SIDS Blue Finance Roadmap

Executive Summary

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face a pivotal moment in advancing ocean resilience and unlocking sustainable blue economy opportunities. This roadmap provides a clear, actionable pathway for strengthening ocean governance, mobilising finance, and building long-term capacity across national, regional, and international levels. It outlines priority actions from 2026 onwards, identifies the roles of key stakeholders, and emphasises the centrality of SIDS leadership, equity, and partnerships.

The roadmap highlights the need for coordinated investment in data, long-term sustained capacity building, support for project structuring, and designing and implementing innovative financing mechanisms. It calls for a portfolio approach to financing – one that blends public, private, concessional, and innovative finance in a coordinated manner, while ensuring that solutions remain accessible, scalable, and responsive to SIDS' special circumstances. Regional collaboration, Centres of Excellence, and knowledge-sharing platforms are identified as critical enablers for reducing transaction costs and accelerating implementation.

By following this roadmap, SIDS and their partners can build robust project pipelines, strengthen community-level access to finance, and create the enabling conditions for long-term ocean and coastal resilience. The document concludes with a call to action for all stakeholders to move decisively from planning to implementation, ensuring that no SIDS is left behind.

Purpose

In January 2026, Wilton Park hosted representatives from a large number of SIDS, some donors, regional organisations, UN bodies, GEF, the private sector, CSOs and invited experts to discuss how to mobilise the financing required so that SIDS receive scaled-up investment into their ocean economies and can achieve their conservation ambitions, with equity and sustainability as core principles. The discussions agreed that several "enabling conditions" need to be in place to accelerate blue finance across SIDS. Without these, SIDS will not be able to maximise the opportunities presented by different financing mechanisms for the blue economy. These include:

1. Political will of the SIDS government.
2. SIDS' enhanced blue finance literacy to be able to not only tell the story of why finance is needed but to pitch to finance partners: **what for**, **through which means** and **when.**
3. An integrated approach by SIDS and all finance partners – avoiding fragmentation and supporting SIDS national and regional priorities, and local communities.

Participants supported the idea of developing a roadmap that outlines priority actions, timelines, and stakeholder responsibilities required to strengthen ocean governance, mobilise blue finance, and support SIDS in implementing the BBNJ Agreement and broader blue economy ambitions. Participants also emphasised the importance of maintaining momentum following the Wilton Park discussions, highlighting the possibilities of joint side-events and meeting in the margins of upcoming international conferences to deliver advocacy, show SIDS leadership and build greater support for this agenda. They also noted the difficulties of competing political priorities at international conferences.

To maintain the momentum, the UK proposes that a light-touch coordination mechanism would be helpful. The UK is looking at possible options for this. One idea is a Task Force that can ensure the different groups of partners can make concrete plans on how to address identified areas of partnership and bring the diverse stakeholders together at an early stage.

Roadmap for SIDS ocean financing

Short-term (first 18 months)

Milestone / Action	Activities	Key Stakeholders
• Establish SIDS finance & knowledge hub; • initiate blue financing diagnostics and needs assessments	• Create a hub coordinating technical assistance, training, and knowledge exchange. • Conduct blue financing diagnostics on institutional capacity, regulatory gaps, data systems, and project pipeline maturity.pipeline maturity. • Map existing initiatives across MDBs, donors, philanthropies, CSOs to avoid duplication. • Begin building longterm inhouse expertise through national focal points and training pathways.-term in-house expertise through national focal points and training pathways. • Integrate risk analysis early to identify where derisking tools are most needed.-risking tools are most needed. • Use evidence, case studies, and storytelling to build internal and external confidence.	SIDS Governments, Regional Institutions, Donors

• Launch capacity-building programmes (blue finance literacy, project structuring, risk assessment)	• Deliver structured training on financial modelling, project structuring, creditworthiness, investment readiness, and innovative blue financing mechanisms.-readiness, and innovative blue financing mechanisms. • Build capacity within ministries, regulators, local banks, and community level institutions.-level institutions. • Support exchanges across SIDS of staff experienced in blue financing models and approaches • Provide support for developing early stage project concepts into bankable proposals.-stage project concepts into bankable proposals. • Strengthen understanding of risk mitigation tools (guarantees, blended finance, insurance).-mitigation tools (guarantees, blended finance, insurance). • Use Centres of Excellence and regional bodies to deliver training at scale. • Upskill investors and credit rating agencies on SIDS realities.-rating agencies on SIDS realities. • Maintain political will by linking capacity programmes to national priorities and timelines.	Donors, MDBs, Development Partners, SIDS Governments

Medium-term (18-24 months)

Milestone / Action	Activities	Key Stakeholders
• Develop blue finance guidelines; • create investor dialogue platforms	• Produce clear, practical blue finance guidelines aligned with SIDS contexts.-finance guidelines aligned with SIDS contexts. • Establish structured dialogue platforms connecting governments, investors, MDBs, and credit rating agencies.-rating agencies. • Share model contracts, regulatory guidance, and best practice frameworks.-practice frameworks. • Use regional institutions to coordinate investor engagement and ensure consistent messaging. • Use evidence and case studies to build investor confidence. • Align guidelines with ongoing work across MDBs, philanthropies, CSOs, and development partners.	Regional Institutions, MDBs, Private Sector
• Strengthen regional Centres of Excellence; • expand knowledge-sharing platforms	• Expand mandates and resourcing of Centres of Excellence to provide due diligence, project preparation, and technical and legal support. • Use regional knowledge platforms to share diagnostics, lessons learned, and replicable models. • Facilitate exchanges between SIDS institutions, regulators, and community actors. • Support longterm institutional strengthening, including digital tools for monitoring and enforcement.-term institutional strengthening, including digital tools for monitoring and enforcement.	SIDS Governments, Regional Bodies, CSOs, Donors, Private Sector

	• Maintain political leadership engagement to sustain momentum.	
• Operationalise BBNJ Special Fund; • implement blended finance instruments	• Finalise governance arrangements for BBNJ Special Fund ensuring equity and accessibility. • Deploy blended finance instruments (guarantees, concessional capital, risk sharing tools) and consider special facilities dedicated to SIDS.-sharing tools) and consider special facilities dedicated to SIDS. • Provide clear modelling and guidance to help SIDS select appropriate financing instruments. • Strengthen regulatory frameworks to support longterm investment.-term investment. • Integrate risk analysis into project design to ensure effective use of blended finance. • Facilitate introductions between SIDS project sponsors and private investors.	SIDS Governments, Donors, MDBs, Private Sector

Long-term (24 months+)

Milestone / Action	Activities	Key Stakeholders
• Scale successful models; • integrate lessons into regional frameworks; • strengthen community-level finance access	• Identify successful pilots and replicate them using regional platforms, back up with support on feasibility studies and technical assistance. • Embed lessons learned into regional frameworks, national marine plans, and biodiversity strategies. • Expand communitylevel access to finance through microfinance, fintech, and aggregation of smallscale projects with a specific focus on the blue economy.-level access to finance through microfinance, fintech, and aggregation of small-scale projects with a specific focus on the blue economy. • Ensure transparent benefitsharing and community engagement.-sharing and community engagement. • Use inclusive approaches supported by CSOs, academia, and community organisations. • Strengthen evaluation and adaptive learning systems.	All Stakeholders

Role of Stakeholders

SIDS Governments

- Set the agenda for what SIDS want
- Lead national planning, prioritisation, and implementation
- Coordinate regionally and globally and champion inclusive, SIDS-led approaches
- Ensure equity and representation across all processes. Identify and develop strong project pipelines and provide clear policy signals

Donors

- Provide concessional finance, technical assistance, and risk-mitigation tools tailored to the blue economy and to SIDS
- Support innovation and capacity building over the long-term
- Facilitate introductions to private investors and stand behind SIDS in negotiations
- Align funding with SIDS-identified needs and priorities

MDBs, IFIs, Climate Funds

- Offer blended finance, guarantees, and de-risking instruments tailored to the blue economy and to SIDS
- Support project structuring, due diligence, and financial modelling
- Strengthen regional platforms and Centres of Excellence
- Provide best-practice guidance and regulatory support

Private Sector

- Invest in blue economy opportunities and co-finance resilience initiatives
- Upskill to understand SIDS contexts and special circumstances
- Engage in structured dialogue platforms with governments and MDBs
- Contribute technical expertise and innovation

Local Public & Commercial Banks

- Mobilise domestic resources and support microfinance and SME development in the blue economy, with a focus on gender inclusion
- Build financial literacy and strengthen local project pipelines, including through incubation
- Partner with fintech to reduce transaction costs and expand access

Regional Institutions

- Provide technical due diligence and knowledge sharing
- Coordinate regional platforms and Centres of Excellence

- Facilitate exchanges, training, and replication of successful models (within and across SIDS regions)

CSOs & Philanthropy

- Promote inclusive, community-centred approaches
- Provide flexible funding and support local engagement
- Connect community-level action to regional and global processes

Research & Academia

- Generate evidence, case studies, and diagnostics
- Provide policy advice and capacity building
- Support monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive learning