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Working paper

Building resilient and dynamic Small Island Developing State cities

Gareth Byatt | SIDS Future Forum 2024
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Abstract

This paper focuses on ways to implement measures that will foster resilient and dynamic cities in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Almost half of SIDS' populations live in urban Centres (UNCTAD, 2021). Ensuring good policy action to build, maintain and continuously improve cities in SIDS is key to achieving sustainable development and resilient prosperity as set out in the Outcome Document of the Fourth International Conference for Small Island Developing States (SIDS4).

RESILIENT
SUSTAINABLE
ISLANDS

Acknowledgements

About this paper
This is one of 12 papers commissioned for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Future Forum, co-hosted by RESI and Island Innovation, alongside partners UN-OHRLLS, UNDESA, UKAid and AOSIS.

In each paper, a leading expert analyses one of five themes identified in the preparatory documents for the UN's Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) in May 2024. The papers will contribute to SIDS4 as supporting material/annexes to the next 10-year roadmap for SIDS, the Antigua and Barbua Agenda for SIDS.

This paper was commissioned under the theme of 'A secure future: Strengthening institutional and statistical capacity.'

Contents

Acronyms/Glossary

CSO   civil society organisation

ISO   International Standards Organisation

NGO   non-governmental organisation

PMO   Portfolio Management Office

PPM   project portfolio management

SIDS   Small Island Developing States

SDG   Sustainable Development Goal

VNR   Voluntary National Review

1   Introduction

Research into urban resilience and urban planning tends to focus on cities in large nations, and only a relatively small amount of specific research on SIDS cities currently exists. However, much of the general urban resilience research is applicable to SIDS, as long as context is considered.

The definition of an urban area and of a city varies around the world (Dijkstra et al., 2020),[1] According to UNCTAD, as of 2019 46% of people across all SIDS were residing in urban areas (56% of people globally are considered urbanised). In larger SIDS, people in urban areas constitute 46–56% of the overall population, while in smaller SIDS, the urban proportion of the population varies more widely – for example, in UNCTAD's 2019 figures all of Nauru's population was considered urban, whereas 18% of people in Samoa lived in the capital.

The International Standards Organisation (ISO) defines resilience as the ability to absorb and adapt in a changing environment. ISO guidance (ISO, 2021) states that, in the context of urban areas, this means the ability of an urban area to prepare for and adapt to changing conditions, reduce chronic stresses and withstand and recover rapidly from acute shocks.

Cities in SIDS need to address widespread change in the coming years if they are to thrive. The threat of disasters from natural hazards continues to loom large and must be tackled (disasters continue to have a significant impact on SIDS economies when they occur). Economies need to change to be more sustainable (UNCTAD, 2021a). Healthcare, social care, education and tackling poverty require continued investment (UNCTAD, 2021b). Good urban preparation can enable SIDS cities to address the stresses they face, withstand and recover from acute shocks (many of which are known) and capture new opportunities. On a macro level, most SIDS are projected to experience slow urban growth up to 2030. Across SIDS, urban growth is expected to be approximately 2.7% per annum to 2030, in line with the overall predicted population growth of SIDS, with the Maldives, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Comoros predicted to have the largest growth (UNCTAD, 2021c). Whilst appreciating the macro level, it should be appreciated that pockets of unplanned and uncontrolled urban growth at a localised level can cause stresses on any SIDS city's urban system.

SIDS cities vary in context – their size, density, topography, ecology, infrastructure, built environment, social demographics and economies all differ. The context of a city is key to working out how it can be resilient and dynamic. Some SIDS cities are very small, with correspondingly

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1   Whilst some approaches (such as OECD/European Commission's *Cities in the World* (OECD/EC, 2020) define cities as urban areas of over 50,000 inhabitants, for the purposes of this paper a city is viewed as any urban centre – given the size of many SIDS.

small-sized governance teams (if such teams exist at all). Some SIDS cities currently have limited economic diversification. Climate change impacts them in different ways, with specific climate adaptation measures required (IPCC, 2022).[2]

For a city of any size, good urban governance is crucial to achieving a good state of urban resilience and dynamism. Urban governance requires the consideration of many aspects and areas, and a systems approach can help. A systems approach requires the involvement of everyone and the availability of good data to support analysis and decision-making (the already-identified SIDS enabler of strengthening data collection, with a Global Data Hub, can play an important role for agreeing urban action as part of the overall development of all SIDS).

The SDGs (towards which, according to the UN, the world is lagging in its progress) can be integrated into a systems approach for urban governance to drive urban resilience and dynamism. The UN SDG Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) report of 2021 (UN DESA, 2021) lists 42 participating country contributions, of which six (representing 14% of all contributions) were provided by SIDS (UN, 2023).[3] This recent laudable effort is something all SIDS can build upon. The *Sustainable Development Report for Small Island Developing States 2023* (Massa, I et al, 2023) uses the SDG Index to assess SIDS SDG progress. SDG data is relevant for building resilient and dynamic SIDS cities.

Whilst many contextualised local challenges need to be addressed to increase the resilience and dynamism of each SIDS city, significant opportunities can be grasped if an integrated approach that reviews the needs of all SIDS as a portfolio is taken. Learnings from cities on SIDS, and elsewhere around the world, can be leveraged across the SIDS group. Published strategies on urban risk management and resilience can also be learned from.[4]

In addition, it should be recognised that many (not all) of the suggested actions and approaches for improving the resilience and dynamism of cities on SIDS stated in this paper can be applied to inhabited areas away from cities, including in remote locations.

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2   IPCC Sixth Assessment Report Fact Sheet – Small Islands discusses the general impacts of
     climate change on low-lying SIDS urban areas.
3   The 2021 Voluntary National Reviews Synthesis Report includes 1) Antigua and Barbuda,
     2) The Bahamas, 3) Cabo Verde, 4) Cuba, 5) The Dominican Republic and 6) The Marshall Islands.
4   For example, the UNDP urban risk management and resilience strategy (UNDP, 2021)

2 Seven principles for resilient and dynamic SIDS cities

Taking into consideration the context-sensitive approach to SIDS cities and urbanisation outlined in the Introduction, seven principles are put forward to address how to set about achieving resilient and dynamic SIDS cities. These principles are based on research by the author into the urban development of nations and cities around the world. The first three principles – a mindset, focusing on outcomes and involving everyone – provide a foundation. The next four principles – using systems thinking, good governance, setting good targets and securing the right investment – are about delivering meaningful action.

2.1 A mindset to achieve good urban places

Having the right mindset underpins the six other principles. The right mindset incorporates many things, with the following seven points emphasised:

- the will to ensure corruption-free governance at all levels of government
- ensuring sensible continuity of urban policy across political cycles and political change (e.g. continuity of skills and knowledge, and appreciation of important long-term urban objectives and investments across changes in elected government teams)
- ensuring good governance is in operation between the public and private sectors
- a commitment to finding the best solutions for all members of society, which includes ensuring everyone is involved in participatory governance
- a commitment to linking efforts to global goals and objectives in a sensible way
- a willingness to use systems thinking in governance[5]
- a commitment to continually focus on delivering meaningful and tangible value.

2.2 Deliver meaningful outcomes

Actions agreed need to demonstrate meaningful benefits to people and the planet.

The following three points are emphasised:

- Plans and initiatives to improve urban environments must be linked to an urban vision that is developed inclusively (involving everyone), and to system-wide benefits.

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5   Different definitions for systems thinking exist. The author uses systems thinking application in healthcare (Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research, 2009) as a way to recognise and prioritise the understanding of linkages, relationships, interactions, and interdependencies among the components of a system.

- Benefits should be achieved in different ways using the right form of socio-economic principles, including natural asset valuation and valuing the SDGs.
- Outcomes should show how much they contribute to agreed global frameworks including the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda, the Humanitarian Agenda, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

2.3 Involve everyone

The meaningful inclusion of all groups of society rightly takes time and effort, and it is worthwhile. Involving everyone in all stages of urban resilience, from initial needs identification through to implementation and ongoing verification, usually means that decisions take longer to reach, and that they are better decisions that make better use of scarce resources.

Five key points are as follows:

- Engage rather than consult, with a social contract. Engaging with local people is key, for the earliest concepts of new ideas for urban improvement through to planning action, implementation and ongoing management. Local and indigenous peoples, and CSOs that work with them, are 'the first mile' of engagement for people nominated to improve urban environments; they must not be seen as 'the last mile'. Local people should be rewarded in an appropriate way for their contribution.
- Support community and civic networks and groups that are already in place, and help to establish newly identified networks and groups. It is not about being 'top-down' or 'bottom-up'; it is about doing things together.
- Engagement by the private sector is key, including businesses of all sizes (including micro-enterprises) and the finance and investment community. From property developers, engineers, and local builders to banks, retailers, telecoms and insurers, business need to be engaged over the ways in which their objectives can be linked to achieving a prosperous urban society for the benefit of all.
- Young people must be inspired to give their views about improving urban areas. This includes what they think the future should look like and how they can contribute. Modern tools and methods should be used to engage young people.
- NGOs, CSOs, academia, think tanks and others all have a valuable role to play.

2.4 Use systems thinking

Understanding and appreciating the interlinkages, relationships, interactions and interdependencies between all parts of the urban system, and related aspects of SIDS including the areas covered by the SIDS Future Forum, can be used to define the right action to take and the best use of scarce resources. The following seven points are aspects to consider:

- First, prove to everyone that systems thinking will add value.
- Select an appropriate urban systems approach, tailored for SIDS if need be.
- As long as people confirm they see value in using systems thinking, use it to drive interconnectedness and good decision-making.
- Ecological aspects of the system include how to use nature-based solutions and natural capital accounting in urban areas, and how to address disaster risk.
- Physical aspects of the system include how to ensure good transport and mobility, and that infrastructure and the built environment are set up properly.
- Socio-economic aspects of the system include ensuring meaningful employment for all parts of society, good health (including mental health) and education and the right urban design for consumption and sustainability.
- Technical aspects of the system include appropriate smart city options.[6]

2.5 Good governance

Already highlighted in this paper as being key to achieving resilient and dynamic cities, good governance requires the political and economic will to put people and the planet first. Governance must be well-informed, accountable and enforced. It must ensure the right investments are defined and managed to deliver meaningful social, environmental and economic benefits. Examples of governance are highlighted in the next section of this paper.

At a summary level, six key points are as follows:

- Governance needs to ensure a continual focus on controls to prevent fraud and ensure societal safety and security.
- A focus on ambitious urban governance must balance control and flexibility.
- Bold and inclusive policy-making requires diverse views from all stakeholder groups and allows these groups to try new ways of doing things, which includes tactical resilience projects that are stitched into flexible long-term planning.
- A focus on urban economics and market-orientated planning principles is important, coupled with appropriate local community empowerment to maintain and uphold good planning.

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6   For more on SIDS as 'Small Island Digital States', see UNDP: From developing to digital; charting the course for SIDS' transformation (Neto, M & Opp, R.,2024) and Small Island Digital States: How Digital Can Catalyse SIDS Development (Handforth, C 2024)

- Equally important is the flexibility to permit small changes and corrections as new measures are trialled, implemented, and learned from.
- Clear accountability and responsibility for actions are key.

2.6 Set good targets

Knowing where we stand today through collecting and using good data, using diagnostics/ profile reviews and setting meaningful targets that are realistic and achievable, whilst not reinventing what has already been done, includes the following:

- If appropriate and agreed as adding value, agree a value-focused diagnostics and data capture approach for all SIDS cities, in a way that uses already available data as much as possible and that collects all new data efficiently.
- Work together globally to produce a collective SIDS cities review – current and future states, which link to a shared vision.
- Leverage appropriate technology to support measurements and analysis.
- Use future 'to-be' assessments to create investment cases with the involvement of all groups, with solid options for securing finance.

2.7 Organise the right investment

Securing the right type of funding and investment, with investment cases that focus on value for society, the economy and the environment and leveraging expertise from experts to define them, includes the following:

- Defined urban financing and funding mechanisms should be linked to the outcomes of SIDS4 and what SIDS want to achieve for the future (post-SIDS4).
- Look at blended investment options, including with the private sector.
- Be bold with a common definition of value for benefits cases, which may include consideration of natural capital accounting and carbon management opportunities.

These seven principles inform an urban system and a framework for agreeing action to deliver meaningful outcomes for SIDS cities, which are discussed in the next section.

3 Words into Action – focusing on meaningful outcomes

Four of the seven principles described above are action-orientated and are reviewed below: using systems thinking, good governance, setting good targets, and organising investment.

3.1 Addressing what SIDS want for their urban contexts with systems thinking

Systems thinking can be the glue that binds needs and actions and helps people to consider alternatives and trade-offs. As indicated above, and elaborated in UNDP's Urban Risk Management and Resilience Strategy (UNDP, 2021), urban systems (which are described in different ways) can be structured into 1) ecological and nature systems, 2) the physical and built environment, and 3) social and economic systems.

Consider an example of applying systems thinking to a SIDS city (and island-wide) telecommunications and internet strategy, which is one of many areas of city resilience (e.g. against disaster threats) and dynamism (e.g. for productivity). Systems thinking gives us a mechanism to consider all aspects of a solution – the physical infrastructure, socio-economics and impact on ecology and natural hazards. The right tech for telecoms and the internet could lead to international expertise being provided, combined with local people employed to maintain it across the urban area. Whilst it facilitates a dynamic economy, it can also link to crucial Early Warning System infrastructure. Resilience through the right infrastructure is key. Relying on outsourced offshore satellite technology and cloud-based solutions that are managed by third parties offshore does not usually provide the required level of resilience.

3.2 Good governance is critical to resilient and dynamic SIDS cities

Good urban governance is an underlying factor for all successful cities. In addition to the governance points previously noted, the following additional points relate to urban governance and are relevant to government teams of different sizes and responsibilities (e.g. municipal authorities or district administrators):

- Urban governance involves many parties coming together with a shared vision.
- Having a compelling shared vision is good, yet authorities who oversee urban environments have many areas to manage and it can be challenging to maintain the desired level of control over them all when resources are stretched.
- Urban governance should be driven by providing people with the means to achieve their objectives in an efficient way, using urban economics to get the 'urban plumbing' right (Bertaud, 2018).

- Urban governance needs to focus on good placemaking, climate-friendly solutions and actions that leverage a systems approach (considering in equal measure the ecological, physical and socio-economic parts of the urban system).
- Governance should be informed by a clear understanding and agreement of risk appetite when reviewing choices. Risk appetite is a mechanism to control activities in a project portfolio management (PPM) approach; what is measured, monitored, reported on and learned (including how the SDGs are used); and how change is managed.
- As part of involving everyone, government authorities should proactively engage with community leaders to help ensure that the urban footprint of where and how people build property is managed (this is particularly important in areas where government teams are very small).
- Good governance also entails supporting communities and businesses of all sizes with 'continuity plans' to boost their resilience against disaster threats. For communities, this means Community Continuity Plans; for businesses, it means Business Continuity Plans.

An example model of governance has three areas of (1) performance, (2) effective collaboration, and (3) openness, transparency and integrity (Australian National Audit Office, 2014). Urban governance should be linked to an integrated collaborative governance framework for SIDS, which is discussed in a linked SIDS Future Forum paper about governance (Lopes, 2024).

3.3   Agree where you are, and where you want to be, with good data

If all SIDS can agree on a common data set for their cities, there may be value in running a city diagnostics assessment to identify the priorities of all SIDS cities. As mentioned earlier, SIDS already collect and provide data and they do not have large data teams to keep collecting it. Any diagnostics review needs to be smart and efficient with existing data and people's time, and only collect new data if it will have real value that is linked to a Global Data Hub.

The SDGs are relevant to SIDS city diagnostics, including: reducing carbon (CO_2) emissions; conserving natural resources; creating better and more sustainable jobs; advancing gender equality, diversity and inclusion; improving health (including wellbeing) and education; and tackling poverty and homelessness. One way to link city targets to the SDGs is to use urban indicators which link to SDG global indicators.

If deemed worthwhile, a SIDS city diagnostics review could provide the following:

- an inclusive civic, economic and environmental view of the urban environment covering all urban system areas, from an administration view, a citizen view, a business view and an observer view (CSOs, think tanks, philanthropic organisations, academics, etc.)
- ideas that could be discussed to improve how the urban place functions
- identification and analysis of specific actions that may contribute towards an agreed city/ town roadmap and vision over a specified timeframe.

One approach to being as efficient as possible with a city diagnostics review is as follows:

- Review different diagnostics solutions and select an appropriate one (the Suredis Cities website provides examples of diagnostics solutions and tools and other resilience indices)
- Agree on the key principles to using a diagnostics review
- Conduct the review by involving all key groups, use existing data where practical and ensure there are clearly defined outcomes to be formulated.

3.4 Achieve the right investment for resilient and dynamic SIDS cities

The Zero Draft Outcome Document (UN, 2023) highlights that SIDS have limited capacity to mobilise domestic resources, and restricted access to international financing mechanisms. Forms of finance are available, yet they are not always directed to the right places. As described in an associated SIDS Future Forum paper about debt, SIDS debt levels and debt-service levels have increased, and debt may be blocking vital public spending on human capital development, the social sectors and climate-resilient, climate-friendly infrastructure (Hurley, 2024). Will this situation change – and are there opportunities for new and innovative forms of urban investment, which may link to a greater whole of investment strategy for each SIDS? As outlined at the SIDS Future Forum, perhaps the formation of a SIDS Investment Bureau could, among other things, manage investments for SIDS cities (maybe through a PMO).[7]

Securing the right investment for building resilient and dynamic cities requires strong investment cases for the target audience (e.g. international donors and the private sector). This may be an area where a PMO (as part of a Centre of Excellence) can support SIDS. SIDS can learn from examples of city action in larger nation states, and novel approaches to business cases and the definition of value, ranging from debt refinancing to green bonds and lifecycle benefits analysis. Key points to focus on may vary across the SIDS group. For example: (1) a plan for development finance which assesses the extent of donor funding requirements; (2) a plan for private sector investment; (3) a plan to secure urban (and other areas') energy needs, (4) a plan for resilient digital economies, and (5) a plan for biodiversity and nature development. The following points should be taken into account:

- Investments should be based on **data-informed benefits plans** that can be monitored for achievement through governance mechanisms.
- Meaningful benefits from investment in cities should be **linked to global goals**, including the SDGs and, when relevant, the Sendai Framework targets.

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7   As noted in a talk by Stan Smith (Smith, 2024) of the Bahamas on 5 March 2024 at the SIDS Future Forum.

- The **private sector** can and should play an investment role in SIDS urban development. This includes investment funding for critical infrastructure, the built environment, ecological resilience, disaster resilience and socio-economic opportunities. Several SIDS are home to investment banking and finance and insurance hubs; can these hubs help to support financial solutions, across all SIDS?
- **Blended investment funds** can secure access to capital from various sources, which requires clear accountability of ownership (and good governance).
- **Trust and accountability through good governance** includes local government being involved in managing investments, working with citizen, community/civic and business groups.
- Finance should **fund needs at the local level**. The percentage of funded local needs as a percentage of total funding should be monitored as part of quantified governance tracking to check funds are being spent in the best way and are delivering value.
- Development finance institutions can **support proactive infrastructure and construction**, noting that the costs of such projects can be high (especially in remote locations).

3.5 Some examples in action

Combining investments across SIDS may achieve economies of scale and efficiency, whilst ensuring solutions are localised to the context of each island.

Consider the challenge of dealing with flooding risk to coastal SIDS cities. The way that choices are made to deal with coastal storm surges, cyclones and hurricanes, using systems thinking, is critical to the success of agreed actions, with sensitivity to the context of local areas always key.

Large 'grey infrastructure' solutions take time to be financed and to be built. History shows that some do not generate the intended benefits. Using a systems approach, living with nature, not against it, is about intelligent design and lifecycle planning for sensible 'green + blue + grey' infrastructure. Solutions options must be data and science-informed; locals, support groups and experts should be engaged for their ideas and knowledge; decisions should be taken once studies support where and how much to do (green + blue + grey). Good finance combined with good governance should shape how solutions are conceived, designed, built, and maintained over an agreed lifecycle. This includes mandating that any investment (through whatever mechanism is decided upon – a loan, a bond, or another mechanism) must be based on solid data and studies and a thorough options analysis which includes a defined appetite for risk. Finance should be linked to specific targets (e.g. SDG urban and global indicators) for sustainable co-benefits across the urban system (e.g. local skills development). With systems thinking, the management of flooding risk could be linked to other resilience needs.

Through sound investment planning, SIDS could look at natural capital accounting (Blackman, 2024). Whilst there is no globally accepted system of environmental accounting to measure, value and preserve the environment, the United Nations principles for the System of Environmental

Economic Accounting (SEEA), which the UN adopted as a global framework in March 2021, has signed up some 89 countries. Could SIDS adopt SEEA, with the creation of 'natural capital banks' to supervise urban environmental protection work and to value and preserve natural capital?

For donors such as development banks, getting the balance right to provide funding and loans to SIDS in a way that is straightforward for the parties involved is key. This is particularly important for funding programmes that are designed to include local small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). Stringent requirements attached to loans to show benefits to specific targets (such as achieving reduced CO_2 emissions) may sound good on paper in the office of one of these banks, but they may not work very well on the ground where the finance is intended to help. The setting of targets to be achieved, and how to unlock payments for work undertaken at the local level, need careful thought and design to make them workable in order to attract private sector SMEs to get involved in sustainable development initiatives – otherwise local businesses will be deterred.

In addition to the role of governments and development banks, and their actions towards sustainable finance, the private finance sector (which includes bond and equity markets) could play a key role in supporting investment in resilient small island cities. Perhaps new markets such as carbon trading could be tapped into.

The world of business has a valuable role to play. The The Small Island States Global Business Network (SIDS-GBN) being held by UN- OHRLLS in May 2024, prior to SIDS4, is a vehicle for the private sector to discuss key matters.. Themes to explore include community empowerment, blue-green growth, enabling the business environment, and investment opportunities. Perhaps AI-sector opportunities for SIDS cities can be explored with tech businesses. Outcomes of the SIDS-GBN Forum will feature in a private sector roundtable during SIDS4. There could be valuable pointers for SIDS policy-makers to note. There are also many global business forums and investment forums that SIDS might want to link into (e.g. the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the Insurance Development Forum, the International Council for Mining and Metals, the International Hospitality Investment Forum). A focus on small business is also important.

3.6 Evidence and learning points

An opportunity exists to undertake further SIDS-focused urban resilience and dynamism research to support the development of priorities and actions. The examples in Table 1 provide very brief overviews of activities to build resilient and dynamic SIDS cities (more details are available separately on request):

Table 1 Examples of city learning points for SIDS (using aspects of the urban system)

Urban 2.0 system/ SDG	Location	Example
Governance: innovative and agile planning *SDG 17: partnerships for the goals*	Cabo Verde	Cabo Verde is one of the most vulnerable SIDS, according to the MVI Report 2023 (UN, 2023), with a score of 60.5. Against all odds, the country progressed from an 'unviable' state in 1975 to a low-middle-income position in 2007 and is today regarded as a development success story for its democratic, economic, and social achievements. Nonetheless, issues remain. Economic and social inequalities, environmental dangers, and non-inclusive governance systems contribute to its susceptibility to external shocks. One solution the government is implementing to address these vulnerabilities is Platforms of Local Development (Plataformas de Desenvolvimento Local (PDL)), an integrated collaborative governance model implemented in 20 municipal governments, with UNDP technical assistance and financial support from the Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency. PDL operates inside municipal boundaries and takes an 'all-of-society approach' to governance, including a diverse range of stakeholders in local decisions on some of the most pressing sustainable development issues. Stakeholders include local private firms, central government delegations, sectoral public entities, community associations, CSOs, international organisations, and foreign partners. PDL establishes an 'ecosystem for local development' (Lopes, 2024).
	Antigua and Barbuda	Antigua and Barbuda is twinned with the London borough of Waltham Forest. *Opportunity: governance knowledge exchange between the London borough and Antigua and Barbuda authorities (and with authorities of other SIDS)?*
Governance: agile and innovative planning *SDG 16: peace, justice & strong institutions*	The Maldives – Hulhumalé	Hulhumalé is a new city being created for the Maldives. As part of the Safer Island Strategy agreed after the 2004 tsunami, Hulhumalé includes infrastructure that is designed to be resilient to natural hazards. The new city is linked into the overall approach of the Maldives to achieve 33% of energy as renewable by 2028.
Governance: responsible finance *SDG 8: decent work & economic growth*	Antigua and Barbuda	The investment banking industry has a strong presence in the capital city of St. John's. Major world financial institutions have offices there. *Opportunity: private finance + SIDS?*
	Willemstad, Curaçao	The finance sector has a large presence in the city. Schlumberger, the world's largest oil field services company is incorporated in Willemstad.

Urban 2.0 system/ SDG	Location	Example
Ecological: disaster risk & climate change	Saint Lucia Tuvalu Trinidad and Tobago Mauritius	Building upon resilience measures for critical infrastructure under the World Bank's Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project, a team has provided the Saint Lucia government with training and assistance on the design and implementation of a risk-based infrastructure asset management system. The Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project (TCAP) continues to roll out its plan to train government officials in the use of a coastal hazard modelling tool, to detect and mitigate coastal risks. Trinidad and Tobago uses the Everbridge population alerting software nationwide to protect the country's 1.4 million residents. It happens to use a cloud-based solution, rather than the more common cell-based broadcast. To help ensure the safety of residents and visitors alike, Mauritius' National Disaster Risk Reduction & Management Centre (NDRRMC) also selected Everbridge for the early warning system of the country's four islands – the main island of Mauritius and the islands of Rodrigues, Agaléga, and St. Brandon. Everbridge has been deployed across all government and law enforcement agencies, including the National Police, Military, Fire & Rescue Services, National Coast Guard, and Meteorological Services to immediately inform the public in the event of an emergency.
Ecological: nature-based solutions *SDG 13: climate action*	Singapore	Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park is an example of creating a blended 'green-blue-grey' infrastructure with nature at the heart. It is integrated into Singapore's overall approach to ecology.
Physical: transport & mobility *SDG 9: industry, innovation & infrastructure*	Saint Lucia	Risk-based management of infrastructure to reduce disaster and climate risk, with a new asset management system installed.
	Costa Rica	The Government of Costa Rica announced in December 2023 the creation of a Public–Private Partnership (PPP) Project Preparation Facility (PPF) for public and private sector resources to develop sustainable infrastructure projects. Costa Rica is also trialling Natural Asset Companies (NACs) as sustainable enterprises that hold the rights to ecosystem services produced by natural, working, or hybrid lands, with an accounting framework to measure ecological performance.
Physical: rewiring to be smart *SDG 9: industry, innovation & infrastructure*	The Cook Islands, The Maldives, Trinidad and Tobago, São Tomé and Príncipe	National digital strategies in the Cook Islands and Niue, the Digital Pathway of Samoa, and innovation in countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, the Maldives, and São Tomé and Príncipe. UNDP SIDS Digital Readiness Assessments indicate that there is citizen enthusiasm for continued action.
	Cabo Verde	Cabo Verde has a practical Smart City Strategy that offers learnings for other SIDS.
	Singapore	Singapore has a Smart Nation Strategy that offers learnings for other SIDS.

Urban 2.0 system/ SDG	Location	Example
Knowledge sharing, Section 17 *SDG 17: partnerships for the goals*	Antigua and Barbuda	The SIDS Global Data Hub is being established.

Additional evidence and learning points relating to SIDS cities are available separately. Many examples are from nations around the world, ranging from how cities in the Netherlands are managing water, through to city roadmaps to grow a green economy (such as that of New York City (NYCEDC, 2024).

4 Recommendations for policy advisors

The following 10 recommendations are put forward for consideration for policy development for all SIDS to build and maintain resilient and dynamic cities, with no one left behind. The recommendations take into account the strategic enablers for SIDS of access to finance; scaling up sustainability finance (not solely 'climate finance'); strengthening data collection; productive populations; and partnerships.

4.1 Policy consideration for resilient and dynamic cities

1. Consider developing a shared urban vision, strategy and plan for building resilient and dynamic SIDS cities to an agreed time horizon – perhaps to 2034, 2040 and 2050. Involve all stakeholder groups in its development.
2. Agree a common governance framework for SIDS cities (possibly linked to an overarching integrated governance initiative).
3. Consider setting up a Portfolio Management Office (PMO) within the proposed new SIDS Centre of Excellence (CoE) to support the city resilience strategies and plans of all SIDS. The cost of running the PMO, its funding, and outputs and benefits tracking would need to be determined. PMO roles and responsibilities should be defined along with ownership of minimum urban governance standards.
4. Consider an all-SIDS framework for supporting urban development (potentially managed by the proposed PMO) that is based on an urban system and includes tools, techniques and guidance for governance teams to use.
5. Consider creating all-SIDS citizens' and business assemblies to co-create the way forward and agree how to inspire citizens through the SDGs.
6. Convene a business panel to provide input into the all-SIDS cities strategy and plan, including but not limited to businesses attending the SIDS-GBN Forum (as part of SIDS4) and the ARISE network, with appropriate representation by small and micro-businesses.
7. Consider developing an all-SIDS cities integrated funding and investment plan which leverages private sector solutions and development finance (potentially linked to broader investment plans).
8. Municipal authorities on SIDS need help to collect and use data. As part of reviewing SIDS city resilience and dynamism, consider conducting, in a specified timeframe, efficient diagnostics reviews for the capital cities of all SIDS, perhaps organised by the proposed PMO. Any diagnostics reviews must leverage existing data and take into consideration all existing SIDS urban diagnostics that are already undertaken/in progress, and tie into the SDGs.

9. Inclusively develop, with partners (including the private sector) and young people, an all-SIDS smart city strategy and plan for all SIDS cities (potentially managed by the proposed PMO). Focus on 'right tech' for resilience and dynamism, including sustainable energy, good construction technology, integrating city design with nature, using smart urban food strategies, good waste management, new forms of employment, and resilience to avoid disasters from natural hazards.

10. Consider using SEEA or other appropriate natural capital accounting framework principles to measure the performance of activities and outputs of SIDS cities.

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