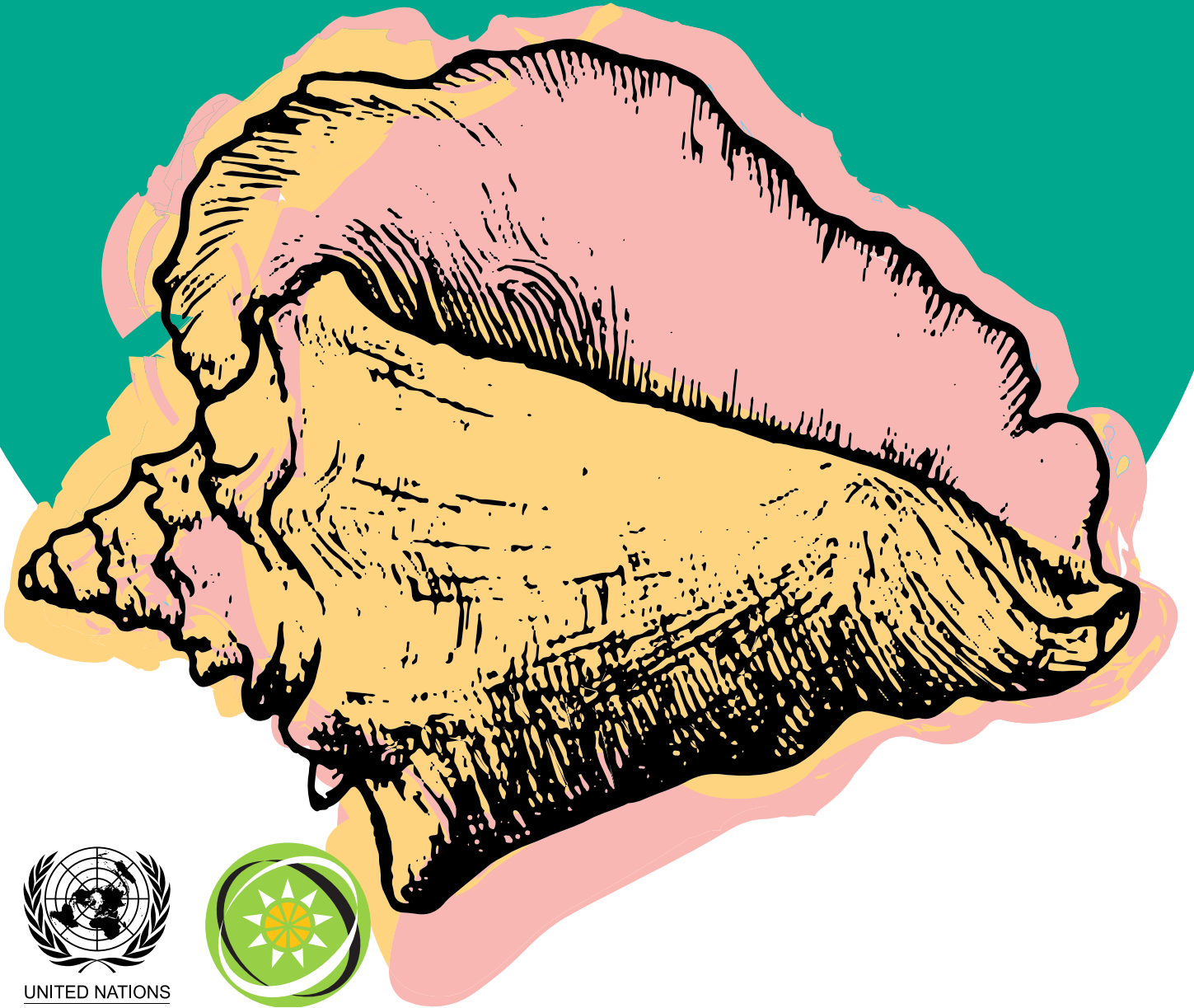




Blue BioTrade in Grenada:

Developing value for the sustainable
trade and production of queen conch
in the Eastern Caribbean
COUNTRY CASE STUDY



UNITED NATIONS
UNCTAD



UNCTAD-OECS Blue BioTrade Project
in cooperation with CITES

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UNCTAD/TCS/DITC/INF/2022/4

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Acknowledgements

The project entitled “Seizing the trade and business potential of Blue BioTrade products for promoting sustainable livelihoods and conservation of marine biodiversity in selected Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Countries” (Blue BioTrade Project) is funded by the OECS and the European Union under the Regional Integration Through Growth Harmonisation and Technology (RIGHT) project, and implemented by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the OECS and the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

This report was produced by Alexander Girvan, (consultant and project coordinator) and Mauro Gongora (consultant and fisheries expert) of the Blue BioTrade Project, under the guidance of and with substantive inputs from David Vivas Eugui, Legal Officer, Claudia Contreras, Economic Affairs Officer, and Maria Durleva, project management expert, all at the Trade, Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Branch at UNCTAD; and from Karen Gaynor, Scientific Support Officer at the CITES Secretariat. The publication has also benefited from comments and inputs from Lench Fevrier and Natasha Deterville-Moise from the OECS Secretariat. The authors would like to thank the Grenadian Fisheries Division for the valuable information and support provided. The authors would also like to thank Cymone Archer, Saint George’s University, Grenada, for her support in conducting this study.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Explanatory notes

References to “dollars” and “\$” indicate United States dollars, unless otherwise stated.

References to “EC\$” indicate Eastern Caribbean dollars.

Use of a dash (–) between dates representing years, e.g., 2015–2018, signifies the full period involved, including the initial and final years.

Reference to metres is represented by “m” and feet by “ft”.

Reference to kilograms is represented by “kg” and pounds by “lbs”.

Reference to nautical miles is represented by “NM”.

To reflect the closest estimate for data, decimals and percentages are rounded off. Numbers in money are rounded to the nearest dollar, unless otherwise stated.

Decimals and percentages in this publication do not necessarily add to totals because of rounding.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and the Pacific
CFMC	Caribbean Fisheries Management Council
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CRFM	Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross domestic product
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing)
NDF	Non-detriment finding
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
OSPESCA	Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo Centroamericano
RQCFMCP	Regional Queen Conch Fishery Management and Conservation
RST	Review of Significant Trade
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
WECAFC	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission

Executive summary

The queen conch (*Strombus gigas*) is a highly appreciated seafood delicacy with important non-food uses, including therapeutic products and handicrafts. While global demand is booming, small-scale coastal producers in the Eastern Caribbean do not fully seize the opportunities offered by sustainable conch markets. In Grenada alone, fishery efforts have been in decline for at least a decade, making it the smallest conch fishery in Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) countries (CRFM, 2021). This is despite the country's notable seafood processing and conch value addition capacity.

Crucially, the queen conch is a CITES Appendix II-listed species, which means that trade in specimens of the species should be subject to regulations compatible with legal, traceable and sustainable use. As of the production of this report, Grenada has been subject to a recommendation to suspend trade under CITES linked to its non-submission of annual reports since 2013, and another suspension linked to a CITES Review of Significant Trade (RST) since 2006.

In response to the need to enable sustainable trade, UNCTAD, OECS (with the financial support of the European Union) and CITES joined forces to design a pilot project to test the application of the revised UNCTAD BioTrade¹ Principles and Criteria (2020)² to the marine environment, focusing on the queen conch value chain in the countries of Grenada, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The project, "Blue BioTrade: Promoting sustainable livelihoods and conservation of marine biodiversity in the Caribbean region (Blue BioTrade Project)³ was launched in October 2020.⁴

This case study presents the value chain analysis of the queen conch production in Grenada. It builds on a 2021 stakeholder mapping of queen conch value chains of Grenada, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.⁵ It is the second of three country case studies to be produced under the Blue BioTrade Project, the first being the country case study of Saint Lucia (UNCTAD, 2022). These case studies will contribute to the development of a regional Blue BioTrade Action Plan, which will be presented at a workshop to be held in 2022.

Main findings

- **Queen conch landings:** Between 2013 and 2017, a total of 143 tons of conch meat were harvested in Grenada, according to landing data from the Fisheries Division (Mitchell, 2021). During this period, an average value of \$163,783 of dirty conch was landed annually. Most conch in Grenada is landed at informal landing sites with limited or no data collection, so these figures likely represent an underestimate of conch landings in Grenada.
- **Grenada has high capacity in seafood processing and conch value addition at the commercial level:** Grenada is notable because it has two Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)-certified facilities (Spice Isle Fish House and Vineyard Seafoods) conducting processing necessary for the United States of America and European Union markets. Processors are known for the large variety of conch products offered, which incorporate conch trimmings that can be wasted by other processors, representing commercial best practice to maximize value.

¹ The UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative aims to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through the promotion of trade and investment in BioTrade products and services. BioTrade is understood as activities related to the collection or production, transformation and commercialization of goods and services derived from biodiversity (genetic resources, species and ecosystems) under environmental, social and economic sustainability criteria, called "BioTrade Principles and Criteria" (UNCTAD, 2020).

² Since their inception in 2007, the BioTrade Principles and Criteria have been the core foundation that guides the implementation of activities of the UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative, the BioTrade programmes and other related activities. In 2020, the BioTrade Principles and Criteria were revised, complementing the evolving legal and policy framework of BioTrade (UNCTAD, 2020).

³ For further information on the OECS Blue BioTrade Project, see UNCTAD, "Blue BioTrade: Promoting sustainable livelihoods and conservation of marine biodiversity in the Caribbean region", available at <https://unctad.org/project/blue-biotrade-promoting-sustainable-livelihoods-and-conservation-marine-biodiversity>.

⁴ See Blue BioTrade Project launch event, available at <https://unctad.org/news/blue-biotrade-project-set-improve-fortunes-eastern-caribbean>.

⁵ For more information, see UNCTAD, "Stakeholder maps of the conch value chains of Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines", available at <https://unctad.org/webflyer/stakeholder-maps-conch-value-chains-grenada-saint-lucia-and-saint-vincent-and-grenadines>.

- **Declines in fishing effort and investment in local fishery, thought to be linked to the CITES recommendation to suspend trade:** Interviewed fishers indicated that fishing efforts and the entry of new fishers to the conch market have generally declined due to CITES' recommendations to suspend trade under the RST process and failure to submit annual trade reports, hindering the export potential of harvested conch.
- **Grenada could be subject to a potential additional trade suspension under the National Legislation Project if no legislative action is taken in the next months:** This was decided at the seventy-fourth meeting of the Standing Committee in Lyon, France, 7–11 March 2022.⁶ This additional trade suspension under CITES could have a detrimental impact on the reputation of Grenada as a harvesting country of queen conch. Grenadian authorities need to consider taking urgent steps to respond to this and other recommendations to suspend trade, taking advantage of support and guidance available from the CITES Secretariat as to the necessary steps for regularisation. As of the publication of this report, Grenada has developed a tentative legislative plan and timetable for the preparation of relevant policy and draft legislation for further approval of national implementing legislation of the CITES Convention for all covered species in the country.

Priority recommendations and needs identified by the Grenada Fisheries Division

- **Enhanced cooperation with Grenadine Islands due to shared stock:** Conducting stock assessments in collaboration with neighbouring countries, primarily Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was deemed necessary, as conch is a migratory species and fishing grounds in Grenada are near to the border with Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
- **Development of a shared management plan with Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:** Collaborating with the relevant authorities in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in the development of a shared management plan for conch harvest on the Grenadine bank was identified as a need, and a recommendation was made to provide sufficient resources for its execution.
- **Dive training and certification for fishers:** Mandatory training and certification for dive fishers in Grenada should be organized and monitored by the Grenadian Fisheries Division.
- **Enhanced social protection for divers:** This is necessary if divers don't possess health insurance coverage (which the majority do not). A one-time payment of EC\$10,000 is necessary for access to the local hyperbaric chamber, a cost well in excess of what is accessible to most fishers. Further collaboration is needed with national and local health authorities, and innovative financial mechanisms developed to provide financial support to divers.
- **Additional resources for fisheries support:** The need for additional financial support to the Grenadian Fisheries Division was also articulated. Additional resources are needed for staffing to provide support in areas of quality control, data collection and management, and point of entry data collection.

Study recommendations

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