



National Adaptation Plans in focus: Lessons from St Vincent and the Grenadines

Saint Vincent and the **Grenadines** (SVG) is an archipelagic state in the Eastern Caribbean with a tropical climate. The country is comprised of the main island Saint Vincent while the Grenadines consists of 32 islands and cays, of which seven are inhabited¹. SVG is volcanic and mountainous country with a total area of 389 km², of which Saint Vincent is 344 km²⁽²⁾. The main island of Saint Vincent is characterised by rugged, mountainous terrain with valleys that drain to the narrow coastal area, as well as wet upland forests, numerous rivers, and fertile soils. The islets and cays that form the Grenadines are smaller and less rugged than Saint Vincent; these islands are nearly entirely dependent on groundwater for their freshwater supply given a lack of rivers and lakes³.

The population of SVG is estimated at 110,000 with a life expectancy at birth of 74.9 years and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of US\$6,669.⁴ The countries' economy depends on agriculture, tourism, construction, remittances, and a small offshore banking sector. The economy is small and open with a very narrow export base, high import dependence and extreme vulnerability to external shocks, such

as the recent global recession, spikes in fuel and food prices, and natural disasters, including hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, floods and droughts⁵. Despite these challenges, the social indicators are generally favourable, placing SVG in the high human development category (position 94 out of 189 countries and territories in 2018)⁶.

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“Adaptation costs are increasing; from 2010 to 2014, extreme weather events have resulted in a loss exceeding 35 percent of our GDP. A key step in the right direction is to integrate our NAP into all relevant domestic financing processes, in line with the NAP support programme.”

Hon. Camillo Gonsalves, Minister of Finance, Economy Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology

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Climate change risks

The geography, geology and socio-economic circumstances of SVG make it extremely vulnerable to climate-induced disasters. Due to its mountainous topography, most activities on the mainland are concentrated on the low-lying coastline, at risk to sea-level rise and coastal erosion, while the landscape also adds risks of landslides and flash floods⁷. As part of the Caribbean, its geographical coordinates place it in the Caribbean Hurricane Belt, making it susceptible to hurricanes during the Atlantic hurricane season (June to November). In addition, climate change projections predict that the region will be affected negatively by sea level rise, increased intensity of hurricanes,

decrease in precipitation and temperature rise, with huge environmental, economic and social costs⁸.

Since 2010, SVG has been affected by several major weather events, resulting in loss and damage amounting to over US\$700 million. These major events – which include Hurricane Thomas in 2010, the 2013 Christmas Eve floods, and the November 2016 floods – have individually caused loss and damage amounting to between 5 and 15 percent of the country's GDP⁹.



Groundwork for supporting the NAP process



Policy, planning and budgeting

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) 2013-2025 is the main planning instrument at the national level. The plan contains five strategic goals with climate change considerations falling mainly within the Goal No. 4: Improving Physical Infrastructure and Preserving the Environment and Building Resilience to Climate Change. To reduce the adverse impacts of climate change, the NESDP also proposes several adaptation measures to reduce restoration costs and to protect the natural environment in the future. Public education and awareness of the potential negative effects of climate change are at the forefront of this Plan. The proposed strategic interventions include:



Increase public awareness with regard to climate change issues;



Build resilience to minimise damage to settlement and infrastructure;



Minimise damage to beach and shoreline integrity and marine ecosystems;



Minimise the negative impact of climate change on agriculture and human health; and



Develop legislative and regulatory framework for environmental management, and institutional systems for responding and mitigating the effects of climate change¹⁰.

The SVG Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) addresses climate change by building on the adaptation goals and interventions outlined in the NESDP in order to protect the country's delicate environment, while reducing GHG emissions¹¹. The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) provided technical assistance to the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology for the 'Development of a Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan'. The project aimed to mainstream climate change resilience into development planning in the country through the development of a National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan¹². To respond to issues of climate change, the Government established the Contingencies Fund in 2017. Increasing the VAT rate by 1 percent, to capitalise it, has imposed a levy on consumption¹³. The Government further introduced a Climate Resilience Levy to be paid by all stay-over visitors in hotels, apartments and short-term rentals of EC\$8.00 (approximately \$3) night¹⁴.

Preparing for adaptation planning

The country participated in a series of regional efforts to establish the database and information systems, inventory of coastal resources and uses, and formulated a policy framework for integrated coastal and marine management. Pilot studies have been done on coral reef monitoring, coastal and agriculture vulnerability and risk assessments, economic valuation of coastal and marine resources, and formulation of economic and regulatory proposals¹⁵. The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Assessment Report included a capacity assessment that was finalized in 2017.

Two National Communications have been submitted to the UNFCCC (2010, 2016). The Second National Communication (SNC) presents the vulnerability assessments conducted in agriculture, coastal, water, health and tourism sectors. The assessments are based on future climate change impacts, in particular, the impacts of drought spells on water availability and the sensitivity of tourism and agriculture to climate extremes. The SNC also identifies related adaptation options¹⁶.

Implementation of adaptation actions

The following projects and programmes have been implemented or are under implementation in SVG:

- The Regional Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Program (RDVRP) including the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR) (World Bank, Climate Investment Fund, the European Union) (2011-2020): Development of the National Climate Change Policy and Strategy and Implementation Plan; slope stabilisation activities in Ginger Village, German Gutter, English Gutter and Belle Isle; river defence work at the Warrow warrow river in Arnos Vale, the Carriere river and the Buccament river; road/bridge rehabilitation; and construction of several satellite warehouses to be used for the storage of emergency supplies;
- The Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership (Government of Japan, United Nations Development Programme) (2016-2019): Strengthening the capacity of countries in the Caribbean (including Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) to invest in climate change mitigation and adaptation technologies, as prioritised in their Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs);
- Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainable Land Management in the Eastern Caribbean (The Global Climate Change Alliance Plus) (2013-2018): Improving the SVG and region's natural resource resilience to the impacts of climate change, through sustainable and effective land management and through adaptation projects focused on physical infrastructure and ecosystems.

“While climate hazards are nothing new, our ability to respond has been stretched due to their increased frequency, ferocity and impacts. Our responses must therefore be aggressive, effective and extensive.”

Janeel Millerr-Findlay, Director of Sustainable Development, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology

Challenges and successes

Support programmes

The NAP process in SVG is supported by a range of partners including: the Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United States of America, the World Bank, the Climate Investment Fund, the European Union and the Global Climate Change Alliance Plus. The In-Country NAP Support Program is managed by the International Institute for Sustainable Development and is the host for the NAP Global Network Secretariat¹⁹.

Challenges

The lack of institutional arrangements for multi-sectoral coordination of climate change actions is one of the most critical gaps at this stage in the NAP process. A coordination body with a clear mandate would strengthen the level of effectiveness of inter-sectoral adaptation activities. The progress will be made in addressing this issue with the formation of the NTACCC. Furthermore, a structured Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework and the metrics for NAP process monitoring are to be clearly defined and established. Another challenge is the lack of availability of data, its management and sharing mechanisms. For example, climate change and socioeconomic scenarios and data are often not available at the required scale for small islands. Additionally, there is no repository for past, ongoing and planned actions²⁰.

Successes

SVG has been actively responding to climate-related disasters. Most stakeholders have awareness of climate change adaptation and some are already implementing adaptation measures to climate-proof their investments and actions. The shifting of the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) from the Ministry of Health and Environment to the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology is the testimony of the political willingness to further integrate adaptation into development planning processes²¹. Among the lessons learned, the importance of including output indicators for projects, under estimation of the technical capacities and response times of the public and private sectors, adaptive management has shown to be key to ensure success of regional projects in the Caribbean²².



October 2016

Adaptation planners met in Grenada with 10 other Caribbean countries to discuss NAP strategies.

February 2018

The Domestic NAP Financing Strategy was finalized.

October 2019

The NAP was approved by Cabinet.

August 2017

UNDP and Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership facilitated stakeholder consultations and provided technical assistance in SVG on NAP development.

April 2018

NAP Assembly and launch of NAP; Donor symposium. Water and agriculture adaptation strategies launched; Presentation of major climate risks, vulnerabilities, projections and impacts in the Climate Risk Assessment and Vulnerability Report.

The process to formulate and implement NAPs

The approval of the National Climate Change Policy in October 2019, which designated the Sustainable Development Unit as the Secretariat, also granted approval for the creation of a National Technical Advisory Climate Change Committee (NTACCC), which would include, among others: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation and Labour – Ministry of National Security – Met, Maritime, NEMO, Energy Unit, Grenadines Affairs; Ministry of Tourism – National Parks, Rivers and Beaches Authority; CWSA, VINLEC, SVG Chamber of Industry and Commerce and representatives from civil society¹⁷. The objective of the NTACCC is to establish institutional mechanisms and inter-sectoral linkages for information sharing, coordination and joint implementation as an effective response to climate change. The NAP is currently being driven by the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) from the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology (MFEPDIT). Under the umbrella of the overarching NAP, Government staff already developed NAPs for the water and agriculture sectors that will be submitted to the Cabinet for approval in 2020¹⁸.

Opportunities and next steps

A consultant was engaged to support the NAP development process by utilizing the NAP Technical Guidelines elaborated by the LDC Expert Group. Stakeholder consultations held at the launch of the NAP process in April 2018, led to the identification of priority sectors that include agriculture, water, health, tourism, education, energy, finance and banking. The consultations also enabled the formulation of the strategic objectives, as well as the identification of the immediate activities:

- Defining the institutional arrangements for the NAP process,
- Designing and implementing a capacity-building plan,
- Establishing a cross-sectoral M&E framework,
- Extending the NAP work to other priority sectors and the elaboration of a portfolio of priority adaptation actions for the key sectors²³. The NAP was approved by Cabinet in October 2019; the sector NAPs for Agriculture and Water will be submitted for approval in 2020²⁴.



Key documents

- [National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013-2025](#)
- [Intended Nationally Determined Contribution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines \(INDC\), 2015](#)
- [Second National Communication on Climate Change, 2016](#)
- [National Climate Change Policy](#)
- [National Adaptation Plan](#)

32
islands
and
cays²⁵

0.001%
of total
global
emissions²⁶

4 adaptation
priority sectors
identified in
the NDC

10
strategic
adaptation
actions
defined
during the
consultation
process²⁷

18 different
Government and
non-Governmental
institutions
represented in the
NAP training
workshops²⁸

\$700
million
in damage
and losses
due to
climate-related
events since
2010²⁹

5-15 percent
of GDP
losses due to
the hurricane
Thomas and two
major floods in
the period
2010-2016³⁰

Notes

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- 3 United Nations Development Programme (2020). Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. URL: <http://adaptation-undp.org/explore/caribbean/saint-vincent-and-grenadines>
- 4 United Nations Statistics Division (2020). Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Country Profile. URL: http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx/_Images/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- 5 Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) (2014). Country Strategy Paper St. Vincent and the Grenadines. URL: <https://www.caribank.org/publications-and-resources/resource-library/country-strategies/country-strategy-paper-st-vincent-and-grenadines-2014-2018>
- 6 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2019). Human Development Report 2019. Briefing note for countries on the 2019 Human Development Report: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. URL: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/VCT.pdf
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- 12 Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (2019). Development of a Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. URL: <https://canari.org/news/development-of-a-climate-change-policy-strategy-and-implementation-plan-for-saint-vincent-and-the-grenadines/>
- 13 Government of SVG (2018). Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 2018 Budget Address. URL: <http://finance.gov.vc/finance/images/PDF/budgetaddress/2018-budget-address.pdf>
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- 15 United Nations Development Programme (2020). Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. URL: <http://adaptation-undp.org/explore/caribbean/saint-vincent-and-grenadines>; Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership; United Nations Development Programme, 2018. DRAFT Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Report.
- 16 Government of SVG (2015). Second National Communication on Climate Change Saint Vincent and the Grenadines URL: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/vctnc2.pdf>; Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership; United Nations Development Programme, 2017. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines NAP Assessment Report.
- 17 Japan-Caribbean Climate Change Partnership; United Nations Development Programme (2017). Saint Vincent and the Grenadines NAP Assessment Report.
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About the NAP-GSP

The joint UNDP-UN Environment National Adaptation Plan Global Support Programme (NAP-GSP) was launched in June 2013, financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). The NAP-GSP, together with partners, are assisting developing countries to identify technical, institutional and financial needs to integrate climate change adaptation into medium and long-term national planning and financing. The NAP-GSP provides technical expertise and guidance on country NAP processes, and opportunities for knowledge exchange on NAPs.



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