



# **Seizing the trade and business potential of Blue BioTrade in selected Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Countries (Blue BioTrade project)**

## **UNCTAD-OECS in cooperation with CITES Secretariat Project launch webinar**

**7 October 2020**

*Draft concept note*

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### **Background:**

Blue BioTrade aims to promote trade and investment in marine biological resources in line with social, economic and environmental sustainability criteria, known as the BioTrade Principles and Criteria<sup>1</sup>. Integrating BioTrade Principles and Criteria into the marine environment can promote the sustainable use of scarce and vital oceanic living resources (at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels) and can lessen the negative impacts of human and economic activity over marine ecosystems. Blue BioTrade is a spinoff of the UNCTAD Oceans Economy and Fisheries Programme and the BioTrade Initiative.

UNCTAD, in collaboration with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), will implement a project to empower small-scale coastal producers from OECS member states. This project aims to produce and trade seafood delicacy (namely queen conch products) in domestic, regional and international markets under the Blue BioTrade Principles and Criteria. The project is funded by OECS with support of the European Union, and will be implemented in 18 months starting this Fall 2020.

Queen conch (*Strombus gigas*)—a sea mollusc or shellfish, is a highly appreciated seafood delicacy with important non-food uses, including therapeutic products, handicrafts and jewellery. Since the late 1990s, the global conch market has been estimated at an average of about \$60 million annually. In 2015 alone, 1.4 thousand tons of conch were exported from the Caribbean to the United States (representing about 70 per cent of global conch trade). More precisely, production of queen conch by Granada, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines was equivalent to 645 metric tonnes (mt) with a value of about USD 7.63 million in 2012 (FAO, 2014; Regional queen conch Fisheries Management and Conservation Plan).

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<sup>1</sup> The BioTrade principles and criteria were created in 2007 and revised in 2020. See <https://unctad.org/en/Pages/DITC/Trade-and-Environment/BioTrade/BT-Principles-Criteria.aspx>

While global demand for this Appendix II CITES-listed species<sup>2</sup> is booming, small-scale coastal producers in the Eastern Caribbean do not fully seize the opportunities offered by sustainable conch markets. In many locations, early uncontrolled harvesting has resulted in overfishing, illegal landings and a rapid deterioration of endowments. Supply-side challenges include the absence of traceability systems, limited landing and trade evidence, poor understanding and use of CITES processes and permits, lack of common handling practices and sanitary standards, and a low level of associativity of fishers. From a trade perspective, limited access to markets—particularly international buyers—and the absence of ways to enhance added value, including the use of certification schemes, for fishermen are significant challenges ahead.

The project considers conducting stakeholder-owned value chain assessments of queen conch products in the three beneficiary countries—Grenada, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines—and developing a Blue BioTrade regional implementation plan of action. By complementing these activities with tailor-made capacity-building efforts, the project aims to enhance stakeholders’ capacity to identify sustainable and gender-inclusive business opportunities and formulate actions to pilot the application of the 2020 BioTrade Principles and Criteria to the conch value chain. Also, the project aims at fostering stakeholders’ capacity to identify, design and implement enhanced sustainable production and trade opportunities in the queen conch value chain. The project is designed and will be implemented in a way that builds on existing work done on queen conch in the countries and region, including under CITES.

The project will directly contribute to achieving key targets of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (Conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources) and 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns). Also, it will address key economic, environmental, and social objectives of the OECS Development Strategy 2019-2028 and supporting a blue recovery in a COVID-19 scenario.

**Objective:** This high-level webinar seeks to convene project partners, beneficiaries and national and regional to discuss the relevance of the project for OECS countries and small island developing states, particularly in preparing national producers to participate in international markets in a COVID19 era.

**Registration:**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/launching-of-the-project-blue-biotrade-in-selected-oecs-countries-tickets-121315386587>

**More information about the project is available on:**

<https://unctad.org/en/pages/MeetingDetails.aspx?meetingid=2484>

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<sup>2</sup> Appendices I, II and III to the Convention are lists of species afforded different levels or types of protection from over-exploitation Appendix II lists species that are not necessarily now threatened with extinction but that may become so unless trade is closely controlled. See <https://www.cites.org/eng/app/index.php> and [https://www.cites.org/eng/prog/queen\\_conch](https://www.cites.org/eng/prog/queen_conch)

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