



IUR - SIDS INTEGRATED URBAN RESILIENCE IN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES AND COASTAL CITIES

NATIONAL AND CITY 'STATE OF PLAY'
KINGSTOWN, ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES (SVG)



ABOUT IUR - SIDS

The Integrated Urban Resilience in Small Island Developing States and Coastal Cities (IUR-SIDS) is a Joint global Programme by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) processed through a Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) for urban risk reduction and resilience building action. The Joint global Programme will unfold during a 2023-2025 first phase reaching 10 countries/cities, which will lay the foundation for potential scaling-up and scaling-out of the approach to support more cities and countries in a second phase from 2026 to 2030. The overall goal of the IUR-SIDS programme is that, by 2030, at least 100 small and medium-sized cities are supported to develop risk-informed urban development plans and implement urban resilience building interventions addressing all resilience dimensions viz. physical, environmental and socio-economic -- while strengthening urban governance informed by a systems' thinking to secure resilient development outcomes. Through delivering as One, the two UN agencies will maximize synergies of action, opens opportunities and provide coherent results in SIDS and coastal cities

About UNDP

UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet.

About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat supports national and local governments, academia, civil society and the private sector, with the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and SDG11, which aims for sustainable cities and communities. We support processes of institutional capacity-building regarding sustainable urbanization and knowledge-transfer between regional counterparts, in particular through key initiatives like National Urban Policies, the City Prosperity Initiatives, Urban Integrated Solutions and others.

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01.

CONTEXT FOR RISK-INFORMED URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND RESILIENCE-BUILDING

I. National / City policies and strategies – Priorities for action (sustainable development, climate action, urban/town planning, DRR, NAPs, etc.)

The **National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) 2013-2025** of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) is the main planning tool on the national level. This plan focuses on educating and raising public awareness of the potential negative impacts of climate change. The NESDP also proposes several adaptation measures to reduce restoration costs and protect the natural environment in the future to reduce the negative impacts of climate change. The proposed strategic actions include raising public awareness of climate change issues, building resilience to minimise damage to settlements and infrastructure, minimising damage to beaches, coasts and marine ecosystems, minimising the negative impacts of climate change on agriculture and human health, and developing legal and regulatory frameworks for environmental management and institutional systems for responding to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. SVG's commitment to the SDGs is mainly implemented through the NESDP.

The **National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2018-2030** is designed to support the creation of conditions to ensure the implementation of priority climate actions by key stakeholders. The adherence to the NAP's pillars ensures that it is centred on addressing the primary national adaptation needs of the country as well as the most vulnerable people to climate change. It is expected that the priority actions articulated in the NAP will be integrated into the portfolio of the climate change adaptation (CCA) actions for key sectors (agriculture, water, forestry, tourism, health and public infrastructure), aligned with the NESDP and sectoral strategies and plans. The NAP is aligned with the NDC, SDGs, and Sendai Framework and promotes the principle of inclusivity. It is perceived as a significant contribution to achieving the nation's goal of creating a resilient nation.

SVG's National Climate Change Policy 2018-2030 is a national policy with a cross-sectoral approach. It provides overarching guidance for building resilience and mainstreaming climate change into the national development agenda for low-carbon and sustainable growth. It sets out an institutional



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framework for an integrated and coordinated response that engages all stakeholders for CCA and mitigation and seeks to enable harmonisation across sectoral policies and plans. It identifies priorities for action including specific objectives for adaptation, mitigation and cross-cutting areas including information management, research and monitoring, integration of disaster risk management and national security, inter-sectoral coordination, investment and economic planning and stakeholder capacity building and engagement. The Policy is aligned with the National Economic and Social Development Plan (2013-2025), the NAP (2018-2030) and NDCs (2015) that guide climate change adaptation and mitigation. It also intends to build on existing policies, institutional structures and initiatives across sectors. The government of SVG prepared the policy with technical assistance from the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) under the Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Regional Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project funded by the World Bank and the Climate Investment Fund's Pilot Program for Climate Resilience.

II. Administrative / Political structure, electoral cycle and next elections (National government; city nodal authority)

SVG is a parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy. The governor-general represents the King, Charles III, and acts on the advice of the Prime Minister and cabinet. The Prime Minister is the leader of the majority party of the House of Assembly, and the cabinet conducts the affairs of the state. The House of Assembly has 23 seats, with 15 directly elected representatives, 6 appointed senators, and 2 ex officio members. The parliamentary term of office is five years, although the Prime Minister may call elections at any time. The next general elections should take place in 2025. The judicial system is rooted in English common law, with 11 courts in 3 magisterial districts. A constitutional referendum held in 2009 proposed a new constitution but was not approved by the required two-thirds majority.

The country does not have elected local governments; limited administrative functions are provided by six parishes overseen by the department of local government within the Ministry of Transport, Works, Urban Development and Local Government (MTWUD&LG). A local government officer is appointed as the head of this department and is responsible for the supervision of 17 local government entities including town boards and village councils. The capital, Kingstown, is governed by the Kingstown Board and has a unique administrative arrangement. It is headed by a Warden who reports directly to the permanent secretary of the MTWUD&LG.

III. Local competencies and jurisdictions (relevant to interventions; key sectors and stakeholders)

The services provided by local authorities include the construction and maintenance of minor/village roads, footpaths, drains, walls and other infrastructure; sanitation services including the cleaning of public places and disposal of garbage in the district (with the exception of Kingstown); management of public cemeteries, community/rural markets and other facilities; and collection of property taxes on behalf of the central government. The services provided are determined primarily by law, policy and resource availability. Local authorities charge low rates for using community markets and a small fee for the use of cemeteries. Service fees can be waived for the indigent on application to the social welfare division of the Ministry of National Mobilisation.

Some of the key stakeholders of Kingstown's council include the Central Water & Sewerage Authority (CWSA), St. Vincent Electricity Services Limited (VINLEC), the Tourism Authority, the Port of Kingstown Authority, and Kingstown's Fish Market Vendors, among others.

IV. Revenue and financing streams – national budgeting for city level planning, development and implementation, etc.

The primary sources of tax revenue for SVG's government are collected by the Inland Revenue Department. These include income tax, value-added tax (VAT), property tax, withholding tax, stamp duty and customs duty. According to a report by Deloitte (2022), the income tax rate for individuals ranges from 10% to 32.5%, while the corporate income tax rate is 30%. Kingstown is the core

of economic activities. In 2022, SVG had less fiscal space than before the pandemic and volcanic eruptions. As in all countries in the region, the debt-to-GDP ratio declined due to increased emergency loans and a declining GDP. The country is experiencing a severe economic dislocation and its consequences.

In fiscal years 2020, 2021, and 2022, the programme expenditures of the Local Government Division of the Ministry Of Urban Development, Energy, Airport, Seaport, Grenadines Affairs And Local Government were XCD3.71 million, XCD3.82 million, and XCD4.75 million respectively (around US\$1.37 million, USD1.41 million, and USD1.75 million) to strengthen the local authorities through policy development, guidance and support. The projected programme expenditures for the fiscal years 2023 and 2024 of the Department are XCD4.76 million (around US\$1.76 million).

The primary sources of revenue for Kingstown City Council are property taxes, the low rates that it charges for using community markets, and a small fee for the use of cemeteries.



Canva/ Port de Kingstown

V. Regional and international partners' engagement and investments – development investments by IFIs, regional or other entities, etc.

The UNDP-Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership (UNDP-JCCCP) receives both financial and technical backing from the Government of Japan to support climate change adaptation and mitigation endeavors in SVG. This investment has enabled the implementation of several projects, such as the installation of solar-powered street lights in remote communities, the provision of rainwater harvesting systems for schools and health centers, the promotion of organic farming practices and agroforestry systems, and the enhancement of community resilience to natural disasters. These initiatives have a twofold objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the utilization of renewable energy sources while simultaneously improving water and food security and empowering local communities. According to UNDP, the total funding for UNDP-JCCCP was USD15 million, which was provided by the Government of Japan.

The World Bank has been investing in various development projects in SVG, with a particular focus on critical areas such as health, fiscal reform, resilience, disaster preparedness, education, and social protection. According to the World Bank data released in October 2021, the total amount of active projects in SVG was USD111.39 million. Among the various sectors, health received the largest commitment, accounting for 45.8% of the total commitments. The World Bank's recent investments in SVG include a USD51 million credit to modernize hospital services and develop a more resilient and sustainable health infrastructure and system. The World Bank also disbursed USD20 million to support the government's response to the La Soufriere volcano eruption and a USD40 million credit for fiscal reform and resilience development policy, including a catastrophe deferred draw-down option (Cat DDO).

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved in 2022 a USD20 million loan to the Caribbean Development Bank to bolster private-sector development and boost the productivity of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in SVG among other countries.

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) has approved financing of USD5.3 million for SVG to support the response to the La Soufriere volcanic eruption, which ravaged parts of the country in April 2021. Additionally, CDB secured USD27 million in financing for a multi-million dollar geothermal energy-drilling project in SVG. Since 2003, the Basic Needs Trust Fund has allocated grants of more than USD7.8 million to SVG.

Under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), Saint Vincent and Grenadines has been allocated an initial EUR7 million for the current programming period (2014-2020) to support the restructuring and rehabilitation of rural roads in the country. Additionally, the CDB has entered into a delegation agreement with the EU, to administer a Road Management and Rural Road Improvement Programme in SVG. The programme will be financed through an EU contribution of EUR5.8 million.

SVG and Canada have maintained close and cooperative relations since its independence in 1979. Cooperation is based on multilateral, development and security cooperation, as well as strong people-to-people ties, including tourism. The Canada-Caribbean Resilience Facility (CRF) is a trust fund managed by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) and executed by the World Bank, funded by the Canadian government with a value of CAD20 million (around USD15.5 million). It aims to improve gender-informed climate resilience and financial management practices in nine Caribbean nations, including SVG, from 2019 to 2023. In 2021, the CRF provided SVG with technical experts to aid support the implementation of Volcanic Eruption Emergency Project (VEEP) after the eruption of La Soufriere. The UK Caribbean Infrastructure Fund (UKCIF) is a single-donor fund, administered by the Caribbean Development Bank. The trust fund is financed by the Government of UK through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and has provided GBP300 million to build economic infrastructure in the Caribbean. The Kingstown Port Modernisation Project (2019-2024) was funded with a USD36 million grant by UKCIF.

VI. Development challenges and gaps

SVG, despite being classified as a middle-income country and having a relatively high human development index score (97 out of 188 countries in 2015), faces significant challenges to its development. SVG is highly exposed to natural hazards such as volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, drought, and floods, which can majorly impact its small economy that is highly dependent on tourism (accounting for approx. 25% of its GDP and 50% of exports) and agriculture, particularly considering the increasing impacts of climate change. SVG is also particularly vulnerable to global economic shifts, as recently evidenced by the high impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its economy. While the poverty rate is declining, high unemployment and persistent shocks to livelihoods still remain a cause for concern.



UN Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean/ Bajanpro - humanitarian crisis in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

SVG has a comprehensive set of legal and institutional frameworks that govern these challenges, albeit more focused on preparedness and response. However, due to its high debt and low economic growth, SVG has limited resources not only to mitigate and effectively respond to disasters as well as address development gaps that further exacerbate its vulnerability. Particularly in Kingstown, the country's capital and center of economic activity, the city is facing issues such as unplanned urban growth, inadequate housing, poor infrastructure, and critical facilities in hazard-prone locations. With the already persistent problems of flooding attributed to poor drainage and sanitation systems, and reclamation in low-lying areas, rapid urbanization continues to put pressure on the capital. Kingstown's Port Modernisation project, which is currently Government of SVG's major investment to address the failing critical infrastructure and provide longer-term economic benefits, presents a short-term fiscal challenge as it accounts for 22% of the country's GDP and places SVG at risk of debt distress.

02. GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

I. Global policy frameworks and positioning

SVG's commitment to the SDGs is operationalized through its National Economic and Social Development Plan, which aligns with the global policy framework. Still, already before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, SVG had initiated a coherent process of implementing measures to build a sustainable society through environmental, economic and social improvements based on good governance, and despite the challenges, the country remains fully committed to this task for the benefit of future generations. For instance, the country ratified the UNFCCC on 2nd December 1996 and made a voluntary commitment called the Barbados Declaration by which they aimed to reduce their projected increase in peak demand by 5% by 2015 and 10% by 2010.

II. Agenda 2030

VNR: Voluntary National Review 2020. Currently, 62% of all planning/policy documents are aligned with the SDGs and related targets. The report highlighted challenges faced by the country, including financial gaps and issues related to mechanisms to contain the Covid 19 pandemic.

NDC: SVG Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) released in 2015. It released its First Nationally Determined Contribution in 2016 which aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 22% by 2025 compared to the business-as-usual (BAU) scenario. The country is taking measures to reduce its emissions, especially through renewable energy and waste initiatives. Although SVG is still in the recovery phase from the effects of the April 2021 volcanic eruptions, the country is committed to submitting its revised NDC. A specific date for submission has not yet been set.

NAP: a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) for 2018-2030 is available, aligned with the NDC, SDGs and the Sendai Framework.

NUA national report: Not available.



UN Barbados/ Bajanpro. Impact of ashfall from the 2021 La Soufriere volcanic eruption in SVG

III. National / local engagement (networks, MCR2030, inter-regional forums, etc.)

SVG is a member state of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), among other international and regional memberships. SVG is also part of the National Commission for UNESCO, part of the Ministry of Education. SVG is a founding member of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and a Participating State of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), a regional inter-governmental agency for disaster management in the CARICOM.



Flickr/ Jim G - Petit St. Vincent

03. ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES IN DRR, CC-CCA, RESILIENCE

The Urban Transformation and Resilience for Inclusive Economic Growth project (10/2018-01/2021), launched by the ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program (ACP-EU NDRR), is a joint initiative of ACP, EU, The World Bank, GDFRR. It supports SVG to advance its transformative urban resilience and economic growth agenda and gives technical and strategic inputs into the redevelopment of Kingstown to tackle problems such as rapid urban transformation, already affected by the impacts of climate change, and the development of the new Modern City at the old airport in Arnos Vale to facilitate investment in the tourism industry. It enhances safety in schools with the School Safety Policy draft and strengthens housing resilience through the Housing Policy White Paper draft. Additionally, it provides technical input on or reviews critical infrastructure investments to better integrate risk considerations into them. This helps in developing the housing policy framework and improving infrastructure investments. The project was implemented in close cooperation with various SVG ministries and activities were also coordinated with UN-Habitat under the EU-funded Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme. The grant has a volume of approx. USD840,000.

SVG is one of the eligible countries for the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) funding, a multilateral fund under the Climate Investment Fund (CIF) that promotes low-carbon and climate-resilient development in developing countries. The primary objective of the PPCR is to help countries integrate climate resilience into their development planning and budgeting, which is critical in mitigating the impact of climate change. The Government of SVG received a grant of USD10.39 million from the PPCR to implement its Strategic Program for Climate Resilience (SPCR), which is comprised of three components:



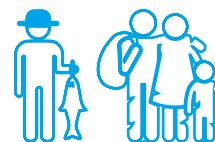
Enhance institutional capacity for climate resilience planning and coordination,



Improve water resource management and promoting climate-smart agriculture,



Enhance the resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems



The SPCR's implementation is expected to particularly benefit vulnerable groups such as women, youth, farmers, and fishers.

The 'Development of a Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan' project was approved in 2018 aimed to mainstream climate change resilience into development planning in the country through the development of a National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan, for which the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) provided technical assistance to the Government of SVG.

The Regional Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project (RDVRP) from 2011-2018 is aimed at tackling critical policy, data management, infrastructure, and capacity issues in the areas of Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management in SVG. With an estimated cost of USD20.92 million, the project's primary objective is to significantly reduce the vulnerability of the country's people and national economy to natural hazards and climate change. Through a comprehensive approach, the RDVRP aims to enhance the country's resilience to natural disasters, including hurricanes, landslides, and floods, and to support long-term sustainable development.

At the local level, SVG is also implementing the Kingstown Port Modernisation Project (2019-2024) to increase the efficiency of port services and promote economic growth, while protecting the marine environment and safeguarding the livelihoods of people affected by the project. The project involves the construction of new cargo port facilities and associated access roads on reclaimed land adjacent to the existing Port of Kingstown, providing essential climate-resilient infrastructure for economic activity on the island. A new marine sewer will protect and enhance the sustainability of the surrounding marine environment. Residents will benefit from improved access to modern and efficient port services, which will improve access to goods and services and economic opportunities. Technical assistance was completed in September 2019 and construction is expected to be completed in March 2024. The project is worth USD250.8 million, of which USD104.8 million is from SVG itself and USD110 million is a loan from the CDB. In addition, the project is funded by a USD36 million grant from the UK Government under the UKCIF.

ADDITIONAL PARTNERS TO CONSIDER FOR ENGAGEMENT

04.

The National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) coordinates the use of all available resources (local, regional, and international) to mitigate, prepare, respond and recover from the impact of disasters.

Invest SVG is the official investment agency of the Government of SVG. Formerly known as National Investment Promotions Inc. (NIPI), their mandate is to attract Foreign Direct Investment to St. Vincent & the Grenadines through specific sectors such as light manufacturing, renewable energy, tourism, export, creative industries and agro-processing.

The Community Development Division is a government agency that assists Community-Based Organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders to build an enabling environment for national development.

The Centre for Enterprise Development (CED) is a non-profit established by the SVG government to promote growth and improve living standards. It aims to reduce unemployment and poverty through initiatives like Small Enterprise development and investment facilitation. It also seeks to encourage private sector activity by improving the fiscal and regulatory framework.

Regional centres like the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), Caribbean Institute for Meteorology & Hydrology (CIMH), CARICOM and Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) all generate information for regional consumption.



FlickrR/ Andrew Moore - Kingstown

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