



23 September 2026

Winning Team Honoured with Cheques Following Regional Victory

The members of The Virgin Islands' winning team from the Caribbean Tourism Organization's (CTO) Regional NextGen Tourism Showcase were officially recognized on Tuesday with the presentation of winners' cheques by Junior Minister for Culture and Tourism, Honourable Luce Hodge-Smith.

The team, comprised of H. Lavity Stoutt Community College students Adrianne Thomas, Auri-Ana El Shabazz, and Naomi Onwufuj, captured first place at the CTO's Regional Nex-Gen Tourism Showcase, held during Caribbean Week in New York on 5 June, 2026. The winning entry focused on their innovative tourism proposal, *"Caribbean Green and Blue Economy Tourism Hub"*.

The students competed against finalists from Saint Lucia and the Turks and Caicos Islands, impressing judges with a forward-thinking model that combines tourism development, environmental conservation, and community engagement. Their concept promotes a self-sustaining tourism ecosystem where tourism revenues directly support marine restoration, sustainability initiatives, and local economic participation.

Junior Minister Hodge-Smith again commended the winners for their creativity, professionalism, and contribution to advancing sustainable tourism solutions for the region. She said the achievement highlights the talent and innovation of Virgin Islands' youth and showcases the Territory's leadership in shaping the future of Caribbean tourism.

Also in attendance at the brief ceremony were Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sustainable Development, Joseph Smith-Abbott and Human Resources Manager, Ziina Hanley; along with Director of the BVI Tourist Board and Film Commission, Clive McCoy.

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About:

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sustainable Development is responsible for advancing the Territory's tourism sector, preserving and promoting cultural heritage, and implementing policies that support sustainable growth and environmental stewardship.