



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs

# Review of the Implementation of Ireland's Strategy for Partnership with Small Island Developing States 2019-2025

## FINAL REPORT

Evaluation and Audit Unit  
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## Disclaimer

The Evaluation and Audit Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland is an independent unit that reports directly to the Secretary General. Its work is overseen by an independent Audit Committee. This review was undertaken by the Evaluation and Audit Unit working closely with the consultancy firm, IOD PARC. The report is the product of the authors. The findings, interpretations, conclusions and lessons learned/points to consider are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or views of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

## List of Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
AIS	Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and South China Seas
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
APU	Asia Pacific Unit
AU	Africa Unit
CARICOM	The Caribbean Community
CARIFORUM	The Caribbean Forum
CCRIF	Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
COAST	Caribbean Ocean and Aquaculture Sustainability Facility
COP	Conference of the Parties
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease (2019)
CPLP	Community of Portuguese Language Countries
CSO	Civil society organisation
CU	Climate Unit
DCAD	Development Cooperation and Africa Division
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EAU	Evaluation and Audit Unit
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FITI	Fisheries Transparency Initiative
GBN	Global business network
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GPU	Global Programmes and Global Citizenship Education Unit
HOM	Head of Mission
HQ	Headquarters
HU	Humanitarian Unit
IAU	Irish Abroad Unit
ICMPS	In-Country Micro Projects Scheme (DFA)

ICOS	Irish Council for International Students
IFI	International Financial Institution
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUKA	Ireland, UK and Americas Division
KII(s)	Key informant interview(s)
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
MLU EU	Multilateral Unit – European Union
MLU UN & IFIs	Multilateral Unit – United Nations and International Financial Institutions
MTR	Mid-term review
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD DAC	Organisation For Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PICIS	Planned Implementation of the Canada Ireland Strategy
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
PMUN NY	Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN, New York
PU	Policy Unit
SAMOA Pathway	Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SMG	Senior Management Group
SOFF	Systematic Observations Financing Facility
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UN-OHRLLS	United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WEDO	Women’s Environment & Development Organization
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIOMSA	The Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association

## Acknowledgements

The Review team would like to express sincere thanks to the staff at Global Programmes Unit for their commitment to this review and for the provision of organisational support. Appreciation also goes out to the members of the Reference Group for their engagement and guidance. A characteristic of the review process was the strong engagement on the part of all who participated. Thus grateful appreciation goes out to all who completed the review form, participated in interviews and workshops and contributed in various other important ways. Thank you for your keen interest and strong engagement.

The Review team consisted of Siobhan McGee, Cormac Smith and Frank Kirwan from Evaluation and Audit Unit and Sarah Bolger and Joe Watkins from IOD PARC. Sincere thanks to them for their collaborative approach and professionalism.

## Executive Summary

Ireland's strategy for partnership with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) 2019-2025 was launched in June 2019. It represents an innovation for the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) given its cross-governmental nature and has since guided Ireland's engagement with SIDS. The strategy includes 36 commitments across four strategic objectives focusing on Ireland's influence, place in Europe, values, and people. With the strategy currently in its fourth year, it was decided to review the progress made towards the achievement of objectives and commitments.

The purpose of the review was to capture the progress and challenges in the implementation of the SIDS strategy and to identify any learning that could inform future strategy, policy, advocacy, and diplomacy initiatives. The review took place from July to October 2022 and was managed by DFA's independent Evaluation and Audit Unit (EAU), working closely with two external consultants. As this exercise was intended as a review, recommendations were not developed but the lessons learned including 'points to consider' were noted for the development of the next SIDS strategy.

## Methodology

The review adopted a mixed methods approach. There were eight overarching review questions focusing on the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness and coherence, as well as on lessons learned. Gender was considered as a cross-cutting theme across all questions. A total of 54 documents were examined; 21 responses to an internal feedback form were analysed; and 19 key informant interviews with internal and external stakeholders were conducted. A validation workshop was conducted with key internal stakeholders to test the findings and lessons learned to ensure that these were in line with internal perspectives and useful for the next iteration of the strategy. The findings from the data collection phase, together with feedback from stakeholders during the validation workshop, informed the final review report.

## Findings

### Relevance

**Overall, the evidence indicates that the SIDS strategy was relevant both for Irish foreign policy objectives and for priority areas of action for SIDS.** The strategy also recognised that SIDS are not a homogenous group and that although there are some similarities, e.g., risks related to climate change, different regions have very different needs. There is strong evidence that this recognition clearly informed strategic engagement with SIDS. The focus on climate, the environment, the oceans and the role of fisheries as a climate mitigating instrument, and governance were all appreciated by SIDS, as well as the fellowships granted to candidates from SIDS countries. Internally, the strategy was highly relevant to Ireland's campaign for the UN Security Council (UNSC), and to the increased prioritisation of climate issues in broader diplomacy and a strengthened focus of climate finance on oceans and the sustainable blue economy.

**There is strong evidence that SIDS were consulted in a highly participatory and inclusive way in the design and development of the strategy.** This effective consultation process contributed to the relevance of the strategy. The establishment of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) single donor Trust Fund was a good example of how Ireland ensured inclusive and participatory consultations with SIDS countries in the development of an instrument designed to address their specific needs. This was considered an innovative approach as this was not how Trust Funds have been historically developed within the Bank; the feedback from SIDS on this process was very positive.

### Effectiveness

**Overall, significant progress has been made in achieving the 36 commitments included in the strategy,** with 5 completed, 28 ongoing and 3 outstanding. The commitments were set out as tangible goals which allowed DFA to largely implement/achieve them, albeit to varying degrees of reported effectiveness. The focus and visible commitment to achieving these goals contributed to Ireland being viewed as a reliable, inclusive partner for SIDS. This approach included sustained and considered engagement and support for SIDS at national, regional and multilateral levels. A key outcome of Ireland establishing itself as a strategic partner for SIDS was that it secured support from a significant number of SIDS in the UNSC campaign. This helped Ireland secure election to the UN Security Council and set the foundations for Ireland's work on pushing for a resolution on climate and security – a key strategic priority for SIDS.

Other key components of the strategy include how Ireland is leveraging its support for access to finance, debt management and loss and damage. Also the support for developing a multidimensional vulnerability index to build momentum toward the creation and implementation of such an index, which can facilitate SIDS access to much needed finance for development and climate adaptation. Ireland has also included consideration of SIDS issues at the EU level, including for example, a focus on climate loss and damage work, with Ireland now considered an expert interlocutor in this area. However, the review found that there is scope to further leverage Ireland's influence in the EU in relation to SIDS, including within Team Europe Initiatives.

The SIDS fellowships were noted as a key achievement by many stakeholders, leading to strengthened capacity and networks in and between SIDS. Finally, the strategy has had a positive multiplier effect, with external stakeholders noting that Ireland's SIDS specific strategy has motivated some donors to follow suit and has allowed SIDS to highlight Ireland's lead as a way of encouraging other donors to provide more focused support to SIDS. Ireland's standing with SIDS on key issues has also helped facilitate support from SIDS for Ireland's priorities e.g., Ireland has been asked by the EU to advocate for the EU position with a number of SIDS, given the strong relationships that have been developed.

**The review found that there was strong awareness of the strategy amongst all stakeholders consulted.** The SIDS team in the Global Programmes and Global Citizenship Education Unit (GPU) (created in 2019/20) played an important and appreciated coordinating and communication role for the strategy. However, the review found that coordination was stronger at multilateral level than at Mission level, with the Mission network less aware of the ongoing implementation of the strategy. The review also found that there is a lack of clarity on funding sources available for SIDS related activities, particularly among Missions. Finally, it was found that the communication of the fellowships programme in SIDS countries could be improved to strengthen the engagement with potential fellows.

## Coherence

The review found that the strategy was widely coherent with ‘A Better World’ and ‘The Global Island’, especially given the increasing focus on climate in ‘A Better World’ and the focus on durable partnerships in ‘The Global Island’. The strategy was also coherent with key regional strategies; this was not even across all regions; SIDS were extensively mentioned in the recent Latin America and the Caribbean strategy and less prominent in the Asia Pacific and Africa strategies. In general, the SIDS strategy was seen as an exemplar of the ‘Team Ireland’ approach and fostered connections across DCAD and DFA Units, Missions, the Department of Finance and Ministers.

## Gender

**Gender was not a strength of the strategy.** Although the strategy mentions gender equality, this was not an obvious focal area and implementation in relation to gender was viewed as a weakness by stakeholders. Several of the commitments related to gender were outstanding or had not made much progress, e.g., the research on climate security including GBV in the Pacific region and the engagement with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). However, due to the strong focus and technical capacity on gender across the Department, the absence of an explicit focus on gender in the strategy was not seen as a huge issue, as gender is generally well integrated in Ireland’s work overall. It was also noted that there is a key opportunity to leverage SIDS as influential interlocutors on human rights and gender negotiations in multilateral fora.

## Lessons Learned

Lessons learned focused on 1) the content and development of the strategy, and 2) coordination, communication, and implementation of the strategy. Based on these lessons learned, key points for consideration were developed for the Department in the design of the next strategy for partnership with SIDS. A summary of lessons learned and points for consideration are summarised in Table 1 below. A key point of consideration underpinning the design process of the next strategy relates to awareness of resources (human, financial and time) and the importance of considering these when developing objectives and activities.

**Table 1. Lessons learned from implementation of the SIDS strategy**

Content and development of the strategy		
	Lessons learned	Points for consideration
<b>Consultation with SIDS to identify strategic priorities</b>	A key strength of the strategy was that it was developed in consultation with SIDS representatives and reflected their views and priorities.	Building on these two points for the next strategy will be important. A key point for consideration is the need to engage with SIDS in SIDS countries, as well as through international fora and multilateral settings.
<b>Level of the strategy</b>	The 36 commitments in the strategy were tangible and activity oriented.	The next strategy could potentially include a blended mix of higher level objectives, strategic outcome areas and activities. A key point of discussion should focus on the idea of growth vs. consolidation.

<p><b>Engagement with SIDS</b></p>	<p>A specific section on SIDS issues and engagement is not currently included in all relevant Mission strategies.</p> <p>There is a lack of clarity on how to engage with non-sovereign SIDS.</p> <p>There are also challenges around engaging with SIDS that are not eligible for ODA funding and that have limited technical and financial capacity.</p>	<p>Options for including specific references to SIDS in relevant Mission strategies could be considered.</p> <p>It would be useful to discuss how to engage with SIDS that fall outside the traditional category of sovereign, development states.</p> <p>Technical and financial capacity in SIDS should be considered and planned for as part of future engagements.</p>
<p><b>Ireland's role in international fora</b></p>	<p>Ireland has developed a strong reputation and voice in various multilateral fora in relation to SIDS.</p>	<p>There is strong scope to further build on Ireland's role of SIDS champion in international and multilateral fora.</p> <p>There is also scope going forward to reflect on how Ireland could further advocate for the consideration of SIDS issues at EU level and in Team Europe Initiatives.</p>
<p><b>Fellowships</b></p>	<p>The fellowships were viewed as a key strength of the strategy, although scope for improvement was noted.</p>	<p>It may be useful to discuss the scope and eligibility of the courses as part of the fellowships.</p>
<p><b>Gender</b></p>	<p>Although Ireland is recognised internationally as strong on gender, gender was not viewed as a strength of the strategy.</p>	<p>A discussion on how gender is integrated in the next strategy would be useful, including how to leverage SIDS champions on gender.</p>
<p><b>Coordination and communication</b></p>		
	<p><b>Lessons learned</b></p>	<p><b>Points for consideration</b></p>
<p><b>Coordination and communication between HQ and Missions</b></p>	<p>There were varying views expressed about the strength of coordination and communication of the strategy between HQ and Missions.</p>	<p>There are several options that could be discussed in relation to strengthening communication and coordination of the strategy moving forward, including more systematic communications and more centralised information on key priorities.</p>
<p><b>Funding sources for SIDS-related activities</b></p>	<p>Funding sources for SIDS-related activities are not always clear, particularly at Mission level.</p>	<p>It would be beneficial to undertake a mapping exercise of funding sources.</p>
<p><b>Cross-Departmental engagement</b></p>	<p>Communication and coordination with the Department of Finance in relation to the SIDS strategy is highly effective.</p> <p>There is scope for stronger engagement with and by other relevant government Departments.</p>	<p>A discussion on how to include relevant government Departments in the development and implementation of the strategy would be useful, whilst considering limited bandwidth and capacity to engage.</p>

## Introduction

Ireland's Strategy for Partnership with Small Island Developing States 2019-2025 was launched in June 2019. The strategy includes 36 commitments across four strategic objectives focusing on Ireland's influence, place in Europe, values, and people. With the strategy currently in its fourth year, the Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland (DFA) made the decision to review progress made towards the achievement of objectives and commitments (see Appendix 3 for Terms of Reference).

The purpose of the review was to capture the progress and challenges in the implementation of the SIDS strategy and to identify any learning that can inform future strategy, policy, advocacy, and diplomacy initiatives.

The review sought to:

- Provide GPU management with an independent assessment of the outcomes of the SIDS strategy so far against the four strategic objectives and the 36 identified commitments.
- Provide accountability to the Governments and peoples of SIDS for the support provided during the period covered by the review.
- Identify lessons learned.
- Contribute to the Department's strategic decision-making and organisational learning.

The review took place from July to October 2022 and was managed by DFA's independent Evaluation and Audit Unit (EAU), working closely with two external consultants. As this exercise was intended as a review, to be undertaken in a short timeframe, involving interviews with a relatively limited number of external stakeholders, recommendations were not developed. Instead, the lessons learned include 'points to consider' for the development of the next SIDS strategy.

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## Context

### Political Economy

There are 38 countries (and 20 non-UN Members) classified as SIDS in the Caribbean, the Pacific, and the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea (AIS). In total SIDS have a population of roughly 65 million and despite being heterogeneous, are faced with a unique set of social, economic and environmental challenges, due in large part to their remote geography.<sup>1</sup> It can be complicated to deliver essential services in SIDS, and they frequently rely on external markets for many goods, facing high import and export costs, making them vulnerable to exogenous economic shocks. Their small land masses and undiversified economies generally mean that SIDS rely on natural resources from the ocean, with tourism and fisheries often constituting over half of their GDP.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, livelihoods tend to be dependent upon the islands' biodiversity, in addition to the spiritual value of this biodiversity for many small island communities.

In 1994 the Barbados Programme of Action was adopted, setting out a sustainable development action plan in SIDS, followed by the Mauritius Strategy in 2005 which addressed remaining implementation gaps. More recently in 2014 the SAMOA Pathway was developed, charting a new sustainable development pathway for SIDS with greater emphasis on the effects of climate change. The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) is an inter-governmental body that represents all of the SIDS while at the regional level, SIDS are supported by several inter-governmental organisations, including the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).

### Climate Change

SIDS are particularly vulnerable to climate change due to fragile land and marine ecosystems and low land elevation. The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report states with high confidence that sea levels will very likely continue to rise around SIDS which, when coupled with storm surges and waves, will cause shorelines to retreat, intensify coastal inundation and saltwater intrusion as well as increase the intensity of tropical cyclones.<sup>3</sup> In addition, SIDS are likely to become drier with associated aridity.

Amongst many small island communities, these risks pose an existential threat, with sea level rise forcing populations to relocate and fast-onset events such as cyclones impacting infrastructure, water, food security and health systems. Climate events are also damaging much of the natural protection afforded to SIDS through their biodiversity, further compounding socio-economic issues and reducing protection from future climate events. Despite this, many small island communities have histories of

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<sup>1</sup> UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, 'Small Island Developing States', 2022, [www.un.org/ohrrls/content/about-small-island-developing-states](http://www.un.org/ohrrls/content/about-small-island-developing-states).

<sup>2</sup> OECD, 'Making Development Co-Operation Work for Small Island Developing States', 2018.

<sup>3</sup> IPCC, 'Sixth Assessment Report', 2022.

resilience which have resulted in innovative, strong, often community-based, adaptation.<sup>4</sup> In addition, through strong joint advocacy efforts, SIDS have made significant contributions to the global debate on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

## Gender

The inclusion of gender equity and women's empowerment as a priority in the SAMOA Pathway 2014 reflects the crucial role of women in sustainable development as well as the disproportionate impact of climate change on women, exacerbating existing gender inequalities.<sup>5</sup> This is also reflected in the implementation of gender responsive climate actions with the recognition that SIDS have led in inclusive and gender responsive climate action.<sup>6</sup> However, progress is still to be made in creating an enabling environments and institutional capacities to ensure that sustainable development and climate actions in SIDS are gender responsive and that women are included as key actors in planning processes.

## Education and Health

Despite improvements in access to education and reduced gender disparities, education participation and adult literacy rates remain low in many SIDS. Education quality is also an issue and there are challenges in education inequality across geographic, socio-economic and ethnic groups in many SIDS.<sup>7</sup> There are also acute challenges in the health sector, with essential services, human resources and medicines hard to provide in the remote locations of many SIDS. Therefore, many SIDS are burdened by non-communicable diseases and malnutrition, as well as the ongoing impacts of COVID-19.<sup>8</sup>

## Donor Context

Concessional finance from the international community is vital for many SIDS. However, finance tends to be concentrated on a limited number of providers and recipients and based largely on geopolitical/cultural ties or inflows following shocks (see below).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Godfrey Baldacchino, 'Small Island States: Vulnerable, Resilient, Doggedly Perseverant or Cleverly Opportunistic?', *Études Caribéennes* 27–28 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.4000/etudescaribeennes.6984>.

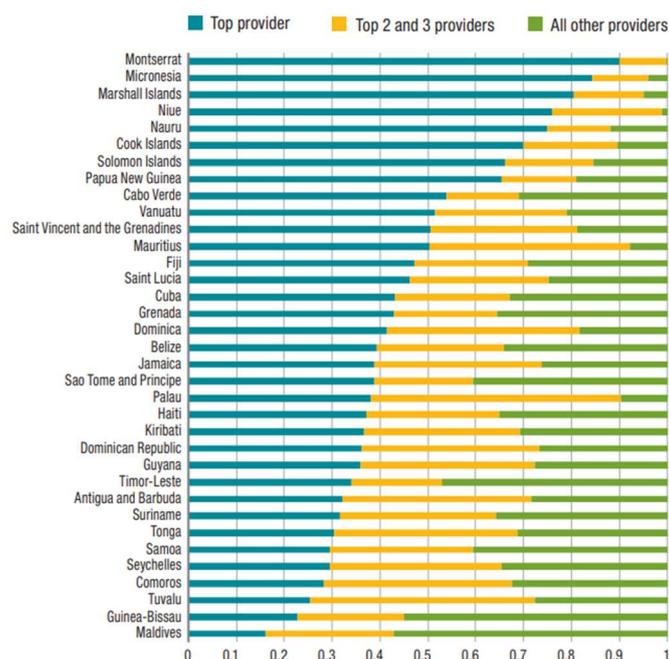
<sup>5</sup> UN General Assembly, 'Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway)', 2014.

<sup>6</sup> UNDP, 'Technical Paper on Gender Responsive Climate Actions in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)', 2022.

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO, 'Small Island Developing States Overview - Education for All Global Monitoring Report', 2015.

<sup>8</sup> WHO, 'SIDS Summit for Health: For a Healthy and Resilient Future in Small Island Developing States - Outcome Statement', 2021.

<sup>9</sup> OECD, 'Making Development Co-Operation Work for Small Island Developing States'.

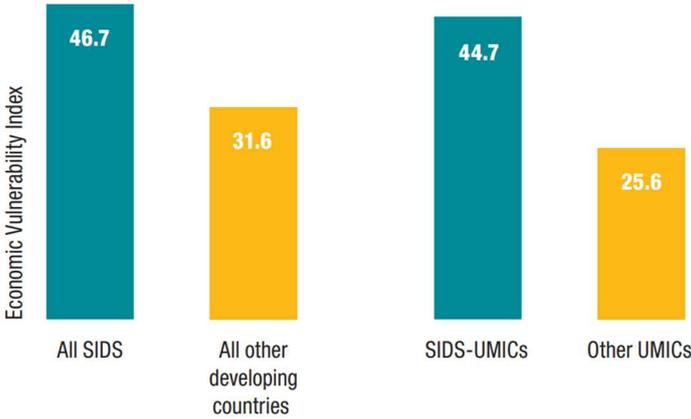


**Figure 1. SIDS ODA from top providers**

Source: OECD, 'Making Development Co-Operation Work for SIDS, (2018)

Many SIDS struggle to access global funds, especially climate funds, due to low absorption capacity and lack of capacity to engage in complex application processes, making engagement on access, modalities and partnerships for concessional finance critical for SIDS. Similar challenges exist in relation to partnerships for SIDS including lack of sustainable financing, human, institutional and technical capacity, enabling conditions for the participation of all stakeholders in partnerships, and internal monitoring of partnerships.<sup>10</sup> It also remains a challenge that despite many SIDS not qualifying for official development assistance (ODA), having graduated from the qualifying income bracket, they are still often highly vulnerable to economic and climate shocks as well as debt distress (see below).

<sup>10</sup> Division for Sustainable Development Goals, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and United Nations, 'Partnership for Small Island Developing States', 2019.



**Figure 2. SIDS economic vulnerability index comparison**

Source: OECD, 'Making Development Co-Operation Work for SIDS, (2018)  
(Note: UMIC – Upper Middle-income Country, categorisation used by OECD DAC)

Another key contextual issue is the UK’s withdrawal from the EU (Brexit). This has implications for the development cooperation between the EU and SIDS. Specifically the UK previously played a key role as an advocate for SIDS in Brussels and left what could be described as a void in this space following Brexit.

## Ireland's Strategic Engagement with SIDS

Ireland's strategic engagement with SIDS began in the late 1990s and early 2000s during Ireland's previous UNSC campaign and term. However, Ireland was seen (by internal and external stakeholders) to have 'dropped the ball' on engagement post 2002, lacking follow through on the relations that were initiated in this period. The development of the current strategy was motivated by the onset of the 2021-22 UNSC campaign and the prioritisation of climate across the Development Cooperation and Africa Division (DCAD), an expanding development programme and Ireland's experience and specific knowledge as an island.

The Strategy for Partnership with SIDS 2019-2025 was launched in 2019, representing an innovation for DFA given its cross-governmental nature, and has since guided Ireland's engagement with SIDS. It was designed as a tangible product which illustrated Ireland's commitment to SIDS with engagement beyond the UNSC campaign, with Ireland one of the only countries to develop a bespoke strategy for partnership with SIDS. The strategy aligns with Ireland's broader commitments in *The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World* (2015), *A Better World* (2019), the *Global Ireland strategy* (2018) and the *Africa, Asia Pacific, and Latin America and Caribbean Regional Strategies*. See Figure 3 below for a timeline of the key policies and strategies.

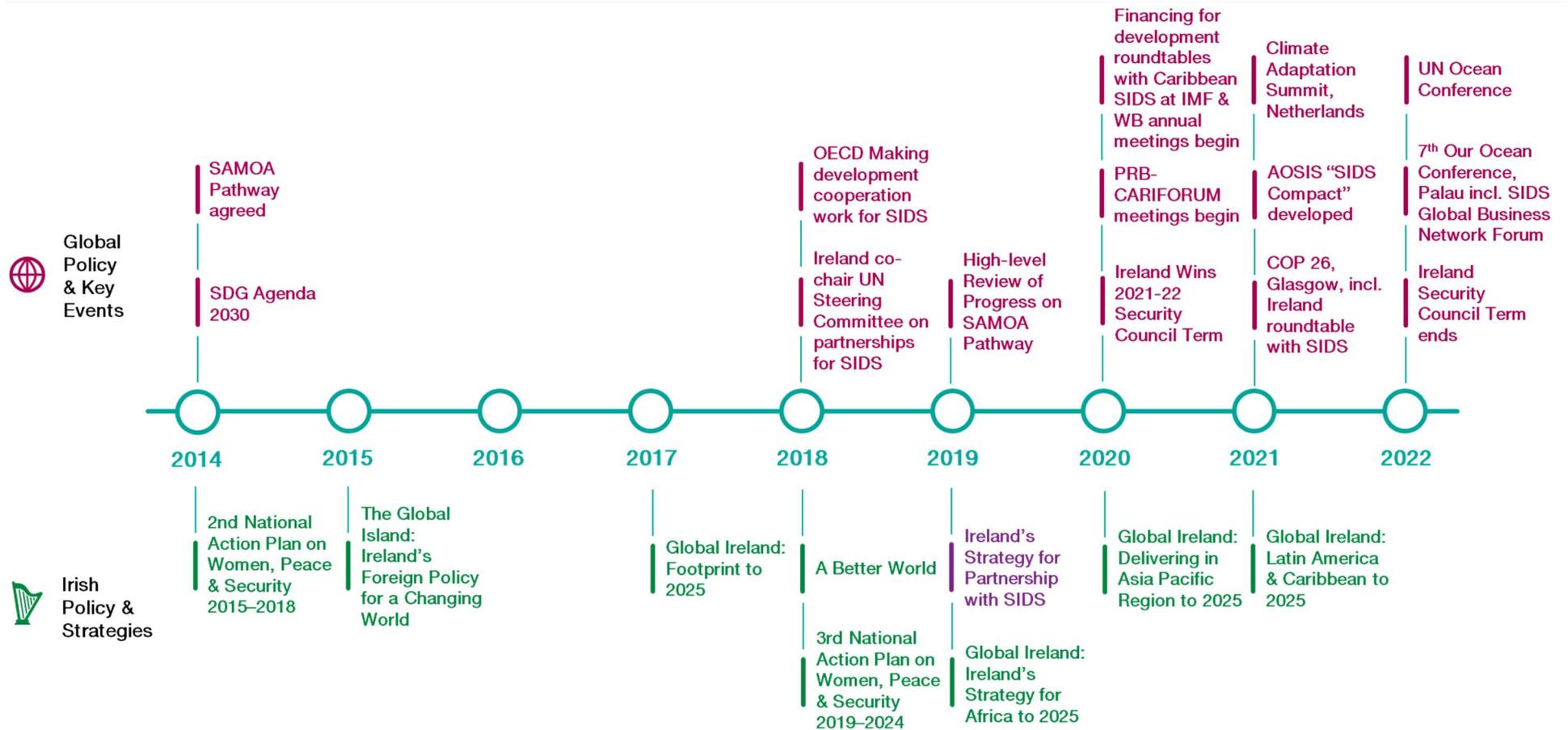


Figure 3. SIDS strategy timeline

In terms of coordination, the strategy was developed and managed by the Policy Unit (PU) initially, before moving to the GPU in 2019/20. The strategy is now coordinated by three staff in GPU, Director, Deputy Director and Desk Officer. GPU coordinates and implements the strategy with support from the Africa Unit (AU), the Asia Pacific Unit (APU), the Climate Unit (CU), the Latin America & Caribbean (LAC) Unit, the Multilateral Unit (MLU – both EU and UN & IFIs) and the Policy Unit as well as a number of Ireland’s relevant Missions including: Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, Mexico, New Zealand, Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN (New York), Permanent Mission to the OECD, Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, Tanzania, the Philippines and the US.

The strategy focuses on 4 strategic objectives:

- i. influencing to champion the needs of SIDS using a collaborative approach;
- ii. ensuring the European Union’s (EU) institutions, policies and support are delivering for SIDS;
- iii. establishing regional partnerships to address the needs of SIDS;
- iv. establishing mechanisms to help contribute expertise to development challenges in SIDS.

These strategic objectives have manifested in a number of actions such as bilateral and multilateral advocacy through the UN, EU, IFIs and OECD and roles such as; co-chairing the Steering Committee on SIDS Partnerships in 2018 (extended through to the beginning of 2020); contributions to the SIDS Partnership Framework; co-chairing the High-level Review of Progress on SAMOA Pathway in 2019; and the establishment of a €12 million SIDS Trust Fund at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) – increased to €14.1 million in 2021.

The reported spend on SIDS related activities between 2019 and 2021 is over €31.5 million. There is no central budget held in GPU; the Unit has a small SIDS partnerships allocation and manages the small In-Country Micro Projects Scheme (ICMPS) budget. The ICMPS is aimed at allowing Irish Embassies to directly support local NGOs to carry out small-scale development projects. The Fellows Programme for SIDS and its budget is also in GPU. Funding for SIDS related activities comes from various Units across DCAD. See below for a summary of the budget spent on SIDS for related activities 2019 to 2021.

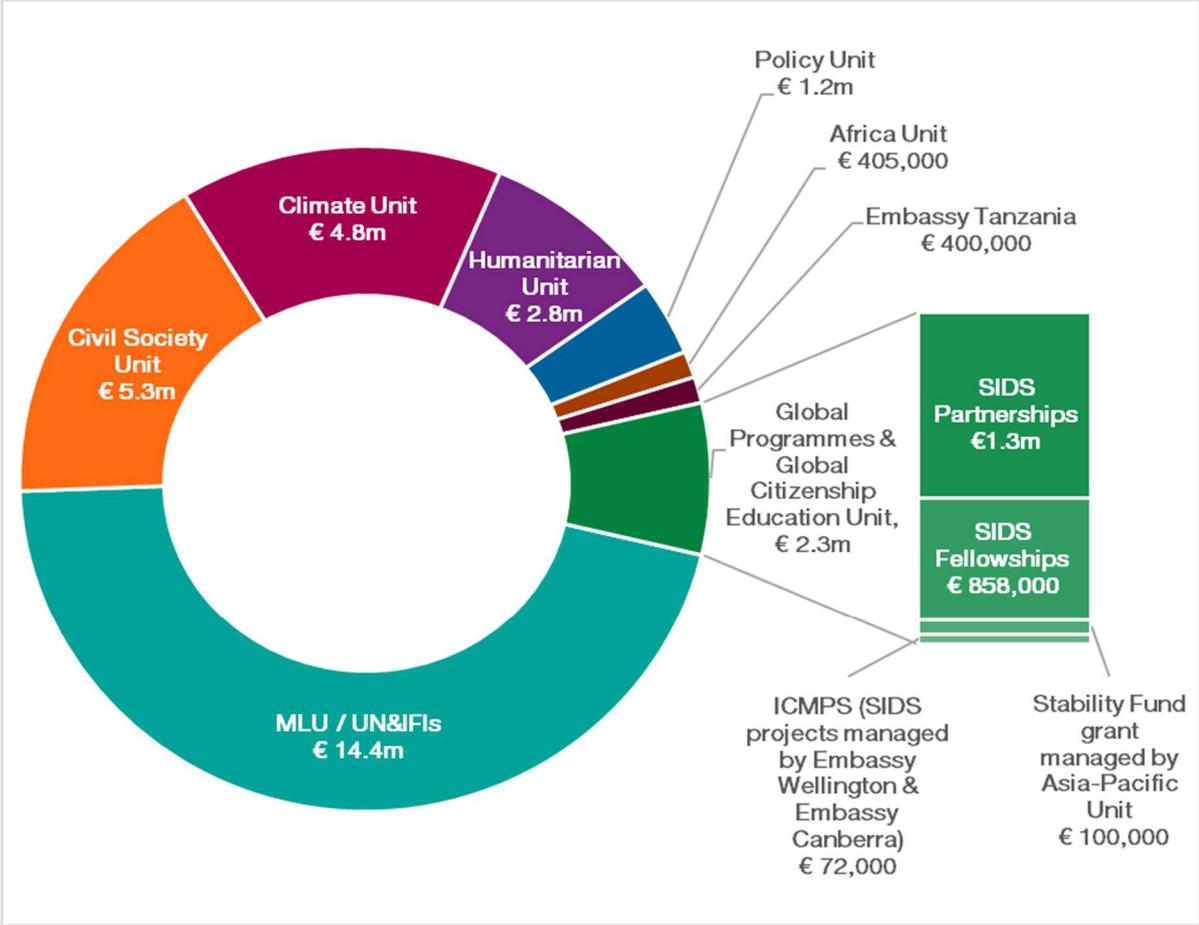


Figure 4. Total DCAD spend on SIDS related activities by business units 2019-21

The majority of funding went to the Pacific, followed by the Caribbean, global funding for SIDS and considerably less on Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and South China Seas (AIS)/Africa.

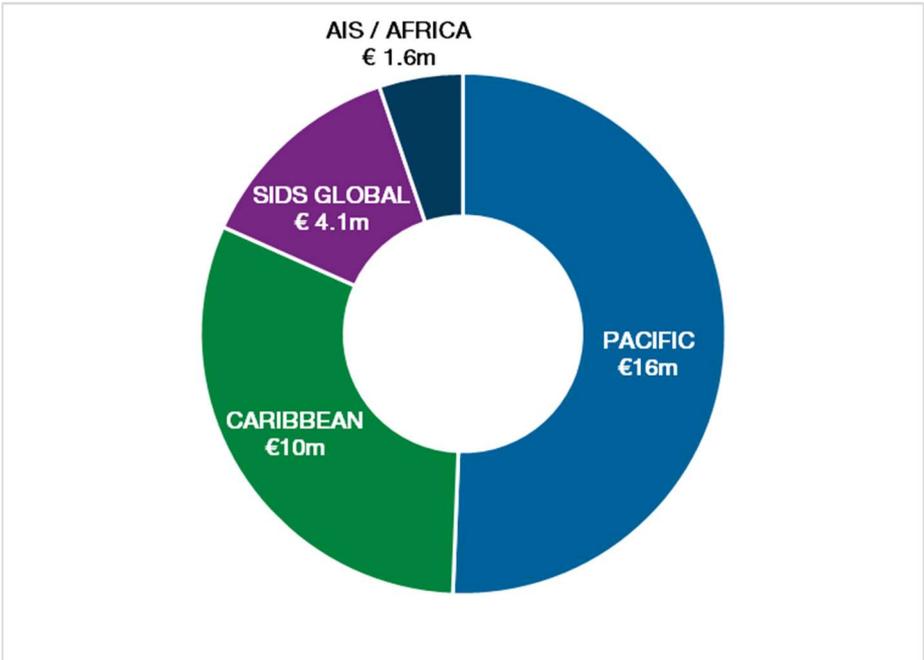


Figure 5. Total DCAD spend on SIDS related activities per region 2019-2021

## Methodology

The review adopted a mixed methods approach, including a comprehensive document review, internal survey, and key informant interviews (KIIs). There were three main phases to the review, namely:

1. Preparation phase (EAU)
2. Data collection phase (EAU and IOD PARC)
3. Analysis and reporting (EAU and IOD PARC)

The first phase, conducted by the EAU team, focused on developing a survey template for Headquarters (HQ) Units and Mission teams to fill out based on their views and activities in relation to the SIDS strategy. Consultants from IOD PARC joined EAU colleagues for the second phase, i.e., the data collection phase. This phase included an analysis of the results of the survey, as well as a review of key documents related to the strategy. The results of these exercises were included in the 'Emerging Issues' paper, which also included a list of key internal and external stakeholders to be interviewed during the data collection phase.

Key review questions were included in the review matrix. There were eight overarching review questions set out in the SIDS strategy review plan focusing on the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness and coherence, as well as on lessons learned. Gender was considered as a cross-cutting theme across the eight review questions. This report is structured around the review questions, with each section responding to the questions in sequence. Table 2 below sets out the key review questions:

**Table 2. Key review questions**

DAC criterion	DAC definition	Review questions
<b>Relevance</b>	Is the intervention doing the right things?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How did the design and implementation of the SIDS strategy respond to the priority areas of action for Small Island Developing States?</li> <li>2. What have been the most significant internal and external contextual changes since 2019?</li> </ol>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Is the intervention achieving its objectives?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. To what extent has the SIDS strategy delivered on the commitments and actions to date?</li> <li>4. What were the key achievements and challenges?</li> <li>5. Has communication of the strategy been effective?</li> </ol>
<b>Coherence</b>	How well does the intervention fit?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. To what extent is the implementation of the SIDS strategy perceived to be coherent with relevant policies, such as A Better World and The Global Island?</li> </ol>
<b>Lesson learning</b>	N/A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. What key insights were gleaned through the implementation of the SIDS strategy that can inform the second phase of strategy implementation?</li> <li>8. What further actions should Ireland/the Department take to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and coherence for SIDS?</li> </ol>

Data collection tools were developed, including semi-structured interview guides for internal and external stakeholders, as well as a data management framework linked to the review questions. There were three main evidence streams as part of the review. A total of 54 documents were examined and 21 responses to the excel survey were analysed. During the data collection phase, a total of 19 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted.



**Figure 6. Overview of the evidence base**

The review team sought to ensure a strong balance of views during the data collection process, including internal stakeholders at both HQ and Mission level, as well as a diverse range of external stakeholders that DFA engaged with in relation to the SIDS strategy. Table 3 below shows a breakdown of the KIIs. A full list of those consulted is presented in Appendix 2.

**Table 3. Breakdown of stakeholders interviewed**

	Internal	External
<b>Total</b>	13	6
<b>Details</b>	5 Missions 8 HQ Units	1 SIDS Fellow 1 Representative from the Department of Finance 1 SIDS representative 3 Grant partner organisations

The third phase of the review focused on analysis and reporting. Following the data collection phase, an endpoint analysis workshop was conducted by the review team to analyse data against each of the review questions and focus on lessons learned to support the development of the next SIDS strategy. A validation workshop was then conducted with key internal stakeholders to test the findings and lessons learned to ensure these were in line with internal perspectives and useful for the next iteration of the strategy. The findings from the data collection phase, together with feedback from stakeholders during the validation workshop, informed the final review report. Key points for consideration in the development of the next SIDS strategy are presented under the final review question.

### Limitations

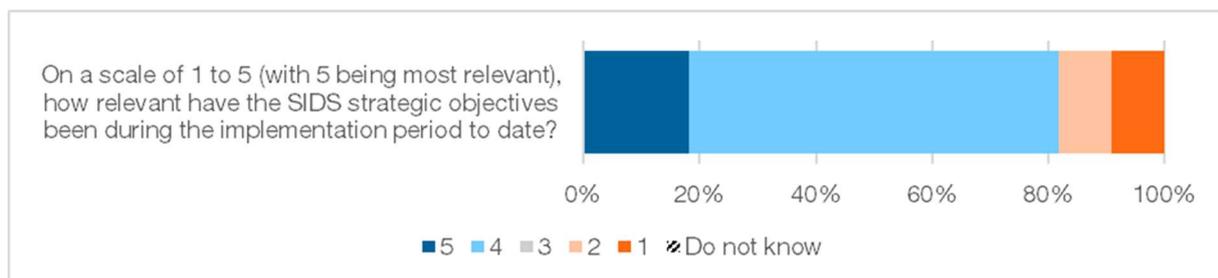
Standard limitations include bias, breadth of the review, participation limitations and quality and availability of data. A particular limitation is that the review exercise did not include travel to a sample of SIDS locations and thus contact with and KIIs with in-country SIDS government representatives and others were not possible.

## Findings

### Relevance

#### How did the design and implementation of the SIDS strategy respond to the priority areas of action for Small Island Developing States?

Overall, there is strong evidence that the design and implementation of the SIDS strategy responded well to priority areas of action for SIDS. The majority of internal and external stakeholders, including representatives from SIDS, hold this view. The survey of HQ and Mission teams, conducted at the beginning of the review process, asked about views on the relevance of the strategic objectives during the implementation period to date. As indicated in the graph below (Figure 7), most stakeholders perceived the strategic objectives to be relevant; 20% indicated the objectives were highly relevant, and 60% indicated they were very relevant. Just 10% of respondents indicated that the objectives were not relevant to SIDS. The strategy also recognised that SIDS are not a homogenous group and that although there are some similarities, e.g., climate change-related risks, different regions have very different needs. Internal stakeholders noted that the strategy focussed on the Caribbean and Pacific SIDS, and less so on the AIS or African SIDS. However, in the case of Tanzania, the Embassy recently established a SIDS Working Group to strengthen the relevance of the SIDS strategy.



**Figure 7. Feedback form responses - Relevance of SIDS strategic objectives**

There is strong evidence that the focus of the strategic objectives is relevant both to SIDS and to Ireland's broader foreign policy objectives. The 36 commitments set out in the strategy provided tangible goals without restricting activities. The strategy successfully piloted a new 'network' approach to strategies; the SIDS partnership strategy is not a geographic, technical, or thematic strategy but rather one focused on networks, relationships, diplomacy, advocacy, and people. It is not viewed as an 'aid' strategy but rather an investment strategy. The strong focus on climate, the environment, the oceans and the role of fisheries as a climate mitigating instrument, and governance as well as the fellowships programme were all appreciated by SIDS. Internally, the strategy was considered to be highly relevant to Ireland's campaign for the UN Security Council, as well as to the increased prioritisation of climate issues in broader diplomacy and the strengthened focus on climate finance and on Oceans and the Sustainable Blue Economy.

**In terms of the design and development of the strategy, there is strong evidence that SIDS were consulted in a highly participatory and inclusive way.** Based on the KIIs and the documentation reviewed, the feedback from SIDS was positive in this regard. Relationships and trust between Ireland and SIDS were further strengthened during this phase, including at ministerial level. Consultations were conducted through the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN (PMUN) in New York, through ‘céilís’ (Irish community gatherings) and on the fringes of international events, as well as in country with a sample of SIDS. The KIIs and the documentation reviewed indicates that the SIDS countries felt that Ireland demonstrated a clear understanding that small states must be part of conversations that affect their future. This effective consultation process contributed to the relevance of the strategy.

Although the consultative approach to conducting meetings in SIDS countries was strong in the development phase, feedback from stakeholders at the Mission level indicated this could have been stronger over the course of the strategic period, noting that once the strategy was launched, it became more HQ-centric. Although there have been ad-hoc consultations, e.g., the ministerial meeting with a group of Pacific SIDS representatives at the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26) in November 2021, and the Local 2030 Islands Network at the UN in New York, these tend to be more at international level rather than on the ground closest to those directly affected by key issues such as climate change. This lack of consultation was as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic which rendered travel impossible and led to the cancellation of visits to SIDS countries. As noted above, the recently established SIDS Working Group in the Tanzania Mission is a positive example of an approach to mitigating this post pandemic.

**The establishment of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) single donor Trust Fund is another strong example of Ireland ensuring inclusive and participatory consultations with SIDS countries in the development of an instrument designed to address their specific needs.** This was the first single donor Trust Fund for both Ireland and the Bank. Ireland adopted an innovative and participatory approach in this, consulting with Pacific SIDS on their needs and priorities in relation to the Fund. This was considered an innovative approach as this was a divergence from how Trust Funds had been developed within the Bank up to then. The feedback from SIDS on this process was very positive. The Trust Fund is largely focused on climate resilience projects and also includes a focus on social protection. All projects are set up to report on a gender outcome. There are concrete examples of how the Trust Fund is addressing specific needs relevant to SIDS in the Pacific, e.g., the multi-hazard analysis supported in Tonga which was the first of its kind and is now being replicated in other countries, including Bangladesh. There was also a positive multiplier effect as a result of this consultative process; stakeholders observed that the success of this engagement influenced similar engagements between other donors and the ADB, as well as with other financial institutions. When the pandemic began in March 2020, the Trust Fund was reconfigured to support the COVID-19 response in the Pacific in a meaningful way.

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**What have been the most significant internal and external contextual changes since 2019? (Enabling and constraining factors).**

**There have been several internal changes within the Department that have influenced the implementation and trajectory of the strategy.** First of all, the strategy brought existing SIDS activities under one umbrella and helped improve internal awareness and understanding of both SIDS-related issues and Ireland's engagement on these. Up until this point, there had been no integrated or coordinated approach to SIDS engagement. There is strong evidence that awareness of SIDS is now well embedded within the Department and within key units of the Department of Finance. There is high-level commitment to the strategy, including at ministerial level, which has positively influenced implementation of the commitments. SIDS support to Ireland's campaign for the UN Security Council was also instrumental in winning the seat.

**There have also been several key changes at the operational level that have positively influenced Ireland's SIDS engagement.** Ireland received formal accreditation to CARICOM in April 2021 and launched its Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) strategy in February 2022. The GPU, with overall responsibility for coordination of the SIDS strategy, supported the development of the LAC strategy with a focus on the Caribbean SIDS. Progress on opening the Consulate General in Miami is at an advanced stage. There is management approval for, and early progress is expected, on the deployment of an officer to a regional role within the Caribbean, to be based in Miami. Also the Asia Pacific Strategy was launched in 2020. New Missions have opened in Wellington and in Manila. Secondary accreditations for the Asia Pacific region have been reassigned while those for the Caribbean are being reviewed.

Recognising the historically stronger engagement with Anglophone SIDS, Ireland sought to establish closer links with Lusophone and Francophone countries by becoming an Observer to l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and becoming an Associate member of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries. Staff turnover in various Units and Missions led to a slight loss in institutional memory but this is an unavoidable aspect of the Department's system in relation to staff postings and rotations and was mitigated to the extent possible.

**There have also been several external contextual changes since 2019 that have influenced the SIDS strategy.** Brexit was the change cited most often by both internal and external stakeholders during the review process. This has had several effects on Ireland's engagement with SIDS. For example, the UK's departure from the EU means Ireland is now one of two Anglophone countries in the EU and several SIDS are now seeking closer ties with Ireland post-Brexit, e.g., Caribbean SIDS and Fiji. Ireland now has a greater opportunity to take the lead on advocating on behalf of SIDS in Brussels.

**The COVID-19 pandemic had both positive and negative effects on SIDS, though the negative far outweigh the positive and continues to have significant impact.** It heavily damaged tourism industries and local economies reliant on tourism and tested health systems and social protection mechanisms. Ireland was able to demonstrate solidarity with SIDS through the provision of a SIDS-specific package worth €3.5 million for humanitarian assistance and recovery. The pandemic also opened up opportunities through remote working and virtual engagement, although SIDS representatives were clear that this is not a workable substitute for physical engagement in the future.

The current energy crisis may also contribute to a shift in the relationship between Ireland and the SIDS.

**There were also several changes specific to each region.** In the Pacific for example, there were internal challenges within the Pacific Islands Forum and increasing tensions between the US and China. The Pacific SIDS are in a geo-politically contested space, and this has presented political and economic challenges and opportunities for those countries, as well as bringing them into sharper focus for the EU and others who are less traditionally engaged. In the Caribbean and Latin America, Barbados became a republic, which was a relatively smooth process and did not have a negative impact on international relations. The strategy period also saw a worsening humanitarian and security situation in Haiti. SIDS are concerned about the impact for them of Russia's war against Ukraine and the consequent increase in international focus and funding as well as the impact of the conflict on food security and economic recovery.

## Effectiveness

**To what extent has the SIDS strategy delivered on the commitments and actions to date?**

**The majority of the commitments in the SIDS strategy are in progress, with 5 completed, 28 ongoing and 3 outstanding.** The commitments were set out as tangible goals which allowed DFA to largely implement/achieve them, albeit to varying degrees of reported effectiveness. Figure 8 below summarises the status of each of the 36 commitments as well as the average score given by respondents in the feedback form to the question 'How effective has the implementation of the commitment been in meeting its strategic objective? (1 to 5, with 5 being most effective). It should also be noted that the implementation of the strategy to date has taken place within the context of COVID-19 which has significantly affected implementation of the strategy and the extent to which Ireland could engage with SIDS. Table expands upon this and other external and internal challenges.

	Commitment	Responsible Unit	Average Rating	Status
SO 1: We will use Our Influence to champion the needs of SIDS	1	GPU	5	Ongoing
	2	GPU	3.5	Completed
	3	APU, IUKA, PU	3.2	Ongoing
	4	GPU	3	Outstanding
	5	UN Policy, PMUN NY	4.5	Ongoing
	6	UN Policy, PMUN NY	5	Completed
	7	UN Policy	3	Ongoing
	8	GPU	5	Ongoing
	9	Disarmament & Non Proliferation Unit	4	Ongoing
	10	PU	1	Ongoing
	11	MLU UN & IFIs	4	Ongoing
	12	PU	N/A	Ongoing
SO2: Ireland will use our Place in Europe to ensure the EU's institutions, policies and support are delivering for SIDS	13	MLU EU, Perm Rep Brussels	5	Ongoing
	14	MLU EU, Perm Rep Brussels	4	Ongoing
	15	MLU EU, Perm Rep Brussels	1	Ongoing
	16	MLU EU, Perm Rep Brussels	N/A	Ongoing
	17	MLU EU, Perm Rep Brussels	N/A	Ongoing
SO3: Based on Our Values, Ireland will establish a series of regional partnerships that will directly help address the needs of SIDS, and can evolve to meet changing circumstances	18	PU	3	Ongoing
	19	MLU UN & IFIs	4	Ongoing
	20	MLU UN & IFIs	N/A	Ongoing
	21	MLU UN & IFIs	4.5	Ongoing
	22	PU	3.25	Ongoing
	23	HU	3	Completed
	24	MLU UN & IFIs	N/A	Outstanding
	25	GPU, PU, AU, Missions	4	Ongoing
	26	PU	N/A	Ongoing
	27	UN Policy, PMUN NY	3	Completed
	28	GPU	5	Ongoing
SO4: Ireland will establish mechanisms that can help Our People contribute their expertise to development challenges in SIDS	29	GPU, UN Policy, PMUN NY	3.5	Ongoing
	30	PU	N/A	Ongoing
	31	MLU UN & IFIs, GPU	5	Ongoing
	32	GPU	4.5	Ongoing
	33	PU, CU	1	Ongoing
	34	GPU, IAU, Missions	3.14	Completed
	35	GPU, Culture Unit, IAU, Missions	2.8	Outstanding
	36	GPU, Trade Division, IAU, Missions	1.67	Ongoing

**Figure 8. Progress and feedback form rating - SIDS partnership strategy commitments**

A summary of the examples of progress against the 36 commitments and the reasons for this is presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 4. Summary of progress on commitments and actions**

Status	No.	Examples of / Reasons for Progress on Commitments
Completed	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A SIDS team is now established in GPU although their role in strategic leadership and coordination of the SIDS strategy needs to be defined.</li> <li>Ireland has established a €12 million Trust Fund at the Asian Development Bank, for SIDS that are members of the ADB, focused on climate resilience and disaster risk reduction, with a further €2.1 million committed to support the COVID-19 response.</li> <li>There were differing views regarding the effectiveness of the commitments on diaspora in the strategy despite commitment 34 being</li> </ul>

		<p>indicated as complete. Missions signalled limited interest from partners in diaspora events and a lack of resources to implement them and SIDS did not have clear focal points on diaspora engagement. However, two policy roundtables were organised hosted by the Minister of State for Diaspora and Development with SIDS representatives. There were subsequent follow-up sessions with Cabo Verde and others. Cabo Verde is now carrying out a diaspora mapping exercise in cooperation with the IOM with a view to developing a diaspora strategy drawing on lessons from the Irish experience.</p>
<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>29</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The céilí approach to engaging with SIDS was seen as effective in providing opportunities to listen to and understand SIDS’ needs, despite COVID-19 restrictions limiting opportunities for direct engagement.</li> <li>• Ireland’s work with regional groupings was more successful in the Caribbean with CARICOM and the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) than elsewhere. Progress in the Pacific was limited by internal Pacific Islands Forum complications, a lack of resources for Mission engagement, COVID-19 related travel restrictions and difficulties in identifying regional partnerships/forums in relation to the AIS/Africa SIDS.</li> <li>• Engagement through UN and MDB fora was viewed as highly effective. The PMUN NY has been a leader on SIDS engagement, the Department of Finance has played a strong role and the funding/staff member provided to UNDESA staffing was effective.</li> <li>• Ireland’s engagement in health and nutrition with SIDS was very limited partly due to lack of awareness of the links with the SIDS strategy in the Policy Unit. But this was highlighted as an area in which Ireland can usefully apply expertise moving forward.</li> <li>• Ireland’s work with the OECD and MDBs on access to finance was recognised including strong inputs for the multidimensional vulnerability index. This was highlighted as an area that needs continuing attention due to the huge strategic importance to SIDS.</li> <li>• Engagement with/for SIDS in the EU has progressed with regular communication between Caribbean SIDS and Ireland’s Permanent Representation to the EU Mission in Brussels through the CARIFORUM dialogues. However, Ireland’s engagement in this area needs to be defined: to what extent can Ireland support Caribbean states on their own policy engagement with the EU and ensure this is reflected in Ireland’s own policy approaches and advocacy? Also does Ireland have the capacity and should it consider extending engagement to Pacific and/or African SIDS in the EU space, perhaps through virtual means?</li> <li>• Ireland’s work with MDBs and regional organisations has progressed with numerous partnerships identified and implemented. There has been less progress in the relationship with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) however. While no formal engagement on the membership of the bank is currently proceeding, consideration of membership has not ceased and would require the necessary due diligence.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The commitments related to knowledge-sharing between and amongst SIDS partners were seen as largely ineffective with little progress made; COVID-19 restrictions was one of the constraining factors.</li> <li>The number of fellows from SIDS has grown between 2019 to 2022, with a total of 43 fellows from 20 different SIDS studying in Ireland (6 fellows in 2020-21, 20 in 2021-22, and 17 in 2022-23).</li> <li>below for the numbers of fellows per region and country.</li> </ul>
Outstanding	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The commitment to establish a network of envoys has evolved post-UNSC campaign and as a consequence of Ireland's policy of developing regional offices to cover some regions in which it does not have resident diplomatic representation. Early progress is expected on deployment of an officer to a regional role in the Caribbean, with the modalities for the Asia-Pacific and African regions under consideration and including the reorganisation of secondary accreditations.</li> <li>The research in the Pacific on climate security including gender-based violence (GBV) was delayed by COVID-19 travel restrictions. However, the UN Peacebuilding Fund, a body funded by DFA, is doing specific work on climate and security in the context of Pacific SIDS.</li> <li>Reflect on Ireland's diaspora link with SIDS, including a study on the links between Ireland and the Caribbean</li> </ul>

### What were the key achievements and challenges?

**Overall, Ireland's sustained and considered engagement and support for SIDS at national, regional and multilateral levels**, including within the UNGA, UNSC, ADB, OECD, World Bank and the COP **has established Ireland as a credible, inclusive partner for SIDS** with considerable expertise in climate and finance. Interviews, including with external partners and SIDS representatives, highlighted that Ireland is now more visible than before amongst SIDS and considered as a dependable partner at both multilateral and bilateral level that ensures that SIDS needs are considered in multilateral and regional forums. Due to Ireland's approach, based on listening and responsiveness, internal stakeholders also highlighted that DFA now has a much greater strategic understanding of the differentiated needs of SIDS, with Ireland's work tailored according to needs recognised by SIDS partners.

It was noted that there are examples where **Ireland's standing with SIDS on key issues has helped facilitate support from SIDS for Ireland's priorities** as well. For example, in recent EU Ukraine-related outreach in the UNGA, Ireland has been asked by the EU delegation to advocate for the EU position with a number of SIDS, given the strong relationships in place.

**A key outcome of Ireland establishing itself as a strategic partner for SIDS was that it secured support from a significant number of SIDS in the UNSC campaign**, helping Ireland secure election to the Security Council. Since its election, Ireland has been recognised by its partners for its work on

bringing forward a thematic resolution on climate and security<sup>11</sup> at the UNSC in 2021 (a key priority of SIDS during the campaign), despite the eventual Russian veto of the resolution.

**It was noted by external stakeholders that Ireland developing and implementing a SIDS specific strategy has motivated other donors to follow suit**, or in other cases has allowed SIDS to leverage the example of Ireland to encourage other donors to provide increased or more focused support to SIDS. Ireland's role in co-chairing the SAMOA Pathway and the Steering Committee for SIDS Partnerships were highlighted as important factors in Ireland's selection for the co-facilitation role for the mid-term review (MTR) of the SAMOA Pathway alongside Fiji, which has contributed to stronger diplomatic relations with Fiji.

**In terms of support through the MDBs and the OECD, Ireland has supported SIDS to access finance and fund several examples of innovative projects and research.** Ireland's support to develop a multidimensional vulnerability index (a key strategic priority for SIDS) is ongoing. The Index may eventually allow non-ODA eligible SIDS to access much needed finance for development and climate adaptation. In a similar vein, Ireland's work with the OECD led to the funding of a case study on transition finance in the Solomon Islands. Ireland has also supported changes to the ODA graduation system, as well as changes to the language in the 2020 OECD DAC High Level Communiqué to better reflect SIDS needs and supported the establishment of a high-level DAC-SIDS dialogue. The DFA/DCAD Our Shared Ocean programme has been designed in a manner that ensures there is scope for all SIDS (both ODA eligible and non-ODA eligible) to participate in the programme.

**In addition, Ireland backed up its commitment to a listening approach by advocating for consultation with SIDS as part of the single donor ADB Trust Fund.** This led to implementation of the approach by ADB during the application and approval processes for the Fund. The ADB Trust Fund implementation has since led to several innovative projects including a multi-hazard risk assessment in Tonga, focused on identifying areas on the island for climate resilient development as opposed to a climate-proofing approach. It was noted by an ADB stakeholder that due to its strategic engagement Ireland has also increased its influence within the ADB.

**Other key achievements include that Ireland is now engaged in climate loss and damage work and wielding influence within the EU space due to its recognised expertise.** Ireland's increased engagement on biodiversity and blue economies with WIOMSA contributed to the launch of the Great Blue Wall, a regional initiative aimed at accelerating the blue economy for western Indian Ocean countries. WIOMSA were subsequently invited to the policy dialogue on oceans ahead of the launch of Our Shared Ocean. After engagement with the Pacific Islands, Ireland has developed contacts with the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and with a view to apply for Dialogue Partner status at the PIF.

**Finally, the SIDS fellowships have led to strong capacity building outcomes** (including capacity and networks built in and/or between SIDS, particularly in environment and climate related subjects) **and diplomatic outcomes** (with the fellowships a key reference point amongst external stakeholders and several former fellows holding positions in government in SIDS). See below for the fellowships per region and country.

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<sup>11</sup> UNSC Resolution S/2021/990 found here: [S/2021/990 : UN Documents : Security Council Report](#)

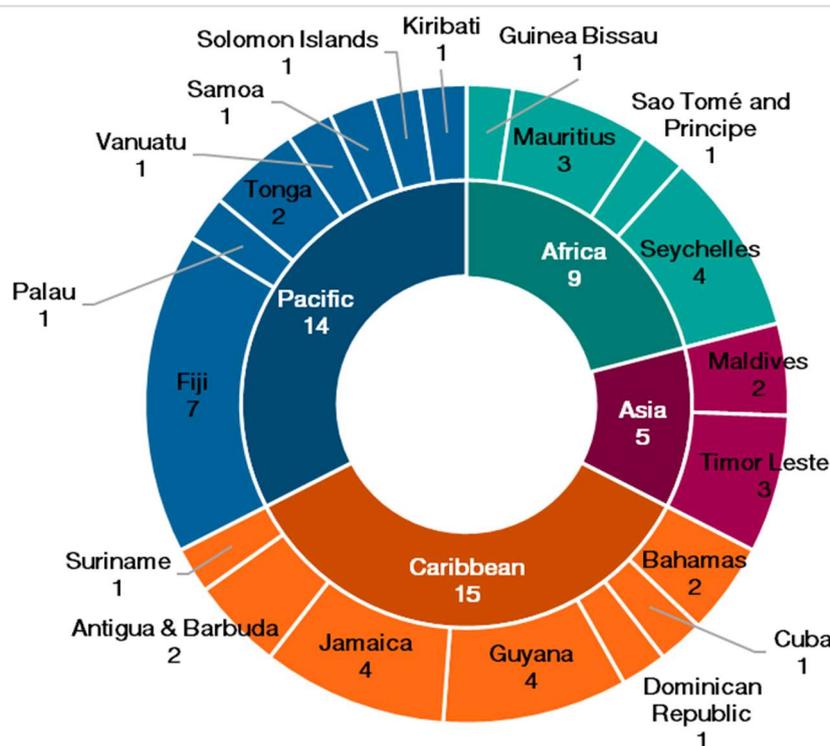


Figure 9. SIDS Fellowships numbers per region and country - 2019-22

The key internal and external challenges related to the implementation of the strategy are summarised in Table below.

Table 5. Key internal and external challenges

Internal challenges	External challenges
Although the strategy has been an exemplar of the ‘Team Ireland’ approach, <b>internal coordination</b> remains a challenge due to the number of interfacing Units, including Units/Missions at HQ, regional and country level.	<b>COVID-19</b> limited direct/bilateral engagement with SIDS as well as limiting SIDS opportunities for participation in international events which was already an issue due to remoteness. It impacted on the delivery of key funding programmes such as the ADB and the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF). This slowed the building of relations with SIDS as well as internal DFA operations.
Missions struggled with a <b>lack of clarity regarding what funding streams they could access for SIDS-related activities</b> with a very small GPU held budget (ICMPS) and lack of clarity on funding for secondary accreditations. Missions noted that they had to search for relevant funding from HQ Units.	<b>Technical capacities</b> were often lacking in SIDS government, regional partners, and national NGOs, making identifying appropriate partnerships and having capacity to fulfil reporting obligations difficult. It was noted that <b>regional partners with adequate capacity were often not present, particularly in African</b>

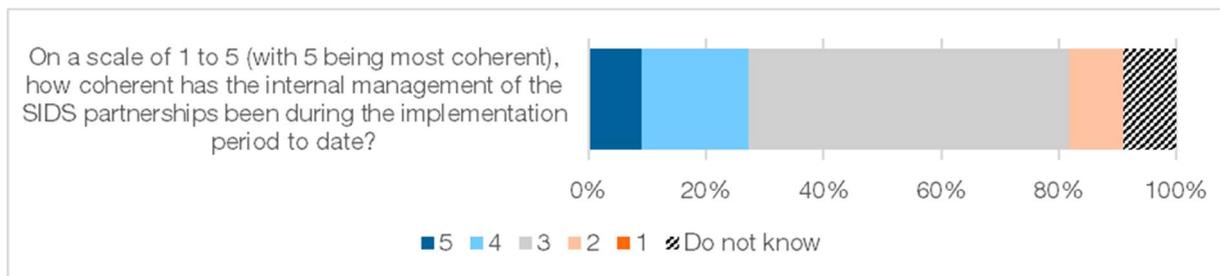
Internal challenges	External challenges
	<b>SIDS</b> , limiting opportunities for implementation through partners.
<b>Communication between the relevant Missions</b> , e.g., a network of Missions, was not established for coordination and knowledge sharing on SIDS related activities e.g., The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) was not connected with the Pretoria Mission when there were difficulties in advancing their work in Mauritius (Mauritius is accredited to the South Africa Mission).	<b>Financial capacity and knowledge of multilateral processes in SIDS</b> was often a limiting factor. For example, SIDS often lacked the capacity or finances to attend international conferences, to engage with MDBs or to campaign for UN elections. This highlights the importance of planned capacity building alongside Ireland's other activities to ensure success.
The Missions often have a <b>heavy workload and numerous competing priorities</b> limiting the scope and resources for SIDS related activities. Progress has been made but many felt that Ireland could have better capitalised on some key opportunities e.g., the EU space left by the UK following Brexit.	<b>Many SIDS are not ODA eligible</b> despite key needs around climate for example, which often made it difficult to meet expectations around financing given Ireland's increased and consistent engagement. Greater clarity on means and opportunities for funding would have been helpful in managing expectations. In addition, many SIDS struggle to raise humanitarian funding with the small numbers of population affected. External stakeholders raised the possibility of SIDS-specific emergency funding given they often struggle to raise funds in the face of larger scale emergencies elsewhere.
<b>Ireland's resource package</b> is modest compared to the larger donors. Although small investments were shown to be effective in many cases, there is a need to be clear on Ireland's funding capacity in engagements e.g., the funding available through the ADB Trust Fund.	Working through <b>SIDS own internal coordination mechanisms/forums</b> resulted in additional coordination challenges in some cases e.g., work with the Pacific Islands Forum was delayed due to issues with the forum.
<b>Staff changeovers</b> slowed progress on several of the commitments due to loss of institutional memory and personal relations.	The <b>time differences</b> between regions made engagement/monitoring with SIDS and missions difficult to coordinate. This also limits the opportunities for cross-regional connections to be established.
There was less <b>knowledge, visibility and capacity available in the Department on African SIDS</b> in the Department in comparison to the Caribbean and Pacific SIDS. In addition, <b>the African SIDS are considered a more geographically dispersed, diverse grouping</b> than the Caribbean and Pacific, with a greater	The <b>language barriers</b> with some SIDS limited opportunities for engagement e.g., it was difficult to establish fellowships with Portuguese speaking SIDS in Africa. An effort to address this has been made through the provision of language supports, e.g., the provision of English

Internal challenges	External challenges
number and geographically spread set of Missions accredited to this grouping, making coordination more of a challenge.	language classes to Lusophone SIDS candidates.
The <b>relationship with the CDB is distinct to that of other development banks of which Ireland is now a member</b> , leading to the partnership and engagement not advancing to the extent possible.	The <b>speed of implementation</b> has been slow/varied with several key partners including the ADB, CCRIF, WIOMSA due to their internal processes and in some cases capacity constraints.
Ireland is working with a relatively small global footprint with <b>no Missions in SIDS</b> . Therefore, direct engagements have to be considered and planned with a clear purpose.	Following Ireland's previous UNSC campaign and the lack of sustained engagement with SIDS, it was noted that some SIDS partners had <b>low expectations</b> of Ireland, which impeded immediate development of relations. This is a key issue to consider going forward given renewed expectations from SIDS regarding Ireland's engagement.
Due to the <b>administration of the fellowships</b> through the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS), DFA received comparatively little visibility for the activities administered by the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) under this Commitment. It was also felt that there was not sustained engagement with former fellows and thus Ireland was not fully benefitting from a potential alumni network.	The terms and conditions when providing support to technical staff placements in a UN body need to take account of the receiving entities human resource contracts systems and their costs to maximise the opportunities for sustained engagement and follow on work.

### How effective was communication of the strategy?

The review found that there was strong awareness of the strategy amongst all stakeholders consulted, both internal and external. Not only were stakeholders aware of the strategy but they highlighted that the existence (as much as the content) of the strategy was a strong signal of intent both within DFA and amongst its partners. Therefore, the strategy also acted as an important external communications tool.

The SIDS team in GPU (created in 2019/20) played an important and appreciated coordination and communication role for the strategy. It was felt that upwards communication - i.e., information gathered from countries for use in the PMUN NY and Brussels Missions - was very strong, providing counterparts with all of the evidence needed for engagement in multilateral and regional forums. However, downwards, the Mission network were less aware of the ongoing implementation of the strategy with more limited engagement from GPU and geographical desks. This was a strong finding from interview evidence and below shows the survey template responses on the coherence of internal management of the SIDS partnerships, with over half of respondents selecting the neutral 3 option.



**Figure 10. Feedback form responses – Coherence of the internal management of SIDS partnerships**

The review found a need to move away from ad-hoc, events-based communication and coordination to more structured, regular and systematic communications on progress, upcoming events and strategic direction. This would help ensure that the strategy remains a continuous, year-round consideration across Missions and Units and that relevant Missions and units could provide input to key processes, events and meetings where possible. Stakeholders felt that there could be greater leadership or direction on engagement with SIDS. The lack of an implementation or results framework often led to a lack of clarity about who was responsible for what and which unit was driving certain elements of the strategy. For example, there was no clear lead amongst the Missions to drive the Pacific or Caribbean SIDS relations and there was no clear lead on the diaspora commitments in the strategy.

In addition, the review found that Missions in particular lacked clarity on the funding available for SIDS related activities. For example, the tiered Promotion and Outreach budgets for Missions do not appear to be widely understood as a tool that can be used for SIDS engagement if an appropriate case is made to do so. There are various internal funding sources that Missions/regional units can draw on, but these were not clear, and Missions often had to search for relevant funding from HQ units to fund initiatives in SIDS when an opportunity was identified.

The review also found that internal stakeholders often did not have sight of key events related to SIDS as there was not a centralised or regional contacts and events management system in place. At Mission and Regional unit level in particular, the networks between Missions and Units have not been developed and, therefore, Missions often lacked sight of other Mission's strategies and engagements with SIDS, leading to an uncoordinated approach. The sharing of knowledge between Units and Missions could also be improved to highlight work of interest e.g., the multi-hazard vulnerability assessment funded by ADB Trust Fund in Tonga could be relevant for the Climate Unit and Fiji or Belize.

Finally, stakeholders found that the communication of the fellowships programme in SIDS countries could be improved. It was felt that the fellowships may not be reaching the intended audience due to ad-hoc and untargeted communication. Communications were primarily through the Mission's social media accounts and from the MFA in the target country whereas a more relevant audience could be targeted through higher education networks in country. The review notes that GPU are working on a communications strategy with the Communications Unit on the fellowships.

## Coherence

**To what extent is the implementation of the SIDS strategy perceived to be coherent with relevant policies such as A Better World and The Global Island?**

**The review found that the strategy was widely coherent with ‘A Better World’ and ‘The Global Island’**, especially given the increasing focus on climate in ‘A Better World’ and the focus on durable partnerships in ‘The Global Island’. The strategy was also coherent with key Regional strategies. SIDS are mentioned extensively in the recent LAC strategy, and to a lesser extent, in the Asia Pacific and Africa strategies. (See Figure 3 below for a timeline of the key policies and strategies.

for a timeline of the key strategies and policies assessed). The Missions interviewed also reported that they have considered the SIDS strategy in the development of their recent Mission Strategies, with interviewees highlighting that the strategy acted as their ‘permission’ to increase engagement with SIDS. External partners also saw it as largely coherent with global/regional strategies and policies including the SAMOA Pathway and the Coalition of Atoll Nations with their focus on sustainable partnerships.

**In general, the strategy was seen as an exemplar of the ‘Team Ireland’ approach** and fostered connections across DCAD Units, Missions, other Government Departments and Ministers. Restructuring in the Department and Missions has been largely coherent with the strategy including the creation of the GPU, the opening of an Embassy in Manila and the future Office for the Caribbean within the Consulate General in Miami and the reorganised secondary accreditations. The only area for improvement was the cross-governmental aspect of the strategy. Although it was found that relations had been developed across DFA, the Missions and the Department of Finance through implementation of the SIDS strategy, the review found that more work could be done to foster relations with other government Departments such as the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications to ensure a whole of government approach. However, it was noted that this type of engagement would need to be well considered and based on key priorities due to the limited bandwidth in DFA as well as in other government Departments.

## Gender

**Despite the overall strengths in the coherence of the strategy, gender was the one key component of A Better World that was not a focus in strategy.** There is mention of gender equality in the strategy, but this was not an obvious focus area and implementation in relation to gender was seen as a weakness by interviewees. Several of the commitments related to gender were outstanding or had progressed little, i.e., the research on climate security including GBV in the Pacific region and the engagement with the CDB which committed to identifying specific areas of collaboration, such as women’s economic empowerment.

**There were several key achievements in relation to gender**, including Ireland’s advocacy for the inclusion of language on gender in the UN SIDS Steering Committee as well as in the outcome document of the high-level review of the SAMOA Pathway and, more recently, in the IFAD Strategy for Engagement in SIDS for 2022-2027. Furthermore, Ireland supported work around the COP26, to

connect practitioners, and promote discussions on supporting gender integration at the national and local level, particularly through operationalising the priorities and objectives of the Gender Action Plan. The Climate Unit also funds and works closely with two organisations that work to strengthen gender equality in climate action: the Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Gender Office, both of which liaise closely on transmitting international agreements and decisions into national action. In addition, the 50% target for female UN Volunteers (UNVs) and fellowships was met.

However, it was noted that **finding partners with the appropriate technical capacities on gender in SIDS was a challenge**. It was also unclear to what extent the ADB work is gender responsive despite the inclusion of gender outcomes and adherence to the ADB's social safeguards.

**Overall, due to the strong focus and technical capacity on gender across the Department, the lack of explicit focus on gender was not seen as a huge issue as gender is generally considered in Ireland's work.** However, Ireland does have the technical capacity to engage to a greater extent in this area and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) and GBV remain key issues in many SIDS. Interviewees noted that although inclusion of gender in the strategy was not a necessity it would improve consistency, be a point of reference and push extra consideration of gender in some cases.

It was also noted that despite varying approaches and openness to tackling gender issues amongst SIDS themselves, **there are several SIDS that have strong gender champions which could be targeted through gender related work**. Internal stakeholders noted that SIDS can be influential interlocutors on human rights and gender negotiations within the UN and that deepened engagement could pay dividends in relation to gender.

## Lessons Learned

The following sections on lessons learned are structured around 1) the content and development of the strategy and 2) coordination, communication, and implementation of the strategy. The first review question under lessons learned focuses on ‘key insights gleaned’, with the second question designed to build on these insights, presenting key points for consideration in the development of the next SIDS strategy. As the first question informs the second, these have been presented side by side to show the links between lessons learned from implementation of the strategy to date and possible further actions for the development of the next strategy (see Table below). A key point of consideration underpinning the development process of the next strategy relates to awareness of resources (human, financial and time) and the importance of considering these when developing objectives and activities.

As this is a review and not a full evaluation, recommendations have not been developed; instead, the right-hand column presents key points for consideration for DFA when developing the next strategy for partnership with SIDS.

*Table 6. Key lessons learned and further actions to consider regarding the SIDS strategy*

	What key insights were gleaned through the implementation of the SIDS strategy that can inform the second phase of strategy implementation?	What further actions should Ireland/the Department take to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and coherence for SIDS?
	<b>Content and development of the strategy</b>	
<b>Consultation with SIDS to identify strategic priorities</b>	<b>A key strength of the strategy noted by all stakeholders was the fact that it was developed in close consultation with SIDS representatives and reflected their views and priorities.</b> This ensured the 36 commitments represented the voices of SIDS countries. The strategy – both in terms of the development process and the resulting content – also recognised that SIDS are not a homogenous group and that although there are some similarities in terms of priorities and needs, there are also major differences that need to be considered both in the strategic approach and in bilateral	<b>Building on these two points for the next strategy will be important.</b> A key point for consideration noted by both internal and external stakeholders was the need to engage with SIDS in SIDS countries, as well as through international fora and multilateral settings. ‘Boots on the ground’ are important to engage with those closest to the priority issues, as well as to maintain and strengthen relationships. There is a cost implication in relation to this as it was well noted that many SIDS are not easily accessible, and it can be expensive and time-consuming to travel for meetings with key stakeholders.

	What key insights were gleaned through the implementation of the SIDS strategy that can inform the second phase of strategy implementation?	What further actions should Ireland/the Department take to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and coherence for SIDS?
	<p>relations with each country. The SIDS strategy development process was a good example of Ireland demonstrating that it is a partner that listens and can be trusted to deliver.</p>	<p>Costs involved in SIDS visits are likely to be high relative to other visits, and some locations are also high-end holiday destinations with internal inequalities which can pose a separate set of challenges. These points will need to be considered and mitigated to the extent possible. While virtual meetings worked well during the COVID-19 period, it was noted that that is not a sustainable or viable alternative to in-person, face-to-face engagement. There are potential options for consideration, including, for example, bringing Honorary Consuls into the strategy where relevant; examining the recently established SIDS working group in the Tanzania Mission as an example that could be developed elsewhere; while keeping in mind that the Tanzania Mission as a Partner country is larger in human resources and capacity terms than many of the other bilateral Missions. Regional working groups or contact groups are an alternative option to consider. There is also the suggestion of a designated SIDS officer for the Pacific.</p> <p><b>Building on the recognition that there are individual and regional differences between SIDS, it may be useful to reflect this recognition in the next strategy.</b> This could include, for example, differentiated targets, activities and outcome areas for each region.</p>
<b>Level of the strategy</b>	<b>The 36 commitments in the strategy were tangible and activity oriented.</b> Feedback from key internal stakeholders	<b>The success of the strategy has laid a solid foundation for the next iteration. This could potentially include a blended</b>

What key insights were gleaned through the implementation of the SIDS strategy that can inform the second phase of strategy implementation?	What further actions should Ireland/the Department take to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and coherence for SIDS?
<p>indicated that this was a logical approach to the strategy given the context at the time; Ireland was campaigning for a UN Security Council seat and tangible activities were a way to demonstrate concrete commitments to SIDS. SIDS representatives also indicated they wanted tangible commitments that they could see Ireland delivering. Activity-oriented commitments are also more ‘visible’ and the swift achievement – or clear progress towards achievement – of these contributed to deepening the relationships between Ireland and SIDS. Therefore, having an activity-oriented strategy worked well for the first SIDS strategy given the context at the time of development. Many stakeholders also noted that the strategy was not ambitious enough, with most of the commitments well on track to being achieved before the end of the strategic period.</p> <p><b>The current strategy specifically names several key partners for engagement.</b> It was noted by internal stakeholders that this may need to be reconsidered for the next strategy, which could be developed at a higher level in terms of referring to categories of partners instead of specific, named partners.</p>	<p><b>mix of higher-level objectives, strategic outcome areas and activities.</b></p> <p>This could be supported by a Theory of Change (ToC), implementation framework and connected indicators. This is a key topic for an inclusive discussion across all Units and Divisions as ToCs are often viewed as more development-focused and the SIDS strategy is broader than development, encompassing diplomacy, partnerships and wider foreign policy objectives as well as engagement with other government Departments.</p> <p>An implementation framework was noted as a useful tool to support the next strategy, as it would facilitate easier tracking of progress against objectives, financial expenditure and reporting. This would also clarify and harmonise the roles of GPU, HQ Units, regional and thematic desks and Missions, as well as other government Departments (see below). There are positive examples of similar project management approaches that could be used to inform the development of such a framework, e.g., the Planned Implementation of the Canada Ireland Strategy (PICIS).</p> <p>Internal stakeholders unanimously agreed it would be beneficial to refer to categories of partners in the next strategy rather than specific, named partners.</p>

	What key insights were gleaned through the implementation of the SIDS strategy that can inform the second phase of strategy implementation?	What further actions should Ireland/the Department take to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and coherence for SIDS?
		<p><b>A key point of discussion ought to also focus on the idea of growth vs. consolidation.</b> There is a strong foundation now in place which provides a solid base for growth and expansion in relation to engagement with SIDS at all levels. At the same time, resources and competing (foreign policy and financial) priorities must also be considered.</p>
Engagement with SIDS	<p><b>A specific section on SIDS issues and engagement is not currently included in all relevant Mission strategies.</b> Where this is done, it appears to be driven by the priorities and interest of the country team. It was noted that a more systematic approach to including SIDS in Mission strategies could lead to a more coherent engagement, as well as ensuring ongoing monitoring and reporting.</p> <p><b>Engagement of non-sovereign Small Islands was also a key point of discussion in relation to lessons learned.</b> Both internal and external stakeholders observed that non-sovereign Small Islands face similar issues to SIDS in relation to the effects of climate change, blue economies and capacity strengthening. This recognition is not reflected in the strategy however, which focuses on sovereign SIDS. There were some good examples of engagement with non-sovereign Small Islands, e.g., the Cook Islands and Niue (both self-governing in free association with New Zealand) are now treated as SIDS and there are projects focusing on the Zanzibar archipelago (Unguja and Pemba) through</p>	<p><b>Options for including specific references to SIDS in relevant Mission Strategies and annual business plans could be considered.</b> Including this in how the Mission plans for implementation and monitors and reports would also support the idea of an implementation framework above as it would support the alignment and contribution of country-level activities to overarching strategic outcome areas. It would also allow for more streamlined tracking of progress towards objectives.</p> <p><b>It would be useful for Regional Units along with GPU to discuss how to engage with SIDS that fall outside the traditional category of sovereign, development states.</b> Since lead Units guide Missions, they – with GPU involvement - can usefully develop guidance for themselves and Missions on how to engage with non-sovereign Small Islands and high-income SIDS that are non-ODA eligible. The Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform list of SIDS, which includes Non-UN members/Associate Members of Regional Commissions may be useful and is at: <a href="https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sids/list">https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sids/list</a></p>

What key insights were gleaned through the implementation of the SIDS strategy that can inform the second phase of strategy implementation?	What further actions should Ireland/the Department take to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and coherence for SIDS?
<p>WIOMSA. However, this engagement is ad hoc and driven by Missions rather than the strategy or guidance from regional Units and/or GPU.</p> <p><b>Challenges around engaging with SIDS that are not eligible for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) funding was also a key insight.</b> Some SIDS are high-income countries but experience climate change-induced effects that they require external support to address. Stakeholders observed that work on approaches such as the Multi-Vulnerability Index is important in relation to engaging high-income SIDS and noted broader guidance from Regional Units and/or GPU on engaging high-income SIDS would also be beneficial.</p> <p><b>One of the external challenges noted was in relation to capacity.</b> This included finding national/regional partners with capacity to implement programmes and projects in SIDS countries/regions, as well as SIDS' capacity to attend relevant international events and engage with UN processes and with the multilateral development banks.</p> <p><b>Ireland's relationships with SIDS are also political.</b> They are State to State and while they are guided by the strategy, it is important to note they are not bound by it.</p>	<p><b>Technical and financial capacity in SIDS should be considered and planned for as part of future engagement with SIDS to ensure that potential obstacles are foreseen.</b> Options for working with SIDS to identify local partners, increase capacity to deliver programmes and deepen engagement in multilateral fora would also be useful to consider. This could include, for example, hiring local consultants to support the identification of partnership opportunities, as well as to establish and maintain key relationships. Again, the cost (human, financial, time) implications would need to be strongly considered.</p>

	What key insights were gleaned through the implementation of the SIDS strategy that can inform the second phase of strategy implementation?	What further actions should Ireland/the Department take to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and coherence for SIDS?
<b>Ireland's role in international fora</b>	<p><b>Ireland has developed a strong reputation and voice in various multilateral fora in relation to SIDS.</b> This includes a strong profile in the ADB, where Ireland is recognised as a SIDS champion, as well as having expertise on gender and climate change. The consultative process with SIDS on developing the Trust Fund received initial pushback but came to be well regarded and seen as a success. Ireland is also seen as a SIDS champion in the EU; this is due to its strong engagement on SIDS issues as well as some SIDS seeking Ireland out for closer support following the UK's departure from the EU. Ireland is now accredited to, and has a strong presence in, CARICOM and while not having a formal relationship with the Pacific Islands Forum, has a level of contact with it.</p>	<p><b>There is strong scope to further build on Ireland's role of SIDS champion in international and multilateral fora.</b> This could include, for example, inclusion of specific objectives around Ireland's continued engagement with the EU in Brussels, at the OECD, with UN Missions in New York and Geneva, the ADB and CARICOM and with the IFIs, as well as new opportunities such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the CDB. The issue of resources is an important aspect for this discussion as staff already have very busy roles and portfolios to cover; it is therefore important to ensure objectives around international and multilateral fora are realistic relative to available resources.</p> <p><b>There is also scope to reflect on how Ireland could further advocate for the consideration of SIDS issues at EU-level and in Team Europe initiatives moving forwards.</b></p>
<b>Fellowships</b>	<p><b>The fellowships were viewed by both internal and external stakeholders as a key strength of the strategy.</b> The programme is well managed through the GPU and the number of fellowships – as well as geographic spread – has increased since the beginning of the strategic period. The programme is gender-sensitive, with clear objectives of gender parity for programme participants.</p> <p><b>Although viewed as a key strength of the strategy, some scope for improvement was noted.</b> The scope of courses</p>	<p><b>It may be useful to review the scope of the fellowships.</b> There are advantages to keeping the eligible courses focused on SIDS-related issues. At the same time, given that one of the core objectives of the fellowship programme is to strengthen capacity, the range of courses could be broadened to include a more diverse set of technical and thematic areas such as business, economics, strategic planning and gender.</p> <p>There is currently a process underway to consider communications in relation to the fellowships between the</p>

	What key insights were gleaned through the implementation of the SIDS strategy that can inform the second phase of strategy implementation?	What further actions should Ireland/the Department take to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and coherence for SIDS?
	was viewed as somewhat limited as they were designed to be aligned with SIDS-related issues such as climate change, oceans and the blue economy. The communication of the fellowships to potential applicants was not systematic or widespread in SIDS countries, and it was noted that this may have limited the reach in some instances.	GPU and the Communications Unit which will help to broaden the reach in SIDS when advertising the fellowships.
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Although Ireland is recognised internationally as strong on gender, gender was not viewed as a strength of the strategy.</b> Internal stakeholders noted this was likely because gender is now implicitly embedded in all of Ireland's work, though observed this could be strengthened and made more explicit as a cross-cutting issue for the next strategy.	<b>A discussion on how gender is integrated in the next strategy would be useful.</b> Implicit/explicit integration are both viable options; the important point is to have an intentional decision on how to integrate it and ensure this is well understood both internally and externally along with supporting a better capture of results and impacts in relation to gender. This should also include consideration of how to leverage SIDS champions on gender.
<b>Coordination and communication</b>		
<b>Coordination and communication between HQ and Missions</b>	<b>There were varying views expressed about the strength of coordination and communication of the strategy between HQ and Missions.</b> There was a recognition that this is likely due to resources and time available to coordinate a broad strategy with many moving parts and interfacing Units. However, it was viewed as one of the weaker points of the implementation of the strategy to date. Stakeholders reported it was not always clear which Unit was responsible for certain decisions and that communication of key issues or key events was not always timely or clear.	<b>There are several options that could be discussed in relation to strengthening communication and coordination of the strategy moving forwards.</b> One point links with the concept of an implementation framework outlined above; such a framework would, in principle, clarify roles and responsibilities in relation to decision making and implementation of the strategy. A communications plan supporting the strategy could also strengthen coordination mechanisms and provide the basis for more regular, structured communications with regular updates on key

	What key insights were gleaned through the implementation of the SIDS strategy that can inform the second phase of strategy implementation?	What further actions should Ireland/the Department take to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and coherence for SIDS?
		<p>priorities and results. A contacts and events management system could also be considered to ensure visibility of key events across DFA and other Departments and provide opportunities for different Units and Missions to provide inputs where relevant. Consideration of available resources would be an important component of this discussion.</p>
<p><b>Funding sources for SIDS-related activities</b></p>	<p><b>Funding sources for SIDS-related activities are not always clear, particularly at Mission level.</b> Funding sources covered by the review included the ICMPS managed by the GPU; the Climate Unit's budget; and the Africa Strategy Innovation Fund. Internal stakeholders noted it was not always clear where they could secure funding to cover SIDS projects and that the process to find out could be time-consuming. Other funding-related issues in relation to the need for greater clarity included DAC restrictions around eligibility (linked to the point above on high-income SIDS) and countries (including SIDS) of secondary accreditation typically receiving fewer resources. SIDS representatives also highlighted challenges in raising emergency funding given the smaller scale of emergencies in SIDS in relation to the population affected compared to other disasters.</p>	<p><b>It would be beneficial to undertake a mapping exercise of funding sources</b> and include this in the implementation framework supporting the strategy to provide clarity on funding sources. It would also be beneficial to keep this up to date. Guidance from GPU would also be useful on non-ODA eligible SIDS (as noted above). Stakeholders noted that investments do not need to be significant, observing that small investments through the ICMPS had gone a long way in building relations. Discussions should also be held regarding SIDS-specific emergency funding given differing views in the Department.</p>
<p><b>Cross-Departmental engagement</b></p>	<p><b>Communication and coordination with the Department of Finance in relation to the SIDS strategy is highly effective.</b> There is a strong, two-way channel of</p>	<p><b>A discussion on how to include relevant government departments in the development and implementation of the strategy would be useful.</b> Including them – in a light</p>

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	<p>communication between DFA and the Department of Finance, and the roles and responsibilities of each Department are clear and well understood. This contributes to effective implementation of the strategy. There is also contact with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in coordination with the Climate Unit.</p> <p><b>There is scope for stronger engagement with and by relevant other government departments.</b> This includes the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. However, it was noted that this type of engagement would need to be well considered and based on key priorities due to the limited bandwidth in DFA as well as in other government Departments.</p>	<p>touch way – in the development of the strategy would be helpful in clarifying roles and responsibilities early on in the process, which could be further articulated in the implementation framework.</p> <p>In addition, incentives at political level for sustained engagement with SIDS should be considered to ensure that SIDS strategic importance is conveyed to and maintained by new Ministers or a new Government.</p>
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## Conclusion

**Ireland's Strategy for Partnerships with Small Island Developing States (2019 – 2025) is largely viewed as having successfully made significant progress towards achieving its objectives and has laid a solid foundation for further future engagement.** Ireland's work on SIDS to date is viewed as highly relevant and effective by both internal and external stakeholders. Numerous strengths of the strategy were repeatedly noted by both internal and external stakeholders, including the inclusive and participatory approach of developing the strategy in line with SIDS priorities, bringing all of the Department's work on SIDS together under one umbrella, clearly articulating realistic goals and commitments, and raising the profile and awareness of SIDS' issues and priorities in key international fora.

The innovative 'network' approach to the strategy was highly effective and the strategy also had several multiplier effects, including positively influencing other States to consider their own SIDS engagements. Ireland also engaged in new relevant fora such as CARICOM and the Asian Development Bank, setting up the ADB Trust Fund in an inclusive and participatory way that was highly appreciated by SIDS. As a result of this type of engagement, Ireland has strengthened its profile and voice in these fora, as well as deepening its engagement in existing fora such as the EU and the UN.

**Although largely successful, specific areas for improvement were noted to ensure the momentum continues and the gains from the first strategy continue to be built upon.** This includes integrating a blend of both outcome and activity-level objectives in the next strategy, ensuring there is an implementation framework that clearly articulates roles and responsibilities, that communication and coordination between HQ and Missions on SIDS is strengthened, and gender considerations are more clearly integrated in the next strategy.

**There are clear lessons learned from the implementation of the current strategy to date that can inform the development of the next strategy.** This is timely, as it coincides with discussions within the Department on how to move forwards on strengthening and deepening partnerships and engagements with SIDS. The lessons learned can inform these discussions, although consideration of the resources needed (i.e., human, financial and time), must be considered, to ensure the strategy finds the appropriate balance between being ambitious and realistic.

## Appendix 1: Evaluation Matrix

DAC criterion	DAC definition	Review questions
<b>Relevance</b>	Is the intervention doing the right things?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How did the design and implementation of the SIDS strategy respond to the priority areas of action for Small Island Developing States?</li> <li>2. What have been the most significant internal and external contextual changes since 2019? (enabling and constraining factors)</li> </ol>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Is the intervention achieving its objectives?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. To what extent has the SIDS strategy delivered on the commitments and actions to date?</li> <li>4. What were the key achievements and challenges?</li> <li>5. Has communication of the strategy been effective?</li> </ol>
<b>Coherence</b>	How well does the intervention fit?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. (Strategies and policies) To what extent is the implementation of the SIDS strategy perceived to be coherent with relevant policies such as <i>A Better World</i> and <i>The Global Island</i>?</li> </ol>
<b>Lesson learning</b>	N/A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. What key insights were gleaned through the implementation of the SIDS strategy that can inform the second phase of strategy implementation?</li> <li>8. What further actions should Ireland/the Department take to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness and coherence for SIDS?</li> </ol>

## Appendix 2: Stakeholders Interviewed

Internal/ External Stakeholder	Interviewee	Role/Position	Date
External	Ambassador Satyendra Prasad	Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations, New York.	30/08/2022
	Grainne Goggin, Michael Pat O'Donoghue	Department of Finance	24/08/2022
	Noelle O'Brien	Chief - Climate Change Division - Asian Development Bank	24/08/2022
	Sai Navoti	Chief of SIDS Unit, UN DESA	22/08/2022
	Shema Roberts	Irish Fellow - Antigua and Barbuda	30/08/2022
	Sven Biermann	Executive Director - FiTI	29/08/2022
Internal	Caoimh Kett	Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU, Brussels	06/09/2022
	Caroline Phelan	Deputy Director, Global Programmes Unit, DCAD, DFA - SIDS Lead	30/08/2022
	Dr Eamonn McKee	Ambassador of Ireland to Canada, Jamaica and The Bahamas	07/09/2022
	Elizabeth Keogh	Global Programmes Unit, DCAD, DFA - Fellowships Lead	15/08/2022
	Feilim McLaughlin	Director, GPU, DCAD	28/07/2022
	John Gilroy	PMUN, New York	28/07/2022
	Mary O'Neill	Ambassador of Ireland to Tanzania	17/08/2022
	Michelle Winthrop	Ambassador of Ireland to South Korea and former Director of Policy Unit, DCAD, DFA	18/08/2022
	Olivia Leslie	Director Asia Pacific Unit within GLOBEC, DFA	17/08/2022
	Peter Ryan	Ambassador of Ireland to Nigeria and formerly Ambassador to Aotearoa New Zealand	06/09/2022
	Ruairi de Burca	Director General, DCAD, DFA	10/08/2022
	Sinead Walsh	Director Climate Unit, DCAD, DFA	25/08/2022
Sonja Hyland	Deputy Secretary General, Global Issues, DFA	25/08/2022	

## Appendix 3: Terms of Reference



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs

### Review to examine the implementation of Ireland's Strategy for Partnership with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) 2019-2025

#### Introduction

Ireland's Strategy for Partnership with Small Island Developing States 2019-2025 was launched in June 2019 following a period of intense consultation with SIDS counterparts. The Strategy reflects the breadth of collaboration between Ireland and SIDS and where there are shared interests in global outcomes. This cooperation spans the bilateral sphere and the multilateral, including collaboration at the UN and International Financial Institutions, in relation to the EU as well as in policy areas such as development cooperation, climate action, diaspora policy, as well as through person-to-person linkages.

Ireland's commitment to SIDS forms a key component of the International Development Policy *A Better World (2019)* and is further informed by the Government's *Global Ireland* strategy. It is also an important strand of Ireland's regional strategies for Africa, the Asia Pacific, and the Latin America and Caribbean regions.

#### Major components of the SIDS strategy

Around 50 million people live in Small Island Developing States, which are found in nearly every region. While each island is distinct, they frequently share vulnerabilities, often climate related, which can threaten their very survival. In addition, separation from continental landmasses can impact heavily on the economic prospects of small island States, complicating the delivery of essential services.

There are 39 countries that are classified as SIDS. Ireland engages with them bilaterally and advocates for SIDS through the United Nations (UN) and at European Union (EU), the OECD and elsewhere. The aim of this activity is to mobilise the international community to address issues of regional and global significance that are of relevance to SIDS.

The four strategic objectives in SIDS Strategy 2019-2025, positioned in the context of *The Global Island*, are:

- a) Ireland will use **Our Influence** to champion the needs of SIDS;

- b) Ireland will use **our Place in Europe** to ensure the EU's institutions, policies and support are delivering for SIDS;
- c) Based on **Our Values**, Ireland will establish a series of regional partnerships that will directly help address the needs of SIDS, and can evolve to meet changing circumstances;
- d) Ireland will establish mechanisms that can help **Our People** contribute their expertise to development challenges in SIDS.

The Global Programmes Unit (GPU), a unit in the Development Cooperation and Africa Division (DCAD) of the Department, holds responsibility for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the SIDS strategy. A number of business units, including the Africa Unit, the Asia Pacific (APU) Unit, the Climate Unit, the Latin America & Caribbean (LAC) Unit, the DCAD UN and IFIs Unit and the DCAD Policy Unit, along with a number of Missions, implement SIDS-related work as set out in the strategy. The strategic objectives are being advanced through the implementation of 36 specific actions or commitments (see Annex B).

### Informing the next phase of the SIDS strategy

As the approach to SIDS policy and activity flowing from the strategy moves towards its fourth year, there is value in reflecting on progress towards the achievement of the stated objectives and priority commitments. Consequently, GPU has proposed an independent review to examine SIDS strategy deliverables and achievements to-date, and to assess whether the approach outlined in the strategy has succeeded in improving the coherence, consistency and visibility of Irish policy and action in relation to SIDS. The reflections and learning delivered by this review will inform the elaboration of a successor strategy during the course of 2022.

### Purpose and scope of the review

The purpose of the review is to capture the progress and challenges in the implementation of the SIDS strategy, to identify any learning that can inform future strategy, policy, advocacy and diplomacy initiatives. The review seeks:

- To provide GPU management with an independent assessment of the outcomes of the SIDS strategy so far against the four Strategic Objectives and the 36 identified Commitments, or Actions
- To provide accountability to the Governments and peoples of SIDS for the support provided during the period covered by the review
- To identify lessons learned to help inform future implementation of the remainder of the strategy.
- To contribute to the Department's strategic decision-making and organisational learning.

The period under review is from the start of the strategy in mid-2019 to early 2022.

### Review questions

Guided by the OECD-Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance and Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, the review will draw on the OECD DAC criteria of **Effectiveness**, **Coherence** and **Relevance** and identify **Lessons Learned**.

1. Effectiveness:

- a. To what extent has the SIDS strategy delivered on the commitments and actions to date? What were the key achievements and challenges?
2. Coherence:
    - a. How coherent has management of the various Partnerships been during the implementation period to date?
    - b. Has coherence/consistency improved?
  3. Relevance:
    - a. What are the most significant internal and external contextual changes since 2019
    - b. How ought these inform the next phase of strategy implementation?
  4. Lesson Learning:
    - a. What **key insights** were gleaned through the implementation of the SIDS strategy that can inform the second phase of strategy implementation?

Table 1: Review sub-questions

	Internal participants	External participants
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<p>Has the SIDS strategy resulted in a more sustained focus on SIDS in policymaking?</p> <p>What role, if any, have the strategy and the designation of a unit (GPU in DCAD) to coordinate and track its implementation played in ensuring a sustained focus on SIDS?</p>	<p>Have you noticed an evolution of Ireland's engagement on issues of concern to SIDS in the last 3-4 years?</p> <p>What is your perception of Ireland's commitment to SIDS issues?</p>
<b>Coherence</b>	<p>To what extent is the implementation of the SIDS strategy perceived to be <b>coherent</b> with relevant policies such as <i>A Better World</i> and <i>Global Island</i>?</p> <p>Do you think there are opportunities to further improve coherence and coordination around SIDS issues? What are these?</p>	<p>What is your perception of the level of coherence in the Irish system on SIDS issues?</p>
<b>Relevance</b>	<p>What further actions should Ireland/the Department take in order to ensure our relevance to SIDS?</p>	<p><i>What further actions should Ireland/the Department take in order to ensure our relevance to SIDS?</i></p>
<b>Lessons Learned / future</b>	<p>What further opportunities exist for Ireland, whether facilitative or leadership-wise?</p>	<p>Are there further opportunities for Ireland to engage with SIDS and SIDS-related issues? If so, what are they?</p>

## Methodology and phases

A mixed-method approach will be applied. Adhering to the principle of *prima non male* (do no harm), (UNDP 2021) the review team will not engage in any activity, or promote engagement in any activity that may place staff, stakeholders, or communities at risk of harm.

Taking a consultative approach with the GPU and the Reference Group, it is anticipated that the review will include (but is not limited to) the following approaches:

- Review of GPU reports, partner documentation and associated results;
- Financial analysis;
- Key informant interviews (in person or by VC) with DFA business units, partners and other external stakeholders (other Government Departments, state bodies, universities);

Units/Missions will be surveyed and asked to:

- (i) Complete a self-reporting feedback template. Below is an indicative template to gather input on the progress of the SIDS Actions, by completing columns 2 to 4.
- (ii) Provide a maximum one page summary narrative of the global or international issues and trends relevant to the SIDS Actions. This qualitative piece can draw on indicators where relevant. Where possible, Units will be asked to show DFA's financial commitment (actual and in percent terms).
- (iii) A small number of interviews will be held to clarify or expand on findings.
- (iv) Stakeholders will be asked to participate in a joint validation workshop where findings will be presented and validated
- (v) Stakeholders will be asked to comment on the final report following the workshop

**Table 2: Outline of self-reporting feedback template**

Priority Action/ Commitment (1-36)	Most Significant Contribution to Priority Action	Status of Contribution	Update on Progress of Contribution, including any reporting (financial and/or narrative) or relevant evaluation	Lessons Learned including what wasn't, but should have been done to contribute to the commitment (this does not have to be associated with a contribution); what worked; what didn't work	Implications for the next Strategy phase	Rating of Importance of Implication for Strategy (1 to 5, with 5 being most important)
1						
2						

## Review Phases

The review will consist of three broad phases:

*Phase I: Planning and review (April 2022)*

The first phase will consist of initial interviews with selected key informants drawn from GPU, elsewhere in DCAD, Political Division, IUKA and Global Ireland and Economic Division. The development of the review plan, design of methodology and detailed planning for the field mission will be undertaken during this phase. The engagement of a consultant will be implemented during this phase. The document review will answer the question: *What were the key achievements, results and challenges of the SIDS strategy in the period to date?*

*Phase II: Further review and fieldwork (end April – end July 2022)*

The consultant will come on board at the start of this second phase. This phase will involve video conferences and/or telephone interviews and a feedback template will be deployed to key informants. The independent consultant (TOR below) as a member of the review team will gather and assess feedback from interviews and completed templates. A paper on emerging observations and findings will be developed by the end of this phase. This paper will form the input to a findings and validation workshop which will be held by the end of this phase, which the consultant will facilitate.

*Phase III: Reporting (September 2022)*

The final phase will consist of debriefing and incorporating the outcomes of the validation workshop with internal stakeholders, final fact checking, and writing the draft final report. A draft final report will be shared with the GPU for final iterative feedback by the end of October.

**Table 3: Review work plan**

Timeline	Activity	Output	Responsible
By end April	Start Tender process to identify Consultant	On board by mid-June	EAU
	Agree review questions	Template in place for measuring progress on commitments and actions.	EAU and GPU
	Identify and brief key stakeholders	Key respondents identified and briefed.	EAU and GPU
	Disseminate feedback template (internal respondents).	Feedback template circulated.	EAU
End May	Deadline for return of completed feedback templates.	Method for consultation and input	EAU

June	Review feedback	First draft Findings paper	Consultant & EAU
End- June	Hold workshop to present main findings, with GPU and other Units		Consultant leads
June	Consultation with Caribbean SIDS		MoS
end July	Collate feedback and summarise findings (from i/vs, templates and workshop)	Findings paper v2	Consultant
End July	<i>Internal quality assurance</i>	QA	<i>EAU &amp; Consultant</i>
End Sept	Consultation with African and Asian SIDS at UNGA		MoS
end-September	Disseminate Report of Findings	Final report on findings SIDS Strategy	EAU & Consultant

## Outputs

The expected outputs of the review are as follows:

1. Terms of Reference for the review capturing a work plan and the main tools proposed to be utilised (e.g. interview guides, a template for structured feedback, review framework) for the review in Phases 1 and 2. The review plan will incorporate Terms of Reference for a consultant.
2. An initial desk report capturing emerging findings and observations of interviews and templates with feedback by the end of Phase 2.
3. Validation workshop with the GPU and internal DFA stakeholders to facilitate finalisation of the draft report at the end of Phase 2.
4. A final report that sets out findings and observations for management's consideration. The report will focus on the core review questions. The primary audience for this report is the GPU SIDS team, DCAD senior management, DCAD technical staff, DFA senior management and SIDS partners.

## Governance and independence

The review will be managed by the DFA's independent Evaluation and Audit Unit (EAU). The review will be devised and implemented in consultation with the Global Programmes Unit (GPU). A peer from the EAU team will act as a 'critical peer' to the review, contributing feedback and quality assurance at all the key stages of the project. A Reference Group, comprised of key stakeholders drawn from the EAU and GPU, along with DCAD and other Units within DFA, will assist in providing observations to the review. The Reference Group will be invited to comment on drafts of key documents.

## Considerations and limitations

This review is primarily internally focused (discuss the SIDS Partner consultations planned by GPU). The timeframe is designed to inform the next phase of SIDS strategy by completing an inclusive exercise and delivering a report that captures Observations and Findings by the end of October 2022.

Given the timeframe requirement, there will not be sufficient time to allow for an analysis that would support the development of specific Recommendations. The report may include some observations or identify issues for consideration. Likewise, the timeframe does not allow for any slippage (such as if/when some key respondents are unavailable); the review can only proceed based on the availability of key informants. Progress at each step also depends on the availability of both EAU and GPU colleagues.

## The review team

Evaluation staff from the Evaluation and Audit Unit (EAU), along with an independent external consultant, will form a review team to implement an independent review in close consultation with the GPU and other relevant business units. Each team member will contribute to researching, reviewing, writing and contributing individual work packages of the review. One of the EAU staff will have overall responsibility for managing the review ('Review Manager'). The consultant will provide the input set out in the next section and will report to the Review Manager.

A peer from the EAU team will act as a 'critical peer' to the review, contributing feedback and quality assurance at all the key stages of the project.

## Role of consultant(s)

As a member of the review team, the consultant will, over the course of 15 working days:

- Familiarise themselves with the review context and background papers, engage in briefing meetings (c2 days)
- Engage in interviews with key informants (c5 days)
- Review and assess template feedback responses (c2 days)
- Draft a report to capture findings emerging from interviews, (SIDS country partner consultations) and completed templates (c3 days)
- Design and facilitate a validation workshop with stakeholders (c1 day)
- Write up the final draft report of findings (c2 days)

## Annex A: SIDS countries (39\*)

Pacific (13): Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

Caribbean (14): Antigua & Barbuda, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname.

Africa (7): Cabo Verde, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Maldives, Mauritius, Sao Tomé and Príncipe.

## Annex B SIDS strategy strategic commitments

**1. We will use Our Influence to champion the needs of SIDS**

We will: Take a new approach to how we collaborate with SIDS (as a group, and in regional blocs, as well as bilaterally), on multilateral issues. This will include:

- » taking a structured approach to understanding the priorities of SIDS and to collaborating to maximise multilateral impact in areas of common concern. Ireland will establish a series of set-piece Céilí, or informal listening spaces modelled on the Talanoa, convened in the margins of major international processes, to ensure we are reflecting their needs. This will also be an opportunity to inform SIDS partners of Irish work in international bodies on relevant issues, to hear from SIDS partners of their work, and to follow up on specific asks from previous interactions;
- » appointing a SIDS-dedicated team within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as a defined focal point, which would facilitate the Céilí, liaise closely with Irish missions abroad, and ensure we are being consistent and effective across the spectrum of conversations with SIDS; and,
- » embedding a strategic and structured Irish engagement with regional groupings, in particular in the Pacific and the Caribbean.

Provide tangible support to bolster the influence of SIDS on the global stage. This will include:

- » redoubling Ireland's support to and for SIDS-specific processes and meetings, building on Ireland's co-chairing of the High-level Review of Progress on SAMOA Pathway with Fiji;
- » using Ireland's chairing, with Belize, of the UN Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS to continue to actively push for partnerships which genuinely contribute to the needs of SIDS;
- » assisting SIDS in so far as possible and on request in their election bids to international bodies, including through the provision of strategic advice, introductions and where helpful, Ireland's convening power;
- » strengthening our support for participation by SIDS delegates in major UN processes. In 2018, Ireland contributed to mechanisms that enabled stronger SIDS representation in COP 24 climate negotiations in Katowice, the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction negotiations, and the SAMOA review; and,
- » supporting Pacific-SIDS engagement on nuclear non-proliferation, and on nuclear legacy issues

Ireland will lend our voice to the issues relevant to SIDS in the following ways:

- » deploying Irish influence in the area of global health and nutrition in support of specific challenges faced by SIDS in Non-Communicable Diseases and nutrition;
- » amplifying Ireland's influence within International Financial Institutions on issues identified by SIDS. Ireland's forthcoming membership of the African Development Bank will be an opportunity to champion the needs of African SIDS and we are currently considering joining the Caribbean Development Bank. We will also make best use of our membership of World Bank and IMF constituencies each of which include a number of Caribbean countries. Ireland has just established a €12 million Trust Fund at the Asian Development Bank for SIDS which are members of the ADB focussed on climate resilience and disaster risk reduction;
- » continuing to make the case within the OECD for the kind of framework for development assistance which meets SIDS needs. During 2020, we will be supporting a major study on transition finance for SIDS which are graduating from eligibility for official development assistance.

**2. Ireland will use our Place in Europe to ensure the EU's institutions, policies and support are delivering for SIDS**

We will:

- » proactively engage with SIDS representatives in Brussels through the Irish Permanent Mission to the EU;
- » use our diplomatic network to reach out and listen to SIDS on the effectiveness of EU development cooperation and where appropriate champion change;
- » engage with SIDS on the negotiation and subsequent implementation of a modern and vibrant post-Cotonou agreement between the EU and ACP countries – ensuring the needs of SIDS are fully reflected;
- » ensure focus on SIDS during the development of the NDICI instrument; and,
- » work with SIDS to enhance their capacity to access finance and technical support from the European Investment Bank and other EU funding mechanisms.

**3. Based on Our Values, Ireland will establish a series of regional partnerships that will directly help address the needs of SIDS, and can evolve to meet changing circumstances**

In the Caribbean, we will:

- » build on Ireland's 2018 support to the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility by engaging in product development (agriculture, drought, public utilities) and encouraging effective policy development in risk management. We will explore support for similar instruments in the Pacific;
- » explore a partnership with a regional Caribbean body on the blue economy, linking sustainable coastal and marine management, investment pipelines, livelihoods for the poor, and renewable energy development; and,
- » seek to identify specific areas of collaboration, such as women's economic empowerment, in dialogue with the Caribbean Development Bank. Ireland is considering joining the Bank.

In the Pacific, we will:

- » use the establishment of a €12 million SIDS Trust Fund by Ireland at the Asian Development Bank to ensure more effective investments in the area of climate resilience and disaster risk reduction which are specifically gender responsive;
- » work with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme to strengthen support to Pacific SIDS to unlock climate and other multilateral finance to build climate resilience;
- » support UN-DRR (the UN Body for Disaster Risk Reduction) to provide direct support to Pacific states to effectively implement the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction; and,
- » commission analytical work on the relationship between climate impacts and security in the Pacific region, including how this relationship impacts upon gender-based violence.

In Africa, we will:

- » work with WIOMSA (the West Indian Ocean Marine Science Association) on the social impacts of ocean acidification. We will also explore opportunities through accredited Missions in Africa to deepen cooperation on other relevant areas with key African SIDS.

At a global level, we will:

- » continue to build capacity among SIDS for National Adaptation Planning, reflecting gender in their climate action, and managing their ocean economies. This will be done through support to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED);
- » proactively engage other technical and policy partners to work more proactively with SIDS, for example in areas of HIV and AIDS, statistical capacity development, and on nutrition, where Ireland has been a global advocate including through the UN-led Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States and the Scaling Up Nutrition movement; and,
- » recognising that SIDS have much to offer us from their experiences, we will seek opportunities to share structured learning. For example, the risk modelling done by CCRIF in the Caribbean is of interest to the Irish insurance industry. Many SIDS are demonstrating good practice in the approach to implementation of the SAMOA pathway from which Ireland can benefit in our domestic SDG process.
- » provide dedicated support to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Land-locked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) to bolster staffing in the SIDS partnerships unit in 2020-21;
- » provide financial support to the SIDS Global Business network to promote private sector and philanthropic support to the creation of partnerships under the SAMOA Pathway framework; and; provide capacity building training to least developed SIDS to better enable their ability to create and sustain durable partnerships

#### **4. Ireland will establish mechanisms that can help Our People contribute their expertise to development challenges in SIDS**

- » establish an innovative Irish SIDS Ocean Partnership Initiative. This will provide short-term capacity support to SIDS, and fund long term collaborative research between Irish counterparts (private sector or academics) and SIDS, in the area of coastal and marine management;
- » expand our partnership with UN Volunteers to support placements for UN volunteers in offices in the Caribbean and the Pacific;
- » establish an annual number of awards to SIDS professionals, at least 50% of whom are women, for postgraduate study in relevant courses on climate change, marine science or similar disciplines in Irish higher education institutions;
- » through our SIDS focal point, foster peer-to-peer support between SIDS and Irish institutions. A recent meeting between the CCRIF and Insurance Ireland revealed opportunities for skill sharing and mutual

support. Tourism Ireland visits to Belize and Mauritius have shown the potential for peer-to-peer support. Irish expertise in telecommunications is being shared in the Caribbean and Pacific, and it is a vital sector for development in remote island states;

» share Irish experience of engaging with our diaspora with SIDS, in particular how an active diaspora can increase the influence and convening potential of a small state, as well as its potential for positively influencing investment;

» reflect on Ireland's diaspora links with SIDS, including a study of the links between Ireland and the Caribbean; and,

» explore how Irish communities in SIDS and existing person-to-person partnerships could provide a basis for longer term trade and investment relationships.

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