

Report

Annual Results Report

July 2022–June 2023



The Commonwealth

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COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

Annual Results Report

July 2022–June 2023



The Commonwealth

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACA	Anti-Corruption Agency	IMF	International Monetary Fund
CARICOM	Caribbean Community	International IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
CAYWA	Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Workers Association	ITFC	International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation
CCALL	Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands	JEP	Junior Election Professionals
CCEAM	Commonwealth Council for Education, Administration and Management	LDC	Least Developed Country
CCFAH	Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
CEMAG	Commonwealth Education Ministers Action Group	MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
CEP	Commonwealth Election Professionals	NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
CFAMM	Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Minister Meeting	NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
CHMM	Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
CFTC	Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation	OACPS	Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
CLMM	Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting	PIANZEA	Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators (Network)
CMAG	Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group	PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
COG	Commonwealth Observer Group	PITAD	Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development
COMSEC	Commonwealth Secretariat fund	RRA	Rapid Readiness Assessment
COP	Conference of the Parties	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	SIDS	Small Island Developing State
CS DRMS	Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System	SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound
CSET	Commonwealth Sustainable Energy Transitions	SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
CSSO	Commonwealth Small States Office	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism	UK	United Kingdom
CYCN	Commonwealth Youth Climate Network	UN	United Nations
CYHRDN	Commonwealth Youth Human Rights and Democracy Network	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Programme	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
EBR	Extra Budgetary Resource	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
EconVAWG	Economic Impact of Violence against Women and Girls	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
EMB	Election Management Body	UPR	Universal Periodic Review
ERM	Enterprise Risk Management	WHO	World Health Organization
EU	European Union	WTO	World Trade Organization
FTA	Free Trade Agreement		
GBV	Gender-based Violence		

Foreword from the Secretary-General

The past year has been one of progress and consolidation, growth and partnership, mourning and celebration.

This year we lost our greatest champion, Her late Majesty the Queen, and gained as our new head a true advocate for and leader of our Commonwealth family, His Majesty King Charles. We start this reporting year in a period of transition, following on from the success of CHOGM 2022 in Rwanda and yet looking forward eagerly to our next CHOGM in Samoa next year.

And during the year we have seen real success. We have worked hard to support our member states by providing a wide range of technical assistance, engaging in and enabling peace processes, building institutional capacities and policies, providing thought leadership, and securing consensus on key issues including trade, gender, health, climate change and leadership. This Annual Results Report includes significant achievements, not just in terms of numbers and statistics but also in terms of the positive impact we have made for the governments we serve and to the communities they represent. The report for 2022/23 is testimony that the Secretariat, even when faced with financial and political pressures, can continue to be responsive, relevant and resilient.

As ever it is an enormous honour to lead the Commonwealth Secretariat as Secretary-General through this period of reform, innovation and growth. As I reflect upon this year of multiple global crises, amplified by the persistent health and economic legacies of a worldwide pandemic,

I am inspired by the passion, resilience and commitment I have seen across the Commonwealth. While the problems seem formidable, our Commonwealth Secretariat has been working with our member states to provide much-needed technical assistance and deliver programmes to help catalyse a capacity for adaptability and global solidarity, while paving the way for leadership that is forward-thinking and value driven.

In the midst of these challenges, our Annual Results Report underscores our dedication to sustainability and corporate responsibility, showcasing our efforts to make a positive impact in these trying times. I have witnessed, within our organisation and among our partners, the commitment to take forward the values of our Commonwealth Charter and mandates from our Commonwealth Heads of Governments.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your unwavering support and belief in our leadership, our strategy and our Commonwealth. I invite you to explore this Annual Results Report, to celebrate our year and join us to shape the journey that lies ahead.



The Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland KC
Secretary-General of the Commonwealth



Introduction

It is my pleasure to put forward the Commonwealth Secretariat's 2022/23 Annual Results Report.

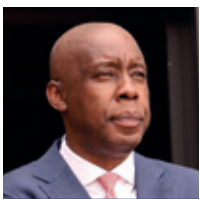
Covering the second year of our 2021/22–2024/25 Strategic Plan, this report highlights successes and challenges in the delivery of the Secretariat's 44 approved projects over 15 programmes implemented in or with member countries by the Secretariat's technical teams in the financial year July 2022–June 2023. It is also a reflection of our commitment to transparency, accountability and responsiveness to the needs of our stakeholders.

This report is presented in two parts. The first is an illustrated summary of key achievements, which has also been provided as a separate document to brief members on the Secretariat's progress in 2022/23. The second part is the substantive results report which includes information on delivery context, progress on intermediate outcomes, technical overviews on key performance indicators across strategic outcomes, and a financial progress report. The annex reports on the indicators of change from the detailed results framework as outlined in Secretariat's delivery plan.

Our Annual Results Report includes evidence-based data as well as case studies and feedback on our outreach and impact on our member states. It showcases our shared values, the strength of our partnerships and the dedication of our talented teams. Most importantly, it serves as a testament to the Commonwealth Secretariat's commitment to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement.

The success we have achieved in 2022/23 would not have been possible without our trusted Senior Management Committee led by our esteemed Secretary-General, the Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland KC, and the guidance and support of our Board of Governors under the leadership of the Chair of the Board of Governors, Her Excellency Linda Scott, High Commissioner for Namibia.

Together, we have demonstrated that the Commonwealth Secretariat continues to be a leader, setting the standard for excellence. Together we offer you this report in hope that you will continue to engage with us about our past achievements and future aspirations.



Joshua Setipa

Senior Director, Strategy,
Portfolio, Partnerships and Digital,
Commonwealth Secretariat



Summary

In 2022/23 the Commonwealth Secretariat prioritised the delivery of the 2022 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting mandates, in alignment with agreed Strategic Plan outcomes.

In this second year of the 2021/22–2024/25 Strategic Plan the Secretariat has focused on specific areas of its comparative advantage while taking forward current programmes and continuing to support business-critical areas.

As of June 2023, 95 per cent of indicators of programme outcomes have been met, exceeded or are showing good progress towards their targets. These indicate changes in performance, behaviours and practices of beneficiaries and partners aligned with the Secretariat's programmes.

The Secretariat has continued to ensure effective budget utilisation across the three major funds – the Commonwealth Secretariat Fund (COMSEC), the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) and the Commonwealth Youth Programme Fund (CYP).

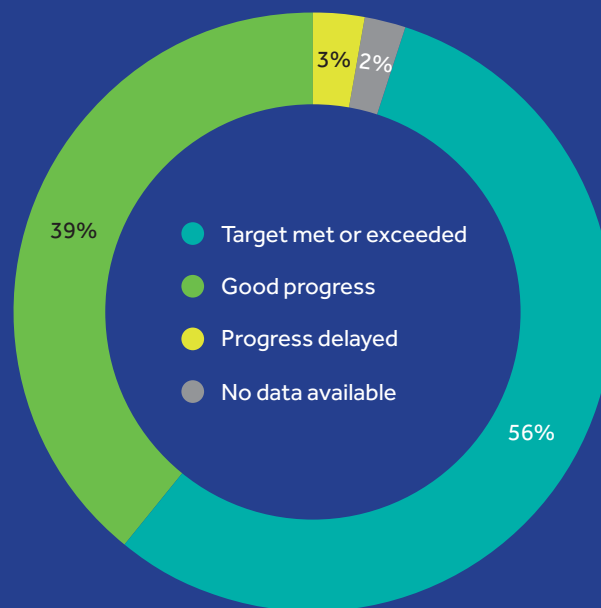


Figure A.1: Delivery Status of Intermediate Outcomes, June 2023

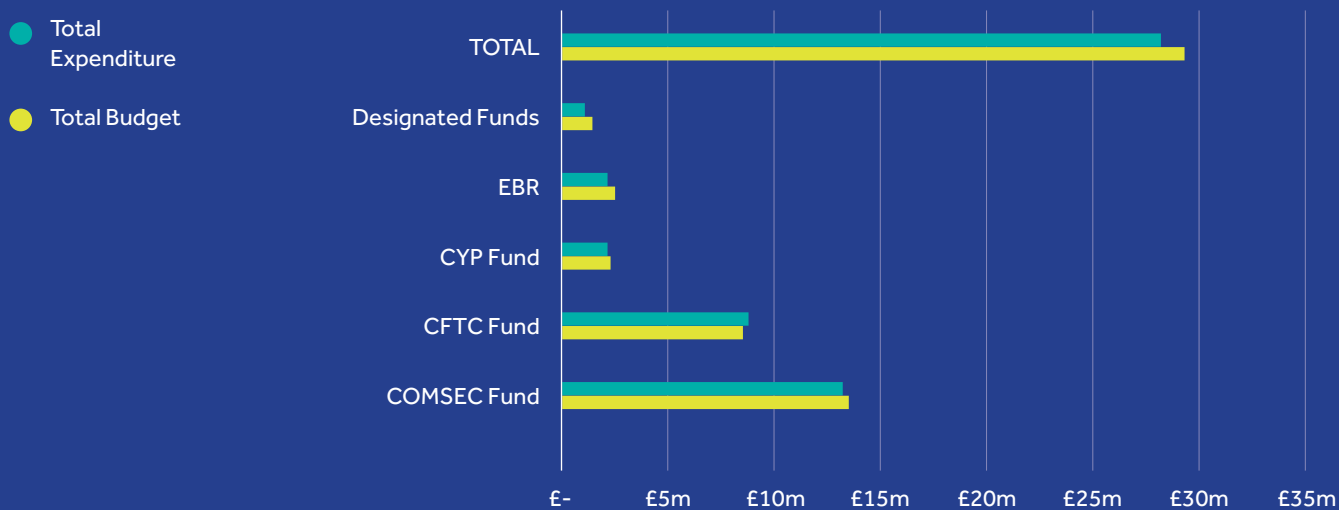


Figure A.2: Direct Budget Performance by fund, and total, 2022/23

The 2022/23 Annual Results Report highlights successes, challenges and progress in the delivery of the Secretariat's programme of work across the 15 programmes and 44 projects by the Secretariat's technical teams. These programmes, expenditure on them and the proportion of that expenditure met by Extra Budgetary Resources (EBRs) are outlined in Figure A.3 below.

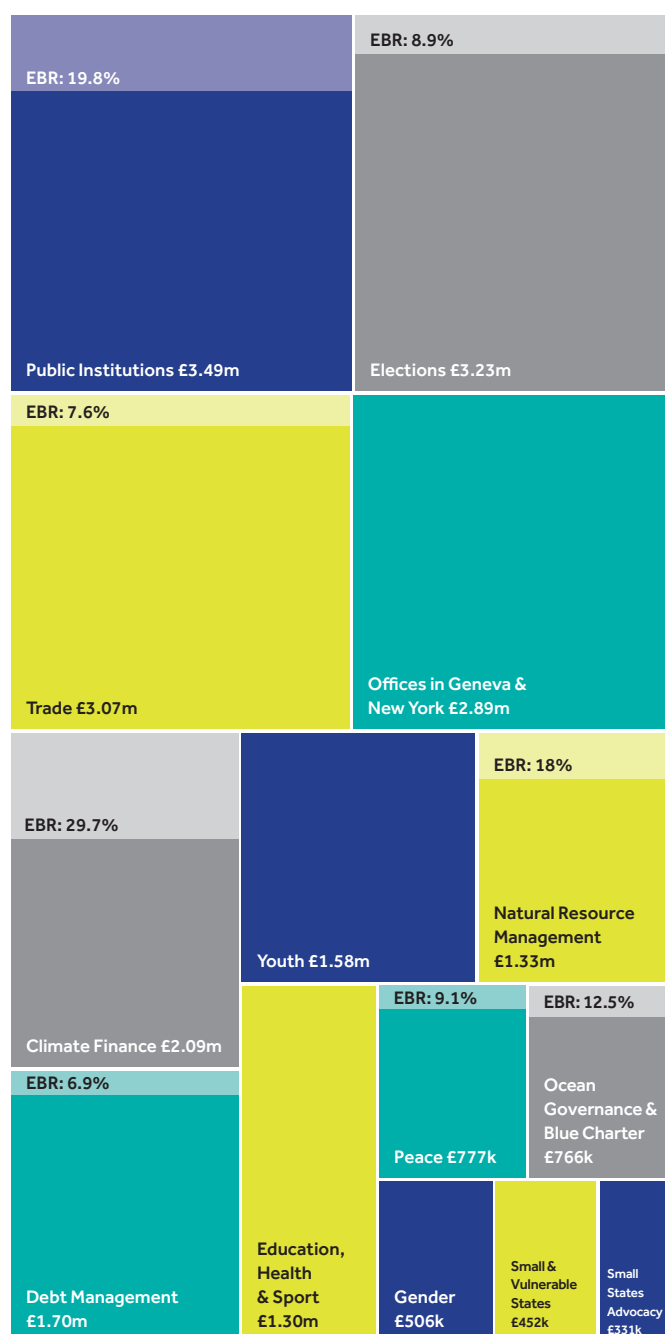


Figure A.3: Expenditure (and proportion of expenditure met by EBR) by Intermediate Outcome (EGBP)

Collaborative efforts leveraging partnerships at national, regional and international levels, including with Commonwealth Accredited organisations,¹ remain instrumental in catalysing Strategic Plan outcomes. The Secretariat has also emphasised partnerships as a critical lever to respond to emerging requests. In 2022/23 the Secretariat mobilised £2.4 million in EBRs from partners – including member countries, government bodies, private entities and other multilaterals – for initiatives within the Strategic Plan.

In June 2022, at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kigali, heads set out new mandates and requested the Secretariat to redouble efforts in areas of existing mandates included in the 2021/22 – 2024/25 Strategic Plan. Following CHOGM 2022, in 2022/23 the Secretariat identified actions for delivery in Commonwealth Leaders' Statement; in 40 paragraphs across the CHOGM 2022 Communiqué; in the 2022 Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands; in the 2022 Declaration on Sustainable Urbanisation; and the 2022 Kigali Declaration on Child Care and Protection Reform. This alignment is outlined in the Strategic Results Framework table opposite, with specific references to which area delivers on CHOGM outcomes.

In 2022/23, the Secretariat advanced **peace and democracy** outcomes through the convening of four high-level meetings to advance Commonwealth Heads of Government commitments, and enhance intra-Commonwealth collaboration to address the urgent development challenges facing the 2.5 billion people of the Commonwealth.

In **Sri Lanka**, we trained government officials, civil society and young people on peace-building, diversity and inclusion. We deployed Commonwealth Election Observation Groups supported by the Secretary-General's Good Offices in **Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Kenya, Lesotho, Nigeria and Sierra Leone**, and strengthened the capacity of election officials in the Pacific and in the **Caribbean and Americas**. In **Asia and the Pacific**, capacity-building was provided to over 120 law enforcement officials, prosecutors, judges and magistrates to advance the Commonwealth Cyber Declaration mandated by the Commonwealth Heads of Government.

The Commonwealth Law Ministers met in person for the first time in three years: they adopted the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Access to Justice and endorsed the Commonwealth Principles on Freedom of Expression and the Role of the Media in Good Governance. In **Belize**, the Secretariat helped substantially reduce the civil court backlog by deploying four judges. In **Mauritius**, we built the capacity of over 500 police and prison officers to apply human rights-based approaches to policing. In **Guyana, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda and Saint Kitts and Nevis**, we convened meetings of anti-corruption officials and leaders to share best practice. Legislative development support in this period included a final review of the revised Enterprise Risk Management Policy in **Botswana** and support to **Lesotho's** National Reforms Authority to enhance its capacity.



The Opening Ceremony of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2022, Kigali, Rwanda

¹ <https://thecommonwealth.org/organisations>

Strategic Results Framework

Strategic Pillars				
Strategic Plan Outcomes/CHOGM Communiqué paragraph numbers	Democracy & Governance	Sustainable Development	Resilience & Climate Action	Small & Other Vulnerable States
	1.1 Member countries effectively utilise mechanisms to further adherence to Commonwealth values and Principles CHOGM Communiqué paragraphs 12, 26	2.1 Effective trade policy, increased competitiveness and co-operation Paras 43, 44, 46, 48	3.1 Enhanced intra-Commonwealth co-operation on sustainable ocean action and energy transition Paras 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70	4.1 Policy positions advanced in global governance mechanisms Paras 33, 41, 42
	1.2 Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections Para 14	2.2 Sustainable public finance and debt management Paras 35, 36	3.2 Enhanced access to financial resources, technology and capacities for climate change adaptation and mitigation Leaders statement; paras 55, 66; Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands; Declaration on Sustainable Urbanisation	4.2 Reduced vulnerability to shocks and improved fiscal sustainability and access to financing Paras 41, 42
	1.3 Public institutions and frameworks in member countries strengthened to promote rule of law, access to justice, human rights and good governance Paras 15, 18, 21, 29, 104	2.3 Sustainable, equitable, transparent and effective management, governance and use of the ocean, energy and natural resources Paras 64, 68, 69		
		2.4 Inclusive and resilient education and health systems Paras 22, 82, 87, 95, 97; Kigali Declaration on Child Care & Protection Reform		
	Cross-cutting Outcomes			
Youth Empowerment	CC1 Effective participation and equal opportunities for youth in leadership, governance, economic and social development enhanced Paras 57, 89, 91, 92, 93	Gender	CC2 Gender disparities in access to political, social and economic rights and violence against women and girls reduced Para 27	
Catalytic Outcomes				
Partnerships	Paras 31, 98, 108			



To advance **sustainable development**, and specifically trade, we convened the second Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting to reflect on opportunities for co-operation and progress objectives in advance of CHOGM 2024 in Samoa. We undertook evidence-based analysis to support least developed countries (LDCs) in their preparations for and participation at the Fifth UN Conference on the LDCs and implemented a joint project with the UN Conference on Trade and Development to assess the intellectual property rights implications for graduating LDCs. We published 14 knowledge products to support members with their trade policies, including a major report on sustainable production and trade in the Commonwealth, and organised various events to examine Commonwealth trade opportunities or to support global advocacy on the challenges facing our members, especially small states and LDCs. We supported **Maldives** with its trade in sustainable fisheries. Our trade advisers at the Commonwealth Small States Office in Geneva continue to support members to engage more effectively in negotiations on existing, new and emerging trade issues at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and facilitate their fuller integration and participation in the multilateral trading system. The Commonwealth Caucus of WTO Ambassadors met for the fourth time in Geneva, convened by **New Zealand**.

We provided comprehensive analysis and capacity-building to support **Pakistan** to make evidence-based decisions as it embarks on free trade agreement negotiations. We engaged with agribusiness small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in **Belize** and supported women's micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in **Cameroon**, assisting them to assess pricing, the competitive landscape and market opportunities. In **Tanzania**, we made the case for further support to SMEs in partnership with the Federation of East African Freight Forwarders Associations. A South–South, peer-to-peer learning exchange took place between aquaculture business owners in the Pacific and senior officials of leading industries in **Mauritius**.

After several years of technical assistance on **debt management**, the Reserve Bank of **Fiji** launched a Central Securities Repository. The roll-out of the Commonwealth Meridian debt management system gathers pace, and technical assistance for comprehensive debt management reform in **The Bahamas** is approaching completion. In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the Secretariat continues to support the development of a Public Debt Management Act. To support member countries with best practice in debt transparency, the Secretariat has developed a **Handbook on Public Debt Transparency** providing a practical blueprint to assist debt managers and stakeholders in improving transparency in debt management operations.

To support and enhance debt transparency in member countries, we are continuing to deploy Commonwealth Meridian in the 42 member clients that use our debt management systems to improve efficiency and quality of debt data recording and dissemination. Of the 42 member clients, 35 have initiated the deployment process, of which 16 have fully adopted Commonwealth Meridian.

We worked with **Belize, Guyana, Malawi** and **Vanuatu** to revise their petroleum policies, acts, regulations and model contracts. Support in mining reform was provided to **The Bahamas** and **eSwatini** and capacity-building in deep-sea mining to **Cook Islands, Fiji, Ghana, South Africa** and **Tonga**. Following a huge oil discovery in **Namibia**, we provided support to develop national field development plans and guidelines, built capacity to help ensure that the discovery benefits all citizens, and advised on revisions to the country's Petroleum Act, Regulation and Model Petroleum Agreement.

To enhance **ocean governance and maritime boundaries**, draft ocean policies for **Anguilla** and **Montserrat** were finalised in this period and a National Maritime Transportation Policy for **Antigua and Barbuda** was completed. Draft maritime zone legislation for **Guyana** was submitted for consideration, and progress was made in **Seychelles** in negotiations on marine boundary delimitation.

To advance social development and particularly **health and education** outcomes, the Secretariat continued to support the progress of the Mental Health Bill in **The Bahamas**. We advanced non-communicable disease prevention legislation in **Nauru**, **Solomon Islands**, **Tonga** and **Tuvalu**. Together with Lancet Oncology, we launched the Cancer in the Commonwealth Lancet Commission to assess the state of cancer control provision and funding in the Commonwealth. The Secretariat soft-launched the **Commonwealth Education Leaders Handbook** in **Kenya** and convened education leaders in **Mauritius**. The Secretariat also convened the Commonwealth Education Ministers Action Group, which resulted in the launch of partner-led action groups to advance education outcomes.

Commonwealth Sports Ministers met in Birmingham, UK, advancing child protection and safeguarding through the **Model Legislative Provisions on Preventing the Abuse of Positions of Trust**. Technical assistance was provided to **Saint Kitts and Nevis** to support the development of a National Sports Policy. In partnership with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Secretariat developed **The Global Sport and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Impact Report**, complemented by an interactive dashboard illustrating how sport contributes to the SDGs. The Commonwealth Blue Charter Project Incubator was launched, supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, with eight promising projects selected for funding.

In the Secretariat's work to **enhance ocean protection and climate resilience**, we advanced blue economies in **Antigua and Barbuda** and **Trinidad and Tobago**, trialling a new Rapid Readiness Assessment tool to better understand how prepared their national systems, structures and stakeholders are to transition to blue economies. We signed an MOU with the International Maritime Organisation to boost sustainable maritime transport.

The **Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH)** continues to go from strength to strength. A 150 per cent increase in funding mobilised has brought the total to US\$350 million, supporting 77 approved adaptation, mitigation and cross-cutting projects in 19 Commonwealth small and other vulnerable states. The monitoring of the youth and gender outcomes of these projects was enabled through the adoption of an evaluation tool to collect disaggregated data and track the extent to which CCFAH is achieving objectives in this area.

Taking forward gender mainstreaming, CCFAH facilitated the submission of two gender-specific funding proposals, for **Mauritius** and **Namibia**. Following the launch of **Gender Integration for Climate Action: A Review of Commonwealth Member Countries Nationally Determined Contributions**, the Secretariat started a Phase 2 study with further recommendations on how to build effective gender-responsive national climate finance systems.

On biodiversity, taking forward the Heads of Government mandate, the Secretariat drafted and circulated the implementation plan for the Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands for consultation with members. This considers key developments across the three Rio conventions, including the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27), the Loss and Damage Fund and the Montreal–Kunming Global Biodiversity Framework from the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15).





To advance the **Commonwealth Sustainable Energy Transition (CSET) Agenda**, the Secretariat hosted the third biennial CSET Forum, with 29 Commonwealth countries represented. A focus of this was ensuring a strong inter-generational approach in recognition that young people are essential stakeholders in creating solutions for energy transition. To further this approach, a Children and Youth Challenge was launched to inspire participation and innovation in energy transition in local communities, led by young people.

We had a strong presence at **COP27** in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, convening 16 side events on a range of topics, including resilient food systems, health and climate, the Commonwealth Living Lands Charter, the Commonwealth Blue Charter, CCFAH, CSET and networks such as the Commonwealth Youth Climate Network. Critically, the Secretariat's presence at COP27 enabled us to champion and advocate for the needs of small and other vulnerable states and to build on CHOGM commitments to scale up action and financing to address loss and damage and keep the Paris Agreement 1.5°C target alive.

Commonwealth Finance Ministers met to discuss current macro-economic challenges and reiterate the need for a new financial architecture that supports the needs of **small and other vulnerable states**. Ministers agreed to form a working group to provide strategic direction to Commonwealth efforts to shape this new financial architecture so that it can be flexible, relevant and adaptive to crisis. Commonwealth Central Bank Governors were convened for the first time in four years to discuss strategies to tackle inflation driven by geopolitical tensions and disruptions in global supply chains. The Secretariat and the UN continued to implement the advocacy strategy on small states, with 15 countries stepping forward as Small States Advocacy Champions. As part of its efforts to foster consensus and collaboration on new finance architecture and

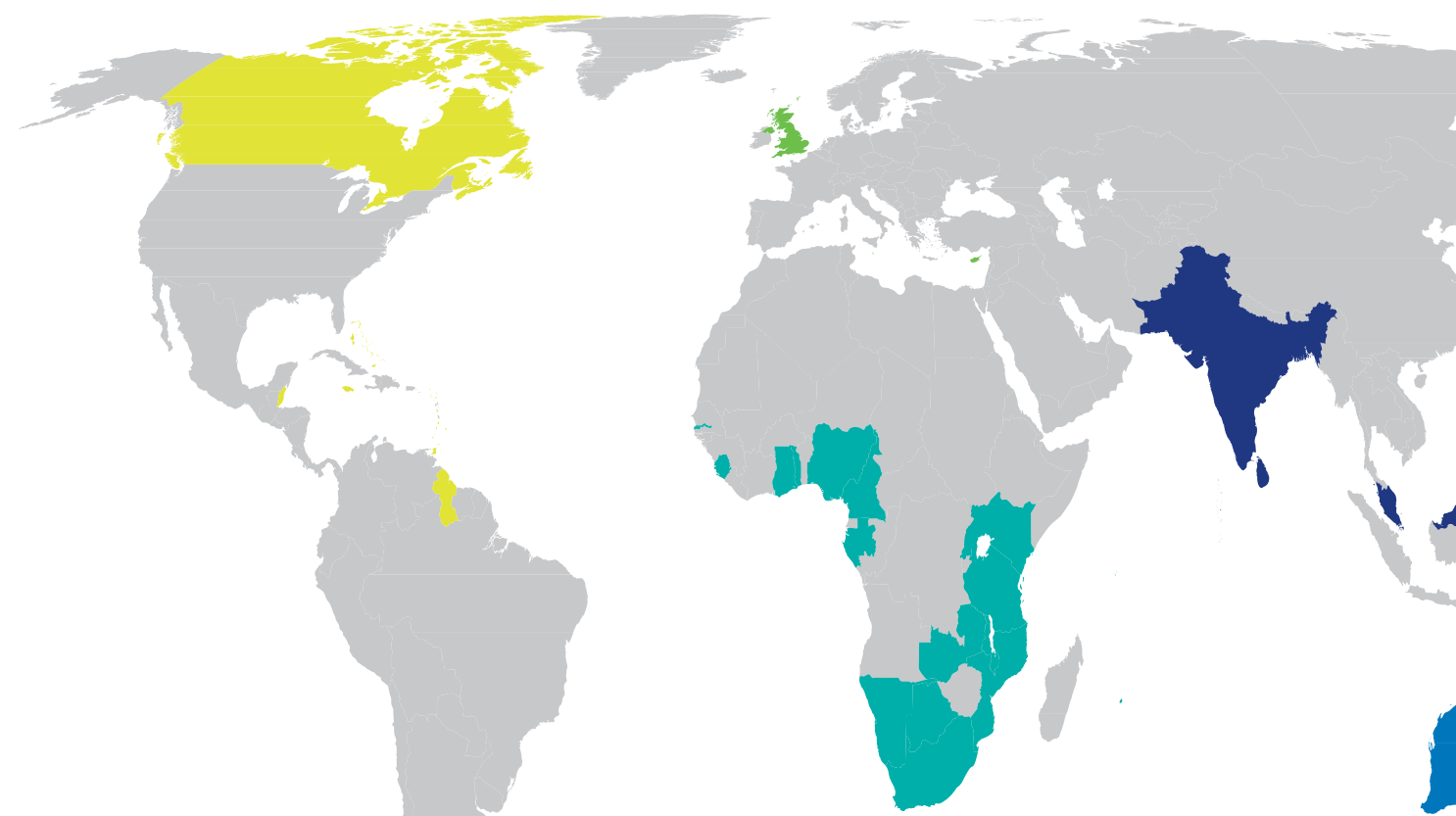
innovative financing for sustainable development, the Secretariat engaged in the High-Level Ministerial Working Group and held a side event on Innovative Financing Initiatives for Effective Debt Restructuring during the 2022 IMF/World Bank Spring meetings, attended by 48 Commonwealth member countries.

Progress to **empower youth** included the launch of a new mainstreaming course to better enable staff, member countries and other stakeholders to identify opportunities and tools to support youth development. Taking forward the CHOGM outcome on youth digital skills, the Secretariat launched the Caribbean Youth Digital Skills initiative in partnership with Simplilearn, aiming to reach 10,000 young people in the coming years. The Aspiring Youth Programme, which provides dedicated support, including capacity-building and mentorship for 300 youth entrepreneurs in the Caribbean, was launched in partnership with the Caribbean Community. We also inaugurated the Commonwealth Year of Youth in January 2023, with a Commonwealth Youth Leaders' Summit and Commonwealth Youth Conference convened.

The Secretariat continued its support to **Lesotho** and **Seychelles** on eliminating violence against women and girls and applying gender-based budgeting.

To improve our evidence base and inform future programming, the Secretariat initiated country evaluations, with field missions conducted in **Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Cameroon, Fiji, The Gambia, Lesotho, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Solomon Islands, Tonga** and **Tanzania**. These evaluations assess the impact of our programmes and enable us to learn valuable lessons on our comparative advantage and value-addition to member countries.

CFTC Highlights 2022/23



Caribbean and Americas

Region-wide

- Ocean policies for Anguilla and Montserrat
- Meridian debt management system onboarding and institutionalisation in Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago
- Rapid Readiness Assessments in Trinidad and Tobago and Antigua and Barbuda on the transition to a sustainable blue economy

Antigua and Barbuda

- Draft national maritime transportation policy

Guyana

- Draft maritime zone legislation

Saint Kitts and Nevis

- Technical assistance on National Sports Policy

The Bahamas

- Supported development of the Mental Health Bill

Trinidad and Tobago

- Supported development of the Public Debt Management Act

Belize

- Achieved substantial reduction in civil court backlog through provision of judges

Bahamas

- Assisted the implementation of the Medium Term Debt Management Strategy

Barbados

- Supporting sustainable energy transition

Africa

Region-wide

- Anti-corruption and leadership training for African region (Botswana, Mauritius, Rwanda, Malawi, eSwatini, The Gambia, Zambia, Lesotho)
- Regional capacity building on Commonwealth Meridian in Liberia and Mozambique
- Meridian debt management system onboarding and training ongoing in Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, United Republic of Tanzania, Zanzibar
- Climate Finance Advisors in position in Seychelles and Zambia, with the Hub based in Mauritius

Seychelles

- Advanced maritime boundary delimitation

Mauritius

- 500 police officers and 40 senior police officers trained

Botswana

- Developed an Enterprise Risk Management Policy

Sierra Leone

- Supported the signing of a historic election peace pledge

Cameroon

- Support to women-led micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

Figure A.5: Global highlights 2022/23

Europe

Cyprus

- Meridian debt management system onboarding and institutionalisation

Asia

Maldives

- Climate Finance Advisor in position
- Supported sustainable fisheries
- Meridian debt management Meridian system onboarding and training

Sri Lanka

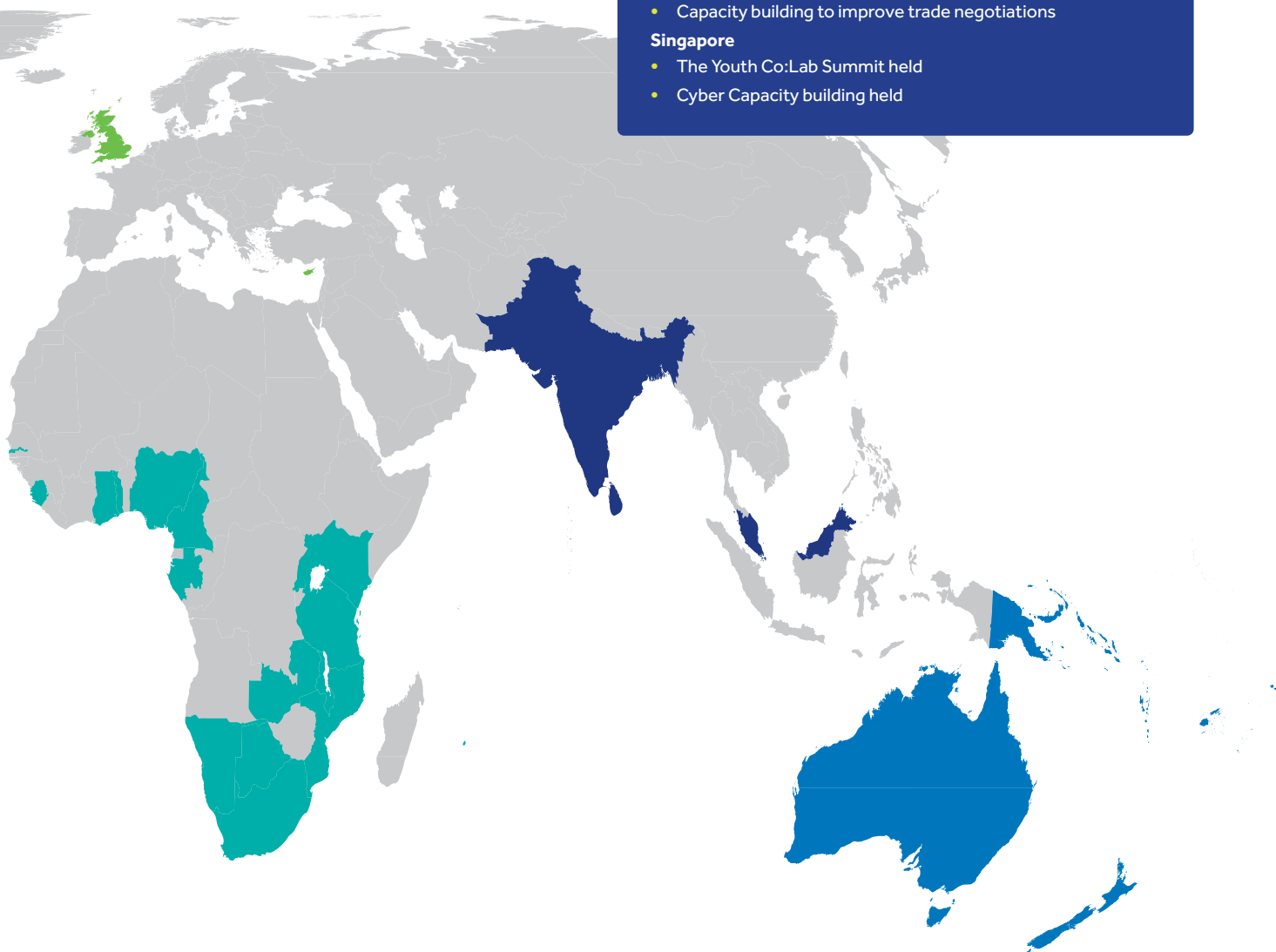
- 40 young people sensitised on to how to engage with the UN human rights system

Pakistan

- Capacity building to improve trade negotiations

Singapore

- The Youth Co:Lab Summit held
- Cyber Capacity building held



Pacific

Region-wide

- Climate Finance Advisors in position in Fiji, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu
- Launch of the Pacific Commonwealth Alliance for Youth Entrepreneurs network
- Non-Communicable Diseases legislative support to Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Tonga
- Regional Commonwealth Election Professionals Programme capacity building
- Meridian debt management system onboarding and training in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu

New Zealand

- Partnering with new Ministry of Disabled People to improve the rights of people with disabilities.

Highlights of the Year 2022/23

Jul
2022



Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting

Aug
2022



Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) monitors the Kenyan general election

Oct
2022



Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting

Nov
2022



Commonwealth attendance of COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt



Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting

COG monitors general election in Lesotho

Dec
2022



Kenya Innovation Week 2022

COG monitors general election in Dominica

Jan
2023



COG monitors general election in Antigua and Barbuda

Feb
2023



COG monitors presidential
election in Nigeria

Mar
2023



Commonwealth Foreign Affairs
Ministers Meeting

Commonwealth
Youth Leaders'
Summit

May
2023



Commonwealth Leaders Summit
and Spouses Event



Health Ministers Meeting

Apr
2023



Events at 2023 World Bank
Group/IMF Spring Meeting

Jun
2023

3rd Biennial Commonwealth
Sustainable Energy Forum

COG monitors general election
in Sierra Leone



Commonwealth Trade
Ministers Meeting

About this report

This report outlines the Secretariat's progress towards achieving outcomes in the Strategic Plan 2021/22–2024/25 with specific updates on the July 2022–June 2023 period.

The report includes information on how the Secretariat has achieved these changes, referencing its impact pathways. These include the Secretariat supporting **policy and legislative development** and **institutional capacity-building**, facilitating the creation of networks and knowledge products, consensus-building and advocacy. Focus is also given to the two cross cutting themes of **youth empowerment** and **gender equality and social inclusion and prioritisation** of the needs of **small and other vulnerable states**, as well as to **partnerships**. Throughout this report, key points relevant to each of these pathways/themes are highlighted in their signature colours, as set out in the key below.

Key to impact pathways/cross-cutting themes/enablers

Policy and legislative development

Institutional capacity-building

Networks and knowledge products

Consensus-building and advocacy

Gender equality and social inclusion (e.g. disability)

Youth empowerment

Small and other vulnerable states

Partnerships

The report highlights work funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC), as shown in the map above, and emphasises progress towards securing the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) mandates.

The report is not an exhaustive update of all the Secretariat activities in the reporting period but highlights key progress towards outcomes across the strategic pillars. Throughout the report, detailed case studies are used to illustrate specific areas of work where there have been notable results or progress towards impact, noting where these have pursued CHOGM mandates, and where they have been funded by EBR and/or CFTC.

The report has two parts. The first is the preceding illustrated summary of key achievements; this has also been provided as a separate document to brief members on the Secretariat's progress in 2023/24. The second part which follows is the substantive results report which includes information on delivery context, progress on intermediate outcomes, technical overview on key performance indicators across strategic outcomes; it also includes a detailed report on financial progress. In addition, an annex contains reporting on the indicators of change from the detailed results framework, as outlined in Secretariat's delivery plan.





Democracy and Governance

Democracy and Governance

3 programmes, aligned to

3 Intermediate Outcomes:

- **'Peace and Democracy'**

1.1 Member countries effectively utilise mechanisms to further adherence to Commonwealth values and principles

- **'Elections'**

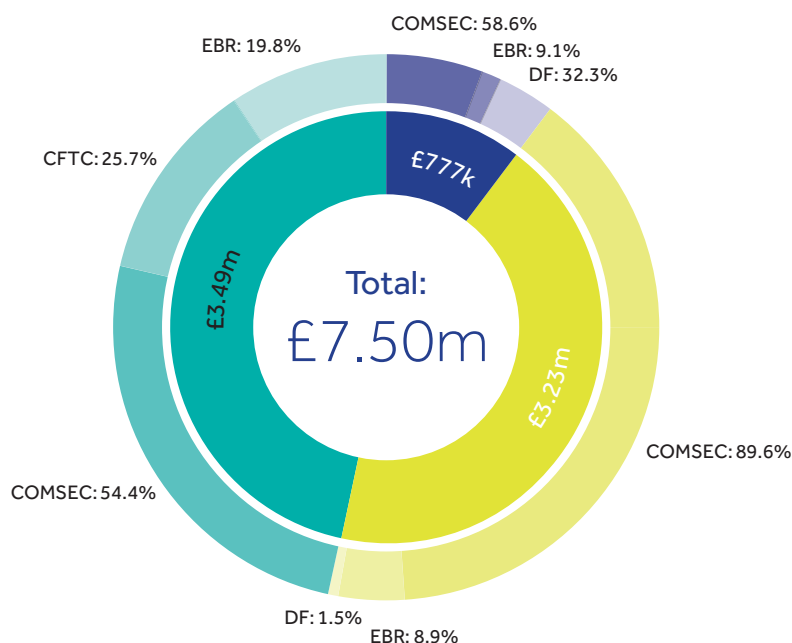
1.2 Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections

- **'Public Institutions'**

1.3 Public institutions and frameworks in member countries strengthened to promote rule of law, access to justice, human rights and good governance

Notable achievements

- Convened Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting, Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting, Leaders' Summit and concurrent Spouses' Programme and Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group Meeting
- Observed six elections
- Strengthened the capacity of 44 election professionals in the Pacific and the Caribbean and Americas
- Trained over 500 law enforcement officials in Mauritius on the role of human rights in policing
- Substantial reduction in case backlog through deployment of four judges in Belize
- Built capacity of 128 law enforcement officials, prosecutors, judges and magistrates in the Pacific and Asian regions to advance the Commonwealth Cyber Declaration



1.1 Member states adhere to Commonwealth values and principles

1.2 Member states conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections

1.3 Public institutions and frameworks strengthened to promote rule of law

Figure 1.1: Expenditure in Democracy and Governance impact pathway (EGBP) by fund, 2022/23

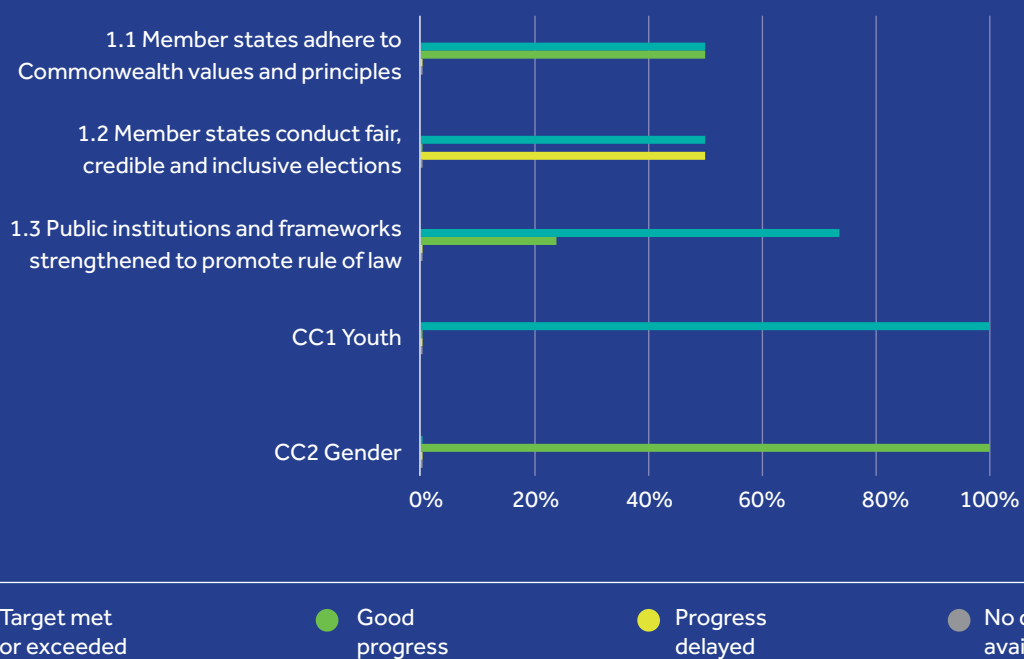


Figure 1.2: Delivery status of intermediate & cross-cutting (CC) outcomes in Democracy and Governance, June 2023

1.1 Peace programme on Commonwealth values and principles

The Secretariat supports member countries to further their adherence to Commonwealth values and principles through the effective use of Commonwealth mechanisms.

In this regard, this period saw the convening of four high-level meetings. The 22nd Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (CFAMM), held on the margins of Commonwealth Day, built on discussions from CHOOGM 2022 in Kigali and focused on enhancing resilience across the Commonwealth. Key issues addressed were food and energy security; climate financing and how the Commonwealth can work towards improving access for the most vulnerable; and leveraging the Commonwealth advantage and digital connectivity to maximise intra-Commonwealth trade, particularly in times of crisis. CFAMM was also an opportunity to reflect on the values of the Commonwealth Charter, 10 years since its signing. In advance of CFAMM, a meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), the custodian of the values of the Charter, was held to discuss further work in the areas of democracy, governance and access to justice.

By convening high-level events, the Secretariat generates space to address development challenges and utilise political discussions to enhance intra-Commonwealth collaboration on some of the pressing matters facing the 2.4 billion people of the Commonwealth. Following requests from the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers in March 2023, the Secretariat convened an event for Commonwealth Leaders and their Spouses on the margins of the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III.

The event for Leaders focused on opportunities and challenges facing the 1.5 billion young people of the Commonwealth, representing 60 per cent of the population and was attended by 30 Heads of State, four Heads of Government and 10 Prime Ministers, with representation from all 56 Commonwealth countries. It provided an opportunity at the mid-point between CHOOGMs for Leaders to reflect on the potential of youth for the advancement of the Commonwealth's shared objectives and ambition. Leaders pledged to continue working towards strengthening the Commonwealth and committed to investing in young people. This informal gathering and the subsequent banquet at Buckingham Palace enabled Commonwealth Leaders to welcome His Majesty as the new Head of the Commonwealth.

A Spouses' Programme was delivered concurrently to encourage further advocacy across the Commonwealth in the fight to eradicate cervical cancer. The event strengthened commitments made by Heads at CHOOGM 2022 to ensure all girls aged 9–13 have access to vaccines to provide immunity against human papillomavirus infection by 2025. H.E. Jeanette Kagame, First Lady of Rwanda, presided over the event. Attendees committed to advocate further on this issue, with ideas emerging for similar events in the near future. Following the event, H.E. Ann Marie Davis, First Lady of The Bahamas, said:

'The Commonwealth has a unique opportunity to provide leadership and to act as a global and regional catalyst for bringing together major stakeholders involved in the fight against cervical cancer. The first spouses are well placed to bridge the political will to see positive change and our health system's ability to affect this change.'



Case study

Sierra Leone's Election Peace Pledge

Intermediate Outcome 1.1:
Member countries effectively utilise mechanisms to further adherence to Commonwealth values and principles



EBR

The **Secretary-General's Good Offices** has a two-pronged approach to supporting member countries to adhere to Commonwealth values and principles. This includes short-term preventive diplomacy and mediation at the highest levels as well as more structural and longer-term conflict prevention technical assistance to member countries to preserve and promote the fundamental political values and principles of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Secretary-General has a unique role as a trusted leader who can offer support and advice to member countries to encourage the settlement of political tension and realignment with the Commonwealth Charter.

The **Secretary-General's Good Offices** supported the Government of Sierra Leone in the promotion of pre-election peace and social cohesion through an Election Peace Pledge event. The Secretariat aims to ensure a whole-of-electoral-cycle approach. This Pledge thus aimed to encourage all stakeholders to proactively engage around peace and democracy and thereby support conflict avoidance. It built on previous successes and utilised lessons learnt from other member countries.

The Secretariat supported the 12-member Steering Committee, which comprised government and non-government stakeholders, including youth, persons with disabilities, women, journalists, lawyers, representatives of religious groups and Paramount Chiefs. Convening the political parties, drafting the Pledge, preparing the event and promoting the subsequent diffusion of its messages represented a powerful symbol of unity, transcending partisan lines. The exercise encouraged stakeholders to work together to shape a Pledge suitable for the nation. Pledge clauses reinforced the importance of the Commonwealth values and principles, including the rule of law, peace, democracy and respect.

The Pledge signing was attended and witnessed by key national stakeholders and the diplomatic community in Sierra Leone. Chair of the African Union Commission H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat and Economic Community of West African States Resident Representative Ambassador Harouna Moussa, as well as Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland KC, acted as moral guarantors to support the political parties in their commitment to peace. Young people and school children participated in the event, as representatives of future generations. The Peace Pledge signing was livestreamed and broadcast on all major networks in the country. Key delivery partners included the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone held elections in June 2023 and Election Observer Groups reported that these were largely peaceful.

The Secretary-General's Good Offices continues to support peace in negotiations in the establishment of the new government.



The Secretariat continues to support member countries to counter and prevent violent extremism despite the end of Extra Budgetary Resource (EBR) funding in this area. The Secretariat focused in this period on furthering the successful Faith in the Commonwealth initiative, developing and maintaining partnerships, and contributing to knowledge products and best practice-sharing.

This included the production of a digital peacebuilding resource *Respect in the Commonwealth* and capacity-building in partnership with UNDP for 80 young people, government representatives, non-governmental organisation (NGO) staff and civil society from across Sri Lanka on 'Youth for Diversity and Inclusion.' Post-workshop, the Secretariat has continued to promote knowledge-sharing of best practice through maintenance and facilitation of an online network to mentor participants. As a testament to the connections and partnerships developed at the workshop, the WhatsApp group created for attendees is still extremely active and lively. Participants share how they have applied their learnings in their communities by getting involved in local initiatives, organising their own events and attending further training.

Further capacity-building in this period involved the delivery of online training to 46 (29 male, 17 female) mayors and sub-national government representatives from Commonwealth countries via the South Asia Hub of the Stronger Cities Network, and capacity-building for 120 practitioners and policy-makers from Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean to share knowledge about policy options regarding addressing terrorist use of the internet.

The Secretary-General's Good Offices has continued to protect and promote the Commonwealth's fundamental values and principles by engaging with countries and the use of envoys when required to de-escalate socio-political crises. The Secretariat also engaged with member countries including Kenya, Lesotho, Nigeria and Sierra Leone in advance of their elections. The Secretary-General was called on to address leaders of 79 countries gathered at the 10th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) in December 2022 to highlight the

importance of solidarity among nations in the face of global challenges. An impact story on the Secretary-General's Good Offices in Sierra Leone can be found in the case study above.

1.2 Elections

The Secretariat supports member countries to conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections through a full-cycle election approach. The reporting period saw the successful deployment of Commonwealth Observer Groups (COGs) in Lesotho, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Nigeria and for snap elections in Dominica, and Antigua and Barbuda. Ahead of and during the election period, the Secretariat provided political and contextual analysis, quiet diplomacy, and legal and peacebuilding support through the Secretary-General's Good Offices. While the Secretariat was able to pivot its resources to accommodate observation of the snap elections in Dominica, and Antigua and Barbuda, this resulted in the postponement of technical assistance to national stakeholders in Cameroon and Jamaica. This work, scheduled to commence in 2023/24, is contingent on CFTC resourcing.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Australian-funded Commonwealth Election Professionals Programme, which has established itself as a trusted forum for the exchange of emerging electoral good practice by providing an ongoing support network. Two Commonwealth regional capacity-building programmes for Election Professionals were held this reporting period, in New Zealand, and Trinidad and Tobago. The Pacific training event was held in partnership with the New Zealand Electoral Commission; the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators (PIANZEA) Network; and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). The Secretariat brought together 23 officials from 11² regional Election Management Bodies (EMBs) in New Zealand, and the Caribbean and Americas training brought together 21 electoral administrators from nine Election Management Bodies (EMBs)³. A detailed case study and supplementary infographs on 10 years of the Commonwealth Election Professionals (CEP) programme can be found below.

² Australia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea (Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission and Office of the Bougainville Electoral Commission), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

³ Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago

Case study

Commonwealth Election Professionals

Intermediate Outcome 1.2: Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections



EBR - Australia

Over 43 years, the Secretariat has advanced democracy and good governance through its whole-cycle approach to electoral support. The Australian-funded Commonwealth Election Professionals (CEP) initiative has been central to building capacity at the regional level to strengthen electoral practices since 2013.

Over the course of 10 years, the Secretariat has supported 14 training courses across **Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Americas, and the Pacific**, with over 250 electoral administrators from 50 Commonwealth EMBs participating. In post-training evaluations, participants consistently report increased understanding of key international standards for the delivery of credible and inclusive electoral processes, which has enhanced their work-related performance and helped them progress in their careers. Notably this year, a participant of the very first Junior Election Professionals (JEP) programme, held in New Delhi in 2013, attained Chief Election Officer level.

The CEP initiative's impact at the institutional level is no less noteworthy. In the most recent annual survey, over a third of respondents reported that their EMB had enacted change based on their recommendations to enhance the transparency, credibility and inclusiveness of its processes. These have included small but key changes in polling day procedures to better serve persons with disabilities. Other changes are far more fundamental, such as the creation of gender and social inclusion units or electoral reform to enact various methods of absentee voting, for example.

CEP's success and longevity are a result of many factors: the quality and relevance of the **capacity-building** training provided; the expertise of resource persons who contribute to the design and delivery of the training programmes; the willingness of Commonwealth EMBs, often under-resourced, to grant staff the time needed to participate; the commitment and enthusiasm of those staff to engage; and, of course, the steadfast and continued Australian financial support. Central to the programme's theory of change is sustainability, through the promotion of **networks** for the ongoing sharing of knowledge and good practice.

Innovation and an active learning strategy are intrinsic to CEP's enduring relevance. This is informed by robust monitoring and evaluation and a commitment to respond to stakeholder priorities.

At the opening of the most recent workshop, held in **Trinidad and Tobago**, Mark Ramkerrysingh, Chair of Trinidad and Tobago's Elections and Boundaries Commission, emphasised the critical importance of such capacity-building for the efficient functioning of electoral bodies, especially at a time when misinformation has eroded public trust in democracy. He stressed:

*'Greater efficiency and transparency can blunt the impact of such misinformation on the electorate... The issues of **integrity, inclusion, transparency and leadership and efficiency and effectiveness** which are the themes of this training will lead to more rounded election professionals and, therefore, a strengthening of the election management body itself.'*

1.3 Public institutions

In working to **strengthen public institutions and frameworks in member countries to promote the rule of law, access to justice, human rights and good governance**, the Secretariat built consensus by convening the 2022 Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting (CLMM) and Senior Officials in **Mauritius** in November. Thirty-one member countries and four partner organisations met to discuss the importance of international co-operation as a catalyst for advancing the rule of law, addressing food security, protecting human rights and prioritising social and economic challenges to deliver access to justice.

Advancing the CHOGM 2022 communiqué, Law Ministers endorsed the Plan of Action on Equal Access to Justice. The plan's central tenants include the development of a 100-day toolkit for Justice Ministers, model contracts in investment, energy and exactments, and recognising the importance of **women and youth** in the delivery of equal access to justice. Of CLMM Law Ministers and senior officials polled in a survey, 97 per cent were 'satisfied' that the objective of 'advancing the attainment of access to justice for all through promoting practical and implementable tools and initiatives across the Commonwealth' was met.

And 79 per cent reported that their government/agency/organisation was currently considering or implementing action to improve access to justice based on the Secretariat's work in this sector. This feedback provides evidence of the continued relevance and importance of consensus-building through ministerial meetings. Law Ministers and senior officials take away valuable tools, strategies, contacts and information that they can utilise to strengthen justice systems in their jurisdictions. Stronger justice systems support stable nations creating conditions that foster individual and national development.

Hon. Jonathan Attard, Minister of Justice, **Malta**, highlighted how member countries and the Secretariat could collaborate to achieve commitments under the Declaration for Equal Access to Justice:

'Malta developed the Digital Justice Strategy which is one of the means that shall be used to strengthen the use of technology in the courts... this Strategy is combined with the CHOGM Plan of Action on the Law Ministers Declaration on Equal Access to Justice.'

Efforts to sustain equal access to justice across the Commonwealth included the continuation of a **legislative drafting** and exchange programme to support legislative development in the Caribbean that resulted in the completion of a Radiation Safety and Security Bill for **Antigua and Barbuda**. In **Africa**, **Namibia** has sought technical assistance in legislative drafting and in establishing a legislative drafting course at the University of Namibia.



Case study

Supporting Access to Justice in Belize

Intermediate Outcome 1.3:

Public institutions and frameworks in member countries strengthened to promote rule of law, access to justice, human rights and good governance

CFTC

In **Belize**, the Secretariat increased access to justice by contributing to a substantial reduction in the accrued civil court backlog.

The Belize Supreme (High) Court as well as the Court of Appeal could not sit to hear trials for most of 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in significant backlogs in the Belize judicial system. This backlog was affecting the functioning of the judiciary, exacerbated by a lack of relevant digital technologies and systems, and high costs.

The Secretariat, through its CFTC, enabled the Government of Belize to appoint four judges to the High Court. The judges were from Canada and Jamaica and were recruited for a period of one year: January 2022 to January 2023. This deployment doubled the capacity of the civil courts over this period. Results included the establishment of pre-trial case management strategies, dispensation of the oldest pending cases (some had been running over seven years) and the prioritisation of cases involving vulnerable litigants including women and girls.

Mrs Magali-Marin Young SC, then Attorney General of Belize, said:

'From a technical perspective the Commonwealth would be the go-to persons to get recommendations because... what has worked in one country we could either emulate or tailor to our own unique situation. So for the future, the Commonwealth is still critical to providing technical assistance to small developing states like Belize.'

The Secretariat's recent evaluation in Belize specifically emphasises the value this initiative has created for a cross-section of stakeholders. In light of this evidence, the CFTC will prioritise this work in 2023/24.





Taking forward the renewed commitment by Heads in the CHOGM 2022 communiqué to the Commonwealth Cyber Declaration, and generously funded by the **UK**, the Secretariat convened 28 law enforcement officials, prosecutors, judges and magistrates from 6⁴ Commonwealth countries across **Asia** in **Singapore** to **build institutional capacity** and exchange views on types, trends and impacts of cybercrime; cyber diplomacy; and mutual legal assistance. Through the workshops, officials shared practical solutions, including on how to secure electronic evidence across territorial borders. Targeted support was also provided to **the Pacific** region in partnership with the Pacific Islands Law Officers Network for over 100 law enforcement officials, prosecutors and judicial officials, with representatives from Interpol, the Council of Europe and the US Federal Bureau of Investigation and also the Australian Ambassador for Cyber Affairs and Critical Technology in attendance. Subsequent support to **the Pacific** region included a three-day conference held in **Papua New Guinea** on 'Addressing Cybercrime and Electronic Evidence in the Pacific.' Delegates included chief justices, attorneys general, judges and senior magistrates from seven Pacific countries⁵. Funding ended in March 2023; however, a new grant has been signed to resume this critical work into the next financial year.

To promote **human rights**, the Secretariat continues to support member countries through **capacity-building** and technical assistance provided by human rights advisers based in Geneva, generously funded by the **UK** and **Australia**. In the announcement on the continuation of funding for the human rights advisers, Ambassador Amada Gorely, Australian Permanent Representative to the UN (Geneva) and Australian Ambassador for Disarmament, said:

'Commonwealth Small States bring vital perspectives to international human rights mechanisms, and their engagement with the UN Human Rights Council and Treaty bodies is a cornerstone of this engagement. The Commonwealth Small States' Office (CSSO) provides a critical link between governments and the multilateral human rights architecture in Geneva.'

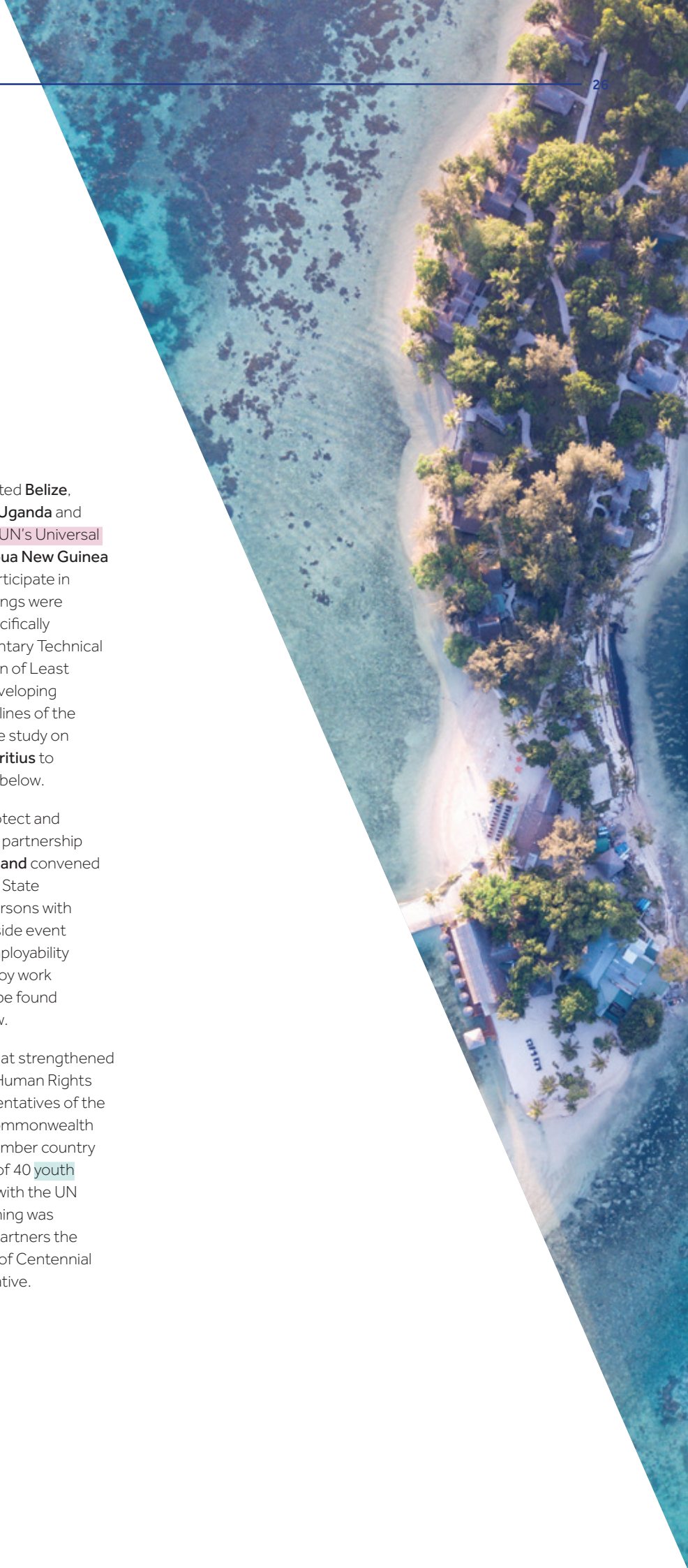
⁴ Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Maldives, Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka

⁵ Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga.

In this period, human rights advisers have supported **Belize, Malawi, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Uganda** and **Vanuatu** to implement recommendations of the **UN's Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**. In addition, **Barbados, Papua New Guinea** and **Solomon Islands** have been supported to participate in the UPR and UN Treaties Bodies. Dedicated briefings were provided for 12 Commonwealth **small states**, specifically beneficiaries of the Human Rights Council's Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to support the participation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in March and June 2023 on the sidelines of the United Nations Human Rights Convention. A case study on support to law enforcement professionals in **Mauritius** to implement UPR recommendations can be found below.

The Secretariat continues to advance work to protect and improve the right of persons with disability, and in partnership with the Ministry for Disabled People of **New Zealand** convened a side event on the margins of the Conference of State Parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in New York City in June. The side event examined practical ways of strengthening the employability of persons with disabilities to ensure they can enjoy work on an equal basis. Progress on this mandate can be found in the case study on gender mainstreaming below.

Advancing Year of **Youth** objectives, the Secretariat strengthened its engagement with the Commonwealth Youth Human Rights and Democracy Network (CYHRDN), with representatives of the CYHRDN Executive Committee attending the Commonwealth Youth Leaders' Summit in London. Dedicated member country support in this period included **capacity-building** of 40 **youth** in **Sri Lanka** on human rights and how to engage with the UN human rights system. Lead by CYHRDN, this training was delivered in collaboration with local and national partners the Global Shapers Colombo Hub, the Rotaract Club of Centennial United and the Democracy and Governance Initiative.



Case study

Raising Awareness of Human Rights in Mauritian Policing

Intermediate Outcome 1.3:
Public institutions and frameworks in member countries strengthened to promote rule of law, access to justice, human rights and good governance



The Secretariat supports Commonwealth countries' efforts to promote, protect and respect internationally recognised human rights principles, standards and practices. In this period, the Geneva-based CSSO supported small states' engagement with various international human rights mechanisms, including the UPR, and to implement the recommendations of the review process. In November 2022, the Secretariat supported Mauritius' implementation of UPR recommendations by delivering an intensive five-day training to raise the awareness of over 500 police officers on methods of investigation and the role of human rights in policing. This involved work with the Government of Mauritius to train local law enforcement and help enhance their relationships with the diverse communities of the country through the teaching of applied human rights principles in policing.

The overarching goal of the training was to better equip senior officers responsible for training and police cadets with an improved understanding of what constitutes torture, the role of human rights in policing, and effective interviewing and information-gathering techniques. Additionally, meetings and consultations with government ministries, senior police, prison officials and public institutions were held to improve ongoing country programming and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders.

The training comprised presentations, interactive discussion and group exercises. Discussion questions and exercises were designed so that participants could draw on their experiences when engaging. During the training, participants identified specific outcomes that would facilitate the discharge of their duties and strengthen the law enforcement environment.

Speaking on Day 1 of the workshop, M. Rassen, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mauritius Police Force, said:

'I am sure that this (training) will be an opportunity for them to take stock of the latest developments in the field of torture prevention and will also raise the level of awareness on challenges faced by police officers in their relentless quest to ensure a balance between the requirements of maintaining public security and order, as well as the respect for and preservation of human rights.'

While law enforcement officers had varying degrees of knowledge and skills on human rights prior to the start of the workshop, those who attended stated that their knowledge and skills had improved (or significantly improved) by the end of the workshop. They also stated that would be interested in participating in further workshops of this nature and that this sort of training should be ongoing.

The Secretariat will continue to support the Mauritius Police Force, including with a review of their training programmes and materials and any future capacity-building needs.



The Secretariat continues to support work to **combat corruption and promote leadership of public administration** bodies across the Commonwealth through **institutional capacity-building** at both the regional and the national level. Tailored capacity programmes were provided to anti-corruption officials from **Botswana, eSwatini, Lesotho, Mauritius, Rwanda and Zambia**. Commending the work of the Secretariat at a parliamentary retreat in eSwatini in a letter of appreciation on behalf of the King of eSwatini, the importance of the Secretariat's work in this area was emphasised as providing a:

'... positive momentum for both the House of Assembly and Senate to commence its sittings. Furthermore, the Honourable Prime Minister, for the first time since his appointment, took advantage of the retreat to dialogue with Parliamentarians on improving public service delivery.'

In **Mauritius**, Heads of 16 Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) from across **Africa** met to promote effective leadership and effective management of ACAs. In his opening address, Navin Beekarry, Director-General of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Mauritius, stressed the importance of the event in *'providing an opportunity and platform to build synergies among ACAs to strengthen the fight against corruption.'* The ninth regional conference for **the Caribbean and Americas** was held in **Guyana** in April under the theme 'Resetting the Anti-Corruption Agenda: Assessing Achievements and Challenges in the Commonwealth Caribbean,' with Heads of 10 ACAs⁶ in attendance.

Progress on the **legislative development pathway** saw the final review of the Revised Enterprise Risk Management Policy for the Government of **Botswana**. The Secretariat provided training for key ministries, departments and agencies of government.

This is the final stage of the review process. The Policy was finalised in March and submitted to Cabinet by the Ministry of Finance for approval. In recognition of the support provided by the Secretariat in this area, Olesitse Masimega, Permanent Secretary of Botswana, expressed *'sincere gratitude for [the] unwavering support and confidence... in leading in implementation of ERM [enterprise risk management] in Southern Africa.'*

This period also saw technical assistance to the Governments of **Lesotho and Namibia** with the development of an Enterprise Risk Management Policy and Framework for Lesotho and an Internal Audit Manual, Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme Manual and Audit Committees Handbook for Namibia finalised in March. This was complemented by comprehensive capacity-building, including of 40 public sector officials from 5 Ministries in Lesotho on Enterprise Risk Management, 70 officials from Namibian regional councils on sensitisation of the manuals and handbooks and a further 40 officials in Namibia from 7 ministries on internal audit and risk management. Leadership development programmes we also conducted in this period for **Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, and Saint Kitts and Nevis**.

The Secretariat provided **legislative** drafting support to **Lesotho's** National Reforms Authority to enhance its capacity to deliver its mandate of enforcing the recommendations from the *Multi Stakeholder National Dialogue Plenary II Report* to promote, among other things, peace, reconciliation, unity and political stability in Lesotho. The recommendations aimed to enhance the independence and oversight function of the Executive and the Judiciary. Significant constitutional amendments included the establishment of a Human Rights Commission, a Public Protector and an Independent Electoral Commission. Work in this area is funded solely by CFTC.

⁶ Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos

Sustainable Development



Sustainable Development

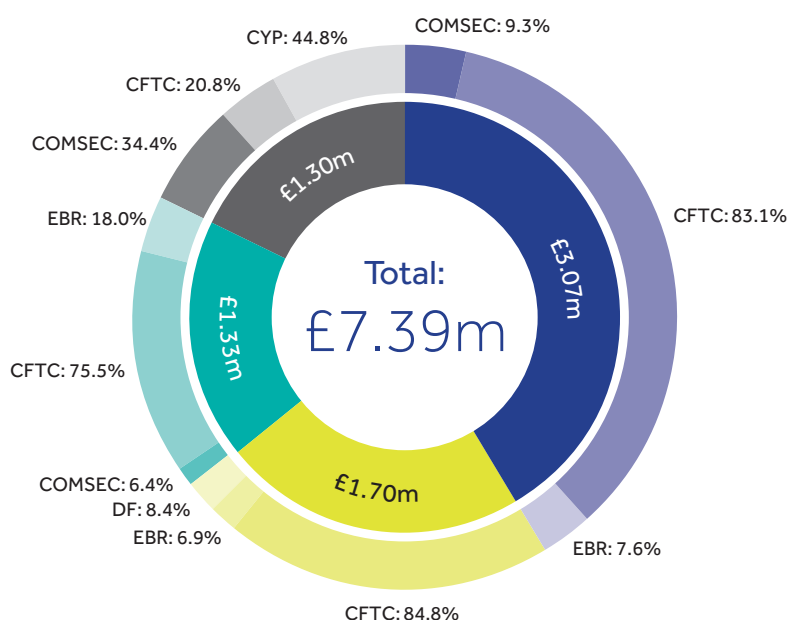
4 programmes, aligned to

4 Intermediate Outcomes:

- **'Trade'**
2.1 Effective trade policy, increased competitiveness and co-operation
- **'Debt Management'**
2.2 Sustainable public finance and debt management
- **'Ocean Governance and Natural Resource Management'**
2.3 Sustainable, equitable, transparent and effective management, governance and use of the ocean, energy and natural resources
- **'Social Policy Development'**
2.4 Inclusive and resilient education and health systems

Notable achievements

- Convened Sports, Health, Trade and Education Ministers
- Gave trade support to LDCs and small states, especially Maldives, on fisheries
- Produced and disseminated knowledge on sustainable production and trade best practices in the Commonwealth
- Supported micro, small and medium enterprises in Cameroon, Mauritius and Tanzania, targeting youth and women
- Supported debt management legislation and implementation in The Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago
- Facilitated adoption of the Petroleum Policy in Malawi and the Environmental Regulations in the Cook Islands
- Strengthened the capacity of 185 government officials on effective management of natural resources
- Assisted with developing draft ocean policies for Anguilla and Montserrat
- Assisted with drafting a maritime transport policy for Antigua and Barbuda
- Contributed to progress in Seychelles in negotiations on maritime boundary delimitation
- Adoption of Commonwealth Meridian in 16 countries for improved debt transparency



- 2.1 Effective trade policy, increased competitiveness and co-operation
- 2.2 Sustainable public finance and debt management
- 2.3 Sustainable management and use of the ocean, energy & natural resources
- 2.4 Inclusive and resilient education and health systems

Figure 2.1: Expenditure in Sustainable Development impact pathway (EGBP) by fund, 2022/23

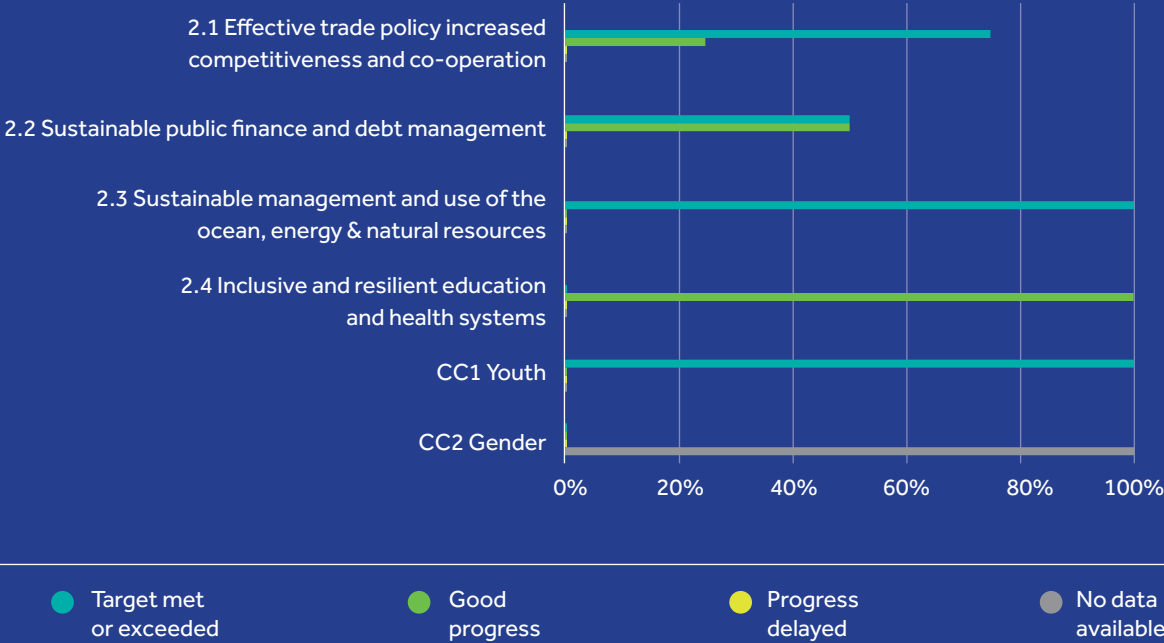


Figure 2.2: Delivery status of intermediate & cross-cutting (CC) outcomes in Sustainable Development, June 2023



2.1 Trade

To enable **effective trade policy, increased trade competitiveness and co-operation on the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment**, the Secretariat continues to support **small and other vulnerable states and LDCs** to advance their positions in international and multilateral trade fora. We undertook evidence-based analysis to support LDCs with their preparations for and participation at the Fifth UN Conference on the LDCs in March 2023 in Qatar. Furthermore, the Secretariat and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), under our MOU, implemented a project to assess the intellectual property rights implications for graduating LDCs, including by convening an expert group meeting in Geneva.

The trade advisers at the CSSO in Geneva, supported in part by the UK, continued to provide technical and advisory support to small state members in Geneva and capitals to enable them to engage more effectively in negotiations on existing, new and emerging trade issues at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to facilitate their fuller integration and participation in the multilateral trading system. In this reporting period, the trade advisers delivered over 30 briefing papers and analytic reports and 12 capacity-building events. The Secretariat held discussions with **The Bahamas** to support its WTO accession process.

The Secretariat supported knowledge creation and capacity on trade policy through 14 publications, including a major report on sustainable production and trade in the Commonwealth launched at the Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting. Two blogs were produced for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Centre. Supporting sustainable fisheries is a key priority; a detailed case study on support to **Maldives** on fisheries can be found below. Leveraging its global advocacy and convening power, the Secretariat organised various events to raise awareness on the trade and development challenges facing members, especially small states and LDCs, including on Aid for Digital Trade, enabling climate-smart trade and investment, and promoting the sustainable energy transition. The Secretariat and the **UK** Department for Business and Trade partnered to organise an event at Marlborough House to assess the business and trade dimensions of the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Case study

Expanding Market Access for Maldives' Sustainable Fisheries

Intermediate Outcome 2.1:
Effective trade policy, increased competitiveness and co-operation

CFTC

The Commonwealth Trade Programme assists small and vulnerable Commonwealth countries to develop trade policies, negotiate and implement trade agreements, and improve their trade competitiveness by focusing on developing their export capabilities. **Maldives** boasts the world's most sustainable tuna fisheries sector, which uses pole and line harvesting rather than other methods such as purse seining and long lining that can be damaging to marine habitats. Despite this commitment to sustainable fishing practices, Maldivian fish exports have faced high most-favoured nation tariffs in the EU and the UK because the country does not have any preferential trade agreement with these key trading partners. Unlike countries with duty-free access, these tariffs make it challenging for Maldives' sustainable tuna products to compete in these lucrative markets and hampers the competitive edge of Maldivian exporters.

The Secretariat has supported Maldives with its intra-Commonwealth trade in sustainable fisheries and to raise awareness about this sustainable fishing practice at the global level. The Secretariat has prepared technical papers and organised virtual meetings to advise senior officials in Malé about the different preferential market access options and strategies for Maldives to pursue. The guidance was that a 'light' free trade agreement (FTA) covering goods only would be the most viable option, ensuring compatibility with WTO rules and offering benefits to both parties. On 8 June 2023, the UK Government announced a preparatory process to negotiate a goods-only FTA with Maldives. According to the President's Office:

'The trade deal is expected to enhance bilateral trade between the Maldives and the United Kingdom, opening new avenues of economic growth and prosperity.'

The Maldives High Commission has acknowledged the Secretariat's constructive support for the potential FTA between the UK and Maldives.

Besides this technical support to expand market access, the Secretariat has helped showcase the sustainability of the Maldivian fishing sector by preparing a case study for the UN Office for South–South Cooperation, for knowledge dissemination in the annual report of the South–South Network for Public Service Innovation. The Secretariat also sponsored the Deputy Director General in the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture to present this case study at the Global South–South Development Expo in Bangkok, Thailand, in September 2022.

Maldives, together with Kiribati, co-champions the Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Group on Sustainable Coastal Fisheries. The Secretariat collaborated with the High Commissions of Kiribati and the Maldives to organise a breakfast event to promote and share best practice on sustainable sourcing and trade in fish products at 2023 Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting in Marlborough House, London.

To advance **trade competitiveness**, the Secretariat has continued to support **Pakistan** with two **capacity-building** workshops, including a 'learning by doing' workshop for 30 officials from the Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development (PITAD) and Ministry of Commerce in November. The training was a result of the identification of knowledge and capacity gaps within PITAD. It engaged officials in a guided practical simulation exercise on partial equilibrium trade **policy** analysis to estimate a tariff liberalisation trade effect on trade creation, diversion and welfare effects. The simulation exercise also involved an analysis of the trade potential of Pakistan. In June, further training was provided on trade negotiations and diplomacy in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce to 20 officers, including 10 **women**, aimed at enhancing the negotiating skills of Pakistan's trade officials and strengthening their participation in international trade discussions. The Secretariat was commended for its efforts by the Ministry of Commerce in Pakistan for providing:

For the past five years, the Secretariat has supported **Belize's** export diversification efforts. In this period, this took the form of **capacity-building** for agribusinesses, particularly for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to develop their products and target regional and global markets, particularly the UK and the EU. A field mission was conducted to assess 16 companies' operations, including quality standards, packaging and labelling. Following the assessment, the Secretariat provided online training on product pitching and marketing; export diagnosis; competing product pricing; and potential importers. The Secretariat has also developed an *Export Guide for Agricultural Producers* on key market entrance strategies and activities, also listing importers and retail stores. One of the early results of this initiative is positive deliberations between Del Socorro (Belize) and HQ Organics (Europe).

Other support to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) included a sensitisation workshop in **Tanzania** in November, held in partnership with the Federation of East African Freight Forwarders Association on the benefits in taking up the East African Community Authorised Economic Operator Scheme.

'... an ideal setting for immersive learning and knowledge exchange. By equipping the participants with the necessary skills and knowledge, Pakistan's trade engagement will be strengthened and positive outcomes will be achieved in international trade negotiations.'



Case study

Empowering Women and Young People in E-commerce

Intermediate Outcome 2.1:
Effective trade policy, increased competitiveness and co-operation



E-commerce is a key focus for many member countries as a lack of payment infrastructure and digital literacy exacerbate market barriers facing developing countries.

The Secretariat supported **Cameroon** in shaping its first-ever national e-commerce strategy and an implementation plan that aligned with Cameroon's national development priorities. The Secretariat recognised that empowering youth and women MSMEs through training could spark immediate and tangible changes to take forward this strategy.

Recognising the impact of working with MSMEs, the Secretariat, in partnership with the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), created a tailored training programme for 100 **women** MSMEs in Cameroon that addressed key topics such as consumer protection, e-payment systems, financial management, product branding and packaging. Speaking at the workshop, Nasser Al-Thekair, General Manager of Trade and Business Development at ITFC, said:

'E-commerce is widely acknowledged as a significant instrument for innovation, competitiveness, job creation and growth. This boot camp will provide women entrepreneurs in Cameroon with a chance to broaden their horizons and enhance their involvement in the global e-commerce trade.'

Following the training programme, a local female entrepreneur reported that she could promote her business via different e-commerce platforms. Her small business expanded online when she created her own myNetShop platform. With the increase in sales, her business moved to a bigger premises and even recruited a full-time staff member. Another entrepreneur, leading an organisation to ensure patients are offered quality medication and health facilities, said the workshop would help her better market her products and medical advice and learn how to engage more partners to reach more citizens.

Following the success of this capacity-building approach, ITFC has provided further resourcing to support a selected 40 MSMEs through a grant model.

**EBR - International Islamic
Trade Finance Corporation**

Further support to the African region included a scoping mission to support SMEs in **Mauritius** and capacity-building on product quality and packaging improvement training for 54 MSMEs, targeted at **young people** and **women**. Funding for work in this critical area is provided through the CFTC.

Leveraging its **consensus-building** powers to advance intra-Commonwealth trade and build off initiatives agreed by Heads at CHOGM 2022 in Rwanda, in June the Secretariat hosted the Second Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting at Marlborough House, **UK**. This was the first time they had met in four years. The aim was to foster co-operation to 'Deliver a Common Future: Co-operation for Resilience, Inclusive, Green and Digital Economies.' Ministers reflected on the opportunities for co-operation and provided guidance on the way forward, in advance of the 2024 CHOGM in **Samoa**. Outcomes included support to reconvene the Working Group on Trade and Investment and support for a joint statement to be delivered at the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference. Twenty-two Ministers were joined by Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the WTO, and Pedro Manuel Moreno, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD. The Commonwealth Caucus of WTO Ambassadors also met for the fourth time in Geneva, convened by **New Zealand**.

Advancing **co-operation on the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment** saw 46 member countries, including newly joined **Togo**, participating actively in the cluster meetings via peer-to-peer learning, capacity-building and knowledge exchange. To strengthen South–South linkages across the Commonwealth **small states**, a peer-to-peer learning exchange took place in **Mauritius** in October 2022 in **partnership** with the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, to connect aquaculture business owners from **Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga** and **Vanuatu** with senior officials of leading aquaculture and trading businesses in Mauritius. The exchange led to new business links and the sharing of learnings and experiences

on sectoral developments. Technical assistance in this period was provided to Mauritius, Samoa and Tonga, to improve and implement key **policies** in digital trade. Work to fund the CHOGM-mandated Connectivity Agenda is primarily through the CFTC.

2.2 Debt management

In pursuing **sustainable public finance and debt management**, the Secretariat continues to strengthen **institutional capacity** in member countries to build debt sustainability, implement Commonwealth Meridian and improve debt data quality. At the end of the reporting period, 14 countries were demonstrating improved debt data quality, with further results pending. Within the reporting period, 60 participants from 13 member countries benefited from regional **capacity-building** taking place in Liberia and **Mozambique**. Targeting **capacity-building** in the reporting period included support to the Central Bank of **Solomon Islands**, which has been utilising Commonwealth debt management software for 20 years. Member countries continue to express satisfaction and appreciation with Commonwealth Meridian and the Secretariat's support, with 90 per cent of respondents in a recent survey reporting that they were extremely satisfied or satisfied with using Commonwealth Meridian and 100 per cent noting extreme satisfaction or satisfaction with the support received through the help desk and with the migration process. Andreas Dlamini, a public economist at the Central Bank of **eSwatini**, recently described Meridian as:

'... improving reporting for the Central Bank by allowing for recording a wider variety of instruments, such as overdrafts. The real-time dashboard widgets that the system provides... have been offering instant reports and analyses for both business and management purposes.'



The eLearning portal remains a key tool for improving debt management capacity in member countries. A total of 210 debt managers from across 26 member countries completed training on the six courses available on the portal. Furthermore, the Secretariat partnered with the Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute of Eastern and Southern Africa and the West African Institute for Financial and Economic Management to deliver regional Commonwealth debt management training for the African region, where over 40 debt managers were trained.

The Secretariat continues to provide **policy and legislative support** to **Trinidad and Tobago** on the development of a Public Debt Management Act. This was advanced by the finalisation of a Guidance Note. Multi-year support to **Fiji** resulted in the launch of a new Central Securities Depository. Ariff Ali, Governor of Fiji's Reserve Bank, described the digitalisation of the country's physical certificates as a result of recommendations by the Secretariat in 2016 and 2018 as a *'significant achievement for Fiji'*, enabling it to meet obligations to the London Stock Exchange by 2024.

Through the generous support of India via the India–UN Partnership Development Fund and in partnership with the UNDP Multi Country Office in **Jamaica**, the Secretariat is continuing its support to **The Bahamas** to implement a medium-term debt management strategy. Outputs delivered in this reporting period included the finalisation and adoption of draft bylaws for The Bahama's Government Securities Depository by the Central Bank. The second strategy draft has been finalised for approval by the Cabinet and further training on implementation has been provided. The newly established Debt Management Office, which will manage day-to-day operations related to the country's debt management, operations, analysis, reporting, borrowing arrangements and investor relations, is expected to become operational in 2023. These milestones are contributing to The Bahama's target of reducing its debt-to-gross domestic product ratio to 65 per cent by 2026/27, with a decrease from 91 per cent in 2022 to 87 per cent in 2027. Simon Wilson, the country's Financial Secretary, stated that, without the project, The Bahamas would face higher costs of debt and more aggressive repayment schedules, leading to higher taxes – all of which increase the risk of economic and fiscal instability and potential for default.



Case study

Strengthening Debt Management Capacity in Lesotho

Intermediate Outcome 2.2: Sustainable public finance and debt management

CFTC

Debt management is a common and persistent challenge, particularly for small and vulnerable states. The Secretariat's critical work in this area reflects its ongoing commitment to support these states. The Secretariat has been working to strengthen institutional capacity and management information systems to support prudent and effective debt management and reduce long-term debt servicing cost.

In 2020, Lesotho became one of 35 member countries (and one state in India) now in the process of implementing the new Commonwealth Meridian system, with enhanced features and functionalities. The Public Debt and Aid Management Department in the Ministry of Finance is the key stakeholder of the country's Debt Strategy and Borrowing Plan and responsible for debt management.

Thanks in large part to the Commonwealth Secretariat's Debt Management programme, the Lesotho Public Debt and Aid Management Department is now managing the country's debts more efficiently.

According to the Director of the Department:

'The Department can now, by just pressing a button, how much my country owns globally and domestically. We can see debts by ministries and by economic sectors. In the past we had to manually fill in forms, rows by rows, sign and calculate. Now the new debt management system just does that for us automatically and accurately.'

The Secretariat's May 2023 country evaluation of Lesotho evidenced key progress in strengthening national debt management capacities. Over the past year, 5 out of 15 staff have been trained to support data migration and transition from the old debt management system, CS DRMS (the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System), to the new Commonwealth Meridian system. Helping smooth the transition has been the Secretariat's provision of a cloud-based data repository. Overall, skills on data management and analysis needed for Meridian have been strengthened for 15 technical staff.

According to the Public Debt and Aid Management Department, Meridian enables easy analysis of data and debt forecasting and at the same time grants greater control and visibility over the data recorded in the system. For example, Meridian allows the department to set the interest rate on the business day that a borrowing deal is sealed. As a result, the Ministry can better manage its debt portfolio and avoid any discrepancy between forecast and actual interest rates. Meridian also provides the ability to produce comprehensive reports in real time vs monthly and records requests to pay debts, which allows tracking of when debt payments are required. The system has improved reporting on debt transparency under the World Bank's Debt Transparency Framework, which the Division Director has stated will ultimately increase the country's credibility with international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Commonwealth Meridian is currently being used by 28 countries. An additional 14 countries have asked the Secretariat to help them migrate their debt records to the new system. For Lesotho, the Secretariat will continue to give support to institutionalise Meridian in the coming year. The Audit team and the Central Bank in Lesotho are going to be added into the system, so that internal controls and the payment of the debts are part of the debt management system.

2.3 Natural resource management

Promoting **sustainable, equitable, transparent and effective management and use of natural resources**, the Secretariat is supporting 14 member countries, primarily **small and other vulnerable states**.⁷ In this reporting period, **policy and legislative support** was provided to six countries on petroleum sector reforms (**Belize, Barbados, Guyana, Malawi, Namibia and Vanuatu**) and to three countries on national mining reforms (**The Bahamas, Cook Islands, eSwatini and Kiribati**). Over 100 advisory reports, technical notes, draft revised policies, laws, regulations, model contracts and working sessions were delivered to advance sector reforms for stronger transparency, economic terms, and **social and environmental protections**. **Malawi's** National Petroleum Policy was passed in January 2023 and **Cook Islands'** Environment (Seabed Minerals Activities) Regulations was passed in June 2023. This reporting period also saw **capacity-building** provided to over 185 government officials through tailored training under technical assistance projects, knowledge networks (**Belize, Guyana, Ghana, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania and Uganda** via the New Producers Group) and deep-sea mining mentorship (**Cook Islands, Fiji, Ghana, South Africa and Tonga**).

To support petroleum-producing countries navigating the challenges of the energy transition and developing robust regulatory regimes to support climate mitigation efforts, the Secretariat published two innovative toolkits, *Field Development Plans: A Handbook for Government Officials* and the *Oil and Gas Decommissioning Toolkit*. Both include an overview of key challenges and recommendations to address, a checklist to assess areas of exposure, model legal provisions and other practical tools. The Field Development Plans Handbook is the first of its kind to incorporate requirements for managing greenhouse gas emissions, including methane, and Net Zero Projects; several countries are in the process of adoption. A feature story on 55+ years of Secretariat support to member countries on the sustainable management of natural resources can be found below.

⁷ Small states: The Bahamas, Belize, Cook Islands, Guyana, Kiribati, Namibia, Tonga, Vanuatu LDCs: Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda



Case study

Supporting Sustainable Petroleum Production in Namibia

Intermediate Outcome 2.3:
Sustainable, equitable, transparent and effective management, governance and use of the ocean, energy and natural resources

CFTC

The Secretariat has a rich history of providing independent, impartial advice and practical support to member countries in the sustainable development of natural resources. For over 55 years, it has supported 70 per cent of members in the mineral and petroleum sectors. These sectors are widely recognised as extremely challenging: many countries fail to maximise the benefits, including government revenues, economic growth and foreign exchange earnings; instead, poor economic and social development outcomes, high levels of corruption, conflict and environmental degradation arise.

Central to sustainable petroleum production and equitable energy transition is the development of robust field development plans (FDPs), which outline how a company intends to develop a petroleum field and manage the impact on the environment and society, as well as forecasts for production and costs. These plans represent significant foreign investment in a country – often billions of dollars. To support countries' efforts to develop robust, environmentally and socially sustainable plans and contribute to net zero efforts, the Secretariat has taken a multi-faceted approach, including capacity-building and policy and legislative advice.

The innovative Field Development Plan Handbook, launched by the Secretariat in 2022, provides a government regulatory framework to combat methane emissions, advance equitable energy transition and ensure financial environmental protection. The huge oil discovery, of several billion barrels, in Namibia will have a transformational impact on the Namibian economy, people and environment. In November 2022, the Secretariat held a workshop for Namibian officials from the Ministry of Mines and Energy to review Namibia's legal framework for FDPs, to develop zero draft national FDP guidelines using the FDP handbook model template and to facilitate discussion on how to develop an intra-government process. Other capacity-building initiatives in this period covered economic modelling, government negotiations, decarbonisation of the petroleum sector, minimising emissions, energy transition and understanding the resource curse.

As part of the multi-faceted approach, the Secretariat has also provided policy and legislative support to Namibia for the development of a Local Content Policy; recommendations to strengthen the fiscal, legal and environmental regulatory frameworks; and help in drafting amendments to the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act, the Petroleum Taxation Act, the Petroleum (Upstream) Regulations, the Model Petroleum Agreement and the National Field Development Plan Submission Guidelines.

Contingent on sufficient CFTC funding, the Secretariat will continue to support member countries to implement the FDP handbook, which is currently being used in Ghana, Namibia and Uganda and in non-Commonwealth countries such as Suriname.

Focus on

Six Decades of Sustainable Development of Natural Resources Management

The Commonwealth Secretariat has a rich history of providing independent, impartial advice and practical support to member states across the energy, mining and petroleum sectors. The Secretariat established demand-driven in-house consultancy services in the mid-1960s, and it has remained a cornerstone of support requested by member countries under the CFTC.

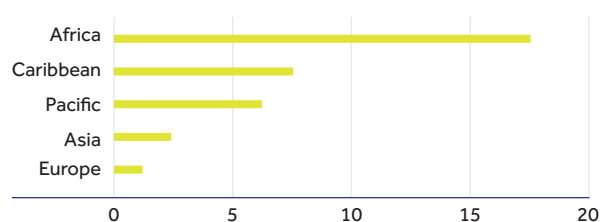
Relevance for the Commonwealth

There are now 25 resource-rich countries (RRCs) in the Commonwealth, in which the mining and/or petroleum sectors are significant contributors to the economy – a number that is set to increase given rising demand for minerals for renewable energy technologies and the development of oil and gas discoveries in many countries.

All 21 Commonwealth countries in Africa are actively engaged in these sectors, and more than 60 per cent are resource-dependent; the same is true of almost 30 per cent of Commonwealth small states, and half of LDCs. The effective management of natural resources is essential to Commonwealth countries that want to secure prosperity, and a just and equitable energy transition, for their citizens.

The Commonwealth advantage

For over half a century the Secretariat's strong technical expertise has supported member states to effectively manage natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations, through technical assistance projects, convening and advocacy efforts, and partnerships. This has included the formulation of policies and strategies, development of robust fiscal, legal and regulatory frameworks, legal drafting of laws, regulations and model contracts, negotiation support, revenue management, capacity building, and the development of knowledge products and international frameworks.



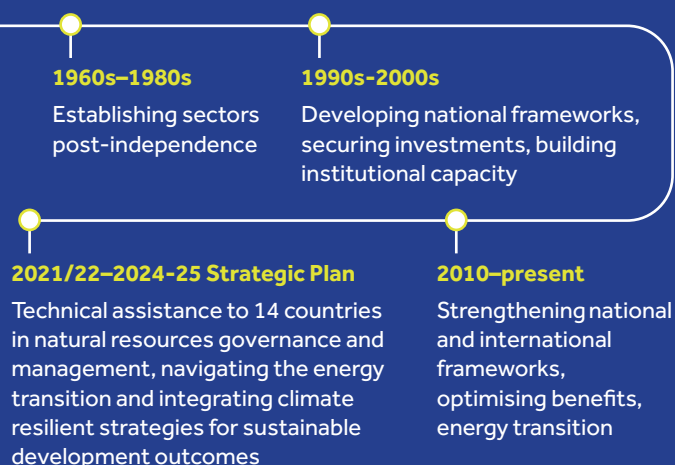
95% of small states and LDCs supported:

23 small states **11** LDCs

Impact of our Natural Resources Programme

- 21 countries establish national policy, laws and taxation systems for mining sector
- 20 countries establish national policy, laws and taxation systems for the petroleum sector
- 9 countries in investment promotion and licensing rounds
- 20 countries negotiating with international oil and mining companies
- dozens of resource assessments and feasibility studies
- enhanced capacity of hundreds, if not thousands, of government officials.

Natural Resources Programme: A timeline



Looking forward

The multi-dimensional linkages of natural resources to the economy, society, energy transition, climate and the environment increases the complexity and challenges for climate-resilient, inclusive sustainable development. The Commonwealth Natural Resources Programme helps countries to navigate these challenges, optimise socioeconomic benefits and effectively manage risks and opportunities.

By strengthening good governance, the programme supports:

- fiscal and debt stability (addressing, for example, the maximisation of government revenues, sovereign wealth funds, stranded assets)
- the protection and participation of citizens (transparency, social impact assessments, consultations)
- the protection of environment and ecosystems (decarbonisation, pollution, decommissioning, methane, environmental impact assessments)
- strengthening government capacity (economic modelling, negotiations, carbon competencies).

Case study

Supporting Energy Sector Reform In Barbados

Intermediate Outcome 2.3:
Sustainable, equitable, transparent and effective management, governance and use of the ocean, energy and natural resources



EBR - India-UN Development Partnership Fund

In response to a request from the Government of Barbados, the Secretariat has supported reforms in the energy sector, including establishing a modern Energy Local Content Policy and legislation. To complement these reforms, with generous funding from UNOPS and in partnership with the Ministry of Energy and Business, the Secretariat has provided capacity-building and networking opportunities for local businesses to improve their competitiveness and market access to business opportunities in the energy industry supply chain. Through these initiatives, the Secretariat is supporting Barbados' commitment to being a 100 per cent renewable energy island by 2030 with interest in its potential oil and gas sector.

In 2022-23 the Secretariat provided in-person technical assistance support, including consultations with energy industry stakeholders in Barbados, in the form of the Energy Local Content Policy and local content legislative reforms and **capacity-building**. This included a Share Fair workshop to facilitate business development between local suppliers and energy companies, contractors and project owners.

Following one of the workshops, Sandra Husband, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, stated:

'Energy stakeholders in Barbados are actively engaged and co-ordinated in exploring how to co-operate and collaborate with the government, to ensure that the emerging industry opportunities yield new economic gains and decent incomes for Barbadians.'

Speaking at the Share Fair, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Energy Debra Dowridge said:

'As our country continues on its transition to being a 100 per cent renewable energy island by 2030, the local content policy will be vital in ensuring that we build the capability and capacity of our people and businesses to allow them to compete with other bidders from the international arena, when the opportunities arise.'

Looking to the medium-to-long-term following these successful missions to Barbados, the Commonwealth Secretariat is planning on providing specialised **capacity-building** training and further technical assistance and support alongside plans for **policy and legislative development** of a legal framework for the establishment of a fund for supporting local suppliers.

2.4 Social policy development programme

On inclusive and resilient health systems, this reporting period saw **policy and legislative development** to support **youth, gender and social inclusion**, with progress towards the finalisation of the *Model Legislative Provisions on Preventing the Abuse of Positions of Trust*. The model law was presented to Sports Ministers at the 10th Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting and was tabled for Commonwealth Law Ministers at CLMM.

Technical assistance was provided to **Saint Kitts and Nevis** to support the implementation of its National Sports **Policy**, including the development of a Saint Kitts and Nevis Road Map and Theory of Change. Central to the policy is the aim of reducing non-communicable diseases NCDs, which account for 80 per cent of mortality in the country. To ensure sustainability and a cross-sectoral approach, the road map assigns responsibilities for each policy priority across government ministries and provides a model for other member countries in the region. Speaking of the importance of the policy and the Secretariat's role in its development, H.E. Dame Marcella Althea Liburd, Governor-General of Saint Kitts and Nevis, said:

'It is very positive indeed to see such a range of stakeholders from throughout both Islands of Saint Kitts and Nevis brought together by the National Sports Council, at the behest of our government, and with the support of the Commonwealth Secretariat, to drive forward the implementation of the National Sports Policy, which has long-reaching implications for health, well-being, fitness, and achievement of the citizenry of our nation.'

Information on the impact of the Secretariat's support to develop and implement a sports policy in Mauritius can be found below.



Case study

Sports for All in Mauritius

Intermediate Outcome 2.4:
Inclusive and resilient health
and education systems

CYP

Sport is among the Commonwealth's highest-profile shared traditions and most valuable assets. Yet employing sport for health and as a catalyst for social and economic development is underutilised in many Commonwealth countries.

The Government of **Mauritius** acknowledged the prevalence and detrimental effects of diabetes on its population if uncontrolled. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) Africa in November 2022:

'The last NCD survey conducted in 2021 shows around 20% of the overall population in Mauritius has diabetes. The prevalence of uncontrolled diabetes is a real concern as it increases the risk of severe health complications such as heart diseases, renal impairment, eyes problems and damaged arteries. Pre-diabetes and obesity are major precursors of diabetes and cardiovascular disease and therefore, promoting a healthy lifestyle at an early age will help to reverse the situation.'

Mauritius was one of the first countries to express interest to the Secretariat in 2014 when the Sports for Development and Peace initiative was introduced. With Secretariat support, in 2017 the Government of Mauritius launched its first ever Sports for All **Policy**. This has been the driving force for transformation in the fight against diabetes. In 2018, national statistics showed that only 13 per cent of the population were physically active as per WHO standards. A target of 35 per cent by 2030 was set.

With Secretariat support, Active Mauritius was launched in 2018 with a 12-hour run for fun and health every Sundays. Free-for-all age-specific programmes included Move It for 5–11 year olds, Youth on the Move for 12–14 year olds, Aging World for 24–65 year olds and Elderly Fitness for over 66 year olds. At the time of review in November 2022, there were over 1,000 participants (including active participation of the Prime Minister), and Mauritius was on course to achieving the 35 per cent target early – so the target year was brought forward to 2024. International Diabetes Federation statistics show the trajectory from 2000 to 2045 as increasing but at a reducing rate from 2021.

Before the Sports for All Policy was passed in 2017, the Government allocated an annual budget of \$1.7 million for all sports activities. After the launch of the policy and **advocacy** from the Secretariat, the budget was increased to \$5 million in 2018. With consistent advocacy and technical support from the Secretariat in the budgeting process at the highest level, the budget increased to \$20 million. There are now over 400 sports facilities active, and close to 10,000 sports coaches have been recruited to work with the population. In an example of sports and health integration, the NCD Clinic can now prescribe exercise, and a full-time exercise consultant has been added to the clinic, which already has a dietician and a diabetes specialist.

The Secretariat continues to support member countries to develop and operationalise national sports policies to promote health, social and economic outcomes.

In July, the Secretariat convened the 10th Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting in Birmingham, UK, under the theme 'Creating an Inclusive and Resilient Sport Sector.' Thirty-five Ministers, officials and international partners came together to advance consensus and co-operation on key sports policy and interventions to maximise the contribution of sport towards sustainable development and on ways to respond to human rights, good governance and integrity in sport.

In partnership with the UN Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, the Secretariat launched a policy paper, *The Global Sport and Sustainable Development Impact Report*, at the 17th International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials for Physical Education and Sports, held in Azerbaijan. This landmark research is the first baseline report to collate available global data to build an international picture of how sport is contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Complementing the report is an interactive data dashboard⁸ for each country.

In **The Bahamas**, The Mental Health Bill 2022, replacing the outdated Mental Health Act of 1969, was passed by the Senate in December. The legislation was described as signalling the government's 'zero tolerance policy' to the abuse and mistreatment of persons with mental illnesses and includes the establishment of a mental health service board and a mental health review tribunal. The Secretariat supported the development of the legislation, which Prime Minister Philip Davis described as:

'providing a modern, best practice-aligned framework, one which will usher us into a new era for mental health in The Bahamas' and 'building a better Bahamas for everyone.'

The Secretariat continues to provide legislative drafting support to the **Pacific** Community member countries to draft new NCD-related legislation and amend existing health-related legislation. Key outputs for this reporting period included a gap analysis for liquor and alcoholic beverage acts in **Nauru**, **Solomon Islands** and **Tuvalu** and a draft Tobacco Control Bill and Tobacco Control Regulations for **Tonga**. The Secretariat's work in the areas of sports and health is primarily funded through the CFTC and the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) fund.

The Secretariat's consensus-building on health included the Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting (CHMM) in Geneva in the wings of the World Health Assembly. This was a critical engagement of key stakeholders on health policy globally meeting for the first time since the global pandemic. Noting the rising concern and emphasis being placed on mental health, especially by Commonwealth countries, the Secretariat also arranged a key side event to explore this area. A Senior Officials Meeting was a new addition to the CHMM proceedings and paved the way to securing unanimous support for a CHMM 2023 outcome statement.

The Secretariat continues to promote connectivity, networks and knowledge-sharing to promote resilient health systems across the Commonwealth, and to champion issues such as the elimination of cervical cancer. The Secretariat presented its work on cervical cancer at the World Cancer Congress in Geneva, where the leadership of Commonwealth countries on this issue was highlighted. In partnership with Lancet Oncology, the Secretariat launched the *Cancer in the Commonwealth Lancet Commission*. This aims to assess the current state of cancer control provisions and funding in Commonwealth nations, with a focus on investment and implementation of on-the-ground solutions.

⁸ <https://thecommonwealth.org/global-sport-and-sdg-impact-indicators>



This reporting period, the Secretariat focused work to support **inclusive and resilient** education systems within member countries on building networks and knowledge-sharing. *The Commonwealth Education Leaders Handbook*⁹ was co-published in partnership with the Commonwealth Council for Education, Administration and Management (CCEAM). The Handbook supports the integration of school leadership development into educational professional development processes. It is now accessible to all CCEAM executives and its membership of over 600 education leaders, administrators and managers. The Handbook was soft launched at a side event hosted by the Secretariat in partnership with the Ministry of Education in **Kenya**. Further, in the wings of its Triennale in **Mauritius**, the Secretariat hosted a side event on 'Reflecting on the Impact of COVID-19 on Africa's Educational Systems and How to Build Resilience to Sustain the Development of Skills for the Continent and Beyond.' At the event, Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Mauritius, described the Handbook as follows:

'A practical, immediate response to expressed needs in school leadership development, it aims to support efforts to integrate school leadership development in the professional development of the education work force, including through reflective practice and conversations about professional development and personal growth.'

In May 2023, the Secretariat advanced consensus-building through the hosting of the Commonwealth Education Ministers Action Group (CEMAG). A key outcome was the strengthening of CEMAG's linkages with CHOGM and the establishment of an annual Education Ministers Meeting. Four thematic working groups were launched with the aim of supporting policy, advocacy and research. These action groups will be led by partners including government ministries, in a new and innovative approach for co-delivery being explored by the Secretariat.

⁹ <https://www.thecommonwealth-ilibrary.org/index.php/comsec/catalog/book/963>



Resilience and Climate Action

Resilience and Climate Action

2 programmes, aligned to

2 Intermediate Outcomes:

- **'Sustainable Energy Transition and Blue Charter'**

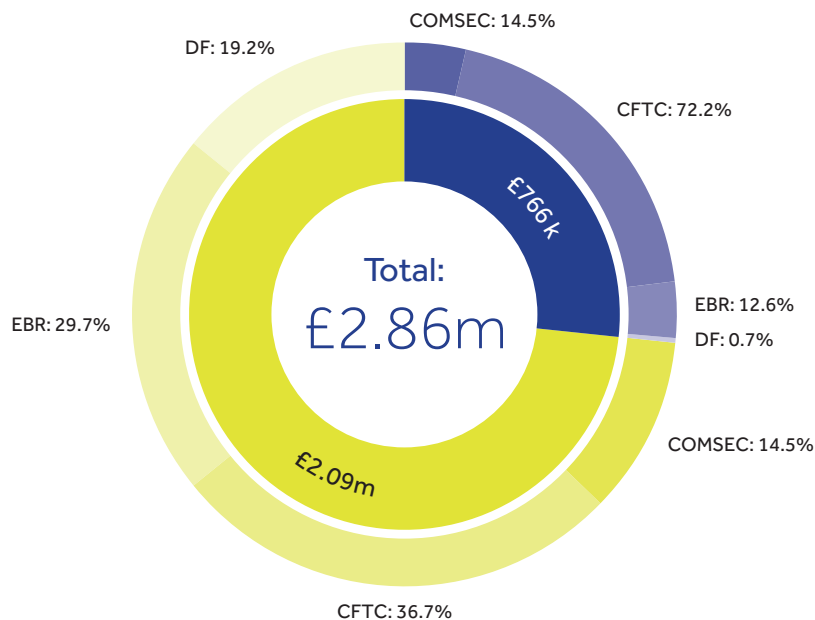
3.1 Enhanced intra-Commonwealth co-operation on sustainable ocean action and energy transition

- **'Climate Change'**

3.2 Enhanced access to financial resources, technology and capacities for climate change adaptation and mitigation

Notable achievements

- Advocacy advanced at COP27 and the UN Biodiversity Conference COP15
- Support for Antigua and Barbuda and Trinidad and Tobago to transition to sustainable 'blue' economies
- First five projects selected for the Commonwealth Blue Charter Incubator funding
- 150 per cent increase in climate finance funding secured for climate change adaptation
- Advancing the Commonwealth Sustainable Transition Agenda through the Third Biennial Commonwealth Sustainable Energy Transition (CSET) Forum



3.1 Co-operation on sustainable ocean action and energy transition

3.2 Access to financial resources for climate change adaptation and mitigation

Figure 3.1: Expenditure in Resilience and Climate Action impact pathway (EGBP), by fund, 2022/23

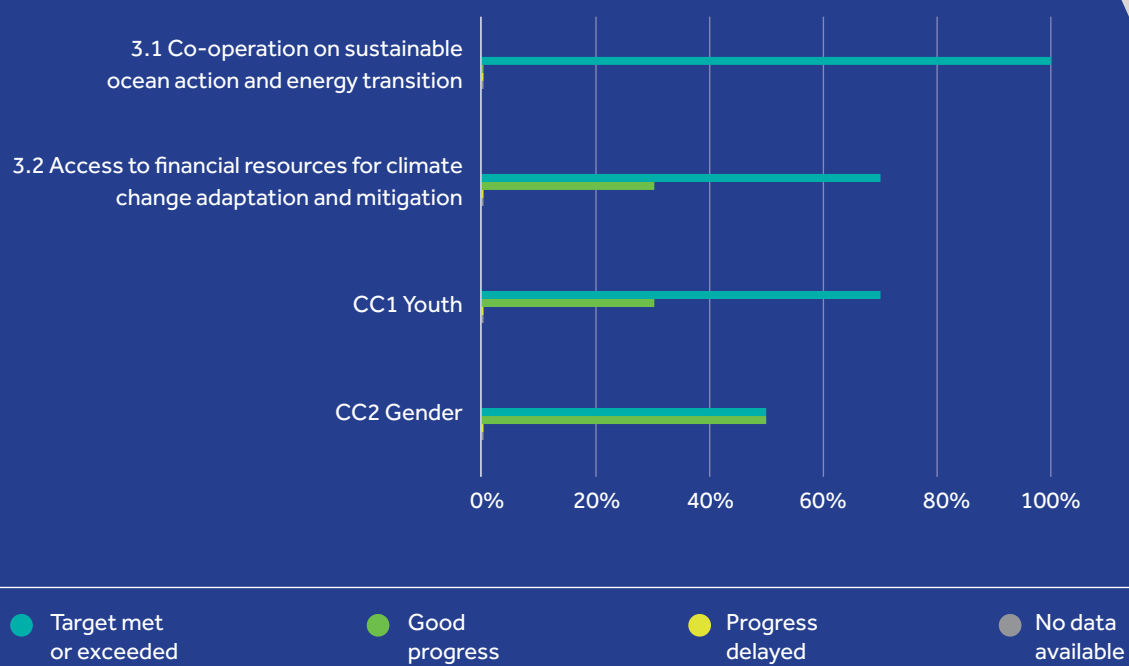


Figure 3.2: Delivery status of intermediate & cross-cutting (CC) outcomes in Resilience and Climate Action, June 2023

3.1 Ocean governance and Blue Charter

The Secretariat continues to support member countries, particularly small and other vulnerable states, to enhance intra-Commonwealth co-operation on sustainable ocean action and energy transition. In **Antigua and Barbuda** and **Trinidad and Tobago** this includes supporting the transition to sustainable 'blue' economies. A detailed case study can be found on next page.

In November, the Commonwealth Blue Charter Project Incubator's first call for proposals was announced at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27). Commitments have also been secured from Bloomberg Philanthropies' Vibrant Oceans Initiative, which directly supports countries and their partners in ocean-related projects, offering grants (£5,000–£50,000), training, rapid assessments and assistance in writing funding proposals. In the first round, a total of 47 proposals from 20 Commonwealth countries were received. After careful consideration by the review panel, eight promising projects were selected to proceed in the 2023/24 financial year. They encompass a broad spectrum of endeavours – for example a project aimed at enhancing capacity for ocean climate monitoring and adaptation among the youth and leaders of the Swahili Coast in Kenya; mapping and assessing 'blue carbon' in Fiji and Sri Lanka; and investigation of riverine sources contributing to marine plastic debris in Seychelles. Other projects focus on crucial areas such as mangrove ecosystem restoration and advancements in oceanographic observations. This selection of projects exemplifies the pragmatic and forward-thinking actions being taken within the Commonwealth to address a diversity of oceanic challenges, and the Blue Charter's support of them.



Case study

Transitioning to a Sustainable Blue Economy

Intermediate Outcome 3.1: Enhanced intra-Commonwealth co-operation on sustainable ocean action and energy transition



EBR - UNEP

Commonwealth countries are endowed with immense and precious natural resources, including millions of square kilometres of ocean space. When managed equitably and sustainably, the exploitation of natural resources bolsters national resilience to economic and social crises, improving prosperity for all citizens. In partnership with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), Howell Marine Consulting and the University of Portsmouth, the Secretariat assessed the readiness of **Antigua and Barbuda**, and **Trinidad and Tobago** to transition to a sustainable blue economy. A new Rapid Readiness Assessment (RRA) method was trialled based on UNEP's Sustainable Blue Economy Transition Framework. The RRA provides governments with a focused snapshot of where to go next, informed by desk-based analysis, in-country stakeholder workshops and interviews. In making this transition, countries can draw on ocean resources for economic development, while also effectively protecting the marine environment.

Rahanna Juman, of the Institute of Marine Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago, said:

'I am pleased that the findings of the Rapid Readiness Assessment suggest that Trinidad and Tobago is well placed to advance its own transition to a sustainable blue economy. Given the complexity of the process, it is encouraging to know that it is very feasible to overcome the challenges identified, through solutions such as marine spatial planning, centralised data management, and research and innovation in key sectors.'

Ann-Louise Hill, from Antigua and Barbuda's Department of Blue Economy, noted:

'Fully transitioning to a sustainable blue economy is not straightforward, but as the Rapid Readiness Assessment demonstrates, it is worth the effort. Antigua and Barbuda must forge its own path, informed by the most effective practices and best available knowledge, while also accounting for the country's unique history, culture and circumstances. The people of Antigua and Barbuda must be informed and engaged at every step of the way.'

The success of the RRA trials demonstrated its usefulness in different contexts, facilitating dialogue among stakeholders and providing practical steps for the transition journey. The next phase of this work will include Dominica and Mauritius, which have confirmed participation in the Coastal Climate Vulnerability Rapid Assessment project generously funded through an EBR from the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance.

3.2 Climate change

The Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH), through generous funding through EBRs from **Australia** and the **UK** during the reporting period, provided **small and other vulnerable states** with **improved access to financial resources, technology and capacities for climate change adaptation and mitigation** through adaptation and mitigation project development; accreditation support; **policy** development; human and **institutional capacity development**; and promoting **knowledge-sharing and learning**. During the reporting period, the project was able to increase funding mobilised by 150 per cent, bringing the total to US\$310.41 million, supporting 77 approved adaptation, mitigation and cross-cutting projects in 19¹⁰ Commonwealth **small and other vulnerable states**.

Since its inception, Commonwealth regional and national climate finance advisers in **Asia, the Caribbean and Americas, and the Pacific** have conducted 119 **capacity-building** initiatives in 16 countries,¹¹ reaching 2,440 government and non-government officials.¹² Key to the success of the CCFAH is its work with national, regional and international partners. In line with the established Hubs and Spokes model, the CCFAH embeds advisers both at the national and at the regional level within the African Union Development Agency and the International Solar Alliance, to facilitate co-ordination between national advisers and to mobilise funding across the region.

COP27, held in Sharm El Sheik in November 2022, provided an opportunity for teams throughout the Secretariat to amplify the concerns of member countries, particularly **small and vulnerable states**, **building consensus**, **sharing knowledge** and **championing global climate and oceans advocacy**. The Secretariat held 16 side events at COP27 on a range of topics, including resilient food systems, health and climate, use of geospatial information

for climate finance and forest landscape restoration. Side events promoted the *Commonwealth Living Lands Charter*, the *Commonwealth Blue Charter*, CCFAH, the Commonwealth Sustainable Energy Transition (CSET) initiative and networks such as the Commonwealth **Youth** Climate Network (CYCN).

Critically, the Secretariat's presence at COP27 enabled the Secretariat to champion and **advocate** for the needs of **small and other vulnerable states** and build off CHOGM commitments to scale up action and financing to address loss and damage and keep the Paris Agreement 1.5°C target alive. Commonwealth efforts contributed to global recognition at COP27 by asserting the need to establish a dedicated fund to address loss and damage and through countries reaffirming their commitment to keeping global temperature rises to below 1.5°C. Highlighting the role of the Secretariat in championing the needs of **small and other vulnerable states** at COP27, Hon. Faime Naiomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister of Samoa, said:

'The Commonwealth has always worked for the interests of small states. It finds resources and develops programmes that can address their specific needs and challenges, whether it be programmes to promote biodiversity or the development of legislation around climate change. We very much appreciate the opportunity to host the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting which will further enhance the profile of small island states.'

¹⁰ Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, eSwatini, Fiji, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Maldives, Mauritius, Nauru, Namibia, Saint Lucia, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Zambia

¹¹ Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, eSwatini, Fiji, Jamaica, Mauritius, Nauru, Namibia, Saint Lucia, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, Zambia and Indo-Pacific Region

¹² Figures as of August 2023

COP27 and the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in Montreal, Canada, provided platforms for the Secretariat to progress mandates from CHOGM 2022 in Rwanda, particularly the *Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands* (CALL) and to ensure that the CALL implementation plan reflects the issues from the three meetings of the Rio Conventions of the UNFCCC, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, held in May 2022. The draft implementation plan has been shared with member countries and partner organisations with the aim of finalising it in the beginning of the 2023/24 financial year. Gender and youth considerations are central to the CALL. Young women and men are included in all levels of decision-making; the critical role women play in safeguarding natural environments is recognised; and there is a focus on women's economic empowerment through low-carbon, climate-resilient development.

Leveraging networks to advance the agenda, three Action Groups have been launched, on Energy Literacy, Geothermal Energy and Youth Action. These voluntary coalitions comprise member countries that wish to share knowledge and expertise, align strategies and collaborate on joint initiatives to address key challenges facing the sector. In May 2023, the Secretariat hosted the Third Biennial CSET Forum in May 2023, at Marlborough House, London, with 29 Commonwealth countries represented. The Forum included the inaugural meeting of the Geothermal Action Group, whose early outcomes demonstrated the value of the Action Groups in terms of providing an opportunity for the exchange of practical solutions to issues ranging from lack of access to and awareness of capacity-building initiatives to the addressing of supply chain limitations for replacement parts.

A focus of the CSET Forum was ensuring a strong inter-generational approach in recognition that young people are essential stakeholders in creating solutions for energy transition. To further this approach, a Children and Youth Challenge was launched to inspire participation and innovation on energy transition in local communities, led by young people. Winners of each category will be invited to pitch their ideas to their governments and policy-makers, with the potential for implementation in communities, dependent on funding and the suitability of the solution. The winner of the best entry in the 15–17 year old category will be invited to attend COP28, with the Commonwealth delegation, to present their work.

Dedicated member country support to advance clean energy transition in this period included the development and deployment of a SIDS toolkit in Barbados and business case development and capacity-building of Barbadian officials.



Case study

The Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub

Intermediate Outcome 3.2:

Enhanced access to financial resources, technology and capacities for climate change adaptation and mitigation

EBR – Australia, NDC Partnership & UK

In 2016, 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 **UK**. **Mauritius** continues to host CCFAH and is the leading country advocating for and responding to climate change issues, as noted in its ambitious National Determined Contribution (NDC). 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. In November 2022, six climate finance accredited institutions were active in Mauritius with either pipeline or active projects: UNDP, UNEP, the French Development Agency, the African Development Bank, OACPS and WHO.

CCFAH mainstreams **youth and gender** considerations throughout its work to ensure equal participation in decision-making, **policy** development, implementation and the benefits of climate action. Young people (under 30 years) constitute more than 60 per cent of the Commonwealth population and are therefore seen as key stakeholders in the development process.

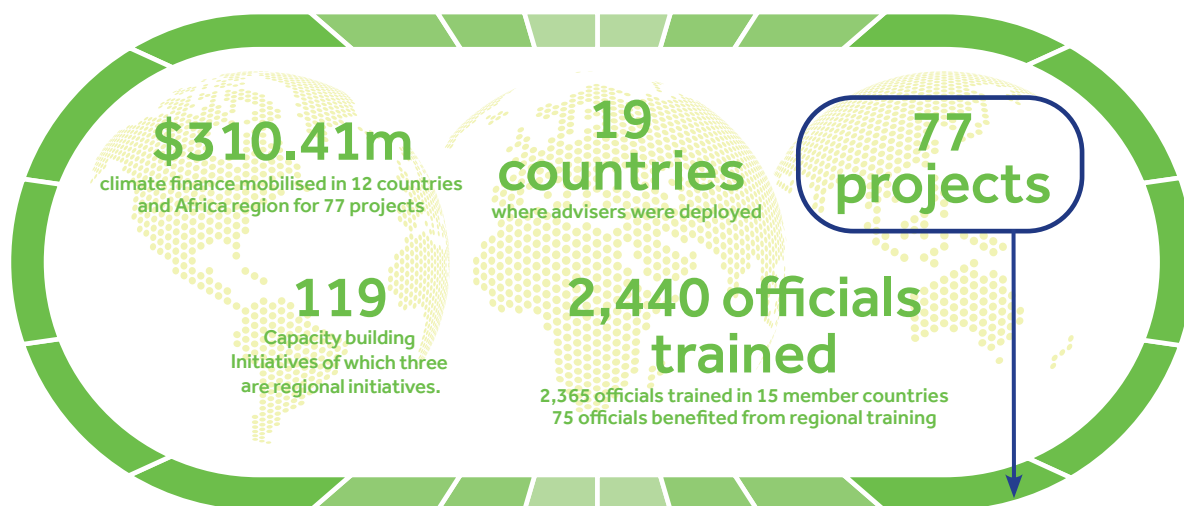
The dynamic nature of threats posed by climate change to lives and livelihoods means there is always a need to develop, assess and enhance solutions to meet the diverse changes. Young people from across the Commonwealth have demonstrated the ability to develop high-impact solutions to meet these challenges. A mapping of CCFAH advisers alongside the CYCN chapters is being conducted to better tailor in-country **youth** in climate action support.

Noting the lack of women's roles in all aspects of decision-making in climate action, the Secretariat has initiated efforts to secure **gender mainstreaming** across its climate change efforts, especially through CCFAH and the CommonSensing initiative. The CommonSensing project entails the use of geospatial information, especially earth observation, for decision-making. Through this project, three **Pacific** countries, **Fiji**, **Solomon Islands** and **Vanuatu**, are change agents for **gender**-focused climate projects. Successes of this project are now being replicated in **Africa**, with **Namibia** having developed a concept note on early warning systems based on lessons learnt from the CommonSensing project in the Pacific.

Notable examples of gender- and youth-focused assistance in this period include CCFAH's technical assistance to **Antigua and Barbuda** to design and develop an operational framework of a **gender-responsive** blended financing window to support the country's NDC implementation in 2023. Youth-targeted initiatives include those in **eSwatini**, where funds were secured for 'Upscaling Adult Women and Female Youth Farmers' Agribusiness Development Skills,' and in **Namibia**, where CCFAH convened three consultations with youth for a youth-focused proposal for Ebikes4Africa to the International Climate Initiative small grants call.

In November 2022, the Commonwealth Secretariat launched a new best practice guide that will assist policy-makers and practitioners across the Commonwealth to integrate **gender** equality into national climate action. The new guide identifies room for further support through initiatives such as CCFAH. In addition, in the reporting period, a training/workshop evaluation tool to effectively track **gender and youth** mainstreaming was designed, adopted and set into motion, with a view to obtaining disaggregated data that can reflect the extent to which CCFAH is achieving its objective.

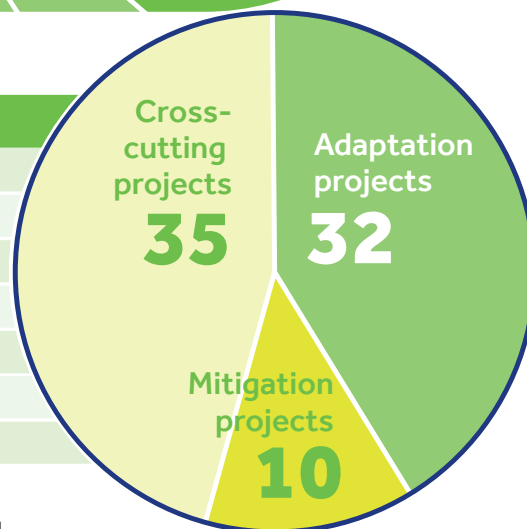
The Climate Finance Access Hub in numbers



Regional deployment of National Climate Finance Advisers

Africa	Asia	Caribbean	Indo-Pacific
eSwatini	Maldives	Antigua and Barbuda	Fiji
Mauritius (Central Hub)		Barbados	Nauru
		Belize	Solomon Islands
Namibia		Grenada	Tonga
Seychelles		Guyana	Tuvalu
Zambia		Jamaica	Vanuatu
		Saint Lucia	

Note: countries in **bold** are those in which CCFAH has an adviser in place; in countries not in bold, assignments are either ongoing or have been completed.



Highlights of CCFAH's capacity building in 2022/23

Seventy-four officials and representatives in Mauritius gained fundamental skills for engaging in international climate negotiations, covering the Paris Agreement, COP27 outcomes, subsidiary bodies, working groups and negotiation blocs.

In Saint Lucia, the Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser and the Information and Knowledge Management Officer organised a three-day 'writeshop',

at which 18 stakeholders were trained in climate finance, accessing funds and developing project concept notes.

Nauru organised a stakeholder engagement to assess climate change capacity building needs. The aim was to identify gaps in knowledge, skills, strengths and weaknesses, and develop a climate change awareness and capacity development program

Small and Other Vulnerable States



Small and Other Vulnerable States

2 programmes, aligned to
2 Intermediate Outcomes:

- **'Advocacy for Small and Other Vulnerable States'**
4.1 Policy positions advanced in global governance mechanisms
- **'Reducing Small States Vulnerability'**
4.2 Reduced vulnerability to shocks and improved fiscal sustainability and access to financing

- 4.1 Policy positions advanced in global governance mechanisms
- 4.2 Improved fiscal sustainability and access to financing

Notable achievements

- Commonwealth Finance Ministers and Commonwealth Central Bank Governors convened
- Advancing the UN–Commonwealth Advocacy Strategy Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

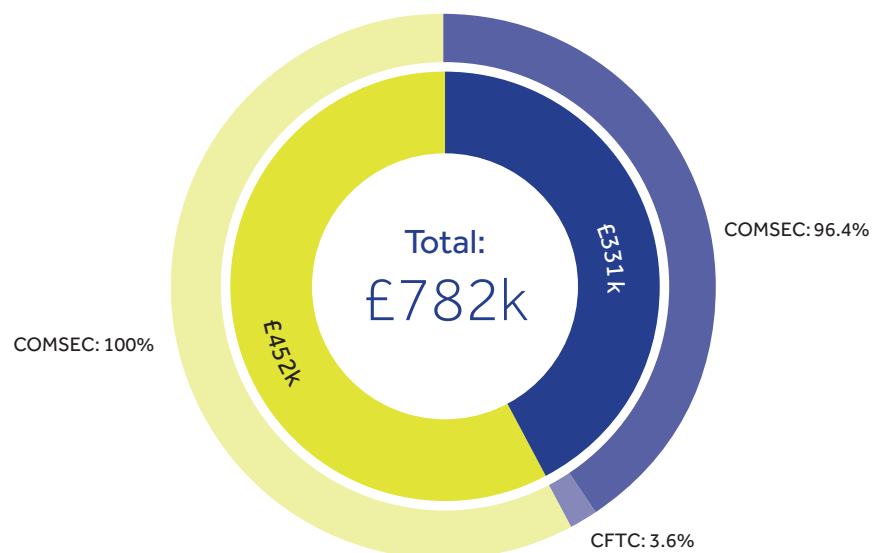


Figure 4.1: Expenditure in Small and Other Vulnerable States impact pathway (EGBP), by fund, 2022/23

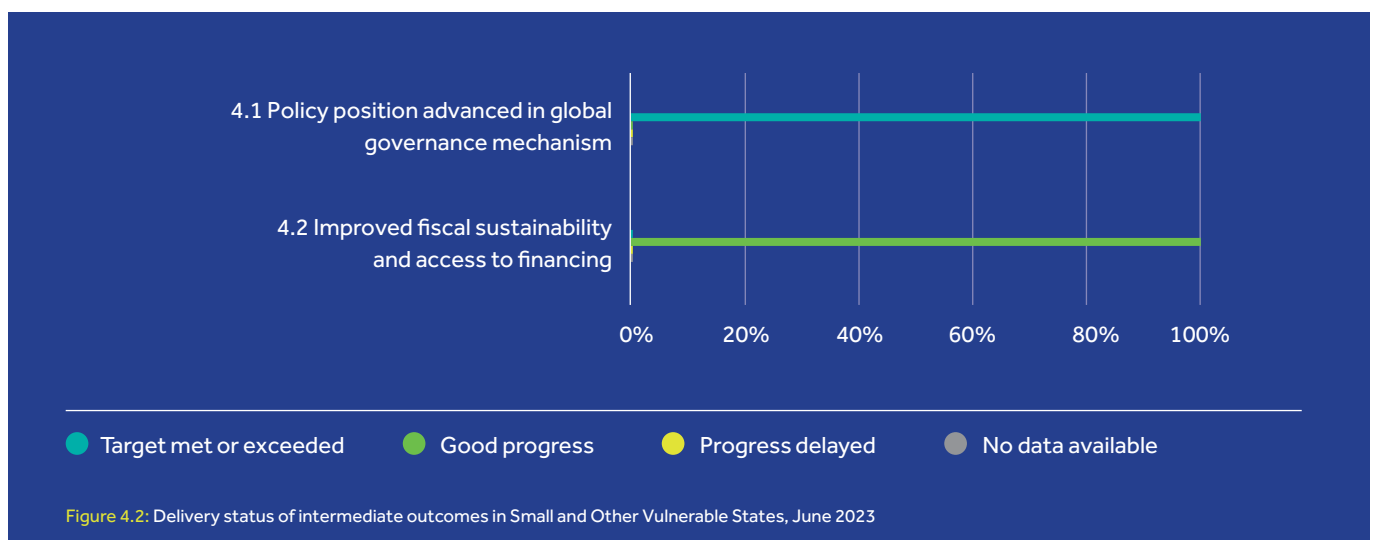


Figure 4.2: Delivery status of intermediate outcomes in Small and Other Vulnerable States, June 2023

4.1 Small and Other Vulnerable States advocacy

To ensure **small and other vulnerable states' needs and concerns are addressed in global governance mechanisms**, the Secretariat **convened** the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting (CFMM) in October on the margins of the IMF/World Bank Annual Meeting. Twenty-eight member countries met to explore the macroeconomic perspectives and implications. Following extensive deliberations, Ministers agreed that lack of access to development finance remains a critical issue, hindering economic recovery, particularly for **small and other vulnerable states**. They agreed to establish a working group to provide strategic direction to ongoing Commonwealth efforts to influence the global development agenda and promote the reform of the global financial architecture. In doing so, the Commonwealth is joining global dialogue such as the Bridgetown Initiative to **advocate** for an overhaul and reform of the global financial system to ensure it is relevant, flexible and adaptive to crises and meets the needs of **small and other vulnerable states**. The meeting of the working group was held in April on the margins of the IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings.

In the wings of the CFMM, Commonwealth Central Bank Governors were **convened** for the first time in four years to discuss strategies to tackle inflation driven by geopolitical tensions and disruptions in global supply chains. The meeting shared best practice, including on monetary tools to tackle inflation, the impact of rising interest rates and innovations such as the Unified Payment Interface, a digital tool developed in India that enables real-time instant payments through smartphones from one bank to another.

CFMM also provided a platform for **networking and knowledge-sharing**, with a side event held to launch *Commonwealth Countries: Driving FinTech Innovation*,¹³ which highlights key innovations across member countries that relate to financial technology as well as focusing on the impact on development, **youth and gender**.

In this reporting period, the Secretariat updated the *Commonwealth Debt Sustainability Toolkits for Africa and the Caribbean and Americas* with peer reviews and consideration of how the toolkits complement existing IMF and World Bank tools. Other **knowledge-sharing** included finalisation of Diaspora and Investment reports for **The Gambia** and **Kenya**. These include policy considerations for enhancing diaspora investment.

In **partnership** with the UN, this reporting period saw further progress to implement the *UN–Commonwealth Advocacy Strategy Towards Achieving the SDGs and Addressing the Vulnerabilities of Small States* launched at CHOGM 2022 in Rwanda. The strategy focuses on the priority areas of economic vulnerabilities, climate action, and access to finance and debt sustainability. **Small States Advocacy Champions**, comprising 15 Ministers from member countries, will take forward the strategy. An inaugural meeting took place in April 2023, which discussed how to take forward the Advocacy Strategy agenda.

¹³ <https://thecommonwealth.org/fintech-report>

Cross-cutting Outcomes



Cross-cutting Outcomes

2 programmes, aligned to 2 Cross-Cutting Outcomes:

- **'Youth Empowerment'**
CC1 Effective participation and equal opportunities for youth in leadership, governance, economic and social development enhanced
- **'Gender Equality'**
CC2 Gender disparities and violence against women and girls reduced

Notable achievements

- Launch of the Year of Youth 2023
- Convening of both the Youth Work Conference and Youth Leaders' Summit
- Youth mainstreaming modules launched to support mainstreaming across the Secretariat and within member countries
- Launch of the Caribbean Youth Digital Skills programme, supporting 10,000 young people in the Caribbean
- Launch of the Aspiring Youth Empowerment Programme, to provide 300 young people with the critical skills needed to succeed in jobs or set up businesses
- Needs assessment in Lesotho to improve gender-responsive budgeting and end gender-based violence
- Needs assessment in Seychelles on initiatives to combat gender-based violence and support survivors

- CC1 Effective participation and equal opportunities for youth in leadership, governance, economic and social development enhanced
- CC2 Gender disparities and violence against women and girls reduced

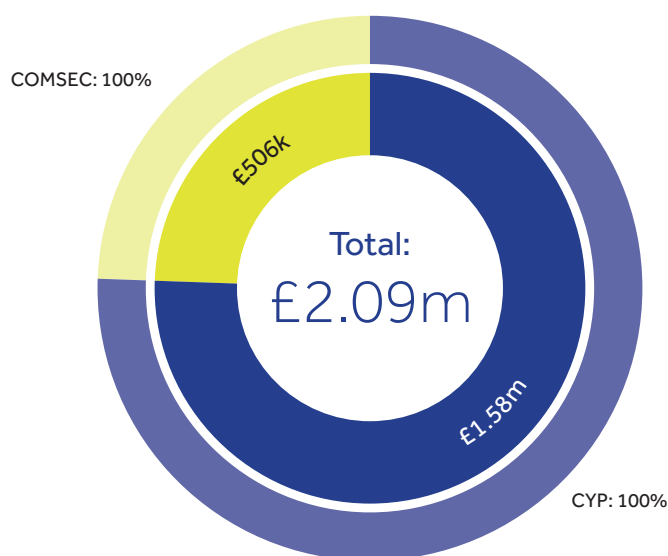
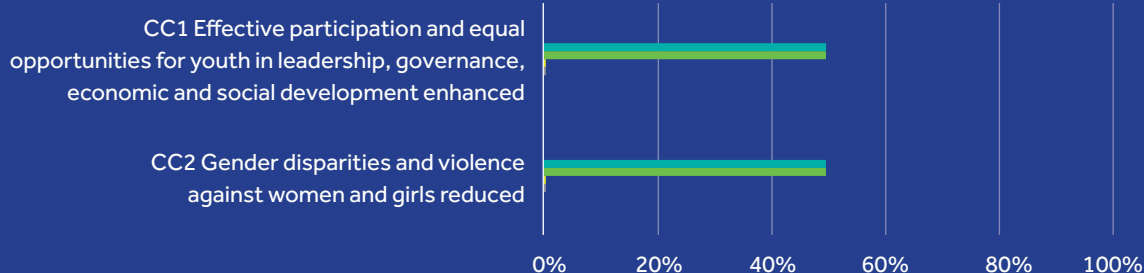


Figure 5.1: Expenditure on cross-cutting outcomes (€GBP), by fund, 2022/23



● Target met or exceeded ● Good progress ● Progress delayed ● No data available

Figure 5.2: Delivery status of cross-cutting outcomes, June 2023



The Secretariat reflects the cross-cutting themes of **youth empowerment** and **gender equality** in all areas of work. Dedicated programmes have been established to take forward specific projects to embed and support **gender** and youth priorities and mainstreaming internally within the Secretariat and externally with member countries.

With Commonwealth Heads of Government declaring 2023 'Year of Youth' in Rwanda in June 2022, the Secretariat has significantly enhanced activities to support **youth** across the Commonwealth. This includes progressing commitments made in Rwanda towards the implementation of the landmark *Kigali Declaration on Childcare and Protection* reform and strengthening health and social protection systems for children to withstand future shocks. The Secretariat will collaborate and **partner** with development agencies to boost aid and development assistance for children and young people, implement the UN CRPD and prioritise reforms agreed upon at the 21st Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers, due to take place in London in September 2023. An infographic showing work across the Secretariat mainstream youth outcomes and activities related to Year of Youth can be found below.

Promoting **youth mainstreaming** through **capacity-building** in this reporting period, the Secretariat launched five e-learning courses on youth mainstreaming in **partnership** with the Open University, UK. These courses build off the Secretariat's *Youth Mainstreaming Strategy*. One course developed for Secretariat staff provides guidance on how to identify opportunities and enabling tools to apply **youth mainstreaming** across the Secretariat's projects and programmes. In February, four further courses were launched, aimed at member countries, on youth mainstreaming, evidence-based youth policy and programming, ethics and safeguarding in youth work, and youth participation and inclusion.¹⁴ The courses have received an average satisfaction rating of 97 per cent.

The Secretariat continues to support youth **networks** and Commonwealth National Volunteer focal points. It provided virtual training sessions in partnership with the National Youth Agency (UK) to **build capacity** in youth work, safeguarding, leadership and management in a youth work context. Youth leaders from 16 member countries¹⁵ received training in the reporting period. The Youth Co:Lab Summit held in July 2022 in Singapore, co-organised by UNDP and Citi Foundation and in **partnership** with the National Youth Council Singapore, provided a key milestone for **networking and knowledge sharing**. It provided a forum for **young** people and their innovative ideas to solve the region's most pressing challenges. The Secretariat also, through the Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Workers Association (CAYWA), provided grants to five national youth worker associations, to cover set-up and drafting of their constitutions/code of ethics/strategic plan, and drive membership. In May, a Commonwealth Youth and Student Summit was held in **Nigeria**. A detailed case study can be found below.

Further convening and **networking** opportunities provided in this period included the Commonwealth Youth Leaders' Summit, which brought together 60 youth leaders in London, UK, to share their experiences, challenges and ideas. The participants included representatives from the Commonwealth Youth Council, the Commonwealth Students Association, 12 Commonwealth Youth Networks, Regional Youth Councils and a selection of National Youth Councils and youth award leaders. The Summit provided a platform for youth leaders to discuss emerging youth development issues; take stock of current functioning and initiatives of youth networks; identify and agree on pragmatic actions to strengthen youth networks and youth engagement; and gain a greater understanding of the work of the Commonwealth.

¹⁴ These courses and other external courses developed by the Secretariat are available on cwelearn.commonwealth.int/course

¹⁵ Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Fiji, Grenada, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uganda

Advancing **youth work professionalism**, the Secretariat hosted the 2023 Commonwealth Youth Work Conference in the **UK** in July in partnership with the National Youth Alliance. Entitled 'The Power of Youth Work: Forging a Sustainable and Peaceful Common Future,' the event was delivered in person and virtually. The event brought together youth workers, academics and policy-makers from across the 56 Commonwealth countries to celebrate youth work, share best practice and learn from one another. The conference provided an opportunity to explore the issues facing the youth work sector today, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as economic and environmental challenges. Dedicated member country support in this period included a technical workshop for youth workers in **Seychelles** to establish clear qualification pathways for youth workers, youth work managers and policy-makers. Complementing online sessions held earlier in the year to enable the University of Seychelles to deliver a diploma and degree in youth work, the workshop brought together experts, academics, youth and government representatives. Joelle Perreau, Vice Chancellor of the University of Seychelles, stressed the importance of collaboration to advance youth work professionalism:

'UniSey remains determined and resilient to transform the nation into an educated, reflective and professional population; to make higher education more accessible to every Seychellois and to lead empirical research in various fields of national interest... We cannot achieve this bold ambition on our own. This is why collaboration with local and international partners like the Commonwealth and the Seychelles National Youth Council is paramount.'

Dedicated support to member countries on **youth skills development and entrepreneurship** included a workshop in **The Gambia** at which the Secretariat convened senior government officials and other stakeholders to share a situational analysis report and findings. An important outcome of the workshop was the identification of priority areas of action that the Government of **The Gambia** and the Commonwealth will undertake to strengthen the **policy** framework and **institutional capacity** for youth entrepreneurship. The reporting period also saw finalisation of a National Youth **Policy** for **Saint Kitts and Nevis**.

Following on from regional situational analyses and Heads' commitment at CHOGM to address the digital divide and skills gap, the Secretariat, in partnership with Simplilearn, launched the Caribbean Youth Digital Skills programme. This will provide 200 scholarships to each country in the region to help address the digital divide and empower **women** and **youth** to better integrate into the digital economy and to contribute to overall empowerment creation and national development. This project will enable 10,000 **young** people from across the Commonwealth to enhance their digital skills through an online delivery model.

More targeted support to youth entrepreneurship in the **Caribbean** saw the launch of a six-month scheme in partnership with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) with the launch of the Aspiring Youth Empowerment Programme, aimed at providing **young** people with the critical skills needed to succeed in jobs or set up businesses. Through the scheme, 300 **youth** will be provided with 8 weeks of training and capacity-building and a further 4 months of mentorship. The training programme will build the capacity of **youth** in areas such as business development, financial literacy, pursuing networking opportunities, entrepreneurship, marketing and production.



Focus on

The Year of Youth



January 2023

- 12–15** Caribbean Youth Leaders' Summit, Caribbean Regional Youth Council, Trinidad and Tobago
- 30** Official Launch of the Year of Youth

February

- 6** Malaysia Youth Work Graduation Ceremony, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)
- 6–17** Commonwealth Youth Leaders' Summit, Commonwealth Youth Council, London, UK
- 17** Relaunch of the YourCommonwealth.org website
- 19** Rwanda Car Free Day and Sports Activity with over 1,000 young people
- 19** Rwanda Forum on Sustainable Urbanisation with 250 Rwandan young people and Commonwealth students

May

- 5** Commonwealth Leaders Meeting, London, UK
- 8–12** Commonwealth Youth and Students Summit for African Region, Abuja, Nigeria organised by Commonwealth Youth Council, Commonwealth Students Association, Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development of Nigeria and the Pan-African Youth Union

April

- 26–27** Namibia's Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service holds National Youth Week (NYW) and Day (NYD)

June

- 7–10** Education World Forum hosted by UK Government and British Council
- 13–15** Youth Forum: Youth for Innovation and Resilience, Caribbean Development Bank

The Year of Youth continues into 2024

Get Involved with the
Year of Youth!

Like, re... the conversation

#YearofYouth #CommonwealthYouth #CYP@50

Year of Youth Actions by Strategic Pillar

	Governance & Peace	Sustainable Development	Resilience & Climate Action	Small & Vulnerable States
Actions	1.1 Delivery of youth-targeted homegrown social cohesion and peacebuilding activities	2.1 Aspiring Youth Programme provides mentorship and capacity building to 300 youth entrepreneurs	3.1 Formation of the CSET Youth Action Group, and launch of the CSET Children and Youth Challenge Empowering youth to advocate for ocean conservation	4.1 & 4.2 Focus on youth issues in small and other vulnerable states
	1.2 Inclusion of youth experts on Commonwealth Observer Group election observation missions	2.2 Enhancing debt management and transparency in 16 countries through Commonwealth Meridian, relevant to the youth agenda	3.2 Youth mainstreaming strategies incorporated into 11 countries' climate finance workplans through CCFAH	
	1.3 Capacity building for youth on human rights in Sri Lanka	2.3 Consult youth in policy development and facilitate youth indicators in oceans action plans	CCFAH facilitates access to youth-specific funding – for example, 'Upscaling Adult Women and Female Youth Farmers Agribusiness Development Skills' in eSwatini The Call to Action on Living Lands supports youth-led initiatives and global networks	
		2.4 Model Legislation on Preventing the Abuse of Positions of Trust developed and published		
Cross-cutting Outcomes				
	Youth Empowerment	Youth mainstreaming modules launched to support mainstreaming across the Secretariat and within member countries		

Case study

Fast-tracking Youth Empowerment in Nigeria

Cross-cutting Outcome 1:
Effective participation and equal opportunities for youth in leadership, governance, economic and social development enhanced

The Secretariat has supported youth across the Commonwealth for over 50 years through the Commonwealth Youth Programme. Nigeria has become the latest country to reiterate its commitment to fast-tracking **youth empowerment** and development during the Commonwealth's ongoing Year of Youth. The country, which boasts one of the youngest populations in the world, with a median age of 18.1 years, hosted a Commonwealth Youth and Student Summit in May in its political capital, Abuja (pictured).

Represented at the summit by his Chief of Staff, Ibrahim Gambari, President Muhammadu Buhari said:

'Nigeria, as a firm believer in the capabilities of young people, is hosting the Summit to create a platform for the youth to network, collaborate and foster sustainable learning environment as well as promote youth development in institutions within the Commonwealth.'

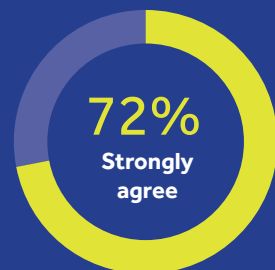
Attended by hundreds of young people, students, officials and representatives from organisations, UN institutions and student groups worldwide, the **knowledge product** summit focused on crucial issues that affect **youth empowerment** and development. It concluded with a joint outcome statement, which includes policy recommendations on five subthemes: the digital divide, the economy and creative industries, gender-based violence, the 'decolonisation of education' and ending child labour. Feedback was sought from attendees:



Quality of panel session and discussions



The summit was beneficial to attendees



During the meeting, Nigeria's Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare, expressed his gratitude to the Commonwealth Secretariat for its unwavering dedication to the youth development agenda. He said to the participants:

'From country to country, we see the youth of Africa making a great impact. They can no longer be ignored... What is clear is that investment and inclusivity must be at the core of our engagement with young people. We must tap into their energy and inquisitiveness to foster innovative solutions towards development.'

Pursuing gender equality in this period, the Secretariat supported efforts to combat gender-based violence (GBV) in **Lesotho** and **Seychelles**. In **Lesotho**, the Secretariat conducted a needs assessment to explore progress made to improve gender-responsive budgeting, end GBV and address sexual harassment in the workplace. The assessment recommended future technical assistance on the most urgent need – that is, tailored capacity-building for the Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation focused on gender-responsive planning, procurement, financing and auditing.

In **Seychelles**, a needs assessment focused on learnings from the establishment of an EU-funded emergency shelter; effectiveness of capacity-building to combat GBV for government officials and civil society; institutionalisation of the EconVAWG (Economic Impact of Violence against Women and Girls) methodology and framework; and the private sector's response to violence against women and girls. The assessment concluded that efforts should be geared towards operationalisation of the shelter by March 2023, when the Domestic Violence Act comes into force, through finalisation of the standard operating procedures (SOPs), capacity-building for all stakeholders involved in the SOPs, and the incorporation of lessons and experiences from the EU shelter project. The Secretariat will continue to support **Lesotho** and **Seychelles** as recommended in the needs assessment through planned capacity-building in 2023. This reporting period also saw the convening of the National Women's Machineries in March, with 21 member countries and 6 partners, including Commonwealth Accredited Organisations, in attendance.

Internally, the Secretariat strives to further gender equality transformation throughout all programmes, projects and Secretariat activities. At the end of the reporting period, 98 per cent of all Secretariat staff had completed the Gender Mainstreaming course. To advance the *Declaration on Gender Equality 2020–2030*, an internal workshop was held for all programme teams to contribute to and refine the draft roadmap. This was presented to the National Women's Machineries meeting in March 2023 and the Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting in August 2023.



Case study

Promoting the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Cross-cutting Outcome 2:
Gender disparities in access to political, social and economic rights and violence against women and girls reduced



The delegation from the Commonwealth Secretariat's Human Rights Unit visit the School for the Exceptional Child and the Plaisance secondary school in the Seychelles.

The 2022 CHOGM communiqué underscored the urgent threat that climate change will exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, and welcomed the Commonwealth Youth Statement, which emphasises the need to safeguard the most vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. At CHOGM, Heads further 'urged member countries to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and promote alignment of any related policies.'

Over 1.3 billion people, nearly 16 per cent of the global population, are estimated to be living with a disability and among them women and girls have a higher disability prevalence. This means that women and girls with disabilities face further barriers to the full realisation of their rights. For women and girls with disabilities, these barriers may result in a lower economic and social status; increased risk of violence and abuse, including sexual violence; gender-based discriminatory practices; and limited access to education, health care (including sexual and reproductive health), information, services and justice, as well as civic and political participation. The international normative human rights framework (primarily the CRPD) and national legislation have largely addressed either the rights of women and girls on the one hand or disability on the other. Policy and legislative development must address the intersectionality of women and girls in all their diversity, particularly disability.

In 2022/23, the Secretariat initiated technical assistance in this area, drawing on its unique position to bring together all key stakeholders. Preliminary assessments were conducted in Seychelles on behalf of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Family and in Antigua and Barbuda towards formulating recommendations for government action. Following the Government of Seychelles' reaffirmed commitment to implementing the CRPD, the Secretariat supported the implementation of recommendations through capacity-building interventions, which will enhance capabilities and strengthen frameworks for the protection of the rights of disabled persons.

In the spirit of 'Nothing about us, without us,' persons with disabilities and disabled people's organisations, particularly the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum, are key partners in all assessments and awareness-raising activities. Recent examples include delivery of a statement and convening a side event at the 16th Conference of States Parties to the CRPD and planned advocacy at the August 2023 Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting in The Bahamas.

Lead by the Secretariat Human Rights team and supported by the Gender team, the Secretariat prioritises the intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination and vulnerability, including based on gender and age, that amplify the barriers hindering persons with disabilities' full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Catalytic Outcomes



Catalytic Outcomes

Notable achievements

- Eight new partnerships forged
- Partnership Assessment Form launched
- Kenya Innovation Week supported

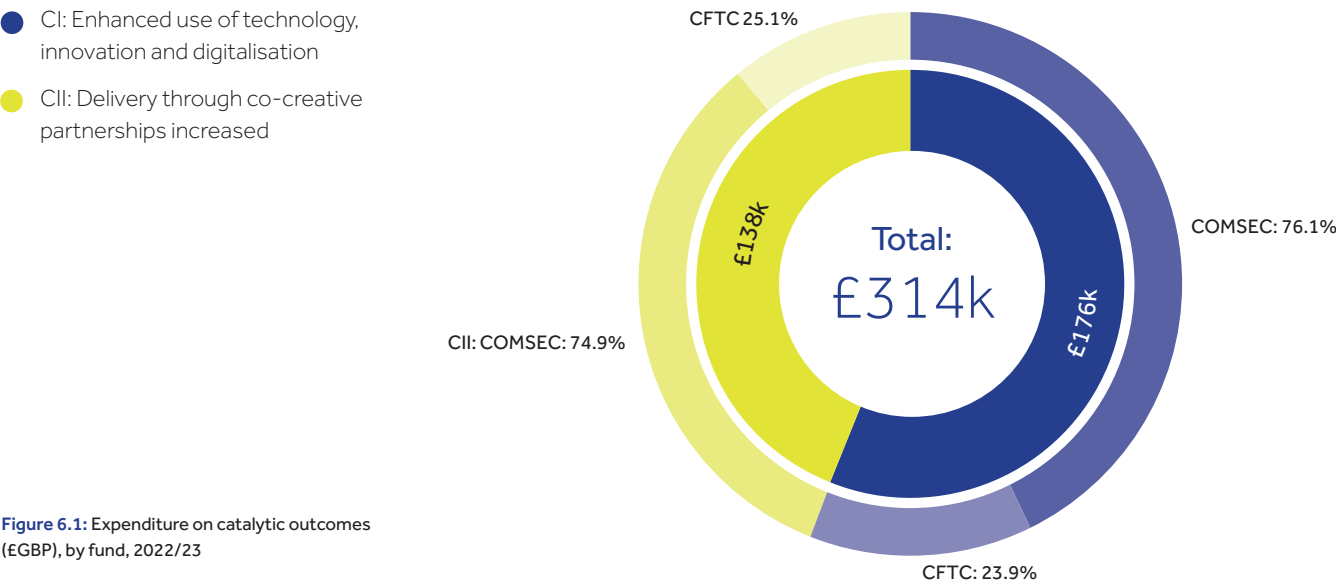


Figure 6.1: Expenditure on catalytic outcomes (£GBP), by fund, 2022/23

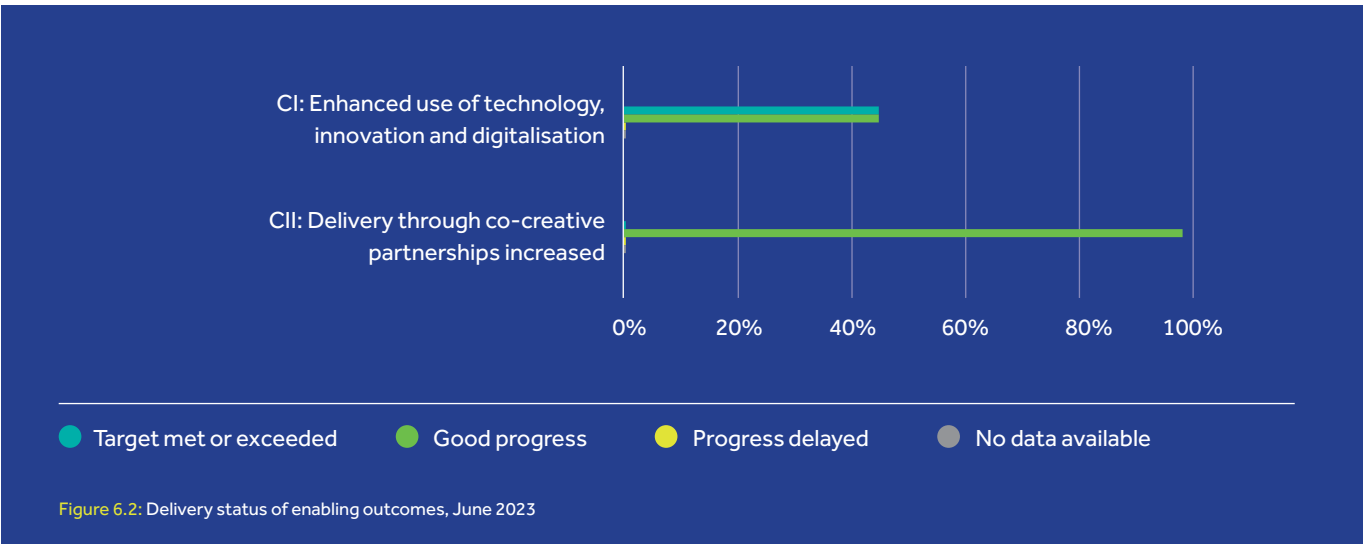


Figure 6.2: Delivery status of enabling outcomes, June 2023

Working in partnership continues to be key to the successful delivery of programmes and projects across the Secretariat. Dedicated work took place in the reporting period to deepen existing partnerships and forge new strategic partnerships. Following a KPMG audit report in 2021/22, the Secretariat introduced a Partnership Risk Assessment Form, to enhance due diligence and conduct robust needs assessments. Secretariat teams must complete the form prior to entering any new partnership.

This will strengthen the Secretariat's capacity to partner with organisations that have a good reputation, standing at national and international levels, resources that are compatible with the Commonwealth's mandate, good governance structures and ethical work practices. Following the above rigorous process, the Secretariat established eight new partnerships with international organisations¹⁶ whose work includes small and other vulnerable states, the environment, clean energy and climate change, health and education skills and systems, technology-enabled development, gender equality and youth development, as highlighted in the Strategic Plan.

¹⁶ The International Maritime Organisation (IMO); the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA); the World Trade Organisation (WTO); the International Hydropower Association (IHA); the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC); PATH; and the International Trade Centre (ITC).



Case study

Kenya Innovation Week 2023: Commonwealth Edition

Enabling Outcome:

Enhanced use of technology, innovation and digitalisation



The Secretariat supports member countries to deliver their innovation ambitions to enable more inclusive, creative and globally connected economies that are able to respond to global challenges and opportunities. In December 2022, the Secretariat supported the Government of Kenya to deliver the second Kenya Innovation Week. The conference showcased the innovation potential that exists to transform the innovation landscape in Kenya and facilitate progress towards achieving the SDGs.

The Secretary-General gave a keynote speech highlighting the importance of innovation as *'a means through which we can achieve the end we seek for Kenya and the whole Commonwealth: more prosperous, more equitable and more resilient societies.'*

The President of Kenya, H.E. Hon. William Samoei Ruto, officially opened the event, promising the connection of innovators to investors, funders and other partners and the championing of innovation in relevant policy engagements.

Themed summits and side events facilitated discussions on innovation opportunities. Results from the event included:

- Over 90 per cent of attendees rated the event as excellent or very good.
- Over 70 per cent of attendees reported making valuable connections and discovering opportunities.
- Over 500 new jobs were created.
- Keynote speaker sessions were rated highly, at a rate of 4.8 out of 5.
- Over 10,000 social media mentions were made of the event.

During discussions held on the margins of Kenya Innovation Week 2022 between the President of Kenya and the Commonwealth Secretary-General, it was agreed that Kenya Innovation Week 2023 would be held as a Commonwealth Edition, to showcase and support Commonwealth innovations and strengthen pan-Commonwealth networks and partnerships, which are critical in bringing innovation to scale to become impactful.

Commonwealth countries will thus get together in Nairobi from 27 November to 1 December 2023 for the inaugural Commonwealth Edition of Kenya Innovation Week 2023, under the overarching theme *'Innovating to Unlock Our Common Wealth.'*

Organisational Outcomes

Supporting improved organisational performance, the Secretariat progressed in the implementation of Country Evaluations over the first half of the financial year.

Sixteen countries were selected based on criteria including time elapsed since their last evaluation, number of country-specific projects and actions undertaken since the start of the last strategic plan, feedback from High Commissions and programme teams and the need to ensure regional representation of Commonwealth membership. Field missions were completed in 13 countries: **Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Cameroon, Fiji, The Gambia, Lesotho, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tanzania.** The missions have enabled the Secretariat to validate reported results, trace its relevance and contributions, identify success factors and barriers, understand in-country and regional contexts, and identify opportunities for improvement. Through these missions, the Secretariat gathered over 154 online survey responses and held over 200 meetings with over 1,000 participants.

Other progress in this area in the reporting period included recommencement of Quarterly Performance Reviews for all programme areas to discuss budgeting and delivery challenges and successes, and the procurement and development of Verto, the Secretariat's new project management system, which all project teams used to submit data for their annual results reporting.

This reporting period saw dedicated communications support to the Secretary-General and Secretariat divisions on major ministerial meetings, observer missions, high-profile events and initiatives, including the Commonwealth Leaders Summit, Commonwealth Day, Year of Youth, the UN General Assembly, the 10th Summit of Heads of State and Government of OACPS and COP27. This resulted in an increase number of interviews, press releases, news items, opeds and media coverage. The Secretary-General and senior officials were quoted 1,605 times in news articles, and 3,954 articles mentioned the Commonwealth

and the Secretariat. This included significant coverage for the Secretariat in leading national and international mainstream media, including BBC News, The Australian, ABC News, The Guardian, The Independent, The Daily Mail, The Evening Standard, Yahoo News, MSN News, The Express and The Star, among many others. Meanwhile, the Secretary-General's interviews attracted wide media coverage in national print, online, TV and radio outlets and reached millions of listeners around the Commonwealth. All this boosted awareness of the Commonwealth and the work of the Secretariat. A total of 6 million impressions and 135,000 engagements were achieved across social media channels and 2 million visits were made to the Commonwealth website. The newly launched monthly newsletter, Commonwealth Matters, which provides an overview of our work programmes and activities, has achieved a consistent open rate of over 50 per cent – well above the industry standard of 20 per cent.

One of the main objectives of the online publications project was to make publications online-first and mobile-optimised, moving away from pdf-only publishing and thereby making our content more accessible and appealing to young people, who are digital natives and more likely to access content on a mobile phone. The Library and Archive is playing a key role in supporting the historical research aspects of the 50 years of the CYP celebrations. The expected outcomes of this will lead to the creation of an online exhibition on the historic achievements of the CYP drawing on findings from the archive, accompanied by narratives on significant people and events that can be used to communicate to the public the value and influence of the CYP over 50 years.

The CSSOs in Geneva and in New York continue to provide support to small states' missions and to host the trade and human rights advisers. Aside from the expert advice provided by the advisers, the work of the CSSO is largely facility management and operations. In these areas, it is mandated to provide optimal quality servicing and responsiveness to requests. With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, both offices saw activities ramped up in this reporting period.



Financial Performance

The Secretariat implemented a total of 44 projects during the financial year 2022/2023 programme of work.¹⁷ The Secretariat's total budget for the year ending 30 June 2023 amounted to £41.3 million, out of which £29.3 million was the direct programme budget.

Of the total direct budget, expenditure was 95 per cent or £28.0 million, resulting in a variance of £1.3 million, of which £0.4 million relates to EBRs and £0.6 million to Designated Funds (DFs).

The total direct budget for the financial year was split between 53 per cent programme costs (£15.1 million) and 47 per cent staff costs (£13.7 million). Total direct budget expenditure of £28.0 million was split between programme costs (£14.1 million, or 50.4 per cent) and staff costs (£13.9 million, or 49.6 per cent).

The composition of the approved direct budget for the financial year 2022/23 was as follows.

47%

Commonwealth Secretariat Fund (COMSEC)

30%

Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC)

8%

Commonwealth Youth Programme Fund (CYP)

15%

EBRs and DFs

The £28.0 million direct programme expenditure across the three funds constituted £13.4 million of a planned £13.7 million in COMSEC (97.4 per cent); £9.0 million of a planned £8.7 million in CFTC (103.1 per cent), and £2.2 million of a planned £2.4 million in CYP (91.7 per cent). Figure 7.2 below illustrates the performance of each fund.

¹⁷ The figures in this section reflect those in the Financial Performance section of the unaudited management accounts as at 30 June 2023.

Financial Performance by Strategic Outcome

Of the total approved direct budget for the financial year 2022/2023, the Secretariat allocated the highest share of the budget to its strategic outcomes amounting to £19.7 million (67.3 per cent of total budget), where expenditure reached £18.5 million (66.1 per cent of the total expenditure). Internal outcomes received a 23.7 per cent share of the budget at £7.0 million with £7.1 million expenditure (25.3 per cent of total expenditure). Figure 7.1 illustrates each outcome's proportion of direct expenditure, and Figure 7.2 illustrates the direct budget and expenditure of each fund.

- Internal Outcomes
- Democracy and Governance
- Sustainable Development
- Resilience and Climate Action
- Small and Other Vulnerable States
- Cross-Cutting Outcomes
- Catalytic Outcomes

Figure 7.1: Percentage of Direct Expenditure per outcome, 2022/23

Extra Budgetary Resources and Designated Funds

As described earlier, £2.8 million of the budget had been funded through EBRs, and £1.8 million through DFs. The largest portions of EBRs were related to the Democracy and Governance outcome, with £1.1 million (40 per cent of total EBR funding), followed by Resilience and Climate Action at £0.9 million (32 per cent) and Sustainable Development at £0.8 million (28 per cent).

The majority of designated funds, £0.5 million (29 per cent) were related to Resilience and Climate Action, with £0.3 million budgeted towards monitoring and evaluation activities budgeted across all outcomes, followed by £0.4 million (21 per cent) each in Democracy and Governance and Sustainable Development respectively.

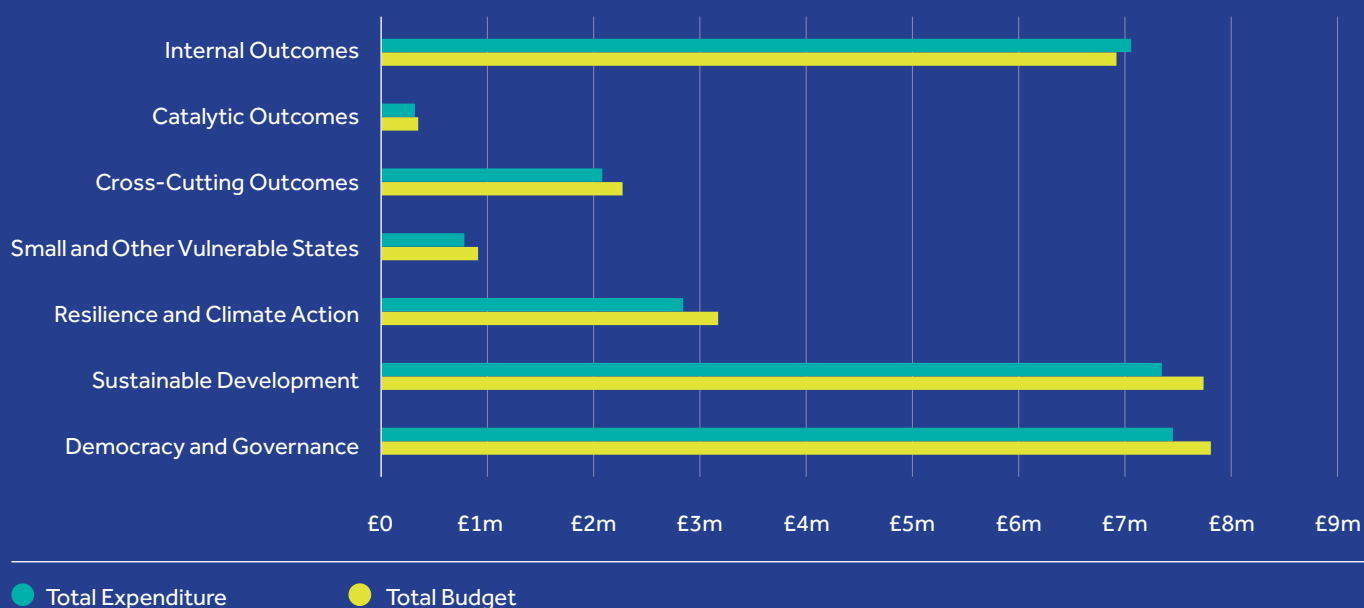
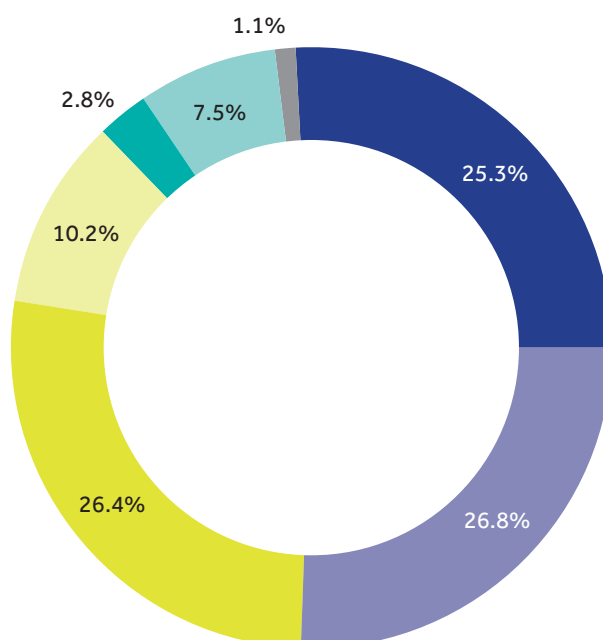


Figure 7.2: Combined Programme Delivery Matrix (Strategic Outcomes), 2022/23

Annex A: Performance Overview

Each project has a project-specific results framework that identifies project outcomes, outputs and activities that the project is designed to deliver.

Cumulatively, the projects contribute to the delivery of a programme and the intermediate and strategic outcomes in the Strategic Results Framework of the Strategic Plan 2021–2025. Each results framework includes Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound (SMART) indicators to measure outputs and project, intermediate and strategic outcomes.

Project managers are required to report at least biannually. The Secretariat has introduced a new Programme Management and Information System. The data collection for the reporting period was carried out through Verto 365, a well-regarded industry benchmarked project management system. The Secretariat in

part also still utilises data collected through Excel and Microsoft Forms, consolidated in Power BI. Activity, output, project and intermediate outcomes are measured by providing the status of progress from a set of drop-down options. In addition, indicator data must be entered and a narrative (qualitative) summary given to accompany the quantitative data. Evidence for all results reported is uploaded on a document centre, tagged and validated. This data is checked, cleaned and validated by the Strategy, Portfolio, Partnerships and Digital division (SPPD).

At the intermediate outcome level, the Secretariat is looking specifically at *changes in behaviour, practice or performance of intermediaries or beneficiaries*. In many of the projects that the Secretariat is delivering, these high-level changes take multiple years to be realised and involve engaging in and influencing complex systems. The Secretariat works to influence these complex and systemic changes through four impact pathways. It measures progress through 48 intermediate outcome indicators.

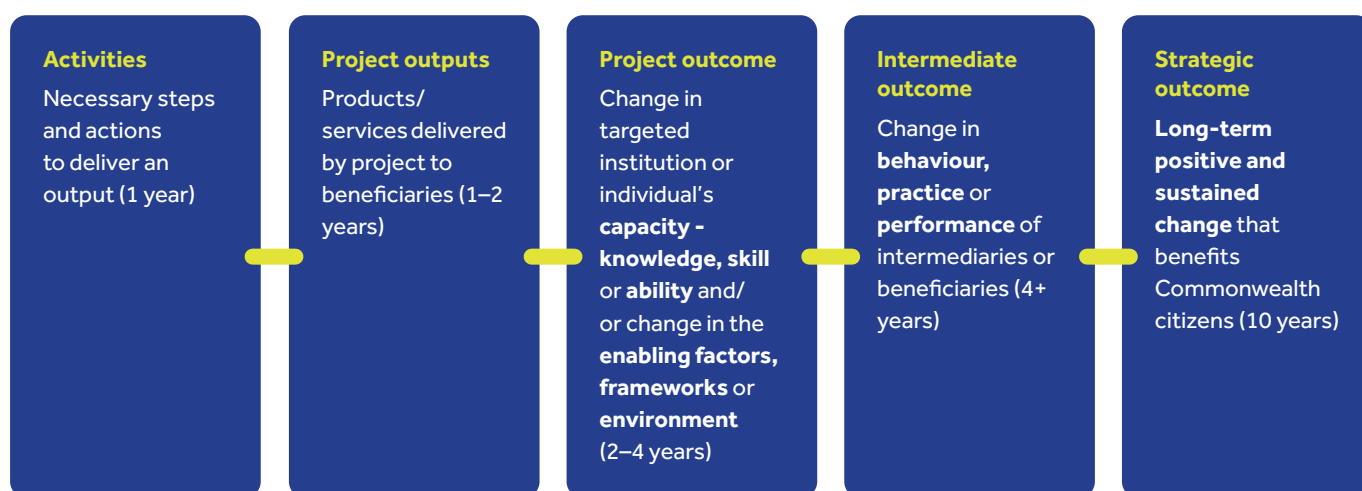


Figure A.7: Commonwealth Secretariat results chain definitions

The overall aggregated percentages provide an indication as to how well the Commonwealth Secretariat is progressing towards meeting intermediate outcome targets for the second year of the Strategic Plan. As of June 2023, 95 per cent of intermediate outcome indicators had been met or exceeded, or seen good progress, with a delay in progress for 3 per cent of targets and no data available for 2 per cent of indicators.

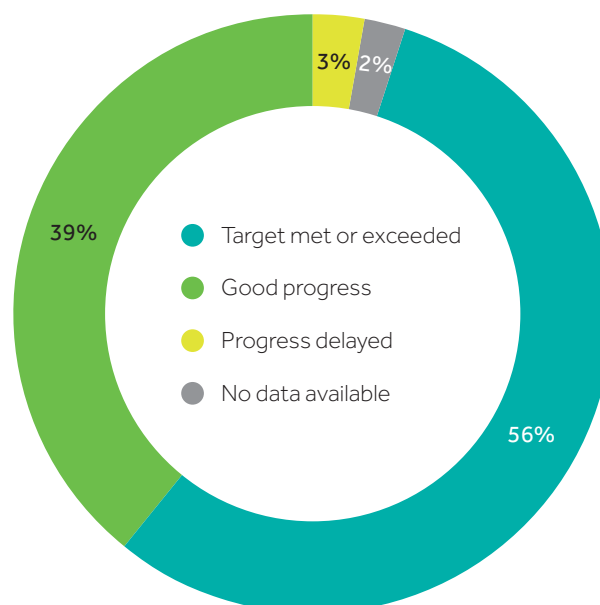


Figure A.8: Delivery Status of Intermediate Outcomes, June 2023

Annex B: Detailed Results Framework Progress Update

Key to progress ratings

● Target met or exceeded
 ● Good progress
 ● Progress delayed
 ● No data available

1. Democracy and Governance

Intermediate outcomes	Performance indicator	Baseline 2020/21	Actuals 2021/22	Target 2022/23	Actuals Jan 2023	Actuals Jun 2023	Progress rating
1.1 Member countries effectively utilise mechanisms to further adherence of Commonwealth values and principles	Share of engaged member states implementing CMAG and Secretary-General's Good Offices advice	60%	57%	60%	67%	67%	Target met or exceeded
	Number of member countries implementing new or improved mechanisms, policies or programmes to counter violent extremism	0	5	6	5 ¹⁹	5	Good progress
1.2 Member countries conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections	Share of member countries engaged through the Secretariat's election programme who implement substantive Commonwealth Observer Recommendations or engage in substantive reform processes	60%	100%	65%	33%	91%	Target met or exceeded
	Share of EMBs implementing recommendations formulated by Commonwealth Elections Professionals to enhance the transparency, credibility and inclusiveness of electoral processes	8%	52%	55%	55%	33%	Progress delayed
CC1 Effective participation and equal opportunities for youth in leadership, governance, economic and social development enhanced	Number of targeted member countries that implement Commonwealth recommended measures to increase youth participation in the political process	17	25	25	25	25	Target met or exceeded
CC2 Gender disparities in access to political, social and economic rights and violence against women and girls reduced	Share of targeted member countries that implement Commonwealth recommended actions to promote equal political representation	30%	25%	30%	25%	25%	Good progress
	Number of targeted member countries implementing Commonwealth advisory guidelines and frameworks to reduce violence against women in politics and elections	1	3	3	3 ²⁰	3 ²¹	Target met or exceeded

¹⁹ From 2017 to 2022, the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) project provided tailored and targeted technical assistance to a consistent set of countries to build and deepen CVE capability year on year. The Secretariat has not secured EBR for the CVE technical assistance project to operate in 2023 /24, and CVE technical assistance will be reduced and phased out.

²⁰ Work in this area has been unable to progress and is no longer planned for 2022/23 owing to funding constraints. The Secretariat continues to support countries in increasing economic rights and reducing violence against women and girls through the Gender Mainstreaming project.

²¹ Work in this area has been unable to progress and is no longer planned for 2022/23 owing to funding constraints. The Secretariat continues to support countries in increasing economic rights and reducing violence against women and girls through the Gender Mainstreaming project.

Intermediate outcomes	Performance indicator	Baseline 2020/21	Actuals 2021/22	Target 2022/23	Actuals Jan 2023	Actuals Jun 2023	Progress rating
1.3 Public institutions and frameworks in member countries strengthened to promote rule of law, access to justice, human rights and good governance	Number of targeted small and other vulnerable states effectively participating in international human rights mechanisms	8	10	10	10	13	Target met or exceeded
	Number of targeted member countries progressively implementing outcomes from human rights instruments and mechanisms	0	3	10	9	9	Good progress
	Number of targeted member countries with substantially reduced backlog of cases	0	1	3	1	1	Good progress
	Number of targeted member countries implementing improved legal, policy and practice frameworks to address cybercrime	0	5	5	5	5	Target met or exceeded
	Number of targeted member countries with substantially improved legislative drafting and law reform capacity	0	3	5	5	5	Target met or exceeded
	Number of targeted member countries with improved SDG-enabling rule of law frameworks	0	0	2	0 ²²	0	Progress delayed
	Number of targeted national anti-corruption bodies demonstrating improved performance	0	4	12	9	13	Target met or exceeded
	Number of targeted member countries implementing Commonwealth recommended reforms in public administration	0	3	5	4	6	Target met or exceeded

²² This was previously misreported as the indicator relates to the establishment of the Pro-Bono Centre of Excellence, which has yet to be launched.

2. Sustainable Development

Intermediate outcomes	Performance indicator	Baseline 2020/21	Actuals 2021/22	Target 2022/23	Actuals Jan 2023	Actuals Jun 2023	Progress rating
2.1 Effective trade policy, increased competitiveness and co-operation	Number of targeted member countries implementing Commonwealth recommended export development and trade competitiveness strategies	13	16	20	17	18	Good progress
	Share of Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda cluster decisions with implementation complete or on track	90%	95%	95%	95%	96%	Target met or exceeded
	Number of member countries supported by the Secretariat to implement policy or regulatory initiatives aligned with the Commonwealth Connectivity Action Plan	18	24	29	25	36	Target met or exceeded
	Number of developing country member countries advocating Commonwealth's policy guidance on digital trade and trade and environmental sustainability in multilateral fora	0	37	22	37	40	Target met or exceeded
CC1 Effective participation and equal opportunities for youth in leadership, governance, economic and social development enhanced	Number of supported member countries incorporating youth considerations in trade-related policies and strategies	0	5	5	5	5	Target met or exceeded
CC2 Gender disparities in access to political, social and economic rights and violence against women and girls reduced	Number of supported member countries incorporating gender considerations in trade and trade-related policies and strategies	5	6	8	7	8	Target met or exceeded
2.2 Sustainable public finance and debt management	Number of targeted member countries implementing Commonwealth recommended reforms and policies for debt and public finance management	2	3	5	5	7	Target met or exceeded
	Number of member countries actively utilising Meridian as their primary/sole tool for debt recording and reporting	5	28	41	28	34	Good progress
2.3 Sustainable, equitable, transparent and effective management, governance and use of the ocean, energy and natural resources	Number of targeted member countries implementing Secretariat policy, legal, economic or strategic advice in the sustainable management of their ocean, energy and natural resources	12	14	14	14	14	Target met or exceeded

Intermediate outcomes	Performance indicator	Baseline 2020/21	Actuals 2021/22	Target 2022/23	Actuals Jan 2023	Actuals Jun 2023	Progress rating
2.4 Inclusive and resilient health and education systems	Number of targeted member countries implementing Commonwealth regional legal frameworks to address NCDs	12	13	16	13	13	Good progress
	Number of regional/international fora where Commonwealth positions on global health inequalities are reflected	3	6	9	9	9	Target met or exceeded
	Number of member countries implementing policies to reduce disparities and improve education access and outcomes	7	10	13	10	10	Good progress
CC1 Effective participation and equal opportunities for youth in leadership, governance, economic and social development enhanced	Number of targeted member countries implementing Commonwealth recommended policies to promote economic opportunities for youth	0	3	3	4	5	Target met or exceeded
CC2 Gender disparities in access to political, social and economic rights and violence against women and girls reduced	Number of targeted member countries implementing Commonwealth policies/frameworks/guidelines to reduce violence against women and girls	1	-	-	-	- ²³	No data available

²³ Work in this area has been unable to progress and is no longer planned owing to funding constraints. The Secretariat continues to support countries in increasing economic rights and reducing violence against women and girls through the Gender Mainstreaming project.

3. Resilience and Climate Action

Intermediate outcomes	Performance indicator	Baseline 2020/21	Actuals 2021/22	Target 2022/23	Actuals Jan 2023	Actuals Jun 2023	Progress rating
3.1 Enhanced intra-Commonwealth co-operation on sustainable ocean action and energy transition	Number of Action Group members implementing Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Group commitments	0	7	7	9	11	Target met or exceeded
	Number of member countries engaged with CSET agenda making progress on their sustainable energy transition	0	4	7	6	8	Target met or exceeded
3.2 Enhanced access to financial resources, technology and capacities for climate change adaptation and mitigation	Increased amount of climate finance (US\$) mobilised for member countries through the actions of the CCFAH (cumulative)	US\$43.8m	US\$47.6m	US\$57m	US\$56.3m	US\$276.1m	Target met or exceeded
	Number of targeted member countries implementing climate actions through Commonwealth established mechanisms	2	16	21	17	19	Good progress
	Extent of agreement reached on CALL agenda	0	30	35	56	56	Target met or exceeded
CC1 Effective participation and equal opportunities for youth in leadership, governance, economic and social development enhanced	Number of Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Group members with increased knowledge of youth perspectives in ocean action	1	3	5	3	3	Good progress
	Number of CSET Action Group members promoting energy literacy among children	0	3	5	11	11	Target met or exceeded
	Number of targeted member countries that actively incorporate youth considerations in their implementation strategies to the NDCs	1	3	3	3	11	Target met or exceeded
CC2 Gender disparities in access to political, social and economic rights and violence against women and girls reduced	Number of member countries with increased knowledge of gender issues around sustainable energy	0	-	3	2	2	Good progress
	Number of targeted member countries that actively incorporate gender mainstreaming in their implementation strategies to the NDCs	0	4	4	4	11	Target met or exceeded

4. Small and Other Vulnerable States

Intermediate outcomes	Performance indicator	Baseline 2020/21	Actuals 2021/22	Target 2022/23	Actuals Jan 2023	Actuals Jun 2023	Progress rating
4.1 Small and other vulnerable states' policy positions advanced in global governance mechanisms	Number of key stakeholders that advance Commonwealth positions on small and other vulnerable states	0	3	4	5	5	Target met or exceeded
	Number of international fora that recognise Commonwealth positions on small states in agreement, arrangements and resolutions (e.g. COP, CARICOM, G7, G20, PIF, UN, OECD, World Bank, IMF)	1	3	5	5	5	Target met or exceeded
4.2 Reduced vulnerability to shocks and improved fiscal sustainability and access to financing	Number of small and vulnerable member countries implementing Commonwealth's policy guidance and tools to address resilience	0	0	3 ²⁴	2	2	Good progress

Cross-cutting Outcomes

Cross-cutting outcomes	Performance indicator	Baseline 2020/21	Actuals 2021/22	Target 2022/23	Actuals Jan 2023	Actuals Jun 2023	Progress rating
CC1 Effective participation and equal opportunities for youth in leadership, governance, economic and social development enhanced	Number of targeted member countries adopting youth mainstreaming strategies	2	5	4	5	5	Target met or exceeded
	Share of Secretariat programmes' budget directed to youth empowerment	N/A	60%	70%	60%	60%	Good progress
	Number of targeted small and other vulnerable states implementing Commonwealth policies/frameworks/guidelines for gender mainstreaming	1	2	2	2	2	Target met or exceeded
	Share of Secretariat programmes' budget directed towards gender equality	N/A	60%	70%	60%	60%	Good progress

²⁴ Target revised owing to delays in plans to roll out of the Debt Sustainability Toolkit and dissemination of report findings for the Diaspora Investment.

Enabling Outcomes

Enabling Outcomes	Performance indicator	Baseline 2020/21	Actuals 2021/22	Target 2022/23	Actuals Jan 2023	Actuals Jun 2023	Progress rating
CI Enhanced use of technology, innovation and digitalisation	Number of targeted member countries Commonwealth facilitating digital/ technological solutions	0	12	20	15	15	Good progress
	Number of Commonwealth initiatives resulting in innovation and knowledge transfer between member countries	0	10	12	14	15	Target met or exceeded
CII Delivery through co-creative partnerships increased	Share of Secretariat projects demonstrating leveraging of partnerships to deliver sustainable change in member countries	0	8%	25%	8%	25%	Target met or exceeded
CIII Dynamic risk management approach institutionalised	Secretariat makes demonstrable progress towards embedding risk	Level 3 of the Risk Maturity Model	Level 3 of the Risk Maturity Model	Level 4 of the Risk Maturity Model	Level 3 of the Risk Maturity Model	Level 3 of the Risk Maturity Model	Good progress



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