

The Project to Expand ENOW framework into the Caribbean

NOAA's OCM created a framework to produce employment statistics from the national economic accounts for sectors of the economy that depend on the oceans and Great Lakes. This framework, called the Economics National Ocean Watch (ENOW), uses data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), and the U.S. Census Bureau (Census) to create time-series data that are comparable across time and across different geographies (counties, states, regions, and the nation). The data are available for download, and can also be seen in a variety of web applications such as the [ENOW Explorer](#) and the [Coastal County Snapshots](#).

The ENOW dataset covers the 30 coastal states within the United States; but does not provide information for the Territories of the United States, including the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI), and Puerto Rico. The USVI and Puerto Rico have a large number of small, independently owned businesses and a relatively high level of informal economic activity, which are not reflected in data produced by the federal statistical agencies. Census Non-employer statistics used to provide data on the self-employed workers in the ocean economy are not available for U.S. territories. In addition, BEA does not develop gross domestic product for the USVI and Puerto Rico.

Recognizing the high level of ocean-dependency in the Caribbean, OCM recently developed a summary of BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) data for ocean-dependent sectors in the USVI and Puerto Rico, using the same ENOW classification scheme that it uses to assess the ocean-dependency of coastal areas on the U.S. mainland. However, given their unique nature as islands, the USVI and Puerto Rico are more reliant on ocean-related activity than most U.S. states. Thus, OCM may need to expand the traditional ENOW framework in order to fully capture ocean-dependent activity in these territories.

For these reasons, OCM hired consultants (the project team) to gain a better understanding of the true ocean-dependency of the economies of the USVI and Puerto Rico, and to assess the applicability of the ENOW methodology for these locations. This research involved conducting in-person meetings to obtain input from local stakeholders and analyzing local data and information to meet the following objectives:

- Assess the accuracy and completeness of the OCM's QCEW summary data for ENOW ocean-dependent sectors in the USVI and Puerto Rico;
- Describe the ocean-dependent activities and sectors that are not captured in the QCEW data; and
- Make recommendations for developing a more complete characterization of USVI and Puerto Rico's economic dependency on the ocean.

The attached report cites a significant shortage in time-series data with sufficient detail to generate annual estimates of the ocean economies of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Due to the labor-intensive nature of assembling the necessary data, it is more likely that the information presented in this report could be updated every five years or so.

The following information is on the expansion of the Economics: National Ocean Watch (ENOW) data and framework to the Caribbean. This initiative was funded by the Office for Coastal Management.

This [Digital Coast page](#) has links to:

1. an August 2016 report "[Describing the Ocean Economies of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico](#)" which presents:
 - a. an [executive summary](#)
 - b. a broad, detailed description of ocean-dependent activities, based on findings from in-person meetings and analysis of local data sources,
 - c. a description of the limitations of the existing ENOW datasets for USVI and PR,
 - d. the findings of this research, including an analysis of the QCEW summary data that OCM developed for the territory, and
 - e. recommendations for improving that data in the future.
2. the [Quick Report Tool for Socio-economic data](#) to view and download a limited range of economic data for Puerto Rico (ENOW data for Puerto Rico are not available; economic data for the U.S. Virgin Islands are not available)