



# Q1 REPORT 2026

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## Executive Summary

**We've made a strong and strategically important start to the year in 2026. Our first quarter has focused on amplifying our impact, and positioning Common Seas for continued growth in an increasingly competitive external environment.**

Through our **Government Partnerships** work, we concluded a major phase of delivery by publishing five national action plans for tackling plastic pollution in Small Island Developing States, supported by FCDO and delivered in close partnership with national governments. We co-hosted a regional launch event in Tuvalu, and increasingly shifted our focus from policy design to implementation. We delivered financial assessment reports for Saint Lucia and Guinea-Bissau, providing governments with clear analysis of costs and sustainable financing options. To maintain momentum, we supported the recruitment of local coordinators to help move policies towards cabinet approval and legislative change. At a regional level, we advanced work on Extended Producer Responsibility, completing a scoping study with the Indian Ocean Commission and presenting regional approaches to representatives from 16 Caribbean states at UNEP's Zero Waste workshop, alongside knowledge-sharing with Pacific partners through SPREP.

Within **Education**, the Plastic Clever Schools programme continued to grow in reach and depth. In Q1, we engaged 387 teachers and almost 9,000 students through training, enrichment activities and events, including as education partner for The Big Plastic Count. We reached an estimated 65,000 young people globally through the 236 schools recording active participation in programme activity. We launched four new curriculum resources in Greek and English and extended delivery across the Caribbean, Africa and Europe, through our collaborations with partners including IUCN, Eco-Schools, River Cleanup. These partnerships helped align education, community action and policy, while new donor support enabled further school-led action.

Operationally, we invested in strengthening foundations for scale and sustainability. Work began to develop integrated stakeholder engagement and communications strategies, supported by a new CRM and a revised approach to engagement and events. Despite a challenging funding landscape, we secured £400k in continued FCDO support for 2026–27 alongside new funding with IUCN and the Amyas Valora Foundation, and have substantial collaborative project proposals under consideration.

Against an uncertain global backdrop, these advances position us well for the coming months as we look forward to supporting partner countries in their move from policy to implementation, and delivering a packed summer term of education activity.



Charlotte Davies,  
Managing Director,  
Common Seas

# Our work

Our vision is a healthy future for people and planet – free from the harms of plastic pollution

## The challenge

We find plastic everywhere we look – from the furthest shores to deep inside our bodies. Plastic is a human health issue, as well as a social and an environmental problem.

The tools already exist to tackle the majority of plastic pollution. But decision-makers need access to resources and information to take action.

## Our solutions

Our programmes drive systemic change, creating partnerships to design and deliver resources and solutions that stop the flow of plastic pollution. We know plastic is a multi-generational issue, so we must equip future generations to make that change last.

We work with the countries that are most affected by plastic, yet who contribute the least to its production, particularly Small Island Developing States and small coastal countries. Together with our partners, we're supporting a just transition to a future freed from plastic pollution.

## Where we work



# Our impact in Q1

Knowledge and insights

9

Endorsed resources published

Influence and inspire

473

Professionals upskilled

Action for change

10

Country partners supported

18

Events & webinars hosted

8,946

Young people participating

1,097

Schools taking action



## Government Partnerships

**Q1 of 2026 marked a significant milestone, concluding key deliverables under our FCDO agreement and securing funding for continuation. Our focus shifted from policy development to enabling implementation, ensuring recently published insights including National Action Plans (NAPs) and Regional EPR research translate into tangible action.**

**To amplify the impact of our publications:** We delivered a digital stakeholder engagement campaign, strengthening our profile to catalyse new opportunities. Initial feedback from priority stakeholders, including the World Bank, CBF, and GPAP, has been highly positive, and we are now progressing follow-up meetings to explore synergies.

**Policy implementation:** We delivered comprehensive financial assessment reports to Saint Lucia and Guinea-Bissau. These reports identify implementation costs and sustainable financing pathways tailored to national contexts and are critical enablers for moving policies forward. To address capacity restraints, we facilitated recruitment of local coordinators in both countries to maintain momentum for cabinet approvals and legislative transitions.

**Regional scaling:** Building on our regional EPR research, we completed a feasibility scoping study for the Indian Ocean Commission. In the Caribbean, we presented the concept to representatives from 16 nations at UNEP's Zero Waste workshop in Panama. We also co-hosted a high-level NAP launch in Tuvalu, and a regional webinar with SPREP to encourage replication across Pacific SIDS.

Securing sustainable funding remained a priority. Despite a challenging funding environment, we secured an additional £400k from FCDO and progressed to the final stage of the CBF ACE call for a \$2M, three-year Caribbean programme, with a decision expected in September.

## Looking ahead to Q2

**Governments have consistently emphasised that sequenced, continued support is essential. Q2 will focus on addressing specific demands and barriers, to move national policy frameworks into tangible short-term outcomes that strengthened capacity, laying the foundations of long-term impact, resilience and economic benefit.**

### Q2 activities will include:

- Developing human and institutional capacity in Tuvalu - identifying priority activities with the government and the support needed
- Starting cost assessment and finance analysis in Papua New Guinea for implementation of policies prioritised in the NAP
- Beginning development of a reuse pilot in Saint Lucia
- Securing match funding for Regional EPR feasibility study covering 5 SIDS in the Indian Ocean
- Beginning meaningful engagement with private sector industry to address SIDS-specific challenges

# Government Partnerships impact

**5 National Action Plans**

published

**3**

webinars/  
events hosted

**400k**

secured in funding  
from FCDO

**2**

Financial assessments (Saint Lucia and Guinea-Bissau)

## What people said about us

**"This Plan really reflects what we are dealing with on the ground in Tuvalu. The dumpsite is one of our biggest challenges, so it's important to see that prioritised. Now the focus is on how we take this forward."**

Epu Falega – Director, Department of Waste Management, Tuvalu



## 2026 targets

- Publish National Action Plans or Reports for 5 SIDS
- Deliver cost assessment reports and institutional capacity support to 4 SIDS
- Support feasibility study into Regional EPR solutions with the Indian Ocean Commission
- Support further adaptation of solutions to SIDS reality
- Foster meaningful engagement from private sector on SIDS

# Education

**In 2026, we are focusing on strengthening engagement across active schools, deepening our understanding of the network, and implementing more effective ways to inspire long-term participation. In Q1, we laid the groundwork for this by improving our website to better track school activity and developing an MEL framework to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities, whilst also increasing our capacity for hands-on support.**

## **Equipping educators**

This quarter, we released four new curriculum resource packs in Greek and English, expanding our global library of learning tools, which have received 235 downloads.

A total of 387 teachers have participated in our engagement activities, including a roundtable on Plastic Clever Education (co-hosted with Eco-Schools), a webinar for Greek educators, and training with in-school support in Barbados and Cameroon.

## **Empowering young people**

So far this year, 236 registered schools have taken part in the programme, reaching an estimated 65,755 young people. Through enrichment activities, partner events, and in-person sessions, we engaged directly with 8,946 students. We also renewed our role as Education Partner for The Big Plastic Count, supporting strong participation from UK schools and providing aligned plastic reduction activities.

## **Building recognition**

Since launching Plastic Clever Schools in Cameroon at the end of 2025, we have welcomed 11 new schools through support from River Cleanup. Work continues to strengthen this partnership with a combined approach to deliver education, community solutions, and policy. Additionally, following a successful donor collaboration in 2025, we secured a further €7,000 to support ongoing school-led action across the Sporades.

## **Looking ahead to Q2**

**In Q2, we will focus on continuing to improve engagement in the programme. We will co-deliver World Ocean Day for Schools and host a celebration event, while beginning preparations for the next International Day of Action.**

Our new MEL approach will be embedded across all activities and resources to enhance learning and impact measurement. We will explore new ways to connect with our active network of teachers and students through ambassador programmes and a refreshed membership model, designed to add value and encourage long-term participation. We will also begin a collaboration with IUCN to adapt Plastic Clever Schools for use in five Caribbean regions as part of the Close the Plastic Tap programme. In parallel, we aim to secure funding for a collaborative project that will expand PCS into communities, supported by local action and policy.

## Education impact

**€7,000**

New funding secured

**4 Resources**

Published

**15**

Webinars and enrichment events

**387 teachers & 8,946 students**

participated in events

### What people said about us

"After learning from the Plastic Clever Schools programme, I understand more about the negative impacts of plastic waste on the environment. Now I'm trying harder to reduce my use of single-use plastic and encourage my friends to keep the school clean."

Student, Alpha Centauri  
(Bandung, Indonesia)

### Plastic Clever Schools

100% of teachers that participated in our Indonesian pilot agreed or strongly agreed that they were better equipped to teach about plastic pollution, and their students were more empowered to prevent it as a result of **Plastic Clever Schools**.



### 2026 Targets

- 1000 teachers join training and events
- 1000 schools are actively participating in PCS
- 150 schools achieve the PCS award status
- 100,000 students are directly engaged



# Finance and operations

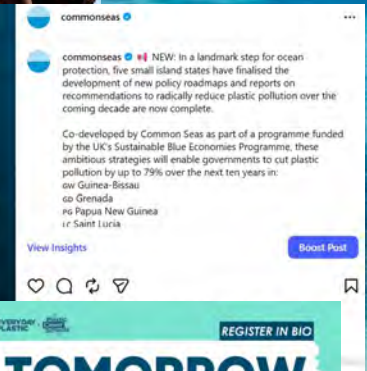
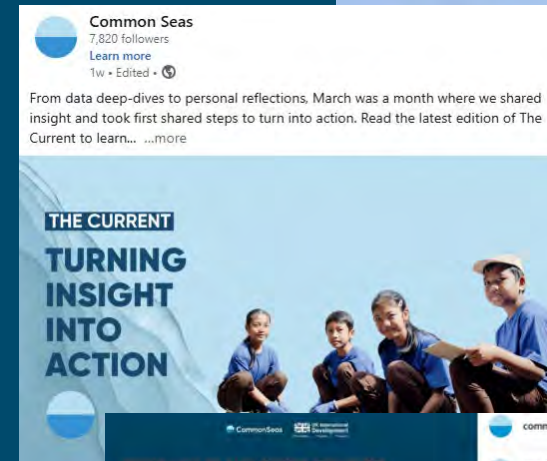
In the first quarter of 2026, we continued improving our operational foundations to support delivery at scale, strengthen partnerships, and position the organisation for long-term financial and strategic resilience.

## Cultivating collaborations

Q1 saw further steps in expanding and deepening our global network of governments, partners and collaborators. We amplified the publication of five National Action Plans for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) through coordinated communications and regional launches, supported by partners including FCDO, SPREP and national governments. These activities strengthened engagement with multilateral institutions such as UNEP, the World Bank and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, and created a pipeline of follow-up collaboration opportunities.

Within education and public engagement, participation in The Big Plastic Count brought new schools into the Plastic Clever Schools programme, while partnerships with organisations such as IUCN, Eco-Schools, River Cleanup and local Ministries of Education extended programme reach across the Caribbean, Africa and the Pacific.

Underpinning this – a stakeholder engagement project is now underway, which will utilise a new CRM tool which will enable us to manage our stakeholder relationships in a more consistent and proactive way, keeping our partners informed and maximising opportunities to nurture collaboration through communications, engagement and events.

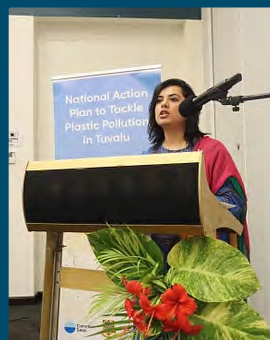


## Securing sustainability through impact

Despite a highly competitive funding environment, Q1 saw strong financial performance. Continued support was received from the Amyas Valora Foundation for education work in Indonesia, alongside new funding secured with IUCN to adapt Plastic Clever Schools resources for Caribbean SIDS. Critically, a further £400k of FCDO funding was confirmed for 2026–27, and Common Seas progressed to the final proposal stage for a Caribbean based project as part of a multi-partner collaboration with regional organisations.

## Cultivating our talent

Team members have actively represented Common Seas at high-profile events, including UNEP's Zero Waste in the Caribbean workshop in Panama. We also co-hosted a high-level NAP launch in Tuvalu, building networks and expertise.





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