

QUESTIONNAIRE

Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the MSI of the BPOA for the Sustainable Development of SIDS

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. In this regard, you are requested to report only on new or updated information. Information conveyed in previous surveys will not be considered. Previous surveys can be accessed at <https://sidsnetwork.org/> and <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/small-island-developing-states> under reports.

PART A VULNERABILITY REDUCTION IN SIDS

1. Enhanced Support for a Resilient Post-COVID-19 Recovery in SIDS

Vulnerability is one of the most crucial challenges faced by SIDS. Briefly elaborate on any ex-ante interventions or proactive/preventive strategies that have been or are being implemented at national and/or sub-regional levels that aim specifically at reducing exposure to external shocks and improving resilience in SIDS. Please include information on any financial resources expended in this regard, if available.

As a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, and sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information". SIDS is a priority group to the Organization and UNESCO is committed building resilience and addressing the impact of the global COVID-19 crisis in SIDS.

UNESCO designated biosphere reserves represent a model for sustainable development aimed at reducing vulnerability. There are currently 27 biosphere reserves in SIDS. In 2020 the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves awarded a grant to the Principe Island Biosphere Reserve in Sao Tomé and Principe to fund a project on plastics associated with the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity and the COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

To further address climate vulnerability, island level vulnerability to hydro-meteorological hazards were mapped in some SIDS and a workshop held with stakeholders to discuss the results. A panel discussion on climate vulnerability and water resilience in SIDS was organized in 2021 to raise awareness of this issue and the publication "Midsummer Drought Atlas for Central America and the Caribbean" was prepared.

The project “Amplifying the Voice of Caribbean SIDS: Towards an Inclusive Recovery from COVID-19” was designed and implemented in collaboration with the COVID-19 Task Force at the University of the West Indies, a leading knowledge producer. The project convened a series of ‘Dialogue Sessions’, where a wide cross section of society, including scholars, youth, policymakers, activists, and CSOs, exchanged ideas about inclusive and equitable recovery in the Caribbean. 11 Think Pieces have been produced with analysis and specific policy recommendations to address, for diverse social groups at risk, the deterioration of well-being in the Caribbean. Furthermore, the project “Post-Pandemic Climate Resilience and Adaptation in SIDS” focused on Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles. This multi-sectoral approach, links climate change and resilience to address key issues of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNESCO also supports the enabling environment for freedom of expression and access to information in SIDS by strengthening monitoring and reporting on SDG 16 for promoting peaceful society and safe communities (indicators 16.10.1 and 16.10.2) and adopting relevant laws. This includes strengthening SIDS’ resilience to climate change and crisis situations, such as COVID-19, including through media development. For instance, UNESCO builds media capacity to cover crisis situations and address related disinformation, such as around climate change in the context of COP 26 (13 SIDS media supported), but also regarding other emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (17 media outlets were trained in Timor-Leste). In its work with SIDS on documentary heritage preservation, UNESCO gives particular attention to disaster risk reduction. In addition, UNESCO supports the digital transformation processes in SIDS, both as agents and beneficiaries. Examples include comprehensive assessments based on the UNESCO Internet Universality Indicators in the Pacific and capacity development initiatives on Artificial Intelligence and its potential for sustainable development in the Caribbean, including in the context of crisis situations.

UNESCO is supporting Jamaica in the development of a new Cultural and Creative Industries Act, as part of the UNESCO/EU project on south-south cooperation (2018-2022; 1.72 million EUR). In 2021 the Comoros finalized its Sustainable Tourism Management Plan under a UNESCO project financed by the Netherlands Funds-in-Trust (\$50,000). The Caribbean Plan of Action for Disaster Resilience and Recovery of the Culture Sector was elaborated in partnership between regional agencies CARICOM, CDEMA and UNESCO. Disaster risk reduction and climate change strategies have been implemented at World Heritage properties in Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Curaçao and Saint Kitts and Nevis (2020-2021; \$227,703). In response to COVID-19 UNESCO supported strengthening of cultural and creative industries in Fiji, Palau, Tonga and Vanuatu as part of a joint UN project focused on strengthening the informal economy (2020-2022; \$510,000).

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO developed an online ocean acidification course on the Ocean Teacher Global Academy (OTGA) platform, and hosted a course for Pacific Island nations enabling participants to receive training without needing to travel. A valuable tool for remote regions, the virtual training platform also enables continuous support and capacity development for data collection towards the SDG Oceans and Seas indicator 14.3.1.

Created in 2020, the Waka Moana Platform is a regional learning management platform aiming at strengthening resilience of Pacific educational systems to ensure continuity of learning in secondary schools in English, Mathematics and Science during the COVID-19 pandemic. 6 Pacific SIDS were supported in this regard: Salomon Islands, Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga. 25 staff and teachers from Marshall Islands, Samoa and Tonga have been trained and 43 staff and teachers from Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Marshall Islands have access to the platform.

To accelerate the progress in literacy and ensure the right to education, especially for youth and adult learners outside formal education systems, innovative, flexible, inclusive and accessible learning opportunities are needed. The Covid-19 pandemic has refocused on the potential of information and communication technologies, particularly the use of open and distance learning (ODL) in ensuring continuity of youth and adult literacy programmes, as most face-to-face classes in adult learning centres were suspended. Given that many of the youth and adults with little or no basic literacy skills also have poor access to digital technologies, it is necessary for literacy training providers to rethink their teaching and extension programmes to adopt ODL practices that are relevant and suitable to the needs of the target group. In that context, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) offered a six-week online course (from 1 March and 12 April 2022) on Implementing open and distance Learning for Youth and Adult Literacy. The course's main objective was to help literacy training providers develop and offer relevant and needs-based youth and adult literacy programmes using ODL approaches in their local contexts. It has been developed for youth and adult education programme providers which are government and non-governmental organizations. Priority has given to the countries of the Global Alliance for Literacy within the Framework of Lifelong Learning (GAL) and other countries in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Arab regions. 5 participants from Solomon Islands and 1 participant from Trinidad and Tobago, working in the field of youth and adult education, have participated, and successfully completed the course. As part of the course assignments, the participants have submitted Individual portfolio plans covering their plan, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation criteria for ODL programme in their national context. These portfolios have been discussed with experts and feedback have been provided to support their implementation.

Through the GIZ-funded COVID-19 Response Project in 2021, UNEVOC implemented a three-month training programme in five countries, including Jamaica and the Maldives, equipped TVET teachers, managers and technical staff with the necessary skills and competencies to provide digital services. This was supplemented with a three-part series of webinars on the challenges of digitalization in TVET. The same project also supported upskilling and reskilling efforts in five countries including Jamaica. These programmes enabled more than 400 trainees to diversify and develop new sources of income in agriculture, healthcare and entrepreneurship to replace those lost due to the pandemic. The report is available [here](#).

2. Enhanced and Tailored Development Cooperation for SIDS

(The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the urgent need to ensure that responses to vulnerability must be at the heart of international policy aimed at supporting SIDS, and that better tailored development co-operation approaches, calibrated to the specific needs, capacity constraints, and economic challenges facing SIDS, are necessary. Briefly elaborate on any planned or ongoing strategies/approaches to improve and deliver on more tailored development support to SIDS. Please include indications of resource allocations, if available)

UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) strengthened the capacities of SIDS to address vulnerability to hydro-meteorological extremes by raising awareness, promoting tools, and building institutional and legal capacities, and to promote the development of groundwater resources for resilience. IHP considers the development of an "Indicator on water education" for the tertiary level of the national formal education systems within the 2030 Agenda relevant to SIDS. Fiji, Mauritius, Singapore, and Trinidad and Tobago have nominated national focal points for this indicator.

UNESCO designated biosphere sites are a model for sustainable development that can contribute to reducing vulnerability and disaster risk in SIDS. The Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) is supporting Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Curaçao to designate their first biosphere reserves. Furthermore, the UNESCO Earth Network, will foster the pairing of young and senior experts to provide expertise in biosphere reserves to strengthen capacity for economic activities linked to ecological restoration, including in Saint Kitts and Nevis. As part of the Earth Network mentorship programme, a young expert from the LAC region will be involved in online and in-person meetings with a senior expert, do site-visits and receive training in ecological restoration and project management.

UNESCO is also increasing crosscutting support for Disaster Risk Reduction in SIDS through a multi-disciplinary, multi-hazard and multi-stakeholder engagement. This includes the assessment of risks of school buildings in Haiti (10 million USD for 2017, 2022-2025), establishing and improving tsunami early warning systems in Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, and others , as well as drought risk mapping in Caribbean SIDS. UNESCO empowers youth through the establishment of Caribbean Risk and Disaster Management Youth Platform (CARIDIMA) (20,000 USD). In Tonga, a detailed assessment of the historical buildings and cultural heritage sites was conducted to assist the preparation of a recovery plan. UNESCO supported post disaster response in St. Vincent and the Grenadines after the volcanic eruption by conducting a ground water quality assessment and in Haiti after the in 2021 earthquake.

Education in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is vital to long term sustainable development including in SIDS. Students learning in an integrative way, with inquiry-based pedagogy, can acquire soft-skills, such as problem-solving, collaboration, creativity and innovation. UNESCO has assisted SIDS in the Caribbean and Africa to increase the capacity of teachers and students in STEM, specially in AI and Robotics. In addition, UNESCO is proving

technical assistance for mapping the STI system in Jamaica and is preparing a publication on the subject. In collaboration with the UN Technology Bank for the LDCs, UNESCO supported Timor-Leste for analyzing the status of STI with focus on technology needs. Government officials from Cuba, Dominican Republic and Timor-Leste attended the UNESCO UN Interagency Task Team (UN-IATT) online training on STI policy-making and policy instruments for the SDGs.

As statutory partner the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) and its regional bodies, UNESCO is promoting Geoparks and providing training on Geo heritage and site management. A tailor-made consultancy service specifically dedicated to support local teams to develop a UNESCO Geopark projects has been established, the UNESCO GGN Grant for Geoparks in the SIDS. GGN Experts will advise and accompany the granted territory from the initial idea to the official application as UNESCO Global Geopark. All services provided through the grant will be free of charge for the territory.

19 Caribbean Member States and Associated Members participated in two UNESCO International Science Schools on Climate Change in 2018 and 2019 supported by the Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST). In 2020 UNESCO engaged with the National Bioethics Committee of Comoros at the first Africa Regional Conference of National Ethics and Bioethics Committees and in 2021 UNESCO Caribbean Shereroes Initiative, aimed to produce knowledge and enhance the skills of young people to promote gender equality to achieve the SDGs. A Special Ministerial Conference for Specific Legislation for Persons with Disabilities was organized in the Caribbean in partnership with the University of the West Indies Centre for Disability Studies, the CARICOM Special Rapporteur on Disability, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Digicel Foundation. A global UNESCO Flagship Initiative, “Youth as Researchers”, was piloted in Jamaica through an ongoing research project on Citizen Security, Safety and Peacebuilding. In 2022 partial findings were shared within the framework of Citizen Security and Safety project coordinated by UNDP.

To bridge the digital divide, capacity building and policy advice will be offered to support an inclusive digital transformation process, notably in the field of Artificial Intelligence. This encompasses digital skills and competencies, but also strengthened legislative and institutional capacities. To support inclusive knowledge societies and create enabling environments for freedom of expression and access to information, further support for national assessments will be provided based on UNESCO’s indicator frameworks. Additional support for the implementation of normative instruments, such as the 2019 Recommendation on Open Educational Resources, is also anticipated. Media will be further capacitated as key actors for crisis preparedness and response, including climate change-related events. Specific attention is given to safeguarding documentary heritage for disaster risk prevention and management.

UNESCO will enhance efforts to protect and promote culture in SIDS to build resilience and advance sustainable development through 2022-2025, as SIDS are integrated into all Culture Sector outputs. The potential of World Heritage sites as laboratories for sustainable development and climate change adaptation and mitigation will be harnessed and indigenous and traditional knowledge will be promoted in line with the priority area “promoting peaceful societies and safe

communities” of the SAMOA Pathway. Cultural and creative industries and sustainable tourism practices will be promoted to lay the foundations for recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and foster local resilience.

During 2021, the UNESCO/IOC Flanders-funded Pacific islands Marine bioinvasions Alert Network (PacMAN) project started to develop a national invasive species monitoring system as well as an early-warning decision-support tool for Pacific SIDS. This is considered particularly relevant as the recent Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services pointed out that around one million species are on the verge of extinction and the introduction of non-indigenous species to new environments is listed as a key driver impacting biodiversity, with SIDS particularly vulnerable. In the area of Early Warning Systems, the UNESCO Tsunami Ready Recognition Programme is aiming to build resilient communities through awareness and preparedness strategies that will protect life, livelihoods, and property from tsunamis in different regions. Samoa in the Pacific and fourteen Caribbean SIDS have already obtained the Tsunami Ready Recognition.

Through the GIZ-funded post-Covid-19 support, UNEVOC is currently developing a plan with the Commonwealth of Learning to support the capacity building of TVET practitioners in cooperation with their national level policy makers (primarily members of the UNEVOC network). This activity (if agreed, will take place between September and December with a total approximate budget of USD70k). Attached to the capacity building activities will be a research module on the longer-term impacts of Covid-19 on the resilience of learners, practitioners and TVET providers. Low/low-middle-income SIDS in the Caribbean and Pacific will be targeted through the planned activity.