

Report 1: Report 1: Contribution of the cultural and creative industries to the economy and society of Antigua and Barbuda

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 2018, the Department of Culture (DOC), via a project proposal formulated by Cultural Advisor Dr. Hazra Medica, was awarded US \$50 033,00 by the UNESCO International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD), for a cultural industries mapping project. The UNESCO-funded project came to a formal end in the last quarter of 2022. The final outputs of the project—two reports on the nation’s Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs), completed by a UNESCO-recommended expert were delivered to Dr. Medica on March 31st, 2023.

The DOC’s historic mapping project, which benefited from technical assistance from public, private, and civil sector partners, has created a few firsts for the Department of Culture, its parent Ministry, and the nation. During the trying times of the Covid-19 pandemic, it accomplished the herculean task of gathering vital information from a total of 434 creatives, and two heritage institutions. These responses form the bulk of the information that informs this novel Report 1, as well as Report 2, which offers recommendations for the growth and development of the nation’s CCIs. The project also resulted in the creation of Antigua and Barbuda’s first-ever Cultural Information System/portal. The portal/website <https://cpoise.gov.ag/> features: monthly updated articles; Antigua and Barbuda’s first-ever Map/Directory of Creatives; a Cultural Repository; a Knowledge Base; Opportunities Page (newly added); and a Map of Events.

Report 1 was guided by information collected from four surveys: one with 430 creatives and cultural practitioner respondents; one completed by the National Festivals Office; one completed (separately) by the Antigua and Barbuda National Museum, and the National Parks Authority; and a Promoter’s Survey. Supplementary information was obtained from primary source documents as well as secondary material relating to socio-economic activity and political imperatives in Antigua and Barbuda, the CCIs in Antigua and Barbuda as well as those in CARICOM in general. An independent consultant, Avril Joffe, a UNESCO Expert Facility member from South Africa, was contracted to analyse the results of these surveys and to compile these reports.

This report, *Report 1: Contribution of the Cultural and Creative Industries to the Economy and Society of Antigua and Barbuda* demonstrates first, that the CCIs ought to be seen as part of the broader socio-economic development of Antigua and Barbuda; second that there is vibrancy and substantial activity in the CCIs but that it remains an embryonic sector; third, that as an embryonic sector with significant potential, it requires crucial support from a range of stakeholders including the artists, creatives and cultural practitioners involved in the CCIs; fourth, that there are key characteristics of CCIs which require specialist attention from a range of policy makers across government such as labour, trade, social development and finance and finally, that given the lack of support, there are a number of crucial areas currently receiving insufficient attention such as the role and participation of women and the participation of vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities.

Nevertheless, it needs to be stated that there is still insufficient information to clearly articulate the contribution of the CCIs to the GDP – for that a more substantial mapping study will need to be undertaken initially based on firm-level interviews with cultural organisations and creative businesses in all the cultural domains and across all stages of the value chain. Such a survey will need to collate financial information related to earnings, turnover, exports, and costs of doing business. More detailed proposals are included in *Report 2: Policy Recommendations to Strengthen the Cultural and Creative sector in Antigua and Barbuda*.