

Continuation of the Community Resilience Hub in the Turks and Caicos Islands

Business Case

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By: Joint Nature Conservation Committee



Project Summary:

This report has been produced as part of the *Resilient Community Recovery from Covid-19 in the Turks and Caicos Islands* project, delivered in partnership between the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), the Turks and Caicos Islands Government Department of Environment and Coastal Resources (DECR), the Turks and Caicos Islands Fishing Cooperative, the Turks and Caicos National Trust, and Invest Turks and Caicos.

The Community Resilience Hub, established through the RESEMBID-support project, delivers training and professional development opportunities in Turks and Caicos Islands Blue and Green economies, with the aim of engaging the most vulnerable and marginalised communities in pursuit of strengthening long-term resilience across the Islands. This report presents a business case for the continuation of the Community Resilience Hub in order to maintain and scale this community resource over the next five years.

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Executive Summary

The Turks and Caicos Islands Vision 2040 sets out the strategy for long-term economic and social development with the aim of achieving “*a high quality of life enjoyed by citizens, residents and future generations*” (p. 10, TCIG, 2023). Quality of life in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) is dependent upon a healthy functioning environment, providing ecosystem services which support livelihoods in key sectors. Research and development of the Community Resilience Hub, established through the [RESEMBID](#)-supported project ‘Resilient Community Recovery from Covid-19 in the Turks and Caicos Islands’ (2020 to 2024), has demonstrated that:

- Business models that rely on the sustainable use of natural resources (blue and green economies) present pathways to economic diversification across TCI. Opportunities may be targeted to communities and sectors most vulnerable to global shocks in support of improved social and economic resilience.
- Increasing education on environmentally sustainable practices and awareness of the impacts of business on the environment can mobilise a transition of practices across sectors to protect nature and natural resources.

Since October 2023, the Community Resilience Hub has delivered training sessions which support skills development in TCI’s blue and green economies, including small-scale fisheries, hydroponics crop production and waste management business models.

The Hub presents a robust opportunity to meaningfully increase livelihoods in TCI’s blue and green economies, in support of sustainable economic growth and protection of nature. This report assesses three options for the continuation of the Hub, beyond the RESEMBID-supported project, presenting the case for an option which optimizes value for money in support of achieving TCI’s sustainable development goals.

Recommended Option

The recruitment of a full-time coordinator (\$54,670 p/a+) most effectively meets the spending objectives of the Hub, supporting the following key principles which are critical to its success:

- **Improving access to markets:** The TCI Natural Capital Investment Plan (NCIP), also developed through the RESEMBID-supported project, identifies early-stage projects which have the potential to generate revenue streams including sustainable tourism, fisheries and agriculture (Finance Earth and etec, 2024). These sectors require capacity building as well as coordinated action across government departments and organisations to bridge the gap between skills

development and domestic trade. The Hub Coordinator will convene relevant stakeholders to address market-wide barriers which limit the investment-readiness and growth of natural capital projects.

- **Integrated:** The Hub has no dedicated staff in TCI and is not recognised as its own entity, resulting in limited engagement with the most marginalised and vulnerable communities. The Hub Coordinator will be a champion for the promotion of opportunities in the blue and green sectors and deliver face-to-face engagement, bringing together communities, government departments and organisations in pursuit of inclusive economic growth.
- **Supportive and Inclusive:** The evaluation of the first year of delivery revealed a desire from participants for sustained learning opportunities, continued support and inclusive training appropriate for people with diverse skills and backgrounds. The Hub Coordinator will oversee all activity and will evaluate and improve delivery to ensure activities meet the needs of participants.

Funding and Strategic Partnerships

Opportunities for funding the continuation of the Community Resilience Hub over the next five years, developed through stakeholder engagement, include the following:

1. **Strategic partnerships:** The objectives of the Hub align with other government initiatives such as [Invest TCI's MSME programme](#). Invest TCI has an established Business Support Unit, providing financial and technical support to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME). The organisation is well placed to support and promote projects in the blue and green economy, guided by environmental expertise and advice of relevant government departments.
2. **Corporate Social Responsibility investment:** The Hub activities are grounded in a strong evidence base, developed by a/the scientific project partner, JNCC (UK). This evidence can be used to develop a well-defined proposal to secure funding commitments from sectors which exert the most pressure on the environment, in support of meaningful, communicable sustainability commitments.
3. **Public and Grant funding:** The Hub is well placed to secure funds through the UK's Darwin Plus programme, which offers grants to achieve strategic outcomes for protecting biodiversity in the UK Overseas Territories. Equally the Hub presents an opportunity to action recommendations set out in the TCI NCIP (Finance Earth and etec, 2024), which identified catalytic government funding as a requirement for mobilising investment in natural capital projects.

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1. Introduction

The Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) Community Resilience Hub was established as part of the RESEMBID-supported project '[Resilient Community Recovery from Covid-19 in the Turks and Caicos Islands](#)'. The Hub activities were developed based on stakeholder engagement and socio-economic data gathered in the early stages of the project. Between October 2023 and September 2024, training and professional development opportunities were delivered through the Hub to support the Islands' blue and green economies in pursuit of a post-pandemic recovery that strengthens long-term resilience across TCI. Recognising the strong links between environmental, social and economic prosperity, the Hub supports sustainable livelihood ventures that increase economic and income diversification opportunities dependent on restoring and maintaining a healthy natural environment.

Activities delivered through the Hub have provided skills training in three sectors which directly depend on and protect natural capital: agriculture, fisheries and waste management. In the first year more than three-hundred people have participated in training modules on small-scale commercial fisheries management; sustainable soil health techniques; hydroponics crop production; and waste management business models which repurpose readily available materials such as plastic and textiles. The Hub provides support to existing businesses seeking opportunities to scale their production, as well as engaging with new entrepreneurs to leverage opportunities for income diversification in the sustainable use of natural resources.

This report presents a business case for the continuation of the Community Resilience Hub, outlining a long-term strategy for maintaining and scaling impactful professional development pathways within TCI's blue and green economies. This report is structured in two parts. The first section sets out the Strategic Case, including the context and need for investment, outputs so far and recommendations for the Hub, along with its contribution to achieving TCI's wider vision and sustainable development strategy. The second section appraises plausible options for the continuation of the Community Resilience Hub and recommendations for developing this initiative over the next five years, including a review of available funding and strategic networks and roles crucial for its success. The conclusion summarizes opportunities to increase the value of this community resource in pursuit of strengthening economic, environmental and social resilience throughout the Turks and Caicos Islands by 2030.

2. The Strategic Case

2.1 Critical Challenges and Opportunities

This section sets out the priority issues impacting the resilience of TCI's environment, economy and society wellbeing, as well as the requirement for interventions which protect a healthy environment and the sustainable use of natural resources.

2.1.1 The Covid-19 pandemic revealed unequal impacts and vulnerabilities to global shocks across the Turks and Caicos Islands and sectors

Research into the socio-economic and environmental impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in TCI suggests that livelihoods in the tourism and fisheries sectors experienced a significantly greater impact on earnings after the Covid-19 pandemic, underlining the vulnerability of many businesses and communities to the impacts of global events (Robinson and Irving, 2023). Impacts varied across the islands and by demographic, with Middle and North Caicos reporting a higher impact on residents' quality of life than those in Providenciales. More than one in ten people reported loss of employment in their primary occupation as a longer-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (at the time of survey in January to April 2023) (Robinson & Irving, 2023). The potential for acute climate events and related global shocks are expected to become more frequent as long-term warming and sea level rise accelerates, disproportionately affecting the Turks and Caicos low-lying islands (WMO, 2022). Urgent action is required to invest in the long-term resilience of TCI's economy, livelihoods and communities.

2.1.2 Natural capital in the Turks and Caicos Islands provides annual benefit values of \$156 million but is threatened by current economic development

The Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) are home to diverse marine and terrestrial ecosystems which provide a range of crucial ecosystem services that contribute overwhelmingly to livelihoods in TCI. A study into business attitudes to sustainable growth revealed that business owners are aware of and acknowledge their high dependence on ecosystem services particularly for food, energy, freshwater, natural hazard protection and aesthetic values (eftec, 2024). The coral reef has been identified as the most important for all business, vital for attracting tourists and increasing coastal protection (eftec, 2024). It is widely recognised that economic and societal wellbeing are dependent on TCI's natural capital but development in the dominant tourist industry, including tourist activities and related development, exerts pressure on the natural environment in the long-term jeopardizing livelihoods.

2.1.3 Sustainable livelihoods support income diversification and economic resilience

The 'TCI Vision 2040' identifies economic diversification as an essential pillar to insulate islanders from external shocks (TCIG, 2023). Tourism is the largest contributor to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in TCI and its success is reliant upon the islands' natural beauty. The development of ecotourism enterprises owned by islanders presents opportunities for environmentally sustainable economic diversification (Finance Earth and eftec, 2024). Tourism also presents a high level of risk due to the sectors dependence on global travel patterns and vulnerability to economic downturns cautioning against a narrow focus of development in tourism alone (The Borgen Project, 2023). An estimated 10% of the TCI population rely on fisheries for their main income and small-scale commercial fishing remains the lifeblood of communities on many of the islands ([FAO, 2020](#)). On average fishers are only able to work two-thirds of each year due to adverse weather conditions. Investing in economic diversification in established and unexplored environmentally sustainable sectors is required to bring greater benefits to TC Islanders.

2.1.4 A healthy environment presents opportunities for job creation in the green and blue economic which benefit the most vulnerable communities

Transitioning business practices towards legitimate sustainable use of natural resources contributes to strengthening long-term resilience of TCI's economy and environment. Increasing the productivity of fisheries is contingent on well managed fish stocks. The ongoing success of tourism is reliant on maintaining the quality of beaches, coral reefs and the wider marine ecosystem. Agriculture has traditionally been restrained by land and water availability, soil quality and environmental factors, which may be to an extent mitigated through innovations in controlled growing. At the same time, waste management is a key area for development by the TCI government to address voters' concerns around solid waste pollution (TCIG, 2023). To meaningfully deliver economic and environmental resilience for TC Islanders, emerging opportunities in blue and green sectors must be focused on the empowerment and involvement of communities most vulnerable to shocks, achieved through appropriate engagement strategies.

2.1.5 Improving food security through innovation in food production

The World Bank reports that food insecurity stands at its highest level in recent decades in the English speaking Caribbean countries and food prices remain high, limiting TCI residents access to healthy, nutritious food ([Arias et al, 2023](#)). TCI is considered food insecure; limited space and water sources contribute to a lack of food

production meaning the majority of food consumed on island is imported, exposing local food prices to global fluctuations. As such, strengthening agriculture is one of twelve priority projects of the TCI Government ([NDU, 2023](#)). Socio-economic research into recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic revealed that agriculture and gardens were the most identified skills for contributing to sustainable economic resilience to future shocks (Robinson & Irving, 2023). This included increasing skills in resource-efficient hydroponics production, composting, backyard gardening and poultry farming as critical to providing opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and food security.

2.1.6 Business support and technical training can reduce barriers to economic participation and development across the Turks and Caicos Islands

During the development of the Community Resilience Hub, research revealed that business management (planning, budgeting, administration, record keeping) and skills to diversify business (product awareness, marketing, continuity plans) were key requirements identified by stakeholders for recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic (Robinson & Irving, 2023). Currently a lack of business management and financial reporting is a barrier to small-scale local enterprises seeking access to commercial lending and markets, with most major development projects owned by foreign interests (Invest TCI, 2023). Risk and disaster management and business continuity planning are also crucial for TCI businesses to build resilience in the event of environmental and economic challenges.

2.1.7 There is a critical need for enterprise which protects and enhances a healthy environment and sustainable use of natural assets

TCI's sectors have a high reliance on the natural environment for food, energy production, freshwater, natural hazard protection and aesthetic values supporting tourism and recreation (eftec, 2024). Economic growth within sectors reliant on TCI's natural capital may increase pressures on the environment through overuse of natural resources, coastal development and the potential for unsustainable business practices. Awareness of the impacts of climate change is high among businesses; however, the impact of business activities on nature is less well understood than business dependencies (eftec, 2024). The lack of recognition of business impacts on nature limits investment and resource allocation towards its protection.

2.1.8 Increasing knowledge of sustainable business practices

A study into business attitudes to sustainable economic growth in TCI reported on the most common attitudes for improving business impacts on the environment, including: scaling sustainable agriculture to decrease reliance on food imports;

increasing and improving fisheries training to sustainably manage stocks; and developing environmentally friendly practices and public campaigns to reduce pollution and impacts of tourism sector (eftec, 2024). Education on sustainable practices, including technical programmes and communication strategies, are key to driving investment in and improving the natural environment in TCI. Other education needs raised by key stakeholders included sustainable business development, reducing carbon emissions and awareness of the protection afforded by TCIs nature (Robinson and Irving, 2023).

2.2. Alignment with TCI Government Strategies

The objectives and outputs of the Community Resilience Hub are fully aligned with the 'TCI Vision 2040' goals and contribute directly to strengthening the necessary conditions for achieving sustainable development in pursuit of "*a high quality of life enjoyed by citizens, residents and future generations*" (TCIG, 2023). The long-term aim of the Community Resilience Hub is to achieve an economy that is more resilient to shocks and natural disasters by promoting inclusive, environmentally sustainable livelihoods which protect the Islands' natural resources and ecosystem services.

Skills and capacity building in sustainable sectors promoted by the Hub directly support the sustainable development dimensions (SDD) outlined in the TCI Vision 2040, of high national income and wealth (SDD1) and a healthy natural environment, heritage and cultural assets (SDD3) (TCIG, 2023). Increasing skills and improving practices in emerging green and blue economies can, over the medium and long-term, reduce unemployment, improve productivity and protect the natural attributes of the Islands on which economic activity depends. Indirectly, services delivered through the Hub support a socially cohesive society (SDD2) and the necessary conditions of decent work and social inclusion. This can be achieved by promoting entrepreneurship which engages the most vulnerable communities who may traditionally have experienced barriers to participation in economic opportunities and income diversification. Engaging vulnerable communities align with the TCI National Investment Policy which promotes active domestic ownership as a cornerstone of inclusive economic growth, placing TC Islanders at the center of development (Invest TCI, 2023).

The continuation of the Community Resilience Hub can enhance TCI's reputation at the international scale by demonstrating commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, the Hub has potential to 'achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' (Goal 5) and to 'promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all' (Goal 8). These goals are also in alignment with the goals of the National Investment Policy (Invest TCI, 2023). Up to this point, gender inclusion has

not been a specific focus of activities delivered through the Hub but there is appetite among partners, particularly the Turks and Caicos Fishing Cooperative, to target professional development and economic inclusion towards women and girls. At the same time, the Community Resilience Hub responds to the proposed TCI NCIP by addressing the market-wide barriers which currently limit investment in natural capital projects (Finance Earth and etec, 2024). This includes delivering training to build capacity and technical expertise in revenue models which support natural capital protection and engaging TC Islanders directly as stakeholders in protecting TCI's natural resources.

2.3 The Case for Change

The Community Resilience Hub has the potential to effectively leverage public funds and partnerships to achieve the following spending objective outcomes:

- Increased opportunities for skills development and economic activity in the TCI's blue and green economies.
- Dissemination of knowledge and raising awareness of sustainable business practices to pivot economic activity towards protecting nature.
- Inclusion and engagement targeted towards TCI's most vulnerable and under-served communities in pursuit of inclusive growth.

This approach will lead to the overall impact of reducing barriers to sustainable livelihood opportunities (Figure 1).

Themes	High level Outcomes – 2030	Impact
Vulnerability to global shocks and crisis	Increased economic and environment resilience TC Islanders develop skills in diverse economic activities, including nascent sectors (food production and waste management), to grow and diversify inclusive income opportunities.	1. Increased opportunities for environmentally sustainable livelihoods are available to the most vulnerable communities. 2. Reinforcement between sustainable resource use and environmental protection. 3. Sustained natural capital for long-term resilience
Development of sustainable livelihoods		
Economic diversification	Economic growth that protects natural capital The Hub provides professional development, skills and knowledge that support sustainable resource use and protection of the environment.	
Protection of natural capital	An established hub for sustainable enterprise Outreach initiatives successfully engage communities most vulnerable to shocks and achieve gender equity. The hub is a recognised and valued resource across TCI.	
Inclusive growth		

Figure 1: High level themes, outcomes and impact of the Community Resilience Hub.

Over the long-term, economic activity in TCI will incorporate sustainable resource use and protection of ecosystem services on which the economy and society rely. The activities delivered through the Hub strengthen the key pillars of sustainable development dimensions, working towards high national income through inclusive growth and a healthy natural environment.

2.3.1 Current Service

Training and professional development opportunities have been developed by JNCC in partnership with the Department for Environment and Coastal Resources (DECR) and project partners between October 2023 and September 2024. The focus of the training programmes has been to build resilience in nature-dependent sectors which are either particularly vulnerable to shocks and extreme weather events, such as small-scale fisheries, or provide opportunities for growth and security, such as waste management and agriculture. Facilitation of agriculture and fisheries training was contracted to expert on-island providers. Michelle Fulford and the Turks and Caicos Fisheries Cooperative developed fisheries modules to increase business and financial acumen within the community, with the goal of increasing access to funding and markets. Michelle Fulford also delivered a Fisheries Train the Trainer programme in which successful participants (Community Hub Champions) went on to facilitate fisheries training sessions across TCI. Mario Smith, a freelance consultant agronomist, developed training in hydroponics crop production and organic soil health techniques and facilitated in-person and online training sessions, as well as Agriculture Train the Trainer sessions. Green VI, a British Virgin Islands organisation, delivered training in waste business models which repurpose readily available materials to address pollution and waste. A range of communication activities were deployed to engage marginalised and vulnerable groups with Hub opportunities, including social media, sector networks and on-island promotion.

In the first year of delivery (October 2023 to September 2024), a total of 25 training sessions were attended by over 300 participants, delivered on each of TCI's major islands. Rigorous evaluation of Hub activities has been undertaken by consultants at Wavehill (UK) who collected data through surveys, interviews and focus groups (Wavehill, 2024). Analysis shows that more than half (58%) of participants were women, with high female representation in the composting and waste management training. Most participants were TCI nationals (60%), whilst the second and third most represented nationalities include Jamaican (9%) and Haitian (7%). Residents of Grand Turk (31%) and South Caicos (24%) constituted the largest proportion of attendees by island. Training effectively engaged young demographics as students were the most represented (25%) occupation category. A third of composting trainees were unemployed at the time of training, whilst no participants in fisheries or waste management reported being out of work. Overall, the key motivations for

participating in the training were to enhance knowledge and skills (73%). A high proportion of waste management (53%) and one-fifth (22%) of fisheries participants were interested in commercial opportunities, compared to one person in hydroponics, where the highest motivation was to gain skills for home production.

Participants, overwhelmingly, were highly satisfied with the training and found it to be important and valuable (90%) with a high level of applicability to their daily lives. The majority of participants indicated interest in attending future training sessions demonstrating a need for development opportunities to access sustainable livelihoods. Five people completed Train the Trainer programmes in agriculture and fisheries modules, increasing the capacity for skills retention and continuation of training beyond the RESEMBID-supported project.

2.3.2 Improvements to Service Delivery

Through the RESEMBID-supported project, the Community Resilience Hub initiative has provided the first steps towards promoting sustainable livelihoods which diversify economic activity and protect natural capital. Four key areas for improvement have been identified through evaluation of the project outputs to date. The following challenges must be addressed to increase the value of this community resource and deliver the spending objective outcomes (Figure 1).

1. To date there has been a limited discernible impact in establishing a link between skills development and access to market opportunities. During the development of training programmes, it was intended that each programme should incorporate business skills and management. However, for some training programmes there were no facilitators with the relevant expertise available during programme delivery. Additionally, the relevant areas of expertise in waste management business models were not available on-island, highlighting under-resourced opportunities for circular economy business opportunities (dependent on the reuse and regeneration of materials). Waste management and hydroponics crop production are relatively new industries and market infrastructure has not yet been established.
2. The level of success in engaging the most vulnerable communities was impacted by the unsuccessful recruitment of a dedicated Hub Coordinator. Instead, a Marketing and Public Relations company, who is partially based in TCI, was employed to deliver engagement and coordination activities. The engagement strategy did not deliver personal and direct engagement and instead relied on existing facilitator networks and online marketing. This created additional challenges as the Hub is not recognised as an entity, limiting visibility and community buy-in with blue and green economic opportunities.

3. In some instances, the material and content were not considered to be relevant to all attendees and the breadth of topics covered was ambitious for the time allocated, which was usually a 2-hour session. Follow-up support and mentoring has been requested by some attendees to reinforce the training content and delivery of training. Training should be progressive and pitched at the right level for groups with diverse backgrounds and experience.
4. Meaningful investment in sustainable fisheries, local food production and waste management enterprise, and other pipeline opportunities in the blue and green sectors, requires more than one-off training. Instead, a multifaceted approach to support a business ecosystem is needed which may include enhancing technical expertise, advancing supportive policies and legislative frameworks and providing business networks, funding, infrastructure and resources, particularly for nascent business opportunities.

2.3.3 Recommendations

The Hub must deliver under the following principles to achieve the spending objective outcomes:

Access to markets: Creating a link between skills and income opportunities.

To fulfil the economic growth potential of TCI's blue and green economies a strategic and holistic Hub model is required which links to business opportunities through new and existing commerce networks, provides business training and support to improve access to high-income contracts and tourist markets and makes available appropriate business grants and resources. This will require political buy-in to advance enabling policies and legislation.

Integrated: Developing relationships with vulnerable communities

Public engagement must improve. This will reduce barriers to accessing training for the sectors and communities most vulnerable to shocks. A variety of outreach techniques should be used, in addition to social media advertising, including on the ground approaches, radio adverts, engagement with key representatives and community leaders and collaboration with grassroots groups and networks.

Inclusive: Training content is accessible and inclusive

Facilitators involved in the Hub have been highly knowledgeable and skilled in their respective areas which resulted in the training being well-designed and tailored to the needs of TC Islanders, a strength of the Community Resilience Hub that must be maintained. Training providers must have local knowledge and the necessary resources to design modules for participants with diverse knowledge and skills.

Supportive: Ongoing support for sustainable entrepreneurship

Considering the nascent and often small-scale nature of blue and green sectors, continued support is required beyond one-off training to reinforce learning and sustain economic growth in these areas. This may include long-term, progressive training programmes, rather than one-off training, alongside mentorship, follow-up engagement and signposting to further support.

3. The Business Case

3.1 Options and Approaches

The following section assesses the potential impact and requirement of three options for the continuation of the Community Resilience Hub. Each option takes a different approach to support livelihoods which maintain and enhance natural assets and deliver long-term environmental gains. The proposed options for continuation of the continuation of the Community Resilience Hub are:

- Option 1 (minimal resources): Promoting blue and green economy opportunities through communication and engagement
- Option 2 (medium resource): Employment of a Community Resilience Hub Coordinator
- Option 3 (maximum resource): Establishing a physical Community Resilience Hub

3.1.1 Option 1: Promoting blue and green economy opportunities through communication and engagement

This option involves incorporating the promotion of blue and green economic opportunities into the existing TCI Government marketing strategy. This would likely require **1 or 2 hours per week** of a government employees time to research relevant opportunities, resources and information and promote them through the department's existing channels. Responsibility for delivery would sit with a specific department, such as DECR. Implementing Option 1 requires few resources; however, as this option does not necessarily create new opportunities or result in the investment of resources in outreach and community buy-in, the objective of establishing the Hub as a valuable community resource will not be met.

3.1.2 Option 2: Employment of a Community Resilience Hub Coordinator

This option supports the Vision 2040 approach of placing TC Islanders at the center of development by employing a locally based Hub Coordinator to lead on face-to-face engagement as well as fundraising and coordinating Hub activities. An original attempt to engage a coordinator was advertised as a Grade 7 post (**\$54,670 p/a+**), but this may be adapted based on the responsibilities and requirements of the role.

This person will sit within a government department or initiative and be responsible for the development and management of community hub activities. The key role of the coordinator will be to engage the most marginalised communities through

outreach, as well as to organise collaboration across departments and organisations to galvanize cross-sector sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The Hub Coordinator may play a lead role in the implementation of the Natural Capital Investment Plan, ensuring that Community Resilience Hub activities support the identified sectors within the investment pipeline and bridge the gap between building capacity in sustainable livelihoods skills with market opportunities.

3.1.3 Option 3: Establishing a physical Community Resilience Hub

This option establishes the Hub as a place where diverse networks, communities and organisations may come together with the purpose of aligning TC Islanders economic activity towards its sustainable development goals. This **requires domestic investment** to establish a space in a government building or Community College which is managed by the Community Hub Coordinator.

Developing a space dedicated to sustainable livelihoods demonstrates the TCI Governments commitment to scaling economic growth in the blue and green sectors. This may strengthen buy-in from local communities and persuade more people of the potential within sustainable livelihoods. A physical hub should be strategically located and accessible for all TC Islanders. Targeted outreach, satellite hubs and a strong sense of leadership from local communities can contribute to achieving this objective, empowering TC Islanders to develop the Hub and take a central role in shaping the islands' future. This may be achieved through inclusive governance models, such as a conservation committee, already successfully established in the [East Caicos Wilderness Area](#) project (Darwin Plus, 2024).

A physical Hub brings significant benefits to reducing TC Islanders barriers to sustainable economic opportunities and markets by providing essential resources and business services including software, literary resources, and drop-in business advice. Providing equipment and tools is particularly important for nascent sectors where these may not be readily available on island, such as hydroponics and waste management, but may be loaned through the Hub. This option most fully aligns with the Natural Capital Investment Plan recommendations to foster local entrepreneurial capacity and develop investable pipeline projects. Increasing local production may build trust in the capacity for domestic markets to meet the demand of businesses in TCI, potentially strengthening the case for increased import tariffs on key products going forward. A scoping exercise should be carried out to assess the level of investment required to implement this option, which will be contingent on alignment with other initiatives.

3.1.4 Recommended Option

The recruitment of a full-time coordinator who is based within a government department or initiative would most effectively achieve the key spending objective outcomes which are outlined below and deliver value for money, in pursuit of increasing inclusive opportunities in TCI's blue and green sectors (see full options appraisal, Appendix 1).

Access to markets

The TCI NCIP identifies early-stage pipeline project opportunities which have the potential to generate revenue streams including sustainable tourism, fisheries and agriculture (Finance Earth and eftec, 2024). Market-wide barriers currently limit the investment readiness of these sectors. These barriers may be reduced through coordinated support to engage local communities with professional development, increase technical expertise and establish an enabling policy and legislative framework. Within the first two years, a key role of the Hub Coordinator should be to act as a convenor, bringing together appropriate government departments and sectors in TCI to build a consortium for promoting environmentally sustainable practices and leveraging market opportunities in natural capital markets.

Integrated

A full-time Hub Coordinator will be the champion for the promotion of entrepreneurship which protects and enhances the natural environment. Engagement has been most successful for the agriculture and fisheries sessions, in which trusted persons within the community promote opportunities through targeted and in-person communications (Wavehill, 2024). To successfully remove barriers to engagement, the Coordinator should have strong interpersonal skills and be able to demonstrate experience of building relationships with marginalised groups in TCI. The Hub Coordinator may foster community governance of the Hub, relieving management burdens on TCI Government and supporting buy-in across TCI communities. The Hub Coordinator may also bring together diverse Government departments, partners and stakeholders (see Appendix 2) to accelerate integrated opportunities in the blue and green economies.

Supportive and Inclusive

The Hub Coordinator will have oversight of all Hub activity and be responsible for identifying and improving the Hub's offering. This may include coordinating follow-up support and continued learning opportunities. Activities provided through the Hub should address the gaps demonstrated through the first-year of delivery, including offering business management and marketing skills and implementing

actions to promote gender inclusion (SDG5). To address the challenges outlined in Section 2, the coordinator will be responsible for monitoring the progress and outcomes of activities, identifying risks and responding to feedback by exploring new ways of working.

The Hub Coordinator role will include three main work areas (Figure 2): inclusive engagement; coordinating and monitoring training programmes; and facilitating collaborative working between relevant sectors and government departments, including securing financial support through public and private partnerships. The immediate next steps for implementing the continuation of the Community Resilience Hub will be to secure funds for the Hub Coordinator Role. Once in post, the Hub Coordinator may develop a thorough inclusive engagement strategy and build relationships with stakeholders across government and key sectors.

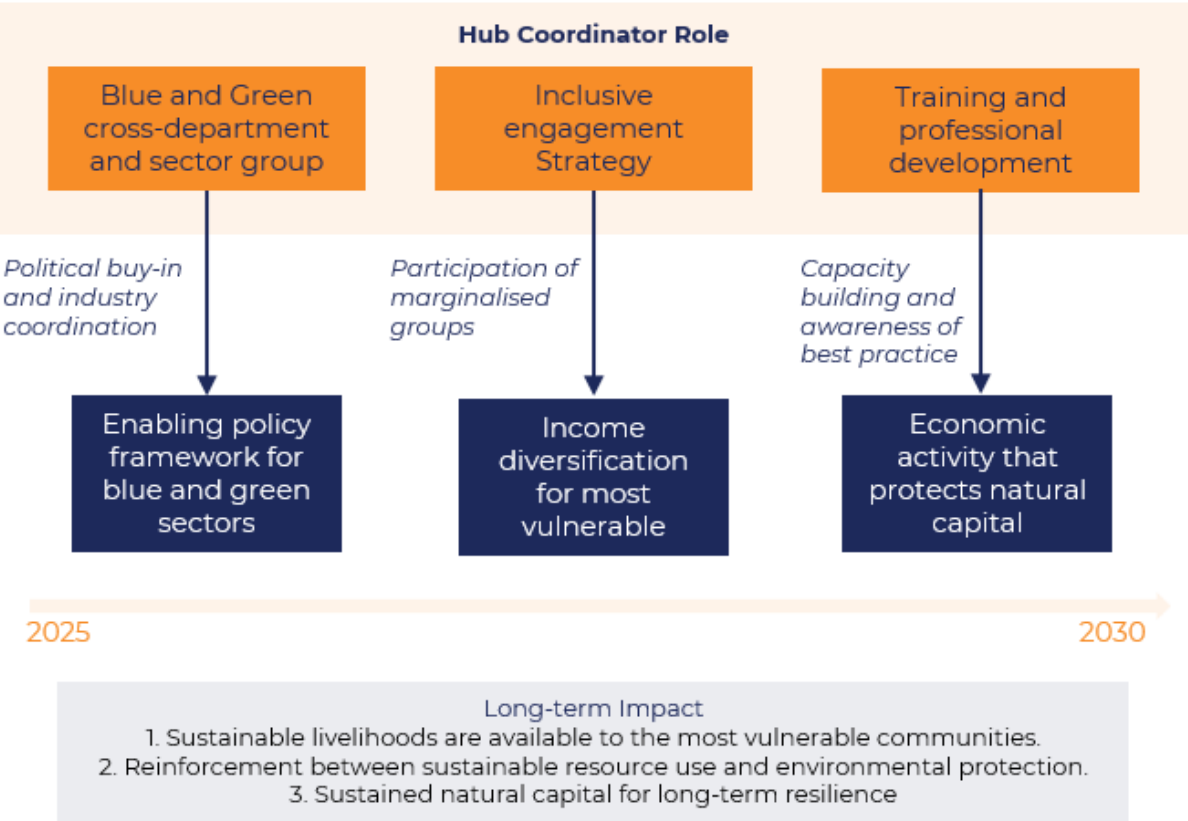


Figure 2: Advancing sustainable livelihoods in blue and green sectors through the Community Resilience Hub, 2025 to 2030.

3.2 Business Model

3.2.1 Funding the Community Resilience Hub

An initial commitment to funding for the Hub Coordinator salary and activity costs could be secured from both public and private sources. Over the next five years the Hub Coordinator will lead on raising additional funds and increasing revenue streams, so that the Hub may become self-sustaining and provide professional development opportunities over the long-term. The NCIP sets out the importance of grant and development funding as an initial step for accelerating natural capital projects (Figure 3). Examples of opportunities for funding the Hub role through a TCI Natural Capital Trust are captured in Figure 3.

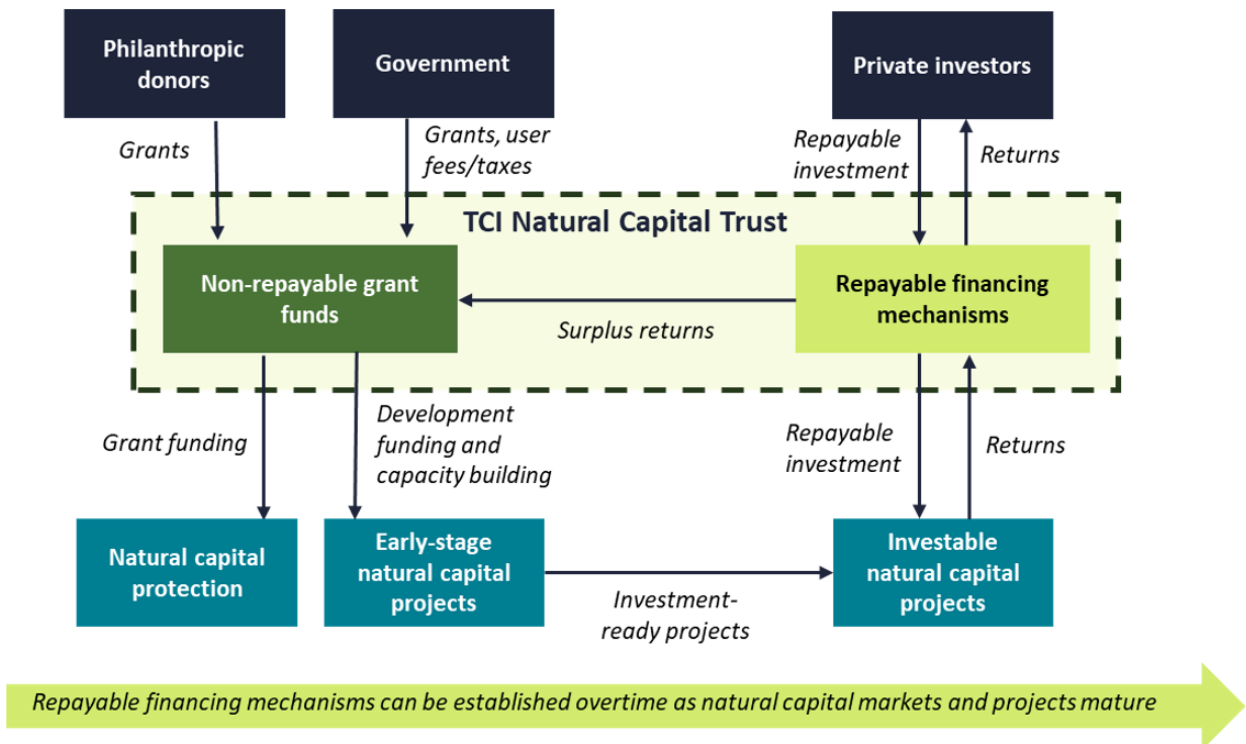


Figure 3: Proposed NCIP Financing Model (p.40, Finance Earth and eftec, 2024).

The NCIP proposes the establishment of an independent charitable vehicle, the TCI Natural Capital Trust, which would act as a mechanism to deliver locally based multi-stakeholder governance and coordinate the delivery of ringfenced funding to priority natural capital projects (Finance Earth and eftec, 2024). The Trust model includes non-repayable grant funds, established through TCI Government and Philanthropic donors, which are intended to support direct conservation as well as development funding and capacity building programmes to help build investment-ready natural capital projects. Funding the Hub Coordinator role through the TCI Natural Capital

Trust presents a transparent, impactful, opportunity to meet these proposed objectives and build capacity in TCI's blue and green sectors.

Public Funding

The Community Resilience Hub delivers on the objectives of diverse TCIG initiatives including environment, fisheries, agriculture, public and environmental health, disaster resilience and investment. Collaboration across departments may direct funds towards the initial continuation of the Hub. For instance, the Hub model could be integrated as a specific arm of Invest TCI's MSME programme, allocating funding, training and business support to legitimate sustainable ventures in the blue and green sectors. Similarly, activities targeted to small-scale fisheries may be supported through the Marine Protected Area funding, positioning the Hub as a strategic delivery partner of the initiative. Any cross-collaboration must adhere to a clear ordinance to protect against mission drift and ensure that activities genuinely support sustainable practices and protection of natural capital.

A proportion of ringfenced tourist fees may provide sustainable income to support the continuation of the Community Resilience Hub. Currently the 12% restaurant tax and 10% destination management fee are absorbed into the overall government budget. Political support is required to progress legislation to enable the ringfencing of tourist fees and governance over allocation (Finance Earth and etec, 2024). TCI Government may further progress support for an increase in sustainable livelihoods through a policy and legislative framework which advantages domestic production.

Grant and Philanthropic funding

A mixed approach to funding the Community Resilience Hub, including government, philanthropic and private sources, may improve the availability of opportunities for the most vulnerable and marginalised communities. The Community Resilience Hub lead, DECR, is well placed to apply for a range of the [Darwin Plus Grants](#) schemes, established for the long-term strategic outcomes for protecting biodiversity, the natural environment and improving resilience within the UK Overseas Territories. Relevant programmes include:

- **People and Skills:** Up to £100,000 for projects up to 24 months. This grant is aimed at building capacity through training, education and professional development opportunities to increase knowledge and ability to meet the long-term strategic outcomes for the natural environment.
- **Darwin Main:** £50,000 to £1 million for projects 6 months to 3 years. This grant is for environmental projects of benefit to the UK Overseas Territories and preference is given to discrete projects implementing existing identified environmental solutions on the ground.

The Hub activities are based on robust evidence gathered by scientific bodies (JNCC, Wavehill) during the first year of delivery. This evidence may be used to secure funding commitments from sectors who want to increase their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). For instance, The Hotel and Tourism Association has an established sustainability committee whose goal is to support eco-tourism and the protection of the natural environment on which the industry relies. Securing CSR commitments may be led by a government department and targeted to sectors with the highest environmental impacts.

Revenue and Changes in Markets

Once the Hub is established in TCI there may be increased opportunities for growing diverse revenue streams in pursuit of becoming a self-sustaining entity. This may include providing tiered price training opportunities, establishing environmentally sustainable certification and providing consultancy to other projects and regional governments. The activity of the Community Resilience Hub, supported by the Hub Coordinator, may accelerate the maturity and robustness of natural capital businesses (Figure 4) helping them to become investment ready. This will require improved sustainable business practices, sustainable business model development, ongoing monitoring and increased capacity and technical expertise (p.17, Finance Earth and etec, 2024). Employing a Hub Coordinator will support venture development under the Natural Capital Investment Plan and may in part be supported by funds secured for its implementation.

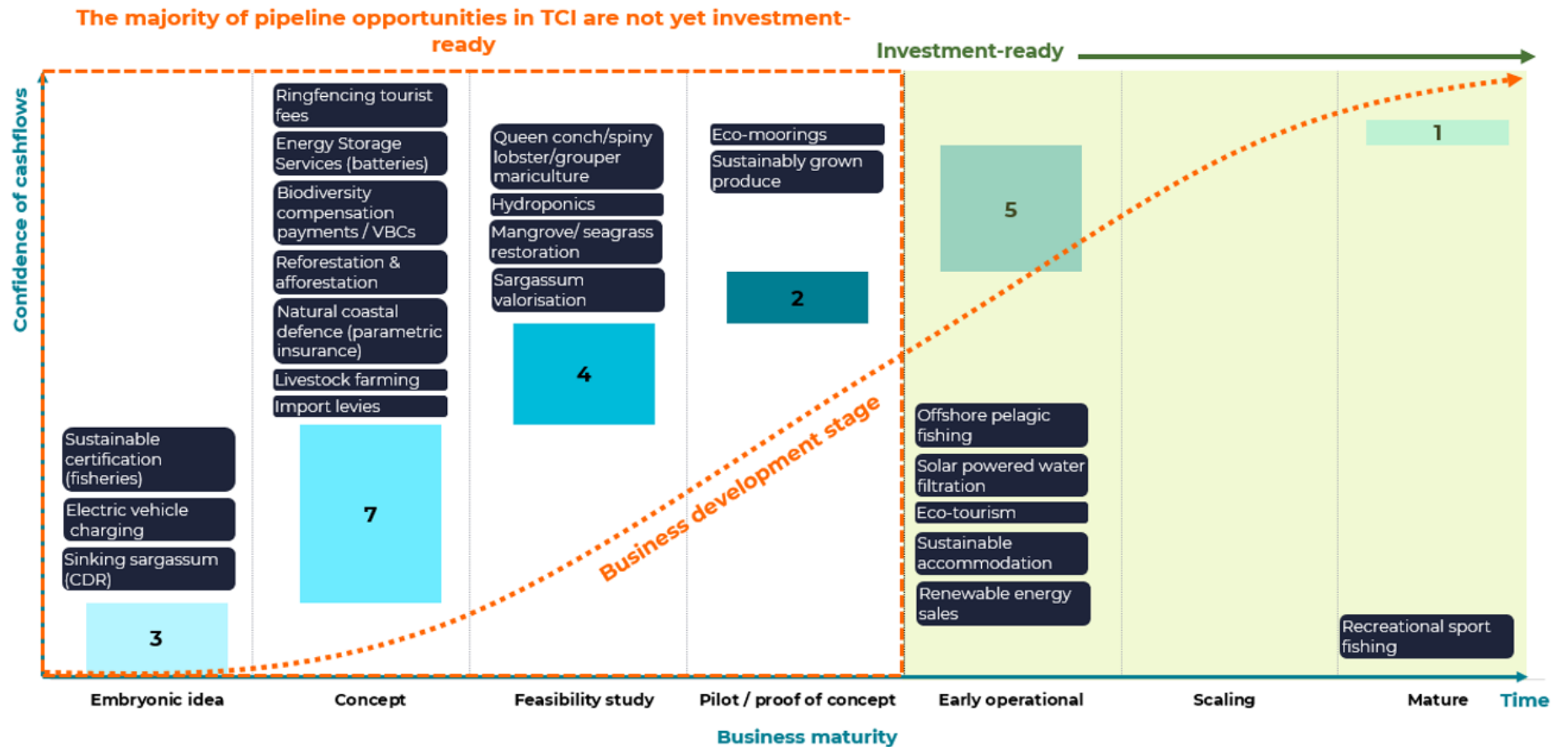


Figure 4: Pipeline opportunities mapping by maturity of business model (p.17, Finance Earth and ettec, 2024).

3.2.2 Monitoring the Hub’s contribution to the ‘Vision 2040’ Sustainable Development Planning Framework

There are a number of critical success factors which the Community Resilience Hub must achieve in order to contribute to key sustainable development dimensions outlined in TCI’s Vision 2040. The Hub Coordinator will be responsible for managing the activities of the Hub and monitoring its contribution to the wider TCI vision (see Table 1).

Table 1: Critical success factors for the delivery of the Community Resilience Hub activities which contribute to the Vision 2040 sustainable development dimensions (TCIG, 2023).

Sustainable Development Dimension (Vision 2040)	Community Hub Critical Success Factors	Hub Coordinator Role
1.4 Optimal private sector development	Return on investment.	Identify opportunities to support funding of the Community Hub and investment into NCIP projects.
1.4.1 Strong tourism industry as a foundation	Leverage opportunities in the tourist industry.	Promote eco-tourism as an opportunity for economic diversification in TCI.
1.4.3 Optimal economic diversification	Investment in skills for economic diversification.	Deliver training across three or more sectors.
1.4.4 Adequate access to development finance	Reduce barriers and meet the needs of MSME growth.	Facilitate relationships between MSME networks and communities.
1.4.5 Technological adaption and innovation including the use of green technology	Capacity in relevant new technologies for innovation.	Promote innovation in natural capital sectors e.g. hydroponics, circular economy.
1.5 Inclusive growth	Accessible for most vulnerable sectors and communities e.g. addressing language barriers.	Build in-person relationships with community leaders and networks.

Sustainable Development Dimension (Vision 2040)	Community Hub Critical Success Factors	Hub Coordinator Role
1.7 Adequate skills and capacity to facilitate economic growth, diversification and sustainable development	Capabilities for growth, economic diversification in sustainable livelihoods.	Support training programme development delivered by expert facilitators and Community Hub Champions.
2.8 Social Inclusion	Participation and governance by marginalised and vulnerable communities.	Assess and improve outcomes in engaging vulnerable communities.
3.1 Good ecosystems, marine and aquatic resource management	Increase sustainable resource use and environment protection.	Engage expert facilitators and monitor the quality of training module contents to support the promotion of legitimate sustainable practices.
3.2 Disaster risk management and climate resilience	Education and protection of ecosystem services.	Community Hub activity promotes sustainable resource-use, protection and restoration of natural ecosystems.
3.5 Adequate waste management and pollution control	Promote circular economy principles which reuse and regenerate locally available materials.	Explore opportunities with partners for scaling waste management enterprise

3.2.3 Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Potential risks of employing a Hub Coordinator for the continuation of the Community Resilience Hub are listed below. These include risks which have high impact and are probable if the described mitigating actions are not implemented.

Unsuccessful recruitment of a Hub Coordinator

In the initial development of the Community Resilience Hub under the RESEMBID-supported project, every effort was made to recruit a Community Hub Coordinator based in TCI. Recruitment was unsuccessful based on the original job description. The requirements and responsibilities of the Hub Coordinator are now well-defined

following evaluation of the first year of activity. As such, the Grade for this role should be reconsidered and a new job description developed which focuses on the candidates interpersonal and convening skills, which was less of a requirement in the original description, and appropriate for someone with 2 – 3 years' experience.

Low engagement from target communities

Evaluation of project delivery has revealed that some marketing and engagement strategies are less effective, such as an overreliance on social media and the Hub as a 'faceless organisation' with no permanent staff or venue (Wavehill, 2024). The Hub Coordinator will therefore develop an engagement strategy which prioritizes building relationships with community and religious leaders and uses known successful marketing channels such as radio adverts, leaflets and WhatsApp groups.

Long-term political support is not maintained

The Community Resilience Hub has been established by DECR with project partners JNCC (UK). The objectives support the long-term sustainable development strategy of Vision 2040, the National Investment Plan (2023) and the recommendations of the TCI NCIP (2024). However, to secure continued political support, the Community Resilience Hub would require engagement with, and buy-in from, senior decision makers within relevant government departments.

New skills development does not lead to increased sustainable livelihoods

The skills programmes delivered in the first year of the Community Resilience Hub activities were developed from evidence gathered from socio-economic research with communities and businesses in TCI and are also sectors identified in the TCI NCIP as pipeline projects. There are multiple market-wide barriers limiting natural capital projects. The role description for the Hub Coordinator should be clear on how the role addresses these challenges. Equally, environmental expertise within TCIG will be crucial to ensuring Hub activities support the legitimate promotion of sustainable enterprise.

4. Conclusion and Next Steps

This report presents a Business Case for a recommended option to continue the Community Resilience Hub with the aim of achieving its key spending objective outcomes and contributing to TCI's sustainable development goals. It is recommended that employment of a full-time Hub Coordinator who sits within, or across, government departments will best support delivery of a strategic Hub model. The Hub Coordinator will be responsible for engaging marginalised and vulnerable groups with professional development and promoting blue and green sector opportunities through new and existing networks.

As the RESEMBID-supported project comes to an end (December 2024) there are three key steps that DECR and the Turks and Caicos Islands Government may wish to action to secure funding for a Hub Coordinator:

- **Strategic Partnerships:** Initiate engagement with partners who may collaborate to fund and manage the Community Resilience Hub. The objectives of the Community Resilience Hub align with a number of government initiatives and sector organisations (see Annex 2). For example, Invest TCI have engaged with the development of the Community Resilience Hub as a project partner and have demonstrated an interest in supporting opportunities in TCI's blue and green sectors through their MSME programme and Business Support Unit. The Department of Fisheries & Marine Resource Management, alongside initiatives such as the UK's Blue Belt Programme, also seek to promote sustainable livelihoods in fisheries and marine-related sectors. As a first step, DECR may scope the appetite and availability of relevant organisations who have strategic interests in supporting the continuation of the Community Resilience Hub. This will also require engagement with relevant Government officials to progress the implementation of the NCIP and proposed Natural Capital Trust.
- **CSR Package:** Develop a presentation to take to key industry networks and corporations who are seeking opportunities to improve their CSR and environmental protection and may wish to invest in the community via the Community Resilience Hub.
- **Grant Funding:** Grant and development funding, such as Darwin People & Skills, may provide an opportunity to secure initial funding for the Hub Coordinator role. The next round of Darwin Plus Grants will be opening in 2025.

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Appendix 1: Options Appraisal

The key considerations for each option for the continuation of the Community Resilience Hub are summarized in the table below (Table 2). Each option is scored against the four principles for success and value for money criteria.

- Option 1 (minimal resources): Promoting blue and green economy opportunities through communication and engagement
- Option 2 (medium resource): Employment of a Community Resilience Hub Coordinator
- Option 3 (maximum resource): Establishing a physical Community Resilience Hub

Table 2: Options appraisal for the continuation of the Hub. Scores range from 1 to 5 (1 = low, 5 = high).

Spending Objectives (3.3)		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Inclusive	Activities are accessible for people with different levels of skills	2	4	4
	Likelihood of engaging relevant expertise for delivery.	5	3	3
Supportive	Provide mentorship and support	1	5	5
	Effective at improving knowledge and skills	2	4	4
	Opportunity for growth	2	4	4
Integrated	Engages vulnerable communities	2	5	4
	Delivery risk: simplicity of programme	4	4	2
	Communication and education for protection of environment	3	4	4
Access to markets	Support nascent markets	2	4	4
	Meeting new and established business needs	1	4	4
	Alignment with TCI NCIP	2	5	5

Spending Objectives (3.3)		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Value for Money	Costs involved in delivery represent value for money	3	5	3
	ROI: input-output over time	3	5	3
	Strategic fit with TCIG priorities	4	4	4
	Management burden saved	3	3	2
	TOTAL	39	58	55

Appendix 2: Partners and Stakeholders

A full-time coordinator may convene diverse partners and stakeholders to establish a networked, multifaceted approach, to accelerating opportunities in blue and green economies.

Turks and Caicos Islands Government

The Department of Environment and Coastal Resources (DECR)

DECR have supported the development of the Community Resilience Hub since its conception and helped to shape the activities throughout as co-project leads with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (UK). Promoting responsible growth in the blue and green economies is aligned with DECR's mission to promote protection and sustainable use of natural resources throughout the Turks and Caicos Islands. DECR's networks and expert staff may provide a bridge between TCIG policy and local action towards sustainable transition of industry.

The Department for Agriculture

The development of innovative and organic crop production methods including hydroponics and composting have been delivered in alignment with activity at the Department of Agriculture (DoA). The DoA's mission is to make agriculture an integral part of the Turks and Caicos economy and to improve food security. Increasing demand for locally grown produce is a potential opportunity for increasing economic opportunities using controlled growing methods which integrate efficient water and spatial use with increased domestic production.

Invest Turks and Caicos Islands

As TCI's statutory investment promotion agency Invest TCI help individuals establish business in the islands and provides guidance and support to help business tap into the local market opportunities aligned with long-term investment strategies. There is an opportunity to align the hub activities with the Investment Plan and MSME programme, which supports medium and small enterprises to grow by offering grants, concessions and technical assistance. Closer integration between the Community Resilience Hub and Invest TCI may lower the barriers to accessing support and investment for sustainable entrepreneurship, improving TC Islanders access to inclusive economic development.

Sector Organisations

Turks and Caicos Islands Fishing Cooperative

This organisation represents the islands' fishing community, promoting the sustainable management of TCI fisheries and steering policy development. The TCIFC has been instrumental partner contributing hugely to the successes of the CRH thus far, by developing training, implementing the Community Hub Champions initiative and engaging networks of fishers across the Turks and Caicos Islands with Hub activities. Lead members of the cooperative have expertise in fisheries regulation and compliance, fisheries management, stakeholder co-management initiatives and effective engagement strategies with fisher communities.

Waste Management

During the first stage of the Community Resilience Hub, waste management training was delivered by Green VI, a non-profit organisation based in the British Virgin Islands, as the required expertise and specialisms were lacking in TCI. The training delivered included repurposing materials along with developing small-scale waste business models. Given that waste management is a critical issue within TCI along with the need for equipment and expertise, opportunities for entrepreneurship in this area may be supported collaboratively across departments (Environmental Health, DECR, Invest TCI), along with NGOs, and community organisations.

Turks & Caicos Hotel and Tourism Association

The mission of the [Turks & Caicos Hotel and Tourism Association \(TCHTA\)](#) is to amplify the voice of the country's diverse stakeholders through collaboration and education, encouraging members to forge meaningful relationships for the advancement of the tourism industry. TCHTA has demonstrated an increasing commitment to environmental stewardship and environmentally sustainable tourism through the TCI Shine cleanup programme and through funding of initiatives decided upon by the TCHTA sustainability committee. The Community Resilience Hub provides an avenue for progressing skills and capacity in the eco-tourism sector, in alignment with the goals of TCHTA sustainability committee.



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