

QUESTIONNAIRE **(UNCTAD)**

Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the MSI, 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, updated or on the *most critical/noteworthy* information. Information conveyed in previous surveys will also not be considered. Previous surveys can be accessed at <https://sidsnetwork.org/> under reports.

1. Legal/Policy/Institutional Arrangements for SIDS and/or the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway¹

Does your entity/organization/government have a SIDS Strategy? If not, are there any plans to establish one, including with the appropriate resources for implementation. (1000 words)

UNCTAD member States, in 2014, mandated UNCTAD to continue to help small island developing States (SIDS) address the “persistent trade, investment and development challenges” these countries were faced with, an agenda fully consistent with system-wide implementation of the 2014 SAMOA Pathway.

UNCTAD has always been a key stakeholder in supporting the resilience-building efforts of SIDS, in keeping with UN members’ “commitment to take urgent and concrete action to address the vulnerability of SIDS” (SAMOA Pathway, para. 22). The main development challenge facing SIDS is their acute vulnerability to external factors beyond domestic control. The paramount development goal of these countries therefore is resilience-building, a multi-faceted agenda ranging from climate adaptation to economic diversification. Most SIDS need external financial and/or technical support in their resilience-building efforts, and there has been a long-standing plea for genuine “SIDS status” as a necessary platform for bringing international support measures for SIDS to fruition.

UNCTAD’s strategy to support this plea is four-tiered: (i) underscoring the need for the UN

¹ This question seeks to examine the extent to which each respondent mainstreamed SIDS and the Samoa Pathway into co-operation frameworks, programmes and activities, national development plans etc, to ensure effective follow-up and implementation at regional and national levels in SIDS.

to have a well-defined criteria for identifying SIDS; (ii) raising the visibility of acute island vulnerability issues; (iii) identifying most desirable special support measures for SIDS; and (iv) providing selected SIDS with relevant advisory services.

This multi-faceted action is largely geared to supporting the productive capacity-building efforts of relevant countries. The latter generally consider that the most important antidote to external shocks beyond domestic control is economic resilience through diversification and smart economic specialization, the surest way to achieve a better spread of risks and absorption of eventual shocks, and to secure a steady momentum of income generation.

Several paragraphs of General Assembly resolutions 74/3 and 74/217 on SIDS underscore the role of UNCTAD in supporting SIDS, notably in areas such as promoting tailored financing solutions²; helping least developed SIDS that are desirous of “graduating smartly” when faced with the challenge of reclassification from LDC status³; promoting foreign direct investment and small enterprise development⁴; investing in science and technology⁵; and making the ocean economy a source of vast trading opportunities⁶.

2. Financial Arrangements

Please give an indication of the budget allocated to SIDS SAMOA Pathway programme areas in your government/organization/entity, if applicable, for the period Jan. 2019 to Jan. 2020 or the fiscal cycle that best fits this period. If the priority areas cannot squarely fit this chart, please report as closely as you can.

SIDS-related issues, in UNCTAD, are dealt with by: (i) a Section within the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes (Trade and Poverty Branch) involving two staff members (P-5; P-4): Small Island Developing States and Status Issues Section; and (ii) staff in other substantive Divisions, on an ad hoc basis, also provide support to SIDS through research and/or technical assistance on subjects of interest to SIDS, in accordance with the 2014 Nairobi Maafikiano (outcome of the 14th Session of UNCTAD).

A Development Account-funded project of technical assistance to six SIDS (Kiribati, Sao

² See paragraphs 30(e) and 30(f) of resolution 74/3, and paragraphs 7, 8, 10 and 11 of resolution 74/217.

³ See paragraphs 5, 13 and 14 of resolution 74/217.

⁴ See paragraphs 30(b) and 30(l) of resolution 74/3.

⁵ See paragraph 30(c) of resolution 74/3.

⁶ See paragraph 30(d) of resolution 74/3.

Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Vanuatu) with a budget of \$488,000 was implemented by the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes over the 2016-2018 period.

Priorities	Investment (USD)	Budget Allocation	FY/ Cycle/ Period
Sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth		2 professional staff work full time on this SIDS issues	
Climate Change	100,000 (Regular Budget UNCTAD Staff Time)	100,000	2020
Sustainable Energy			
Disaster Risk Reduction			
Oceans and seas	114'000	114'000	2019-2020
Food Security and Nutrition			
Water and Sanitation			
Sustainable Transportation		6 work months professional staff in the area of transport, including climate change adaptation	
Sustainable Consumption and Production			

Chemical and Waste management			
Health and NCDs			
Gender equality			
Social development			
Biodiversity			
Means of implementation			
Etc.			

3. Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and Support to SIDS over the remaining life of the SAMOA Pathway

Based on the call for action and other priority areas contained in on A/Res/73/4, please provide an indication of your entity's/organization's/government's proposed focus in the remaining life of the SAMOA Pathway. What outcomes are you seeking to achieve? (1500 words).

What specific actions, if any will your entity/organization/government take to address any of the gaps and challenges identified in the political outcome (paras 15 ~29), section on "Call for Action" in the document A/RES/74/3⁷? (1500 words)

Helping least developed SIDS "graduate smartly"

The small island LDCs which are or will be faced with the challenge of graduation have been broadly unable to define their quest for post-LDC support, a large part of which should be in the area of resilience-building. UNCTAD helps these countries come to grips with the notion of "smooth transition strategy", which implies recognizing the vital importance of certain forms of special treatment given the permanence and severity of the structural handicaps endured by SIDS. For years, least developed SIDS leaders have called for SIDS treatment (particularly SIDS-targeted support to climate adaptation efforts) as an alternative to LDC treatment. UNCTAD has consistently supported this call.

Encouraging foreign direct investment in SIDS

UNCTAD helps SIDS attract foreign direct investment (FDI). In 2019, Cabo Verde benefited from an Investment Policy Review. The latter, prepared by UNCTAD at the request of the Government, presented action-oriented recommendations to improve the national legal

⁷ The document can be accessed at <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/3>

framework for investment and enhance the country's approach to attracting foreign investment. An Investment Policy Review is currently being prepared in Seychelles.

In 2019, UNCTAD organized, in partnership with the Caribbean Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (CAIPA), a Regional Seminar on *Facilitating Investment in SDG Projects: Spotlight on Small Island Developing States*. Topics included the facilitation of investment in SDG projects, online business registration platforms, special economic zones, and the impact of investment in key SDG sectors in the region.

To provide international investors with essential up-to-date information on rules, economic conditions, procedures, business costs and investment opportunities in developing countries, UNCTAD (jointly with the International Chamber of Commerce) assists countries in producing iGuides. In 2019, iGuides were completed in Curaçao, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, in collaboration with CAIPA and Caribexport. More recently, an iGuide was launched for Barbados, while iGuides for St. Kitts and Nevis and the Turks and Caicos Islands are at different stages of preparation.

In 2009, UNCTAD launched the Sustainable Stock Exchanges (SSE) initiative to answer the demand from national Exchanges for a place to come together with investors, companies and policymakers to share good practices and challenges in a multi-stakeholder environment. Stock exchanges in Jamaica, Mauritius and Seychelles have been part of the initiative.

Supporting SIDS efforts to foster small enterprise creation

UNCTAD helps countries promote development-oriented policies to support entrepreneurship, notably toward the identification, formulation, implementation and assessment of policy measures on entrepreneurship and the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises. In this context, UNCTAD has provided support to the development of national entrepreneurship strategies, particularly through the *Empretec* capacity-building programme which assists entrepreneurs by establishing a self-sustained, local entrepreneurship development centre, and through workshops and business development services. This programme has been implemented in Mauritius, where an impact assessment showed that Empretec graduates, twelve months after a workshop, were able to report increased sales (+72%), employment (+20%) and profitability (+72%).

Helping SIDS find trading opportunities in the ocean economy

The ocean has a trade dimension of critical importance to all SIDS. The Ocean Economy and Trade strategies (OETS) project jointly implemented by UNCTAD and the UN Division for

Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) has already produced draft ocean economy and trade strategies for two countries of the Caribbean region (a SIDS, Barbados; and a continental country, Belize).

In 2019, UNCTAD produced, jointly with FAO and UNEP, a report on “*Advancing Sustainable Development Goal 14 - Sustainable fish, seafood value chains, trade and climate*”, with a focus on SIDS.

Supporting the gender dimension of SIDS trade

Since 2018, UNCTAD has been implementing activities aimed to promote gender equality and women’s economic empowerment in 9 Pacific Island Countries (Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, the Cook Islands and Niue) in the context of the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus.

Specifically, the project has attempted to identify ways in which the transparency provisions of the PACER Plus Agreement could ease the difficulties Pacific women face as producers and traders, in the context of the Agreement and beyond. Activities conducted by UNCTAD in this framework included:

(i) the publication of a report examining the potential implications of transparency provisions for gender outcomes in the PACER Plus Agreement: [*International Trade, Transparency, and Gender Equality: The Case of the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations \(PACER\) Plus*](#);

(ii) the publication of a guide to provide information on non-tariff measures exporters must comply with to enter the Australia and New Zealand markets. The guide covers measures applied to products that are typically produced and/or exported by women (cocoa, handbags, liquid soap for personal care, necklaces, red toddy syrup, vanilla, virgin coconut oil, and women’s dresses), with a view to strengthening women’s role in trade: [*A trader’s guide to export to Australia and New Zealand: NTMs applied to selected products made by women in nine Pacific islands countries*](#);

(iii) the publication of country fact sheets outlining the socio-economic profiles of the nine Pacific SIDS;

(iv) national validation workshops in most Pacific SIDS in 2019.

Encouraging e-commerce and the digital economy in SIDS

The role of trade-related technology in supporting sustainable development is essential. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and its adverse impact on the tourism sector in most SIDS, it is particularly urgent to accelerate the digital transformation of these countries. UNCTAD has conducted [*eTrade Readiness Assessments*](#) in five SIDS of the Pacific (Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu) and is in discussion with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat for further collaboration on digital development in the region.

Although the five countries differ substantially in many respects, they also face similar challenges. Affordable Internet access is a major bottleneck on economic activities, though projects are underway to bring underwater broadband cables to these islands. The distribution of local products such as taro, virgin coconut oil, pearls and handicraft has already revealed valuable trading opportunities for these countries. Similarly, government processes and tourism development initiatives could significantly benefit from digital transformation and solutions. Based on the recommendations made in the national Assessments, UNCTAD supports capacity-building in digital literacy for young people, women entrepreneurs, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

Investing in science and technology for innovation and entrepreneurship in SIDS

Science, technology and innovation (STI) policies help SIDS face challenges related to energy supply, natural resource-based activities (minerals, tourism) or geographical remoteness. UNCTAD helps policy makers in developing countries review capabilities, institutions, policies and programmes to support scientific capacity-building, technological upgrading, and promotion of sustainable development through innovation. It has collaborated on STI policy with Jamaica, Mauritius and Trinidad and Tobago. STI Policy Reviews provide support through policy evaluation and advice on STI aimed at building STI capacity and improving national innovation performance to promote sustainable development.

Supporting trade logistics and maritime transport in SIDS

For SIDS to remain competitive in export markets and keep the cost of trade processes to a minimum, trade facilitation procedures must be efficient and cost-effective. UNCTAD supports National Trade Facilitation Committees in several SIDS, notably to simplify foreign trade procedures.

Maritime transport is a lifeline for all SIDS. The challenges facing these countries are heightened by their remoteness and the smallness of their domestic markets, which result in diseconomies of scale and low shipping connectivity. UNCTAD helps SIDS alleviate their transport and trade logistics constraints by promoting coordinated approaches to trade and

transport with development partners, mostly in neighbouring SIDS.

Further important UNCTAD works have highlighted the risks incurred by the vital coastal transport infrastructure as a result of climate change-induced marine inundation. Currently, UNCTAD and UNEP, with financial support from the Government of Germany, are implementing a project on “Climate-resilient transport infrastructure for sustainable trade, tourism and development in SIDS”.

Data and statistics remain a significant challenge for SIDS. It hinders the ability of SIDS to report on key international commitments. Most SIDS are currently able to report on less than 50% of the SDG indicators. Please give an indication of any proposed targeted action at national or sub regional levels, to address this area in SIDS (1000 words)

UNCTAD and the UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) are helping SIDS gather data on ocean-based selected sectors and report on their implementation of SDG 14. Data fact sheets have been produced on fisheries, aquaculture, seafood processing, coastal and marine environmental services, and links with coastal and marine tourism sectors. Ocean-related regulatory and governance frameworks have also been assessed in beneficiary countries.

UNCTAD’s statistical reporting on SDGs includes contributions on maritime statistics. UNCTAD maritime statistics span areas such as seaborne trade, world fleet, transport costs, container port traffic and the Liner Shipping Connectivity Index (LSCI). It is important to monitor the access to shipping services in the context of vertical and horizontal concentration in the maritime transport sector.⁸

4. Financing for Sustainable Development in SIDS

Access to low cost development financing is a longstanding concern and priority for SIDS. Please indicate any plans or approaches which your entity/organization/government may have to support or enhance SIDS access to concessional finance, including the broadening partnerships, to address capacity

⁸ <http://stats.unctad.org/maritime>

constraints and enhance SIDS ability to mobilise, manage and spend financial resources from a wider array of sources (1500 words).

All SIDS are exposed to natural shocks beyond domestic control. Some of these shocks are “slow”, such as the sea level rise phenomenon, while others can be immediate and violent, such as cyclone and tsunamis. Climate change is the greatest cause of most of these disturbances. Adaptation measures at national level entail high costs and great funding challenges for most non-LDC SIDS, which do not have straightforward (if any) access to relevant international support mechanisms. These SIDS are compelled to borrow on market terms, particularly when exorbitant post-disasters reconstruction costs add to the needed resilience-building expenses. The resulting context is that of heavily indebted SIDS which find it increasingly difficult to secure the means that are vital for their resilience-building agenda. These countries therefore call for “tailored solutions”. UNCTAD has consistently supported their long-standing plea for genuine “SIDS status” as a necessary platform for making international support measures for SIDS possible. Such measures would constitute a first natural avenue for tailored financing solutions.

With coastal developing countries and SIDS particularly vulnerable to the direct and indirect impacts of climate variability and change, and critically dependent on key coastal transport infrastructure (ports and airports), it is important to explore ways to raise and allocate the necessary financial resources for effective adaptation and resilience building and to consider how best to highlight and integrate relevant considerations as part of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Climate Agreement and in National Adaptation Plans. Relevant considerations will be integrated into proposals for follow up work as part of an ongoing joint UNCTAD-UNEP TC project with a focus on “Climate resilient transport infrastructure for sustainable trade, tourism and development in SIDS”.⁹

Please elaborate on any specific plans or programmes at national and or sub regional levels to support SIDS to explore approaches and financial instruments that can help SIDS maximise resources for sustainable development from a broader array of resources, in particular through innovative financial instruments such as green bonds, blue bonds, and blending arrangements (1500 words).

One of the capacity building activities provided by UNCTAD is on financing sustainable freight transport and the different tools available including green bonds, climate finance as well as Public Private Partnership (PPPs). It provides specific guidance and methodology on

⁹ <https://unfccc.int/event/climate-resilient-transport-infrastructure-for-sustainable-trade-tourism-and-development-in-sids>

how to use of PPPs for the development and delivery of infrastructure projects in the transportation sector.

5. Climate Change and Disaster Risk Resilience

Please elaborate on any specific or planned programmes which your entity/organization/government intends to engage to support SIDS to build climate resilience, including building back better in the aftermath of disasters? (1000 words)

In 2020, UNCTAD launched research on strengthening the economic resilience of SIDS to current and future impacts of climate change. At the same time, a “SIDS Trade Climate Readiness” technical assistance project has been envisaged, to implement the research recommendations in 12 SIDS of three regions (Caribbean, Africa-Indian Ocean, Pacific). This project will engage national stakeholders in the development of plans for trade resilience in the aftermath of tropical cyclones and extreme tidal events, and during periods of drought or flooding. UNCTAD devoted the 2019 Trade Forum to a timely topic: “Trade and climate change: bringing SIDS into focus”.

Whilst the potentially severe economic impacts of the global public health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic might challenge resilience building and climate change adaptation efforts for critical coastal transport infrastructure in SIDS in the short term (e.g. shift in focus of budget allocations resulting in a likely decrease of available infrastructure financing etc.), the pandemic underlines the critical importance of preparedness, risk assessment and resiliency building. Lessons learnt could provide renewed impetus for climate risk/vulnerability assessments of critical transport infrastructure and foster long term planning essential to enhancing resiliency.

Relevant considerations will be integrated into proposals for follow up work as part of an ongoing joint UNCTAD-UNEP TC project with a focus on 'Climate resilient transport infrastructure for sustainable trade, tourism and development in SIDS'.¹⁰ The project will involve UNCTAD’s established network of collaborators and draw on earlier related work.¹¹ Key considerations for follow-up work include the following:

- Successful adaptation strategies need to be underpinned by strong legal and regulatory frameworks, that can help to reduce exposure and/or vulnerability to

¹⁰ <https://unfccc.int/event/climate-resilient-transport-infrastructure-for-sustainable-trade-tourism-and-development-in-sids>.

¹¹ <https://SIDSport-ClimateAdapt.unctad.org>.

climate-related risks of coastal transport infrastructure. Legal and regulatory tools may further provide economic incentives to fund climate change adaptation efforts, promote the transfer of adaptation technologies and contribute to the availability of accurate climate data and tools. At the same time, it is of major importance that legal and regulatory approaches do not – even inadvertently – foster ‘maladaptation’ that may limit or lock-in future adaptation options.

- Appropriate policies and standards also have an important role to play, particularly in the context of infrastructure planning and coastal zone management. Examples of existing approaches are set out in a recent UNCTAD report, “Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Coastal Transport Infrastructure: A Compilation of Policies and Practices”.¹² The report draws on UNCTAD’s related work and was prepared to assist in the development of effective legal, regulatory and policy measures for adaptation and resilience-building for coastal transport infrastructure.
- For the purposes of risk-assessment and with a view to developing effective adaptation measures, generation and dissemination of more tailored data and information is important, as are targeted case studies and effective multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Infrastructure inventories, higher resolution data, including better Digital Elevation Models (DEMs), as well as a better understanding of coastal processes under climate change are required for effective risk-assessment and adaptation planning; and detailed technical studies at facility level are needed to avoid maladaptation. Technical adaptation measures are widely needed, but these should involve innovative and efficient designs to avoid over-engineering; ecosystem approaches to adaptation can play a significant role in reducing risks.
- Increased investment in human resources and skills (in particular skilled coastal scientists/engineers) at local/regional levels will be critical for successful adaptation and resilience building in the future, as will be the mainstreaming of climate change considerations into ordinary transport planning, operations, and management.

¹² <https://unctad.org/en/pages/PublicationWebflyer.aspx?publicationid=2631>.