



QUESTIONNAIRE

Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the MSI, BPOA for the Sustainable Development of SIDS

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. In this regard, you are requested to report only on new or updated information. Information conveyed in previous surveys will not be considered. Previous surveys can be accessed at XXXX under reports.

PART A

VULNERABILITY REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE BUILDING IN SIDS

1. Enhanced Support for a resilient Post COVID 19 Recovery in SIDS

Vulnerability reduction and resilience building are critical issues that must be addressed by SIDS. Briefly elaborate on any resilience building interventions or strategies (proactive or preventative) that have been or are being implemented at national or regional levels that aim specifically at improving resilience in SIDS. Please include financial resources expended in this regard, if available **(750 words)**.

It is well understood that disasters can disproportionately affect SIDS, owing to their unique and particular vulnerabilities, and that there is a critical need to build SIDS' resilience. Australia's climate assistance is backing Pacific leadership and enhancing the tools and choices available to the Pacific family to combat the effects of climate change and build resilience on their own terms.

In Fiji, Australia is providing AU\$25.5 million to rebuild schools using climate-resilient infrastructure that incorporates renewable energy, following Tropical Cyclones Yasa and Ana in 2020 and 2021. In Kiribati, Australia is helping to strengthen coastal resilience through enhanced coastal and flood management, and community resilience initiatives. This is part of the AU\$5.6 million Australia-Kiribati Climate Security Initiative. In Papua New Guinea, Australia is investing close to AU\$20 million to improve access to climate finance and increase engagement with carbon markets. At a regional level Australia is providing an initial AU\$30 million to kickstart the Pacific-led Weather Ready Pacific initiative, to help communities better prepare for disasters through improved early warning systems for severe weather.

Australia is also investing in climate infrastructure through the *Pacific Climate Infrastructure Financing Partnership* to be implemented by the Australia Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP). Recognising that climate change is the single greatest threat to the livelihoods and well-being of our Pacific family, Australia will prioritise projects through the Partnership that assist Pacific countries to respond and adapt to climate change risks and impacts. The Pacific Climate Infrastructure Financing Partnership will:

- increase support for medium and large-scale, climate-related infrastructure projects that mitigate, adapt, and build resilience to the impacts of climate change, and
- green existing or future AIFFP investments by integrating climate-smart enhancements.

Through financing mechanisms, including Australia's new Pacific Climate Infrastructure Financing Partnership, and the expanded Emerging Markets Impact Investment Fund (EMIIF), among others, Australia will help meet critical climate financing needs across the region to build resilience.

Australia will also continue to support SIDS in our region when crises occur – just as just as we did in recently supporting the Government of Vanuatu with their disaster response and recovery efforts following Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin. However, Australia will not

only continue to provide support in partnership with Pacific SIDS following crisis, but in-line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, we will also increase our investment in disaster and climate resilience – supporting partner governments and communities in the Pacific to lead their own national disaster risk reduction and preparedness efforts.

2. Enhanced and Tailored Development Cooperation for SIDS

Improved, tailored development co-operation approaches, calibrated to the specific needs, capacity constraints, and economic challenges facing SIDS are necessary if SIDS are to effectively recover from the COVID Pandemic. Briefly elaborate on 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 **(850 words)**

Australia has long shown strong support for SIDS, particularly in the Pacific, where our efforts make a considerable contribution to development outcomes in the region. We recognise the SAMOA Pathway as the overarching framework that sets out the sustainable development priorities of SIDS and we are committed to advancing its implementation and recognise the progress made to date. In-line with the SAMOA Pathway's ambitions, Australia's priority is to ensure the Blue Pacific remains peaceful, prosperous and equipped to respond to the challenges of our time. At every step, Australia will work together on shared regional interests, respond to Pacific priorities, and respect Pacific institutions. Working in partnership in this way helps ensure that Australia's development cooperation assistance remains tailored and calibrated to the specific needs, capacity constraints, and challenges facing SIDS.

In Australia's recently announced international development cooperation budget for the next year (Australia's 2023–24 financial year), an additional AU\$900 million in ODA was allocated for the Pacific region. This new funding will strengthen Australia's support to meet the region's climate resilience and mitigation objectives. Australia will continue to reduce fiscal distress in partner Pacific countries too by building on existing budget support – assisting

economic recovery from COVID-19. Australia will also deepen our economic and people-to-people connections. This includes expanding and improving the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, and enhancing conditions for workers on the ground, in-line with Australian and Pacific aspirations. With this enhanced investment, we will ensure the scheme continues to make a valuable contribution to economies and resilience across the region.

Australia will also continue to invest in climate outcomes, health, water, sanitation and hygiene, education and social protection systems across the Pacific. And our investments will empower women and girls, and people with a disability, to participate more fully in social, political and economic life. We will bring First Nations Australians' voices to our Pacific engagement and further deepen our partnerships to achieve our shared vision of a peaceful, prosperous and resilient region. The portion of ODA allocated to the Pacific for the Australian 2023–24 financial year is AU\$1.90 billion. This equates to roughly 40% of the 2023–24 aid development cooperation budget.

Australia is on track to meet our commitment to provide AU\$2 billion in climate finance between 2020 and 2025, with AU\$700 million of this to be delivered in the Pacific in line with Pacific SIDS' priorities – such as better access to climate finance, stronger climate science and early warning systems to deliver greater disaster resilience, support for adapting to the impacts of climate change and more renewable infrastructure for energy security and lower emissions. Australia aims to be a genuine partner by ensuring our development assistance aligns with the priorities of partner countries as articulated in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), with the majority of Australia's climate finance being grant-based and supporting adaptation projects, reflecting the needs of our Pacific neighbours. Australia is also working with international partners to accelerate the pace and scale of clean energy innovation and deployment, including through leadership in Mission Innovation, the Global Power System Transformation Consortium and developing new clean energy supply chains.

PART B

IDENTIFYING POLICY PRIORITIES IN SIDS FOR THE NEW AGENDA

The SAMOA Pathway contains a number of action areas which require policy formulation, programmes or projects to implemented at national, sub regional and/or regional levels. While SIDS have made a fair amount of progress with actioning these over the last decade, a number of gaps remain. As the international community prepares for the 4th International Conference on SIDS, what are the key priority policies, programes and projects that are needed to further advance the SIDS development agenda and why? (750 words)

Australia is proud to be a longstanding champion for SIDS and will continue to support efforts to showcase SIDS' unique development challenges and priorities, including at, and in the lead-up to, the Fourth International SIDS Conference ("SIDS 4") in 2024. SIDS have long called for changes to the international development system to better reflect their vulnerability and move beyond income metrics such as GNI. Despite their remoteness, smallness and high costs, SIDS tend to have high GNI and are disproportionately identified for graduation from development support mechanisms such as ODA and the LDC Category, with many SIDS surpassing eligibility thresholds for development support. For these reasons, Australia has been an active supporter of the High-Level Panel to Develop a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) for SIDS to bed down a shared understanding of what vulnerability and resilience mean, based on the best available academic and practical experience. However, a key obstacle for the Panel has been availability and quality of data and statistics, with the MVI prototype needing to rely on indicators where data is available, rather than the best fit indicators for measurement of vulnerability. While data and statistics are a challenge for all developing countries, this is particularly the case for SIDS due to barriers such as the high costs of data collection in small populations, often spread across remote islands. **Australia therefore sees the consideration of data and statistics as a priority for the SIDS 4 process.**

Australia also recognises SIDS' longstanding role in driving international climate action and we will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with SIDS partners in responding to this crisis. Rising sea

levels, increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and changing weather patterns exacerbate the vulnerability of SIDS, and Pacific Island nations in particular. Disasters can and do disproportionately affect SIDS, owing to their unique and particular vulnerabilities. Australia was pleased the political declaration of the High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review (MTR) of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction recognised this, and we are committed to ensuring the outcomes of the MTR are implemented in ways that amplify support for SIDS to reduce disaster risk and build resilience. **Australia sees an important opportunity to connect the MTR process with preparatory process for SIDS 4 to ensure all support is underpinned by resilience.**

Third, we recognise that the deployment of high-quality climate finance by Australia and donor partners will be key to meet the needs of SIDS in our region, including to support clean energy transitions, climate resilience and infrastructure needs. Climate adaptation efforts in the Pacific are critical, but costs are substantial. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat estimates that the region needs USD1 billion per year to implement its climate adaptation goals. **Australia therefore considers climate finance as a priority issue for the SIDS 4 process.**

Fourth, in tackling climate change and supporting SIDS reduce disaster risk and build resilience, Australia also recognises the SAMOA Pathway's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment – that “the full realization of human rights for women and girls have a transformative and multiplier effect on sustainable development” – **Australia therefore also views consideration of gender-responsive climate action and disaster risk reduction as a priority for the SIDS 4 process.** Equally, First Nations Australians have shared culture and kinship connections across the Pacific for tens of thousands of years. In meeting today's climate and resilience challenges, we have much to learn from Australia's First Nations Peoples and enhancing collaboration between First Nations Australians and regional SIDS partners will create opportunities for mutual learning of benefit to us all. **Australia also considers the embedding of First Nations Peoples' perspectives and experience as a priority for the SIDS 4 process.**

Finally, with average Exclusive Economic Zones 28 times larger than their countries' landmasses, oceans are central to SIDS' sustainable development. Recognising the fundamental importance of oceans to SIDS, and key processes underway to strengthen international frameworks central to the health and resilience of oceans (such as the Plastic Pollution Agreement, the Agreement on Maritime Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and consideration by the International Law Commission on the legal implications of sea-level rise), **Australia sees consideration of SIDS's views on oceans in the context of these new/ strengthened agreements as a priority to include in the SIDS 4 process.**