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[1] (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).

Nuclear science and technology, along with the technical cooperation programme of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), play pivotal roles in enhancing resilience-building interventions for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) at both national and regional levels in various modalities.

1. Strategic Planning and IAEA Initiatives

Country Programme Frameworks (CPFs) are strategic medium-term planning documents drawn up by a Member State in collaboration with the IAEA's Secretariat. They define mutually agreed priority development needs and interests to be supported through TC activities. 3 SIDS signed CPFs in 2024: Cuba, Grenada and Vanuatu. In 2024, CPFs was extended for Belize.

In November 2024, the Steering Committee for the Regional Strategic Framework (RSF) for Technical Cooperation with the IAEA–CARICOM Member States met to assess progress in achieving the RSF 2020-2026 stated outcomes and identify corrective actions on the delivery of RSF outputs towards ensuring its successful implementation.

In 2024, to better build smooth existing mechanisms between the IAEA and Member States, two National Liaison Assistants (NLAs), from the Marshall Islands, who are supporting the National Liaison Officers (NLOs), the main contact from the country to strategically coordinate the needs to the IAEA assistance, successfully completed group fellowships designed to promote stronger collaboration between Member States and the Agency and to contribute to more effective implementation of the TC programme.

The IAEA major initiatives ZODIAC, NUTEC Plastics, Rays of Hope and Atoms4Food continue to support and facilitate the delivery of IAEA development activities to SIDS — in particular Technical Cooperation activities that require major funding for high-cost equipment — by mobilizing funds, raising awareness, and bringing together partners. The efforts also include building human capacity, including through youth outreach, specialist schools, postgraduate support and legislative assistance.

[1] accountability framework developed to promote and monitor progress with implementation of ABAS

These key initiatives help IAEA Member States, including SIDS who are IAEA Member States to benefit from the IAEA nuclear expertise against their needs and priorities. [2]

Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Comoros, Cuba, Dominica, Jamaica, Mauritius, Palau, and Trinidad and Tobago are benefiting from the marine monitoring and assessment services, as a part of NUTEC Plastics Initiative; while Cuba also benefits from plastic recycling assistance. Following an oil spill in February 2024, Trinidad and Tobago requested support for clean-up efforts. The Agency provided training in preparing samples for analysis of the presence of petroleum hydrocarbons in the marine environment. The Agency also provided laboratory equipment and analytical supplies for the Institute of Marine Affairs and expert advice on conducting oil fingerprinting and quantifying hydrocarbon pollution in the marine environment.

In the field of health, 11 SIDS participated actively in Rays of Hope in 2024, which aims to scale up much needed imaging, nuclear medicine and radiotherapy access for cancer patients. Support in this area includes the procurement of a linear accelerator and a brachytherapy system for cancer treatment in Dominican Republic. Efforts continue to build capacity, train a new generation of qualified professionals and expand the use of more advanced techniques in the region. National diagnostic radiology services in Guyana have been strengthened through the provision of mammography units to four hospitals: Linden Hospital Complex, New Amsterdam Public Hospital, Public Hospital Suddie and Lethem Regional Hospital. Quality control equipment was provided for the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. In parallel, the Agency provided technical guidance to help centres plan, design and operate high quality and safe breast cancer screening services. In Belize, 31 diagnostic imaging personnel including radiologists, radiographers, dentists, and assistants were trained on the Quality Assurance Manual to improve diagnostic imaging services.

2. Regional and national Technical Cooperation (TC) projects

Regarding the regional and national programmes, the IAEA continue to provide support in the areas of food and agriculture, , energy planning, water and the environment, human health and radiation safety to SIDS.

The IAEA continues to support SIDS through regional and national TC projects tailored to their specific social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities.

Under the AFRA umbrella, radiopharmacists from Mauritius completed their degrees. The project enhanced the capacities of medical professionals from Africa in cancer diagnosis.

In the Caribbean region, in 2024, legislative support was provided to the Bahamas, Barbados, and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Draft laws from the Bahamas, Barbados, were reviewed and feedback was provided which could enable discussions on the importance of becoming party to relevant international legal instruments and developing comprehensive nuclear legislation. This achievement will positively impact key sectors in the country for the peaceful use of nuclear applications in sectors including health, the environment and agriculture. For food and agriculture, the IAEA assisted the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences in Jamaica to establish a self-contained gamma irradiation facility

[2] There are 28 IAEA Member States as SIDS as of 15 November 2024: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Cook Islands, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Singapore, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu.
See Member States of the IAEA and dates of membership | IAEA and List of SIDS | Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

to support the use of the Sterile Insect Technique , mutation induction for the development of new crop varieties, and the irradiation of agricultural crops as a post-harvest phytosanitary measure on a pilot scale. The new irradiation facility will also provide services to other CARICOM countries and will be used to transfer knowledge in the use of irradiation techniques across the subregion

Food safety analysis capabilities of the national laboratory at Government Analytical Services in Barbados are being improved with the provision of ultra-high performance liquid chromatography for quantitative and confirmatory analysis of mycotoxins and pesticide residues in plant and animal food products. Laboratory staff have been trained in analytical method development and validation techniques for pesticide and other chemical residues in food using isotope-based liquid chromatography–mass spectrometry and gas chromatography–mass spectrometry. Additionally, 17 participants from 10 Member States (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago) trained in the use of nuclear induced (mutation breeding) in combination with associated biotechnology to develop steady stream of crop varieties with enhanced performance and stability, nutrition, and resilience.

CARICOM Member States received support to strengthen their water resources management capacities through the training of personnel in conceptual hydrogeology models and isotope hydrology methodologies. Hydrology field equipment was provided for the Central Water and Sewerage Authority in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. In addition, laboratory personnel at the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology in Barbados were trained in the use of laser spectrometry, including troubleshooting, data acquisition and data processing.

As it relates to energy planning, 14 participants from Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Haiti, Jamaica and Saint Vincent and Grenadines received support through an online training course on sustainable energy system planning and the Agency's capacity building support. The course aimed to provide participants with the knowledge and skills required for effective energy planning at the national levelIn the area of health, the Dominican Republic is extending its nuclear medicine and radiotherapy infrastructure to improve response time and improve access to oncological diagnosis and treatment through the establishment of a new oncological centre in the city of Barahona, in the south-west of the country. The Agency is providing equipment and related training. It is also providing support for the establishment of the Dominican Republic's first secondary standards dosimetry laboratory (SSDL), which will improve national infrastructure to assess the calibration of dosimetry equipment. Radiation Therapist and Physicist from Barbados were trained through fellowships on linear accelerator technologies in preparation for installation and use of a Halcyon linear accelerator. In response to a request by the Prime Minister of Grenada, the Agency initiated procurement of an X-ray unit for the Princess Royal Hospital on the island of Carriacou, Grenada, to replace one that was damaged by Hurricane Beryl in July 2024 and quickly reinstate services for the communities that the hospital serves.

In Asia and Pacific region, a regional training course on mutation breeding and molecular techniques for crop improvement, held in Thailand at the end of April, built capacity in mutation breeding methods and other technologies to accelerate the selection process for participants attending from five Pacific SIDS. Collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community through the Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees continued with the co-organization of a regional training course on tissue culture and phytosanitary methods in Fiji. Eleven participants from six SIDS were trained in tissue culture techniques for conservation and micropropagation, with practical demonstrations. Fellowships for Papua New Guinea and Samoa on mutation induction and breeding in banana and taro were conducted at the IAEA Seibersdorf laboratories from August to November 2024. A regional training course on mutation breeding for abiotic stress tolerance, hosted by the Malaysian Nuclear Agency for 14 participants from six Pacific SIDS in October 2024, offered training on mutation breeding for varieties with abiotic stress tolerance.

In 2024, a Marshallese scientist from the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) attended a fellowship on radioactivity monitoring conducted at the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), Australia from 12 August to 7 September 2024. The training helped equip the fellow for implementing the Fish Market Monitoring Programme in the Marshall Islands TCP. The procurement for water quality assessment was finalized for Samoa, and the second batch of procurement of hydrology field equipment was initiated for Papua New Guinea to equip them for water sampling and some water quality analysis.

A six-week group fellowship on isotope hydrology was held at the Geotop Research Centre at the University of Québec in Montreal, Canada, from October to November 2024, attended by five participants from the Pacific SIDS. The fellowship built capacity in isotope hydrology and strengthened the application of isotope hydrology techniques in groundwater assessment and management. A fellowship on radiation monitoring for the Marshall Islands was conducted at the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency from August to September 2024, providing training on laboratory work, radiation safety and regulatory infrastructure. The training supported a scientist from the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority to implement the fish market monitoring programme. The fellow gave an oral/poster presentation at the 2024 Conference of the South Pacific Environmental Radioactivity Association.

Pacific Island Member States received assistance to strengthen national and subregional capacities for the systematic assessment of water resources and to support coastal zone management. Pacific Islands face unique environmental challenges such as rising sea levels, salt water intrusion and limited freshwater resources. Through group fellowships and training, expertise in isotope hydrology techniques for water resources assessment and ocean acidification monitoring was addressed in 2024 in Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Vanuatu.

In Fiji, the sustainability of fruit production was boosted with activities to support the integration of the SIT into an area-wide pest management approach to control fruit flies. Support was provided for mass trapping techniques (especially for the main target pest Bactrocera kirki) and fly surveillance, and to increase awareness of fruit fly management in villages and schools. Young people have been encouraged to participate in community activities such as handling traps, infusing fly lures and deploying traps at the correct distance and in specific hosts.

A dual energy X-ray absorptiometry system for measuring bone density and body composition at the spine, hip and whole body was delivered to Mauritius, along with training for professionals to enable them analyse and interpret results related to sarcopenia, muscle mass, muscle strength and physical performance.

The Palau International Coral Reef Center has been collecting nearshore and offshore water samples to test for pH and total alkalinity since 2021. In 2024, with Agency procurement of control reference material for analysis, the Centre was able to clear a backlog of samples. Training for new staff also contributed to the sustainability of the effort.

Singapore has made proton therapy — advanced radiation treatment that can destroy cancer cells while minimizing damage to surrounding healthy tissues — available to patients since 2023, and in 2024 a proton beam therapy centre was established at the National Cancer Centre Singapore. The IAEA supported capacity building for the application of this advanced nuclear and radiation medicine technique, contributing to the improvement of health care services in Singapore, which has an ageing population and rising cancer incidence and mortality rates.

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 polices 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)

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)

Nuclear Techniques Tailoring Support to SIDS

The IAEA TC programme is tailored to the needs of Member States, giving an overview of South–South and triangular cooperation, and the IAEA's support to SIDS, in the areas of efforts to build human capacity, including through youth outreach, specialist schools, postgraduate support and legislative assistance. It also details the responses to emergencies through the TC programme.

The IAEA's Sub-Regional Approach to the Pacific Islands (SAPI) prioritizes five areas: nutrition, agriculture, non-communicable diseases, water resources management and marine and coastal environments, and radiation safety. The approach was initially developed to address the needs of existing Member States such as Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

A workshop on the use of isotopic techniques for nutrition assessment was conducted in April 2024 in Fiji in partnership with Fiji National University, attended by 13 participants from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga. The workshop introduced the work of Agency in the field of nutrition and raised awareness on the use of stable isotopes for assessing body composition and of SOPs in nutrition studies. The workshop also provided an opportunity to discuss and plan for collaborative data collection in the participating countries.

The first IAEA High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Law for Pacific Islands States was held at the Agency's Headquarters in September 2024, attended by eight participants from Papua New Guinea and the Marshall Islands, including non-Member States of the IAEA like Nauru, Maldives and the Solomon Islands. Participants gained a broad knowledge of all aspects of nuclear law and a comprehensive overview of relevant international legal instruments, including the concept of a tailored approach to national nuclear law.

At a meeting in February 2024 organized in partnership with the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO), participants from six Pacific Islands IAEA Member States held strategic discussions on the TC programme as part of SAPI and on common challenges related to radiation safety infrastructure. As a follow-up, learning materials were developed for a training school programme on nuclear regulations, tailored to the specific needs of participating Member States. An expert mission in September 2024 provided Fiji with assistance to prepare disused radium-226 sources for international transportation for recycling. Expert support was also provided to Papua New Guinea's regulatory body in September 2024 for the review and assessment of documentation for a cobalt-60 radiotherapy machine, including licensing, to ensure compliance with local and international regulatory standards.

As part of the TC programme, the IAEA also provides support to Member States upon request for the development of Member State-owned strategic funding documents (also known as bankable documents) that are intended to enable the mobilization of resources from international financial institutions (IFIs), development agencies and other partners, including at the national level. The Agency

ensures that bankable documents are technically sound, financially viable and facilitate the flow of financial resources to Member States. In 2024, the IAEA provided expert advisory support the Comoros for the preparation of bankable documents for the establishment or expansion of radiotherapy services.

Source capsules and shielded containers were delivered to Cuba to secure used radioactive sources. In addition, an interregional meeting on the safety and security of disused sealed radioactive sources (DSRSs) during predisposal management was held in Türkiye in March 2024, in which some SIDs attended.

PART B - COHERENT AND EFFETIVE 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?

Delivering a coherent, whole-of-system response to the complex development needs of SIDS is often constrained by fragmentation across agencies, siloed planning frameworks, and limited data interoperability. While specialized agencies like the IAEA contribute highly technical support in areas such as climate adaptation and food security, these efforts often operate parallel to joint programming streams coordinated under the UNCT system. At the same time, SIDS governments face substantial capacity constraints in engaging across multiple UN entities, often without sufficient coordination support. These structural issues limit the visibility and integration of diverse UN contributions and result in gaps in planning, implementation, and reporting.

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

vi. 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.

vii. 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)

At the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States held in Antigua and Barbuda in May 2024, the IAEA presented its an overview of its assistance to SIDS and organized a side event together with Antigua and Barbuda, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNOSSC and the USA on harnessing environmental data for the benefit of SIDS. The Agency raised awareness of its activities at events including the Paris Peace Forum and the Annual Meeting of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

While a centralized UN-SIDS entity may offer visibility, it risks duplicating mandates and adding institutional complexity at a time when the system must prioritize agility and efficiency. A possible approach would be to strengthen informal or light-touch mechanisms that connect SIDS-specific divisions and focal points across UN agencies. For example, the IAEA has found the sub-regional approach to be a effective mechanism for tailored technology transfer and capacity-building addressing shared developmental challenges in the Pacific Islands states (SAPI - Sub-Regional Approach to the Pacific Islands; initiated in 2022). However, SAPI is limited to the Pacific, and its focal points remain largely disconnected from other SIDS-specific divisions throughout the UN system. Coordination is ad hoc, and not sustained. A flexible, rotating coordination model could be convened between these entities to facilitate the exchange of good practices, improve alignment of M&R activities, and promote coherence without creating new bureaucratic structures. The IAEA sees value in contributing to such mechanisms through its climate, ocean, food, and health portfolios, ensuring its niche capabilities are embedded within broader UN efforts.

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?)

Led by the UN Secretariat (UN DESA, OHRLLS), IAEA's engagement in the Inter-Agency Task Force on the ABAS M&E Framework (IATF-ABAS) underscored shared and persistent challenges to achieving system-wide coherence in UN support to SIDS:

- The lack of standardized SIDS-specific indicators which impedes coherent inter-agency planning, harmonized reporting, and effective impact assessments across global frameworks
- Capacity limitations (technical and manpower) within SIDS to engage across multiple specialized UN entities, often leading to coordination fatigue and reduced participation in programming processes
- Limited institutional integration of specialized agencies (the IAEA among others) in UN Country Teams (UNCTs), which limit opportunities for coordinated engagement through the Resident Coordinator system and contribute to fragmentation in reporting across global M&R frameworks (SDGs, OECD-DAC, UN Info etc.)

Strengthened institutional mechanisms that systematically link specialized agencies with regional commissions, UNCTs, and global M&R platforms can enable more coherent contributions to joint SDG delivery addressing SIDS-specific needs, risks and vulnerabilities. From the IAEA's perspective, these enhancements could bolster ECESA Plus's effectiveness as a valuable coordination platform for inter-agency processes and operationalizing underutilized synergies:

- Establishing rotating thematic clusters (e.g., on science, technology, resilience, data) to systematically integrate specialized agencies into cross-agency programming and monitoring efforts
- Facilitate informal, regionally anchored coordination among SIDS-focused divisions across UN entities. With many agencies now establishing dedicated SIDS portfolios, ECESA Plus could encourage alignment through shared planning cycles, reporting platforms and technical exchanges

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)

The HLPF SIDS session could move beyond high-level convening and showcasing VNRs to serving as a structured accountability mechanism for ABAS delivery and implementation. Anchored in the ABAS M&E framework, the session could draw on cross-agency and (sub-)regional experiences, including delivery challenges, adaptive practices and data gaps identified through ECESA Plus. This would ensure a more accurate picture of progress and foster shared ownership among implementing entities. Embedding ABAS results into HLPF's follow-up cycle would strengthen the feedback loop between policy and implementation, moving from periodic reporting to enabling real-time problem-solving, ultimately enhancing the system's capacity to deliver on ABAS commitments and sustainable development impact.