

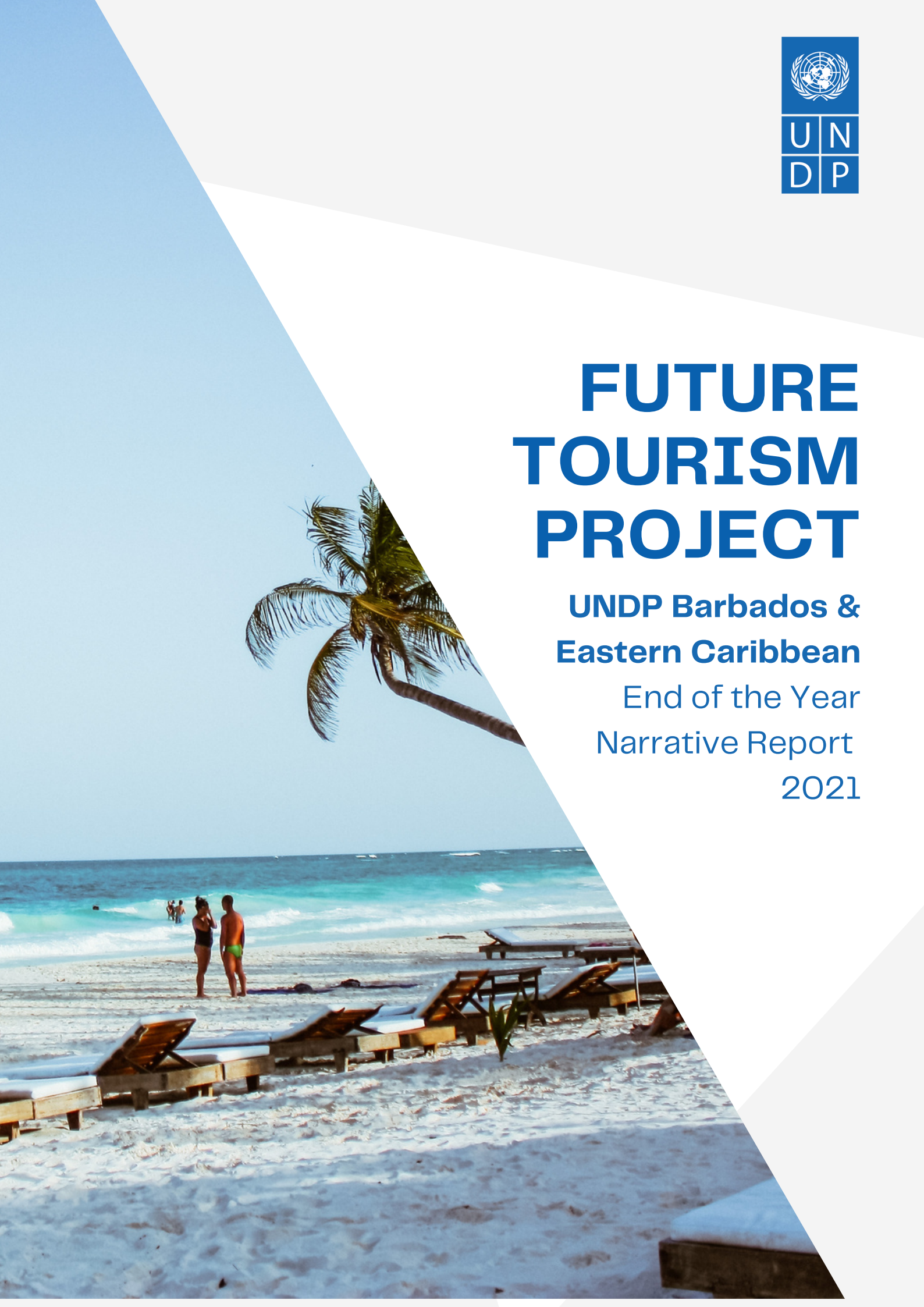


FUTURE TOURISM PROJECT

**UNDP Barbados &
Eastern Caribbean**

End of the Year
Narrative Report

2021



Overview

FUT-TOURISM | End of the Year Narrative Report 2021

The **“Future Tourism: Rethinking Tourism and MSMEs in times of COVID-19”** project aims to technically and financially support Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that are directly or indirectly linked to the tourism sector or have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

With gender equality and empowerment of women at its core, the project seeks to promote economic diversification, job creation and resilience with the **“Blue Economy for Green Islands”** approach in the tourism sector thereby boosting recovery and supporting the digitally enabled transformation of the business processes and value chains of MSMEs.

Covering the following ten (10) countries and territories in the Eastern Caribbean; Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the project spans from January 2021 to June 2022 and has a budget of USD 1.5M.

The project was officially launched in March 2021 with a virtual forum attended by participating governments, partners, stakeholders, and UN agencies. Special guests were Hon. Dr. Clarice Modeste-Curwen, Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Climate Resilience and the Environment in Grenada and Hon. Denise Charles, Minister of Tourism, International Transport and Maritime Initiatives in Dominica who addressed the attendees along with Ugo Blanco, Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Multi-Country Office. A press release of the event is accessible [here](#).



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The Future Tourism project has three (3) main outputs including:

Output 1 – Regional dialogues and policy solutions for the tourism sector.

The **Regional Policy Dialogues** provided a forum for stakeholders within the tourism sector in the Eastern Caribbean and the wide region to collectively rethink the tourism industry. The result was an engaging dialogue series that gave rise to the compilation of solutions from governments, regional organizations, big tour operators and MSMEs who are all critical to the functioning of the tourism sector. These solutions can be found in the **Summary Report** of the Regional Policy Dialogues which presents several recommendations from the aforementioned stakeholders in the tourism value chain.

In addition, there will be country-specific diagnostic on five countries within the Eastern Caribbean, as well as a subregional analysis which will provide data and compile information on the current situation, existing policies, ongoing efforts, needs, trends, scenarios and opportunities that could have a catalytic impact on the sector. These studies are currently ongoing and will be published in February 2022.

Output 2 – Technical support for MSME retooling and access to markets within tourism value chains:

In this output, the focus is predominantly on the development of environmentally sustainable value chains with an inclusive business approach where MSMEs, women-owned businesses, producers' associations and cooperatives that operate either as suppliers, manufacturers, distributors and/or commercial channels receive the support required to adapt to the new market conditions. The **Business Adaptation Programme** (BAP) in partnership with the University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus and the Frankfurt School (FS) of Finances & Management, and with the generous contribution of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), provided training and technical assistance to more than 200 MSMEs.

Output 3 – Financial assistance for the economic recovery of MSMEs affected by the impact of COVID-19.

150 MSMEs that participated in the BAP will be receiving a grant of either USD 4,000 or USD 6,500 to adapt their businesses to the new environment created by the pandemic with a focus on digitization. These grants are expected to reach the beneficiaries between Q4 2021 and Q1 2022.

Output 1 – Regional Dialogues and Policy Solutions for the Tourism Sector

Regional Tourism Dialogues

A key component of this project is the Future Tourism Regional Policy Dialogues: a 5-part series of weekly panels, that facilitated catalytic discussions which will contribute towards shaping the future of tourism in the region. The Dialogues provided the opportunity for key tourism stakeholders from across the region to discuss the issues and opportunities affecting inclusive and sustainable growth in Caribbean tourism.

Each Policy Dialogue was focused on key topics and sub-themes, which were explored in depth by the panel of experts selected for each. The Policy Dialogues were hosted virtually on **UWItv** and on the UNDP Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean’s **Facebook page**. They were held bi-weekly from May 11 to June 10, 2021, and government representatives, including Dr the Honourable Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada, the Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, and representatives from regional and international tourism organizations were part of the discussions. The full agenda is available below and the recordings are available [here](#).

Topic	Panelist
RPD1: High-level Discussion: The Future of Tourism: What is next? “Disruptive Innovation” · The value of short VS long-term visitors · Diversification of product offering Digital innovation	Moderator: Denise Shepherd-Johnson Panellists: 1. Dr the Honourable Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada 2. The Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica 3. Luis Felipe Lopez-Calva, UN Assistant Secretary-General and UNDP Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean 4. Marla Dukharan, Caribbean Economist and chief economist at Bitt Inc. 5. Sandra Carvao, Chief Market Intelligence and Competitiveness at World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) 6. Flavia Matos, Airbnb Director of Public Policy for Latin America

Table 1 – Agenda for the Regional Policy Dialogues

Output 1 – Regional Dialogues and Policy Solutions for the Tourism Sector

Topic	Panelist
<p>RPD2: The new profiles of visitors – A market-driven approach to accelerate recovery.</p> <p>“New market opportunities”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Remote work program (digital nomads, welcome stamps, etc.) Emerging market opportunities for MSMEs 	<p>Moderator: Nikola Simpson, UNDP Accelerator Lab in Barbados & the Eastern Caribbean</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warren Solomon, Director of Tourism, Montserrat Tourism division 2. Dr Sylvia Dohnert, Compete Caribbean Executive Director 3. Katrina Yearwood, Chief Immigration Officer, Antigua and Barbuda 4. Peter Thompson, CEO Remote Work (Barbados) Inc. 5. Gabriella Stowell, Regional Director for Latin America & Caribbean, Adventure Travel Trade Association 6. Ava Nasiri, SAP Engineer and Digital Nomad in Barbados
<p>RPD3: A digital approach to leapfrog recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · “Digital Transformation” · Digital requirements for Caribbean MSMEs · Online and mobile payment · Contact tracing and digital apps for health and safety Online presence and real-time monitoring 	<p>Moderator: Brian Frontin, Caribbean Tourism Strategist</p> <p>Keynote address:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natalia Bayona, UNWTO Director of Innovation, Education and Investments <p>Panellists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Dr Lisa Indar, Director-Surveillance, Disease Prevention & Control Division, Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) 3. Sybil Welsh, Senior Project Specialist, Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) on Dcash 4. Jessica Bensley, Founder and CEO, Skyviews 5. Aldwyn Wayne, Founder and CEO, WiPay 6. Iva Kutle, Global Destination Marketing Partner, Google

Table 1 – Agenda for the Regional Policy Dialogues

Output 1 – Regional Dialogues and Policy Solutions for the Tourism Sector

Topic	Panelist
<p>RDP4: A value chain approach for inclusive and sustainable recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · “Inclusive & Sustainable Value Chains” · Community-Based Tourism · Value chain integration with national, regional and international partners and markets · Cross sectorial linkages 	<p>Moderator: Tonni Brodber, Representative, UN Women MCO – Caribbean</p> <p>Keynote address:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neil Walters, Secretary General (Ag.), Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) <p>Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Dr Hon. Natalio Wheatley, Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, Culture, Youth Affairs, Fisheries, and Agriculture, British Virgin Islands 3. Valerie Cliff, UNDP Resident Representative for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean 4. Helena Rey, UNEP Program Officer 5. Carl Hurter, St. Lucia Hotel & Tourism Association 6. Frank Comito, Special Advisor and Former CEO, Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)
<p>RPD5: Sustainable solutions for tourism development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · “Sustainable solutions” <p>Regional coordination Explicit policy and financing solutions for discussion</p>	<p>Moderator: Riad Meddeb, Senior Principal Advisor for SIDS, UNDP</p> <p>Solution presenters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Karolin Troubetzkoy, Hotelier and Envoy, Caribbean Challenge Initiative, past Chairperson of CHTA and the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST) 2. Seleni Matus, Executive Director, International Institute of Tourism Studies, George Washington University 3. Maria Fowell, Senior Technical Specialist Tourism, OECS Commission <p>Panel of Financial Institutions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Floris Vermeulen, Local Representative, Southern and Eastern Caribbean, European Investment Bank, European Union 5. Marisol Inurritegui, Natural Resources Sector Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Output 1 – Regional Dialogues and Policy Solutions for the Tourism Sector

Regional Tourism Dialogues

The public was also invited to participate via UNDP's digital platform for online engagement **SparkBlue**. The e-discussion focused on the three (3) main topics:

- Digital Technologies and Payments: What are the Challenges and the Opportunities?
- Short-term vs long-term visitors: Digital Nomads the new normal?
- Shifting consumer demand: Sustainable, Community Tourism and New Opportunities for Caribbean MSMEs

Users of the platform were invited to ask questions or make relevant interventions on the platform – some of these were also included in the final dialogue report. More than 50 people joined the discussion, from a variety of backgrounds: Barbados Welcome Stamp/remote workers, start-ups, small businesses, civil society, technology companies and representatives from UNDP and other UN agencies across the world.

Subregional and National Diagnostic Reports

The tourism diagnostic consultations will assess the state of tourism in the countries and territories in the Caribbean and identify policy solutions for the sector. Six consultations will be held, 5 national analyses focused on Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and 1 subregional analysis covering ten countries and territories in the Eastern Caribbean, and are envisioned with draft national diagnostic reports for each country and the overall subregional report. These studies will provide data and compile information on the current situation, existing policies, ongoing efforts, needs, trends, scenarios and opportunities that could have a catalytic impact on the tourism sector.

Output 2 – Technical support for MSME retooling and access to markets within tourism value chains

Technical support for MSMEs is a key focus of this project and includes interlinked components, namely: Virtual Open Training, Technical Assistance and Mentoring leading to access to grants. The so-called **Business Adaptation Programme** (BAP) had a target for participation of 300 MSMEs from the region. Almost 1000 MSMEs from across the Caribbean registered in the initial call for applications to receive technical support. 70% of these were women-owned businesses, surpassing the key target of 50% identified for the project.

As mentioned above, the BAP was possible thanks to the generous contribution of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and in partnership with the University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus and the Frankfurt School (FS) of Finances & Management. Through the assistance of the CDB, UNDP was able to allocate USD 700,00 to over 150 beneficiaries to assist business owners with strategic investments to help them actualize their business plans. This assistance will help improve the digitization of the MSMEs and further assist the overall recovery of the tourism sector.

Virtual Open Training

The programme provided open training to MSMEs to strengthen their digital skills and support their operations considering the effects of COVID-19. The training commenced in June 2021 for the duration of twelve (12) weeks, consisting of three (3) areas namely; digital technologies, financial planning, and marketing. The training allowed the MSMEs the option to select the most appropriate level of training depending on the stage of their business and their goals.

Country/ Territory	Number of MSMEs
Anguilla	8
Antigua and Barbuda	21
Barbados	56
British Virgin Islands	5
Dominica	56
Grenada	21
Montserrat	21
St. Kitts and Nevis	46
St. Lucia	119
St. Vincent and The Grenadines	40

Table 2 – Showing the number of MSMEs participating in the Open Training by Country/Territory 8

Output 2 – Technical support for MSME retooling and access to markets within tourism value chains

In November 2021, a virtual Graduation ceremony was prepared to celebrate the achievements of the MSMEs. It can be accessed [here](#).

Technical Assistance and Mentoring

This initiative was geared to help MSMEs incorporate innovative, digital solutions into their business model considering the new market trends. The technical assistance component rolls out in two (2) phases; phase one (1) covered technical support workshops and phase two (2) included one-to-one mentoring sessions. Participants of Phase 1 received assistance to develop a Business Improvement Plan (BIP) and in Phase 2, participants received advice on guidance to implement their BIPs.

The BIP is a strategic document that was created by participating MSMEs. This included a plan for building a more resilient business post-COVID-19, incorporating some of the key skills learned in the Open Training and a detailed financial proposal that showed how grant funding would be spent.

MSME Engagement – To build a community and improve engagement among the MSMEs in the programme, a Facebook page was developed to be used by the business students.

Output 3 – Financial assistance through sustainable financing mechanisms to boost economic recovery of MSMEs impacted by COVID-19

The financial assistance (grants) permits strategic investments, financial support to employee retention and further support resilience recovery from the impact of COVID-19. 150 MSMEs that completed the BAP were selected to receive grants through a government-led process.

Grants of up to USD 6,500 will be dispersed to the 150 MSMEs which submitted their Business Improvement Plans and completed the technical support of the project. Grants will reach the beneficiaries in Q4 2021 and Q1 2022.

Country/ Territory	Number of MSMEs	No. of fully & partially female owned MSMEs	Partially or fully female owned %
Anguilla	2	1	50%
Antigua and Barbuda	6	3	50%
Barbados	33	26	79%
British Virgin Islands	1	1	100%
Dominica	22	16	73%
Grenada	5	4	80%
Montserrat	11	8	73%
St. Kitts and Nevis	18	14	78%
St. Lucia	21	18	86%
St. Vincent and The Grenadines	31	24	77%
Total	150	115	77%

Table 3 shows the number of MSMEs that will receive grants

Women owned businesses are the main target of this programme as its two main cross-cutting principles are; gender equality and gender empowerment. Through gender-responsive training, technical assistance and mentoring, the project will strengthen women's capacities as well as access to grants in an effort to promote faster recovery of livelihoods and enhancement of living conditions.



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