The Blue Economy and Partnership Building for MPA Managers

Regional Peer-to-Peer Workshop

Coyaba Beach Resort Conference Room

October 21st - 23rd, 2026

St. George's, Grenada

Introduction

The term "blue economy" is a term which many marine protected area (MPA) managers and practitioners have heard, but there is a lack understanding of what the term really means for MPA managers, how it can be part of benefit-sharing with communities, and how it can help generate financial support for MPA management.

There is also a need for tools that can help MPA managers to promote blue economic development associated with their sites, and for capacity building that can assist communities to develop enterprises that will generate funding and enhance the sustainability of development from blue growth. MPAs are both deserving of investment via the blue economy to help finance effective MPA management and infrastructure, and at the same time they can drive new opportunities for investment in blue enterprise development, such as sustainable marine ecotourism.

As the Blue Economy receives increasing attention from policy-makers and investors, marine natural resource managers have an important role to play in ensuring that ocean-based, blue economic growth is truly good for the oceans and that it doesn't come at the expense of sustainability. Given the potentially significant amount of funding at stake in the Blue Economy, MPA managers stand to benefit from having a solid understanding of the principles underpinning the concept.

This regional peer-to-peer learning exchange builds on significant work to date by the participating MPAs and their regional mentors to build MPA management capacity for sustainable marine financing, communications and other core MPA management topics. At this workshop we will address:

- Understanding the blue economy
- Links between the blue economy and MPA sustainable financing
- Case studies in the blue economy and sustainable financing from MPA management mentors
- Sustainable tourism management – an update on key concepts and approaches
- Sustainable livelihoods and micro-enterprise development in the blue economy
- Determining communications needs in support of blue economic development

Tuesday, October 20th, 2026 - Arrival of participants

Time	Programme	Facilitator
All day	Arrival of participants and transport	Ms. Kristy Shortte

DAY 1 - Wednesday, October 21st, 2026 — Understanding the Blue Economy & Links to Sustainable MPA Financing

Time	Programme	Facilitator
8:30am – 9:00am	Registration of participants	Ms. Kristy Shortte, SusGren
9:00am –10:00am	Welcome and Protocol	Ms. Kristy Shortte, SusGren
	Opening Remarks – Chief Fisheries Officer, Grenada	Mr. Nigel Gibbs
	Opening Remarks – GIZ Technical Advisor Blue Economy and Skills in the Eastern Caribbean	Ms. Laurah John, GIZ
	Opening Remarks – MPAConnect Coordination	Ms. Dana Wusinich-Mendez, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program
	Introduction of Participants	All participants
	Background on the Grenadines Network of MPAs Background on the MPAConnect Network and context for blue economy and partnership building	Ms. Orisha Joseph Mrs. Celia Mahung
10:00am - ~Coffee Break ~		
10:30am – 10:45am	**Demystifying the Blue Economy** - What is the blue economy? - Where can MPAs fit in the Blue Economy?	Ms. Emma Doyle, MPAConnect Coordinator
10:45am – 12:30pm	**MPA Management Updates**: What initiatives are underway at each MPA related to: **sustainable financing, coastal zone management, tourism management and local communities**? - Grenada Network of MPAs - Sandy Island Oyster Bed MPA - Tobago Cays Marine Park	Mr. Nigel Gibbs Mr. Aaron Bartholomew Mr. Benjamin Wilson

	- South Coast Marine Conservation Area (Fisheries Division) Point Sable Environmental Protection Area (Saint Lucia National Trust) - Soufriere Marine Managed Area - Soufriere-Scotts Head Marine Reserve - Oceans Forward	Mr. Danroy Connell Mrs. Jeannine Compton-Antoine Mr. Harold Dalsan Mr. Norman Norris Mr. Derrick Theophille
12:30 – 1:30pm ~Lunch Break ~		
1:30 - 1:45pm	Case study: Raising revenue through new partnerships between a marine reserve and the tourism sector – Turneffe Atoll Blue Talks as part of blended finance and the blue economy	Ms. Delonie Forman Turneffe Atoll Sustainable Association (TASA)
1:45pm – 2:30pm	Case study: Generating Sustainable Financing from an MPA Business Venture – The TIDE STEM Programme – education tourism through TIDE Tours STEM Programmes, strategic partnerships, and the OPEN business model	Mr. Oliver Garay, TIDE
2:30-3:00pm	Seed Funding Opportunity: Merchandizing proposal from GIZ	Ms. Laurah John
3:00pm – 3:30pm	Case study: Belize Blue Bonds – the story of pursuing an innovative financing mechanism	Mrs. Beverly Wade, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Blue Economy and Marine Conservation
3:30 - 4:00pm	Review of MPA sustainable finance opportunities identified in past MPAConnect workshops	Ms. Orisha Joseph Mrs. Celia Mahung
	End of Day 1	

DAY 2 — Thursday October 22nd, 2026 - Blue Economic Development – Investors, Tourism and Communities

Time	Programme	Facilitator
8:30am – 9:00am	Registration of participants	Ms. Kristy Shortte
9:00-10:00am	**Sustainable tourism under the Blue Economy** - Approaches to tourism management for MPAs – from carrying capacity to developing a shared vision with the tourism sector and incorporating into MPA management planning and monitoring - **Discussion:** Q&A with sustainable tourism mentors	Ms. Emma Doyle Mr. Yashin Dujon, Ms. Delonie Foreman
	~Coffee Break ~	
10:30-11:30am	**Achieving a voice for MPAs in development planning under the Blue Economy** - **Case study**: The Belize Marine Spatial Plan - **Case study**: Participatory marine spatial planning experience in The Grenadines	Mr. Samir Rosado, Lead, Marine Spatial Plan, Coastal Zone Management Authority, Belize Ms. Orisha Joseph
11:30-12:30pm	**Discussion**: The role of MPA champions/ambassadors in closing the blue economy disconnect between decisions makers, investors and the reality of chronic underfunding for MPA management on the frontlines of marine conservation	Mrs. Celia Mahung, MPAConnect Mentor
	12:30 – 1:30pm ~Lunch ~	
1:30-2:30pm	**Sharing the benefits of the blue economy with communities associated with MPAs** – the importance of community-focused programmes and partnership approaches for implementation - **Case study**: Roatan Marine Park	Mr. Lucito Ayuso, MPAConnect Mentor
2:30 – 3:30pm	Blue Action Lab's work in **advancing blue economy entrepreneurship in The Bahamas**	Ms. Ann-Marie Carroll, Program Manager, Blue Action
3:30-4:30pm	**Applying a blue economy lens to consider MPA sustainable finance opportunities, partner programmes and development planning proposals** - Screening criteria - Group work	Celia Mahung MPA teams with mentors
	Recap End of Day 2	

DAY 3 — Friday October 23rd, 2026 - Communications and Field Trip

Time	Programme	Facilitator
8:30am – 9:00am	Registration of participants	Ms. Kristy Shortte
9:00am – 10:30am	Communicating about the importance of MPAs in the blue economy - Participant role play/interviews	Ms. Orisha Joseph Mr. Paul Etienne
10:30am Break		
10:30 – 11:00am	Partnership building with national conservation trust funds Case study: Support for MPAs in St. Vincent and the Grenadines through the SVG Conservation Fund - Tobago Cays Marine Park	Mr. Kenrick Chambers
11:00 – 11:30am	Partnership building with national conservation trust funds Case study: Support for MPAs in Grenada through the Grenada Sustainable Development Trust Fund - Sandy Island Oyster Bed MPA	Dr. Stephen Nimrod
11:30 – 12:00pm	Partnership building with national conservation trust funds Case study: Woburn Clarks Court Marine Protected Area	Mr. Johnny Calliste GSDTF
12:00pm – 1:00pm ~Lunch~		
1:00pm – 3:00pm	Field Tour – Boat Trip Woburn Clarks Court Marine Protected Area with Aquanauts	Mr. Kendon James Johnny Calliste – GSDTF
7:30pm – 10:00pm	MPA Award Ceremony and Networking	All participants