Review of the Small Islands Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway in the Pacific Region:

Economic growth, social development and Partnerships
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Pacific region, with its unique geographic, economic, and social characteristics, faces a multitude of challenges that necessitate targeted policy interventions. In 2014, the United Nations adopted the SAMOA Pathway, a comprehensive framework designed to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific. As we approach the midpoint of the decade-long mandate, it is essential to evaluate the Pacific's progress in implementing the Samoa Pathway and identify opportunities to enhance its impact.

This policy brief examines the Pacific Region’s efforts in implementing priorities outlined under the SAMOA pathway framework under three of the five thematic areas. The three thematic areas covered in this brief include:

- **Thematic Area 1**: Promote sustained and sustainable, inclusive, and equitable economic growth, with decent work for all, sustained consumption and production and sustainable transportation.
- **Thematic Area 4**: Improve human health and social development through food security and nutrition and improved water and sanitation by reducing the incidence of non-communicable diseases and promoting gender equity and women’s empowerment.
- **Thematic Area 5**: Fostering partnership among small island developing States, United Nations agencies, development partners and others to achieve the goals.

The brief looks at how countries in the region translated the SAMOA Pathway into tangible outcomes. It underscores the significance of this global commitment to addressing the complex challenges faced by SIDS and underscores the need for accelerated action to promote sustainable development, resilience, and inclusive growth in the region.

The Pacific's geographical isolation, susceptibility to climate change impacts, limited resources, and unique cultural diversity amplifies the urgency of effective policy implementation. This brief highlights the specific context of the Pacific, emphasizing the interconnectedness of its economic, social, and environmental challenges, by acknowledging the progress made thus far and addressing the gaps and emerging issues that demand immediate and urgent attention.

By assessing the achievements, constraints, and evolving priorities corresponding to the SAMOA Pathway framework, this report will inform policymakers, development partners, and stakeholders on recommendations for the crucial steps needed to enhance the Pacific's implementation efforts. This report will also advocate for more effective and efficient partnerships from around the region, mobilizing resources, strengthening of governance mechanisms, and advancing sustainable development practices contextualized to the Pacific region.


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1 Lise Kalavi of Finikaso Consultants is the lead author of this Policy Brief.
2. SAMOA PATHWAY PROGRESS

In 2021, a monitoring and evaluation framework was established for the SAMOA Pathway, and significant progress has been made in its implementation. Progress on each of the thematic areas is outlined below.

2.1 Thematic Area 1: Promote sustained and sustainable, inclusive, and equitable economic growth, with decent work for all, sustained consumption and production and sustainable transportation.

For Indicators 23 - 29: Niue, Fiji, PNG, Nauru and the Solomon Is, progressed on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. The rest of the countries and territories either stagnated, regressed or had no data to determine progress on the sustained and sustainable, inclusive, and equitable economic growth with decent work for all indicators.

For Indicator 30: Only Kiribati and FSM progressed, French Polynesia stagnated whilst Fiji, Guam and Marshall Islands regressed. There was no data available for the rest of the region pertaining to the Tourism indicators.

There was no data available for Indicator 66 - 67 on Sustainable transportation in the Pacific region. This trend was consistent with both SIDS in the Caribbean and Indian Ocean as well.

For Indicators 87 – 88: Kiribati, PNG, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Samoa, and Tonga progressed on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. The rest of the countries in the region either stagnated, regressed or had no data to determine progress on the education indicators.

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2 SAMOA-Pathway-2023 (Version 3)
2.2 Thematic Area 4: Improve human health and social development through food security and nutrition and improved water and sanitation, by reducing the incidence of non-communicable diseases and promoting gender equity and women’s empowerment.

For Indicators 59 – 63: CNMI, Cook Islands, RMI, FSM, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu progressed on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. The rest of the countries in the region either stagnated, regressed, or had no data available pertaining to the Food Security and Nutrition clusters.

For Indicators 64 – 65: CNMI, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, RMI, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Solomon Is, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Vanuatu, American Samoa, Tuvalu, and Guam progressed on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. The rest of the countries and territories in the region either stagnated, regressed, or had no data available pertaining to the Water and Sanitation cluster.

For Indicators 72 – 75: Kiribati, PNG, Timor-Leste, Solomon Is, Cook Is, RMI, FSM, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu progressed on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. The remaining countries either stagnated, regressed, or had no data available pertaining to the Health and Non-Communicable diseases cluster.

For Indicators 76 -77: Fiji, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Is, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Tuvalu, Marshall Is, Nauru, Cook Is, Kiribati, and Guam progressed on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. The remaining countries in the region either stagnated, regressed, or had no data available pertaining to the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment cluster.

For Indicators 78 – 79: PNG, FSM, Cook Is, Timor-Leste, Fiji, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Is, Tonga, Vanuatu, American Samoa, CNMI, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and New Caledonia progressed on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. The remaining countries either stagnated, regressed, or had no data available pertaining to the Social Development cluster.

For Indicators 80 – 82: Only Kiribati and FSM showed progression. The remaining countries either stagnated, regressed or had no data available pertaining to the Culture and Sport cluster.
For **Indicators 83 – 86**: Only Fiji, Samoa, and Timor-Leste showed progression. The remaining countries either stagnated, regressed, or had no data available pertaining to the *Peaceful Societies and Safe Communities* cluster.

2.3 **Thematic Area 5**: Fostering partnerships among small island developing States, UN Agencies, development partners, and others to achieve these goals.

For **Indicator 96**: Marshall Is, Nauru, Fiji, Solomon Is, and Tonga showed progress on at least one of the indicators in the cluster. The remaining countries either stagnated, regressed or had no data pertaining to the *Means of implementation* indicators.

For **Indicators 97 – 101**: Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, Nauru, Palau, PNG, Solomon Is, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu showed progress on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. The remaining countries either stagnated, regressed, or had no data available pertaining to the *Partnerships* indicators.

For **Indicators 102 – 106**: Fiji, Vanuatu, Nauru, Samoa, and Tonga showed progress on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. The remaining countries either stagnated, regressed, or had no data available pertaining to the *Financing* indicators.

For **Indicator 107**: American Samoa, CNMI, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, Niue, Solomon Is, and Timor-Leste showed progress on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. The remaining countries either stagnated, regressed or had no data available to the *Trade* indicators.

For **Indicators 108 – 109**: Cook Is, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Timor-Leste, Tonga, and Tuvalu, showed progress on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. The remaining countries either stagnated, regressed, or had no data available pertaining to the *Capacity Building* indicators.

For **Indicators 110 – 111**: Cook Is, Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Is, Tonga, Tuvalu, CNMI, French Polynesia, Guam, Samoa, Vanuatu, and Timor-Leste showed progress on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. The remaining countries either stagnated, regressed, or had no data available to the *Technology* indicators.
For **Indicators 112 – 114**: Cook Is, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Timor-Leste, Tonga, American Samoa, Tuvalu, CNMI, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Guam showed progress on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. The remaining countries either stagnated, regressed or had no data available pertaining to the **Data and Statistics** cluster.

For **Indicator 115**: Only Kiribati and Timor-Leste showed progress on the indicators in this cluster. The remaining countries either stagnated, regressed, or had no data available pertaining to the **Role of UN and Development partners’** cluster.

### 3. GAPS AND CHALLENGES

PSIDS, renowned for its stunning natural beauty and rich cultural heritage, deals with a multitude of diverse challenges that impact its sustainable development and progress. Across a range of critical areas, the Pacific region faces unique obstacles that require concerted efforts and collaborative solutions. This section outlines key challenges faced in the region:

#### 3.1 ECONOMIC GROWTH:

Limited resources, isolation, vulnerability to external shocks, and a heavy reliance on a narrow range of industries impede sustained economic growth in many Pacific Island countries. Recent events like the Covid-19 Pandemic, Tropical cyclones, frequent drought periods, Volcano eruption in Tonga, the Russia-Ukraine conflict have exposed how vulnerable Pacific economies are to external shocks. All countries and territories in the region have been exposed detrimentally to the external shocks mentioned.

*Mitigation Action:* In its [VNR Report](#), Fiji reported that since the inception of the BPO Council of Fiji and Outsource Fiji in 2017, it has become a game-changer for the country’s economy as it employs over 8,000 Fiji citizens. This has resulted in a conducive business environment, increased foreign investment initiatives, and an educated workforce.

#### 3.2 DECENT WORK:

Creating meaningful employment opportunities that offer fair wages, safe working conditions, and opportunities for skill development remains a challenge in the region. Cook Is, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Is, Timor-Leste, Tonga and Vanuatu stagnated against the indicators for decent work outlined in the Samoa Pathway framework. Samoa regressed, whilst the rest of the countries in the region had no information pertaining to any of the indicators for the cluster.

High unemployment rates, particularly amongst the youth, is a common theme reported in all VNRs in the region. The global pandemic further exacerbated this vulnerability, and it shows how vulnerable economies in the region are to external pressures.

*Mitigation Action:* The Government of the Solomon Islands has facilitated economic growth, through public and private investments in its Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Tourism Industries, which has resulted in economic growth and increased employment. The Government also further prioritized the protection of employees by developing stringent labour laws in which employers are mandated to ensure compliance in respect to employment contracts, minimum wages, working hours, leave entitlement and other benefits.
3.3 SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION:

Pacific Island countries face the delicate balance of promoting economic growth while minimizing negative environmental impacts. While most countries in the region have achieved targets on electronic waste, and municipal solid waste, there is very little information on production-based SO₂ emissions, SO₂ emissions embodied in imports, production-based nitrogen emissions, nitrogen emissions embodied in imports, and figures for exports of plastic waste.

**Mitigation Action:** In 2018, Vanuatu became one of the first countries in the world to implement a ban on single-use plastic bags, straws, and polystyrene packaging. Other countries in the region such as Fiji, Tuvalu and Samoa have followed suit.

3.4 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT:

Geographic isolation and limited infrastructure pose significant challenges to efficient and sustainable transport systems. Improving connectivity, investing in renewable energy-powered transportation, and enhancing logistics and supply chain networks are vital for regional integration and economic development.

**Mitigation Action:** As part of the goals under Fiji’s Green Growth Framework, the Fiji Roads Authority included cycle lanes in the Nakasi - Nausori corridor in 2019. (Fiji Government, 2014). Additionally, the Fiji Government has expanded its investment incentives to promote the procurement of electric vehicles and the setting up of charging stations in the country. To date, a handful of foreign-owned companies have invested in the development of electric vehicles and charging stations. (Fiji Government, 2022)

3.5 HUMAN HEALTH:

Pacific Island countries are faced with the double burden of both communicable and non-communicable diseases. Limited healthcare resources, inadequate infrastructure, and a changing disease landscape demand increased investment in healthcare systems, preventative measures, and healthcare workforce capacity. This is a major area of concern with countries in the region such as Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Is, Tonga, Tuvalu, CNMI, and Vanuatu regressing on at least one of the indicators in this cluster. Other countries not mentioned do not have sufficient or any data to report against these indicators.

**Mitigation Effort:** Most healthcare systems and resources allocated in PSIDS are focused on curative health, and this presents an urgent need for PSIDS to shift its focus and allocate appropriate resources to preventative healthcare, and more interactive awareness at all levels.

3.6 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

Addressing social issues, such as poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, is crucial for inclusive development.

In the Pacific region, only FSM has met the target for percentage of population with access to at least one source of social protection benefit. Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, Nauru, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Is, Timor-Leste, Tonga, and Vanuatu are stagnating, whilst the rest of the countries in the region have no data to report against this indicator.
Mitigation Effort: The Government of PNG has put in place the District Development Authority Act (2014) to manage the Service Improvement Programme to ensure that development priorities consider the needs of remote and isolated rural populations and the marginalized and most vulnerable groups in society. (PNG Government, 2020)

3.7 FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION:
Pacific Island countries face challenges related to food security, including limited arable land, vulnerability to climate change impacts on agriculture, and dependence on food imports. American Samoa, Cook Is, Fiji, French Polynesia, FSM, Kiribati, Marshall Is, Nauru, New Caledonia, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Is, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu registered at least one regression on at least one indicator in the Food Security and Nutrition cluster.

Mitigation Effort: Small Island States such as Tuvalu, Kiribati and Nauru consume more imported food as compared to locally sourced food due to many factors such as limited land for cultivation and overcrowding. Tuvalu implemented its Sustainable Healthy Food Security Strategy, an integration of the Tuvalu Food Security Strategy and the UN Food Systems Pathways. The Strategy has 5 thematic areas which include (i) Eat Safe and Nutritious Food (ii) Strengthen Governance and Finance (iii) Change and Shifting of Diets (iv) Increase local food production, and (v) Strengthened Partnership. The Government of Tuvalu believes that implementing the Strategy requires a multi-sectorial/multi-stakeholder hands-on approach for successful implementation. (Government of Tuvalu, 2021)

3.8 WATER AND SANITATION:
Access to safe and clean water, as well as adequate sanitation facilities, remains a pressing challenge for many Pacific Island communities. Efficient water resource management, infrastructure development, and innovative solutions are vital to address water scarcity, pollution, and inadequate sanitation. American Samoa, Cook Is, French Polynesia, Fiji, FSM, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Timor-Leste, and Tonga reported at least one regression on the indicators for Wash and Sanitation.

Mitigation Effort: Kiribati, for instance heavily relies on its underground water for domestic consumption. Saltwater intrusion and rising sea levels pose a significant challenge to freshwater sources in Kiribati. The Kiribati Government and its development partners are working together to address these issues, through initiatives including the promotion of rainwater harvesting systems, improving water storage and distribution infrastructure, and implementing wastewater management solutions. (Kiribati Ministry of Public Works and Utility, 2008)

3.9 NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES:
Pacific Island countries experience a high prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and obesity. Combating NCDs requires comprehensive prevention strategies, promoting healthy lifestyles, and strengthening healthcare systems to provide early detection and treatment.
CNMI, Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, PNG, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Is, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu all registered at least one regression against indicators for the Health and Non-Communicable cluster.

**Mitigation Effort:** In 2010, the Global Burden Diseases ranked Nauru as number one in the world, in terms of the prevalence of diabetes in the adult population. Consequently, the annual expenditure for diabetes is approximately 20% of the annual health Government expenditure. Despite Nauru implementing various initiatives, including health education campaigns, promoting healthy lifestyles, improving access to healthy food, and strengthening screening and management programs for NCDs, the NCD numbers in Nauru continue to grow. (Government of Nauru, 2018)

### 3.10 GENDER EQUALITY:
Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is crucial for sustainable development. Eliminating gender-based violence, increasing women’s participation in decision-making processes, and ensuring equal access to education and economic opportunities are essential steps.

American Samoa, Cook Is, Fiji, FSM, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, PNG, RMI, Samoa, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu registered at least one regression against the indicators for Gender equality and Women’s empowerment.

**Mitigation effort:** In the Solomon Islands, the Government has implemented free education and other targeted policy measures which have increased primary and secondary school enrollment rates and improved gender parity with more girls starting and remaining in school. As a result, Solomon Islands continues to maintain high levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy, scoring higher than the regional proficiency average for years four and six. (Solomon Islands Government, 2020)

### 3.11 FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS:
Pacific Island countries face capacity constraints, limited resources, and complex development challenges.

All countries and territories in the region: American Samoa, CNMI, Cook Is, French Polynesia, Fiji, FSM, Guam, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Is, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu have registered at least one regression against indicators in the Partnerships cluster.

**Mitigation Effort:** Countries in the region must continue to work in collaboration with development partners such as the UN agencies and CROP agencies, to tailor strategies contextualized for each country, using all available technologies, and leveraging regional cooperation to ensure that the multifaceted challenges which are required to meet reporting mechanisms of the SAMOA Pathway framework are developed via innovative approaches with commitments from governments, private sector, civil society, development partners, and the international community.
4 PARTNERSHIPS

Fostering partnerships among Small Island Developing States (SIDS), UN agencies, development agencies, and other partners is essential for addressing the challenges faced by SIDS and achieving sustainable development goals. However, several challenges and issues need to be addressed to ensure effective partnerships.

4.1 Fragmentation and duplication of efforts. Multiple partners may implement similar projects without proper coordination, leading to overlapping activities and resource wastage.

*Mitigation Action:* To mitigate this, it is important to strengthen coordination mechanisms and ensure high-impact and contextualized initiatives. Tuvalu has such a mechanism in place, where the Aid Coordination Unit and the Department of Foreign Affairs maintain a comprehensive record of all development assistance in the country. The entities are also responsible for coordinating all proposals to development partners. (Government of Tuvalu, 2017)

4.2 Power imbalances can hinder effective partnerships. SIDS may face challenges in advocating for their priorities and ensuring their voices are heard in decision-making processes. Equitable partnerships are essential, where the needs and perspectives of SIDS are given due consideration. Capacity constraints also pose challenges, as SIDS may have limited resources, technical expertise, and institutional frameworks.

*Mitigation Action:* The Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) facilitate regional cooperation among its member countries. By working together, these nations have a strong collective voice in international fisheries management discussions and negotiations. The PNA advocates for the interest of its member countries in global forums and promotes the recognition of Pacific Island countries’ rights and responsibilities in the sustainable management of their tuna resources. (PNA, n.d.)

4.2 Sustainability and long-term commitment are important for achieving sustainable development goals. Partnerships can sometimes be short-term and project-focused, lacking continuity and follow-through. It is crucial to foster enduring partnerships that focus on building long-term relationships, sharing knowledge, and jointly working towards common goals.

*Mitigation Action:* CROP Agencies ensure continuous assistance to their members by coordinating efforts, strategic planning, resource mobilization, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, policy advice and advocacy, and facilitating information and knowledge sharing. These approaches enable them to provide sustained support to member countries in addressing their development challenges.
5 LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

5.1 Lessons Learned:

5.1.1 Integration and Synergies: One key lesson learned is the importance of integrating and synergizing efforts across different areas of sustainable development. Addressing the various priorities should not be pursued in isolation. Instead, a holistic and integrated approach that recognizes the interconnections between these areas is essential for achieving sustainable development goals. As there are many frameworks to be reported on not just national, but regional and global as well, so indicators must be developed that can meet National, Regional and Global commitments.

Country Example: Tonga – Integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development.
The Tonga 2019 VNR states that the country has applied a Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) methodology to the analysis of the Tonga Strategic Development Framework to align with the Addis Abba Action Agenda, the SAMOA Pathway, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and other regional established frameworks. The UN Tonga country team provided the necessary human and technical resources to conduct the assessment.

5.1.2 Multi-Stakeholder Engagement: Meaningful progress in these areas requires the active engagement and collaboration of multiple stakeholders, including governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, and local communities. Lessons have been learned about the importance of inclusivity, participation, and cooperation among these stakeholders to ensure that policies, programs, and initiatives are well-designed, effectively implemented, and sustainable in the long term.

Country Example: Samoa – Facilitating multistakeholder engagement.
The Government of Samoa organized a multistakeholder “data validation week”, which was considered to be critical to defining the dataset on which reported information was based. Before the meetings, national authorities shared a draft indicator matrix across government, civil society, and private sector for input. Consultations led to a participatory discussion and validation of the existing data. This helped to identify better data produced by different actors of the Samoan data community.

5.1.3 Policy Coherence and Alignment: Lessons have been learned about the need for policy coherence and alignment across sectors to promote sustainable development. Coordinated and integrated policies that consider social, economic, and environmental dimensions are essential for achieving desired outcomes and avoiding potential trade-offs or unintended consequences. Also, aligning country priorities to regional and global frameworks is an effective way of ensuring that all priorities are accounted for and not neglected.

Country Example: Kiribati – Streamlining of all Global, Regional and National priorities
The Government of Kiribati was faced with the daunting task of developing its national plan based on the priorities of the Kiribati people but at the same time, ensuring that commitments that the Government of Kiribati had assented to such as the SDGs, the Istanbul Plan, SAMOA pathway are all fulfilled. So after consultations with the Kiribati public was done, targets and
indicators from regional and global frameworks were contextualized to develop indicators suitable for Kiribati, that would meet all reporting requirements for Kiribati.

5.1.4 Data and Monitoring: Availability and access to reliable data and robust monitoring systems are critical for evidence-based decision-making and tracking progress in not only national frameworks but regional and global frameworks as well. Lessons have been learned about the importance of investing in data collection, analysis, and reporting mechanisms to facilitate evidence-based policies, monitoring of progress, and identification of gaps and challenges that need to be addressed. Government Statistics Department needs to be cognizant of all qualitative and quantitative data reporting requirements are needed to be able to incorporate into National Census surveys or Household Income and Expenditure Surveys (HIES).

Example: Capacity Building by ADB in partnership with UNSD, SIAD and ESCAP.

An online training course for SDMX Foundation was conducted by ADB, UNDP, SIAP, and ESCAP in response to concerns from National Statistics Offices on the lack of knowledge and implementation of SMDX in the national statistical systems. The course will assist National Statistics Offices to strengthen their knowledge of SDMX and improve statistical business processes.

5.2 Next Steps:

5.2.1 MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

National: Countries in the region need to look at the gaps and challenges identified from the last VNR that was conducted and to incorporate best practices from the region in preparation for the next VNR. This can be achieved by having a committee in place that is chaired by the appropriate government department, but also includes members from other relevant government departments, NGOs, Civil Societies, the Private Sector and Community Leaders, to oversee the monitoring and evaluation of all relevant reporting requirements for indicators. By having a multi-sector approach that leaves no one behind, this will get a buy in for all sectors concerned, and it will gain cooperation and acceptance by all stakeholders. This will also increase awareness of reporting requirements for not only the SDGs, but for the Samoa Pathway, Addis Ababa framework, Istanbul framework, Sendai Framework and also National Framework indicators. Also, by considering opportunities in the Blue Economy, as it has the potential to further develop all economies in the region.

Regional/ Global: CROP and UN agencies should connect with governments in the region, on financial and technical priority needs to ensure that national priorities are fulfilled, whether it be capacity building, provision of technical expertise, or provision of financial assistance to achieve local priorities. CROP/ UN agencies should also assist Pacific SIDS with planning for the Blue Economy.
innovative solutions to tackle complex challenges and drive progress in areas of sustainable development and reduce potential duplication of work.

Regional/Global: CROP and UN agencies in the region, should review individual country priorities and offer advice and recommendations to their counterparts in-country. If possible, offering technical and financial assistance to countries, in the event that there is no official request from the country.

5.1.6 STRENGTHENING IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING:
National: Emphasis should be placed on strengthening implementation mechanisms and monitoring frameworks to ensure the effective delivery of policies and programs. This includes establishing clear targets and indicators, enhancing accountability mechanisms, and regularly evaluating progress to identify gaps and areas for improvement.

Regional/Global: UN organisations like UNESCAP should continue their collaboration with governments in the region to strengthen capacities of National Statistics Organisations and National Monitoring and Evaluation Committees responsible for reporting indicators of regional and global frameworks such as the SAMOA pathway and SDGs. Also, UNESCAP should also connect national governments with other organisations that may be able to increase capacity of monitoring, evaluation and implementation of SAMOA pathway and SDG targets.

5.1.7 KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND CAPACITY BUILDING:
National: Promoting knowledge sharing and capacity building is crucial for enhancing understanding, awareness, and skills related to sustainable development. Supporting research, education, training, and knowledge exchange platforms can empower individuals, organizations, and communities to contribute effectively to sustainable development efforts.

Regional/Global: UNESCAP is in a good position to facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building within the region. Recommendation is that UNESCAP works in collaboration with other CROP/UN agencies and acts as a focal point for all Pacific SIDS to facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building.

5.1.8 ADDRESSING EMERGING ISSUES
National: The next steps should also involve addressing emerging challenges and evolving priorities. This includes tackling emerging issues such as climate change, digital transformation, biodiversity loss, circular economy, just transition, mental health, and social inequalities. Flexibility, adaptability, and innovation are key in responding to these emerging challenges and identifying sustainable solutions.

Regional/Global: UNESCAP should act as the focal point for any matters pertaining to addressing emerging issues within Pacific SIDS for the implementation of SAMOA pathway and SDG priorities. To minimize duplication, it is recommended that UNESCAP coordinate with Pacific governments in addressing emerging issues mentioned and also additional opportunities such as the Blue Economy.
4.6. DATA AVAILABILITY AND CHALLENGES

In 2021, a monitoring and evaluation framework was established for the SAMOA Pathway, and significant progress has been made in its implementation. The assembly acknowledges this development and urges SIDS to utilize the framework for reporting purposes.

The present analysis relies on the latest data and estimates sourced from the global SDG indicator database, custodian agencies, and regional economic commissions. These sources provide a comprehensive range of data, including country-level statistics as well as regional and global aggregates.

The data presented in this study demonstrates the critical role of reliable and extensive data in facilitating systematic progress monitoring, review, and informed decision-making at various levels. However, it is important to note that the data requirements for the indicators are extensive, posing significant challenges for SIDS. This is evidenced by the presence of substantial data gaps across most thematic areas, as well as the lack of recent data.

Insufficient data availability for several key indicators hampers the ability to assess trends effectively in most thematic areas. As SIDS confronts the daunting task of recovering from the compounded crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, the need for timely and high-quality data has become more imperative than ever before.

a) **Thematic Area 1: Promote sustained and sustainable, inclusive, and equitable economic growth, with decent work for all, sustained consumption and production and sustainable transportation.**

Insufficient data hinders the analysis of sustainable transport, and no data was presented for consumption and production. Moreover, substantial data gaps exist for the remaining priority action clusters, with less than 30% of countries in each region having accessible data, making it challenging to draw significant conclusions.
Despite these limitations, the available data suggests that most countries with data show signs of progress in the education and economic growth clusters. Further examination of the underlying indicators reveals improvements in school completion rates across all levels, as well as increased official flows for scholarships, which are also observed in nearly half of the SIDS. Notably, there are noticeable increases in official flows for infrastructure, particularly in the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, and South China Sea regions.

b) *Thematic area 4: Improve human health and social development through food security and nutrition and improved water and sanitation by reducing the incidence of non-communicable diseases and promoting gender equity and women’s empowerment.*

Relatively better data coverage is observed for this thematic area. Encouraging progress is noted in social development as well as health and non-communicable diseases, with declining rates of maternal, infant, under-5, and neonatal mortality across most SIDS. Additionally, there have been reductions in the incidence of tuberculosis, although certain Pacific countries still face challenges in combating this communicable disease.
Where data is available, moderate progress is evident in the areas of food security and nutrition, gender equality, women’s empowerment, and water and sanitation. Further analysis of the underlying indicators reveals an increase in water use efficiency across SIDS, especially in the countries of the Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, and South China Sea region. However, there is a noticeable rise in water stress levels for approximately half of the countries with available data. Furthermore, there is compelling evidence of increased official development assistance (ODA) in the field of water and sanitation, particularly in the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, and South China Sea regions. As for the prevalence of undernourishment, countries exhibit mixed results, with some progressing slowly towards the Sustainable Development Goal target by 2030, while others face regression or stagnation. Notably, Cuba has already achieved the Sustainable Development Goal target 2.1.1.

In the culture and sport, peaceful societies and safe communities, and social development clusters, most countries with available data are either not making progress or experiencing negative trends.

c) **Thematic area 5: Fostering partnership among small island developing States, United Nations agencies, development partners and others to achieve the goals.**

For thematic area 5, improvements and progress has been noted for the priority action cluster of capacity-building in comparison from data from 2022.
On a positive note, notable progress is observed in technology and trade across all regions. Most countries in both fixed broadband subscriptions and access to mobile phone networks have experienced growth, indicating advancements in technological infrastructure.

Regarding financing, signs of progress are evident in all regions. This can be partially attributed to the increasing percentage of personal remittances as a share of gross domestic product in many SIDS. However, a few countries in each region still exhibit a decline in this regard.

Means of implementation and partnerships present mixed results across all regions. Further analysis of the underlying indicators reveals declines in the funding of domestic budgets through taxes in several countries. While official development assistance (ODA) shows progress in many countries, particularly in the Pacific region, there is a decline observed in a significant number of countries as well.
7. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 **Focus Area 1: To improve economic growth, decent work for all, sustainable consumption and production, and sustainable transport, Governments in the region:**

7.1.1 **National:**

7.1.1.1 Prioritize investment in sustainable infrastructure, particularly in renewable energy, public transportation, and green technologies.

7.1.1.2 Promote innovation and technology adoption, along with investments in education and skills development, which will drive productivity gains and create quality employment opportunities.

7.1.1.3 Support for small and medium enterprises should be enhanced through access to finance and capacity building programs.

7.1.1.4 Implement policies to encourage sustainable consumption patterns, such as promoting circular economy practices and reducing waste.

7.1.1.5 Leverage relatively high education spending into other drivers for future opportunities such as the blue economy potential. Examples could include training a critical mass of researchers and instructors and mounting tertiary and vocational training programmes oriented towards priority industries.

7.1.2 **Regional**

7.1.2.1 CROP regional agencies and UN agencies to coordinate policy advice and support and also provision of technical and financial support to priority capacity-building and development programs.

7.1.2.2 CROP regional agencies and UN agencies to coordinate support to countries in the region to develop streamlined Indicator frameworks to support reporting requirements of each country in the region for National frameworks, SAMOA pathway framework and SDG frameworks.

7.1.2.3 CROP regional agencies and UN agencies to coordinate support to countries in the region to develop and compile reporting requirements for their National, Regional, and Global reporting requirements.
7.2 Focus Area 4: To improve human health and social development, governments should prioritize comprehensive approaches:

7.2.1 National:
7.2.1.1 Promote food security and nutrition through sustainable agricultural practices, support smallholder farmers, and ensure access to nutritious and diverse food for all.
7.2.1.2 PSIDS should invest in entry-level precision agriculture technologies, with accompanying extension and information services for farmers. Implementing these technologies on a targeted, small-scale basis can contribute to immediate policy priority. For example, increasing agricultural productivity, improving overall food security and nutrition and reduce food import dependency – as well as building knowledge of new technologies among local entrepreneurs, engineers, and technicians, as part of a long-term strategy for capitalizing on future opportunities.
7.2.1.3 Improve water and sanitation infrastructure to provide clean and safe drinking water, proper sanitation facilities, and hygiene education. Access to safe and clean water, as well as adequate sanitation facilities, remains a pressing challenge for many Pacific Island communities. Efficient water resource management, infrastructure development, and innovative solutions are vital to address water scarcity, pollution, and inadequate sanitation.
7.2.1.4 Implement preventive measures to reduce the incidence of non-communicable diseases, such as promoting healthy lifestyles, tobacco control, and access to affordable healthcare services.
7.2.1.5 Foster gender equality by addressing social norms, ensuring equal access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, and promoting women’s participation in decision-making processes.

7.2.2 Regional
7.2.2.1 CROP regional agencies and UN agencies to coordinate policy advice and support and also provision of technical and financial support to priority capacity-building and development programs.
7.2.2.2 CROP regional agencies and UN agencies to coordinate support to countries in the region to develop streamlined indicator frameworks to support reporting requirements of each country in the region for National frameworks, SAMOA pathway framework and SDG frameworks.
7.2.2.3 CROP regional agencies and UN agencies to coordinate support to countries in the region to develop and compile reporting requirements for their National, Regional, and Global reporting requirements.
7.3 Focus Area 5: To achieve the goals outlined in the Samoa Pathway, fostering partnerships among Small Island Developing States (SIDS), UN Agencies, development partners, and other stakeholders is crucial.

7.3.1 National:
7.3.1.1 Enhance collaboration and coordination through regular dialogues, joint initiatives, and information-sharing platforms. A sustainable outcome will not be achieved without coordination among actors, alignment of investment and initiatives, integration across sectors, and a commitment to policy coherence. Through the investments they make and their approaches to programming, donors and partners have a critical influence on all actors in the system and are especially important at national level in supporting host countries to develop regulatory and policy framework that supports integrated food systems.

7.3.1.2 Mobilize resources by attracting investment, by aligning National priorities to development priorities, securing funding commitments, and leveraging innovative financing mechanisms.

7.3.1.3 Strengthen capacity-building efforts by facilitating knowledge exchange, technical assistance, and training programs. Promote South-South cooperation and regional integration to share experiences and best practices. Advocate for SIDS' interests in international forums and ensure their meaningful participation in decision-making processes.

7.3.2 Regional
7.3.2.1 CROP regional agencies and UN agencies to coordinate policy advice and support and also provision of technical and financial support to priority capacity-building and development programs.

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7.3.2.3 CROP regional agencies and UN agencies to coordinate support to countries in the region to develop and compile reporting requirements for their National, Regional, and Global reporting requirements.
8. REFERENCES


