

Training Programme for National Ozone Officers & National Ozone Assistants in the Caribbean Region

1. Dates of travel: 15 – 19 March 2023

2. Country Visited: Panama

3. Purpose and Objectives of the trip:

Purpose and Objective

The main objective of this training package was to provide new National Ozone Unit (NOU) staff with essential information about the Montreal Protocol, a country's obligations under the Montreal Protocol, and the main activities carried out by NOUs. The aim was to provide new NOU staff with fundamental knowledge and information tools that would enable them to support their national government in meeting the commitments agreed by all countries under the Montreal Protocol.

Participants

The audience comprised NOU officers from Belize, Dominica, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago and Grenada.

4. Meeting/workshop/training agenda: The agenda is submitted with this report as two (2) attachments.

Modules presented during the training:

- Ozone depletion and reasons why the ozone layer needs to be protected
- Negative effects of ozone depletion on human health and the environment
- Evolution and achievements of the Montreal Protocol
- Organisational structure and bodies of the Protocol
- Global commitments agreed under the Protocol
- The role of the National Ozone Unit
- National legislation, policies measures and activities
- Data collection, monitoring and reporting
- Implementing Multilateral Fund projects
- Raising awareness and working with stakeholders
- Alternative technologies and options

Customs officers were also incorporated into the training workshop to appraise them of important border control issues as they relate to the monitoring of the illegal trade of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) *and* the modification of the custom codes to account for imports of Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). These substances were introduced to replace the ODS, Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs). However, due to the Global Warming Potential (GWP) of HFCs, parties to the Montreal Protocol committed to phase down the levels of imports of HFCs to established international targets. This effort is supported by ratification of yet another amendment to the Montreal Protocol, the Kigali Amendment, critical to the management of climate change.

5. Benefits to the agency and the public generally

The knowledge gained will enable the NOU to support the government in meeting its commitments agreed by all countries under the Montreal Protocol.

6. Recommendations and or action plans arising from the overseas trip

The key recommendations/activities as a consequence to the convening of this workshop were:

- One country expressed concern of the notable absence of the Multi-Lateral Fund Secretariat (MLFS) at the current meeting and recommended their presence or participation in future meetings in order to fully understand the work of the MLFS, their processes, decisions and implications for the region.
- Countries were reminded that funding is available, through the Enabling Activities Projects, to assist with early ratification of the Kigali Amendment. Non-participating countries were encouraged to access this funding.
- Countries that have not yet included Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) in their import/export licensing and quota systems, were encouraged to examine the most efficient means of doing so to facilitate the phase down of HFCs under the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.
- Countries noted the information presented on the HFC alternative refrigerant Dimethyl Ether (DME) and recommended that its application be evaluated further, taking into account ongoing research and development, whilst giving special consideration to the flammability and toxicity aspects of its use as a refrigerant.
- Countries were encouraged to be involved in the development of various energy efficiency policy measures that have linkages to the Kigali Amendment, such as the development of energy efficiency standards being undertaken by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission and the Caribbean Community Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ).
- Concern was raised for the format of recent sub-regional network meetings that do not allow sufficient time for discussion on the important issues pertaining to the sub-region.

- Customs officers were encouraged to undertake inspections of all shipments of refrigerants to ensure that they comply with the import licences and to guard against illegal trade.
- The routine use of refrigerant identifiers to inspect refrigerant shipments was encouraged. However, it was recognized that identifiers only provide a preliminary test and in some countries further verification of a test sample from a recognized testing institution may be required in the event of a legal challenge.
- The meeting recommended that regular training for Customs officers be continued at the national level.
- It was proposed that the matter of the disaggregation of HS codes for Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) should be presented to respective national Ministers of Trade for discussion at the level of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) to facilitate the establishment of regional HS codes ahead of the World Customs Organization's 2022 review.
- Countries who do not have an Electronic Licensing (e-Licensing) System were encouraged to develop the same through the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) platform e-licensing module.

Conclusions

1. The Meeting recognized the three countries that have already ratified the Kigali Amendment from the Region, namely Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Grenada. Other countries were encouraged to take the necessary steps at the national level to ratify the Kigali Amendment at the earliest possible time.
2. The Earlier Ratifiers noted that, the key factors contributing to the success of their ratification process were, highlighting the synergies amongst the Montreal Protocol, other Multilateral Environmental Agreements and national development strategies and the economic benefits that will be derived from ratification of the Kigali Amendment.
3. Countries noted the importance of developing national standards for the use of natural refrigerants as a measure to support the transition from fluorinated gases to non-ozone depleting, low GWP and energy efficient alternatives.
4. It was noted that non-ozone depleting, low GWP and energy efficient refrigerants and their technologies are still not widely available in the region. It was recommended that potential sources be examined in order to determine the accessibility and economic implications.
5. The meeting re-examined the issue of disposal of used and contaminated refrigerants since it still remains a major problem for the region. Access to financial resources was identified as a solution to assist countries to overcome this issue.

6. The meeting recognized that the role of NOOs was expanding to include energy efficiency issues, as countries get closer to the implementation of the Kigali Amendment.
7. Participants of the new NOO training expressed their overall satisfaction with the outcome of the training and identified areas for further development.

7. Suitability of the report for inter-agency sharing: This report is suitable for inter-agency review.

8. Description of the interventions made on behalf of Jamaica at the Meeting/workshop/forum etc.

Jamaica has fulfilled its 2017 data reporting obligations to the Ozone Secretariat which signifies the country's continued excellent compliance with the Montreal Protocol.

9. Issues raised that Jamaica needs to address in a policy

The Trade (Montreal Protocol) (Trade in Ozone Depleting Controlled Substances) Order, 2014 must be examined to ascertain if modifications therein can permit inclusion of control of HFCs.

10. The follow up that needs to be made after the meeting/workshop/forum etc.

- The Jamaica Customs Agency and the Ministry of Health must be appraised of their regulatory responsibilities with respect to the new requirements for the control of trade of these substances.
- The refrigeration and air-conditioning service sectors need to be aware of modifications to be made to existing equipment to accommodate newer substances that have reduced contributions to global warming.
- An assessment of the enabling environment required for the Kigali Amendment to be successful in fulfilling its objectives within the national environment and planning legislative framework must be conducted.

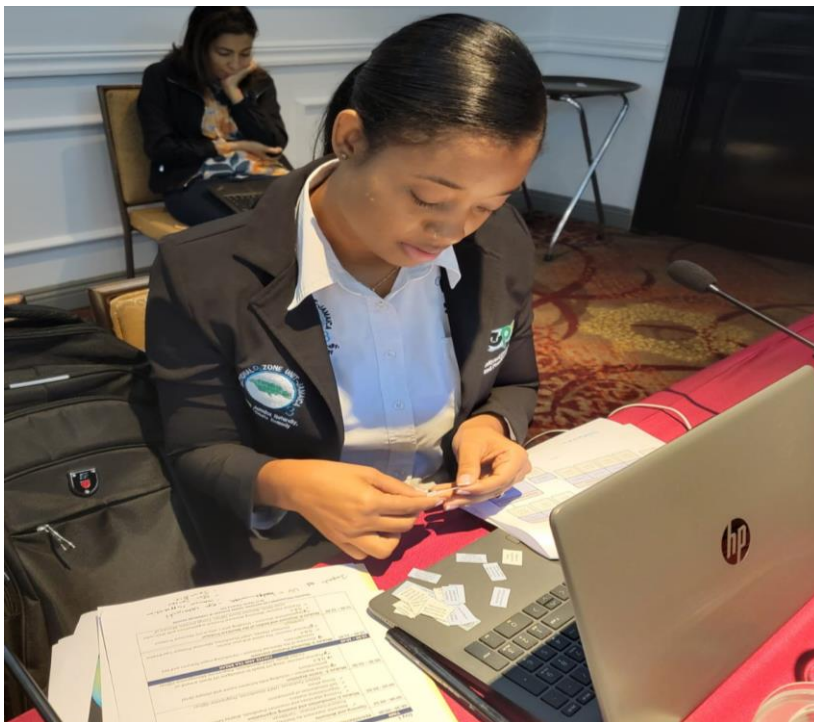
11. Outcomes of the trip

The workshop equipped the new incumbent to the post of Project Assistant, National Ozone Unit/National Ozone Officer with knowledge to enable her to continue the work in fulfilment of Jamaica's obligations under the Montreal Protocol *and commencing* the initial steps towards the ratification of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol.

APPENDIX I: PHOTOGRAPH INVENTORY



Group Photo



Engaged in individual assignment

Report of the Training Programme for National Ozone Officers & National Ozone Assistant, 16 March – 18 March 2023 in Panama.



Participants engaged in group activities