

# Innovation Briefing

November 2018

## Editor's Note

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Assistant Secretary-General

The Commonwealth Innovation Hub was launched at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April this year. Since then, we have made much progress.

Our partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies is developing rapidly, particularly on the analysis and use of data that are relevant to national development and disaster risk management. Our goal to establish a Commonwealth Innovation Fund in collaboration with the Global Innovation Fund is also gathering momentum. The proposal was discussed with Finance Ministers and Senior Officials at the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting in Bali recently.

On the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September, the Secretary-General signed two crucial partnership agreements. The Memorandum of Understanding with the UN Office for South-South Co-operation will catalyse knowledge sharing and innovative partnerships between developing countries in the Commonwealth. Another MoU with the International Trade Centre will help us reduce the barriers to trade and exports faced by small and medium-sized businesses in the Commonwealth, particularly those led by women and young people.

The Secretary-General's Innovation for Sustainable Development Awards were launched in September. The deadline for nominations is 31 December, so please do consider nominating any worthy organisations or individuals that you may know.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is also working with the United Nations and others to reshape international cooperation by developing the concept of 'Network Multilateralism' - an innovative, inclusive and adaptive proposition to deal with complex contemporary challenges, including the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We believe the time has come to flatten existing vertical hierarchies into horizontal networks; turn organisational silos into flexible formations; and establish collaborative platforms for information exchange, expertise swaps and joint actions. We have responded to this call by establishing the Commonwealth Innovation Hub.

Our goal is to make the Hub a global platform that will enable the committed to consult, convene and collaborate towards achieving shared objectives. You can find out more about the Commonwealth Innovation Hub by visiting [www.cominnowealth.org](http://www.cominnowealth.org). And if you would like to connect or contribute, please write to us at [innovation@commonwealth.int](mailto:innovation@commonwealth.int).

We are making good progress and there is much more to come.



A digital platform designed to tap and unleash the innovation potential of the Commonwealth

[www.cominnowealth.org](http://www.cominnowealth.org)

## 1. Commonwealth Countries Move Up on the UN's E-Government Development Index

The UN's 2018 e-government survey and rankings tracks the progress countries worldwide are making in digitising the work of government and the online provision of public services. The e-Government Development Index (EGDI) measures countries' use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to deliver public services. It does so by assessing the scope and quality of online services, status of telecommunication infrastructure and existing human capacity.

Member States	Ranking	
	Global	Commonwealth
Australia	2	1
United Kingdom	4	2
Singapore	7	3
New Zealand	8	4
Canada	23	5
Malta	30	6
Cyprus	36	7
Barbados	46	8
Mauritius	58	9
Brunei Darussalam	59	10
Malaysia	66	11
South Africa	68	12
St Kitts and Nevis	71	13
Bahamas	72	14
Trinidad and Tobago	78	15
Seychelles	83	16
Grenada	89	17
Antigua and Barbuda	90	18
Dominica	93	19
Sri Lanka	94	20
India	96	21
Ghana	101	22
Fiji	102	23
St Vincent and the Grenadines	104	24
Tonga	109	25
Bangladesh	115	26
Jamaica	118	27
St Lucia	119	28
Rwanda	120	29
Namibia	121	30

According to the EGDI:

- Australia tops the rankings on e-governance among Commonwealth countries, while Cyprus has made the greatest improvement since the previous survey, moving up 28 places since 2016.
- The United Kingdom (global EGDI ranking = 4), Australia (2), Singapore (7), Canada (23), and Mauritius (58) were ranked at the top of their respective regions.
- The Caribbean and Americas regions have shown the most improvement since 2016.

Member States	Ranking	
	Global	Commonwealth
Kenya	122	31
Guyana	124	32
Botswana	127	33
Samoa	128	34
Belize	132	35
Zambia	133	36
Uganda	135	37
Cameroon	136	38
Vanuatu	137	39
United Republic of Tanzania	139	40
Kingdom of Eswatini	141	41
Nigeria	143	42
Tuvalu	144	43
Pakistan	148	44
Kiribati	153	45
Nauru	158	46
Mozambique	160	47
Lesotho	167	48
Gambia	168	49
Solomon Islands	169	50
Papua New Guinea	171	51
Sierra Leone	174	52
Malawi	175	53

## 2. Secretary-General's Innovation for Sustainable Development Awards Launched

The Commonwealth Secretary-General's Innovation for Sustainable Development Awards have been launched to celebrate the most outstanding innovators and innovations from the 53 Commonwealth countries.

With a total of £30,000 available in prize money, the awards seek to showcase impactful innovations and forward-looking solutions that are helping Commonwealth countries and people achieve sustainable development, while advancing the values in the Commonwealth Charter.

With a population of 2.4 billion, more than 60 per cent of whom are young people, the awards also aim to inspire the next generation of pioneers across the Commonwealth.

Speaking at the launch of the awards in London, Secretary-General Patricia Scotland said: "These awards will honour pioneering thinking and valuable examples of innovation that have been developed by Commonwealth citizens working in government, business or civil society. Our hope is that by drawing attention to new ideas and eye-catching concepts we will encourage others to devise fresh approaches which can be catalysts to accelerate progress towards a common future that is fairer, more sustainable, more prosperous and more secure."

The competition is open to Commonwealth citizens and Commonwealth country-based organisations, including those in the public, private or civil society sectors. Nominations, including self-nominations,



can be made via an online platform until 31 December 2018. Women and young people are especially encouraged to apply.

An independent jury will select 15 winners, who will each receive a trophy, a certificate and £2,000 in prize money. Awards will be based on the impact or potential of the innovations to advance one or more of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in Commonwealth countries. Five thematic categories of the competition include improving the lives of people; boosting prosperity; protecting the planet, promoting peace; and building partnerships for development in the Commonwealth.

For more information about the Innovation for Sustainable Development Awards, or to make a nomination, please visit: <http://cominnwealth.org/the-commonwealth-innovation-awards/>

## 3. Commonwealth Partnerships: India and Singapore Establish Innovation Hub

The governments of India and Singapore have established a 50,000-square foot innovation hub in Singapore that will offer free rental space to selected Indian start-up ventures. This innovation centre will facilitate collaboration between Indian and Singaporean enterprises.

The innovation centre will be equipped with a high-speed internet network, where fibre optics will act as a bridge between Indian and Singaporean partners. An advanced data centre will also be set up at this facility. The innovation hub will also provide free monitoring support from corporate leaders from across the region and facilitate

exposure for the start-ups to the vibrant corporate culture in Singapore.

The goal of this partnership is to provide much-needed impetus to the growing start-up ecosystem of India. Singapore was ranked the sixth most innovative country in the world in the 2016 Global Innovation Index produced by the World Intellectual Property Organisation and others.

For more on this story, see the Singapore and India country pages on the Commonwealth Innovation Hub: <http://cominnwealth.org/display/country-innovations/>

## 4. Toolkit from the Commonwealth Secretariat: Legal Knowledge Portal

The Commonwealth Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform (OCCJR) and its Legal Knowledge Portal support Commonwealth countries in delivering access to justice and sustainable development through the creation of fair and effective national laws to tackle challenges such as violence against women and girls, gender discrimination, corruption and climate change. Through the Legal Knowledge Portal, the OCCJR makes available good legislation practice from across the Commonwealth through model laws, standards, templates, legal insight, and legal networks. It delivers technical assistance to member countries based on these resources. The OCCJR is informed by a high-level panel of distinguished Commonwealth legal experts.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland said at the launch of the OCCJR: "Clear, fair and effective legal frameworks are integral to the rule of law

and development, and represent the very fabric of the rules by which the state and private citizens interact, as well as by which individuals and enterprises deal with each other, both within and between, countries. This online resource will now enable members who are working on the same issues to collaborate and share templates, as well as to cultivate Commonwealth best practice materials."

The Secretariat has carried out consultations on legal reform in Commonwealth countries, for example, a survey on anti-corruption measures in all 53 member countries. These consultations showed the clear need to support law reform, including the implementation of international legal standards.

For more on the OCCJR and Legal Knowledge Portal, please visit: <http://thecommonwealth.org/office-civil-and-criminal-justice-reform>

## 5. Commonwealth Innovation: Virtual University for Small States

Of the 53 Commonwealth countries, 31 are small states, and a common challenge their citizens face is the difficulty in accessing good quality higher education. To address this challenge, the Commonwealth of Learning, an inter-governmental organisation, has established the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC), whose objective is to improve the quality of post-secondary education in small states by building capacity and expertise in online collaboration, eLearning and information and communication technologies (ICT). It facilitates the sharing and transfer of course content, learning materials and resources through its network and delivers courses and programmes in

areas such as agriculture, construction management, entrepreneurship, disaster management, fisheries, life skills, tourism, transportation, logistics and the use of ICT.

A unique characteristic of the VUSSC is its Transnational Qualifications Framework, which allows those who complete courses to receive international recognition for their qualification and enjoy improved labour mobility.

For more information on VUSSC, please visit: <https://www.col.org/programmes/vussc/virtual-university-small-states-commonwealth-vussc>

## 6. Commonwealth Data: Start-up Procedures Required to Register a Business

Sustainable Developmental Goal 9 (SDG 9) urges member states to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation. A key indicator of a country's ability to foster innovation and sustainable industrialisation is the ease with which new businesses can be started. As defined by the World Bank, start-up procedures are those required to start a business, including interactions to obtain necessary permits and licenses and to complete all inscriptions, verifications, and notifications to start operations.

In 2018, Uganda had the highest number of start-up procedures (13) while New Zealand required just one step: applying online for registration with New

Zealand's Companies Office. However, on average, the number of procedures required to start a business in a Commonwealth country and a country in the rest of the world is the same, 7.

Over the five-year period, Brunei Darussalam reduced its procedures the most, reducing from 18 procedures in 2013 to 6 procedures in 2018. The average number of start-up procedures required to start a business in the Commonwealth fell from 8 in 2013 to 7 in 2018. There was no data available for Nauru and Tuvalu for the given years.

For more Commonwealth data visualisations and analysis, see: <http://cominnowearth.org/data-portal/>

## Start-up Procedures Required to Register a Business, grouped by number of steps

2013		2018	
No. of Procedures Required	Country	No. of Procedures Required	Country
1	New Zealand	1	New Zealand
2	Canada	2	Canada Jamaica
3	Australia Singapore	3	Australia Singapore
4	Samoa Tonga	4	Samoa Tonga United Kingdom
5	Dominica Jamaica Mauritius St. Lucia	5	Cyprus Dominica Mauritius Rwanda Sierra Leone St. Lucia
6	Cyprus Grenada Malaysia Papua New Guinea Sierra Leone South Africa United Kingdom	6	Brunei Darussalam Grenada Kenya Papua New Guinea
7	Bahamas, The Cameroon Guyana Kiribati Lesotho Rwanda Solomon Islands St. Kitts and Nevis St. Vincent and the Grenadines Trinidad and Tobago Zambia	7	Bahamas, The Cameroon Gambia, The Guyana Kiribati Lesotho Malawi Solomon Islands South Africa Sri Lanka St. Kitts and Nevis St. Vincent and the Grenadines Trinidad and Tobago Vanuatu Zambia
8	Barbados Gambia, The Ghana Nigeria Vanuatu	8	Barbados Ghana Malaysia Malta
9	Antigua and Barbuda Bangladesh Belize Botswana Seychelles Sri Lanka	9	Antigua and Barbuda Bangladesh Belize Botswana Nigeria Seychelles
10	Malawi Malta Mozambique Namibia	10	Mozambique Namibia
11	Fiji Tanzania	11	Fiji Tanzania
12	Kenya Pakistan Swaziland	12	India Pakistan Swaziland
13	India	13	Uganda
14	Uganda		
18	Brunei Darussalam		

Source: Doing Business 2018 Report, World Bank.

## 7. Commonwealth Blue Charter Research Fellowships Announced

The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) has launched a new fellowship programme that will support emerging scholars from Commonwealth countries to conduct world-class research on marine plastics. The 35 new Blue Charter Fellowships will be guided by the Commonwealth's technical experts on oceans. The programme takes its name from the Commonwealth Blue Charter, a collective commitment of the 53 member countries to preserve and nurture the world's oceans, agreed by leaders at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in April.

Joanna Newman, ACU Chief Executive and Secretary General, said: "Marine pollution – and the scourge of marine plastics in our oceans – is one of the most pressing issues our global community must confront. Universities are uniquely placed to help solve such challenges, and these Blue Charter Fellowships will enable new research and innovation to flourish through the exchange of people and ideas."

Applications are open to research staff or PhD students at any of the ACU member institutions, which number more than 500 in at least 50 countries across the Commonwealth. Grants of up to £10,000 each will support fellows through two- to three-month placements at universities and industries in small island states, Canada, India, South Africa and the UK. The fellows will also receive support from specialist mentors with expertise in their area of research.

Research will focus on responses to marine pollution, such as preventing plastics from getting into the sea, developing alternatives to plastics, and potential innovations for cleaning up the seas. The fellowships will take place between 27 December 2018 and 31 March 2019. For more details, click on the ACU logo on the Commonwealth Innovation Hub: <http://cominnowealth.org/display/commonwealth-organisations/>

## 8. Mozambican Engineer Wins UNCTAD Women in Business Award 2018

The founder of ConsMoz Ltd, a construction company based in Nampula, northern Mozambique, has won the UNCTAD Empretec Women in Business Gold Award for 2018 for her commitment to quality, sustainability and environmental protection – as well as for her pioneering leadership in a traditionally male-led sector.

Civil engineer Uneiza Ali Issufo founded ConsMoz after finding it difficult to get ahead in the construction companies she had been working for, despite being president of her local contractors' association. After participating in an UNCTAD entrepreneurship training workshop in 2017, the MBA graduate was able to expand her business so

that it now employs 800 women and men and lands large building contracts demanding top quality and green credentials. "Taking risk is my natural way of being," Ms Issufo said of her entrepreneurial zeal. "You cannot discover the oceans unless you dare to lose sight of the pier."

For more stories on Commonwealth countries and people, visit the country pages on the Commonwealth Innovation Hub: <http://cominnowealth.org/display/country-innovations/>



The Commonwealth

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