



Barbados and the  
Eastern Caribbean  
accelerator  
lab

blue  
digital

Sparking the Digital  
Transformation  
of MSMEs in  
the Blue  
Economy

## What is BlueDIGITAL?

**BlueDIGITAL** is a pilot experiment from the UNDP Accelerator Lab that **applies digital tools and solutions to improve segments of the Blue Economy ecosystem and value chains for fisherfolk, government, tourism industry partners and the general public as consumers.** In doing so, this proposed concept aims to reduce digital divides exposed by COVID-19 by introducing innovative, online measures within sectors of the Blue Economy in the Eastern Caribbean.

## Why BlueDIGITAL?

The Eastern Caribbean Blue Economy has been negatively impacted by COVID-19 and many novel challenges have arisen as a result of the extended closure of much of the tourism industry, such as through reduced sales of fish and increased pressure on fragile waste management systems.

Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNDP Accelerator Lab for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean conducted stakeholder outreach consultations as a means of scoping, identifying and analyzing challenges and solutions in the Blue Economy. Through this work, one key trend emerged: COVID-19 acted as a catalyst for change among Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs), with many small-scale fisherfolk turning to tools such as WhatsApp to support their business practices as one example.

The range of opportunities and increasing potential of the Blue Economy as a solution to diversify the Eastern Caribbean economy while creating jobs, improving livelihoods and promoting environmental sustainability is at the core of the UNDP “Blue Economy for Green Islands” strategy. Through this system lens of an integrated approach to development, the Lab is also contributing to UNDP’s Small Island Developing States (SIDS) offer, which is rooted in climate action, Blue Economy and digital transformation. Globally, this concept aligns with UNDP’s strategy to harness potential for development based on digitization and digitalization.

As **BlueDIGITAL** shapes the Blue New Normal, focus must be placed on vulnerable populations, including women whose livelihoods are particularly compromised due to the pandemic. Considering this and in support of Phase 2 of the Multi-Country Office’s (MCO’s) COVID-19 Response Programme, this proposed pilot will help Blue Economy MSMEs transition to new models, from economic recovery to expansion and beyond.

## How will BlueDIGITAL work?

**BlueDIGITAL** will provide digitally-enabled solutions that seek to offer specific services through four portals to four key groups of stakeholders in the Blue Economy ecosystem and related value chains:

### **BlueFISH: IMPROVED SALES FOR FISHERFOLK** STAKEHOLDER - FISHERFOLK



Measures fisheries catch data, including species and size through image recognition technology, and transitions that data to basic digital business management for improved:

- Fisherfolk sales
- Financial, digital and business literacy
- Fisheries catch data (species, size, seasonality and quantity)

### **BlueSEAL: RESPONSIBLE AND REGENERATIVE BLUE TOURISM SOLUTIONS**



STAKEHOLDER - PRIVATE SECTOR

Enhances sustainable and responsible tourism operations by:

- Developing a nationally verified seal to recognize industry partners who implement sustainability into elements of their operations
- Developing a marketplace feature and/or strategy for fisherfolk, enhancing tourism sector-based access to local, sustainable fish and seafood products
- Increasing awareness on and access to responsible and regenerative nature and conservation based tourism activities

BlueDIGITAL app



Four Portals

### **BlueDATA: BETTER DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING**



STAKEHOLDER - GOVERNMENT

Improves data collection for decision making and more sustainable fisheries management through:

- Enhanced data collection of fish catch including species, quantity of fish caught, size and sustainability factors
- Support to digitalization of elements of the fisheries industry

### **BlueTRACE: SUPPORTING TRACEABLE, DIRECT TO CUSTOMER MARKET APPROACHES**



STAKEHOLDER - ALL THE ABOVE + PUBLIC/AVERAGE CONSUMER

Creation of a simple traceability system for fisherfolk profiling including the journey of your fish from ocean to plate:

- Greater public access to transparent, sustainable seafood products through a direct-to-consumer virtual offering

## BlueDIGITAL Fast Facts:

### When?

BlueDIGITAL will be operational from April - December 2021. A phased approach will be applied at each stage.

### Where?

BlueDIGITAL will be piloted in Barbados and will subsequently aim to expand into additional Eastern Caribbean islands where Blue Economy priorities are present.

### Who?

The UNDP Accelerator Lab for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, with support from the Barbados and Eastern Caribbean MCO which will lead the implementation of BlueDIGITAL.