



4TH INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON  
**Small Island  
Developing States**  
27-30 MAY, 2024  
ST. JOHN'S, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

## **SIDS4 Conference Side Event**

### **SIDS and the GEF: Three Decades of Environmental Leadership and Innovation**

**Wednesday May 29, 2024; 12:00-1:30pm: Room 4, American University of Antigua  
(Conference Venue), St. Johns, Antigua and Barbuda**

### **Organized by: Global Environment Facility**

Driven by increasing environment and economic pressures and faced with unique vulnerabilities, SIDS have been drivers of innovation and have demonstrated leadership in the global environmental agenda. The GEF hosted a side event to highlight key interventions and partnerships within the SIDS community over the last 30 years and reflect on priorities for the future.

#### Objectives of the Side Event:

- To highlight GEF investments in SIDS which have enabled countries to meet commitments under multilateral environment agreements, Sustainable Development Goals and priorities as defined by the global SIDS agenda. This aligns well with the interactive dialogue on Revitalizing SIDS Economies for accelerated and sustainable growth
- To strengthen partnerships within the SIDS community and with organizations working to advance nature positive and resilient development in SIDS.
- To inform approaches and thinking on support for the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) through the upcoming GEF-9 funding cycle (9<sup>th</sup> GEF Replenishment) and beyond.
- To launch a new [SIDS and GEF publication](#) showcasing SIDS as leaders and innovators in addressing challenges in the context of their developing blue and green economies.

Speakers from a range of stakeholders representing the GEF partnership including GEF recipient country Vanuatu, Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, United Nations Development Programme, Inter-American Development Bank as well as other invited speakers – Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office and the Ashley Lashley Foundation joined the GEF side event.

Interventions primarily highlighted the impact, lessons, opportunities arising from GEF investments over the past 30 years and ended with SIDS focused recommendations for the GEF, as the organization embarks on the negotiations for the 9<sup>th</sup> replenishment cycle.

These key recommendations included the need to enhance the ability of SIDS to capture, manage and utilize data and improve digitalization for practical decision making and action on climate and nature; the need to continue with the integrated approaches similar those seen under the [Blue and Green Islands Integrated Program](#); continue to push for innovation which sets GEF apart from many other grant making institutions; maintain the role of the 'green' in the blue and green discussions; active engagement of CSOs and persons on the ground to validate theories of change, contribute to decision making and implementation of solutions; assist with enhancing the level of capacity within the institutions charged with implementing interventions; incorporate the Integrated National Financing Framework in GEF financed projects; facilitate active engagement of youth in GEF 9 through the establishment of a Youth Advisory Board, SIDS Youth Action Task Force to work with SIDS Regional Teams and support Youth Innovative Hubs in GEF projects; continue to support financial instruments/models such as debt for nature conversions and conservation trust funds, whilst recognizing that it takes time to build the institutional frameworks for these instruments.

The GEF SIDS 4 event page is available [here](#).