

SIDS NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS NETWORK

Engagement Strategy



UN-OHRLLS

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Background

Small island developing States (SIDS) stand as a unique group of countries, confronting intertwined challenges due to their geographical isolation, limited economic scale, exposure to exogenous economic, social, and environmental shocks, and the ongoing adverse impacts of the climate crisis.

In 2024, SIDS will renew their commitment to sustainable development through a new programme of action that builds on the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA), the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI), and the SAMOA Pathway.

As agreed in the SAMOA Pathway, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) mandate was expanded to:

- Ensure the mainstreaming of the SAMOA Pathway and issues related to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the work of the United Nations (UN) system;
- Enhance the coherence of SIDS issues in UN processes, including at the national, regional, and global levels.

This led to the establishment of the SIDS National Focal Points (NFP) network in 2018 to strengthen coherence and coordination of SIDS-related sustainable development issues at the national, regional, and global levels. It was born out of the need to foster peer-learning and exchange of best practices on the implementation and follow up of the SAMOA Pathway, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global frameworks.

On October 29, 2018, OHRLLS hosted its inaugural meeting for SIDS NFPs in Apia, Samoa, coinciding with the preparatory meeting for the mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway. During this gathering, participants underscored the vital role that NFPs can play in advancing and executing the SAMOA Pathway, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The meeting also delved into strategies for enhancing the network's effectiveness.

The second meeting took place on July 25-26, 2019, in Praia, Cabo Verde, and adopted the [Terms of Reference](#) for SIDS NFPs. During this session, NFPs highlighted the pressing need for capacity building and dedicated resources to support their roles and responsibilities in relation to the SAMOA Pathway. Responding to this call, OHRLLS developed a guide that outlined key elements for reinforcing and sustaining the NFPs' capabilities. This [guide](#) was created as a valuable resource to assist NFPs in achieving their objectives.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the annual in-person meetings for the NFP, but it did not stop the network from participating in virtual discussions in 2020 and 2021. On 5 – 6 August 2022, the third in-person meeting convened in St. Johns, Antigua and Barbuda and further solidified the vital role of the NFPs in localizing the SAMOA Pathway and to bring about emerging issues that will be key for the new programme of action.

The fourth in-person meeting of the NFP network took place on 30 August 2023 in Praia, Cabo Verde, on the margins of the Inter-regional preparatory meeting for the SIDS4 Conference. As the new programme of action for SIDS will carry forth progress from the SAMOA Pathway into the next decade, NFPs are uniquely placed to support localizing a new set of development priorities for SIDS, in tandem with their terms of reference (TORs).

This engagement strategy will guide the NFPs in conducting their main functions to support the effective implementation of the new programme of action and achieving the desired outcome within the next decade.



Figure 2 Cabo Verde

Goals and Objectives

The overarching goal of this Engagement Strategy is to utilize the unique position of the NFPs on the ground in supporting the new SIDS programme of action. Such support will be strengthened through the NFP network by cultivating shared learning experiences, best practices, and consistent exchange of ideas to support NFPs with the implementation of the SIDS programme of action on the ground.

Objective 1: Support the NFPs in advocacy and representation in regional, international forums, funding, and resource mobilization for localization of the SIDS Programme of Action.

Objective 2: Annual (Virtual) meetings of the NFPs facilitated by OHRLLS to track the implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action.

Objective 3: Share successful stories from NFPs that can be emulated in different SIDS on the national, regional, and global level.

Objective 4: Capacity building activities for NFPs in national contexts to enhance stakeholders' understanding of the SIDS Programme of Action.

Stakeholder Analysis

While the new programme of action and SDGs are global frameworks, their realization hinges on our capacity to bring them to life within our communities, nations and regions. National Focal Points occupy an advantageous position for translating the ambitious new programme of action into a tangible and effective blueprint for SIDS. Recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, governance strategies must be diverse, customized, innovative, and adaptable, guided by relevant and reliable data to inform decision-making.

In this context, the NFPs serve as a key liaison between the global frameworks and local implementation. The NFPs can facilitate and inform the formulation of policies and initiatives that align with the new programme of action and SDGs, ensuring they are effectively integrated into national development plans.

NFPs would support governments at all levels in their integration of these objectives and benchmarks into national strategic plans and financial allocations. They should formulate policies and initiatives geared toward their achievement. Robust systems for monitoring and evaluation, facilitated by the NFPs, are imperative to ensure progress and accountability at the national and local levels.

Therefore, this engagement strategy proposes the following analysis of the various stakeholders that can support the NFP network at all levels.

| Levels | Who | How |
|----------------|--|--|
| National Level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Planning Departments • Ministry of Foreign Affairs • Ministry of Finance • Private Sector (Chambers of Commerce) • Parliamentarians | <p>The Government Ministries that are responsible for the preparation, monitoring and evaluation of national plans will be able to work with NFPs in localizing the new programme of action.</p> <p>The Private Sector engagement through the Chambers of Commerce as they are involved in discussions of national strategies.</p> <p>The Parliamentarians to facilitate through specific commissions, mainstreaming of the new PoA into laws, and budgets, based on their legislative and oversight functions</p> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Governments • Community organizations • non-governmental organizations (NGOs). | <p>The local governments can work directly with the NFPs to highlight projects and programmes that relate to the implementation of the programme of action.</p> <p>Local communities to provide feedback on projects programme and initiatives and how the NFPs can feed and link international support for their work on the ground.</p> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) • Resident Coordinator's Offices (RCO) | <p>This will also ensure that efforts are not duplicated and to maximize the impact of the new PoA.</p> |
| Regional Level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional intergovernmental organizations • Regional Commissions • Regional Development Banks | <p>These regional organizations can facilitate cooperation among the NFP network in specific regions as a way for SIDS-SIDS cooperation.</p> <p>The Regional Commissions can take forward the programme of action and engage the NFPs by region on capacity building programmes and projects.</p> |

| | | |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Global Level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Development System • International Organizations | <p>The UN Development System provides a platform for SIDS to raise their concerns and awareness about the dire situations in SIDS.</p> <p>NFP network to engage and participate in international forums that relate to the programme of action for SIDS.</p> |
|---------------------|--|--|

Preparatory Phase

The new programme of action will outline deliverables, targets, goals, and priorities that are important for SIDS in their course towards sustainable development. Therefore, the initial steps that must be taken by the NFPs will lay the groundwork for their engagement throughout the national implementation of the programme of action.

1. Understanding the new SIDS programme of action: NFPs should thoroughly study the new programme of action for SIDS to gain a comprehensive understanding of its objectives, goals, and priorities. UN OHRLLS will provide necessary support for the NFPs in outlining and providing key takeaways from the programme of action. This work can start during the Preparatory Committee Meetings towards the SIDS Conference in which the outcome will be negotiated and discussed before its adoption.
2. Identifying Local Context: The NFPs may conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current state of sustainable development in the national context, including social, economic, environmental, and cultural factors. Given that NFPs are Government designated officials involved in the localization of the new programme of action, the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and SDGs as well as their national implementation, monitoring, and review, they are encouraged to identify specific challenges and opportunities for the new programme of action.
3. UN OHRLLS can assist NFPs in this preparatory phase through technical assistance and data sharing support ensuring that the NFPs are given the necessary tools to help with localization of the new programme of action. Collaboration with UNCTs and RCOs in tailoring technical assistance according to local context is crucial in this regard.
4. This Preparatory phase may include the development of communication materials illustrating key deliverables and actions from the new PoA and how it links to the achievement of the SDGs.

Engagement Phase

1. Stakeholder Consultations:

NFPs conduct regular surveys, interviews, or focus groups with local stakeholders to gather input and feedback on the programme of action's implementation and impact. A survey supported by UN OHRLLS would be a financially viable option given the voluntary nature of the NFP work. Most importantly, in avoiding duplication, NFPs can focus on utilizing existing regional and national mechanisms to gather feedback on implementation of the new SIDS programme of action.

2. National Workshops and Training:

Organize training sessions and workshops for local stakeholders to build their capacity and understanding of the programme of action objectives and concrete deliverables. The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) engagement can help link local stakeholders to resources and support available from the UN system. The NFPs can utilize existing resources for these workshops and trainings.

3. Collaborative Projects:

NFPs collaborate with local stakeholders on specific projects aligned with the programme of action's goals, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment. Development partners on the ground can also be important partners that can support the implementation of the new programme of action through funding and providing technical assistance for various projects on the ground. Regional Commissions must also be invited in these projects to avoid duplication and enhance synergies with other projects the Commissions are leading. UNCTs and RCOs are poised to support the NFPs in collaborative projects through UN pooled funding mechanisms.

4. SIDS – SIDS Regional Partnerships:

The NFPs can utilize the network to connect amongst themselves, whether within regions, or across regions to learn from each other. This is possible through constant and frequent coordination of the network. Such regional connections including through Regional Commissions help cater to various gaps in the implementation of the new programme of action. It is also crucial to utilize regional organizations where they exist to facilitate these SIDS-SIDS partnerships.

5. Recognition and Rewards:

Recognize and celebrate the contributions of local stakeholders through awards or recognition programs, motivating continued engagement. The NFP can share these success stories with UN OHRLLS for sharing with the network.



Figure 3 UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

UN-OHRLLS will support NFPs through the avenues below:

6. Information Dissemination:

Establish a dedicated online platform or portal where NFPs can access up-to-date information, resources, and best practices related to SIDS development. Ensure that this platform is user-friendly and regularly updated. The UN-OHRLLS website can be the basis for this information sharing. This includes a repository of training and capacity building opportunities (online and in-person) in areas relevant to SIDS and to the implementation of the new programme of action.

7. Peer Learning:

Facilitate peer learning and exchanges of best practices among NFP network. Encourage them to share their experiences, challenges, and success stories to foster a sense of community and mutual support. Regional Commissions and RCOs are important vehicles to facilitate these exchanges on the national and regional levels.

8. Regular Meetings:

OHRLLS will continue to organise the annual in-person meeting of NFPs to serve as a forum for sharing updates on progress of the implementation of the programme

of action and addressing emerging challenges. In preparation for the annual in-person meeting, a dedicated session may be organized for regional commissions and RCOs to brief the network on their work related to the SIDS agenda.

Additionally, OHRLLS will organize one annual virtual meeting session for the NFP network. These meetings can cover several topics such as sustainable development, climate resilience, finance management, and data collection and how the NFP network can share their best practices and experiences in localizing the programme of action.

9. Regional NFP Collaboration:

UN OHRLLS can utilize its platform to facilitate and coordinate regional NFP network engagements and sharing of ideas within and across the three SIDS regions. Organizing virtual meetings or bringing together NFPs in the same region to connect and meet on the margins of any regional UN meetings related to SIDS agenda. Establish knowledge networks or communities of practice that allow NFPs to collaborate, share insights, and access expertise from within the SIDS community and beyond including through the inter-governmental sessions of the Regional Commissions. It is also crucial to utilize regional organizations where they exist to facilitate regional collaboration amongst the network.

10. Advocacy Support:

Assist NFPs in advocating for the unique needs and challenges of SIDS at international forums and within the United Nations system. Utilize the social media outlets and SIDS related platforms for UN OHRLLS to advocate and highlight national programmes and projects in SIDS that relate to the programme of action ensuring that the NFP plays a role in that regard. Where resources are available, OHRLLS will explore opportunities to support NFPs to attend international meetings related to the implementation of the programme of action and other SIDS related agenda at the UN. Regional Commissions may share opportunities that relate to the SIDS Agenda in their respective regions, so that SIDS NFP may participate where resources are available, and advocate for support to their national realities.

Beyond social media outreach, advocacy materials can be built from the proposed [Global SIDS Data hub](#) to inform engagements of NFPs in various engagements related to the implementation of the SIDS programme of action at all levels.

11. Resource Mobilization:

Facilitate SIDS access to international funding sources, grants, and partnerships by mobilizing international support and resources for the implementation of the programme of action.

Provide NFPs with regular updates on funding opportunities (Call for Proposals, funding windows and Expression of Interest) which SIDS can apply and tap into to finance their development agenda and implement the programme of action. OHRLLS will also facilitate the collaboration with other international organization to improve access to climate and development finance.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation:

Through a collaborative effort, OHRLLS will work with NFPs to consolidate and communicate regular feedback enabling the strategy to evolve in response to changing stakeholder needs. This will be linked to an expected monitoring and reporting framework of the new programme of action. Regularly assess the effectiveness of communication channels and engagement strategies through surveys, analytics, and feedback mechanisms. Regional Commissions and RCOs play an important part in this conversation where they can provide the technical and substantial support for the network once the M&E for the new PoA is finalized.

13. Feedback Mechanisms:

Implement feedback mechanisms to gather input and suggestions from NFPs ensuring that their needs and priorities remain central to the support provided.

SIDS NFP Network Timeline

In anticipation of the upcoming programme of action, it is crucial that the engagement timeline for the NFP network is designed to promote frequent and well-coordinated interactions.

Kicking off the calendar year, the annual in-person meeting of the NFP network sets the stage for the entire year's coordination efforts for NFPs. This gathering is an opportunity to assess the status of NFPs, including any newly appointed officials. Such updates are of paramount importance to OHRLLS. They play a vital role in informing NFPs about various global discussions and meetings from which NFPs can derive substantial benefits.

The NFP annual in-person meeting is usually organized on the margins of a SIDS related global meeting and if such meeting only takes place in the second half of the year, then the timing of the NFP in-person meeting will be slightly changed.

OHRLLS will produce a biannual newsletter specifically for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) NFP network. This newsletter serves to highlight the pivotal roles played by NFPs, share success stories, and maintain the momentum in localizing the new programme of action. It provides NFPs with an opportunity to present their on-ground initiatives and disseminate them widely, encouraging support from partners, the UN System, and inspiring other SIDS NFPs to learn from these experiences. This exchange of information is a critical component of our engagement strategy.

Considering the time zone differences within the three SIDS regions, OHRLLS will need to arrange multiple virtual meetings to ensure that NFPs can connect during their respective working hours. These virtual meetings can serve as stock-taking sessions where OHRLLS updates NFPs on global and regional developments related to the programme of action and any SIDS-related activities. Moreover, these meetings provide a platform to refine and enhance our engagement strategy by addressing weaknesses and building on what is already working.

Timeline of Annual Engagement

| Timeline | Event | Preparatory Phase |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| First Quarter of the year | Annual in-person meeting of the NFP network | NFP to breakdown the programme of action and identify national programmes/projects that relate to goals and deliverables of the PoA. |
| Second Quarter of the year | Newsletter | Quarterly updates from UN OHRLLS highlighting national programmes and projects related to the new PoA. |
| Third Quarter of the year | Virtual meeting | Discuss with UN OHRLLS the status of the new PoA within the national context and development plans. |
| Fourth Quarter of the year | Newsletter | Quarterly updates from UN OHRLLS highlighting national programmes and projects related to the new PoA. |
