

Call To Action

Resilient Infrastructure for SIDS and Coastal Regions



The scale of the resilient infrastructure challenge faced by SIDS

From Dominica to Vanuatu, extreme weather events have erased up to 226 % of GDP in SIDS, wiping out ports, power grids and roads built with decades of scarce capital. Building back stronger raises costs by 3-10%, a premium most island treasuries cannot afford, as debt servicing costs soar after every storm. But resilient infrastructure is not a 'nice to have'; it is a necessity.

Recognizing this urgency, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure convened three expert working groups between March and April 2025 to interrogate barriers and identify solutions: Access to Finance; Standards and Codes; and Data, Technology and Early-Warnings. This Call to Action sets out practical steps to close the resilience gap and protect hard-won development gains in some of the world's most vulnerable nations.

Vision

By 2034, all SIDS can build and maintain disaster resilient infrastructure, guided by localized codes, open risk data, and a mix of concessional, domestic, and private finance.

Expert Group Members

Emily Wilkinson Principal Research Fellow ODI Global, (Lead for 'Access to Finance' Working Group)	Ravi Sinha Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, IIT Bombay (Lead for 'Standards and Codes' Working Group)	Ajay Lavakare Senior Advisor, CDRI (Lead for 'Data & Technology' Working Group)
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What the experts concluded:

Fragmented funding streams and complex fiduciary and reporting requirements, income-based eligibility, rigid timelines and thin project pipelines keep development and climate finance from reaching SIDS when and how they need it. The finance architecture needs reshaping so resources flow into resilient infrastructure investment programmes in small islands, at scale.

Foreign design codes and standards are misaligned with island hazards and limited human capacities, documents are difficult to access, and enforcement is challenging. Construction regulations need to be fit-for-purpose for SIDS, adapted to their size and capacities, encouraging 'minimum' requirements through incentives as well as penalties and encourage use of local materials.

Lack of baseline information, dispersed data across portals and behind paywalls, and gaps in communications networks, all pose severe challenges for building, maintaining and operating resilient infrastructure and early warning systems, and reaching vulnerable communities and people with disabilities. Unified, trusted data ecosystems and inclusive, tech-enabled alert systems can overcome these challenges.

Time to act is now

Ten concrete actions to unlock finance and build resilient infrastructure (2025-2034)

1

Launch the SIDS Global Data Hub 2.0.

Consolidate hazard, asset and loss data for SIDS into an open, cloud platform with gender – and disability – disaggregated layers and a live interface for policy-makers, planners and investors.

2

Ensure 100% multi-hazard early-warning coverage in SIDS by 2030.

Fund sensors, satellite links and low-cost last – mile messaging (radio, cell-broadcast, vibro-alerts, sirens) so warnings reach every person, including remote atolls and persons with disabilities.

3

Build permanent data-tech cadres.

Geospatial/ physical planning units in SIDS receive long-term (9-year) capacity strengthening and knowledge exchange with university partners and budgets to maintain systems, audit data quality and translate analytics into investment-ready resilient projects.

4

Develop SIDS-specific design codes.

CDRI and regional bodies develop a set of modular, hazard-appropriate minimum building and infrastructure design standards for SIDS that recognise vernacular methods, nature-based solutions and locally available materials.

5

Tie finance to resilience compliance.

Normalize practice of providing higher concessional lending conditional on resilience standards, insurance-premium discounts and tax rebates on certified resilient designs, retrofits and maintenance plans.

6

Digitise standards enforcement and access.

Publish free, translated standards online; establish national or regional mechanisms, equip construction inspectors in SIDS with checklists and access to monitoring technologies, and fund vocational training programmes for contractors and communities to monitor compliance.

7

Create a one-stop accreditation process for SIDS.

Establish a “SIDS accreditation passport” across the climate funds and with MDBs, using AI to update information (for reaccreditation), to reduce duplicative application processes and capacity pressures on SIDS.

8

Establish resilience units within ministries of finance.

Support SIDS to consolidate climate-finance, engineering and legal expertise in one unit and embed long-term climate finance/project finance technical advisers in these units.

9

Generate resilient infrastructure pipelines and country investment platforms.

Develop resilient infrastructure pipelines in all SIDS covering both new builds and retrofits, and country investment platforms through which donors coordinate, pool resources and expertise, and give private financiers a clear entry point for blended finance.

10

Launch a SIDS capacity accelerator for resilient infrastructure.

Establishing regionally coordinated trainings, diploma, apprenticeship and micro-credential programmes that upskill SIDS engineers, data specialists and procurement officers to plan, finance and maintain resilient infrastructure.

