

Latin America and the Caribbean Climate Week

LACCW 2022 | 18-22 July 2022

Regional Consultation: Developing a Caribbean Strategy for Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS)

Date: 20 and 21 July 2022

Location: El Embajador and Crowne Plaza, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Summary:

At COP26, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) launched IRIS, an initiative to promote resilient, sustainable and inclusive infrastructure in SIDS. In the one-year inception period for IRIS, regional consultations are planned to re-engage with key SIDS stakeholders to identify regional infrastructure priorities and risks in the three SIDS region-Pacific, Indian Ocean and Caribbean. The regional consultation for Caribbean region is proposed to be held during the LACCW. The regional consultation will attempt to capture the critical challenges and significant opportunities for adopting resilient pathways for infrastructure development in the region. The consultation will focus on holding discussions with key Caribbean SIDS stakeholders to identify risks, infrastructure priorities and opportunities to develop a Caribbean regional strategy for IRIS. The consultation will also be a platform for SIDS stakeholders to provide inputs on the institutional and program frameworks for IRIS, in order to ensure an efficient delivery mechanism for implementing projects under this initiative.

Background and Overview:

The Small Island Developing States Region (SIDS) are amongst the most exposed and vulnerable countries to both geophysical and hydro-meteorological hazards. They are particularly affected by sea level rise, coastal flooding and erosion, and extreme events such as tsunamis, volcanoes, cyclones and storm surges. According to the World Risk Index 2020¹, the five countries most at risk and vulnerable to disasters are from SIDS. Vanuatu is the country with the highest disaster risk worldwide, followed by Tonga, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, and Solomon Islands. Another 10 SIDS made the top 30 as the countries with very high risks². Apart from the disaster and climate related risks, these countries also face multiple challenges due to their limited resources, geographic remoteness and weak economic diversification which severely limits their ability to recover from disasters.

Resilient, sustainable and inclusive infrastructure plays a key role in addressing these challenges faced along with presenting opportunities for growth. However, there is a large infrastructure investment deficit in these nations. For example, the Caribbean region requires an additional infrastructure investment of US\$1.53-1.91 billion per year. These challenges put SIDS in an extremely vulnerable state while dealing with cascading impacts of disasters due to climate change and extreme weather events. Given the need for infrastructure investment in SIDS and its high propensity to disaster and climate risks as demonstrated by recent disasters, there is a need to integrate disaster and climate resilience for infrastructure development. To reap long-term benefits from the infrastructure

¹ Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft (2020). World Risk Report 2020. Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft.

² Guyana at 6th, Papua New Guinea 8th, Cape Verde 11th, Fiji 15th, Kiribati 18th, Comoros 19th, Timor-Leste 20th, Haiti 22nd, Guinea-Bissau 24th, and Jamaica 29th

investments, it is imperative SIDS address its disaster and climate risks and adopt a resilient pathway for infrastructure development.

Against this backdrop, CDRI has been working closely with its members and SIDS representatives in co-creating Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS), an initiative dedicated to achieving sustainable development through a systematic approach to promote resilient, sustainable, and inclusive infrastructure in SIDS. Anchored on the key guiding principles of co-creation and complementarity, IRIS was launched at the World Leaders Summit at COP26 by the heads of states from India, UK, Australia, Jamaica, Mauritius and Fiji. IRIS is designed to provide technical support on multifaceted issues posed by infrastructure systems and promote disaster and climate resilience of infrastructure assets in SIDS.

Currently, as IRIS is being operationalized, it is crucial that it truly remains a SIDS led initiative and continues to be underpinned on the principles of co-creation and complementarity. This makes it imperative to have a platform for SIDS representatives and stakeholders to contribute to the operationalization process for effective delivery of IRIS goal and outcomes. To this end, a regional consultation focussed on Caribbean SIDS is proposed to:

- Re-engage with SIDS stakeholders to identify gaps and opportunities for resilient infrastructure.
- Understand the project landscape and identify no regret investment opportunities in the Caribbean SIDS.
- Receive inputs from key SIDS stakeholders to develop a regional strategy for Caribbean islands under IRIS.

The regional consultation will therefore attempt to capture the critical challenges and significant opportunities for adopting resilient pathways for infrastructure development in Caribbean islands. The focus of the consultation will be to hold discussions with key SIDS stakeholders on the risks and infrastructure priorities and no regret investment opportunities in the Caribbean SIDS with the objective of developing a Caribbean regional strategy under IRIS. This will be a platform for stakeholders to contribute to the programs and activities of IRIS, in order to ensure an efficient delivery mechanism is in place for implementing disaster resilient infrastructure projects under IRIS.

Format:

The regional consultation will be organized in two parts in the following format:

Part One: Side-event at LACCW 2022-The first part of the regional consultation will be a moderated discussion with 15-20 key stakeholders from Caribbean SIDS at LACCW. The stakeholders will include infrastructure planning and governance, risk finance, climate and disaster resilience specialists and practitioners from government agencies, regional organisations, private sector and civil society organizations and academia with deep experience of working in SIDS. The focus of the discussion will be to understand the critical challenges and opportunities for infrastructure resilience and developing a Caribbean regional strategy under IRIS.

Part Two: Full day event on the side-lines of LACCW 2022-The second part of the regional consultation will be anchored on the key takeaways of the part one discussion and be organized in continuation to it on a different day. The expert roundtable consultation will focus on holding immersive discussions with key SIDS stakeholders on the risks and infrastructure priorities of Caribbean SIDS with the objective of developing a Caribbean regional strategy for resilient

infrastructure development. The consultation will also be a platform for SIDS stakeholders to provide inputs on the institutional and program frameworks for IRIS, so as to ensure an efficient delivery mechanism for implementing projects under this initiative. The same set of stakeholders participating in part one will participate in this day long consultation as well.

Agenda:

Part One: Side-event at LACCW 2022

Date: July 20

Time: 1600-1700 AST

Venue: Garden Terrace, El Embajador, Santo Domingo

Format: Hybrid

Time	Duration	Session
16:00-16:05	5 mins	Context Setting for IRIS
16:05-16:50	45 mins	Facilitated group discussions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure gaps and challenges faced in the Caribbean SIDS region • Projects landscape and opportunities in the Caribbean SIDS
16:50-17:00	10 mins	Discussion synthesis on Developing a Caribbean regional strategy for IRIS

Part Two: Full day event on the side-lines of LACCW 2022

Date: July 21

Time: 0900-1530 AST

Venue: Crowne Plaza, Santo Domingo

Format: Hybrid

Time	Duration	Session
09:00-09:15	15 mins	Welcome and Stage Setting by CDRI
Moderation Discussion		
09:15-10:45	90 mins	Infrastructure gaps and challenges faced in the Caribbean region
10:45-11:00	15 mins	Tea-break
11:00-12:30	90 mins	Understanding projects landscape and identifying opportunities in the Caribbean SIDS
12:30-13:30	60 mins	Lunch- break
13:30-14:30	60 mins	Operational frameworks for IRIS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Arrangements • Project Implementation
14:30-15:15	45 mins	Synthesis of consultation
15:15-15:30	15 mins	Wrap up and tea