



ONLINE

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

# THE SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS) DIALOGUES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

21 – 25 NOVEMBER 2022

*Information Note*



## BACKGROUND

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are a heterogeneous group of countries, spread across the world, with very distinct, and context-specific, needs, opportunities and challenges. Despite their diversity, SIDS' small size and geographic isolation underpin their unifying trait: extreme vulnerability to environmental and economic shocks, as well as great resilience and unity of vision in engaging globally towards sustainable development.

The economies of most SIDS are characterized by a lack of economic diversification and a strong dependence on global partners through trade, tourism, remittance and concessional finance. Their growth and development is often further blocked by high transportation and communication costs, disproportionately expensive infrastructure due to their small size, and little or no opportunity to create economies of scale. Consequently, SIDS have suffered more from the financial crisis in 2008 than most other developing countries, and the COVID-19 crises has exacerbated their economic vulnerability, making it even more difficult for SIDS to achieve sustained economic growth and provide decent work to their people.

In addition, small islands are so-called hotspots of climate change. Here, the adverse effects of sea-level rise, increasing temperatures, and extreme weather events are already felt, making adaptation urgent.

To advance the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda, SIDS have built their resilience to external shocks and are adopting development strategies that deliver economic growth, diversification and decent work. A just transition to a blue economy can catalyse this process, bringing prosperity and decent jobs to island communities while restoring ocean and inland ecosystems.

The blue economy approach offers small islands the opportunity to break their dependence on a narrow range of goods and services, predominantly tourism and fisheries, and to expand into new blue growth sectors, including marine biotechnology, aquaculture and ocean renewable energy. A just transition has also the potential of creating decent work for *all* and, by extension, contributing to building more equal and resilient societies, which are equipped to respond to the climate emergency.

However, realizing the full potential of the blue economy requires securing investment, finance and access to technology; having an appropriately skilled workforce; ensuring gender equality and the effective inclusion of all societal groups, including marginalized and underrepresented ones.

The SIDS Dialogues are organized by the ITCILO in collaboration with the ILO, UN DCO, UN OHRLLS, UN SDG Fund and the ICR Facility. The Dialogues aim to flag

out opportunities and reinforce the existing network across small islands, that have long been stewards of vast ocean spaces, and provide a space for them to share, scale up and replicate national, regional and local examples of blue economy and related services in a changing climate. Through peer learning and exchanges of national, regional and local good practices, participants will identify potential solutions and synergies for accelerating progress towards the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda.

## METHODOLOGY

The SIDS Dialogues will be held online from 21 to 25 November 2022. Each day participants will have access to two live online sessions of 90 minutes each and have access to asynchronous activities participants complete either individually or in groups.

Online webinar sessions are highly participatory, featuring activities designed to foster peer-to-peer interaction and collaborative learning. Webinars will take place at 8:00pm-11:30pm CET, corresponding to 3:00pm-6:30pm AST and 7:00am-11:30am FJT (of the following day).

Training content is made available on the ITCILO e-learning platform, the eCampus. This will feature webinar links and recordings, preliminary or supplementary readings, slides and other training materials and discussion forum.

## CONTENTS

The SIDS Dialogues cover the following topics:

### **DAY 1: SMALL ISLANDS STATES, LARGE OCEANS: TAKING STOCK AND LOOKING FORWARD**

Facing a future whose only certainty is change, SIDS are confronted with many problems and difficulties – some intrinsic and timeless, others extrinsic and new – in making progress towards sustainable development. However, small island societies have a record of thriving in challenging times. As Large Ocean States and custodians of 19.1 percent of the world’s Exclusive Economic Zones, SIDS can reimagine their development strategies in more sustainable and diverse forms. The first day of the SIDS Dialogues will provide an overview of SIDS’ unique features that make them a “special case for development” and will examine opportunities that SIDS have to advance the SAMOA Pathway and 2030 Agenda.

## **DAY 2: LEVERAGING DIGITAL IN SIDS: PREPARING A WORKFORCE FOR THE NEW BLUE ECONOMY**

The transition from the “old” blue economy—one that unfortunately still relies too heavily on oil and gas, overfishing, and unsustainable tourism—to a new economy, one that is both sustainable and built on data, information, and knowledge, requires a major transition for technology, talent, and skills too. Skills are also crucial to enable economies and businesses, workers and entrepreneurs to adapt rapidly to changes deriving from climate change and environmental policies. This session will provide an overview of the state-of-the-art and needs in digitalization skills in SIDS and present examples of skills development initiatives supporting a just transition to the blue economy.

## **DAY 3: ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE: CLIMATE-RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS AS PILLARS OF SIDS BLUE ECONOMY**

For SIDS, coastal infrastructure assets are a key driver of economic development and prosperity. However, while SIDS already face high exposure to natural disasters, compelling scientific studies project that climate change will increase the hydro-meteorological hazards for the coastal infrastructure of SIDS<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, enhanced climate resilience and adaptation for critical infrastructure is a matter of strategic socio-economic importance and will be key in achieving progress on many of the SDGs. Also nature-based solutions can help to restore natural ecosystems and reduce disaster risks, while at the same time creating job opportunities at the local community level. This session will present examples of climate-resilient infrastructures in SIDS, as well as initiatives protecting marine and coastal ecosystems, such as coral reefs and mangrove restoration.

## **DAY 4: TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE BLUE ECONOMY IN SIDS**

A sustainable blue economy needs to tackle the poverty, inequality, and exclusion that constrain both growth and environmental sustainability, making sure that no one is left behind. Without this integrated approach, stand-alone green or blue growth projects and investments will not lead to real transformation. However, exclusion issues persist. For instance, while it is almost exclusively men out on the water, women are key players in the fishing value chain particularly when it comes to processing. Yet they are often marginalized from decision making and resource management processes. Similarly, in the context of coastal and marine ecosystems, indigenous peoples are often underrepresented and excluded from decision-making processes. This session will be an opportunity to discuss existing inclusion challenges and explore best practices on policies reconciling the transition to the blue economy with an inclusive job-rich growth.

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<sup>1</sup> IPCC, 2014; IPCC, 2018; IPCC 2019

## DAY 5: FINANCING THE BLUE ECONOMY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION IN SMALL ISLANDS

Pursuing the blue economy requires access to affordable long-term financing at scale, yet small islands have thus far experienced limited success in catalysing public and private investments in the blue economy at scale. In addition, most SIDS are middle-income countries and many are not eligible to receive concessional finance from multilateral financial institutions. Day 5 will provide an overview of current trends in financing the blue economy and climate change adaptation, focusing on new source of funding and innovating financing, such as blue bonds, as well as UN initiatives such as SDG SIDS Global Funds and the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI).

## TARGET AUDIENCE

The Forum targets professionals supporting or interested in supporting the blue and green economy in SIDS. The Forum specifically targets:

- Government officials operating at the local, sub-regional, regional and national level;
- Trade unions and employers' organizations;
- ILO and UN staff;
- Development organizations;
- Donor organizations;
- Research and education institutions;
- Universities

## HOW TO APPLY

Applicants are kindly asked to submit:

1. A complete online registration form: <https://oarf2.itcilo.org/MIF/A9714838/en>;
2. An official sponsorship letter if they're financed by their organization (or a donor). The letter can be uploaded to the application form or sent by email to [devinvest@itcilo.org](mailto:devinvest@itcilo.org);
3. Fee payments completed prior to course enrolment for self-funded participants. Further information on payment methods can be found [here](#).

## FEES

Total costs per participant: Euro 900

## FURTHER INFORMATION

**Language:** English

**Certificate:** On completion of all required course activities, participants will obtain a Certificate of Participation in Digital Credentials Format

**Contact:** [itcilo\\_sids@itcilo.org](mailto:itcilo_sids@itcilo.org)

## WITHDRAWAL, CANCELLATION POLICY, AND REFUNDS FOR OPEN COURSES

If an enrolled participant wishes or must withdraw from a course, they may choose to apply to a different course or be substituted by another candidate. The participant must notify the Centre, in writing, of their decision at least 14 days prior to the start date of the course. Cancellation of participation in regular courses will result in the following penalties:

- 14 days or more prior to the start date of the course: No penalty, 100% refund of amount paid less applicable bank charges
- 8 to 13 days prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 50% of course price, refund of residual amount paid (if any) less applicable bank charges
- 7 days or less prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 100% of course price.

## INFO

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

**International Training Centre of the ILO**  
Development Investment Programme (DEVINVEST)  
Viale Maestri del Lavoro, 10  
10127 Turin – Italy

itcilo\_sids@itcilo.org  
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**COURSE CODE: A9714838**