

TECHNICAL BRIEF | SEPTEMBER 2026

Recommendations for Advancing NDC Implementation and Readiness Across Small Island Developing States

This Technical Brief presents four key recommendations to advance Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Implementation and Readiness in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), grounded in stakeholder consultations conducted through two targeted engagements. It is intended to inform the discussions and ambition raising at the UNFCCC Pre-COP meeting in Fiji in October 2026 and at COP31 in November.

Executive Summary - Recommendations



Establish and adequately resource regional Expert Pools, working alongside existing regional bodies, to build sustained local capacity and shared data systems for NDC implementation.



Strengthen countries climate finance systems by simplifying access, building institutional capacity, adopting programmatic approaches to enhance coordination, and deploy public finance to unlock private investment.



Embed participatory, locally-led decision making and strengthen subnational capacity for climate action, while focusing on programmatic approaches.



Scale up technical support for ecosystem-based adaptation and establish Synergy Hubs to align NDCs, National Adaptation Plans, and Biodiversity Strategies, with water security as a top priority.



Establish Regional Solutions for Collaboration and Joint Action

Persistent capacity constraints continue to limit the planning and implementation of climate action in SIDS. Strengthening domestic institutional and human capacity to originate, develop and implement projects are essential and to reduce long-term dependence on external support. Regional organizations such as the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the Indian Ocean Commission and the Alliance of Small Island States, already provide capacity-building support, however, these efforts are often fragmented and project-based, leaving gaps in sustained expertise. Establishing and adequately resourcing region-specific Experts Pools, designed to work in close coordination with these existing actors, would help bridge these gaps and alleviate the pressure on governments to have the capacities in-house significantly. The design of such pools should be informed by a systematic assessment

of existing capacities, needs, and synergies across the SIDS regions globally. Activities of such a pool should include sustained investment in national skills development, particularly to strengthen capacities for project development, implementation and reporting requirements associated with NDCs, including greenhouse gas inventories, Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), and other Paris Agreement processes. Embedding these competencies within the curricula of universities would also help institutionalize knowledge and foster local expertise. Strengthened regional collaboration can also help address persistent structural constraints, in relation to data availability and management. The development of shared regional data platforms and systems would improve the efficiency and consistency of data collection and management, while also providing foundations for planning, reporting, and investment decisions.



Improve Access to Climate Finance through Enhanced Coordination

Advancing NDC implementation in SIDS requires a fundamental shift towards more accessible, coherent, and country-driven climate finance systems. Simplifying and harmonizing processes of finance providers to access and report on climate finance, combined with strengthened institutional capacity at country level, including the establishment of dedicated units, e.g. Climate Finance Units with strong political support and clear mandates, can enable governments to enhance coordination across ministries and with financiers, and translate national priorities into investment-ready pipelines. Country-led programmatic approaches are critical to move away from fragmented, project-based support to long-term planning frameworks and more predictable, multi-year financing.

While innovative instruments, such as green and blue bonds, Public Private Partnerships, hold potential for SIDS, their application remains limited by high perceived risks, small project sizes and weak project pipelines. Unlocking private finance requires more targeted concessional and grant-based public finance, supported by risk-sharing mechanisms, including guarantees, and incentives that make investments viable. Improved access also depends on the availability of direct access modalities at national and local level, and financing approaches that better serve SIDS-specific constraints, including small project sizes and high climate vulnerability.



Advance participatory frameworks for increased inclusion, equity, and knowledge integration

As outlined above, to ensure the highest impact of climate-related intervention, support needs to move from project-based implementation to programmatic approach. Embedding participatory frameworks within these can enhance inclusion, equity, and knowledge integration, ensuring that local and indigenous knowledge inform decision-making while improving the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions. This can be achieved by establishing structured feedback mechanisms that incorporate local and indigenous knowledge into formal decision-making processes

across government and academia to ensure planning and implementation consider existing priorities and strategies for adaptation to climate change and resilience building. This would also strengthen bottom-up innovation and approaches combined with decentralized implementation solutions. To further ensure local communities and subnational entities are enabled to contribute to effective climate action, localized capacity-building systems need to be created in order to react efficiently to subnational needs, including direct disaster risk responses.



Provide targeted international support to strengthen the technical capacities for resilience and adaptation

SIDS face a massive adaptation challenge. To be able to respond to this, targeted international technical support is needed for increasing SIDS-specific capacities and resilience for NDC implementation. A central aspect of resilience in SIDS lies in the protection and sustainable management of healthy ecosystems, which are fundamental to mitigation, adaptation, and economic stability, particularly in sectors such as tourism, fisheries, and other ecosystem-dependent livelihoods. Using Ecosystem-based Adaptation and Ridge to Reef approaches instead of relying solely on hard measures, like seawalls that contribute to adaptation lock-ins, helps SIDS to set out more resilient adaptation pathways. For this, technical support

for mainstreaming Nature-based Solutions (NbS) into policy, creating NbS project pipelines and developing green jobs and skills will equip SIDS with the needed capacities to respond to their context-specific adaptation challenges ahead. A critical challenge relates to water availability and water resource management that should receive specific attention as a cross-cutting priority as it can determine habitability of small islands (especially atoll islands). International support should further support SIDS by establishing Synergy Hubs to align NDCs, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to increase institutional efficiency.

Background

Building on the outcomes of the “Regional Forum for Practitioners in SIDS on Advancing NDC Implementation Readiness” held in Mauritius in February 2026, the event, “En route from Mauritius to Fiji: Advancing NDC Implementation Readiness across Small Island Developing States (SIDS)” was convened on 12 June 2026 on the sidelines of the SB64 Climate Meetings in Bonn. Organized by GIZ together with the NDC Partnership and the Center for Access to Climate Finance with contribution from the UNEP Copenhagen Climate Center, the event brought together SIDS representatives, implementing agencies, regional organizations, and international partners to discuss and further refine the Mauritius Forum’s key recommendations, while identifying strategic priorities for strengthening implementation readiness to scale climate action and to inform the SIDS-focused Pre-COP hosted by Fiji in the lead-up to COP31.

About the partnering organizations



The **NDC Partnership** is a global coalition bringing together more than 270 members, including more than 140 countries, developed and developing, and more than 120 institutions to deliver on ambitious climate action that helps achieve the Paris Agreement and drive sustainable development.



The **Center for Access to Climate Finance** is an initiative of the Taskforce on Access to Climate Finance, which advances thought leadership, shares best practices, facilitates global and South South knowledge exchange, and generates evidence to improve the international climate finance system and countries access to finance.



The **UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC)** is a leading international advisory institution supporting developing countries in their transition towards low-carbon and climate-resilient futures that deliver on the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals. Anchored in the Climate Change Division of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the UNEP-CCC works with governments, cities and institutions to translate global climate commitments into on-the-ground implementation. The Centre also delivers technical and science-based inputs, including global assessments, that inform international frameworks and high-level climate negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).



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