Working paper

Mapping the information and learning landscape for adaptation in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

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Key messages

Stakeholders working to advance climate change adaptation and resilience in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) find that the information they need is incomplete, inaccessible, and poorly presented. Disaggregated climate risk and impact information about groups facing inequality on the basis of gender, ethnicity, indigeneity and income is especially needed, but missing.

SIDS stakeholders want to access more lessons from local and lived experiences in implementing adaptation solutions.

Governments, regional and international bodies, and research institutions should collect data systematically and make it openly available. They should invite and collaborate with community actors to document and contribute their lived experiences.

There is a need for high quality knowledge management systems for SIDS that collect, curate and publish such information. To the extent that global knowledge management systems for SIDS are being explored, such systems should be: SIDS-led, sustainable and non-duplicative. They should signpost to existing regional SIDS efforts that are much appreciated already, and they should add value in the dimensions described above.

Stakeholders' interest in lessons from lived experience lends itself to peer learning among individuals and institutions in SIDS.

SIDS face severe human and financial resource constraints, so international public and philanthropic donors should ramp up grant funding to enable data collection, knowledge management and learning systems in SIDS to perform to their greatest potential.

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Acronyms/Glossary

AIS	Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SME	small / medium-sized enterprise
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Executive summary

This report presents the results of a study on the information needs and gaps concerning climate change adaptation in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The authors surveyed more than 50 SIDS stakeholders with roles in planning, implementing, financing, monitoring, evaluation and learning on adaptation and resilience. The authors asked where stakeholders get their information, what information is missing, and how they would like to be supported to compile and analyse data and learn better.

The study reinforces earlier studies' findings that there are huge gaps in the availability of development information in SIDS. It adds further nuance concerning the landscape of climate risk, resilience and adaptation information in these countries.

Information on climate risks and vulnerability, as well as SIDS adaptation and resilience solutions, is fragmented across information platforms, time-consuming to find, and often sits behind paywalls. This information should be more easily searchable and accessible, both in the form of high-quality statistical data sets and clear analyses and insights.

Information on the vulnerabilities of specific social and socioeconomic groups and localities in SIDS is deeply sought after. This large information gap includes data disaggregated by gender, age, indigeneity, disability, income levels and other relevant contextual factors, including knowledge based on people's lived experiences. In addition, more climate risk and adaptation information tailored for groups of actors – such as small businesses – is needed for adaptation planning.

The trustworthiness and provenance of the information is paramount. As trusted sources, United Nations agencies and authoritative government and non-government research bodies should ramp up their coordination efforts significantly to improve the accessibility, cohesiveness and user-friendliness of knowledge management systems for SIDS. Stakeholders are also interested in accessing more, robust, downscaled climate projections.

Further, stakeholders' interest in understanding the lived experiences of different social groups suggests that there is a strong potential for peer-to-peer learning both within and among SIDS.

International public and philanthropic funders should urgently increase their grant support for data collection and, critically, for open, transparent and high-quality knowledge management systems led by and for the benefit of SIDS. This could include, for instance, uptake of these recommendations by the SIDS Centre of Excellence.

Although SIDS cultural and ecological heritage and efforts toward greater climate resilience are of global significance, international actors have so far failed to partner with and invest adequately in SIDS capacities to measure, monitor, document and use and learn from climate risk, resilience and adaptation information.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why this study?

> 'Don't bury the data in long report pdfs...what I am looking for is authoritative, up to date statistics about SIDS that I can pull off a website, but I need to know the year it comes from, and that it's from a good source.' SIDS climate change negotiator

Small islands already suffer significantly from the impacts of climate change, including increases in temperature and increased impacts from tropical cyclones, storm surges, droughts, changing rainfall patterns, sea level rise, coral bleaching and invasive species (Mycoo and Wairiu, 2022).

While resilience is strong in many SIDS communities, there are barriers to effective adaptation. These include inadequate data and information on future climate trends and limited information on the effectiveness of adaptation practices (Mycoo and Wairiu, 2022)

Human resource constraints are a further issue for most SIDS: government officials and researchers are generally few and have limited resources to gather and analyse data. Besides data scarcity on climate change projections and observed impacts across social and ecological systems, stakeholders often struggle to access available information. The problem is due to several issues, including language barriers, paywalls, documents that are too long for policy-makers who are time-poor, etc. This issue can prevent stakeholders from:

- assessing climate risks comprehensively, in order to prioritise and design inclusive and robust adaptation actions
- costing adaptation options and developing investment plans to raise the necessary finance for implementation
- implementing adaptation plans and strategies and evaluating the effectiveness of adaptation interventions for different groups of people, including unintended outcomes
- reflecting on and documenting learning to improve ongoing and future adaptation efforts.

The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States published a report (UN-OHRLLS, 2022) highlighting the lack of information on SIDS experience with accessing climate finance – although the issue goes beyond finance to means of implementation for adaptation more broadly (Wilkinson et al., 2023).

The UN report states that: '[M]uch of this information is scattered across the UN, donor agencies, and funds, with inconsistent methodologies and periodicities. As a special case for development

and climate change finance, SIDS lack a coordinating body for their effective prioritisation across systems, funding institutions, and agendas' (UN-OHRLLS, 2022: 24). This situation also hinders the planning and implementation of National Adaptation Plan processes across SIDS.

To address this gap, the UN-OHRLLS proposed establishing a centralised coordination and resource mechanism or 'hub' (UN-OHRLLS, 2022: 24). The SIDS Global Data Hub (https://sids.sdg.org/) was launched at the SIDS4 Conference in May 2024 (AOSIS, 2024). Its objective will be to establish a sustainable and enduring repository for comprehensive data on SIDS, help national governments share data, monitor public investments, track progress toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and engage stakeholders.

The hub is intended to go beyond the concept of collecting data: it will allow for a better understanding of SIDS needs, and the types of policies and interventions needed nationally, regionally and internationally. It will also promote capacity strengthening via improved access to learning around adaptation planning, financing and delivery.

This study was undertaken to inform both the hub and also the broader suite of activities by SIDS on adaptation and resilience information, in the context of the next 10-year SIDS agenda: 'The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS – a Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity'; this succeeds the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (SAMOA Pathway)(UN, 2014).

1.2 Purpose of the study

This study aims to investigate the landscape of climate risk, resilience and adaptation information available and used by SIDS stakeholders, and to validate and update the findings of earlier studies on this topic. Specifically, the study aims to:

- understand how SIDS stakeholders and those who work on SIDS issues currently compile and use information on climate change adaptation and resilience, what information is missing and why
- understand the desire of SIDS stakeholders to document and exchange good practice and learning with other SIDS, and the extent to which they are able to do so.

The study's findings respond to the evolving work of the Global Data Hub for SIDS. The study also aims to more broadly inform research institutions, adaptation practitioners, governments, financiers and development partners, by highlighting where further cooperation and investment in adaptation data and analysis is needed. Our final recommendations (page 1 and pages 19-21) speak directly to these institutions and processes.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Individual versus institutional responses

The primary method of this research was gathering stakeholder opinion via a survey, complemented by Key Informant Interviews. (The final survey is included in full in the Annex). Fifty-one people answered the survey across all SIDS regions (Caribbean, Pacific, Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS)). Some questions had less respondents, and these are highlighted in the analysis. A further six targeted interviews were carried out with respondents who focus their work on regional policy and engagement with young people and women in SIDS.

The responses are presented here anonymously, although we provide the overall demographic and professional profile of the respondents.

1.3.2 Respondents' profiles

- 59% of respondents answered the survey in an individual capacity.
- 41% of respondents answered in an institutional capacity.

Sectors in which respondents are working

When asked 'What best describes your work?', replies span government, consultancy and private business, multilateral development organisations, and academic and policy research institutions. Respondents work in climate research, climate project design, development and implementation, education and environmental conservation.

Organisations represented in the responses included the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), World Bank, Caribbean Development Bank, Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility/ Inter-American Development Bank, the Grantham Research Institute and Centre for Clean Air Policy. Examples of the job roles of the respondents are given in Box 1: Respondent profiles.

Focus of respondents' work

When asked 'Do you or your institution focus the majority of your work exclusively on a social group(s) in SIDS, such as women, young people, Indigenous Peoples, people living with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, etc.?':

- 75% of respondents do not focus on their work exclusively on a particular social group.
- 25% of respondents focus on a particular social group.

This question was important for identifying specific knowledge gaps and accessibility issues.

Box 1 Respondent profiles

'I'm an environmental and sustainable development advisor and the SIDS national focal point of Comoros.'

'I am a researcher at The University of the West Indies.'

'I am a climate finance specialist and I provide technical consultative support to SIDS and developing countries towards project development of concept notes and funding proposals; thereby fostering an increased mobilisation of climate finance through global funding modalities and donor agencies.'

'I'm Resilience Lead coordinating regional work across Caribbean SIDS to build resilient communities, livelihoods and ecosystems, with a focus on locally led adaptation and just, nature-based solutions.'

Reasons for seeking adaptation and resilience information

Respondents were asked why they need adaptation and resilience information about SIDS. This broad question covered all kinds of climate risk data, as well as adaptation and resilience solutions.

A high percentage of respondents (84%) said they use information to plan adaptation and resilience projects. Almost three-quarters use information for capacity building (73%) and to implement projects and programmes (73%).

The next most popular use (71%) is for writing proposals and mobilising resources, followed by information to support policy design (61%).

These results underscore the importance of access to evidence in SIDS to support all stages of design, planning, and implementation of policies, programmes and projects, and for cross-cutting capacity.

Box 2 User profile

The Director of Projects at the Caribbean Development Bank uses adaptation information to 'brief others (e.g. meetings); design policies; plan programmes, projects; implement programmes, projects; [and] report to international stakeholders (e.g. accountability and transparency)'.

Table 1 Reasons for seeking adaptation information

Reason for seeking adaptation information	%
Planning programmes and projects	84
Implementing programmes and projects	73
Training others (capacity building)	73
Writing proposals and mobilising resources	71
Designing policies	61
Own Education and Learning	57
Briefing others (for example, at meetings)	55
Reporting to international stakeholders	49
Reporting to domestic stakeholders	43
Media	29
Other	6

2 Current sources of adaptation information

2.1 Current sources of adaptation and resilience information

Most respondents (88%) get their data and analysis from international and multilateral agencies such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The reports of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) follow close behind – 78% and 74%, respectively, of respondents get their data from these sources.

These responses came with the desire for more user-friendly language, format and presentation of information – as discussed further, below.

Many respondents (82%) consult government departments of SIDS countries where they work for data, underscoring the need for greater capacity to produce useful information. Only 68% of respondents consult data and analysis from universities and research institutions, which may indicate a greater need for these entities to be more connected to policy discussions surrounding climate adaptation and resilience building.

Seventy-six per cent (76%) of respondents noted that they acquired information from 'other sources'. These include webinars and online events, and regional data hubs such as the Pacific Data Hub. The former is critical, as it underscores the importance of peer-to-peer learning events, both online and in person.

Almost half of respondents (43%) make use of specific information portals, such as the NAP Global Network, UNDP SIDS Data Platform, and the Global Resilience Partnership – Resilience Platform (refer to Box 3 on page 8).

When asked what search engines they used, most respondents said they used Google. Academic researchers note their use of university portals and academic platforms such as Scopus and Web of Science.

Table 2 Current sources of adaptation and resilience information

Current souces of adaptation and resilience information	%
Data and analysis from international and multilateral agencies, such as UNDP, FAO, World Bank, etc	88
Data and analysis from other government departments in the country/ies where I work	82
UNFCCC documents	78
Data and analysis from development organisations, including NGOs, that I trust in the country or region where I work	76
IPCC reports	74
Data and analysis from universities and research institutions I can trust	68
My own institution's proprietary or internal information	48
Internet searches and AI-powered data synthesis	30
Information Portal 2	20
Data from proprietary or private sources	12

Box 3 Preferred sources for adaptation and resilience information

Survey respondents reported that they rely on the following current sources for adaptation and resilience information in SIDS:

- UNDP Data Platform for SIDS (https://sids.data.undp.org)
- Global Resilience Partnership Resilience Platform (www.globalresiliencepartnership.org/resource/resilience-solutions-platform)
- UNDP Learning for Nature (www.learningfornature.org/en)
- Caribbean Natural Resource Institute (https://resiliencecanari.org)
- Pacific Environment Data Portal (https://pacific-data.sprep.org)
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (https://unescap.org)
- World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal (https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org)
- NDC Partnership – Climate Change Knowledge Portal (https://ndcpartnership.org/knowledge-portal)
- Pacific Data Hub (https://pacificdata.org)
- The International Disaster Database (www.emdat.be)

2.2 Most frequently accessed information

When asked what kinds of information they most frequently access (whether to know about climate risk and/or to know about actions and solutions), 90% of respondents regularly access information about socioeconomic factors related to climate risks, adaptation and resilience, while 78% regularly utilise general data on climate risk. Sector climate risk information is the third highest sought-after information (68%), while information tailored to specific groups of stakeholders, such as the private sector, remains important to researchers (42%).

Table 3 Most frequently accessed information

Most frequently accessed information	%
Information about socio-economic factors related to climate risks, adaptation and resilience	90
General climate risk information	78
Sector climate risk information	68
Information on climate risk of specific stakeholder types such as small businesses, etc.	42
Other	10

Eleven respondents highlighted other types of information they frequently access; listed in Box 4.

Box 4 Most frequently accessed information

'I look for tangible actions/solutions that have worked in increasing climate resilience of local communities and SMEs.'

'Recent, current and older data on weather, rainfall and temperature. Medical data, detailed demographic data, death rates.'

'Data specific to vulnerable groups.'

'Future climate projection data.'

'Climate change adaptation projects: past, planned or ongoing.'

'Information on climate risk impact on vulnerable groups. We also seek best practices in adaptation and resilience that is relevant to the Caribbean.'

'Governance issues and arrangements related to climate data more generally, rather than just looking at climate risks; I do also look for more specific and socioeconomic information.'

2.3 What climate risk information are respondents lacking?

First, of 49 respondents, two-thirds (67%) said they lacked information on climate risks for specific, disadvantaged stakeholder groups, e.g. women, young people, LGBTQI+ community and Indigenous peoples; and on climate risks for groups by income or poverty level (67%).

Second, a similar number of respondents (65%) said they lacked the information they needed on climate risks for specific types of stakeholders, such as small businesses (see Table 4).

Table 4 Gaps in climate risk information

Gaps in cimate risk information	%
Information on climate risk of specific social groups e.g., women, young people, Indigenous, LGBTQI	67
Information about socio-economic factors (poverty levels, income level, etc.,) related to climate risks, adaptation and resilience	67
Information on climate risk of specific stakeholder types such as small businesses, etc.	65
Sector climate risk information	45
General climate risk information	22
Other	18

Some respondents noted that other information, besides the survey options, is in short supply. These include:

'Downscaled future climate projection data from the most frequent suite of global climate models (Representative Concentration Pathways, RCPs and especially the Shared Socioeconomic Pathways, SSPs) a lack of which will see SIDS continuing to be unable to develop robust projections on climate impacts on SIDS, rendering robust and resilience planning impossible.'

'Data that disaggregates the Caribbean from Latin America.'

'Data that combines climate risks of specific social groups and other socioeconomic factors such as gender inequality, and data that provides the lived experiences and voices of those being impacted by climate change, for example those living in flood prone areas.'

> 'Sector-specific data, such as on oceans and fisheries, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).'
>
> 'Information on governance strategies at the community level, and information on how to quickly mobilise adaptation funding.'
>
> 'Detailed data in respect of spatial resolution and time resolution are missing. Most data on weather parameters for most SIDS are still missing or in paper format, especially long-term data. Good data on potential effects of climate missing, economic data sometimes missing also.'

Respondents' requests are reflective of findings elsewhere. For example, the importance of accessing more information on lived experiences (especially as told through traditional and indigenous knowledge) is discussed by Shah and Kelman (2024) and Santo Sunset Environmental Network (2023) as a cornerstone of evidence-based policy-making that is inclusive, equitable and effective. Regarding climate projection data, this is widely seen as critical to decision making, particularly climate data tailored to SIDS contexts (see Dookie, 2024).

2.4 What information is needed on resilience solutions?

Of 48 people who responded to this question, the majority (71%) would like to see recommendations for building climate resilience in their sector and to learn from others. This response again demonstrates the importance of peer learning across SIDS. The importance of identifying the social impacts of climate change is also identified as critical for climate adaptation and resilience by researchers and practitioners, with 69% of respondents noting that recommendations on building climate resilience for their specific stakeholder are needed but in short supply. Respondents also considered that recommendations on building climate resilience for social groups, such as women, are a critical gap (65%) (refer to Table 5).

Table 5 Information needed on resilience solutions

Information needed on resilience solutions	%
Recommendations for building climate resilience in my sector, and evaluation and learning from others	71
Recommendations on building climate resilience for stakeholder groups relevant to me, and evaluation and learning from others (e.g. business continuity after climate events	69
Recommendations on building climate resilience for the social groups I work with (e.g. women, Indigenous people, etc.) and evaluating and learning from others	65
Other	6
I am not missing information, I can find everything I need to do the job	4

Social issues were raised again in response to the question on 'other' types of information that would be useful for adaptation planning but is lacking. In particular, respondents seek information that is disaggregated for, and within vulnerable groups, and information based directly on the voices of affected individuals. This indicates a need for more qualitative studies – and/or greater availability of existing studies – on how climate change affects certain groups, and how adaptation and resilience measures should be tailored toward these groups.

2.5 Which SIDS are respondents interested in?

Of the 50 researchers and practitioners who completed the survey, 68% and 62% are, respectively, most interested in the SIDS within the region where they are based, and any SIDS . Thirty per cent (30%) are only interested in the SIDS where their work is focused, and only 24% are interested in general data across all countries (refer to Table 6).

Table 6 Countries of interest

Countries of interest	%
The SIDS in the region where I work/focus	68
Any SIDS	62
Only the specific SIDS country where I work/focus	30
Other Global Information (Non-SIDS)	24

2.6 What prevents researchers and practitioners from finding the information they need?

Respondents report that they have trouble finding the specific information they need. They report being overwhelmed by large amounts of irrelevant data (39%) yet cannot find the specific types of data they are looking for (67%).

Fifty-one per cent (51%) can access the information they are looking for but find the documents too long and the information overwhelming, indicating that reports and documents need to be summarised, or prepared more concisely. Twenty-two per cent (22%) of respondents note that the information they need is behind paywalls, restricting access. Another 22% said the information they found cannot be trusted. Ten per cent (10%) of respondents cite language barriers as an issue to accessing information (refer to Table 7).

Respondents outlined several other barriers, including a lack of updated information, lack of downscaled climate data for individual SIDS, lack of data sharing among SIDS, a lack of private-

sector specific data, and data collected by private companies, such as oil and gas companies, which is held privately and not shared with the public. Internet access was also highlighted as a barrier, speaking to the need for affordable broadband internet access and connectivity in SIDS.

One respondent noted:

> There's too much information that's scattered; I'd also want more information from actual communities who are most at risk. I want to tap into their lived experiences and knowledge of their local surroundings to potentially build solutions *with* them.'

The lack of data sharing across, and even within SIDS, has been identified in several studies. Shah and Kelman (2024) observe that agencies in SIDS create data silos because they are territorial and have data protection concerns. This lack of sharing hampers effective policy-making on climate change adaptation and resilience building. Dookie (2024) suggests that legislation could make data sharing compulsory. They believe that data protection, including anonymising data and forging data-sharing agreements, could help address this issue.

Table 7 What prevents respondents from finding the information they need

What prevents respondents from finding the information they need	%
I cannot find the specific type of adaptation and resilience information that I'm looking for	67
I can access the information I need, but I do not have time to utilise it and need summarised or more focused versions	51
I am overwhelmed by too much irrelevant or poor-quality information	39
I cannot find sources that I trust	22
I know what information I need, but it's behind a paywall and I cannot afford it	22
I can access the information I need, but it's too difficult to understand and I need it in plainer language.	18
I know what information I need, but it is proprietory data and I cannot access	16
Relevant information is available, but not in my working language(s) (e.g. French, Spanish, English etc)	10
Other 4%	4

2.7 Is a global SIDS online knowledge platform useful?

When asked whether it was useful for SIDS to aggregate information about climate change adaptation and resilience into one online knowledge platform to provide a trusted, well-curated and user-friendly place for data and analysis, along with sign-posting to other platforms:

- 70.6% of respondents said 'Yes'
- 27.5% of respondents said 'Maybe'
- 2% of respondents said 'No'

Respondents were asked the reason for their answer, and 41 responded. One response noted that:

> [H]aving a one-stop knowledge platform focused on adaptation and resilience in SIDS would be useful to not only foster efficiency and accuracy, but quality and assurance as well. It would also lessen the amount of cross-referencing needed as most of the data would already be aggregated'. Others said that such a platform would provide the opportunity to consult a single source rather than a multitude of sources for information, while some spoke to the opportunity to learn what other SIDS are doing.'

Some were more sceptical of the benefits. One respondent noted that 'my needs are for primary data, not analysed data. I am unsure how the platform will access data from governments if governments currently don't share data with researchers, why would they share with the platform. To be trusted, the platform would have to be operated by SIDS, but the financial resources to operate same don't exist in the SIDS'.

This underscores the issue that for a single platform to work, SIDS governments must be willing to provide data. This, in turn, will require capacity building and funding for data collection at the local and national levels.

Other respondents, pointing to regional and global hubs, noted that a new hub will need to ensure that efforts are not duplicated. One respondent proposed: '[M]aybe consider having adaptation as a sub-focus of existing SIDS data platform and ensuring all relevant resources/data are added to this in collaboration with UN agencies?'

One respondent, a SIDS climate change negotiator, noted that 'Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS) SIDS do not have any knowledge management platforms as Pacific and Caribbean SIDS do.'

Box 5 What information are women and youth climate leaders looking for?

One quarter of respondents work in organisations that are exclusively focused on and led by women, young people or other distinct social groups. Many other respondents target programmes of work for these groups. Five of the six Key Informants interviewed had a targeted social focus, and the response rate was higher from Pacific SIDS.

So, what kind of adaptation information are they looking for? The answer depended partly on the respondents' job responsibilities. A regional statistician for Pacific SIDS heralded the Gender and Environment Data Alliance (UN, 2023) for its comprehensive push for improved sex-disaggregated data on climate issues. They also hailed the work of the Kingdom of Tonga in pioneering the capture and publication of sex-disaggregated gender data (Tonga, 2023).

However, for two Pacific youth climate campaigners who were interviewed (one of whom was Tongan), the perspective differs. They are more interested in exchanging strategic and tactical information on climate justice campaigning with other youth leaders in the Pacific region. Their emphasis is on relationships and coordination.

They also have a heavy focus on analysing adaptation-related information in national and local context, to leverage their advocacy efforts. That is because they see the entry points for improving women's and young people's lives as being local and national: the information they need relates to laws and practices of government and traditional authorities. 'For young women in Tonga, the biggest issue is around lack of land ownership and so we are fighting for women's land rights,' one respondent said.

3 Adaptation learning: experiences and preferences

Respondents were asked about their previous experiences with peer learning activities and their preference for potential future peer learning on climate change adaptation. These could be in the context of the Global Data Hub for SIDS or other international or regional initiatives.

Overall, respondents indicated that a mix of virtual and in-person events can help over the course of a sustained programme that involves peers. Access to new sectors and actors is the most desired. However, to be relevant and deliver learning, peer learning activities should be highly contextualised to the audience's needs.

Respondents were asked if they had previously participated in a peer learning event, and from what kind of learning event they would gain the most. Of 57 responses, 81% of respondents said they gained the most learning from round-table discussions and knowledge exchange with peers. Other types of peer learning activities appreciated included consecutive training courses (55%) and one-off events and trainings (49%).

When asked whether they might potentially be interested in participating in a peer learning process on adaptation and resilience building in SIDS, 75% were interested in participating, and 25% were 'maybe' interested, depending on the modalities of the peer learning. This result highlights the demand for peer learning among SIDS researchers and practitioners.

3.1 Preferences for types of learning events

When asked what kinds of learning events are preferable, 8% of respondents preferred virtual events only, 18.5% preferred only face-to-face, while 77.5% preferred a mix of both in-person and virtual. The desire for in-person events speaks to the effectiveness of this medium for peer learning. The benefits of virtual events, such as eliminating travel and lowering carbon footprints, are also acknowledged given the desire to maintain the use of virtual platforms. Ways should be found to extract the benefits of both types of events, but especially virtual ones, to optimise peer learning in SIDS (as discussed, for example, in Fisher et al., 2022).

When asked what would make this learning event worthwhile, 38 respondents answered, and expressed event preferences that include:

- Providing information on the lived experiences of various groups and those most affected by climate change.
- Focusing on experiential learning, such as learning during/from collaborations for developing and implementing projects and programmes.

- Involving a wide cross-section of stakeholder participation, including policy-makers, the private sector, communities, and international organisations such as the UN
- Creating learning processes over more than even event and that includes commitment to engage with peers, such as a community of practice for SIDS.
- Using semi-structured and informal settings that are focused on knowledge and information sharing, allowing for brainstorming and building trust.
- Giving spaces and planning activities to develop actionable outputs and tangible actions from attending learning events.
- Hearing actionable, practical and scalable solutions from peers with opportunities to discuss funding and implementation support.
- Provides information on international organisations such as the UN, and how SIDS stakeholders can tap into them for grassroots and community level support.

One climate finance expert remarked: 'Good peer learning events should be like a platform where the persons involved in the process can share ideas, write down thoughts and map them out into tangible and action-based solutions. They also creates an environment for relationship building.'

We see that respondents demand peer-to-peer learning across sectors, as well as across SIDS.

The main topics highlighted as priority for peer learning are:

- locally-led and community adaptation
- finance and resource mobilisation
- gender equality and social inclusion
- indigenous knowledge
- monitoring, evaluation and learning
- private sector and SMEs / circular economy
- downscaled climate data and GIS mapping
- nature-based solutions
- plastics and pollution.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Adaptation information: synthesis of findings and recommendations for SIDS

The survey of diverse government officials, consultants and researchers who plan and deliver adaptation and resilience interventions in SIDS found that the information they need is too sparse, inaccessible and poorly presented.

A particular gap is disaggregated data and information on climate risks and resilience solutions for distinct social and socioeconomic groups, such as women, Indigenous Peoples, young people and low- income groups, and for specific sectors in SIDS. This need also extends to lessons from SIDS local implementation experience, which can yield implications and recommendations for other SIDS communities.

The lived experiences of SIDS communities are considered highly relevant to respondents' work but insufficiently documented and accessible. This finding implies that efforts focusing purely on geospatial data are likely to fall short and be largely insufficient in equipping SIDS stakeholders with the information needed to design, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate and learn from adaptation interventions.

Authoritative climate risk and resilience statistics, in data tables, geospatially mapped, and in visual data layers, are all welcome – the key being that such information can be accessed and manipulated swiftly and at an appropriate scale for SIDS planning purposes. The study also highlighted stakeholders' desire for downscaled climate projections that map to SIDS small land territories. However, this desire is less likely to be fulfilled in the short to medium term (5–10 years), especially at a 5km square degree of resolution, because of the vast supercomputing power needed to run multiple climate models, combine them into ensembles and downscale the data to any degree of scientific robustness.

Statistical agencies, research institutions and their partners (such as UN agencies) must collect, curate and openly publish robust data that is disaggregated for key demographic groups and sectors in SIDS. They must do this in a coordinated way and via user-friendly interface(s).

It's not just about the information gaps; it's about knowledge management systems. A towering gap is the adequate management, openness and accessibility of existing SIDS data and analysis. Quality assurance, professional curation of information and authenticity are key. Any such global knowledge platforms should be SIDS-led, sustainable and non-duplicative. They should point to existing regional SIDS efforts that are much appreciated already, and should add value in the above-described dimensions. An effective knowledge management approach for a Global SIDS Hub will require a platform that is accessible (easy to navigate), tailored for multiple

audiences (i.e., government decision makers at different levels, civil society, private sector, academia, development partners, etc.), well-integrated with existing national and regional data and information sources, lends itself to shareability, and is appropriately staffed with clear roles and responsibilities for information management. SIDS governments' ownership, especially co-ownership with data-holding institutions, will be fundamental to success. For long-term sustainability and to promote platform ownership by SIDS, the platform should be linked to peer learning and training opportunities in adaptation and resilience.

Respondents have mixed views about whether a 'one stop shop' for SIDS adaptation and resilience information is necessary and desirable, given the good progress and trusted performance of data and information platforms for the Caribbean and Pacific regions. Some respondents acknowledged that Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS) SIDS lack the type of regional platforms available to Caribbean and Pacific SIDS and suggested this gap needs to be addressed. Patient, reliable and sustained financial resources and capacity building are required to support SIDS knowledge management systems and meet local and national needs over time. SIDS lack the financial and human resources to meet their data collection and knowledge management needs. International public and philanthropic donors should provide increased grant funding for enhanced data collection, both locally and nationally – especially if it can be part of larger technical assistance programmes. Most of all, they must support capacity-building in SIDS to sustain professional, open, accessible and versatile knowledge management systems over time.

4.2 Adaptation learning: synthesis of findings and recommendations for SIDS

A significant emphasis is placed on practical, experiential learning modalities. Participants highlight the value of field visits and exchanges that allow them to observe 'good practices' in action. Multiple respondents emphasised the invaluable nature of learning from people's experiences for transferring actionable knowledge and skills. This includes learning from peers in similar roles, but also from communities who are living and experiencing climate impacts and the actions and projects implemented to address them. This indicates a strong preference for participatory and collaborative learning approaches that integrate the lived experiences of local communities and peers to foster personal and professional growth.

Some respondents mentioned the importance of immersive work experiences such as secondments, or fellowships, and learning from direct collaborations on projects. Applied research collaborations were also noted as a good opportunity. For example, a respondent noted that anthropological research at the community, and working directly with organisations doing work at the community levels, are beneficial. This way, practitioners spend an extended period with different organisations in similar fields, facilitating a deeper understanding of global challenges and innovative strategies.

The need to develop learning over a sustained period is also reflected by respondents proposing peer-learning should aim to create communities of practice among SIDS researchers and practitioners, and commitments to engage with peers on a continuous basis. Communities of practice or learning cohorts can support continuous learning by further developing relationships and enduring connections between peers. Sustained engagement should have a blend of qualitative and quantitative data sharing, different modalities (virtual/in person) and a structured yet flexible engagement format to adapt to new ideas and needs.

Responses underline the importance of inclusivity in peer learning, allowing learning access to different types of stakeholders. Actors mentioned included policy-makers, businesses, local communities, and vulnerable groups. This multistakeholder approach ensures that different perspectives are incorporated, enhancing the relevance and applicability of learning outcomes. In multistakeholder learning processes, the emphasis on role play and guided training further suggests a desire for interactive, engaging formats that accommodate diverse learning styles and professional backgrounds.

Respondents emphasised the need for peer learning processes that are fully inclusive of all SIDS regions. Respondents expressed a need for island-focused data and case studies, highlighting the importance of scalability and local applicability in interventions. They also call for the intentional inclusion of all SIDS regions in peer learning processes and perhaps even the inclusion of diverse islands from within regions and individual SIDS.

One SIDS climate change negotiator said: 'It is really important to contextualise peer learning to the uniqueness of SIDS. For example, it can be a struggle for my country to engage with other SIDS, in various means, because of how we are geographically placed as the only Asian SIDS in the Indian Ocean.'

There is a significant demand for learning processes that lead to practical and actionable outcomes. This demand includes having peer-learning around thematic sessions that feature practical examples, best practices and country-specific case studies. Respondents want to hear about real-world projects rather than theory, particularly those aimed at climate resilience and adaptation. Several respondents emphasised coming away with recommendations and solutions that are directly actionable and scaled up once they get back to work. Indeed, having opportunities for resource mobilisation and funding next steps after events is a critical factor to translate learning into tangible outcomes.

In summary, the survey responses articulate a clear preference for learning exchanges and peer learning processes that are practical, inclusive, locally relevant, and outcome focused. These elements are crucial for developing effective, sustainable solutions tailored to the unique environmental, social and economic contexts of small island developing states.

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Annex: survey

Part A - About You

1. What is your Family Name (Last name)

2. What is your given name (s) (or name you prefer to be called)?*

3. What title do you use ?

4. If you selected 'Other' in Question 3, what title do you go by?

5. What is your email address?

6. Where are you located (City and Country)*

7. Are you answering the survey as an individual or on behalf of an institution?

- ☐ Individual capacity
- ☐ On behalf of an institution

8. If you answered 'on behalf of an institution', please write the name, your department and website url of the institution below; otherwise, leave blank

9. What best describes your work, or study role when you are accessing and using information about adaptation in SIDS? (For example, 'I am a government official responsible for drafting my country's NAP'. Or, 'I am an environmental consultant: I undertake climate risk assessments for...'. 'I am post-graduate student of climate-resilient development at the University of...' etc.,

10. Do you or your institution focus the majority of your work exclusively on a social group(s) in SIDS, such as women, young people, Indigenous People, people living with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, etc.?

- ☐ Yes, I/we focus exclusively on particular social group(s)
- ☐ No, we don't focus exclusively on particular social group(s)

11. If you answered 'Yes' to question 10, please add below details of the group(s) you focus on.

Part B. Your information needs and current provision

12. Why do you need information about adaptation and resilience building in SIDS? *Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ My own education, learning and development
- ☐ Educating or training others (e.g. capacity building)

☐ Briefing others (e.g. meetings)
☐ Media (mass communication)
☐ Designing policies
☐ Planning programmes, projects
☐ Implementing programmes, projects
☐ Writing proposals and mobilising resources
☐ Reporting to domestic stakeholders (e.g. accountability and transparency)
☐ Reporting to international stakeholders (e.g. accountability and transparency)
☐ Other (please go to question 13)

13. What other reason do you have for needing information about adaptation and resilience in SIDS?

14. What data/information are you looking for?

☐ Quantitative
☐ Qualitative
☐ Both

15. What information sources do you currently use? *Tick all that apply.*

☐ My own institution's proprietary or internal information
☐ Data and analysis from other government departments in the country/ies where I work
☐ IPCC reports
☐ UNFCCC documents
☐ Data and analysis from international and multilateral agencies, such as UNDP, FAO, World Bank, etc
☐ Data and analysis from universities and research institutions I can trust
☐ Data and analysis from development organisations, including NGOs, that I trust in the country or region where I work
☐ Data from proprietary or private sources (If you checked this box, please tell us at Question 16 the sources you use)
☐ Information Portal (if you checked this box, please tell us at Question 17 which information portals you use)
☐ Internet searches and AI-powered data synthesis (if you check this box, please tell us in Question 18 which ones you use)

16. From which proprietary or private sources do you access data?

17. Which information portals do you use? (List the top 5)

18. Which internet search and/or AI-powered data synthesis do you use? (List the top 5)

19. What kinds of information do you most frequently access (whether it's to know about climate risk and/or to know about actions and solutions)? *Tick all that apply.*

☐ General climate risk information
☐ Sector climate risk information
☐ Information on climate risk of specific stakeholder types such as small businesses, etc.
☐ Information about socio-economic factors related to climate risks, adaptation and resilience
☐ Other (please see question 20 below)

20. If you selected 'Other' in Question 19, please tell us what kinds of information you most frequently access.

21. What information are you missing (if any) to carry out your work? Select all that apply

Category: Climate risk information in SIDS *Tick all that apply.*
☐ General climate risk information
☐ Sector climate risk information
☐ Information on climate risk of specific social groups e.g., women, young people ,Indigenous, LGBTQI
☐ Information on climate risk of specific stakeholder types such as small businesses, etc.
☐ Information about socio-economic factors (gender, age, income level, etc.,) related to climate risks, adaptation and resilience
☐ Other (See Question 22)

22. If you selected other in Question 21, please tell us what information are you missing to carry out your work?

23. What information are you missing to carry out your work? Select all that apply.

Category: Action to reduce climate risk in SIDS *Tick all that apply.*
☐ Recommendations for building climate resilience in my sector, and evaluation and learning from others
☐ Recommendations on building climate resilience for the social groups I work with(e.g. women, Indigenous people, etc.) and evaluating and learning from others
☐ Recommendations on building climate resilience for stakeholder groups relevant to me, and evaluation and learning from others (e.g. business continuity after climate events)
☐ I am not missing information; I can find everything I need to do the job
☐ Other (See Question 24)

24. If you selected 'Other' in Question 23, please tell us what information you are missing to carry out your work.

25. What SIDS do you want to access information about? *Tick all that apply.*

☐ Only the specific SIDS country where I work/focus
☐ The SIDS in the region where I work/focus
☐ Any SIDS
☐ Other Global Information (Non-SIDS)

26. What prevents you from finding the information about adaptation and resilience in SIDS that you need? Select all that apply. *Tick all that apply.*

☐ I am overwhelmed by too much irrelevant or poor-quality information
☐ I cannot find sources that I trust
☐ I cannot find the specific type of adaptation and resilience information that I'm looking for
☐ I know what information I need, but it's behind a paywall and I cannot afford it
☐ I can access the information I need, but it's too difficult to understand and I need it in plainer language
☐ I can access the information I need, but I do not have time to utilise it and need summarised or more focused versions
☐ Relevant information is available, but not in my working language(s) (e.g. French, Spanish, English etc)
☐ I know what information I need, but it is proprietary data, and I cannot access (please state the proprietor of the information in Question 27.
☐ Other, please go to Question 27.

27. Following from Question 25, please state what other barriers you face in accessing the information you need, including the holder of proprietary information, if applicable.

28. How could the information sources or platforms you use be improved, if at all? (if no improvements are required, go to question 29)

We want to know if it would be useful to aggregate information about climate change adaptation and resilience in SIDS onto one online knowledge platform. This would aim to provide a trusted, well-curated and user-friendly place to find original data and analysis, and signposting toother authoritative, open-access platforms. The purpose of such a platform would be to cut time spent searching for information, and relieve working burdens on people and organisations in SIDS.

29. Does this proposition sound interesting to you?
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

30. What is the reason for your answer in Question 29?

Part C – Your interest in learning and exchange on adaptation in SIDS Complete this if you are not in full-time education at present.

31. Have you participated in a learning event about adaptation with people from different SIDS before? If No, go to question 35. *Tick all that apply.*

☐ One-off events and trainings
☐ Consecutive trainings or courses
☐ Roundtable discussions and knowledge exchange with peers

☐ Other types of learning and exchanges (please tell us in Question 33)

32. If yes, what kinds of learning events do you gain the most from? *Tick all that apply.*

☐ One-off events and trainings
☐ Consecutive trainings or courses
☐ Roundtable discussions and knowledge exchange with peers
☐ Other types of learning and exchanges (please tell us in Question 33)

33. If you answered 'Other' at Question 32, what other types of learning and exchanges do you gain the most from?

34. Think about one event that you gained a lot from. This can be about learning, information, experience, relationships, and more. Please briefly describe the event and what you gained?

35. Which kinds of learning events do you prefer: virtual-only, face to face only, or hybrid? *Tick all that apply.*

☐ Virtual only
☐ Face-to-Face only
☐ A mixture of virtual and face-to-face interactions

36. Would you potentially be interested in participating in a peer learning process on adaptation and resilience-building in SIDS?

37. If you are interested in a peer learning process, what would make it worthwhile?

38. If you are interested in a peer learning process, what topics would you be interested in?

39. If you are interested in a peer learning process, what format would you prefer (see Question 35) and what time commitment are you willing to make to it?

40. May we contact you by email with any clarification questions about your responses to the survey?

41. Would you like to take part in a short virtual interview or focus group discussion about these topics?

This is purely optional and checking 'yes' means you would get an invitation to participate but you are not obliged to do so

42. Would you like to be added to the mailing list to hear about our recommendations at the end of the study?

[survey ends]