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# Women's economic empowerment in the blue economy in Small Island Developing States

WOW Helpdesk Query No.73

Olivia Jenkins and Gillian Brown

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**Query Questions:**

1. What are the status, trends and barriers to women's economic empowerment across blue economy sectors in SIDS?
2. What evidence is there on how to achieve economic empowerment for more marginalised women, especially those working in blue economy sectors in SIDS? Please consider approaches for LBT+ women, women with disabilities, migrant women and other groups.
3. What works to prevent and respond to violence experienced by women working in blue economy sectors in SIDS?

Question 1 will take an intersectional approach, reporting on the situation of women in all their diversity, including any evidence on economic abuse.

**Authors and institutional affiliations:** Olivia Jenkins, Social Development Direct, and Gillian Brown, Independent.

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## Acronyms

AIS	Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zones
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISA	International Seabed Authority
LBT+	Lesbian, bisexual and trans
LGBT+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex and ace
LDC	Least developed countries
LLCS	Landlocked developing countries
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SAMOA Pathway	Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPBD	South Pacific Business Development
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
UN-OHRLLS	United Nations Office of the High Representative of the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
UN SIDS	United Nations Small Island Developing States
WBL	Women, Business and the Law
WOW	Work and Opportunities for Women

## Executive Summary

A United Nations Small Island Developing States (UN SIDS) Summit will be held in 2024 in which Small Island Developing States (SIDS) governments will agree their next 10-year development goals. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) SIDS Hub requested this paper to inform their own Centrally Managed Programme design, as well as for staff, including Heads of Missions, in UK Posts in SIDS so that they can use the findings to ensure that UK policy and support is evidence-based.

This WOW Helpdesk query is a rapid desk-based review of the evidence on women's economic empowerment in blue economy sectors in SIDS where women often take up more precarious, lower paid, and less visible jobs. Specifically, it presents the status, trends and barriers; how to achieve economic empowerment for more marginalised women; and what works to prevent and respond to violence experienced by women working these sectors. The query focuses on the blue economy in SIDS in the Pacific, Caribbean, and the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS).

### Status and trends of women's labour force participation

**In all three regions, women's participation in the labour force varies significantly but is always less than men's participation.** The largest differences are in the Pacific where women's labour force participation rate varies from 31% in Samoa to 83% in the Solomon Islands. Overall, AIS has lower rates of women's labour force participation than the Pacific or Caribbean. The gap between male and female labour force participation rates across the regions varies from 2% in Papua New Guinea (where women are in the labour force almost at parity to men) to 37% in Fiji (World Bank Databank 2022).

**Women, especially from socially excluded groups, are more likely to live in poverty and have fewer rights.** In "female" occupations, in the Pacific, including tourism and food processing, working conditions are often poor and wages lower. Women are at risk of sexual harassment and have little collective bargaining position (ILO 2014). Women have fewer legal rights than men in the Pacific and Caribbean but there is generally greater gender parity in rights in AIS (World Bank 2022b).

**Women and men generally have different roles in the fisheries sector in each region and women's roles are not well captured in the data.** In the Pacific, men tend to hold most of the blue sector formal jobs and women are mostly in the informal sector (Asia Foundation 2021). Across the regions, there is gendered occupational segregation with men generally undertaking better paid tasks. For example, men target fish capture and harvest, and women target invertebrates, low-tide marine harvesting and selling (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2014, UN Women 2020b, McConney et al. 2019). A narrow definition of "fishing" is often used in fisheries policy where fishing is considered to be simply the act of catching fish by a boat or vessel, mostly carried out by men, and excludes tasks carried out by women (UN Women 2020b). A significant proportion of women's work is in the informal sector or is unwaged and considered to be an extension of, or complementary to, unpaid care work (UN Women 2020b).

**In all three regions, the blue economy tourism sector is a leading employment sector for women although it tends to be gender segregated.** Female participation in tourism is above 30% in 9 of the 14 SIDS countries for which there is data, and over 60% in 5 of these countries smaller (Wabnitz et al. 2021). The tourism labour force often has better work opportunities for employment, advancement, leadership, and entrepreneurship. Compared to the broader economy, gender gaps in the tourism sector in SIDS are slightly smaller (Wabnitz et al. 2021). However, evidence from several SIDS shows that women are concentrated in low-paid and precarious positions in the tourism sector and not reaching professional-level employment (Hamilton 2020, World Bank 2018).

## Barriers to women's participation in the blue economy sectors

**Climate change, shocks, and natural disasters are significant barriers to women's economic empowerment in blue economy sectors.** SIDS are vulnerable to disasters impacting blue economy sectors such as cyclones, typhoons, and earthquakes. Climate change is now exacerbating the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, with women in the blue economy bearing the burden of the impacts (Wabnitz et al. 2021). Global shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and global downturn are also negatively impacting livelihoods (WFP and Caricom 2022). The tourism industry was disproportionately affected by COVID-19 due to global travel restrictions. Increased mechanisation in the fish industry, migrant labour, and declining fish catch, including as a result of climate change, has reduced employment and economic opportunities including for women (World Bank 2022c, UN Women 2020b, and Value for Women 2020).

**Strong cultural and social norms limit women's opportunities and voice.** Social norms around unpaid care work inhibits the time women have available for income-earning activities, education or leisure. It also affects the type and quality of paid employment opportunities available to them. Other ways in which social norms are a barrier to women in the blue economy can be country specific, for example in some SIDS, women are considered to bring bad luck and poor catch if they are on a boat or near fishing activities, in others unmarried women face social stigma for working in the tourist industry (Michalena et al. 2020 El-Horr and Pande 2016). Globally, women working in hotels, catering, and tourism sector experience some of the highest levels of sexual harassment of any sector (IFC et al. 2020). Norms that exclude women from decision-making can exclude their participation in relevant policy formulation or community discussions. Women in the Pacific have been left out of consultations and decision making relating to mining opportunities and compensation and have borne the costs of mining while benefits such as employment opportunities and compensation packages, have mostly accrued to men (The Nature Conservancy 2018 and Davidian 2019).

**Women, including LBT+ women, are at risk of gender-based violence.** Global evidence suggests that there are high rates of gender-based violence in fisheries. High numbers of cases of alcoholism and domestic violence have been reported in fisheries communities around the world, which may be partly due to the social relationships between fishers that often centres around alcohol and increasing stresses of uncertainty in the fishing industry (Coulthard et al. 2019). Overall rates of gender-based violence are very high across the Pacific and Caribbean regions, but lower in AIS SIDS. LBT+ women are at heightened risk of violence across all three regions. The market can be a particularly dangerous place for women in the Pacific region (Castañeda Camey et al. 2020). Discriminatory laws serve to legitimise discrimination and hostility towards LGBT+ people, and prevent LGBT+ people from reporting violence.

**Women are less likely to access finance than men and a lack of access to finance is a barrier for women in the blue economy.** Women in traditional fishing communities undertaking fish vending and processing activities usually need frequent but small loans (UN Women 2020a). However, women in the fishing industry are less likely to be able to access finance than men, meaning they may have to resort to informal credit at exorbitant interest rates or even exploitative relationships with male fisherfolk (UN Women 2020a). A lack of access to finance also constrains women in the 'conservation tourism' sector, including in the Seychelles (Steyn Kotze et al. 2019).

**Women are less likely to have access to digital technology than men.** Digital technology is an important enabler for women's economic empowerment in the blue economy. As entrepreneurs, women report many benefits of digital technology for their businesses, including reaching new markets, reducing travel costs, using calculators, and ordering supplies (GSMA 2014). Studies in several SIDS countries consistently show that men have greater access to mobile phones than women (USAID 2022 and UNFPA Pacific 2020).

**Women with disabilities are less likely to be employed, more likely to be living in poverty, and disproportionately affected by climate change and disasters.** They face additional barriers to accessing jobs, due to perceptions that they are less capable of working or fulfilling their culturally ascribed roles as mothers, wives, and unpaid community workers (ILO 2014). People living with disabilities are less likely to be able to access crucial information on disasters and disaster responses as this is often not in line with accessibility standards (World Bank and GFDRR 2022).

### **Achieving economic empowerment for more marginalised women, especially those working in blue economy sectors in SIDS**

**There are some interesting emerging practices underway to achieve women’s economic empowerment in blue economy sectors in SIDS.** These have not been evaluated to assess their effectiveness, however they provide a basis for informing future programming. Some of the key entry points include:

- Conduct policy reviews, and support development and implementation of **gender responsive policy, strategy and legal frameworks** for blue economy sectors.
- Conduct **gender analysis and research**, for example in fisheries, tourism, or mining sectors as well as within value chains to help link more women producers within sectors and into value chains.
- **Develop capacity** for implementing gender analysis and mainstreaming gender.
- Develop and trial **business and conservation ideas** that link women to larger-scale economic benefits of blue economy conservation such as carbon markets.
- Focus specific support to include **women living with disabilities** in blue economy sectors.
- Create **peer-learning platforms for women playing leadership roles** in blue economy sectors and provide mentoring, capacity building and thought leadership.
- Improve women’s access to and use of **digital technology and online platforms** to expand their markets and businesses.
- Increase the **amount of finance available to women-owned SMEs** and help women grow and expand their businesses in the blue economy.
- Create **climate risk insurance mechanisms** to and ensure women such as fish vendors are included.
- Work with and support **organisations representing women and marginalised groups** to increase their voice and participation in decision-making.

### **Preventing and responding to violence experienced by women working in blue economy sectors in SIDS**

Several initiatives are being undertaken aimed at preventing and responding to violence against women, including LBTIQ+ women, and women working in the blue economy, in the three SIDS regions. The case studies outlined in the report fall into three broad categories:

- Funding for **women’s organisations and LBTIQ+ organisations** advocating for changes in legal and policy frameworks and working to reduce risks of violence against women and provide responses.
- **Working with the private sector**, including blue economy companies, to help them develop policies and approaches to support employees facing violence and harassment at home or in the workplace.



- Supporting the development and implementation of **legal frameworks on gender-based violence, and sexual harassment** - including the ratification of ILO Convention 190.

Although there is only a small amount of evidence on what works to prevent and respond to violence experienced by women working in blue economy sectors in SIDS, it can be concluded there are consistencies with what works in different contexts. For example, it is important to:

- Address **factors at the individual, interpersonal, community, institutional and societal levels** that put women working in blue economy sectors in SIDS at risk of violence and harassment. For example, social norms, legal protection and workplace policies.
- Focus on **both gender-based violence prevention and response**, ensuring in particular that any prevention work also includes capacity and resource for response, as incidents may be brought to the surface.

# 1. Background

## 1.1 Background to Small Island Developing States and the blue economy

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are a group of small island countries that face similar social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities due to their remote geographies. They include UN members and non-UN members, and are grouped into three regions: Pacific, Caribbean, and Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS).

SIDS are increasingly self-identifying as ‘large ocean states’ to respect the vast ocean areas and resources within their jurisdictions (FCDO 2022). Through their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), SIDS steward about 30% of all oceans and seas on the planet (IISD 2021). For example, St Lucia has a marine reserve around the same size as Germany, while Tuvalu has an EEZ that is 27,000 times its land mass (IISD 2021). Around 3.5% of SIDS geographical jurisdiction is land, whilst 96.5% is ocean (IISD 2021). Given these vast ocean resources, and their importance for livelihoods, climate, and biodiversity across the planet, the role of SIDS in protecting and conserving these ecosystems while ensuring they can be harnessed as a means to alleviate poverty – otherwise known as maintaining a sustainable ‘blue economy’ – is crucial (FCDO 2022).

The ‘Blue Economy’ concept seeks to promote economic growth, social inclusion, and preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability (FCDO 2022). At its core it refers to the decoupling of socioeconomic development through ocean-related sectors and activities from environmental and ecosystems degradation (UNCTAD 2014). The blue economy can include diverse components, from established ocean industries such as fisheries, tourism, and maritime transport, to emerging activities such as offshore renewable energy, deep-sea mining, aquaculture, and marine biotechnology. In addition, the concept includes ecosystem services that provide economic benefits from natural resources, such as climate mitigation through blue carbon sequestration,<sup>1</sup> or coastal flood and storm defence from reefs and mangroves.

## 1.2 Background to the query

The FCDO SIDS Hub works with partners such as SIDS governments, members of the OECD-DAC and multilateral organisations, and is currently preparing for the UN SIDS Summit in 2024. This UN Summit will be led by SIDS to agree their next 10-year development goals to follow on from the 2014 Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.<sup>2</sup>

Recognising that in the blue economy, women often take up more precarious, less remunerated, and less visible forms of work, this query will be presented to Heads of Mission for UK Posts in the SIDS so they can use the findings to ensure UK policy and support aligns with evidence.

The query aims to answer three questions:

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<sup>1</sup> Blue carbon sequestration refers to the capture and storage of atmospheric carbon dioxide by coastal and marine ecosystems, such as mangroves, tidal marshes and seagrass meadows.

<sup>2</sup> The Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (SAMOA Pathway) refers to the dedicated, internationally agreed, programme of action for small island developing States (SIDS) for the decade 2014 - 2024. Commitments made by 115 SIDS leaders at the Third International Conference on SIDS in 2014 around key priority areas such as climate change, oceans and seas, gender equality and women’s empowerment, and biodiversity.

1. What are the status, trends and barriers to women's economic empowerment across blue economy sectors in SIDS?
2. What evidence is there on how to achieve economic empowerment for more marginalised women, especially those working in blue economy sectors in SIDS? Please consider approaches for lesbian, bisexual and trans (LBT+) women<sup>3</sup>, women living with disabilities, migrant women and other groups.
3. What works to prevent and respond to violence experienced by women working in blue economy sectors in SIDS?

Question 1 will take an intersectional approach, reporting on the situation of women in all their diversity, including any evidence on economic abuse.

### 1.3 Methodology

The review has been undertaken through rapid desk-based research. This is a review of existing work in this area, and not an academic paper and thus has not taken a comprehensive or systematic review standard. However, existing evidence reviews and mixed-method studies have been prioritised, drawing out both qualitative and quantitative data. In total, over 100 documents were reviewed for this project, including peer-reviewed journal articles, research reports, project documents, databanks and websites. See the Bibliography for a full list of documents.

The report aims to ensure a balanced coverage across the Caribbean, Pacific, Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS) SIDS. Evidence from a list of SIDS supplied by FCDO has been prioritised (see Annex 2 for the list). The analysis includes a reflection on the strength/robustness of evidence. Case studies from different countries across the three regions have been included under the sections on what works to achieve women's economic empowerment as well as what works to prevent and respond to violence, using examples from SIDS and blue economy sectors.

### 1.4 Structure of this report

This report is structured based on the three questions that the query aims to answer. The first section lays out the background to the query and the methodology. The second section looks at the status and trends of women's economic empowerment across blue economy sectors in each of the three regions, and then turns to the barriers to women's economic empowerment, including gender-based violence. Section 3 outlines the evidence on what works to achieve economic empowerment for more marginalised women, especially those working in blue economy sectors in SIDS. Section 4 focuses on what works to prevent and respond to violence experienced by women working in blue economy sectors in SIDS. A list of key experts in women's economic empowerment in SIDS is provided in Annex 1.

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<sup>3</sup> The query focuses on evidence for lesbian, bisexual and trans women who face discrimination and violence in the intersection of oppression based in gender inequality and homo, bi and transphobia. It should be noted that trans men, non-binary and gender non-conforming people can face similar intersecting inequalities in situations where they are incorrectly perceived as women. The query sometimes cites evidence related to LGBT+ people as a broader community as there is limited disaggregated data and evidence focused on LBT+ women, and to highlight the wider context of LGBT+ rights in regions and countries, in which LBT+ women are likely to face compounding discrimination due to being women and having diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions.

## 2. Status, trends and barriers to women’s economic empowerment across blue economy sectors in SIDS

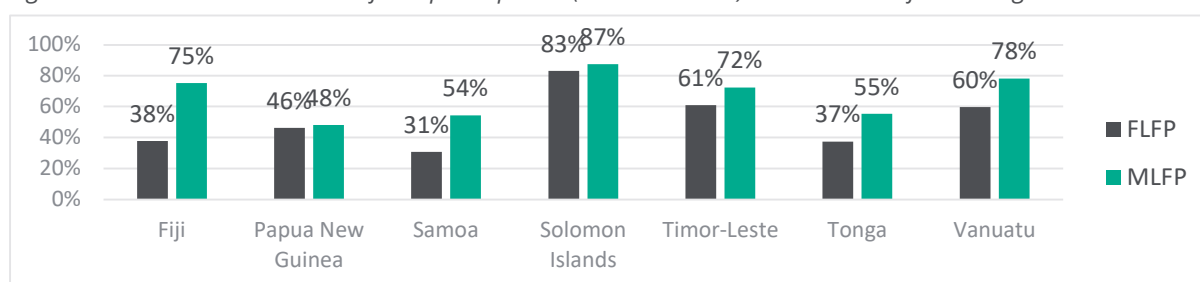
This section first outlines the status and trends of women’s economic empowerment in each of the three regions. The evidence on women’s economic empowerment across blue economy sectors and barriers to women’s economic empowerment were found to be consistent across regions, and the evidence is structured by blue economy sector, and then by barrier, with evidence on particular regions and particular SIDS outlined.

The most evidence was found for the Pacific region followed by the Caribbean region. There was less evidence available across the AIS region – some evidence was found through different groupings of countries such as the Indian Ocean Rim, pulling out evidence on the SIDS of interest to FCDO.

### 2.1 Status and trends in women’s economic empowerment across SIDS regions

#### 2.2.1 The Pacific region

Figure 1: Female and male labour force participation (FLFP and MLFP) across the Pacific SIDS region in 2021

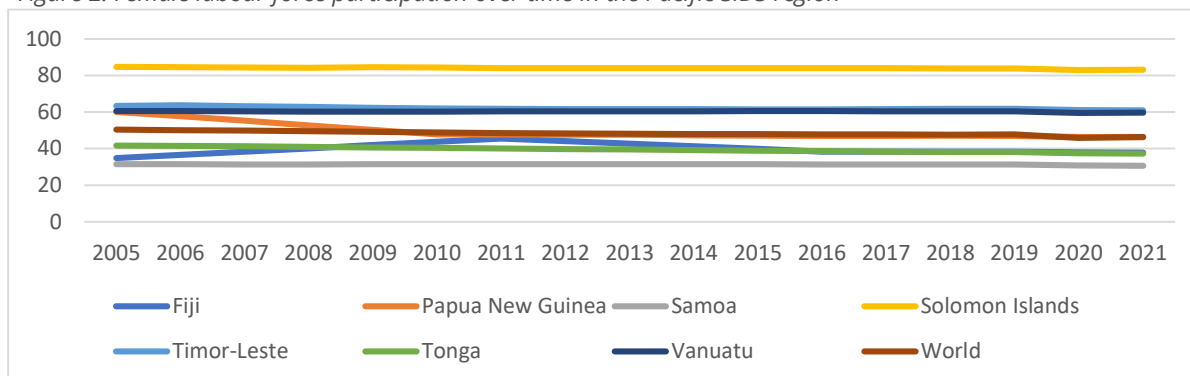


Source: World Bank DataBank (2022)

\* Niue and Cook Islands are not included as countries in the World Bank database, whilst no data on labour force participation is available for Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau and Tuvalu.

**Across the Pacific SIDS region, women are less likely to be in the labour force than men.** As shown in Figure 1, women’s labour force participation across the region varies considerably from 84% in Solomon Islands to 31% in Samoa (World Bank DataBank 2022). Gender gaps in labour force participation also vary considerably, from a 2% gap in Papua New Guinea where women are in the labour force almost at parity to men, to a 37% gap in Fiji where women are far less likely to be in the labour force than men. This is despite most countries having close-to-gender parity in primary and secondary school enrolment (ILO 2021b).

Figure 2: Female labour force participation over time in the Pacific SIDS region



Source: World Bank DataBank (2022)

**Female labour force participation has mostly been consistent over time.** However, Papua New Guinea has seen a decrease in the percentage of women in the labour force, from 60% in 2005 to 46% in 2021 (World Bank DataBank 2022). COVID-19 does not appear to have had much of an effect on female labour force participation.

**In the blue economy, there are high levels of occupational concentration by sex.** Across the region, there are four key economic sectors: fisheries, tourism, agriculture and the maritime sector (ILO 2014). In agriculture and fisheries, men tend to hold most of the jobs in the formal economy, with women more involved in the informal economy, for example, in processing, marketing and selling goods at markets (Asia Foundation 2021). In 2011 in the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, and Tonga, only 18% of total staff were women, however they made up 60% of the administrative and clerical staff in government fisheries departments (Tuara and Passfield 2011).

**Women, particularly those from socially excluded groups, are more likely to live in poverty.** According to ILO (2014), in predominantly ‘female’ occupations including tourism and food processing, working conditions are often poor, wages are typically lower, women are at risk of sexual harassment and abuse, and they have little collective “bargaining voice.” ADB (2014b) found that 64% of economically active women in Fiji earned below the conservative poverty line for workers, compared with 38% to 40% of men. In Cook Islands in 2011, female-headed households generally had lower household incomes than male-headed households. Among the single headed households that live with their relatives, there was an 18% income gap between those headed by women and men (Pacific Community 2017). Limited evidence suggests that female-headed households; older women; widows; women with disabilities; lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LBT) women; those living in remote areas; survivors of violence; and women living with family members who have a disability are often likely to experience financial hardship than other households (Pacific Community 2017; UNFPA 2014).

**Women in the Pacific SIDS region do not have the same legal rights as men.** Table 1 shows the indicator scores for the World Bank’s Women, Business and the Law (WBL) index, which is based on the presence of gender discrimination in laws across workplace, pay, marriage, parenthood, entrepreneurship, assets, pensions. A score of 100 indicates full legal equality with men. The global average Women, Business and the Law score is 76.5 out of 100, indicating that a typical woman has just three-quarters of the rights of men in the areas measured (World Bank 2022b). Women’s legal rights are particularly low in Vanuatu, Palau and Tonga, with women having less than 60% of the legal rights of men (World Bank 2022b). Evidence has shown that where women’s legal rights are stronger and upheld, positive women’s economic empowerment outcomes are more likely (Jenkins and Hearle 2022).

Table 1: Women, Business and the Law indicator scores across the Pacific SIDS region

Country	Global Average	Cook Islands	Fiji	Kiribati	Marshall Islands	F.S. Micronesia	Nauru	Niue	Palau	Papua New Guinea	Samoa	Solomon Islands	Timor-Leste	Tonga	Tuvalu	Vanuatu
WBL Indicator score*	76.5	Not available	82.5	76.3	65.6	61.3	Not available	Not available	56.3	60.0	75.0	56.9	86.3	58.8	Not available	55.6

Source: The World Bank’s Women, Business and the Law database (World Bank 2022b)

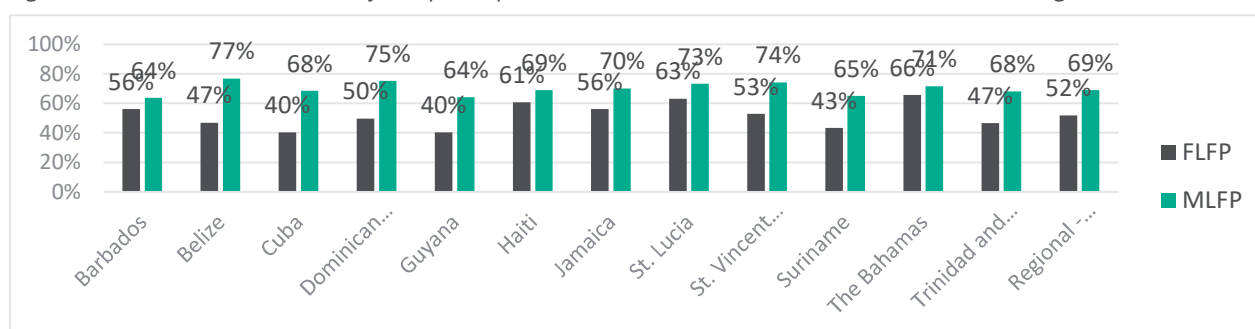
\*A score of 100 indicates full legal equality with men.

**Despite some recent progress in legislation change, legal and policy barriers persist to women's economic empowerment.** This includes some restrictions on the type of jobs that women can take, such as in certain industries, or for work at night, or work considered too dangerous. In Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, women are restricted from working at night, whilst men are not. In Papua New Guinea, women are prohibited from working in jobs deemed dangerous in the same way as men. In Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands, women are not able to work in some of the same industries as men (World Bank 2022b).

**Women have less decision-making power than men.** Many industries, including coastal fisheries and agriculture, are often perceived as male domains where women's decisions are unrecognised or unappreciated (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2014). While women's representation in business leadership is favourable compared with global averages, it is far from representative. Women are less represented in senior leadership in companies in the Pacific; on average, women hold 21% of board seats, 11% of board chair positions, and 13% of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) positions (Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative 2021).

### 2.2.2 The Caribbean region

Figure 3: Female and male labour force participation (FLFP and MLFP) across the Caribbean SIDS region in 2021



Source: World Bank DataBank (2022)

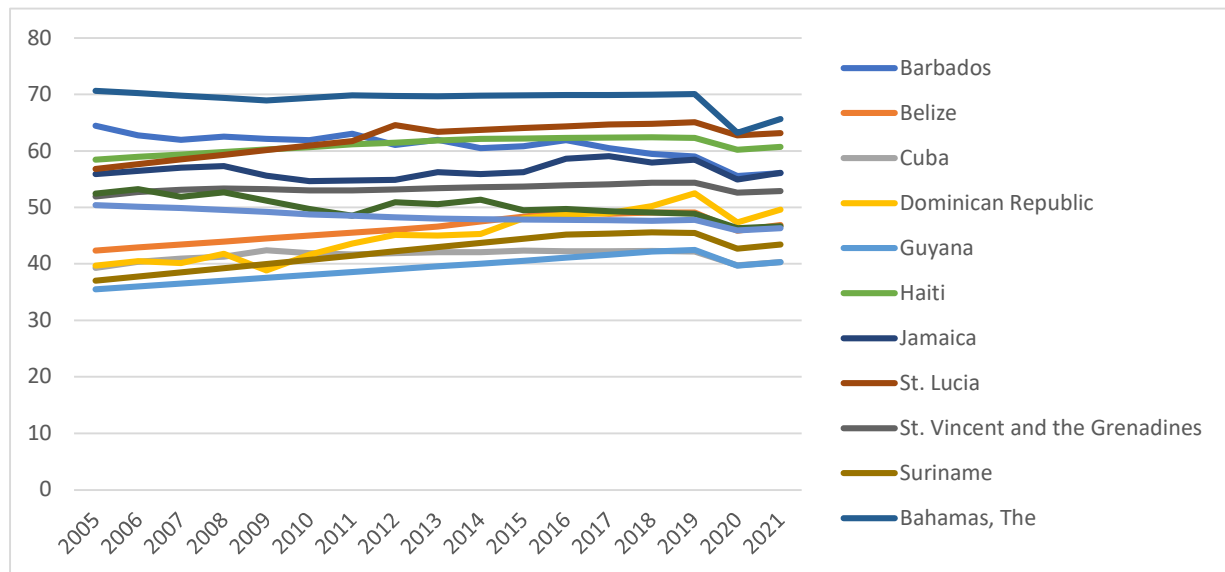
\* Montserrat is not included as countries in the database, whilst no data on labour force participation is available for Antigua & Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts & Nevis, Turks & Caicos Islands.

**There is less variation in female labour force participation in the Caribbean SIDS region compared to Pacific and AIS regions.** As shown in Figure 2, female labour force participation ranges from 40% in Cuba and Guyana, to 66% in the Bahamas (World Bank DataBank 2022). Gender gaps in labour force participation varied across countries, from 6% in the Bahamas to 30% in Belize.

**Female labour force participation in the Caribbean has generally increased across Caribbean SIDS,** with a dip in 2020, likely due to COVID-19. Female labour force participation has decreased in Barbados from 64% in 2005 to 56% in 2021, and Bahamas from 71% in 2005 to 66% in 2021 (World Bank DataBank 2022). This is more consistent with the world average female labour force participation rate, which has decreased from 50% in 2005 to 46% in 2021.

**The cost-of-living crisis and the pandemic are negatively impacting livelihoods.** In an August 2022 survey, over half of respondents faced disruptions to their livelihoods in the two weeks prior to the survey, with most of them reporting the inability to afford livelihood inputs as the main cause of disruptions (62%) (WFP and CARICOM 2022). Negative impacts on income remain widespread, with 54% of respondents reporting that their household has experienced job loss or reduced income in the last year, and an additional 18% had to resort to secondary income source (WFP and CARICOM 2022).

Figure 4: Female labour force participation (% of female population ages 15+) over time in the Caribbean SIDS region



Source: World Bank DataBank (2022)

\* Montserrat is not included as countries in the database, whilst no data on labour force participation is available for Antigua & Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts & Nevis, Turks & Caicos Islands.

#### Little evidence is available on women's economic empowerment for more socially excluded groups.

In the Commonwealth Caribbean, men living with disabilities are twice as likely to gain employment than women living with disabilities. Women living with disabilities are heavily concentrated in low-skilled, elementary occupations, routine clerical work and service sector jobs (ECLAC 2011). LBTIQ+ women and particularly trans people are often discriminated against in the workplace in the Caribbean region (Crawford 2019; UCTRANS and OutRight Action International 2022).

#### Women tend to be more highly educated than men but are more likely to be unemployed and have lower earnings.

A study of Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, found that the rate of employment increases with increasing education (UN Women 2019). However, a constant pattern across countries is that the employment rate is lower for women than for men at each of the three levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary). Despite women tending to be more highly educated than men, women's hourly rate is less than men's except in Barbados (where the rates are the same) and Jamaica (UN Women 2019).

#### There are high levels of occupational sex segregation with women most strongly over-represented in clerical occupations.

Men are more likely to work with machines, tools and objects and women with and for people (UN Women 2019). Women are more likely than men to be employed by government, as women account for the majority of teachers and nurses in most countries, and also of clerical workers (UN Women 2019). However, there is also an increasing number of women in technical and scientific posts in fisheries authorities across the Caribbean region, including in leadership roles (McConney et al. 2019).

**There is a very high share of women in management positions.** An ILO survey of 675 companies in the Caribbean found that over 40% of all managers are women in 8 out of 11 countries in the region, making the Caribbean a world leader in terms of the share of women managers in private sector organisations (ILO 2018). At the time, Jamaica reported the highest proportion of women managers in the world at 59% (ILO 2018). It is not clear what sector these companies are operating in.

**Women in Caribbean SIDS have considerably more decision-making power compared with Pacific and AIS SIDS** (FAO 2022). Women participate in cooperatives and producer associations, mostly

through the support of NGOs aiming to empower women, through which women are involved in community organisation and in which they hold leadership roles (FAO 2022).

**Women do not have the same legal rights as men across the Caribbean SIDS region.** The most gender-discriminatory laws are in Haiti, which has the lowest WBL indicator score in the Latin America & Caribbean region (World Bank 2022b). In Haiti, a woman cannot travel outside her home in the same way as a man, women and men do not have equal property rights, and there is no legislation on sexual harassment in employment, nor any legislation specifically addressing domestic violence. There is much higher legal gender parity in Guyana and Dominican Republic, although there are seven countries in the Latin America & Caribbean region with more legal gender parity (World Bank 2022b).

Table 2: Women, Business and the Law (WBL) indicator scores across the Caribbean SIDS region

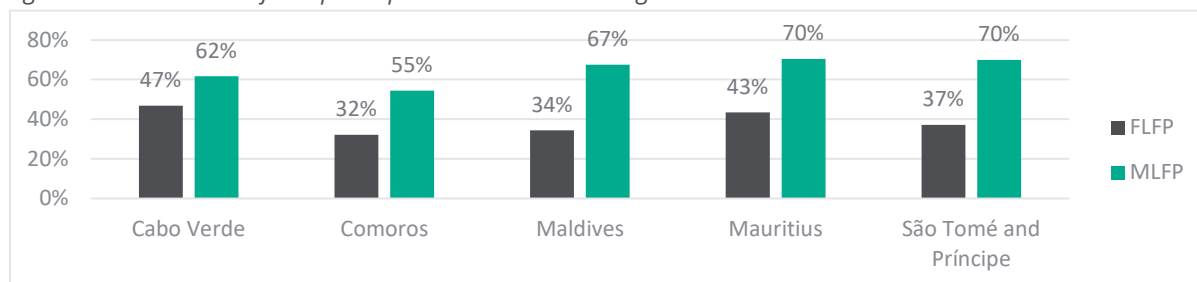
Country	WBL Indicator score
Antigua and Barbuda	66.3
Barbados	80.0
Belize	79.4
British Virgin Islands	Not included
Cuba	Not included
Dominica	62.5
Dominican Republic	86.3
Grenada	80.6
Guyana	86.9
Haiti	61.3
Jamaica	68.1
Montserrat	Not included
St. Kitts and Nevis	71.3
St. Lucia	83.8
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	68.1
Suriname	73.8
The Bahamas	81.3
Trinidad and Tobago	75.0
Turks and Caicos	Not included

Source: The World Bank's Women, Business and the Law database, (World Bank 2022b)

### 2.2.3 The Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS) SIDS region

The AIS SIDS region is incredibly diverse in terms of geographical location, culture and socio-economic factors. No literature was found which analyses the AIS SIDS region in terms of women's economic empowerment. Therefore, it was necessary to find literature at the country-level and across different regional groupings that include AIS SIDS, such as the Indian Ocean Rim.

Figure 5: Female labour force participation across the AIS region in 2021



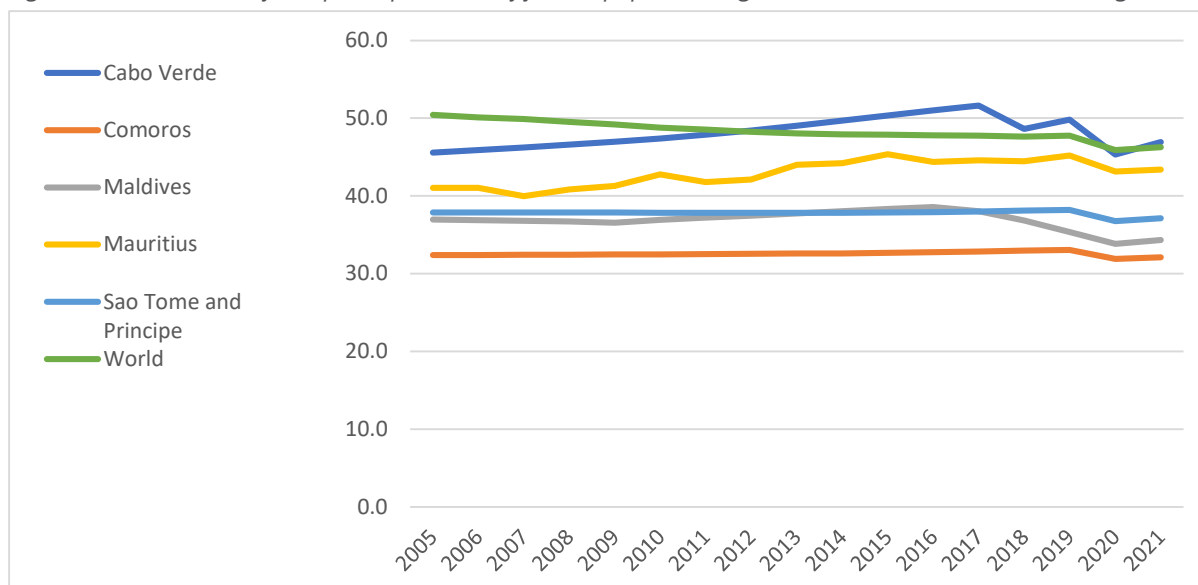
Source: World Bank DataBank (2022)

\* St. Helena is not included as a country in the database, whilst no data is available for Seychelles.

**Female labour force participation across AIS SIDS is generally lower than in the Pacific or Caribbean.** Despite the high level of geographic diversity in AIS SIDS, female labour force participation rates vary less across AIS SIDS than the Pacific region, ranging from 32% in Comoros to 47% in Cabo Verde. Gender gaps in labour force participation are high, as much as 33% in Maldives and São Tomé and Príncipe, with the lowest gap in Cabo Verde at 15% (World Bank DataBank 2022).



Figure 6: Female labour force participation (% of female population ages 15+) over time in the AIS SIDS region



Source: World Bank DataBank (2022)

\* St. Helena is not included as a country in the database, whilst no data is available for Seychelles.

**Similarly to the Caribbean region, female labour force participation rates have generally been consistent over time**, with dips in 2020 likely due to COVID-19. Female labour force participation in Maldives has decreased from 37% in 2005 to 34% in 2021, which is consistent with the global trend of a decrease in female participation rate during the COVID-19 pandemic, prior to which it was flat (World Bank DataBank 2022).

**Little evidence is available on women's economic empowerment for socially excluded groups in AIS SIDS.** There is likely to be a similar pattern as in the Pacific and Caribbean regions, whereby women from socially excluded groups such as women with disabilities and LBT+ women face discrimination in the labour market.

**There is a high level of variation in the proportion of women workers who are self-employed.** For example, in Comoros 83% of women workers are self-employed, compared to 34% in the Maldives and only 14.8% in Mauritius (UN Women 2020c). Within the wider Indian Ocean Rim region, approximately 43% of women work in the informal economy and are self-employed (UN Women 2020c).

**There is generally more gender legal parity in AIS SIDS than Pacific or Caribbean SIDS, although there is a high level of variation.** As Table 3 shows, in Mauritius, the WBL indicator score is 89.4, which is the highest in the entire Sub-Saharan Africa region (World Bank 2022b). There is legal equality across all laws examined in the WBL index (across workplace, pay, marriage, parenthood, entrepreneurship, assets, pensions) except that women do not have the same legal rights to remarry as men, and laws around pensions and maternity benefits are not in line with best practice. In Comoros, women's legal rights are far more restricted. For example, women cannot choose where to live in the same way as a man, cannot get a job in the same way as a man, cannot obtain a divorce in the same way as a man nor have the same legal rights to remarry, and there is no paid leave available to fathers (World Bank 2022b).

Table 3: Women, Business and the Law indicator scores across the AIS SIDS region

Country	Cabo Verde	Comoros	Maldives	Mauritius	São Tomé and Príncipe	Seychelles	St. Helena
WBL Indicator score	86.3	65.0	73.8	89.4	Not included	76.3	Not included

Source: The World Bank's Women, Business and the Law database, 2022

## 2.2 Status and trends in women's economic empowerment across blue economy sectors

There is not a lot of adequate data on women's participation in the blue economy in many countries. The blue economy is a fairly new concept, and so has historically not been treated as an economic sector to collect data on (Steyn Kotze et al. 2019). Where data is available, it is often not sex-disaggregated (Steyn Kotze et al. 2019).

Below we outline the evidence on women's economic empowerment across six key blue economy sectors: fisheries and aquaculture, tourism, deep-sea research, extraction of critical minerals and genetic materials, ecosystem and nature conservation, and renewable energy.

### 2.2.1 Fisheries and aquaculture

**Women and men have different roles in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.** The type of fishing women are engaged in varies by country, from lagoon-based octopus fishing in Mauritius to low-tide marine harvesting in Comoros (UN Women 2020b). In Barbados, there is a fairly clear gender-based division of labour where it is mostly males engaged in the harvest work, and mostly females working as fish vendors (McConney et al. 2019). Across the Pacific region, men target finfish (mainly tuna) for commercial purposes while women target invertebrates such as octopus, lobsters, snails, tube worms, sea cucumbers, sea urchins, clams, seaweed, and other shellfish mainly for home consumption (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2014). In Nauru, women's participation in activities depends on their ethnic background - Nauruan women mainly harvest resources and have less involvement in processing and marketing, while Chinese women are mainly involved in the marketing of resources and I-Kiribati women are involved across all three domains (Gillett 2016).

**This occupational segregation is usually defined by women working in roles in the informal sector that earn less income than men's roles.** For example, in the fish-processing industry in the Indian Ocean Rim, women are largely confined to low-technology and low-paid jobs, while men tend to predominate in higher-paid jobs (UN Women 2020b). In Saint Lucia, although women are critical players in pre- and post-harvest activities of the fisheries sector, as of 2019 only 6% of formally registered fishers were women (World Bank 2019). Across SIDS, since much of employment in the fishery sector is informal, returns to workers depend on their bargaining power. The bargaining power of women in fisheries is low, given that their work lacks formal recognition, coupled with gender norms around women's work (UN Women 2020b).

**Women's involvement in aquaculture and fisheries is still not well captured in the data.** The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has been gathering employment data on female involvement in aquaculture and fisheries since 1970 (Steyn Kotze et al. 2019). However, they have had mixed success

in improving the quality of sex-disaggregated data across regions (Steyn Kotze et al. 2019). Data on wages for women in fisheries is particularly limited (UN Women 2020b). A significant proportion of women's work is unwaged and considered to be an extension of, or complementary to, unpaid care work — for example, helping men in the family in their fishing-related tasks, mending nets or maintaining accounts (UN Women 2020b). There is also often a narrow definition of “fishing” used in fisheries policy; fishing is usually considered to be the act of fish capture by a boat or vessel, rather than including other fishing activities such as shore-based fishing and the gleaning of invertebrates and other aquatic species in intertidal zones, rivers and shallow waters (UN Women 2020b).

**However, some sex-disaggregated data in the fisheries and aquaculture industry is available.** For example, we know that in 2017, the percentage of women workers in the aquaculture industry was 26% in Mauritius (Steyn Kotze et al. 2019). The same data for Seychelles is only available from 2005, when women workers made up 2.29% of workers in aquaculture (Steyn Kotze et al. 2019). We also know that ‘large numbers of women’ are engaged in small-scale fish processing and trade in Comoros and Mauritius and that in Mauritius and Seychelles, women's participation in the fishery industry is estimated to be ‘significant’ (UN Women 2020b). In Comoros, about half the fisheries labour force are women, with women mostly involved in reef gleaning and harvesting of intertidal zones (UN Women 2020b). In Maldives, while women spend an estimated average 7 hours each week on fishing, men spend 12 hours per week (UN Women 2020b).

**There is some representation of women in senior management in the fishing industry.** In the Caribbean, it is widely accepted that women strongly influence the socioeconomic and cultural aspects of fishing households and the industry as a whole (Grant 2004). There is an increasing number of women in technical and scientific posts in fisheries authorities across the region, and there are women in leadership roles, such as the two female presidents and other executive members of the Barbados National Union of Fisherfolk Organisations (BARNUFO) (McConney et al. 2019).

**Fisheries' policies with regards to gender needs to be improved to increase women's economic empowerment in the sector.** The absence of formal recognition of women as workers in fisheries leads to their work being unregulated and their exclusion from state policies, programmes and decision-making processes. It also limits their access to resources, information, training, credit, welfare measures and social protection (UN Women 2020b). A 2021 study found that where policy instruments in the Fijian fisheries sector discussed gender, they predominantly focused on women rather than considering gender roles or dynamics (Lawless et al. 2021). Furthermore, women were portrayed as vulnerable or victims in 35 out of 55 small-scale fisheries policy instruments, showing a paternalistic approach and a gap in understanding the benefits of women's participation and leadership in the fisheries sector (Lawless et al. 2021). In Barbados, informal interviews found that fishery bodies do not pay much attention to gender in their policies, plans and operational management, although are conscious of the gendered divisions of labour in the industry (McConney et al. 2019).

**The fishing industry is declining in many countries, straining women's economic empowerment for women who work in the sector.** In Maldives, women have been actively involved in fish processing for domestic consumption; however, they are being slowly replaced or removed from the sector by migrant workers (UN Women 2020b). According to the World Bank (2022c), declining fish catch has resulted in a decline in employment in direct fishing activities in the Caribbean. A significant reduction in women's employment in fisheries is attributed to the increased mechanisation of fish processing activities (UN Women 2020b). In the Caribbean, climate change is reducing fish stocks, changing women's role in the value chain as they are less likely than men to migrate to find other work (Value for Women 2020).

## 2.2.2 Tourism

**In all three regions, the blue economy tourist sector is a leading employment sector for women.** Female participation in tourism is above 30% in 9 of the 14 SIDS countries for which there is data, and over 60% in 5 of these countries (Wabnitz et al. 2021).<sup>4</sup> In Solomon Islands, women are responsible for 90% of the income generated through tourism (Wabnitz et al. 2021). In the Caribbean, women's participation in the hotel and restaurant sector is between 43% and 63% (Wabnitz et al. 2021). In the Indian Ocean Rim countries, women are almost twice as likely as men to be employed in the tourist sector (UN Women 2020c).

**In general, the tourism industry tends to be gender segregated,** with women concentrated in low-paid and precarious positions and not reaching professional-level employment. In Fiji, women account for nearly two-thirds of university students on tourism courses, yet they hold only a quarter of professional and managerial positions in the sector (Hamilton 2020). Instead, women in the formal tourism sector are concentrated in minimum-wage jobs, including reception and cleaning roles. Surveys by the World Bank (2018) in Grenada and Saint Lucia found that the main reasons why a gender pay gap in the tourism sector persists is that women employees are highly concentrated in lower paying housekeeping, food and beverages, and front-office positions and are less likely to be promoted or compensated for working overtime (World Bank 2018). Limited access to capital or assets such as land limit women's abilities to start or grow their businesses in the tourism sector (UN Women 2020c). A study across 13 Caribbean SIDS found that female management and ownership of companies in the tourism sector is related to lower profitability (Pastore et al. 2020).

**Relative to other sectors, tourism has provided women with more opportunities for economic empowerment** through better work opportunities for employment, advancement, leadership, and entrepreneurship (Wabnitz et al. 2021). Globally, compared to the broader economy, gender gaps in the tourism sector in SIDS are slightly smaller: women earn 15% less than men in equivalent tourism sector jobs (compared to 17% less in the broader economy); 23% of tourism ministers are women (compared to 21% for governments more generally); and women represent 54% of the tourism workforce (compared to 39% in the broader economy) (Wabnitz et al. 2021). There is strong evidence from the Caribbean that women in management positions in the tourism sector are more likely to hire women employees in their businesses (Pastore et al. 2020).

**The tourist sector is highly vulnerable to shocks such as pandemics, climate disasters or internal unrest.** The tourism industry has been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 due to global travel restrictions. In the Caribbean, women were more likely to lose income due to closure of hotels and restaurants during the COVID-19 pandemic because they fill jobs that are easily furloughed in the absence of customers (World Bank 2022c). In the Pacific region there is strong evidence that the pandemic has affected women-owned businesses worse than male-owned businesses. By the end of 2021, 20% of female-owned businesses had temporarily closed compared to 8% of male-owned businesses (PTI 2021).

## 2.2.3 Deep-sea research and related activities

**Thanks to the 'Women in Deep-Sea Research (WIDSR) project' launched in 2021, there is some evidence on women's economic empowerment in deep-sea research in SIDS.** The project involves a partnership between the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and the United Nations Office of the High Representative of the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small

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<sup>4</sup> Female participation in tourism is understood here to be share of female participation as part of ILO category Economic activity (ISIC-Rev.4): I. Accommodation and food service activities and averaged between 2015-2020. All of the 14 countries are included in the FCDO list in Annex 1. The authors of this report wish to thank the authors of the Wabnitz et al. 2021 report for access to their data from which this was calculated.

Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS). In 2022 the project undertook a study with the aim to provide a better understanding of gender specific barriers and solutions in deep-sea research, particularly for SIDS as well as least developed countries (LDCs) and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) (ISA 2022a). Considering that direct capacity in such a highly technical field is low in the targeted countries, the scope of the study was broadened to include disciplines and activities with skills transferable to deep-sea research, including marine biology, deep-sea mining, marine energy, fisheries and aquaculture, and conservation.

**Women were underrepresented in deep-sea research and related activities** in the participating countries at both national and institutional levels (ISA 2022a). While there were more permanent than contractual staff overall, fewer women hold permanent positions compared to men (ISA 2022a).

Table 4 presents the numbers of women and men in a selection of SIDS countries that were profiled in the study. It shows that relatively small numbers are employed in the sector, and there is little difference in female and male employment in the profiled countries (ISA 2022a).

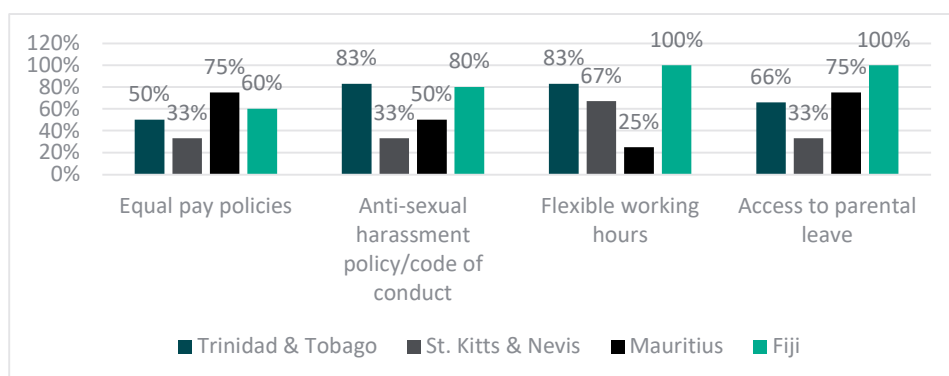
Table 4: Numbers of men and women employed in deep-sea research and related activities

	Employment in deep-sea research and related activities					
	Ocean science		Deep-sea research		Disciplines and activities related to deep-sea research	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</b>	50 - 99	50 - 99	0 - 4	0 - 4	100+	100+
<b>St. Kitts &amp; Nevis</b>	20 - 49	20 - 49	5 - 9	5 - 9	50 - 99	50 - 99
<b>Mauritius</b>	20 - 49	50 - 99	10 - 19	10 - 19	20 - 49	20 - 49
<b>Fiji</b>	50 - 99	100+	0 - 4	5 - 9	100+	100+
<b>Nauru</b>	0 - 4	0 - 4	0 - 4	0 - 4	0 - 4	0 - 4

Source: International Seabed Authority (2022a)

Table 5 shows that the presence of gender-related policies in institutions related to deep-sea research is mixed.

Table 5: Fraction of deep-sea research related institutions with gender policies



Source: International Seabed Authority (2022a)

**Number of institutions which took part in the survey:**  
 Trinidad & Tobago: 6  
 St. Kitts & Nevis: 3  
 Mauritius: 4  
 Fiji: 5  
 Nauru: 0

**CSOs and women’s rights organisations such as Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) have contested ISA’s commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment.** They allege that ISA is not transparent, there is a lack of women’s voices and power in ISA processes, and that ISA is promoting technologies under deep-sea mining which will be destructive for women’s

human rights such as access to healthy environments which women disproportionately depend on (e.g. due to often being responsible for collecting firewood and clean water) (PANG and DAWN 2022).

Additional evidence has found that the majority of Pacific women who are working in marine science mainly focus on training communities working on fisheries or examining research samples as technicians (Tuara and Passfield, 2011) rather than in marine or ocean science management positions. The shortage of career progression in women in these types of jobs may be due to pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, lack of confidence, or lack of career opportunity or awareness of such opportunity (Michalena et al. 2020).

#### 2.2.4 Extraction of critical minerals

**Onshore mining in the Pacific region has caused significant environmental and social damage.** For example, Nauru once had one of the highest per capita incomes in the world because of a booming phosphate mining industry in the 1970s and 80s, but the royalties were mismanaged and now nearly 80% of the island's small landmass is unliveable after being mined by foreign corporates (Togiba 2021). In Papua New Guinea, whilst resource extraction has led to government revenues in some cases, in others, corporates have avoided tax and mining has driven conflict, and discharged poisonous waste making water unsafe to drink and causing fish to die (Togiba 2021).

**Onshore mining projects have disproportionately negatively impacted women.** Women are often left out of consultations and decision-making about mining projects (The Nature Conservancy 2018). Benefits accrue mostly to men in the form of employment and compensation, whilst costs accrue mostly to women (Davidian 2019). For example, when miners change water flows or pollute land, women have greater difficulty finding water and food (Davidian 2019). Mining often leads to large influxes of male workers with huge amounts of disposable income which increased the risk of gender-based violence or sexual exploitation (Davidian 2019). For example, in Solomon Islands, miners in West Rennell paid women for sex and some had children with local women and then left, leaving behind children who have not been accepted by the community and women facing shame and stigma (Puia 2021).

**Deep-sea mining is still in early stages but there is a significant potential for expansion of activities in oceans surrounding SIDS with associated risks.** No evidence was found on women's economic empowerment related specifically deep-sea mining. However, the UN have identified the potential for negative impacts such as: loss of livelihoods and reduction of attractiveness of coastal community due to pollution or development of new infrastructure; pollution preventing a communities ability to harvest marine resources upon which their livelihoods depend; or construction of infrastructure physically preventing coastal communities access to marine environments. They also note the potential for inequality of opportunities between men and women, since economic opportunities are more likely to be available to men, and unequal distribution of costs and benefits (United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative 2022).

#### 2.2.5 Ecosystem and nature conservation

**Women around the world – particularly rural and indigenous women - often play an essential role in ecosystem and nature conservation.** Women have been historically active in ecosystem preservation and maintenance of traditional knowledge, playing a fundamental role in environmental protection and conservation. However, changes arising from increased interaction with other communities have marginalised women's role in natural resource management (OECD 2021). Women from SIDS possess complex and layered knowledge and skills that are fundamental to ecological sustainability (Women's Major Group 2013).

**In SIDS, women often take the lead for planting and protecting mangroves.** In Papua New Guinea, the Pari Women’s Development Association has led successful mangrove reforestation efforts, planting 500 seedlings and launching an awareness campaign to protect such areas (Root 2020). Mangroves play a role in protecting communities from flooding and rising sea levels, as well as sequestering carbon from the atmosphere (World Rainforest Movement 2014). This means that mangrove projects can be monetised in the growing blue carbon credit market. However, in this market, women receive very little compensation for their contributions (Bohler-Muller et al. 2019). It is crucial that women’s access to carbon markets is increased and that they benefit equitably from their key roles in nature-based solutions (Phillips and Jenkins 2022).

### 2.2.6 Renewable energy

**There is very little evidence on women working in renewable energy in SIDS.** Women make up 32% of the renewable energy industry globally (IRENA 2019). The Women in Renewable Energy (WIRE) Network is a professional development group for women working in energy in island nations. There are more than 570 individuals from more than 60 countries in the network (RMI 2022).

## 2.3 Barriers to women’s economic empowerment across blue economy sectors

Several barriers exist to women’s economic empowerment across the above blue economy sectors, which are consistent across the Pacific, Caribbean and AIS SIDS regions. Below we outline six key barriers which emerged in our research: climate change and related disasters; strong gendered social and cultural norms including related to unpaid care work; gender-based violence including economic abuse; low access to finance; and low access to digital technology. We then turn to the additional barriers that marginalised groups face in SIDS.

### 2.3.1 Climate change and natural disasters

**SIDS have always been vulnerable to disasters that impact blue economy sectors and climate change is exacerbating this and causing additional problems.** Communities across the Pacific are experiencing the negative effects from extreme weather events, including cyclones and typhoons, and slow-onset disasters, such as sea-level rise. In a survey of 377 households in Kiribati, 94% of households reported that they had been affected by environmental hazards over the last 10 years, with 81% affected by sea-level rise (Oakes et al. 2016). In Solomon Islands, it has been reported that fish catches have decreased due to the increase in seawater temperature, rising sea level, and a loss of marine biodiversity (Pacific Disability Forum 2022).

**Women in the blue economy are especially vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters.** Following Cyclone Winston in 2016, mud crab fishers in Fiji, who are predominantly female, changed their fishing patterns; 52% stopped harvesting crabs as they needed to divert labour to repairing their homes and faced difficulties accessing collection sites and markets (Thomas et al. 2021). When Cyclone Pam landed in Vanuatu in 2015, female micro-entrepreneurs predominantly in the tourism industry lost an estimated average of 39 days each due to the additional unpaid work carried out by women to restore homes and gardens, fetch water and food, and take care of children while schools were closed (Esler 2015). Across several Caribbean islands, impacts from Tropical Storm Erika (2015), Hurricane Maria (2017), were found to put a disproportionate burden on women, similarly to Cyclone Winston in the Pacific region (Wabnitz et al. 2021).

**Women, especially those from marginalised groups, are at a higher risk of experiencing the negative effects of climate change and related disasters.** Reasons for this include that as workers they are concentrated in more vulnerable, often informal, and lower paid employment; they are less likely to

have access to the resources and information they need to adapt and respond; there is a societal expectation that women are responsible for care work which means that they cannot migrate to less affected areas; women are often not involved in decision-making regarding disaster risk reduction and climate change meaning that early warning systems do not always consider how to convey information to women; and women often lack land rights and access to productive assets, as well as social protection schemes designed to support recovery (FAO and SPC 2019; FAO 2019; UN Women 2016). People living with disabilities have been noted to experience difficulty in accessing necessary medical care and services during disaster response after severe floods in Solomon Islands and tropical cyclones in Tuvalu (Pacific Disability Forum 2022). In the Caribbean, female-headed households and women in rural areas have been pointed out as more vulnerable to climate change impacts (Value for Women 2020). A report on the experiences of sexual and gender minorities in Fiji following Cyclone Winston found that religious leaders and local communities often identified sexual and gender minorities as the cause of the disaster, being sent as a punishment for their supposed 'sins', leading to verbal abuse from communities and feelings of alienation (Dwyer and Woolf 2018). Sexual and gender minorities are often left out of community-based disaster risk management committees and programs, leading to their specific needs being unaddressed (Dwyer and Woolf 2018). For example, Fiji's National Disaster Management Plan makes little reference to vulnerable groups, and research found that interviewees had never previously engaged with sexual and gender minority issues (Dwyer and Woolf 2018).

**Despite their valuable knowledge for climate adaptation, women are often left out of decision-making and post-disaster recovery efforts, with further negative effects.** For example, when fish stocks dwindle due to climate change, women's access to fish diminishes and their underrepresentation in fisheries decision-making bodies means that there is no one to speak up for and safeguard their economic and other interests (UN Women 2020b). In Kosrae and Chuuk (Federated States of Micronesia), during droughts, women rely on drying and fermenting breadfruit to support food security, while in Pohnpei, women's knowledge of where traditional wells are located enables them to find potable water (Wabnitz et al. 2021). Integrating women's input and enhancing their participation in decision making supports better recovery efforts and community resilience and adaptation.

### 2.3.2 Strong gendered cultural and social norms including unpaid care work

**Due to strong gendered social norms, women across all three SIDS regions have a disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work.** This both inhibits their time available for income-earning activities, education or leisure, but also affects the type and quality of paid employment opportunities available to them, contributing to their concentration in part-time, low-paid, informal work across all blue economy sectors. For example, women in Sao Tome and Principe spend 8 hours a day on unpaid work, and just 2 hours on paid work (FAO 2022). In a 24-hour day, women in Cuba spend 21% of it on unpaid care work, and women in Dominican Republic spend 17% (World Bank DataBank 2022). In Fiji, across all age groups, women spend approximately three times as much time on unpaid domestic chores and care work than men (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2016).

**A lack of access to affordable and quality childcare is a key barrier for working parents, particularly women.** In a gender analysis of four CARICOM countries, men are noticeably more likely than women to be employed if there are children under five years old in their household (UN Women 2019). For example, in Guyana 70% of men with children under five are employed compared with 35% of women (UN Women 2019, p. 32). An IFC (2019c) survey of more than 2,700 employees from the public and private sector in Fiji found that only 8% of parents with pre-school-age children use a childcare service. In Indian Ocean Rim countries, there is little evidence of child-care facilities at seafood and fish-processing factories, even though the workforce consists disproportionately of women (UN Women 2020b).



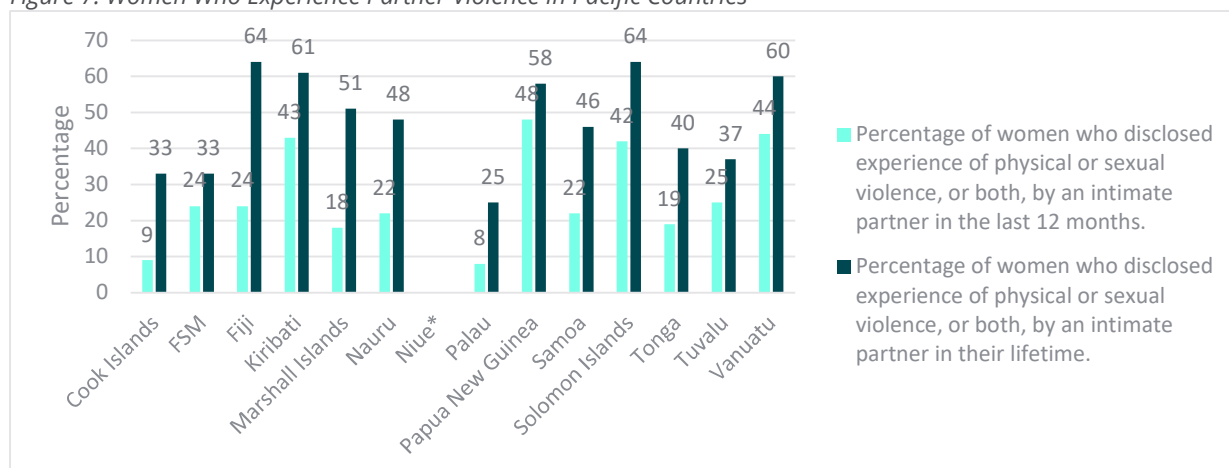
**In the Pacific region, there are strong cultural and social norms in the fishing industry that act as a barrier to women’s economic empowerment.** While women play active roles in harvesting and selling, fisheries are considered male domains. This concentrates decision-making power in the hands of men. In addition, there are some roles that are considered culturally inappropriate for women. In some contexts, women are considered to bring bad luck and poor catch, if they are on a boat or near fishing activities (Michalena et al. 2020). A study in the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, and Tonga found that the belief that men are more suited to the fisheries sector, and a lack of awareness of the roles played by women, was a key factor in limiting women’s education and career choices in fisheries science and management (SPC 2014).

**In Maldives, social stigmas exclude women from the tourism sector.** Maldives is an outlier in SIDS as the tourist sector is overwhelmingly male-dominated, with men making up 87% of employees (El-Horr and Pande 2016). Women in Maldives are excluded from the tourism sector because of social stigmas associated with young unmarried women staying on resort islands for significant periods of time, the perceived risks of women travelling alone, high costs of transport and limited child-care facilities for resort employees (El-Horr and Pande 2016). Globally, women working in hotels, catering, and tourism sector experience some of the highest levels of sexual harassment of any sector. (IFC et al. 2020).

### 2.3.3 Gender-based violence including economic abuse

**Rates of gender-based violence are some of the highest in the world in certain Pacific SIDS and are also high across the Caribbean but lower in AIS SIDS.** Regionally, 68% of Pacific women have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime, which is double the global average (UNDRR 2022). As shown in Figure 7, in Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, 50% or more women have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. The only Pacific country with a rate below the global average is Palau at 26% (WHO 2018). Similarly in the Caribbean region, an average of 46% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence (UN Women 2020a). Figure 8 shows that all five countries surveyed by UN Women (2020a) have rates higher than the global average of 30%. In the AIS region, several countries are missing data but for those which have data, the rates of violence are lower than the global average, as shown in Figure 9. Disasters have been reported to increase GBV, including a possible 300% increase in new domestic violence cases in a Southern province of Vanuatu after two tropical cyclones hit in 2011 (UN Women 2012).

Figure 7: Women Who Experience Partner Violence in Pacific Countries

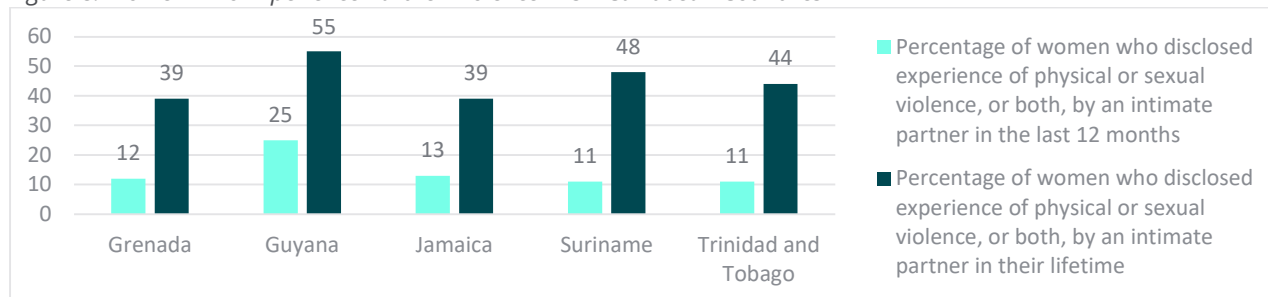


FSM = Federated States of Micronesia.

\* No data is available for Niue.

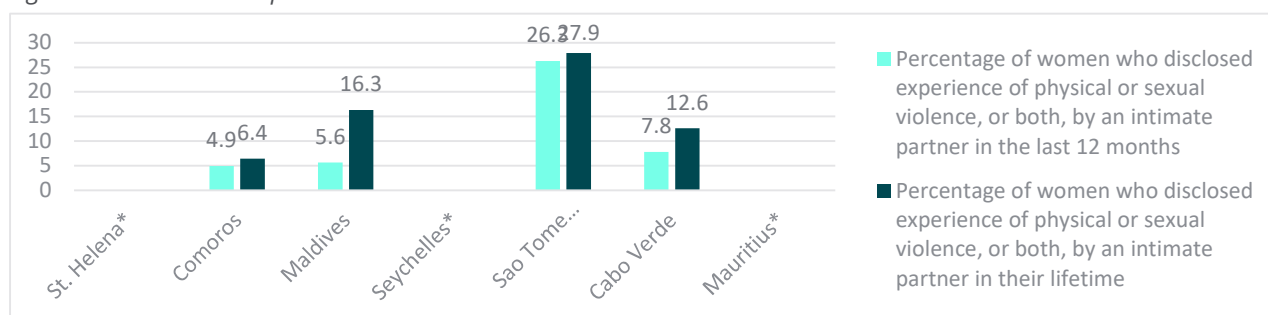
Source: UNFPA (2020).

Figure 8: Women Who Experience Partner Violence in six Caribbean Countries



Source: UN Women (2020a)

Figure 9: Women Who Experience Partner Violence in AIS Countries



Source: UN Women 2022

\* No data is available for St. Helena, Seychelles or Mauritius

**LBT+ women are at heightened risk of violence across all three regions.** In the Caribbean, a survey with over 2,000 participants found that 46% of the LGB and 59% of the transgender Caribbean sample had experienced physical or verbal harassment, versus only 5% of the heterosexual and cisgender sample (Crehan et al. 2021). In Fiji, 84% of lesbians, bisexual, and transgender masculine and gender non-conforming people have experienced intimate partner violence (DIVA for Equality 2019). In a participatory study with 15 trans women in Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago focussing on the contexts of education, healthcare and police encounters, 14 out of 15 participants had experienced gender-based violence (Lanham et al. 2019). In the Caribbean region it has been estimated that violence against LGBT+ people costs 0.51–1.6% of the region’s GDP – or between USD 383 million and up to USD 1.2 billion (Crehan et al. 2021).

**There is little data available on violence against other marginalised communities but some data is available for the Pacific region.** In Fiji, rural women are more likely than urban women (69% versus 58%) to experience violence during their lifetime (FWCC 2013). According to the Samoan 2017 Family Safety Study, 90% of elderly men and women interviewed in Samoa suffered emotional or physical abuse (Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development 2018). Globally, it has been found that women living with disabilities are between two and four times more likely as those without disabilities to experience intimate-partner violence and that women and girls living with disabilities are also more likely to experience non-partner sexual violence (Dunkle et al. 2018). Several small-scale studies in Samoa have found that people living with disabilities are more likely to experience violence and less likely to report the violence or access healthcare for the violence (UNFPA et al. 2021). Almost half (59%) of the women living with disabilities interviewed in a 2013 study in the Solomon Islands had experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives (UNFPA 2013).

**Economic violence<sup>5</sup> negatively impacts women’s economic empowerment by impeding women’s control over economic assets.** In a UN Women (2020a) report of five CARICOM countries, the prevalence of economic violence as a form of intimate-partner violence ranged from 6% in Grenada to 22% of women in Guyana experiencing this in their lifetime. In the Pacific region, in the Marshall Islands, 27% of ever-partnered women reported that their partners either took their earnings or refused to give them money (ADB 2019) whilst in Fiji, 28% of ever-partnered women have partners who either take their savings or refuse to give them money.

**The market can be a particularly dangerous place for women in the Pacific region.** A study of fisherwomen in Fiji found that 59% of interviewees considered the market a safe place to sell their catch if they have a license; but women in focus groups reported that they were sometimes harassed and threatened while selling their catch (Thomas et al. 2021). A UN Women (2011) scoping study of the markets in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, found that 22% of female market vendor respondents experienced more than one incidence of sexual violence at work in the last 12 months.

**Across women working in deep-sea research and related activities in SIDS, LDC and LLDCs, 46% of women (48 of 105) have felt discriminated against at work.** Over 15% of women have been harassed in their work environment and during the early stages of their career (at job placements, internships and apprenticeships, and during their studies). When asked to provide the details of the harassment, women most commonly reported ‘sexual’, implying gender-based sexual harassment. 29% (30 of 105) have been the recipient of unwanted leers, sexual comments, noises or gestures at their workplace (ISA 2022a).

**Global evidence suggests that there are high rates of gender-based violence in fisheries.** For example, the practice of ‘sex-for-fish’ has mostly been documented in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and describes the sexual exploitation of women who process fish or need fish for food, by male fishers who choose which women they sell their fish catches to (Castañeda Camey et al. 2020). High numbers of cases of alcoholism and domestic violence have been reported in fisheries communities around the world, which may be partly due to the social relationships between fishers which often centres around alcohol and increasing stresses of uncertainty in the fishing industry (Coulthard et al. 2019).

### 2.3.4 Low access to finance

**Women are less likely to access finance than men.** However, no systematic country-level data is available to compare women’s digital inclusion in SIDS compared to other developing countries. An ADB survey found that women-owned firms in the Pacific region faced 2.5 times more rejections than men-owned firms (ADB 2019). In the Caribbean, two-thirds of women-owned/led firms report access to finance as a major or severe obstacle to business (Acevedo et al. 2022). Women are more likely than men to cite accessing credit, particularly collateral requirements as a major barrier – this is most noticeable in Guyana and Suriname, where women-owned/led firms are 14 and 10 percentage points more likely, respectively, to have this view (Acevedo et al. 2022). Barriers for women to accessing finance include limited ownership of private land as collateral, a lack of financial expertise and experience, high equity requirements, high interest rates, complex documentation requirements, fewer business networks, a lack of confidence, lower rates of mobile phone ownership, and poor digital literacy (Nagarajan 2021).

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<sup>5</sup> Economic violence involves making or attempting to make a person financially dependent by maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding access to money, and/or forbidding attendance at school or employment (UN Women n.d.). Acts of economic violence may include being prohibited from getting a job, working, negotiating, selling, gaining income, participating in activities that could earn income by an intimate-partner; taking earnings by force; or being denied money for household expenses even when the partner has money for other things such as alcohol and cigarettes (UN Women 2020a).

**Women often have to turn to alternative financing arrangements.** In the Caribbean, women turn to family or friends for loans, and many prefer informal financing mechanisms, such as the *sou sou* (an informal rotating savings club) in Trinidad and Saint Lucia (FAO 2022). In the Pacific, interest rates from informal money lenders can be extortionate: 40% to 50% in Papua New Guinea, 8% to 21% in Samoa, and 50% to 250% in Solomon Islands every 2 weeks, with high repercussions for default (IFC 2016b; Pacific Financial Inclusion Program 2020; UNESCAP 2020). Concerns have also been raised about the high levels of interest charged by microfinance providers (ADB 2018). South Pacific Business Development (SPBD), which operates across the Pacific, charges interest rates that range from 24% to 27% per annum in Samoa. Almost all SPBD's clients are women borrowing through a group lending system.

**A lack of access to finance is a barrier for women in the blue economy.** Women in traditional fishing communities undertaking fish vending and processing activities usually need frequent but small loans (UN Women 2020a). However, women in the fishing industry are less likely to be able to access finance than men, meaning they may have to resort to informal credit at exorbitant interest rates or even exploitative relationships with male fisherfolk (UN Women 2020a). A lack of access to finance also constrains women in the 'conservation tourism' sector, including in the Seychelles (Steyn Kotze et al. 2019).

**Women's financial inclusion can be improved via digital inclusion.** Digital technologies are playing an important role for many Pacific islanders (ADB 2018). The rapid uptake of mobile phones by Pacific women has facilitated the delivery of financial services to many women in urban and rural areas, allowing them to open bank accounts and savings accounts (ADB 2018). In the Caribbean, a Digital Financial Inclusion Programme has recently been launched by the European Union, Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) (UNCDF 2022).

### 2.3.5 Low access to digital technology

**The Pacific region has the lowest rate of mobile internet penetration in the world at 18%** (GSMA 2019). However, this has increased quickly over recent years; In Samoa, mobile internet penetration increased from 41% of the population in 2013 to 88% in 2018 (Government of Samoa 2020). In the Caribbean, mobile internet penetration is 63.7%, slightly below the global average of 67.1% (GSMA 2022). There is a high level of variation in AIS SIDS, from Seychelles with a higher mobile penetration rate than the global average at 79%, to Comoros which has one of the lowest rates in the world at 8% (World Bank DataBank 2022).

**Women are less likely to have access to mobile phones and internet than men, particularly in remote areas.** However, no systematic country-level data is available to compare women's digital inclusion in SIDS compared to other developing countries. In Haiti, 67% of men own a mobile phone versus 55% of women (USAID 2022). Across the Pacific region, the proportion of private homes with access to mobile phones is higher among male-headed households than female-headed households (UNFPA Pacific 2020). Multiple studies have found that mobile phone usage reflects existing patterns of inequality and social norms; In matrilineal East New Britain, Papua New Guinea, women market sellers showed higher levels of phone usage than men, while in the patrilineal Western Highlands Province, the opposite trend was found (Curry et al. 2016).

**Digital technology is an important enabler for women's economic empowerment in the blue economy.** As entrepreneurs, women report many benefits of digital technology for their businesses, including reaching new markets, accessing finance, reducing travel costs, using calculators, and ordering supplies (GSMA 2014). Women in Tonga have used Facebook to reach new markets, selling

handicrafts to women in the diaspora (FAO and SPC 2019). Increased use of mobile phones and better boats have increased the number of women who go night-fishing with their husbands in Kosrae and Yap, Federated States of Micronesia, as it is now considered safer (Pacific Community 2019). No evidence was found on how this could promote women's economic empowerment for marginalised groups specifically, but digital technologies can be important for accessibility for women living with disabilities in particular.

### 2.3.7 Additional barriers for more marginalised women

#### LBT+ Women

**Across all three regions of SIDS, criminalisation of same-sex sexual conduct is common.** For example, in the Caribbean, many countries criminalise same-sex sexual activities with punishments ranging from 2 years to life imprisonment, no country permits same-sex civil unions/marriage and adoption by same-sex couples, and only Cuba allows LGBT people to serve openly in the military and the legal change of gender identity (Idris 2021). Despite a culture of 'third gender' in many Pacific SIDS, e.g. Samoa, none have laws on gender recognition (Idris 2021). A lack of legal gender recognition also increases the risk of discrimination in the workplace (UCTRANS and OutRight Action International 2022).

**Even while these discriminatory laws are rarely enforced, there is an impact on economic empowerment.** Discriminatory laws serve to legitimise discrimination and hostility towards LGBT+ people, and prevent LGBT+ people from reporting violence. In the Caribbean, a study by Crehan et al. (2021) found that prevalent attitudinal and institutional barriers within families, schools and workplaces limited the opportunities for LGBT+ people to access formal-sector work, while also diminishing their workplace productivity. In the study, only 55% of the LGB sample were in full- or part-time employment, whilst this was only 45% of the transgender sample (Crehan et al. 2021). The study found that LGBT+ exclusion in the English-speaking Caribbean costs between USD 1.5 billion and USD 4.2 billion per year – between 2.1 and up to 5.7% of its collective GDP (Crehan et al. 2021).

**LBT women may be discriminated against in the employment market.** Interviews in the Caribbean found anecdotal evidence of LBTIQ women being rejected for jobs, which they feel is based on judgement of their gender identity (Crawford 2019). For example, 'butch' lesbians<sup>6</sup> may be excluded from jobs traditionally held by cisgender heterosexual women because they may not appear feminine enough. Once in employment, LBTIQ employees may have to deal with feelings of unworthiness in the workplace, homophobic slurs or harassment, and invasion of privacy (Crawford 2019). A study on trans people's experiences in the Caribbean also found that they often faced discrimination at work and were forced to leave when they were open with their gender identity and transitions (UCTRANS and OutRight Action International 2022).

#### Women living with disabilities

**Women living with disabilities are less likely to be employed and more likely to be living in poverty.** In Fiji, women living with disabilities have a labour-force participation rate around half that of men living with disabilities (19.8% versus 39.8%) (Pacific Women 2021b). In Tuvalu, more than 20% of people living with disabilities live in hardship and women living with disabilities are twice as likely to live in hardship compared with men living with disabilities (Pacific Women 2021b). In Solomon Islands, girls living with disabilities attend school at half the rate of girls without disabilities (Pacific Women 2021b).

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<sup>6</sup> Stonewall (2022) defines 'butch' as a term used in LBT culture to describe someone who expresses themselves in a typically masculine way.

**Women living with disabilities face additional barriers to accessing jobs.** There are often perceptions that women living with disabilities are less capable of working or fulfilling their culturally ascribed roles as mothers, wives, and unpaid community workers (ILO 2014). In Solomon Islands, negative social attitudes and stigmatisation toward disability include the notion that disability is a form of punishment or curse (Gartrell et al. 2016). A lack of investment in inclusive and accessible education remains a barrier to women and girls living with disabilities (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2020). Pacific regional data suggests that women living with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed than men living with disabilities, and other women (CARE 2020).

**Climate change and related disasters are having a disproportionate effect on people living with disabilities.** People living with disabilities from Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu have reported that heatwaves are creating further barriers to accessing work, including in formal employment, fishing, and farming, and are negatively impacting on their economic productivity and incomes (Pacific Disability Forum 2022). In Kiribati, people living with disabilities have reported the heat is unbearable at times and makes it difficult for people to walk, particularly for people with a physical disability (Pacific Disability Forum 2022). Participants from Solomon Islands have highlighted that persons living with disabilities face additional barriers to accessing safe drinking water due to flooding, increasing their dependency on family and community members (Pacific Disability Forum 2022). Women living with disabilities in Kiribati and Tuvalu have noted the negative impacts on menstrual hygiene of reduced access to clean water (Pacific Disability Forum 2022). In the Caribbean, websites which give alerts and information on climate-related disasters and response are often not in line with accessibility standards, meaning people living with disabilities are less likely to be able to access crucial information (World Bank and GFDRR 2022).

### **Migrant women**

**There are many migrant workers employed in the blue economy in SIDS.** In the Pacific region, the largest numbers of migrant workers are employed in Palau and Papua New Guinea, with the majority migrating from Asian countries such as the Philippines (ILO 2017). In 2014, 4,330 foreign workers accounted for 41.7% of total employment in Palau (ILO 2017). In the Cook Islands, migrant workers are concentrated mainly in the restaurant and accommodation sector and make up around 16% of the workforce. Across the Pacific region, industries most reliant on migrant workers are construction and infrastructure; agriculture, forestry and fishing; and mining (ILO 2017). In Seychelles, migrant workers from China, Kenya, Madagascar and various countries in South Asia make up 20% of the working population and are primarily employed in fishing and construction, with workers facing exploitative conditions in fish-processing plants (US Department of State 2016). In Maldives, there has been a trend of hiring cheap migrant labour in the fisheries and agriculture sectors, slowly replacing local women (FAO 2012).

**Migrant women face additional risks.** Migrant workers are not always legally protected in the same way as citizens. Many SIDS have not ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families – in the Pacific region, only Fiji and Timor-Leste have ratified; Belize, Guyana, Jamaica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in the Caribbean region; and Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Seychelles in AIS region (OHCHR 2022). Migrant women are more at risk to gender-based violence due to the intersecting forms of discrimination they face, but also, for example, due to often being unable to gain decent work and so needing to accept risky economic opportunities (UN Women 2021).

### 3. What evidence is there on how to achieve economic empowerment for more marginalised women, especially those working in blue economy sectors in SIDS?

**There is very little evidence in terms of ‘what works’ to achieve economic empowerment**, with no examples of projects or interventions that have been evaluated for their effectiveness. Instead, we outline below some emerging practice on ‘what is being done’ to achieve economic empowerment in blue economy sectors in SIDS, especially for more marginalised women, which could help inform the direction for further investment, research and programming.

**There is more evidence available on promoting women’s economic empowerment outside of the blue economy**, which is not included here. For example, the DFAT-funded *Pacific Women* programme that ran from 2012-2021 and included a focus on economic empowerment, does not mention any economic empowerment initiatives in blue economy sectors in their final report (Pacific Women 2021). Instead, economic empowerment initiatives included a focus on women working, for example, in agriculture or crafts.

Below we outline a series of case studies of economic empowerment interventions, categorised by blue economy sector and then by type of intervention. Some of the key entry points identified include:

- Conduct policy reviews, and give support to develop and implement **gender responsive policy, strategy and legal frameworks** for blue economy sectors.
- **Conduct gender analysis and research**, for example in fisheries, tourism, or mining sectors as well as within value chains to help link more women producers into sectors and value chains.
- **Develop capacity** for implementing gender analysis and mainstreaming gender.
- Develop and trial **business and conservation ideas** that link women to larger-scale economic benefits of blue economy conservation such as carbon markets.
- Focus specific support to include **women with disabilities and LBT+ women** in blue economy sectors.
- Create **peer learning platforms for women playing leadership roles** in blue economy sectors and provide mentoring, capacity building and thought leadership.
- Improve women’s access to, and use of, **digital technology and online platforms** to expand their markets and businesses.
- Increase the **amount of finance available to women-owned SMEs** and help women grow and expand their businesses in the blue economy.
- Create **climate risk insurance mechanisms** to and ensure women such as fish vendors are included.
- Work with and support **organisations representing women and marginalised groups** (e.g. organisations for people with disabilities and LGBTQI+ organisations) to understand the barriers they face to economic empowerment and to increase their voice and participation in decision-making and leadership in developing economic empowerment programmes and approaches.

## Examples of economic empowerment interventions by sector

### 3.1 Women's economic empowerment in the fisheries sector

*Example 1: Promoting women in the fisheries sector in the Caribbean*

In 2016, the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies in the Caribbean (CERMES) established a Gender in Fisheries Team (GIFT), with a global network, to promote gender equality in responsible fisheries and sustainable development. GIFT applies an ecosystem approach to fisheries, focusing on climate, disasters, social protection, poverty, food security and decent work, among other issues included in the Voluntary Guidelines on Small Scale Fisheries.

GIFT works with members of the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO) and provides a range of support services including: research and scoping of gender in Caribbean fisheries; capacity development and implementation of gender analyses, policy development and mainstreaming; project proposals for resource mobilisation; implementation support for fisheries projects; and communication to promote gender mainstreaming and gender equality in the fisheries sector. This initiative continues with renewed funding, through new projects, such as the Implementing Gender Aspects within the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines and the Protocol to the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP) for Securing SSF (The University of the West Indies, 2021b).

Source: FAO 2022

*Example 2: Targeting women in the salting value chain in Cabo Verde*

FAO and the Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI), together with national institutions and associations, are implementing a project in Cabo Verde under the subprogram *Empowering Women in Food Systems and Strengthening the Local Capacities and Resilience of SIDS in the Agri-food Sector*. The project focuses on two levels: At the community level, the project targets women engaged in the salted grouper value chain in Sao Vicente Island. Salting is the only form of artisanal fish processing on the island, carried out traditionally by women and sold in the municipal market, mostly in unhygienic conditions and, often, with significant loss of value due to women's inability to obtain sufficient salt for proper preservation of the fish.

To address these issues, the project is conducting a participatory gender analysis of the value chain to identify critical areas for improvement and to explore options for minimising post-harvest losses and providing a good quality product to consumers and for improving the living conditions of women sellers. The project also provides technical support and training to strengthen value chain organisations in assessing demand and accessing markets. At the national level, the project supports efforts to mainstream gender in the fishery sector, by carrying out a policy review and assisting the government in designing and implementing relevant national fishery policies, strategies and legal frameworks. The ultimate goal is for the Ministry of the Sea to elaborate and endorse the country's first Fishery Sector Gender Equality Strategy.

Source: FAO 2022



### 3.2 Women's economic empowerment in the tourism sector

*Example 3: Gender-responsive carbon-neutral tourism in Palau*

Palau is working to be the world's first carbon neutral destination.

The FAO Sustainable Tourism Value Chain program focuses on gender equality, women's socioeconomic empowerment, biodiversity conservation and the protection of natural and cultural heritage. Working with local governments, male and female producers, tourism stakeholders and consumers, it aims to improve the livelihoods and resilience of communities and ecosystems. The program is implemented by Sustainable Travel International, Slow Food, and the Palau Bureau of Tourism.

It focuses on two components: (a) gender-sensitive tourism value chain analysis and carbon calculation, examining tourism flows and dynamics, to enable the assessment of a tourists' carbon footprint, and exploring food system vulnerabilities as they relate to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; and (b) Km0 Food initiative, increasing diversification and productivity, and enhancing producer groups' access to the tourism supply chain, while promoting local food culture and traditions.

Focusing on women producers and their role in protecting Palau's heritage, the project developed an initial database of heritage foods and processing practices that will be enriched with a deeper mapping exercise and an inventory of agro-biodiversity and traditional agricultural practices linked to food and identity. At least two products with marketing potential were identified for promotion. The project also conducted a number of needs assessment surveys to identify areas of improvement in channelling local products to the tourism value chain. The results were shared in producer group training workshops in April 2021. The next steps of this innovative program will involve gender-sensitive capacity development activities for local producers and gender-sensitive post-COVID-19 tourism marketing research, targeting key visitor markets in order to link their motivations for travel to destinations that are inclusive, sustainable and eco-friendly. This program is generating evidence around good practices in building resilience for economic, social and environmental sustainability, that have a high potential of adaptation and/or replication in other SIDS.

Source: FAO 2022

### 3.3 Women's economic empowerment in the nature conservation and ecosystem sector

*Example 4: Mangoro Market Meri supporting sustainable mangrove management in Papua New Guinea*

Mangroves are the breeding and feeding grounds for fish and shellfish that many communities in Papua New Guinea rely upon. Mangroves also trap sediment from land runoff, so that coral reefs and seagrass are not smothered by silt, and they buffer coastal communities against the impact of king tides and storm surges caused by climate change.

The idea for *Mangoro Market Meri* ('Mangrove Market Women') was developed during the first ever 'Nature's Leading Women' event in November 2017 in Australia. The Papua New Guinea delegation developed the idea for *Mangoro Market Meri* which has now been turned into a project led by The Nature Conservancy and funded by the Australian government amongst other donors.

The project is helping women working with mangroves to develop and trial their business and conservation ideas, and then link them to larger-scale economic benefits for conservation. The focus is on supporting women to identify their needs and then create opportunities for them to access leadership, financial literacy and business and conservation management to generate much-needed

income and employment. Using innovative approaches, the women are building local markets for sustainably harvested mangrove products like mud crabs and clams.

To create long-term solutions for mangroves and women in Papua New Guinea, the project is exploring “volun-tourism” initiatives and is preparing to engage in ‘blue carbon’ in the long term. The Nature Conservancy also supports efforts at the provincial and national level to develop sustainable mangrove policies, which *Mangoro Market Meri* can both inform and reinforce. Women’s leadership is expanding to other provinces in Papua New Guinea with the goal of creating a network for sharing and learning between women across the country.

Women living with disabilities have also been included in this intervention. The Nature Conservancy assisted in facilitating a planning meeting with the Manus Disabled People’s Association to meaningfully engage the disabled community in activities in Manus Province of Papua New Guinea. The Nature Conservancy is work with this group to better understand women with disabilities’ needs and is supporting the organisation to get formally registered.

Source: Konia et al. (2019) and The Nature Conservancy (2020)

*Example 5: CTI-CFF Women Leaders’ Forum to highlight the role of women leaders in marine biodiversity*

In 2014, the six countries of the Coral Triangle Region — Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste — launched an innovative platform to highlight the role of women leaders in protecting and sustaining the world’s epicenter of marine biodiversity. Dubbed the “CTI-CFF Women Leaders’ Forum” the platform functions as a peer-learning network for women who are playing key leadership roles and leading programs and projects that promote marine and coastal resource management. It is also a platform to build the capacity of women from the Coral Triangle so that they can take a more active role in preserving and sustaining the region’s unique marine and coastal resources.

Examples of activities to date:

- ADB has supported small \$3,000 grants for use by the grassroots women leaders within marine biodiversity protection from the Coral Triangle countries for public awareness activities.
- The Inter-generational Leadership Learning Program of 2017-2018 paired mentors with mentees from each Coral Triangle country, providing the pairs with training on leadership, conservation and project management to support their conservation projects.
- Three-day in-country trainings in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea were organised, building on the capacity of women currently holding leadership roles in marine resource management. The training included strategic leadership development, gender advocacy and equity at work, and communication and networking.

Source: ADB (2014a), Coral Training Centre (2019) and CTI (2022)

### 3.4 Women's economic empowerment in the renewable energy sector

*Example 6: The Women in Renewable Energy (WIRE) Network to promote women's empowerment in renewable energy in the Caribbean region*

The Women in Renewable Energy (WIRE) Network is a professional development group for women working in energy in island nations. WIRE currently operates in the Caribbean with plans to expand across geographies while maintaining an Islands-only network. Since 2016, more than 570 individuals from more than 60 countries have joined the network. Over 80 women have participated in the flagship Mentorship Program, and alumni continue to have an impact beyond the network on the ground in their localities.

The WIRE Network takes a multi-faceted approach to opening opportunities and promoting career development among its members:

- **Mentorship:** Through a two-year reciprocal program, mentors and mentees meet one-on-one and as a cohort, with access to resources to support their learning and career advancement.
- **Commitments to action:** Mentorship participants are encouraged to fulfil a Commitment to Action — a new, specific, and measurable project that addresses a challenge within the nexus of gender and energy in their own communities. Past commitments have helped distribute LED light bulbs to female-headed households, promoted engineering at all-girls schools, and elevated women's voices, stories, and creativity through educational podcasts.
- **Capacity building and thought leadership:** Members receive a wide variety of technical training materials and access to webinars and in-person training sessions throughout the year, while the WIRE Network supports the coordination of all-women panels at regional and international energy conferences.
- **Strategic partnerships:** The WIRE Network partners with regional and international organisations, such as Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) and the Caribbean Electric Utility Services Corporation (CARILEC) to jointly progress and advocate for gender equality, ensure active women's participation in the renewable energy space, and work toward the achievement of UN's Sustainable Development Goal 7 in line with the Paris Agreement.
- **Raising awareness:** The WIRE Network also works to advance women's leadership by raising awareness around relevant issues and highlighting outstanding women leaders, through storytelling opportunities and at industry conferences hosted around the world.

Source: RMI (2022)

### 3.5 Women's economic empowerment in the deep-sea research

*Example 7: The International Seabed Authority's commitment to promoting women empowerment and leadership in marine scientific research*

The International Seabed Authority (ISA) launched a Voluntary Commitment (#OceanAction15467) at the UN Ocean Conference in June 2017: *Promoting women empowerment and leadership in marine scientific research*. ISA has a vision of women scientists from developing States (particularly from the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS) playing a central role in marine scientific research and in strengthening the scientific and technological capabilities of their country.

Since 2017, this commitment has been enacted in four thematic areas:

- **Informing policy:** ISA aims to raise awareness amongst decision-makers about the importance of women's empowerment and leadership in the context of the implementation of UNCLOS, and in

particular in relation to deep-sea research. ISA aims to influence decision-making processes towards the adoption and implementation of proactive and positive measures that promote gender equality and empower women in the field of deep-sea scientific research.

- **Building and developing capacities:** ISA facilitates capacity-building and technology transfer mechanisms for its members, especially developing States. Several capacity-building and technology transfer mechanisms have been carried out by ISA, benefiting 423 individuals, including 188 women, as of April 2021. In February 2020, ISA organised the first-ever workshop on capacity development resources and needs assessment. The workshop resulted in the adoption of an outcomes document, including recommendations to advance the commitment of empowering women scientists, and ensure leadership roles for women scientists from developing States, as part of ISA’s mandate.
- **Sustainability and strategic partnerships:** Together with UN-OHRLLS and other partners, ISA is implementing the “*Women in Deep-Sea Research*” project to address the critical challenges faced by women scientists from developing States, particularly from SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs, in accessing opportunities for careers and leadership roles in deep-sea research as a way to contribute to strengthening the resource base of such countries in highly technical areas of knowledge. The WIDSR project activities focus on improving data availability on gender-specific barriers and solutions in deep-sea science and technology, policy support and awareness from leaders and decision-makers. It aims to foster capacity-building initiatives, strategic alliances and partnerships around establishing communities of practice, twinning of institutions, mentorship and leadership programmes, and outreach and awareness activities.
- **Communications and outreach:** ISA showcases women’s accomplishments in the field of deep-sea research and highlights the opportunities available for women in professions related to ocean science.

Source: ISA (2022b)

## Economic empowerment interventions by type of intervention

### 3.6 Improving women’s access to digital technology

*Example 6: A digital platform to increase market access for women in St. Lucia*

Helen’s Daughters in Saint Lucia is leveraging technological tools to support women farmers, including those selling to the tourist industry, supporting women both individually and in groups. The NGO supports rural women in the application of adaptive agricultural technologies, builds their capacities and improves their market access. The NGO launched an online platform at the end of 2019, which allows hotel owners and others to order fresh produce produced by the rural women the NGO supports.

Helen’s Daughters is also providing women with soil sensors that transmit data to an online dashboard which monitors their plots and allows the organisation to provide individualised agronomic recommendations translated into Creole. This advice is delivered through a dial-in interactive voice response (IVR) system.

Source: FAO (2022)

### 3.7 Access to finance for women entrepreneurs in blue economy sectors

In non-blue economy sectors, there are some examples of women in SIDS having sufficient access to finance and services to enable them to conduct highly profitable activities and assume positions of power, even providing employment and loans to male partners and labourers in sectors outside of the blue economy. For example, some women in Samoa manage, and even own, cocoa farms and women in Palau often employ male migrant workers to assist with their taro production in peak labour seasons (FAO 2022).

*Example 7: Targeted financial schemes for women-owned businesses in Maldives*

In Maldives, the Ministry of Economic Development has prioritised the development of women-owned SMEs by working with the Maldives Monetary Authority to increase the collection of sex-disaggregated data on bank account owners and persons receiving loans to better understand challenges in accessing financial services. In response, the Ministry has developed a number of financial schemes to address these constraints for women and youth and to create employment opportunities. The Ministry's commitments to increasing the number of women-owned SMEs and the number of women receiving trainings on business start-ups have been integrated into their internal monitoring frameworks with specific targets such as a 20% increase in the number of women- and youth-owned businesses.

Source: UN Women (2020c)

### 3.8 Gender-smart climate finance

Over the last few years, gender lens investing has been attracting the attention of multilateral development organisations, international development actors, and impact and mainstream investors alike. Gender lens investing is the deliberate incorporation of gender factors into investment analysis and decisions in order to improve social and business outcomes. By integrating a gender lens into climate finance, funds can be channelled towards women on the ground who are change agents in climate resilience efforts in blue economy sectors (Value for Women 2020).

*Example 8: Gender-responsive carbon credits*

A global women-led organisation with expertise in both climate change and gender, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN), created the W+ Standard in 2015 to provide governments, NGOs, and companies a way to measure and finance women's empowerment outcomes within projects and supply chains. The W+ Standard can be applied to energy, agriculture, and forestry projects, as well as projects related to the blue economy such as mangroves projects, that produce improved income, health, food security, leadership, time-saving, and education benefits for women and their families. It is a rigorous results-driven framework that quantifies and monetises the social capital created by women and rewards their contributions to climate resilience, sustainable environments, and communities through a donation provided to local women's organisations. Organisations and businesses that obtain satisfactory results generate W+ units and receive W+ certificates and labels that inform clients and customers of their support for women's empowerment. The W+ makes it possible for companies, funders, and individuals to obtain carbon emissions offsets that provide benefits to women, through purchases of Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) bundled with W+ units in a single package. This has not yet been trialled in a SIDS.

Source: Value for Women (2020)

### 3.9 Climate risk insurance

Climate risk insurance represents an important opportunity to mitigate ocean risk and build resilience. Social equity considerations, however, are not inherently considered in the design of such finance measures and need to be included to protect and support vulnerable groups, including those operating as part of the informal sector, many of whom are women (Wabnitz et al. 2021). While risk insurance currently only plays a minor role in disaster risk response and climate adaptation in most developing countries, it can provide support to vulnerable communities, especially if explicitly designed as pro-poor (including the use of participatory, inclusive, and transparent processes) to ensure accessibility, affordability, and value to target groups (Wabnitz et al. 2021).

*Example 9: Inclusive climate risk insurance in the Caribbean*

Recent hurricanes and their devastating effects demonstrate the need for a climate risk insurance product to ensure that fishing communities can quickly rally after such events. To meet this need, the Caribbean Ocean and Aquaculture Sustainability Facility (COAST) initiative was developed by the World Bank, the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF SPC), the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the U.S. State Department and Caribbean governments. COAST is an innovative climate risk insurance mechanism to promote food security, livelihoods of fisherfolk, fisheries resilience, sustainable management of coastal infrastructure, and disaster risk reduction in the Caribbean.

Features:

- First-ever climate risk parametric insurance developed for the fisheries sector—spearheaded by the Caribbean. Vulnerable fishing communities are getting access to insurance developed specifically for their needs.
- Promotion of resilience in the fisheries sector. COAST will foster a stronger blue economy in the region by reducing the harm of climate change to fisheries food security and by incentivising policy reforms for climate-smart fisheries practices and coastal resilience.
- First-time insurance coverage for “bad weather” events, including tropical cyclones. COAST innovates in also covering potential losses that fisherfolk suffer due to high waves and heavy rainfall.
- Rapid pay-outs. CCRIF SPC will channel pay-out funds to the Ministry of Finance of participating countries within 14 days of the covered event, followed by a quick transfer to fisherfolk and other beneficiaries.
- First-time tracking of pay-outs down to the level of individual beneficiaries. A special financial management and auditing system will make this possible.
- Inclusiveness and participation of women. COAST is intended to cover all participants in the fisheries sector, including crew members, captains, and boat owners, but also fish vendors and processors, most of whom are women. The list of beneficiaries is predefined by the governments in a COAST Operational Manual.

In the first year of the program, COAST is advancing the formalisation of the fisheries sector by registering all stakeholders in the fisheries value chain, including the women who often go uncounted and unrecognised. The next step will be to promote better data management and reporting to improve ability to locate fisherfolk and fisheries assets.

Source: World Bank 2019

### 3.10 Working with organisations representing women and marginalised groups

*Example 12: Disability inclusion within the Pacific Women lead programme*

Over nearly 10 years, the DFAT-funded *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* ('Pacific Women') connected more than 180 gender equality initiatives supported by Australia and implemented by over 190 partners across 14 Pacific Island countries. Its emphasis was on partnerships and locally-driven development. Its focus areas were leadership and decision-making, economic empowerment, ending violence against women, and enhancing agency.

Over the course of the program, Pacific Women took a twin-track approach to disability inclusion, mainstreaming disability inclusion across country and regional planning, program implementation, and reporting, monitoring and evaluation processes as well as undertaking some targeted assistance for disability inclusion, including a disability survey in Tuvalu, support to the development of a toolkit on ending violence against women with disability, and working with partners to develop and review disability inclusion guidance and minimum standards.

Source: Pacific Women (2021b)

## 4. What works to prevent and respond to violence experienced by women working in blue economy sectors in SIDS?

Below four case studies present different types of initiatives across the three SIDS regions which are preventing and responding to violence experienced by women working in blue economy sectors.

These case studies fall into three broad categories:

- Funding for **women’s organisations and LBTIQ+ organisations advocating for changes in legal and policy frameworks** and working to reduce risks of violence against women and provide responses.
- **Working with the private sector**, including blue economy companies, to help them develop policies and approaches to support employees facing violence and harassment at home or in the workplace.
- Supporting the development and implementation of **legal frameworks on gender-based violence, and sexual harassment** - including the ratification of ILO Convention 190.

Although there is only a small amount of evidence on what works to prevent and respond to violence experienced by women working in blue economy sectors in SIDS, it can be concluded there are consistencies with what works in different contexts. For example, it is important to:

- Address factors at the **individual, interpersonal, community, institutional and societal levels** that put women working in blue economy sectors in SIDS at risk of violence and harassment. For example, social norms, legal protection and workplace policies.
- Focus on **both gender-based violence prevention and response**, ensuring in particular that any prevention work also includes capacity and resource for response, as incidents may be brought to the surface.

### 4.1 Case study 1: Feminist funding for LBTIQ+ organisations in the Caribbean

**In terms of preventing violence against LBTIQ+ women specifically, there is little evidence on what works in the blue economy in SIDS.** Ahlenback (2022) provides an in-depth evidence review of what works to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people across the globe. She finds that one promising programme in a SIDS region is the Women’s Voice and Leadership – Caribbean regional programme (2019-2024) (Ahlenback 2022).

**The Women’s Voice and Leadership (WVL) – Caribbean regional programme is a regional arm of a global programme funded by the Government of Canada.** In the Caribbean, it is implemented by the Equality Fund and the Astraea Lesbian Fund for Justice. The programme gives multi-year, responsive funding which aims to respond to organisations’ own priorities and agendas, as well as capacity building and alliance building support (Equality Fund 2022). It is currently funding 26 feminist organisations across 9 Caribbean SIDS, including those which focus on LBTIQ persons and preventing violence, such as CariFLAGS in Jamaica, Sweet Water Foundation in Grenada, and Red Thread in Guyana (Equality Fund 2022). One partner, Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia has had recent success in the enactment of a new domestic violence bill in Saint Lucia, which is gender-neutral, includes financial,



physical and emotional abuse, and has been supported by the LGBTQI+ community who are also protected under the new bill (Gaillard 2022).

The programme is guided by an Advisory Group which includes regional leaders with expertise spanning across women's rights and LGBTQI+ rights. It is unclear how the particular risks of violence in the blue economy are being addressed by the programme. An evaluation of the global program, which encompasses an additional two regional projects and 30 bilateral projects around the world, found that WVL was highly relevant to local WRO's needs, with evidence of early positive results (Global Affairs Canada 2022).

#### 4.2 Case study 2: IFC's work on gender-based violence with the private sector in Solomon Islands

**SolTuna is the only tuna processing facility in the Solomon Islands and employs over 1,800 workers, 64% of whom are women.** In 2015, an IFC survey found that SolTuna experiences extremely high absenteeism rates among production staff, with staff absent 32% of the time on average (IFC 2016). A significant share of workers indicated they were absent (10%) or resigned (15%) due to family problems such as domestic violence (IFC 2016).

Laws against domestic violence and sexual assault were passed only in the Solomon Islands in 2015 and 2016 respectively, so there was a lack of services available in the community (ILO 2016). SolTuna decided to support employees facing domestic violence by:

- Actively supporting the development of a safe house in the town.
- Sending a number of staff to be trained as peer counsellors in order to support their colleagues, family members, and neighbours facing violence.
- In cases where they are requested to do so by staff, SolTuna management intervenes to help, which may include bringing in the police.

At the time, IFC noted that SolTuna had not yet established a structured approach and policy for how it addresses domestic violence among its staff and that implementing a policy and associated training could bring various benefits to the company (ILO 2016). Since then, IFC has brought in the Waka Mere Commitment, partnering with various companies in the Solomon Islands on domestic violence policies, including SolTuna.

**The Waka Mere ("She Works") Commitment to Action was a two-year initiative aiming to promote gender equality in the private sector in Solomon Islands.** It was launched in July 2017 and was led by the IFC in collaboration with the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI). It included 15 of the largest companies in Solomon Islands, covering nearly 6,000 employees combined. Several of the participating companies operate in the blue economy, including National Fisheries Development, Solomon Islands Port Authority, Solomon Islands Water Authority, and SolTuna (IFC 2018). Each company committed to one or more of the following three areas:

1. Promote women in leadership
2. Build respectful and supportive workplaces
3. Increase opportunities for women in jobs traditionally held by men.

**Under area (2), 11 companies have completed training and began implementing a Policy for Addressing Domestic Violence at the Workplace** to better support employees affected by domestic violence (IFC 2018). The policy can include measures such as special leave to attend medical, counselling, and legal appointments or move to safe accommodation; Referral to available support

services; and a policy to manage employees who are perpetrators through referrals to appropriate services and authorities (IFC 2018). Early signs are showing that the Waka Mere project is effective in addressing violence, with an IFC survey showing much lower levels of acceptance of violence amongst Waka Mere employees than previous studies (IFC 2019).

In order to get buy-in from the private sector, IFC has done a significant amount of work to show the ‘business case’ for companies for addressing gender-based violence. For example, in the Pacific SIDS region they’ve published [The Impact of Domestic and Sexual Violence on the Workplace in Solomon Islands](#) and [The Business Case for Workplace Responses to Domestic and Sexual Violence in Fiji](#).

### 4.3 Case study 3: Legal reform on gender-based violence in São Tomé and Príncipe

**Gender-based violence was brought to the forefront of public debate in São Tomé and Príncipe in the early 2000s** due to high rates of gender-based violence, combined with the need to comply with the terms of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the creation of new public institutions with mandates on domestic violence and gender-equality brought. The debate gained momentum in 2007, when the story of a woman that had her arm amputated by her husband shocked the public (World Bank 2022a).

Dr. Maria das Neves, the first woman Prime Minister of São Tomé and Príncipe (2002–04), and the only woman in the 55-member Parliament, was moved by the survivor’s story and spearheaded legal reform on gender-based violence. CSOs and women’s groups participated in the drafting process of the domestic and violence laws (Laws No. 11/2008 and No. 12/2008). Dr. das Neves advocated her all-male colleagues to vote in favour, which 48 of the 55 did in 2008. In 2012, a new Penal Code was enacted which included a provision protecting women from sexual harassment in the workplace (World Bank 2022).

**In order to support successful implementation of the law, between 2012 and 2021 five national awareness-raising campaigns on gender equality were implemented.** During one such campaign, volunteers went door-to-door handing out brochures explaining the new legislation. Between 2014 and 2021, the number of domestic violence cases reported to the national police quadrupled from 286 to 1285. This does not necessarily imply that domestic violence is increasing, but instead that the incidents are being reported more due to the population’s increased awareness of the resources available and the legal consequences (World Bank 2022a).

**The World Bank (2022a) identifies three main factors that enabled the domestic violence legislation to be successfully enacted and implemented** in São Tomé and Príncipe:

- A strong women’s movement, dating back to the 1960s, mobilised and sensitised society and policymakers alike. The active participation of women in public life since before the country’s independence from Portugal was essential to put women’s rights front and centre.
- Second, a strategic collaboration between the government, civil society organisations (CSOs) and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), and the international community provided both technical and financial support for reform efforts. Women’s representation within the government and Parliament ensured the necessary support and mobilisation to bring gender equality and women’s rights to the top of the reform agenda.
- Finally, grassroots awareness-raising campaigns encouraged the population to understand their rights under the law and call for their effective implementation. A strong multi-stakeholder partnership, comprising civil society, nongovernmental organisations, and the

international community, proved essential to strategically mobilise advocacy efforts, not only to enact new legislation but to push for its effective implementation.

Although the legislation is not specific to the blue economy, as São Tomé and Príncipe transitions towards a blue and green economy, comprehensive national legislation on gender-based violence will help to protect women workers.

#### 4.4 Case study 4: Advocacy by a CSO in Fiji to ratify ILO Convention 190

**In Fiji, after a 2016 study found that 1 in 5 women had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace, the Fiji Women’s Rights Movement initiated the ‘Not OK: Stop Sexual Harassment’ campaign.** Their campaign included publishing and disseminating infographic posters and resources on stopping sexual harassment (Centre for Women’s Global Leadership 2021). This formed part of a successful lobby of the Fijian government to ratify ILO Convention 190—an international treaty on violence and harassment at work. Fiji was one of the first 10 countries in the world to ratify ILO Convention 190, and at the time of writing is still the only Pacific SIDS to have ratified (ILO 2022). In the Caribbean region, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas and Barbados all ratified in 2022. In the AIS region, at the time of writing only Mauritius has ratified (ILO 2022).

**ILO Convention 190 is not specific to the blue economy, but instead it applies to all sectors,** whether private or public, both in the formal and informal economy, and whether in urban or rural areas. The Convention protects people from violence and harassment in the world of work, including in the workplace and when commuting to and from work (ILO 2021a). It also acknowledges that gender-based violence and harassment disproportionately affects women and girls and that a gender-responsive approach, which includes tackling gender-based power relations, is essential to end violence and harassment in the world of work (ILO 2021a).

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## Annex 1: List of key experts and organisations

The below list presents key experts on gender and the blue economy which were found during the rapid review:

- Dr. Colette Wabnitz, Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions
- Evanthie Michalena, Sustainability Research Centre, University of the Sunshine Coast
- Professor Joleen Steyn Kotze, Human Sciences Research Council
- Professor Narnia Bohler, Human Sciences Research Council
- Sarah Harper, Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries, The University of British Columbia

The below list presents organisations with experience related to gender, social inclusion and the blue economy which were found during the rapid review:

- Gender in Fisheries Team (GIFT) Caribbean
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
- The United Caribbean Trans Network (UCTRANS)
- Pacific region women’s rights organisations and organisations representing socially excluded groups (partners of the Pacific Women programme):
  - Cook Islands:
    - Punanga Tauturu Inc.
  - Fiji
    - Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA) for Equality, Fiji
    - Empower Pacific
    - FemLINKPACIFIC
    - Fiji Muslim Women’s League
    - Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre
    - Fiji Women’s Rights Movement
    - House of Sarah
    - Medical Services Pacific
    - Pacific Conference of Churches
    - Ra Naari Parishad
    - South Pacific Academy of Beauty and Therapy
    - Women in Fisheries Network-Fiji
  - Kiribati
    - Kiribati Family Health Association
  - Papua New Guinea
    - Bougainville Women’s Federation
    - Community Development Workers Association Inc.
    - Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee, Institute of National Affairs
    - Family for Change
    - Femili PNG
    - Ginigoada Bisnis Development Foundation
    - Highlands Women Human Rights Defenders Network
    - Kafe Urban Settlers Association
    - Kup Women for Peace
    - Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation
  - Republic of the Marshall Islands
    - Women United Together Marshall Islands
  - Solomon Islands

- Christian Care Centre
  - Live and Learn
  - Oxfam Solomon Islands
  - Solomon Islands National Council of Women
  - Solomon Islands Women in Business Association
  - Vois Blong Mere Solomon
  - World Vision Solomon Islands
- Tonga
  - Tonga National Centre for Women and Children
  - Women and Children’s Crisis Centre Tonga
- Vanuatu
  - Vanuatu Women’s Centre
  - Wan Smolbag Theatre
- Caribbean region women’s rights organisations and organisations representing socially excluded groups (partners of the Women’s Voice & Leadership - Caribbean programme):
  - Antigua and Barbuda
    - Caribbean Institute of Women in Leadership
    - Integrated Health Outreach
    - Intersect
  - Belize
    - Promoting Empowerment Through Awareness for Lesbian and Bisexual Women (PETAL)
    - Productive Organization for Women in Action
    - Toledo Maya Women’s Council
    - Our Circle
  - Dominica
    - Dominica Planned Parenthood Association
  - Suriname
    - Women's Way Foundation
    - Stichting Projekta
    - Suriname Coalition of Sex Workers
  - Jamaica
    - CariFLAGS
    - Eve for Life
    - Women’s Empowerment for Change
    - Jamaica SW Coalition
    - Women’s Resource and Outreach Centre
  - Guyana
    - Tamùkke Feminist Rising
    - Guyana RainBow Foundation
    - Guyana Trans United
    - Red Thread
    - Makushi Research Unit
    - Wapichan Women’s Movement
  - Grenada
    - Sweet Water Foundation: Research and Treatment Institute
  - Saint Lucia
    - Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia
    - Girls of a Feather
    - Helen's Daughters

## Annex 2: List of priority SIDS

The following list was shared by FCDO as the SIDS which they were most interested in the evidence from. It is a mix of UN and non-UN members (mainly based on British Overseas Territories) as well as a mix of official development assistance (ODA)-eligible and non-ODA-eligible islands.

Pacific region	Caribbean region	Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS)
Nauru	Montserrat	St. Helena
Palau	Suriname	Comoros
Tuvalu	Grenada	Maldives
Micronesia	Belize	Seychelles
Kiribati	St. Kitts and Nevis	São Tomé and Príncipe
Marshall Islands	St. Lucia	Cabo Verde
Solomon Islands	Antigua and Barbuda	Mauritius
Tonga	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	
Timor-Leste	Barbados	
Vanuatu	Haiti	
Fiji	Guyana	
Samoa	Dominica	
Niue	Jamaica	
Cook Islands	Trinidad and Tobago	
Papua New Guinea	Dominican Republic	
	Cuba	
	The Bahamas	
	Turks and Caicos Islands	
	British Virgin Islands	

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