

Global Programme Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change (HMCCC)

Caribbean Component

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) commissioned the Global Programme Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change (GP HMCCC) to support and enhance sustainable management of climate mobility in the Eastern Caribbean. The programme was implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in collaboration with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission from 2018 to 2023. This paper elaborates the key outcomes and achievements of the programme.

Migration, Displacement and Planned Relocation in the Eastern Caribbean

The impacts of climate change are already affecting human mobility across the Eastern Caribbean. Extreme weather events, in particular hurricanes, have induced displacement and migration in the region. In 2017, Hurricane Irma damaged or destroyed 95% of properties in Barbuda, resulting in internal and cross-border displacement of the entire population of the island. Climate projections for the Caribbean indicate that both extreme and slow-onset events will become more severe and unpredictable, affecting the highly vulnerable small island states that comprise the OECS and leading to increased forms of human mobility.

The OECS Revised Treaty of Basseterre (2011) calls for an economic union in the region and has sought to facilitate the free movement of people, goods and capital to promote socio-economic development. The Free Movement of Persons policy aims

Project name	Global Programme Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Partner organisation	The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
Project region	the Eastern Caribbean (Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Duration	2018 – 2023

at enhancing economic prosperity by permitting citizens of OECS full member states (MS) to move, reside and work freely in these member states. In the event of disasters, this policy has proven effective in allowing OECS citizens to easily move to other MS and benefit from the ability to work and access social services.

Key Outputs and Activities of the HMCCC Programme in the Eastern Caribbean

The principal goal of the GP HMCCC is to improve applied knowledge relating to the sustainable management of climate change induced human mobility in the Caribbean. The OECS Commission and GIZ implemented a series of activities and developed several knowledge products such as videos, graphics and a virtual exhibition to heighten awareness and understanding of human mobility in the context of climate change.

Technical Support

Technical support focused on reducing the displacement of persons due to climate events through supporting enabling frameworks, institutional capacities and instruments related to human mobility. Activities included the development and monitoring of the OECS Commission HMCCC Strategic Plan 2020-2023 which set out a roadmap for action. National HMCCC focal points and a regional technical working group were established and supported to facilitate implementation of the Strategic Plan.





The human impacts of climate induced mobility

“My house was built flat on ground so when the river came it took everything. The house and everything in it washed away... When we were leaving and the plane was flying over Dominica, I cried because I couldn’t believe that was my country.... I am still grieving about it. I am not in my country, I cannot pay my bills and I am living in somebody’s house.”
Maria – displaced from Dominica to Antigua and Barbuda in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in 2017.

Furthermore, a policy brief explored the implications for human mobility in the event of a hurricane impacting OECS MS during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, technical support and guidance were provided on harmonized Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) developed for national border control agencies to facilitate cross-border displacement in the aftermath of disasters.

Knowledge Products

A range of knowledge products were created to increase general awareness of HMCCC to a broad audience in the Eastern Caribbean. A virtual exhibition “Climate Change – An Eastern Caribbean Journey”, commissioned photographs and artwork from across the region to highlight the effects of climate change on human mobility.

Knowledge products were also developed to provide policy guidance on key aspects of HMCCC. A study on gender and HMCCC was developed, focusing on case studies and lessons learned from Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Given that financing for HMCCC was identified as a crucial area of support by the OECS Commission, two studies with a focus on finance were produced: “Options to Finance Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change” and “Financing Cross-Border Disaster Displacements in the OECS Region: Options & Considerations”.

Capacity Building

Human mobility in the context of climate change is a relatively new policy challenge for the OECS, necessitating capacity-building to develop responses. Capacity-building focused on increasing the ability of governments and border officials in OECS MS to address cross-border movement in disaster scenarios. A series of trainings were held including a virtual training programme in 2020, a virtual “Training of Trainers” in 2021 and “National Training Workshops on Cross-Border Disaster Displacement” in nine OECS MS in 2022. These training activities were part of the Plan of Action to Address Human Mobility in Contexts of Disasters and Climate Change.

Workshops were also held to bring together representatives of the OECS Commission and OECS MS to share their knowledge and learn together about climate change induced human mobility. Participants used scenario planning to improve their understanding and management of HMCCC across the region. The workshops furthermore identified thematic entry points on HMCCC for the OECS Commission.

The GIZ GP HMCCC contributed to an enhanced and pro-active management of the different dimensions of human mobility in the context of climate change. As a result, the OECS Commission and its MS are better prepared to manage intra-regional disaster displacement through knowledge generation, policy development and capacity building.

Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
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As at July 2023

Design DIAMOND media GmbH, Neunkirchen-Seelscheid

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 Text Annett Fleischer
 GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.
 On behalf of Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
 In cooperation with Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission