

World island networks and organisations Preliminary report





Published in July 2021 by SMILO

© SMILO 2021

All rights reserved. Any reproduction in full or in part must mention the title and credit the above-mentioned publisher at the copyright owner.

Lead authors

Cyrielle Lâm Muzerelle, Marta Ferretti, Sylvain Petit (Small Islands Organisation)

Editing, infographics and layout

Kuna Zlatica

We would like to warmly thank all the people and organisations who were part of the advisory group of this publication or kindly contributed in some other way:

Fabrice Bernard, Kate Brown, Jason Donofrio, Gregg Howald, Nicolas Imbert, Domitille Le Huédé, Maxime Prodromides, Stewart Sarkozy-Banoczy, Nenad Starc, Mathieu Thévenet



Contact

Small Islands Organisation (SMILO)
secretariat@smilo-program.org
www.smilo-program.org

Financial support



Contents

- 4 Foreword
- 8 Introduction
- 15 Geographic scope
- 24 Type of stakeholder
- 26 Work themes
- 30 Funding
- 32 Strategic objectives
- 36 Self-description
- 38 Conclusion
- 40 About the authors and the partners

- 43 Data sources
- 45 Bibliography

Foreword

What is an island? And how many are there in the world? “These are complex questions, which open up to more questions and endless reflexions on what an island is, and what are their properties” according to Christian Depraetere, a researcher at the Research Institute for Development (IRD). As of today, these territories are still poorly documented, studied or generally unknown. Two studies have attempted to shed some light on this issue. The **GIS database** created by the IRD in 2008 shows there are 116,100 islands worldwide, ranging from islands the size of the Château d’If in Marseille or the Liberty Island in New York (0,06 km²) to the island of New Guinea⁽²⁾ (785 000 km²). More recently, in 2019, the U.S. Geological Survey, Esri and the GEO Group Inc. mapped 340,691 islands of the Earth’s islands and created a **GIS dataset** that is publicly available⁽³⁾.

Although islands account for only 5% of the earth’s surface, they host 20% of terrestrial plants and vertebrates and 600 million people depend on island ecosystem services for their sustainable development ⁽¹⁾. Additionally, 7 of the world’s 10 coral reef hotspots and 10 of the 34 richest areas of biodiversity in the world, as well as 64% of recorded extinctions are on islands. Over two thirds of the world’s countries include islands.

Earth

5%
of the earth’s surface

20%
of terrestrial plants
and vertebrates

600
million people

64%
of recorded
extinctions

7 of 10
coral reef
hotspots

10 of 34
richest areas of
biodiversity



As islands are particularly vulnerable to global changes, they face many issues: climate change impacts, pollution, extraordinary biological diversity in need of protection, invasive species, and habitat destruction. While those issues are not specific to islands, they are particularly emphasised on these territories. At the same time, **insularity** is a strength, becoming a fertile ground for technical, social, legal and sustainable innovation. Islands therefore share similar challenges with common solutions.

While several island networks or organisations with island-focused strategies are well known, we are convinced that more cross-regional linkage could be beneficial, as well as building a vast connection between islanders. This could foster a better coordination between projects, an enhanced use of the financial resources, as well as helping organisations identify their strengths and specialities, or adapt their strategy according to the other existing stakeholders.

For this reason, the Small Islands Organisation (SMILO), together with its close partners started in 2020 the process of identifying island networks and organisations around the globe that help protect the environment or cultural heritage of islands. This mapping work enables us to analyse their roles, actions, scope and difficulties, and also to pinpoint opportunities for the different players to cooperate.

Islands are facing important challenges in the light of the global pandemic due to COVID 19, including public health, self-sufficiency and economic issues. Beyond the human tragedy, the world's attention has also turned towards our relationship with the nature and the impact of our footprint. Addressing underlying drivers of such diseases will be an essential part of finding an alternative path to both protect humans' health and our planet. Deforestation, habitat fragmentation, the expansion of agricultural lands contribute

to the spreading of such diseases, and are major drivers of climate change. The climate emergency has been looming for decades and is the longer-term threat that we are all facing, and we know it.

We hope that the present mapping will be a small step towards the transformational change we all wish for. Let us work together to rebuild together smarter and prove that part of the solution can come from islands.

Photo: Sophie Jacquet, Ibo, Mozambique



Introduction

To date, **98 island networks and organisations have been identified** of which **32 have completed our survey**. The complete list is available at the end of the present report.

All the information used in this intermediary report is based on the data gathered through a **Google Form**, or open data collected on the Internet (websites, reports, etc.). We would like to thank again all the organisations that have responded. In order to complete the final report later this year, **further information is needed**. We thus highly encourage organisations to complete the short survey.

On November 19 and December 1, 2020, two **virtual events** were organised to help further our mapping work. Focus sessions on different regions of the world attracted 335 participants of 68 different nationalities who enjoyed presentations by 18 panellists. Representatives of public authorities, financial backers and universities, plus representatives of civil society organisations, all testified to the importance of island networks and organisations in protecting the natural and cultural heritage of islands.

The way SMILO treated the data does not engage the island networks and organisations.

Selection criteria definition of island networks and organisations



Works on more than one island in the country

This includes organisations that work on several islands within one region of a country.



Currently active.

It can be public or private; it may or may not have an official status (public institution, non-governmental organisation, university or research institution, etc.).



Designed to last over time

This excludes programmes with a given, limited lifespan.



Helps protect island environments or heritage.



Different from a financial backer.

A separate study on organisations that fund projects on islands is needed.

FIGURE 1.

Yearly evolution of the number of island networks and organisation that have been created and that currently still exist and are active

Source: G-form and available data on the Internet

The Pacific Community (SCP) was the first organism created in 1947. In the early 2000s, a significant rise of the number of island networks and organisations can be observed. The increase could be partly explained by the dense activity of SIDS at the UN level, and at the European level, following the short reference to the islands included on economic and social cohesion in the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997 (Article 174 of the Lisbon Treaty).

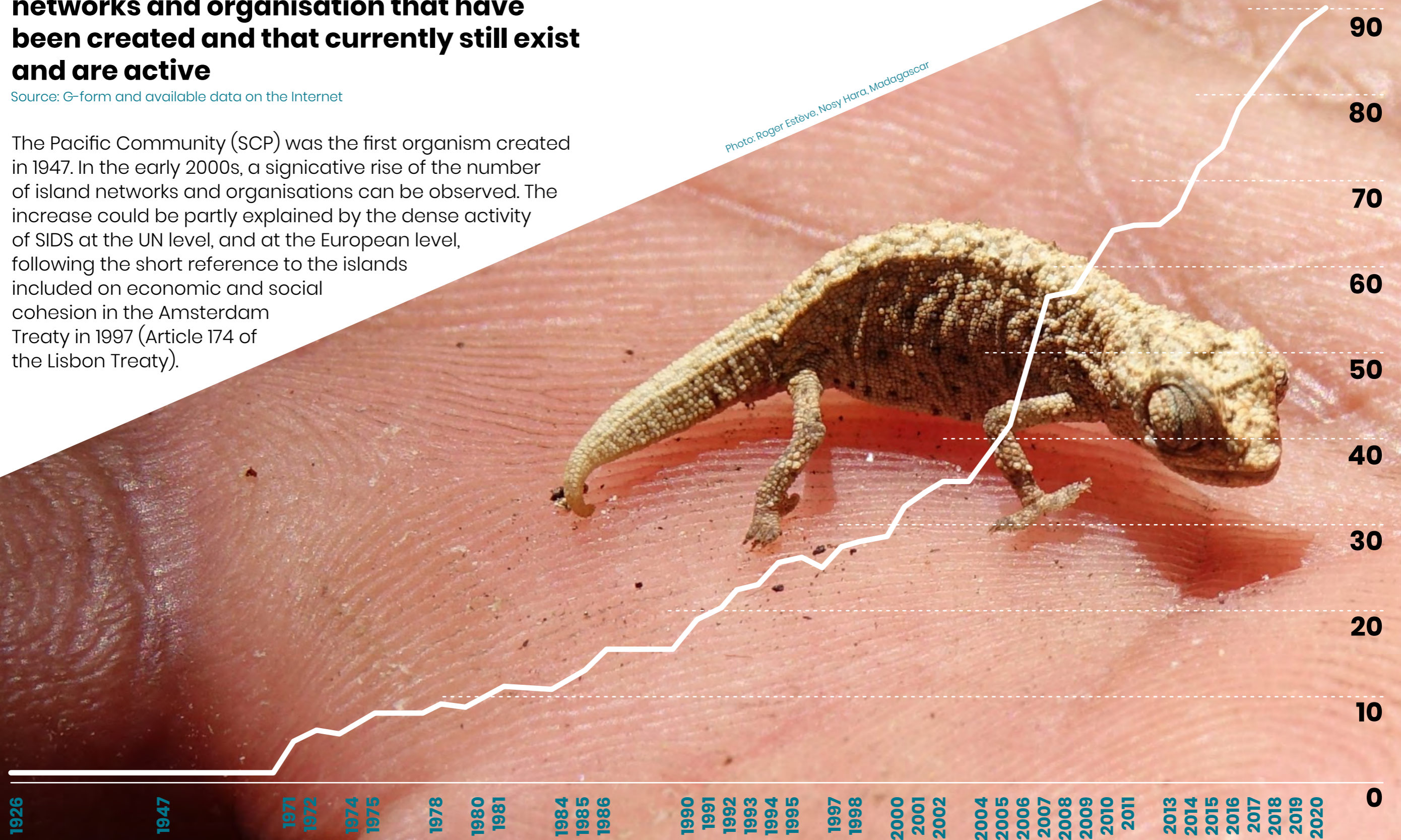


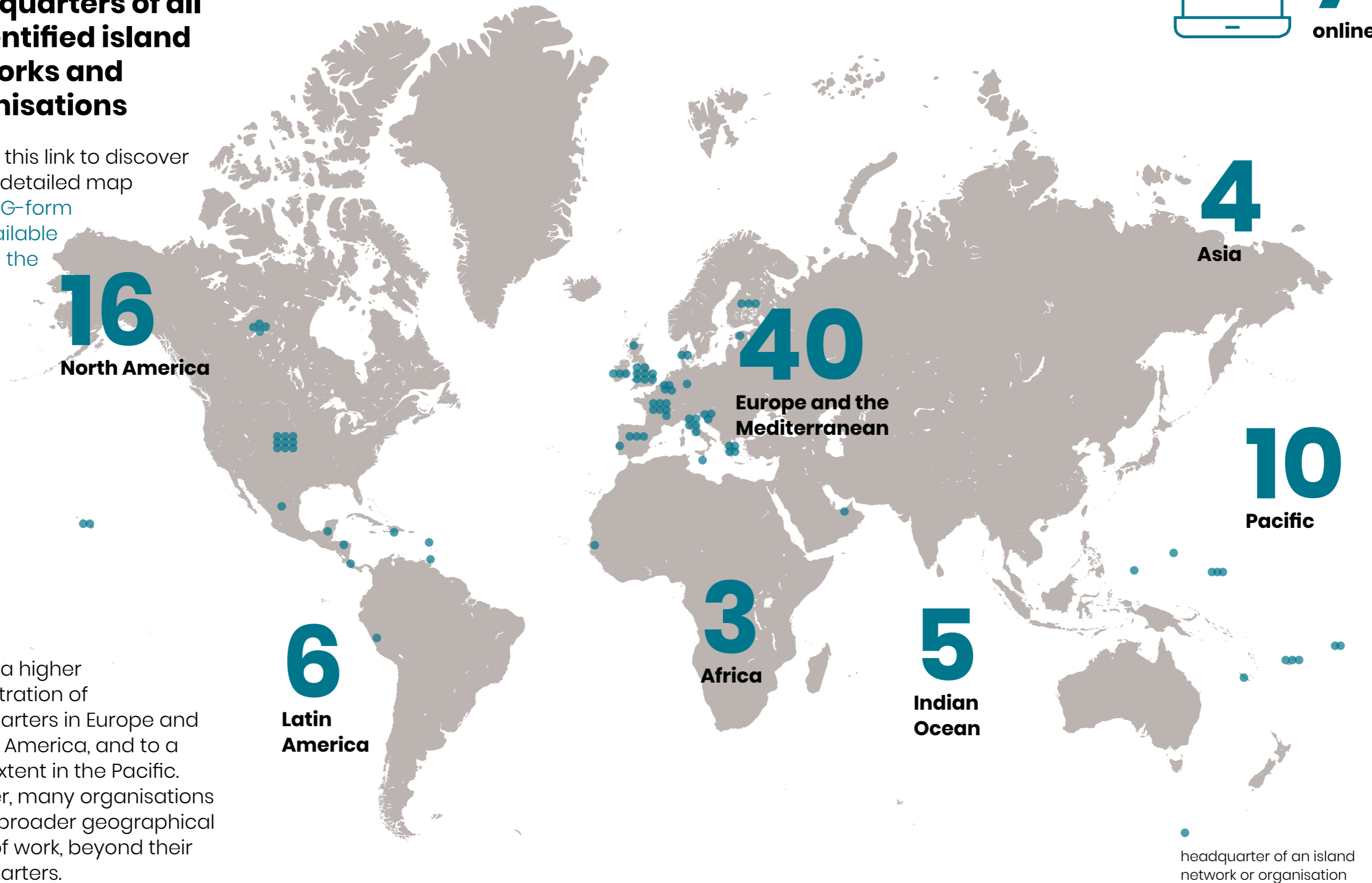
FIGURE 2.

Official headquarters of all 91 identified island networks and organisations

Click on this link to discover
a more detailed map

Source: G-form
and available
data on the
Internet

There is a higher
concentration of
headquarters in Europe and
in North America, and to a
lesser extent in the Pacific.
However, many organisations
have a broader geographical
scope of work, beyond their
headquarters.



7
online

Geographic scope

Each organisation could select more than one geographical area of work, if applicable. Asia and Africa are the most under-represented continents so far.

9 island networks and organisations have declared working worldwide:

1. Global Island Partnership (GLISPA)
2. Institute of Island Studies
3. International Small Islands Studies Association (ISISA)
4. Island Policy Lab, University of Delaware
5. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
6. Observatory on Tourism for Islands Economy (OTIE)
7. Small Island Cultures Research Initiative (SICRI)
8. Universities Consortium of Small Island States
9. Small Islands Organisation (SMILO)

FIGURE 3.

Number of active island networks and organisations per region out of 32 that completed the survey

Source: G-form



Number of organisations active per country



FIGURE 4.

Island networks and organisations that are active in Europe and the Mediterranean.

Organisations could specify in which countries they are particularly active.

Source: G-form



Number of organisations active per country



FIGURE 5.

Island networks and organisations that are active in North America.

Organisations could specify in which countries they are particularly active.

Source: G-form



Number of organisations active per country



FIGURE 6.

Island networks and organisations that are active in the Caribbean and Latin America.



Organisations could specify in which countries they are particularly active.

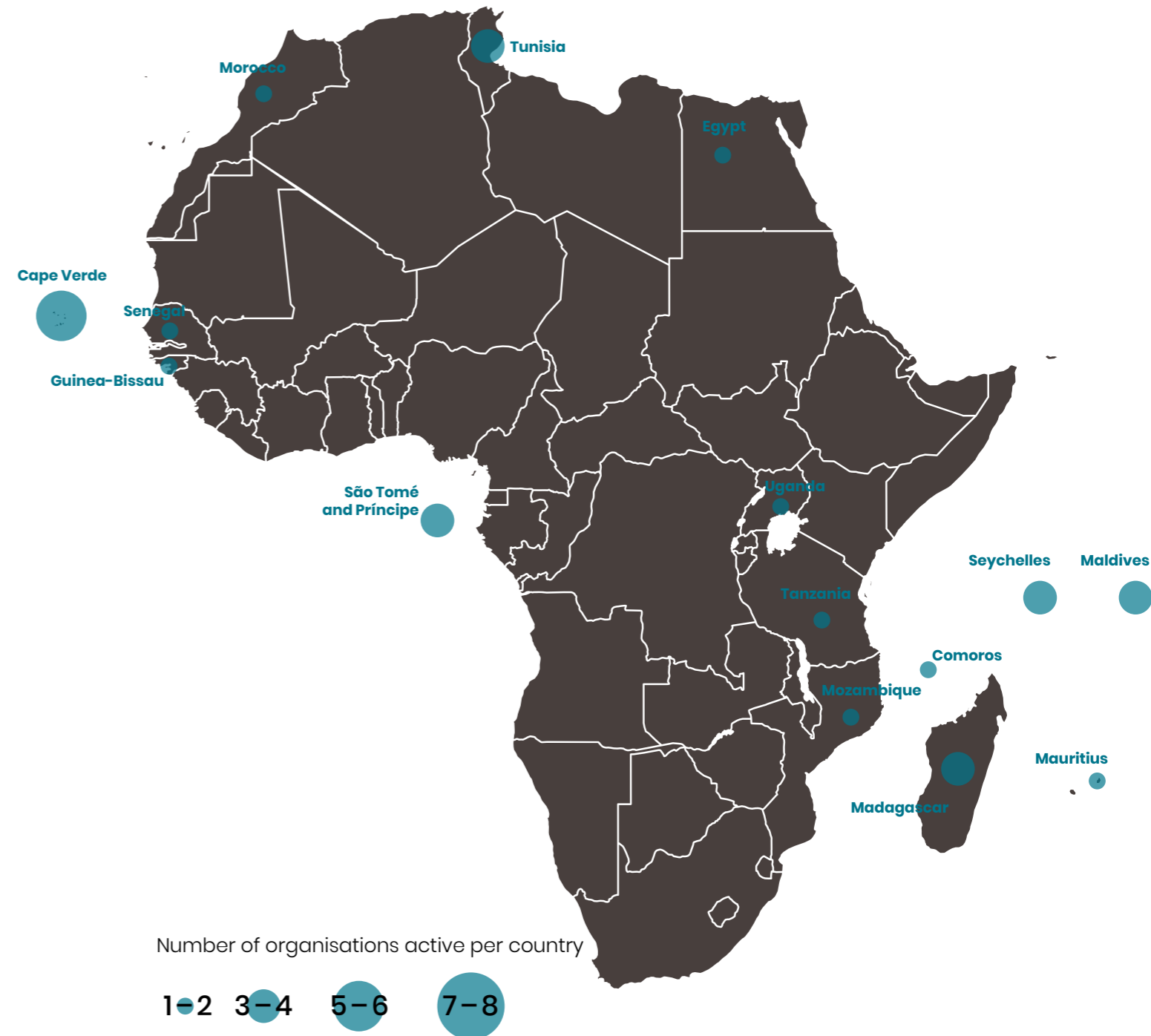
Source: G-form

FIGURE 7.

Island networks and organisations that are active in Africa and the Indian Ocean.

Organisations could specify in which countries they are particularly active.

Source: G-form



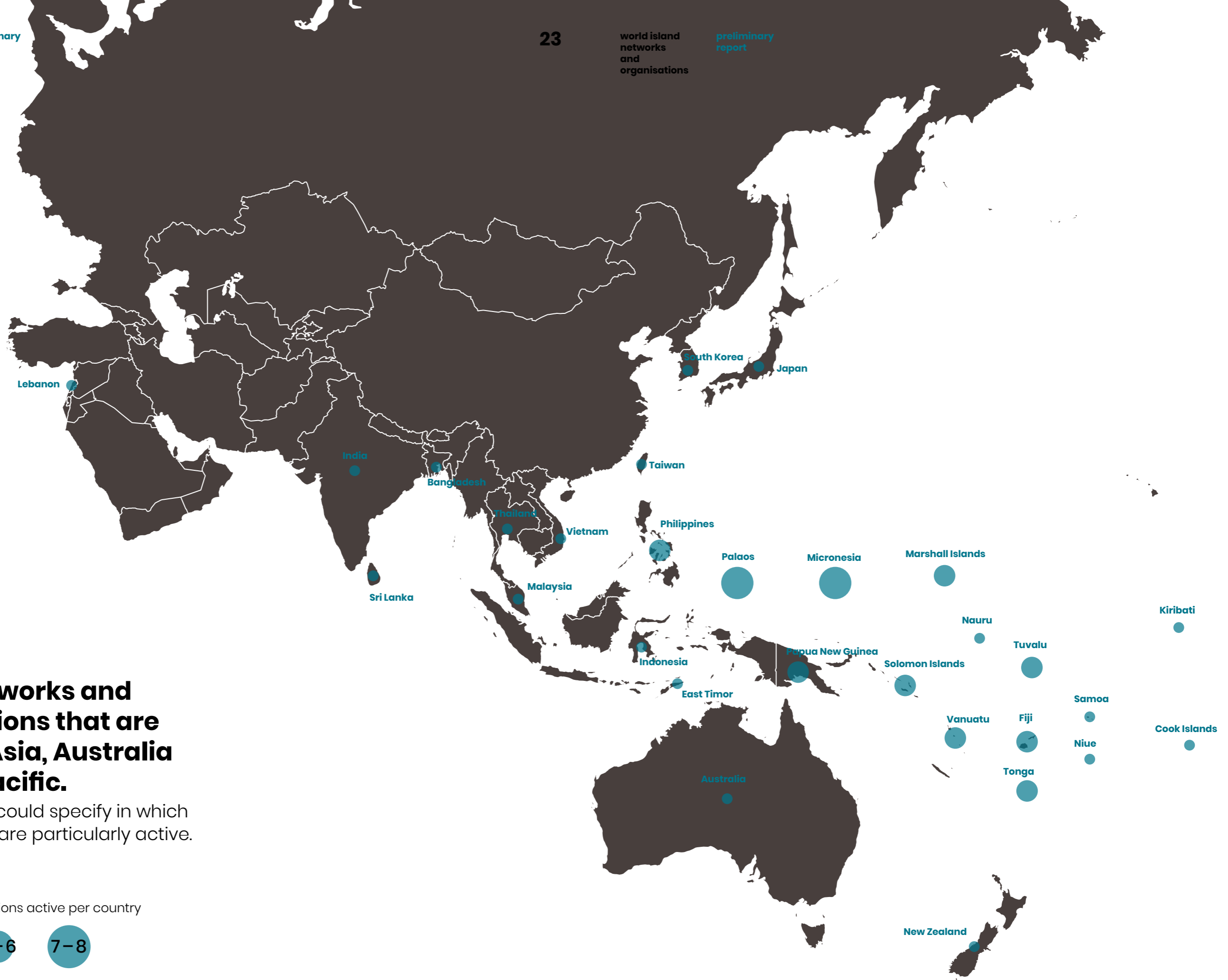


FIGURE 8.

Island networks and organisations that are active in Asia, Australia and the Pacific.

Organisations could specify in which countries they are particularly active.

Source: G-form

Number of organisations active per country



Type of stakeholder

FIGURE 9.

Distribution per type of stakeholders among the island networks and organisations:

Civil society: includes NGOs, charities, non-profit associations, etc.

Intergovernmental organisation or initiative: also includes initiatives that have resulted from inter-state/supranational or European negotiations.

State organisation

Research / Academia: for example think tanks, labs or other initiatives created by universities, network of researchers, etc.

Business: private companies that have developed solutions tested and implemented on at least two islands. The solutions can be specifically designed for islands, or adapted to different territories, including islands.

Source: G-form and available data on the Internet

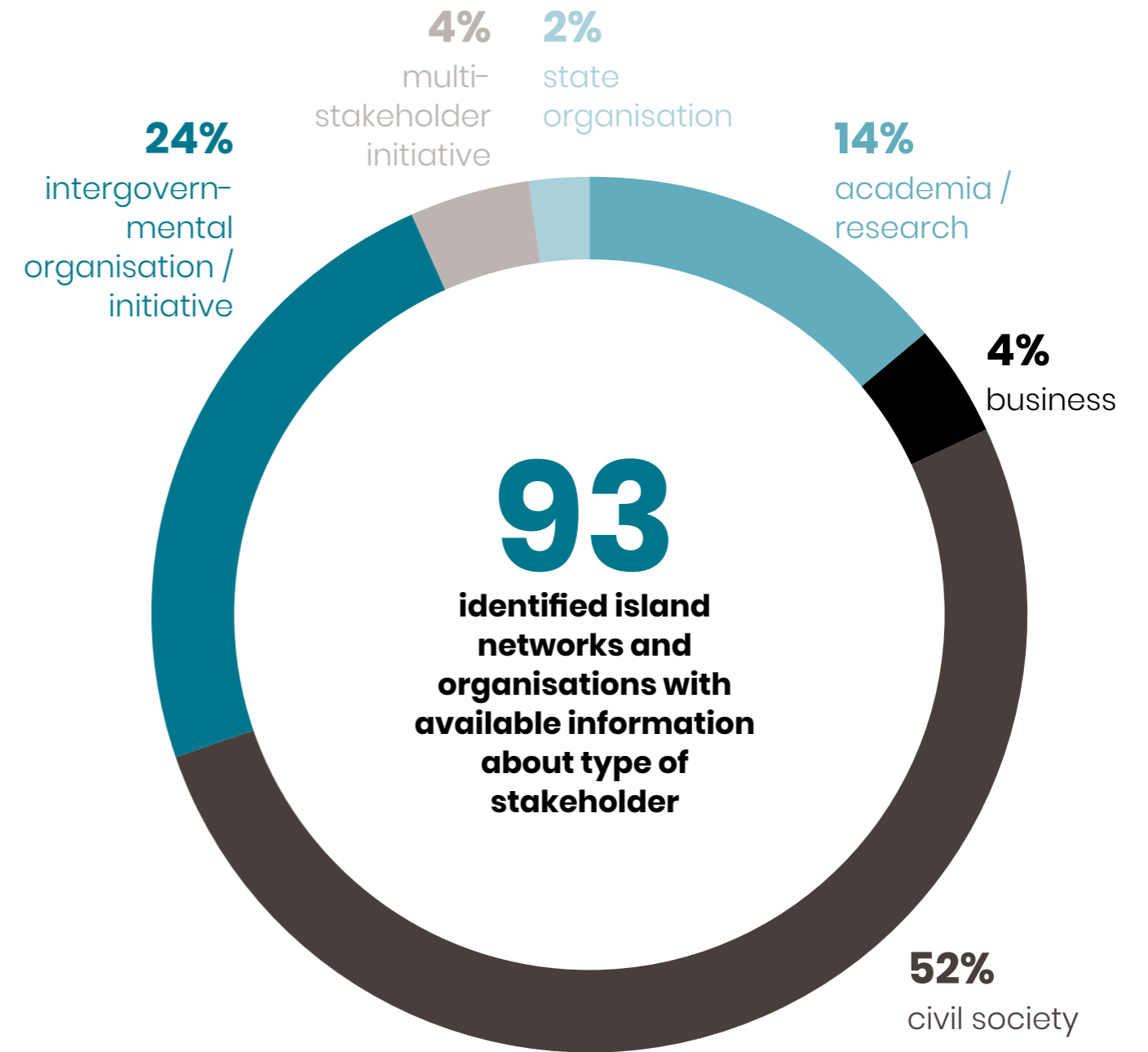


Photo: Pedro Gomes, Príncipe, São Tomé and Príncipe



Work themes

85,7%

work on biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation.

42,8%

work on sustainable food systems and productions.



FIGURE 10

Main issues on which island networks and organisations are currently working on.

Each organisation could select more than one topic, if applicable. On average, island networks and organisations work on two themes.

Source: G-form

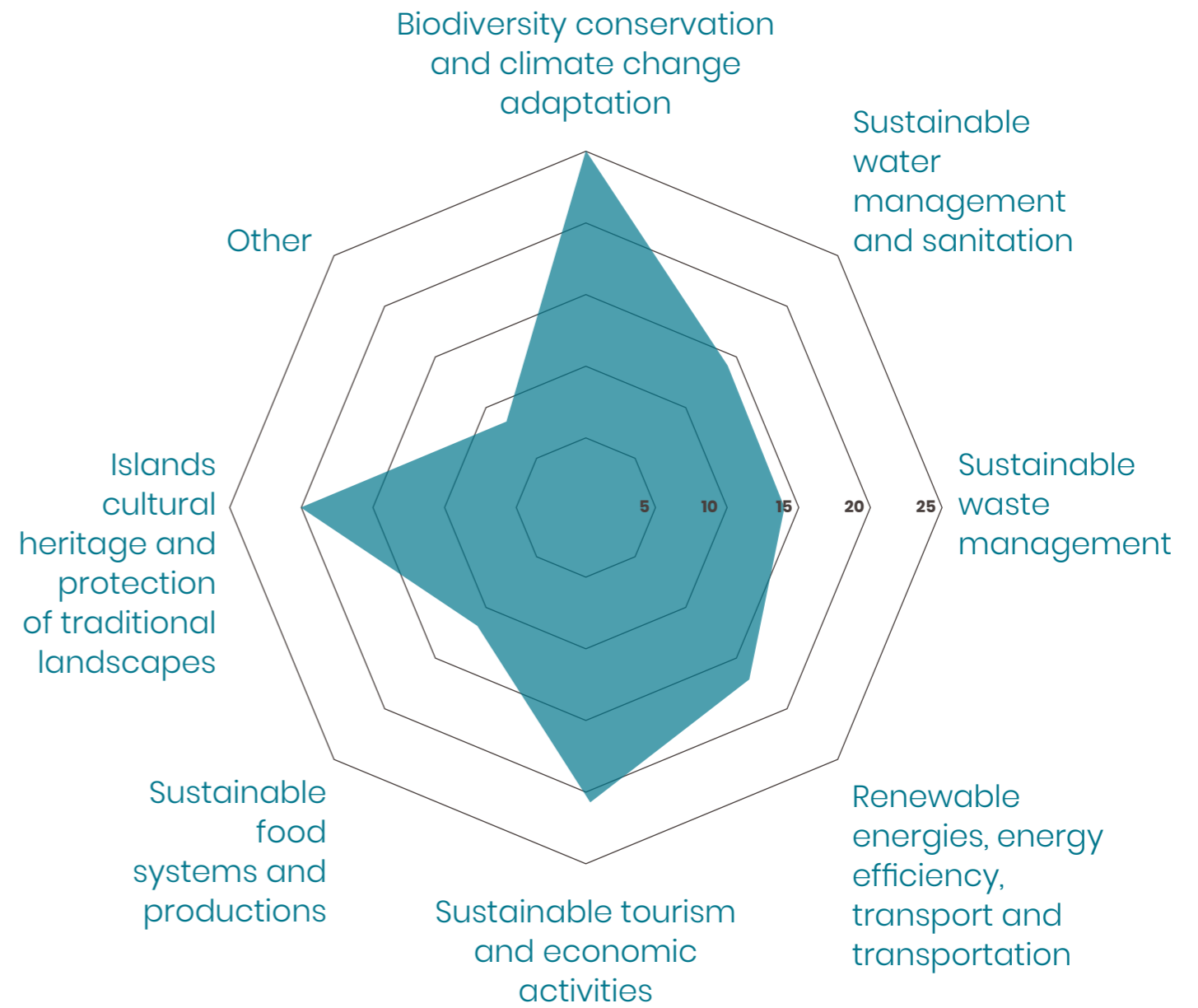
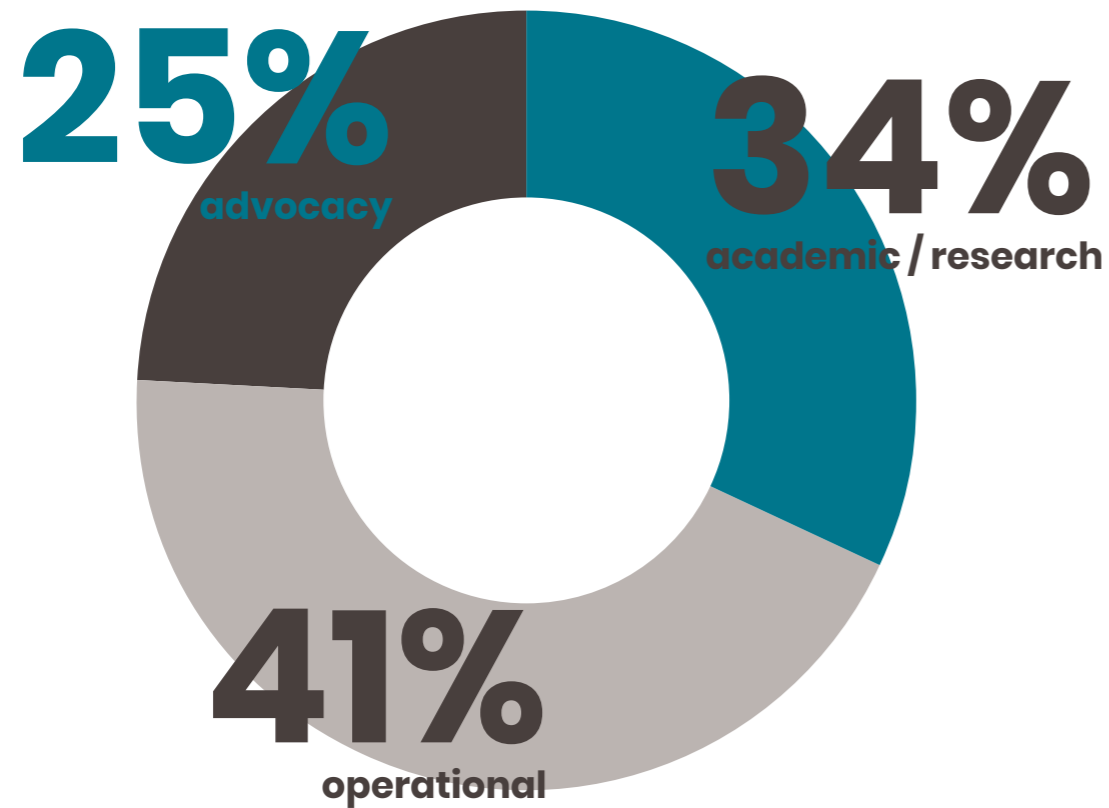


Photo: Stéphane Ledoux, Ibo, Mozambique

FIGURE 11

Main areas of work of island networks and organisations.

Source: G-form



Based on the interpretation of the G-form responses, we could divide the data into 3 main categories. However, more precise data is needed. The G-form has been updated, and more responses are required.

Each organism tends to work more on one of the major areas of work, as highlighted in figure 11. Yet, the vast majority of networks and organisations focus on more than one activity.

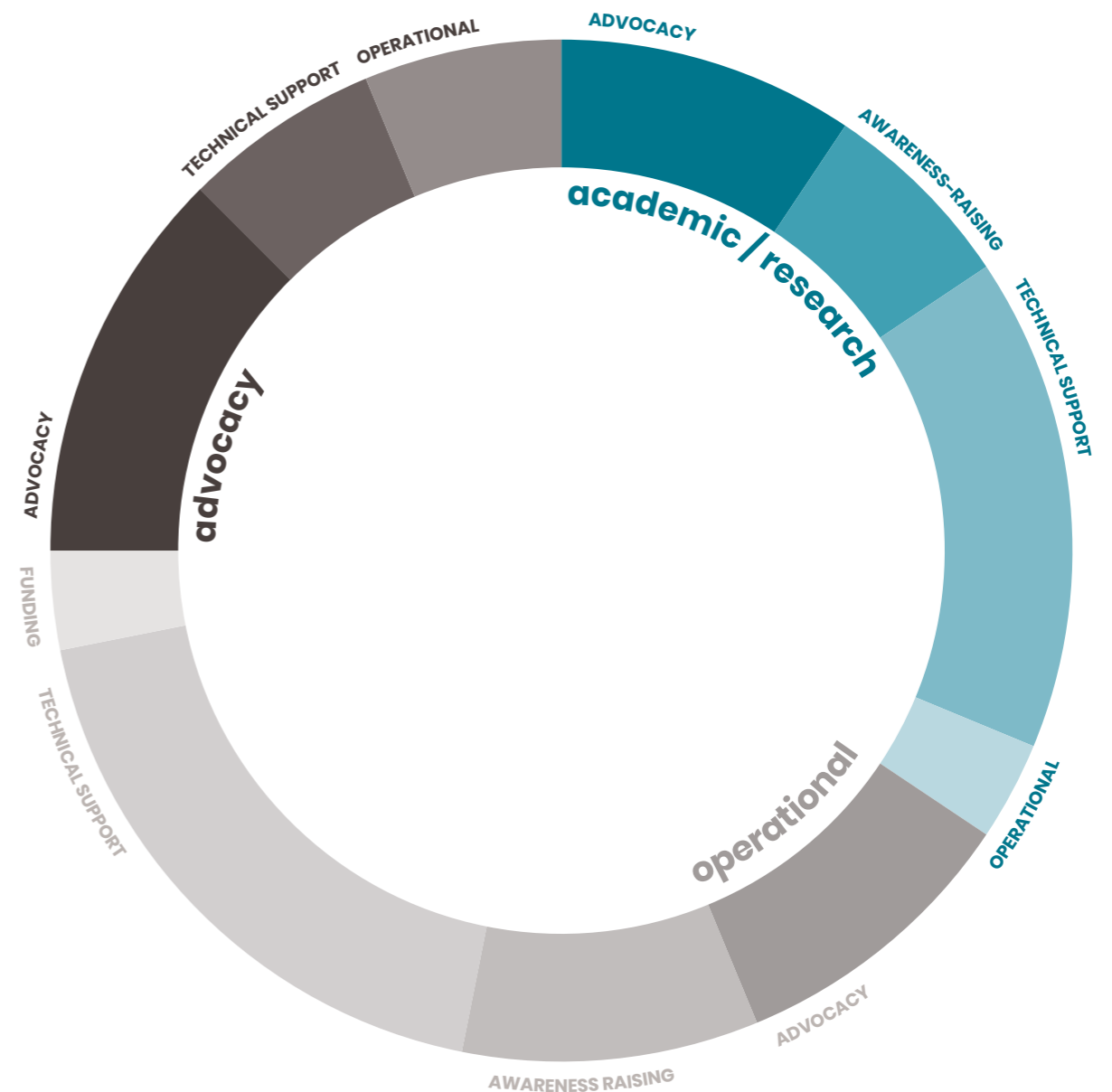
FIGURE 12

Main sub-categories of work of island networks and organisations.

Source: G-form

Figure 12 highlights sub-categories of work, such as providing technical support, funding, and contributing to raising-awareness campaigns.

For organisms whose principal activity is considered as operational, a vast majority also offers technical support.

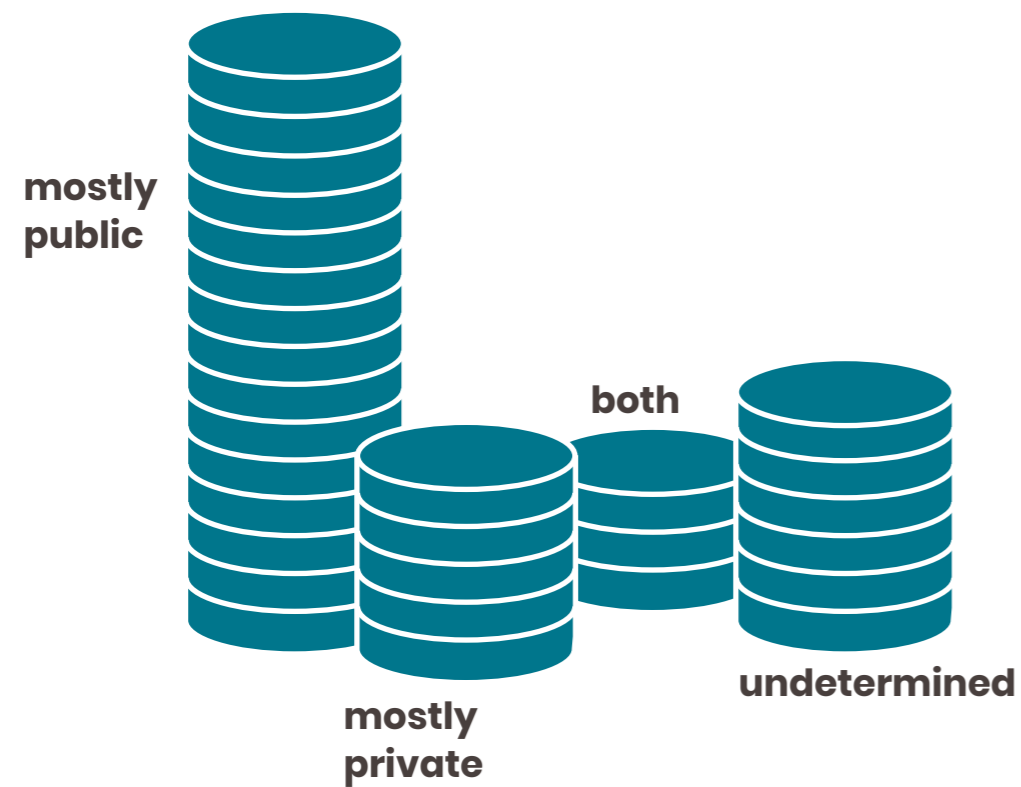


Funding

FIGURE 13

Sources of funding for island networks and organisations. Based on the interpretation of the G-form responses. The G-form has been updated, and more responses are needed.

Source: G-form

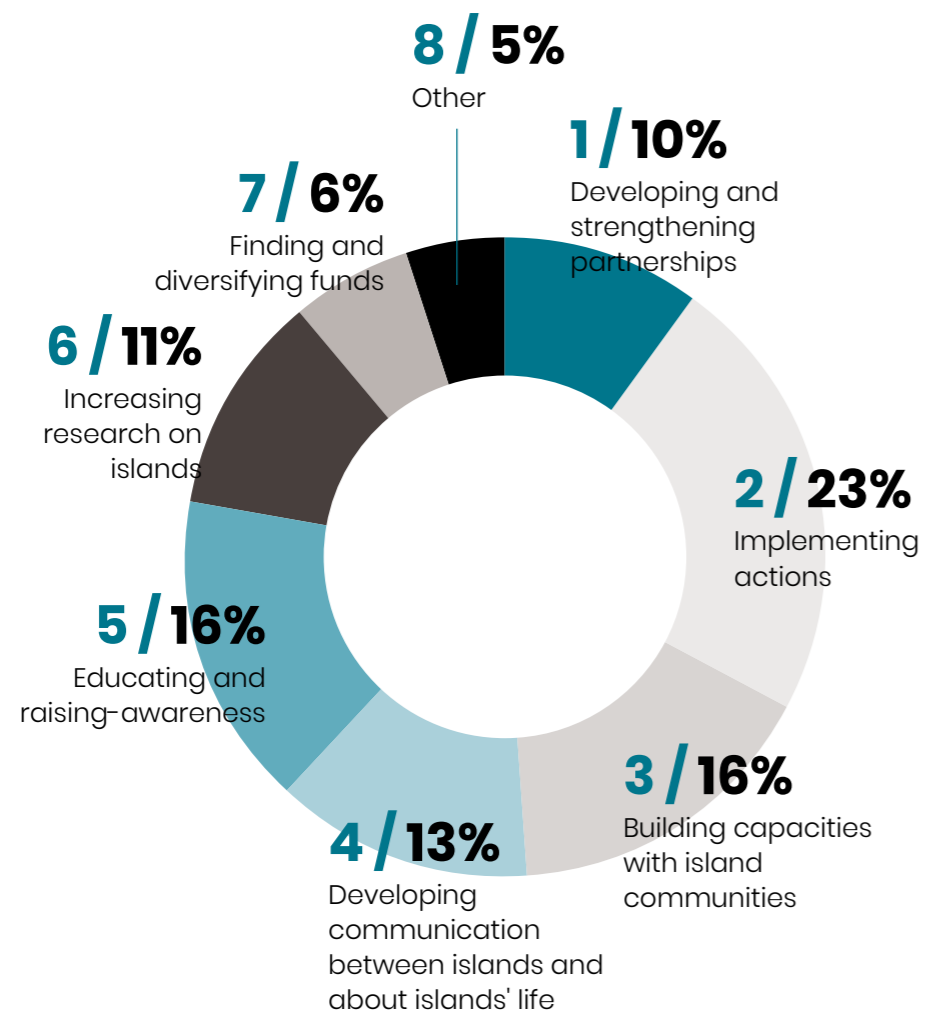


Strategic objectives

FIGURE 14

Main 5-year strategic objectives. Organisations had to specify up to 5 main strategic objectives.

Source: G-form



The present report has interpreted and divided their responses into 8 main type of objectives:

1/ Developing and strengthening partnerships:

“Develop at the international scale partnerships and projects to strengthen networking and the implementation of concrete activities for more protected and better managed territories”

Conservatoire du littoral (French Coastal Protection Agency)

Sifnos, Greece



2 / Implementing actions

“To increase support to implement community-led concrete and sustainable solutions to protect small islands’ environment”

Small Islands Organisation (SMILO)

3 / Building capacities with island communities

“To build capacity with local communities to prevent new introductions of invasive species and to foster governance for the sustainable development of Mexican islands.”

Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas (GECI)

4 / Developing communication between islands and about islands' life

“To encourage free and critical discussion on island affairs, including (but not limited to) matters dealing with survival, sustainability, islandness, smallness, insularity, resource management, the environment and the culture and nature of island life.”

International Small Islands Studies Association (ISISA)

5 / Educating and raising awareness

“Promote the visibility of island topics in public discourse, share the knowledge about islands on local, regional and international level”

Anatomy of Islands - Center for Research and Development

6. Increasing research on islands

Among the answers we have gathered, academic networks and organisations represent 22% of the stakeholders. It seems we are witnessing the emergence of the study of islands as a subject in its own right.

7 / Finding and diversifying funds

As previously mentioned (see Figure 13), island networks and organisations are still mostly funded by public sources.

Consequently, they are looking to diversify their source of fundings, especially to fund projects.

“Develop breakthroughs in funding to assist projects at scale”

Island Conservation

8. Other

Photo: Office tourisme Gorée, Senegal



Self -description

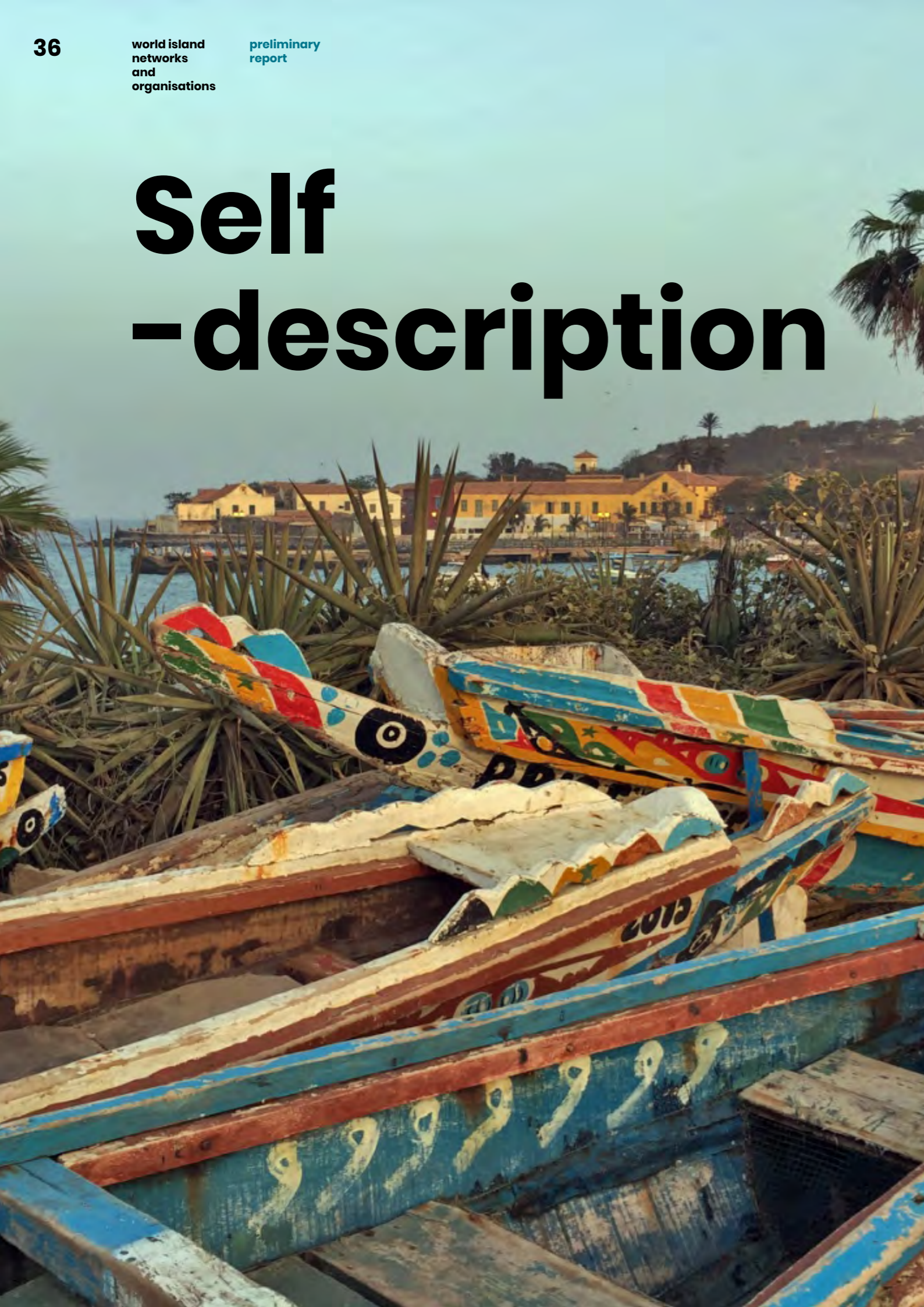


FIGURE 15

The figure shows how island networks and organisations describe themselves. Restoration, biodiversity, Sustainable, Ecosystem are the main recurring keywords used, based on the interpretation of the present report.

Source: G-form



Conclusion

One of the goals of the present mapping is to encourage new partnerships, ultimately offering better answers to islands' needs.

To further understand how we can build more efficient collaboration among island networks and organisations, more responses from the organisms identified are needed, and beyond. Based on the first analysis, we have also updated the G-form to reduce the time needed to fill in the survey, and with new questions that will help us better identify the missing information: size of island organisations and networks (budget ranges, number of employees, etc.), type of funding, strategic objectives ranked by priority, etc. The organisations that have already responded to the first versions of the G-form will be asked to fill in a separate short survey with the new questions we have identified in the updated G-form.

Results will be discussed on September 9, 2021 during the ICO Solutions event – Island Coast Ocean in parallel with the IUCN World Congress in Marseille, France. This event, of which SMILO is a partner, is driven by the Conservatoire du Littoral, the Marseille Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Rhône-Mediterranean-Corsica Water Agency. A final report will be published shortly after. The key conclusions will also be presented at the coming COP CBD 2021, as well as during SMILO's "Small Sustainable Islands" annual event in November 2021 in Kerkennah, Tunisia.



Photo: Ville de Cannes, Sainte-Marguerite, France

In light of the coming COP CBD 2021, the UNFCCC and other major international events, we can and must all join in our efforts to raise the voice of islands, create innovative projects, work together more efficiently, and ensure a better integration of islands' issues and needs in the international agenda for 2030.

You are working for an island network or organisation that isn't listed in the mapping yet or hasn't replied to our survey? Fill in the **G-form** or contact us at secretariat@smilo-program.org.

 [small islands organisation](https://www.facebook.com/smallislandsorganisation)

 [@smilo_org](https://twitter.com/smilo_org)

 [@smilo_org](https://www.instagram.com/smilo_org)

 [smilo - small islands organisation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/smilo-small-islands-organisation)

About the authors and the partners

This project is led by SMILO – Small Islands Organisation who assists small islands of less than 150 km² that wish to work towards managing their territory more sustainably. It aims to curb impacts linked to human activities and development, whilst fostering innovations on islands that benefit the local population and their environment. SMILO focuses on sustainable solutions in the fields of water & sanitation, waste, energy, biodiversity, landscape and heritage.

To strengthen cooperation and solidarity between islands, SMILO coordinates an international network, with members located in Europe, the Mediterranean, Africa, the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia. Advocacy initiatives by SMILO aim to put the question of small islands on the international agenda. This project is supported by:

Conservatoire du littoral



The Conservatoire du Littoral (Coastal Agency) is a French public agency, whose mission has been to acquire coastal plots that are degraded or threatened by urbanisation since 1975. Once acquired, the sites are restored and welcome the public, with a great attention to respecting the environment and raising awareness.

www.conservatoire-du-littoral.fr

GLISPA – Global Island Partnership



Led by the Presidents of Palau, Seychelles and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Prime Minister of Grenada and Premier of the British Virgin Islands, GLISPA's mission is to promote action to build resilient and sustainable island communities by inspiring leadership, catalysing commitments and facilitating collaboration for all islands, with a focus on the Pacific. To achieve its mission, GLISPA mobilises high-level political stakeholders and supports partnerships that implement global resilience, conservation and sustainability goals on islands. It also advocates at the global level to raise awareness and support for island solutions and initiatives, especially through major international meetings and conferences.

www.glispa.org



Island Conservation

Its mission is to prevent animal extinctions by removing invasive species from islands. It works with local communities, government management agencies, and conservation organisations on islands with the greatest potential for preventing the extinction of globally threatened species.

www.islandconservation.org

Green Cross France et Territoires



It is part of Green Cross International network, a non-governmental environmental organisation. The mission of Green

Cross International is to respond to the combined challenges of security, poverty and environmental degradation to ensure a sustainable and secure future. Water and food security, as well as access to energy are GCFT's current priorities. It firmly believes in the good management of natural resources as a way to achieve peace.

www.gcft.fr

Precovery Labs



It is a hub for community, impact and creativity, based in the US. It focuses on strategy, implementation and storytelling in support of resilience and precovery for the most vulnerable people and places. Specialties include island resilience, resilient cities and communities, indigenous community development.

www.facebook.com/precoverylabs

ICO Solutions



ICO Solutions – Islands, Coasts, Oceans Solutions is a platform driven by the Conservatoire du Littoral, the Marseille Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Rhône-Mediterranean-Corsica Water Agency, to support and promote solutions to major conservation and sustainable development issues of islands, coasts and oceans.

www.ico-solutions.eu

The Ocean Foundation



As the only community foundation for the ocean, The Ocean Foundation's 501(c)(3) mission is to support, strengthen, and promote those organisations dedicated to reversing the trend of destruction of ocean environments around the world. It focuses its collective expertise on emerging threats in order to generate cutting edge solutions and better strategies for implementation.

www.oceanfdn.org

The report is based on the data graciously shared by:

Anatomy of Islands - Center for Research and Development
Association des îles du Ponant
Bärkraft.ax
Center for Island Sustainability, University of Guam
Conservatoire du littoral
DAFNI - Network of Sustainable Greek Islands
Global Islands Partnership (GLISPA)
Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas (GECI)
Initiative Petites Îles de Méditerranée (Initiative PIM)
Institute of Island Studies
INSULEUR - Network of the Insular Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the European Union
International National Trusts Organisation (INTO)
International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) - SIDS Lighthouse Initiative 2.0
International Small Islands Studies Association (ISISA)
Island Commission of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR)
Island Conservation
Island Innovation
Island Movement / Pokret Otoka
Island Policy Lab, University of Delaware
Island Research and Education Initiative (iREi)
Journal of CESaRE
Major Projects Foundation
Observatory on Tourism for Islands Economy (OTIE)
Seacology
Secretaría del Corredor Biológico en el Caribe (CBC)
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
Small Island Cultures Research Initiative (SICRI)
Small Islands Organisation (SMILO)
Sustainable Islands Observatory

Sustainable Islands Platform (SIsP)
UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum (UKOTCF)
Universities Consortium of Small Island States

It also includes available data about:

Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)
Asociación Tinerfeña Amigos de la Naturaleza (ATAN)
Association of Danish Small Islands
Association of Estonian Islands - Eesti Saarte Kogu
Associazione Nazionale Comuni Isole Minori (ANCIM)
Associazione Vivara Onlus
Big Ocean
Birdlife
Center for Small States
Clean Blue Alliance
Clean Energy for EU Secretariat
Climate Strong Islands Network
Comhar na nOileán CTR
Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann (The Irish Islands Federation)
Corredor Marino del Pacífico Este Tropical (CMAR)
EOAEN - Chambers group for the development of Greek Isles
European Small Islands Network (ESIN)
FARNET
FEDARENE - European Federation of Agencies and Regions for Energy and Environment
Frontline Cities & Islands
Fundación Islas de la Bahía
Global Islands Network (GIN)
Green Cross France & Territoires
Greening the Islands (GTI)
Hellenic Small Islands Network
Island Biology Interest Group (IBIG)
Island Dynamics
Island Rights Initiative
Island Studies Journal
Island Waste Management
Global Alliance

Living Islands
 Locally Managed Marine Area
 Network (LMMA Network)
 Marshall Islands Conservation Society
 MEET Network
 Micronesia Challenge
 National Association of
 Finnish Islands (FÖSS)
 Nordiska skärgårdssamarbetet
 Oikonos
 Organization of Eastern
 Caribbean States (OECS)
 Otočni Sabor
 Overseas Countries and
 Territories Association (OCTA)
 Pacific Climate Change
 Roundtable (PCCR)
 Pacific Community (SPC)
 Pacific Invasive Learning Network (PILN)
 Pacific Island Inventory &
 Monitoring Network
 Pacific Islands Forum
 Pacific Islands Managed and Protected
 Areas Community (PIMPAC)
 Pacific Islands Roundtable for
 Nature Conservation (PIRT)
 Pacific Network for
 Environmental Law (PaNEL)
 Pacific Regional Integrated Sciences
 and Assessments (RISA)
 Pacific Resilience Partnership
 Precovery Labs

Réseau des aires marines protégées
 d'Afrique de l'Ouest (RAMPAO)
 RETI Network - Réseau d'Excellence
 des Territoires Insulaires
 Scottish Islands Federation
 Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
 Environment Programme (SPREP)
 SIDS Global Business Network (SIDS-GBN)
 Société de conservation des Îles-
 de-la-Madeleine (SCÎM)
 The Island Initiative
 Tmed Net
 Trilateral Island Initiative
 UCL Islands Research Laboratory
 UN DESA
 UNESCO MAB
 World Network of Island and
 Coastal Biosphere Reserves
 Yubarta Islas

Bibliography

- (3) Altaweel, M. (2019). Mapping the World's Islands. GIS Lounge. https://www.gislounge.com/mapping-the-worlds-islands/?fbclid=IwAR0M86HCRBxJqvdnjJ_I_9cBVGKAejtRZ5nbzplQuxPecGWyDjwdYVPPe0. For more information on the GIE database, see: <https://rmgsc.cr.usgs.gov/gie/gie.shtml>.
 See also Sayre, R. et al. (2018). A new 30 meter resolution global shoreline vector and associated global islands database for the development of standardized global ecological coastal units. *Journal of Operational Oceanography – A Special Blue Planet Edition*. DOI:10.1080/1755876X.2018.1529714. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1755876X.2018.1529714>.
- (1) Convention on Biological Diversity, 2014
- (2) Depratere, C. (2019). Base de données insulaires mondiale. DataSuds V3 <https://doi.org/10.23708/T37S0K>.
 See also Depratere, C. (2008a). The Challenge of Nissology: A Global Outlook on the World Archipelago. Part I: Scene Setting the World Archipelago. *Island Studies Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1-16.



World island
networks
and
organisations
Preliminary
report

© SMILO 2021
www.smilo-program.org