



**Oceans Economy and Trade Strategies (OETS):
Looking back and forging ahead
- A Caribbean and Central American experience sharing workshop -**

**Online
23-24 September 2021**

Geneva: 5 - 8 p.m.

Bridgetown/New York: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

San José/Belmopan: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

CONCEPT NOTE

Version of 28 September 2021

I. Background

The oceans economy provides livelihoods for billions of people and offers significant opportunities for sustainable development. However, reeling from the global impacts of the 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, continuous developments of marine technology, limited opportunities for growth in inland-based economic activities and increasing human uses of the ocean and coasts - our oceans have become a promising but fragile economic frontier. Prior to the pandemic, the United Nations Conference

on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimated that the export value of ocean-based goods and services sectors was at least US\$ 2.5 trillion (2018) and with a potential to double in value by 2030.¹ However, many oceans-based sectors have been heavily impacted by the pandemic and measures designed to address it, particularly coastal tourism, maritime transport and fisheries. It is probable that uncertainties in these sectors will remain until the pandemic is fully under control globally, including in coastal developing countries, but most notably in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Harnessing the potential of an ocean-based economy under an integrated ocean governance framework that implements international law as reflected in [the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#) will help enable sustainable economic recovery, diversification of livelihoods and climate resilience.

In 2018, the UNCTAD in cooperation with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) of the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) of the United Nations launched the project, "[Evidence-based and policy coherent Oceans Economy and Trade Strategies](#)" in Barbados, Belize and Costa Rica ("target countries"). At the outset, the key challenges identified were: 1) limited capacity by national stakeholders to identify and harness opportunities arising from sustainable ocean-based sectors; 2) lack of shared vision, coordination mechanisms and cooperation among stakeholders; 3) elusive trade opportunities for ocean-based sectors due to significant trade barriers including high tariffs and tariff peaks, complex non-tariff measures, and private standards relevant to products and services in ocean-based economic sectors; and overall, 4) limited legal and institutional frameworks for the sustainable governance of oceans in accordance with the international legal framework for oceans set out in the UNCLOS and its related instruments, as well as applicable trade-related multilateral instruments. Additionally, opportunities may also be hindered by limited resilience and adaptation capacities to climate and pandemic shocks.

To strengthen capacities of the target countries in elaborating, adopting and implementing evidence-based and policy coherent Oceans Economy and Trade Strategies (OETS) to promote sustainable trade of products and services in ocean-based economic sectors within the UNCLOS framework, UNCTAD and OLA/DOALOS implemented the OETS project in three phases: (i) assessment and formulation; (ii) validation and implementation; and (iii) dissemination. Currently, the project is in its third (final) phase and is seeking to implement selected key priorities identified by target countries from their respective national Oceans Economy and Trade Strategies and Plans of Action developed under this project, while considering the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. Objectives

This online regional experience sharing workshop will be held as part of the final phase (dissemination) of the project. By considering the achievements, lessons learned and recommendations that have emerged from the first two phases of the project, it seeks to:

- increase understanding on how to design and implement OETS as a tool to promote sustainable trade of products and services in ocean-based economic sectors within the UNCLOS framework; and
- foster cooperation among States at the regional level.

More specifically, it aims to:

¹ UNCTAD (forthcoming, 2021). Advancing the potential of Sustainable Ocean-Based Economies - Trade trends, market drivers and market access.

- present project outcomes and share experiences, including lessons learned, on the elaboration, adoption and implementation of national OETS reports;
- present on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on OETS-selected value chains and potential responses including through economic, trade and law of the sea policy and regulatory measures;
- encourage interest in obtaining further support to develop and implement a new generation of OETS support in other countries in the Americas, Africa, the Pacific and other regions.

Envisaged as an event leading up to [UNCTAD15](#), the online workshop will also serve as a platform to showcase to the international community, the findings of the project and its contribution to the implementation of the regulatory and trade-related aspects of [SDG 14](#), including through [UNCTAD's mandate on oceans and seas \(Paragraph 100\(t\) of the Nairobi Maafikiano\)](#) and OLA/DOALOS' mandate to promote the uniform and consistent application of UNCLOS and a coordinated approach to its overall implementation, and of strengthening technical cooperation and financial assistance for this purpose, as well as promoting better understanding and wider appreciation of UNCLOS and its related agreements (General Assembly resolution 52/26).

III. Methodology

Building upon the achievements and lessons learned from the project's activities in the last years, [UNCTAD's Ocean's Economy Pillars](#) and the uniform and consistent application of UNCLOS and related instruments, the OETS online workshop will be divided into two three-hour sessions taking place **on Zoom on 23-24 September 2021**. Both sessions will include a poll (a set of baseline questions), a survey and interactive discussions among participants.

IV. Partners

Multilateral: UNCTAD and OLA/DOALOS

National: COMEX, INCOPESCA, Belize Fisheries Department, Directorate General for Foreign Trade, Belize, Barbados Fisheries Division

V. Programme

Oceans Economy and Trade Strategies (OETS): Looking back and forging ahead

- Online Caribbean and Central American Experience Sharing Workshop -

23-24 September 2021

English-Spanish simultaneous interpretation available

Day 1: 23 September 2021 (Thursday)

Geneva: 5 - 8 p.m.

Bridgetown/New York: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Belmopan/San José: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Moderators: UNCTAD and OLA/DOALOS

<p>5 - 5:45 p.m. (Geneva time)</p>	<p>Welcoming remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon. Andre Perez, Minister of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation, Belize • Hon. Andrés Valenciano, Minister of Foreign Trade, Costa Rica • Ms. Sonia Foster, Permanent Secretary (Ag.), Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy, Barbados • Ms. Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General, UNCTAD • Mr. Dmitry Gonchar, Principal Legal Officer, Officer-in-Charge, OLA/DOALOS
<p>5:45 - 7 p.m. (Geneva time)</p>	<p>The Oceans Economy and Trade Strategies: Key findings and action plans</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Costa Rica</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. José Centeno, Chief, Office for International Cooperation, Costa Rican Institute of Fisheries and Aquaculture (INCOPECA) • Mr. Jaime Mora, Adviser, Minister's Office for Regional and Territorial Development, Ministry of Foreign Trade (COMEX) <p>Belize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Felicia Cruz, Fisheries Officer, Policy and Planning Unit, Belize Fisheries Department • Mr. Berisford Codd, Trade Economist, Directorate General for Foreign Trade, Belize <p>Barbados</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Joyce Leslie, Chief Fisheries Officer, Fisheries Division, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy <p>Q&A by stakeholders</p> <p>Baseline poll questions</p>
<p>7 - 8 p.m. (Geneva time)</p>	<p>Impacts and implications of the COVID-19 for the Oceans Economy and Trade Strategy: Case study of Barbados, Belize and Costa Rica</p> <p>Dr. Lahsen Ababouch, Former Director, Fisheries Policy and Economics Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNCTAD-OLA/DOALOS Senior Expert</p> <p>Comments by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Graciela Pereira, Executive Director, INFOPECA • Ms. Yvette Diei-Ouadi, FAO Subregional Office for the Caribbean (FAO-SLC) Secretary to Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) • Mr. Peter A. Murray, Advisor, Fisheries Management and Development, Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM)

	Interaction with stakeholders
<p>Day 2: 24 September (Friday)</p> <p>Geneva: 5 - 8 p.m. Bridgetown/New York: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Belmopan/San José: 9 a.m. -12 p.m.</p> <p>Moderators: UNCTAD and OLA/DOALOS</p>	
5 – 5:45 p.m. (Geneva time)	<p>Original OETS methodology: Implementation, lessons learned and sustainability</p> <p>Mr. David Vivas, Legal Officer, Division on International Trade and Commodities (DITC), UNCTAD Mr. Francois Bailet, Senior Legal Officer, OLA/DOALOS</p> <p>Q&A by stakeholders</p>
5:45 – 6:30 p.m. (Geneva time)	<p>The national OETS process: Key accomplishments, lessons learned and planned follow-up</p> <p>Comments by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. José Centeno, Chief, Office for International Cooperation, INCOPECA, Costa Rica • Mr. Jaime Mora, Adviser, Minister's Office for Regional and Territorial Development, COMEX, Costa Rica • Ms. Felicia Cruz, Fisheries Officer, Policy and Planning Unit, Belize Fisheries Department • Mr. Berisford Codd, Trade Economist, Directorate General for Foreign Trade, Belize • Mr. Christopher Parker, Fisheries Biologist, Fisheries Division, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy, Barbados
6:30 - 7:30 p.m. (Geneva time)	<p>The future of the OETS project: expressions of interest and additional financial means</p> <p>Interaction with stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Jaqueline-Emmanuel Flood, Director of Economic Affairs and Regional Integration, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) • Mr. Peter A. Murray, Adviser, Fisheries Management and Development, CRFM <p>Representatives of financial and export support institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Federico Vignati, Principal Executive, development bank of Latin America (CAF) ○ Mr. Ted Janulis, Founder and Principal, Investable Oceans

7:30 – 7:45 p.m. (Geneva time)	Wrap up and next steps UNCTAD- OLA/DOALOS
7:45 – 8 p.m. (Geneva time)	Online workshop survey on impact of the OETS Project

VI. Focal points

- UNCTAD** Mr. David Vivas Eugui, Legal Officer (david.vivaseugui@unctad.org)
Ms. Claudia Contreras, Economic Affairs Officer (claudia.contreras@unctad.org)
Ms. Maria Durleva, Trade and Environment Consultant (maria.durleva@un.org)
- OLA/DOALOS** Mr. Francois Bailet, Senior Legal Officer (bailet@un.org)
Mr. Michele Ameri, Legal Officer (amerim@un.org)
Mr. Bingzhuo Li, Legal Officer (bingzhuo.li@un.org)
Mr. Fernando Diaz Cabrera, Legal Officer (fernando.cabrera@un.org)