by policies to govern the exploration and production of oil, health and safety practices, environmental protection and pollution control, as well as regulations to manage profit-sharing between investors.
Jamaica, Botswana	5.1	These countries made improvements to their trade competitiveness policies and strategies with Secretariat support.
Mauritius	5.1	Regional integration and expert diversification were advanced in Mauritius through support to deepen integration into the global financial system in negotiations for a Trade in Services Agreement
Belize	5.1	Belize's subsidy programme was brought into line with WTO regulations and a business process outsourcing strategy was developed and endorsed by its economic development ministry for the potential to catalyse exports, attract foreign investment, and stimulate innovation and the employment of skilled women and young people.
Caribbean	5.1	Support through Hubs & Spokes II helped several Caribbean countries ratify the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), and approve a regional TFA committee to implement, monitor and ensure compliance with this agreement.
Malta	5.3	Malta has accepted the recommendations to strengthen its policy frameworks to provide an effective legal framework to support sound practice, good governance and prudent principles for debt management.
Trinidad and Tobago	5.3	Trinidad and Tobago implemented recommended reforms to reorganise their debt office to facilitate specialisation and improve risk management processes.
Fiji, The Bahamas	5.3	Fiji and the Bahamas accepted and began to implement recommendations relating to their Bond Market Development.
Mauritius, Jamaica, Fiji	5.3	Mauritius, Jamaica, and Fiji adopted the Horizon public debt analytical tool.
The Bahamas	5.4	The Petroleum Bill, developed with Secretariat support, was passed into law.
Cook Islands	5.4	The Cook Islands saw the first public tender for seabed mineral exploration and the revised draft Seabed Minerals Act which is now undergoing stakeholder consultation.
Jamaica	5.4	The Secretariat also supported a successful negotiation outcome for upstream exploration operations by a company in Jamaica.
Namibia	5.4	A renewable energy policy that was drafted for Namibia has now been through public consultation and will be implemented by the Government.
St Vincent and The Grenadines and Barbados	5.4	Maritime boundary and continental shelf support saw the signing of maritime boundary treaties between St Vincent and The Grenadines and Barbados.
Saint Lucia, Barbados	5.4	Maritime boundary and continental shelf support saw agreement on a draft treaty between Saint Lucia and Barbados.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Seychelles, International, Caribbean	5.4	Seychelles completed a draft Blue Economy Roadmap, a key milestone for the country: Secretariat work on the Blue Economy has gained significant momentum, with the World Bank announcing the launch of a \$100 million project to support the implementation of the Blue Economy in the Caribbean as the result of work undertaken by the Secretariat with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).
UN, International	6.1	UN Agenda (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) acknowledges the challenges faced by SIDS in financing their development, reflecting the view of the Commonwealth small states. References to the issues affecting small states increased substantially between the Zero draft issued before a Commonwealth-convened conference in March 2015 and the final AAAA published in July 2015, showing the impact of advocacy.

A5.2.5 Annual Report 2016–2017

In this synthesis of findings culled from the annual report, the consultants have highlighted in red usual questions for the evaluation and sector teams to consider when reporting results.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Lesotho	1.2	Following a period of political crisis, which culminated in snap elections, the pre-election peace pledge was signed by all parties on 17 May 2017. The Secretary-General had visited Lesotho where she advocated the signing of a peace pledge by political parties ahead of the elections.
Nauru	1.3	New Electoral Act passed in 106 and an independent Nauru Election Commission (NEC) established in line with previous Commonwealth observer recommendations. The Secretariat also gave technical assistance to set up the NEC quickly, and helped introduce i) The compilation of a new voters' list; ii) More robust voter verification and identification processes; iii) A revised counting and tabulation system; iv) Voter education and outreach programmes.
International	1.3	"Although this represents a small sample of the overall elections monitored, there is sufficient evidence to be indicative of wider take-up of COG recommendations."
Samoa	2.1	Support to the Ombudsman of Samoa saw the country's first national inquiry into family violence and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) launch, with the Secretariat providing technical inputs throughout its lifecycle to June 2018.
Mauritius	2.4	Mauritius developed a new Education Law and a Police and Criminal Justice Reform Bill with Secretariat assistance.
Eswatini	2.4	Eswatini's laws were reformed to conform with anti-terror legislation with Secretariat assistance.
Kiribati	2.4	Support to Kiribati's High Court saw its civil and criminal case backlog reduce by 581 cases, as well as measurable improvement in the court's efficiency through the adoption of new operational practices.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Seychelles	2.4	<p>The Secretariat provided two Supreme Court Judges and one Court Administration Advisor to support the Supreme Court, resulting in a significant reduction in the backlog of cases (more than 70% in the Criminal Division and 25% in the Civil Division).</p> <p>The two Judges were key members of the constitutional court to hear an election petition challenging the December 2015 election. As a result of the case, recommendations were made for legal guidelines for election regulations. The legislation was implemented within months and strengthened the separation of powers.</p> <p>Through the Court Administration Advisor, a Computerised Case Administration System Seychelles (CCASS) system was introduced, improving the processing and management of court cases and enabling the public to access judgements, increasing transparency and facilitating legal research.</p>
Vanuatu	2.4	<p>A judge and master of court in the Supreme court were appointed via Secretariat assistance to fill gaps in the judiciary. This resulted in a reduction in the case backlog through introduction of Computerised Case Administration System (CCAS), with mediation introduced to increase the rate of case closure, and improved standards for rule of law and justice.</p> <p>The judges contributed to improvements in sentencing practice and were instrumental in reviewing the Misuse of Drugs Act and advising the committee that set up the tribunal, which helped reduce the backlog of criminal cases. As above</p> <p>In 2015 a female judge who was previously seconded to the Vanuatu Supreme Court by the Secretariat made one of the most high-profile and impactful rulings in the history of the country, sentencing 15 Members of Parliament for corruption. Evaluation respondents unanimously attested that this would help curb corruption going forwards. Respondents noted the female judge and master of court, also female, "provide unique role models for women in a country where they have little power and a low social status."</p>
Guyana	2.	Guyana developed new securities legislation with Secretariat support.
Namibia	2.4	Namibia developed new public accountants' legislation with Secretariat support.
Cook Islands	2.6	Improved performance management practices have been implemented through support to the Cook Islands to develop best practice Human Resource Management policies and strategies.
Botswana	2.6	<p>A secretariat expert in Botswana supported the establishment and functioning of the Commonwealth African Anti-Corruption Commission. An independent evaluation of Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption programmes found that through the Commonwealth African Anti-Corruption Centre (CAACC), which benefits 18 member Anti-Corruption Agencies:</p> <p>"Commonwealth member states have benefited significantly from the programme and tangible capacity improvements have been realised by the anti-corruption agencies"; 68% of ACA representatives reported making significant changes to their work after returning from CAACC courses.</p>
Belize	2.6	In Belize, a Secretariat expert provided support to the Attorney General's office (AGO) to improve the legislative drafting systems and processes, including mentoring programmes for four AGO Officers. The capacity of the office has been significantly strengthened, and the legislation backlog reduced. From a position of 73 outstanding pieces of legislation for drafting in April 2014, 67 acts have been passed by parliament.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Fiji	2.6	Secretariat supported drafting office capacity and assisted the drafting and passage of six amendment bills. Further, a range of resources and guides was produced to support future drafting within the Attorney General's Office, leading to wider institutional and staff capacity-building.
Namibia	2.6	Input: A Secretariat expert completed the draft Public and Accountants and Auditors Bill. This will support Namibia to better regulate its public accountants and auditors in order to protect the financial interest of the Namibian public and international investors through the reform of its Public Accounts' and Auditors' Act (PAA) in accordance with internationally recognised standards and processes.
Grenada	2.6	Grenada accepted a new code of ethics.
Antigua and Barbuda	3.1	Following successfully piloting the Non-Communicable Diseases Framework, developed in partnership with the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, Antigua and Barbuda launched its Wellness Commission in Feb 2017.
St Vincent and the Grenadines	3.1	Following successfully piloting the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Framework, developed in partnership with the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, St Vincent and the Grenadines achieved its objective of establishing a multisector National NCD Commission.
Grenada	3.1	Following successfully piloting the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Framework, developed in partnership with the Healthy Caribbean Coalition Grenada successfully strengthened its existing National NCD Commission.
Mauritius	3.2	CFTC (CFTC Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation) Technical Assistance to Mauritius' Ministry of Education came to an end with the delivery of "The Mauritian Higher Education Bill 2017". Significant achievements within the Bill included the establishment of an independent Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency to maintain and assure the high quality of education in Mauritius.
The Bahamas	3.4	Targeted training from the Secretariat increased the capacity in the newly formed Gender Department.
Brunei Darussalam	4.1	Brunei Darussalam has adopted a national Youth Development Index.
Saint Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, Solomon Islands	4.1	Four countries have adopted new National Youth policies with Secretariat support. Saint Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, and Dominica received CFTC technical expert assistance, while Solomon Islands used the Secretariat's methodology and evidence-based approach through its drafting process.
Malta, Jamaica	4.1	The Youth Work Associations of these countries (supported by the Commonwealth) adopted the constitution and formed the Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Work Associations (CAYWA) and adopted the Commonwealth Code of Ethical Practice that embeds the Commonwealth values and principles in youth work practice in the interest of young people.
Mauritius	4.1	Assistance to develop and implement Mauritius' Sports for All strategy has seen the Sports Department of the Ministry of Youth and Sports restructured to include a dedicated unit, and 25 million rupees allocated in the 2017/18 budget.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
International, Seychelles, Mauritius	4.2	The Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) and Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network (CYCN) jointly designed, developed, and launched the Blue-Green Economy Toolkit, and the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) Youth Advocacy Toolkit. The toolkits were used to train youth leaders from Small States on how to engage with the COP22 processes and how to lead action on Climate Advocacy. In addition, the CYC and the CYCN initiated and conducted an Ocean Governance Internship pilot programme in Mauritius and Seychelles that exposed over 30 young people to Blue employment.
Grenada	5.1	Secretariat technical support saw Grenada launch its National Export Strategy.
Papua New Guinea	5.1	Papua New Guinea accepted PACER Plus Agreement recommendations.
Mauritius	5.1	Support for Mauritius' Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) negotiations saw the country fully maintain an evidence-based position on the TiSA framework text.
Seychelles	5.1	Seychelles' Intellectual Property Office was supported to implement the Industrial Rights Property Act 2014, achieving full compliance with the WTO TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement towards an improved business environment in the country.
Pacific	5.1	Pacific Islands Forum countries (PIFs) were supported through the strengthening of the Office of the Chief Trade Advisor, leading to the successful conclusion of PACER Plus negotiations in August 2016.
Solomon Islands, Fiji	5.1	Trade policies have been implemented with support from the Hubs and Spokes II Programme [since 2013].
Kiribati	5.1	The Hubs & Spokes adviser assisted the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives on drafting its Sector Plan (2016–2019), as a strategic approach to mainstream trade into the country's Development Plan. The sector plan seeks to improve the volume of trade and competitiveness in the sectors where Kiribati has a comparative advantage.
Cyprus (Zanzibar)	5.3	Governments have adopted the Secretariat Debt Recording Management System (CS-DRMS), improving their debt management capability.
The Bahamas	5.3	The Central Bank of the Bahamas is setting up a Central Securities Depository (CSD).
Fiji	5.3	Fiji implemented Secretariat recommendations in reopening its infrastructure bonds—a critical first step towards developing market liquidity as it facilitates consolidation of Government securities and creates large bond size which will boost trading and reduce cost to the government.
Africa, Asia, Pacific, Caribbean	5.3	164 Debt Managers trained in domestic and external debt management and debt recording in CS-DRMS via a new e-learning tool.
Antigua and Barbuda	5.4	In Antigua and Barbuda, the maritime boundary with France was formally adopted.
Vanuatu, Solomon Islands	5.4	Vanuatu and Solomon Islands signed an agreement on their respective boundaries.
Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados	5.4	Maritime boundaries were also signed between Saint Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines, and between Saint Lucia and Barbados, and formally adopted at the CARICOM Heads of Government meeting (July 2017).

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
The Bahamas	5.4	New National Oceans Policy adopted.
Vanuatu	5.4	New National Oceans Policy adopted.
Guyana	5.4	Secretariat support resulted in Guyana establishing a Petrol Commission.
Cook Islands	5.4	CFTC (Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation) Technical Assistance to Cook Islands' Ministry of Mineral and Natural Resources saw improved sustainable management and development of seabed mineral resources through the institutionalisation and establishment of the Seabed Minerals Authority and the development of an appropriately functioning regulatory framework. This has already resulted in the first national tender for seabed minerals in national waters and approval to explore 75.000 km ² seabed minerals with an estimated ground value of US\$227 billion, with investment opportunities now being explored.
International/ World Bank	6.1	World Bank in 2016 prioritised a three-year work programme to examine the inclusion of vulnerability as a criterion for concessional financing, including working with the Secretariat and other partners following Secretariat advocacy.
International/ Geneva/ New York	6.2	Geneva and New York Small States offices enabled the participation of 11 resident member states in international fora.

A5.3 Strategic Plan 2017/ 18–2020/21

A5.3.1 Intermediate Outcomes

1. Democracy
 - 1.1 CMAG is well-informed and supported to protect and promote Commonwealth values and principles
 - 1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General
 - 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections
 - 1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism
2. Public Institutions
 - 2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved
 - 2.2 Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all
 - 2.3 Improved public administration for good governance, and the prevention and elimination of corruption
3. Youth and Social Development
 - 3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes
 - 3.2 Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies
 - 3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes
 - 3.4 Women, girls, and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices
4. Economic Development

- 4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment, and business growth
- 4.2 Commonwealth positions, advanced in international development and financing mechanisms
- 4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management
- 4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including Blue Economies
5. Small and Other Vulnerable States
- 5.1 International policies, mechanisms and rules are more responsive to small and other vulnerable states' development strategies and resilience needs
- 5.2 Increased resilience, adaptation and mitigation against climate change
- 5.3 Improved access to climate financing

A5.3.2 Annual Report 2017–2018

Report unavailable.

A5.3.3 Annual Report 2018–2019

In this Annual Report there is a noticeable shift in the way results are reported with more evidence on outcomes. Triple Line have highlighted in red further questions for the evaluation and sector teams.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Solomon Islands	1.2	Clear evidence during elections that previous Commonwealth recommendations have been acted upon, including an enhanced regulatory framework, penalties for election offences, pre-poll voting procedures, voting laws amended, reviewed polling procedures, and training for journalists.
Guyana	1.3	Commonwealth Election Professionals recommendations to the election management body has improved civic and voter education outreach in Guyana.
Trinidad and Tobago	1.4	With the support of the Secretariat, Trinidad and Tobago established the Nightingale Taskforce, mandated to address the return and reintegration of foreign fighters and their families.
Belize, Dominica, Grenada, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Vanuatu	2.1	Received technical support and capacity-building, enabling these states to effectively engage international human rights mechanisms, specifically the UNHCR Universal Periodic Review.
Samoa	2.2	Secretariat supported the Ombudsman to undertake a national inquiry into family violence (activity). The data generated led to advocacy and awareness-raising on domestic abuse and family violence, including government commitment to implement the report's 39 recommendations. Several have already been implemented.
Botswana, Jamaica	2.3	Secretariat-produced Enterprise Risk Management Policy and Frameworks were adopted in Botswana, Ghana, Jamaica, and The Gambia. These enable member countries to achieve national strategic objectives and sustainable development through enhanced risk management and improved decision-making.
Botswana	3.2	Influenced and supported by the Secretariat, a National Gender and Sports Strategy was adopted in Botswana.
Fiji, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands	3.3	At the country level, Fiji Islands, Tuvalu, and Solomon Islands have taken into account recommendations stemming from the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework, in particular with regard to governance and the framework's education systems capacity enablers.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles	3.3	These members have adopted actions plans for the rollout of the Commonwealth Education Policy Framework with Secretariat support.
International (19 Commonwealth countries, mostly small states)	4.1	Hubs & Spokes II programme provided policy and strategy support, capacity-building and supported trade agreements with some outcomes suggested.
Botswana	4.1	New National Export Strategy completed, published, and launched with Secretariat support.
Grenada	4.1	Implementation of National Export Strategy underway and New Products, New Market Strategy adopted with Secretariat support.
Lesotho	4.1	Country Brand Strategy adopted; and New Products, New Market Strategy developed with Secretariat support, including via a 'Train the trainer' workshop on Product Development and Innovation.
Cyprus	4.3	Adopted the Commonwealth Meridian debt management software, and reports benefits from improved user-friendliness and a streamlined recording process.
Papua New Guinea	4.3	Adopted the Commonwealth Meridian debt management software, and reports cost and time savings because of it.
Trinidad and Tobago	4.3	Adopted the Commonwealth Meridian debt management software, allowing greater flexibility in financing options and better suiting the needs of Trinidad and Tobago, according to the report.
The Bahamas	4.3	With the support from the Secretariat, the government initiated measures to improve debt management and make it credible, transparent, and effective. A new Act will strengthen various strands of public debt management and bolster the public debt management framework in The Bahamas. To address financial infrastructure gaps, the Central Bank is setting up a new Central Securities Depository (CSD), which is nearing completion.
The Bahamas, Belize, Kiribati, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu	4.4	All reported to have accepted the Secretariat's guidance in the formulation of laws pertaining to natural resource usage.
Barbados	4.4	The Secretariat supported the country's successful application to the India-UN Development Partnership Fund for furthering local content development in the petroleum and other energy sectors.
Cook Islands	4.4	Adopted the Secretariat's legal guidance in the reform of its seabed minerals management regime, which was issued for public consultation and culminated in the enactment of a new Seabed Minerals Act in 2019.
Guyana	4.4	Adopted National Resource Fund Legislation based on the Secretariat's advice. The fund will provide a strong basis for the management of approximately US\$40 billion of petroleum revenues, as well as for maintaining economic competitiveness, a fair intergenerational transfer of petroleum wealth and a sustainable long-term fiscal policy.
St Vincent and the Grenadines/ International	5.1	St Vincent and the Grenadines made use of the Commonwealth Small States Office to run a successful campaign to be elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Antigua and Barbuda	5.3	Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub supported Antigua and Barbuda to unlock a grand of US\$20 million from GCF following Hurricanes Irma and Maria.
International		A total of US\$25 million has so far been mobilised for five countries, with a further US\$492 million in the pipeline for eight countries.

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Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Jamaica	1.4	The Secretariat undertook technical assistance visits and delivered activities on a variety of countering violent extremism topics. These served as the foundation for assistance to countries to better understand the drivers of extremism. Overall, as recognition that extremism affects a broad range of countries increases, there is a growing receptiveness across the Commonwealth to engaging in CVE.
International	2.1	Support provided by human rights advisers based in Geneva contributed to reducing small states' backlog in reporting to human rights treaty bodies, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
Eswatini	2.1	The Secretariat also continued to support the strengthening of Eswatini's National Human Rights Institution, achieving a milestone with revised legislation now submitted to the Cabinet, induction of new commissioners facilitated through South–South cooperation, and provision of strategic planning advice.
Guyana, Malawi*, Seychelles, Sierra Leone*, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu *not officially listed as small states	2.1	The Secretariat further assisted six small states, Guyana, Malawi, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Sierra Leone, and Vanuatu to enhance their participation at the HRC by supporting statement preparation and organising five pre-session briefings to provide updates on HRC-related activities in upcoming sessions. As a result, the number of statements these states delivered increased substantially—as compared with zero statements by some states in previous sessions. For example, Vanuatu was advised and delivered seven statements at HRC42 and HRC43 as compared with no statements at HRC41; similarly, Sierra Leone delivered seven statements at HRC42 compared with one statement at HRC41.
Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, St Vincent and the Grenadines	2.1	With the Secretariat's support, four Commonwealth small states—Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, and St Vincent and the Grenadines—have stepped up their engagement with Treaty Bodies by submitting overdue reports or participating in constructive dialogue in Geneva.
Seychelles	2.3	Following a request from Seychelles, the Anti-Corruption Commission underwent capacity-building with the outcome of increased management capabilities and understanding of steps to manage corruption risk.
Eswatini	2.3	Technical assistance was also provided to Eswatini on introducing ERM in the Ministry of Finance and six line ministries. The minister of finance conveyed his appreciation of the Secretariat's support during the Secretary-General's visit to the country.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
Namibia / International	3.1	The Secretariat collaborated with the Rajiv Ghandi National Institute of Youth and the Namibia College of Open Learning to support more than 330 youth workers and leaders in Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, Canada, and Africa. Youth leaders received training in effective and evidence-based youth policy and advocacy and creating strong national and regional youth councils. They also received support to participate in youth-led action around entrepreneurship and employment and to attend and contribute to important regional and global forums such as those held by the Africa Union and the United Nations.
Mauritius	3.2	Mauritius has launched the Active Mauritius initiative, drawing on the Secretariat's 'Rising to the Challenge through Sport' guidance and recommendation report delivered to the government in 2018.
Seychelles	3.4	Following a period of Secretariat research, and benefitting from technical support and training of law enforcement teams, Seychelles has adopted a new domestic violence bill. It further sets out the role of police in relation to victims in need of shelters; imparts powers to social services to take up legal action against abusers, even in cases where the victim removes their case; and increases the options available to third parties seeking protection for survivors.
Barbados, Belize, Cook Islands, Cyprus, Mauritius, Lesotho, Saint Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Trinidad and Tobago	4.3	All these countries benefitted from adopting the Commonwealth Meridian debt management software and platform developed by the Secretariat.
The Bahamas	4.3	During the reporting period, the Secretariat made significant progress in supporting debt management policy reform in The Bahamas. Draft public debt management legislation developed with technical assistance from the Secretariat was presented to the Cabinet for approval. It has passed through internal review by the government and peer review by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and is expected to be enacted in 2020/21. The new legislation will establish a new debt management framework, improve accountability and transparency in debt management operations and modernise public debt management infrastructure in line with best international practices.
<i>Note: The 2019–2020 report part A refers to ongoing technical assistance to several small states under indicator 4.1, but lists no specific outcomes. It is unclear whether this is a gap in reporting or a gap in outcome achievement.</i>		
Saint Lucia	4.4	In-country and remote assistance in the implementation of the findings of the International Maritime Organization resulted in the signing of a Corrective Action Plan in December 2019. Maritime pollution prevention and other laws giving effect to key international maritime instruments were finalised during the period under review and the establishment of a separate Maritime Administration was raised in Parliament and is close to being realised.

Country	SO	Outcome Result in bold
The Bahamas	4.4	The government accepted the Secretariat's recommendations on a petroleum sector fiscal regime. Following several reviews, drafting of legislation and a model agreement to reflect those positions commenced.
Cook Islands	4.4	The government accepted the Secretariat's recommendations on due diligence for deep seabed mining, incorporating the recommendations in the draft exploration regulations and internal procedural documents.
Guyana	4.4	Guyana, with the Secretariat's assistance, continued to make steady progress operationalising the Sovereign Wealth Fund, which now has a balance of over US\$50 million.
Kiribati	4.4	The government accepted the Secretariat's recommendations regarding marine scientific research mandates. Following several reviews, a draft protocol was written and implementation is imminent. Strong progress was made on drafting the exploration regulations, fee structure, and tax regime for deep seabed mining, which will help the government maximise the benefits from this industry.
Eswatini	4.4	The government accepted the Secretariat's proposals on a new mining fiscal regime. Preparation of amendments to the Income Tax Act and the Mines and Minerals Act has commenced.
Vanuatu	5.1	The Small States Office in New York enabled Vanuatu to sit on executive boards of UN agencies. As a result, Vanuatu has worked to advocate for a greater UNOPS 'footprint' in the region. This has spurred the UNOPS Secretariat to take a more active interest in partnering with Pacific Islands countries to facilitate projects within its expertise.
	5.3	Vanuatu also used this opportunity (facilitated by the Commonwealth Mission) to secure US\$2 million in financing for three resilience projects.
Tonga	5.3	A National Climate Finance Adviser was deployed to Tonga and provided assistance in drafting two successful funding proposals approved for funding by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and worth almost US\$1 million combined for climate resilience work.
Antigua and Barbuda	5.3	In Antigua and Barbuda, a National Climate Finance Adviser mobilised funding of US\$180,560 in December 2019.
Jamaica	5.3	The National Climate Adviser in Jamaica supported a regional application that successfully secured a further US\$1.3 million for a Caribbean regional initiative, the Enhancing Caribbean Civil Society's Access and Readiness for Climate Finance. Of this, Jamaica will be allocated some US\$200,000.

Annex F. Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Support to Small States

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of independent and equal sovereign states. Its countries are bound together by shared values and principles, which are enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter. The Commonwealth Secretariat in London convenes member countries; executes mandates set by the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) and implements strategic plans agreed by its Board of Governors representing its member countries.

The Commonwealth has championed small and vulnerable states (SVS) since the 1980. In 1985, a Commonwealth Consultative Group produced the report, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society*. The Report noted that small states are 'inherently vulnerable to external interference' and outlined the characteristics of smallness, the vagaries of vulnerability and the threats to small states.

The Secretariat defines small states as countries with a population of 1.5 million people or less, and vulnerable states as countries with a bigger population but which share many of the same vulnerabilities:

- vulnerability to external events such as natural disasters;
- vulnerability to external economic shocks such as world trade fluctuations;
- limited market diversification;
- limited capacity in the public and private sectors and;
- limited access to external capital.

Based on this definition, thirty-two (32) of the 56 member countries of the Commonwealth are small and vulnerable states (See *List of SVS in Annex 1*).

The Commonwealth delivers a range of programmes to address the needs of SVS. Programme approaches include global advocacy,

capacity and institution building and technical assistance, knowledge sharing and policy development. Support to small states is delivered directly to address country needs and priorities and, indirectly, through pan-commonwealth and regional-level provisions.

The four-year Strategic Plan of 2013/14 was the first to prioritise support for small states with one of the six strategic outcomes (SO) being:

SO 6. Strengthened resilience of small states and vulnerable states

Under the subsequent four-year Strategic Plan of 2017/18, the Secretariat further expanded on this strategic outcome as:

SO 5. Strengthened resilience of small and vulnerable states, including adaptation and mitigation against climate change

This strategic outcome reflected an agreed focusing by Member States on the environmental and climate change issues impacting small states. The outcome however does not fully encompass the cross-organisational strategic focus on ensuring that small states benefit disproportionately from the Secretariat's delivery. Across each of the other strategic outcomes, a number of projects and programmes recognise and respond to the needs of small states. (See *Strategic Outcomes/matrices in Annex 2*).

In March 2020, the Secretariat commenced development of a new strategic plan. The Annual Evaluation Plan identified a number of critical evaluations to inform the new Strategic Plan development. These evaluations which will be implemented concurrently will also include results to small states in their scopes:

- Strategic Plan Evaluation, 2020
- Evaluation of Consensus Building, 2020
- Evaluation of the Economic Development Programme, 2020
- Evaluation of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub, 2020

2. Purpose and Users of the Evaluation

The main purpose of the evaluation is to assess the contribution of the Commonwealth Secretariat's programmes in delivering benefits to, and promoting the interests of, its small member states. The evaluation is summative as it seeks to take stock of the effectiveness of the Secretariat in assisting its small state members to address their development and public governance challenges. Its findings are also expected to inform the new Strategic Plan from July 2021.

The objectives of this evaluation are therefore to:

- i. Assess the overall coherence of the Commonwealth Secretariat's support to small and vulnerable states
- ii. Review the relevance of the support to small states' development and public governance challenges and needs, and specifically in light of the changed global context over the past 10 years
- iii. Consolidate and assess whether the Secretariat's actions in favour of small states have been effective in meeting the expected outcomes of the Strategic plan.
- iv. Identify specific stories and evidence of impact across the four regions
- v. Make recommendations for the consideration of the Secretariat's senior management and Board of Governors on how small states impact can be scaled up across the Commonwealth.

Primary Users

There are two primary user groups of the evaluation: 1) senior management and programme leads of the Commonwealth Secretariat; 2) the Board of Governors, sector leader and heads of member states.

3. Evaluation Scope and Key Questions

The evaluation scope will cover the two strategic periods between 2013/14 to 2020/21, a total of

8 years. The evaluation will assess outcomes in the context of the following five strategic outcomes.

1. Greater adherence to Commonwealth political values and principles
2. More effective, efficient and equitable public governance
3. People of the Commonwealth fulfil their potential with dignity and equality in a healthy environment
4. More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development
5. Strengthened resilience of small and vulnerable states, including adaptation and mitigation against climate change

Key Evaluation Questions

The evaluation purpose and objectives, and the assessment of the Secretariat's performance, will be framed in line with relevant OECD/DAC Evaluation criteria¹. The following proposed questions will be validated and refined by the Evaluators in consultation with internal stakeholders.

Effectiveness: How effectively has the Commonwealth Secretariat delivered support to address the vulnerabilities, public governance and development challenges of its small member states?

1. To what extent has the Secretariat's ways of working enabled the realisation of its strategic and programmatic outcomes for small states?
2. What programmatic and strategic outcomes can be evidenced?
3. What unintended outcomes may have emerged, where and why?
4. How has the Secretariat's influence in global discussions worked? On which global issue(s) has the Commonwealth demonstrated effective leadership on behalf of small states?

Efficiency: How well is the Secretariat utilising and managing its resources?

5. How efficiently are resources (financial, non-financial, tangible and intangible) used/ managed?

1 <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

6. How does the Secretariat facilitate learning across small states interventions?

Relevance. How well are projects' designed to respond to small member states' needs, policies, and priorities, and to continue to do so as the global context changes

7. Is the Commonwealth involved where it should be, and to the level it should be to be effective from a strategic perspective?
8. How responsive has the Secretariat's programming been to the evolving needs of SVS and the global context?
9. Are there opportunities, gaps where the Commonwealth could/should be more deeply involved?

Coherence/Alignment: How well do the Secretariat's small states interventions and support fit within an overarching Secretariat strategic intent and with the actions of other institutions targeting small states are key beneficiaries.

10. How well are project rationales and actions delivering to the same programmatic outcomes within the Secretariat's portfolio?
11. How aligned are the CW meetings with global meetings? How aligned are the CW advocacy issues to the global agenda? What entry points exist in global discussions for addressing Commonwealth issues, how effective have these entry points been recognised and utilised?
12. How consistent is the CW in addressing and following up on key issues? What follow-up mechanisms exist for key issues that the Secretariat is advocating for? How are conversations around these issues developed and sustained?

Impact: To what extent has the Commonwealth Secretariat's support delivered to longer-term/high level social, environmental, public governance and economic changes (positive or negative, intended or unintended)

13. What long-term benefits has Secretariat's use of its convening powers reaped for small member states, the Secretariat and Commonwealth organisations?

14. How have small states' resilience changed over the past two years and how might the Commonwealth have contributed to observed changes?

Lessons

15. What are the factors, drivers, opportunities, capacities and processes that foster effective global policy influencing and national capacity building?
16. How does the Secretariat facilitate learning across small states programming?

4. Methodology

The evaluation will utilise the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and the Evaluators will devise an appropriate analytical tool to inform the assessment of the underlying evaluation questions and deliver to the evaluation objectives. The approach will be largely qualitative and is therefore expected to apply a number of such methodologies to ensure a robust triangulation of findings.

The following methodologies may be applicable.

Case study: The case study methodology allows for a deep-dive analysis of select issues or stories of impact. Case studies can address select global issues analysis (debt management, international finance, public governance, and gender) in depth to assess the Secretariat's influence and effectiveness in delivering results. A small number of case studies (at least 2 per region) should be developed. Key informant interviews can also be employed targeted at a wide range of external stakeholders, and in-depth analysis drawn from relevant third party databases, web, bibliometric, media, and social media data.

Document review and beta-Analysis to synthesize available evidence on the impact of the Secretariat's programming and identify common themes, including completed evaluations.

Interviews Unstructured and semi-structured interviews would be informed by the evaluation questions and modified to target interviewees, which would include:

- Key global leaders/collaborators/potential/ Partners/co-hosts
- Board of Governors - regional reps, Chairs

- Other intergovernmental Commonwealth organisations
- Secretariat staff, programme leads, senior directors
- Regional and international organisations

5. Deliverables

- A Final Inception Report that includes a detailed evaluation framework, a work plan, the evaluation methodologies that will be utilised and the perceived challenges, risks and mitigation actions.
- A Draft Report to be shared with stakeholders for fact-checking and comments
- A Validation workshop to discuss emerging findings, and respond to comments
- A Final Draft Report incorporating the outcomes of the validation and other feedback
- A Final Submission of the Evaluation Report incorporating comments from the Secretariat's External Peer Reviewers.

The deliverables must be submitted to Strategy, Portfolio, Partnerships and Digital Division (SPPDD) electronically as a Microsoft Word document. The inception report is due within two weeks after the initial meetings with the Secretariat staff and the review of literature. Following the presentation of the Evaluation findings at a seminar at the Secretariat and receipt of feedback comments from the Secretariat and other stakeholders on the draft report, the consultant(s) is/are expected to submit a revised final Evaluation report within two weeks. The draft (and final) Evaluation reports must be no more than 75 pages, excluding all annexes. The copyright of the Evaluation Report shall belong to the Commonwealth Secretariat, however, consultants may be contacted to provide input to the final copy-editing phase.

6. Confidentiality

The Commonwealth Secretariat and the Consultant will keep confidential at all times any information or data that may be exchanged, acquired, disclosed or shared in connection with any activity conducted pursuant with the assignment, save where such information is already in the public domain or is

project material intended for publication or is required to be disclosed by any applicable law or regulations or where the extent of such disclosure is authorised in writing by the other.

7. Schedule and Level of Effort

The evaluation is planned to commence in December 2020. It is estimated that 120 consultant days will be needed to complete the study, including agreed fieldwork. Travel and DSA expenses related to field visits, if required, will be covered separately as per Secretariat's Travel Policy for external consultants. The final Evaluation Report is expected by June 2021.

8. Management Arrangements

The Evaluation will be managed by the evaluation team of the Secretariat's Strategy Portfolio and Partnerships, Digital Division. In this regard, an evaluation staff member would be assigned to support the evaluation team.

A *Programme Steering Group* (PSG) will be constituted to include project leads from within each of the five strategic outcomes.

The Evaluation's engagement with the Steering Committee will improve ownership of and accountability for the results of the evaluation. Members will serve in an advisory capacity; their main responsibilities will be the following:

- Ensure that adequate support, input and feedback is provided in each phase of the evaluation (TOR development; Inception; Drafting; Validation; Finalisation; Dissemination and Utilisation);
- Facilitate access to key documents and contacts for potential interviewees;
- Participate in the validation workshop on findings and conclusions and assist in the finalisation of recommendations;

9. External Peer Review

All of the Secretariat's Evaluations are subject to external peer review at the Final Draft Report Stage. The Peer Reviewers assessments will inform the Evaluators' finalisation of the report as appropriate to strengthen the soundness of the analysis and the quality of the Report.

10. Location

Given the current impact of COVID-19, the Secretariat's planned meetings and all staff travel are on hold. Some Meetings may move to a virtual setting while others postponed. Given the period of the evaluation, the Evaluators should plan for completing this work remotely.

11. Consultancy Requirements

The consultant(s)/consultancy team should demonstrate the following:

- Substantive knowledge and experience in undertaking reviews, evaluations and critical research, particularly for multilateral organisations;
- Good understanding of global governance and advocacy, the work of multilateral and intergovernmental organisations, foreign and diplomatic institutions and how they relate with member countries, especially within the Commonwealth;
- Knowledge and experience of policy advocacy work and programming matters in global development;
- Demonstrable experience with qualitative evaluation methodologies, including in the conduct of multi-country and global reviews, and specifically in the use of approaches appropriate for advocacy, governance and policy evaluations.
- Excellent communication skills, both spoken and written English, including experience in the production of clear and concise reports for international/inter-governmental institutions, and delivery of messages to a diversified audience;
- Familiarity with Sustainable Development Goals and the international governance architecture.

12. COVID-19

The current global pandemic has transformed work in recent weeks and disrupted the travel components of plans. Evaluation planning, like most areas of work, is significantly affected and the timeline to a return to 'business-as-usual' is still unknown. With this in mind, prospective applicants are asked to ensure that their team compositions and remote working technologies are geared to support the completion of this evaluation without travel. Applicants are encouraged to reflect their

adjustments in their proposed approaches and methodologies as part of their responses to the TORS and to raise any concerns or risks they foresee. Should the current travel restrictions be lifted, allowing for safe travel and in-person engagements, consultants are asked to retain flexibility to undertake such activities as may add value to the evaluation.

Table F1: List of Commonwealth Secretariat Small and Vulnerable Member countries

Africa	
1	Botswana
2	Lesotho
3	Namibia
4	Mauritius*
5	Swaziland
6	Seychelles*
Asia	
7	Brunei Darussalam
8	Maldives*
9	Singapore*
Caribbean and Americas	
10	Antigua and Barbuda"
11	The Bahamas*
12	Barbados *
13	Belize*
14	Dominica*
15	Grenada*
16	Guyana*
17	Jamaica*
18	St Kitts and Nevis*
19	Saint Lucia*
20	St Vincent and the Grenadines *
21	Trinidad and Tobago*
Europe	
22	Cyprus
23	Malta
Pacific	
24	Fiji*
25	Kiribati*
26	Nauru*
27	Papua New Guinea *
28	Samoa*
29	Solomon Islands*
30	Tonga"
31	Tuvalu*
32	Vanuatu*

*Small islands developing states

Table F2: Strategic Plan Outcome Matrices

Diagram 1: 2013/14–2016/17 Strategic Plan Overview REVISED,						
Goals						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong democracy, rule of law, promotion and protection of human rights and respect for diversity • Inclusive growth and sustainable development • A well-connected and networked Commonwealth 						
	Democracy	Public institutions	Social development	Youth	Development: pan-Commonwealth	Development: small states and vulnerable states
Strategic Outcomes	1. Greater adherence to Commonwealth political values and principles	2. More effective, efficient and equitable public governance	3. Enhanced positive impact of social development	4. Youth more integrated and valued in political and development processes	5. More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development	6. Strengthened resilience of small states and vulnerable states
Intermediate Outcomes	1.1 CMAG is well-informed and supported to protect and promote Commonwealth values and principles 1.2 Member countries engage with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General 1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections 1.4 Values of 'respect and understanding' advanced	2.1 Effective institutions and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights 2.2 Improved and constructive engagement of member countries in the UN's UPR process through technical assistance 2.3 Effective mechanisms ensuring the autonomous and harmonious operation of the three branches of government and strengthen the independence of the judiciary 2.4 National institutions effectively facilitating the administration and delivery of the rule of law and justice 2.5 merged with 2.3 2.6 Improved public administration	3.1 Strengthened national frameworks and policies improve health outcomes 3.2 Strengthened national policies and frameworks improve education outcomes 3.3 Gender equality and the empowerment of women effectively mainstreamed into member country policies, frameworks and programmes and Secretariat's projects 3.4 Improved capacity building for social development	4.1 National and pan-Commonwealth frameworks advance social, political and economic empowerment of young people 4.2 Young people empowered and supported to participate meaningfully and to take forward youth-led initiatives	5.1 Effective policy mechanisms for integration and participation in the global trading system 5.2 Commonwealth principles and values advanced in global development and financing decisions (e.g. G20 and post-2015 MDG framework) 5.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management 5.4 Effective, equitable, transparent and sustainable management of marine and other natural resources	6.1 International policies, mechanisms and rules are more responsive to small states' development strategies and resilience needs 6.2 Small states enabled to effectively participate in international decision-making processes 6.3 Improved climate financing frameworks
Enabling outcomes						
i. Global advocacy: international declarations, resolutions and other commitments on democracy development and diversity include Commonwealth perspective ii. Technical assistance, referral and partnership mechanisms respond flexibly to member countries' needs and capacity building priorities iii. Commonwealth profile; profile of the Commonwealth is strengthened at all levels iv. Knowledge management and exchange leads to sharing of good practices and strengthened Commonwealth network (Formerly 5.5)						
Internal outcomes						
Human resources		<i>The recruitment and retention of a diverse, engaged and high-performing workforce to facilitate the effective delivery of the Strategic Plan</i>			Quality and results	
Effective planning, quality assurance and ME&R system to facilitate the delivery and reporting of the Strategic Plan					Financial and non-financial corporate services <i>Efficient and effective delivery of corporate services</i>	

Strategic Plan 2017/18– 2020/21 OUTCOMES MATRIX					
Goals					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong democracy, rule of law, promotion and protection of human rights and respect for diversity • Inclusive growth and sustainable development • A well-connected and networked Commonwealth 					
Strategic Outcomes	Democracy (Peace)	Public institutions (Peace)	Youth and Social Development (People)	Economic Development (Prosperity)	Small and Vulnerable States (Planet)
Intermediate Outcomes	<p>1. Greater adherence to Commonwealth political values and principles</p> <p>1.1 CMAG is well-informed and supported to protect and promote Commonwealth values and principles</p> <p>1.2 Member countries engaged with and benefit from strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General</p> <p>1.3 Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections</p> <p>1.4 Strengthened mechanisms of civil paths to peace in member countries to counter violent extremism</p>	<p>2. More effective, efficient and equitable public governance</p> <p>2.1 Human Rights promoted and protected, and participation in the UN's UPR process improved</p> <p>2.2 Rule of law strengthened and access to justice ensured for all</p> <p>2.3 Improved public administration for good governance, and the prevention of corruption</p>	<p>3. People of the Commonwealth fulfil their potential with dignity and equality in a healthy environment</p> <p>3.1 Young people engaged and empowered to meaningfully participate in political and development processes</p> <p>3.2 Sports contributes to sustainable development, health, and peaceful and just societies</p> <p>3.3 Strengthened sustainable policies reduce disparities and improve health and education outcomes</p> <p>3.4 Women, girls and other vulnerable groups empowered and protected against violence and harmful practices</p>	<p>4. More inclusive economic growth and sustainable development</p> <p>4.1 Effective mechanisms for increased trade, employment and business growth</p> <p>4.2 Commonwealth positions, advanced in international development and financing mechanisms</p> <p>4.3 National frameworks facilitate effective debt management</p> <p>4.4 Sustainable development of marine, other natural resources, including 'blue economies'</p>	<p>5. Strengthened resilience of small and vulnerable states, including adaptation and mitigation against climate change</p> <p>5.1 International policies, mechanisms and rules are more responsive to small states' development strategies and resilience needs</p> <p>5.2 Increased resilience, adaptation and mitigation against climate change</p> <p>5.3 Improved access to climate financing</p>
Cross-cutting Outcomes					
<p>V. Partnerships and Innovation: Strengthened partnerships and innovations to support member countries and Commonwealth organisations</p> <p>VII. Gender Mainstreaming: Gender equality and the empowerment of women integrated in the Secretariat's policies, frameworks, programmes and projects</p> <p>VIII. Consensus Building: Member countries achieve consensus and advance key priority issues</p>					

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