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**National capacity building workshop in cost-benefit analysis**

Paramaribo, Suriname, 11–15 May 2026

**CONCEPT NOTE**

## Background

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean is currently implementing a Development Account (DA) project titled “**Strengthened capacity to design and implement policies to enhance resilience in Caribbean SIDS**” under the 16<sup>th</sup> tranche of the Development Account. The objective of this DA16 project is to strengthen national capacities of Caribbean countries to design and implement policies and strategies for accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and building resilient economies. Six Caribbean countries, namely, Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Suriname will benefit from the project, which is expected to enhance the technical skills of decision-makers of the target countries in the development of policies and projects to promote sustainable development and build resilience to shocks, while strengthening national institutional capacity to facilitate greater synergy in the implementation of the SDGs and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States (ABAS).

The midterm review of progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a sobering account of the slow pace of achievement of the SDGs. The COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical conflicts have negatively affected progress on SDG targets related to poverty, hunger, and climate action, while earlier gains recorded in promoting health and wellbeing, advancing quality education, and reducing inequalities are seriously threatened, if not reversed.<sup>1</sup> More recently, the higher tariff regime being pursued by the new United States administration is disrupting global financial markets and has introduced new uncertainties for global trade that could constitute barriers to trade in goods and services for Caribbean SIDS. These events have severe implications for foreign exchange reserves of nations. Furthermore, global crises and their impacts exacerbate the subregion’s existing vulnerabilities, which include susceptibility to the impacts of climate change, exposure to natural hazards and disasters, increasingly unsustainable public debt, and limited technical and institutional capacity to effectively manage development challenges.

Considering the global environment in which Caribbean SIDS noting that the timeline for the 2030 Agenda is now just five years away, there is an urgency to accelerate action in implementing the SDGs. This will require strengthening national and subnational capacity, accountability, and public institutions to deliver accelerated progress towards achieving the SDGs. In its call to action for the transformation required to fully achieve the global Goals and their targets in the remaining years of the 2030 Agenda, the Global Sustainable Development Report 2023 underscores the need for capacity building at individual, institutional and network levels.<sup>2</sup> Capacity development is also prominently emphasized across thematic areas in ABAS, the Outcome Document of the Fourth International Conference on SIDS (SIDS4).

Due to the human capital limitations that Caribbean countries face, there have been notable national planning and implementation gaps hindering sustainable development and resilience building. Therefore, capacity strengthening at institutional and individual levels is crucial for resilience building in the Caribbean. Of particular importance is the consistency with which Caribbean countries acknowledge in their Voluntary National Review (VNR) reports presented to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development their need for capacity strengthening. Therefore, the current DA16 project is designed to

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<sup>1</sup> While this represents a global trend, developing countries and the poorest and most vulnerable in society have been the most affected, see The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023; Special edition. Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General, Global Sustainable Development Report 2023: Times of crisis, times of change: Science for accelerating transformations to sustainable development, (United Nations, New York, 2023). <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>.

respond to the institutional capacity needs of Caribbean member States, including capacity strengthening in evidence-based, cost-effective decision making through the provision of training in cost-benefit analysis.

To this end, and in collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Suriname, ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean conducted a workshop in strategic policy planning during 23–27 February 2026, for senior officials and technical officers of the Government of Suriname. Building on the knowledge imparted during this workshop, ECLAC is now organising a national capacity building workshop in cost-benefit analysis for policymakers and technical officers of the Government of Suriname, in fulfilment of Output 1.2 (OP1.2) of the DA16 project, which includes the conduct of a national capacity building workshop on cost-benefit analysis in each target country to raise the skills level of policymakers in the drafting of evidence-informed national policies and sectoral strategies. This training will be conducted during 11-15 May 2026.

## **Rationale**

In its first VNR presented in 2022, the Government of Suriname highlighted its development priorities to be the restoration and preservation of economic stability and the improvement of inclusive growth and development, with specific reference to emerging offshore gas and oil industry. The Government duly acknowledged that prospects in the exploitation of its natural resources would require more skilled workers and investments in technical and vocational education and training. Furthermore, while noting the emphasis that it had laid over the years on strengthening the capacities within line-ministries and key government institutions, the Government also acknowledged that additional efforts will be needed to improve both institutional and human resources capacities both at the national and district levels.

More recently, in the 2025 VNR, the Government further highlighted that its national priorities revolve around poverty reduction, economic resilience, climate adaptation and human capital development. It also emphasized that institutional and capacity strengthening are needed to facilitate improved coordination and oversight of SDG implementation in Suriname. The Government further noted that capacity constraints negatively impact the regular collection, analysis and distribution of SDG-related data, and that addressing this challenge is critical for future evidence-based policymaking.

Given its focus on the exploitation of its natural resources as the engine of growth, Suriname would benefit significantly from the training workshop in cost-benefit analysis to assist the country's decision-makers in making informed decisions about investment options by adequately taking into account the future costs and benefits of investment decisions made in the present.

## **Objectives**

The overall objective of the national workshop is to strengthen the skills level of senior officials and technical staff of the Government of Suriname in cost-benefit analysis. This will enhance their ability to design and implement data-informed policies and strategies, towards promoting national sustainable development and resilience building.

## **Participants**

The training will target two main groups of participants:

### *Senior Government Officials*

Senior government officials at the level of Permanent Secretary, Deputy Permanent Secretary, and Director, are the most senior career professionals in the public service. They provide strategic direction and oversight for their ministry/department and take decisions that require the use of data and have budget implications for the public sector. Therefore, having functional understanding of return on investment will enhance their management skills and improve the performance of public projects and initiatives.

### *Technical Staff of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)*

Technical staff, at various levels, are routinely tasked with implementing policies and executing public projects without necessarily having the background training in the economic appraisal of alternative ways of implementing such policies and projects. Therefore, for greater efficiency and optimal decision-making in the public sector, training in cost-benefit analysis will enhance the skills of public sector workers in designing and effectively implementing data-informed policies and strategies.

### **Format**

The national workshop will be delivered using classroom-style teaching approaches over the course of five days. Topics to be covered during the cost-benefit analysis training, include:

- Fundamentals of Cost-Benefit Analysis
- Methods and Techniques in Cost-Benefit Analysis
- Applying Cost-Benefit Analysis in Caribbean SIDS
- Using Microsoft Excel to conduct Cost-Benefit Analysis

The course outline for the cost-benefit analysis training is included in the appendix.

### **Expected outcome**

At the conclusion of the workshops, senior government officials and technical officers in Suriname would have gained a functioning knowledge of, and be able to apply, return on investment criteria in appraising policy and project options in the public service. With the knowledge gained, a strengthened environment for best practices in data-informed decision-making is achieved in Suriname.

### **Venue, date and language of instruction**

The workshop will take place in Paramaribo, Suriname, during 11-15 May 2026, starting each day at 9:00 a.m. and concluding at 3:00 p.m., and will be conducted in English.

### **Required ICT Facility for Training**

Training participants are required to have a laptop with Microsoft Excel, or any other spreadsheet application such as Google Sheets, installed.

## AGENDA

### *National Capacity Building Workshop in Cost-Benefit Analysis*

<b>Monday 11 May 2026</b>	
<b>Morning session</b>	Module 1: Introduction to Cost-Benefit Analysis
<b>Afternoon session</b>	Module 2: Fundamentals of Cost-Benefit Analysis
<b>Tuesday 12 May 2026</b>	
<b>Morning session</b>	Module 2: Fundamentals of Cost-Benefit Analysis
<b>Afternoon session</b>	Module 3: Methods and Techniques of Cost-Benefit Analysis
<b>Wednesday 13 May 2026</b>	
<b>Morning session</b>	Module 3: Methods and Techniques of Cost-Benefit Analysis
<b>Afternoon session</b>	Module 4: Applying Cost-Benefit Analysis in Caribbean SIDS
<b>Thursday 14 May 2026</b>	
<b>Morning session</b>	Module 4: Applying Cost-Benefit Analysis in Caribbean SIDS
<b>Afternoon session</b>	Module 5: Using Excel to Conduct Cost-Benefit Analysis
<b>Friday 15 May 2026</b>	
<b>Morning session</b>	Module 5: Using Excel to Conduct Cost-Benefit Analysis
<b>Afternoon session</b>	Module 5: Using Excel to Conduct Cost-Benefit Analysis Course Evaluation

## APPENDIX: COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS COURSE OUTLINE

### Module 1: Introduction

- 1.1 Purpose of the Manual
- 1.2 Target Audience (Public Sector Workers & Non-Economists)
- 1.3 Overview of CBA in Policy Decision-Making
- 1.4 Importance of CBA for Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

### Module 2: Fundamentals of Cost-Benefit Analysis

- 2.1 Definition and Purpose
- 2.2 Key Concepts and Principles
- 2.3 Steps in Conducting CBA
  - Defining the Decision Problem and Objectives
  - Identifying the Set of Policy Options (including for example, ‘Do-Nothing or the Business-As-Usual’ vs. Competing/Alternative Policy Options)
  - Specifying types of Costs & Benefits and Boundaries of the Analysis
  - Identification of Impacts for the Policy Alternatives
  - Quantification of Benefits & Costs over the Project’s Life Cycle
  - Discounting Future Benefits & Costs and Performing Sensitivity Analyses
  - Presenting Findings and Making Recommendations
- 2.4 Exercises and Quizzes

### Module 3: Methods and Techniques of Cost-Benefit Analysis

- 3.1 Monetizing Costs & Benefits: Issues and Perspectives
- 3.2 Approaches to Valuation (e.g. Market Prices, Shadow Pricing, Willingness to Pay)
- 3.3 Discount Rate Selection and Sensitivity Analysis
- 3.4 Dealing with Uncertainty, Risk and Data Quality
- 3.5 Exercises and Quizzes

### Module 4: Applying Cost-Benefit Analysis in Caribbean SIDS

- 4.1 Case Study Examples include:
  - Energy, Environment & Biodiversity (Ecosystem Valuation, Climate Resilience Projects)
  - Tourism (Sustainable Tourism Development)
  - Agriculture (Agricultural Investment and Productivity)
  - Health (Public Health Interventions)
  - Mining (Natural Resource Management)
- 4.2 Country-specific Examples from Antigua & Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Suriname

### Module 5: Using Excel to Conduct Cost-Benefit Analysis

- 5.1 Set Up the Analysis
- 5.2 Collect and Validate Data
- 5.3 Develop and Build a CBA framework
- 5.4 Conduct Sensitivity Analyses
- 5.5 Interpret Results and Make Policy Recommendations