

QUESTIONNAIRE

Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway for the Sustainable Development of SIDS

Please note that strict word limits have been established for each question. In this regard, you are requested to report only on new or updated information. Previous surveys can be accessed at <https://sidsnetwork.org/> under reports.

1. Legal/Policy/Institutional Arrangements for SIDS and/or the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway¹

Does your entity/organization/government have a SIDS Strategy? If not, are there any plans to establish one, including with the appropriate resources for implementation. (500 words)

Mauritius is implementing a number of policy measures that are in line with the SAMOA Pathway. Mauritius has also adopted the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development along with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The overarching socio-economic vision of the Government is focused on the concept of redistributive and regenerative growth encompassing fundamentals of sustainability and inclusiveness.

The Government strategies revolve around 4 main pillars as outlined in the Government Programme 2020-24:

- I. High Income economy, with sustained economic growth and higher development level that translate into improved living standards;
- II. Inclusive economy, entailing a reduction in poverty and inequality, promotion of greater social justice and equity and higher level of well-being;
- III. Green Mauritius, with the pursuit of sustainable economic development to meet present needs without undermining the integrity and stability of the natural environment and without jeopardizing the needs of the future generations;
- IV. Safe Mauritius, where safety of citizens and tourists is reinforced, combat against social ills, drugs and domestic violence is tightened, and preparedness to health

¹ This question seeks to examine the extent to which each respondent mainstreamed SIDS and the Samoa Pathway into co-operation frameworks, programmes and activities, national development plans etc, to ensure effective follow-up and implementation at regional and national levels in SIDS.

threats including infectious disease, as well as resilience to climate change, is improved.

The Budget speech 2020/21 laid the foundation for the 'New Normal' in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic- which deals with measures on economic recovery, food security and protection of the vulnerable segments of the population, including those worst affected by the pandemic, inter alia.

Several sectoral plans have been developed in line with the long-term socio-economic path of the country. Two recent ones (2021) include the (i) Renewable Energy Roadmap to achieve a target of 35% in 2025 and 40% in 2030 of renewable energy mix and (ii) National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Strategic Framework 2020-2030 to better reduce and manage disaster risks and reinforce the security of citizens and foreigners vis-à-vis natural disaster risks and hazards.

In October 2020, Parliament passed the Climate Change Bill, as part of national efforts to make Mauritius more resilient to climate change.

As part of its adherence to the Paris Agreement, Mauritius is committed to implementing a series of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures by 2030 aimed at both reducing its GHG emissions and its vulnerability to the impacts of climate change across various key sectors including agriculture, tourism, water resources, fisheries, etc. Government is currently engaged in the five-yearly exercise to update and review the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs).

The actions of the SAMOA pathway is further enshrined in the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act of 2007 (FMRA) of Mauritius as it provides the legislative framework to the management, conservation, protection of fisheries resources and the marine ecosystems. It regulates fishing activities and promotes responsible fisheries by prohibiting use of destructive fishing gears such as dynamite fishing, underwater fishing, close seasons, protection of sensitive habitats and marine ecosystem preservation and protection. Thus, the FMRA promotes sustainable fish production whilst ensuring that the marine environment is not affected.

2. Financial Arrangements

Please give an indication of the budget allocated to the SAMOA Pathway programme areas in your government/organization/entity, if applicable, for the period Jan. - Dec. 2021 or the fiscal cycle that best fits this period. If the priority areas cannot squarely fit this chart, please report as closely as you can.

Table 1- FY/Cycle/Period Starting from 1st July 2020 to 30th June 2021

Priorities	Investments 2020-2021		Budget Estimates 2020-2021	
	Rs Million	USD Million	Rs Million	USD Million
Sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth (includes Education)	942.00	23.67	83,304.00	2,093.07
Climate Change	2,942.00	73.92	1,496.70	37.61
Sustainable Energy			2,920.00	73.37
Disaster Risk Reduction			659.30	16.57
Oceans and Seas			304.00	7.64
Food Security and Nutrition			3,144.00	78.99
Water and Sanitation			2,040.00	51.26
Sustainable Transportation			4,693.00	117.91
Sustainable Consumption and Production			74.00	1.86
Chemical and Waste management			125.00	3.14
Health and NCDs	1,713.00	43.04	12,677.00	318.52
Gender Equality			746.00	18.74
Social Development	10,348.00	260	74,775.00	1,878.77
Biodiversity			319.00	8.02
Means of Implementation				

Other (includes Public Order and Safety; and Economic Affairs)	18,540.00	465.83		
Total	34,485	866.46	187,277.00	4,705.47

Note: USD 1= MUR 39.80 as at 4th March 2021

Additional Information:

Priorities	Investment (USD)	Budget Allocation	FY/ Cycle/ Period
Climate Change	<p>(1) Coral Restoration Project (10 Million USD) The aim of the project is to reduce the impact of climate change on local communities and coral reef-dependent economic sectors in Mauritius and Seychelles by implementing coral reef restoration with thermal tolerant corals as adaptation to climate change.</p> <p>(2) Assessing Blue Carbon in Seagrass (2 Million USD) The aim of the project is to conserve, rehabilitate and sustainably use seagrass ecosystems and associated resources to maintain the ecological functions that seagrass beds procure.</p>	<p>Funded by UNDP/ Adaptation Fund Board (AFB)</p> <p>Funded by WIOSAP/ Nairobi Convention</p>	<p>6 years (started 2020)</p> <p>2021 to 2023</p>
Food Security and Nutrition	<p>Enhancing Livelihoods, Food Security and Maritime Safety through Increased Resilience of Fishing Communities Dependent on Coral Reef Fisheries in the African Coastal Countries of the Indian Ocean (4.4 Million USD)</p> <p>The project aims to improve coral reef fisheries production through restoring and conserving the coral reef in countries such as Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles and assisting fishing communities to better manage their coral reef resources.</p>	<p>Funded by FAO /Japanese Embassy</p>	<p>3.3 years, (2019-2022)</p>

Sustainable Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Cycle Network at four locations - USD 12.5 M • Modernisation of Bus Fleet - USD40M - 1600 buses need to be replaced by semi-low floor in the short and medium terms and an average of Rs1m is being allocated by Government to incentivise fleet replacement. As at date around 381 buses have been replaced out of a fleet of 2000 buses. 	<p>USD1.425 M</p> <p>USD 17.5M - Budget allocated under the Bus Modernisation Scheme: Rs70m annually</p>	<p>2021-2024</p> <p>2014- Ongoing (Yearly Budget) – Exchange Rate: 1 USD = Rs40</p>
Biodiversity	<p>Mainstreaming Biodiversity into the Management of Coastal Zone in the Republic of Mauritius (USD 4,664,521)</p> <p>The objective of the project is “to mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services into coastal zone management and into the operations and policies of the tourism and physical development sectors in the Republic of Mauritius The project has 3 Components: (1) Mainstreaming of biodiversity into local level physical development planning and tourism management, (2) Strengthening Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), (3) Erosion control and ecosystem services restoration in sensitive areas. Activities under these Components are presently being implemented.</p>	<p>Funded by UNDP-GEF</p>	<p>5 years (2017-2021)</p>

Table 2- Expenditure on Social Protection as a % of Total Government Expenditure (2015/16 to 2022/23)

Government Spending on Social Protection (SP) (Rs Million)	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Estimates 2020/21	Planned 2021/22	Planned 2022/23
	23,618	26,605	32,645	35,279	42,943	47,773	48,605	49,540
Total Government Expenditure (Rs Million)	99,879	115,205	119,370	124,027	157,768	162,900	145,538	145,863
Expenditure on SP as a % of total Government Expenditure	23.6%	23.1%	27.3%	28.4%	27.2%	29.3%	33.4%	34.0%

Note: Expenditure on Social Protection include outlays in the Disability sector, Elderly, Social exclusion, Social Protection, and Welfare for Children & Family

A ‘Marshall Plan against Poverty’ (MPAP) was developed and implemented as from 2016. The MPAP is a holistic plan for projects and initiatives in the areas of social protection, employment, social housing, education, health, environment, and equity in service delivery.

To enable the execution of the MPAP, a ‘Social Integration and Empowerment Act 2016’ was introduced with the objective to promote social integration and empowerment of persons living in absolute poverty. It provides for the setting up of empowerment programmes and support schemes to combat absolute poverty; provide assistance and other services to these families, helping them to integrate the mainstream society.

Key social protection measures to address poverty and social exclusion include:

- Subsistence Allowance payable to eligible households in absolute poverty.
The annual provision from the Budget amounts to Rs 240 Million.
- Educational support provided to children of families living in absolute poverty.
The annual provision amounts to Rs 188 Million.
- Basic Retirement Pensions to elderly persons (aged 60+) – Provision of Rs 28 Billion for FY 2020/21.
- Basic Invalid Pensions to some 33,000 persons with disabilities- estimated to cost Rs 3.8 Billion for FY 2020/21.
- Social Aid benefits for the sum of Rs 812.4 Million paid annually to other vulnerable groups.
- Other in-kind assistance (wheelchairs, hearing aids, spectacles and dentures) which cost around Rs 30 Million annually are provided to the needy.
- Domiciliary visits of doctors to severely handicapped and bedridden persons- with annual budgetary provision of Rs 150 Million.
- For Leisure facilities/activities in terms of residential and recreational activities for the senior citizens, a budget of Rs 32 Million is provided annually (i.e, Catering costs: Rs 22 Million and Senior Citizens Association: Rs 10 Million)

3. Enhanced Support for a resilient Post COVID 19 Recovery in SIDS

*Overcoming the economic fallout of the pandemic and regaining growth momentum in SIDS will require a **robust, practical, tailored** and **impactful** solutions not only to keep SIDS afloat but also for the successful implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. Please elaborate on any proposed resilience building interventions/programmes for implementation in SIDS that are to be pursued over the remaining period of the SAMOA Pathway. (500 words)*

Table 3 summarizes the key measures and policies adopted by the Mauritian Government with the aim of propelling recovery and building resilience during and post the COVID-19 context.

Table 3- Key Measures and Policies Adopted to Initiate Recovery and Build Resilience

<p>Economic Recovery Programme (ERP)</p>	<p>The Programme will include both capital investment and recurrent expenditure.</p> <p><u>Capital Investment</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure Development, Environment Protection and Embellishment, Renewable Energy, Water Distribution, Food Production, and Public Service Delivery. <p>The capital projects to be implemented under the ERP will be included in the ‘Public Sector Investment Programme’ (PSIP) and will be financed, through reallocation, under the COVID-19 Projects Development Fund.</p> <p><u>Recurrent Expenditure:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the National Training and Reskilling Intake; Employment Support Scheme for SMEs and MMEs; Nationwide Clean-up Campaign by Maurifacilities Management Co. Ltd; Assistance Schemes for Coral Farming, Fish Breeding and Tea Growers; Air Freight Scheme for Export-Oriented Enterprises. 	<p>Reallocation of Rs 6 Billion in infrastructure projects.</p> <p>Reallocation of Rs 3 Billion for Recurrent Expenditure</p>
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	The above-mentioned programmes/schemes will be effective for the period starting 1 st November 2020 up to 30 th June 2021.	
Wage Assistance Scheme	<p>Enterprises received an amount equivalent to the 15 days' basic wage bill for all of its employees drawing a monthly basic wage of up to Rs 50,000 subject to a cap of Rs 12,500 per employee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mar-May 2020: Rs 8 bn (all private sector) • Jun 2020: Rs 574 m (Tourism sector, Sports and recreational activities) • Jul-Aug 2020: Rs 1 bn (Tourism Sector) <p>Scheme being extended on a monthly basis</p>	
Self Employed Assistance Scheme	<p>Eligible self-employed individuals received an amount of Rs 5,100 per month.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mar-May 2020: Rs 2.4 bn (all self-employed) • Jun 2020: Rs 10.2 m (self-employed in Tourism sector, Sports and recreational activities) • Jul-Aug 2020: Rs 15 m (self-employed in Tourism Sector) <p>Scheme has been extended on a monthly basis up to June 2021.</p>	
	<p><u>Deferment of Taxes</u></p> <p>The income tax liability of companies under the 'Advance Payment System' (APS) is being deferred to June 2021. As regards self-employed individuals, the advance payment of personal income tax under the Current Payment System (CPS) payable in December 2020, March 2021 and June 2021 will be paid together with the return in October 2021.</p>	
	<p><u>Incentive to settle Tax Due</u></p> <p>The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) will renew the 'Tax Arrears Settlement Scheme' (TASS) which provides full waiver of penalties and interest on all tax dues. The interest and penalty waiver will also apply to cases at assessment, objection or appeal.</p>	
	<p><u>Incentives for payment of Training Levy arrears</u></p> <p>High surcharges on late submission of returns and late payment of Training Levy are deterrents to the settlement of debts by employers.</p> <p>It is proposed to incentivize all debtors to benefit from 100 per cent waiver of the late submission penalty and 80 per cent waiver of surcharge on late payment of Training Levy provided that the employer signs an agreement with the MRA by 30th June 2021 and effect payment of all dues under an instalment programme up to 31st March 2022.</p>	

COVID-19 Solidarity Fund	<p>The key objectives of the COVID-19 Solidarity Fund are to contribute to the financing of projects, programmes and schemes related to the COVID-19 and other related public health issues and provide financial support to citizens and organisations being affected by the COVID-19 virus.</p> <p><u>Credit Guarantee Scheme</u></p> <p>To encourage entrepreneurship, the Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM) will be providing loans to business enterprises without the need for collateral for an amount up to Rs 1 Million instead of Rs 350,000. To this end, Government will contribute Rs 500 Million to the Credit Guarantee Scheme.</p>	
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Table 4 sets out the main policies, measures, actions on climate change and environmental protection in a bid to reinforce SIDS resilience to vulnerabilities.

Table 4- Climate Change Key Policies in the Context of Covid-19 Recovery

Climate Mitigation Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mauritius is implementing the ‘Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions’ (NAMA) for Low Carbon Island Development Strategy for Mauritius’ project (2017 – 2021), funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to the tune of USD 1.6 Million. The objective of the project is to ensure a low carbon path for Mauritius, by establishing the national capacity for formulating and prioritizing mitigation actions in line with the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) and further develop the local capability to design and implement mitigation actions in the energy sector. The project would culminate in the formulation of a ‘National Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan’.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the 2020-2021 budget, Government has introduced the following schemes to encourage the use of renewable energy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) A Medium-Scale Distributed Generation (MSDG) Scheme, for a maximum of 10 MW, to enable beneficiaries to produce electricity for their own consumption and sell the excess to CEB; and (b) Installation of 25 MW of rooftop solar PV to cater for public and residential buildings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ‘Metro Express Project’ is the most ambitious transport infrastructure project ever implemented in Mauritius. Since the Metro is solely powered by electricity, it is significantly contributing in lowering carbon emission for each kilometer travelled. The light rail service aims to provide a more reliable, affordable, sustainable and alternative mode of transport which would also reduce traffic congestion and hence carbon emission caused by stagnant vehicles. Government is also promoting low-carbon Electric Public Bus Transport in Mauritius. Solar powered electric buses would be deployed on a pilot basis and upscaled throughout the whole island using Green Climate Fund (GCF) funding.
Climate Adaptation Measures

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some USD 50 Million have been allocated to the ‘National Environment Fund’ under the current national budget to support measures such as construction of drains and flood management, coastal protection and rehabilitation, landslide management, disaster risk reduction and management, solid waste management and the circular economy sectors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In view to strengthen the climate change and health sector nexus, Mauritius is finalizing the proposed project with the collaboration of the World Health Organization (WHO) in order to tap funds from the Green Climate Fund Readiness Support (USD 425,000), with the aim to: (i) advance climate change and health policy coherence by providing evidence on the links between climate change and health; and (ii) strengthen national technical and institutional capacity to build resilience and reduce the health risks of climate change in Mauritius.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mauritius has set up a ‘National Vulnerability Assessment Committee’ (NVAC), with the assistance of the SADC ‘Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme’ (RVAA). The purpose of the RVAA system will be to monitor the capacity of Mauritius to deal with external hazards and critical elements such as early warning systems, meteorological forecasting and crop projections, and disaster risk reduction, amongst others. The objective of this programme is to enhance capacity in the agricultural and the food security sectors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mauritius has initiated the preparation of its ‘National Adaptation Plan’ which will include sectors such as coastal zone infrastructure, agriculture and fisheries. Investment is also continuing in the water sector, coastal zone, land drainage, and disaster risk reduction and management. This project will have the support of the GCF for the sum of USD 2.5 Million.
Cross-Cutting Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A COVID-19 Bill has been promulgated, which includes amendment to the ‘Environment Protection Act 2002’ (EPA) to extend the prescribed time for processing of the Environment Impact Assessment during curfew situations, namely to allow for 30 days after the curfew to undertake mandatory actions.
Other Environmental Measures (Waste management /Sustainable Production and Consumption)
<p>The budget provides for the setting up of a network of Civic Amenity Centres (déchetteries) at the 5 Transfer Stations of the island. Local Authorities will carry out composting of market waste. A feasibility study will be conducted on the construction and operation of sorting units on a public private partnership basis.</p>

COVID-19 measures

With a view to allow for business continuity online during the first confinement period while ensuring an adequate Internet access speed, the broadband capacity was doubled for all subscribers at no extra cost.

We have customised the open source Jitsi video conferencing software which has been installed locally at the Government Online Centre (GOC), the data centre for Government, to provide a secure video conferencing facility to Ministries and Departments. This platform has proved to be very effective in emergency situations.

The GOC is also providing for Virtual Private Network (VPN) connectivity to enable Government officials to work on Government IT systems from home.

A dedicated website cum mobile app, “Besafemoris”, has been implemented to allow citizens to view real-time information about COVID-19 thus curtailing the effects of fake news and misinformation on COVID-19 in Mauritius. They can also apply online for Work Access Permits to move to and from their work places during confinement periods.

Recently the COVAC system has been implemented, through which citizens and foreign residents can register online for COVID-19 vaccination.

Promoting inclusion and building resilience

IC3 courses – which is about ICT literacy – have been offered for many years now for people at work as well as those who remain at home, including our senior citizens, women and young girls. These courses have also been integrated in the Computer Science school curriculum for primary and secondary school students.

Government is putting much emphasis on capacity building to equip our people with the required skills to operate in the digital environment. Courses on emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Cloud Computing, Security and Big Data are being offered in public universities to better prepare the country for jobs of the future.

Government is also setting up the necessary infrastructure and contents for students and teachers to interact online. To promote inclusion of vulnerable groups, free broadband Internet facilities is being provided to families on the Social Register. Tablets are also provided to children of vulnerable groups taking them at par with other students accessing e-learning materials on the web. In this way, online learning would become a reality for vulnerable groups allowing them the possibility to integrate into the economy.

Mauritius is currently implementing a new e-Health system to be deployed across all health centres for a better management of its health services.

Mobile and fibre coverage are very determinant to extend online services through the Internet to a wider range of users. Mauritius has already reached 100% mobile and fibre coverage. Presently the island is carpeted with more than 350 Wi-Fi hotspots. Some 230 more will soon be added.

To date some 130 Government Online Services (or e-services) have been developed for use by citizens and businesses, and include payment facilities online.

Connecting to more and more submarine cables has the net effect of increasing the bandwidth capacity and making the Internet more affordable. As regards international connectivity, Mauritius is currently connected to the SAFE (South Africa Far East), the LION/LION2 (Lower Indian Ocean Network) and the METISS (MEltingpoT Indianoceanic Submarine System) optical fibre submarine cables. A new submarine cable will be operational in the horizon 2022/23.

4. Financing for Sustainable Development in SIDS

The road to recovery post-COVID-19 will be challenging for SIDS. They will need new strategies and financial instruments to mobilize adequate resources for recovery and reconstruction. Please elaborate on any proposed/planned programmes that will be delivered to reduce risks and build resilience in SIDS, and/or that alleviate the liquidity and debt vulnerability challenges facing SIDS (500 words)

International Cooperation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The European Union contributed Rs 11.3 Million to the COVID-2019 Solidarity Fund which has been created to contribute to the financing of projects, programmes and schemes related to the COVID-19 virus and other related public health issues.

The high level of excess liquidity which has been prevailing in the banking system for a number of years has enabled Government to meet its borrowing requirements, as well as rollover of maturing debt.

In view of the COVID-19, the level of excess liquidity has further increased. In this respect, yields on Government securities have dropped on the market. Thus, the aim is to continue to finance the borrowing requirements mainly from the domestic market.

It may be noted that the share of domestic debt in the total Government debt portfolio is about 80%. Longer-term Government securities would continue to be issued mostly to lengthen the maturity structure and benefit from the low yield environment. In addition, part of the borrowing requirements would be met from foreign loans, secured from bilateral and multilateral sources at concessional rates.

One example of south-south cooperation undertaken by Mauritius is through the implementation of the Project on “Enhancing livelihoods, food security and maritime safety through increased resilience of fishing communities’ dependent on coral reef fisheries in the African coastal countries of the Indian Ocean.”

The Project is being implemented by FAO and financed by the Government of Japan to the tune of USD 4.4 Million for three years, starting as from 01 November 2019 till 31 October 2022. The beneficiary countries are namely: Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles. The Project is still in its initial phase of implementation.

The project aims to improve coral reef fisheries production through restoring and conserving the coral reef in these countries and assisting fishing communities to better manage their coral reef resources. Furthermore, the project will contribute to reducing

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and enhancing maritime safety in the region, while identifying viable fishing grounds for rational and sustainable exploitation.

One of the aims of the Project is to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 "Conserve and use the oceans sustainably, the seas and marine resources for sustainable development ". Besides the Project addresses the priority area on Oceans and seas of the SAMOA Pathway.

The preservation and protection of coral reef remains one of the priorities of the Government. To this end this Ministry has secured a grant for the regional project for Mauritius (including Rodrigues) and Seychelles to the tune of USD 10 Million to be undertaken for a period of 6 years for the project entitled "Restoring marine ecosystem services by rehabilitating coral reefs to meet a changing climate future" from the Adaptation Fund Board (AFB). The AFB is the donor agency and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would be the implementing agency for the project.

The project will benefit Mauritius and Seychelles through coral restoration activities as well as capacity building programmes and knowledge exchange for the region. The project will involve executing partners in the Republic of Mauritius (Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping) and the Republic of Seychelles (Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change). The project implementation started in 2020 and would run over a period of six years (72 months). The overall objective of the project is to reduce the impact of climate change on local communities and coral reef-dependent economic sectors in the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Seychelles by implementing coral reef restoration with thermal tolerant corals as adaptation to climate change.

06 May 2021

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