

IOM and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

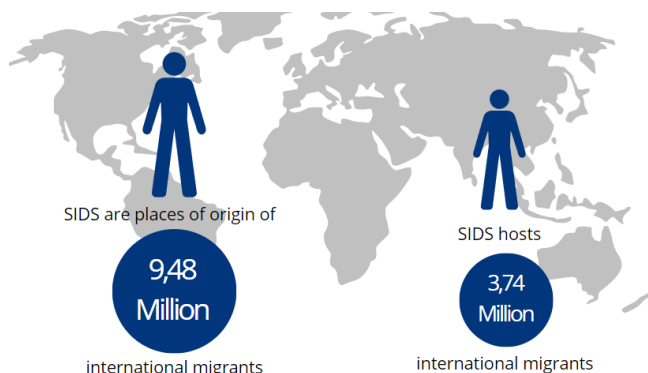


Photo: SIDS are prone to natural hazards which are further exacerbated by climate change. In Papua New Guinea for instance, volcanic eruptions are a regular occurrence that leads to displacement, forced relocation and that can compound other hardships.

Human Mobility and Sustainable Development in SIDS

The SIDS are a distinct group of [39 States and 18 Associate Members](#) located across three geographical regions: the Caribbean; the Pacific; and the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS). Despite the aggregate population of all SIDS being 65 million, barely 1 percent of the global population, the group is faced with a unique set of social, environmental and economic challenges that illustrate the complex relationship between human mobility and development.

SIDS present a complex migration profile, with broad variations from country to country. However, on the whole, SIDS are more places of origin of international migrants than of destination of migrants.



Despite hosting only 1,35% of the international migrant stock, and being places of origin of 3,35% of international migrants, some SIDS are characterized by significant immigration and emigration trends.

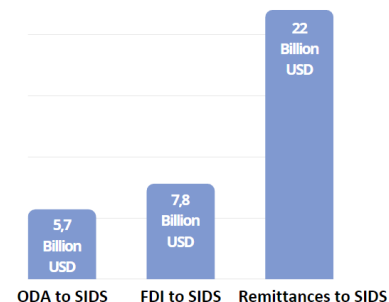
International migrant stock as a % of the total population:



% of nationals living outside of their country of origin, in relation to country population:



In a context of limited Official Development Assistance (ODA) and declining Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), as well as of high external borrowing costs, remittances provide a lifeline to many households in the SIDS.



SIDS are amongst the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events that lead to displacement. Climate-induced displacement can have [economic, social and cultural implications](#) that accentuate structural and conjunctural development challenges of SIDS.

People on the move are part of the solution. The [SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway \(SAMOA Pathway\)](#) underlines the need for strengthened international support on key priority areas to tackle obstacles to sustainable development in the SIDS; and it recognizes the important role of people on the move in accelerating development, including as it relates to disaster risk reduction, protecting biodiversity and environmental health, improving social and economic development, and strengthening partnerships to achieve these development goals.

The SAMOA Pathway – in conjunction with the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration \(GCM\)](#); and the [Secretary General’s Action Agenda on Internal Displacement](#) can serve as a blueprint to leverage human mobility for sustainable development in the SIDS, and to transform the way displacement crises are resolved, prevented and addressed in the SIDS.

Well managed human mobility, including through enhanced legal pathways, can be leveraged to respond to some of the demographic shifts unfolding and to the specific labour market requirements of the SIDS. It can be built into adaptation and mitigation solutions to the impacts of climate change. There is an untapped potential for diaspora to contribute their expertise, knowledge, and innovation and leverage digitalization opportunities, including to support just and green transitions of SIDS economies. Remittances – already significantly higher than both ODA and FDI could be channeled as a stable financing for development instrument for SIDS.

IOM’s Engagement in the SIDS

37 SIDS are member states or Observer States of IOM. IOM has a substantial operational footprint in SIDS; through full-fledged Missions, or projects and other forms of national stakeholders’ engagement.

As part of its active engagement in the UN Development System, IOM provides inputs every year for the preparation of the [Secretary General report to the General Assembly on the follow-up to and implementation of the SAMOA Pathway](#) and the [Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS](#). These inputs outline IOMs work on the development agenda for the SIDS; and showcase human mobility solutions to tackle development issues in the SIDS.

Since 2020, IOM has initiated 325 projects benefiting all 39 SIDS countries and covering a range of thematic areas. These projects accounted for around 10 percent of IOM’s overall budget over the same period. These directly advance the SAMOA Pathway priority action areas; and accelerate progress on all SDGs. A sample of IOM interventions are presented in this fact sheet.

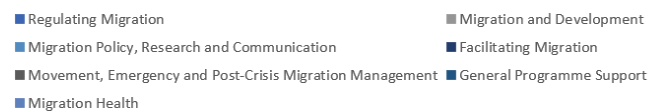


Illustration: IOM projects by type thematic areas of support implemented in SIDS, since 2020.



Illustration: IOM operational presence, by SIDS’ regions.

IOM Operational Support in SIDS

Climate change mitigation and resilience (SAMOA Pathway Priority Action Areas: CLUSTERS 31-46 & 51-52)

IOM works to strengthen resilience in regions at the frontline of a changing climate and severely affected by recurrent displacement such as in the **Caribbean**, where IOM supports the integration of human mobility in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) plans through dialogue with national counterparts. In the **Eastern Caribbean**, IOM supports counterparts in designing policies and programmes that address climate and environmental mobility from a human security perspective. In **Trinidad and Tobago**, IOM collaborates with government agencies such as the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management of the Ministry of National Security to increase preparedness among the migrant population. In **Haiti**, IOM supports efforts on promoting the use of sustainable materials for resilient building practices.

In the **Pacific** region, IOM supports DRR, CCA and community resilience building efforts to reduce exposure and vulnerability to external shocks. In the **Federated State of Micronesia** and **Republic of the Marshall Islands**, IOM projects expand resilience of vulnerable communities in outer islands by enhancing Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) capacity in public facilities such as schools and clinics.



Photo: IOM support build back better principles to meet DRR objectives and prevent future harm in SIDS

In the **Republic of the Marshall Islands**, IOM supported the development of the National Adaptation Plan by conducting community consultations in various atolls. In the **Federated State of Micronesia**, **Republic of the**

Marshall Islands, and **Kiribati**, a regional program to support community efforts towards climate change adaptation through small grants allocations to civil society organizations was recently launched. In the **Solomon Islands**, IOM supported the development of evidence-based [Planned Relocation Guidelines](#).

Sustainable tourism (SAMOA Pathway Priority Action Areas: CLUSTER 30)

External health shocks showcase SIDS vulnerabilities: the Covid-19 pandemic brought national lockdowns and travel reductions that resulted in a dramatic reduction in human mobility with major impacts on tourism. Tourism generates over half of the GDP of several SIDS. In the **Maldives**; IOM supported the [UN COVID-19 Socioeconomic Response and Recovery Framework's](#) Pillar 3 that focused on protecting jobs, small and medium enterprises, and informal sector workers through a project on Immigration and Border Health Management to strengthen the capacities of border management to respond to infectious diseases, at Points of Entry across the archipelago. In **Cabo Verde**, IOM promotes the economic recovery of migrant workers, particularly migrant women, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, through an entrepreneurship Start-Up Challenge enabling them to develop and implement their business ideas and restore their self-sustaining capacity.

Economic growth and reduction of poverty (SAMOA Pathway Priority Action Areas: CLUSTER 23-29)

Human mobility can be a development strategy that accelerates economic growth and reduces poverty. By addressing large labour shortages, migrants fill jobs and diasporas generate extensive remittances that support migrant workers and their families. Remittances play an important part in supporting SIDS economies, especially in countries that lack significant natural resources, or that – such as many Caribbean SIDS – have some of the highest emigration rates in the world.

Cabo Verde is highly dependent on the capacities of its diaspora, through the mobilization of its resources both in terms of professional competencies and remittances; to accelerate economic growth and reduce poverty. IOM is supporting an initiative to improve diaspora engagement in Cabo Verde through the revision of the Diaspora Engagement Strategy and the development and implementation of the Diaspora Investment Programme which intends to mobilize resource from Cabo Verde

diaspora to develop and implement their investments projects in the country, contributing to the overall country's sustainable development, job creation and poverty reduction.

Following an IOM survey in which 96% of respondents for **Eastern Caribbean** diaspora groups said that contributing to their country of origin was either important or very important to their work, IOM supported a consultation workshop on leveraging diaspora engagement for development in **Grenada**.

Partnerships and enhanced cooperation (SAMOA Pathway Priority Action Areas: CLUSTER 96-101)

Many of the irregular migration routes takes place at sea which poses severe risks for migrants. In the **South-western Indian Ocean**, the increasing sophistication of criminal activities taking place by sea in the vast ocean areas along the coast of mainland Africa and the Island States of Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles and French territories, has led to a renewed attention to dynamics of migrant smuggling to and from the sub-region. It is well known that transnational criminal networks maximize opportunities that mix smuggling of goods, human beings, and natural resources, weapons and drug trafficking, as well as illegal fishing activities. Supporting tailored development co-operation approaches through national and regional cooperation to tackle contextual needs help strengthen capacities in SIDS.

In 2022, IOM supported the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) and the Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC) to hold a simulation exercise (SIMEX) to build the

capacity of border management officials to effectively manage irregular migration at sea. Participants included 51 border management officials, including from **Comoros, Mauritius** and **Seychelles**, and from the two regional centers (RCOC and RMIFC). IOM also supported a regional stocktaking workshop on Maritime Security in the region; which helped enhance the capacity of stakeholders on migration and maritime security in a regional context

Gender equality and Women's Empowerment (SAMOA Pathway Priority Action Areas: CLUSTER 76-77)

Gender equality is prioritized and mainstreamed in IOM programs in the **North Pacific**, for instance through Gender-Based Violence prevention and response support in DRR work, as well as through direct women empowerment programming. This has seen key achievements such as the development of a GBV national referral mechanism for the **Republic of the Marshall Islands**, the inclusion of PSEA and protection from GBV in national disaster response Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and the direct targeting of female beneficiaries and civil society organizations to foster women empowerment thought grants mechanisms. In order to assist **Solomon Islands** to make an informed decision about acceding to United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (TIP Protocol), [IOM has previously undertaken a detailed legislative assessment](#), looking at key compliance gaps in the current national legislation and offering tailored recommendations. This has helped shape the joint Cabinet Paper supporting accession to UNTOC and the TIP Protocol that will be endorsed in 2023.



Peacebuilding initiatives are central to IOM's work in the Pacific and include promoting safer communities through improved migrant assistance and protection, enhance response to trafficking and preventing Gender-Based Violence (GBV). In 2022, IOM delivered training on Gender, Leadership and Peacebuilding to over 200 women and young women across 10 local communities in Solomon Islands.



While the SIDS face many common challenges, the differences among them point to the need for tailored development approaches that are adapted to respective local contexts. To advance local capacity building, IOM supports the development of Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) on different thematic areas that build on existing national capacities and structures: for instance, on preparedness and recovery from disasters, and to strengthen capacities to prevent human trafficking.

For more information on IOM and its work on sustainable development in the SIDS, please contact:

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