

Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for Integrated Climate Action For Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Project Code and Title:	<i>2528B: Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for Integrated Climate Action for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)</i>
Implementing Entity (Lead):	<i>DESA</i>
Jointly Implementing DA Entities	<i>ECA</i>
Collaborating DA Entities	<i>RCOs – Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Timor Leste, DCO (Africa)</i>
Other Collaborating Entities:	<i>UNESCO, Center of Ocean Research for Sustainable Development, Cabo Verde, Ocean Science Mindelo Centre, Technical University of the Atlantic</i>
Budget:	<i>740,100</i>
Will this project use IPMR?	<i>Yes</i>
Target countries:	<i>Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe</i>
Most relevant SDG	<i>The 2030 Agenda calls for priority attention to be given to least developed countries (LDCs) and SIDS in supporting implementation. This project contributes primarily to SDGs 9 and 14. This project also contributes to SDG 1, 2, 3,4,5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17.</i>
SDG Targets	<i>Primarily 9.5, 9B, 14.2, 14.4, 14.7, 14A,</i>

Brief description
<p><i>Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) are key drivers of economic growth and sustainable development in LDCs and SIDS. However, many of these countries face challenges in harnessing the power of STI to drive economic growth and sustainable development in part due to cost constraints, infrastructure deficiencies, geographical insularity, fragmentation and limited knowledge transfer. Addressing these gaps requires efforts at all levels to assist countries to inter alia (i) prioritize investments in resilience and research and development ; (ii) promote regional cooperation and coordination and strengthen regional research institutions’ technical and institutional capacity through inter alia joint research initiatives, and knowledge sharing; and (iii) effectively mobilize national science and engineering capacity for mission-oriented research to solve specific national/regional problems .</i></p> <p><i>This project will support 3 Lusophone SIDS (Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, and São Tomé and Príncipe,) to strengthen their capacity to develop, deploy, and expand their use of STI in the context of the SDGs and particularly for building ocean knowledge and coastal resilience. Its objectives are to (i) expand opportunities to find workable and scalable STI solutions for building coastal resilience including through inter alia the use of nature-based solutions; (ii) work with existing centers of excellence to foster coherent approaches to, and increased investments in research and development, a common research and training agenda and to build out its infrastructure to support the STI for the SDGs; (III) enhance the capacity of targeted SIDS to develop STI roadmaps at national and sub-national levels and to contribute to the further development and enhancement</i></p>

of the agenda of STI for these countries. The project will be jointly implemented by UNDESA, UNECA and UNESCO

2. TARGET COUNTRIES

The main target countries for this project are Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, and São Tomé and Príncipe. Under Outcome 2, the project will also take advantage of ongoing complementary UNESCO work in Timor Leste to explore peer learning and to build partnerships between this Pacific Lusophone country and the main target countries .

3. CONTEXT AND SITUATION ANALYSIS

Most LDC SIDS face challenges in accessing and adopting technology and innovation due to factors such as high costs, infrastructure deficiencies, small and micro economies, geographical insularity, fragmentation and limited knowledge transfer. This has affected their ability to implement sustainable development solutions in a number of key priority sectors for economic growth and development. Notwithstanding the ongoing work of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (UN IATT) and other bilateral partners working with AIS SIDS, many of these countries are likely to miss the targets of the 2030 Agenda without significant upscaling of STI systems to meet existing and emerging challenges.

Over the last decade a range of national and regional political, policy statements and instruments e.g. Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 have emerged, all of which underscore the need for increased investment in STI to achieve *inter alia* sustainable socio-economic growth, and stem environmental degradation. This has also been reinforced by the launch of a number of regional networks e.g. the Coalition on Science, Technology, and Innovation for Africa's Development to support the expansion of STI in all areas of policy development and implementation.

Never-the-less progress particularly in LDC SIDS is challenged by:

1. insufficient funding for STI. UNESCO estimates that the current level of investment in R&D by LDC SIDS in Africa a(of which more than half is internationally funded) is less than of 1% of GDP.
2. Weak human and institutional capacity for STI policy making. Institutions typically operate in isolation from other policy agencies, with weak links, not just to the private and education and research sectors, but also to regional and international Policy Research Think Tanks. This is compounded by a general lack of experience of many of the officials involved in or responsible for drafting policy documents.
3. West African LDC SIDS in particular face greater challenges, where basic infrastructure such as energy, telecommunications, and transportation are often severely lacking, which adds significant obstacles to creating an environment conducive to STI development.

There has been some progress. Some African SIDS have recognized the role that STI can play in building resilience in general, and are also implementing policies that include a reliance on STI to promote resilience, including the scaling-up projects that reduce systematic vulnerabilities and boost resilience against external shocks including climate and disaster impacts. Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe have all prioritized *inter alia* tourism, biodiversity, agriculture and the blue economy as key engines of growth in their respective economies and are investing in STI as a means of modernizing the

sectors and promoting resilience. To make STI work for the society, however appropriate STI policy frameworks and participatory forms of governance need to be developed and reinforced and must involve a whole-of-government approach. . This project aims to support the target countries to strengthen their capacity to develop, deploy, and expand their use of STI in the context of the SDGs and in particular for SDG14, including building coastal resilience. Its objectives are to:

- expand opportunities to find workable and scalable STI solutions for building coastal resilience including through the use of nature-based solutions;
- work with existing centers of excellence to foster coherent approaches to and increased investments in research and development including exploring partnerships in research and training with a focus on coastal resilience
- Enhance the capacity of counties to (i) build out its infrastructure to support the growth of STI for the SDGs, (ii) develop STI roadmaps at national and sub-national levels and (iii) contribute to the further development and enhancement of the STI agenda for these countries

4. KEY QUESTIONS

- What are the primary challenges faced by SIDS in developing and deploying STI solutions, especially related to ocean knowledge and coastal resilience, and how can these challenges be addressed?
- How can SIDS be supported to mobilize development finance and/or appropriate partnerships needed to invest in and develop their STI sectors at national and regional levels? How can the private sector in SIDS be mobilized to contribute?
- What kinds of infrastructure or platforms are needed at national and regional levels to foster the research and development needed to enable African SIDS to meet their sustainable development goals?