

News story: Foreign Secretary announces £9m to save our oceans

Britain will use its position as a leading maritime nation to help Commonwealth Small Island Developing states (SIDS) drive economic development and make the most of their marine environments.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, will announce £9 million over two years to help Commonwealth Small Island Developing states (SIDS) use their marine resources to sustainably grow their economies. The funding which will be delivered through the Commonwealth Marine Economies programme will also safeguard healthy seas and build resilience against environmental disasters.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Britain is using its seafaring prowess to help reverse the decline of our oceans.

Our oceans are the largest living space on Earth with a delicate and complex biodiversity. They are not only integral to the economy, but crucial to supporting the cultures, food and security of the world.

We must as a Commonwealth protect our marine inheritance. That's why today's £9 million will help Commonwealth small island states sustainably develop their maritime environment to create jobs and drive growth.

The Foreign Office is on course to safeguard over four million square kilometres of ocean by 2020 through its Overseas Territories Blue Belt programme. The programme's scientific expeditions around St Helena have discovered a potential new species of octopus. Evidence is now being put to the international scientific community for formal validation.

Through projects in the SIDS such as seabed mapping, sustainable tourism and identifying marine pollution hotspots, the UK will share its world-renowned expertise to help SIDS tackle climate change, reduce poverty and boost the blue economy.

Many Commonwealth countries are at the coalface of climate change, even though their populations account for a tiny fraction of the world's greenhouse emissions. Mr Johnson wants to build global political momentum to ensure that this generation leaves the environment in a better state than we found it.

Notes to Editors

- The Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme works in 17 Small Island

Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean and Pacific, and is delivered by three world-leading UK agencies: the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO), The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), and the National Oceanography Centre (NOC).

- The Blue Belt Programme works in the UK's Overseas Territories and is run by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) and the Marine Management Organisation.
- The funding will come from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund which provides funding for cross-government projects and programmes.

Further information