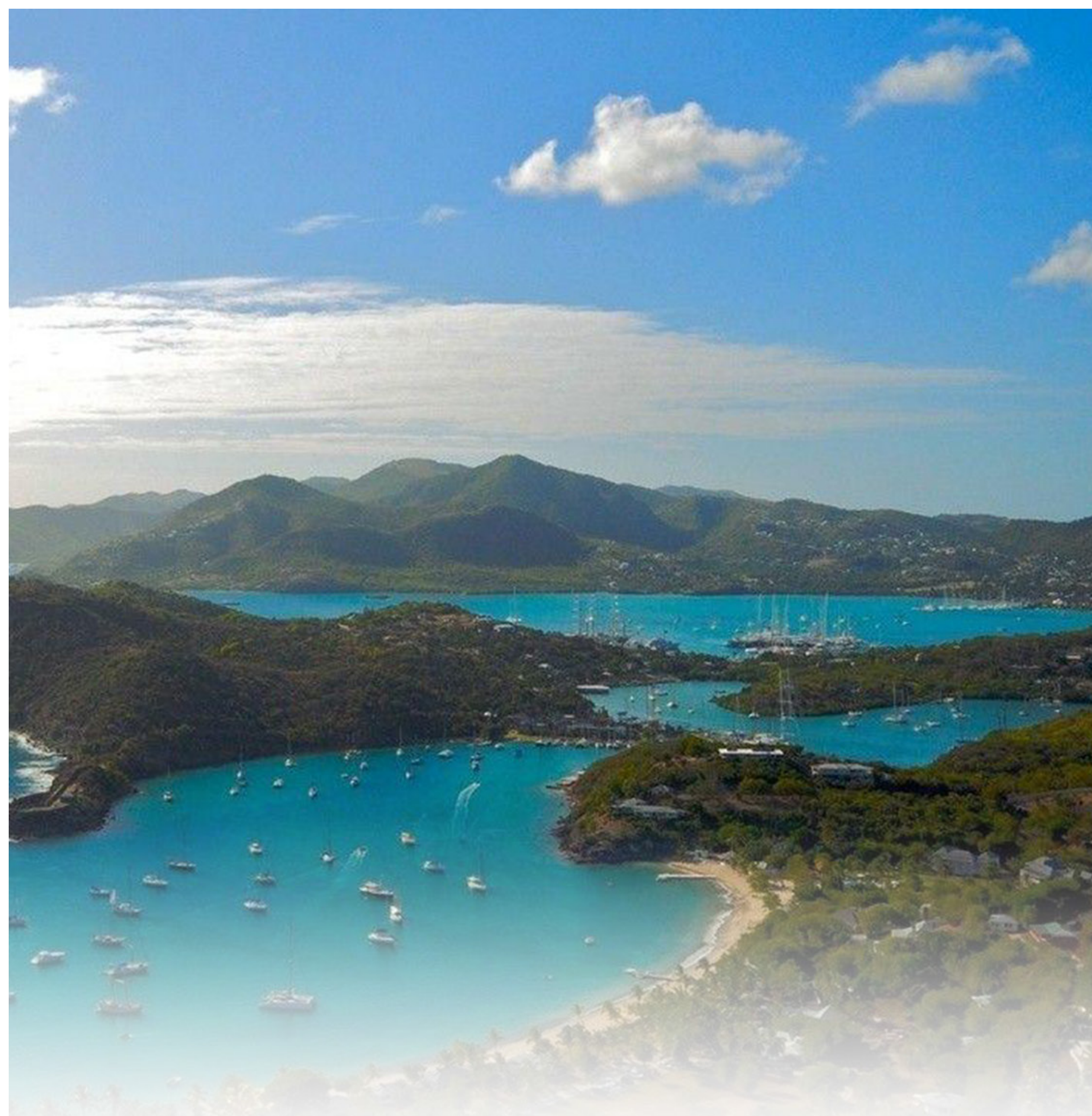




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RG-T3267 – Streamlining the Issuance of Construction Permits in Antigua and Barbuda (US\$215,444 earmarked and disbursed) 2018 – 2021

Counterpart: Development Control Authority

Objective: To implement a digitized system which will facilitate a reduction in the number of procedures, time and cost involved in obtaining construction permits in Antigua and Barbuda.

Results: The new construction permit system was formally handed over to the Government of Antigua and Barbuda in August 2021. This digitalized system was designed to allow applicants to create and submit applications online, check the status of applications, receive notifications of key milestones, including requests for additional information and scheduling of inspection, and to receive final permits and construction certificates. Since the handover to the government, training for all the agencies that have a role in reviewing and approving construction permits has been completed (22 individuals). This ensures that all relevant personnel are equipped to use the new system effectively. Six pieces of legislation/policy were completed and submitted for government approval: Electronic Transactions (Amendment) Bill, Physical Planning (Development and Control) Regulations; Data Sharing Regulations; Data Sharing Memorandum of Agreement (between the Development Control Authority & other agencies); Data Sharing Memorandum of Agreement (Master Template), Business Names Act, of which 3 were approved. The Physical Planning, Development and Control Regulations, and Public Data Sharing Regulations, which are necessary for the effective operation of the construction permit platform, are still in the process of being reviewed by the Attorney General's Office. Despite the operationalization of the system, between the baseline year of 2020 and the most recent assessment in 2023, Antigua and Barbuda's Distance to Frontier (DTF) score had remained at 65.7 and the country's rank had also stayed the same at 117th. Although reductions had been made in the number of steps and the duration of permitting process, the other major factor that affected the DTF score – the Building Quality Control Index – had not been affected. The next priority for the Government of Antigua and Barbuda should be to ensure that the legally mandated inspections throughout the construction process always occur in practice. Doing so would further improve the DTF score.

RG-T3520 - Improving the Business and Innovation Climate and Capacity to Attract Investment in OECS Member Countries (US\$96,685 disbursed for Antigua and Barbuda) 2019 – 2023

Counterpart: Antigua and Barbuda Intellectual Property and Commerce Office (ABIPCO)

Objective: To improve the Business and Investment Climate (BIC) in OECS Member Countries and to increase foreign and local investment.

Results: The project supported the establishment of electronic one-stop-shops for business registration in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines; strengthened agencies responsible for promoting and coordinating Business and Innovation Climate reforms; provided knowledge management and dissemination; and assessed legislation and drafted recommendations relating to Protecting Minority Investors and Enforcing Contracts for OECS member states, including Antigua and Barbuda, and drafting of the legislation required to enable the operation of the DigiGov platform in Saint Lucia.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the project completed a baseline institutional and legislative gap assessment related to starting a business, created an action plan for automating the registration of businesses, completed the digitization of records, and funded the establishment of an electronic one-stop-shop for Business registration. The system went live in 2024. The 2023 DTF score changed to 84.3, up from 82.6 in 2020. The time to complete incorporation was reduced due to removal of a procedure for registration of education levy.

The OECS Commission has procured computer hardware and software, and training services for the four countries that underwent digitalization of business registration with this project (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines). Training workshops were launched in January 2025. These workshops target lawyers, accountants, social services agencies and officials responsible for DevOps and Administration of the systems. The 11th EDF Regional Integration through



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Growth, Harmonisation and Technology provided funding to assist OECS Beneficiary Member States to upgrade their equipment and retool human resources.

The project also funded the review of the Companies Act in the context of current best practices for protecting minority interests and enforcing contracts. This review resulted in a Legislative Gap Analysis Report and recommended amendments to the legal framework. The Doing Business scores for Antigua and Barbuda improved in “Enforcing Contracts” (from 68.1 to 72.7) and “Protecting Minority Investors” (62 vs. 58) over the lifetime of the project. It is expected that improving the protection of minority interests and the enforcement of contracts would result in increased interest from investors to finance small businesses in Antigua and Barbuda.

RG-T3322 - Technology Extension Services (TES) in the Caribbean (2019-2024)

Objective: Technology Extension Services is a form of innovation policy that sought to accelerate the pace at which Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) "catch up" with more advanced firms by transferring cutting-edge technology. This Caribbean-wide project worked with agri-business, manufacturing, and tourism firms.

Results: This project funded 75 technology audits and assessments for MSMEs, with 50 of the firms also benefiting from partial implementation.

Antigua and Barbuda's Participation

In this project, 2 Antiguan firms in the tourism sector benefitted from technology audits and partial implementation of their assessment plans. The firms received technical assistance in the form of specialized and customized training on digital technologies identified in the audits. Beneficiaries from Antigua and Barbuda included: Keyonna Beach ; The Lindengrove Corp (DBA The Villas at Sunset Lane).

RG-T4003 -Technology Extension Services (TES) in the Caribbean Blue Economy and Essential Services Sectors (US\$52,162 disbursed for Antigua and Barbuda) (2021-ongoing)

Objective: to support firms in the blue economy and essential services sectors in the acceleration of technological diffusion, adoption, and upgrading, thus providing support to the Caribbean in diversifying the blue economy and strengthening the delivery of goods and services in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results: This project delivered technology extension services to a group of businesses in every country. In addition, the project implemented a supplementary capacity building plan for a sub-group of women-owned businesses with growth potential.

Beneficiaries from Antigua and Barbuda:

1. Antigua and Barbuda Network of Rural Women Producers/Processors
2. Caribbean Holiday Apartments (also received support from the Woman Owned Business intervention)
3. Terrence Refrigeration
4. The Local APP
5. Wills Recycling Ltd.