

QUESTIONNAIRE

Follow-up to and implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States (ABAS)

Please note that strict word limits have been established for each question. The Secretariat is unable to consider any information beyond these established word limits. You are requested to report only on new or updated information. Information conveyed in previous surveys or Secretary-Generals' reports will not be considered.

PART A - FOSTERING RESILIENT PROSPERITY IN SIDS

1. Enhanced UN System Support for achieving Resilient Prosperity in SIDS (FOR the UN system)

Using the UN implementation Matrix¹ (attached) to guide feedback, briefly elaborate on any resilience building interventions or strategies (proactive or preventative) that were/are being implemented during the reporting period at national or regional levels aimed specifically at improving resilience in SIDS. Please include indications of resource allocations, if available (600 words).

- ITC has continued to develop sustainable value chains in SIDS to increase socioeconomic resilience, promote product diversification and value addition. Under the EU-ACP Business Friendly Program, ITC is working in SIDS in coffee, cocoa, coconuts, and kava value chains. In the Caribbean, Agri-MSMEs achieved significant milestones in market expansion, workforce growth, and operational enhancement in 2024. Through project support, these enterprises accessed new markets in Asia, North America, Europe, and the UK, strengthening sales channels and establishing strategic partnerships. This growth translated into tangible outcomes, including a 31% increase in the number of farmers they source from and a total transaction value of USD \$1,161,359. In the Pacific, the programme, implemented in collaboration with the Pacific Community (SPC), continued its efforts to enhance the kava industry in Vanuatu and the coconut value chain in Papua New Guinea (PNG). In 2024, the programme advanced its objectives through engagement workshops, training of trainers (ToTs), and targeted capacity-building sessions. In Vanuatu, multi-stakeholder workshops brought together key actors across the kava value chain, including government bodies, financial institutions, and lead farmers, to align on industry goals and strengthen collaboration. In PNG, the programme adopted a decentralized approach, focusing on MSMEs, cooperatives, and financial institutions to improve competitiveness and profitability across the coconut sector.
- In addition, as part of the Food Security project implemented in CARICOM with EU-support, ITC has intensified its efforts to support coastal communities, fisherfolk and MSMEs in SIDS by developing sustainable economic activities in the Blue Economy. ITC is working in the Caribbean (including the Dominican Republic and Grenada) to develop a value chain for invasive species - sargassum seaweed products. This circular economy model prioritizes sustainability by minimising waste, reusing resources, and fostering closed-loop systems. For MSMEs in ACP/SIDS countries, the circular economy integrates adaptation and mitigation strategies, directly supporting their decarbonisation goals. In the circular blue economy, ocean conservation generates value through waste utilisation—for example, creating products for food, fuel, health, and agriculture sectors. This

¹ accountability framework developed to promote and monitor progress with implementation of ABAS

approach lowers landfill pressure, reduces import costs (e.g., agricultural inputs), and improves market access, both regionally and internationally.

- In 2024-2025, ITC worked with SMEs in **creative industries and technology sectors** under the UK Trade Partnerships Programme in CARIFORUM. By leveraging tailored coaching, market-focused training, and strategic partnerships, the ITC has empowered SMEs to enhance their competitiveness and successfully scale in international markets. The ITC's approach integrates a deep understanding of local ecosystems, strategic export marketing, and compliance requirements. Through this initiative, ITC has effectively catalyzed trade and investment opportunities in the Caribbean, especially in Jamaican IT and BPO sectors, as well as the Caribbean's music industry, providing them with crucial exposure and market access.
- ITC has continued to support National Export Strategies and Sector Strategies as a pivotal service provided to SIDS. These strategies are particularly valuable for SIDS, which typically face challenges due to less diversified export baskets, constraints of scale, and limited digital and physical connectivity.
 - Trinidad and Tobago (2024-2025): the government is reviewing the Master document of the National Trade Strategy. NTS starts with the identification of high potential sectors and four functional strategies. These were selected based on their potential to contribute to job creation, value addition and foreign exchange earnings, as well as based on the existing capacities of the country.
 - Bahamas (2024-2025): ITC is supporting the government in the creation of a strategy for the Creative Industries sector. The strategy seeks to enhance trade competitiveness, particularly for SMEs, and to bring about a coherent strategic framework for trade development. Outcomes also include the building of capacities among national stakeholders to design and update future strategies.
- ITC, in collaboration with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Inter-American Development Bank, has supported investment facilitation assessments in Barbados and six OECS countries - Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Saint Kitts and Nevis. The assessments aimed at mapping the countries efforts on investment facilitation, benchmarking them against the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement at the WTO, and develop roadmaps for further enhancing strategies to facilitate investment into productive sectors to create jobs and enhance contribution of FDI to local growth. ITC, IDB and OECS have jointly organized a high-level roundtable in May 2025, which brought together Ministers and heads of IPAs in the Caribbean region to discuss strategies to attract FDI into Caribbean. Participants highlighted the needs for technical assistance to understand and implement the IFD Agreement, while investors underlined the importance of streamlining authorization procedures and adopting a single window.

2. Enhanced and Tailored Development Cooperation for SIDS (For Development Partners, IFIs and SIDS Governments)

Successful ABAS implementation will require improved, tailored development cooperation approaches and financial resources, calibrated to the specific needs, capacity constraints, and economic challenges facing SIDS. It will also require that relevant national/regional plans programme and policies are implemented. Briefly elaborate on:

- i) any planned or ongoing strategies/approaches to improve and deliver on more tailored development support to SIDS. What are the expected results from these interventions in the targeted countries Please include indications of resource allocations if available (600 words)
- ii) any planned or ongoing national programmes to develop more resilient SIDS economies. What are the expected results from these interventions. Please include indications of resource allocations if available (600 words)

PART B - COHERENT AND EFFECTIVE UN SYSTEM WIDE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES TO SIDS

Paragraph 36 of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) requests the UN Secretary-General:

“..... within his annual report to the General Assembly for the 80th Session on the implementation of the ABAS, to present proposals to ensure a coordinated, coherent and effective UN system wide capacity development approach to SIDS and to enhance the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ABAS, including a potential single SIDS dedicated entity at the UN Secretariat.”

At the global level, the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) oversees UN efforts for sustainable development in 162 countries and territories, guiding, supporting, tracking and overseeing the coordination of development operations. The UNSDG derives its mandate from the Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, which serves as an important instrument for the monitoring and the assessment of UN development operations. The integrated nature of ABAS calls for a UN Development System that works in a coordinated and coherent manner while preserving each entity’s mandate and role and leveraging each entity’s expertise.

1. Coherent and effective UN system support to SIDS (For UN System Responses, 750 words)

- i. What challenges are encountered by UN agencies, to deliver a ‘whole-of-system response’ in addressing the needs, risks and vulnerabilities and to provide development programmes that address the underlying drivers of needs in SIDS?

Non-resident agencies like ITC can face challenges in delivering a whole of system response. Constructive ways to foster greater inclusion of NRAs will strengthen their ability to deliver for SIDS.

- ii. What percentage of your entity’s programming expenditures on development activities in SIDS in 2024 were allocated to joint programmes? What percentage will be allocated in 2025?

ITC’s priority countries are least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), small island developing States (SIDS), sub-Saharan African countries (SSA), small, vulnerable economies (SVEs) and countries in armed conflict or at risk of lapsing into conflict. In Jan-

Jun 2024, ITC delivered more than 80% of its technical assistance to the priority countries, as planned. In 2024, ITC committed 8% of its planned programming delivery to SIDS which exceeded the 5% target. In 2025, the target delivery in SIDS is 5%.

- iii. What are the lessons learned, challenges and best practices of the UNSCDF (including multi-country frameworks) and their respective Country Implementation Plans (CIPs) in promoting joint programming?

ITC is implementing a joint programme with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Cuba. The program has two key outputs: productive development policies proposal to improve national export capacities; and a second on strategies for two agroindustry value chains, as a proof of concept scalable to other sectors in the economy, with attention to gender dimensions. A best practice from this experience is that both agencies are adding value to their strategies methodologies and adding their expertise in respective areas. For example, ITC is contributing with market orientation, export potential and its expertise of international markets while ECLAC is contributing on a strategy and methodology at the local level.

- iv. What improvements would you recommend enhancing the UN's system-wide approach to capacity development in SIDS?

ITC actively participates in the Inter-Agency Task Force of SIDS and works with UN partners to support SIDS member states in a coordinated manner. ITC also facilitates contributions to key intergovernmental processes related to SIDS, such as the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States, and the Fourth International Conference of Financing for Development to be adopted in Sevilla in July 2025.

- v. How can the UN better partner with regional development stakeholders e.g. CARICOM Secretariat, SPC, PIF, SPREP etc to improve programme delivery, improve coherence and avoid duplication

One best practice that should be replicated / supported is how CARICOM organizes periodic meetings with international and regional partners on implementation of projects that contribute to the fulfilment of its policy to reduce food imports. They gather information about different initiatives and areas of work. These meetings are very helpful to know about other programs and are not time-consuming in terms of preparation. Also the Caribbean Week of Agriculture has similar results – FAO is already a prominent partner. The same could be replicated for other ongoing policies in Digital, Environment, Regional Trade and others.

A best practice worth replicating is how the Pacific Community (SPC), in partnership with FAO, organises events like the Pacific Agriculture Week to align regional priorities, share progress, and foster collaboration among development partners. ITC's ongoing work with SPC on the regional kava strategy and efforts to improve smallholder farmers' access to finance—particularly those on customary land through partnerships with credit guarantee schemes and national development banks—demonstrates the value of such collaboration. To enhance programme delivery, coherence, and avoid duplication, the UN can strengthen its partnerships with regional organisations like SPC, PIF and others by supporting regular, coordination mechanisms across areas such as agriculture, climate resilience, digital transformation and trade.

For Governments

- vi. How would you assess the current level of coordination among UN agencies in supporting capacity development for SIDS at the national, regional and global levels? What challenges do you believe hinder effective coordination among UN entities in providing support to SIDS? What mechanisms would you suggest to improve the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of UN support for SIDS? (600 words)

2. Interagency Mechanisms for improved coherence

Under the chairmanship of the UN Secretary-General, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) provides broad guidance, coordination and strategic direction for the UN system in the areas under the responsibility of Executive Heads. Focus is placed on inter-agency priorities and initiatives while ensuring that the independent mandates of organizations are maintained. One particular focus of the CEB is system-wide coordination and policy coherence in the programme areas. The CEB has to date created three inter-agency mechanisms to increase coherence across the United Nations system in addressing urgent development challenges. These are UN-Water, UN-Oceans and UN-Energy.

- vii. As there is no single entity in the United Nations system that has sole responsibility for SIDS, do you see value creating a UN-SIDS to serve as the primary agent for promoting system-wide collaboration on SIDS issues, and to promote coherence in the UN system's multi-disciplinary response to SIDS? (500 words)

Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs Plus (ECESA Plus)

Coordination of UN System actions for the implementation of politically agreed documents e.g. ABAS takes place through the Executive Committee on Economic and Social (ECESA Plus). Its over fifty members have developed a matrix for the follow up to ABAS, focusing on mandates specifically directed at the United Nations system as well as on areas where the UN system is already engaged through its programmatic work. The UN Implementation Matrix, which is being continuously updated, serves as an accountability framework and as a working tool to promote and monitor progress. ECESA Plus meets regularly to *inter alia* SIDS related matters and is convened by the Under Secretary General of DESA.

- viii. How can ECESA Plus be used to more effectively harness UN agency contributions and to amplify systemic synergies?)

3. HLPF

- ix. How should the HLPF SIDS session be structured to effectively monitor progress to scale up implementation of the SDGs while at the same time driving implementation of ABAS? What role should the monitoring and evaluation framework of ABAS play in this? (250 words)