



Antigua and Barbuda's Experience: Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway

By

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Introduction

- The Samoa Pathway references a comprehensive framework spanning 10 years (2014-2024) aimed at addressing the unique challenges faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in achieving sustainable development.

Its main objectives include addressing :

- The **unique vulnerabilities** of SIDS;
- Accelerate progress on **sustainable development**;
- Strengthen **international cooperation and partnerships**; and
- Ensure SIDS concerns are reflected in the **global development agendas**.

It is within this context, the successes, challenges and takeaways regarding Antigua and Barbuda's implementation of the Samoa Pathway will be highlighted.

Major Successes

- **Strong Political Commitment and International Leadership**

Antigua and Barbuda has consistently demonstrated strong political commitment to the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, which culminated in the hosting of the Fourth International Conference on SIDS in 2024. which resulted in a new ten-year plan of action regarding SIDS.

Specific to the Somoa Pathway, Antigua and Barbuda served as Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) during the lead-up to the 4th International Conference on SIDS. In that role, the government advocated strongly for the full implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, pushed for renewed political engagement and mobilization of partners and encouraged stronger monitoring and reporting systems—highlighting that the original Pathway lacked measurable targets and universal indicators.

Antigua and Barbuda **also hosted major preparatory meetings and dialogues** focused on the SAMOA Pathway including the **Wadadli Action Platform-** An event that brought together SIDS officials focused on matters related to building resilience against climate change, securing climate finance, and accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) amid multiple global crises including COVID 19, high debt, and advocating for the development and use of the Multi-dimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) as an alternative to GDP measurement to unlock concessionary financing for SIDS and the need for greater international support.

Successes

- **Mainstreaming of Sustainable Development and Climate Priorities**

Key SAMOA Pathway priorities—such as climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, renewable energy, and ocean governance—were increasingly reflected in national development strategies including the nation’s Medium Term Development Strategy, climate strategies, and sectoral policies including initiatives to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The establishment of the Centre of Excellence for Oceanography and the Blue Economy at the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus (Antigua and Barbuda) via MOU signed in 2021. This centre’s mandate includes advancing intellectual progress and strengthening institutional capacity in the areas of marine science and the blue economy while benefiting from the societal, economic and environmental opportunities for the Caribbean within this emerging sector.

Additionally, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda would have established domestically, a Blue Economy Unit.

The pursuit of innovative climate financing including the debt for climate swap, where Antigua and Barbuda champions mechanisms where debt relief is tied to climate action and freeing up funds for green projects.

Successes

- **Advances in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Resilience**

Following major climate shocks (e.g. hurricanes and floods), Antigua and Barbuda strengthened disaster preparedness-construction of climate resilient homes including for the vulnerable, hurricane shutters distribution initiative, early warning systems-unveiling of the CAP app, and resilience planning informed by the SAMOA's emphasis on resilience-building.

Successes

Partnership Building

The country leveraged regional (**CARICOM, OECS, ECLAC**) and international partnerships to access technical assistance, climate finance, and capacity-building support, in line with the SAMOA Pathway's partnership-driven approach.

Challenges

- **Weak Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting**

A major shortcoming was the **absence of a robust national monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework** for the SAMOA Pathway. Progress was often ad hoc and difficult to quantify, limiting accountability and learning.

- **Limited Access to Adequate and Predictable Financing**

Despite strong needs, Antigua and Barbuda faced persistent barriers to accessing concessional finance due to **income-based eligibility criteria** that do not reflect vulnerability. This constrained implementation in areas such as climate adaptation, infrastructure resilience, and economic diversification.

- **Capacity and Data Constraints**

Limited technical capacity and gaps in data collection and analysis hindered evidence-based policymaking and effective reporting on SAMOA commitments.

Challenges

- **Economic Vulnerability and External Shocks**

Heavy reliance on tourism and exposure to **external shocks** (natural disasters, COVID-19, global economic volatility) repeatedly diverted resources away from long-term sustainable development investments envisioned under the SAMOA Pathway.

Lessons Learned

- **Political Commitment Is Necessary but Not Sufficient**

High-level commitment must be matched with **institutional systems**, particularly M&E mechanisms, to translate global commitments into measurable national outcomes.

- **Vulnerability-Based Financing Is Critical for SIDS**

The SAMOA Pathway highlighted that **income-based classifications are inadequate** for SIDS. Antigua and Barbuda's experience reinforces the need for financing criteria that reflect vulnerability, exposure to shocks, and limited fiscal space.

- **Stronger National Coordination Improves Implementation**

More structured coordination across ministries and agencies is essential to avoid fragmentation and ensure coherent implementation of multi-sectoral commitments.

Lessons Learned

- **Data and Capacity Are Foundational**

Without reliable data and sufficient technical capacity, implementation and reporting remain weak. Investment in national statistical systems and human capacity is a prerequisite for effective follow-through.

- **Regional and International Partnerships Multiply Impact**

Collaboration with regional institutions and development partners helped offset national capacity constraints and should remain central to future SIDS frameworks.



Conclusion

**Lessons from SAMOA Informed
the Antigua and Barbuda
Agenda for SIDS**

The limitations encountered under SAMOA directly informed the **Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (2024–2034)**, which places stronger emphasis on implementation, financing, data, and accountability.