

Unlocking Climate Finance Access for Small States and other Vulnerable Commonwealth Countries

The Commonwealth Climate Finance
Access Hub: Accomplishments,
Lessons Learned and Future Outlook



The Commonwealth



Commonwealth

**CLIMATE FINANCE
ACCESS HUB**

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Forewords



It is essential to ramp up global climate action if we are to avoid the catastrophic impacts of an overheated planet and sustain human civilisation as we know it. With every report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change we are confronted with hard evidence of the alarming rise of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere, generated by human activity, as well as its dreadful impacts.

With every news story we hear about intensifying droughts in Africa, successive record-breaking storms in the Caribbean or submerged atolls in the Pacific. With every personal story shared by rural farmers enduring bad crops, or by families forced to relocate from coastal homes, we are compelled to ask: 'If not now, then when? If not us, then who?'

We must also recognise that effective global climate action cannot be achieved without adequate and well-targeted resources. Climate finance is the oxygen needed to ensure that we deliver on the targets set out in national and global commitments, as captured in Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.

That is why the work of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH) is essential for small states and other vulnerable member countries, as it supports better access to international funds that will help them to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This work continues an esteemed legacy of dedicated leadership and commitment by the Commonwealth on this issue, which has not waned since leaders issued the Langkawi Declaration on the Environment in 1989.

I am therefore extremely proud to present this publication, which captures CCFAH's accomplishments and lessons learned over the years. I look forward to continuing this important work, for the benefit of the 2.5 billion people of the Commonwealth, and beyond.

The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC
Secretary-General of the Commonwealth



When Commonwealth Heads of Government agreed to establish a Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH) during their meeting in Malta in November 2015, the aim was to support Commonwealth small states, in particular Small Island Developing States, as well as Least Developed Countries to access the finance required to urgently address the impacts of climate change and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere.

A year later, in 2016, the CCFAH opened its doors in Port Louis, Mauritius, thanks to in-kind support from the Government of Mauritius as well as generous funding from the governments of Australia and the United Kingdom. The achievements of the Hub since then have been very encouraging, including the mobilisation of US\$50 million in international climate finance for projects in 11 countries, with more than US\$800 million worth of projects in the pipeline. The programme also delivered 95 training initiatives, with over 1,900 government officials trained on various aspects of climate finance.

However, it is the CCFAH's 'hub and spokes' model, where the central office in Mauritius acts as the 'hub', branching out to various countries and regions in dynamic 'spokes', through expert Climate Advisers, which has added a higher value and visibility. It has enhanced capacity-building and nurtured better co-ordination, knowledge-sharing and cross-regional collaboration, all of which are imperative as the Commonwealth seeks to steadfastly address accelerated climate change and build a more resilient future, together.

Facing the triple trap of climate impacts, high fossil fuel prices and high levels of indebtedness, exacerbated by their susceptibility to natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic and conflicts, Small Island Developing States have heightened their repeated calls for both easier access to – and frontloading and fast tracking – development financing, and using innovative financial instruments and creating new partnerships to mobilise additional resources. Where such financing is available, the challenge has been to find achievable transformative projects which can absorb and make the most of these available resources.

In its own unassuming but efficacious way, the CCFAH – a truly flagship initiative of the Commonwealth – seeks to respond to these calls in a targeted approach. We are gratified that the new manager of the CCFAH, H.E. Dr Oduetse Koboto, has instilled a new spirit and momentum to the hub, building on the excellent legacy of his predecessor, Mr Bilal Anwar.

This publication captures these elements and serves as an important piece of groundwork to demonstrate the value of the CCFAH initiative in improving climate finance access for the most vulnerable members of the Commonwealth and dedicatedly walking the talk for urgent climate action in sync with national policies.

The Government of Mauritius is indeed pleased and proud to be serving as host of the central hub, as well as to be a beneficiary of the enabling services of the CCFAH which we commend to Commonwealth family.

Therefore, on behalf of The Hon Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, we would like to reiterate our deep gratitude to the Commonwealth membership for its enduring trust in our country and to the Secretary-General, the Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, for her unwavering commitment to the CCFAH and its continued viability.

Honourable Alan Ganoo, Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade of the Republic of Mauritius

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The CCFAH team pictured with Commonwealth Secretary-General Baroness Scotland at COP26 in Glasgow, UK, November 2021.

CCFAH at a Glance

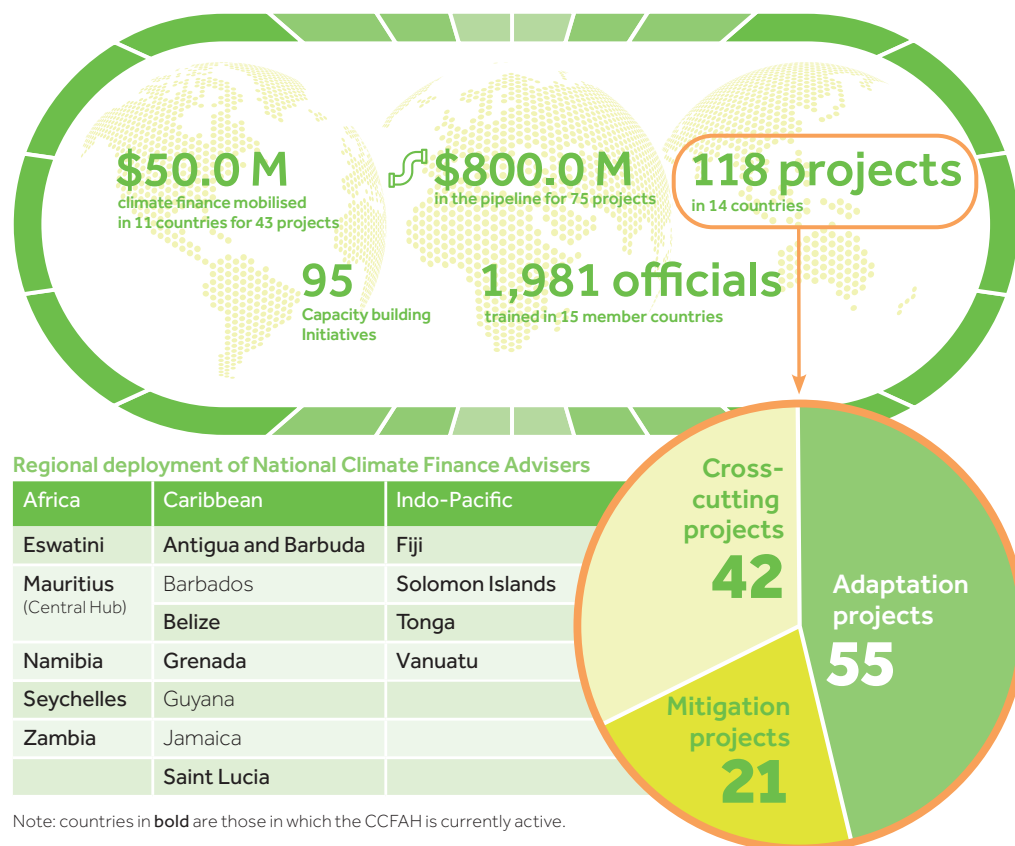
The Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH) is a pioneering Commonwealth initiative first proposed by a 2013 Commonwealth Expert Group on Climate Finance, subsequently mandated by the 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and operationalised in 2016; in response to the increasing threat of climate change to the most vulnerable member countries.

CCFAH supports Commonwealth small and other vulnerable states to access funding for climate projects by embedding highly skilled long-term expertise, in the form of Commonwealth National and Regional Climate Finance Advisers, in relevant government departments. CCFAH support can be grouped into the following areas.

1. Concrete adaptation and mitigation project development.
2. Climate policy and strategy development.
3. Human and institutional capacity building, including climate finance readiness and accreditation.
4. Knowledge management and learning.
5. Mainstreaming of gender and youth considerations.

Since becoming operational in 2016, CCFAH actions and achievements can be summarised as follows.

Figure 1. Summary of CCFAH support¹



1 Funding (mobilised and in the pipeline) is shown in US Dollars.

Commonwealth National and Regional Climate Finance Advisers focus on delivering four key outputs.

Output 1: Increased number of bankable mitigation and adaptation projects in the pipeline, in support of national and regional priorities on climate change.

Output 2: Small and other vulnerable Commonwealth countries assisted to strengthen institutional mechanisms to access international climate finance.

Output 3: Strengthened use of evidence, data and development, and dissemination of knowledge, experiences and learning.

Output 4: Technical assistance provided to ministries and national designated authorities to strengthen their capacity to access climate finance.

Development partners

Countries

The operations of CCFAH have been supported with funding from the Governments of Australia and the United Kingdom, as well as in-kind support from the Government of Mauritius where the Central Hub is located, and funding from the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Institutions

CCFAH is demonstrably compatible with other climate change activities in member countries and with other institutions. These collaborative efforts with institutions at the regional and international levels have been instrumental to securing support for the expansion of the delivery of technical assistance to member countries.



Why climate finance is critical

The climate finance landscape is complex and challenging. Funds are available to support climate change mitigation and adaptation, but small and vulnerable Commonwealth countries, which often face the most serious impacts of climate change, have limited capacities and experience significant barriers to accessing these funds.

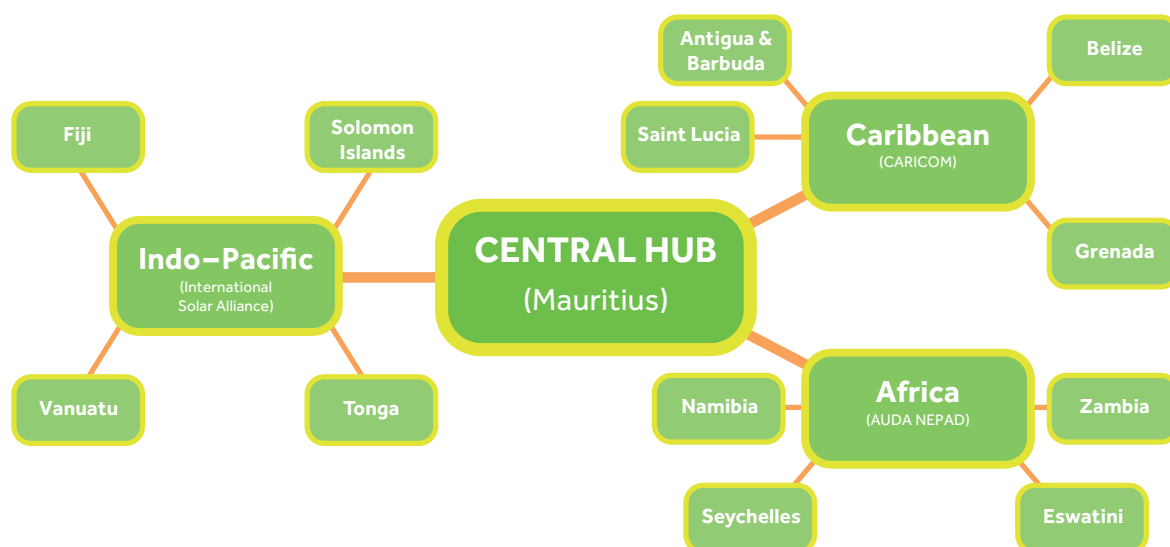
In 2013 the Commonwealth Expert Group on Climate Finance identified the complex and crowded climate finance landscape as one of the main bottlenecks preventing the scaling up of climate finance for developing member countries.¹ Member countries often face capacity and resource constraints that mean they cannot secure and optimise access to climate funds. Moreover, with an estimated increase in annual climate finance of at least 590 per cent required to meet internationally agreed climate objectives by 2030 and to avoid the most dangerous impacts of climate change,² CCFAH is a direct response to the 54-member Commonwealth family's need for support if we are to overcome these challenges together.

How CCFAH Works: responsive, participatory and hands-on assistance

This demand-driven nature of CCFAH enables it to be responsive to Commonwealth countries' need for capacity building, institutional strengthening and improving access to climate finance and therefore their ability to deal with the long-term adverse impacts of climate change while maximising existing opportunities.

CCFAH operates on a 'hub and spokes' model, with a central hub in Mauritius and, as 'spokes', national and regional advisers stationed in beneficiary countries and regional institutions. This has proved to be an effective means of delivering technical assistance: it has been widely commended by various stakeholders, and has been adopted by an increasing number of other international development agencies.

Figure 2. The CCFAH 'hub and spokes' model



1 Commonwealth (2013), *Improving Access to Climate Finance for Small and Vulnerable States*.

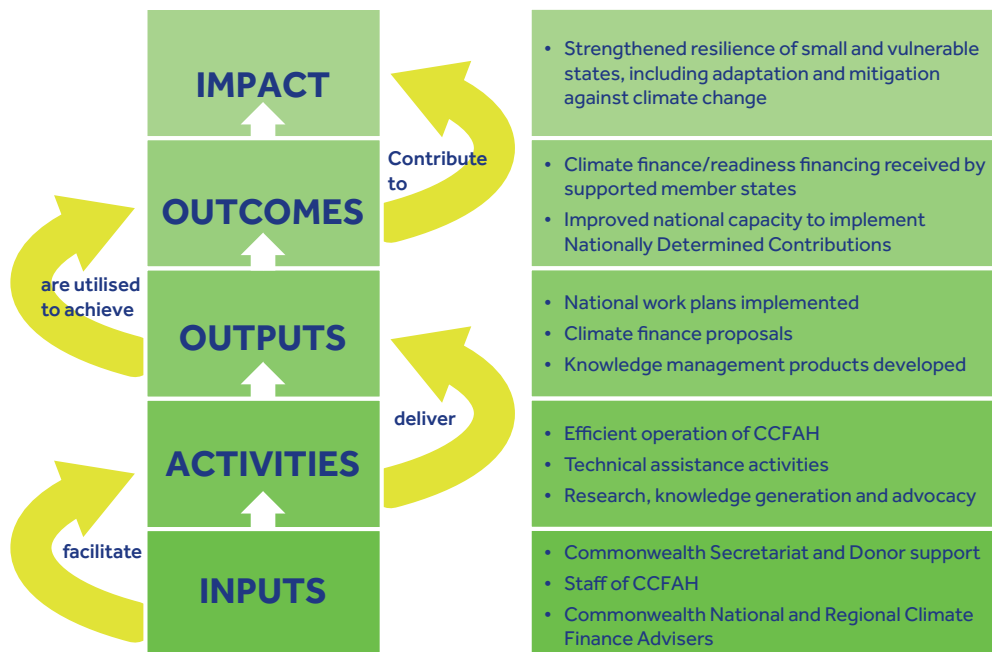
2 Climate Policy Initiative (2021), *Global Landscape of Climate Finance 2021*.

Figure 3. CCFAH adviser deployment process



The Central Hub comprises a the CCFAH Adviser and Manager, a Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser for Mauritius, and administrative and IT support personnel. Future strengthening of the Central Hub will include the appointment of a Gender Climate Finance Adviser and Knowledge Management Officer. In the past, CCFAH has also received support in the form of Ocean Climate Finance Experts, to help Commonwealth governments to develop proposals and access funding for ocean-based adaptation and mitigation activities

Figure 4. CCFAH results chain



A key strength of the model is that it facilitates South–South peer learning between the Commonwealth national/regional climate finance advisers, which is highly valued. A second strength is that the Central Hub is located in and hosted by a Commonwealth member country, Mauritius, which increases the sense of ownership of the programme among member countries. The value of CCFAH lies in the long-term deployment of Commonwealth National and Regional Climate Finance Advisers, who are embedded in relevant government departments and regional institutions.

The programme's expected results can be summarised through a simple results chain. The programme's inputs, such as funding from donors and the efforts of CCFAH staff and advisers, generate activities such as providing capacity building, and contribute to tangible outputs such as national work plans, climate finance proposals, and knowledge management products. These outputs are then utilised to achieve beneficiary countries' set outcomes, ultimately having an impact on strengthening the resilience of small and vulnerable states in line with the Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Plan.

Governance structure

CCFAH is governed by a steering committee comprising beneficiary countries, development partners and observers. They are appointed on a rotational basis and are responsible for governance and for guiding strategy and policy mechanisms. The steering committee ensures that the principles of transparency and accountability are upheld, and that the controls and risk management system are robust.

An *Operational Manual* has also been developed for the CCFAH, aimed at providing guidance and maintaining consistency in the practices employed in the Hub's operations.

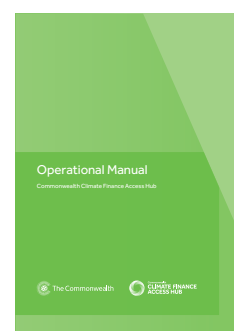


Table 1. Members of the CCFAH steering committee (as of July 2022)

Region / Entity	Country
Permanent members	Mauritius (chair) Commonwealth Secretariat
Africa	Zambia
Caribbean	Jamaica
Asia	Sri Lanka
Pacific	Fiji
Development partners	Australia, United Kingdom

Progress to Date

Increasing climate finance access and delivering climate action

Finance mobilised (development of project pipelines and proposals)

As of May 2022, CCFAH had helped countries to access approximately US\$50.0 million of climate finance, including US\$3 million as co-financing, with over US\$800.0 million in the pipeline. This \$50.0 million covers 43 approved projects (15 adaptation, 6 mitigation and 22 cross-cutting projects) in 11 countries.

Institutional strengthening (including accreditation and readiness support)

The support granted through CCFAH includes assistance to national entities to become accredited to various funds, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Accreditation efforts in Antigua and Barbuda and Tonga have been supported by CCFAH. A notable approach was through the GCF's Enhanced Direct Access (EDA) mechanism: an EDA proposal submitted by Antigua and Barbuda,³ with support from CCFAH, saw the islands of Dominica and Grenada, though not accredited at the time, receive equal financing as well as support to set up all oversight and mechanisms necessary to use GCF funding, while also building their capacity in order to become accredited.

Figure 5. CCFAH national and regional presence



- Countries in which CCFAH is currently active
- Countries in which CCFAH has previously been active

³ Green Climate Fund (no date), FP061. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp061>

- **Development of national trust funds:** In Antigua and Barbuda, CCFAH supported the development of operational manuals, procedures and training to mobilise climate finance resources, particularly the operationalisation of the Sustainable Island Resource Framework (SIRF) Fund which channels funding for environmental and climate mitigation and adaptation actions from international and domestic sources. These experiences are also being used to support the advancement of the Tonga Climate Change Trust Fund.
- **Readiness support:** In November 2019, Tonga, with support from CCFAH, secured a grant of around US\$500,000 from the GCF towards a two-year readiness programme preparing the country's National Designated Authority to better engage with the GCF and manage activities sponsored by the fund in the country. This was the second phase of the National Designated Authority Strengthening Readiness Programme, which will improve the organisational performance of the authority and strengthen systems to enlist Tonga's Ministry of Finance and National Planning as an accredited entity of the GCF. Furthermore, in Jamaica in 2017, accreditation support of US\$33,000 was secured to support the country's Social Investment Fund with its GCF accreditation application.
- **Project Development Unit:** In Fiji, CCFAH supported the development of a blueprint for establishing a Project Development Unit (PDU) to be lodged within the Ministry of Economy and hosted by the Climate Change and International Cooperation Division. This unit, once fully operational, will seek to mobilise and increase access to domestic and international finance, by performing a co-ordination function to effectively utilise sector-specific data to develop robust, evidence-based proposals and proof of concept.
- **Climate budget tagging:** In Eswatini, a Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review exercise was conducted by the Commonwealth Secretariat through CCFAH, creating a framework to review how climate-related spending is included in the national budgeting process. A similar exercise was conducted in Jamaica, aimed at understanding the socioeconomic consequences of climate change for the country's national budget and spending, as well as developing models to support the introduction of climate change budgeting.

Capacity building (through dedicated training activities)

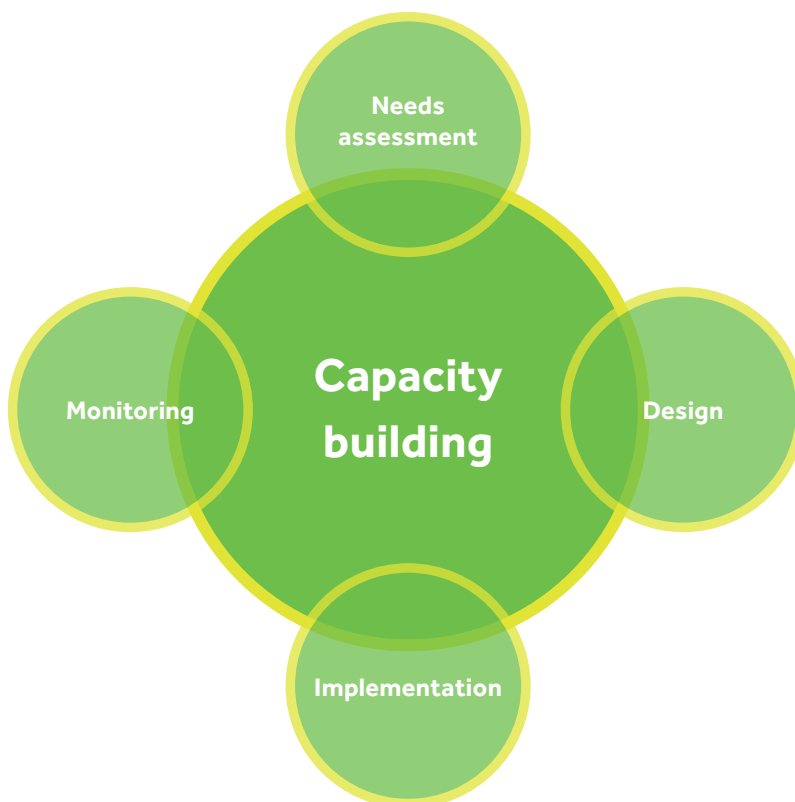
CCFAH Advisers conduct both human and institutional capacity building. In terms of human capacity building specifically, 88 initiatives have been conducted, training approximately 1,900 individuals in member countries.

A top priority for the CCFAH has been to conduct institutional capacity development for government officials in relation to: enhancing the understanding of climate finance requirements; strengthening national entities to achieve direct access and accreditation to international funds; and developing a pipeline of climate change projects.

Our procedure for responding to a request from a member country for support from the CCFAH is as follows.

1. **Needs assessment:** A CCFAH scoping mission is conducted to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the national context. This informs the joint development of the Commonwealth National and Regional Climate Finance Advisers' terms of reference and subsequent work plan by the government and CCFAH, where required capacity interventions are outlined.
2. **Design:** Based on the assessment, the Commonwealth National and Regional Climate Finance Advisers work with the government, and draw on the wider expertise of the CCFAH, to formulate the required capacity building and training initiatives.
3. **Implementation:** This is co-led with the government, with guidance and technical support provided by the Commonwealth National and Regional Climate Finance Advisers in-country and the wider CCFAH.
4. **Monitoring:** CCFAH has experience supporting member countries to develop tools for tracking and monitoring the impact of capacity building activities on national processes.

Figure 6. Capacity building elements



Policy and strategy support

The ability of member countries to effectively meet their mitigation and adaptation targets is heavily influenced by the various domestic climate policies and frameworks. Beyond simply enabling access to climate finance, technical assistance for the development and implementation of climate-related policies is crucial to ensure and safeguard sustainable long-term climate action. This includes national climate policy and planning documents, roadmaps and project pipelines, and climate action plans – which are all supported under the CCFAH.

Table 2. Examples of capacity building activities undertaken

Country	Details of capacity building activities	Potential impact
Antigua and Barbuda	Development of operational manuals, procedures and training to mobilise climate finance resources (SIRF Fund).	Operationalisation of the SIRF Fund will mobilise climate finance resources for the projects and activities identified by the country.
Mauritius	Institutional capacity building for undertaking mitigation analysis for low-carbon development planning under the Third National Communication.	Mitigation analysis for the Third National Communication will identify the potential sectors for reducing emissions, and also set the path for mitigation options towards the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions for Mauritius.
Eswatini	Undertook the Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review.	The review identifies the need for the quantification of climate expenditure, and the establishment of a system for climate budget tagging and tracking.
Jamaica	Development and implementation of a road map for climate finance readiness.	This is a multisectoral plan for long-term action on climate, with a particular focus on climate investments. The climate finance readiness component of the strategy is being implemented.
Saint Lucia	Development of a national adaptation plan and climate financing strategy.	The national adaptation plan will identify key adaptation needs and priorities and its implementation framework, including a climate financing strategy.
Tonga	Readiness support towards becoming the first country in the Pacific region to receive GCF Readiness Adaptation Planning support grant.	Strengthening adaptation planning in Tonga through implementation of the GCF readiness grant.
Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands	Climate Finance Writeshop Training.	These aim to strengthen climate finance skills already obtained in previous trainings. The 'writeshop' format seeks to use live concept notes to demonstrate the practical application of data and information from the CommonSensing Platform to enhance the evidence base and climate rationale in funding proposals.

CCFAH has demonstrable experience in contributing to national financing strategies across the Commonwealth.

- **Tonga:** development of Tonga's Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (JNAP2), which sets out a strategy for implementation of the country's national climate change priorities across all sectors and serves as an entry point for climate-related assistance to the country.
- **Belize:** a climate finance landscape study was conducted, which informed the development of the Climate Finance Strategy of Belize 2021–2026⁴ also developed through CCFAH. This will also support the work of the newly established Climate Finance Unit in the country.

4 Commonwealth (2021). *National Climate Finance Strategy of Belize 2021–2026*. https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/migrated/inline/Climate_Finance_Strategy_of_Belize_UPDF.pdf

- **Zambia:** a similar *Climate Finance Mapping for NDC Implementation* study was also completed under this initiative for the Government of Zambia.⁵ This study provided a comprehensive knowledge base about the stakeholders and systems required to finance climate action in the respective countries.
- **Eswatini:** in an effort to enhance private sector engagement in NDC implementation, CCFAH led the development of a *Strategy to Enhance Private Sector Engagement in Eswatini NDC Actions*.⁶ The strategy assesses private sector potential to leverage finance in order to meet NDC targets, as well as providing guidance to the government on ways to further encourage and facilitate the involvement of the sector in climate actions.



Enhancing access to climate finance through evidenced-based and data-driven climate action

Geospatial data often provides objective data and information required for key disaster risk management, project development, monitoring and adaptive actions. CCFAH provides support to member countries to enhance evidence-based and data-driven climate finance concept notes and proposals. This assistance was pioneered through the IPP CommonSensing project and is continuing beyond that project's end date. The IPP CommonSensing project is based on a partnership between Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and a consortium of international partners, including the Commonwealth Secretariat, looking to enhance evidence-based climate action through capacity building and the development of a geospatial data platform. The project aims to enable decision-makers, policy-makers and trained technicians to increasingly use satellite-based data and information when developing solutions to address climate change.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is leading the climate finance thematic area of the IPP CommonSensing project, delivering support through CCFAH and deploying Commonwealth National Climate Finance Advisers in project beneficiary countries. As part of the project, National Climate Finance Advisers in Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands pilot the increased use of satellite-derived data to strengthen the evidence base and climate rationales of climate finance concepts and proposals. This support in the Pacific is continuing beyond the IPP CommonSensing project, drawing on project lessons and experience, and has the potential for replication in other Commonwealth countries and regions.

5 Commonwealth Secretariat (2021). *Climate Finance Mapping for NDC Implementation in Zambia*. https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/migrated/inline/Climate_Finance_Mapping_for_Zambia_UPDF.pdf

6 Commonwealth Secretariat (2021). *Strategy to Enhance Private Sector Engagement in Eswatini NDC Actions*. https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/migrated/inline/Eswatini_NDC_private_sector_UPDF.pdf

Mainstreaming of gender and youth

The integration of gender and youth considerations into climate change initiatives is fundamental to building resilience in an equitable manner, as these groups are often at a greater disadvantage from the impacts of climate change.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's approach to mainstreaming gender into climate change action, through CCFAH, includes supporting member countries in the development of funding proposals that integrate youth analysis and gender action plans and aim to deliver gender and youth responsive actions in their implementation. The Secretariat has mandated Commonwealth Regional and National Climate Finance Advisers operating under the CCFAH to mainstream gender equality and equity across all projects supported in-country, in an effort to ensure that climate finance delivered in member countries is gender responsive and takes youth considerations into account.

A study conducted by the Secretariat on the extent of gender integration in Commonwealth NDCs provides recommendations on how to effectively build more gender-responsive national systems around climate finance.⁷

Table 3. Recommendations from our *Gender Integration for Climate Action* report

Recommendations
Prioritising gender in context
Policy integration of gender
Institutional co-ordination across gender and climate change
Capacity building in technology
MRV systems, sex-disaggregated data and information
Financial resources for gender inclusion



As part of current technical assistance to Antigua and Barbuda, a new climate finance proposal valued at US\$10 million is being developed, to support a gender-responsive approach to the redevelopment of technical vocational education and training programmes by building requisite capacity, skills and knowledge in appropriate climate change technologies in the main greenhouse gas-emitting sectors of energy, transport and construction, which are traditionally dominated by men.

CCFAH has previously supported Saint Lucia to secure an offer of complementary funding under the Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean Project (EnGenDER), towards conducting sectoral gender assessments both under the National Adaptation Plan process, and in the energy sector. The funding is supporting Saint Lucia to establish a comprehensive baseline understanding of gender needs on a sectoral basis.

7 Commonwealth Secretariat (2021). *Gender Integration for Climate Action: A Review of Commonwealth Member Country Nationally Determined Contributions*. https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/migrated/inline/Gender%20Integration%20for%20Climate%20Action%20-%20A%20Review%20of%20Commonwealth%20Member%20NDCs_0.pdf

A CCFAH-supported readiness proposal in Tonga, submitted to the GCF, looks at strengthening the access of disabled people's organisations in Tonga to climate finance in order to build the climate resilience of people with disabilities. It will also mainstream gender aspects, as well as disability and human rights, in line with national policies such as the Joint National Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2 (JNAP2).

Operational sustainability

To date, CCFAH has received a total of 29 requests for support from member countries and has successfully placed advisers in 16. The Secretariat continues to seek long-term financing for the CCFAH, mobilising additional resources to effectively meet increasing demand from member countries. The recruitment of Commonwealth Regional Climate Finance Advisers has strengthened CCFAH and is helping to meet this increasing demand.

A Commonwealth Gender Climate Finance Adviser, based at the Central Hub in Mauritius, is expected to be added to further enhance support provided to CCFAH beneficiary countries on integrating gender equality in climate action and ensuring gender considerations are adequately met in the pursuit of climate finance.

CCFAH's resilience has been quite evident, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic; while it prevented the physical deployment of staff to beneficiary countries in many cases, 12 advisers were successfully recruited, some as replacements, to support member countries during the 2020 to 2021 period (five in 2020; seven in 2021).

Over this five-year period, in addition to its own contribution the Commonwealth Secretariat has successfully secured additional financial resources from development partners to support the delivery of technical assistance to member countries. This includes support from some member countries, as well other regional and international development agencies.

Knowledge Management and Outreach

Leveraging the Commonwealth Secretariat’s strong advocacy and convening power, the CCFAH maximises opportunities to utilise and share its rich technical capacity for cross-regional knowledge exchange. This is a unique component of CCFAH that facilitates the strengthening and scaling up of climate action across the Commonwealth.

Knowledge products

Extensive and effective use of electronic media from the Secretariat’s Communications team has expanded the overall visibility of the CCFAH and the services it offers. Furthermore, several publications and promotional products have been developed, sharing the successes, achievements and lessons learned from CCFAH’s technical assistance programme. These include country reports for Fiji,⁸ Vanuatu⁹ and Solomon Islands,¹⁰ a climate finance toolkit,¹¹ and discussion papers on nature-based solutions,¹² and on the use of earth observation data for climate finance.¹³

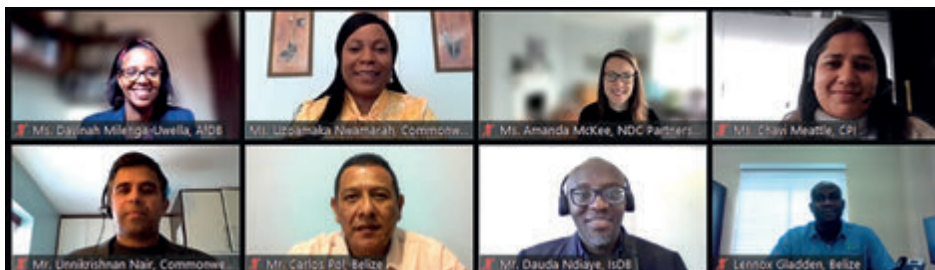


- 8 Commonwealth Secretariat (2021). *An Assessment of Vulnerable Sectors and EO Data Potential in Fiji: Climate Finance Landscape Report*. [https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-02/Climate Finance Reports Fiji_UPDF.pdf](https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-02/Climate%20Finance%20Reports%20Fiji_UPDF.pdf)
- 9 Commonwealth Secretariat (2021). *An Assessment of Vulnerable Sectors and EO Data Potential in Vanuatu Climate Finance Landscape Report*. [https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-02/Climate finance report Vanuatu_UPDF.pdf](https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-02/Climate%20finance%20report%20Vanuatu_UPDF.pdf)
- 10 Commonwealth Secretariat (2021). *An Assessment of Vulnerable Sectors and EO Data Potential for Solomon Islands: Climate Finance Landscape Report*. [https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-02/Climate finance reports Solomon Islands_UPDF.pdf](https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-02/Climate%20finance%20reports%20Solomon%20Islands_UPDF.pdf)
- 11 Commonwealth (2022). *Toolkit to Enhance Access to Climate Finance: A Commonwealth Practical Guide*. https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-03/Toolkit_to_Enhance_Access_to_Climate_Finance_UPDF.pdf?VersionId=DRLRxyeqBil43xd_HddZPBxpJ4ScdpL1
- 12 Commonwealth Secretariat (2021). *Accelerating Financing for Nature-based Solutions to Support Action Across the Rio Conventions*, discussion paper 28, October 2021. https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-05/Accelerating%20Financing%20for%20Nature%20Based%20Solutions_Discussion%20Paper%2028_UPDF.pdf
- 13 Commonwealth Secretariat (2021). *Earth Observation Technologies for Improved Access to Climate Finance: The Role of Data and Information*, discussion paper 27, April 2021. https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-05/Accelerating%20Financing%20for%20Nature%20Based%20Solutions_Discussion%20Paper%2027_UPDF.pdf



An image from the event, 'Accelerating Climate Finance Access for Nature-based Solutions in Supporting Climate, Land and Biodiversity Targets, a side event at COP26, Glasgow, 5 November 2021.

Images from the event, 'Accelerating Action Around Land for Enhanced Climate Action', held by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification on 17 September 2020, during the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly.



An image from the event, 'Climate Finance: From Landscape to Strategy Implementation', held by the Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with the NDC Partnership on 17 February 2022, as part of the Commonwealth NDC Webinar Series.

Technical sessions and outreach events

Extensive efforts have been undertaken to reach out to national, regional and international partners, with the aim of sharing the objectives and work of CCFAH, as well as initiating sessions aimed at facilitating the sharing of knowledge and experience on various technical aspects of climate finance. The Commonwealth National and Regional Climate Finance Advisers have been seizing opportunities to participate in international, regional and national-level events, conferences and seminars to share the experiences of CCFAH with wider stakeholders and to establish collaborative partnerships. These include externally led events such as the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as Secretariat-led events, including the Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands (CALL) regional consultations, and the Commonwealth NDC Webinar Series.

Highlights from the Independent Evaluation of CCFAH

An independent evaluation of CCFAH was undertaken at the end of 2020, with the final report published in 2021 and available on the Commonwealth Secretariat's website.¹⁴ Among its main findings were the following.

- CCFAH activities are critical in countries where climate change is an urgent priority.
- A balance must be struck between depth and breadth, impact and coverage.
- Commonwealth climate finance advisers provide additional value and efficiency, and also contribute to significant non-financial achievements.
- Building national capacity to access climate finance is vital.

How did we do?

The evaluation team assessed the programme's performance against the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria and rated relevance and coherence of CCFAH as very high and high respectively.

- CCFAH was relevant to most countries, particularly small island developing states, least developed countries and others with climate change as an urgent priority.
- CCFAH was responsive to needs, with a participatory approach and embedded, hands-on technical assistance.
- It addressed challenges such as countries' inability to meet climate finance fund requirements, structuring bankable projects, insufficient technical knowledge, and/or awareness of finance options.
- CCFAH activities fit with the Commonwealth Secretariat's focus on small states and strengthening climate change resilience. CCFAH complemented existing efforts in regions with relatively few technical assistance providers, particularly Africa; in others, there was a risk of duplication.
- While technical assistance had a modest effect on awareness and skills, advisers supported wider improvements to adaptation and mitigation activities.
- The Hub's governance and management worked well, but processes, roles and responsibilities were found to need greater definition to ensure institutional memory and consistent operation.

14 Commonwealth Secretariat (2021). *Evaluation of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub: Final Report*. https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/migrated/inline/120%20-%20Evaluation%20of%20the%20Climate%20Finance%20Access%20Hub_with%20MR.pdf

What our beneficiary countries and partners are saying

'CCFAH provides a superior assistance package to other organisations that offer short-term and sometimes distant assistance for key climate change issues.'

Public sector stakeholder from Grenada

'I am amazed with the number of new climate finance projects.'

Regional stakeholder from Tonga

'CCFAH assistance has made a world of difference and helped to focus the work on what matters most.'

Public sector stakeholder from Jamaica



'Tonga is truly grateful for the continuous support from the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH) since 2018. This support increases Tonga's capacity to access climate change funding and resilience of the country and people to the adverse impacts of climate change. CCFAH's support also strengthens the partnerships between the Secretariat and Government of Tonga and we look forward

to our continued partnership and future opportunities to support Tonga towards achieving its climate financing goals.'

Hon Poasi Mataele Tei, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of MEIDECC



'The International Solar Alliance and Commonwealth Secretariat through its Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub are working together towards accelerating deployment of solar energy technologies as a means for bringing energy access, ensuring energy security, and driving energy transition in the member countries common to both organisations.'

Amit Kaushik, Chief of Program and Projects, ISA



'Building on the success and momentum of CAEP, our members, like the Commonwealth Secretariat, are well positioned to provide the much-needed implementation support and to continue to deliver climate action through the Partnership model.'

Pablo Viera, Global Director, NDC Partnership Support Unit



'The Kingdom of Eswatini is committed to becoming a low carbon, climate resilient economy. The support being provided by the Commonwealth through the Commonwealth Climate Finance Adviser for Eswatini is supporting the country's efforts in moving towards a low carbon and resilient economy. Not only are we improving access to resources for climate actions and strengthening human and institutional capacity, but we are also ensuring that no one is left behind: Public and private sectors, and all sectors including the vulnerable, in a gender sensitive manner. Climate action has become a matter of life and death.'

*Duduzile Nhlengethwa-Masina, Director, Eswatini Meteorological Services,
Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs*



'We are happy with the quality of work from our Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser for Namibia, Ms. Carol Mwape, and we have made impact which we would not have been able to without her.'

*Timoteus Mufeti, Environmental Commissioner,
Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia*



'Our Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser's input has been fit for purpose; contributing immensely to our ability to access funding for climate action.'

*Nadia Spencer-Henry, Debt Manager, Ministry of Finance,
Antigua & Barbuda*

Emerging Areas and Outlook

Call to Action on Living Lands (CALL)



High-level speakers at the COP26 Side Event, 'A Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands: Accelerating Action against Climate Change, Desertification and Biodiversity Loss Across the 3 Rio Conventions' on 3 November 2021. (L-R) Hon Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda; Rt Hon Patricia Scotland, Secretary General of the Commonwealth; Hon Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji; and Dr Ruth Kattumuri, Senior Director, Economic Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat.

The Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands (CALL) originated after the 2019 IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land and calls on member countries to work at the juncture of biodiversity, climate change and land to synergise the implementation of the commitments agreed to under the three Rio Conventions: the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The proposed Living Lands Charter will serve as an agreement among the Commonwealth's 54 member countries to work towards climate resilient and sustainable land management by integrating the targets of the Rio Conventions, including the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (UNCBD), Land Degradation Neutrality targets (UNCCD), and Paris Agreement (UNFCCC) – with the support of the platforms and initiatives of the Secretariat, particularly CCFAH, and other intergovernmental organisations, financial institutions and regional developmental agencies.

Climate change and health

Climate change continues to impact water, food and health security, with higher temperatures and more extreme, less predictable weather changing the availability, distribution and quality of surface and groundwater resources. Recognising the increasing linkages between climate change and health, greater focus is being placed on advancing initiatives in this space among Commonwealth member countries. The February 2022 memorandum of understanding signing between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the World Health Organisation will form the foundation for catalysing action, in particular around building resilient health systems in the Commonwealth.

Innovation and technology

Considering the dynamic climate finance landscape, the Secretariat continues to explore the use of modern technologies to support the resilience efforts of member countries. For instance, a feasibility study has been conducted to determine the likely customer demand, technical feasibility and economic viability of blockchain-based climate catastrophe insurance, using Fiji as a case study.

Spotlight on CCFAH Approved Projects

Water

Name: Aquifer Mapping Technologies for Zambia

Type of Project: Adaptation

Country: Zambia

National entity: Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation, Ministry of Green Economy and Environment Zambia

Sector: Water

Financing Details: US\$250,000 - Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator (AFCIA)

Description:

This project will select a specific area of Zambia and undertake a water balance analysis and map aquifers of the selected location. Based on this water balance, possible technologies will be identified, and the possible impact of these technologies will be estimated through a predictive model. A water management plan for surface and groundwater and implementation plan for aquifer mapping will also be developed, including clear measures and actions that could be used in the country to increase its resilience in times of drought.

Objective:

Develop a robust groundwater management plan to support climate change adaptation strategies in Zambia.

Impact:

Enhanced decision-making through access to improved aquifer mapping information tools and technologies, further strengthening the ecosystem resilience and adaptive capacities for local communities.

Beneficiaries:

The project explicitly emphasises the participation of and accrued benefits to women and girls via active engagement and balanced participation of women in all interventions, while also applying national participatory tools that enhance not only the (passive) participation of indigenous people but also their capacities through full and effective participation, enabling the addressing of their concerns and needs.

Gender

Name: Facilitating a Gender Responsive Approach to Mitigation and Adaptation in Jamaica

Type of Project: Cross-cutting

Country: Jamaica

National entity: Climate Change Division, Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation and Bureau of Gender Affairs

Sector: Gender

Financing Details: US\$272,797 – Green Climate Fund

Description:

Following Jamaica Climate Change Division's 2017 gender study and workshop, it was found that the country's Climate Change Policy Framework was not gender-responsive, and understanding of gender and climate change was limited; information on the impacts of climate change on men and women in Jamaica was lacking, and institutional linkages were weak. Several recommendations were identified and this GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme aims to address the challenges and build on the recommendations.

Objective:

To strengthen Jamaica's institutional co-ordination to promote gender-responsive climate action and ensure that policies, programmes and projects address gender inequalities.

Impact:

Enhanced awareness for gender perspectives of climate change among in-country stakeholders.

Beneficiaries:

With government officials as the primary beneficiary, this readiness initiative revolves around gender contributions and attention to other vulnerable groups.

Enhanced Direct Access

Name: Integrated Physical Adaptation and Community Resilience through Enhanced Direct Access Pilot in the Public, Private and Civil Society Sectors of three Eastern Caribbean small island developing states of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and Grenada.

Type of Project: Adaptation

Country: Antigua and Barbuda

National entity: Department of Environment, Antigua & Barbuda

Sector: Infrastructure

Financing Details: US\$ 24,369,360 – Green Climate Fund

Description:

Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and Grenada are three small island developing states facing challenges in relation to adapting to climate change-related threats such as more intense hurricanes, higher temperatures and lower overall rainfall. Small grants for community organisations, together with revolving loans for households and businesses, will improve the resilience of infrastructure to withstand category 5 hurricanes. A funding mechanism for public infrastructure (including drainage and irrigation) and ecosystems will also reduce disruptions in the water system and improve soil and water conservation, which are all threatened by the results of climate change.

Objective:

The objective of the proposed Enhanced Direct Access project in the Eastern Caribbean is to increase the resilience of at least 5 per cent of the population in the Eastern Caribbean pilot countries to climate variability and change, of which 50 per cent are women, through adaptation in infrastructure, strengthened buildings and enhanced ecosystem services.

Impact:

- Accreditation of 3 direct access entities in the Eastern Caribbean, including for on-lending accreditation.
- At least 100 people are trained to identify, prioritise, implement, monitor and evaluate adaptation strategies and measures.
- 6 transparent sustainable financing mechanisms for supporting adaptation in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States sub-region meet GCF criteria.
- 300 vulnerable households and 100 businesses, of which approximately 40 per cent should be female-headed, use Fund-supported microfinancing to respond to climate variability and projected climate change.

Beneficiaries:

13,200 direct and 69,000 indirect beneficiaries in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and Grenada.

Energy

Name: Assessment and Reform of the Tonga Outer Island Solar Electrification Society (OISES)

Type of Project: Mitigation

Country: Tonga

National entity: Ministry of Finance and Planning and the Department of Energy

Sector: Energy

Financing Details: US\$ 460,692 – Green Climate Fund

Description:

The GCF Readiness Funds are anticipated to fund technical assistance to review and provide necessary reform approaches for the OISES. It is hoped that this reform will be implemented by the Department of Energy before all off-grid new projects in the Government of Tonga's pipeline. This readiness proposal will therefore help strengthen the current institutional framework to effectively implement this.

Objective:

This project seeks to improve management and maintenance operations in the remote islands and main office. Technical support to improve regulatory roles for services, tariffs, ownership and expectation of local communities as well as to strengthen policies on financial operation, revenue collections, compliance, tariff payment and enforcement.

Impact:

This project will lead to improved access to renewable energy in the outer islands.

Beneficiaries:

The project will facilitate equitable opportunities to the involvement of men and women and vulnerable groups like youth, the elderly and people living with disabilities in the outer islands of Tonga.

Agriculture

Name: AgriTech Park Facility and Development of Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) Initiative Grant

Type of Project: Adaptation

Country: Mauritius

National entity: University of Mauritius, Faculty of Agriculture

Sector: Agriculture

Financing Details: US\$1,257,142 – European Union, Government of Mauritius

Description:

The AgriTech Park Facility will yield the development of smart innovation through research in agriculture to promote biotechnology, precision agriculture, climate change mainstreaming and food security as well as an agro-processing incubator for agricultural transformation and processing.

Objectives:

To strengthen the capacities of local communities through training to enable them understand the adverse effects of climate change on agricultural production and productivity. To improve the capacity of young and women farmers to address issues related to climate change such as pests and new diseases that decrease product yield.

Impact:

Increased awareness as well as enhanced capacity on climate change adaptation and mitigation to the local community, including young farmers and women.

Beneficiaries:

Local communities, local farmers, women and youths. Special attention to be given to women farmers as well as women entrepreneurs.

Meet the Team

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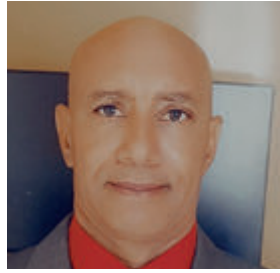


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