

## 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 Matrix<sup>1</sup> (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).

##### 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)
  - a. Resource allocation to SIDS has been a consistent priority in GEF programming. Since its inception, the GEF's System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) has evolved to increasingly direct resources to countries with special needs, including SIDS. As a result, the share of STAR resources allocated to SIDS has steadily grown with each GEF replenishment cycle. In the current GEF-8 cycle, allocations to SIDS reached a historic high of \$379.3 million—15.6% of the total STAR resources—up from \$233 million (12.3%) in GEF-7.  
During the ongoing GEF-9 replenishment negotiations, the adjustment of various STAR parameters may have an allocation impact on SIDS. These adjustments could include, but are not limited to, potential changes to allocation floors and ceilings, the weighting of the GDP index, and the possible introduction of a vulnerability index.
  - b. To strengthen tailored support for SIDS, the GEF is advancing a targeted expansion of its partnership under GEF-9 (2026–2030). This effort aims to add to the partnership new regional agencies with strong operational presence and contextual expertise in SIDS, thereby enhancing access to GEF funding and delivery capacity on the ground. This expansion aligns with the spirit of the SAMOA Pathway and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS, which emphasize the need for improved access to finance and institutional support tailored to SIDS' unique vulnerabilities. By broadening agency representation, the GEF aims to address persistent gaps in institutional coverage and facilitate more responsive support across programming, implementation, and oversight.

<sup>1</sup> accountability framework developed to promote and monitor progress with implementation of ABAS

The expansion is expected to strengthen project pipelines, improve day-to-day support during implementation, and help ensure GEF investments more directly reflect national and regional priorities in SIDS.

- c. The GEF is also engaged in a number of initiatives under its Country Engagement Strategy to strengthen the capacity of countries to access financing and to monitor the implementation of programs and projects within their countries. GEF recipient countries have access to targeted funding and support for GEFP Project Oversight as well as the hosting of technical and national dialogues to respond to their specific needs on programming of GEF resources.

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)

As a financial mechanism for the MEAs and other environmental agreements, the GEF does not have SIDS specific or country specific strategies. However, the GEF recognizes many SIDS have fragile environments and are uniquely affected by global change. As a result, they often receive special consideration across the family of funds within the GEF- including the GEF Trust Fund, Special Climate Change Fund, Least Developed Countries Fund, Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency, Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) and the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund (NPIF). Please see further details below.

GEF Trust Fund	
Thematic Area	Strategic consideration for SIDS in GEF-8
Biodiversity	The principle area of work for the Biodiversity focal area is protection and restoration of areas to ensure conservation of globally significant biodiversity in integrated landscape and seascape management approaches. The Biodiversity Strategy places a special emphasis on sustainable use of biodiversity by IPLCs and management of invasive alien species on islands ecosystems. GEF can support countries in mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations in productive sectors (including agriculture, fisheries and tourism), by changing practices and policies harmful to biodiversity. The strategy also helps implementation of Cartagena and Nagoya protocols on biosafety and access to benefit sharing. Finally, GEF supports strengthening islands institutional and financial capacities, by creating enabling conditions and developing financial mechanisms to ensure sustainable conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems.
Chemicals & Waste	In GEF-8 the Chemicals and Waste strategy supports developing countries, including SIDS to address pollution from hazardous chemicals and waste through three strategic objectives. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation, strengthening and supporting the enabling environment and policy coherence to transform the manufacture, use and sound management of chemicals and to eliminate waste and chemical pollution.</li> <li>• Prevention of future buildup of hazardous chemicals and waste in the environment</li> <li>• Elimination of hazardous chemicals and waste</li> </ul>
Climate Change Mitigation	The Climate Change Strategy aims to support developing countries, including SIDS, to make transformational shifts towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways. It aims to promote innovation and technology transfer for sustainable energy breakthroughs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerate the efficient use of energy and materials;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable the transition to decarbonized power systems;</li> <li>• Scale up zero-emission mobility of people and goods; and</li> <li>• Promote Nature-based Solutions with high mitigation potential.</li> </ul>
International Waters	There are multiple opportunities for SIDS to access resources to support transboundary cooperation in shared marine and freshwater ecosystems through regional investments that address a suite of stressors such as overfishing, land-based sources of pollution, loss and damage of key coastal and marine ecosystems towards strengthening Blue Economy opportunities. This is to be achieved through three areas of strategic action: 1) accelerating joint action to support a Sustainable Blue Economy; 2) advancing management in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), and 3) enhancing water security in shared freshwater ecosystems.
Land Degradation	The Land Degradation Strategy aims to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation, desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in many countries, including vulnerable contexts such as SIDS. The GEF continues to support the SIDS to utilize sustainable land management, land restoration/rehabilitation and drought mitigation approaches to support efforts to address food security, to maintain livelihoods, and support resilience while ensuring the integrity of productive landscapes.
<b>Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT)</b>	
Climate Change	The Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) was created at the request of UNFCCC Parties to help strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of developing countries to meet the enhanced transparency requirements defined in Article 13 of the Paris Agreement. The CBIT Programming Directions stipulated that proposals would be prioritized for those countries that are in most need of capacity-building assistance for transparency-related activities, in particular LDCs and SIDS. The CBIT can support SIDS in strengthening their national institutions for transparency-related activities; providing relevant tools, training, and assistance for meeting the provisions in Article 13 of the Agreement.
<b>Special Climate Change Fund and Least Developed Countries Fund</b>	
Climate Change Adaptation	<p>During the ongoing GEF-8 period, SCCF has been supporting targeted interventions to address the climate change adaptation needs of the SIDS. The GEF-8 Adaptation Strategy allocates \$ 3 million per non-LDCs SIDS as initial cap under the SCCF Window A, dedicated supporting 30 non-LDCs SIDS. To date, 13 non-LDC SIDS have fully accessed funds under SCCF-A, including through regional projects aimed at enhancing climate change resilience in the fisheries sector for five Caribbean SIDS and boosting resilience for three Pacific SIDS. Water, agriculture, and climate information are the sectors with the greatest focus among all SCCF projects, followed by nature-based solutions</p> <p>The eight SIDS that are also LDCs each have accessed US\$20 million in grant resources of the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) by end of GEF-8 toward reducing vulnerability to climate change and meeting their national adaptation priorities. In addition, the GEF Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation pilots and de-risks new approaches to adaptation funding – leveraging public finance to engage private sector innovators in creating new solutions to the climate crisis for vulnerable populations. For both the LDCF and the SCCF, the GEF endeavors to ensure that support is complimentary and synergistic to any support being provided by other adaptation funding avenues for a country.</p>
<b>Global Biodiversity Framework Fund</b>	
Biodiversity	Established at the request of CBD COP 15, the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) scales up financing for the implementation of

	the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Among the innovative features of the GBFF is one of the portfolio-level targets which stipulates 36%+3% of GBFF resources are to be programmed in SIDS and LDCs, which makes the GBFF a reliable source of funding for SIDS.
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GEF-8 also has a series of global integrated programs (IP) which have included up to 26 GEF eligible recipient SIDS including a dedicated SIDS program - Blue and Green Islands IP (BGI IP). The BGI IP seeks to mainstream the central role of nature and scales nature-based solutions to address environmental degradation across three target key growth sectors—urban development, food production, and tourism—for nature-positive shifts in fifteen island states.

## **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?
- 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?
- 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?
- iv. What improvements would you recommend to enhance the UN’s system-wide approach to capacity development in SIDS?
- 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

#### **For Governments**

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.

- vi. 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)

A coordinated approach for increased coherence in a multi-disciplinary response is crucial to effectively address urgent development and environmental challenges in the SIDS, and other regions. This must include the coordination of efforts at the domestic, international and systemic level, leading to nature positive governance.

The GEF promotes and enhances policy coherence at the national level through its programming and operations in its recipient countries, several of whom are SIDS. Policy Coherence is a key lever of systems transformation for the GEF-8 integrated programs referenced under question 2. The GEF Secretariat reviews the design of ongoing projects to analyze policy coherence elements, and this is systematically highlighted and reported to the GEF Council. In addition, several engagements with countries on the topic is conducted through the GEF's Country Engagement Strategy. For example, to sensitize and promote the concept, a session on policy coherence was organized at a SIDS-dedicated GEF workshop in the Dominican Republic. Additionally, the GEF has led and contributed to several knowledge products, strategic meetings, and events on policy coherence, also benefitting participants and audience from SIDS.

Country-owned investment platforms can help reduce fragmentation in the delivery of climate and nature finance and better allocate resources to high-impact projects. Critically, these platforms bring together funders with cross-sectoral government agencies and to better connect national priority projects and national and international, public and private financial flows. Country platforms can also improve intersectoral collaboration and coordination, supporting policy coherence across several dimensions. As such, the GEF family of funds actively participates in the Seychelles Climate Finance Roundtable, co-convened by the IMF and the World Bank with the government of Seychelles, to coordinate efforts to increase climate finance through policy reforms, capacity building, and innovative financing in the country.

In the upcoming GEF-9 cycle, policy coherence is proposed as a cross-cutting issue into the GEF-9 programming strategy, as well as through the Country Engagement Strategy, facilitating a holistic and inclusive development planning approach at the country level. The GEF-9 Country Engagement Strategy will further include potential provisions to support country platforms through the GEF Trust Fund and broader Family of Funds.

The GEF is committed to supporting and sharing lessons and experiences in enhancing coordination and policy coherence in SIDS.

### **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)