

Management Response & Recommendations Action Plan

Evaluation Report for Programme Name: Evaluation of FCDO support to improve resilience in the Caribbean through a range of programmes and wider initiatives.

Response to Evaluation of FCDO support to improve resilience in the Caribbean

The Caribbean Development Team (CDT) recently completed their thematic evaluation on the UK's support to build resilience in the Caribbean 2015-2023.

Background

In 2024, Triple Line and the Global Institute for Climate Smart and Resilient Development in the University of West Indies (GICSRD - UWI) were commissioned to conduct a thematic evaluation of the United Kingdom (UK) support to build resilience in the Caribbean. The evaluation was undertaken from January to June 2024. The evaluation aimed to understand how the UK supported the Caribbean region to build its resilience to shocks and climate change. This evaluation covers UK support to 15 countries in the region including seven English speaking ODA eligible countries (Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Lucia, St Vincent and Grenadines), Haiti, Suriname, and Dominican Republic and 5 non-ODA eligible countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, St Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago) over the 9-year period, 2015 to 2023. The evaluation covered a wide range of interventions, including a range of programmatic and non-programmatic support, such as influencing, coordination, research and analysis.

Methodology

The evaluation was theory-based, for which the evaluation team retrospectively constructed a Theory of Change to explore the pathways towards resilience and to serve as a guiding framework. The evaluation followed a qualitative approach and drew on a combination of secondary documentary sources and interviews. There were seven country case studies including 4 ODA eligible countries (Belize, Dominica, Jamaica and Suriname); Guyana (graduating) and two non-ODA eligible

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countries (The Bahamas, Barbados). Contribution analysis principles were used to consider the UK contribution to key outcomes.

There were two overarching evaluation questions.

- **Question 1:** To what extent is the approach taken by the Caribbean Development Team to improve the resilience of the Caribbean region – to climate shifts, natural hazards, economic and other shocks – **relevant and strategically targeted to deliver** the UK objective of strengthening resilience? This question focuses on ODA-eligible countries.
- **Question 2:** What changes in the way FCDO's **use of available resources could improve overall effectiveness**? This question focuses on ODA-eligible countries as well as non-ODA eligible countries.

Key lessons

Lessons

Lessons 1 through 5 are related to the first overarching evaluation question, while lessons 6 and 7 are in relation to the second evaluation question.

Lesson 1. Partnerships with like-minded development partners to co-design and implement programmes contributes to enhanced coherence and effectiveness. Partnerships should be based on respective capacities and value – added to ensure complementarity of efforts.

FCDO benefits from strong working relationships with development partners, multilateral and bilateral donors, across the Caribbean. Based on the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with the relevant partners successful programme examples include: the Jamaica Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP3), implemented with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and Global Affairs Canada; the Climate Resilience Execution Agency of Dominica (CREAD) experience in Dominica, a joint effort with Global Affairs Canada and UNDP; and the 'SMART' Hospitals Initiative, a combined effort with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and Ministries of Health. The evidence from both documents and Key Informant Interviews (KII) indicate the benefits of regional partnerships are that they contribute to:

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- Achieving economies of scale.
- Collective and complementary efforts among development partners reduces risk of duplication and offers the potential of stronger transformational impact.
- Participating in regional conversations on resilience-building by exchanging ideas and programming approaches.

Lesson 2. FCDO has strongly emphasised inclusion of vulnerable groups as a core element in programme design, implementation and safeguarding measures (leaving no one behind).

CDT programming has proactively developed and sought to mainstream mechanisms to ensure the interests of marginalised and vulnerable groups are fully considered and institutionalised within implementing partner systems and procedures. This approach ensures a UK commitment to placing the needs of the most vulnerable at the core of development efforts, and fosters resilience-building initiatives that promote greater social cohesion by embedding inclusiveness.

Lesson 3. FCDO has used adaptive management to adjust UKCIF interventions to enable better use of grant funding and TA to support infrastructure investment. This is important as bottlenecks emerge during the implementation lifecycle. Adaptive management is critical to effective programme delivery and should be continued.

The UKCIF model shifted from a UK grant-based funding model to more of a blend of UK grants and CDB concessional loan financing. TA was flexible and designed to ensure a progression from project preparation into implementation. This allowed capital projects to move more efficiently to delivery (as compared to without UKCIF) and has been positively perceived by implementing partners. The EE/RE initiative combined TA and FA allowing governments in the Eastern Caribbean to de-risk investments in renewable energy. Implementation timelines have been adjusted to account for unforeseen factors, such as COVID-19, hurricanes and supply chain constraints. Looking ahead, intervention design should allow for flexible use of technical assistance and grant funding fit for purpose to the objectives targeted. FCDO staff accessibility, expertise and willingness to discuss programme progress more informally is seen as a positive way to ensure effectiveness and the achievement of the results sought.

Lesson 4. A strong emphasis on technical capability and independent advisory services builds confidence and trust. Development partners in the Caribbean recognise the UK for its commitment to address development challenges through technical excellence.

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Development partners acknowledged the emphasis that the UK places in ensuring robust and appropriate technical solutions are implemented to address resilience building challenges.

Lesson 5: FCDO programme effectiveness is strengthened by building a culture of ownership, open communication and progress tracking among implementing parties.

The CREAD experience was notable in this regard. The document review and KIIs illustrate that FCDO staff were open when it came to discussing programme progress, formally and informally, and this was seen as a positive means of supporting effectiveness, allowing local level partners to influence delivery, and the achievement of the results. FCDO should continue to promote open communication to foster accountability and programme ownership.

Lesson 5. Upfront readiness and capacity assessments of implementing partners is mission critical to realistic project delivery effectiveness and achieving target outcomes.

The document and KII evidence related to UKCIF, the largest programme in the CDT portfolio, strongly illustrated that programme schedules and milestones were too ambitious. Lack of readiness in partner countries impaired effective delivery and significantly extended timelines. A clear lesson from the UKCIF programme is the need for rigorous delivery partner readiness assessments prior to programme execution and then to ensure appropriate support measures are in place to enable effective project preparation and implementation.

- Gaps in readiness and capacity were evident in both the financial intermediary, CDB, and in the partner government implementing agencies (with exceptions of Jamaica and Belize). These gaps were addressed more expediently in some partners than others.
- Given the critical importance of country level implementing agencies, accounting for perhaps 80% of the delivery effort, country capacity assessments and targeted institutional strengthening could ease implementation delays and thereby strengthen effectiveness in delivery to the target timelines. Within the UKCIF, the use of the Project Execution Unit at the Ministry of Infrastructure in Belize to deliver the two road investments on time and schedule is a notable example of good practice.

Lesson 6. CDT should continue to invest in and capitalise on its Bridgetown base to implement regional programming in the Caribbean. Evidence illustrates that the Barbados Hub allows FCDO to achieve economies of scale, stronger teamwork and knowledge sharing, and effectively engage

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development partners (most of whom are also based in Bridgetown) on a daily basis and sit at the top of the table when resilience building priorities are discussed.

Lesson 7. CDT should continue to build positive working relationships with development partners grounded in technical excellence and commitment to tackle resilience building challenges. The development community in the Caribbean recognises CDT due to its technical excellence and dedication to progressing development efforts. These positive working relationships allow FCDO to support programming effectiveness and receive value for money by supporting coherence, mobilising partner technical strengths and capitalising on existing partner resources.

Recommendations

First evaluation question: To what extent is the approach taken by the Caribbean Development Team to improve the resilience of the Caribbean region – to climate shifts, natural hazards, economic and other shocks – relevant and strategically targeted to deliver the UK objective of strengthening resilience? This question focuses on ODA-eligible countries.

The recommendations for the first overarching evaluation question are structured around three focus areas FCDO CDT requested guidance on for future programming:

1. The relative weighting given to regional and bilateral programming and related interventions;
2. The priority thematic areas to guide programming content;
3. The choice of partners to work with and make these partnerships more effective.

The recommendations are best viewed as packages of changes that should be taken forward in parallel rather than sequenced priorities. Collectively, they are designed to improve the overall effectiveness, sustainability and VfM of CDTs regional programming. Based on discussions with FCDO CDT, the recommendations are exclusively aimed at FCDO CDT and the wider FCDO interests active in the Caribbean. The recommendations are not aimed at FCDOs development partners.

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Focus Area 1: The relative balance between regional and bilateral programming and related interventions;

Recommendations: FCDO	Accepted or Rejected	If 'Accepted', set out action plan for implementation, If "Rejected", state the Reason for Rejection
<p>Recommendation 1. The FCDO CDT should develop a holistic resilience building strategy that provides a framework and roadmap for next generation programming – this is aimed at providing a stronger focus and streamlined set of programmes and partnerships.</p>	Accepted	<p>CDT have developed a new strategy for the period 2025-2030. This strategy incorporates the new resilience building theory of change. In light of the recent aid cuts, we will need to amend the proposed strategy retaining the focus on resilience building but through mechanisms which use less ODA. We plan to discuss this with Ministers and incorporate the findings of the development review into the strategic direction. Further, the new theory of change is also being considered as the Small Island States Hub develop their strategy for 2025-2030.</p> <p>CDT will work internally and with partners to identify a set of resilience indicators or indices to measure countries resilience progress. Indicators will cover different types of resilience. CDT will use these indicators internally and encourage broader adoption and use in monitoring and reviewing progress and results.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2. Regional programming should be the relative priority.</p>	Accepted	<p>CDT agrees that where possible, regional programming makes sense to maximise developmental impact. In some cases, it makes sense to pilot initiatives in one country before expanding out – for example, SOCAP and VPP lessons will be taken into future work on security . We should also consider how we lesson learn across partners on regional programming.</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Recommendation 3. Bilateral programming should be retained where there are compelling value-added arguments and strong local relationships to build on.</p>	Partially accept	<p>CDT partially agree. The portfolio will continue to balance a regional approach with bilateral engagement.</p> <p>Our new portfolio has a strong regional focus; however, we are preparing to allow more flexibility within regional programmes to allow specific tailoring of the regional offer to country needs .</p>

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		In cases where we plan to work bilaterally, initially, we will use bilateral engagement to learn how we can involve regional partners to improve coverage and effectiveness e.g. Statistical capacity building, improved access to climate finance.
Recommendation 4. Setting regional priorities should be evidence based using best available resilience related data and mapped against the resilience framework outlined in this report.	Accepted	<p>CDT agrees. We agree that regional priorities should be informed by this evidence base. We have a strong evidence base in our growth diagnostic, political economy analysis and the analysis presented in this thematic evaluation. We are working with CDB to develop an index or set of metrics to measure country vulnerability, resilience, and the cost of recovery following a disaster event. The intention is that these measures can then be used to assess need and levels of concessional finance. It is hoped that an agreed set of resilience metrics used in decision making processes will be the start of a framework for better understanding of resilience and more focused programming.</p> <p>We will work internally and with partners as well as align with global agreements including the new UNFCCC indicators for adaptation to develop an agreed set of relevant indicators for monitoring progress towards improved resilience. Resilience levels can then be used to assess country engagement in different programmes and policies going forward.</p>
Recommendation 5. Prioritisation of interventions should reflect contextual differences in resilience across countries in the region.	Accepted	CDT agrees. CDT will work with CDB to further develop resilience measures. A stronger understanding of the different aspects of vulnerability and resilience at national level, will allow improvement in measurements used to compare levels of vulnerability and resilience across countries in the region and will facilitate more informed discussions and more evidence based decision making when designing programmes or discussing prioritisation of funding and concessional financing (e.g. SDF).

Focus Area 2 : Identifying priority thematic areas

Recommendations: FCDO	Accepted or Rejected	If ‘Accepted’, set out action plan for implementation, If “Rejected”, state the Reason for Rejection
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<p>Recommendation 1. Infrastructure should remain a centre piece of programming, but new approaches are needed to accelerate investment and increase impact.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>CDT partially agrees. In the current ODA environment, CDT will need to consider how best to use our scarce resources and focus on systemic capability building above capital spend. In May 2024, FCDO announced an additional £200m for climate resilient infrastructure in the Caribbean. From September-December 2024, we consulted partners on our approach to delivering this through a new programme. We expect that a new programme will take a more programmatic approach to infrastructure development that will enable more resilient infrastructure projects to be built in a more timely fashion by deliberately targeting systemic barriers to investment and impact, through (i) supporting enhanced country systems to identify the most impactful infrastructure projects that contribute to long-term resilience, (ii) supporting key capacity needs necessary to prepare and implement quality and inclusive infrastructure projects, and (iii) capitalising country-led facilities that can pool concessional and non-concessional resources to increase scale.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2. Investing in complementary enabling environment and assets to improve infrastructure services performance and unlock productivity.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>UKCIF is investing in complimentary TA activities to improve the impact of infrastructure investments and unlock productivity, for example through livelihoods initiatives in Belize and climate-smart agriculture training in Jamaica. As outlined above, the new FCDO infrastructure programme will consider how to enhance country systems to improve infrastructure services and maximise long-term benefits. Our work on renewable energy will consider not only technical feasibility but also regulatory and political challenges to de-carbonising at scale.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3. There is a need to develop new approaches to access green finance sources and use of other financial product innovations</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>CDT agrees and efforts are already underway through several central programmes with a Caribbean focus. Our SIDAR initiative is providing both bottom-up and top-down support to strengthen Caribbean access to climate finance and is trialling a number of new approaches including embedded long term national project development support, establishing a regional helpdesk for climate data and evidence, relevant planning tools (including new systemic risk management), technical experts and learning. Tracking national resilience improvements will also be supported.</p> <p>We are funding prearranged and anticipatory disaster finance innovation and helping explore the feasibility of new blue economy products through the Global Shield, and Sustainable Blue Economies programme respectively. Through UK</p>

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		<p>support to the IDB's Compete Caribbean Programme, we are also supporting the private sector to adapt to climate change, and access more green finance. UK funding to the IMF's regional Technical Assistance Centre (CARTAC) also supports technical assistance to Caribbean governments on securing sustainable climate finance and improved public financial management systems for disasters.</p> <p>UK leadership will continue on reform of the Green Climate Fund and international financial architecture (as proposed in the Bridgetown initiative) to address the climate crisis in SIDS and increasing debt burdens from disasters.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4. There should be a focus on the judicious and innovative use of TA to leverage additional resources to address resilience challenges across the region.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>CDT agrees with this recommendation. Given Caribbean SIDS acute capacity constraints, we will continue to invest in regional solutions where possible. The UK provides significant resources into the provision of technical assistance in the region, for example through the IMF's regional technical assistance centre (CARTAC), and the IDB's Compete Caribbean programme. We will continue to work with development partners to ensure our technical assistance is effective and joined up with others to increase efficiency, and accessibility by Caribbean governments. In a reduced ODA scenario, we will consider how best to use increasingly scarce resources to address regional resilience challenges.</p>

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Focus Area 3: Strengthening partnerships

Recommendations: FCDO	Accepted or Rejected	If 'Accepted', set out action plan for implementation, If "Rejected", state the Reason for Rejection
<p>Recommendation 1. FCDO should continue to capitalise on established partnerships with organisations involved in regional resilience-building efforts.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Through UKCIF the UK has a long-standing partnership with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and has been able to benefit from their significant experience of delivering resilient infrastructure across the region.</p> <p>The Catalytic Activities Supporting Climate and Disaster Resilience in the Caribbean (CASCaDe) programme (£2m) and Small Island Developing States Capacity and Development (SIDAR) Caribbean programme (£54.5m with ~ 12m dedicated to Caribbean) will work with established regional organisations (PAHO, CDEMA, 5Cs, UWI etc) to deliver strengthened regional climate and disaster resilience.</p> <p>CDT will likely continue to work with the Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (CCREEE), CDB, IDB, OECS and WB (key RE/EE partners) on projects to upscale renewable energy penetration in the Caribbean including through implementation of the regional offshore wind strategy and road map, support to geothermal development and strengthening the regulatory environment in the RE/EE sector.</p> <p>To better use regional approaches to achieve country results, we are also planning to work with new partners e.g. OECS to provide a sustainable solution to capacity challenges. We will also lobby to persuade other development partners to do the same.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2. Regional programming should embed strong</p>	<p>Partially accept</p>	<p>National ownership and partner ownership or buy-in is essential for any effective development programme. This is why we often work through trusted regional</p>

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<p>and trusted relationships at the national level to enhance ownership, effectiveness and sustainability.</p>		<p>partners, including the IMF's CARTAC, and the IDB's Compete Caribbean programme, that have already built strong relationships with Caribbean governments, private sector and regional stakeholders. Specifically with regards to the IMF's CARTAC, the technical assistance is demand-led, meaning governments will request specific areas of support from the centre as and when needed.</p> <p>The UKCIF model relies on national governments both selecting projects and managing them on a day-to-day basis through their own project management teams. However, the programme was not designed to build capacity in this area.</p> <p>There's a balance between building capacity and tackling bottlenecks at country vs regional/sub-regional level. It is not cost-effective or sustainable to do everything at country level, but country engagement is essential for sensitive areas such as policy reform or law enforcement require high degrees of trust and relationships built over time to effect cultural shifts.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3. FCDO should place a strong emphasis on how to leverage its resources to catalyse finance to maximise scale and impact.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The Catalytic Activities Supporting Climate and Disaster Resilience in the Caribbean (CASCaDe) programme is specifically designed as a small projects programme to fund catalytic initiatives for replicability, scalability and sustainability.</p> <p>Increasing adoption of the blueprint and resilient infrastructure standards developed as part of the PAHO Smart (safer, greener and sustainable) hospital initiative will be supported through CASCADE and IDB One Caribbean.</p> <p>We also work through the IDB's Compete Caribbean to improve the business environment across the Caribbean region. We will work with our partners to try to ensure this in turn leverages additional concessional lending for governments, for example, we will work with Compete partners to try to improve access to concessional lending from regional Development Banks.</p>

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		<p>UKCIF has leveraged additional finance to help maximise the scale and impact of UK investment. While the UK has provided £350m in grants, the overall value of the portfolio of infrastructure investments supported by UKCIF is closer to \$1 billion. This is because UK grants have been complemented by CDB loans, contributions from other development agencies and national government finances.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4. FCDO needs to ensure lessons learned from programme experience feed into adaptive management systems, shared knowledge products, and are fully mainstreamed into next generation programming.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>We will ensure that learning is a core part of any pilot initiative and that lessons feed into any scale up a programme, any roll out in other geographical areas or any programme adaption. Where appropriate we will carry out formative evaluations to enhance learning (VPP), and apply adaptive learning techniques within the programme design and ensure real time learning and adaption (VPP).</p> <p>We will also conduct end line evaluations where learning is key to influencing and scaling up an initiative or influencing funding from other partners (UKCIF, Economic Development programme).</p>

Recommendations for the second overarching evaluation question: Question 2: What changes in the way FCDO's use of available resources could improve overall effectiveness? This question focuses on ODA-eligible countries as well as non-ODA eligible countries.

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Recommendations: FCDO	Accepted or Rejected	If 'Accepted', set out action plan for implementation, If "Rejected", state the Reason for Rejection
<p>Recommendation 1. Develop a strategic document detailing how CDT will deliver regional programming from the Bridgetown base while capitalising on the entire FCDO network across the Caribbean.</p>	Accepted	<p>CDT have developed a new strategy for the period 2025-2030. This strategy sets out how we will deliver regional programming from the Bridgetown base whilst capitalising on the entire FCDO network and X-HMG. It is critical that we identify synergies by using the broader network and partners. This strategy will be reviewed in light of the ODA cuts.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2. Testing a matrix structure or organising programming through "modular" interventions may enhance effectiveness.</p>	Accepted	<p>CDT agrees. We are directly addressing this recommendation in two areas. Firstly, we are designing a new programme which integrates infrastructure, climate change and economic development initiatives under an umbrella programme. We are also designing a new Governance programme which integrates support to reduce corruption and serious crime with initiatives to reduce violence in schools and communities.</p> <p>In light of the ODA cuts, we will review all of our programmes.</p> <p>We will ensure all review and learning processes consider to what extent programmes were designed and implemented to facilitate a modular or iterative approach and how this approach impacted on results.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3. There is merit in exploring a more systematised approach to internal communications to ensure FCDO staff working in different countries regularly talk with each other, especially when discussing "mission" planning, programmatic priorities and developing project pipelines.</p>	Accepted	<p>CDT members will continue to have weekly meetings to ensure that we are liaising across countries. CDT members based in Bridgetown, will join the weekly eastern Caribbean network call. Team members reach out to HoMs/RBCs if planning mission travel to the country.</p> <p>Several members of CDT are now part of the Network board or provide analysis and updates to the board quarterly.</p> <p>The Programme quality Board is also a board with cross mission participation.</p>

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		<p>Going forward CDT will provide weekly updates on priority work areas and share across the network,</p>
<p>Recommendation 4. Although the headline recommendation is that there is a strong case to support regional programming¹, there should be increased recognition within the regional programme of some countries due to their size, salience, historic ties to the UK (e.g. Jamaica), or contextual specifics (e.g. Belize). This recognition should be reflected in interactions between CDT and FCDO posts.</p>	<p>Accepted as appropriate</p>	<p>We take a balanced approach across our portfolio between regional and country-specific, with some specific programming such as in Jamaica, Guyana and Haiti. We are also working to take a more joined up approach centrally with countries that will be graduating from ODA soon.</p> <p>CDT weekly updates to the full network provide information on work areas and priorities for CDT. The PQB serves to give the network a chance to feedback on specific programme design, implementation issues and programme reviews.</p>

¹ See Chapter 6 in Final Report Volume 1 for further detail.