



The Commonwealth Blue Charter

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"Shared ocean, shared values"

Background

The Commonwealth Blue Charter is an agreement by all 54 Commonwealth countries, adopted at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London, April 2018. The Charter of the Commonwealth provides the underlying principles for the Blue Charter, ensuring a fair, equitable, inclusive and sustainable approach to ocean economic development and protection. In the Blue Charter, Commonwealth countries agree to actively co-operate to solve ocean-related problems and meet commitments for sustainable ocean development, with particular emphasis on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 14 (Life Below Water).

Rationale

The rationale behind the Commonwealth Blue Charter is that, in order to make lasting progress on ocean sustainability, national governments need to:

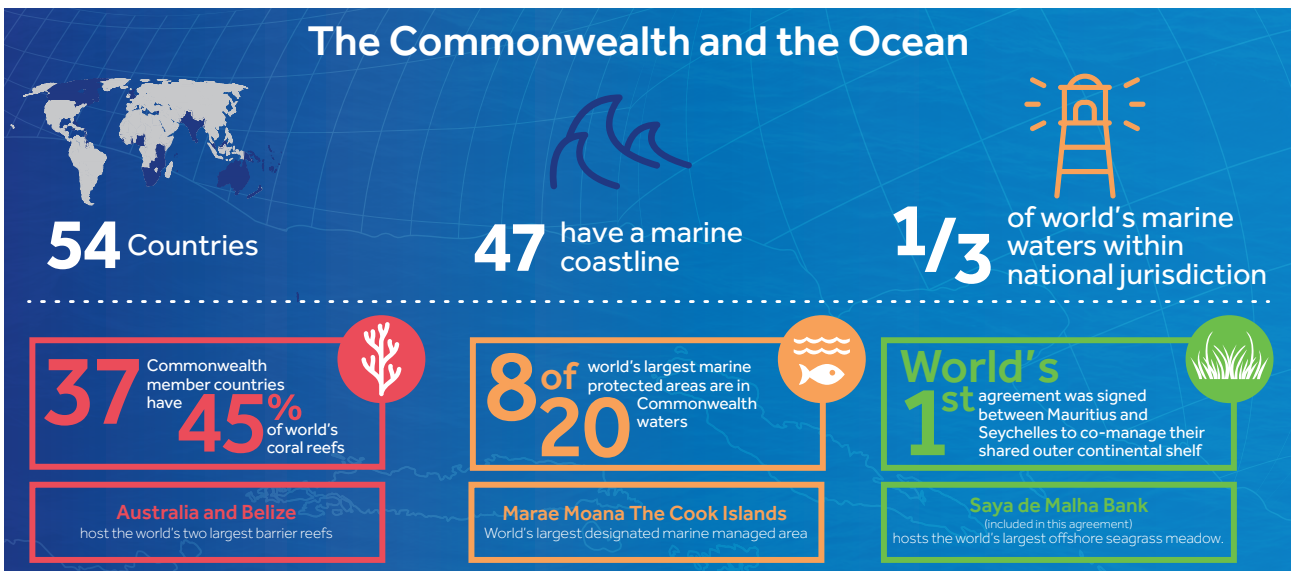
- take the lead, as that only governments have the mandate to make the necessary changes to laws and policies;
- be supported through partnerships with civil society and the private sector who have the necessary expertise and personnel; and
- be offered the opportunity to access new funding that will allow them to escape political funding cycles and project eligibility restrictions.

The Commonwealth Blue Charter targets a particular gap in the current global efforts: the lack of support for co-operative trans-national marine policy development and project implementation. The Blue Charter Action Groups are the means by which high-level government commitments can connect to on-the-water actions.

"Leaders have agreed on a bold, co-ordinated push to protect the world's oceans. Their landmark decision to adopt a Commonwealth Blue Charter will affect one-third of the world's national coastal waters, helping to sustain livelihoods and eco-systems globally"

Rt Hon Patricia Scotland
Secretary-General
Commonwealth Secretariat

The Commonwealth and the Ocean

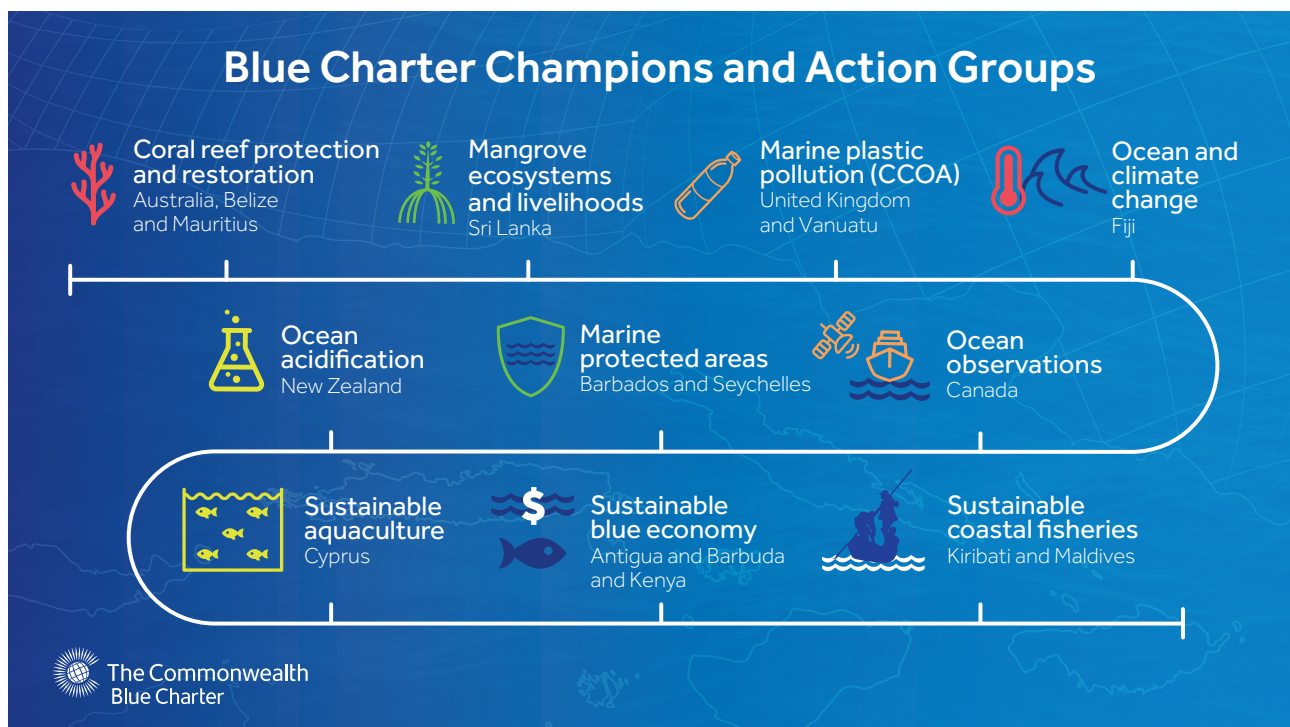




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Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Groups

Implementation of the Commonwealth Blue Charter is through 'Action Groups'. These are member-driven, and led by 'Champion' countries. To date, sixteen countries have stepped forward to be Champions on ten topics identified as priorities. Action Groups unlock the power of 54 nations and guide the development of tools and training, they are: Coral reef protection and restoration, Mangrove ecosystems and livelihoods, Commonwealth clean ocean alliance (marine plastics), Marine protected areas, Ocean acidification, Ocean and climate change, Ocean observation, Sustainable aquaculture, Sustainable blue economy and Sustainable coastal fisheries.



About the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 independent and equal sovereign states. It is home to 2.4 billion people and includes both advanced economies and developing countries. Thirty-two of our members are small states, 25 of which are small island developing states. Forty-seven members have a marine coastline. Globally, Commonwealth marine waters account for over one-third (35%) of national marine jurisdictions. Our shared values and principles are inscribed in the Commonwealth Charter (2013), which is the bedrock of the Commonwealth Blue Charter (2018).

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