

# SISRI

## Small Island States Resilience Initiative

*Building Resilience of Small Island States to Climate and Disaster Risks*

Tom Perry/World Bank



### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- The Small Island States Resilience Initiative (SISRI) was launched at the UN SIDS Conference in Samoa (September 2014) to support Small Island States in reducing climate and disaster risks to their people, economies and ecosystems.
- SISRI will support scaled-up investments for countries to integrate climate and disaster risks into their development plans, strengthen infrastructure and ecosystems, reduce social vulnerability, and improve capacity to recover from disasters.
- Through support from a World Bank team specialized in the needs of Small Island States, it will help build technical and institutional capacity to manage climate and disaster risks.
- SISRI will also provide a platform to share and access knowledge from Small Island States around the world, and apply innovative financial instruments that address key constraints to resilience.

Small Island States include two-thirds of the countries that face the highest losses due to natural disasters, and the costs are growing.

Tropical cyclones alone cause an estimated \$835 million of damages in the Caribbean and \$178 million in the Pacific each year. These recurrent losses have created a 'leaking bucket' effect that undermines growth and adds to national debt. However, proven interventions can increase the capacity to anticipate, absorb and bounce back from natural disasters.

Small Island States have consistently called for adequate, predictable and effective flows of finance to help them address these challenges. The Small Island States Resilience Initiative (SISRI) will help island nations to scale up the responses that work, generating measurable improvements in their resilience to climate change and natural disasters. SISRI will work through established governance structures and procedures between the World Bank Group and client countries.

## Deploying Specialized Expertise

The challenges faced by Small Island States are distinctive and specific. Yet successful approaches to building resilience have not always been captured and disseminated adequately. SISRI will act as a platform and a hub of technical expertise on resilience in Small Island States. It will deploy a specialized team of technical experts who work specifically on island challenges. Through this team and a series of SISRI Knowledge Notes, it will help countries tap the best available lessons learned on risk financing, social safety nets, safer infrastructure, disaster recovery and other key topics.

## Financing Adaptation at Scale

Successfully building resilience means deploying significant funds in support of national programs. Although Small Island State resilience receives around \$914 million per year in financial support, many island states are managing 10 – 20 donor funded projects with separate reporting requirements. Moreover, small and piecemeal investments have been inadequate to deliver the improvements that are needed, such as safer infrastructure, reliable agricultural production and secure livelihoods, and improved early warning and preparedness.

Through SISRI, the World Bank and partners will work with Small Island States to deliver coherent and predictable funding that gets results, through:

- building long-term, multi-phase programs;
- measuring changes in vulnerability to prioritize investments; and
- piloting innovative financing approaches such as debt-for-resilience swaps.

## DEEPENING FOUNDATIONS FOR RESILIENCE

Small Island States have built stronger approaches to managing climate and disaster risk over time. Starting in the 1980s with post-disaster reconstruction operations, efforts broadened into disaster preparedness, early warning systems, risk financing and strengthening public infrastructure. The World Bank and partners are now supporting Small Island States in proactively managing risks in a systematic and comprehensive manner.

SISRI will build on these experiences through a set of Building Blocks that cover the key interventions needed to identify, anticipate and respond to disaster and climate risks. These will include:

- Strengthening national institutional arrangements for climate and disaster risk management;
- Enhancing operational capacities through financial management and procurement;
- Effective early warning systems and preparedness;
- Producing high-quality risk information for decision-making;
- Reducing risks to populations, infrastructure and assets;
- Enhancing financial and social protection; and
- Resilient recovery in response to disasters.

The initiative will build on existing national and regional efforts such as the Pacific Resilience Program and Caribbean Resilience Initiative and Program. The menu of products and services will also position countries to have direct access to global climate funds.

## Implementation Timeline

The World Bank SISRI team is engaging with Small Island States, donors and partners to develop an initial investment plan for implementation from 2016. SISRI aims to support up to 30 countries in the Caribbean, Pacific and African/Indian Oceans during its first commitment period of 2016–2018.

### Contact

Sofia Bettencourt | sbettencourt@worldbank.org  
Habiba Gitay | hgitay@worldbank.org