

# Strengthening of the SIDS Partnership Framework

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## Background

The *third* International Conference on SIDS was held in September 2014 in Apia, Samoa under the overarching theme of "*The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships*". At the Conference, member States emphasized that international cooperation and partnerships of various kinds and across a wide variety of stakeholders are critical for the implementation of the sustainable development of SIDS. This was further emphasized in the request by member States, through the SAMOA Pathway (para 101), for establishing a **SIDS Partnership Framework to monitor progress of existing, and stimulate the launch of new, genuine, and durable partnerships for the sustainable development of SIDS.**

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly established<sup>1</sup>, in accordance with paragraph 101 of the SAMOA Pathway<sup>2</sup> and in line with the priorities of SIDS, the SIDS Partnership Framework, which consist of:

- A Steering Committee, chaired by a SIDS and a non-SIDS UN Member State.
- An annual Global Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue
- A standardized reporting template and process.
- Encouragement to organize multi-stakeholder regional and national partnership dialogues
- The SIDS Partnerships Awards (established 2021).

In addition to the SIDS Partnership Framework, the SIDS Global Business Network (SIDS-GBN) was established by UN OHRLLS in 2014 as an outcome of the *Private Sector Forum*, an event held during the third SIDS Conference, to facilitate and share best practices of successful scalable private sector partnerships, including through its biennial SIDS-GBN Forum.

## Request from ABAS

The *Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States – A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity (ABAS)*, adopted at the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) in May 2024, calls for renewed action to strengthen systems that support sustainable development in SIDS. Paragraph 37 of the Outcome Document specifically requests:

*"We also request the United Nations Secretary-General, in consultation with States and through the Steering Committee on SIDS Partnerships, to present recommendations for strengthening the SIDS Partnership Framework, the SIDS Global Business Network, and its Forum." (Paragraph 37, ABAS)*

## SIDS Partnership Framework

### Consultation process

In response to paragraph 37 of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States (ABAS), the United Nations Secretariat, through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), in consultation with the Steering Committee on Partnership for SIDS co-chaired in 2025 by Maldives and Latvia, has led a comprehensive consultation process to collect inputs and ideas from Member States, UN system and civil society on the strengthening of the SIDS Partnership Framework.

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<sup>1</sup> A/70/472/Add.2, paragraph 11

<sup>2</sup> A/RES/69/15 - SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway

## Process

**Survey to Member States** (December 2024 – March 2025): A survey sent to all member States by the co-chairs

- **9 submissions**, representing **22 countries** (15 from SIDS) (Australia, PSIDS – Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu Vanuatu – Germany, Ireland, Japan, Malta, Mauritius, Portugal, and Seychelles).

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**Expert meeting of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS** (6 March 2025)

- Presentation by the Secretariat on the initial finding of the survey on strengthening of SIDS Partnership Framework and the SIDS Global Business Network.
- Interventions and comments by Member States by **Ireland, UK**.

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**Survey to UN Entities and Stakeholders** (7 March – 15 April 2025): An online survey to UN system entities and stakeholders.

- **21 responses** (2 from UN, 19 from Stakeholders) – from Papua New Guinea, Comoros, Samoa, Fiji, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Barbados, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Philippines, India, Guyana, Saint Lucia.

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**Dedicated Survey to SIDS Civil Society** to prepare for webinars and SIDS CSO Engagement Forum

- **41 responses** (33 representing SIDS - from Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Fiji, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Kiribati, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome e Principe, Trinidad and Tobago)

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Three virtual **SIDS Regional** Civil Society Consultations

- **65 participants** across the 3 SIDS regions.

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**SIDS Civil Society Engagement Forum** (12–13 May 2025): A dedicated forum brought together civil society organizations from across the three SIDS regions—Caribbean, Pacific, and Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS)—to co-develop recommendations from a stakeholder perspective.

- **27 civil society in-person participants** from SIDS (from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Fiji, Guyana, Haiti, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu).
  - Interventions by Member States from **Antigua and Barbuda, Portugal, Ireland, Australia, Palau, Germany**.
  - Interventions from UN Resident Coordinators, representing **Mauritius, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, Barbados and Eastern Caribbean**.
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## **Recommendations for strengthening the SIDS Partnership Framework**

The recommendations presented in this document are grounded in the outcomes of the consultation process and highlight what is needed to foster meaningful, effective, and durable partnerships that address the unique challenges and priorities of SIDS.

A strengthened SIDS Partnership Framework could meaningfully support the sustainable development of SIDS and the implementation of the ABAS through inclusive partnerships and the mobilization of knowledge, expertise, resources, and multi-stakeholder engagement by:

1. **Strengthen the Steering Committee** – Ensure meaningful and strategic role of the Committee and its meetings, ensuring it functions as a platform to discuss implementation of ABAS and emerging SIDS issues, reinforce linkages with global and regional UN processes, and establish consultative mechanisms with key stakeholder groups, including civil society, as needed.
2. **Increase Stakeholder Access and Clarify the Value of Engagement** – Develop a multilingual, communications strategy that raise awareness of the Framework, outlines how stakeholders can engage with the SIDS Partnership Framework, highlights the benefits of participation, and establishes a network of SIDS Partnership Champions to promote action on ABAS, the SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap, and SIDS partnerships.
3. **Strengthen National and Regional Coordination** – Encourage national partnership dialogues and conduct assessments to identify gaps, opportunities, strengths, and challenges in building partnership across sectors. Establish regional hubs, in collaboration with stakeholders, to improve coordination, scale up civil society-led initiatives, foster cross-regional collaboration and knowledge exchange among CSOs, and convene annual or biennial in-person regional civil society fora in support of the SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap (2024–2034).
4. **Expand the Global Multi-Stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue** – Broaden its scope to include stakeholder- and civil society-led events, sector-specific breakout sessions, align with ABAS priorities, and the option of hosting it as a standalone event.
5. **Developing Guidance on Best Practices for Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships** – Create inclusive, principle-based guidelines to promote effective and accountable partnerships among governments, civil society, and other sectors—emphasizing early engagement and co-creation mechanisms.
6. **Strengthen UN Secretariat Support for SIDS Partnerships** – Allocate sufficient resources and staffing to implementation of the SIDS Partnership Framework, with a clear division of labor within the Secretariat—UN DESA coordinating implementation of the SIDS Partnership Framework and UN-OHRLS coordinating implementation of the SIDS Global Business Network and its Forum—in collaboration with relevant UN entities and stakeholders. Enhance support to UN Resident Coordinator Offices in SIDS through training and tools for national-level partnership building and dialogue.
7. **Explore the feasibility to establish a SIDS Partnership Incubator and Investment Platform** – Assess the potential, including source of funding, to establish a SIDS Partnership Incubator and Investment Platform within the Framework to support emerging multi-stakeholder and civil society-led partnerships by facilitating matchmaking between donors

and SIDS partnerships. providing capacity-building and technical assistance (including training of trainers), investing in youth skills and leadership, supporting community-led data and evidence collection to inform policy across for ABAS priority areas, and improving access to partnership financing—such as through the SIDS Partnership Awards and a dedicated SIDS Civil Society Development Fund that offers inclusive, easily accessible support tailored to the needs of grassroots, informal, and underrepresented groups, and is informed by an analysis of existing funding flows and disbursement practices.

8. **Map Stakeholders and Establish an Online SIDS CSO Registry** – Conduct regional stakeholder mapping to identify existing actors, resources, and priority thematic areas; use findings to inform the implementation of the SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap (2024–2034). Establish an interactive online platform to showcase civil society initiatives, promote knowledge exchange, track impact, and strengthen SIDS–SIDS cooperation. Include a review mechanism, including through the Global Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue and the annual report by the Secretary-General on ABAS implementation, to ensure the registry remains up to date and relevant, through regular information updates, stakeholder feedback, and periodic assessments of the platform’s use and effectiveness.

## SIDS Global Business Network and its Forum

### Recommendations for Strengthening the SIDS Global Business Network and its Forum

#### Recommendations from Member States

##### 1. Raise Awareness and Clarify Value

- **Run targeted awareness campaigns** so *ministries, investment agencies and academia “know what the SIDS GBN is.”*
- **Spell out a clear value proposition for companies** - articulate concrete benefits and explain *ways to join*.
- **Keep members engaged** through *newsletters, events and success-story showcases* that demonstrate real-world impact.

##### 2. Build Capacity for MSMEs

- **Offer capacity-building sessions for MSMEs** delivered through the Network to equip smaller enterprises with the skills and know-how to participate effectively.

##### 3. Mobilise Finance and Lead Thematic Workstreams

- **Use financial-hub expertise** to steer GBN workstreams on *Innovative Blue & Green Economies* and *Enabling Business Environment*.
- **Mobilise green/blue bonds and ESG finance** through the Network to channel investment toward sustainable projects in SIDS.

##### 4. Deepen Strategic Partnerships and Coordination

- **Further involve** *civil society, academia, the private sector, IFIs and MDBs.*

- **Coordinate the GBN's biennial Forum** with the forthcoming *Island Investment Forum* under the SIDS Centre of Excellence and, *if resources allow, consider more frequent meetings* to sustain momentum.

## Recommendations from the UN system and Inter-Agency Consultative Group

### 1. Grow and Diversify Membership

- Adopt a **robust membership strategy** that engages *diverse private-sector entities, including SMEs and local businesses*.
- Provide **step-by-step guidance** that explains how companies can participate.
- Broaden outreach through chambers of commerce, industry associations and targeted communication campaigns that showcase success stories.

### 2. Mobilise Finance and Investment

- Launch a **SIDS Green Investment Platform**, a **SIDS Investment Fund** and other innovative finance options—green bonds, climate funds, blended-finance and diaspora capital—to back bankable projects.
- Offer an online **digital investment marketplace** that connects investors with opportunities.

### 3. Create Regional Hubs and Thematic Alliances

- **Expand regional business hubs** and form sector-specific alliances for the blue economy, renewable energy and digital transformation.
- Support **inter-island partnerships** and joint ventures that foster regional trade and technology exchange.

### 4. Strengthen Knowledge, Capacity and Partnerships

- Provide **training programmes, capacity-building workshops and knowledge-sharing platforms** on sustainable practices, corporate social responsibility and climate resilience.
- Facilitate **B2B matchmaking** and regular networking events, forums and round-tables that bring together businesses, governments and civil society.
- Encourage **public-private partnerships** and use public-private dialogue platforms—both national and regional—to ensure business perspectives inform policy.
- **Coordinate with the UN Global Compact** and **work with chambers of commerce** to deepen local business engagement.

### 5. Enhance Visibility, Monitoring and Recognition

- Hold an **Annual SIDS-GBN Forum** to showcase deals, share best practices and celebrate outstanding partnerships through awards.
- Link SIDS-GBN activities to the **SIDS Partnership Framework's reporting and recognition systems**, including the Partnerships Awards, to ensure transparency and accountability.

## **Recommendations from Civil Society**

1. **Launch a CSO–Private Sector Innovation Lab and Funding Platform** to develop sustainable solutions in ocean-based sectors, with built-in transparency and accountability mechanisms.
2. **Establish Independent Governance**—free from political interference—with equal CSO and private sector representation and regular oversight.
3. **Activate the SIDS Partnership Framework and the SIDS Global Business Network** to support this initiative through capacity building, business mentoring, and funding for social innovation.