



Climate-Resilient Islands Partnership

An Inter-Regional Partnership on
Climate Change Planning and Finance
in Small Island Developing States

Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre
Indian Ocean Commission
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
Working in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat



Caribbean Community
Climate Change Centre



INDIAN OCEAN
COMMISSION



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme



The Commonwealth

Introduction

A priority for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is effective planning and financing of actions to address the impacts of climate change. This paper examines the vital role that regional institutions play in sharing SIDS relevant approaches and knowledge, and in delivering specialist skills and knowledge to support national efforts. It goes on to highlight the work of the Climate-Resilient Islands Partnership, which links the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific Regions, and is working to rapidly scale-up cost-effective services to SIDS through inter-regional cooperation and exchange.

The Impact of Climate Change on Small Island Developing States

A recent Expert Group on climate finance¹ concluded that climate change is reversing progress on poverty alleviation, economic growth and stability across the world. The smallest and least developed countries are facing the greatest impacts and have the most limited capacity to respond.

Climate change is having physical impacts across the world, but SIDS are especially vulnerable (Box 1).

¹ *Improving Access to Climate Finance for Small and Vulnerable States: A Report of the Commonwealth Expert Group on Climate Finance to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2013.*

Box 1: Findings of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report

- Due to sea-level rise projected throughout the 21st century and beyond, coastal systems and low lying areas will increasingly experience adverse impacts such as submergence, coastal flooding, and coastal erosion.
- Some low-lying developing countries and small island states are expected to face very high impacts that, in some cases, could have associated damage and adaptation costs of several percentage points of GDP.
- Global marine-species, redistribution and marine-biodiversity reduction in sensitive regions will challenge the sustained provision of fisheries productivity and other ecosystem services.



IPCC (2013) Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis, Summary for Policy Makers, Working Group 1 Contribution to the Fifth Assessment Report. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. IPCC (2014) WGI AR5 Summary for Policymakers.

Planning for Climate Change

The cost of dealing with climate change is increasing in both developed and developing countries. Costs include:

- increasingly expensive insurance (where insurance is even available);
- businesses having to invest in adapting to climate change, meaning they have less finance for more productive investments;
- governments spending scarce public resources on new or improved infrastructure, alternative sources of food and water, relocation of communities, and recovery from natural disasters.

The smallest and least developed countries are facing the greatest impacts - they are some of the world's most climate vulnerable countries.

Extreme Weather Events: Impact on SIDS

SIDS are often made more vulnerable by limited capacity, and by key sectors of the economy being highly climate sensitive (such as tourism, agriculture and fisheries). The cost of a single extreme weather event in an island state can approach or even exceed its GDP in a given year, with impacts felt island-wide (see Box 2).

Box 2: Extreme weather events damaging lives and livelihoods in SIDS



Climate change threatens to make extreme weather events more frequent and more intense. Recent examples of the devastating impact of extreme weather events on SIDS include:

- In Guyana, major floods in 2005 caused damage equivalent to 60% of GDP and 320,000 people were directly affected. Annual economic loss due to flooding is projected to be US\$150 million by 2030 unless a US\$1 billion adaptation infrastructure programme is completed.
- In the recent decade, the islands of the Indian Ocean have been challenged by impact of flooding and landslides due to a combination of both natural and anthropogenic causes. At the end of March 2014, the island of Anjouan in Comoros was affected by landslide following heavy rains resulting from Tropical Depression Hellen, displacing 3030 people.
- In 2004, a low Category 3 hurricane in Grenada resulted in damages estimated at more than 200% of the island's gross domestic product in that year.
- Flooding in Kiribati has led the Kiribati Government to put a relocation strategy in place, based on the concept of migration with dignity - stating that climate change threatens the survival of the country. The Kiribati Government 'acknowledges that relocation of our people may be inevitable'.

What Can SIDS do to Prepare for Climate Change?

Experts agree that the following responses to climate change are urgently needed:

- *prudent investment in climate change adaptation to protect people and existing economic activity, and*
- *a global conversion to a low carbon economy, sustainable land use and better forest management. This can save costs and increase resilience.*

Solutions are possible and affordable — but they require action through policy, planning and finance.

The Role of Regional Organisations

SIDS' small size - whether this is in terms of population, land mass or economy - means that they are severely limited in their capacity to respond to the climate impacts they face. This is where regional institutions play a vital role. They deliver specialist skills and help to share knowledge and experiences amongst countries with similar challenges and characteristics.

The regional organisations of SIDS have recognised that their collaboration could deliver further benefits, by creating access to wider SIDS-relevant experiences and cross-regional learning to rapidly scale-up services.

The Climate-Resilient Islands Partnership is uniting organisations working in different small states regions to help SIDS prepare for climate change. The partners are:

- Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)
- Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
- Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)

Supported by a Memoranda of Understanding, these organisations are working with the Commonwealth to promote this partnership and its potential. The partnership represents a unique and timely mechanism to help SIDS across the globe to prepare and adapt for climate change by bringing regions together to learn from one another's experiences in supporting SIDS in the face of climate change, by sharing facilities and expertise, and by fostering dialogue between countries in the global South that share similar experiences.

Focus of the Partnership

Originally formed in 2011, the Climate-Resilient Islands Partnership has spent three years developing a Joint Work Plan to progress on SIDS' own priorities, attract resources, and harness the three regional partners' strengths.

The partnership supports national climate planning and finance to reduce risks from climate change, and action towards low-emission, climate-resilient communities, seeking to:

- Ensure that SIDS' citizens have access to real-time climate information for decision making.
- Ensure SIDS have access to climate modelling that is relevant at the national level to support their climate change planning and finance decision making.
- Establish integrated planning for climate change and disaster risk reduction and management.
- Build strong institutional arrangements at the regional and national level to facilitate SIDS' readiness for, and access to, climate finance.
- Support the Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) Region in the development of regional institutional mechanisms on climate change.

The partnership is strategically designed to achieve these goals:

- It's an ideal forum to foster **joint projects and pooled resources**.
- Global SIDS face many similar challenges and constraints; the approaches and lessons in one region are often highly relevant to another SIDS region. **Common access to tools** developed in the three regions, and learning through **twinning programmes**, will facilitate capacity building and the exchange of **SIDS-specific approaches**.
- It will allow a common review of experiences on climate change planning and finance across SIDS regions, to help inform the **design of international approaches and mechanisms** tailored to SIDS' needs and capacities.
- It presents an opportunity to develop globally recognised technical excellence on delivering low-emission, climate-resilient development in SIDS.

Five Priorities

The partnership has identified five key priorities:

1. **On-line Portals.** Each partner is developing its own public focused information portal to build a public understanding of climate change impacts, climate variation, and disaster risk reduction. The partnership will link these portals so that citizens in SIDS can have a broader view of climate concerns and strategies across a wide range of small states.
2. **Climate Modelling.** Given their small size, one challenge for SIDS is access to climate impact models that are detailed enough to support decision-making. Each member of the partnership is down-scaling climate models to support its member countries, and the partnership is creating an inter-regional network of climate modellers to learn from one another in the use of different approaches and SIDS-tailored products.

3. Integration of Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is

a high priority within SIDS. Each partner is currently working in its own region to deliver tools and approaches, but the partnership can strengthen national planning processes by sharing different experiences with regional plans, road maps, and the application of dynamic systems modelling and resilience profiling. A technical dialogue across the regions on climate change and DRR could help to identify key approaches to making progress.

4. Regional Implementing Entity (RIE)/National Implementing Entity (NIE) Accreditation.

(NIE) Accreditation. Access to climate financing through the major international climate funds requires accreditation to those funds. For adaptation financing, these are the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund, which is currently being developed. SPREP has already achieved RIE status for the Adaptation Fund and commissioned a report on its experiences seeking RIE status, which will provide useful guidance to IOC and CCCCC as they seek accreditation. The partnership can also accelerate the national accreditation process for SIDS and regional organisations. It also has the potential to rapidly facilitate SIDS' readiness to access the Green Climate Fund and to support the development of an effective pipeline of projects proposed by SIDS. Sharing reflective learning and experiences are particularly important in the 2015-2020 period as the Green Climate Fund is prepared for full operation.

5. Developing an IOC Implementation Plan. The partnership aims to

strengthen regional arrangements for the Indian Ocean region in particular. Taking lessons from processes that the Pacific and the Caribbean have already implemented, to rapidly develop regional capacity within the Indian Ocean region. In this way, the partnership provides a targeted scaling-up of climate change planning and finance services to SIDS in the AIMS region.

Results So Far

- **Knowledge shared by technical advisers.** An exchange visit of technical advisers within the CCCCC and SPREP shared knowledge and tool kits developed within the two institutions on the costs and benefits of climate change actions within a SIDS context. The CCCCC adviser then reviewed indicators for monitoring the Pacific Programme on Climate Resilience, and participated in a UNFCCC M&E Workshop in Fiji in September 2013.
- **Collaboration through web portals.** The partners' portals were surveyed and a format for an IOC portal was prepared. The partnership is now poised to link portals and begin jointly producing material. The next step will be to examine the work that each region has already completed in adapting to climate variability and change, and to highlight how the lessons learnt are being exchanged across regions.
- **Assessing virtual learning.** A report on the virtual learning network between respective knowledge management officers from CCCCC and SPREP has been completed, sharing key lessons and experiences in managing regional climate change portals and information hubs in the Pacific and in the Caribbean.
- **Sharing tools to study climate.** Tools and lessons in expert networking and modelling have been identified, ready for sharing across the regions. SPREP, in close collaboration with the Pacific Climate Change Science Program, has more than four climate tools and predictive modelling online tools available for various Pacific countries and regions.
- **Assessing what the regions share in common.** A comparative assessment of the three regions has been completed, which will develop a roadmap for the IOC over the next three years, to deliver the Regional Strategy on Adaptation, and to enact the Memoranda of Understanding between the partners.

Each Partner's Role

Each institution brings different strengths and contributions to the partnership:

Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)

The CCCCC coordinates the Caribbean region's response to climate change. Opened in August 2005, the Centre is home to a wealth of expertise on climate change and the Caribbean's response. The Centre is a repository and clearing house for regional climate change information and data, and provides climate change-related policy advice and guidelines to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) states. Taking a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach, CCCCC has extensive experience with:

- climate modelling,
- the use of economic assessments of adaptation options, and
- the development of portals for direct public use.

The Centre seeks to share two innovative online tools it has developed recently:

- the Caribbean Climate Online Risk and Adaptation Tool (CCORAL)
- the Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation (MR&E) online tool

The CCCCC's experience evolving from a regional adaptation programme to fully-fledged institution—in particular, its work in developing an Implementation Plan (2011-2021) for the Regional Framework for Achieving Development Resilient to Climate Change is of particular value to the partnership and an aspect it has been keen to share with the IOC.

Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)

The IOC is leading the development of a work plan based on the partnership's five priorities and responsible for the overall management of the partnership. In moving this partnership forward, the IOC hopes to support its member countries to achieve a regionally coherent and inclusive low-emission, climate-resilient development path. As the partnership's work progresses, the IOC's key activities will include:

1. developing its CC portal linking to other work from the partner organisations,
2. continuing leading the work on the setup of a network of modellers, while
3. continuing learning from its partners in integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and climate change, and the process of accreditation as RIE for the global Adaptation Fund.

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

SPREP's key areas of knowledge and expertise which they bring to the partnership are:

- climate finance,
- information and knowledge management,
- how to implement regional mainstreaming projects in climate change adaptation and mitigation,
- how to achieve Regional Implementing Entity status under the Adaptation Fund, and
- how to integrate disaster risk management and climate adaptation planning.

SPREP brings insight and Pacific experiences of key lessons in these areas, and will provide leadership in the Pacific region for the partnership as well as collaborate with partnership activities in the other regions, funding permitting.

Commonwealth Secretariat

The Commonwealth Secretariat has a long-standing interest in climate change concerns of SIDS, in response to the interests of its 52 member states. It has supported the partnership by convening members twice in 2011, by supporting outreach by the partnership through a joint side-event on the climate challenges of SIDS at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio in 2012, and by placing Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) Advisers at SPREP and CCCCC to strengthen institutional capacity and foster cross-regional exchange.

The Commonwealth is currently developing proposals for a Commonwealth Climate Finance Skills Hub, to be hosted by the Government of Mauritius. The Hub proposal is in its design phase. The intention is to have an institutionally-light networked approach: delivery of elements of the Hub could potentially operate through the SIDS Climate Change Planning and Finance Partnership, particularly within the 2015-2020 phase as SIDS build up key climate finance readiness capacity at regional and national levels.

Implementation

The Strategic Plan for the partnership is driven forward through processes at four levels:

- Partner CEOs approve the Strategic Plan and review progress on an annual basis.
- Partner focal points are responsible for developing the necessary internal commitment and awareness-raising about the partnership's work plan and coordinating the effective implementation.
- Each partner monitors activities for which it is the lead organisation; this monitoring will inform and drive individual projects.
- The partnership implements and monitors the overall Strategy, with a review every six months.

Conclusion: Partnership at a Turning Point

The partnership has laid a strong foundation and developed a bold vision. Partners have enacted the spirit of their Memoranda of Understanding through a comprehensive analysis of the three regional organisations to define a practical programme of work. Targeted inter-regional exchanges have taken place, and institutional assessments have created an effective basis for shared services and Centre-to-Centre learning. The stage is now set to significantly expand the partnership's activities to realise its full potential, scaling-up institutional support to SIDS and delivering SIDS-appropriate services in a cost-effective way.

But in order for the partnership to reach this potential, they require new investment and collaborating institutions.

The threat that climate change poses requires international cooperation on an unprecedented scale. The partnership is an effective mechanism that can enable this vital international cooperation to support progress towards low-emission, climate-resilient sustainable development in Small Island Developing States.



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