

UNEP Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

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1. Legal/Policy/Institutional Arrangements for SIDS and/or the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway

Through implementation of the **UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025**, UNEP will address the special needs of Least Developed Countries, Land-Locked Developing Countries and small island developing States, facilitating access to finance, technology and innovative solutions to help them build more resilient and inclusive economies and societies a post-COVID-19 world. Our sub-regional offices are engaged in the development of the **Multi-Country Sustainable Development Frameworks for the Pacific and the Caribbean SIDS**. UNEP is supporting the United Nations Country Teams in SIDS, providing environmental data and analysis through the **World Environment Situation Room (WESR)**. The **United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks** will likewise include strong environmental components, providing clear guidance and pathways to support the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

High-quality, credible, open and shared, sex-disaggregated environmental data, assessments and expertise are critical to support integration efforts across the UN system. In the Caribbean, UNEP will continue supporting the **Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC)** initiative on environmental indicators as mandated by the Regional Forum of Ministers of Environment. Through the activities being conducted in the framework of the ILAC Working Group on Environmental Indicators, UNEP is promoting the establishment of a network of **Caribbean Environmental Information Systems**.

In Africa, UNEP will strengthen capacities of SIDS in the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of environmental data and information to better understand the state of their environment, assess progress in implementation of SDGs and address their priority challenges such as climate change, natural disaster risks and pollution through building and strengthening the capacity of their National Environment Information Networks.

The **Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway** (2014), provides connection to UNEP's strategic response to vulnerabilities of island states. The

Marine and Coastal Strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme (2019)¹¹ presents the integrated ecosystem approach to ocean-related activities. SIDS and other countries are urged to implement fully and invest in urgent action to protect coral reefs and other vulnerable marine ecosystems.

UNEP convenes a meeting of Pacific Island Country Ministers of Environment during the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.

UNEP further promotes South-South Cooperation and triangular cooperation at the Regional Forum of Ministries of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, providing assistance to through the **Capacity Building Related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in African, Caribbean, and Pacific Countries** (2019). UNEP has institutionalised an annual Forum of Ministers responsible for Waste Management in the Caribbean.

The **Global Environment Facility (GEF)**-funded project being implemented by the UNEP Science Division in 14 Pacific Islands has adopted a plan for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway's Thematic Areas.

The **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** adopted a programme of work on island biodiversity as a set of actions addressing issues and problems that are specific to islands in 2006. The **Global Island Partnership (GLISPA)** has been one of the mechanisms to implement the CBD island biodiversity Programme of Work.

UNEP appointed a SIDS focal point at Headquarters in 2020.

2. Enhanced Support for a resilient Post COVID-19 Recovery in SIDS

The [GEF Pacific Inform project](#) implemented by UNEP and executed by the Secretariat of the **Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)** in 14 Pacific SIDS has established a Covid-19 resistant [network of environmental data portals](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how the loss and degradation of biodiversity undermines the web of life and increases the risk of disease spillover from wildlife to people. At a special virtual session for SBSTTA and SBI on the theme of "Biodiversity, One Health and the response to COVID-19", held on 15-16 December 2020, Parties to the **Convention on Biological Diversity** considered the interlinkages between biodiversity, health and pandemic risk and how they should be reflected in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The post-2020 global biodiversity framework is expected to be adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth meeting (currently scheduled for October 2021).

¹¹ UNEP/EA.4/INF.7

Several projects are being implemented in SIDS that will strengthen capacities for addressing fundamental elements of effective chemicals and waste management in relation to the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and thereby further contribute to resilience building. In Caribbean Sub-region a consultant was recruited by the **Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions** in 2020 to design, develop and deploy WESR platforms in the Caribbean region. This activity includes the identification and analysis of relevant datasets, statistics indicators and publications at global, regional and national levels.

A 5-year **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**-financed UNEP Programme (September 2021–2026) will support five Pacific SIDS to build long-term climate resilience through early warning systems and innovative approaches to disaster risk management, such as impact-based forecasting and Forecast-based Financing. The Programme will install new and/or upgraded observation equipment to improve baseline climate and ocean monitoring, whilst concurrently building capacity of the SIDS to manage and use climate data/information to deliver robust, evidence-based solutions. A dedicated component to enhance regional knowledge management and South-South cooperation will facilitate knowledge transfer and data sharing to other Pacific SIDS. Further GCF proposals on **Climate Information and Early Warning Systems (CIEWS) in SIDS** are in different stages of development, including for **Timor-Leste** and **Maldives**.

At the 20th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Lima in December 2014, the COP Presidency endorsed and launched the **Lima Adaptation Knowledge Initiative (LAKI)** under the Nairobi work programme (NWP) on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. The first phase of LAKI currently underway focuses on understanding the critical knowledge gaps through a priority setting workshop that involves a participatory process of knowledge gap identification, categorization and prioritization for specific subregions.

LAKI is a joint action pledge under the NWP between the UNFCCC secretariat and UNEP through its Global Adaptation Network (GAN). The Pacific sub-region for the LAKI consists of Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The priority-setting workshop for the Pacific subregion was organized from 23 to 26 February 2021.

3. Financing for Sustainable Development in SIDS

To mitigate the challenges and risks induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, SPREP and the Inform project management unit have adjusted the existing GEF resources to better respond to member state needs and priorities in 2021. New project development efforts are underway considering the long-lasting impacts of COVID-19.

UNEP has partnered with SPREP and 5 SIDS in the Pacific on integrated climate and ocean information services and multi-hazard early warning systems (MHEWS) to design a now

approved, ~ USD 50 million Green Climate Fund (GCF) climate services and capacity building project, that will establish robust early warning, climate change adaptation resilience, and improve disaster risk reduction capacities in the Pacific.

The existing project management team for the [GEF Pacific Regional Inform project](#) played a crucial coordination and proposal review role during the preparation process for this monumental GCF investment in the Pacific. This new [GCF project](#) in Cook Islands, Niue, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu that is scheduled to start implementation within 2021 aims to support increased climate-resilient sustainable development of 100,000 beneficiaries in the **Cook Islands, Niue, Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and Tuvalu** through the achievement of three outcomes:

- i. increased generation and use of climate information in decision making
- ii. strengthened adaptive capacity and reduced exposure to climate risks
- iii. strengthened awareness of climate threats and risk-reduction processes

As the project has been approved as a grant instrument as opposed to a loan facility, it builds much needed climate change adaptation capacities, while alleviating the liquidity and debt vulnerability challenges facing the five Pacific SIDS.

The pilot project programme established under the **Basel Convention Plastic Waste Partnership** to promote the environmentally sound management of plastic waste recognizes the special consideration due to SIDS considering their specific circumstances. The funding envelope of the programme for 2021-2022 is US\$1.8 million.

Through the **United Nations Joint SDG Fund** that supports countries to accelerate their progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNEP is implementing jointly with other participating United Nations organizations, three projects – i) **Roadmap for a Sustainable Financial System for Suriname – Suriname**; ii) **Blue Invest: A Facility for Caribbean SIDS' Financial Expansion Barbados Grenada St. Vincent and the Grenadines** and; iii) **Harnessing Blue Economy Finance for SIDS Recovery and Sustainable Development – Barbados Grenada St. Vincent and the Grenadines**.

UNEP will establish financial mechanisms on thematic issues (such as landscape management and coral reefs) and within such global financial mechanisms sub-regional financing for SDGs will be addressed. A GEF-7 project concept under development by UNEP, SPREP, ADB and UNDP with the support of the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development Goals, “**Developing and implementing integrated island and ocean management frameworks for sustainable blue economies**”, will promote investments in blue economy sectors.

References

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United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (2019). Status of Implementation: UNEP/EA.2/Res.10 “Oceans and Seas”, Annex (UNEP/CPR/144/7d).

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